



# Timberjay Holiday Schedule

**Dec. 20 issue:** Regular deadlines

**Dec. 27 issue:** Articles and ads due  
by Friday, Dec. 20 at 10 a.m.

No paper published on Jan. 3

# the TIMBERJAY



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989

VOL. 35, ISSUE 49

December 13, 2024

\$1.50

## HEALTH CARE

# Mental telehealth referrals now available in Ely

New service being offered through Wilderness Health consortium with federal funding

by CATIE CLARK  
Ely Editor

ELY- Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital's most recent community needs health assessment identified mental health services as one of the top three gaps in health care for the region. In November, a nonprofit rural health agency has helped to address that gap by bringing its "telemental" service to Ely. "Patients can consult with

a therapist anywhere there's an internet connection," said Zomi Bloom, the telehealth program manager for Wilderness Health of Two Harbors. Patients referred into the program gain access to a vetted mental health professional who provides services over the internet, eliminating one of the most substantial barriers to gaining behavioral health care.

**Creating a program**  
Wilderness Health received

a four-year \$1 million Rural Health Network Development Program grant in July 2023 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Our goal for the grant is to strengthen behavioral health navigation in our region's rural communities," Bloom told the *Timberjay*.

As part of its efforts, the nonprofit agency used \$297,000 of the grant in part to develop a telehealth program for mental health services designed specif-

**Right: The Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital is now able to offer mental health referrals remotely.**

ically with northeast Minnesota in mind.

"We hired a company called Digital Health Innovation to create an adaptive telehealth platform for us. We worked with them to get a branded

See...TELEHEALTH pg. 10



## GREENWOOD

# Board puts Option B back on the ballot

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- On the now familiar 3-2 vote, the Greenwood Town Board voted Tuesday to put "Option B" on the March 11 township election ballot once again. The measure would allow the town board to appoint a clerk and treasurer, which would eliminate those jobs as elected positions. Township residents voted on this exact same option back in 2020 and 2021, and both times the measure failed by a two-to-one margin.

The motion to put the question back on the ballot later this winter passed with only a brief discussion, with supervisors John Bassing and Rick Stoehr voting against.

"I will not take away anyone's right to vote," said Bassing.

Chair Lois Roskoski explained how this would affect the treasurer seat, which is up for election in March, and the clerk seat, which doesn't expire until March 2026. If voters approve the measure, whoever is elected to the treasurer seat would likely serve for a short time until the board hires a treasurer. The clerk would serve out the remainder of that term, and then the board would hire a replacement effective March 2026.

"The person hired can be from anywhere," Roskoski said. This opens the applicant pool to those not living in the township.

In 2020 and 2021, the issue came up when a majority of town board members wished to have more authority over



## HOLIDAY FUN

# Fun for all ages

The holidays serve up a compendium of events in the North Country

**Above:** This Santa's sleigh and reindeer, created by Myrtle Lake Resort, took first place at last Saturday's Snow City parade in Orr.

**Right:** Bristol Wills gives a nervous smile as she stands next to The Grinch at the December pancake breakfast at Timber Hall in Embarrass.

**Below:** Kids check out some of the donated toys during the pancake breakfast.



## CITY OF TOWER

# Council backs sprint medic pilot program participation

OKs four percent final levy increase for 2025

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

TOWER— The city council here, after considerable deliberation, voted unanimously to join the sprint medic pilot program being spearheaded by the Virginia ambulance service. City officials had appeared cool to the idea initially, but after a face-to-face meeting with the Virginia fire chief and assistant chief, Mayor Dave Setterberg and council member Kevin Norby said they felt more comfortable that the program would provide potential benefit without much downside risk.

Norby had previously expressed opposition to a \$200 fee that Virginia will be assessing for those calls that require advanced life support

See...COUNCIL pg. 9

## COUNTY SCHOOLS

# Board hears update on workforce goals

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook/Orr Editor

VIRGINIA- At Tuesday's ISD 2142 school board meeting, Kristi Berlin, the district's director of teaching and learning, presented the state-required annual "World's Best Workforce" report, which targets goals for school readiness, closing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and attendance. The Minnesota

See...SCHOOLS pg. 9



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## Community notices

### Holiday-themed History Happy Hour in Ely on Dec. 18 at the Boathouse Brewpub

ELY- Join host Jess Edberg for this month's History Happy Hour on Wednesday, Dec. 18 from 5 – 5:30 p.m. at the Boathouse Brewpub's Lookout Lounge. We'll be taking a look at the dark side of Christmas, where Krampus - the antithesis of Saint Nicholas (or Santa Claus) and part of the cultural lore traced back to pre-Christian Alpine traditions of northern and central Europe - is the guest of honor. We'll also have an "ugly sweater contest" for those in attendance, with third place getting a 6-pack of Dorothy's Root Beer, 2nd place getting a Boathouse Brewpub sweatshirt, and a grand prize of a \$100 gift card to the Boathouse Brewpub! Don your best worst holiday sweater/sweatshirt and learn about the other holiday visitor who may come down your chimney. History Happy Hour is informal, social, entertaining, and FREE. The Lookout Lounge will be open 4:30-6 p.m. with full service for dining and drinks before and during the program. History Happy Hour is offered on the third Wednesday of the month October-May from 5-5:30pm and is supported by the Boathouse Brewpub, Ely's Heritage Preservation Commission, the Dorothy Molter Museum, Boundary Waters Connect, the Ely Folk School and Ely Trivia Night.

### Tickets on sale now for Stages of the Range Players annual New Year's mystery dinner theater in Virginia

VIRGINIA- Stages of the Range Players will present their 23rd annual mystery dinner theater, "Molly Howard is No More," on Dec. 30 and 31 at Iron Trail Motors Event Center in Virginia. Under the direction of Mary Lou Conaway, this year's cast includes actors from Virginia, Tower, and Iron who are busy learning their parts. In the play, Molly Howard, played by Kelsey Cooke, has been murdered and her ghost now roams the halls of her estate. 'Who killed her?' is the question of the night. Did the butler, portrayed by Karel Winkelaar, do it? Hannah Buisse, as the maid? Or, maybe, it was Sam Papin, as the husband! It could even possibly be one of their friends, played by Tavia Melhus and Cade Gornick?

An eccentric psychic, played by Nina Kampf, is added to the mix of characters with the hope that the dead will speak. Experience a ghost story like none you have ever seen before! Everyone is in mourning and everyone is a suspect. The audience will have the opportunity to guess who the culprit is.

Event Center doors open at 5:30 p.m. and a cash bar will be open. Show starts promptly at 6 p.m. The dinner is catered by Kunnari's and features three entrees for you to select from, all deliciously prepared to the high quality standards held by this locally-owned restaurant. Make your dinner choice and reserve your seat as you purchase your tickets.

All tickets must be reserved before Dec. 24. Sorry, walk-up tickets are not available for this performance. Tickets are \$75 and available now at [www.tinyurl.com/3cas7bp2](http://www.tinyurl.com/3cas7bp2).

### Friends of the Boundary Waters hosting upcoming December event

ELY- Friends of the Boundary Waters is hosting an event on Winter Camping on a Budget on Thursday, Dec. 19 from 7 – 8 p.m. The event is being held at the Friends of the Boundary Waters office located at 8 E Sheridan St. in Ely.

Winter Camping on a Budget will explore the magic of wilderness winter camping. The perceived need for expensive gear and technical know-how can leave hopeful adventure-seekers out in the cold. In this presentation, learn how to start winter camping with meager means, where it's necessary to spend a bit extra, and how to make the most of the snowy season.

### Upcoming dates and deadlines for UWNEMN activities and funding

Dec. 17: Last chance to register for United Way of Northeastern Minnesota's United for Veterans Retreat (Jan.17-19 at Grand Ely Lodge) with guaranteed room availability. Local veterans and service members are invited to attend individually, with a significant other, or with their families. Learn more/register at [www.unitedwaynemn.org/ufv-retreat](http://www.unitedwaynemn.org/ufv-retreat) or call 218-215-2424.

Jan. 6: Deadline for local high school seniors to submit their entries in United Way of Northeastern Minnesota's Youth United Contest. Up to \$10,000 in scholarships will be awarded! Learn more at [www.unitedwaynemn.org/youth-united](http://www.unitedwaynemn.org/youth-united).

## HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

### TS Singers to perform on Sunday, Dec. 15 in Tower



TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Area Singers will perform their 2024 holiday concert, "The Wonder of the Holiday Season," on Sunday, Dec. 15 at 2 p.m. in the Tower-Soudan Elementary School gym. The 30 singers will present seasonal music of all types for all ages. The concert is under the direction of Rolf Anderson.

A special treat will be music performed by Tower's own Mattson family.

Christmas goodies will be served following the concert.

A free will donation will be taken, which will be used for purchase of music, decorations, and needed equipment. Everyone is invited to attend.

## THE CHRISTMAS STORY

### St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Alango annual live nativity on Friday, Dec. 20

ANGORA- St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Alango will once again be putting on a beautiful enactment of the Christmas story featuring Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, shepherds, wise men, and animals provided by Cook's Country Connection. This live nativity play will be performed on Friday, Dec. 20 and Pastor Dan Kerr will read the Christmas story as the star of Bethlehem shines above. Performances will take place at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. with refreshments

in the church following each performance. The church is located at 9808 Hwy. 22, Angora. Everyone is welcome to attend.



## EMBARRASS

### Ice candle celebration in Embarrass on Saturday, Dec. 14



EMBARRASS- Everyone is invited to stop by the Embarrass Cemetery starting at dusk on Saturday, Dec. 14 to see the displays of ice candles in memory of loved ones. Hundreds and hundreds of ice candles will light the cemetery as cars drive through. The cemetery is located on Hwy. 135, just north of the Four Corners intersection (Hwy. 21).

After the ceremony, the public is invited to the Embarrass Town Hall, located at 7503 Levander Rd., for a holiday gathering from 4 – 6 p.m. There will be sloppy Joes and Christmas goodies made and served by a wonderful group of happy elves. There will be crafts and a holiday movie for children, plus a quick visit from Santa.

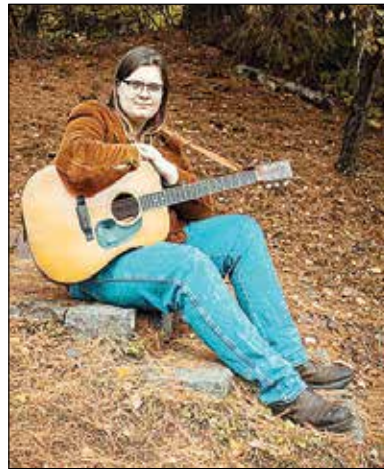
## FOLK MUSIC

### Blues/folk artist Jon Edwards to perform in Virginia on Dec. 14

VIRGINIA- Cultures, Humanities, and Arts on the Iron Range (CHAIR) is presenting the Iron Range debut of musician Jon Edwards at their facility at 510 Chestnut Street in Virginia at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14.

Edwards, a traditional blues and folk artist, has made major headway in forging a successful musical career over the past year in Duluth and across the region. He plays both 12 string and resonator guitars, and he got his start playing old-time string band music before branching out from there.

Influenced by artists such as Lead Belly, Dave Van Ronk, Spider John Koerner, John Prine, and Paul Germia, much of Edwards'



work is compared to Duluth blues legend Charlie Parr. He has shared the stage with Parr on several occasions and they have released recordings together. Not bad for a young person who was still in high school at the be-

ginning of the year.

"We are excited to host the Iron Range debut performance of Jon Edwards. He is incredibly talented and is quickly gaining a following among folks who appreciate real, salt of the earth blues and folk," said CHAIR Executive Director Paul M. Gregersen. "This is a special concert for both CHAIR and Jon, and will be looked back fondly upon for years to come."

Following his performance at CHAIR, Edwards will open for Parr at the Turf Club in St. Paul on Jan. 5.

"Jon's Charlie Parr-inspired style is complemented nicely with his own unique contributions that make for quite an impressive stage presence. He's going to blow people away," Gregersen said.

Tickets are not required for the show at CHAIR, but freewill donations will be collected on behalf of the organization.

Cultures, Humanities, and Arts on the Iron Range (CHAIR) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to provide opportunities pertaining to humanities, cultures, arts and education to people of all ages across the Iron Range.

**Left: Blues and folk musician Jon Edwards will make his Iron Range stage debut on Saturday, Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. in downtown Virginia at Cultures, Humanities, and Arts on the Iron Range (CHAIR). Edwards' music draws comparisons with Charlie Parr, Lead Belly, and Spider John Koerner.**

## The Wonder of the HOLIDAY SEASON

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ELY SCHOOLS

# New hardwood stage floor installed in the Washington Auditorium

by CATIE CLARK  
Ely Editor

ELY- The new hardwood floor for Washington Auditorium stage is now installed. That was the welcome news that Tim Leeson, the district's facilities director, had for the school board here this week.

"We will get it sanded and stained over Christmas break and get it good to go," Leeson told the board during its Monday evening meeting.

The new stage floor has been a long time in coming. The stage had originally been scheduled to be re-floored ahead of last school year, but more pressing repairs pushed the installation back by more than a year. The production crew for the production of "Frozen" last year had to install its own repairs to the floor in order to stage the musical because of the delay.

Leeson also reported that the temporary structural repair to the ice arena is complete and had passed

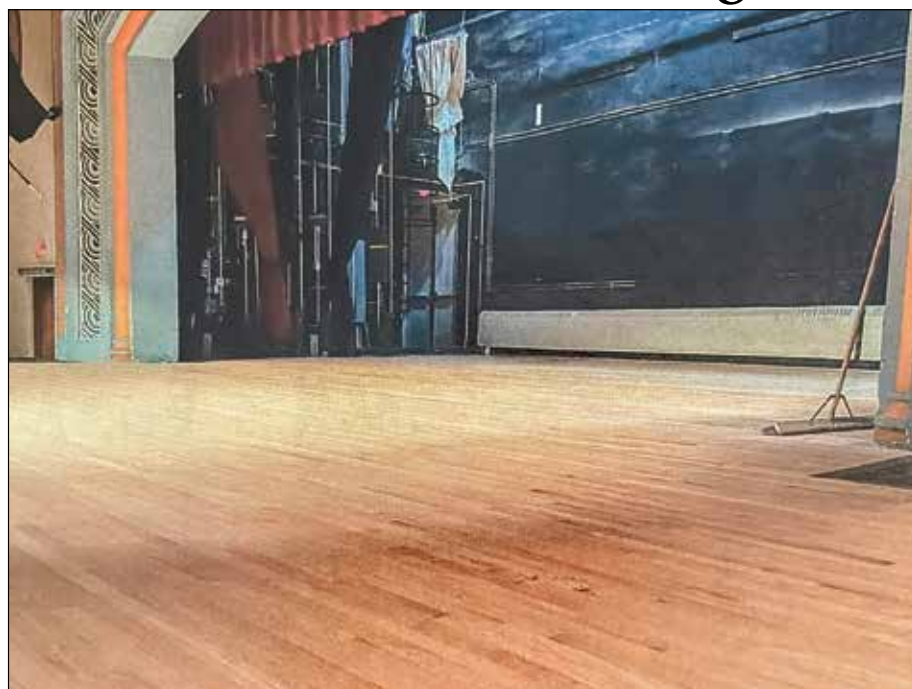
inspection. The ice arena is now open and in use for ice hockey practice and public open skating.

Leeson also commented that the new window project is down to the last remaining window although four or five that came from the manufacturer need to be reglazed. The small amount of remaining window work will be completed this school year, he said.

## Truth in Taxation

Jordan Huntbatch, the payroll, benefits and finance coordinator for ISD 696, gave the Truth in Taxation presentation for the district. The property tax levy for 2025 will be \$2.553 million, which reflects a \$284,685 or 12.55 percent increase from the 2024 levy. The new capital projects levy approved by voters during the recent November general election is included in this amount.

The school board certified the final levy amount at Monday's meeting. The increase will be included in property taxes beginning in



The new hardwood stage has been installed in Washington Auditorium at the Ely Public Schools Campus. submitted photo

May 2025 and will be used by the district in the 2026 fiscal year, which is the same as the 2025-26 school year.

The majority of the current levy, 68.7 percent, is allocated for the general fund and 31.3 percent is allocated

for debt service. The levy is 25.5 percent of the district's budgeted revenues. Most of the revenue, 67.5 percent, is from the state, with federal funds contributing 3.7 percent and the remainder coming from other sources. The

total projected revenue for the 2025 fiscal year is \$9.765 million.

