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# The **TIMBERJAY**



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989

VOL. 35, ISSUE 15

April 19, 2024

\$1<sup>50</sup>

## THE LEGISLATURE

# Measure would bring big investments to the Range

### Property tax relief plus \$79 million in regional bonding backed by Lislegard and Hauschild

by **DAVID COLBURN**  
Cook/Orr Editor

**REGIONAL-** Property tax relief and millions of dollars in new spending could be on the way to the Iron Range and the North Country if bills pushed by two area lawmakers find their way into overall tax legislation before the end of the session.

Ely and Tower-Soudan would be among the biggest winners should the package make it to final



**Dave Lislegard**



**Grant Hauschild**

passage unchanged. Ely would see \$5.25 million for a variety of investments in sports facilities,

while Tower-Soudan would see \$3 million to bridge a major funding gap in a long-planned new drinking water treatment plant.

With the deadline for action on finance bills looming, Rep. Dave Lislegard, DFL-Aurora, on Monday introduced HF 5198, a summary of recommendations of the House Property Tax Division, which Lislegard chairs.

Sen. Grant Hauschild introduced SF 5435, a companion bill in the Senate.

The package – authored by Rep. Lislegard – includes a long list of infrastructure investments along with permanent property tax cuts for homeowners on the Iron Range and northeastern Minnesota. The proposal appropriates taconite taxes – which mining companies pay in lieu of property taxes – to pay for it all.

“Senator Hauschild and I are working with a ‘Range First’ focus to cut taxes and invest in our local communities,” Lislegard said. “This package continues our commitment to building a better life for seniors and families in our region by improving our schools, taking advantage of economic opportunities, growing tourism, and more to strengthen the core

See...**FUNDING** pg. 9



## END OF AN ERA

# McDonald hangs up the whistle

### Decision comes after 35 years officiating and five years as the region’s county commissioner

by **CATIE CLARK**  
Ely Editor

**ELY** — When Paul McDonald walked off the basketball court for the last time at the Section 7A semifinal last month, he capped a 35-year career of officiating high school sports in Minnesota.

McDonald says his decades of playing, coaching and officiating were motivated by his love of sports. “My whole thing was to give back to the games that were good to me. Athletics and education have been my life and it feels good to give back.”

McDonald’s devotion to sports was key to his decision to continue officiating even after his election to the St. Louis County Board of Commissioners in 2018.

McDonald inherited his love for sports and, in particular, his knowledge of basketball from his famous father, Bob McDonald, who coached the Chisholm Bluebreakers for 59 years, racking up over 1,000 wins in his career. “My dad was the winningest coach in the state,” recalls

**Top: Paul McDonald’s referee team at his last basketball game, the Section 7A semi-final game between Carlton/Wrenshall and Mt. Iron-Buhl. Left-to-right: Frank Ivancich, Paul McDonald, Dave Clement.**  
submitted photo

**Right: McDonald holds a plaque reflecting his high school scoring record.**  
photo by C. Clark

Paul. Growing up in Chisholm, Paul played high school sports and excelled at basketball, which earned him an athletic scholarship to the University of Nebraska in the 1970s. He transferred to South Dakota State, spending one year redshirted before playing for the Division I Jackrabbits.

McDonald started teaching physical education in Cotton and then at Tower-Soudan. He later moved to Ely to teach and coach at Vermilion Community College, the predecessor of Minnesota North College-Vermilion. He retired from Vermilion in 2018.

See...**MCDONALD** pg. 9



## U.S. STEEL

# Shareholders OK purchase by Nippon

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**  
Managing Editor

**REGIONAL** — U.S. Steel shareholders voted overwhelmingly this week to approve the sale of the historic domestic steel manufacturer to Nippon Steel, of Japan — but where it goes from there isn’t clear.

The outcome could have significant impacts on the Iron Range, where U.S. Steel owns and operates some of the region’s largest employers, including the Minntac and Keetac taconite facilities.

The tendered offer is an all-cash deal valued at \$55 per share of stock, or an estimated \$14.1 billion. With the assumption of debt, U.S. Steel says the deal, originally announced in December, is worth a total of \$14.9 billion.

More than 98 percent of the shares voted at a special shareholders meeting

See...**US STEEL** pg. 9

## CITY OF ELY

# Council takes next step on blighted Gillson property

by **CATIE CLARK**  
Ely Editor

**ELY** — Jason Gillson now has 30 days to address his blighted property at 45 E. Boundary St. following a Tuesday city council hearing during which Gillson said he’s willing to cooperate with the city in hopes of getting his house back.

But Gillson’s cooperation was in question after he repeatedly postponed, then canceled, a visit by Ely Building Official Doug Whitney just ahead of Tuesday’s council meeting. As the hearing began, Whitney explained that the owners of the property, which include Gillson and Gillson’s

See...**BLIGHT** pg. 11



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Community notices



Some of the items up for auction this Saturday at the ECR fundraiser. photo C. Clark

ECR auction live at EHST Saturday, April 20

ELY- The nonprofit Ely Community Resource (ECR) will hold its first live art auction since the COVID-19 pandemic, Saturday, April 20. Doors will open at 5 p.m. at Ely's Historic State Theater for hors d'oeuvres and for viewing the auction items. Bidding will start at 6 p.m. The event fee is \$10 at the door and parking will be available at the lots for the Frisky Otter Restaurant and KJ's True Value Hardware Store.

Rock out to the sounds of Chicago April 27

ELY - Duluth Transit Authority, the Midwest's largest Chicago tribute band, returns to Ely's Historic State Theater located at 238 E. Sheridan St., Saturday, April 27, at 7 p.m. (doors open 6:30). Come out after Prom Grand March for a fantastic night of music from the greatest era of rock-n-roll as DTA plays the best of Chicago classics and deep cuts. Tickets: \$25 at www.elystatestheater.org or at the door. Concessions include \$7 taps, \$8 mixed drinks, popcorn, soda, candy, and more.



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UNITED WAY

# Giving back and getting involved

REGIONAL - Early in my career, I was exposed to the amazing work United Way of Northeastern Minnesota (UWNEMN) was doing in our region and because of that I became a long-time donor. I love giving back by donating time and money; I find it incredibly rewarding.

When I had the privilege to join UWNEMN's Board of Directors eight years ago to further support UWNEMN and its partner agencies, it felt like my contribution was multiplied ten-fold! I'm excited for the opportunity to build on my investment once again by stepping into the role of board president.

As a donor, I trust that every dollar I contribute to UWNEMN - whether through personal payroll deductions, event participation, raffle ticket purchases, estate planning, or my workplace contributions through corporate donations or event sponsorships - is used to address some of the biggest issues facing northeastern Minnesota. Serving on the board has shown me that trust is not misplaced, and I've seen firsthand the painstaking level of attention given to ensure donor dollars are making a real impact on the most pressing community needs.

Over time, needs have changed - as has life. I've been impressed by

the way UWNEMN leadership and staff have pivoted to tackle new issues and challenges that arise in our community. Most people don't know how much work has been done by UWNEMN to address some of the biggest challenges facing our region including the community impacts of COVID-19, child-care availability, dental services, and mental health and wellbeing. UWNEMN's staff is incredibly hard working, but they can't do it alone. I'd like to thank the people who have stepped up to serve on the board of directors and the thousands of volunteers who have mobilized to keep UWNEMN programs and partner agencies running over the years. It is important to take the time to volunteer, and it is also so rewarding. It's a value I've worked to instill in my son: I encouraged him to bring friends to help at last year's Flavor of the North event and loved seeing them have an absolute blast working their butts off for the betterment of our community!



**LaTisha Gietzen, 2024-2025 UWNEMN Board President**

I am grateful my family and I can be a part of such an impactful organization. As this year's board president, I hope to continue UWNEMN's legacy of identifying needs and swiftly moving to meet them. Two of my top priorities for this year are diversifying funding sources and de-

veloping new programs to address issues brought to our attention through our recent Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Assessment and Youth United Contest responses.

These may sound like lofty goals, but given UWNEMN's strong foundation of uniting donors, volunteers, and partners across the region, I know they're attainable. In fact, I'm sure they're just the beginning of the great things that will happen this year!

*LaTisha Gietzen is the Marketing Manager - Mining North America for Kalenborn and has served on UWNEMN's Board of Directors*

YARD & GARDEN

## Be sure to plan before digging this spring

A crucial step for yard improvement projects is having underground utilities marked

STATEWIDE - Dig smart this spring. When digging on your property for plantings, fencing, decks or other home improvement projects, it's important to safely plan ahead, according to experts at Gopher State One Call.

"Hitting an underground electrical wire or gas line can be dangerous and costly for a homeowner or business," says Olivia Phillips, Senior Marketing and Public Awareness Specialist for Gopher State One Call -- the Minnesota nonprofit organization that coordinates marking of utilities prior to digging or excavation projects.

"It's amazingly easy to stay safe. All people have to do is click onto our website, www.gopherstateonecall.org or call 8-1-1," Phillips said. "And here's the kicker - it's free."

Phillips said that all homeowners or businesses must contact Gopher State One Call at least three business days before digging. For example, she said, if you plan to dig on a Saturday, ensure that you

submit your request prior to 2 p.m. the previous Wednesday. Free of charge, utility company professional locators will mark all public utilities on your property with spray paint and/or flags, keeping you and your family safe.

Failing to have utility lines marked can result in serious consequences, including gas leaks, electrical service disruptions and expensive repairs.

It's wise to have property marked for any and all projects that require digging, including tree planting, deck building or fencing," Phillips said.

"We want homeowners to stay safe," she said. "It's as simple as that. It's also the law," she said.

Gopher State One Call was established by the state legislature in 1987 after a terrible natural gas explosion occurred in Mounds View when a pipeline was struck during an excavating project. Now, all digging requires advance marking.

"The marking process is also about peace of mind," Phillips said.

"Every homeowner or excavator can be confident they're significantly reducing the risk of injury and expense."

For "weekend warriors," Gopher State One Call encourages homeowners to plan ahead and make a marking request by going online or calling 8-1-1 by midday Wednesday so there's plenty of time for utilities to be marked for a weekend project. Digging should not start until utilities are marked.

"Plan ahead to stay safe by clicking www.gopherstateonecall.org or calling 8-1-1 or before every dig," Phillips said. "Even if you've caught spring fever, you'll feel better knowing you've taken the right precautions before digging."

Gopher State One Call is governed by a volunteer board of about 20 directors representing utilities, excavators and other safety-minded individuals. More information on scheduling marking before your dig is available at www.gopherstateonecall.org.

LIVE MUSIC

## The "Choralaires" to host two spring concerts

VIRGINIA - Live music lovers should mark their calendars for two upcoming spring concerts by the "Choralaires." On Friday, April 26 the "Choralaires" will perform at Gethsemane Lutheran Church located at 901 Fourth St. S. at 7 p.m. and

on Sunday, April 28, at Our Savior's Lutheran Church located at 1111 Eighth St. S. at 2 p.m.

The "Choralaires" under direction of Myron Cook and accompanied by Amanda Spotts will feature solos, small groups and ensembles

and will perform selections that include "Paper Moon," "Walk a Mile," wacky hits of the 60s, and much more.

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ELY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# Chamber of Commerce honors members

by CATIE CLARK  
Ely Editor

ELY – The Ely Chamber of Commerce honored businesses and individuals for their contributions to the Ely community at the annual Celebrate Ely dinner last Thursday.

The winners in the various categories are as follows:

### Good Neighbor

The Ely Veterinary Clinic was honored with the Good Neighbor Business Award for its contribution to the community. “There are few individuals in this room, if you’re from Ely or the surrounding area, who have not brought a loved one to their facility,” noted chamber board member Tanner Spicer, who presented the award to veterinarian Alison Pace on behalf of the clinic. Spicer pointed out that clinic founder Chip Hanson provides free round-the-clock care and supplies for Ely’s WolfTrack Classic Sled Dog Race every year. The clinic also provides the care for the Contented Critters animal shelter. “Their reputation extends well outside of the Ely area to the North Shore, Minneapolis, and beyond,” he said.

### Customer Service

Bob Hendrickson received the Excellence in Customer Service award. “This year’s recipient has a long history at [Grand Ely Lodge],” said Spicer. “His passion for providing excellent quality customer service is unwavering. This individual not only excels in customer service, he provides excellent leadership in the area of food and beverages at Grand Ely Lodge. He treats both customers and staff with respect. Rate surveys frequently say Bob’s customer service is amazing.”

### Community Spirit

The Ely Winter Festival was this year’s winner of the Jackpine Bob Cary Community Spirit Award, named for the well-known Ely author and outdoors enthusiast “Jackpine” Bob Cary. It honors a business or individual the embodies Cary’s love and promotion of



Above Left: Ely Winter Festival Board Chair Lynn Evenson accepts the 2024 Jackpine Bob Cary Community Spirit Award. Above Right: Bob Hendrickson of the Grand Ely Lodge accepts the Excellence in Customer Service Award from Ely Chamber of Commerce Board Member Tanner Spicer. Lower Left: Dr. Alison Pace accepts the Good Neighbor Business Award on behalf of the Ely Veterinary Clinic from Spicer. Lower Right: Veteran Tony Rechichi, who volunteers as a fishing guide at the nonprofit Veterans on the Lake Resort accepted the Vounteer of the Year Award from Ely Chamber of Commerce Board Member Dafne Caruso. photos by C. Clark

the Ely area as a destination. “This year’s award recipient has a long history of promoting Ely through their annual event,” said Dafne Caruso, a chamber board member who presented the award. Caruso recapped the history of the event and its ability to draw thousands of visitors to the area during the coldest time of the year.

### Volunteer of the Year

Tony Rechichi was the Volunteer of Year for his work as a guide at the nonprofit Veterans On the Lake Resort. “This year’s recipient is the commander of the Ely VFW and an active member of the Ely Color Guard,” noted Caruso. “He himself is a disabled Air Force Veteran who works with other Veterans to pro-

vide them the opportunity to experience the Ely outdoors. Our recipient spends countless hours volunteering as a fishing guide through Veterans on the Lake Resort. These are just a few of the things Tony Rechichi does for his community and fellow Veterans.”



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# OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

## Editorial

### Voyageurs National Park

Park service should work with local businesses as partners, not opponents

In a perfect world the National Park Service and the businesses that serve users of Voyageurs National Park would work as partners with the goal of making the experience of park users the best that it can be. Sadly, we seem to be a long way from that perfect world these days.

We understand that the park service has a mandate to preserve the park environment, and that such a directive sometimes requires regulations that might rub a few folks the wrong way. Yet few people have as strong an interest in preserving Voyageurs as the business owners who rely on the park and its pristine character for their livelihood. Virtually every one of them would be just fine complying with regulations that truly protect the park environment.

Unfortunately, much of what we've seen from the park service in recent years has been senseless regulation with no apparent benefit to the natural surroundings. That, combined with a troubling trend toward overly aggressive enforcement of increasingly onerous regulations within the park, has seriously strained relations between local business owners and park managers.

Since this newspaper began covering Voyageurs National Park 35 years ago, we have regularly defended the park service against critics when we thought federal officials were right. Like the many businesses that serve users of the park, we want to see Voyageurs thrive. Yet it can't do so if it develops the reputation as an unfriendly place, that implements regulations that serve only to inconvenience users and area business owners and that are enforced with the kind of take-no-prisoners attitude that led to the shameful and unjust tasing of business owner Justin Ebel in 2022. While park service officials seemed willing to bury their heads in the sand over that incident, it still rankles many in the area and we share that concern. As any engaged reader of this newspaper has learned over the years, there are few things that will attract the ire of our editorial page faster than an obvious abuse of government authority, which Mr. Ebel's tasing represented in spades. Government should be there to serve, not to bully or abuse.

Nor should it be there to add red tape and expense for businesses that serve park users. The park service proposal to discontinue allowing businesses that operate in the park to "bundle" their services under a single permit, is so dumb it's practically a caricature of overwrought bureaucracy.

How does forcing local businesses to take out multiple permits and pay multiple fees help the environment or the experience for park users? It's simply maddening. As a largely water-based park, the access provided by local businesses, be they fishing guides, boat tour operators, or houseboat rental operations, is critical to fulfilling the economic promise that park promoters touted when pushing for the creation of Voyageurs. Without these businesses, much of the public would have little means of accessing the park's interior and interest in the park would decline markedly. The park service should recognize the value that local businesses bring to the park and do what they can to encourage them rather than exhibit what looks to many like disdain.

