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the **TIMBERJAY**



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VOL. 36, ISSUE 2

January 17, 2025

\$1.50

RECOGNITION

County board lauds Chavers for life of service

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

SUDAN- The St. Louis County Board opened their Jan. 14 regular meeting by paying homage to Cathy Chavers, who recently announced her retirement from her position as Bois Forte Tribal Chair.

Meeting at the Breitung Community Center, Commissioner Paul McDonald spoke of Chavers' 50 years of public service, with both the

county and the band, culminating in her election as tribal chair in 2016.

"It says a lot for her leadership," he said. "She has given her heart and soul to what she has done. She has been a strong advocate for healthier outcomes," said McDonald, noting that Chavers has served on the county's public health advisory board.

Other commissioners commended Chavers for building a strong relationship between the tribe and county government.

"Our relationship with the band went to a new level with Cathy," said Keith Nelson.

St. Louis County Sheriff Jason Akerson thanked Chavers for listening to concerns of the sheriff's department and helping to finally get a stalled aid agreement in place.

The board passed a proclamation, in appreciation of her service.

The proclamation discussed her earlier career in health care, as well as her prominent lead-

Right: Chavers, holding plaque, surrounded by members of the St. Louis County Board.

photo by J. Summit

ership role as President of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, and appointment by the Governor to the Minnesota Board on Aging's Public Policy Committee.

Chavers, for her part, thanked the county board for

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GREENWOOD

Board puts Maus on paid leave

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- The Greenwood Town Board voted 3-2, Tuesday, to place fire chief Jeff Maus on paid administrative leave, and requiring that he obtain a doctor's note before he can return to the job.

The board had held a special meeting Jan. 2 to place Maus on medical leave, though board members adjourned the meeting without ever passing the necessary motion.



Jeff Maus

At the time, they did vote to name fire captain Brian Trancheff as interim chief until Jan. 22, or until Maus has a doctor's note allowing him to return to full duty. Supervisors John Bassing and Rick Stoehr voted against the latest steps against Maus.

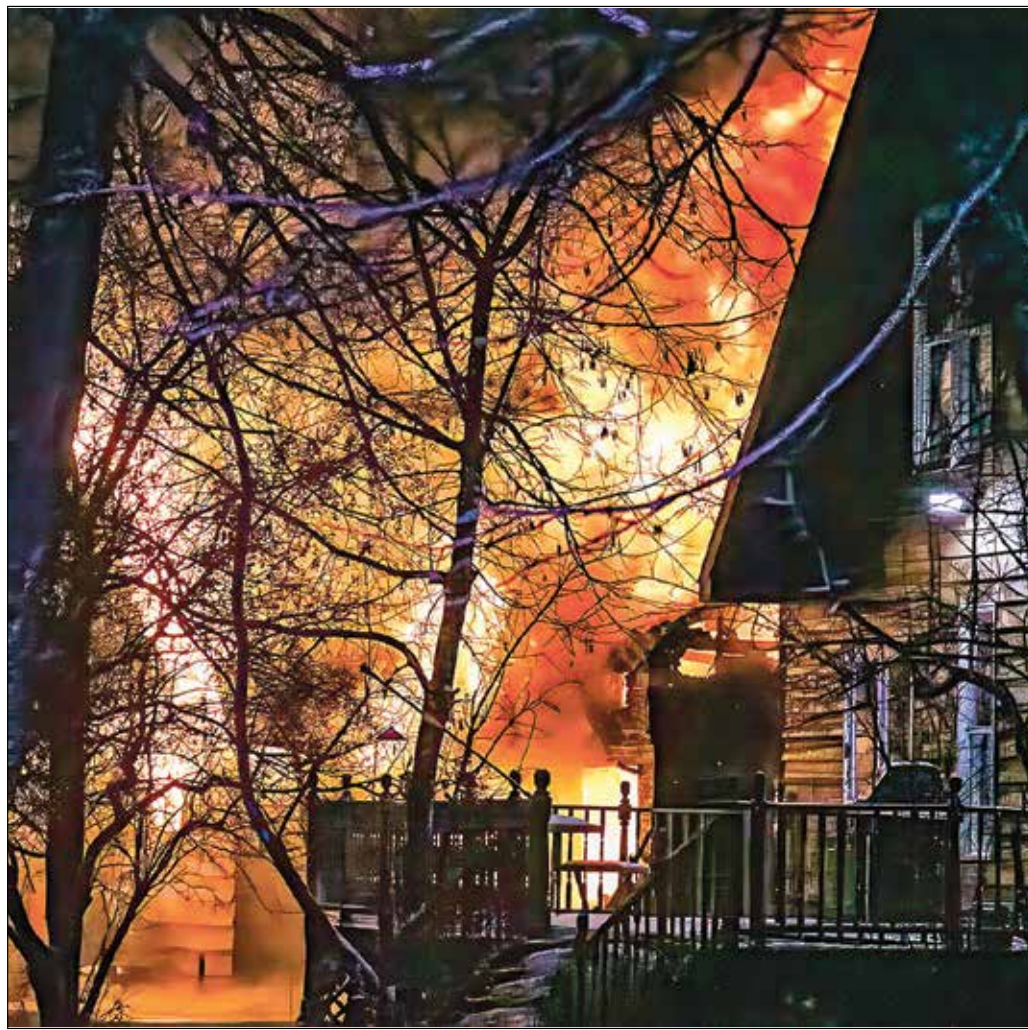
The move came after a lengthy discussion of fire department matters, Maus's communications with the board concerning his surgery, and Maus's decision to respond to two EMR calls after receiving the okay from his physician to return to full duty.

Maus had informed the clerk on Nov. 20 that he was scheduled for surgery in early December.

"Employees who are going to be absent from work should notify supervisors," Roskoski said. "I asked the clerk to ask Maus when he was going to be off from work."

Roskoski said the board didn't find out that information until their Dec. 9 meeting, when

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NEAR TRAGEDY

Close call as explosion and fire destroys Tower home

Young man rescues elderly neighbor from fully engulfed residence

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- Former Tower Fire Chief Rolando Noyes put his fire training to good use, Jan. 9, when the neighboring house caught fire shortly after 9 p.m.

"We heard a boom, looked out the window, and saw nothing but flames," Noyes said.

"It was a big explosion, and the house was fully engulfed," he said. The explosion blasted out windows on the side of the house facing Noyes' residence.

Noyes' 17-year-old son, Rogelio, quickly called 911 and then went to help 86-year-old

Jim Anderson get out of his house safely. The two could see that Anderson was still inside, struggling to open a back door, where a cement slab under the door had frost-heaved just a week or so before the fire. Rogelio helped open the door and got his elderly neighbor to safety.

"That door was really hard to push," Rolando said. "It was a pretty close call. All I saw was big flames, and I worried the trees between our houses would catch on fire."

Rolando and Rogelio got Anderson into the safety of their heated garage, and then made calls to get a family member to come

Above: Out of control flames lit up the night on Tower's south side last Thursday after an explosion in the basement of a house on S. Third nearly took the life of an elderly resident.

photo by D. Colburn

get him.

"I'd been at my dad's house until 7 p.m. that night," said Sherry Anderson, "and then another friend stopped to visit and stayed until 8 p.m."

Sherry said her dad walks with a cane and is not steady on his feet. She was surprised he was able to

See...**FIRE** pg. 9

MINING LITIGATION

Judges sound skeptical of Twin Metals' arguments

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Twin Metals officials were hoping an appeal before a three-judge panel here could reinstate their claim against the Biden administration's cancellation of two federal mineral leases key to their plans to build a copper-nickel mine south of Ely.

That D.C. Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in the case here on Monday in its review of a lower court ruling that had dismissed Twin Metals' claims.

Yet the company appears to face better odds pushing for action under the incoming Trump administration as the judges appeared skeptical of the mining company's legal arguments, appearing to agree with the lower court that its dispute with the government was contractual in nature, shifting jurisdiction to the federal

See...**TWIN METALS** pg. 9

HOSPITAL STATUS

Press release finds drama in paper shuffle

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

ELY— This week's drama over a purported threat to the Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital's status as a critical access hospital, appears to be more of a paperwork shuffle than an actual threat to the hospital's designation.

A change in the designation of St. Louis County by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, had left a total of four small town hospitals in St. Louis County, including facilities in Cook and Aurora in addition to Ely, facing the

See...**HOSPITALS** pg. 10



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Community notices

St. Louis County seeking public input through survey

REGIONAL- Questions about quality of life in St. Louis County, what people think of the job the county is doing at providing a wide set of critical services, and how much priority people think the county should place on certain services – St. Louis County is seeking public input on these issues and others in a survey that is being mailed out this week.

Information collected in the survey helps guide decisions on budgets, policy, and more.

New this year, the county will be seeking public input on topics including environmentally sustainable practices, and on investments in types of housing and services for people experiencing homelessness.

Approximately 4,900 county residents selected at random will receive a postcard in the mail inviting them to take the survey online. These residents will also have the option to complete a paper copy of the survey. Results of the survey, which are considered statistically valid, will be shared by early summer and will be taken into consideration by staff and commissioners as they work on the 2026 budget and long-range plans.

“We encourage our citizens, if you are one of the randomly selected households to receive this survey, please fill it out,” said St. Louis County Board Chair Annie Herala. “We very much value the opinions and information we gain from this survey. In some cases, it becomes rationale to redirect resources, and in other instances we find it reaffirms that people appreciate decisions we’ve made.”

In addition to this scientific survey, the county will later offer an online survey that any citizen can complete. Those answers will be kept separate from the official survey but will still be reviewed and taken into consideration.

St. Louis County is partnering with four other counties – Dakota, Olmsted, Scott and Washington – to produce the survey, which is being conducted by Polco/National Research Center, Inc. St. Louis County has conducted similar surveys every two to three years since 2007, most recently in 2022.

UWNEMN's free babysitter trainings return this winter for students 11 and older

REGIONAL – United Way of Northeastern Minnesota (UWNEMN) has opened registration for no-cost babysitter trainings this winter.

The next trainings are scheduled for Jan. 20 and Feb. 17 at UWNEMN's building in Chisholm. All trainings take place from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and are led by American Red Cross certified instructor, Mountain Iron Public Library Director and Events Coordinator, Anna Amundson. United Way offered a class earlier this month in International Falls.

Lunch and snacks are provided, but transportation must be provided by a parent or caregiver. Following each training, participants will receive a certification of knowledge and skills necessary to safely and responsibly care for children and infants (CPR training included).

To participate, students must be 11 years or older and must live in UWNEMN's service area (Iron Range, Koochiching County, or Lake of the Woods County).

This is the third year UWNEMN has organized these American Red Cross trainings.

“These trainings are making a real difference, both for the students who are building leadership and safety skills and for the families across the region in need of additional childcare options,” said UWNEMN Community Impact Director Crystal Royer. “We understand our region and knew in order to make the biggest impact we’d need to bring the training outside our building and into the communities we serve.”

