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The **TIMBERJAY**



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PUBLIC LANDS

VNP issues revised frozen lake use proposal

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

Public comment period to run from May 28-June 28

REGIONAL- Voyageurs National Park officials on Monday released a revised version of their proposed Frozen Lake Surface Use Plan, a measure that generated intense blowback from the public when the first iteration was proposed in April of last year.

According to park officials, the plan is needed to bring the park into compliance with federal policies and regulations for the use of motor vehicles within national parks. Those regulations

prohibit the operation of motor vehicles except on park roads, and in parking areas. According to the document issued by VNP on Monday, routes and areas for off-road motor vehicle use may not be designated in national parks, meaning the current dispersed use of such vehicles on the park's frozen lake surfaces is inconsistent with regulations.

Comments taken at two public hearings, a third virtual hearing, and submitted in writing

were compiled, analyzed, and used to inform the revised proposal, according to VNP Superintendent Bob DeGross, who said he hopes the public will continue to be engaged in the review process.

"We encourage the public to review the new alternative and provide their comments," DeGross told the *Timberjay* on Monday. "My main goal is to allow for a reasonable amount of access within the regulations

defined by the National Park Service, while assuring the protection of resources and being mindful of the range of visitors who seek to enjoy the park. I hope that the new alternative will demonstrate our willingness to create the balance that considers all of those concerns."

The Frozen Lake Surface Use Plan document lists four alternatives, two of which appear to be non-starters. Alternative one would be to leave things the way

they are, an option the document clearly states is "not selectable" due to the conflict with applicable regulations. Alternative four would restrict access to snowmobiles only, with no ice roads, and ice fishing shelters would have to be transported only by snowmobiles in both the moderate and low-use zones that would be established.

That leaves alternative two, the original frozen lake plan, and alternative three, the revised plan,

See...**FROZEN** pg. 9



FISHING OPENER 2024

Fish stories aplenty

The walleye were wily, but anglers win out for opener

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

Above: An angler uses his bare hands to land a modest Lake Vermilion walleye on opening day.

Right: An angler ponders whether to keep or toss back a small walleye.

photos by D. Colburn

REGIONAL- Another successful fishing opener weekend is in the books, with hordes of eager anglers flocking to Lake Vermilion and other area lakes in search of the often elusive walleye.

Reports indicate a strong turnout and catch on Lake Vermilion, with anglers reporting plenty of pan-sized walleye.

Early morning activity in and around Tower was somewhat subdued compared to past openers, with fishing guide Rob Bryers reporting fewer than usual boats in the traditional early season hot spots on the east end of Lake Vermilion. Perhaps anglers were a bit reluctant to brave the chilly morning temperatures, but as temperatures warmed toward midday, the fishing flotillas were out

in numbers comparable to typical opening days, Bryers said.

"There were spots where there a lot of boats congregate and I didn't notice any significant increase or decrease it looked like a kind of a typical opener on Lake Vermilion," fishing guide Phil Bakken told the *Timberjay*. "Most people I talked to started in Pike Bay, so I assume it was the typical crowd."

Boats racing from place to place was a common sight as anglers went in search of walleye that were more dispersed than usual, thanks in large

See...**OPENER** pg. 10



ELY SCHOOLS

ECR reports funding cuts to board

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The nonprofit Ely Community Resource shared unhappy news with the Ely School Board on Monday evening. The group, which runs several tutoring, mentoring, afterschool, and summer programs for school-aged children and youth, has lost close to \$150,000 in funding for next year.

"So, for summer, I think we're going to make it but we're unsure about the school year," ECR executive director Julie Hignell told the board. "I wanted to come and make sure that you knew that because we feel very connected to the school. ECR exists to support the school and our kids."

The ECR had a \$120,000 three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education which was not renewed. The organization also had had a Youth Intervention Grant from

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

CITY OF TOWER

Council hears pushback over short-term rental recommendation

TOWER— A recommendation to prohibit short-term rentals in districts zoned residential here drew some pushback at Monday's meeting of the Tower City Council. The city's planning and zoning commission, which has been considering an ordinance change to address concerns about short-term rentals for more than a year, voted recently to recommend prohibiting the option in the city's three residential zone districts as well the residential-transition zone along a portion of Main Street.

See...**COUNCIL** pg. 9



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Community notices

Citywide Rummage, Business Crazy Day, and Used Equipment and Watercraft Sale is Saturday, May 18

ELY - Spring is here, and that means the 13th annual Citywide Rummage Sale, Business Crazy Day, and Used Equipment and Watercraft Sale is just around the corner. This is a ONE-day event on May 18. The event map with the sale locations and lists is available at the Chamber of Commerce office or at Ely.org/citywide on May 14, providing just enough time to plan out shopping routes and strategies.

Dozens of area residents are holding rummage sales starting at 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. There are plenty of locations with clothing, household goods, plus some with outdoor gear, sporting goods, and more.

Area businesses are on the list too, featuring in-store and sidewalk sales. Some of our area outfitters have used equipment and watercraft on their sales lists. Business hours vary and are listed on the event map.

Restaurants, coffee shops, and bakeries are open too, so swing in and fill-up on great food and beverages while shopping.

The Ely Chamber of Commerce is open from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 18, so you can swing in and pick up your map, or download a copy off the website at Ely.org/citywide.

Shannon Gunderson in concert on May 19

EMBARRASS- Sisu Heritage, Inc. will host a concert by Shannon Gunderson on Sunday, May 19 at 3 p.m. in the Embarrass Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church.

Gunderson, of Virginia, is well known in the region as a piano teacher and a member of The Divas trio. For this concert, she will be performing solo, adding vocals to her keyboard playing. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$8 for Sisu members; children ages 12 and under are free.

The historic church building was gifted to Sisu by its former congregation and is a great venue for live music. Parking is available on the lawn. The address is 5103 Hwy. 21, across from Hope Lutheran Church.

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

Embarrass Memorial Day service

EMBARRASS- Embarrass will hold their annual Memorial Day service on Monday, May 27 at 9 a.m. at the Embarrass Cemetery. Coffee and refreshments will follow at the Embarrass Town Hall.

Free community meal at Immanuel Lutheran on May 22

TOWER- Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tower is hosting a free community meal on Wednesday, May 22 from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., or until the food is gone. The menu this month is sloppy Joe's, chips, baked beans, and dessert. Dine-in or carry-out available. All are welcome.

Borealis Bards to present the musical, "Is There a Doctor in the House?"

BACKUS - The Borealis Bards, the theatre program associated with Backus Community Center, will be presenting, "Is There a Doctor in the House? the Musical" as its spring production May 23 and 24. Performances are scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 23 and Friday, May 24. Doors will open one hour prior to the show.

"Is There a Doctor in the House? the Musical," is a vaudevillian slapstick adaptation of Moliere's medical play with original bluegrass and country songs. The script was written by Tim Kelly, with music and lyrics by Bill Francoeur. It is being produced by special arrangement with Pioneer Drama Inc., of Denver, Colo. The show features a cast of more than 25 youth and adults who have a hilarious time singing, dancing, and improvising. The director, Michelle Boelk, was the former band teacher at Falls High School and is the newly hired events coordinator at Backus.

This theatre arts production has been made possible by a grant from the Marshall N. Knutson Family Community Fund.

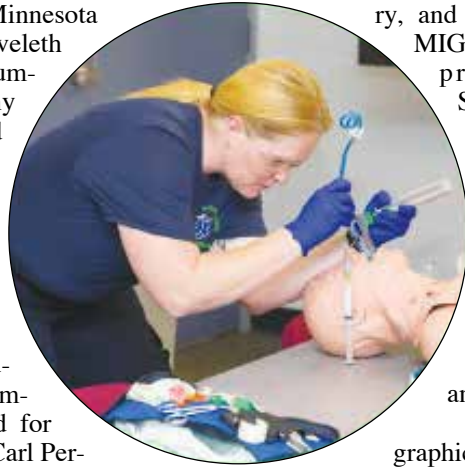
INVESTING IN YOUTH

Teenagers can learn about EMS, welding, graphic design at free camps

EVELETH - Minnesota North College, Eveleth Campus, will host summer camps for any student ages 16 and up. Attendees can explore hands-on workshops in Emergency Medical Services (EMS), welding, and graphic design and visual communications. These summer camps are paid for through the federal Carl Perkins grant for Career and Technical Education and will be hosted at the Eveleth Campus.

The EMS camp is June 10-11 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Students will work to gain a CPR/First Aid/AED certification and work alongside local fire departments, EMS and Life Link air medical program.

The welding camp is July 8-12 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. The focus of this camp will be safety, welding theo-



ry, and stick and MIG welding processes. Supplies will be provided. Students are strongly encouraged to wear jeans and boots.

The graphic design and visual communications boot camp is August 15 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. This camp will highlight photography and video editing, along with Motion and Apple M1 computer training.

Minnesota North College is a member of the True North Stars, a Carl Perkins consortia. Carl Perkins is a grant funded program that supports Career and Technical Education in Minnesota. Each consor-

tia includes at least one Minnesota State College and one school district, including charter schools. The True North Stars include 22 high schools across the Iron Range, serving five counties in northern Minnesota. Perkins mission is to connect students to career exploration and hands-on learning opportunities in high schools, post-secondary and with local workforce. For more information about Perkins please contact Perkins Coordinator, Chris Vito, at Christopher.vito@minnesotanorth.edu.

Minnesota North College prepares lifelong learners and engaged citizens through inclusive, transformative experiences reflecting the character and natural environment of the region. For more information about Minnesota North College, please contact Annika Freiburger at annika.freiburger@minnesotanorth.edu.

FANTASY FANS

Return of Range FanCon to Virginia on June 29 - 30

VIRGINIA - Range FanCon held its debut last year in late July at Mt. Iron Community Center and received a great deal of attention with visitors and vendors coming from Minneapolis and St. Paul, special guests, and competitions throughout the day.

Lovers of all things anime, fantasy, sci-fi, comics, and videogames have found a home at this event which has started a community, especially for people in the Iron Range area, to celebrate their fandoms and meet with fellow enthusiasts both in their area and those attending from areas outside of the Iron Range.

"The crew has been working real hard and are excited for this year's event!" said Richelle Cole, Range FanCon committee member and

one of the original founders of the event.

The Range FanCon committee has made efforts to grow the convention even further by having the event take place this year at the Iron Trail Motors Event Center and extended it into a two-day event that will take place June 29 and 30. With more room for additional vendors and a larger capacity, event runners are anticipating an increased attendance from last year's 500 attendees at the 2023 debut event.

This year's Range FanCon has received sponsorships so far from CTC, Virginia Coop Credit Union, and Discover the Range which has significantly helped in their ability to potentially upstage last year's perfor-



mance. Attendees can expect more cosplay competitions and specialized vendors from across Minnesota as well as light saber battles from The Saber Legion, Axe throwing with Forge Social Haus, tournament style gaming competitions, and a variety of panels. Attendees may also purchase tickets to the Sunday VIP breakfast where they can

also meet some vendors and other guests who will be in attendance.

Early bird passes are on sale until June 1 for \$25 for a one-day badge and \$45 for a two-day badge. Additional prices are listed on their ticketing site at rangefancon.ticketleap.com.

If you would like to sponsor Range FanCon 2024 contact Cesar Ortega at ceasar@rangefancon.com. To sign up as a vendor/panelist, contact richellec@rangefancon.com or joer@rangefancon.com. For more information, check out the website at <https://rangefancon.com/> or Instagram, Facebook, or Discord.

HEALTH CARE

Mission of Mercy to provide free dental care in Duluth, June 7-8

DULUTH - The Minnesota Dental Association and the Minnesota Dental Foundation are proud to announce the upcoming Minnesota Mission of Mercy (MnMOM) event. This two-day free dental clinic will take place on June 7 and 8, 2024, at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center (DECC).

The Mission of Mercy initiative aims to bring free dental care to those in need. Dental professionals, volunteers, and

community partners will come together to provide services, including cleanings, fillings, root canals on select teeth, extractions, children's dentistry, oral hygiene instruction, and a limited amount of temporary partial dental appliances. This event is a lifeline for individuals who lack dental insurance or have faced barriers to accessing dental care.

Clinic dates are June 7-8 at the DECC. Dental professionals and commu-

nity members interested in volunteering can register at www.mndental.org/events/mission-of-mercy.

There is no advance sign-up and patients will be seen on a first-come, first-served basis. Doors will open at 5:30 a.m. Early arrival is encouraged, as patients will be accepted until capacity is reached each day. A parent or guardian must accompany children under 18. Patients will be given a registration and release form to complete and undergo a brief health screening. There will be no photo identification, social security number, or any other personal documentation required. Full dentures, root canals on molars, crowns,

extractions of unexposed wisdom teeth, and dental implants will not be provided.

MnMOM is entirely volunteer-run and donation-based. Monetary and in-kind gifts are critical to ensuring its success. To help cover necessary dental equipment and supplies, pharmaceuticals, and food costs for this event, over \$250,000 in cash and in-kind donations are needed. To make a contribution visit www.mndental.org/about/foundation/give.

For more information, visit www.mndental.org/events/mission-of-mercy.

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TOWNSHIP UPDATES

Greenwood still wrangling over treasurer reports

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- "We are going to zip right through here tonight," said Greenwood Chair Lois Roskoski optimistically at the beginning of the May 14 town board meeting. And while the meeting did not exactly zip along, the board did complete the agenda by 9 p.m., a slight improvement from the April meeting, which lasted more than three hours before members adjourned without completing their agenda.

Once again, the town hall was mostly full, with at least 40 in the audience when the meeting began. And once again, the normal regular financial business took longer than expected.

Treasurer Jeff Maus and Roskoski again sparred over the history of the township's accounting, and financial reporting issues that have yet to be resolved with the changeover of the township clerk, and both brought up inaccuracies in the current recordkeeping.