Sadly, the public doesn't seem to be treated with much more consideration. The park service's ridiculous proposal to heavily regulate the use of the park's frozen lake surfaces is an example of one-size-fits-all thinking that will significantly impact the ability of many people to enjoy the park in winter. The regulation, as proposed, would sharply limit the use of ATVs or four-wheel drive vehicles outside of limited corridors. Allowing snowmobiles free reign while heavily restricting the use of ATVs or four-wheel trucks, makes no sense. We understand that ATVs can cause significant damage to the landscape, which is why they are justifiably prohibited in most national parks, just as they are in state parks in Minnesota. Yet, vehicles on frozen lakes don't do that kind of damage. When the ice melts in the spring, the trails left by vehicles simply melt away.

The state of Minnesota has a role to play here. The Department of Natural Resources has questioned the park service's right to regulate the use of vehicles on frozen lake surfaces in the park, noting that the state never ceded jurisdiction over the public waters in the park. As we reported last week, local businesses around Voyageurs have recently organized to urge state action to protect the rights of the public to use frozen lake surfaces to travel and fish as they would virtually anywhere else in the state. The DNR, the governor, or other state officials should make it clear that they're willing to defend, in court if necessary, the rights of Minnesotans and others to travel and fish on frozen lakes in the park, as they are able. It's time to start pushing back on a park service that appears increasingly out of control.

AN EYE FOR AN EYE



## Letters from Readers

### Science and spirituality are different paths to knowledge

"Science is not only compatible with spirituality; it is a profound source of spirituality," according to Carl Sagan. Science is about the search for truth and the love of knowledge. As "the breath of life," spirituality is about the power of truth, beauty, goodness and love. Science and spirituality, hold in common, energy that gives life to our existence in the universe.

Science and spirituality, both begin with awe and wonder, in pursuit of understanding the way nature and the world work. Each follows with question and curiosity to discover and explain our connection with the real world, not the supernatural. Science turns outward to explore nature, spirituality turns inward to find relationship of life within to the external.

Science seeks to probe the tangible or physical outer world through objective observation, empirical research and experiment. Spirituality seeks to comprehend the intangible or nonphysical phenomena of inner being through introspective and subjective experience. And then, find a presence and connection with the vastness beyond

oneself.

Science, as accumulated knowledge, makes it a product; as a process or method, science is an activity for discovery. Spirituality is an inner-driven activity of reverence, awe and wonder in the mystery of both the inner and outer world, not otherworldliness. Science reveals the knowledge, spirituality provides the mindfulness that we are not separate from nor superior to nature, but one in nature.

Science and spirituality as activities searching for truth, can work together, in harmony for the well-being of humans, the Indigenous to Earth. Urgency compels us to turn to Indigenous wisdom about connection, interaction, and interdependence in oneness of life on Planet Earth. The Anthropocene Era bears witness to significant environmental change while ignoring the imperative of stewardship. If science and spirituality converge to awaken us, will we have the wisdom to act?

**Harold Honkola  
Stillwater**

### Speaking of useless words...

I'd, um, like to respond to, um, Rich Floyd's um, letter to the editor, um, on April 12. He had an issue with, like, too many useless words, like, when speaking. English class used to include,

um, like, speaking without using, um, you know, like, wasted words.. When listening to, um, like, even lawyers or politicians speaking, it's, like, um, really a bad habit. I agree with, um, him.....thanks Rich, and like, um, have a good, like, day!

**Barry Tungseth  
Ely**



## Your letters

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

We ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

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

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

## COMMENTARY

# It's time for leadership and vision

People around the world are concerned and confused by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has confounded peace seekers for years. I have joined them in wondering why a just, peaceful solution is so elusive. Since the Hamas attack on Oct. 7 and the massive Israeli response, citizens and leaders from many countries are condemning the ongoing atrocities as immoral, unconscionable, and unsustainable. A common response is, "What can we do?"



**BETTY FIRTH**

have taken the initiative to bring attention to the situation, providing opportunities and resources to people in our region to increase awareness and understanding, hoping to inspire them to speak out. Valerie Mynti is one of those peacemakers, who stated, "We can't stay with the status quo any longer. We have to support the peacemakers. The United States

and the European Union are so pro-Israel, wanting to maintain the status quo, that they lack the creative vision for a true and lasting peace for everyone.

This is not the fault of the citizens of Israel or Palestine. There is actually a groundswell of Israeli and Palestinian citizens working together for peace, security, and equality. It is a failure of leadership and imagination that has taken us to this point."

Mary Louise Icenhour collaborated with Valerie in planning a presentation and compiling resources for the Northern Progressives meeting on

April 3 in Tower. Mary Louise is an avid reader and contributed a list of books which she felt were worth reading. Valerie selected videos she felt were informative, well-executed, and balanced, with interviews and perspectives offered by Israelis and Palestinians, as well as relief organizations and books recommended by university departments of Middle Eastern studies.

I asked each of them about their particular interest in the region. When she was 19, Valerie traveled to Israel, Palestine, and Jordan. Her father did international consulting with minerals and mining

all over the Middle East and Africa and was very interested in the region. Her sister, a professor in Lebanon at the American University in Beirut, did her PhD research in Yemen. Valerie recalled, "I was raised thinking of it as the tragedy of Palestine, but also with sympathy for the Jews who fled for their lives during the Holocaust. What I have experienced is that when you actually get to know people, you can see that peace is absolutely possible. If you only have heard generalized, biased opinions about groups, you don't see them as human beings."

Mary Louise also had personal connections with the region. Her son had a Palestinian college roommate, and hearing his stories first-hand about the difficulties of living in Palestine, she learned that his well-established family had been kicked out of their house and had to move to sparse living quarters. Mary Louise is friends to this day with a Jewish family that she met years ago in North Carolina, who had relatives living in Tel Aviv. She learned what life was like for them living with

See **SIGNS**...pg. 5

## Commentary

# What is the future of community newspapers?

Eight community newspapers — the *Hutchinson Leader*, *Litchfield Independent Review*, *Chaska Herald*, *Chanhasen Villager*, *Jordan Independent*, *the Shakopee Valley News*, *Prior Lake American* and *Savage Pacer* — will cease to exist later this month.

Their demise, due to corporate greed, was set in motion last week by Denver-based company MediaNews Group, which is owned by the soulless investment firm Alden Global Capital.

Litchfield's population is 6,600, and Meeker County's is 23,500. Hutchinson's is 14,700, and McLeod County's is 36,714. If these cities had locally owned newspapers, they would have a future — not an easy one, but one that would continue to serve the needs of citizens and businesses.

But they were owned by a hedge fund that stripped them of revenue and staff and is now discarding them with no thought to the information void they will leave in these vibrant communities.

A presidential election and races for the U.S. Senate and House are on the ballot in November. State legislative seats and contests for school boards, city councils and county boards will bring voters to polls. Who will inform the citizens of these communities about the candidates and their positions on is-



**REED ANFINSON**

sues?

Where is the outrage? Where is the demand for federal and state actions supporting community newspapers? We suspect that too many believe the internet will provide their news. They are disastrously wrong.

For two decades, we've been promised a revolution of civic participation built on the broad, deep knowledge citizens will gain from online reporting. The reality of the past two decades is the decimation of reporting staff.

We have experienced an internet world that has fractured society into warring social and political clans. Death threats, misinformation and ridicule are more common than harmony, compromise and enlightenment. Lies gain power, and the truth is harder to find.

One irrefutable reality is that community news has, at best, a bleak future in a digital world.

According to the U.S.

"If once they become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I, and Congress, and Assemblies, judges and governors shall all become wolves."

*President Thomas Jefferson on the dangers of an uninformed electorate*

Census, 76 percent of America's towns — more than 14,600 — have a population under 5,000. Newspapers in these communities earn less than 5 percent of their income from digital sources. Many earn little or nothing because they are far too small, with too few subscribers and too few businesses to support them with digital pennies.

Newspapers or local reporting are being lost in towns the size of Litchfield, Hutchinson and St. Cloud because digital revenue could not sustain them.

For too long, elected officials have promised action, but nothing happens. Close to 2,500 newspapers have been lost since 2005, and more than 200 counties no longer have a newspaper.

Citizens watch idly as politicians promise action but then are distracted by a thousand other causes on their agenda. Lawmakers' focus is fragmented as another one of their newspapers disappears.

We see a heightened focus on improving civic education, but its basic textbook is the commu-

nity newspaper. These efforts will be meaningless if newspapers disappear.

People say TikTok, Facebook or other social media are their news sources. Define news. Unless it has been stolen from a newspaper, people aren't getting the news of their local school board, city council and county commission on these sites. They aren't getting the news of day care shortages, lack of affordable housing or the latest economic development efforts to address these challenges. Those stories come from local reporters. What readers are getting instead is entertainment and snippets of national news.

The eight newspapers being eliminated are institutions. *The Shakopee Valley News* and *Chaska Herald* have been published for more than 160 years; the *Jordan Independent* was founded 140 years ago. At their core, hometown newspapers provide living histories of their communities.

Today's remaining community newspapers are fragile. They often fear taking tough editorial

stands, knowing they will lose advertisers and subscribers.

We increasingly see news sites putting up paywalls and offering premium content for those who pay more. These operations eliminate most people from reading the news and create an elite class of informed readers. A print newspaper is available to every citizen. A copy sits in the café, the library, a waiting room, at schools and on a city bus — no subscription needed.

The voice of independent community news is replaced by fake news sites run by political parties, special interest groups, corporations, and foreign countries, each pushing its propaganda in increasingly sophisticated ways.

When communities lose their newspapers, they become more politicized, fewer people vote, incumbents are returned more frequently, taxpayer-supported bonding costs rise, and government corruption expands.

Controversy in our communities is not typically divided along Republican and Democratic lines. Debates involve issues about their children's education, property taxes, public safety, and quality of life.

Lose the printed newspaper, and local government officials go largely unchecked. For those in power, accountability will be a worry of the past. At

95 percent of the meetings our newspapers cover, our reporters are the only citizens in the room. Video connections are available, but no one signs in.

If we want another generation of journalists to take on the responsibility of community journalism, if we want to hire trained journalists for our newspapers, they must see a future with financial security. Too many newspapers can't guarantee they will be around a year from now.

In a representative democracy, who ultimately has the most to lose if they are no longer informed about the actions of their public bodies? If they aren't connected to their fellow citizens through the common bond of shared knowledge? If they lose the reporting of the challenges facing their communities? Citizens.

Citizens, in the form of their state and federal governments, must ensure the financial health of newspapers and an informed electorate before the wolves feed unchecked.

*Reed Anfinson is a past president of the Minnesota and National Newspaper Associations. He and his wife, Shelly, own three county-seat newspapers in western Minnesota.*

## SIGNS...Cont. from page 4

perpetual conflict. One grandson was so embittered that he wanted to join the military so he could kill Palestinians.

Both women are concerned about the dangers of simplistic thinking and knee-jerk reactions by people—including, and especially, people in leadership positions—who do not understand the complex layers of the region's dynamics. They are hoping that we will all dig a little deeper to become better-informed. I asked each of them to name their top picks from their extensive lists of resources to give readers a place to begin.

### Recommended books

► "The Balfour Declaration" by Bernard Regan. To begin at the beginning, this declaration in 1917 was a statement of British support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," culminating in the founding of the state of Israel in 1948. This extension of the author's doctoral dissertation includes well-documented details of the study groups, commissions, and widespread (especially Palestinian) dissatisfaction with the arrangement. A notable, thorough work, but not an easy read.

► "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy" by John Measheimer and Stephen M. Watt. Written

by two Jewish authors, this book is very detailed and informative about the persuasive power of money through lobbies in shaping arms sales and foreign policy positions. AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee, America's powerful pro-Israel lobby) "advocates for a U.S. foreign policy directly at odds with human rights and international humanitarian law. It has supported an unconditional flow of U.S. military funding and weapons to the Israeli government that have been used to support human rights violations against Palestinians." (Al Jazeera)

► "The Hundred Year War on Palestine: History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance 1917-2017" by Rashid Khalidi. This fairly objective view by a Palestinian author reviews the modern history of the Palestinian struggle and the attempts to obtain the right of return, democratic rights, and establishment of a Palestinian State.

► "Tolerance in a Wasteland" by Professor Saree Mahidini, University of California Press. The author holds up to the light the contradiction between the violent project to dispossess Palestinians of their land and rights with well-documented evidence of human rights abuses, while Israel is embraced by the most liberal sectors of Europe and

America as manifesting tolerance, plurality and democracy. She argues that "this miraculous act of political alchemy is a very specific form of political denial."

► "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know" Don Waxman, 2019. A historical overview by a Jewish author covering the conflict from its 19th-century origin through 2019. An even-handed and judicious guide to this dispute.

### Recommended videos

To find, run a Google search on the titles.

► "Crash Course with John Green—Conflict in Israel and Palestine through 2015." A rapid-fire review of the history of the region and the 124-year-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which makes the point that it is not an intractable problem that has gone on for centuries. Historically, Jews, Muslims, and Christians lived together peacefully prior to the Zionists coming, and solutions can be found.

► "Sally Abed (Palestinian) & Alon-Lee Green (Israeli)" Interview at Congregation Sherith Israel, Berkeley, Calif., 2024. In 2015 Abed and Green started Standing Together, a grassroots movement of Israeli and Palestinian peacemakers working together for a peaceful solution.

► Ted Talks: "An Is-

raeli & Palestinian Talk Peace, Dignity & Safety with Ali Abu Awed and Ami Dar." Ali Abu Awed founded the Taghyeer Movement, ("change" in Arabic) and received the 2023 Luxembourg Peace Prize. Ami Dar is the founder and executive director of Idealist.org, which helps millions around the world to work or volunteer for causes they believe in. As non-violent peace activists working together, they believe both sides have deep roots to this land—ideologically, politically, nationally, and religiously—and nobody is leaving "Whatever solution we end up with has to include and encompass everyone who is there; the mechanics (one-state, two-state, etc.) are less important than peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all."

### Donate

We can make a difference by supporting the peacemakers who are actively promoting a lasting peace in the Middle East. In addition to those mentioned above, organizations such as the Quaker groups: American Friends Service Committee and Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL); Indivisible; International Rescue Committee, Doctors Without Borders; American Near East Refugee Aid; Palestine Red Crescent Society; Oxfam; and International Committee of the Red

Cross.

### Take action

You can make your voice heard by contacting your elected representatives to urge action for humanitarian aid, a permanent ceasefire, and withholding money for arms among other actions. Your voice matters; they do tally up contacts from their constituents. Sen.

Amy Klobuchar: Virginia office- 218-741-9690 • Metro office- 612-727-5220 • D.C. office- 202-224-3244. Sen. Tina Smith: Duluth office- 218-722-2390 • St. Paul office- 651-221-1016 • D.C. office- 202-224-5641. The White House: 202-456-1414 or 202-456-1111.



## the TIMBERJAY

Copyright © 2024 by The Timberjay. *The Timberjay* (PN 16025) is published weekly on Fridays, 51 weeks per year, by The Timberjay Inc., PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790. Business/Editorial Office at 414 Main St., PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790. Call (218) 753-2950 to subscribe. E-mail address is editor@timberjay.com. Periodicals postage paid at Tower, Minnesota.

**POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Timberjay, PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790.**

This award-winning community newspaper published each week serves the communities of Tower/Soudan, Cook/Orr, and Ely.

Publisher	Marshall Helmlinger
General Manager	Jodi Summit
Cook/Orr Editor	David Colburn
Ely Editor	Catie Clark
Office Manager	Michelle Toutloff
Staff Writer	Rachel Brophy
Graphics/Ad Sales	Scarlet Lynn Stone
Ad Sales/Sports	Jay Greeney

### Official Newspaper:

Townships of Bearville, Eagles Nest, Embarrass, Kugler, Vermilion Lake, Field, Morcom, Leiding, Kabetogama, Crane Lake, Greenwood, ISD 707, city of Tower.

**Member:** Minnesota Newspaper Association, Lake Vermilion Resort Association, Lake Vermilion Area Chamber of Commerce, Ely Chamber of Commerce.

### Subscriptions Available:

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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](http://www.timberjay.com).

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Week of April 22

**Monday**

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

**Tuesday**

Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is May 21.

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](http://vermilioncountry.org).

**TSHS weekly winner**

TOWER- The winner of the Charlemagne's 52 Club \$100 cash prize for week 38 is Dan McCorsion of Canyon.

History Tidbit: In the late 1800s, the area around Tower began to emerge as a tourist destination. Roads were not plentiful in the area; rail travel was the best and most reliable mode of transportation at that time. As years went by, tourism was promoted. Word had spread about Lake Vermilion and the other beautiful lakes in the area, where the fish and game were plentiful, and the air was healthy.