Upcoming trainings are made possible through UWNEMN's Bright Beginnings initiative, with support from the Northland Foundation and the State of Minnesota.

There is a limit of 10 students per training; a wait list will be started as trainings fill. To learn more or register, visit: www.unitedwaynemn.org/babysitter

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NORTHWOODS FRIENDS OF THE ARTS

Rolando art exhibit on display in Cook

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- To see Ely artist and author Cecilia Rolando mingling with guests at Saturday's reception for her January fabric art exhibition at Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook was catching a glimpse of her everyday life, one spent in a sea of creative inspiration.

Whether she's painting or drawing or writing haiku or poetry, Rolando said her home is awash in creative materials and spaces, ready for use at any moment she feels a creative spark, and for Rolando those sparks come fast and furious, with some projects completed in short order and others taking weeks to achieve fruition.

Vivid harmonious colors and thoughtful design are anchoring elements of Rolando's fabric work, something she said she picked up as an alternative to the more structured art of quilting, which doesn't quite fit her own artistic inclinations. Rolando is drawn to more abstract design, and discovering designing with fabric years ago was a perfect blend between artist and materials.

“In the early 70s, I had gotten a sewing machine, one of those old Singers – it didn't have a treadle, it had an electric foot connected to it,” Rolando said. “I had gotten some fabric for making rugs, and just naturally I started making some of these fabric hangings, like compositions instead of paintings. I started using the fabric as the medium and I made some. And then things changed and I didn't do it for many, many years, but then I started doing it again. You have to have a lot of different fabrics, which I collect and am fascinated with.”

It would be out of character for Rolando to start a fabric hanging with a vision of the end product in mind. Her abstract flow not from an absence of mindfulness, but from the application of mindfulness as she considers how each piece, color, and pattern can be incorporated into a unified whole using principles of good artistic design.

“I don't think about it, I just go ahead and do it. I have a piece of fabric, say a rectangle. I look around at my fabric bits and pieces, and then I think I'm just going to put some of these on this backing in a way that looks like a start of a composition,” Rolando said. “And so then I pin those down and start sewing them on – that's the first stage. And then I look at it and think, what else does this need, and I go through a second stage and add other pieces to it. And when it gets closer to being finalized I'll put a more secure backing to cover up all those stitches on the back, and make hangers and then add some



three dimensional pieces to finish the composition.”

Walking around the exhibit with Rolando, one discovers that each piece comes with a story of some kind, something about the fabrics she found compelling or where they came from, items only the creator would know.

“I had just a small piece of this fabric, but I absolutely love this fabric,” Rolando said as she stopped to consider one of the hangings. “I love it against these greens here, which are like complementary colors to that. Also, these fabrics are like Indian sari fabrics. I ordered these and they come in three different colors and patterns in this one piece, and they stitch them together like this.”

It's also common for Rolando to incorporate one work of art into another to create a larger work. That's not only the case with her wall hangings, but also with a group of decorative bags. For example, she's made delicate prints on tissue paper and used a bag as her canvas to create a design.

Rolando said she created some works just for the NWFA show.

“I had a show down in Minneapolis at the First Congregational Church in Dinkytown last year for three months. Some of the pieces sold and then I also have put them in other places for sale. So when they asked me to do this show about three weeks ago, I thought, gosh, I might not have enough and I thought I'd better whip up some more. So, I ended up making like 12 new ones.”

Along with Rolando's work, NWFA's January exhibit also includes a display of works by the Round Robin Quilters group. The exhibit is free and open to the public during the gallery's regular hours of Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. through the end of January. The NWFA Gallery is located at 210 S River St. in Cook.

WINTER FUN IN TOWER



2025 Finlander Bocce Ball set for Jan. 25 in Tower

TOWER- Play bocce ball the Finlander way, on the ice, on Saturday, Jan. 25 beginning at 9 a.m. at Your Boat Club Lake Vermilion Marina. Please preregis-

ter your team by 5 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 23. All teams must be two men and two women, 18 years or older.

Sign-up sheets available at D'Erick's, Good Ol' Days,

Benchwarmers, or Fuel & Food in Tower. You may also contact Jolene Mroszak at 218-255-2131 or email tseventsboard@gmail.com with your team information.

Cost to play is \$20/person, with payout to the top four places. Payment must be made before the start of play on the day of the event.

Coolers are allowed. For questions, contact Jolene Mroszak 218-255-2131

Your Boat Club will be open so stop in and check out their sale on in-stock items and sign up for the drawing. Players will receive a complimentary tape measure on the ice at the time of registration.

Lake Vermilion Weiner Cruiser is joining us again

this year. Ward and his wife welcome you to stop by the stand and grab some lunch have a snack, and shoot the breeze.

Thank you to our incredible donors: Nelsor Williams Linings, Inc. and Tower-Soudan Insurance Agency, Inc.

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CRIME

Britt man jailed for criminal sexual conduct

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— A Britt man remains in the St. Louis County Jail after his Dec. 20 arrest on three separate counts stemming from his use of a nine-year-old boy in a sexual performance or pornography last April.

Matthew Steven Tourigny, age 38, faces a maximum sentence of 15 years and is currently being held on \$300,000 bail.

According to the complaint, Tourigny posted a nude image of the nine-year-old boy, facing away

from the camera, from a Snapchat account in the name of "mtourigny86," which Tourigny later acknowledged was his.

The St. Louis County Sheriff's Office and the Lake Superior Forensic Technology and Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force received a tip from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children on Dec. 12 regarding a Snapchat user, "mtourigny86," who had uploaded the image of the nine-year-old victim. Tourigny's Snapchat account allegedly shared



Matthew Tourigny

the photo with another account, "mt_ironmat," and solicited a sexual encounter between mt_ironmat and the nine-year-old.

On Dec. 17, law enforcement officers executed a search warrant at Tourigny's residence during which they seized numerous items, including multiple cell phones, a camera, and a laptop computer. During the search, Tourigny acknowledged ownership of the Snapchat account mtourigny86 and that he has a significant

relationship with the nine-year-old boy. Officers found additional photographs of the nine-year-old, including some that were more explicit than the one sent over Snapchat. Tourigny did, however, acknowledge sending the more explicit images to other Snapchat users in exchange for their sending other, similar images, to him.

Tourigny assault in new context

Tourigny was the subject of a physical attack in Tower back in July, when four male juveniles lured him to town promising a hook-up with another young male. The juve-

niles then jumped him, hitting him with rods while posting the attack online, during which some of the juveniles accused Tourigny of being a sexual predator.

During the attack, Tourigny pleaded with the youths that he thought he was meeting a 24-year-old.

The attack was ultimately thwarted by the prompt actions of a Tower emergency responder, Steven Freshour, who drove off the attackers. The individuals involved were ultimately identified, arrested, and charged for the assault.

TOWER

City takes possession of old county garage

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER— The former St. Louis County public works facility here is now the city of Tower's following the recent closing on the property, which had been in the works for more than a year. The facility, purchased for \$260,000, provides the city with a 31-acre site, a 3.6-acre parking area, a 4,700-sq. ft. office and maintenance garage, and a 3,500-sq. ft. cold storage building. It also includes a 10,200-sq.ft. salt dome with thousands of yards of salted gravel. The maintenance facility includes a built-in crane and a long list of other equipment which the county left with the building.

City public works foreman Ben Velcheff said the new digs have been a huge improvement for the city's public works staff, providing an office for the first time along with facilities for repairs and maintenance of equipment.

"We love it," said Velcheff. "It's very nice having everything in one spot and not having to go to three different places to look for things." The public works has, in the past, made use of the small garage at city hall along with three metal buildings located in other parts of the city for various cold storage of equipment and supplies.

The county also left a substantial amount of salted sand

in the salt dome for the city to use. "I think we have at least a good 8-10 years' worth," said Velcheff.

And with the recent cold snap, Velcheff said he was happy to have an actual office with working heat. In the past, he had taken care of most of his office work while standing at a workbench in the city hall garage, which was rarely warmer than 50 degrees in cold weather.

While the new facility is a huge step up, clerk-treasurer Michael Schultz told the city council at their meeting on Monday that there were improvements that the council might want to consider. He noted that the city could likely obtain grant funding using the \$260,000 purchase price as their local match.

Council members appeared to agree and appointed council members Joe Morin and Bob Anderson to work with city hall and public works to determine high priority improvements that might be needed.

In other action on Monday, the council approved its annual appointments and designations, as follows:

- ▶ Acting Mayor: Joe Morin
- ▶ Airport Commission: Kevin Norby and David Wanless.
- ▶ Ambulance Commission: Bob Anderson, Dena Suihkonen.
- ▶ Forestry Board: Dave Setterberg, Joe Morin.
- ▶ Tower-Breitung Waste Water Board: Dave Setterberg,

Dave Wanless.

▶ Tower Economic Development Authority: Joe Morin, Bob Anderson.

▶ Planning and Zoning: Joe Morin, Kevin Norby.

▶ Tower-Soudan Joint Powers Recreation Board, Terri Joki-Martin.

▶ Lake Vermilion Trail Joint Powers: Dave Wanless, Michael Schultz as alternate.

▶ City Zoning Administrator, Cliff Koski.

The council also appointed Wanless to serve as the city's blight officer, after Wanless, who was elected on a write-in effort in November, volunteered for the usually thankless task, which has been vacant for several years. Since moving to town a couple years ago, Wanless said he's seen some things in town that he'd like to help address.

The council approved a contract with Colosimo, Patchin, Kearney & Brunfelt to continue as legal counsel although Setterberg noted that the firm is currently quite limited in the services it can provide due to retirements.

The council also discussed how to proceed with the selection of a new auditor after its longstanding auditing firm, Walker, Giroux, and Hahne, announced that they would no longer be able to provide those services. Schultz told the council that he's had little success to date in finding a new auditor, since other firms in the region

have indicated they are already at capacity. Schultz asked if one of the council members could assist with the search for a new auditor and Wanless volunteered to help.

In other business, the council:

▶ Discussed the recent city newsletter, which was sent out with the city's most recent utility billing. Council members agreed the effort was worthwhile and will try to produce the newsletter on a quarterly basis so it can continue to go out with utility bills. Bob Anderson will work with Schultz to develop ideas for the publication.

▶ Made no decision on repairs to the 2013 ambulance, which the council is considering as a transfer vehicle. The vehicle is currently at Armory Shell, which has given a quote of \$10,996 to get the vehicle roadworthy again. The council suggested obtaining quotes for the work from some other repair shops.

▶ Approved soliciting quotes for official publishing for 2025.

▶ Approved a positive performance review for the clerk-treasurer along with a six-percent raise, which was in line with the city's union staff pay increases for 2025.