Both Roskoski, who had been working with new clerk Debby Spicer, and Maus said they were having trouble getting data from each other.

Roskoski again requested changes to how the treasurer submits monthly reports to the board, as well as a budget-to-actual-spending report for the first quarter.

"You two came in," Maus said, "and you had your own way of doing things."

"We are off to a rocky start here," said Maus. "We need to heal our communication. If you need something, call me and ask. Nobody talked to me about how the office had been running. This is something we have to work on."

Maus said he wondered if Roskoski, whose previous experience was with the city of Virginia, was expecting the township treasurer to have the same duties as a city treasurer.

"The treasurer in a township doesn't usually do planning," he said. The duties of a township treasurer are outlined in state statute, and mainly involve re-

ceiving monies belonging to the township and paying it out only upon the lawful order of the town or its officers, along with preserving all financial records.

The treasurers report showed a total balance of township funds of \$630,298 at the end of April. The motion to approve the treasurer's report passed 4-1, with Supervisor Paul Skubic voting against.

Questions also came up on the claims for the month. Maus told Roskoski the past practice had always been to wait as long as possible to post the claims report, so that as many bills as possible are received and can be approved for payment at the monthly meetings.

Maus said he was doing reports the way he had for the past two years. But Roskoski said she wanted the information available as part of the meeting packet, so things like the claims could be reviewed before the meeting night.

"People have been signing claims right before the meeting for years," Maus noted.

The motion to approve claims totaling \$35,839.78 passed 3-2, with Roskoski and Skubic voting no. The claims included \$26,025 to the city of Tower for the 2024 ambulance subsidy payment. Roskoski wanted to delay that payment because the ambulance subsidy agreement had only been approved by the Tower City Council the day before.

Pickleball

The town board approved a contract, drawn up by the township attorney, with the Lake Vermilion Pickleball Association, which outlines how the township will pay the \$24,999 it has committed towards the project. Detailed plans for the court construction are in place. The pads for the court will go in at the same time the parking lot is resurfaced. And committee members are hopeful the fencing and the rest of the court work will be done by late fall.

Township Road 4136

Supervisor Rick Stoehr asked the board to have the township attorney work with the board to develop a process to let the township assess property owners along the road for the needed improvements, to bring the road up to a standard where St. Louis County would agree to provide plowing services.

Skubic said he didn't think the township was "at that point yet."

Roskoski said the township still hadn't determined if the road should be blacktopped or turned back to gravel (a less expensive option).

The motion failed with only Stoehr voting in favor. Supervisor John Bassing abstained, since he owns property along the road.

Skubic said he had met with Mesabi Bituminous, which is resurfacing the parking lot, to review the potholes on Twp. Rd. 4136. The contractor gave an estimate of \$4,250 to fill the potholes, which could be done at the same time they work on the parking lot. The board approved having the work done at the quoted cost.

Paved trail

The board approved an offer from Linda Smith to repaint and repair the sign along the Greenwood paved trail at no cost to the township.

The board took no action on the offer by Mesabi Bituminous to repair several sections of and resurface the entire paved trail for \$75,000.

"Personally, I don't think the trail is that bad now," said Skubic, but he noted that the bad spots are not going to get any better over time. Currently, the township has \$20,000 set aside for trail maintenance, by adding \$2,000 a year to the fund. Resident Lee Peterson wondered if the township should start setting aside twice that amount to account for future repairs.

Fire Department

The board approved hiring two new department members, Dean and Tammy Dowden. Both are EMTs, but they will join the department as EMRs. Dean will also be a firefighter, having previously been a member of the Eagles Nest Fire Department.

The board also approved two new job descriptions for captain positions for both fire and EMS. This move will help with fire department succession, Maus noted, because the two will be trained to perform many management duties. The positions will be posted internally for 25 days. In the meantime, the board approved appointing Brian Trancheff as interim fire captain, and David DeJoode as the interim EMS captain. Pay for both positions has been initially set at \$300 per month. Maus said the two have been performing the new job duties for the last few months.

The board also approved \$1,191 for repairs to one of the engines on fire boat one, \$380 to repair two propellers, and \$4,046 (plus any travel costs) for repairs on fire engine one and tender three. Fire engine one needs new gauges installed. The board also approved spending some of the DNR grant dollars awarded last year on upgrading the lighting on fire boats one and two. The department received a \$5,000 matching grant from the DNR last year. Funds have also been used for wildland firefighting equipment, and new helmets and goggles.

Other business

In other business, the town board:

- Approved hiring Mike Nystrom to video town board meetings at a cost of \$145 per meeting. Roskoski said this would include transparency and accountability for the town board. Nystrom said the videos could be broadcast live on Facebook, or made available shortly after the meeting online. The board approved doing this through the end of the year on a 3-2 vote, with Stoehr and

Bassing voting against, noting the cost.

- At the request of Bassing, the town board unanimously approved accepting the provisions of the state data practices act. This act automatically applies to cities and metro-area townships. Bassing noted this will help the township with some grant applications. "This sends a message that we are transparent," Bassing said. "It shows we can provide information to people the same as a city."

- Heard that Maus has appointed JoAnn Bassing as deputy treasurer, noting she had worked closely with him the last two years and understood the job duties.

- Heard a question from a resident about the progress of the broadband internet installation. Board member Craig Gilbert said he had talked to Randy Long, the project's manager, who said they are hoping to have the project completed this summer. Maus said he talked with a crew doing the archeological survey, who said the survey was completed and now needed approval by the state, which would take about a month. The survey, which was required prior to digging new lines, delayed the project last year.

- Approved a request from Bassing to amend the April minutes to include Bassing's reasoning for voting no on the pickleball donation.

- Approved the purchase of two additional security cameras from Perpich TV at a cost of \$1,690 including installation. Bassing voted against the motion, noting the township needed a policy stating how this information is used, who has access, and other issues. The board also voted to resume operation of the existing four security cameras.

- Accepted the low quote from A-Z Property Management for lawn mowing services at a cost of \$250 per mow.

- Approved purchasing a \$75 ad sponsor package from the *Tower News*.

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OPINION

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Editorial

Politicians for sale

Trump's promises to Big Oil in exchange for campaign cash raise troubling questions

Rarely has a presidential candidate been so blunt. During a meeting with some of the country's top oil executives at Mar-a-Lago last month, Donald Trump reportedly pushed them to raise a billion dollars to send him back to the White House.

The payoff? He'd eliminate dozens of environmental policies put in place by the Biden administration to reduce air pollution, cut greenhouse gas emissions, limit toxic chemicals and conserve wild lands.

President Biden's policies are supported by huge majorities of Americans, most of whom line up firmly behind cleaner air and water, protection of public lands, and fighting climate change. But such policies have been a nuisance to the well-heeled oil and gas executives who are lining up to help fund Trump's run for a second term (and a get-out-of-jail-free card). Trump makes no secret, of course, of whose side he's on and that he views the presidency in purely transactional terms, so such a blatant quid pro quo isn't a surprise. Yet, the fact that so much of Trump's campaign cash ends up in his own pocket makes his pitch nearly indistinguishable from a solicited bribe.

Keep in mind, the oil executives doing the complaining have been wallowing in money. Over the past two years, under the Biden administration, companies like Exxon and Chevron have made near-record profits, in part due to the impact of the war in Ukraine as well as continuing sanctions on Venezuela and Iran, which continue to limit global supply. But, as Trump would no doubt say, you can always be richer and to hell with the planet. Just tell yourself that climate change is a hoax, dirty air builds character, and endangered species should pull themselves up by their bootstraps.

Some of Biden's critics are trying to blame his environmental policies for gas prices that have risen since the early days of the pandemic, even though they've dropped since the peaks in 2023.

The fact is, despite the Biden administration's progress on environmental protection, oil production in the U.S. is booming. Indeed, oil production is not only higher under Biden than at any point during the Trump administration, it is higher than ever recorded in any country at any time in history. Which makes the

point that the U.S. isn't going to produce its way to lower gas prices.

Keep in mind, that's not American oil coming out of the ground in North Dakota, Texas, or California. Once produced, its owned by the oil companies of the world and they don't give American consumers a discount just because it's extracted here. Oil is a global commodity and the geopolitics are complex and are certainly not dictated from the White House anymore.

Trump says if elected, he'll "drill, baby, drill," but Trump says a lot of things that aren't true, and this is one of them. The president doesn't drill for oil, nor does the administration. The federal government sells leases for oil and gas drilling and the oil companies get around to drilling on those leases when they feel it's most profitable—and thousands of those leases sit untapped to this day. The oil sector has finally learned over the years that bringing a whole lot of new capacity online whenever the price rises serves only to drive down the oil price, and oil profits along with it.

In either case, federal lands only comprise about ten percent of the land leased for oil and gas drilling. The vast majority of federal leases are on private land.

Here's a reality check: electing Trump won't cut two cents off the price of gas at the pump. Issuing more leases as thousands of leases already issued sit unused won't boost oil production in the U.S. Promising to "drill, baby, drill" may elicit cheers at a Trump rally, but it's as empty as all the other promises Trump made and then ignored over the years.

But by kowtowing to the Exxons and Chevrons of the world, Trump is helpfully reminding us what it's like to have a president who is for sale. If he's willing to do the oil industry's bidding for money, whose other interests is he willing to serve for the next payoff? Trump made it clear in his first term that he viewed the office of the presidency as his, not the nation's. Like Trump bibles, Trump steaks, and Trump sneakers, it's just another over-hyped product to be sold to the highest bidder. Anyone who believes America's interests will be part of the calculation, should start actually listening to what Donald Trump is saying. It's scary.



Letters from Readers

The "doughnut" economy

Kate Raworth, an English economist, describes "good life" economics as a "doughnut economy." Her big picture view challenges linear, "bottom-line," endless-growth economics with a sustainable circular system that nurtures all human beings. Systems thinking requires ethics in building a fair and regenerative economy allowing everyone to thrive.

Beginning with the Industrial Revolution, human activity has significantly overloaded the environment to bring about consequences that threaten our very existence. Proactive human behavior is long overdue to redirect us from ecological collapse to one that restores, regenerates and renews our relationship to Mother Earth. Clear and obvious; we are not above, nor separate from, but part of nature.

Economics that disregards Earth's ecological balance and the well-being of its inhabitants has outlived its usefulness. A self-contained market system that worships and enables addiction to endless growth is destructive to planetary and human well-being. Economics, narrowly defined as a mechanical marketplace of supply and demand must be redesigned by dynamic and complex systems thinking.

Economic systems, creations of human imagination, can be reordered to be dis-

tributive and regenerative by design. Two concentric circles form a doughnut shape, a Goldilocks Zone between those circles, provides a "safe and just space for humanity" to thrive. Going beyond the outer ring, overshooting Earth's carrying capacity, degrades the environment to endanger planetary life. Inequality and human deprivation weakens the social foundation allowing too many to fall outside the inner ring into the "doughnut hole."

Our economy, a social system (not a natural system), designed for accumulating wealth for the few, is blind to the injustice of human deprivation and ecological degradation. Endless growth, externalities, extraction and depletion are the outcomes of an economy, highly centralized with the 1-percent "lording over" the 99-percent. The "doughnut" metaphor suggests an economy of the people, by the people, for the people.

**Harold Honkola
Stillwater**

Too many underappreciate the damage a second Trump presidency could do

About ten years ago Erik Larson, a nonfiction author penned a book called "In the Garden of the Beasts."

It is a history of the American ambassador to Germany in the 1930s and his response to Adolf Hitler.

The ambassador seemed to underappreciate the potential evil of Hitler who would thrust the world into chaos and World War.

It seems to me that many in our region have underappreciated Donald Trump and the dangers he could unleash upon the United States and the world. We must take him at his word for he has pledged to suspend the United States Constitution on day one after pledging to uphold the Constitution at the inauguration.

Further, Trump has promised to set up deportation centers and bypass immigration laws, only after defeating the best bipartisan bill solving the immigration mess that Congress had wanted to fix. As well, he has threatened the press and media unfriendly to him. He continues to demonize those who oppose him, such as calling Democrats "Nazis." This is a man who does not respect our institutions and acts as if he is above the law. He has asked the Supreme Court to make him immune from accountability for any presidential acts that a president might commit. The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior, and the riot and coup planned on Jan. 6, 2021, should make any voter vote for the alternative. He is a clear and present danger to our democracy. We said "no" to King George on July 4, 1776.

**Rev. Charles D. Barnes
Aurora**

COMMENTARY

There is hope where there is help

I found out my mom was an alcoholic when I was 17 years old. That was devastating, but eventually shed some enlightenment for me on our household dysfunctions. I shouldn't have been surprised,



BETTY FIRTH

since I grew up in an alcohol-soaked environment, but that was the norm, and alcoholism was neither acknowledged nor discussed. My parents had a fully-stocked liquor cabinet, and socializing with friends always meant drinking, whether it was a weekend party, golf outing, or bridge club, along with a daily ritual of evening cocktails. I thought it

was normal to have a dozen liquor bottles on hand along with many after-dinner liqueurs. I thought every teenager would naturally know the difference between creme de menthe and Kahlúa, how to make a dry martini, and be able to identify drinks I served to the adults. We rarely had beer or wine (which I thought of as intense grape juice, not even really alcohol), but my best friend's father drank beer, and I just thought he wasn't as classy as my parents.

I was unaware of Al-Anon and floundered in

my ignorance and lack of support about Mom's condition. Although empathetic, I was embarrassed by her, ashamed for her, and angry at my father for abandoning her and me emotionally and later, physically. Most distressing was being clueless about how to help her. Like many in that predominantly white, middle class, Chicago suburb, I thought alcoholism was the affliction of winos falling into gutters, and we didn't even have gutters in our neighborhood. The uninformed and biased attitudes of our country as a whole delayed serious research into addictive behavior, because it was regarded as a character flaw and moral failing.