**Soudan canister site hours remaining the same**

SOUDAN- An ad published last week in the Timberjay showed shortened hours at the Soudan Canister Site on Wednesdays and Sundays, but the ad sent by St. Louis County Environmental Services was in error, and a new ad was sent this week with corrected hours.

The hours at the Soudan Canister Site are staying the same at 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. These are year round hours.

Summer hours at the Hwy. 77 Canister Site are Tuesdays from 1 – 6 p.m., Thursdays from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m., Saturdays from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., and Sundays from 12 noon – 5 p.m.

**Looking for used tin roofing material for TSHS project**

TOWER- A small group of volunteers, led by Joe Morin, will be replacing the roof on the Old Settler's Cabin at the mini-park that is maintained by the Tower-Soudan Historical Society.

They are looking for donations of gently-used corrugated tin in decent condition.

They will need at least 20 sheets that are 24"x9" or 24" by 10". Tin that is 26" wide would also work. The pieces need to be at least 9" long.

Anyone with material to donate can contact Morin at 218-780-7306.

Read It  
HERE

## TOWER-SOUDAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**TSHS debuts new website, summer programs**

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Historical Society debuted a new website this year, [www.towersoudanhistory.com](http://www.towersoudanhistory.com), which highlights the history of the area, along with many resources for both visitors and community members.

The website, [towersoudanhistory.com](http://towersoudanhistory.com), was designed by W.A. Fisher, and TSHS members Nancy Larson, Louise Gately, Richard Hanson, and Leon Anderson wrote the articles featured on the website, and Deb Setterberg also lent a hand.

Larson led the research effort, along with the page layout and gathering photographs, both historical and current photos highlighting the area's natural beauty.

A committee of five TSHS volunteers will be managing the website.

The work was funded with help from a matching grant from the IRRR Culture and Tourism Program, matched by locally raised TSHS funds.

The site has a wealth of information, including articles on the area's history, links to the oral history interviews completed by TSHS volunteers, listings and information on historic sites in the area, information on the Lakeview Cemetery, and TSHS events. The website includes a downloadable self-guided history tour map (free paper versions are also available at the Tower Depot Museum, local businesses in Tower and Soudan, Tower City Hall, and Breitung Township office in Soudan). The map is available to download at [tower-soudanhistory.com/historic-sites](http://tower-soudanhistory.com/historic-sites).



TSHS volunteers at the History Happy Hour last summer. Pictured are Nancy Larson (left) and Louise Gately. file photo

The website also highlights the local landmarks recognized on the National Register of Historic Places: Soudan Iron Mine (now a state park), the Tower Fire Hall (now owned and renovated by TSHS), Stuntz Bay Boathouse Historic District, and the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad Company Passenger Station/Tower Depot (which houses the TSHS Museum/visitors center).

The TSHS is proud of these local historic sites. These sites give a connection to the past, a sense of continuity and deepens our community's sense of identity. "These important historical landmarks focus attention on and promote knowledge and pride in the rich history in our communities," writes Larson on the new website.

The website also features detailed information on the train

cars that are on display at the depot area. Coach 81 is open and available to tour at no cost during the day from Memorial Day to Labor Day. It serves as a mini "Welcome Center" with information, brochures, and maps of the local area on summer weekdays when the Train Depot Museum is closed. The coach car is available to rent for receptions, classes, teas, birthday parties, or meetings. Rental information is available on the new website.

The TSHS was founded back in 1963. The Tower-Soudan Historical Society works to bring local history to light. The group's mission is to discover, reveal and share the area's remarkable past and connect people with history in meaningful ways.

TSHS is actively engaged in preserving Tower-Soudan-Lake Vermilion's past, sharing community stories, and providing a

link to the roots of the community and its people.

Since 1963, TSHS has grown to become the historical society that it is today — playing an important role in our community's preservation, education and tourism by providing the public with enlightening and entertaining programs, exhibitions, and events.

**Upcoming events**

Depot Museum: The museum will be open this summer Fridays through Mondays, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., May 24 through Sept. 2, or by appointment.

Train Tales Storytelling: Storytelling events are set for Wednesdays, June 19, July 10, 31, and Aug. 21. Time is at 3:15 p.m. inside the Coach 81 train car. Local volunteers will share tales and read aloud from a book, suitable for all ages. This event is in conjunction with the Arrowhead Bookmobile stops in July and August (no bookmobile stop in June).

History Happy Hour: Come visit with TSHS volunteers during the Tower Farmers Market on June 28, July 26, and Aug. 30, from 4 – 5 p.m. in the parking lot by the depot.

Events are also listed on the new website at [towersoudanhistory.com](http://towersoudanhistory.com). TSHS memberships are \$15 per year, or \$100 for a business membership. Membership payments can be made on the website, or mailed to Tower-Soudan Historical Society, PO Box 465, Tower, MN 55790.

"All you need is to have is a love of history, and the desire to help support the preservation of our Tower-Soudan-Lake Vermilion community's history for current and future generations," said Larson.

## LAKE VERMILION CHAMBER

**Chamber in process of rebuilding, new website now online**

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor



LAKE VERMILION  
chamber of commerce

TOWER-SOUDAN- After more than a year of work, the next generation of chamber leaders are getting a new Lake Vermilion Chamber website up and running, as well as restarting a chamber presence on Facebook.

The Lake Vermilion Area Chamber went off the radar, back in 2022, after the death of chamber director, website manager, and Facebook guru Troy Swanson. Swanson lived with a chronic illness, but his death was unexpected, and he hadn't passed the reins, i.e. website passwords, onto the next generation of chamber leaders. The TowerMN facebook page, which has over 21,000 followers, is now the Lake Vermilion Chamber Facebook page, and while the name has changed, they were able to hang on to all the old followers.

Chamber director, and local small business owner, Katrina (Brotten) Blocker said the chamber is currently in a rebuilding phase, and right now all the work is being done by volunteers, including herself.

"Right now, our main focus on Facebook is promoting our

members," said Blocker, "as well as driving more viewers to the website." The group is currently using its Facebook page to promote member businesses, but she hopes to expand in the future for wider promotions of area events. They are also looking at creating a presence on Instagram.

The website, at [www.lakevermilionchamber.org](http://www.lakevermilionchamber.org), was created by Jake Aune and Blocker.

"We are a place to highlight our community," Blocker said. Costs for the website development and hosting have been funded by membership dollars along with a small amount leftover in the previous chamber's bank account.

Recruiting chamber members is mostly happening by word of mouth and online, Blocker said, but they hope to be able to start meeting with area businesses face-to-face to grow the membership back to its previous level.

vious level.

"We have a lot of wonderful ideas for the chamber," she said. "But the website is our first focus. We have big aspirations for the chamber's future."

The group is also working to network with other tourism-related groups such as the Lake Vermilion Resort Association and the Tower-Soudan Lake Vermilion Events Board.

Membership payments and applications right now are only available online, through the website at [www.lakevermilionchamber.org](http://www.lakevermilionchamber.org).

"We are trying to get all our information and files in one location," said Blocker, "So our team can easily find and attend to chamber responsibilities."

Miranda Kishel has donated time at her FlexSpace co-working facility, which offers high-speed broadband, to get their website work completed. The Lake Vermilion Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit, community network dedicated to providing a tree of support for aspiring and local businesses.

"We are emphasizing on "tree" of support because every successful service starts with an untangled root system that supports its ability to thrive and

grow. We want our service to have roots that assist in growing a strong foundation for the mission of our Chamber and its members," said Blocker. "The tall trees of northern Minnesota grow tall and full because of what goes on underneath the soil. This is the same as any nonprofit. The hours of volunteer and teamwork that goes on behind the scenes of what you see are the roots of an organization. It is our mission to begin bringing our community professionals together in a way that builds confidence and pride. The professionals in this neck of the woods deserve to be seen and provided for. Our mission is to thrive, together!"

A basic chamber membership is \$150 and includes a business listing on the website, sharing opportunities on the chamber's Facebook page which has 21,000 current followers, access to the chamber's business resource portal, and a highlighted welcome on the Facebook page. The \$200 VIP membership includes the previous benefits plus a "business spotlight" feature on the chamber's website and a \$20 Facebook advertising boost.

## COMMUNITY NOTICES

**Fellowship breakfast at Immanuel on April 20**

TOWER- Everyone is invited to breakfast on Saturday, April 20 from 8 - 10 a.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tower. The menu includes eggs made to order, meat, sausage gravy,

and potatoes. This will be a great opportunity to enjoy breakfast, visit with friends, and to learn about Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry at Camps Vermilion and Hiawatha. At 9 a.m. there will be a presentation by Bradley Petzer about summer camp opportunities at Camp Vermilion and Camp Hiawatha. Potential campers and their guardians can find out what is available and even get registered for camp. A free will offering will be accepted with the funds used to send kids to camp this summer.

**Greenwood pickleball fundraiser set for April 20**

GREENWOOD TWP- Pizza for Pickleball is set for Saturday, April 20 from 6 – 9 p.m. at the Vermilion Club. Pizza is courtesy of the Vermilion Club, and there will be live music by Jammin' Joe. There will be a silent auction, raffles, and prizes. Donations are much appreciated. There is also a raffle for a quilt donated by Diane Frerichs, with only 100 tickets being sold at \$20 each.

The event is sponsored by the Greenwood Community Recreation

Board and the Lake Vermilion Pickleball Association. Donations are tax-deductible.

**Singers needed for Tower-Soudan Memorial Day program**

TOWER- Anyone who enjoys group singing is invited to join with the Tower-Soudan Area Singers to help celebrate Memorial Day. The annual program to honor all military Veterans will be held in the Herb Lamppa Civic Center on Monday, May 27 at 10 a.m.

Rehearsals for the

program will be on Mondays, May 6, 13, and 20 at 5 p.m. in the music room at the Tower Elementary School. Participants are asked to enter the building through the 3rd St. (north) entrance.

Traditional patriotic music will be performed for and with the audience. The music and folders will be provided. If you have any questions contact Rolf Anderson at 218-753-3262.

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## LIVING HISTORY



The two fourth-grade classes at Ely's Washington Elementary School dressed up as their favorite wax museum personalities on Friday, April 12, and gathered for group pictures. Students chose a famous person, current or from history, to research and prepared a speech on their life. Left: Nancy Preblich's fourth-grade class. photo by C. Clark. Right: Amanda Faulkner's fourth-grade class. submitted photo

## OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD



Ely's Historic State Theater put the classic 1939 "Wizard of Oz" up on the big screen in multiple showings last week. On Saturday, the theater held a costume contest before the 7 p.m. show. Contestants came dressed as characters in the movie, including one gentleman who came as the tornado and six ladies who came as the Yellow Brick Road. photo by C. Clark

## New Elyites and the brain gain

by CATIE CLARK  
Ely Editor

ELY- The most recent installment of "New Elyites" at the Tuesday Group introduced five who represented the "brain gain" trend of working-age people looking for a better quality of life in a rural setting.

Grace Klein's reasons for moving to Ely hit a familiar refrain. "I've been visiting Ely and the Boundary Waters my whole life," Klein said. Growing up, she attended and then worked at Camp Du Nord. When she graduated from the University of Wis-

consin-Madison in fashion and textile design, she moved to Ely. She currently works as a cutter and designer at Wintergreen.

Klein's biggest splash locally has been in the arts. She was the artist for the March Northern Lakes Arts Association (NLAA) show at Ely's Historic State Theater. Klein creates woven fiber arts creations using paper she makes herself.

When she first arrived in town, she became part of the now well-loved trio of the Chickadee-dee-dees that first wowed audiences at the 2022 NLAA Christmas concert. "I've been singing and playing music my whole life," Klein said. She most recently played the role of Chava in the NLAA production of "Fiddler on the Roof."

Johanna Scarlet and Tim Mattamore found Ely during the COVID-19 pandemic and fell in

love with Ely. They found a place on Bear Island Lake and decided to live there full-time.

The couple met in Detroit, where they both worked in advertising. Mattamore is a photographer. He brought one of his books of gorgeous nature photos that he passed around the room. Scarlet specializes in video production. One project she worked on was the Jersey Mike's commercials featuring Danny DeVito.

The availability of high-speed internet will enable the couple to continue to work in their field while living in the Ely area. "We love the outdoor activities here and all the animals, too," Scarlet said.

Joanne Pollman and Ryan Olson are another couple seduced by the Ely area. Olson repeated that familiar refrain, "I've been coming up here since I was a kid ... (moving here) is something



Johanna Scarlet and Tim Mattamore



Joanne Pollman and Ryan Olson

"I've wanted to do my whole life." They decided to move to Ely after warm interactions with locals on social media and because the area is beautiful.

Pollman, who grew up in England, is a web designer. She most recently worked for Avera Health in South Dakota. Pollman works in construction. He anticipates continuing in that field for at least one more year before he transitions to life as a full-time house husband.

The couple likes paddling and hiking and looks forward to meeting like-minded people to share the activities with them.



Grace Klein

## COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

## Babbitt City Hall closed this week

BABBITT- The Babbitt City Hall office will be closed the week of April 22. Bill payments can be made at the Babbitt Credit Union and left in their night deposit box. For any questions that might arise during this week, call city hall (218-827-3464) and leave a message. Voicemails will be responded to daily while the office is closed.

## Ely Public Library

ELY- The spice of the month is tarragon. Pick up a spice kit with a tarragon sample and recipes at the library while supplies last.

The Library Scientists group for grades 1-3 will meet on Tuesday, April 23 at 3 p.m. This month, participants will learn and then do a hands-on project involving plant science. Pre-registration

is required for this event so the library can order enough supplies. This activity is limited to 20 participants.

This library will host a grief-writing workshop for adults with Lisa Simons on Wednesday, April 24, from 1-4 p.m. Simons is a 2023 recipient of a Creative Support for Individuals grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board.

The library will hold a Kahoot online trivia game for all ages on the Meg Langslow series, books 1-3 by Donna Andrews. 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 Thursday, April 25, and end at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, April 30.

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.

## Summer Youth Programs

ELY- Registration is now open for the Northern Lakes Arts Association summertime arts and theater camps and programs for kids and teens. Details are online under the "Youth Art Experiences" tab at northern-lakesarts.org.

## NLAA Art Show

ELY- The Northern Lakes Arts Association art show for April features the paintings of Sarah Brooke. The show is in the lobby of Ely's Historic State Theater, 238 E. Sheridan, available for viewing whenever the theater is open. The show runs through April 27.

## Ely Citywide Rummage Sale

ELY- Registration is now open for the Ely citywide rummage sale, business crazy day sale, and the used equipment and watercraft sale — to be held on Saturday, May 18. Registration for all three events will be accepted through May 9 at the Ely Chamber of Commerce office, 1600 E. Sheridan St. Registration forms can be picked up at the chamber office or downloaded from ely.org/citywide.

## Circus in Babbitt

BABBITT- The circus is coming to Ron Castellano Arena, 32 South Dr. Tickets are \$35. The circus will have two performances on Tuesday, April 23 at 4 p.m., and 7 p.m., this is a change from their initial schedule. \$10 from each ticket will go to benefit Bab-

bitt's Arena Capital Fund. Call the City of Babbitt for more information at 218-827-3464.

## Homebuyer's Class

ELY- Ely Continuing Education will hold a class for homebuyers, taught by banker Tom Omerza, on Wednesday, April 24, from 5:30-6:30 p.m., at the Ely Public School District Media Center, 600 E. Harvey St. Enter through the center door (door No. 1), and turn right. The Media Center is on the right across from the new gym.

## 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.

## In Brief

## Tuesday Group schedule

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

Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

► April 23 & 30: In the Face of Fire: a two-part series featuring two perspectives on fuels reduction in forests.

► May 7: Conversation with a Loon Enthusiast with Ely's Loon Ranger, Sherry Abts.

## Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2024



puddle reflections  
strong shadows from the sun's glare

longer days soon reign

## 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.

## LAKE VERMILION FIRE BRIGADE

# Responders train for rescues before ice disappears

LAKE VERMILION- Was it a thrill or a scare? You'll have to ask the volunteers of the Lake Vermilion Fire Brigade, who recently donned cold water rescue suits, tethered themselves to teammates on shore, and climbed out onto Lake Vermilion's thin spring ice.

In collaboration with Matt Hoffmann of the MN Public Safety Group, the LVFB team carried out cold-water rescue training, employing ice picks, ropes, and rescue rings (noodles) to rescue the volunteer "victims."