▶ Approved a motion to promote Ben Velcheff to the position of Senior Maintenance Foreman effective Jan. 19.

Victim in wheelchair fire identified

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The Ely Police Department has identified Marjorie Jane Hible of Ely, age 80, as the victim who suffered fatal burns while she was outdoors on a mobility scooter near the Boundary Waters Care Center. Hible died later that same day, Jan. 6, at St. Mary's in Duluth surrounded by her family.

Hible was a resident of the care center, a skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility located adjacent to the Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital. The center's residents who are fit to leave the center can leave the facility and preliminary findings suggest Hible had gone outside to smoke a cigarette. While the incident remains under investigation, the state Fire Marshal's office indicated that smoking was the likely cause of the fire.

Both the Ely Police Department and the Boundary Waters Care Center confirmed that an oxygen tank was not involved with this tragic incident. Smoking can be a particular hazard for individuals who are on oxygen, which is a fire accelerant.

While the lithium batteries that power mobility scooters are known to be a fire risk, the *Timberjay* could find no similar reports online of cigarettes causing a scooter to catch fire.

Boundary Waters Care Center director Adam Masloski, in a statement, said the center "is wholly dedicated to delivering the best short-term rehabilitation services and long-term care," adding that the center is fully cooperating with local and state agencies as they continue their investigation. "We are also in contact with the family and are doing everything we can to support them and our team members during this time. Our deepest condolences go out to our beloved community member's family and friends."

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Editorial

It's the economy, stupid

History shows that voters' picks are often disconnected from the parties' economic records

For nearly four decades, U.S. voters have consistently punished Democrats for success and Republicans for failure, and that is a trend that will almost certainly remain intact when President-elect Donald Trump takes the oath of office on Monday.

Over the past 36 years, despite an inexplicable public perception that Republicans are better managers of the economy, every Democratic president has inherited higher unemployment and larger federal budget deficits from their Republican predecessor than they have bequeathed to their Republican successors.

Don't believe it? Here are the historical facts:

► George H.W. Bush took office in January 1989 with unemployment at 5.3 percent and the federal budget deficit for the fiscal year he inherited at \$152 billion. He lost re-election to Bill Clinton in part due to the 1991 recession that pushed unemployment to 7.3 percent the month before he left office. The federal budget deficit, meanwhile, had bulged to \$290 billion.

► Clinton inherited Bush's 7.3 percent unemployment rate and \$290 billion deficit and left office with the jobless rate at 4.2 percent and a budget SURPLUS of \$236 billion, a record which inexplicably appeared to upset many American voters, who ultimately opted for the Republican George W. Bush over Clinton's then-vice president, Al Gore, at the end of Clinton's second term.

► George W. Bush inherited Clinton's low unemployment rate and a record budget surplus and blew the surplus on tax cuts for the wealthy, which helped lead to the financial crash of 2007-08 that wrecked the economy. Bush left office with unemployment at 7.8 percent (and nosediving) and the federal deficit at \$1.41 TRILLION.

► Obama inherited Bush's mess and over the next eight years made remarkable progress, dropping the unemployment rate to 4.8 percent while more than halving the deficit to \$665.7 billion. Again, enough voters found reason for a change to put Donald Trump in the White House in the wake of Obama's success.

► Trump inherited Obama's steady economy and unemployment at 4.8 percent, and experienced mediocre growth in the early years of his presidency only to watch it all melt when the COVID pandemic reached U.S. shores in March 2020. Trump left office with unemployment at 6.3 percent and a federal budget deficit at a staggering \$2.8 tril-

lion. ► Biden inherited the fallout of the pandemic and used a series of legislative successes, such as the infrastructure bill and Inflation Reduction Act, to lay the groundwork for strong economic growth for years to come. Biden presided over one of the strongest periods of growth in the past half century, adding 16.6 million new jobs, including 1.6 million in manufacturing and construction. Biden leaves office with the unemployment rate at 4.1 percent and the deficit at \$1.9 trillion— still too high but nearly a trillion dollars less than during Trump's final budget.

While Biden took a political hit on immigration, he leaves office with illegal entries running well below the levels experienced in Trump's final months in office. Crime of all kinds has also dropped sharply during Biden's term, now running below levels just prior to the pandemic.

Inflation, which spiked globally in the wake of the pandemic, has returned very close to the Federal Reserve's benchmark of two percent. The stock market is booming and incomes for folks in the bottom half of the economic ladder have made gains like they haven't seen in decades.

As many economists have noted, Biden will hand Trump one of the best economies in generations, making this yet another example of voters punishing Democrats for implementing policies that have led to solid economic gains.

There is little reason to believe that Trump will reverse this interesting trend in American politics. While his statements often bear little relationship to actual policies, should he be able to implement most of what he touted on the campaign trail, the implications will be serious for the economy and the deficit. From tax policy to tariffs, to his threats of mass deportations, Trump's economic plans will explode the deficit, likely raise prices for many goods, and weaken, if not cripple, economic growth.

He will almost certainly leave office with a weaker economy than he will inherit and a budget deficit utterly out of control— a continuation of the pattern first set in the late 1980s. Which should, if both this historical trend and the Constitution survive, help pave the way for a Democratic president in 2028.



Letters from Readers

Americans need to wake up!

By now, most people know that President Biden and his criminal gang have sent and continue to send weapons to Benjamin Netanyahu, the criminal president of Israel, who is using them to commit murder/genocide against the real owners of that part of the world—Palestinians. American taxpayers are funding this genocide. Biden, along with most Senators and Representatives, including Sen. Klobuchar, are basically right-wing fascists and should all be impeached and tried under the International Criminal Court and sent to prison. Most of our "leaders" are criminals representing the rich corporate interests, with the weapons industry being top of the list.

We know that Amerika has killed well over 45,000 good people in Palestine and it doesn't even bother them in the least. The media is basically in cahoots with these murderers, but despite that, Americans are starting to see what's going on.

Schools, universities, clinics, hospitals, homes are all targets and none of that makes any difference to the fascists in Washington. I taught English in Gaza and the West Bank of Palestine. The university where I taught in Gaza was bombed and destroyed.

It's easy to blame the Israeli government but their horrendous crimes would not have happened had it not been for the criminal nature of the United States government wanting to control the world and take from it what is not rightly theirs. The Israeli government does what the U.S. wants it to do.

A government of and by the people? A government representative of us? All of that is pure unadulterated bullsh_! And more Americans better wake up if we want to become a nation that loves

peace and good heartedness. We're not there yet — maybe someday. I feel nothing but shame for the U.S. government. And I hope that more Americans will WAKE UP!!

Steve Johnson
Ely

Musk has it backward on human population

Elon Musk said, "A collapsing birth rate is the biggest danger civilization faces, by far." Actually, a fast-climbing birth rate is the bigger danger to our present civilization. Just during my lifetime, the world population grew from two billion people to eight billion people!

According to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "land degradation is increasing. Almost two thirds of the world's population face water scarcity today, and this could reach 75 percent of the population by 2050 leading to high risk of food insecurity." A total of 1.84 billion people are already exposed to drought, according to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

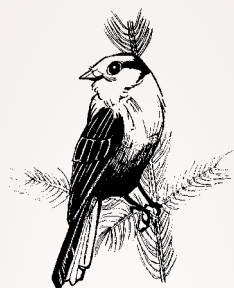
There is a finite limit to the Earth's resources available to sustain a large world population. Yet, Elon Musk is calling for increased population and is devoting financial resources to accelerate population growth. He seems not only oblivious to the impact from the degradation of agricultural land and the future reduction in our food resources, but is actively promoting and funding an increase of the planet's population. Larger populations will require a corresponding increase in food availability despite the growing number of hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, and excessive heat, all of which are rapidly degrading the planet's cropland. It has been estimated that 40 percent of the planet's land is already degraded, and the amount of unhealthy acreage is in-

creasing yearly.

Our livelihood literally is dependent on healthy soil. The latest COP 16 meeting indicated half of the world's GDP, about \$44 trillion, is reliant on healthy soil. Food shortages can result in population starvation deaths and can foster wars for food and potable water to fulfill his goal for an increase in population.

So far, Musk has fathered 12 children with three women. Is this his example for others to follow his way to increase population growth? (with or without marriage?)

Gerry Snyder
Ely



Your letters

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

We ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

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

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

COMMENTARY

Political will is a renewable resource, let's use it

Despite criticisms being hurled at the "Biden agenda," during Biden's term in office, policies and programs designed to reduce our nation's dependence on fossil fuels were given greater attention and federal investment than ever before. His administration was committed to helping speed up the nation's progress toward a more environmentally sustainable economy. That led to supporting scientifically endorsed efforts to reduce carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gas emis-



KATHLEEN
MCQUILLAN

sions, known to be the main culprits of global warming, and the increasing intensity of fires, hurricanes and flooding that are becoming more and more frequent. Our way of life and the economy that drives it rely on ever-increasing consumption for its success. Our behavior is wreaking havoc with global weather systems. Climate change is not a "hoax."

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 earmarked billions of dollars to advance development of renewable

technologies and upgrade our energy infrastructure. These investments will not only be good for the environment. They will also serve as a massive stimulant to our domestic economy by creating millions of new jobs as we transition to a more sustainable future. These dollars are being distributed nationally to assist state and local economies over the next 10 years in order to reach the goal of "net zero" carbon emissions by 2070, a date at which, if successful, we can avert what would otherwise become a global climate catastrophe. Although, at first glance, these investments may seem too costly, once

implemented, they would create massive savings from future disasters that, if we do nothing, could cause economic collapse. Much if not all the progress we will make over the next decade may be reversed if the next administration does not recognize the importance of this investment and abandons our commitment to ensure our grandchildren a future less marred by climate mayhem. The impact of climate change is already taking a toll on our mental health. Social scientists are studying the effects of repeated exposure to extraordinary climate events like those we've seen

in Florida, North Carolina, and now California, again! Reports of overwhelming anxiety, hopelessness and despair, and changes in sleep and eating behaviors are signs of high levels of psychological stress and insecurity. As a nation, we lack a clear path forward with achievable goals to measure our progress. We have a political system that doesn't guarantee that the progress we make will be defended from undoing. We're getting confusing and inconsistent messages from political leaders and news sources. Many lack confidence that anything we do will actually make a difference. Com-

bined, these conditions undermine our ability to work together and reach consensus on how to solve our problems. But from a distance, we may be vicariously sharing the suffering of thousands of victims directly impacted by climate disasters, a form of collective trauma and grief. I know I've had my days of anxiety and despair. Today, instead of turning on my radio to catch "top of the hour" headlines, I thought I'd refrain and search for something more uplifting. I found a video-recorded TED Talk by our former vice-president and environmental activist,

See RESOURCE...pg. 5

Just keep going, just keep trying, wonders are ready to start



**JEAN
GENDREAU**

Last week a movie theme-song made me cry. It threw me backwards into the thick sadness of 35 years ago. I had forgotten how bad that time was. Thank God I had forgotten.