Lack of true under-

standing about addictions and the interconnection with mental health is still an obstacle to implementing effective solutions that would provide the supports needed. Those with deep pockets have a lot of options, but for those with little money or support from family and friends, the obstacles are huge. Addictive behavior can be changed, but it's not easy, and the chances for long-term recovery are dramatically improved with adequate, supportive resources. And yet, according to the 2022 U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 94 percent of people aged 12 or older with a substance use disorder did not receive any treatment, and most did not think they needed

treatment.

A friend, who is in recovery with a year's sobriety, first tried to quit on her own with family support. She realized she needed inpatient treatment, where hearing everyone's stories helped her understanding of the addictions and challenges they all faced. She said, "People can be very vulnerable and still feel safe," which she continues to experience in 12-step meetings. She said, "I met weekly on Zoom with my family for months, attended several 12-step meetings a week, and shared my story with friends. I continue to meet weekly with my wise, wonderful, sponsor, and I couldn't have done it without all that incredible support."

Professionals in the

field have long acknowledged that alcohol and substance (drug) abuse is a disease, but the average lay person may still be holding on to old biases and the resulting stigma, perhaps thinking, "Yeah, but really, it just takes some will power, doesn't it?" It is almost cliché that people—including most of us—are in denial about our own addictive behavior: "I'm not really addicted to..." (fill in substance of choice: alcohol, prescription drugs, illicit drugs, nicotine, sugar, caffeine...and behaviors such as shopping, sleeping, relationships, and work). "I can stop anytime. I can do it on my own. I'll just

See HOPE...pg. 5

Letters from Readers

Paved shoulder improvements to Hwy. 115

Thanks for David Colburn's road project report in last week's paper. I'd like to add one thing that is of interest concerning CSAH 115/77. Hwy. 77, from the Y Store to the beginning of Hwy. 115 in Greenwood, was built with eight-foot paved shoulders, making it quite safe for foot and bike traffic. Hwy. 115, from Greenwood to Cook, was built with only six-foot paved shoulders. Last summer, I spoke with Commissioner Paul McDonald about the possibility of widening the 115 shoulders for safety's sake. He liked the idea and brought it to the Public Works Dept. for consideration and got a positive result. Paul asked that the Greenwood Town Board pass a motion of support for the upgrade and send it along to him. The town board voted unanimously in favor of it. The result will be an upgrade to seven-and-a-half-foot paved shoulders on Hwy. 115, making it much safer to walk and bike all the way to Cook. It's really a nice route through the countryside, with no big challenging hills to contend with. Paul McDonald's quick help to make it safer is appreciated.

**Lee Peterson
Greenwood Township**

Biden and his lies

Biden handlers avoided interviews with journalists willing to ask tough questions. *NY Post* editorial board wrote, "Wednesday's chat with CNN's

Erin Burnett shows why. In a brief 17 minutes, Biden told 15 lies, nearly a lie a minute. From whoppers about the economy to prevarications on Israel, Biden spun a fantasyland of a presidency that voters know is false." Propaganda lies.

NY Post's editorial board wrote, "Are other world leaders really pulling Biden aside after his nap and saying 'democracy is at stake' if he loses? Give us a break."

Biden claimed inflation was 9 percent when he took office when in fact it was only 1.4 percent. Biden's inflation numbers do not include gas and food! When asked how inflation affects Americans, Biden responded, "People have money to spend ... They're personally in good shape." Demented or delusional?

CNN reported, "Biden's claim of 15 million jobs being created in the U.S. during his administration is correct, but it lacks the context that so many jobs were temporarily lost during the Covid-19 pandemic," due to Democrat mandates! Lying by omission. CBS reports one in five of those jobs are taken by illegal aliens.

The *Post's* editorial board said "he created nothing" and accused Biden of lying about former President Trump losing more jobs than he created, which they called a "corollary lie."

Biden went to a holocaust memorial, then the next day he pulled congressionally approved arms and munitions to Israel needed to eradicate Hamas terrorists. Genocide Joe is pandering to Hamas terrorist loving Democrat voters who chant death to America and killing all Jews from the river to the sea while screwing the only democratic country in the region. Starting with the disastrous Afghan withdrawal, Biden

is orchestrating a master class on foreign policy blunders.

**Mike Banovetz
Ely**

Hydrogen has tremendous potential for energy

Hydrogen is the most abundant element in our universe. Many people thought that hydrogen was only found in compound form, such as in water. Recently, however, naturally formed hydrogen was found in reservoirs in Mali and France. Subsequently, hydrogen is anticipated to be found in at least a half dozen countries and in Nebraska and Arizona. It is expected that a lot more geological hydrogen sites will be discovered in the future.

"Manufactured" hydrogen separates its compound element such as water into hydrogen and oxygen. It is a costly operation, and the process often uses natural gas that releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. In contrast, natural hydrogen does not require processing for it to be used as a greenhouse emissions-free fuel.

Hydrogen is presently being used in Europe and elsewhere throughout the world to power automobiles (15,000 in U.S.), trucks, buses, ships, airplanes, rockets, trains, construction and farm equipment and even golf carts. A recent hydrogen powered passenger train established a record of pollution-free travel distance of 1,741 miles without refueling or recharging.

Unfortunately, oil companies have continued to concentrate on financing the expansion of carbon petroleum products instead of shifting the focus to hydrogen in a meaningful effort to develop hydrogen as a primary energy source.

Fortunately, politicians or

Congress will not have to legislate or subsidize the companies to shift their focus to hydrogen. Economics will be the determining factor. Natural or white hydrogen, as it is referred to, will be competitively cheaper than petroleum products because it can be used directly in its natural state and does not require costly refining that is necessary for producing gasoline.

Unlike solar and wind power that are unreliable for continuous fuel power and necessitate battery backups, hydrogen can be stored without degradation of energy over time or temperature changes that can significantly reduce batteries' effectiveness.

In some countries hydrogen is already being consumer marketed at existing fueling stations alongside gasoline pumps. Hydrogen can be transported by retrofitted pipelines, ships, trains, or trucks to retail destinations.

Natural occurrence of hydrogen originates when subterranean heated water comes in contact with iron-rich rock which essentially rusts, forming iron oxides, leaving behind hydrogen. (There is likely to be active reservoirs of hydrogen beneath Ely's iron-rich rock that is located above the Mid-continental Rift System. The Rift was created by a split in the Earth's crust occurring about 1.1 billion years ago.) According to the U.S. Geological Survey, hydrogen deposits can provide continuous clean energy for hundreds of years because the source of hydrogen energy is still being replenished by constantly flowing into existing reservoirs due to the earth's heat dynamics and formation.

Our aging vulnerable national grid system will unlikely be able to provide continuously reliable and viable electric service when the almost 300 million U.S. registered vehicles are replaced with electric grid pow-

ered vehicles.

Will the utilities be able to upgrade, increase their capacity, and finance the additional burden of the transportation needs, in a timely manner? According to Canary Media, "A mountain of solar, storage, and wind projects are waiting for permission to plug into the grid. The interconnection queue is now double the size of the entire U.S. grid. In 2015, a typical project took three years to make it through the queue. In 2023, it took five years. These new demands will require acquiescence of many and very diverse stakeholders including the NIMBYS.

There are many new start-up companies that have as their sole purpose to find and develop natural hydrogen energy. This clean energy can be used not only for transportation, but also power for stationary needs in homes, office buildings, factories, warehouses, data centers, and utilities.

It may take a while to determine whether hydrogen can become the major contributor to the reduction of fossil fuels emissions, but there is more than just hope because very large resources of private capital and brainpower are being focused on overcoming possible obstacles to activate the benefits of hydrogen. On the other hand, the continuation of the status quo will assuredly lead our planet towards extreme heat, disasters, and rising sea levels.

Maybe in the future a small, self-powered hydrogen electrolyzer (splits water into hydrogen and oxygen) might be developed to operate in cars and other forms of transportation using water as the fuel.

**Gerry Snyder
Ely**

HOPE...Cont. from page 4

cut back. I don't need any treatment, therapy, or help from people or programs. I'm doing just fine," as we reach for another bottle of beer, pill, or candy bar.

Advancements in brain research have increased the understanding of what addictive substances are specifically doing to our brains that cause addiction and make recovery difficult. I think this deepening understanding of the process, beyond using the generic term of "disease," will help people realize that addiction is not a character flaw or personal failure, but a way that our bodies react to certain substances, and that some people are more susceptible than others; 10-15-percent of the population are considered to have addictive tendencies.

The National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIH/NIDA) website states, "As a result of scientific research, we know that addiction is a medical disorder that affects the brain and changes behavior. Addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences. Brain imaging studies of people with addiction show physical changes in areas of the brain that are critical to judgment, decision-making, learning, memory, and behavior control. These changes help explain the compulsive nature of addiction."

Research has identified many of the biological and environmental risk factors and are searching for the genetic variations that contribute to this disorder in order to develop effective prevention and treatment approaches. Treatment enables people

to counteract the disruptive effects on their brain, behavior, and loss of control in their lives.

The cost to ourselves, our families, and communities is stunning when you wrap your mind around the realities. In 2021, 16.7-percent of the population over 12 battled a substance use disorder. That's one in every six people, so one-sixth of our population is adversely affected by substance use, with a ripple effect to all those around them. That means they are probably doing poorly in school or work, having difficulty maintaining healthy relationships, spending a lot of money to feed their addictions, and performing more poorly as a community member than they would be if they were clean and sober. There is also an incalculable cost to those affected by the often devastating side effects—partners, children, parents, siblings and other family members, co-workers, as well as random strangers who become victims in crimes or accidents.

How could our communities benefit from providing adequate supports for prevention and recovery? In addition to improving the lives of the people with a substance disorder and all those in their sphere, our communities gain a productive, tax-paying citizen who will hopefully engage in constructive activities and lend a hand to others who could use some help. Research shows that communities with better resources experience reduced crime rates, less reliance on law enforcement and emergency services, higher property values, and improved connections between community members.

How can we do that here? The need is greater in our rural communities and resources are in short supply, a sad statement for the state nicknamed "The Land of 10,000 treatment centers." The Ely non-profit, Well Being Development, created in 2010 to address widely unmet mental health needs on the northeast Iron Range, is working hard to make more community support a reality. With input from the community, plans are underway to create a recovery residence for local residents recovering from the effects of substance abuse. In March of 2023, the group received \$134,000 from an opioid settlement received by St. Louis County and initiated research into proven, cost-effective interventions that could be implemented in Ely.

I spoke with Nels Pierson, who is on the Well Being Development board and advisory council for the transitional housing facility. He shared his own experiences as a person in recovery in sober housing after he completed treatment, saying that he doesn't believe he would have made it without that structure, accountability,

and support. The facility had rules and agreements that were not negotiable, such as attending 12-step meetings at least three days a week, being in the facility at night, having a paid or volunteer job, and obviously, not using illegal drugs or alcohol. Counseling was available to residents as well as appropriately prescribed medication for depression and other physical and mental health issues.

Asked what was most helpful about that structure, he responded that it was a safe place to be, insulated from the world's stresses and temptations. "I needed the slow pace of getting back into society, living in recovery. I felt that I was a part of something bigger; that if I didn't keep my agreements, I would be letting down not just myself, but the other residents and the program itself."

The proposed sober house in Ely will have similar agreements and supports for two to four rent-paying residents who have successfully completed a treatment program. The residence will have an on-site manager with peer recovery support training and will also

provide a home for Northern Lights Clubhouse and office space for Well Being Development offices, including a certified Community Health Worker serving as a Pathways to Wellness Care Facilitator.

May is Mental Health Awareness month—perhaps it's time to give your own attitudes about mental health and addic-

tion a wellness check. A contribution to Well Being Development would be a valued step toward shifting attitudes and improving resources in our area! Mail a check to Well Being Development, PO Box 714, Ely, MN, 55731 or donate online at: www.wellbeingdevelopment.org/support-us.



the TIMBERJAY

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Week of May 20

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.



TSHS weekly winner
TOWER- The winner of the Charlemagne's 52 Club \$100 cash prize for week 42 is Ted Johnson of East Grand Forks, Minn.

History Tidbit: The Mother's Day Fire of 1992 is a true story of personal heroism played out in the midst of the fire's fury. DNR and Forest Service fire crews, volunteer fire departments, and neighbors all pitched in to save most of the homes along County Road 26, Highway 169 and elsewhere in the vicinity.

It was Mother's Day and the opening weekend of fishing season. Many area families had gathered together to celebrate Mother's Day and spend time on the lake. Hundreds of people were fishing on Lake Vermilion and many lake residents were busy opening their cabins for the season. It was a perfect day—warm and sunny.

What folks did not realize was that persistent dry conditions in the area had created an ideal setting for a forest fire, and an idyllic Mother's Day turned into a terrifying day of disaster. That afternoon, smoke and fires to the south and west of Tower were spotted by fire tower personnel and the Forestry Detection Flight. Within an hour of being reported, local firefighters and DNR crews, along with volunteers and air support, were at the scene fighting two separate forest fires that would blacken over 7,400 acres.

To be continued...

Bookmobile stops
REGIONAL- The Arrowhead Bookmobile will be in the Tower-Soudan area on Wednesdays: May 29, no bookmobile stop in June, July 10 and 31, Aug. 21, Sept. 11, Oct. 2 and 23, Nov. 13, and Dec. 4, 2024.

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

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

LAKE VERMILION CULTURAL CENTER

Lepak and Solkela in concert in Tower on May 18

TOWER- The Lake Vermilion Cultural Center is pleased to host a spectacular show on Saturday, May 18 featuring two local performers, Jeremy Lepak and Steve Solkela.

Lepak, a local ventriloquist, will begin the show at 6 p.m. Lepak has been a professional ventriloquist for 16 years. He and his puppets will entertain the audience with comedy and mu-

sic incorporating variety show charm.