If you're interested in volunteering with the LVFB, email LakeVermilionFireBrigade@gmail.com or reach out via Facebook. Volunteers are needed in a variety of positions, including boat operations and fundraising.



Looking considerably warmer than when in the lake for rescue training (right), facilitator Matt Hoffmann poses with Lake Vermilion Fire Brigade volunteers Matt Holmes, Paul Ludlow, Blaine Olson, Don and Laurie Potter, Karl and Peyton Stefan. submitted photos



## There is a notification system for rail crossing emergencies

REGIONAL- Did you know that there's a number you can call when you encounter safety concerns or an emergency with a railroad crossing, such as a vehicle stalled on the tracks?

At every highway-rail grade crossing there is an Emergency Notification System sign with information to reach the railroad responsible for the crossing and identify the specific crossing in the event of an emergency.

Look for a blue and white ENS sign at the crossing, typically at-

tached to the crossing arm posts on both sides of the crossing. The sign has the name of the railroad responsible for the crossing, an emergency contact number, and the U.S. Department of Transportation crossing inventory number that lets an operator know exactly where the problem is.

A description of what to do in the event of a crossing emergency provided by the Minnesota Department of Transportation indicates the railroad should be contacted first before calling 911.

Also, according to MnDOT, under state law trains are not to block public roads or streets for longer than ten minutes. Crossings blocked by trains should also be reported using the ENS number and crossing identifier, as train dispatchers may be able to resolve the problem. The local law enforcement agency may also be notified about noncompliance with the blocked crossing statute.

## Public input sought for area transportation survey

COOK- Do you sometimes have trouble finding a way to get to a medical appointment or the grocery store or to visit family and friends? Or do you know someone who has trouble finding needed transportation?

The Cook Area Transportation Committee needs your input to evaluate gaps in options and services for transportation within the Cook area and beyond to the Iron Range and Duluth. The committee is surveying the residents of Cook and surrounding communities to learn more about travel needs and find

ways to address them.

Your responses to the survey will help the committee develop plans to address identified needs so that area citizens can confidently get to where they need to go. The Cook Area Transportation Committee is comprised of residents, volunteers and other interested persons, including health and human services agency representatives concerned about the lack of safe reliable transportation for rural citizens, especially those with special needs.

Surveys are available at the Cook Public

Library, the Cook Area Food Shelf, the (HRA) Homestead and Pioneer buildings, Cook Scenic Rivers Health Services and Zups Market. Return the completed survey to the drop boxes at these sites or mail to: Transportation Survey; c/o Judith Ulseth; 8787 Raps Rd; Cook, MN 55723. Surveys should be returned by May 15. For more information, or to obtain a survey in an alternate way, contact Kathleen McQuillan at 218-994-2036 or Judith Ulseth at 218-750-4304.

## Good stuff and more at NWFA

COOK- Northwoods Friends of the Arts reminds patrons that the "Good Stuff" Art Garage Sale continues at the gallery at 210 S River St. through Saturday, April 27. In addition to beautiful, thought provoking artwork on exhibit, donated art and other items are on sale. Come browse the sections during gallery open hours of 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays and 9 a.m.-1 p.m. on Sat-

urdays.

Registration is happening now for NWFA's annual Spring Art Expo from June 5 through June 29. Member and non-member artists are invited to exhibit their work at the gallery and no commission is charged on the sale of artwork during the expo. The deadline to register is May 22. Registration forms are available at the gallery or online at [nwfam.org](http://nwfam.org).

A busy schedule of

new art classes kicks off on Thursday, May 23 with "Your Story as Art." Instructor Kris Mustro will guide participants in visualizing a story through drawing, painting, and collage. Dive into concept, symbolism, representation and metaphor in a fun way. Supplies will be provided. The class is appropriate for ages 12 and up. Register by calling Alberta at 218-666-2153 or via email at [nwfam.org@gmail.com](mailto:nwfam.org@gmail.com).

# Walz signs \$79 million environmental resources bill

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Gov. Tim Walz reaffirmed Minnesota's commitment to conservation and natural resources on Monday by signing the \$79.6 million environmental and natural resource trust fund (ENRTF) allocation bill for 80 projects focused on protecting the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other outdoor resources.

But while lauding the bill's intentions, Walz chastised the process that brought the measure to his desk. Recommendations for ENRTF funds are supposed to be generated annually by the 17-member Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources, LCCMR, but in 2023 the process broke down. The LCCMR made no recommendations for fiscal year 2023 as they were unable to come to an agreement and pass it with the required supermajority. This year, the bill Walz signed was based on two separate motions proposed by the LCCMR

rather than a supermajority vote.

"Unfortunately, this year, due to an unwillingness to compromise during the commission vetting process, no proposal received the requisite votes needed for an LCCMR recommendation to the Legislature," Walz said. "The bill sent to my desk has 12 legislative additions, a full 15 percent of the bill, that were not even proposed in the LCCMR vetting process. All but one of these additions were at the expense of projects that had been submitted as a proposal and vetted by the LCCMR. I am deeply disappointed that politicians undermined the integrity of a process that includes public members who spend hundreds of hours each year reviewing and recommending projects for funding."

Walz implored the legislators who serve on the LCCMR to reach a compromise on a fully vetted ENRTF bill and to cease adding unvetted projects to the measure. Public member LCCMR experts should lead and

prioritize making the recommendations, he said.

Five previous governors have exercised their constitutional line-item veto power to purge items they found objectionable from environmental resource funding bills, but Walz, who has vetoed only one bill during his tenure, signed the legislation as presented, despite his objections. The bill provides funding in fiscal year 2025 for projects in eight major categories, including:

► Foundational natural resource data and information - \$14,993,000.

► Water resources - \$6,924,000.

► Environmental education - \$11,262,000.

► Aquatic and terrestrial invasive species - \$8,304,000.

► Air quality, climate change, and renewable energy - \$4,833,000.

► Methods to protect or restore land, water, and habitat - \$10,910,000.

► Land acquisition, habitat, and recreation - \$20,322,000.

► Administration, emerging issues, and contract agreement reim-

bursement - \$2,096,000.

### Selected projects

Research initiatives of particular interest to North Country residents include:

► A \$453,000 modeling study of how water quality of Minnesota's lakes will change in the next century under various future land use and climate change scenarios.

► \$379,000 to study lake visitor perceptions of water quality to aid in lake management.

► \$996,000 for the Voyageurs Wolf Project to continue its study of summertime wolf predation in the Voyageurs ecosystem.

► \$1.236 million for continued production of county geologic atlases for surface water and groundwater management.

► \$499,000 to develop a tool for flood and drought modeling that provides estimates of the effects of land use and climate change on floods and droughts.

Among the broad-based array of education projects being funded, two are targeted specifically at North Country

treasures. The Voyageurs Conservancy will receive \$994,000 to connect Minnesotans to Voyageurs National Park through standards-aligned K-12 education, career-building fellowships, and enhanced programming that engages diverse audiences in the park's conservation. "The Boundary Waters is Our Backyard" is a \$500,000 initiative through the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness to connect students from northeastern Minnesota to the Boundary Waters through grade-wide day trips and overnight wilderness experiences.

A \$415,000 project will evaluate the impacts of increasing tree diversity within northern Minnesota aspen forests to develop best management practices for mixed woodlands.

Around \$3 million has been devoted to projects dealing with PFAS, a group of synthetic chemicals used in many consumer products since the 1950s that are found in water, air, fish, and soil and pose harmful health effects in humans and an-

imals. \$1.4 million of the total will be devoted to creating a full-scale pilot project to destroy PFAS in water treatment systems.

Another \$2 million will go to updating and replacing septic systems for low-income landowners. Funds will be distributed in the form of grants for landowners whose septic tanks pose a public health threat to groundwater.

\$197,000 has been allocated to the city of Abbott to design a new marina at Birch Lake Recreation Area.

Another provision in the bill modified the terms of a \$2.7 million grant given to Crane Lake for the new Crane Lake Voyageurs National Park Visitor Center. The visitor center will be owned by Crane Lake and space will be leased to the National Park Service and other tenants. The modification will allow Crane Lake to take any net income from the center's operations and reinvest it in the project, with an approved re-investment plan.



# MCDONALD...Continued from page 1

## Early officiating

Years before he started officiating for high school sports, McDonald worked as a basketball referee for a men's basketball league in Chisholm.

"I actually started officiating when I was in high school," McDonald said. "I did that for three years... I got exposed as an official there and it was a very good experience."

When he went on to college, he officiated at intermural basketball and football games. After he graduated, once he started coaching at the high school level, he officiated at lower-level games.

Then he took a position in 1989 at Vermilion teaching physical education and acting as the head coach for basketball, and the assistant coach for football.

"When I took the job at Vermilion, I had the flexibility to do some officiating."

When his friend Jack Coombe asked him

if he'd like to officiate high school basketball, he took the opportunity. Then John Soumi, athletic director at Babbitt-Embarrass High School, and Rudy Semeja, recently retired from Vermilion, assembled a football officiating crew that included McDonald in 1990. That was McDonald's start as a high school referee and he went on to officiate for the next 35 years.

## A distinguished record

"I've had a lot of fun," McDonald remarked. "The camaraderie with officials is something that I'll miss, as well as the interaction with the people at the games."

The feeling will be mutual, particularly among many of his fellow officials. "I feel so fortunate to have been able to work so many games with Paul over the years," said Frank Ivancich. "He taught me how to become a good official. I've always prided myself

in having the ability to make the players feel it is about them and their experience, and I learned that from Paul, from watching how he related to the players and coaches he officiated for."

Sometimes the atmosphere could be intense, Ivancich recalls. "I remember working games in Tower gym with Mac, which at times could get quite intense as the fans are literally on top of you, but he always assured me that I was doing a good job."

For Ivancich, knowing and working closely with McDonald opened up the world of basketball and all of its opportunities. "I was able to meet so many great basketball people as well working with Paul, which should be no surprise as many have often said to me about Mac, who doesn't he know?"

McDonald's notoriety in the region, combined with his affable nature and interest in serving others, made his transition

to a political career seem effortless.

McDonald is ending his time as a referee on an upbeat note. "We were fortunate enough this year to be able to do the state championship nineman football game," McDonald said, noting that the others on his crew included Kyle Lamppa, Davis Lamppa, Aaron Donais, and Mike Pope. "It was a nice feather in the hat," he said.

In total, McDonald has officiated in seven state football tournaments and at two state championship games—the other back in 2016, in a class 2A title match.

His basketball record is even more impressive. McDonald has officiated at 22 state tournaments and at four state championship games, in 2006, 2016, 2017, and 2020. "All of those were in the large school sections, either 3A or 4A," he said.

## Stepping down

After 35 years, McDonald decided it was time to move on. "The weather comes into play," he explained. "This year, I was 90 percent sure I was going to get out of football. We were doing a section semifinal at Mesabi East and the sleet was coming down. The wind was coming out of the northwest at about 30 miles an hour. And I came in at halftime and I told my crew I said, 'You know when I said I was 90 percent sure? I am now 100 percent sure. This is it!'"

Even so, McDonald said he's not letting go entirely.

"I've worked very closely with the Minnesota State High School League. I am a coordinator of officials for northeastern Minnesota, and I will keep doing that."

"I'm going to move into an observing role where I will be watching and helping officials with

their craft. And I'll be able to mentor younger officials, to be somebody they can reach out to, talk to, and ask questions. I've done that for the last seven or eight years, but now I'll be able to focus on that without (the added duty of) being on the field or on the court."

For his 32nd wedding anniversary, he will take his wife Tracy on a Caribbean cruise with his last officiating pay. "I would never have been able to do this without her support and understanding," he said.

While stepping down as an official is a big life change for McDonald, he said he has no regrets. "I'm at a point, after 35 years, where it's time to pass the torch. When I walk onto the field, or walk onto the basketball floor, I think people are happy to see me. And I think that's a good way to end."

# FUNDING...Continued from page 1

Iron Range."

## Property tax relief

The broadest impact of the bill will be felt by homeowners. The legislation would increase the Taconite Homestead Credit from an average of \$289-\$315 per household to \$515, a nearly 77 percent increase. The credit has lost much of its impact since being frozen in 1998. The credit applies to homeowners in school districts in the Taconite Relief Area, including Ely, St. Louis County, and Mesabi East.

"By increasing the Taconite Homestead Credit, we can provide relief to Iron Range families immediately and permanently," said Sen. Hauschild. "After a 26-year freeze, it's the right thing to do for the Iron Range."

The bill also makes other adjustments, one of which is to the valuation tiers for class 1c homestead resort property. An increase of between \$500,000 and \$900,000 could result in lower property taxes.

Nonprofit land banks that acquire, hold or manage vacant, blighted, foreclosed or tax-forfeited properties for future development, including affordable housing development, would be eligible for tax abatements of up to five years.

Townships would be able to obtain the total amount of local government aid appropriated for them with an increase in funding for the program to \$11.5 million. Current law restricts aid to a percentage of the allocation. The distribution formula would still factor aid based on each township's area, population, and share of tax base made up of agricultural land.

Another provision of the bill specific to Breitung Township would increase their annual taconite production tax distribution from \$15,000 to \$25,000.

## IRRR bonds

The bill also authorizes the Department of Iron Range Resources and

Rehabilitation to issue \$79.5 million of revenue bonds over two years to provide funding for projects across the region. The bonds will be paid for by increased taconite production tax distributions from the Douglas J. Johnson economic protection trust fund to the Iron Range consolidation and cooperatively operated school account, with various amounts scheduled through 2036 and then continuing annually at \$3.5 million.

The bill also designates the projects to be funded by the IRRR bonds. North Country area projects included in the \$49 million proposed total for 2024 include:

- \$950,000 to the Buyck Volunteer Fire Department for design, engineering, and construction of a new fire and training hall and related equipment.

- \$750,000 to the Voyageur Trail Society for a joint maintenance facility with Voyageur Country

ATV in the city of Orr.

- \$1.2 million to Northland Learning Center for construction costs.

- \$3 million to the city of Tower for water management for construction of a new drinking water plant to serve the communities of Tower and Soudan.

- \$600,000 to the St. Louis County school district, \$400,000 of which must be used for septic system upgrades at the South Ridge School and \$200,000 must be used for cafeteria renovations at Northeast Range School in Babbitt and Tower-Soudan Elementary School in Tower.

- \$5.2 million for design, engineering, and replacement of chair lifts, and for design, engineering, demolition, and construction of a Nordic and welcome center at the Giants Ridge Recreation Center.

- \$5 million to Ely ISD 696 for planning, design, engineering, demolition and construction related

to the district's athletic complex.

- \$250,000 for the Ely school district for baseball field renovations.

- \$400,000 for Veterans On The Lake for demolition of existing structures and construction of a triplex compliant with ADA standards.

- \$300,000 for the Northern Lights Music Festival to support programs, with \$100,000 annually for three years.

- \$500,000 to the Northland Foundation for businesses or resorts that were economically damaged by floods in 2022 or 2023.

- \$25,000 to Northwoods Friends of the Arts in Cook for facility upgrades and programs.

- \$50,000 to the Bois Forte band for food shelf expenses.

- \$100,000 to the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center to improve and renovate the facility and its displays.

- \$50,000 for the Pioneer Mine historical site

in Ely for maintenance and displays.

- \$25,000 each to the Ely Igloo Snowmobile Club, Cook Timberwolves Snowmobile Club, Crane Lake Voyageurs Club, Voyageur Snowmobile Club, Prospector ATV Club, Babbitt ATV and Snowmobile Club, and Vermilion Penguins Snowmobile Club.

Of the \$30.5 million in bonds to be funded in 2025, area projects receiving funds would include:

- \$7.8 million for the chair lift and welcome center construction at Giants Ridge.

- \$1.08 million to the Northland Learning Center to construct the Alternative Learning Center.

Liselgard's bill was scheduled to be considered by the full House Tax Committee on Wednesday, where it was expected to be incorporated into this year's tax bill. Hauschild's bill was set to be heard by the Senate Tax Committee on Thursday.

# US STEEL...Continued from page 1

held April 12, representing approximately 71 percent of the shares of U.S. Steel's common stock, favored the proposed sale.

"The overwhelming support from our stockholders is a clear endorsement that they recognize the compelling rationale for our transaction with NSC," stated U.S. Steel President and CEO David Burritt. "This is an important milestone as we progress toward completing the transaction. We are one step closer to bringing together the

best of our companies and moving forward together as the 'Best Steelmaker with World-Leading Capabilities.'"