Most of the district's spending, 48.6 percent, goes to wages, and 19.4 percent goes to employee benefits. Purchased services, such as

technology support and special education, comprise 11.2 percent of the budget. Debt service uses 9.3 percent of the budget, supplies and materials use 5.9 percent, and capital expenditures use 4.4 percent.

## Meeting changes

The December study session for the school board has been moved up a week, to next Monday, Dec. 16, at 6 p.m., to review the results of the district's most recent financial audit.

The January study session has been moved from Jan. 27 to Monday, Jan. 6, at 6 p.m. The subject of the meeting will be the upcoming 2025 session of the Minnesota Legislature. State Sen. Grant Hauschild and Rep. Roger Skraba, along with staff from Northeast Range School, will attend the Jan. 6 meeting.

## Other business

In other business, the school board:

- Approved a leave

See ELY...pg. 5

GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

# Greenwood finally acknowledges ownership of Township Rd. 4136

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- The town board finally passed a resolution formally acknowledging that Birch Point Extension is Township Rd. 4136. The vote was 3-1, with John Bassing abstaining (conflict of interest) and Rick Stoehr voting against.

The resolution does specify that the township road ends where the blacktop ends, near fire number 2577.

This formalizes the reality that the township is responsible for maintaining the road in a passable condition. This leaves open the option of converting the aging blacktop to gravel, or assessing adjacent property owners for the costs of applying new blacktop.

When Greenwood Township was formed, officials had made clear they opposed taking possession of any of the existing roads, but the township did start maintaining the end of Birch Point Rd. (a county road) by paying St. Louis County for plowing services, inadvertently becoming responsible for the mile-long stretch that was privately paved back in the 1970s. The designation has angered other township residents who privately pay for the maintenance on their own roads.

Stoehr was concerned about litigation underway about a platted road vacation request on Birch Point Extension, but chair Lois Roskoski said that issue was not relevant. She said the township is working to specify the road right-of-way it needs as part of the road vacation legal process.

"This township road designation has nothing to do with that vacation request," she said. "We just need to show the court how much land we need for snowplowing." Stoehr asked to table the

resolution until after the annual meeting, to allow township residents to vote on the matter, but other supervisors reiterated that this was a township road. "Several attorneys have told us this is a township road," said Paul Skubic. Roskoski said that Scott Neff, who was the township attorney many years ago, told her it had been a township road since 1980.

"We have maintained the road for over seven years," said Roskoski, "so it is a township road."

The town board then voted to approve hiring Calgaro Tree Service to brush the sides of the road, four feet from the edge of the blacktop, and to the height of 16 feet. The work will cost \$4,100 and will be completed over the winter, as conditions allow.

## Helicopter landing area

The board voted to form a committee to look at ways to make

the landing zone area in the township parking lot safer. The committee will be led by supervisor Craig Gilbert, and members will include Paul Thompson and fire captain Brian Trancheff.

Deputy treasurer JoAnn Bassing told the board there were steps the township could take to make the area safer, as well as reducing any possible liability issues for the township. No one was sure if the township's insurance policies would cover any issues relating to the landing zone, which is not licensed (and probably could not qualify for a license).

Fire chief Jeff Maus has brought the issue to the attention of the board, and had MnDOT visit and prepare a report for the town board, which the town board had yet to act on.

"We need to have the absolute safest area we can," said JoAnn Bassing. "But we can't eliminate all possible liability."

There are no licensed landing areas nearby. The other area often used is the parking lot at the Y Store, which is also unlicensed.

## Recreation board

Paul Thompson gave an update on the township's recreation board activities. He told the board the pickleball court project was paid for and there is \$6,000 in left-over funds for future maintenance costs. He said they are looking at refinishing the existing tennis court surface, and have received one grant, and hope to receive a second grant for that project. "We are looking forward to hosting a grand opening of the pickleball courts in June," he said.

The committee will also give a presentation at the March 11 annual meeting about future plans for maintenance and upkeep of the

See ROAD...pg. 5

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# OPINION

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## Editorial

### ACA tax credits

More than 20 million Americans could see their premiums rise without action in Washington

When it comes to the cost of living, the advanced premium tax credits available under the Affordable Care Act have been a lifesaver for millions of Americans who would otherwise have struggled mightily to afford health insurance coverage. That's been particularly true since those tax credits were enhanced as part of the COVID relief measures passed in 2021 and then extended in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

That was one of many ways that the Inflation Reduction Act truly did reduce the cost of living for millions of Americans. The enhanced tax credits made private health insurance so affordable that it literally doubled the number of Americans who signed up for insurance under the ACA's marketplace, which we access in Minnesota through MNsure. Today, more than 21 million Americans benefit from the tax credits to make their health insurance affordable. Here in Minnesota, the ranks of beneficiaries include many small business owners, farmers, and lower-wage workers whose employers can't afford to provide coverage through their businesses.

But with the change coming in Washington in January, millions of families may soon be paying significantly more for health coverage than they have in the past. The enhanced tax credits are set to expire next year and there appears to be little enthusiasm on the part of the Republicans or President-elect Trump to extend the benefit. They'll be focused much more on extending the Trump tax cuts, a tax formula that is overwhelmingly slanted to the benefit of high earners and the wealthy. According to the Congressional Budget Office, extending the Trump cuts will add \$4 trillion to the deficit over the next decade. Extending the ACA's enhanced premium tax credits, another form of tax cut that would primarily benefit small entrepreneurs, farmers, and low-wage workers, would add an estimated \$335 billion to the deficit over the next decade, or less than one-tenth the amount of the Trump tax cut extension.

Without the extension, Americans who qualify for the tax credits would see their annual premiums increase by more than \$1,000. Some could face a much bigger hit depending on their circumstances. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, the enhanced tax credits not only increase the

assistance for those who were already qualified, it expanded the eligibility pool to allow middle-class families (earning up to \$123,000 per year for a family of four) to qualify for the tax credits for the first time. If those families no longer qualify for the credit, it could be a noticeable financial hit.

MNsure's own calculations provide a better sense of just how big a hit. As reported in the *Star Tribune* last week, residents of northeastern Minnesota can expect an average premium increase of \$175 per month without an extension of the enhanced tax credits. That's \$2,100 a year. Just as the enhanced tax credits encouraged many more families to sign up for coverage, their expiration will force many to drop their coverage, which will once again increase the ranks of the uninsured.

Of course, as always when it comes to politics, decisions reflect the priorities of those in charge. Unfortunately, helping working-class families afford health insurance doesn't appear to be a high priority for the next administration, or for Congress.

Those priorities, of course, can change depending on the feedback members of Congress receive from the public — which is why we all should be thinking how we can move the needle to build support for extending the tax credits.

The fact is, the ACA has worked largely as it was designed to do. It has dramatically reduced the ranks of the uninsured by expanding eligibility for programs like Medical Assistance while providing premium tax credits for tens of millions of Americans who don't qualify for Medical Assistance. Given that most families today either benefit from, or know family members who benefit from the ACA, it's no surprise that nearly two-thirds of Americans now say they have a favorable view of the program. That's a remarkably high percentage for any government program, and it's a reflection of the fact that the ACA is working for so many Americans.

It's easy to forget that as recently as 2010, about 16 percent of Americans lived without health coverage. Today, it's half that, about 7.7 percent according to the latest government data. That's a success story, one that Americans should fight to protect.



## Letters from Readers

### What about water power?

So far, we have not made much progress in arresting rising global temperatures generated by our greenhouse emissions. They have formed a “canopy” in our atmosphere, blocking and accumulating the heat from the earth's emissions from escaping into space. If left to continue unabated, the increasing world temperatures will eventually annihilate vegetation, wildlife, and humans. (You cannot imagine the impact of intense heat. You have to actually experience it to understand its devastating impact.)

The major components of the canopy are generated from the use of fossil fuels, i.e., petroleum products that are primarily used in transportation and heating needs.

Toyota, the world's largest maker of automobiles, has developed a water-powered automobile. The water is processed through hydrolysis, a chemical decomposition that is integrated into the engine's operation. It breaks the water molecules into hydrogen and oxygen. The recombination of hydrogen and oxygen inside the engine generates combustion energy that drives the engine with water vapor being the only emission.

If Toyota can scale up the water engine for mass usage, it will have a major, major contribution towards curbing destructive climate change. The water-powered engine can be used for many other applications: including trucks, buses, trains, ships, airplanes plus heavy equipment for building, mining, and agriculture. The water engine also could be used for the electricity in factories, office buildings, homes, and the grid system. Moreover, the engines will avoid the national grid system of having to support the need for the potentially over 200 million EV cars that would have been dependent on the aging electric system.

Since populations are usually situated where water exists, the logistics of fueling water engines become more accessible and cost savings generated from having

convenient access to fuel. Water represents 70 percent of the earth's surface.

Tesla appears also on the brink of developing a water engine that reinforces the confidence that, indeed, a water-powered engine can realistically be developed, providing the means to minimize our present global warming, which is not a hoax. It does not require the development of a huge infrastructure to implement a market, and that factor permits smaller nations easy participation.

It is anticipated that there will be efforts by the oil industry and uninformed political rhetoric to curtail water-powered engines. The marketing and economics of a new fuel power greatly favor public acceptance. It can be without government financing or incentives and still save our planet from adverse impact generated by climate change.

Gerry Snyder  
Ely

### Biden pardon shows Democrat elitism

Political theater by Democrats just keeps getting embellished. Bloody backstabbing and blaming is entertaining as the Democrats try to figure out why they lost to the Russian agent Hitler Nazi dictator fascist as they had labeled Trump. Who ever thought Biden would be pardoning three turkeys this year? Biden said, “Because no one is above the law,” right? In your face America, it is good to be king!

Special counsel David Weiss said, “A pardon does not blot out guilt or expunge a judgment of conviction,” emphasizing that a pardon removes the punishment but does not invalidate the legal basis for an indictment. Biden has the power to prevent punishment but not expunge the record. Why does the pardon include anything and everything known and unknown about Hunter Biden from 2014 to present? Hunter was put on Burisma board. Why are there so many Biden “shell” companies? Why make the pardon for 11 years if they committed no crimes?

Grandpa Bubbles has been a serial liar from the time 51 deep state liars signed a letter saying the Hunt-

er emails were Russian disinformation to saying over and over he would not pardon his kid. Complicit liberal legacy media and journalists enabled the ‘Big Guy’ lie of letting Biden's drug-addled, whore-monger, money-scramming son go to jail.

Anyone with common sense believes Tony Bobulinski and whistle blowers Gary Shapely and Joseph Ziegler long before a single word from Biden or his battery of lawyer's smearing tactics.

Some are saying that Biden's own justice department targeted Hunter because of politics. Really? And Trump is not victimized by Democrat lawfare? Some claim Biden has seen politics in the justice system for “years and years.” Then why didn't Biden deal with this? Why wasn't Trump and all J6ers pardoned at the same time for the same reason? What a farce!! The Bidens are the epitome of Democrat elitism.

It has been bad enough putting up with Democrats and Biden's multiple levels of stupidity for four years, but now he took us one more step to nuclear war with Putin and instructed Blinken to push as much military hardware as possible into Ukraine before Jan. 20.



## Your letters

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

We ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

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

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

## COMMENTARY

# Recognizing the ladies who have led the way

“The First Lady”, a PBS dramatic series, highlights the lives and political roles of Eleanor Roosevelt, Betty Ford, and Michelle Obama. These smart, strong-willed women had definite ideas about what they wanted to do (and what they didn't want to do) as political wives, and eventually as First Ladies. Husbands, chiefs of staff, and party officials all tried to keep them



BETTY FIRTH

quiet, exhorting them to comport themselves as proper First Ladies, but these women refused to be silenced, managed, or manipulated—and the country benefited. To their credit, all three of their husbands had chosen to marry strong women and knew that it was pretty fruitless to try to keep them quiet. The relationship of Eleanor and Franklin Roos-

velt was a complicated one. FDR's infidelity shattered the marital trust. They developed a celibate partnership—described as “an armed truce” by a relative, in which Eleanor had significant influence politically and personally.

Roosevelt and his team of pols tried to get Eleanor to shut up, to no avail. She recognized her own need to have meaningful work to use her talents and influence to create positive change. When she asked what position she would have in FDR's first administration, his chief of

staff, said, “First Lady.” Her response was, “That is not a position; that's my situation.”

As First Lady, she was expected to look good, be a charming hostess, keep her opinions quiet, and do what the men told her to do. Not likely. She was FDR's helpmate, tending to him when he was paralyzed, supporting his decision to remain in politics, campaigning for him, and later serving as ambassador, human rights advocate, and a popular voice for the common worker. She was the first First Lady to have

a secretary, and her activism changed the role of the First Lady ever after. She has been memorialized with a statue in Riverside Park in Manhattan, a coin in the 2023 American Women's History quarter series, and multiple books and movies.

Betty Ford struck me as unremarkable when Gerald Ford was president, so I found it interesting to learn about her personal growth. She filled the role of a Congressional wife, but she counted the days until Gerald would be free to move to California and build their

dream home. History intervened, and with the resignations of Agnew and then Nixon, Betty reluctantly became Second Lady, then First Lady. Not happy with her life, Betty got hooked on alcohol and prescription drugs. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1974, she spoke up, encouraging women to get checkups to increase the chance of early detection. She said, “I came to recognize more clearly the power of the woman in the

See WOMEN...pg. 5



## ELY...Continued from page 3

of absence for Anna-Lena Forsman from her paraprofessional position, with no loss of her union seniority standing, and hired her as the grade 7 and 8 long-term substitute math teacher position effective from Nov. 18 until March 21, 2025.

In a related item, the board heard the report from the district's substitute teacher contractor, Teachers on Call, that the firm had hired Lisa Eastham as a long-term substitute paraprofessional as of Dec. 5 until her service is no longer needed.

► Adopted the maximum U.S. General Services Administration domestic 2025 per diem rates for meal

reimbursement and maximum lodging rates for all district employee travel.

► Accepted the resignation of Kate Perkins from her cafeteria aide position effective Dec. 15.

► Approved the following assistant coaches for the winter sports season: Ray Podominick, assistant boys basketball coach; Troy Oelke, junior high girls basketball coach; Patrick Vanderbeek, junior high boys basketball coach; Katelynn Rice, volunteer girls basketball coach. Any stipends for Oelke and Vanderbeek will be the responsibility of the Ely Hoop Club.

► Approved the first

reading of Minn. School Boards Association Policy 704 for the development and maintenance of an inventory of fixed assets and a fixed asset accounting system. This is a new district policy as recommended by the district's auditors.

► Approved the final revisions of the district's new five-year strategic plan draft and its distribution to the participants of the strategic planning meetings for review and final comments.

► Approved the renewal of the expiring referendum revenue authorization as allowed under state law.

► Approved two memorandums of understanding

between the district and the Ely Educational Association, which is the local teacher's union, regarding the use of education credits. School board chair Rochelle Sjoberg explained that the two MOUs were necessary to clarify language in district's teacher contracts.

► Approved a mandated Letter of Understanding between the district and the Ely Educational Association in relation to the grievance regarding insurance brokerage fees. The letter outlines the results of arbitration over the grievance, stating that the district will no longer add brokerage fees to the insurance premiums paid by EEA

members. In addition, the district will reimburse affected EEA members for these fees in the Dec. 31 payroll.

► Approved the 2023-2024 World's Best Workforce Report and Summary. This report is compiled every year and submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education as required by state law.

► Approved cooperative agreements with Northeast Range School for Speech and for boys and girls golf with Northeast Range as the host school for the 2024-25 season.

► Approved a cooperative agreement with Northeast Range and Vermilion

Country School for boys basketball for the 2024-25 season.

► Approved the following donations: \$434 from the Ely Community Resource to the Media Center for books, \$385 from the Kiwanis Club for the National Honor Society, \$400 from the Kiwanis Club for the Early Childhood Family Education program, an \$1,850 anonymous donation for special education, and \$150 from the Mesabi Community Orchestra for the band program.

## ROAD...Continued from page 3

township's recreation facilities, as well as setting up an ongoing system for receiving donations.

Thompson thanked the group of volunteers who do the ongoing upkeep at the recreation facilities, including collecting trash, watering flowers, and decorating, as well as spring and fall cleanup/setup duties.

"Jarri Ankrum keeps our group on task," Thompson said.

### Fire department

The board voted to hire the Minnesota Safety Group to help update and rewrite the department's standard operating and paid on-call guidelines.

"Right now, it's a mess," said Roskoski, "and we need to confirm which version we are following."