Once again, Steve Solkela, "The Funny Finn from Palo, Minn." will perform an action-packed recital beginning at 6:30 p.m. Steve is an accomplished musician, comedian, stuntman, opera singer, actor, and composer known for his nonsensical sense of humor, creative mind, and unpredictable

musical combinations. This local favorite's "overpopulated" one-man band is made up of 14 instruments, some of which are the accordion, trumpet, cowbell, train horn, double bass drum pedal, and one blonde guy who sings.

Save this date because you won't want to miss seeing these two amazing performers. A free-will donation will be accepted at

the door. The cultural center is located on Tower's Main Street, across from the fire hall.

The LVCC is dedicated to community enrichment through education and the arts by offering quality programming and providing opportunities to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the area. To learn more about the organization or to donate, visit vermilionculturalcenter.org.

New playground at McKinley Park Campground



Amelie and Owen Zak had a great time checking out the new playground equipment at McKinley Park Campground. The campground also features public docks (launch fee required) and a public beach and play area. submitted photos

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

BREITUNG TWP- McKinley Park Campground has new playground equipment, thanks to a \$20,000 grant received from St. Louis County. The new climber-style structure features slides along with plenty of fun climbing opportuni-

ties. The equipment was picked out with help from a few adults in Soudan who have young children. The existing swings are still in place. The play area also has a thick layer of brand new woodchips.

"We got the grant with help from St. Louis County Commissioner Paul McDonald," said campground manager Su-

sie Chiabotti. "The old playground equipment was here before we took over managing the campground 21 years ago."

Township maintenance staff plus campground volunteers helped put the new play structure together, to make sure it was ready for the new camping and swimming season.

Tower Car Show set for Saturday, May 18

TOWER- The Tower Café is hosting a day filled with classic cars, community, and celebration on May 18, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in downtown Tower. Explore a stunning array of classic cars, trucks, and more, as enthusiasts gather to showcase their prized possessions. Whether you're a car aficionado or simply love a good time, this event is for you! Entries are available at Tower Café on the day of the event. The entry fee is simply a donation of your choice (i.e. a can of food, monetary donation, etc.)

for the Tower Area Food Shelf. Let's come together to support our community while admiring some incredible automobiles.

Please note that in the event of inclement weather, the car show will turn into a winter beater show. Rain or shine, we'll be out in full force, ready to make memories and connections. While you're here, take a leisurely stroll along Main Street and discover the charm of our local shops. Many of them will be open, offering unique finds and friendly faces. And of course, don't forget to

swing by Tower Café for some delicious lunch and breakfast options. Whether you're craving a hearty meal or a quick bite, we've got you covered. Let's make this a day to remember, filled with laughter, camaraderie, and the joy of community. If any local businesses want to take part in donating prizes, please drop them off at the Tower Café. Thanks to UBetcha Antiques & Uffda Gifts for the gift card donation which we will be using this weekend as one of the prizes.

Midsummer singers needed

TOWER- The Lake Vermilion Cultural Center will be celebrating the 15th anniversary of Midsummer concerts with a tune from each year's show featuring a chorus and soloists, under the direction of Janice Kimes, assisted by Larry Reynolds. Come join us for what will be a memorable, song-filled, Midsummer birthday party.

Rehearsals at St. Mary's Hall will be on Thursday, June

13 from 6:30-8 p.m. ; Friday, June 14 from 2-3:30 p.m.; and Saturday, June 15 from 10:30 a.m.-12 noon. The performance will be on Saturday, June 15 at 7:15 p.m. To join the chorus or for more information, email larryreynolds52@gmail.com.

Charlelmagne's Attic last chance sale

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Historical Society needs to clean out the inside of the old fire hall for the interior reno-

vation work planned for this summer. The group is planning one final sale on Friday and Saturday, May 24 and 25 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., both days. Items will be priced to move! New to the sale are mid-century modern furniture pieces, an antique settee couch and matching chair, Singer sewing machine in a cabinet, electric stove, kitchen and household items, artwork, and more.

Memorial Day Tribute set for Monday, May 27

TOWER- Plans are being finalized for the Tower Soudan area-wide annual Memorial Day Tribute to be held on Monday, May 27, at the Herbert R. Lamp-pa Civic Center from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. This tribute will honor the military service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, their families at home, and those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

The names of local Veterans killed in action and deceased Veterans will be read. A medley of patriotic songs will be sung by the Tower-Soudan Area Singers under the direction of Rolf Anderson.

If you know the name of a recently deceased Veteran whose name should be added to our roll call, or if you need to make a change to last year's list of Veterans, contact Barb Peyla. Call or text 218-410-7883 or send an email to bngepeyla@gmail.com.

The Tower-Soudan Area Singers will practice on Monday, May 20, from 5 - 6:30 p.m. in the music room at the Tower Elementary School. If you are interested in joining the singers, Contact Rolf Anderson at 218-753-3262. All are welcome.

The program will conclude with a traditional Memorial Day wreath placed on a symbolic Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in a ceremony to be held outside the Civic Center.

Refreshments provided by the Tower-Soudan Civic Club will be served before and following the tribute. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend this heartwarming event.

Tower Café Pet Patio grand opening and pet adoption event on Saturday

TOWER- The Tower Café's outdoor "pet-friendly" patio will open on Saturday, May 18. And Contented Critters, an animal rescue nonprofit from Ely, will be there, rain or shine, from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. with some pets to meet, and possibly adopt.

If you're considering adoption, please visit the Contented Critters website to fill out your adoption application as soon as possible, allowing time for background checks. You can also reach out to Contented Critters directly to request specific animals for a meet and greet. <https://www.contentedcrittersmn.org/>.

In addition to finding forever homes for these furry friends, Contented Critters has some urgent needs they're looking to address. Even if you're not adopting, they would greatly appreciate monetary or material donations (please reach out to them for specific material requests). Every little bit helps. For more information about Contented Critters and their wonderful program, please visit their website.

TOWER CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

Please Donate:
Tower Cemetery Assn.
PO Box 874, Tower, MN 55790

THANK YOU!

Published in the Timberjay, May 17, 31, June 7, 21, 28, July 12

NOTICE
STUNTZ BAY ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL MEETING

Friday, May 17
6 PM

Breitung Community Center
Call Dan Wiirre 218-969-6374

FISHING OPENER



The line was out the door before 6 a.m. at the traditional all-you-can-eat breakfast at the Veterans on the Lake. The nonprofit resort holds the breakfast pig-out on fishing opener every year. The dining room opened its doors to feed anglers and other hungry parties at 5 a.m. This year, Ely area businesses donated 30 breakfasts to be given to Veterans. photo by C. Clark

In Brief

Tuesday Group schedule

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

Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

► May 21: “Ask-Me-Anything” with Jessica Hellmann, Midwest Climate Adaptation Science Center

► May 28: Lauren Bennett McGinty, Executive Director, Explore MN Tourism

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2024



color enchantment
beauty in the shapes and form
pushing up from earth

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.

Ely Memorial High School senior awards

ELY- The Ely Memorial High School held its annual Senior Awards Day on May 8. The school presented honor chords to the following seniors for graduating with a 3.5 or better grade point average: Chase Anderson, Esther Anderson, Claire Blauch, Aubree Gerlovich, Abigail “Teddy” Johnson, Grace LaTourell, Brielle Lindland, Deegan Richards, Gavin Marshall, Isabelle Schiltz, Ava Skustad, Leo Stalmer, and Sarah Visser.

Scholarships

The following are scholarships won by seniors:

- Alworth Memorial Fund Scholarship: Esther Anderson and Gavin Marshall
- American Legion Auxiliary Scholarship: Brielle Lindland
- American Legion Merit Award: Grace LaTourell
- Arrowhead Archery in Our Schools Scholarship: Abigail “Teddy” Johnson
- Bertha Bjorkman Scholarship: Aubree Gerlovich and Kiarstin Eaton
- Bill Braun and John Braun Courage Memorial Scholarship: Lily Dirks and Brielle Lindland
- Ely Alumni Hockey Association Scholarship: Deegan Richards and Wesley Sandy
- Ely Area Credit Union: Braydin Mosher and Brielle Lindland
- Ely Education Association: Grace LaTourell
- Ely Educational Foundation: Grace LaTourell and Brielle Lindland
- Ely Football Scholarship: Deegan Richards
- Ely Hoop Club Scholarship: Grace LaTourell
- Ely Hoop Club Scholarship: Robert Towley

- Ely Nordic Wolves/ Ely Nordic Ski & Bike Club Scholarship: Claire Blauch
- Ely Rotary Scholarship: Grace LaTourell and Gavin Marshall
- Ely Rotary Club Gil Vo-Tech Rotarian Scholarship: Matthew Johnson
- Employees of the Kawishiwi Ranger District Scholarship: Rose Mary Schlosser
- EMPOWER Baccalaureate Scholarship: Esther Anderson
- EMPOWER Technical or Associate Degree Scholarship: Sarah Visser
- Jake Forsman Memorial Scholarship: Chase Anderson, Ty Walker, Braydin Mosher, Robert Towley, and Kadein Zupancich
- Frandsen Bank Orlo A. Balcer Memorial Scholarship: Hannah Penke
- Frandsen Foundation Scholarships: Chase Anderson, Ian Anderson, Bryce Ferdig, Matthew Johnson, Colton Lassi, Braydin Mosher, Isabelle Schiltz, Rose Mary Schlosser, Karissa Steiger, Robert Towley, Ty Walker, and Kadein Zupancich
- Claus/Svea Hammerstrom Scholarship: Sarah Visser
- John Huntbatch Memorial Scholarship: Deegan Richards
- Industrial Education Scholarship: Chase Anderson
- Joey Ivancich Memorial Scholarship: Deegan Richards
- Johnson Brothers Trade Scholarship: Robert Towley and Kadein Zupancich
- Killen Scholarship Sarah Visser, Brielle Lindland, Gavin Marshall, Grace LaTourell, and Thomas Homer
- Kiwanis Club of Ely Scholarship: Grace LaTourell and Ava Skustad

- Lahtonen Scholarship in Memory of Eugene and Mary Joan Lahtonen: Grace LaTourell, Samuel Leeson, Matthew Johnson, Leo Stalmer
- Lake Country Power Les Beach Memorial Scholarship: Sarah Visser
- Mary Lassi Scholarship: Aubree Gerlovich
- Renee Lassi Memorial Scholarship: Robert Towley
- Sylvester J. and Christine A. Logar Memorial Scholarship: Rose Mary Schlosser and Matthew Johnson
- Merle Lunceford Memorial Scholarship: Brielle Lindland
- Zachary Scott Matschiner Scholarship: Ty Walker
- Frank Sr. & Josephine Osaben Scholarship: Kiarstin Eaton
- Pass Education On Scholarship: Brielle Lindland

- Jim & Betty Povhe Scholarship: Ty Walker
 - Carla Mattson Quackenbush Scholarship: Samuel Leeson
 - Joye Soderberg Memorial Scholarship: Drew Marolt
 - VFW Post 2717 Scholarship: Brielle Lindland
 - Wintergreen Northern Wear Award: Ava Skustad
- Ely Educational Foundation**
The following are named scholarships awarded through the Ely Educational Foundation:
- Derek & Dana Banovetz Alumni Scholarship: Rose Mary Schlosser
 - Daniel J. Erzar Memorial Scholarship: Abigail “Teddy” Johnson
 - Ely Fire Department Relief Association Scholarship: Gavin Marshall and Ty Walker
 - Dale and Florence

- Forsman Memorial Scholarship: Chase Anderson
- Eldon and Geraldine Foster Education Scholarship: Grace LaTourell
- Leona Janezich “Good Soul” Scholarship: Grace LaTourell
- Rudy and Dorothy Marolt Memorial Scholarship: Gavin Marshall
- Morse Fall Lake Fire Relief Association Scholarship: Kiarstin Eaton
- James A. and Albert F. Musich Family Scholarship: Brielle Lindland
- Anna Rojakovich Scholarship: Isabelle Schiltz
- Anne Rozman Scholarship: Brielle Lindland
- John Skantz Memorial Scholarship: Lily Dirks
- Somrock Family Scholarship: Grace LaTourell

Skywarn comes to in Ely



Meteorologists Bryan Howell (center background) and Linda Engebretson (far right) from the Duluth office of the National Weather Service (NWS) came to Ely on Tuesday evening to teach the basic Skywarn Spotter class. Though in-person classes are over for the year, the NWS has an online version available on the Duluth office website at weather.gov/dlh/skywarn. photo by C. Clark

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

Ely Public Library

ELY- The spice for May is caraway. Pick up a spice kit with a sample and recipes at the circulation desk.
The Library Scientists group for grades 4-6 will hold a session on pollution on Friday, May 24 from 3-4 p.m. The event will include a hands-on project. Preregister so the library can order enough materials for participants. Registration is limited to 25.
The library will be closed on Monday, May 27.
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.

Disc Golf Fundraiser

BABBITT- All are welcome at a disc golf tournament on Saturday, May 18, on the Babbitt disc golf course. Check-in starts at noon at the Assembly of God Church, 29 Babbitt Rd. The tournament starts at 1 p.m. The entry fee is \$15 per team, with two people on each team. Sign-up to play at the event. All proceeds will go to the Northeast Range Class of 2026.

25th Anniversary Recital

ELY- Studio North will hold its 25th anniversary dance recital on May 18 with two performanc-

es at 1 and 5:30 p.m., at Washington Auditorium, 600 E. Harvey St. Admission for adults is \$12 in advance or \$15 at door, and for youth is \$10 in advance and \$13 at door. For more information, call 218-365-2493.

Bake Sale

ELY- The Ely Senior Center, 27 S. First Ave. E. will hold a bake sale on Saturday, May 18, from 9 a.m. until noon.