While the deal may be a good one for U.S. Steel shareholders, federal officials in Washington say the transaction raises concerns about its impact on unionized workers, U.S. supply chains, and national security.

President Joe Biden came out in opposition to the deal last month, saying it was vital for U.S. Steel "to

remain an American steel company that is domestically owned and operated."

Financier J.P. Morgan founded U.S. Steel nearly 125 years ago and it was long one of the giants of American industry. But the company has struggled more recently to compete against cheaper competition, both foreign and domestic, even through periods of protectionist policies. It has been soliciting tender offers for more than a year, although it rejected a less generous

offer from U.S. based Cleveland-Cliffs early last fall. That offer, unlike the one from Nippon, had the full-throated support of the United Steelworkers, who represent the roughly 11,000 U.S. Steel employees in the country.

The Steelworkers remain strongly opposed to the Nippon offer and that opposition has put added pressure on Biden to block the deal. Biden recently won the endorsement of the Steelworkers union, which represents nearly

850,000 industrial workers around the country, in his bid for re-election over presumptive GOP nominee Donald Trump. Trump has promised he would block the deal if elected, which puts Biden in a difficult position should he opt to allow the acquisition to ultimately move forward.

While shareholders have given the sale a green light, it still faces review from the Committee on Foreign Investment, an executive branch, inter-agency committee

of the federal government which reviews the national security implications of foreign investments in U.S. companies or operations, using classified information from the U.S. intelligence community. Should that council come out in opposition to the deal, it could give Biden reason to follow through on his announced opposition.


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**Forever in my Heart**  
— Frankie J. Brula —  
♥ Linda



*A limb has fallen from the family tree. I keep hearing a voice that says, "Grieve not for me. Remember the best times, the laughter, the song, the good life to lived while I was strong. Continue my heritage. I am counting on you. Keep smiling and sunny the sun will shine through. My mind is at ease, my soul is at rest. Remembering all, how I truly (was) blessed. Continue traditions, no matter how small. Go on with your life, don't worry about bills. I miss you all dearly, so keep up your chin. Until the day comes, we're together again."*

**NOTICE**  
**CITY of TOWER**



**The City of Tower will be**  
**FLUSHING HYDRANTS**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 1**  
**Starting at 10 AM**

**Residents should expect**  
**discolored water.**

## ST. LOUIS COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

# Too wide, too tall, and too close to the water

## Variance requests denied for proposed Lake Vermilion “dream” house

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook/Orr Editor

VIRGINIA- A “dream home” proposed to be built on Plotnik’s Point on Lake Vermilion won’t be as close to the lakeshore as originally planned after the St. Louis County Board of Adjustment rejected variances the house would have required.

While their primary residence is in the city of Shoreview in Ramsey County, Jon and Jean Savat are certainly not newcomers to Lake Vermilion.

“Forty-five years ago I started dating a girl and she brought me to Lake Vermilion,” Jon said. “I fell in love with that girl and I fell in love with Lake Vermilion. Thirty-five years ago we built a log home in Frazer Bay and our kids grew up on Lake Vermilion.”

In 2020, the Savats bought the Plotnik Point property at 4573 Bradley Rd. on Black Duck Bay, and they’ve spent the subsequent summers there, staying in a 484-square-foot vertical log cabin that was a part of the former resort on the property. During that time the Savats have been planning to make the property their permanent home by building a 4,100-square-foot “cabin” on the property while keeping the cabin they’ve been using for use as a guest house. They said they will be removing three old cabins in disrepair totaling about 1,000 square feet that sit in the 50-foot shore impact zone.

County planner Skyler Webb described for the board why the cabin would require four zoning

variances.

First, the 1.3-acre lot is too small to accommodate a second principal dwelling.

“We can’t consider the existing dwelling to be an accessory dwelling,” Webb said. “It’s considered a first principle dwelling. In order to allow the new cabin that would be considered the second principal dwelling, in which case, they would need to have double the acreage and double the width. Unfortunately, this parcel does not have that acreage or width.” The Savats described the care they took in considering where to site the house on the property, giving consideration to preserving a number of large trees as well as historical features of the former resort and overall aesthetics. But the spot they proposed brought three additional zoning regulations into play.

The footprint of the angular cabin would extend into the 75-foot shore setback, with the closest point to the shore being just over 50 feet away, a location that required a variance.

And because it extended into the shore setback, the cabin’s proposed dimensions became an issue as well, Webb explained. At 116 feet long, the cabin exceeded the calculated allowable length by six feet. The design also exceeded the 25-foot allowable height. As the house would not have a basement, the house was designed with storage space above a large garage, and the roof pitch needed to adequately shed winter snow required a height of 32 feet.

Webb said that she discussed alternatives with the Savats that

would move the cabin back behind the 75-foot setback, locations that would negate the need for three of the four variance requests. The house could be built as planned with only the second dwelling variance necessary. Another option would have been to scale down the size of the house. The Savats decided to go ahead and seek the multiple variances.

“Skyler was great about explaining everything and understanding the ordinances and their intent,” Jean Savat said. “We did revise our original plan to better align with ordinances and their intent. The intent of these ordinances is to preserve the land and the lake shore. We believe that our proposed site aligns with the ordinances’ intent.”

Savat noted that only a relatively small portion of the house would extend into the 75-foot shoreline setback.

“We’re actually asking for about 18 percent of the proposed dwelling to be within that 75-foot setback, and about 82 percent of that dwelling then is actually past the setback,” she said.

Moving the house back would bring elevated ledger rock into play, requiring about four feet of fill and a retaining wall, the Savats said.

“We don’t necessarily want to build a castle on a hill, we would rather build a cabin in the woods. And with leaving it down at that lower level, it gives us that opportunity,” Jon Savat said.

During Webb’s presentation she described the bar necessary for the Savats to clear to have their requests approved.

“Ordinance 62 states that it shall be the burden of the applicant to demonstrate sufficient practical difficulty to sustain the need for a variance,” Webb said. “Absent a showing of practical difficulty as provided in Minnesota statutes and this ordinance, the Board of Adjustment shall not approve any variance.”

And as the board deliberated, it became clear that some members failed to find practical difficulties that would warrant a favorable decision for the Savats.

Board member David Pollack criticized the Savats for not considering zoning requirements during their planning. “Sometimes when you have a property it becomes a situation that you need to analyze the rules and regulations of what you can look for, not just that I want more height, I want to be closer to the lake,” he said. “Wish lists don’t fly, reality flies. I’m looking at this and I don’t see any work being done that applies to the rules and regulations. You’re telling us your wishes, not what you can do to more closely adhere to our rules and regulations. Everybody wants, everybody doesn’t get.” Board member Dan Manick indicated that ledge rock was an issue that could be reasonably dealt with. “Skyler did talk to you about alternatives, but you’re still proposing to come here with a structure that doesn’t meet three of our requirements,” Manick said. “Just move (the cabin) back a few more feet and we don’t even need to talk about this. If you were to move it back we have no arguments.”

At another point in the

deliberations, Jean Savat said the need to have the fill and a retaining wall was something they had been trying to avoid with the placement of the house. “Is there any compromise there?” she said. “If you move it back and then you have to add another four feet of fill and we’re going to have to accommodate that four-foot drop towards the lakeshore, and I was just trying to avoid a retaining wall. I think those are very ugly on the lakeshore. That’s what we are trying to avoid there.”

However, the Savats indicated when asked that they were amenable to moving the cabin back behind the shoreline setback. They also readily agreed to a stipulation that the lot could never be split, a concern raised in public feedback that the Savats said they never had any plans to do.

After further discussion, board member Tom Coombe made motions to deny the setback, height and width variances and approve the second dwelling request. The first three passed unanimously, and Manick, who had previously expressed his opposition to the second dwelling variance, voted against that motion.

With the agreement to move the house back behind the setback, the Savats will now be able to apply for a building permit to construct the cabin according to plan and preserve the small cabin as a guest house.

## CITY OF ELY

# Council okays use of city site for apartment project

by CATIE CLARK  
Ely Editor

ELY-Continuing Ely’s growing cascade of actions to build new workforce apartments, the city council approved a resolution to commit the old city garage site on W. Pattison, to the project. Then, it scheduled a special city council meeting for April 23 at 5 p.m. to formerly approve and certify the city’s Housing Rehabilitation Authority’s application for \$4 million to the Minnesota Housing and Finance Agency. The application must be submitted to the state before the end of the month to be eligible for a grant from the \$39 million fund that the Legislature allocated last year for workforce housing.

In other action, the council approved the second reading of Ordinance 376 2nd Series, which revises Ely City Code Chapter 11, Section 4 regarding conditional uses.

Jay Greeney, an Ely business owner spoke at the hearing, concerned whether his conditional use permit could be transferred to a new owner if he sold his business. Planning and Zoning Administrator Scott Kochendorfer explained the issue was moot for Greeney because under the revision to the ordinance, he no longer needed a CUP.

The council did approve an amendment to the ordinance change at the urging of council member Al Forsman, who noted that the revision would prohibit automotive repair businesses in the “M” zone district, while similar businesses, like machine shops and welding businesses, were permitted as a conditional use. He recommended that the revised ordinance be amended to allow automotive repair businesses with a CUP and the council agreed.

In other business, the

city council:

- Approved quotes totaling \$1,169 from Custom Theaters of Ely for the cabling and routers needed for high-definition internet on the recommendation of the city’s Telecommunications Advisory Board (TAB).

- Approved a recommendation from TAB to pay Ely Area Television \$150 for additional filming in March.

- Approved the recommendation from the employee relations committee to draft a memorandum of understanding to clarify step-up pay language in the current agreement with the local unit of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

- Approved the recommendation from employee relations to allow the use of Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provisions. The council directed the city’s staff to draft a policy stating that the FMLA will be used as it has been in the past while recognizing that Ely is currently not obligated to do so because the city currently employs fewer than the minimum 50 employees required by FMLA.

- Approved the recommendation from employee relations to remove Jay Poshak from the Ely Fire Department. Poshak had not met the minimum attendance standards over the previous three years to remain part of the department.

- Approved the recommendation of employee relations to approve the job description for public works foreman and to advertise the position after the AFSCME local 1490 approves the job description.

- Approved Northern Bedrock Historic Preservation Corps to work on the entrance gate

columns at the city cemetery in June for \$9,000 on the recommendation of the cemetery committee.

- Approved a two-year extension on the deadline to build a home at 2221 Sibley Dr.

- “The owner, who lives in Texas, has had difficulty in finding contractors,” explained Ely Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski. The city sold the property with the requirement that the owner must build a home there within a set time period. The city has granted similar extensions in the past for circumstances like this. The motion to grant the extension passed 6-1, with council member Adam Bisbee voting against.

- Approved a recommendation from the projects committee to replace the decorative lighting on Sheridan St. from Eighth to 17th Avenues. Langowski said that the project replaced the old lighting with LED lamps that are dark-sky compliant.

- Approved a recommendation from the projects committee to sponsor the funding application to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. The grant will help fund a clean-up of the property near the depot. Langowski explained that the owners are cleaning up the property voluntarily. The owners are funding the clean-up, not the city. The city’s sponsorship is a requirement of the grant application.

- Approved the purchase of a Komatsu loader for \$315,421 from Road Machinery & Supply Co. of Virginia, and its trade-in for \$42,500 or its sale at a better price.

- Approved the purchase of a tandem axle dump truck from Ascendance Track Centers of Virginia for \$303,135.

- Approved the pur-

chase of a new police patrol vehicle from Lundgren Ford for \$44,860.

- Heard the report from Langowski to remind Ely residents that no wood ash will be accepted at the dump or recycling center, “or we could get a fire like the one in Hibbing today.”

- Heard the report from Fire Chief David Marshall thanking the Ely Rod and Gun Club for their donation which enabled the FD to buy lights for all of the department’s firefighters.

- Received a letter from the Arbor Day Foundation congratulating Ely on earning recognition as a “2023 Tree City USA.”

- Approved city and EUC claims for payment of \$506,683 for the period ending April 16.

- Approved an application by the city for a grant to work on the city’s Burntside water line from the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority.

- Approved the lease between Ely and the Ely Golf Club Corporation. The lease must be renewed every two years. In a moment of levity, council member Jerome Debeltz

asked, “Does this mean I need to learn how to golf?” Mayor Heidi Omerza replied, “We’ve already signed you up to give lessons.”

- Approved Resolution 2024-018, to change how the city processes write-in votes for candidates. “In the past,” Langowski explained, “we had to hand count every write-in vote, for Daffy Duck, Huey, Duey, and Luey, regardless.” The revision requires a candidate to inform the city seven days in advance that they want the city to count their write-in votes.

- Approved an amendment to the real estate contract to continue listing lots 9, 10, 11 in East Spaulding Addition until April 25, 2025. The contract is through agent Jim Burke at Keller Williams Classic Realty – Duluth.

- Approved a \$4,143 residential rehab loan application for Taylor Davis to repair and line the sewer at 915 E. White St. The council directed city attorney Kelly Klun to work with the applicant and proceed with the loan application pending proper

paperwork and fees.

- Approved a request for \$11,200 from the Ely Arts and Heritage Center (EAHC) to match the \$11,200 they have already raised, for electrical work and upgrades at the Miners Dry and Captains Dry Buildings. Council member Paul Kess remarked, “There’s not money in this year’s budget for this so it will come out of the general fund.” He added that the request came at an awkward time because the city is currently processing its department budget requests for next year’s budget. Langowski stated that the “last minute” request came in at 9:27 p.m. the previous evening, but that the EAHC had been working towards this work for years. He noted that the current lighting in the Miners Dry Building was appropriate for the facility’s historic use but not for its current use as a meeting and exhibition space.

The council approved the request 6-1, with Forsman voting against.

- Met in closed session at the end of the meeting for an employee disciplinary issue.



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**BLIGHT...**Continued from page 1

stepfather, Mark Herman, of Jacobson, had agreed to a visit by the city that Tuesday morning at 11 a.m. Then, Gillson rescheduled the visit to 1 p.m. and then 1:15 p.m. Gillson then cancelled the visit for the day.

"So, we have not been in the property yet," Whitney said. He went on to explain that the Sept. 13, 2023 fire on the property had been in the basement with "smoke damage throughout the main floor."

Gillson appeared at the hearing, stating that the insurance inspection was done last Friday. "At the advice of my lawyer, I had wanted to let them in as soon as (my lawyer) said it was okay." He did not offer any explanation why it took almost eight months before he arranged an insurance inspection other than his lawyer's advice.

Gillson said the insurance inspector gave him a verbal report but that he has not yet received a written report. He said that report is likely to "dictate whether (the home) was possibly habitable again... I'm more than happy to cooperate to get my home back."

Following Tuesday's hearing, the Ely City Council passed a resolution declaring the property as blighted and gave the owners 30 days to remedy the situation. The city has issued several notices prior to Gillson, most recently on March 7 of this year, but they have resulted in little if any noticeable improvement at the site.

The home has been vacant since the fire last fall, which was allegedly set by Gillson during a domestic dispute. Immediately after the fire, Ely Building Official Doug Whitney posted the structure as "unhealthy, unsafe, and uninhabitable."

On Tuesday, Gillson said he knew the deadline from the March violation notice had expired, but explained that he lacked the funds to fix the home until he receives an insurance settlement.

Whitney told the *Timberjay* this week that the

property finally received an insurance inspection "a couple of Fridays ago." Gillson and Herman informed the city that they now have a contractor.

According to Whitney, however, the city has not received any permit applications or scope of work from a contractor as to what needs to be done to remedy the interior of the residence.

Gillson explained his cancellation of the Tuesday visit for the city because "I've had a bit of reluctance with (dealing with) Mr. Whitney ... He said I'd be best off just selling the place

and leaving town." Gillson conceded he might have misunderstood Whitney.

Langowski cautioned Gillson, "This can't go on indefinitely. There are actions that must occur on this property, and it's deemed uninhabitable. The whole neighborhood is dealing with the blight and that's what makes this a serious issue."

After the hearing and city council meeting, Whitney told the *Timberjay* that Gillson's recollection of their conversations was not accurate. "What I told him was that he had three

options: to sell the property, to get a contractor and fix the property, or to take the insurance settlement and let the city deal with the property."

Public records show that Gillson and Herman bought the property, which includes a lot and a three-bedroom home, for \$75,000 in 2021.

**Alleged arson**

Gillson was charged on Sept. 13 with felony counts of arson, assault on a peace officer, flight from a peace officer, and discharge of a firearm

within city limits. He was also charged with misdemeanor domestic assault of a woman living with him at the residence. The cascade of events allegedly started with a domestic altercation between the two.