Fire department officials have been working to update and standardize these guidelines, but final approval needs to come from the town board, which has repeatedly delayed acting on revisions.

The cost to hire the safety group, which is led by the Hibbing Fire Chief, will not exceed \$2,000. "I don't think we need them to do this," said John Bassing. "We've had a committee before to do this."

"It is unfortunate we have to spend this kind of money," said Skubic.

"We've been asking him [Chief Maus] to do it."

The vote passed 4-1, with Bassing voting against.

The board failed to pass a motion requesting township employees to use their issued credit cards, whenever possible, instead of township charge accounts.

The board did pass a motion to require any receipts for purchases made at Menards which qualify for the 11-percent rebate to be given to the township to redeem.

The board also passed a motion to authorize the two fire department captains to obtain the training certificates for all the members and develop an up-to-date

list of all members and their training levels.

"How are they going to get this information," asked Gilbert. "The fire chief should have this info. What do we have a fire chief for if they have to do his job?"

A motion to have the clerk send employment forms to all current employees passed 3-2, with Stoehr and Bassing voting against. The clerk's office does not have complete employment records on file, and there is confusion about where this data has been filed.

### Other business

► Filings for township offices open on Dec. 31. The supervisor seat currently

held by Rick Stoehr and the treasurer seat currently held by Jeff Maus will both be on the ballot.

► Approved a donation of \$100 to the St. Louis County Fair.

► Approved purchasing holiday greeting ads in the *Timberjay* and *Tower News*.

► Accepted donations from the Vermilion Quilters of \$260 and Bois Forte for \$15,000 (for fire department services)

► Approved paying for five EMRs attending a three-day conference in Duluth, at a cost of \$5,400 for hotel, conference fees, and travel.

► Approved hiring Mike Nystrom for video services for 2025. They also

approved an additional \$25 per meeting fee if the meeting cannot be livestreamed, and Nystrom has to upload the video the following day from his home. The township has been paying \$290 per month for this service. The township is having issues with its new internet service, which apparently lacks the bandwidth needed for live-streaming. Roskoski said the videos are getting between 200 and 700 views each month, and supervisors are getting good feedback on offering the video streams. Right now they are just available on the township's Facebook page.

## WOMEN...Continued from page 4

White House. Not my power, but the power of the position, a power which could be used to help."

Gerald was very supportive of her and her right to speak up, but other politicians tried to silence her. Her approval ratings were about double of those of her husband when he lost the election in 1976 to Jimmy Carter. After years of denial about her disease of alcoholism and drug addiction, her family staged an intervention in 1978. She went into treatment and then helped bring opioid and alcohol addiction into the light along with the recognition that a network of resources is needed for recovery. She helped found the Betty Ford Center for treatment in Rancho Mirage, California.

The story of Michelle and Barack Obama might be the archetype of two brilliant, capable, strong people who managed to find each

other and create an interdependent team to pursue their goals in life. Michelle showed her strong will even as a child, and she graduated from Harvard law school in spite of the odds against her. She was a force to be reckoned with; Barack made no secret of his respect for her strength in interviews and his own writings. She did not hesitate to call Barack on his actions if he was not living up to her high ideals. Opposition just made her more stubborn and stronger in her will to do what she felt was right.

She described herself as a mother first and resented the intrusion on her family's privacy and safety that came with public life. At the same time, she recognized the importance of the values the Obamas brought to the White House, and her work focused on the importance of education, nutrition, and physical activity. She insist-

ed on talking honestly about racism and poverty in the country when Barack and political advisors were asking her for political reasons to soft pedal what she was saying.

All three of the First Ladies received apologies from the men who had tried to squelch them along with acknowledgements that their honesty with the American public had gained them respect and popularity, which strengthened their husbands' administrations; at times they even gained a higher level of approval and trust than their husbands had.

The 10-episode PBS series struck me as very timely as we anticipate the upcoming Trump administration with its ingrown misogyny and disrespect for many categories of people that these First Ladies stood up for. Why would so many voters seemingly approve of overt actions of disrespect and

hatred? Who will call to account this self-absorbed man driven by a bottomless need for approval and endless greed for power and money?

Real men — those who have no need to huff and puff and blow the house down — have no problem acknowledging the strength and capabilities of women, showing appreciation for everything women accomplish in their families, communities, and work places.

Garrison Keillor called Minnesota the place where the women are strong and the men are good-looking, and I have met many remarkable women throughout the state. I'd like to honor two powerful, local women who have contributed so much through their work and indomitable spirits. There cannot be very many people in Ely who don't know Julie Hignell, who recently retired from her position as Executive Director of Ely Community

Resource (ECR). It would be hard to find a more effective, generous, kind, cheerful person in her extensive work with students, staff, and volunteers while operating within the constraints of nonprofit guidelines and the continual need for fundraising. Wishing you the best in your retirement, Julie!

Kap Wilkes is another Ely nonprofit champion, who has brought her skills for strategic organizational development to Well Being Development. She helped the organization through a

transitional time, then continued to provide guidance as the organization grew stronger and its vision expanded culminating, in part, with the opening of the permanent home for Northern Lights Clubhouse and the first sober house in Ely. With her outstanding skills in grant writing and her ability to bring people together to find solutions, she has inspired many to help make this vision a reality. Kudos and thanks to you, Kap!

## Obituaries and Death Notices

### Carol A. Lassey

Carol Ann Lassey, 95, of Ely, passed away on Monday, Dec. 2, 2024. A short memorial service is tentatively planned for Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025, following the regular church service at First Presbyterian Church of Ely. A private inurnment will be held in the spring. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral Home of Virginia.

Carol was born in Ely on Nov. 5, 1929, to Charles and Violet Maki Lassey.

She graduated from high school and junior college in Ely and attended Duluth Business University. Following that she moved to Moline, Ill., where she was employed in the Moline Public Hospital and for John Deere and Co. In 1970, she returned to Ely to help with her aging parents and was also employed by Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital in the dietary department.

Carol loved sports, especially basketball. She was an avid fan of Vermilion Community College teams. In Illinois she was much taken with roller skating. She was a longtime member of First Presbyterian Church of Ely and had sung in the choir.

Carol is survived by her

cousins, David, Donald, Paul and Peter Kess of Ely; and a niece in North Carolina.

She was predeceased by her sister, Gloria Starkman; an infant brother; and two nephews.

### Roland E. Fowler Jr.

Roland Eugene Fowler Jr., 62, of Embarrass, passed away on Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2024, doing what he loved to do, deer hunting in Embarrass. A celebration of life was held on Sunday, Dec. 8 at the Embarrass Town Hall. Arrangements were with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his daughter, Amber Luck (Duart); son, Roland Fowler III; grandchildren, Troy, Beau and Gema Luck, and Huntin Al and Howie Fowler Dalebout; father, Roland Fowler Sr.; sister, Michelle Fowler (Daryl Benson); brother, Randy Fowler; aunts and uncles, Robert and Cathy Fowler, R'milla and Dan Meyer; and numerous cousins.

### William M. Isham

William M. Isham, 78, passed away peacefully on Monday, Nov. 25, 2024, at St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth. Visitation was on Sunday, Dec. 1 and the tra-

ditional service was on Monday, Dec. 2, both at the Bois Forte Government Center in Nett Lake. The pallbearers were Tyler Isham, Nicolis Buchholz, Jake Isham, Alex Isham, Ernie Landgren and Luke Landgren. Honorary pallbearers were William G. Isham, Shullon Isham, Kevin Strong, Jim Prepodnik, John Prepodnik, Henry Thompson, Elius Strong and Pablo Gonzales. Arrangements were with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his son, William G. Isham (Jannan Isham); daughters, Louise Elizabeth Isham and Jennifer Lorraine Isham; grandchildren, Tyler Isham (Crystal Isham), Nicolis Buchholz (Racheal Howe), Shullon Isham (Kevin Strong), Jake Isham and Alexander Isham; great-grandchildren, Grace Isham, Alyssa Isham, Graham Isham, Jazmin Buchholz, Gabryl Buchholz, Neko Buchholz, Elius Strong, Hazel Strong and William Isham.

### Leola C. Vezina

Leola Crisman Vezina, 80, of Bigfork, passed away on Friday, Nov. 29, 2024. A celebration of life will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025, at Mlaker Fu-

neral Home in Cook. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service.


### Gary V. Burow

Gary Vaughn Burow, 71, of Makinen, proud owner of Junction Properties in Babbitt, passed away unexpectedly at his lake home on Monday, Nov. 25, 2024. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 21 at Faith Lutheran Church in Hoyt Lakes. Visitation will take place from 10 to 11 a.m. Family services are provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his best friends, Missy Carlson of Babbitt, Ryan and Landyn Nephew of Ely, Jennifer Borden of Virginia and Don Maxson of Babbitt; nephews, Troy and Trent; and other dear family and friends.

### Tanner L. Aho

Tanner Lee Aho, 17, of Babbitt, passed away on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2024, at Children's Hospital in Minneapolis. A funeral service will be held this summer. Family services have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.



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**TIMBERJAY**

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

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



Week of Dec. 16

**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. New location in the old St. James Church building. Next food shelf day is Dec. 17.  
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.  
Breitung Town Board- 6 p.m. on Dec. 19

COMMUNITY GIVING

Last minute Operation Santa donations can still be dropped off

TOWER- We have started to "wrap up" this year's Operation Santa toy drive, with gifts to be distributed to families on Tuesday, Dec. 17. And while we have collected enough toys and gift cards for the families who signed up in advance, we always end up with as many as 15 last minute requests from families, so we need to have plenty on our shelves to meet that need. This toy drive was started back in 1991 and at that time, served about 60 children. Operation Santa is a local fundraiser that purchases Christmas gifts (toys, gift cards, and warm winter items) for children whose families use the Tower Food Shelf. Last year the need was greater than ever, with toys and clothing given to 200 children from 68 families, and thanks to everyone's generosity, we also had enough for small gifts for over 50 students at Vermilion Country School, as well as gift bags we assembled for the senior citizens who use the food shelf.

Gifts to be distributed to families on Tuesday, Dec. 17



stuffer type gifts and holiday candy are also appreciated. We are always in need of gifts for infants and babies (must be labeled as safe for children under three). Gift ideas for children include games, action figures, building toys, dolls with accessories, craft sets, art supplies (including crayons and markers), sporting goods (basketballs, footballs, playground balls, sleds), puzzles, cars and trucks and science kits. Please don't worry about picking out the right gift; promise there will be a child on our list who will love whatever you pick out! Donations can be dropped off at the Timberjay in Tower, and will be distributed at the food shelf on Dec. 17. Families who use the Tower Food Shelf and have not yet signed up, can call Jodi at the Timberjay at 218-753-2950, or email editor@timberjay.com to get your children on the list.

The effort is organized by the Timberjay and the Tower-Soudan Civic Club, with help from many area groups, churches, organizations, and individuals. Lake Country Power's Operation RoundUp® program has once again made a very generous donation to the Tower-Soudan Civic Club to help cover the cost of purchasing warm items for the children. We are looking for donations of toys, games, art supplies, and sporting equipment for children, and gift cards to either Target or Walmart for our teenagers (\$10 or \$15). Stocking



**TSHS weekly winner**  
TOWER- The Week 13 winner of the Charlemagne's 52 Club \$100 cash prize is Frank Siskar of Tower. **History Tidbit:**In the early 1900s, the Soudan Hospital charged the miners \$1 per month for free remedies and office calls. The doctors also made periodic visits to the logging camps in the winter months.

**Free community meal on Wednesday, Dec. 18 at Immanuel**  
TOWER- Immanuel Lutheran Church is hosting their monthly free community meal on Wednesday, Dec. 18 from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., or until the food is gone. The meal this month will be sloppy Joe's and homemade macaroni and cheese. Eat-in or take-out is available and all are welcome to stop by the church basement for the meal.

**Little Church committee to meet Dec. 14**  
VERMILION LAKE TWP- The Little Church committee will have a business meeting on Saturday, Dec. 14 at 10 a.m. New members are always welcome and the group is always looking for people interested in keeping the Little Church preserved and maintained. The organization hosts a men's group on Thursdays at 9 a.m. and a women's group on Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. for coffee and conversation. The Little Church is located on County Rd. 26/Wahlsten Rd. Any questions, contact Len Hujanen at 218-749-2014 (feel free to leave a message).

**Wellness Mini-Expo on Saturday, Dec. 14**  
TOWER- There will be a Wellness Mini-Expo on Saturday, Dec. 14 from 12 noon - 6 p.m. at the Idea Warehouse on Tower's Main St. There will be a meet and greet with vendors, prize drawings, Reconnective Therapy with Terah Rinerson, Bare Rhythms products, Touched by a Starr consultation sessions, chair massages by Sherri, Bravenly products and consultations, Starbaby products, Clean Life Family muscle testing demos and products, and Brianna Lofquist with PEMF and red light mat demonstrations. Some of these events are free, and others have a cost. There will be a Native Detox Clinic 101 from 3 - 4:30 p.m. (Contact circle-sister13@gmail.com or call 218-780-5554 for registration and cost information).

TOWER-SOUDAN ELEMENTARY



Tower-Soudan Elementary Winter Concert set for Thursday, Dec. 19

TOWER- The community is invited to the Tower-Soudan Elementary School's winter concert on Thursday, Dec. 19 at 1:30 p.m. There will be a performance by the Tower-Soudan and Northeast Range elementary band, followed by performances by students in grades K-6, under the direction of music teacher Michelle Anderson.

Left: A file photo from last year's concert.



Tower-Soudan Elementary hoops

Tower-Soudan Elementary Girls Basketball players traveled to International Falls last weekend to play in a tournament. The team won their first game against Mesabi East, but then lost their next game against Rock Ridge. The team will travel again next week to Cherry, and have future games scheduled in Deer River and Hibbing. This is the first year the school has hosted an elementary team that is traveling to games. The team's volunteer coaches are Heather and James Anderson, Kalee Bjorgo and Zac Schroeder, and John Jirik. Team members include: Ayva, Zaija, Cecilia, Nitanis, Sri, Bessie, Adaiyah, Kai'Lee, Hazel, Harper, Amelie, Karmina, Azalya, and Raven. Photos by T. Trucano



Read us online at timberjay.com  
e-edition available on Wednesday afternoons



## AROUND TOWN



**Top left: "Elf: The Musical" runs from Dec. 12 through Dec. 21 at the Vermilion Fine Arts Theater. Get you tickets at [northernlakesarts.org/tickets](http://northernlakesarts.org/tickets). From left-to-right: Aubrielle Poppler, Toby Davis, Noah Warner, Mattie Lindsay, and Mallory Wintz.** submitted photo

**Top right: Michael Rouse conducting the Ely Community Choir and the Ely Community Youth Choir last Saturday.** photo by C. Clark

**Center left: The ribbon cutting at Well Being Development's Northern Lights House, the new home for the nonprofit's clubhouse and recovery residence. Lisa Ledel (left) holds the ribbon as Peggy Jesme (center) and Kap Wilkes (right) wield the scissors to cut the ribbon.** submitted photo

**Bottom: The Ely Community Choir and Ely Community Youth Choir performing the Christmas cantata "Love is Born" by Minnesota composer Lloyd Larson last Saturday.** photo by C. Clark



## In Brief

## Tuesday Group schedule

ELY – Hosted by Boundary Waters Connect, the Tuesday Group community educational luncheon 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](mailto:ElyTuesdayGroup@gmail.com) or call her at 218-216-9141.

The Tuesday Group is now on its winter holiday hiatus until January.

## Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2024



trees outlined in white as predicted it came down

snow banks five feet high

## 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-6 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  
**ADULT BASIC EDUCATION GED**  
Study materials and pre-test available.  
Call 218-365-3359, or 1-800-662-5711.

**CO-DEPENDENTS' 12-step support group, 4:00 p.m. Tuesdays,** hosted by Well Being Development, Ely. *This meeting is suspended temporarily while Well Being Development's Northern Lights Clubhouse moves to its new home.*

**CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS:** Babbitt: 3rd Monday of Month: 6-7:30 p.m. at Carefree Living. Ely: 4th Monday of Month: 10-11:30 a.m. at Ely-Bloomenson Hospital. Conference Room B.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

## Party and Toy Drive

ELY- The Iron Range 81 is holding a Friday the 13th charity party and Christmas toy drive for local families in need at Samz' Place, 1225 Winton Rd., starting at 5 p.m. this Friday and ending at closing time. Entry into the party is a \$20 donation at the door or a new toy, bike, jacket, clothes, or anything else new for families in need worth at least \$20. Samz' will serve cookies and treats to all attendees. Sober rides home will be available.