The theme was from a dinosaur movie that I watched with my little girls. In the movie, the young dinos get separated from their families. As they search for the big herd, all they have is each other.

*Don't lose your way
With each passing day
You've come so far
Don't throw it away.*

(“If We Hold On Together,” sung by Diana Ross.)

People try so hard. At that time, my second marriage was crashing. My dream of happiness seemed impossible. I felt I had tried, but it seemed happiness simply could never happen for me. Maybe for others, but not for me.

*Live believing
Dreams are for weaving
Wonders are waiting to start
Live your story
Faith, hope and glory
Hold to the truth in your heart.*

Here's what's wonderful: What I know today is that happiness is possible. We can find our wholeness. Healing takes time, but it is possible.

How amazing. I had forgotten how bad it had been. I didn't even remember how much I used to hurt.

To heal, to find happiness, I had to discover four things:

Respect

I had to strip away the “pretends” and see the real child I had been—and I had to respect that child for enduring in harsh surroundings. Mind you, it's not that my life was worse than everyone else's. It's that as children we all endure pain that no one else sees. I had to respect the child in me and be honest about my own confusion and sadness. I did this in therapy. It's what I needed.

And then, of course, I had to respect the same thing in others. I had to see my grandparents, my parents, and my brother and sisters as they really were, in their own confusion and pain. We fit together like jigsaw puzzle pieces. If we soften our eyes, here and there we can see surprising beauty.

Tenderness

I had to accept tenderness for myself. This is hard because all of us feel shame over who we have been. Some of us say, “Stop whin-

ing.” Sure, stop it, don't whine your whole adult life. But first, learn how to be tender to yourself. Tell the truth. Name the hurts. I had to touch my child self, my teenage self and my adult woman self with true kindness. This means throwing shame in the garbage. We all heard, “Aren't you ashamed of yourself?” Many of us heard, “We are ashamed of you.” It's time to stop the pain. We have punished and re-punished ourselves enough. The only thing we deserve now is tenderness, and I had to learn how to accept it.

And then, of course, I had to offer tenderness to others. In the end, all we have is each other.

*Souls in the wind
Must learn how to bend,
Seek out a star,
Hold on to the end.*

Courage

Healing takes work. It's hard to expose ancient pain, and others often enjoy watching your struggles. Sadly, our family members often love to point their

fingers and say, “Boy, does he have problems” or “I'm sure glad I'm not as screwed up as she is.” Ignore them. Walk on. Everyone needs healing and therapy—everyone. Your only job is you. Keep your eyes on hope. It takes huge courage to tell the truth to yourself and to believe that you can heal, that things can change. Believe me: You can learn to be whole and happy.

And when you know it for yourself, it's easy to see it for others too.

*Valley, mountain
There is a fountain
Washes our tears all away
Words are praying
Someone is saying
Please let us come home to stay.*

Reverence

As you heal, you become holy beauty. You finally see yourself as an amazing, glowing thing. A star. A light. A tender, courageous, honorable warrior who has fought through it and come out the other side. And when you see it in yourself, you

see it in the others around you.

The Divine hopes for your joy. Heaven pours out healing. Hope and wholeness seep into us and through us until finally, as we shine, we pour out our light for others.

*Don't lose your way
With each passing day
You've come so far
Don't throw it away
Live believing
Dreams are for weaving
Wonders are waiting to start.*

The song still makes me cry, even after all these years. I want to reach out to the younger me, look into her eyes and tell her that she'll make it through.

Believe me. It's possible. Hold on to the end. I made it through, and so can you. My life isn't perfect, but it is good, very good.

Happiness. Wholeness. Home. Just keep going. Keep trying. Wonders really are waiting to start.

We need better ways to conserve resources

Someone once stated, “Life is what happens to you when you are making other plans.” Nothing could be truer for the farmers and ranchers of the southern U.S. plains all through the 1930s. The Great Dust Bowl days of those years were the result of a misunderstood ecology and misapplied agricultural practices on the Great Plains of North America.

At first, the plowbreak

of plains sod resulted in bumper crops of wheat. Many feet of humus from hundreds of years of decaying grass residue provided rich soil, needing no fertilizer at first. Rains were abundant for years until suddenly they were not coming at all. The bare soil, subject to drying and the merciless prairie winds, caused dust storms to carry away topsoil.

Eventually, the rains came back to grow more wheat again, and government-sponsored soil conservation plans were adapted to great success. However, for

a brief time in the 1950s, the dust storms returned. Then agriculture, spurred by new technology, took a leap and decided to tap the deep and vast Ogallala aquifer, which stretches from Nebraska to northern Texas. The “breadbasket” of America rose again. However, this aquifer used to be over one hundred feet thick (assumed to be water left from retreating glaciers), but we have used up half of it already. No one knows how many years the breadbasket has left.

For centuries, the ecology of the plains depended

on a grassland (savanna) production of food for bison and other ungulates like elk, deer and antelope, along with other animal and bird life. Eventually, Native Americans, supposedly from crossing the land bridge from Asia, also obtained their food from the plants and animals of the plains. There was no “sod-busting” per se, except some tribes practiced low impact agriculture along the river bottoms by cultivating corn, beans and squash.

The book, “Braiding Sweetgrass,” explores the Native concept of accept-

ing what the Creator gives without taking more than one needs, and also sharing abundance with others. To some, “sharing” might sound like “socialism,” but even the Amish, Hutterites and Mennonites (western agriculturalists) have practiced this.

Here in the Northland, treaties enabled the Natives to keep their fishing, hunting and gathering rights, but no mention was made of retaining their mineral and timber rights. Natives were cheated out of their land ownership, and their mineral and timber rights.

Industrial extraction methods are the dominant means of dealing with oil, timber and minerals. Timber is renewable, oil and taconite are not.

Whether it is the water in the Ogallala aquifer, taconite, oil, or any other irreplaceable resource, we need to research alternative methods and practice conservation of the resources we have.

**Mark Roalson
Hoyt Lakes**

RESOURCE...Cont. from page 4

Al Gore. His talk, entitled, “Political will is a renewable resource,” a pep talk of sorts on why tuning out or giving up on discussing climate change are not acceptable options. He listed sizable gains we're making by really tackling the most challenging environmental threat, global warming. He shared some current goals and emphasized that it's not too late to prevent the proverbial “Climate Apocalypse.” Oddly, I caught myself doubting his optimism. Despair set in and a subtle shutting down. In that moment, his proposed solutions seemed unimaginable.

I was about to change the channel when different voice came on, that of Per Espen Stoknes, a neuropsychologist and former member of the Norwegian parliament. Also, a renowned climate activist, Stoknes began to share his research on the ways humans react to scientific information on climate change. He was concerned about our collective failure as a species to face the environmental problems that threaten our very existence. He was studying this aversion to hearing unpleasant facts and had identified key factors in our messaging that contribute to our blocking out the truth — dangerous as this phenomenon also blocks us from taking action to prevent our own extinction.

In a moment of self-reflection, I knew exactly what he was talking about. Hadn't I just been inclined to dismiss the urgency of Al Gore's message? I decided to sit myself back down and listen to Mr. Stoknes, ready to receive another pep talk.

Stoknes, in his scholarly Scandinavian dialect, introduced a framework he'd developed called “the Big D's,” five inner defenses humans employ when presented with information that feels too

heavy a burden to readily accept. He described it like this.

➤ Distance. With thoughts like, “It's not here, not now. There's nothing I can do about it.” we walk away and do nothing.

➤ Doom. “It's too big and too late to make a difference anyway.” We desensitize to the facts, push down our fear, and walk away, slipping into psychic numbing he called “Apocalypse Fatigue.”

➤ Dissonance occurs when an internal conflict develops between the way we're living differs from the way we think we should be living. We begin to rationalize. Reasons or excuses lead us to reject the facts and refuse to act.

➤ Denial occurs when there's a need to seek refuge from nagging fear and anxiety. We begin to ridicule or ignore the information and behave as if we'd never heard it.

Identity encapsulates the expression of our core values and often overrides facts. Stoknes referenced studies showing wealthier, conservative participants valuing “big cars and small government,” while participants who identified with other class backgrounds placed higher value on “smaller cars and bigger government”. When combined with other Big Ds, identity will often become the death knell for environmental engagement.

Stoknes then went on to describe the “Five S's,” his framing for solutions to defenses that block communication and thwart commitment to climate change. Here are his suggestions.

➤ Move Distance to Social. Encourage new social norms. Peer-to-peer communication proves the most effective by providing more direct and concrete incentives for adopting new be-

haviors. Stoknes presented a slide showing a neighborhood in which a homeowner spoke enthusiastically about his new well-functioning, cost-saving solar energy system. Another neighbor followed suit and installed his alternative system. In the next slide, taken months later, a few more folks had installed solar roof panels. Next slide, within a few years nearly the entire neighborhood had transitioned away from the conventional centralized energy provider. This was a powerful example of the momentum for change that grew with the initial action of one person triggering a major shift in awareness and behavior. From this initial experience other behaviors climate change behavior emerged. People made greater efforts to reduce waste, recycle, change lawns to vegetable gardens and gasoline-powered cars to electric vehicles.

➤ Move Doom to Support. Stoknes recommended using emphasis on climate catastrophes as a motivator for change and instead, focus on environmental benefits and economic opportunities that happen when we shift to “greener” economies. Job creation comes inevitably with developing, manufacturing, installing and using new energy-efficient equipment and infrastructure. And as his slides displayed, visible signs of progress quickly create positive feedback loops that expedite our transition away from harmful fossil fuels.

➤ Reduce Dissonance in Small Steps by celebrating the positive cumulative effects when many people take even small steps in the battle to reduce carbon emissions, pollution and waste. No action is too small.

➤ Handle Denial with Sensitivity by communicating with genuine respect for

the barriers that thwart a person's ability to understand and accept climate-related information. Hard facts are more easily digested when presented in simpler and smaller servings.

➤ Dissolve Identity barriers with good Stories. Stoknes illustrated his point with a story from Norway's long-standing climate goal of using “100 percent Electric Vehicles by the year 2025.” Upon reaching 89 percent on Jan. 1, Norway extended their deadline to the year's end, confident they will reach it. Norway's success is spreading across Europe with France now creating similar target goals. A great example of the power of “political will.” Stories move us from abstractions to real life and show how success can breed success!

Gore and Stoknes offered insights into what's holding us back in achieving the climate changes we know are necessary. They had inspired me. So much is happening and there is so much more to we can do. And it starts with our conversations.

In our country, the story isn't over. It is really just beginning. As I set out out to discern what part I want to play, I've been reminded never to give up communicating with others. Listening to one another is the single most powerful force we have to create a more habitable world.