The Sept. 13 incident was the second episode in less than a month where Gillson was arrested for alleged actions at 45 E. Boundary St. He was charged with felony discharge of a firearm within a municipality during a domestic altercation with a woman who was living at the house on Aug. 20.

Gillson was released on \$150,000 bail on Sept. 16. Since then, Gillson has appeared at multiple hearings as he has progressed through the justice system. He was scheduled for a settlement hearing on Feb. 12, which was rescheduled for April 8. Settlement hearings are usually where a defendant and the prosecuting attorneys finalize a plea bargain arrangement.

At the April 8 hearing, Gillson did not agree to a plea bargain. He was instead scheduled for a jury trial, currently set for Sept. 17.

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## GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

# Town board struggles to get through agenda

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

**GREENWOOD TWP-** The April 9 town board meeting had an unexpected visitor— a St. Louis County deputy sheriff who attended while in uniform. The deputy said it was part of an outreach effort by the department, not a response to the board's contentious March 27 special meeting, as a few in the audience speculated.

That special meeting was supposed to solely address a financial report due for submission to the state auditor, but veered off track at times during discussion about how township financials were being handled. Former clerk JoAnn Bassing reacted verbally to characterizations of her work product as clerk, and according to the meeting minutes was repeatedly gavelled out of order.

"You both [clerk Debby Spicer and chair Lois Roskoski] defamed Jeff [Maus] and I to all in attendance without verifying the origin of the information, to which I can attest," JoAnn Bassing wrote in an apology issued after the special meeting.

"What offended me was when Spicer said CTAS was accurate when she was clerk," JoAnn Bassing said. "Jeff and I spent countless hours doing research with the state auditor and MAT personnel [to get it corrected]."

"I do not think Debby's minutes were accurate," JoAnn Bassing said, adding that remarks made by Maus at the meeting that the discussion had veered off the published agenda were not included.

During public comment, JoAnn Bassing read from a long list of items she had reviewed with the new clerk, Debby Spicer, when she was sworn in, along with how information was being organized in the clerk's office.

The board spent 75 minutes on the basic introductory parts of the agenda, including public input, approval of the agenda and payroll, and approval of minutes.

Former board member Mike Ralston said the payroll register included in the online meeting



Pictured from left: Treasurer Jeff Maus, chair Lois Roskoski, Craig Gilbert, John Bassing, Rick Stoehr, Paul Skubic, and clerk Debby Spicer.

packet was different from the one presented at the meeting. Treasurer Jeff Maus said the one at the meeting was the current one. Clerk Debby Spicer said the one included in the online packet was the one approved at the meeting after the March annual meeting.

Maus said the correct payroll included checks for the election judges, as well as prorated checks for the newly-elected officers, though it was noted that Roskoski's name was not on the printout. Maus said the payroll processing firm the township uses (ADP) was having trouble getting that name added, but that it had been completed after a few tries. Issues were also noted with inaccurate payroll totals for the two former supervisors whose salaries had been pro-rated.

Ralston accused the township of a "clear case of wage theft" because the township prorated March payroll when he left the board and was doing it again for the two outgoing supervisors. He insisted he was due back wages plus interest.

"I had fulfilled my duties by attending the monthly meetings," Ralston said, noting he had protested this move previously. "I got shorted!"

Roskoski said the board should add to the administrative guidelines, saying that outgoing township officials' salaries are prorated to the date the new supervisor is sworn in.

Maus said that the payroll and financial reports included in the online agenda packet were not his final versions.

"They weren't submitted by me," Maus said.

The issues with the information in the pack-

et appeared to stem from some confusion during the switchover to the new clerk, and the collection of the information needed for the meeting.

Roskoski asked that Maus submit a written treasurer's report prior to the board meeting so it could be included in the packet along with the other financial information. Maus had previously, as had past treasurers, given a verbal report at the meeting. Maus was able to get corrections made to the payroll during the meeting, which were then approved.

The approval of the minutes was also contentious. A motion to add comments made by Maus at the special meeting lost on a 2-3 vote, with Roskoski, Paul Skubic, and Craig Gilbert voting against. A motion to approve the treasurers report passed 3-2 with John Bassing and Rick Stoehr voting against.

John Bassing had numerous corrections to the reorganizational meeting minutes, mostly detailing who had made or seconded a motion. These were approved unanimously.

## Administrative guidelines

A motion to approve the administrative guidelines written by Roskoski was passed on a 3-2 vote, with Bassing and Stoehr voting against. Roskoski said the language was adapted from other townships, along with the existing policies, and that the language, with a few revisions, was approved by the township attorney.

The guidelines outline basic responsibilities of township officials, how meeting agendas are set, limits public input at meetings to 10 minutes per person, outlines expectations of respectful behavior during meetings, along with a duty list for the clerk and treasurer. The guidelines also set the process and fees for accessing public information and set the annual salary for township officials and fire department officials. These guidelines will be approved annually.

Approved salaries are: Chair: \$411.44/month; Supervisor: \$383.02/month; Clerk: \$2,316.59/month; Treasurer: \$962.50/month; Deputy clerk or treasurer: \$25/hour; Election judge/head election judge: \$15/hour; and set the spending authority for clerk, fire chief, and maintenance supervisor at \$1,000/month.

Public information guidelines: Citizens requesting public informa-

tion can contact the clerk to set up a time to inspect public records. If the clerk is required to search for information, after the first 15 minutes, time will be charged at \$25 per hour, and 25 cents per page for copies (copies fewer than 25 pages at no cost). It also sets charges for copying data to a personal thumb drive.

Stoehr said the clerk and treasurer are not subservient to the supervisors.

"We can make recommendations, other townships do," said Roskoski.

"We are not other townships," said Stoehr. "It should be stated as such."

In other business at the April 9 meeting, the board:

► Tabled discussion until their next meeting on a policy for guns on township property.

► Tabled discussion of current township policies including standard operating guidelines for the fire department, personnel policy, camera

policy, internal control document, and capital replacement fund/plan.

► Approved setting up separate fund and bank account for the road fund tax monies received between 2015 and 2024 of \$34,497.

Bassing noted that MAT (Minnesota Association of Townships) has a document that lays out snow/ice removal policies and states that gas tax monies can be used for this purpose. According to Bassing's research, the township spent about \$25,000 on snow/ice removal during this time period. The vote to set up a road fund was unanimous. The vote to establish a separate bank account for the fund passed 4-1, with Bassing voting against.

► Set up a committee to report back to the board on what maintenance is needed on the paved trail.

► Authorized having the deputy clerk (Tammy Mortaloni) import financial data into the CTAS program. The deputy clerk was appointed by clerk Spicer.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m., without completing the rest of the agenda, including supervisor reports, clerk report and correspondence, and the report from the fire chief, who was looking for permission to hire two new fire department members.

The *Timberjay* reported on parts of this meeting in the April 12 issue.



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### Q: What is a Community Health Needs Assessment?

**A:** Every three years, non-profit hospitals like EBCH must conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). These assessments are about understanding the needs and expectations of the communities we serve and hearing your voice as a patient. You play a vital role in this process. You may receive a survey in the mail or be invited to participate in a Key Informant or Focus Group interview. Your honest feedback is not just valued; it's essential. It helps us make the best decisions for the future of our hospital and the patients we serve. The results of our last two CHNAs can be found on our website at [www.ebch.org](http://www.ebch.org). If you want to participate in our 2024 CHNA, please get in touch with us at 218-365-8739.

### Q: How can I give a compliment or make a complaint?

**A:** At EBCH, we are always happy to hear what we are doing right. We also need to know when there are areas we can improve. If you are on campus, you can talk to any member of our team and let them know about your visit. If you have already gone home but would like to let us know how we have done, there are several ways available, including the CONTACT US page of our website, calling 218-365-8787, or mailing a letter to 328 W. Conan St. Ely, MN 55731. Our Patient Relations Committee handles each instance.

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## BASEBALL

# Ely pitching shows promise in early season

Wolves ten-run Littlefork-Big Falls on Monday, leave too many runners stranded in 4-2 loss to GNK

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**  
Managing Editor

**E L Y** — The Timberwolves bounced back Monday to even their young season's record at 1-1 as Ely pitchers combined on a five-inning no-hitter to beat Littlefork-Big Falls 10-0 on a perfect day for baseball.

Elliott Levens pitched three full, striking out one in the effort without allowing a hit. Sophomore Jack Davies kept the no-hit streak alive, finishing up the final two frames before the ten-run rule brought a halt to the slaughter.

While the pitching stood

out, Head Coach Frank Ivancich saw plenty to like from his hitters as well. Caid Chittum led the way with three hits, three runs scored and two RBIs, while Levens added two hits and two RBIs. Ely put two runs on the board in the first inning, five more in the second, and wrapped up their offense with three more in the third.

"Today we did a much better job at the plate, being more aggressive and most importantly swinging the bat," said Ivancich. He noted that last Friday's season opener against Greenway, was his teams' first time

**Right: Ely's Caid Chittum slides in safe at second during Monday's home tilt with Littlefork.**

photo by J. Greeney

playing on a field this season, which likely accounted for some of the miscues in that outing, which Ely lost 4-2. "To throw and field outside is a much different venue than being in the gym," Ivancich said.

Drew Marolt had a middling performance from the mound against the Raiders, scattering five hits

See **WOLVES**, pg. 2B



## SOFTBALL

# Grizzlies go 1-2 to start season

North Woods rallies for win over Mesabi East: fall to N-HC, Silver Bay

by **DAVID COLBURN**  
Cook-Orr Editor

**FIELD TWP-** The North Woods softball team fell to 1-2 on the season Monday with a home loss to the Northland/Hill City Storm.

NHC tagged Grizzlies starting pitcher Addison Burckhardt for a first-inning home run and a 1-0 lead, but that would quickly change in the Grizzlies' half of the inning. Nevada Gauthier reached base when she was struck by a pitch, and advanced to second when Zoey Burckhardt got on thanks to a fielding error by the Storm on an infield pop fly. Cleanup hitter River Cheney put North Woods on top when she crushed a three-run homer over the center field fence.

NHC retook the lead as the Grizzlies' bats went silent, scoring three runs in the fourth and two more in the fifth. North Woods

**Above: Grizzlies' senior cleanup hitter River Cheney is all smiles as she gets a high five from Head Coach Dee Ann Sandberg after blasting a three-run homer on Monday.**

**Right: North Woods' Addison Burckhardt winds up for a pitch against Northland/Hill City.**

photos by D. Colburn

tallied another run in the sixth with Zoey Burckhardt crossing the plate, making the score 6-4.

But the Storm put the game away in the top of the seventh, with a pair of long fly balls finding the gaps in the outfield as four runners crossed the plate. The Grizzlies had no answer, going down in order in their last at bat to close out the 10-4 loss.

See **GRIZZLIES**, pg. 2B



## TRACK

# Visser strikes gold for Ely in discus

by **DAVID COLBURN**  
Cook-Orr Editor

**CHISHOLM-** Ely girls discus thrower Kaylin Visser dominated the competition at the Chisholm Early Bird Invitational track and field meet on Thursday, April 11, claiming the school's only gold medal on the day.

Visser's winning throw of 97'6" was four inches short of being 23 feet farther than the runner-up. She also took fourth in the shot put with a toss of 27'1" in leading the girls to a fourth-place finish among the 12 schools competing.

Other notable performers included Lydia Shultz placing second in high jump with a leap of 4'8", and Sarah Visser taking second in triple jump with a mark of 30'5".

Top-20 performances by the girls included:

- 100 meters – Lydia Shultz, sixth, 13.91; Anna Larson, ninth, 14.33; Miriam Messerschmidt, 18th, 14.61.
- 400m – Grace Latourell, fourth, 1:06.75; Violet Udovich, 16th, 1:12.22.
- 1600m – Katy Brophy, fifth, 6:29.28; Elsa Ellerbrook, sixth, 6:33.72.
- 300m hurdles – Mattie Lindsay, fourth, 57.05.
- 4x100 relay – Ely A, Lydia Shultz, Carmen

See **ELY TRACK**, pg. 2B

# Grizzlies compete at Chisholm

by **DAVID COLBURN**  
Cook-Orr Editor

**CHISHOLM-** The track and field season is underway, with 37 North Woods students, seventh grade through senior, competing with the South Ridge Panthers combined squad, under the guidance of first-year assistant coach Brett Brodeen and head coach Jeremy Polson.

The Panthers competed on Thursday, April 11 in the Chisholm Early Bird Invitational with 11 other schools. The boys team placed seventh, and the girls team finished ninth.

Grizzlies boys with top 20 finishes included:

See **PANTHERS**, pg. 2B



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SOFTBALL

On the road, Wolves drop two of three in season debut

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

MT. IRON — The Timberwolves softball team dropped to 1-2 in the season's early-going here on Tuesday, as the Rangers exploded in the sixth inning to rout Ely 11-3 in a game marked by high winds. The Rangers went up 5-0 early but the Wolves battled part-way

back in the fourth inning, putting two runs on the board.

"We left the bases loaded when their left fielder made a catch that would have tied the game," said Ely Head Coach Cory Lassi. "I felt like we made a lot of mental mistakes that we need to clear up. We gave them too many extra outs because of it."

Zoe MacKenzie worked the mound for Ely, allowing just three

earned runs on eight hits, while fanning five Rangers' batters.

Clare Thomas notched two of the Wolves' three hits in the contest, including a triple, scoring a run and an RBI. Peyton Huntington notched Ely's only other hit.

Playing Monday at Silver Bay, the Mariners edged the Wolves 8-7 as an Ely rally fell short. "We battled back from

being down 5-0 to take a 6-5 lead," Lassi said. "I thought we played well."

The Wolves outhit the Mariners 12-6, but a few close plays didn't go Ely's way and that made the difference.

MacKenzie had another solid outing on the mound, allowing five runs on six hits, while striking out seven. Maija Mattson was on fire at the plate as she went

4-4, including two doubles and a triple, along with an RBI and a run scored. Huntington drove in two runs on two hits and Thomas drove in one run on two hits. Ella Perish notched two hits and scored twice, while Makenzi Huntington notched a hit and scored twice.

After their opening road trip, the Wolves were scheduled to host Deer River in their home opener on Tuesday, April 23.

WOLVES...Continued from page 1B

and allowing four runs in four innings of work. He also showed considerable command at times, striking out six batters while walking just two.

The Raiders opened

scoring with a run in the second, but Ely responded with a run in the top of the third to knot the game 1-1. Davies walked, stole second, and advanced to third on a Drew Johnson

bunt, before Chittum drove him in on a sac fly to center.

The Raiders added a run in the bottom of the third and two more runs in the fourth inning off a passed ball and a wild pitch

to make it 4-1. Ely looked ready to rally as they loaded the bases in the fourth and left two runners stranded in the fifth but couldn't score. They drove one runner across the plate in

the seventh and once again left the bases loaded.

Having allowed just four runs in their first two games, pitching has been an early bright spot for the Wolves. "Only walking

three batters in 12 innings is a good trend to build on," said Ivancich. "If we can continue to do that, we'll be in most of our games."

GRIZZLIES...Continued from page

Mesabi East

The first game of the season, a scheduled home game against Mesabi East, was relocated to the synthetic turf field in Aurora due to wet conditions at North Woods.

On a blustery, rainy Thursday afternoon, both

teams cranked up the offense in a come-from-behind 17-16 win for the Grizzlies.

The Giants got out of the box fast with three runs in the top of the first, while the Grizzlies went down in order.

But North Woods

revved it up in the bottom of the second with a six-run deluge, with Gauthier and Cheney each smacking two-run doubles.

The Giants came right back in the third with a six-run blitz of their own, regaining a lead they would hold until a massive

Grizzlies' rally in the fifth. With the Giants' pitcher having control problems, the sharp-eyed Grizzlies manufactured runs via walks as well as hits as they piled up eight runs in the inning for a 16-10 lead.

The Giants fought back with one run in the sixth

and five in the seventh for a 16-16 tie.

As the home team, the Grizzlies had the last at bat, and they made it pay off. Evalyn Thiel singled and advanced to third on an error. Dakota Schwarzenberger connected with a pitch and Thiel raced home to score

the winning run.

Silver Bay

North Woods was on the road again Friday in another game moved due to field conditions, this time to the home field of opponent Silver Bay. North Woods struggled to score as Silver Bay breezed to a 13-2 win.

ELY TRACK...Continued from page 1B

Nelson, Anna Larson, Miriam Messerschmidt, fifth, 57.46; Ely B, Lucy Dunn, Isabella Macho, Addison Kannas, Kaija Shultz, 12th, 1:04.03.