## Beach Party and Bonfire

ELY- The Ely Folk School will hold its fourth annual winter bonfire and beach party at Semers Beach on Saturday, Dec. 14, from 3-5 p.m. The event is free and open to everyone. The event will feature snacks, refreshments, games, a hot tent, and, of course, a return of the dog sled rides!

## Santa Hayride and Bazaar

BABBITT- The Babbitt Santa Hayride and Bazaar will be on Saturday, Dec. 14 at the Babbitt Municipal Building, 71 South Dr. Booth set-up is at 1 p.m. The bazaar starts at 3 p.m. Hayrides start at 4 p.m.

## Gingerbread House Contest

BABBITT- Peter Mitchell Fun Days is sponsoring a gingerbread house contest on Saturday, Dec. 14 during

the Santa Hayride and Bazaar (see above). Bring your finished gingerbread house to the Babbitt city gym stage between 3-4:30 p.m. Judging will be at 5 p.m. Pick up your gingerbread house at 6:30 p.m. Age groups will be ages 0-5, 6-12, 13-17, and 18+. First place prize is \$100, second place is \$75, third place is \$50. New for this year is a people's choice award of \$50 for each age group.

## Gaza Documentary

ELY- The Ely-Palestine Solidarity Group is hosting a community screening of "Gaza is Our Home," a documentary by filmmaker Monear Shaer on Sunday, Dec. 15, at 4 p.m. at the Grand Ely Lodge, 400 N. Pioneer Rd. The film gives a personal view into the beauty and tragedy facing the people of Gaza today, relying primarily on footage and family photos of the filmmaker. Admission is free and open to the public. For more info about the film visit <https://www.gazaisourhome.com>. Email questions to [elypalestinesolidaritygroup24@proton.me](mailto:elypalestinesolidaritygroup24@proton.me).

## History Happy Hour Ugly Sweater Contest

ELY- The December History Happy Hour will be on Wednesday, Dec. 18, from 5-5:30 p.m. at the Boathouse Brewpub. The topic will be Krampus, the antithesis of Saint Nick, and the dark side of Christmas. This month, History Happy Hour will also hold an ugly sweater

contest with third place winning a six-pack of Dorothy's Root Beer, second place winning a Boathouse Brewpub sweatshirt, and first place receiving of a \$100 gift card to the Boathouse Brewpub. The Boathouse Brewpub's Lookout Lounge will be open 4:30-6 p.m. for dining and drinks before and during the program.

## Cookie Swap

ELY- Prepare a couple batches of your favorite cookies and bring them to the Ely Folk School for a cookie swap on Thursday, Dec. 19, from 4-6 p.m. The folk school asks that participants share their recipe and a story about why they made those cookies. Learn about the cookie traditions neighbors, take home new recipes, and enjoy a plate full of cookies. The folk school will provide paper plates and bags to bring cookies home. Please bring cookies in a serving container.

The Ely Folk School is also seeking volunteers to help make cookies on Thursday morning, Dec. 19, from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. during its Makers Morning time. Email [info@elyfolkschool.org](mailto:info@elyfolkschool.org) for more information.

## Winter Camping How-to Presentation

ELY- The Friends of the Boundary Waters will host a winter camping on a budget presentation on Thursday, Dec. 19, from 7-8 p.m. at its offices at 8 E. Sheridan St.

## Ely Public Library

ELY- The library will be closed Dec. 24-25, Dec. 31, and Jan. 1.

The spice for December is cardamom. Pick up a spice sample and recipes while supplies last.

The take-and-make kit for December is a tea light snowman ornament. Pick one up while supplies last.

Ely's string and winds group, the Accidental Ensemble, will perform an hour of seasonal music on Friday, Dec. 13, from 3:30- 4:30 p.m.

The library will hold a snowflake appreciation day on Wednesday, Dec. 18, from 2-3 p.m. Learn about snowflakes and participate in fun flaky activities. This activity is for all ages. Please register in advance for this event so the library can order enough supplies for participants.

The library will hold an online Kahoot trivia game starting on Thursday, Dec. 19 at 3 p.m. through Monday, Dec. 23 at 8 a.m. on the following Christmas novels: "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens, "The Night Before Christmas" by Clement Clarke Moore, and "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" by Barbara Robinson. Participants must preregister for the Kahoot so the library can email the link for the game.

The Get Crafty Group for all ages will meet on Friday, Dec. 27, from 1-2 p.m. for a winter craft station session where participants can try as many craft projects as

look interesting.

The library board will meet on Jan. 8, 5:30- 6:30 p.m.

The library will hold an online Kahoot trivia game starting on Thursday, Jan. 2. at 3 p.m. through Tuesday, Dec. 7 at 8 a.m. on books 6-8 of the "Babysitter's Club Little Sister" series by Ann Martin. Participants must preregister for the Kahoot so the library can email the link for the game.

Preschool Storytime is held every Friday from 10:30-11 a.m. All library events are at the Ely Public Library at 224 E. Chapman St. unless otherwise noted.

## Babbitt Public Library

BABBITT- The Friends of the Library have a raffle for a Kate Spade glimmer tote bag. Tickets are \$5 each and only 500 will be sold. The drawing will be on Dec. 14; ticket holders do not need to be present to win.

The library has a Christmas wreath made by Theresa Miller to raffle off. Tickets are \$1. The drawing will be on Dec. 16.

The book club will meet on Monday, Jan. 6, at 2 p.m. The book for discussion will be "The Giver of Stars" by Jojo Moyes.

Preschool story time is every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. All library events are at the Babbitt Public Library, 71 South Dr., unless otherwise noted.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

# Orr City Council makes quick work of light agenda

## New management company steps in for water, wastewater, airport and more

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- The Orr City Council conducted a lightning fast meeting on Monday, approving a series of simple resolutions without discussion before hearing reports from various departments.

Of note was the report provided by Jeff Wiedemer of Veolia North America, the city's new contractor for wastewater, water, and maintenance services. Wiedemer noted that the organization is currently reviewing and assessing all functions for which they have responsibility.

"We're just getting the

show going, trying to find all the pieces of the puzzle – it's a big piece of pie," Wiedemer said. "But we've got clean water going out and clean water for drinking – that's the main thing to keep going."

Wiedemer said he's spent a lot of time in the plow truck since arriving in Orr, and that one of the first orders of business is going to be some heavy cleaning.

"There's a lot of hoarding of stuff that's been saved," he said. "There's no reason to keep things if Ethan (Olson) doesn't know what it is. Certainly we'll do due diligence to make sure we're not throwing something good away, but we'll

just make things look a little nicer. That's part of the start-up, just a good general cleaning of things."

Wiedemer said Veolia would base its operations out of an office at the airport. He said he was appreciative of the welcome he's received.

"From what I've seen, this is a nice little town," he said. "People are very friendly. We'll do our best. I've worked for them for a lot of years, so if you've got any questions, just ask me."

Ambulance director Donna Hoffer reported that the service made 15 runs in November, 11 of which were mutual aid calls. For the year, the service has done 28 transfer calls. Hoffer also

said that five service members will be attending the five-day Arrowhead EMS Association conference and expo in January.

It was reported that the fire department has gone on 20 calls this year, a bit lower than normal, with one run in November.

In other business, the council:

➤ Approved payment of \$11,802.65 to Best Oil for 1998 gallons of fuel at the airport.

➤ Approved a resolution giving St. Louis County consent to register cannabis businesses in the city and to perform compliance checks. The city will remain responsible for certifying whether a

proposed business complies with local zoning ordinances and state fire and building codes, where applicable.

➤ Agreed to be the governmental sponsor of the Voyageur Snowmobiling Trail maintained by the Voyageur Trail Society.

➤ Approved a resolution accepting liability coverage from the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust at the specified statutory tort limits.

➤ Approved balance write offs of outstanding utility bills. The balance remains on properties that were previously sold and transferred in the amount of \$815.69.

➤ Approved a change in due dates for utility bills to

correspond with Veolia billing dates. Meters will be read on the 28th and 29th of the month, with invoices mailed out on the last day of the month and due by the 25th of the month.

➤ Approved two fund transfers to balance the 2024 city budget and eight fund transfers to balance the 2025 budget. The transfers included approximately \$70,000 from the RBC savings account to the water and sewer accounts, and \$40,392 from the liquor store to the airport.

➤ The council approved the final 2025 budget at \$429,458.10, with \$150,384.10 to be collected in property taxes.

## TIS THE SEASON



## Santa's Workshop

Above: Heavy snow on late Sunday afternoon wasn't about to deter these Santa's Workshop attendees at Cook Community Center from taking a ride on Mike Hansen's horse-drawn wagon.

Right: Of course you can't have Santa's Workshop without a Santa, and the Jolly Old Elf was in fine form on Sunday, even entertaining the Christmas wishes of the young at heart like Jeannie Taylor, left, and Joani Bergstrom. The event featured games and free food, and was sponsored by Friends of the Parks. photos by D. Colburn



## Snow City Christmas

Left and above: The City of Orr celebrated its annual Snow City Christmas festival on Saturday, and while the parade theme was "The Grinch," it was Jolly Old St. Nick himself who received the chauffeured Orr Fire Department escort. After the parade Santa went to T. Pattenn Cafe to take Christmas wish lists from excited youngsters.

First place in the parade was awarded to Myrtle Lake Resort's Reindeer Fun entry, second went to Ice Cream Delicious, and third place went to the Laakkonen Family for Polar Express.

## Community notices

### Voyageurs National Park visitor centers to re-open

INTERNATIONAL FALLS- Voyageurs National Park visitor centers at Rainy Lake and Kabetogama will open for the winter recreation season in early January.

The Rainy Lake center will be open on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. starting Jan. 10 through the end of March. The Kabetogama Lake center will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. starting Jan. 11. Both locations will be open through the end of March.

Holiday shoppers can take advantage of special hours at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center gift store on Saturday, Dec. 14 and Saturday, Dec. 21 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Explore the park on cross-country skis or snowshoes this winter by renting your equipment from the park. Beginning Jan. 1, cross-country ski and snowshoe rentals will be available online through the Voyageurs National Park Winter Equipment Rentals webpage at \$10 per pair for adults and \$5 per pair for children 16 and un-

der. Pick up your equipment at the Rainy Lake center during open hours. Rented equipment must be returned by the time the center closes at 4 p.m.

To try out the park's rental equipment for free, take advantage of the Candlelight Snowshoe Hike on Saturday, Jan. 18 at 5 p.m. at the Rainy Lake center, as part of the International Falls Ice Box Days festival. Another free opportunity comes in February when Skiing with the Polar Polers takes place on Saturday, Feb. 15 at Black Bay trailhead.

For more details about winter equipment rentals, instructions for online reservations, winter trail maps and conditions and other park amenities and activities, check VNP's Winter Activities webpage, <https://www.nps.gov/voya/planyourvisit/winter-activities.htm>. And remember that access to the park remains open year-round for visitors to enjoy the breathtaking beauty and snowy splendor of Voyageurs National Park in winter.

### Shop the holiday extravaganza this month at NWFA

COOK- No holiday shopping excursion is complete until you've been to the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook for their holiday pop-up gift extravaganza running now through Saturday, Dec. 21.

You'll find the unique, one-of-a-kind gift items from local artisans that NWFA is noted for, including paintings, pottery, jewelry, wood carvings, photography and more, and "nearly new" items that would make grand additions to your holiday giving list.

The gallery at 210 S River St. is open on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

### Hanging of greens is Friday at Bear River

BEAR RIVER- Bear River Lutheran Church will host its annual "Hanging of the Greens" tonight, Friday, Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. at the church. Come help decorate the sanctuary to prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth with songs, fellowship, and refreshments. All are

welcome.

Coffee and goodies will be available on Saturday, Dec. 14 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the church's Holiday Bake Shop. Cookies, breads, candies, cakes, bars, pies, and much more will be available for purchase for your own holiday gatherings.

Another favorite Bear River Lutheran tradition is the annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, which will be at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 24.

The church is located at 11141 Hwy. 22 in Bear River. Call 218-376-4673 or 218-966-2817 for more information.

### Coffee with a Cop comes to Cook on Thursday, Dec. 19

COOK- Come enjoy a cuppa Joe with your neighbors and St. Louis County Sheriff's deputies at "Coffee with a Cop" on Thursday, Dec. 19 from 4-6 p.m. at the Cook Community Center, 510 Gopher Dr.

The mission of Coffee with a Cop is to break down the barriers between deputies and the citizens they serve by removing agendas and allowing opportunities

to ask questions, voice concerns, and get to know the deputies in your area.

Free coffee and a sweet treat will be served. The event is presented by the Virginia St. Louis County Sheriff's office and hosted by the City of Cook. For more information or questions, call 218-749-7134.

### North Woods hosts holiday music events

FIELD TWP- A double dose of holiday musical cheer is in store at North Woods School, with two big concerts on the schedule.

On Friday, Dec. 13, the North Woods Elementary Christmas Concert will be at 1:30 p.m. The concert typically features a mix of traditional and contemporary children's holiday tunes spiced up with fun movements and festive props.

Oh Thursday, Dec. 19 at 6 p.m. the school will host the Winter Band and Choir Concert.

### Cook Public Library plans winter hours

COOK- The library will be open Monday – Thursday, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. through the winter as long as there are no issues with the building.

The library walls are insulated but not sealed and there is no carpet. There are two entry rugs to help keep moisture off the concrete floor. The staff room, meeting room and storage room are not insulated and will not be used during the winter.

A small area of shelves is open for browsing books, DVDs and audio books. Staff are happy to help find things beyond this browsing area. Printing, copying and faxing services are available. Wi-Fi is available outside the building 24/7.

At this time, we cannot provide seating areas or use of the public bathroom due to safety concerns.

Due to our limited hours and space, we will not accept book sale donations until spring.

If you have any questions about the library, please call 218-666-2210 or email [crystal.whitney@alslib.info](mailto:crystal.whitney@alslib.info).

**Read It  
HERE**



## OPTION B...Continued from page 1

the clerk. As elected officials, both the clerk and treasurer set their own work hours and have the authority to appoint their own deputies. Neither are under the direct authority of the town board.

When the measure did not pass the second time, the board voted to cut the pay of the clerk Sue Drobac, who then resigned.

This time, the impetus for the change seemed more focused on the inability of the treasurer and clerk to work together to make sure the financial accounts overseen by each office match. The board had hired former

treasurer Pam Rodgers to go over the clerk's financials and make sure they were accurate. Rodgers has completed that work, but the treasurer's monthly financials are still not totally in accordance with the clerk's. Some of this appears to stem from different accounting methods, with the clerk counting checks that were mailed out, but hadn't cleared the bank account, while the treasurer was working off the actual end-of-the-month balance on the bank statements. The two also seem to be working off a start of the year balance that differs by about \$10,000.

Treasurer Jeff Maus, who had informed the board he was home recovering from hip surgery, was not at Tuesday's meeting. Deputy treasurer JoAnn Bassing attended the meeting in his place.

The board again expressed its displeasure that the treasurer's report was not available prior to the meeting.

"We've been asking the treasurer all year to get us this information in a timely manner," said Paul Skubic.

"I prefer to see them early," said John Bassing, "but really want to see them done right."

Maus has repeatedly

told the board he sometimes has difficulty getting all the financial statements, specifically the information on the township's CD investments, from the previous month in time to get the information to the clerk five days prior to the meeting, which is the second Tuesday of the month. He has stated he will not give out a report until he is sure the information is accurate.

Roskoski again stated that the clerk and treasurer need to be working together, so their financial statements match.

"We will have to call for an audit if the books are not matching at the end of

the year," she said. Such an audit would cost as much as \$30,000, she said.

The board also discussed what to do about the township's CD investments, which are maturing this month.

"The treasurer should be managing our cash flow and investments," said Roskoski.

The township's treasurer position has not historically taken on these roles, and these are not part of the township treasurer duties prescribed by state law.

The board discussed letting the three smaller CDs, for capital spending that are not needed in the near future,

to rollover, but want to look into the idea of splitting up the larger (jumbo) CD so it all doesn't come due at the same time, giving the township more flexibility to access the funds.

The vote to approve the monthly treasurer report failed 2-3, with Roskoski, Craig Gilbert, and Skubic voting against. This past year, the board has regularly left the treasurer's report unapproved at their monthly meetings.