With that I glance across the room at some recent photos of my grandsons. Suddenly, it's true. Despair is no longer an option. Those Dearies deserve a safer, brighter future. We can make it happen.



the
TIMBERJAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Week of Jan. 20

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

Tuesday
Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5 p.m. New location in the old St. James Church building. Next food shelf day is Jan. 21.
Greenwood Fire Dept.- Training meetings on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Thursday
AA Meeting- Lake Vermilion 12x12 (Open) 6:30 p.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tower. Use the rear side door entrance.

Vermilion Country School Board- Meetings posted online at vermilioncountry.org.



TSHS weekly winners
TOWER- The winner of the Tower-Soudan Historical Society Week 18 Charlemagne's 52 Club \$100 cash prize is Robin Majerle of Tower. Congratulations Robin!

History Tidbit: The steam locomotive 1218 and passenger coach 81 were donated to the City of Tower in 1962. Julius Abrahamson, who worked for the railroad at the time, was the liaison for the Tower-Soudan Historical Society, and as such, Coach 81 was developed in 1963 as the Abrahamson Museum. The "Smoker Section" was left intact but the rest of the seats were removed to make room for displays. The coach car museum was in use until 2007 when the museum moved into the 1915 Tower Depot, which was donated to the city in 1966.

Free community meal at Immanuel on Jan. 22
TOWER- Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tower is hosting a free community meal on Wednesday, Jan. 22 from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., or until the food is gone. The meal this month is baked chicken with wild rice. Eat-in or take-outs available. All are welcome to attend.

Bookmobile stops
REGIONAL- The Arrowhead Bookmobile will be in the Tower-Soudan area on Wednesdays: Feb. 5 & 26; March 19; April 9 & 30; May 21; June 11; July 2 & 23; Aug. 13; Sept. 3 & 24; Oct. 15, Nov. 5 & 26; and Dec. 17.
Stops include: Britt (Sand Lake Storage): 9 - 9:30 a.m.; Bois Forte (Boys & Girls Club): 11 - 11:30 a.m.; Greenwood (Town Hall): 12 – 1 p.m.; Soudan (Post Office area): 2:30 - 3:30 p.m.; Tower (Civic Center): 3:45 - 4:30 p.m.; and Embarrass (Hwy 135 & Hwy 21): 5 – 6 p.m.

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



BREITUNG RECREATION DEPARTMENT



Chimpy's skating parties are now underway in Soudan. Watch for upcoming dates on the Breitung Township Facebook page. All are invited to stop by for skating, food, and fun. Above: Chimpy defended the goal while Kaleb Gornick (right) and Bennie Nevala (left) attempted shots. Left: Rolando Noyes was one of the half dozen adult volunteers preparing and serving food. Below left: Ella Trancheff and Theo Purkat skated on the little kids rink. Below: Speedy little skater Parker Salmela played a game of tag with Chimpy. photos by J. Summit



PUBLIC SAFETY

Tower Café hosting Coffee with a Cop on Jan. 17



TOWER- Everyone is invited to stop by the Tower Café on Friday, Jan. 17 from 10 a.m. – 12 noon to visit with St. Louis County deputies, including Dep. Brock Kick, and other law enforcement officials from the area. St. Louis County Sheriff Gordon Ramsay has been invited, and will try to attend, depending on his schedule, said Dep. Kick.
The café will be serving free coffee, and visitors are free to order off the menu.

"We go into these events with no agenda," said Dep. Kick. "We just want to sit down and have coffee and conversation. Dep. Kick said questions at other area events have been wide-ranging, and can include up-close looks inside squad cars for younger visitors.
"I am really looking forward to this event," said Dep. Kick. "And I am excited to meet café owner Jen McDonough for the first time."
McDonough is also excited

to host the event, and is hoping the event helps the community strengthen ties with the sheriff's department.
This is one of a series of events being held in the county and is part of a nationwide effort by law enforcement officials. The mission of Coffee with a Cop is to break down the barriers between deputies and the citizens they serve, and to allow the opportunity to ask questions, voice concerns, and get to know the deputies serving our community.

COMMUNITY NOTICES

New bookmobile stop at Vermilion Lake Town Hall starting Jan. 22
VERMILION LAKE TWP- The Arrowhead Bookmobile is now making a stop at the Vermilion Lake Town Hall as part of the bookmobile's Week A schedule, which also includes stops in Ely Lake, Cherry, Markham, and Biwabik. The bookmobile is in Tower, Soudan, Greenwood, and Embarrass during their Week C schedule.
The Vermilion Lake stop is from 4 – 5 p.m. on Jan. 22, Feb. 12, March 5 & 26; April 16; May 7 & 28; June 18; July 9 & 30; Aug. 20; Sept. 10; Oct. 1 & 22; Nov. 12; and Dec. 3.

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

Annual meetings for Friends of VCS and TSAA
TOWER- The annual meetings for Friends of VCS and Tower-Soudan Athletic Association will be held on Thursday, Jan. 23 at 5:15 p.m. at the Vermilion Country School (following the completion of the regular school board meeting which starts at 4 p.m.) Friends of VCS is a booster club for the charter school, and raises money at the Fourth of July 5K/10K Run and the holiday craft

fair. Tower-Soudan Athletic Association raises money at its annual fall auction fundraiser to support extra-curricular and other activities at Tower-Soudan Elementary and Vermilion Country School, along with providing financial support to Tower-Soudan summer baseball programs.

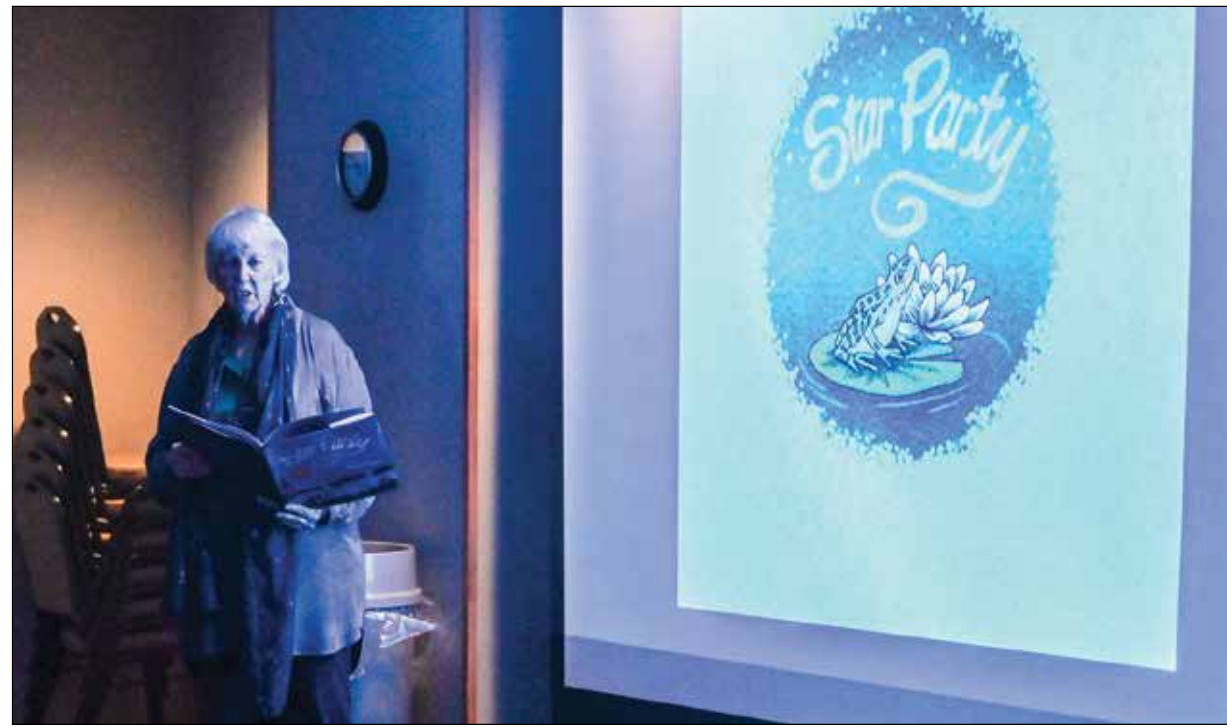
Tower-Soudan Elementary student council sponsoring food drive
TOWER- Tower-Soudan Elementary is collecting non-perishable food items for the Tower Food Shelf from Jan. 27 – 30. The food drive is being organized by the sixth-grade student council. Food shelf director Kate Smith met with the sixth-grade

students in December. All of the elementary classes are competing to see who can collect the most food items. The winning class will be treated to a pizza party.
Anyone in the community interested in helping out, should contact an elementary school student.

St. Paul's Lutheran annual meeting on Jan. 26
SOUDAN- St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Soudan is holding their annual meeting on Sunday, Jan. 26 following the worship service. A meal will follow.

AROUND TOWN

Overcast didn't stop Ely's first Dark Sky Festival



Left: As part of the Dark Sky Festival Expo activities last Saturday at the Grand Ely Lodge, Ely area author Polly Carlson-Voiles read her award-winning children's book "Star Party" to a room full of families while projecting the book's illustrations by Elyite Consie Powell.

Lower left: Jesse Gates of the Voyageurs Conservancy sets up a solar telescope while Sharon Kuttler, of Ely, and Will Schwinghammer, of St. Paul, look on. The solar telescope demonstration was part of the Saturday activities in downtown Ely during the Dark Sky Festival.

Lower right: Ely area resident Larry Olson shows clips of his Fall Lake aurora cam to visitors at the Dark Sky Festival Expo at the Grand Ely Lodge on Saturday afternoon. photos by C. Clark

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- The dark night skies were overcast for Ely's inaugural Dark Sky Festival, but that didn't stop the large number of attendees from taking part in a weekend of activities.

"We designed our programming so there would be something for everyone throughout the festival," said Todd Burlet, president of the nonprofit Starry Skies North, one of the organizations behind the event. "We arranged activities for kids, families, and adults, both inside and outside, with plenty of events that didn't depend

on clear skies."

While the cloud cover cast a pall on the solar telescope and canceled the nighttime astronomy sessions, the uncooperative weather didn't stop visitors from attending the festival's many other events.

According to Ely Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Eva Sebesta, the demand for many events exceeded capacity.

"The Ely Folk School had to add an extra session for Cecilia Rolando's class on painting the aurora," Sebesta noted. "The presentations at Friends of the Boundary Waters were full and some were standing

room only. Wintergreen had to add extra dog sled rides. I was concerned about the overcast, but it didn't stop visitors from coming to the festival."

While the stargazing activities had to be canceled, the festival included a variety of other fun events, including performances of "Romeo and Juliet," free dog sled rides, free shows at the University of Minnesota-Duluth traveling planetarium, nighttime snowshoeing on Fall Lake, kick sledding on the Trezona Trail, and an entire afternoon of kid-friendly programming at the Grand Ely Lodge on Saturday.