Smokey Bear

ELY- Smokey Bear will be at the Ely Public Library, 224 E. Chapman St., on Monday, May 20, at 10:30 a.m., giving out treats to passers-by. The event will be cancelled

in the event of wildfire, because Smokey will be busy fighting it.

New Homeowners Class

ELY- Ely Continuing Education will present a homeowners buying class taught by banker Tom Omerza on May 29, from 5:30-6:30 p.m. The class will be in the Ely School District Media Center, 600 E. Harvey St. Enter through door No. 1. Turn right after the double doors. The media center is on the right across from the new gym. For more information and to register, go to ely.k12.mn.us/communityed or call 218-365 6166 ext. 1784.

Ely High School All Class Reunion

ELY- The Ely High School All Class Reunion in honor of 100 years of the Ely Memorial High School building will be June 29-July 6. Information and register at elyallclassreunion.com.

List your event

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

ORR CITY COUNCIL

Cost-free airport upgrades reviewed by Orr council

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- Approval of bids for the pavement crack sealing project at the Orr Airport was on the Orr Council's agenda on Monday, but they ended up getting a full update on airport improvements from Bollig Engineering's Aviation Division Lead and Architect Angela Holm.

Of the three bids received for the project, the lowest was submitted by Wisconsin-based Fahrner Asphalt Sealers, who works on pavement maintenance projects in a six-state region. The company's bid of \$89,892 was about \$157,000 less than the engineering estimate of \$247,000.

"They're a contractor that we've had on our projects multiple times - they have a good reputation and we're comfortable with them," Holm said. "We did check - as part of our due diligence, we call that low bidder and ask are you sure you're comfortable with

your bid? Are you really sure? And they said yes, absolutely. We were on the site. We looked at the cracks. We don't think it's a \$200,000 job."

While the savings over the original estimate are considerable, they won't have an impact on the city's tight budget situation. Holm noted that the project is being done at no cost to the city, as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will pay for 90 percent of the cost, with MnDOT and the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation will split the remaining 10 percent.

After the bid was unanimously approved by the council, Holm moved on to an update for the fuel system replacement project. She said they were "very, very close to complete."

"They salvaged all the old systems that they could, and to save they transferred in into the new tanks," Holm said.

The crew working on the project did have to order a new pump that pulls

water out of the fuel system, Holm said, and she reported that the new card reader payment system would be up and running within a day. They were also able to salvage 800 gallons of low-lead fuel and 1,400 gallons of jet A fuel.

"Again, this is a really nice project for the city, it's 100 percent paid by somebody else," Holm said. "It'll just be a few weeks before it's totally done."

The third project Holm discussed is called a PAPI and REIL replacement project, which deals with runway lighting. PAPI, short for precision approach path indicator, is a system that provides guidance to help a pilot acquire and maintain the correct approach slope for landing. REIL, short for runway end identifier lights, includes the flashing strobe lights on all four corners of the runway that help pilots identify where the runway is. Holm said the project was still in the planning stage, but would also be completely fund-

ed by other government sources.

Council member John Jirik asked Holm about procedures involved in disposing of outdated or defunct equipment that was purchased with FAA or MnDOT funds.

"We have a truck that no longer works," he said, "What are our options with that. Is that something that has to go to them?"

Holm said her understanding is that the agencies typically want their share of the money if equipment is sold, in proportion to the amount of money they put in.

"So if you sell it for \$100, \$90 has to go to the FAA and 10 percent or five percent to the state," she said.

Holm volunteered to review an equipment list if the city would provide one to determine what funding sources were used and what parameters might apply to disposing of the property.

Upcoming projects mentioned by Holm included replacement of the outdated weather monitor-

ing system, show removal equipment, and construction of new hangars. There is an annual allotment of federal dollars coming in that may support some of these projects.

In other business, the council:

► Approved the renewal of short-term rentals for Go Big Investments/Skoglund Investments, with the understanding that the approval is not transferrable to new owners if the property is sold.

► Approved the renewal of the labor agreement with the International Union of Operating Engineers Local No. 49.

► Approved an agreement with Voyageurs National Park to allow Voyageur Trail Society to do snowmobile trail grooming.

► Approved a resolution to apply to and accept funds from the Blandin Foundation for a fishing pier and the city park beach. The city could receive up to \$150,000.

► Reviewed a matured CD from RBC In-

vestment and deferred action to the next council meeting.

► Approved advertising for part-time summer help at the Tourist Information Center.

► Approved the specifications for a new ambulance and gave permission for ambulance director Donna Hoffer to seek bids. The ambulance would be paid for out of ambulance service funds, and is expected to take almost two years to be delivered.

► Discussed a request from maintenance supervisor Paul Koch to carry over unused vacation time. That led to a broader discussion of the city's use-it-or-lose-it policy and how exceptions to that are granted. Council members expressed interest in doing a payout of \$7,721 for Koch's accrued time rather than carry it over, and tabled action on the matter to the next meeting.

► Received two anonymous donations to the ambulance service of \$200 each.

BEST IN SHOW



These North Woods artists set a record by taking home five Best of Show awards in this year's MSHSL Region 7A art competition. From left, senior Emily Grahn won for ceramics, junior Nia Gaskell won for sculpture, senior Trinity Vidal won for drawing, and senior Ella Smith was a double winner for printmaking and mixed media. The quartet went to the Perpich Center for the Arts on Saturday to receive their trophies. All North Woods artworks from the regional competition can be viewed at North Woods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook through May 29.

LIONS DONATION



Cook Lions Club members Steve Kajala and Erin Danielson were on hand at North Woods School on Tuesday to present the school's volleyball team with a donation of \$500.

GRIZZLIES SPORTS

Grizzlies compete at Denfield

DULUTH- North Woods tracksters competing with the South Ridge Panthers participated on Friday in the 15-team Matt Kero Memorial Invitational at Duluth Denfield High School.

The Panthers finished well down the team standings, with the boys tying for 11th and the girls tying for 14th.

Stacked up against a packed powerhouse field, a few Grizzlies athletes managed to crack the ranks of top-20 finishers.

For the boys, Aidan

Hartway placed 17th in the 100-meters with a time of 12.5 seconds. Jonah Burnett finished sixth in the 800 in 2:12.11. The 4x100 relay team with Evan Kajala, Aidan Hartway, Jeffrey Moyle, and Trajen Barto sprinted to a ninth-place finish in 49.85. Hartway, Kajala, Barto, and Marcus Israelson ran on the 11th-place 4x200 relay, clocking a time of 1:42.12. Burnett took third place in high jump, clearing a height of 5'6".

Izzy Pascuzzi turned

in the best individual effort for the girls, placing seventh in high jump with a height of 4'8" and 11th in long jump with a leap of 13'4". Pascuzzi was also a member of the 12th-place 4x100 relay along with Lauren Burnett, Addy Hartway, and Harmony Aikey, clocking a time of 58.23. Hartway came in 18th in the 400 at 1:10.75. The 4x800 relay of Brynn Chosa, Mya Kinsey, Tegan Fordahl and Aolani Hammack finished ninth in 13:22.63.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

BASS tourney at Kab resort on Sunday invites spectators

KABETOGAMA- The Pines of Kabetogama is the place for bass fishing aficionados to be this Sunday, May 19, as the resort plays host to the season kickoff event for the Minnesota B.A.S.S. Nation tournament season. Approximately 80 teams are expected for the competition.

The most exciting time for fans is the big climax, the weigh-in at 3 p.m., which will take place on the lawn and the marina of The Pines, at 12443 Burma Road in Kabetogama. Spectators are welcome to join the excitement of the weigh-in and experience the vibrant atmosphere of a professional fishing tournament.

For more information, call 218-875-2000.

North Woods student art to be on display at NWFA

COOK- Come see a variety of student art submitted to the Minnesota State High School League Art Competition, including North Woods' five "Best in Show" winners, at the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery from May 15-29. An opening reception was held at the gallery on Wednesday, May 15 from 4-6 p.m. featuring the student artists.

The students whose work will be on display are: Trinity Vidal, Ella Smith, Lemar Drift, Mya Kinsey, Cynthia Kirkman,

Haley Leinonen, Emily Grahn, Rory Bundy, Nia Gaskell, Rose Christian, Alex Niles, Sheyenne Schuster and Jaida Lambert.

The exhibit is at the gallery located at 210 S. River St. Open hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Farmers Market planning hits home stretch next week

COOK- The Cook Area Farmers Market will have its final spring meeting on Wednesday, May 22, at 11 a.m. at the Montana Café before the Market opens in June. All are welcome to come help the Market continue to be a success in 2024. The Market promises to be a great weekly community event.

Spring Arts Expo deadline nears

COOK- If you don't act now, you will miss the chance to exhibit your art in the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Spring Expo, running June 5-29.

Registration for the event is due by Wednesday, May 22. For a small fee artists may exhibit and sell their arts or cratts at the NWFA Gallery, with all sales proceed going directly to the artist, as no commissions are collected during the expo.

Participants have approximately 4x8 feet of wall space to hang their art. Sculptures and other art that does not require wall space will have ap-

proximately 6 feet of table space. Artists who have their own display units may use them as long as they fit space guidelines.

Registration information is available at the NWFA Gallery at 210 S. River St. in Cook, or online at www.nwfamn.org. Additional questions should be sent to nwfamn.org@gmail.com. Registration forms may be emailed or mailed to NWFA, PO Box 44, Cook, MN 55723

Artists are requested to provide biographies which need to be e-mailed to Shawna Kishel at shkishel@gmail.com before June 3.

There will be a grand opening reception for artists and the public at the Gallery on Friday, June 7 from 5-7 p.m.

The gallery open hours are from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Lions Club brat shack re-opens at Zup's for summer

COOK- While last weekend was fishing opener, many local foodies made note of another opening day for the Cook Lions Club brat shack in the parking lot of Zup's Market.

Serving delicious Zup's brats and hot dogs, club volunteers will be manning the shack on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. And don't forget to ask about the Lions' coupon books again this year!



The Cook Lions Club is having a
ONE DAY SALE

May 25, 2024

9 am - 2 pm

Sale will be held at Unit #8

Vermilion Drive Storage on Hwy 24

CASH AND CARRY ONLY!

The Lions Club is accepting donations
of clean furniture

Contact Steve Kajala at

218-750-0310

PUBLIC SAFETY

Beldo pleads guilty in Babbitt double homicide

54-year-old admits to bludgeoning elderly couple who had offered him a place to live

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

BABBITT- Roger Beldo pled guilty to second degree murder “with intent” in a Virginia courtroom May 8 in the deaths of an elderly Babbitt couple last October. Beldo acknowledged the double homicide as part of a plea agreement reached with prosecutors, under which the prosecution agreed to drop any pursuit of stricter sentencing.

In return, Beldo will receive a sentence of 556 months (46.3 years) served consecutively. Formal sentencing is set for Aug. 5.

A tragic incident

Last Oct. 28, Beldo made multiple 911 calls, asking to turn himself in, claiming he’d “done bad things.” Duluth police first contacted Beldo in the parking lot at Essentia Health-St. Mary’s in Duluth, where he asked to be taken to jail. He later acknowledged that he had killed Clifford and Christine Johnson, who had agreed to rent him and his dog a room in their Babbitt home about a month earlier. He said

he attacked Clifford in the garage with a crowbar and Christine in her bedroom with a hammer.

Beldo later drove to Duluth in the Johnson’s vehicle, a red Nissan Rogue. Duluth police reported Beldo had slurred speech and smelled of alcohol when he was taken into custody.

Based on Beldo’s claims, the Babbitt police and St. Louis County Sheriff’s deputies responded to 14 Fir Circle, the single-story home owned by the Johnsons. Inside they found Clifford and Christine Johnson, ages 79 and 78, in the locations Beldo had earlier described. Both were deceased with blunt trauma injuries to their heads and bodies.

A troubled past

Beldo, age 54, has a long and disturbing criminal record, dating back 30 years. According to Minnesota court records, his violations include indecent exposure,

harassment, felony assault, theft, and 15 convictions for disorderly conduct. Beldo committed all but one offense in St. Louis County.

On Sept. 5, 2023, Beldo posted to his Facebook page that he had been “kicked out” and needed a place to live. Sometime later he landed at the Johnsons’ home in Babbitt. The day after the murders, the Johnsons’ granddaughter told the St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office that Beldo had been living with her grandparents for about a month.

The fit between Beldo and the Johnsons was an uncomfortable one from the start. Starting on Sept. 29, Beldo began asking for help on social media to find a one-bedroom apartment that would take a Section 8 voucher. The tone of his requests became more strident with time.

“Please I can’t take another weekend stuck here,” Beldo pleaded on his Facebook page on Oct. 13. The last plea was dated Oct. 26, two days before police found the bodies of the Johnsons.

In his petition for a guilty plea, Beldo stated that he killed Clifford Johnson as Johnson was removing him from his home.

“Clifford Johnson was in his garage about to take me away from the house after I loaded my belongings into his vehicle. I struck him multiple times in the back and in the head with a heavy metal rod, intending to kill him.” Having killed Clifford, Beldo went back into the house to kill Christine Johnson.

The Johnsons were newcomers to Babbitt, having bought their home on Fir Circle in 2021.

Plea bargain

Beldo was originally booked into the county jail with a bail set on Nov. 1 of \$1 million. Court records reveal that Judge Michelle Anderson ordered a competency evaluation for Beldo on Nov. 6 at the request of Beldo’s public defender, Scott Swanson. Swanson reported, “The Defendant has refused to speak with him whether by phone or in person.” Swanson sent a second request for competency evaluation on Feb. 29.

The St. Louis County Attorney’s office filed notice on Dec. 28 that if Beldo went to trial, the prosecution would seek an “upward departure” in

sentencing, to make any penalties more stringent, based on aggravating circumstances, including the vulnerability of the elderly victims, the cruelty of leaving them to die of their injuries, and fact that the Johnsons had helped Beldo by opening their home to him. Beldo had also previously been convicted of felony assault where the victim received similar injuries.