## SCHOOLS...Continued from page 1

Legislature passed a measure last spring revamping the World's Best Workforce initiative, renaming it the Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness initiative and establishing six goals that will be the framework for the 2025 report. Notable additions include a goal for third-grade reading levels and preparing students to be lifelong learners.

ISD 2142 hit the mark this past year for school readiness and graduation, Berlin said. Ninety-seven percent of the district's pre-Kindergarten students received developmental screenings, while on the other end of the educational spectrum the district had a 91.5 percent graduation rate for 2023, slightly exceeding the target of 90 percent. That was significantly higher than the 83.3 graduation rate reported for schools statewide.

However, the news was not so good when it came to reducing the achievement gap for Native American students and students in the free and reduced-price (FRP) meal programs (as determined by family income).

As measured by scores on the eighth-grade Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment, achievement among Native American students dropped in both math and reading in 2023-24 compared to 2022-2023. Math achievement dropped from 5.6 percent to 3.4 percent, and reading achievement dropped from 25 percent to 6.9 percent. For the same years, math achievement among white students improved from 11.4 percent

to 20.6 percent and reading achievement increased from 40.2 percent to 50 percent.

FRP students also fell behind in math in 2023-24, dropping from 19.1 percent achievement the prior year to 10.1 percent. Meanwhile, non-FRP students increased their achievement performance from 8.8 percent to 23.9 percent.

Both groups of students showed positive increases in reading achievement, with the FRP student gain of 13.8 percent to a level of 34.8 percent achievement, slightly exceeding that of non-FRP students, who improved 9.4 percent overall to 42.4 percent.

"We continue to struggle in our achievement gaps," Berlin said. "You can see that our achievement gaps are not narrowing." Berlin talked about various strategies the district has either implemented or is investigating to address the issue, including looking at a new math program that will better support new teachers relative to state standards, working on targeted and small group interventions, and pursuing a grant to provide funds for additional educational support staff.

"We know this is an issue and we continue to work on it," Berlin said. "We have a lot of things in place in the elementary (grades) to build on that. We continue to look at anything that we can do to bridge that gap and help teachers and students."

Attendance is a goal that is closely related to academic performance, and Berlin said that continues to be a challenge

for the district. While the goal was to increase the attendance rate to 78 percent in 2023, the district fell short, hitting just 69.8 percent.

"We are struggling with attendance, which is affecting a lot of our achievement scores," Berlin said. "This has been worse since COVID because we got really used to during COVID not going (to school). And we do see attendance rates drop for our Native American students and our free and reduced students. We're trying everything we can to get those kiddos to school. We send instant alerts, we send three-day letters, we have a meeting at seven days and we have a meeting at ten days. We will continue trying because it tends to impact all of the other areas."

### Achievement and integration

ISD 2142 is one of approximately 180 districts that participates in the Department of Education's Achievement and Integration Program, which fosters racial and economic integration and pursues increases in student achievement, creation of equitable educational opportunities, and reduction of academic disparities.

Director of Indigenous Education Kim Jordan delivered a report on last year's program, which had a particular focus on Tower-Soudan Elementary due to a higher percentage of Native American students than at other elementary schools in the district, a level that categorizes it as "racially isolated,"

she said.

Integration in this program does not involve having children attend different schools, but instead provides schools with culturally diverse learning experiences for students by interacting with students and staff from other schools and districts. For the first year of the project, Jordan said the district partnered with Mt. Iron-Buhl. Last year the district enhanced its plan by including all five schools in the district as well as MIB.

"It's really helped our South Ridge and Cherry schools," Jordan said. "We might have an event where South Ridge can come up and do an activity with Tower-Soudan or they can have an activity with Northeast Range. Just recently we had the art students from Northeast Range and North Woods travel with fifth and sixth grade students from Tower-Soudan to the Tweed Museum (of Art in Duluth) and they saw an Indigenous interactive display, because those three groups are going to develop a mural to be put in the Tower-Soudan School. That was an integration activity. We look for lots of fun activities like that to do."

The program, which receives additional funding from the state, provides teachers with additional professional development opportunities, Jordan said. And the district has been able to increase student exposure to the Anishinaabe language.

"We have a teacher at North Woods School who is licensed in Anishinaabe lan-

guage and culture, and we pay her salary out of this grant," Jordan said. "She's going once a week to a different school in our district."

Jordan also talked about how the district is using Indigenous support advocates to not only increase student exposure to diverse staff but to enhance education about Native culture and language.

Jordan said that they will be assessing the program's impact on academic proficiency this year after establishing baseline measures last year and indicated that she's already seeing improvements.

"We're doing a lot better, especially for our reading, and math is increasing as well," she said.

### Levy approval

Following a review of the proposed 2025-26 budget at a November working session, the ISD 2142 school board on Tuesday approved without comment a reduction in the district's 2025 pay levy of 12.06 percent, which will reduce revenue by \$859,302.

The levy decrease, from \$7,123,512 to \$6,264,210, reflects the decline in student numbers in the district, which have dropped by about 300 students from a pre-COVID level of 2,100 to 1,800. That's according to comments made at the November meeting by district Finance Director Kim Johnson.

Superintendent Reggie Engebretson noted that the reduction was a percentage point more than what was originally projected. While school districts are required

to approve their levies each year, they have no control over the levy amount, which is set by the Legislature and state statute.

The district projects a \$1.3 million shortfall in the unassigned general fund for 2025-26, which will likely lead to further staff cuts to address the deficit.

No members of the public spoke at the Truth in Taxation meeting that came at the end of the regular board meeting.

In other business, the board:

- Welcomed new member Mallory Manick to her first official meeting since she was chosen by the board in October to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Nathan Briggs.

- Accepted a bid of \$1,098,202 from Viita's Excavating for the North Woods wastewater treatment plant project.

- Approved the 2025-26 school calendar with no significant changes from the current year.

- Hired Keiza Besemann as an Indigenous Support Advocate I at Tower-Soudan.

- Hired Kate Perkins as a substitute van driver at Northeast Range.

- Hired Cindy Powell as a substitute bus driver at North Woods and T-S.

- Hired Trudy Pelach as a substitute secretary at NW.

- Hired Travis Morrison as an assistant basketball coach at NW.

## COUNCIL...Continued from page 1

level care. While that fee will remain, Norby said the Virginia officials stressed that the number of advanced life support, or ALS, interventions likely won't change much once the program goes into effect. Currently, the Tower Area Ambulance Service, which provides basic life support care, pays Virginia \$400 for ALS assists.

What's more, said Norby, Virginia has also agreed to add a 60-day opt-out provision in the agreement, which would allow partners to withdraw if the costs increased too much.

Clerk-treasurer Michael Schultz said he had talked to ambulance personnel about the program and found some concern that the medics would potentially take charge of too many incidents, which could undermine morale among Tower staff. But he said the 60-day opt-out provision seemed to ease that concern.

The new pilot program is being funded by a \$3 million state grant that is designed to determine the cost-effectiveness of using sprint medics to provide ALS care to rural areas. The program has shown viability in an urban setting, but the economic viability of the concept in a rural area is so far unproven.

Sprint medics will be deployed in vans and will remain on the move throughout their designated service

area during scheduled hours to respond quickly in the event of a medical incident requiring ALS care.

Tower joins the Cook and Orr ambulance services as partners in the pilot program, which is scheduled to run at least two years.

In other action, the council approved a final 2025 levy of \$423,030, a four-percent increase over this year, with virtually all of the increase going to pay the city's share of stormwater and sanitary sewer improvements and repaving of S. Second and Third streets. "I feel comfortable going with the increase given that the work on Second and Third streets, will impact a lot of people in town," said council member Joe Morin, who made the motion.

Council member Bob Anderson agreed, and noted that the proposed property tax statements that were recently mailed to property owners by St. Louis County, had shown that even with the levy increase, most residents had seen the city portion of their tax bills actually fall.

The levy reflects only a relatively small percentage of total city revenues and spending. The resolution adopting the 2025 levy also included the city's 2025 budget, which calls for total anticipated revenues of \$2.146 million and total expenditures of \$2.007

million. The levy itself will provide \$360,419 to the city's general fund, \$15,668 to harbor debt service, \$14,593 to the airport special fund, \$27,200 to TIF debt service, and \$5,000 to TEDA.

At the same time, the council approved a \$5 per month increase in the water and sewer rates to help cover higher billings from the Tower-Breitung Waste Water Board that are anticipated due to the higher debt service from the new drinking water treatment facility. The increase will bump the monthly cost for city utilities from the current \$86.17 per month to \$91.17 monthly.

Council members noted that even with the increase, the city's assessments for water and sewer were still on the low end compared to other cities in the region. Other cities in the region range from \$111.82 per month in Aurora to \$74.39 per month in Silver Bay, according to data presented in the council's meeting packet.

The council also approved a couple other budget adjustments, including refunding about \$16,000 for workman's compensation coverage for ambulance personnel that the city had paid for through the general fund. The council also opted not to hire a seasonal winter worker as they typically do each year to help with snow removal.

In other business, the council:

- Gave final approval to the city's new short-term rental ordinance, after more than a year of work and considerable public input. The council did change the number of short-term rentals in the Harbor North zone district from four to unlimited, providing flexibility for new development currently underway on the Marjo Motel property. The city's Main Street commercial district is also allowed an unlimited number of short-term rentals, while Lake Avenue and Northstar Addition would be allowed two apiece and the remainder of the city's residential districts would be allowed a combined total of two.

The council also clarified that their definition of a "single vehicle" would include a vehicle and trailer, which could contain several recreational vehicles.

- Approved the 2025 police contract with Breitung Township, which includes a price increase from \$78,187 in 2024 to \$85,967 in the new year. Setterberg said he thought the city was getting a fair deal despite the increase, which mostly reflects higher labor costs.

"I feel that we're getting very good service, probably the best we have ever," said Setterberg.

Norby said he was concerned about the ten percent increase, but he noted that the city will be receiving about 50 more hours of coverage.

- Approved a resolution to pursue funding to complete the final segment of the Vermilion Loop Trail in cooperation with Breitung township.

- Approved a resolution authorizing a grant application to the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation for funding for temporary water and sewer hookups for the Marjo RE development.

- Heard an update from Schultz and Setterberg about the installation of the Green Flush bathroom facility near the train depot, which encountered some hiccups. There was minor cosmetic damage to one portion of the outside of the building, which apparently occurred in transit. The city is still working with Minnesota Power on installing electricity and with the Department of Labor and Industry to approve the plumbing, which was initially rejected by an inspector.

- Heard from Schultz that the city should be able to close the deal on the county public works building by the end of the year.

- Approved pursuing a culvert replacement project along the city-owned portions of Second St. N, which would

be done in conjunction with a similar project on the county-owned portion of the road. The estimated cost of \$33,305 is currently unbudgeted but the council could approve it and pull funds from their capital reserve. St. Louis County would handle all the bidding and contractor payments for the entire project. The project is intended to repair all the culverts along the road that had heaved badly in the wake of the most recent repaving of the street.

- Approved the transfer of an airport hangar lease from Arden Niemi to his son Dale Niemi.



# READ THE TIMBERJAY!



THE ARTS IN ELY

# NLAA highlights growth in annual member meeting

by CATIE CLARK  
Ely Editor

ELY- Northern Lakes Arts Association held its annual meeting for its membership on Nov. 26, highlighting the organization's growth and its impact on the community.

Board chair Molly Olson opened the meeting with a brief overlook of NLAA's 2024 year in several points.

"Number one," Olson began, "NLAA welcomed over 17,500 participants, drawing attendees from northeastern Minnesota, the Twin Cities, Duluth, Thunder Bay, Nebraska, Pennsylvania and Florida. Two is our local impact. For every one dollar spent on a ticket, patrons generated \$6 for local businesses, contributing over \$500,000

annually to the local economy. Three, we are powered by generosity. Volunteers contributed over 2,123 hours to advance our mission."

Olson also cited the ways that the organization inspires young people through the arts. "Over 300 youth engaged in NLAA's camps, workshops and classes, sparking creativity and building lifelong skills," she said. "Number five, we are opening doors for youth. Over \$1,000 in scholarships ensured art experiences for all ... Number six is our support of regional artists. NLAA collaborated with and supported over 50 local and regional artists this year. And number seven is making the arts accessible to all through eight pay-what-you-can performances, where we provided more than 950 individuals with accessible,

high quality art experiences." During the meeting, the members of the board of directors took turns reviewing NLAA's activities for 2024 for the members. In addition, two members of the NLAA board, Vince O'Connor and Beth Ohlhauser, stepped down at the meeting. The membership voted in two new directors, Jess Kulik and Megan Olson.

**Finances**

NLAA board of directors' member and treasurer Scott O'Brien reviewed the NLAA's financials for 2024, noting that the organization has tripled the size of financial investment in arts activities as compared to just two seasons ago. "We're not going to double or triple the activities that happen in 2025," he explained, noting that the 2025

budget will be based largely on NLAA's 2024's activities.

Much of NLAA's expansion has been due to the creation of the Broadway in the Boundary Waters theater season and the inclusion of other Ely-based arts organizations in the last few years under the NLAA umbrella like the Greenstone Arts Camp for children, the Reflections Dance Company, and the Ely Concert Series.

O'Brien outlined the organization's expenditures for 2024, including \$35,000 in advertising, \$35,000 for the NLAA's one employee, \$14,500 for rights and royalties, and \$120 for actor and director fees. As of the end of October, net revenue was a negative \$42,000, but O'Brien noted that while the organization has already booked the

vast majority of expenses for the year, several significant revenue-generating activities had yet to be tallied in his report, which provided the financial picture through the end of October.

By the end of October, NLAA had collected year-to-date revenues of \$260,563, including \$49,655 from grants, \$10,525 membership income, \$145,874 admissions income, \$1,954 miscellaneous income, and \$52,469 fundraising income.

**Back in the black**

The *Timberjay* followed up with NLAA Executive Director Ian Francis Lah after the members' meeting about the organization's finances. Lah reported that the balance was already back in the black by the end of November.

"October is a dead month

for us," Lah said. "We've already spent most of our money for the year by the end of the summer but we've not yet had our biggest fundraising events of the year. Every time I run the budget simulation, we're always down in October, so we'll always look bad if you look at the year-to-date numbers at the end of that month."

Lah pointed out that the financial figures O'Brien had at the members' meeting did not include the revenue from the piano concert on Nov. 26, the Reflections Dance Company's winter dance showcase on Dec. 7, the ticket receipts from "Elf: The Musical," contributions from the "Give to the Max" campaign in November, or the annual end-of-the-year membership drive.

THE LEGISLATURE

# Sticky situations leave state House status in limbo

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Could a simple piece of tape flip the balance of power in the Minnesota House to the Republican Party in the upcoming legislative session?

A piece of tape placed on an apartment door was one of the surveillance techniques used by supporters of House District 40B Republican candidate Paul Wikstrom in an attempt to prove that DFL candidate Curtis Johnson did not reside in that Roseville apartment when he won the Nov. 4 election for the seat. Wikstrom filed a lawsuit in Ramsey County District Court on Nov. 20 alleging that Johnson's victory should be nullified because, Wikstrom alleges, Johnson instead continued to live at his residence in Little Canada, outside of the district. Minnesota law requires that House candidates be a resident in the district they seek to represent for at least six months before an election.

Last week Ramsey County District Court Judge Leonardo Castro denied Johnson's petition to dismiss the lawsuit, leaving the outcome and control of the now deadlocked House in limbo. With the DFL and Republicans both winning 67 seats in the Nov. 4 election, political power is split for the first time since 1979, upending the governing trifecta of Senate, House, and governorship control enjoyed by the DFL last session as they pushed through a largely parti-

san agenda. Should Wikstrom be successful in his lawsuit, Republicans would take temporary control of the House pending the outcome of a special election to fill the seat, an election that could tip the scales in their favor for the remainder of the session.

Wikstrom's lawsuit indicates that a surveillance team of campaign team members was assembled after he had been told by former Roseville City Council member Robert Willmus that he believed Johnson had leased the apartment to make it appear he lived in the district while continuing to maintain his primary residence in Little Canada. The team made over 60 observations at both the apartment and Johnson's Little Canada home between Aug. 31 and Nov. 11, taking photos and videos to document his whereabouts. Calls were also made to utility companies to determine if the apartment had electric or internet service. It did not. Two team members even got down on the floor to peer through a one-inch gap at the bottom of the door looking for any evidence of furnishings, which they reportedly did not see.

On Oct. 1, team member Chris Sears observed that the apartment door appeared dusty and lacked any evidence of recent activity and placed a piece of invisible tape on the door that would be disturbed if someone entered. When Sears returned on Oct. 9, the tape was still present and undisturbed,

the lawsuit alleges.