Festival visitors cer-

tainly seemed to enjoy their time in Ely. "One of the beautiful stories that was shared on Saturday night came from a family whose child had just finished their final chemo treatment," said Sebesta. "As a celebration, they decided to head north to Ely and participate in our Ely Dark Sky Festival. Words can't describe how that story touched those who heard it."

Will Schwinghammer, of St. Paul, who was at the first of Saturday's solar telescope sessions, said he was glad he came. "I couldn't get off work on Friday during the day, but I got here in time for the dog sled ride and that was a lot of fun ... The overcast isn't good but it's not a big deal. There's so much other stuff going on. There really is something for everyone all weekend. I like

how there's a mix of both indoor and outdoor events."

Ely's inaugural Dark Sky Festival was the joint effort of the Ely Area Tourism Bureau, the Ely Chamber of Commerce, and Starry Skies North. The three groups worked for a year with local businesses and nonprofits to plan the event. The festival aimed to promote the Ely area as an astrotourism destination. The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is the largest designated dark sky sanctuary in the world.



COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

Live Benefit Concert

ELY- The Duluth jam band, the Salty dogs, will be at the Boathouse, 47 E. Sheridan St., on Friday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m. for a live concert to benefit the Sage Foundation, a nonprofit that serves students at the Vermilion Campus of Minnesota North College. The foundation is asking for a \$15 cash or check donation at the door.

NLAA Auditions

ELY- Auditions for the Northern Lakes Arts Association spring production of "Matilda the Musical" will be held on Jan. 28 from 5-10 p.m. at the Vermilion Fine Arts Theater, Minnesota North College, 1900 E. Camp St. The award-winning musical, commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company, is based on the award-winning children's book by British author Roald Dahl. The NLAA production will be staged March 27-April 3.

Estate Planning

ELY- Ely Community Education is offering a no cost class on estate planning taught by attorney Kelly Klun on Wednesday, Jan. 29, from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Register

for free at <https://www.ely.k12.mn.us/communityed>. The class will be in the Media Center at the Ely Public Schools campus, 600 E. Harvey St. Enter through door No. 1 and turn right after the double doors. The Media Center will be on the right across from the new gym.

Mining Panel and Discussion

ELY- The Ely chapter of the Braver Angels Alliance will host a panel and moderated discussion on precious metals mining on Thursday, Jan. 30, at 6 p.m., at the Ely Senior Center, 27 S. First Ave. E.

Book Sale

ELY- The Ely Friends of the Library will hold their annual book sale at the Ely Senior Center, 27 S. First Ave. E., on Friday, Feb. 7, and Saturday, Feb. 8. The hours of the sale will be from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days.

Patrons who buy a book bag for \$10 can then fill it with books for free.

Ely Public Library

ELY- The library will be closed on Jan. 20 and from Monday, Jan. 27 through

Wednesday, Jan. 29, for carpeting.

The Library Scientist group for all ages will learn about ways to write with invisible ink on Thursday, Jan. 23 from 3-4 p.m. Please register in advance for this activity so the library has enough supplies for everyone.

The library will hold a Harry Potter event on Saturday, Jan. 25 from 1-4 p.m., which will include sorting into houses for the breakout box and other activities. This event is for adults and teens grade nine and higher. Please register in advance so the library has enough supplies for everyone.

The Get Crafty activities group for adults will meet on Thursday, Jan. 30, at 1 p.m. for a session with diamond dots. Please register in advance so the library has enough supplies for everyone.

The Curiosity Cohort for adults will meet on Monday, February 3, at 1:30 p.m. to learn about ancient beauty tips, like what Caesar's wife Calpurnia may have used for skin care or what Elizabeth I may have had on hand for cosmetics. The library will have some of these historic ingredients on hand at the event as well as recipes to take home for those who

might want to try some of these old-fashioned compounds on their own. Please register in advance so the library has enough supplies for everyone.

The library will hold an online Kahoot trivia game for kids of all ages on the first three books in the Mr. Lemoncello's Library series by Chris Grabenstein. The Kahoot will start at 3 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 6, and end at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 12. 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- There's still plenty of time to sign up for the library's "Snow better time to read" adult winter reading program which runs through March 3. Register for the program at the library. Then, read two books to earn an entry for prizes. The more books you read, the more entries you will receive for the prize drawing.

The library will host internationally acclaimed sing-

er-songwriter Dennis Warner in concert on Monday, Jan. 27, from 3-4 p.m.

Starting on Jan. 30, kids in grades K-12 can pick up the free take-and-make monthly art kit for February while supplies last. Created by 321 Art Studio, the February kit is for aluminum foil sculpture.

The book club will meet on Monday, Feb. 3, at 2 p.m. The book for discussion will be "Happy Place" by Emily Henry.

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.

Elyite named to Dean's List

MILWAUKEE, Wis.- Andrew McCluskey, of Ely, has been named to the Dean's List for the fall 2024 semester at Marquette University in Milwaukee. McCluskey is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in accounting.

To make the Dean's List at Marquette's College of Business Administration, students must achieve a GPA of 3.5 and earn 12 or more credits for the semester.

In Brief

Tuesday Group schedule

ELY - Hosted by Boundary Waters Connect, the Tuesday Group community educational luncheon gathering meets every Tuesday at noon at the Grand Ely Lodge. Participants have an opportunity to order lunch.

For those interested in being a host, or who have a speaker suggestion, contact Lacey Squier by email at ElyTuesdayGroup@gmail.com or call her at 218-216-9141.

Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

►Jan. 21: Dylan Kelly, Director of Climate Programs at Ampact

►Jan. 28: Arts, Culture, & the Ely Economy with the Ely Cultural Alliance

►Feb. 4: Lucy Soderstrom, executive director of the Ely Folk School

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2025



furnace running loud
soft snow falling quietly

no need for rushing

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

CO-DEPENDENTS' 12-step support group, 4:00 p.m. Tuesdays, hosted by Well Being Development, Ely. *This meeting is suspended temporarily.*

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.

ADULT BASIC

EDUCATION GED

Study materials and pre-test

available.

Call 218-365-3359, or

1-800-662-5711.

A CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Hilde to continue as ISD 2142 school board chair

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

VIRGINIA- ISD 2142 school board members, on Tuesday, chose Lynn Hilde to serve another term as their chair, with Chris Koivisto tabbed for the vice-chair spot.

It's a new-look board with four new members, three of which were elected in November and took the oath of office at the beginning of Tuesday's organizational meeting - District 1 North Woods rep Jarret Bundy, District 6 South Woods rep Kristen Zorn, and District 7 South Ridge rep Linsey Larson. District 2 North Woods rep Mallory Manick was appointed to fill an unexpired vacancy and officially joined



Kristin Zorn

the board in December.

That leaves Hilde, Koivisto, and Rob Marinaro as the holdovers for a board that will have many issues to tackle in the upcoming year, including a significant budget shortfall.

But none of that was on



Mallory Manick

the agenda that was instead devoted to the usual house-keeping organizational items regularly decided upon at the first meeting of the new year.

In addition to volunteering for various committee assignments, board members:

& Approved an increase



Linsey Larson

in board member pay for business and working meetings from \$400 to \$450. Marinaro originally moved to keep the level at \$400, saying, "With our budget and stuff, I think we've got to hold it there." But during discussion it was noted that



Jarrett Bundy

unlike boards of the past, all but one of the members are employed and will often need to use work time to respond to the many calls and emails they receive weekly, as well as make adjustments for meeting and committee meeting attendance. "I'm the

only one left that's retired," Hilde quipped. A motion by Koivisto to raise the pay to \$450 was approved.

Selected Marinaro as clerk and Bundy as treasurer.

Approved the board meeting schedule for 2025.

Designated Frandsen Bank, North Star Credit Union, Ely Area Credit Union, U.S. Bank, and the Minnesota School District Asset Fund Plus as the district's official depositories.

Continued Colosimo, Patchin and Kearney, Ltd. as the district's legal counsel.

Designated the *Timberjay* as the district's official newspaper.

MUD THROWING IS A GOOD THING AT NORTH WOODS



Art students at North Woods School have been busy making bowls and other ceramic items for their annual Empty Bowl fundraiser coming up on Friday, Feb. 7 to benefit food shelves in Cook and Orr.

Left: Lauren Burnett and Brynn Chosa work at pottery wheels.

Top: Josephine Carlson and Marriah Glowaski use handbuilding techniques for making enhancements.

Right: Richard Swinson centers clay on the wheel.

submitted photos

CITY GOVERNMENT

Orr City Council eases into the start of a new year

ORR- After all of the trials and tribulations of governing in the latter half of 2025, including dealing with the ever-tight budget, some might agree that the Orr City Council members deserved a meeting with a light agenda, and that's what they got on Monday.

The first meeting of a new year always comes with the routine business items covering things cities are le-

gally required to have, and the council made short work of those. Including:

Retaining Sterle and Co. as the city's auditing firm.

Designated the *Timberjay* as the city's legal newspaper.

Retained Kelly Klun as legal counsel and Fryberger, Buchanan, Smith and Frederick, P.A. as bond counsel.

Appointed Mayor Robert Antikainen as noxious weed inspector.

Approved Park State Bank, the League of Minnesota Cities 4M Fund, RBC Wealth Management, and First Horizon as designated financial institutions and established appropriate signatories for the various accounts.

Designated council member Bruce Black to

serve as acting mayor in Antikainen's absence.

Approved a mileage reimbursement rate of 70 cents per mile in accordance with the IRS standard rate increase.

Approved renewal of liquor liability insurance with Illinois Casualty Company in the amount of \$3,763.

Approved renewal of the Standard Premium

Option for property, mobile property, and general liability insurance coverage through the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust for a total net deposit premium of \$11,672.

In other business the council:

Accepted donations to the ambulance service of \$500 each from couples Brian and Barbara Eggert and Stuart and Mary McKie.

Granted a request from Emily Koch to rent the community center on March 23 for St. Mary's Catholic Church Bingo and approved the necessary gambling permit.

Approve a bid from Braun Intertec for geotechnical evaluations for runway lighting and hangar projects at the airport.

LIONS LARGESS



There was no possible way Cook Lion Danny Brinker could avoid getting a warm fuzzy feeling on Saturday, both inside and out, as he joined with a group of Cook Lions Club members at the Cook VFW to make tie blankets for people in need. Around 20 volunteers made 90 blankets that will be donated to various agencies for distribution through social workers, health care providers, and other groups. The annual project has become a club favorite.

photo by D. Colburn

Cook library promotes winter reading program

COOK- There's no better time than winter to stay cozy inside with a good book, and the winter reading program running now through March 31 at Cook Public Library is your gateway to new adventures in the comfort of your own home. Adults and teens can pick up a Winter Reading Challenge card at the library and receive prizes for the number of books read. Read all 12 books and receive an entry for a chance to win a \$50 gift card to a local business. Turn in your challenge card by March 31 for prizes. Preschool and elementary children will find a "Snow Better Time to Read Activity Booklet and Bingo Card" waiting for them at the library. Complete the Bingo card on the inside cover of the activity book and it in to the library by March 31 to receive a prize. The Cook Public Library Winter Reading Program is sponsored by the Friends of the Cook Public Library and the Arrowhead Library System.