“While a guilty plea is an essential step towards legal closure and accountability, we recognize that it will not mitigate the emotional pain or lessen the sense of loss experienced by the loved ones of Clifford and Christine Johnson,” said St. Louis County Attorney Kim Maki in response to the plea. “Our thoughts go out to them.”

The St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office, the Babbitt Police Department, the Duluth Police Department, and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension all contributed to the investigation of the Johnson murders.

OPENER...Continued from page 1

part to an early ice-out and quick end to the spawning run. Water temperatures, which had warmed into the low 50-degree range as of opening morning, likely kept the walleyes moving.

“We did find one place where we caught a bunch of 14, 16, and 17-inchers, and that helped, Bakken said. “We caught a lot of fish.”

Bakken said his crew had their best luck using minnows and jigs and plastics in depths of 26 to 32 feet, a depth consistent with various reports from around the lake.

The lighter than usual early morning activity on the east end may have been due to the results of the latest DNR fish survey for Vermilion, which showed record numbers of walleye on the west end of the lake. Cook’s Northwoods Bait



Anglers were out in good numbers on Lake Vermilion for Saturday’s opening of the fishing season. photo by D. Colburn

and Tackle co-owner Paula Dundas reported brisk business for the weekend,

with demand particularly high for rainbow minnows and leeches.

“The study said the Cook end would be better, so maybe they were down

here,” Dundas said. “But I just talked to somebody who said they tried to put their boat in Saturday morning at Everett Bay and they said they couldn’t find a place to park.”

But the reports Dundas received also reflected a successful opener.

“People said they had to work a little bit for the walleyes, but people were finding fish and putting them in the boat,” she said. “A lot of people were catching nice eating-size fish. And the crappies have been really good – people said they’re really biting.”

Paula and Dave Dundas took over Northwoods Bait and Tackle just in time for last year’s opener, and a successful angle for them this weekend was seeing all of the returning anglers. “It was great for us,”

Paula said. “We saw a lot of familiar faces coming back and it was nice to see everybody excited to head out. I think when we did our count we were the same as last year for people heading out.”

Reports from the Ely area suggested anglers were struggling to find walleye in their usual early season locations. According to Steve Renneberg, of Arrowhead Outdoors, the best walleye action was in the shallowest water, just two to seven feet deep, worked with small jigs and big rainbows.

While the walleye action was slow for most anglers, he said the pike action in shallow bays was hot, with anglers finding plenty of success with large sucker minnows under bobbers.

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EBCH
Ely-Bloomenson
Community Hospital

Hospital Connection
Celebrating Hospital Week

Q: What is Hospital Week?
A: Hospital Week is an annual celebration dedicated to honoring the vital contributions of hospitals and healthcare professionals to their communities. At Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital (EBCH), we have a dedicated team that plans activities and events to show our staff how much we appreciate their hard work. This year, activities include an all-staff lunch, BINGO, and Root Beer Making with the Dorothy Molter Museum.

Q: When is Hospital Week celebrated?
A: Hospital Week typically occurs in the second week of May each year. It allows hospitals and healthcare organizations to recognize and appreciate their staff’s hard work and dedication. Hospital Week typically follows Nurse’s Week, which coincides with Florence Nightingale’s birthday.

Q: Why is Hospital Week important?
A: Hospital Week is important because it raises awareness about hospitals’ critical role in providing essential healthcare services, promoting wellness, and saving lives. It’s also a time that fosters a strong sense of pride and unity among healthcare professionals, acknowledging their tireless efforts in caring for patients and supporting their communities.

**** EBCH is so thankful for the wonderful team of healthcare professionals that work with us to provide high quality care to the patients and community we serve. ****

Hospital Connection is an ongoing feature of Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital (EBCH). We are excited to share our most recent updates and information in a question-and-answer format featuring a new topic each week. We will share important information about healthcare at local, state, and national levels, along with exciting information about EBCH, our services, and how we are a partner in the communities we serve. You can also find more information about EBCH by visiting our website at www.ebch.org. Like our Facebook page to keep up with current events and announcements.

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

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Charlemagne’s Attic Sale supports
Tower’s Historic Fire Hall restoration project.

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TIMBERJAY!

BUSINESS

New manager takes the reins at The Wilderness

TOWER— When The Wilderness at Fortune Bay opened last Friday, there was a new manager at the helm — Bill Manahan.

Manahan, who most recently served as general manager at the Cloquet Country Club, had earlier held a similar position at the Black Bear Resort Casino golf course.

At a recent directors meeting, Manahan said he's excited to be heading up operations at The Wilderness and thanked his staff for their hard work prepping for the season, especially his grounds crew, under the leadership of Superintendent Trevor Rintala. Manahan reported that the course will be in better shape this year than last, and far better than in 2022 when the course was under different leadership.

It looks to be a busy season ahead for The Wilderness. "There are already over 10,000 rounds booked for the year and that number keeps going up," said Manahan, who lives in Barnum, but will be renting an apartment in Virginia until he can find a permanent housing solution.

While Manahan's staff

will continue to work hard filling the tee-sheet for 2024, he is also encouraging non-golfers to stop by The Wilderness Grill to try out some of Chef Mitch Kerfeld's culinary creations.

"He has a lot of creativity and talent that will resonate with our guests," said Manahan of Kerfeld, who is entering his second year heading up The Wilderness Grill.

Manahan's golf experience dates back to the late 1970s and aside from his stints at the Cloquet Country Club and Black Bear, he also served as the General Manager and PGA

Head Golf Professional at Grand National Golf Club for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe from 1995 to 2004. He is a graduate of Rochester Lourdes High School and attended the University of Minnesota before transferring to the Rochester Area Vocational School to receive his degree in Banking and Finance.

"Bill has fit in very well with the staff at The Wilderness at Fortune Bay," said Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers. "His vast experience at other well-known golf courses across the state is invaluable and we feel he will be the perfect manager to lead his team."



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Briefly

Duluth man dies in BWCAW accident

REGIONAL - A 62-year-old Duluth man was found dead on Friday on Lake Agnes, the victim of an apparent drowning. Mark Ham was described by family members as a clinical psychologist and an avid outdoorsman who had gone on solo trips to the Boundary Waters twice a year for decades.

St. Louis County 911 dispatchers received a call at approximately 5 p.m. on Friday from canoeists reporting that they had located a capsized canoe and a partially submerged human body on Lake Agnes, located in the wilderness north of the Echo Trail, approximately 25 miles northwest of Ely.

Multiple units from the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office, the St. Louis County Rescue Squad and the U.S. Forest Service initially responded to the call, but the response was scaled back once it was determined that it would be a recovery operation of a solo camper. In the end, a forest service pilot, a rescue squad member, and a sheriff's deputy flew to the site in a Beaver to recover Ham's body. Rescuers reported that a life jacket was found on the scene but was not worn by the victim at the time.

On a memorial site for Ham, family members pushed back against the implication by the sheriff's office that Ham was involved in some kind of canoeing accident while he was without a life jacket. Family insist that Ham always wore his life jacket while in the canoe.

"What we do know points to him having some sort of accident that led to lack of consciousness and then slipping into the water. From how he was found it was clear he was not yet in his canoe when the incident occurred."

The incident remains under investigation by the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office and Midwest Medical Examiner Office, which will perform an autopsy to determine the cause of death.

EMBARRASS

Piecing it all together: Jigsaw competition proves popular

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

EMBARRASS- Five hundred pieces. Four sets of hands. Ten teams ready to go, each with their own copy of the same puzzle.

The Timber Hall Event Center's first Jigs and Jaws puzzle competition got underway shortly after 11 a.m. this past Saturday, and within an hour, the speediest two teams had completed their challenge. While many area residents were out trying to catch their limit of wall-eyes, these jigsaw puzzle fans were after their own trophy, consisting of bragging rights plus gift certificates to area businesses for each of the winners on the two top teams. The event was part of the Embarrass Region Fair Association's efforts to bring more community-focused events to Timber Hall.

The idea for the event came from Sheila Smith, who had come to the Timber Hall's used book and puzzle event in February. Community members had donated used books and puzzles, and dozens of tables full were available for people to browse and take home, free of charge, during the monthly fair association fundraiser pancake breakfast. Smith said she got the idea after seeing all the used puzzles at the event, and asked one of the fair association members if they thought such an event would be possible. The fair association is quite open to new ideas, and this was one they thought would become a fun community event. And while Smith's team didn't place in the competition, she was excited to be part of the action.

Before the actual competition began, fair association organizers explained the rules, which were simple. When given the sign, all teams could open their boxes, dump out the puzzle pieces (already removed from the plastic bag), and start to assemble their puzzles.

The puzzle was chosen as not too easy and not



Above: Eleanor Nyquist (left) and her mother Jordyn Stocks were on the winning team. Left: Leanne Negley was one of the fastest puzzlers. Her team finished about a half a minute after the top team. photos by J. Summit

too hard.

"I looked for a puzzle with lots of colors," said fair association volunteer Sue Beaton. The chosen puzzle featured a garden scene, along with a variety of backyard birds, but the leafy green background gave the puzzle some challenge, and those leafy-colored pieces were the last assembled by every single team competing.

Puzzlers from Embarrass, Ely, and other parts of the Iron Range, were among those who took part in the competition. Each player paid a \$10 entry fee and each team gave themselves a name: The Cold Spot Puzzlers, Falling into Pieces, Disturbing the Piece, We Came- We Jigged- We Sawed, were just some of the examples, suggesting that most of the participants had a penchant for puns as well as puzzles.

And while some teams were all friends or relations, others were strangers, meeting up for the first time during the event. Puzzlers ranged from early teens to seniors. Each team had their own table, with the 10 tables spread out in Timber Hall.

Hands quickly got busy flipping pieces over, sorting by color, and finding edge pieces. Different teams had different strategies, though most seemed to start working on assembling the birds and gardening items that made up the focal points of the puzzle image.

The most experienced jigsaw enthusiast in the room was Leanne Negley, from Babbitt.

She described her most recent puzzle accomplishment, finishing a 42,000-piece puzzle (one of the largest that you can buy), that took her two months and was 20 feet long when finished. Negley was recovering after knee replacement surgery, so had one hand on an ice bag on her knee, while the other was quickly as-

sembling pieces. Her two teammates weren't nearly as experienced, but both were intent on completing their puzzle as quickly as

possible.

Eleanor Nyquist, a 12-year-old from Ely, was one of the youngest participants at the competition, working on a team with her mother, grandmother, and aunt. Grandma Connie Stocks was the most experienced puzzler at their table and wasn't letting a splinted finger slow her down. Rounding out the team were Connie's daughters, Jordyn Stocks and Jaymie Stocks. Connie said her favorite puzzles are thousand-pieceers that have pictures of horses on them, and she often works on puzzles with Eleanor.

Teenager Starla Forsman and her father Joshua, along with Starla's friend Morgan Scarbrough, were busy figuring out their best strategy as they picked out edge pieces. Starla said she was the biggest puzzle fan of her group.

Teams appeared to be neck and neck at first, but after a half hour there were three teams that had made substantial progress. Soon two teams had pulled into what looked like a tie: Leanne Negley's team of

three, and the Stocks family team of four.

Things got a little testy for the Stocks as four sets of arms raced to finish up the last 40 pieces or so, with some bumping that sent one piece flying, but luckily landing on the table not the floor. The Negley team, with only three sets of arms, was more relaxed but also was feeling stressed as the final pieces were falling into place. These two teams were on opposite sides of the hall, so neither had any idea how close the other was to finishing.

The Stocks family, Connie, Jordyn, Jaymie, and Eleanor finished with a time of 57 minutes and 45 seconds. Less than 30 seconds later, Negley, with team members Christina Forsythe and Ellen Root slotted their last piece in place.

To keep track of upcoming events at Timber Hall, follow the Timber Hall Events Center on Facebook, as well as watching for community notices in the *Timberjay*. Plans are underway to set the date for the next jigsaw puzzle competition.



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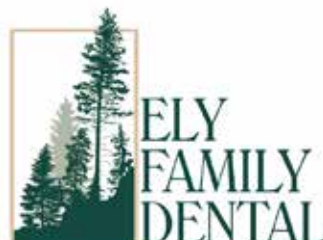
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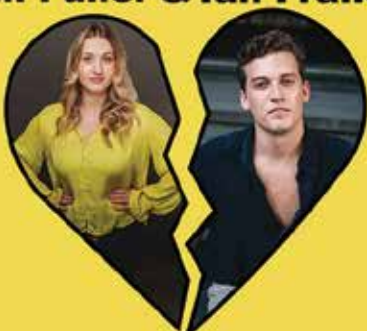
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BASEBALL

Mental mistakes plaguing Ely in late season

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

SOUTH RIDGE— The Timberwolves were heading into this weekend's annual Veterans Showcase tournament still looking for answers with just ten days to go in the regular season.

"The way we are playing right now, we need every call and every break to go our way,"

Lack of pitching control, errors in the field contribute to recent losses

said Head Coach Frank Ivancich, who watched his team drop three of four contests in the past week. In Monday's game against the Panthers, very little went the Timberwolves' way as the defending Section 7A champions pounded Ely 15-5.

While the Wolves have found a variety of ways to lose in recent games, pitching proved their

Achilles' heel at South Ridge. Senior pitcher Drew Marolt suffered his shortest start of the season as he struggled with control, walking four and hitting three batters in just an inning and two-thirds of work.

Senior Elliott Levens didn't fare much better, walking two and hitting a batter in his two-thirds of an inning worked. Sophomore

Jack Davies climbed the mound for Ely in the third and hit three more South Ridge batters while surrendering five runs while facing just 6 batters. Junior Ben Leeson tossed the final inning and two-thirds, giving up four runs on four hits.