Summarizing affidavits from six individuals involved in the surveillance activities, the lawsuit claims that there was little to no evidence that Johnson regularly used the apartment.

However, in rebuttal, Johnson claims that Wikstrom's team was watching the wrong apartment. He told the court that he had been living in a different apartment in the same complex since Oct. 15 because of maintenance issues with the original apartment. Johnson's claim was supported by a letter from the property manager, who indicated that construction was taking place in the apartment. However, those supporting Wikstrom's effort to overturn the election results note that there was little evidence that Johnson had been living in the apartment prior to Oct. 15.

**Lost ballots**

A second lawsuit, this one over lost ballots in Scott County, also threatens to upset the election results.

Incumbent Rep. Brad Tabke, DFL-Shakopee, defeated Republican challenger Aaron Paul by a scant 14 votes out of almost 22,000 votes cast for the District 54A race, but Paul is challenging the result in court over 20 lost ballots that he believes could have tipped the race in his favor.

A review by the Scott County Attorney's office determined that the ballots were likely thrown in the trash

due to human error during the collection of early absentee ballots.

"With 20 ballots missing and confirmation from Scott County that they will likely not be recovered, it's impossible to declare a winner with a 14-vote margin. We appreciate the efforts by Scott County to investigate this matter and be transparent about their findings," said Republican House Speaker-designate Lisa Demuth.

Tabke countered in a court filing that the results were certified by the county canvassing board and again by a hand recount, and that Paul is attempting to nullify all of the votes cast. He points out that the precinct that the missing ballots were from was one he won by 14 percent, and that there was only "a .0005 percent chance" that Paul would get the votes necessary to change the result. Moreover, Tabke's filing asserts that the House of Representatives, and not the courts, has the exclusive authority to judge the election returns and eligibility of members.

The resolution sought by Paul is for the court to deny issuance of a certificate of election to Tabke, which would then mean that a special election would have to be held to fill the seat.

**Moving forward**

With the new session fast approaching, party leaders have had to contend with preparing to do business as things currently stand with the

67-67 split.

Melissa Hortman, DFL-Brooklyn Park, and Demuth, R-Cold Spring, were chosen by their respective party caucuses as speaker-designates to lead the development of shared governance plans. Hortman served last session as speaker, while Demuth was minority leader.

Under an arrangement announced on Nov. 25, the pair agreed to have co-chairs for the 23 House committees, one from each party. Committee membership will also be equally divided, but appointments have yet to be announced. There were no North Country House legislators named to committee leadership spots.

However, no decision has been made as to how Hortman and Demuth propose to split the speaker role. Under the Minnesota Constitution only one person can hold the position at a time.

The arrangements were quite different in 1979 when a Republican held the position of speaker and Democrats chaired key committees.

That's a solution Hortman and Demuth rejected, as evidenced by the committee co-chair announcement.

Even if the chamber split survives the court challenges, that balance could be upset if a member decided to change parties, or if one becomes seriously ill or dies. Both leaders have emphasized that success will depend on bipartisan cooperation, but an unexpected change could significantly alter that dynamic.

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## TELEHEALTH...Continued from page 1

product made just for us designed for the needs of our area," Bloom explained. "We selected providers that will accept most of the insurance offered in the region, and for those whose insurance isn't accepted or won't pay, EBCH can provide help with financial counseling."

**How it works**

"Two departments at EBCH are piloting our program, the emergency department and cardiac rehabilitation," Bloom said. When these two departments identify patients with mental or behavior health care needs, it will refer them to Wilderness Health's telemental program.

While it is intuitive that the ER would provide referrals for mental health, behavior health, and substance abuse help, the *Timberjay* asked Bloom about the connection with cardiac rehabilitation.

"For patients in cardiac rehab, as your life changes, your mental health changes with that," Bloom replied.

The care provided through the telemental program can be as varied as a short-term acute-care consultation leading to other health services and outcomes or can be long-term therapy with a mental

health provider. Wilderness Health will work with clients to help them get the best fit for their needs. By providing the program, the agency aims to address some of the mental health care gaps in EBCH's service area.

**Wilderness Health**

Several rural hospitals in northeast Minnesota came together in 2013 to found Wilderness Health as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit agency designed to foster collaboration and coordination of health services between them while preserving their independence.

The agency's member hospitals are Bigfork Valley Hospital, Community Memorial Hospital in Cloquet, Cook Hospital, Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital, Fairview Range-Range Regional Health Services, Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital, Aspirus Lake View, North Shore Health, and Aspirus St. Luke's.

One of Wilderness Health's current major initiatives is the expansion of telehealth in northeast and central Minnesota, since telehealth providers can help extend specialty services like mental and behavioral health care into underserved rural areas.



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'TIS THE SEASON

# Christmas spirit on full display at Nelimark Homestead in Embarrass

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

EMBARRASS- If you missed the three-day Nelimark Christmas in November, you have one more chance to stock up on home-baked holiday goodness and handmade and Nordic gifts at the Nelimark Homestead in Embarrass. They'll be open again for shoppers on Dec. 12-14, from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. each day, offering shelves full of ethnic holiday treats, cookies, and candies, made fresh each

day, along with gift ideas for all ages.

Free coffee and encourages shoppers to sit and visit. Farmstead Artisan bakers and crafters are also on hand to meet.

New this year are Embarrass-themed coffee mugs, featuring classic Embarrass landmarks like Timber Hall, the Cold Spot thermometer, and the historic log buildings, a perfect gift idea for friends and family. The mugs were created by Ivory and Sage,

a small, Minnesota-based business run by a teenager in rural Fertile. Teenage artist Willow Larson started designing and selling these unique mugs back in 2020. The Nelimark volunteers sent her photos of Embarrass landmarks, which Willow then drew into a design for the mugs. The mugs are available for \$25.

### Embarrass fire department raffle

Three handmade quilts, created and donated by the Embarrass Quilt Club, are

being raffled as a fundraiser for the Embarrass Fire Department. The winner will be drawn at the Dec. 14 Ice Candle Gathering at the Embarrass Town Hall. Tickets are \$10 each and are available at Trapline Liquors, Embarrass-Vermillion Credit Union Embarrass office, and at the Embarrass Town Hall.

**Right: Jeannine Bjornrud displays one of the new Embarrass mugs now on sale at the Nelimark homestead museum.**



## EXPLORATION

# Drilling effort underway as Pulsar seeks to deepen helium well

by CATIE CLARK  
Ely Editor

BABBITT- A Wyoming-based drill crew is set for more work near Babbitt as Pulsar Helium is continuing its drilling efforts at its helium exploration well. Pulsar hired Capstar Drilling, of Casper, in October, to deepen its Jetstream No. 1 well, the heart of Pulsar's efforts to develop a commercial helium resource in Minnesota. Jetstream No. 1 was initially completed last spring with a zone open to gas flow from 1,650-2,200 feet. Pulsar has brought Capstar back to the region to further deepen the well, as reported in the Oct. 4 *Timberjay*.

Since the well was completed in the spring, Pulsar has collected new geophysical

cal data, including a detailed seismic survey down the entire 13-mile length of the Dunka River Road. When combined with previously collected geophysical surveys, Pulsar's data indicates the helium resource extends at least to a depth of 3,200 feet. This convinced the firm to deepen the well an additional 1,640 feet (500 meters) or more.

### Site activities

Pulsar has been active at the well site this fall, working on preparing the pad for the Capstar drill rig and improving site access. Last year, exploration had to stop temporarily during the early breakup because the Dunka River Road became impassible to the heavy vehicles used for drilling and well logging.

Since then, Pulsar has made improvements to the road this fall "in anticipation of increased traffic levels during the winter."

The drill rig arrived at the Jetstream No. 1 site on Saturday, Dec. 7. Pulsar estimates that the actual drilling phase of deepening the well will be completed before the Christmas holidays.

During drilling, well-logging contractors will collect gas samples and will analyze those in real-time with an onsite mass spectrometer to characterize gas composition. Previous gas analyses show that the gas resource is around 70 percent carbon dioxide with up to 14.5 percent helium. The rest of the gas is nitrogen and a very small non-economic amount of methane.

Pulsar will acquire additional "wireline" surveys of the deepened well, where geophysical instruments on a cable are run through the hole to measure important physical properties of the rocks hosting the gas resource such as porosity and the distribution of the fractures that carry the gas.

Pulsar anticipates that activities at the well site will continue into 2025.

Deepening Jetstream No. 1 is a major step forward for Pulsar," said Thomas Abraham-James, CEO of Pulsar. "The February 2024 well that was drilled within the prospect... (had helium) concentrations that are extremely high by global standards, significantly surpassing the commonly accepted economic viability threshold (of 0.3

percent helium). During this deeper drilling phase, we plan to build on this and unlock a helium resource of size and quality to advance our goal to become a significant helium supplier."

### Other developments

Pulsar announced on Nov. 20 that it has signed an agreement with a Twin Cities subsidiary of Chart Industries, a leading supplier of industrial gas processing plant and equipment. The agreement between the two firms outlines a roadmap for Pulsar to access advanced gas processing technologies for capturing helium and carbon dioxide, in anticipation of converting Jetstream No. 1 into a production well for selling these two gases commercially.

The current demand for helium is greater than the supply. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the lead U.S. agency for tracking mineral commodities, MRIs utilize 30 percent of all domestic helium sold. Lifting gas for blimps, zeppelins, and other lighter-than-air aircraft takes up 17 percent. Around 14 percent goes to analytical and laboratory equipment and 9 percent is used for welding.

The carbon dioxide from Pulsar's Topaz project can be sold as food-grade gas, a commodity that must currently be imported into Minnesota for use in the state's food manufacturing facilities.

## CONSERVATION

# FWS proposes federal protection for monarch butterfly

REGIONAL — In response to a decade of advocacy by conservation groups, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed this week to protect monarch butterflies as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The once-common orange-and-black butterflies have declined by 90 percent in recent decades, with the latest count showing the second smallest population on record.

If today's proposal is finalized, monarchs will gain not only protection from harm but also a comprehensive recovery plan and ongoing funding to restore their habitat.

"The fact that a butterfly as widespread and beloved as the monarch is now the face of the extinction crisis is a tri-national distress signal warning us to take better care of the environment that we all share," said Tierra Curry, a senior scientist at the Center for Biological Diversity. "What's bad for monarchs is bad for humans, so we have to stop pretending that our health is somehow separate from that of the wildlife our activities are decimating."

Following the lowest count ever in 2014, the Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety, Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and renowned monarch biologist Lincoln

Brower petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service seeking protection for the butterflies and their habitat under the Endangered Species Act. Monarchs were placed on the candidate waiting list for protection in 2020.

"Today's monarch listing decision is a landmark victory 10 years in the making. It is also a damning precedent, revealing the driving role of pesticides and industrial agriculture in the ongoing extinction crisis," said George Kimbrell, legal director at the Center for Food Safety. "But the job isn't done: Monarchs still face an onslaught of pesticides. The service must do what science and the law require and promptly finalize protection for monarchs."

In one of the longest migrations of any insect, at the end of summer eastern monarchs fly from the northern United States and southern Canada to overwinter together in high-elevation fir forests in Mexico. The population size is determined by measuring the area of trees turned vivid orange by the clusters of butterflies.

Scientists estimate that 15 acres of occupied forest is the minimum threshold for the migrating pollinators risk to be above extinction risk in North America. In winter 2023 there were only 2.2 acres

of monarchs, and the 2024 count is also predicted to be bleak because of poor summer weather conditions for breeding and abnormally warm September temperatures that delayed the start of migration.

Migratory monarchs face tremendous threats. Their initial decline was driven by widespread loss of milkweed, the caterpillar's sole food source, due to increased herbicide use on genetically engineered corn and soybean crops — most notably, Monsanto's Roundup. All stages of monarchs are harmed by neonicotinoid insecticides used in crop seed coatings and on ornamental plants.

Grasslands and other green spaces that provide wildflowers for nectar-seeking adult monarchs continue to be lost to sprawl development. Millions of monarchs are killed by vehicles annually as they migrate across the continent. In their winter habitat in Mexico, forests and streams are being lost at record rates to grow avocados for unsustainable avocado demand in the United States.

Non-migratory populations of monarchs live year-round in the southern U.S. states. These butterflies have smaller wings and are harmed by parasites that build up on non-native tropical milkweed plants that don't die back in

winter.

In Canada, monarchs were listed as endangered under the Species At Risk Act in 2023. In Mexico they are considered a species of special concern. The International Union for Conservation of Nature ranks them as vulnerable, a category denoting threatened status.

The Endangered Species Act is a powerful tool to prevent extinction and help vulnerable species recover. It's 99-percent effective at preventing species under its protection from going extinct.

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## GIRLS BASKETBALL

### Wolves notch back-to-back wins

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

ELY— The Timberwolves notched back-to-back wins on the hardwood this past week to improve their record to 3-2 on the young season. Playing at home, Tuesday, Ely shot an impressive 43 percent from the floor as they beat Silver Bay in a 66-18 rout.

Amelia Penke had a huge night for Ely, pouring in 17 points

and grabbing 11 rebounds for a double-double. Audrey Kallberg just missed the double with 11 points and nine boards on the night, while Zoe Mackenzie added 12 points—all from beyond the arc— along with five rebounds. Clare Thomas added nine points for Ely, while Maija Mattson added six points and six boards.

Tuesday's blowout was in sharp contrast with last Thursday's close call with International Falls.

Playing on the Broncos' home court, the Wolves held off the Broncos in overtime for the 67-64 win.

Lydia Schultz had a huge night offensively, posting 20 points and seven assists. Audrey Kallberg notched a double-double with 17 points and a season-high 14 rebounds. Amelia Penke added 14 points, while Clare Thomas added ten points and six assists.

The Wolves hit the road next

Monday to take on Chisholm and they'll be back home on Tuesday to host Cook County. They'll travel to Cherry on Friday, Dec. 20, their final game before the winter break. The Wolves will host the Hoops for Hope Tournament Dec. 26-27.

**Right: Ely senior Clare Thomas goes in for a jumper under heavy pressure from a Silver Bay defender.**  
photo by J. Greeney



## BOYS BASKETBALL

### North Woods takes two

Grizzlies prevail in a blowout and a nailbiter

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- The North Woods boys basketball team turned Friday's home game against Carlton-Wrenshall into a rout by halftime, throttling the Raptors 47-17 in the first stanza and coasting to an 80-48 win.

When North Woods guard Aidan Hartway dropped in a free throw at the 14:35 mark of the first half, the game was close, the Grizzlies leading 6-4. What happened from there was nothing short of a nightmare for the hapless Raptors, as the Grizzlies savagely controlled both ends of the court during a 28-3 run over the next 10 minutes, getting big plays up and down the lineup. That was more than enough to seal the outcome before halftime, with the Grizzlies leading by 30 at the break, 47-17. While the Raptors played better in the second half as the Grizzlies substituted freely, they couldn't make a dent in the huge North Woods lead, and North Woods won by 32.

North Woods was solid in every aspect of the game, hitting 44 percent of their shots from the field and 75 percent at the free throw line.

**Above: North Woods' Louie Panichi drives the lane against Carlton-Wrenshall last Friday.**

**Right: As teammate Kalvyn Benner looks on, the Grizzlies' Aidan Hartway finishes a baseline drive with a jumper for a score against Carlton-Wrenshall.**

photos by D. Colburn

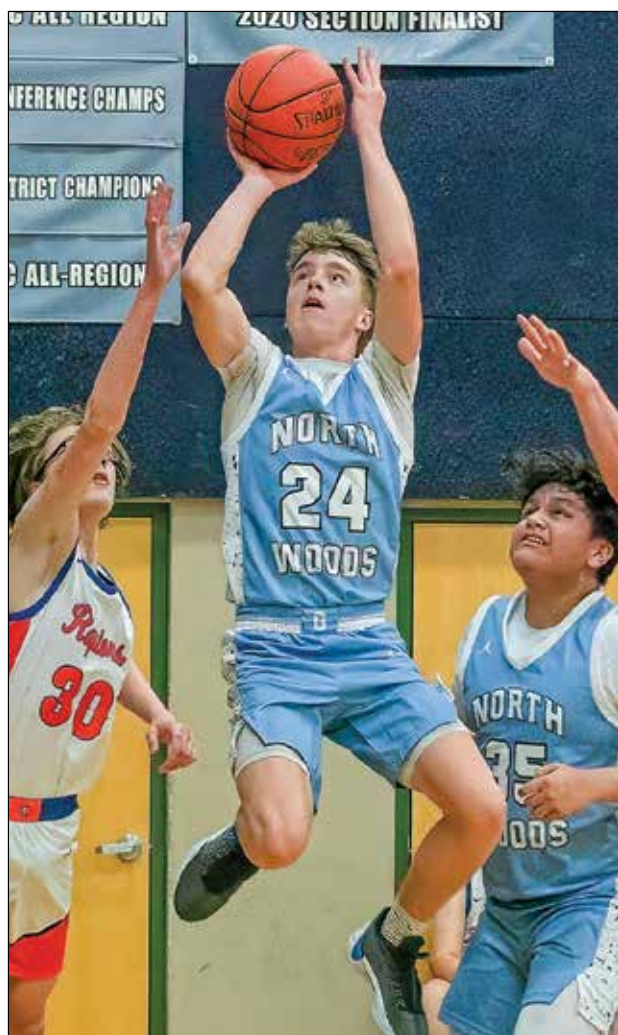
They dominated the glass, pulling down 49 rebounds to only 18 for the Raptors. The defense forced 20 turnovers that the Grizzlies turned into 29 points.