Cook's Big Chill
January 18, 2025
Noon - 6 PM
Cook Community Center - Doug Johnson Recreation Center
Open Skating Noon - 4 PM
Broomball/Boot Hockey 4 - 6 PM
\$5 per participant
Contact Ryan Manick 218-750-4211
Cribbage Tournament 2-4PM
\$20 Per team
- Register Early!
Contact Matt Lange 218-780-5140

RAFFLE!
Gambling Permit X-92575-25-019

Ice Cream Sundae Bar
Chili - Grilled Cheese Sandwiches
Hot Chocolate Bar - Movie
Indoor/Outdoor Games - Coloring
Cookie Decorating - Card Stamping
Frozen Activities for Children
Raffles

Something fun for everyone!

Sponsored by Friends of the Parks
All proceeds will go to the Pickleball/Skating Rink Project

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Gillson sentenced for 2023 arson and assault in Ely

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- After a year and a half, the curtain is finally being closed on the prosecution of Jason Keith Gillson, age 50, for his acts of assault and arson at his home at 45 E. Boundary St. in late summer of 2023.

Minnesota Sixth District Court Judge Robert Friday sentenced Gillson to 270 days at either the St. Louis County

Jail or the Northeast Regional Corrections Center. He must report to serve his sentence on April 1.

Gillson's sentence is part of a plea bargain he negotiated in November that capped prison time at



Jason Gillson

one year.

The charges arose from Gillson's actions during two altercations with his girlfriend at his Boundary St. residence on Aug. 20 and Sept. 13, 2023. On Aug. 20, while trying to stop her from leaving his house, he shot his garage door and the tires of his girlfriend's car. On Sept. 13, he shot both her wallet and cell phone, set his own house on fire,

and fled from the scene in a panel truck, chased by police through Ely, Morse, Waasa, and Embarrass. After fleeing his vehicle on foot, he later assaulted the law enforcement officers who had to take him into custody.

Gillson pled guilty to three felonies, including discharging a firearm in the Aug. 20 incident and second-degree arson and fourth-degree

assault of a peace officer in the Sept. 13 incident. The court dismissed the other charges.

In an arrangement typical of plea bargains, Judge Robert Friday imposed longer prison sentences which he suspended, or "stayed," in exchange for split sentences of shorter jail time and probation. Friday sentenced Gillson to three years at the St. Cloud Correctional Facility for the

arson, and a year and a day for both the assault and discharge of a firearm. Friday then stayed the three St. Cloud sentences for five years. In their place, he imposed five-year supervised probation, 270 days incarceration, and mandatory evaluation and treatment for substance abuse for each offense. The three identical sentences will run concurrently.

Erickson gets probation in fraud against city of Cook

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Former Cook Housing and Rehabilitation Authority Executive Director Reed Erickson, 69, of Side Lake, received two years' probation and will pay \$24,232.90 in restitution for the nearly \$19,000 in compensation for unused leave time that he wrongfully claimed when he left the CHRA in December 2022. That sentence comes after Erickson pled guilty to

gross misdemeanor misconduct of a public employee on Friday in St. Louis County District Court.

Judge Michelle M. Anderson sentenced Erickson to 364 days in jail, which Erickson will not serve if he successfully completes two years of unsupervised probation and makes minimum court-ordered payments of \$500 a month. Should Erickson pay off the restitution within a year, his probation would be terminated at that time.

In addition, Erickson must have no contact with any Cook HRA residents, employees, or board members, and he may not hold any job or position in which he holds a fiduciary duty with regard to any public entity or public funds.

An original felony charge of embezzlement and a subsequent felony charge of theft filed with the court in December for which Erickson would have faced stiffer maximum penalties were dismissed.

"Public employees throughout our region work hard to keep us all safe and healthy," said Assistant County Attorney Aaron Welch, who prosecuted the case. "However, when the trust of the public is violated by someone who has promised to serve them, that person must be held to account."

Current CHRA Executive Director Mike Jugovich discovered the pay discrepancy while reviewing agency records after assuming the position, and an external

auditor was called in who confirmed the finding that Erickson had claimed 456 hours of unused vacation time and 40 hours of unused sick time, while he actually only had 99 hours of unused vacation and had exceeded his allowable sick time. Under CHRA policy, Erickson was entitled to a maximum payout of 240 hours of vacation time and no compensation for unused sick time.

Welch told the *Timberjay* on Tuesday that the court has the option to extend

Erickson's probation by two years if restitution is not paid in full by the end of the original probationary period. If the court either decides not to extend probation or can't extend probation and restitution is not fully paid, CHRA can pursue civil action or send to collections to recoup the remainder of the judgment.

The County Attorney's Office thanked the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office and the Cook HRA for their investigation and assistance in prosecuting the case.

BOARD...Continued from page 1

Maus was absent from his role as treasurer, and deputy treasurer JoAnn Bassing said that his surgery was completed and had gone well. Maus then sent a doctor's note to the township on Dec. 20 saying he was off work until Jan. 22 while he recovered from his surgery. On Jan. 2, prior to the special meeting, he submitted an updated doctor's note saying he was fit for light duty, but the board said they couldn't act on that issue because it wasn't on the special meeting's agenda.

Maus then obtained an updated doctor's note, dated Jan. 3, saying he was able to return to full duty with no restrictions, but some on the board questioned the legitimacy of the doctor's note, since it was issued only a day after a note saying he could return to light duty.

Bassing informed the board that Maus, who is a First

Responder, had responded to medical calls in the past week, a statement that drew consternation from some on the board.

"He is a firefighter, EMR, and the fire chief," said Bassing. "He felt he could go on a medical call."

Maus concurred, noting that he had never been placed on leave by the board prior to this week's meeting.

"We want to make sure Jeff is fit to return," said chairman Lois Roskoski, noting possible liability issues for the township.

Supervisor Craig Gilbert, who is also a member of the fire department, questioned the validity of the doctor's notes Maus had submitted, since they were not signed. Maus explained they were written through Essentia's MyChart system, and that he had both in-person and virtual

visits with his doctor since his hip surgery in early December.

"Thursday you were on light duty, and then Friday on full duty?" Gilbert asked.

The board said Maus would remain on paid administrative leave until he had a visit with a doctor working for Fairview Job Care, an appointment that would be paid for by the township. The motion also stated his return to work was contingent on the results of the investigation the township is currently conducting following allegations that were raised against him. The township hired a law firm Oct. 30 to investigate allegations made against Maus by members of the Tower Ambulance Service. That investigation is ongoing and investigators have yet to interview Maus, although he said he is currently scheduled for an interview on Jan. 22.

Maus questioned if the board's latest actions could be considered further retaliation for the complaints he had lodged several years ago with OSHA regarding safety issues with the department and retaliation by the former chief after he submitted the OSHA complaint. According to Maus, he refused a verbal offer by the township to pay him \$5,000 to settle the claim, but only if he agreed to resign from the fire department. Since he did not settle, the investigation by OSHA is still ongoing. Maus also said that Roskoski had been hiding the information about the OSHA claim from the board for two months earlier this fall before calling the closed meeting to discuss the issue.

Roskoski said that information was attorney-client privileged and should not be discussed.

"I think it is retaliation," Maus said. "It is very clear to me."

Other fire department issues

The board addressed multiple other fire department-related issues at the meeting.

The board approved spending \$9,162 for EMR supplies, including new supply backpacks, which will make it easier for EMRs to transport their medical supplies while on scene. Right now, the EMR supplies are in two duffels. EMR captain Dave DeJode explained that it can be difficult on scene to carry the two duffels on steep slopes and uneven ground, and that having supplies in a backpack is easier and safer for responders.

The allocation also covers replacing outdated medical supplies. The department

recently inventoried all supplies and replaced those that were outdated. EMR supplies must be paid for by the department, and the cost is not reimbursed by patients.

The board also approved having the fire extinguishers inspected, accepting a quote from Summit Fire Protection.

"Trancheff told me we haven't had the fire extinguishers inspected," Roskoski told the board.

Maus told the board that the department does in-house inspections regularly.

"We were planning to bring this to the board for approval this month," Maus said.

Supervisor Paul Skubic asked why the department hadn't done DOT inspections of the vehicles.

"Our last chief was fired for not doing inspections," Skubic said.

CHIVERS...Continued from page 1

holding regular board meetings in both Nett Lake and Vermilion, noting that the meetings gave county commissioners and their staff time

to build personal relationships with tribal leaders.

Chavers told the board she is not retiring from public service completely and will be

expanding her work outside of the reservation, hoping to work with industries like mining to bring a tribal perspective.

"There is a lot more to do," she said.

Chavers' uncle Bill King also attended the meeting. King, now 94, was a long-

time Orr Braves basketball coach and he had stories to share with McDonald, also a longtime basketball coach, now retired. McDonald said

he also remembered watching Chavers when she was a cheerleader for the Orr Braves while she attended Orr High School.

TWIN METALS...Continued from page 1

Court of Claims.

While the federal government generally enjoys what is known as "sovereign immunity" from lawsuits, the 1940s-era Administrative Procedures Act, or APA, includes a partial waiver of that immunity in cases where federal agencies take actions affecting the statutory rights granted to the public that are deemed to be unsupported by law, science, or are unreasonable.

But when pressed repeatedly by Judge Harry Edwards to cite the statute or regulation that the government violated when it canceled the leases, Twin Metals attorney Lisa Blatt was unable to do so—and that failure raises the likelihood that the appellate judges will affirm the lower court ruling. That's the ideal

outcome from the perspective of Becky Rom, of Ely, who heads the national Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters. Rom, who was present for this week's arguments in Washington, said she was pleased with what she heard. "I thought the judges had a good grasp of the case and asked good questions of both sides," she said.

The impact of their eventual decision may matter little, however, given Donald Trump's promise to reissue the leases as well as cancel a mineral withdrawal affecting a large portion of the Superior National Forest where the leases are located. Trump takes office officially next Monday, Jan. 20. Indeed, Blatt even suggested that the court hold any decision in the

case until it sees what relevant actions might be taken by the incoming administration.

The federal mineral leases in question have been a political ping-pong ball over the past eight years, ever since the Obama administration denied a renewal of the leases in January 2017. The Trump administration reissued the leases in 2019 without proper environmental review and without the consent of the U.S. Forest Service which has a statutory right to consent or veto mining proposals within the Superior National Forest. The Biden administration's Interior Department found that the Trump administration had acted improperly and eventually canceled the leases. The administration also reinstated a federal mineral withdrawal

affecting about 225,000 acres in the Superior National Forest, including the area where the leases were located.