4x800m relay - Kiarstin Eaton, Elsa Ellerbrook, Katy Brophy, Mattie Lindsay, third,

11:37.65.

Shot Put - Rachel Carter, 14th, 24'10".

Discus - Alyssa Ice, ninth, 55'6"; Addison Forsman, tenth, 55'5".

High Jump - Selam Houle, tenth, 4'0".

Long jump - Addison Forsman, fifth, 13'9.5"; Sarah Visser, 12th, 13'4"; Anna Dunn, 19th, 12'0.5".

Triple jump - Addison Forsman, sixth, 27'7"; Anna Dunn, 11th, 25'10.5"; Alyssa Ice, 13th, 24'3".

Boys

The Ely boys place eighth at the meet. Top-20 finishers included:

400m - Tory Hughley, 18th, 1:03.62.

800m - Silas Solum, third, 2:12.8.

1600m - Brooks Brenny, 12th, 5:42.83.

300m hurdles - Leo Stalmer, fourth, 47.2; Mason Spate-Kurnava, 15th, 1:01.7.

4x100m relay - Caleb Larson, Wyatt Mattson, Tory Hughley, Jack Rintala, 10th,

52.79.

4x200 relay - Ely A, Milo McClelland, Wyatt Mattson, Tory Hughley, Dylan Durkin, seventh, 1:45.24;

PANTHERS...Continued from page 1B

800 meters - Jonah Burnett, 11th, 2:39.8.

1600m - Kahlil Lightfeather-Spears, seventh, 5:23.74; Lincoln Antikainen,

eighth, 5:30.54.

4x100m relay - Aidan Hartway, Trajen Barto, Wyatt Ellefson, Marcus Israelson, ninth, 52.3.

High Jump - Jonah Burnett, third, 5'8".

Long Jump - Trajen Barto, 16th, 15'9.5". Top-20 finishes for the

Grizzlies girls included:

400m - Corra Brodeon, 13th, 1:11.17.

4x100m relay - Harmony Aikey, Makayla Gibson, Addy

Hartway, Grace Henneger, tenth, 1:02.6.

Discus - Alice Sopoci, 14th, 47'9".

High jump - Lauren

Burnett, seventh, 4'2"; Izzy Pascuzzi, seventh, 4'2".

Long jump - Lauren Burnett, 17th, 12'5"; Izzy Pascuzzi, 19th, 12'0.5".



Keep it Clean. ST. LOUIS COUNTY

Table listing waste management facilities: Ash River Trail Canister Site, Cook Transfer Station, County 77 Canister Site, Kabetogama Lake Canister Site, Orr Canister Site, Portage Canister Site, Regional Landfill, and Household Hazardous Waste Facilities, including their addresses and hours.

ST. LOUIS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
218-749-9703 | OFFICE HOURS MON - FRI 8 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.



Summer hours effective April 15 - September 30

## Obituaries and Death Notices

**Charles W. Bystrom**

Charles "Chuck" William Bystrom, 69, of Tower, respected businessman and adored husband, father, grandfather, and friend was called home to God and reunited with family on Tuesday, April 9, 2024. Chuck will be dearly missed, but his memory and legacy will live on through his loved ones, including his Vermilion Houseboats family. Chuck's remarkable life will be honored according to his wishes with a private service among immediate family. Family services are provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower.

Chuck was born on May 7, 1954, in Baudette, to father Merle Bystrom and mother Tillian Martinson Bystrom. Charles had an adventurous childhood in Cook, surrounded by the lakes and rivers of the Laurentian Shield. Chuck was passionate about the outdoors and treasured time spent with his family at their cabin near Trout Lake Portage. He could always be counted on for adventures with his sister and cousins, riding his beloved horse, Rex. From a young age, Chuck was known for his strong work ethic as a dock boy at Pehrson's Lodge on Lake Vermilion and as a gas station attendant at the Midland Co-op gas station in Cook. He graduated from Cook High School in 1972. Chuck started his career at U.S. Steel Minntac the following fall.

Chuck met the love of his life and wife of almost 50 years, LeeAnn Rinerson, in 1972. They were married on Aug. 17, 1974. Chuck and LeeAnn embarked upon their careers in entrepreneurship with the purchase of Spring Bay Resort on the Cook end of Lake Vermilion in 1982, all while Chuck continued his career at Minntac. In 1985, Chuck started Spring Bay Floating Lodge, Inc. with his brother-in-law Gale Rinerson, purchasing three new houseboats. In the spring of 1986, Chuck and LeeAnn sold the resort and moved the houseboat corporation to the Tower end of Lake Vermilion with the purchase of Vermilion Houseboats. Gale Rinerson sold his stock in the corporation in the fall of 1988. Chuck continued the houseboat business along with LeeAnn. He expanded the business by renting snowmobiles and personal watercraft. Chuck retired from Minntac in the spring of 2003 to just have one job, running Vermilion Houseboats. Putting in 31 years at both US Steel and Vermilion Houseboats, he was able to fully retire when Chuck and LeeAnn sold Vermilion Houseboats in May 2017, to finally enjoy a summer of camping with his wife, daughters, grandson and son-in-law in the woods overlooking Lake Vermilion.

Chuck loved to go out west, snowmobiling in the mountains with his friends. He enjoyed cars, boats, rigs, trains, and airplanes and had a special passion for Corvettes. He was a handyman and jack-of-all-trades, with knowledge of mechanics, electrical work and carpentry. He was a master griller, known for his delicious grilled and smoked food. Chuck was a sweet and devoted father. He would do anything for his girls, creating many fond memories of family vacations out west and to Florida. Chuck always made time for trips to the hunting shack, plowing skating rinks, and cherished snowmobile, boat and four-wheeler rides. He was a

loving grandfather, who doted on his grandsons, from campfires to rides in the Ranger. Chuck loved instilling a joy for the outdoors in his grandsons. He was a revered leader who created lifelong connections with those who worked for him. He would do anything for them, and they would do anything for him.

Chuck is survived by his wife, LeeAnn; daughters, Ashley (Peder) Aarness, Katelyn Bystrom and Rebecca (Tyler) McMillen; grandsons, Jase Zigliński and Nolan McMillen; nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father, Merle; mother, Tillian; and sister, Pamela Amundson.

**Walter J. Snyder**

Walter "Wally" Joseph Snyder, 75, formerly of Greenwood Township, passed away on Saturday, March 30, 2024. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, May 3 at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Inver Grove Heights. Visitation will be from 10 to 11 a.m. at the church. Arrangements are by Roberts Funeral Home of Inver Grove Heights.

Wally, Shirley and Paul Snyder owned Eagle Docks on Lake Vermilion from 1990 to 2006.

Wally is survived by his wife, Shirley Ruth Forester Snyder; four brothers; two sisters; brothers-in-law; sisters-in-law; nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his daughter, Ruth Marie; parents; and grandparents.

**Dr. Mathew Rolando**

Dr. Mathew Rolando, 51, originally of Ely, passed away on Friday, March 29, 2024, in San Diego, Calif. Services will be held at 2 p.m. on Tuesday,

April 30 at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Afton.

He is survived by his wife, Sara Kay Engebretson Rolando; children, Gianni, Sophia and Marco; parents, Seraphine and Patricia Murto Rolando of Ely; sister, Amanda Rolando (Matthew) Barnstorf of Duluth; aunt, Cecilia Rolando of Ely; and numerous cousins and relatives.

**Jeffrey A. Rosati**

Jeffrey Allan Rosati, 51, of Hermantown, departed to his eternal rest on Dec. 17, 2023, after a lengthy battle with cancer. A celebration of life will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 27, 2024, at Shriners Event Center on Hwy. 53 in Hermantown. Jeffrey requested that memorials be directed to your local food shelf, animal shelter, or a charity close to your heart.

He is survived by his parents, Charles and Nancy Voxland Rosati Eichholz of Tower and Richard and Lisa Davis Rosati of Eveleth; stepbrother, Josh Parenteau of Westbrook; and many treasured aunts, uncles, cousins and close friends.

**Enola L. Loomis**

Enola L. Nelson Loomis, 89, entered peacefully into God's Kingdom of Glory on Tuesday, April 9, 2024. Funeral services were held on Saturday, April 13 at First Lutheran Church in Ely. Donations may be directed to First Lutheran Church of Ely. Funeral arrangements were entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

She is survived by her son, Thad (Soraya); daughter, Teri; granddaughters, Hannah (fiancé Alex Povhe), Emma and Scout; great-granddaughter, Enola; and sister, Myma Olesen.

**Gene E. Freyholtz**

Gene Edward Freyholtz, 74, of Gheen, passed away peacefully at the Cook Hospital on Sunday, April 14, 2024. A private family service will be held at the Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook.

He is survived by his daughters, Darla Freyholtz of Gheen and Shawna (Justin) Rosenlund of Duluth; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; siblings, Irma Kellerman of Blackduck, Maynard (Delores) Freyholtz of Condon, Mont., Marvin (Barb) Freyholtz and Dennis (Linda) Freyholtz of Hines; brother-in-law, Bob (Diane) Fischer of Cook; and several nieces and nephews.

**Bernie Mettler**

Bernie Mettler, a 60-year-old resident of Long Prairie, Minn., passed away on Saturday, April 13, 2024 at his residence. A funeral service will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 20, 2024, at Living Hope Assembly of God Church in Little Falls, MN. Visitation will be from 4 to 8 p.m. on Friday at Shelley Funeral Chapel in Little Falls, and from 12 noon to 1 p.m. Saturday at the church.

Bernard Thomas Mettler was born on September 3, 1963 in Wessington Springs, S.D.,

to Thomas and Margaret (Simmons) Mettler. He moved with his family to Swanville, Minn., at the age of two. Bernie spent his formative years attending Swanville School and working at the Circle R Ranch, where he met his future wife, Cindy. After the birth of his third child, Bernie endeavored to receive his Associates Degree in Law Enforcement from Brainerd Community College. This led to a career serving his community in Staples, Madison, and later St. Louis County. Bernie's character and drive to help people defined his 25-year career with the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office. Whether guiding moose off a busy road or donating pork to his church, Bernie acted always as a steward to those in need. Bernie spent his retirement years, caring for his family and friends, and sharing his love of the outdoors with those he loved. If you wanted to find Bernie, he'd be on the lake with a rod, in the field with a rifle, or hauling a load of firewood to a friend.

Bernie is survived by his parents, Tom and Margaret Mettler; his siblings, Randy (Marge) Mettler, Bob (Cindy) Mettler, Bill (Kristy) Mettler, Joni (Brian) Nelson, and Richard Mettler; survived also by his three children, Josh (Lori) Mettler, Jeremy (Hollie) Mettler, and Danielle (Dave Hanson) Mettler; former wife, Cindy Mettler; stepchildren, Bryce Sampson-Bernstrom, Brenden Donner, and Kayle Donner; grandchildren, Wyatt Mettler Connor Mettler, and Brayden Donner; and many, many beloved nieces and nephews.



# Thank You



## 19TH ANNUAL SWEET SPRING RECOGNITION

We want to express our heartfelt thanks to our generous donors and bidders for making our 2024 auction successful. We are continually astounded by the support from our community, from both businesses and individuals, and Ely Young Life would truly not exist without you. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for supporting the youth of our community with your endless generosity.

Adventure Inn  
AJ's Fast Lube  
Anderson, Dawn  
Anonymous Donors  
Arrowhead Outdoors  
Bagge, Erika  
Bercher, Kris  
Bianco, Joe and Mary  
Bina, Cindy  
Bloomers  
Blue Loon Boutique  
Boat Club Restaurant  
Boathouse Brewpub & Restaurant  
Boes, Lori  
Boundary Waters Septic  
Brainstorm Bakery  
Brgant, Eric  
Britton's Cafe  
Cache Lake  
Canoe Country Outfitters  
Chernak, Sue  
Cinema 6 - Mtn. Iron  
Cole, Autumn  
Cove Point Lodge Restaurant  
D & D Accounting  
Dairy Queen - Ely  
Dan MacCoy Chimney Sweeps  
Dan's Garage  
Dannenbring, Greg  
Dirty Dog Manufacturing  
Docks on Wheels  
Domino's Pizza - Ely  
Dorothy Molter Museum  
Dunnom, Janet  
Dutchman Tree Service  
Ely Area Credit Union  
Ely Bike and Kicksled  
Ely Chiropractic Clinic  
Ely Fire Department  
Ely Flower and Seed  
Ely Golf Club  
Ely Memorial Senior High School  
Ely Mercantile Co.  
Ely Surplus  
Ely Veterinary Clinic  
Ely Vision Center  
Ely's Historic State Theater  
Erzar, Debbie  
Evergreen Spa & Wellness

Faltsek, Evan  
Fisher Maps  
Forest Concrete  
Fortune Bay Resort  
Frandsen Bank  
Gator's Emporium  
Gene Hicks Gourmet Coffee  
Gracie's Plant Works  
Grand Ely Lodge  
Great Lakes Aquarium  
Gunflint Lodge  
Gustafson, Donna  
Healthy Family Chiropractic  
Highland Bank  
Holen, Jo  
Hunter, Anne  
Insula Restaurant  
International Wolf Center  
Jessie Brooks Massage  
Kaetterhenry, Dennis  
Kahle, Sarah  
Kaiser, Bob  
Kawishwi Lodge and Outfitters  
Kidd, Kris  
Kottke, Carrie  
KTIS Northwestern  
Laine, Susan  
L & M  
LaTourell's Resort  
Lee, Stephen  
Lepisto, Andrea  
Lien, Mary Ellen  
Lobo Gun Leather  
Log Cabin Coffee  
Low Impact Excavating  
Magee, Heather  
Mealey's Gift & Sauna  
Merhar's Ace Hardware  
Mischke, Sue  
Mitska's Market  
Moravitz, Erin  
MN State Fair  
North American Bear Center  
North Shore Camping Co.  
North Shore Scenic Railroad  
Northern Impressions  
Northern Grounds  
Northern Expressions  
Olson, Brenda  
Olson, Justin

Orcutt Guide Service  
Passananti, Joyce  
Passananti, Stan  
Paws and Claws  
Pebble Spa  
Penke, Matt & Sherry  
Phoenix Fire Ceramics  
Piragis Northwoods Co.  
Portage North  
Potluck  
Range LP Gas  
Raven Words Press  
Razor Edge  
RMS Virginia  
Roderick, Gary & Maggie  
Rue, Jan  
Serena's Carpet  
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St. Paul Saints  
Stahl, Carol  
Stony Ridge  
Stouffer, Carol  
Streit, Nancy  
Subway - Ely  
Sundell Eye Associates  
Sundog Sports  
Svatos, Sharon  
Swanson Excavating  
Tara Kay Photography  
The Wilderness at Fortune Bay  
Thompson, Anna  
Tim's Auto & Truck Repair  
Today, Dave  
Tranquility by Jaime  
Tupperware - Peggy Erzar  
Urbas, Larry  
Vermilion Veterinary Clinic  
Voyageur Lumber  
Willy Vosburgh Moose Lake Tow  
Service  
Wetzel, Tom & Mischke, Larry  
Wick, Chuck  
Wilderness Wood Fire Pizza  
Woffland Computers & Hobby  
Zup North Realty  
Zup's Food Market Ely  
Zup's Food Market Babbitt



# Outdoors

Our lives in the  
Northwoods

## ICE-OUT

# Vermilion declared clear of ice April 13

Extraordinarily warm winter made for ice-out surprises

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— In the wake of the most unusual winter in northern Minnesota history, ice-out proved equally unusual on many lakes and rivers in the region— and not only because most lakes cleared of ice about two weeks earlier than average.

Take Lake Vermilion, where ice-out was called for Saturday, April 13. That's 17 days earlier than its April 30 median ice-out date, but it was the places the ice

lingered that offered up the biggest surprise of the season.

Traditionally, Big Bay, the largest and deepest expanse of water on the lake, is the last holdout for large ice floes on Vermilion. Not this year. Instead, Big Bay was clear of ice nearly a week before the last of the ice cleared from some of the more sheltered and shallower bays.

Even some tributary streams, like the Pike River flowage and the East Two River, held their ice longer than Big Bay this year. Indeed, the Tower harbor on the East Two River still had lingering ice as of Saturday,

**Right: An aerial view of lingering ice on Lake Vermilion as of April 11. Ice was mostly limited to small bays. Big Bay had already cleared earlier in the week.**

photo courtesy J. Burgess

the same day that Vermilion was declared open water and a week after the ice had cleared from Big Bay. Typically, those streams clear of ice about a week before the ice clears from Big Bay.