Talen Jarshaw topped the scoring column for North Woods, hitting 18 points with a pair of treys. Hot on his heels were Louie Panichi and Kalvyn Benner, each with 17 points. In total, nine Grizzlies scored in the game.

#### Nashwauk-Keewatin

The Grizzlies went on the road on Tuesday to take on Nashwauk-Keewatin, and again made a strong first half run to take control. From a 7-4 advantage North Woods went on a 15-5 run with treys by Panichi, Benner, and Jarshaw to go

See GRIZZLIES...pg. 4B



## BOYS BASKETBALL

### Ely looks impressive in 3-0 start

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

FLOODWOOD— In their first week of boys basketball action, the Timberwolves have combined solid defensive play with offensive firepower and the result is a 3-0 start.

Playing in Floodwood on Tuesday, the Wolves thoroughly dominated the young Polar Bears in a 110-36 rout. "They are a young team and we forced them into many turnovers," said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald.

Ely jumped to a big lead quickly and never looked back as they led 70-15 at the half. Five Ely players reached double digits, led by Caid Chittum with 24 points. Point guard Jack Davies added 21 points, while Drew Johnson and Leo McKrahl added 15 apiece. Wyatt Tedrick pitched in with ten points.

Playing in Hill City last Saturday, Ely faced its toughest challenge of the week in a 74-59 win that was closer than the score might suggest. "We pulled away with a 19-2 run to finish the game," noted McDonald. "We hit a lot of big shots in that run and played well defensively down the stretch."

See WOLVES...pg. 4B

## HOCKEY

### Ely's offense sluggish in early going Splits weekend series with Mora/Milaca

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

MORA— Ely's sluggish start to the hockey season continued this past Saturday as the Timberwolves fell to 1-3 on the season on a 3-1 loss here to Mora/Milaca. The graduation of some of last year's top scorers has definitely limited Ely's offensive firepower, at least in the early going this season.

Mora took the lead at the 11-minute mark of the first period, and added two more in second to lead 3-0. That's where the scoring remained until the 8:18 mark of the third period, when Cooper Mayranen scored an even-strength goal with an assist from Hunter Halbakken.

Mora peppered Ely goalie Ben Leeson

See HOCKEY...pg. 4B

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# Outdoors

Our lives in the  
Northwoods

## OUTDOOR RECREATION

# Camping fees to increase on the Superior next year

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

**REGIONAL**— If you're thinking of camping on the Superior National Forest next summer, it's going to cost you a bit more than in the past.

The forest service announced late last week that camping fees at ten of its most popular campgrounds on the forest will increase, in many cases by at least 50 percent. Forest officials say the higher costs associated with maintenance of forest

campgrounds is driving the need for higher fees.

In 2004, Congress passed the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act which allows the forest service to retain 95 percent of revenue collected at recreation sites and use these funds locally to operate, maintain and improve these sites. Revenue is reinvested into forest recreation sites in the form of trash pickups, septic and toilet pumping, painting, cleaning, addressing the backlog of deferred

maintenance, conducting patrols, maintaining highly used trails and campsites, and more.

Even with the increases, the rates at forest service campgrounds are typically well below most private sector camping facilities in the region.

The higher fees took effect on Monday of this week for those making reservations for 2025 at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).

The fee changes include:  
**Campgrounds**

Single site fee: Current \$12/New \$18  
Extra vehicle fee: Current \$6/New \$9.

- ▶ Echo Lake (LaCroix District)
- ▶ Lake Jeanette (LaCroix District)
- ▶ Pfeiffer Lake (Laurentian District)

Single site fee: Current \$15/New \$18.  
Extra vehicle fee: Current \$7.50/New \$9.

- ▶ Divide Lake (Tofte District)
- ▶ Little Isabella River (Tofte District)
- ▶ McDougal Lake (Tofte District)
- ▶ Ninemile Lake (Tofte District)

See **CAMPING**, pg. 3B



LITTLE FORK RIVER

# It's all in the sediment

Researchers using sediment "fingerprinting" to find sources of the Little Fork pollution

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

**REGIONAL**— While fingerprints are used mostly to fight crime, a different kind of fingerprint is helping researchers better understand the sources of the chronic turbidity that has long impaired the Little Fork River.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, in coordination with the North St. Louis, Itasca, and Koochiching counties' soil and water conservation districts, is using "sediment fingerprinting" as a way to identify the specific locations of the sediment that is constantly entering the river from various parts of its 2,000 square mile watershed.

According to Mike Kennedy, with the MPCA, staff from the cooperating agencies have gathered more than 200 soil samples from across the watershed to establish a library of the varying soil particles found in the surrounding landscape. Using a variety of methods, from appearance under a microscope to chemical, magnetic, and even radioactive signals, the researchers can tell where on the landscape the river sediments may be coming from. Unfortunately, said Kennedy, the research hasn't found a "silver bullet" solution, but rather that the sources of sediment are widespread and that any solution to the problem would be long-term and expensive.

Much of the Little Fork's watershed is comprised of the former bed of glacial Lake Agassiz, said Kennedy, and it contains a thick layer of sediments that settled on the bottom of the ancient lake. While the lake is gone today, that sediment remains, consisting of dense, silty clay and fine sands, all of which are easily eroded over time, contributing to



**Top:** A bucolic scene along the Little Fork River, in Koochiching County.

**Above:** The sediment-laden Little Fork River is clearly distinguished from the much clearer waters of the Rainy River at their junction near Pelland.  
courtesy MPCA

**Right:** Hannine Falls on the Little Fork River, near Celina.  
file photos

the river's turbidity.

Turbid waters are normally a sign of a river system that's in trouble from a biological standpoint, which is why the Little Fork is listed as impaired by the MPCA for sediment levels that are about four times the allowable limit. Yet, while the river is remarkably turbid, Kennedy notes that the biological health of the river, as measured by the abundance and diversity of fish and aquatic insects, remains robust. "The good news is that the biology of the river is exceptional, probably at the 95th percentile," said Kennedy.

That would be expected given that much of the river's watershed is remote, much like the rest of the



region, where river water quality tends to be exceptional. The Little Fork watershed, unlike most in the region, does have pockets of more intensive land use, such as agriculture, which appears to be a significant contributor to the sedimentation problem in the river. Agricultural properties are

more likely to erode than forested lands, which otherwise dominate the Little Fork watershed. And Kennedy notes he's seen evidence that there may be some more direct impact from agricultural operations in the area. This reporter

See **LITTLE FORK**, pg. 3B



**Giants Ridge has added 74 new snowmaking machines, significantly improving the facility's ability to create artificial snow.**

photo by M. Helmsberger

## GIANTS RIDGE

# Snowmaking investment to pay dividends for area skiers

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

**GIANTS RIDGE**— The white stuff is flying like never before here, thanks to a \$16.5 million investment in new, high-tech snowmaking equipment that should allow skiers to hit the slopes at Giants Ridge earlier than might otherwise be the case in the future.

"We're taking our snowmaking system from 1980s technology and upgrading it to 2024 standards," said Benji Neff, director of mountain sports at Giants Ridge.

After a record warm winter last year and a near-record warm fall this year, the need for upgrading snowmaking equipment at the Ridge was pretty apparent.

The upgrade includes 74 new snowmaking guns in addition to the 23 machines added last year. Combined with the existing equipment, Giants Ridge now has more than 100 snowmaking machines. And new technology allows the guns to work automatically whenever weather conditions allow for efficient snowmaking.

"We're going to be able to make snow across the mountain in warmer, marginal weather," said Sean Peyla, director of facilities and mountain operations. "So, it will allow us to put down more snow in a broader sense across the ski area."

The investment, which included replacement of aging waterlines, hydrants, pedestals, and electrical wiring, was funded by the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation and state bonding. The publicly-owned facility is a major job creator and a popular recreational facility that serves thousands of visitors as well as local residents with year-round.

According to Neff, users of the ski facilities will be major beneficiaries of the new snowmaking equipment. "We're going to be able to put down more snow in more places, having more runs available at the start of the season to just give everyone a better experience and a better value for every day they get to spend on the slopes."

About half of the alpine runs at Giants Ridge were currently open ahead of this past weekend's snow. Expect most runs to be open by next week.





Pine and fir draped in snow in the wake of last weekend's snowfall, the most significant of the season so far. Anywhere from 5-10 inches fell around the area. photo by M. Helmberger

## LITTLE FORK...Continued from page 4B

has personally witnessed a livestock producer near Cook emptying a trailer load of manure-encrusted straw into the river from the side of a bridge. Kennedy said he's found significant amounts of straw in the river at times, suggesting this kind of illegal dumping may be occurring relatively frequently.

### Many sources of sediment

If there is one thing that the sediment fingerprinting has revealed, it is that the sediment isn't coming from just one, or even a handful of locations. Kennedy notes that

the Little Fork watershed is interlaced with hundreds of ravines, cut into the fine clay and sand layers by water as it moves through the landscape. While any one of those ravines may contribute a relatively small amount of sediment to the river, the cumulative effect can be seen every day. "It's like death by a thousand cuts," said Kennedy.

The river begins its journey at Lost Lake, just west of Tower, and spends its first several miles percolating through the vast Lost Lake peatland, emerging with a bit of bog stain, and some organic material, but

little sediment. But Kennedy said that changes abruptly as the river nears Cook. "Right about Hwy 53, the soil changes and we start picking up that load," he notes. From there until Hannine Falls, about ten river miles west of Cook, Kennedy said it appears that most of the sediment is coming in from surrounding upland sources, farm fields, logging operations, and even dust from gravel roads.

Further downstream, he said most of the sediment appears to be coming from within the river channel itself, which could make it extremely difficult to address

in a meaningful way. It's not clear whether the river has always experienced significant sedimentation or if the current conditions are a legacy of the original logging era. Prior MPCA analyses have pointed to the effects of the big log drives that used to be conducted on the river as big pine cut from the region was ferried north to the mill in International Falls. Those log drives effectively scoured the riverbanks, likely exposing new pockets of sediment that have continued to erode over time.

All of which makes a solution exceptionally chal-

lenging. While the MPCA is charged with finding solutions to the river's sedimentation problem, it isn't clear how it can be accomplished without an enormous investment of public resources. Kennedy notes that addressing sedimentation from a single ravine could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, and that would need to be repeated potentially hundreds of times to make much difference. And reducing sedimentation from the river channel itself would be even more challenging and expensive.

And given that the fishing in the river remains very good,

Kennedy said it's tough to generate much public enthusiasm for an expensive mitigation effort. Which suggests that even as work continues to understand the problem, a change in the river's turbidity could still be a long way off.

Eventually, notes Kennedy, the Little Fork will cut its way through the sediment layer from the old lake bed to the bedrock below, and it could run clear again once it does. "But that's not going to happen in any of our lifetimes," said Kennedy.

## CAMPING...Continued from page 2B

**Group campground fee:** Current \$20/New \$30 per night. > Echo Lake

**Seasonal camping:** Current \$420/New \$504 Extra vehicle fee: Current \$7.50/New \$9 > Little Isabella River > McDougal Lake

Jeanette Lake campgrounds has been changed to seven days (sites cannot be reserved fewer than seven days before the reservation date).

At Pfeiffer Lake Campground, reservations can be made up to the day of arrival.

The reservation season for Echo Lake and Lake Jeanette for 2025 is May 9 to Sept. 2, and May 9 to Sept 30 for Ninemile Lake, Little Isabella River, Pfeiffer Lake, and McDougal Lake.

Divide Lake sites are available on a first come, first served basis all season.

Along with the fee increases, the following changes have been made in the reservation process for some of the campgrounds, including:

The reservation window for Echo Lake, McDougal Lake, Little Isabella River, and

## LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather

		Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
		10		0		26		18		30		22		30		13		22		10						
<b>Ely</b>	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	<b>Emb.</b>	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	<b>Cook</b>	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	<b>Orr</b>	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	<b>Tower</b>	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.		
	12/02	18	13	0.04	0.5"	12/02	19	8	0.03	2.0"	12/02	18	10	0.02	0.4"	12/02	18	10	0.03	0.4"	12/02	19	11	0.06	1.2"	
	12/03	18	14	0.00		12/03	19	8	0.00		12/03	17	13	0.00		12/03	17	11	0.00		12/03	17	13	0.00		
	12/04	23	15	na	0.3"	12/04	25	15	0.12	2.0"	12/04	24	13	0.13	2.5"	12/04	25	12	0.06	0.8"	12/04	24	15	0.26	2.2"	
	12/05	15	3	0.04	0.8"	12/05	24	4	0.00		12/05	23	4	0.02	0.4"	12/05	22	4	0.00		12/05	19	11	0.08	1.2"	
	12/06	18	8	0.03	0.7"	12/06	17	1	0.00		12/06	16	7	0.02	0.4"	12/06	16	2	0.01	0.2"	12/06	18	1	0.00		
	12/07	27	13	0.17	0.5"	12/07	28	15	0.00		12/07	26	13	0.04	0.2"	12/07	27	14	0.05	0.2"	12/07	26	14	0.00		
	12/08	37	27	0.00		12/08	41	27	0.00		12/08	40	26	0.00		12/08	41	27	0.00		12/08	41	14	0.00		
	YTD Total	26.85			9.6"	YTD Total	26.64			9.4"	YTD Total	27.01			11.7"	YTD Total	NA			7.7"	YTD Total	29.97			11.2"	

Editor's Note: Beginning this week, the Timberjay will be using weather data from an official weather station located three miles east of Orr, in hopes of obtaining more reliable precipitation data.

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ARTS RESCHEDULED

# NLAA cancels Dec. 18 performance of "Elf: The Musical"

by CATIE CLARK  
Ely Editor

ELY- A scheduling conflict has prompted the Northern Lakes Arts Association to cancel their Dec. 18 performance of "Elf: The Musical" which had originally been

planned as a "pay-what-you-can performance. But when NLAA officials learned the performance was scheduled opposite the Ely Memorial Middle and Senior High School band and choir performance, they opted to cancel

the musical for the night.

"Many of the talented young people who star in our production of 'Elf: The Musical' are also integral members of these ensembles," NLAA Executive Director Ian Francis Lah said in a state-

ment. "To honor their dual commitments and highlight the incredible importance of youth arts education, we have decided to cancel our Dec. 18 performance." Instead, NLAA will host its pay-what-you-can performance on Dec. 19.

"This decision wasn't made lightly but with full confidence that our community values and supports our young artists as much as we do," stated Lah. "We strongly encourage everyone who planned to join us on Dec.

18 to instead attend the ISD 696 band and choir concert. These students deserve a full audience to celebrate their hard work, and we're thrilled to help make that happen."

GIRLS BASKETBALL

# Grizzlies girls get season's first win on the road

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

CARLTON- The North Woods girls basketball team notched their first win of the season last week, staving off a comeback bid by Carlton-Wrenshall to squeak out a 32-30 road win. The Grizzlies got off to a quick start when Corra

Brodeen took the ball in the lane and dropped in a jumper, then picked up a loose ball under the bucket and scored again, giving North Woods a 4-0 lead. Addison Burckhardt got a steal and score to put the Grizzlies up 10-4, and a free-throw-line double from Brodeen sent the game to halftime with North Woods up 18-8.