"The sole bright spot for the Wolves was a three-run home run by Drew Marolt in the third inning

for Ely," said Ivancich. Caid Chittum notched two hits and 2 RBIs as well, but it was too little, too late, noted Ivancich. "Putting 15 runners on base with eight walks and seven hit batters, there was no way we were ever going to win," said Ivancich. "Especially against the defending Section 7A

See **WOLVES...**pg. 2B



SOFTBALL

Sweet revenge for Grizzlies

Turn tables on Ely in payback for earlier loss

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- With an eye on avenging an earlier loss this season to the Ely Timberwolves, the North Woods softball team stepped up on Friday to defend their home diamond and send the visitors home on the short end of a 10-7 Grizzlies win.

After North Woods starter Addison Burckhardt and the Grizzlies set the Wolves down with a three-up, three-down start, Burckhardt got the Grizzlies rolling with a double off the Wolves' Zoe MacKenzie, then stole third

Above: Ely's Zoe MacKenzie zeroes in on home plate as she winds for a pitch.

Right: The Grizzlies' River Cheney snags a pop foul next to the Ely dugout for an out.

photos by D. Colburn

on a passed ball. River Cheney delivered the RBI with a single, then stole second and came home on a double by Evalyn Thiel. MacKenzie recorded her second strike-out of the inning to retire the side, but the Grizzlies led 2-0 after one.



The Wolves struck back in the third when Peyton Huntington rapped a two-out single and came around to score on a fielding error of a hard-hit ball by Clare Thomas. Hannah Penke smashed a double to score Thomas, knot-

ting the score at 2-2 after three.

With MacKenzie holding the Grizzlies in check in the second and third, the Wolves took the lead in the top of the fourth. Maija Mattson and

See **SOFTBALL...**pg. 2B

BASEBALL

Ely's Veterans Memorial tourney begins Friday

ELY— The annual Veterans Memorial Showcase baseball tournament gets underway this Friday, with continuous baseball action through Saturday evening. Free admission for all games and the concession stand will be open with burgers, pulled pork sandwiches and many other items.

The tournament lineup is as follows:

Friday

12 noon - Ely vs. Warroad
2:30 p.m. - Blackduck vs. Cherry
5 p.m. - Blackduck vs. Cook County
7:30 p.m. - Ely vs. Cherry

Saturday

9 a.m. - Silver Bay vs. Blackduck
11:30 a.m. - Silver Bay vs. Warroad
2 p.m. - Cook County vs. Int'l. Falls
4:30 p.m. - Ely vs. Cook County
7:00 p.m. - Ely vs. Int'l. Falls

In addition, there will be an Ely vs. Cook County JV game at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday in Soudan.

TRACK

Udovich wins 400 for Ely at league meet

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

HIBBING- The Ely boys and girls track squads parted ways last week to compete in separate meets in Chisholm and Hibbing, then got back together on Tuesday to compete at Rock Ridge.

IRC championship

Tuesday's contest at Rock Ridge High School was the Iron Range Conference Championship meet, with the girls placing third in the seven-team field and the boys finishing fifth.

See **TRACK...**pg. 2B

GIRLS GOLF

North Woods' Olson hits hot streak, takes first at Ely tourney

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

ELY- North Woods golfer Tori Olson bagged first place on Monday at the East Range Conference meet in Ely, and placed high on the leaderboards

in Virginia and Hibbing last week.

The Grizzlies senior was on fire at the Ely Golf Club, notching three birdies on the way to a 40 and first place at the nine-hole event. Olson finished two shots clear of runner-up Kelby Anderson of International Falls.

North Woods placed third among the four schools competing in the team division. Sophia Hoffman checked in with a 52 to finish eighth, Carsyn Burnett place 22nd with a 63, and Laurin Glass scored a 65 and a 23rd-place finish.

At the invitational meet on a challenging 18-hole course in Hibbing on Friday, Olson took fourth in the field of 54 golfers with a round of 88. Olson was the only North Woods golfer to compete in the tournament.

On Thursday at the Rock

Ridge Invitational in Virginia, Olson was in the mix at the top again, this time finishing as runner-up to Anderson with a round of 79. Glass placed 37th with a 128, and Burnett shot a 129 for 38th.

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BOIS FORTE

Ebert chosen as new CEO for Bois Forte Business Corp.

TOWER—Despite only being on the job for a few weeks, Bois Forte Business Development Corporation's new CEO Andrew Ebert is already making a significant impact.

Not only is Ebert immersing himself in the inner workings of Bois Forte Tribal Government operations, but he is also soaking up as much information as he can about Fortune Bay Resort Casino, the economic engine that drives programming for Bois Forte band members.

To help with his transition, Ebert has spent a lot of time getting to know employees and guests by walking the casino floor and gleaning as much information as possible to get up to speed on what works for Fortune Bay and what doesn't. He has also stepped in to help man the Gold Mine Grill when it gets overly busy, as he is not one to stand around and watch others do all the work.

In Ebert's eyes, Fortune Bay, which boasts a 172-room resort, casino, full-service marina, RV Park, golf course, dining options, and much more, has a lot of potential that still needs to be tapped. He's also fully aware that the property, which is now over 38 years old, will need some renovations and expansion to truly position itself as a destination getaway.

A lot of the elements are already in place, as the property is located on one of the state's largest and most popular lakes, which is home to great fishing and recreational activities. The Wilderness at Fortune Bay Golf Course, which is ranked as one of the state's best public courses, draws in visitors from all over the region and country.

So, in many ways, the canvas is already set for Ebert to



Drew Ebert is the new CEO for the Bois Forte Development Corporation (BFDC). Ebert will oversee the BFDC, which includes Fortune Bay Resort Casino, The Wilderness at Fortune Bay, the Y Store in Tower and the C Store in Nett Lake. In addition to having an office at Fortune Bay, Ebert will be spending time at the Reservation Tribal Government Building in Nett Lake.

start painting his vision of how Fortune Bay and its staff can step up their game to help Bois Forte prosper for years to come. But he also realizes he's only one person and will look to his leadership team and front-line staff for input in the process.

"I am big on having an open-door policy," said Ebert at a recent meeting with his managers and directors. "So, if anyone has comments, questions, concerns, or great ideas to run with, I want to hear about them."

Ebert, a Kansas City native, added that it doesn't matter if those suggestions to improve our operations are immediate and small or entail mid-range or long-term goals. The crucial element is that he wants to start compiling a game plan in which proactive thinking trumps reactive thinking.

"We're going to end up getting into strategic and capital planning very soon," said Ebert, who most recently worked as the Executive Director for the Ponca Economic Development Corporation in Lincoln.

"It sounds like we've already had a lot of talks in the past about vision but not any execution."

However, Ebert is confident he, along with the help of

his new team, will have a clear vision for Fortune Bay and, ultimately, the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa.

"These things I am talking about are not my ideas; I am getting them because I am talking to the people who do the work," said Ebert, who was a self-employed Business Consultant for 13 years before his stint for the Ponca Tribe. "That's what we need to do. There are a lot of good ideas here, a lot of good experience."

For Bois Forte Tribal Chair Cathy Chavers, that positive way of thinking is what led the Tribal Council to select Ebert to lead Bois Forte to a promising future.

"He really stood out amongst the other candidates because he is a go-getter with a proven track record," said Chavers of Ebert, who received a Bachelor of Communications and Master of Public Administration from the University of Missouri. "We feel that Drew will be the perfect addition to our entire team, and we look forward to having much success under his leadership."

Annual Healthy Aging Expo May 30 in Ely

ELY- Area seniors and those who help care for them are invited to the Healthy Aging Expo on Thursday, May 30 at Grand Ely Lodge in Ely. This annual event focuses on promoting healthy lifestyles, education, and caregiver support for older adults in our community.

The event runs from 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. and is free of charge. A light lunch will be served. The resource showcase begins at 9 a.m., and speakers will begin at 10 a.m. Local businesses and organizations will have the opportunity to promote their services and resources that support older adults' healthy living. Families and persons dealing with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders will also find valuable information.

The expo will feature ex-

pert speakers covering a wide range of topics relevant to aging individuals. Whether you're interested in health, wellness, or caregiving, there will be something for everyone.

The expo is also a chance to connect with fellow community members, caregivers, and professionals who share a passion for healthy aging.

Tentative speakers include: Angela Lunde (Mayo Clinic): How to Lower your Risk of Alzheimer's Disease; Molly Edwards (Essentia Health): Mental Health and Aging; Georgia Lane (AAAA): Age-Friendly Minnesota; Jess Langer (Senior LinkAge Line): How Senior LinkAge Line Can Help – Planning Ahead; Kristen Parendo (Justice North): Elder Law; Beth Hartshorn and Abby Sirek

(Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital): Outpatient Infusion Therapy Services; Patti Banks and Jodi Martin (Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital): Healthcare "Hot Topics"; Tommy Teigen, Beth artshorn and Abby Sirek (Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital): Heart Health Meds & Cardiac Rehab

Northwoods Partners is grateful for the support of Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital, Ely Community Pharmacy, and Victory Fund for sponsoring this event.

For more information, contact Lisa Porthan, Executive Director Northwoods Partners at Lisa@northwoodspartners.org or (218) 365-8019. Northwoods Partners is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that serves area older adults and their families.



The Ely Fire Department and a fire crew from the U.S. Forest Service putting out a fire in the alley off of 12th Ave. between Pattison and White Streets. photo by C. Clark

Fire season arrives in Ely

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The Ely Fire Department responded to a brush fire shortly after 11 a.m. on Sunday in the alley off 12th Ave., scant feet from several homes. The fire started on the south side of the alley in a wooded, lowland lot and burned approximately 20 feet along the alley and ten feet into the wooded lot.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation. Fire Chief Dave Marshall told the *Timberjay*, "It could have started any number of ways. It could have

been overhead electric lines arcing in the wind. It could have been flammable liquids heating up in discarded bottles. We just don't know yet. The important thing was getting it out quickly, especially on a windy day like this."

Marshall expressed his gratitude for the help from the USFS fire crew, "They're experts with brush fires like this." The Ely Police and the Department of Natural Resources also responded to the incident.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

Ely Historic State Theater receives award for services for seniors



Georgia Lane of the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging (second from right) with the staff and board of directors of Ely's Historic State Theater last week. submitted photo

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- Ely's Historic State Theater (EHST) was given an Aging Impact Award last week by the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging (AAAA). The agency issues the awards every year to businesses and organizations in the region "that respond to the needs of older adults in the community. This includes providing innovative services, adapting or improving the physical space, marketing to older adults, hiring practices, training, and customer experience."

AAAA heard about how EHST serves seniors from a staff member at Northwoods Partners, according to Georgia Lane, Principal Planner for AAAA. After observing the customer service the theater's staff provides to seniors, the staff member was so impressed she nominated the theater for the award.

EHST Executive Director Jacob White told the

Timberjay that the theater is uniquely qualified to serve seniors because it's an accessible-friendly space and it offers proactive customer service for those with accessibility challenges.

"Our staff has a policy of being mindful of our customers," White said, "and that includes escorting customers to their seats and carrying their concessions for them if they need the extra hand. It's a decision the theater board made about how we wanted to operate when we reopened."

The nonprofit theater reopened in 2020 after a long renovation. It was redesigned with seniors and those with mobility challenges in mind, said White. "We even have closed captioning devices for those who may be hard of hearing. The interior was built to accommodate more accessible spaces for seniors and those using wheelchairs and walkers. A lot of hard work went into the renovation of the space to make it accessible."

Volunteers needed at Tower Depot Museum

TOWER- Are you willing to share your time and enthusiasm greeting visitors to the Tower-Soudan Historical Society depot-museum this summer? The society is excited for the coming tourist season. The depot-museum will open on Friday, May 24. Last year the depot welcomed over 2,000 visitors. The historical society hopes to have the depot-museum open from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays with area volunteers. Your help and support are crucial. The society is looking at

three-hour shifts (10 a.m. – 1 p.m. and 1 – 4 p.m.) throughout the summer (Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend) and volunteers are able to sign up for days whenever it fits their schedule. Training is provided. The experience is rewarding and fun. Please consider signing up for a shift or two over the summer. Bring a friend. Contact TSHS Vice-President Linda Folstad at 218 750-0193 for more information.

Obituaries and Death Notices

Jennie Woodenfrog

Jennie Woodenfrog "Ge be-gah shig", 94, longtime Nett Lake resident, made her journey to the spirit world on Tuesday, May 7, 2024. Traditional services were held on Monday, May 13 at the Nett Lake Government and Community Services Center. The spiritual advisor was Bill Blackwell and the spiritual advisor's assistant was Vernon Adams. Pallbearers were Matthew Boney, Jeffrey Boney, Jason Boney, Anthony Juliano, Kyle Juliano and John Juliano. The honorary bearers were Jim Morrison, Pete Boney Jr., Vernon Boney, Andy Warrington, Brad Johnson and James Wilde. Burial was in the Woodenfrog Cemetery in Nett Lake. Arrangements were with Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook.

She is survived by her nieces, Irene Boney of Roseville and Mary Ann Juliano of Lawrence, Kan.; and many grandnieces, grandnephews, great-grandnieces and great-grandnephews.

Ray D. Rahkola

Ray Dennis Rahkola, 74, of Panama City Beach, Fla., longtime resident of Embarrass, passed away on Sunday, May 5, 2024. Services will be determined. Find information via Facebook family members or What's UP Embarrass, Minnesota Facebook page.

Ralph L. Richtsmeier

Ralph L. Richtsmeier, 95, of Babbitt, passed away peacefully on Thursday, April 25, 2024, at his home. Services will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 25 at Woodland Presbyterian Church in Babbitt, followed by a visitation with coffee at the church. Burial will be at the Argo Cemetery in Babbitt following the visitation.