The topsy turvy weather likely

See ICE-OUT...pg. 5B



## 'TIS THE SEASON

# The run is on

Hatchery operations underway with a smaller-than-usual quota for 2024

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

PIKE RIVER— Staff at the Pike River Hatchery were hoping that the wet and cold weather that settled in mid-week wasn't going to slow down the walleye run, which finally began in earnest under sunshine and mild temperatures on Monday.

The annual walleye spawning run was just ramping up last Friday as water temperatures remained in the low 40s, or a few degrees cooler than needed to push the run into high gear. By Sunday, the water temperature briefly reached the low 50s, which was enough to spark the kind of activity that helps fisheries staff get the work done quickly.

Hatchery staff were working to gather this year's goal of 430 quarts of walleye eggs. While that's considerably lower than a few years ago,

**Above: DNR fisheries tech Camden Glade hoists a typical, large female walleye that wasn't quite ready for egg harvest late last week.**

**Right: Fisheries staff Matt Hennen and Jeff Mueller lift a net with trapped walleye in preparation for sorting.**

photos by M. Helmsberger

hatchery manager Brent Flatten said planned stocking numbers within the Rainy River basin, which includes the entire Tower work area, will be on par with previous years.

This year's lower goal reflects the decision by DNR fisheries officials to use more egg sources from southern Minnesota to stock lakes in that region, he said.

"It's a question of genetics," said Flatten, noting that the DNR has determined that

See HATCHERY...pg. 5B



## FISHING

# Minnesota stream trout season now underway

REGIONAL— Minnesota's popular stream trout season opened April 13, with quality fishing opportunities in every region of the state.

Trout anglers can find information on Minnesota's trout streams and lakes on Minnesota DNR's website. Anglers will find helpful

learning guides and fishing tips tailored to each of Minnesota's six trout fishing regions. Anglers can also access StreamFinder, which provides anglers with a description, species list, regulations and access information for trout streams throughout Minnesota, and is modeled

after the DNR's popular LakeFinder tool.

Minnesota has roughly 3,800 miles of designated trout streams. Anglers 18-64 years old fishing on designated trout waters must have a trout stamp validation in addition to an angling license for possessing stream trout.



A colorful brook trout



## RECREATION

# Take extra care out on spring trails

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST— Land managers here are reminding trail users, both motorized and non-motorized, to practice TREAD principles when using forest trails during this sensitive freeze-thaw season.

Although the winter weather was mild, road and trail beds remain vulnerable this time of year to deep rutting or the creation of mud holes along trail and road systems. That increases the time and expense for the Forest Service planners and trail partners who work hard year around maintaining them.

The acronym TREAD stands for: TRAVEL responsibly. RESPECT the rights of others. EDUCATE yourself. AVOID sensitive areas. DO your part.

National forest trails can incur substantial resource damage during spring thaw. Trails experience spring storm damage as well, where downed trees may result in impassable trails, some even deep into a trail system. Patience is requested as forest staff and partners work to clean up trails and make ready for visitors.

As with trails under the management of the Minnesota DNR, the Superior's ATV trail system is open May 1- Oct. 31.

"Our trails cross a mosaic of landownership to ensure connectivity, our staff and partners work hard year around to ensure these trails are safe and accessible," says Michelle de Leon, developed recreation program manager on the Superior. "We look forward to continuing to work with our partners like the DNR and the many trail associations across the forest to not only maintain the trails and access, but also in working to adapt policies and procedures to allow for more flexibility as varied seasonal weather continues."

## Road restrictions

National forest system roads within the Superior have been in seasonal spring load restriction of four tons per axle for more than a month.

"Our main goal is to reduce negative impacts to road surfaces like rutting, washouts, and other resource

See TRAILS...pg. 5B



**Outdoors briefly**

**Enjoy a state park for free on April 27**

REGIONAL — Looking to enjoy some time in the outdoors this spring ahead of the inevitable arrival of the flies and mosquitoes? Then you'll definitely want to take advantage of the free state park day set for next Saturday, April 27.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is waiving all vehicle permit fees on that date at all 74 state parks and recreation areas.

This "Free Park Day" is one of four days each year and they're spread out over the year allowing folks an opportunity to visit a state park for free in each season of the year.

"Minnesota state parks and recreation areas are great places to make memories with loved ones," said Ann Pierce, director of the DNR Parks and Trails Division. "Spring is an ideal time to reconnect with the natural world and enjoy the beauty of Minnesota's state parks and recreation areas. I encourage visitors to look for signs of spring like early-blooming wildflowers, migrating birds, and the opening of green leaves on trees. Our goal is for those who visit on Free Park Day to be inspired to come back again soon."

Each spring, Free Park Day is held on the Saturday after Earth Day. Earth Day is a great time to remind visitors to always recreate responsibly to protect natural resources.

For example: Spring is a time of

increased wildlife activity. Respect wildlife by observing from a distance.

Please stay on trails when hiking or biking to avoid erosion and damage to sensitive plants and wildlife habitat.

Love the blooming spring wildflowers? Resist the urge to pick — take a photo instead. Leave

**Minnesota fishing facts**

flowers, rocks and other natural objects as they were found.

Ever wonder how many anglers there are in Minnesota, who goes fishing or how much anglers contribute to the state economy? Here are some Minnesota fishing facts gathered from the 2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others.

► 1.7 million anglers fished in Minnesota in 2022.

► An estimated 26 percent of Minnesota residents aged 16 and older went fishing in 2022. A closer look at participation by race and ethnicity found that 21 percent of Black, 26 percent of Hispanic, and 27 percent of white Minnesotans aged 16 and older fished in 2022.

► The most frequently reported barrier to fishing — for Minnesotans interested in fishing — is lacking friends and family to fish with.

► Minnesota anglers spent \$5.9 billion dollars on angling related expenses in 2022.

**LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST**

from NOAA weather

Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
39 26					45 25					53 32					55 30					52 33				
Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.
04/08	56	32	0.00		04/08	56	31	0.00		04/08	55	31	0.00		04/08	41	36	No		04/08	55	32	0.00	
04/09	39	35	0.38		04/09	41	36	0.23		04/09	41	36	0.16		04/09	48	36			04/09	41	32	0.30	
04/10	45	30	0.00		04/10	52	26	0.01		04/10	48	30	0.02		04/10	64	28	precip		04/10	50	27	0.04	
04/11	61	32	0.21		04/11	64	26	0.00		04/11	58	30	0.05		04/11	57	30	data		04/11	62	29	0.05	
04/12	58	33	0.00		04/12	60	28	0.00		04/12	57	31	0.00		04/12	54	34	at press-		04/12	59	32	0.00	
04/13	50	26	0.00		04/13	53	21	0.01		04/13	51	28	0.00		04/13	63	25	time		04/13	52	23	0.00	
04/14	59	19	0.09		04/14	67	27	0.00		04/14	62	29	0.02		04/14	63	37			04/14	64	28	0.05	
YTD Total			3.55	44.6"	YTD Total			2.69	30.7"	YTD Total			3.05	52.2"	YTD Total			NA		YTD Total			3.67	41.9"

**HATCHERY...Continued from page 4B**

the so-called "Lower Mississippi strain" of walleye, found in southern Minnesota, is better suited to the conditions in lakes in the region and tend to have better survival.

In the past, fry hatched from the Pike River and Cut Foot Sioux hatcheries were often used for walleye stocking in southern Minnesota in addition to lakes in northern Minnesota.

While the total egg harvest goal is lower this year at Pike River, the DNR will be increasing the number of fry stocked in Vermilion from five million last year to 7.5 million this year.

Other lakes in the Tower and

International Falls work areas with planned walleye fry stocking amounts include:

**Tower area**

- (base stocking)
- Joseph- 112,000
- Nickel- 25,000
- Nigh- 80,000
- Pauline- 50,000
- Triangle- 400,000
- Wolf- 75,000
- Mashkenode- 64,000
- Parent- 143,000
- Big- 750,000
- Astrid- 60,000
- Nels- 44,000
- Whisper- 20,000
- Maude- 50,000

- Stuart- 177,000
- Slim- 87,000
- Johnson- 212,000
- Trout- 1,613,000
- Purvis- 25,000
- (surplus stocking)
- Burntside- 1,478,000
- Cedar- 156,000

**International Falls area**

- (base stocking)
- Ban- 194,500
- Seretha- 37,000
- Vermilion River- 535,000
- (contingency stocking)
- Moose- 929,000
- Bartlett- 292,000

**ICE-OUT...Continued from page 4B**

had something to do with it. The exceptionally warm February and early March nearly cleared some area lakes of ice in mid-March (which were poised to set new all-time records for earliest ice-outs) until a return to winter-like temperatures and heavy snow later in the month, helped to rebuild ice, at least temporarily.

While Vermilion cleared well

ahead of normal this year, it was nearly a week later than Shagawa Lake, in Ely, which typically clears within a day or two of Vermilion. This year, the official ice-out was called from Grand Ely Lodge on Sunday, April 7, at 6:08 p.m.

**Other ice-out dates include:**

- Eagles Nest One: April 14.
- Fall Lake: April 12.
- Lake Kabetogama: April 14.

As of early this week, ice could still be seen lingering on Burntside, Snowbank, and Trout lakes, as well as on most other larger lakes in the Boundary Waters, particularly east from Ely. Up at the border, ice was still lingering on Rainy Lake and there appeared to be dark ice remaining on Namakan and Sand Point as well as patches of ice on Crane Lake.

**TRAILS...Continued from page 4B**

damage that vehicular traffic can cause during the spring" said Preston Tripp, civil engineer on the Superior National Forest.

State and county spring load limits are in effect for all other roads. Limiting heavy loads in the spring on roads in freeze-thaw

environments like Minnesota helps to protect road structure. Load limits are expected to continue into May.

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### SUPPORT GROUPS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AA MEN'S PRIMARY PURPOSE meeting, Tuesdays at 7 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 226 E Harvey St., Ely, 218-235-38191

### HAIR CARE

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

### HOSPICE

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

### PET CREMATION

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

### GARAGE SALE

ELY CITY-WIDE RUMMAGE and Business Crazy Day Saturday, May 18, from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. \$10 registration fee. Receive signage (while supplies last), map location, and advertising. Stop at the Ely Chamber of Commerce, 1600 E Sheridan St, or visit Ely.org/citywide for a registration form and details. 4/26

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### APPLICATION PROCESS

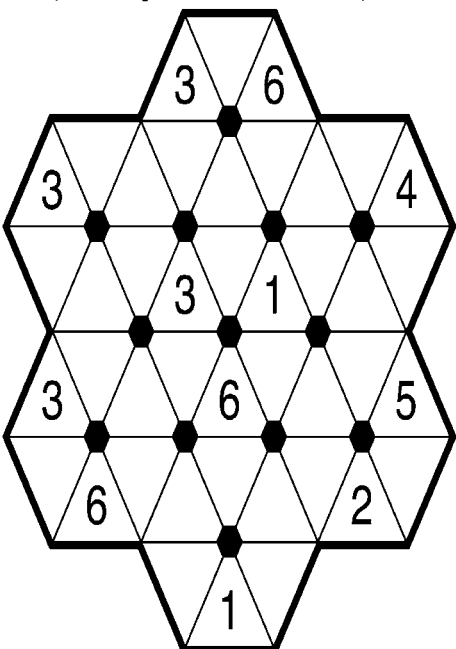
## Super Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Big trucks
  - 5 "Serial" podcast host Koenig
  - 10 Brothers Wyatt, Virgil and Morgan
  - 15 Like GI garb, often
  - 19 Woeful things
  - 20 Bingham of "Baywatch"
  - 21 Slobber
  - 22 Nivea rival
  - 23 Outfit
  - 26 Lasses
  - 27 All upset, with "up"
  - 28 "... flaw — feature?"
  - 29 Actor Knotts
  - 30 Wrung (out)
  - 32 Deli classic
  - 33 Bother a lot
  - 35 Frank of rock
  - 38 Outward display of courage
  - 40 Attachable with a click
  - 42 Hits, as a fly
  - 44 Fill with love
  - 45 "The X Factor," e.g.
  - 47 Congeal
  - 49 Short sleeps
  - 50 Diane once of NPR
  - 51 Gentlemen
  - 53 Breather
  - 56 Apple option
  - 59 Cow sound
  - 62 Primer for a wall, e.g.
  - 67 Names anew
  - 70 Outdoor enclosure for a tabby
  - 72 Abundant
  - 73 Cow sound
  - 74 Despot Amin
  - 75 It's often played during a massage
  - 78 "Let us spray," e.g.
  - 79 Recognize
  - 80 Central Asia's — Sea
  - 81 Honking birds
  - 82 Old Jewish ascetic
  - 84 Snootiness
  - 87 Cur's warning
  - 89 Snake's warning
  - 90 Not bogus
  - 91 Small plateau
  - 93 Give relief to
  - 96 Choir female
  - 99 Responses to massages
  - 101 Something revealed by a scale
  - 107 Fly without a co-pilot, e.g.
  - 110 Like a famed Vatican chapel
  - 112 Roll around in mud or dust
  - 113 Mascara, e.g.
  - 115 Writer
  - 117 Ethiopia's — Selassie
  - 118 Ovid's lang.
  - 119 Tubers often candied
  - 120 Engine speed meas.
  - 121 By way of
  - 123 Tattooist's supply
  - 124 Otherwise
  - 126 What eight answers in this puzzle might say if they could talk?
  - 131 Increase, with "up"
  - 132 Internet sales
  - 133 Increase, with "up"
  - 134 Villain in "The Avengers"
  - 135 609-homer Sammy
  - 136 AC— (big name in auto parts)
  - 137 Promotes heavily
  - 138 Leg joint
- DOWN**
- 1 Most wealthy
  - 2 Actress Douglas who starred in "Grace of My Heart"
  - 3 Pertaining to an opening of the larynx
  - 4 Former jet to JFK
  - 5 Mix, as batter
  - 6 Desi of Desilu Studios
  - 7 Sleazy paper
  - 8 King topper
  - 9 Furry feet in back
  - 10 Biblical utopia
  - 11 Shirt part
  - 12 Clemente of baseball
  - 13 Oompah band genre
  - 14 Shirt part
  - 15 Tooth on a gearwheel
  - 16 A Gulf state
  - 17 Patroller around a food court
  - 18 Bivalve mollusks
  - 24 Sweltering summer day
  - 25 Ivory, e.g.
  - 31 Lion's hideout
  - 34 Fast glance
  - 36 Burnt residue
  - 37 Gp. once led by Arafat
  - 38 Raft wood
  - 39 Soda brand
  - 41 Utmost
  - 43 Dickens' miser
  - 46 Opposite of lge.
  - 48 Three, to Fifi
  - 52 Slippery road condition
  - 54 "The Hunger Games" escort
  - 55 Blueprint data, in brief
  - 56 From Dublin or Cork
  - 57 Jason's wife, in myth
  - 58 "Ta-tal," in Tours
  - 60 Central Florida city
  - 61 Crayon stuff
  - 63 Less of a lie
  - 64 Louvre Pyramid architect
  - 65 Adjectives modify them
  - 66 Message-leavers' cues
  - 68 Astronomer Tycho —
  - 69 Mattress brand
  - 71 Fierce female feline
  - 76 1972 Eric Clapton hit
  - 77 Chinese menu letters
  - 83 Aussie girl
  - 85 Newlywed man
  - 86 "Got it, man"
  - 88 San Luis —
  - 92 Slightly excessive
  - 94 "How cute!"
  - 95 Ugly foe of Popeye
  - 96 Neverending
  - 97 Not deserting
  - 98 Frightful flies
  - 100 Like always
  - 102 "Ode — Grecian Urn"
  - 103 Costa — Sol
  - 104 Use as a skating surface
  - 105 Mount — College (Elaine Chao's alma mater)
  - 106 12-year-old kid, say
  - 108 Set in place
  - 109 Gave the nod
  - 111 — City (Ohio town named for William Henry Harrison's moniker)
  - 114 Theatricalize
  - 116 Like sheep
  - 120 Move, to a Realtor
  - 122 Tattooist's supplies
  - 125 Green org.
  - 127 Ocasek of The Cars
  - 128 Endeavor
  - 129 Spying setup
  - 130 Big name in civ. rights

## SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

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



DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

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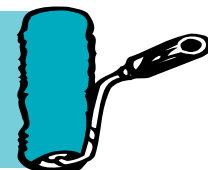
### Answer

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

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