The Raptors made a game of it in the second half by bumping up their shooting percentage from a woeful ten percent in the first half to 23 percent in the second, taking their first lead of the game, 27-25, on a deep trey with five minutes remaining. A free throw by Isabelle Koch and a pair of charities by Brodeen put North Woods back in front,

28-27, but the Grizzlies trailed 30-29 with just 1:15 remaining. Tatum Barto was fouled with 56 seconds left and made two free throws, and Koch sealed the win with a charity with five seconds left.

Free throws were the difference maker for the Grizzlies, as they topped the Raptors 12-10 from the line, hitting 67 percent of

their attempts. North Woods also held a big advantage in turnovers, forcing 43 Raptors miscues.

Both teams had trouble hitting from the field, and Brodeen was the only player on either roster in double figures with 12.

**Floodwood**

The Grizzlies traveled to Floodwood on Monday, and

the Polar Bears proved to be too much of a challenge to handle. North Woods trailed 50-21 at the half and lost 68-36 to fall to 1-4 on the season. Additional game information was unavailable as of press time.

## WOLVES...Continued from page 1B

Chittum again led offensively with 30 points and 11 rebounds for a double-double, while Johnson added his own double with 11 points and 13 boards. Wyatt Tedrick tallied

13 points, while Davies added 12.

Davies notched a truly impressive performance in Ely's season opener with International Falls, narrowly

missing a quadruple-double with 21 points, eight rebounds, eight assists, and nine steals to lead the Wolves to a 73-32 win. "We played well defensively the entire game," said

McDonald. "Our full-court defense forced them into a lot of turnovers and easy baskets for us." Chittum again led in points scored, with 31 along with six steals. Johnson added

15 points and five assists.

varsity start.

The Wolves are set to face Mesabi East on Friday in Aurora. They'll be back home on Tuesday to host Cook County, with a 6:30 p.m.

## GRIZZLIES...Continued from page 1B

up 22-9. Aidan Hartway and TaySean Boshey-Wilkerson joined the three-ball barrage as the Grizzlies pushed the lead to 31-12 with just under five minutes left in the half.

But the Spartans wouldn't go as easily as the Raptors, rallying to within 12 by the break, 38-26.

The Spartans had early success working the ball

down low in the second half and cut into the Grizzlies lead even more, pulling to within four at 45-41 with 13:46 left on the clock. But a basket by Jarshaw and a pair of free

throws and a basket by Scott Morrison gave North Woods a ten-point cushion at 51-41. A step-back Panichi triple put North Woods up 61-50, but the Spartans had one more surge

left, closing to within three at 65-62 with 1:54 remaining. But seconds later Benner shoved a dagger in the heart of the N-K rally with a rainbow triple and followed up with

a pair of free throws as the Grizzlies held their opponents scoreless the rest of the way to claim a 73-62 win.

## HOCKEY...Continued from page 1B

with 31 shots on goal, compared to a relatively anemic 15 shots by the Wolves.

Ely played shorthanded much of the game as they were hauled to the box a total of ten times for a total of 20 minutes. Jayden Zemke spent ten minutes sidelined on five minor infractions, including interference, holding, high-sticking, and twice for

roughing. Jace Huntbatch was tagged twice for hooking and cross-checking.

The Wolves notched their first win of the season in the first game of their two-game series with Mora last Friday. Owen Marolt exploded for four goals in the game, including while Ely was playing short-handed in the third period. Jace Huntbatch

added the only other goal for Ely, with an assist from Alex Merriman, as the Wolves outpaced Mora 5-2. Huntbatch notched assists on two of Marolt's scores.

Mora took an early lead in the contest and led 1-0 through the first period, but Marolt quickly put the Wolves in the driver's seat with goals at the 3:21, 11:45, and 16:06

marks of the second period. Huntbatch and Rhett Johnson both added assists.

Huntbatch added a fourth goal for the Wolves early in the third, with an assist from Merriman, before Marolt iced the cake with just over five minutes to play.

Ely put a season-high 36 shots on goal in the contest, while Mora posted 28 shots

on target. Leeson turned 26 of them aside for a .929 save percentage.

Penalties weren't much of a factor in the game as Ely players spent a total of just eight minutes in the box.

In earlier action this season, the Wolves opened with a 7-1 loss to Moose Lake on Nov. 30, followed by a 5-2 loss to North Shore on Dec. 3.

The Wolves were set to host International Falls this past Tuesday, but Ely postponed the matchup to give players time to rest and heal from injuries. They're expected to return to the road on Saturday with a 2 p.m. contest at Lake of the Woods. They should be back home next Thursday, Dec. 19, to host Greenway.



## Memories of the Early Days

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

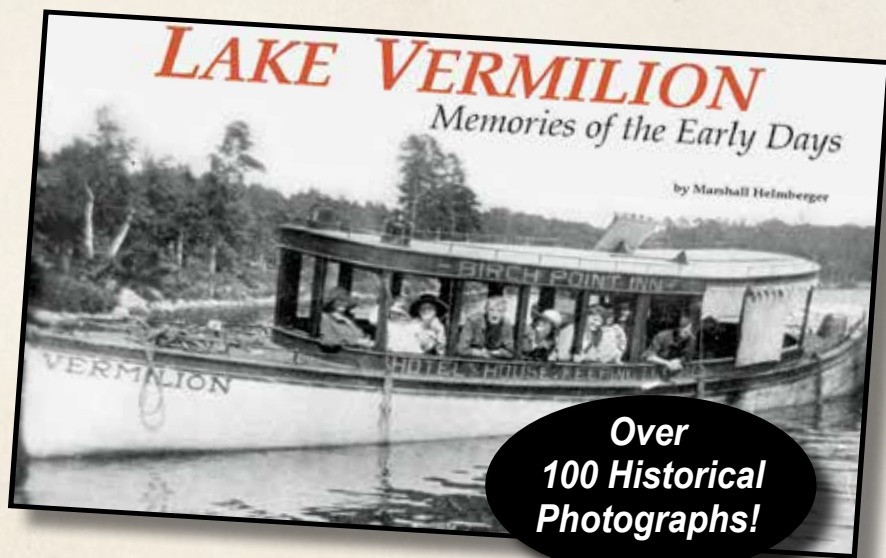
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ELY AA OPEN GROUP MEETINGS - in person meetings, Wednesdays & Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, 915 E Camp St., Ely.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**SNOWFLAKES**  
 by Japheth Light

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

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ◆◆◆

◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

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**Super Crossword** **TEEPEES**

- |   |   |  |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| <b>ACROSS</b>   | <b>46</b> Pie — mode  | <b>90</b> Inherent hanging-down position?                        | <b>6</b> Indian dish                        | <b>44</b> See 50-Across                    | <b>83</b> Festivity                                |
| <b>1</b> The United States' landmass, with "the"                              | <b>49</b> Abbr. on a road map   | <b>96</b> SeaWorld whale, once building timbers                  | <b>7</b> Height: Prefix                     | <b>45</b> High degree                      | <b>84</b> Pigeon perch                             |
| <b>9</b> Rafter's challenge   | <b>44-Down,</b> decay of building                                     | <b>100</b> Fake identity   | <b>8</b> The whole —                        | <b>47</b> Falsification                    | <b>87</b> Males                                    |
| <b>15</b> Shul scroll   | <b>51</b> Colon part  | <b>101</b> Fuels (up)  | <b>9</b> King, in Caen                      | <b>48</b> Cookout pest                     | <b>90</b> Rapa — (Easter Island)                   |
| <b>20</b> Another similar thing   | <b>52</b> Communist Joseph  | <b>102</b> "It won't hurt to snoop a little!"?                   | <b>10</b> Belly muscles                     | <b>52</b> BBQ rod                          | <b>91</b> Solar beam                               |
| <b>21</b> Barack and Michelle   | <b>55</b> Egyptian god of the dead                                    | <b>107</b> Body of eau de Cologne, to locals                     | <b>11</b> Jean — (perfume brand)            | <b>53</b> Mosaic piece                     | <b>92</b> Frazier foe                              |
| <b>22</b> Give the slip   | <b>57</b> Declaration while pointing at a group of workers on strike? | <b>108</b> Kind of acid in vinegar                               | <b>12</b> Windows ad catchphrase            | <b>54</b> On the go                        | <b>93</b> Sheet fabric                             |
| <b>23</b> Like babies who throw tantrums when you try to put diapers on them? | <b>62</b> Scent sensor  | <b>109</b> Debt note   | <b>13</b> Language of Copenhagen, to locals | <b>56</b> Withdraw                         | <b>94</b> Website visit unit                       |
| <b>25</b> News outlets  | <b>63</b> George at Gettysburg  | <b>110</b> Architect Saarinen                                    | <b>14</b> New jet in '68                    | <b>57</b> — Aviv                           | <b>95</b> Pilot Amelia                             |
| <b>26</b> RBI or ERA  | <b>64</b> Airy melody   | <b>112</b> "Slung" food  | <b>15</b> Worked as an office sub           | <b>58</b> Deli meat                        | <b>97</b> Actress McDaniel of "Gone With the Wind" |
| <b>27</b> Film lead-in to "Cop"   | <b>65</b> Statement when you're nearly ready to complete a collage?   | <b>116</b> St. — (Caribbean getaway)                             | <b>16</b> Carry too far                     | <b>59</b> Footfaraw                        | <b>98</b> Comes up                                 |
| <b>28</b> Photo —   | <b>72</b> The "A" of "A-Rod"  | <b>117</b> Hassle of tracking down a missing retirement payment? | <b>17</b> Howard Stern's area               | <b>60</b> Model S car                      | <b>99</b> Nero's 2,100                             |
| <b>29</b> More nimble   | <b>73</b> Depart  | <b>122</b> Stress  | <b>18</b> "Bye, Brigitte"                   | <b>61</b> Otherwise                        | <b>102</b> Bigwig                                  |
| <b>30</b> Trellis climber   | <b>74</b> Air out   | <b>123</b> Spiritual self  | <b>19</b> Bodily pump                       | <b>63</b> Long skirt                       | <b>103</b> Florida city                            |
| <b>32</b> Having a sore mouth from working long hours at a kissing booth?     | <b>77</b> Mesmerizing horse movement?                                 | <b>124</b> Foundations   | <b>24</b> Conductor Georg                   | <b>66</b> Balm plant                       | <b>104</b> "Uncle!" crier, perhaps                 |
| <b>36</b> Joint a sock often covers   | <b>83</b> Limb-bending muscle   | <b>125</b> Peanut butter cup brand                               | <b>29</b> "Every seat sold" abbr.           | <b>67</b> Meshes                           | <b>105</b> Explorer — de León                      |
| <b>39</b> Chipped in, in poker  | <b>85</b> Is theatrical   | <b>126</b> Bread browners  | <b>31</b> "La Traviata" composer            | <b>68</b> A fifth of fifty                 | <b>106</b> Stratagems of 2016                      |
| <b>40</b> Beckett title character   | <b>86</b> Pod item  | <b>DOWN</b>  | <b>33</b> Spy novelist Deighton             | <b>69</b> D.C. donor                       | <b>107</b> Disney film of 2016                     |
| <b>41</b> Intense fire used as an energy source?                              | <b>87</b> Color grade   | <b>1</b> Cobra types   | <b>34</b> Shareable PC file                 | <b>70</b> Abbr. on a road map              | <b>111</b> Nevada city                             |
|   | <b>88</b> Actress Gasteyer  | <b>2</b> Castle ditch  | <b>35</b> Vainglory                         | <b>71</b> Dallasites or Houstonians        | <b>113</b> Highest point                           |
|   | <b>89</b> Tangle of hair  | <b>3</b> Avenger Peel  | <b>36</b> Chef's tie-on                     | <b>75</b> — word (single-occasion coinage) | <b>114</b> — -Pei                                  |
|   |   | <b>4</b> Lizard, e.g.  | <b>37</b> "Untrue!"                         | <b>76</b> Plate holders                    | <b>115</b> Mama birds                              |
|   |   | <b>5</b> British verb suffix                                     | <b>38</b> Maryland congressman — Mfume      | <b>77</b> Skirt edge                       | <b>117</b> Golf average                            |
|   |   |  | <b>39</b> Even a bit of                     | <b>78</b> Diva Sumac                       | <b>118</b> Ending for opal                         |
|   |   |  | <b>42</b> Taxing gp.                        | <b>79</b> Broken bits of ceramic material  | <b>119</b> Extra NBA periods                       |
|   |   |  | <b>43</b> Mag bigwigs                       | <b>80</b> Tax doc. pro animal              | <b>120</b> — Plains                                |
|   |   |  |   | <b>81</b> House                            |  |
|   |   |  |   | <b>82</b> Novelist Santha Rama —           |  |

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**Weekly SUDOKU**

Answer

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

**CryptoQuote**  
 answer

Words are singularly the most powerful force available to humanity.  
 — Yehuda Berg

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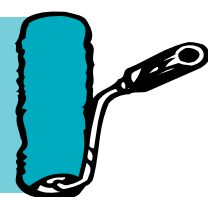
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**Weekly SUDOKU**

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

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

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦**

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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**ELY PUBLIC SCHOOLS POSITION OPENING Cafeteria Aide**

Ely Public School District is looking for a Cafeteria Aide for the 2024-2025 school year. We are an EC - Grade 12 district, seeking an energetic, self-starting, personable, and highly motivated individual. **Background check required.**

**Required Qualifications:**  
➤ Must be able to lift 30 lbs. on a regular basis  
➤ Must be able to work in a fast-paced setting  
➤ Preferred experience working with school-age children  
➤ Evidence of ability to work cooperatively and communicate effectively in a collaborative setting

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Application available at:  
www.ely.k12.mn.us

A complete application must include the following:  
➤ District Non-Licensed Application  
➤ Resume  
➤ 2 letters of recommendation

**Return materials to:** Ely Public Schools, Attn: Superintendent, 600 E. Harvey St., Ely, MN, 55731 or email lwestrack@ely.k12.mn.us

**Starting Rate of Pay:** \$18.35/hour  
**Hours:** 2.75 hours/day; 5 days/week; student contact days  
**Deadline to apply:** December 17, 2024; open until filled.

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 6 & 13, 2024

**Breitung Township St. Louis County, Minnesota Notice of Filing for Town Offices to be Elected**

Notice is hereby given that a town election will be held in the Township of Breitung, St. Louis County, Minnesota, on Tuesday, the 11th day of March, 2025.

The first day for filing affidavits of candidacy will be Tuesday, December 31, 2024. The last day will be Tuesday, the 14th of January, 2025, at 5:00 pm

Filings may be made with the Township Clerk, Amber Zak. You can make an appointment by calling 218-753-6020, or visit our website for forms and mail them along with the filing fee to: Breitung Township, PO Box 56, Soudan, MN 55782

The following terms will be expiring:  
Supervisor Seat #1 for the term of 3 years  
Treasurer for the term of 2 years  
Filing fee is \$2.00

Amber Zak, Township Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 13, 2024

**KUGLER TOWNSHIP REGULAR MEETING NOTICE**

The Kugler Town Board will meet on Wednesday, Dec. 18 at 5:00 p.m. at the Kugler Town Hall for their regular monthly meeting.

Christopher Suihkonen, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 13, 2024

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**GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP 2025 CANDIDATE FILING NOTICE**

Affidavits of Candidacy may be filed with the Town Clerk's office during regular office hours at the Greenwood Town Hall from December 31, 2024, through January 14, 2025. These are the first date and last date to file.

Office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9am to 1pm. Greenwood Township office will extend the hours for filing on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, to 9am to 5pm.

The filing fee is \$2.00.

The March 11, 2025, election will be for the following positions:  
Supervisor 4 - 3- year term, currently held by Rick Stoehr  
Treasurer - 2-year term, currently held by Jeff Maus

The following question will be on the March ballot, worded as follows:  
**"Shall Option B, providing for the appointment of the Clerk and Treasurer by the Town Board, be adopted for the government of Greenwood Township?"**

The successful candidate for the Town Treasurer position shall take office only if Option B is abandoned at the election.

Debby Spicer, Clerk, Greenwood Township

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 13, 20 & 27, 2024 and Jan. 10, 2025

**CryptoQuote**

AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

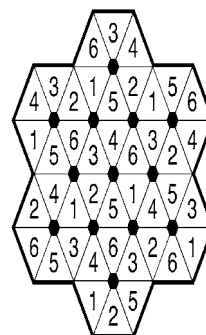
One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

OKECX HED XPVRFNHENI  
SJD AKXS LKODEYFN YKEBD  
HMHPNHZND SK JFAHVPSI.  
- IDJFCH ZDER

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**SNOWFLAKES**

solution



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**Super Crossword**

Answers

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

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