He is survived by his wife, Betty Hoversten Richtsmeier; sons, Timothy Richtsmeier of Babbitt and Jeffrey (Irma) Richtsmeier of Rochester; daughter, Rebecca Richtsmeier of Woodbury; and many nieces

and nephews.

Frederick A. Lesemann

Frederick "Fred" Allan Lesemann, 74, of El Paso, Texas, formerly of Embarrass, passed away peacefully in his home surrounded by loved ones on Wednesday, May 8, 2024. No public services will be held. Notes can be sent to Jennifer Nelson, 11976 Banner Crest Dr., El Paso, TX 79936. The family asks that in lieu of flowers, friends perform an act of kindness for a person in need.

He is survived by his daughters, Lyn (Shakeel) Kahn, Kristen (Vicente) Pantoja and Jennifer (Ronald) Nelson; siblings, Janet McKeon, Ellen Hinner, David Lesemann and Patricia Lesemann; grandchildren, Shaina, Dustin, Austin, William, Alexander and Adaam; three great-grandchildren; several nieces and nephews.



Outdoors

Our lives in the
Northwoods

AIR QUALITY

Forecast: more smoky skies this summer

Canadian wildfires expected to prompt above-average number of air quality alerts

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— This past Sunday's incursion of heavy wildfire smoke into the North Country from north of the border was a portent of what to expect this summer and into the fall.

North Country residents can expect to breathe more wildfire smoke than average this summer, although likely not as much as last year, when the state experienced a record 52 air quality alert days. All of the alerts affecting northern

Right: A red sun sets through smoky skies last Sunday evening as dense wildfire smoke from Canada moved into the region.

photo by M. HelMBERGER

Minnesota last year were related to smoke from Canadian wildfires.

"Wildfires in Canada and other states have a significant impact on Minnesota's air quality, and last year was profound," said Matt

See **SMOKY...** pg. 5B



NATURE'S MUSIC

The spring chorus

Patience proves key to observing and photographing singing frogs

Here in the North Country, the spring-time woods can be a noisy affair, and few sounds are as symbolic of that seasonal cacophony as the calling of frogs. For years, I've tried (though apparently not hard enough) to capture images of frogs mid-chorus, but found it can be a challenge.

Turns out, there's nothing that will halt an amphibious choir faster than attempting to get too close. Like a ripple in a pond, the sound of silence seems to radiate out from me whenever I've tried to get in close enough to attempt a photo. And on those rare occasions when I've managed to sneak in close, trying to find the

Top: A boreal chorus frog sings away from its soggy home.

Right: The frog rests atop floating vegetation.

photos by M. HelMBERGER

photography—patience. I paid a visit to an extensive forested wetland east of Soudan recently and a little patience paid off, as I was able to capture some nice images and, even better, observe the world of frogs up close.

It was a windy afternoon, which probably helped since the sound and movement created by the wind, along with my camo gear, helped to mask my careful steps as I worked my way out into the water. While the nearby frogs stopped singing at

first, I stood and waited and after a few minutes, they forgot about me and started up again.

Even then, finding the tiny frogs in the midst of the sedges, floating leaves, fallen branches, and other debris, was a challenge until I figured out to stop looking for frogs and start looking for the ripples they make whenever they move. That's when the frogs started coming into view.

While it was a bright sunny afternoon, normally a quiet



time for most frogs, the chorus frogs were irrepresible and it was their persistent singing that prompted me to wade into the swamp with my camera and long lens.

These are tiny frogs, their bodies averaging barely over an inch, but they can generate sounds clocking in at 90-110 decibels, and even louder when large numbers are singing at once.

There are many species of chorus frogs, which includes spring peepers, all under the genus *Pseudacris*. The boreal chorus frog is found across a wide swath of central Canada down into the central and western U.S., including Minnesota. Like many amphibians, this species is known to be declining, although the causes

See **CHORUS...** pg. 5B



MARSHALL
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Wildflower Watch



This week's featured flower
MARSH MARIGOLDS

Few signs of spring are more dramatic or welcome as the explosion of yellow across deciduous swamps that signals the season of the **Marsh Marigolds**, *Caltha palustris*. This is a species found across the region in wet areas, particularly alder and ash swamps, where they appear like sunshine even on a cloudy day.

They are easily identified by their inch-and-a-half-wide, bright yellow flowers, with 5-9 petal-like sepals that showcase the 50-100 stamens packed into each flower's center. It's glossy, dark green basal leaves are typically heart-shaped.

These are a widespread species, found all the way into the high arctic.

The Marsh Marigold is a member of the Buttercup family.

Outdoors briefly

Area stream levels continue to show considerable bounce

REGIONAL— River and stream levels continued to exhibit considerable bounce this week as the impact of late April and early May rains faded. Area stream levels began the ice-free season at near record lows due to the lack of spring snowmelt but rebounded significantly from the spring rains, running well above average levels for this time of year.

As of Monday, stream levels were dropping quickly once again. Measured at Littlefork, the Little Fork River, for example, had fallen from its May 6 reading of 4,510 cubic feet per second (well above the top 25th percentile for May) to 2,250 cfs as of May 13. That's about the 50th percentile, or Q50 for the Little Fork.

Up at the border, the Rainy River at Manitou Rapids had fallen from 15,200 cfs as of May 6 to 10,700 cfs. That's just above the Q75 for May, meaning the level is likely to fall into the low flow category in the next few days without some significant additional rain. Some rain was forecast for later in the week, but amounts were generally forecasted to be under half an inch.

Meanwhile, the Vermilion River was down as well as of Monday's reading, registering at 1,050 cfs at Crane Lake. That's slightly below average for May, but marks a considerable improvement from the 220 cfs reading back on March 31.

Outdoors briefly

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

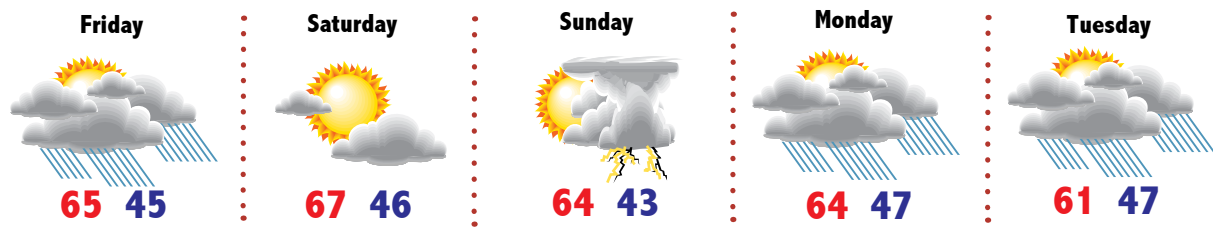
from NOAA weather

Spring turkey hunting season continues through May 31

REGIONAL — Firearmsturkey hunters who have an unused tag from an earlier hunt period can participate in the final hunt period from Wednesday, May 22, through Friday, May 31. Hunters can also purchase a license for this ten-day hunt.

Archery-only and youth ages 17 and younger are allowed to hunt during any time period, including the final one. Hunters cannot

purchase both a firearms and archery-only license. Turkey licenses can be purchased online (mndnr.gov/buyalicense), by phone at 888-665-4236, or in person from a license agent. More information about turkey hunting in Minnesota can be found on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website at mndnr.gov/hunting/turkey.



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.
05/06	60	30	0.00		05/06	63	27	0.00		05/06	63	35	0.00		05/06	73	36	0.02		05/06	62	32	0.00	
05/07	68	35	0.00		05/07	71	40	0.00		05/07	72	40	0.00		05/07	57	50	0.00		05/07	71	48	0.00	
05/08	56	42	0.16		05/08	56	40	0.15		05/08	57	43	0.11		05/08	72	45	0.20		05/08	54	30	0.17	
05/09	67	35	0.00		05/09	68	29	0.00		05/09	68	39	0.00		05/09	63	34	0.00		05/09	67	36	0.00	
05/10	60	28	0.00		05/10	63	32	0.00		05/10	62	35	0.00		05/10	57	39	0.00		05/10	62	34	0.00	
05/11	52	na	0.20		05/11	57	29	0.11		05/11	58	35	0.11		05/11	72	34	0.10		05/11	58	30	0.17	
05/12	62	37	0.02		05/12	67	48	0.00		05/12	70	39	0.00		05/12	70	52	0.00		05/12	67	34	0.07	
YTD Total			6.93	44.6"	YTD Total			6.12	30.7"	YTD Total			5.21	53.0"	YTD Total			NA		YTD Total			7.31	41.9"

SMOKY...Continued from page 4B

Taraldsen, lead meteorologist with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. "Our meteorologists are closely monitoring air quality around the state, and we are committed to providing accurate information promptly so that everyone can stay informed about changing conditions."

Earlier than average snowmelt combined with drought in Canada has fueled another active fire season across large swaths of Canada, where high fire danger is currently being experienced across large areas of northeastern British Columbia, northwestern Alberta and southern and central Saskatchewan. Smoke from fires in those regions could reach Minnesota whenever prevailing winds are from the northwest.

Modeling from MPCA and its federal partners highlight the persistence of drought across parts of Canada and Minnesota and other factors that can contribute to large wildfires that ultimately impact air quality.

The incursion of smoke this past Sunday arrived suddenly and quickly pushed air quality indexes into the red zone across much of northeastern Minnesota, a level that is considered unhealthy for all groups. That prompted the region's first air quality alert of the year. Air quality in the region had improved by Monday as the smoke

moved south, although air quality reached unhealthy levels in southern and central Minnesota.

Though not projected to reach the level of 2023, wildfire smoke will impact Minnesotans' quality of life and outdoor plans this summer as we see more impact from climate change in the state, according to MPCA experts. Wildfires are becoming larger and more frequent during the summer months in the U.S. and Canada. Warmer temperatures and persistent drought conditions make it easy for fires to start and quickly spread out of control. Smoke from these wildfires can travel thousands of miles.

Minnesota drought

For now, it appears most smoke affecting air quality in Minnesota will be coming from fires in Canada. Recent rains have improved the drought conditions in Minnesota, including in northeastern Minnesota, where the drought status improved from moderate drought to abnormally dry in the latest U.S. Drought Monitor report, issued last Thursday, May 9. Fire danger as of Monday of this week was listed as high across the northern two-thirds of St. Louis County and the northern half of Lake County, while the danger in most of Koochiching was rated as very high.

CHORUS...Continued from page 4B



A wood frog kicks back and relaxes after a short stint of calling for a mate. Dozens of wood frogs were recently congregated in a pool in a wetland off the Murray Road, east of Soudan. photo by M. Helmsberger

of that decline are likely complex. They are known to be vulnerable to a virulent pathogen that is spreading globally, affecting amphibian populations everywhere.

Climate change, which has generally led to drier conditions here in the North Country, is likely also impacting frogs as there is less water on the landscape generally.

None of these concerns seemed to be an issue during my recent visit to the frogs. As I ventured further into the swamp, I came across a small, open pool that had attracted at least a dozen wood frogs, which were mostly lounging, just floating on the surface of the water. They'd occasionally paddle or

kick their legs, interspersed with their croaking "rick-rick-rick" call which is nowhere near as loud as the chorus frogs. They may have just emerged days earlier from their winter dormancy, during which they are literally frozen solid, but these frogs didn't seem to be in a hurry. They seemed to be enjoying themselves, just hanging with their pals, being frogs.

Wood frogs are a different genus (Lithobates) than the chorus frogs, and are noticeably bigger as well, averaging about two and a half inches in body length. They're recognized by their size, their dark brown coloration and the raccoon-like mask around their eyes.

Wood frogs have gotten quite a bit of attention from researchers in recent years because of their ability to freeze nearly solid in winter through a variety of adaptations. Most other frogs find wetlands in the fall and bury themselves in the sediments to avoid freezing, but the wood frog simply burrows into the leaf litter and freezes nearly solid without any apparent damage.

They are also unusually terrestrial for a frog, and will range long distances from water, relying on the dampness of the forest floor to maintain the skin moisture frogs need. They're known to range widely (at least for a frog), traveling hundreds of meters within their habitats, although always connected to a breeding pond.

Wood frogs are considered to be heavily reliant on ephemeral pools that arise in the wake of spring snowmelt only to disappear in the summer heat. A trend toward more winters like we experienced this year could certainly impact wood frog reproduction down the road. At this point, their populations are considered healthy, and from the look of things from my recent visit to the swamp, they're kicking back and enjoying life!

Fishing reports

Ely area

Walleye anglers were greeted with warm water temps and clear blue skies on opener, with water temps from 51-59 degrees. As they did last year, anglers out for opener struggled to find fish. Small walleyes, too small to keep, were a common catch. A few anglers caught keeper walleyes in 14-20 feet of water on jigs and minnows.

So, where was the hot bite, with the big keepers? In super shallow water— just two-to-seven feet of water, max! Here anglers are catch-

ing walleyes pitching 1/16 oz. to 1/8 oz. jigs, tipped with a good lively rainbow. Bigger the rainbow the better! Shallow sand flats, gravel, or near slow moving creeks entering a lake were the best places to find these active walleyes. Top jig colors reported were green...yes green, bubble gum, blue and white.

Pike anglers had a great time catching good numbers of quality pike over opening weekend. However, pike over 40" proved very challenging to find. Large suckers, fished under a bobber, proved very effective. Pike anglers found pike in

shallow bays with emerging weeds or a slow moving creek entering the lake.

With warming water, anglers found dark colored crappies in shallow water staging to spawn on many area lakes. Crappie minnows fished under a bobber or hair jigs fished back in shallow, sun soaked bays, were very effective catching nice crappies.

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- Trash unused bait

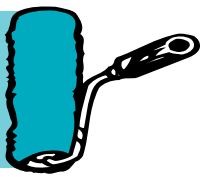
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9	3	1	8	5	7	2	4	6
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