Twin Metals sued over the decision but lost at the district court level when the judge found that any rights that company claimed were derived from the terms of its leases, or contracts, with the government, not from statute or regulations. That meant any dispute over the language of the contract was a matter for the Court of Claims, not the civil courts which have jurisdiction over claims under the APA.

The decision does not prohibit Twin Metals from seeking damages for breach of contract in the Court of Claims under the Tucker Act, but the prospects for that seem doubt-

ful as well. Federal lawyers have consistently argued that the company's right to renewal of the leases was contingent on the commencement of mining operations within the initial 20-year term of the lease, which expired in the 1980s without any mining activity. Because of that failure and other regulations pertaining to federal hardrock mineral leasing, Interior Department lawyers have maintained since the Reagan administration that renewal of the 1966 leases was discretionary.

The Trump administration had reissued the leases in 2019 based on a controversial opinion by a Trump-appointed Interior Department legal counsel, Daniel Jorjani, who claimed that the federal government had no choice but to

renew the leases, based on the terms of the original leases. That decision, according to the Trump administration, justified a perfunctory environmental review and the failure to seek forest service consent for the reissuance of leases. The forest service has maintained its opposition to the proposed Twin Metals mine since 2016, arguing that the risks of impacting water quality within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, located several miles downstream, and the difficulty of mitigating those impacts, made a sulfide-based copper-nickel mine too risky.

FIRE...Continued from page 1

get to the back door so quickly. "And if it wasn't for Rogelio," she said. "He might not have gotten out."

The house, near the corner of Birch and S. Third, is less than two blocks from the Tower Fire Hall, so responders were on the scene quickly, but getting an adequate water supply proved challenging.

Tower's fire engine did not make it to the scene after responders were unable to start the vehicle, apparently due to a battery issue. The two responding members of the Tower Fire Department arrived at the scene in the

department's brush rig, which isn't equipped to fight structure fires.

Breitung firefighters arrived soon after with a pumper and were able to use water in their tank to wet down Noyes' house until the hydrant watersupply was secured. The first hydrant they attempted to use was not working, and they ended up having to lay hose to get water from a different hydrant almost two blocks away.

"Once Breitung got the hydrant hooked up, everything went well," said Noyes.

Anderson said when she

got to the scene, her dad was standing behind the house, leaning on a garbage can. Someone had lent him a coat. He got out of the house with just the clothes he was wearing. Sherry said no one assessed her father at the scene, and she is worried he has lingering health effects from the explosion.

"He can hardly hear," she said. "His vision is blurry, and he has really bad tinnitus."

Jim's truck, parked behind the house, had melted taillights and the hatch handle was melted. Sherry said they need to get a new key made

for the truck before figuring out if it still can run.

"If that truck had blown up, it could have taken out the two neighboring houses," she said.

The house was a total loss, and an excavator was brought in to aid in extinguishing the blaze. Firefighters were on scene well into the early morning hours getting the fire totally extinguished. The cause of the fire is not yet determined. Sherry said a fire examiner was scheduled to visit Tuesday. She said it appeared the oil tank was still intact in the remains of the

basement.

The family has moved Jim into Vermilion Senior Living, but the shock of the fire and his inability to sleep since the incident is making the adjustment to a new living situation even harder.

"He has just aged years this past few days," Sherry said of her father.

Anderson said she is concerned about the Tower Fire Department's response to the fire, but was glad to see Breitung arrive as quickly as it did.

"Don't pretend to have a fire department [in Tower]

when you don't," she said. "Nobody had control of the situation." She wondered if the city knew about non-working hydrants, and why they hadn't been fixed.

Departments dispatched to the fire included Tower, Breitung Township, Greenwood Township, Embarrass, Ely, Eagles Nest, Vermilion Lake, and Pike-Sandy-Britt. The Tower Ambulance Service provided medical standby at the scene.

Obituaries and Death Notices

**Katherine Aune**

Katherine "Katie" Picek Aune, 93, beloved wife, mother, grandmother and friend, passed away peacefully with her family by her side on Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025, at Carefree Living in Cook. The family would like to express heartfelt gratitude to Carefree Assisted Living and Essentia Hospice for their compassionate love and care. Funeral services were held on Tuesday, Jan. 14 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook. Arrangements were with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

Katie was born on October 7, 1931, to Steve and Pearl Picek. She grew up in Field Township and graduated from Cook High School in 1949. She was united in marriage to Earl Aune on February 17, 1951, in Cook, where they shared a beautiful life together.

A lifelong member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook, Katie's faith was a cornerstone of her life. Her dedication extended to her work at Cook School, where she served as Head Cook for over 25 years. A hard-working and devoted school employee, Katie formed many lifelong friendships with her colleagues.

Katie was a caretaker in every sense of the word. Those close to her knew her

as a loving and giving soul who always went above and beyond for her family and friends. Her home was a place of warmth and welcome, where visitors were met with open arms, heartfelt conversations, and an abundance of delicious food. No one ever left Katie's home hungry as she made it her mission to ensure everyone was well-fed and cared for, her generous hospitality will be fondly remembered by all who knew her.

Katie's family cherishes memories of her quick wit, lively card games at the Blackduck cabin, and her unparalleled life-making skills. When word got out that she was making life, friends and family would gather for a taste and some friendly banter, creating fond memories.

Her legacy lives on through the love and laughter she shared with others. Katie will be deeply missed, and her family will forever remember her unwavering love and dedication to them.

Katie was preceded in death by her parents; husband Earl; brothers: John, William, Peter, Harry, Steve, and Mike Picek; sisters: Mary Rudduck, Ann Picek, Julia Lind, and Helen Arola; and son-in-law Ed Vaughn.

Katie is survived by her children, Judy Vaughn, Steven Aune, Donald (Cynthia) Aune, Roger (Sheryl) Aune, grandchildren, Crystal (Jesse) Scofield, Jennifer (Garrett) Corrow, Carrie (Rod) Wilson, Kyle Aune, Tara (Todd) Dietman, Trisha Aune, Tawnya Aune, Chuck (Stephanie) Tomlin, Bill (Ashley) Aune, Eric (Rachelle) Aune, Jake (Rachel) Aune; great-grandchildren, Blake, Karah, Emilee, Owen, Kaius, Joby, Tessa, Jaxin, Bryce, Nathan, Cole, Brendin, Gage,

Austin, Maverick, Ashton, Bayleigh, Jared; sisters-in-law, Margaret Picek, Donna Picek, Carol McCue; and numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

James F. Saatela

James Floyd Saatela, 76, of Orr, died on Friday, Jan. 10, 2025, at University Medical Center Mesabi after being under the care of hospice for cancer. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 18 at Heritage Trail Bible Church, officiated by Pastor Gus Layman. Visitation will begin one hour prior to the service. Private burial will be at a later date at Leiding Cemetery in Orr. Arrangements are with Range Funeral Home of Virginia.

He is survived by his sisters, Kathy Ebel and Patti Corchoran; brother, Bruce (Rhoda) Saatela; children, Dan (Amy Dishneau) Saatela, Angela Mitchell, Nancy (Todd) Fisher, Mike (Renee) Saatela and Sherri (Ben) Johnson; seven grandchildren; a nephew, nieces, cousins and friends.

Donald W. Anderson

Donald Wallace Anderson, 81, of Lake Vermilion-Cook, passed away on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2025. Per his wishes, there will be no funeral service. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

He is survived by his sisters, Alice LeMoine and Patricia Lund; nieces, Lisa Tamte, Jennifer Kukielka and Jodi Bergh; and nephew, Jim LeMoine.

Margaret I. Oberg

Margaret I. Oberg, 84, of Tower, passed away on Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025, at

her home. Arrangements are pending with Landmark Funeral Home in Virginia.

Marjorie Hible

Marjorie "Margie" Hible, 80, of Ely, passed away on Monday, Jan. 6, 2025, at St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth surrounded by her loving family. Services will be held on Saturday, Jan. 18 at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely. Visitation will be at 10 a.m. with Mass beginning at 11 a.m. There will be a gathering at her daughter Kim's house following the service. The family would like to express a sincere and special thank you to the amazing individuals who loved and cared for her at Boundary Waters Care and Carefree Living. Also, a heartfelt thank you to the men and women who were involved as First Responders, EMS, EPD, EFD and the staff members of St. Mary's Medical Center. Family services are entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home in Ely.

She is survived by her children, Eugene Jr. (Mary) Kowarsch, Kim (Christopher) Puzel, Kevin (Tonya) Kowarsch, Kerry (Amanda) Kowarsch, Krissy (Dave) Kishel and Korry (Jessie) Kowarsch; brothers, George (Barb) Hible and Jim Hible; 40 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; nieces and nephews.

Lawrence Thompson

Lawrence "Larry" Thompson, 78, of Babbitt, passed away peacefully at his home on Monday, Jan. 6, 2025. A celebration of life will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 25 at the HideAway Supper Club in Babbitt. Family services have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

He is survived by his

daughter, Barbara Thompson; son, Corey Thompson; grandson, Michael Frost; sister, Norma Heikkila; and many nieces and nephews.

Jack E. Erkkila

Jack Edward Erkkila, 69, of Babbitt, died on Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025, at St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth with his sisters by his side. Visitation will be at 10 a.m. with a memorial service to follow at 11 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 17 at St. Pius X Catholic Church in Babbitt with Deacon Greg Hutar officiating. Burial will be in the Argo Cemetery in Babbitt. Arrangements are with Ziemer-Moeglein-Shatava Funeral Home in Gilbert.

He is survived by his siblings, Kathy (Gary) Dale of Warroad, Monica (Rob) Curtiss and James Erkkila, both of Babbitt; nephews and nieces, Gerald (Katie) Dale, Chad (Janel) Dale, James (Kristen) Lesemann, Pamela Lesemann and Emily (Craig) Seliskar; great-nieces and great-nephews.

Michael W. Randolph

Michael W. "Steel" Randolph, 69, of Cook, passed away peacefully at the Cook Care Center on Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025. A funeral service was held on Wednesday, Jan. 15 at Dougherty Funeral Home in Hibbing with Pastor John Dietz officiating. Interment was at Maple Hill Cemetery in Hibbing.

He is survived by his companion, June Randall; children, Carrie (James) Armstrong of Altoona, Iowa, and Ashlee (Jake) Kaim of Pengilly; bonus children, Angela (John) Schweiberger and Jamie (Kristen) Bayliss, both of Hibbing; brother, Greg (Robbin) Randolph of Mason, Ohio; four grandchildren; and

seven bonus grandchildren.

Pat Schmid

Pat "Patti Lou" Akins Schmid, 77, of Embarrass, died on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025, at Essentia Health St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth surrounded by her loving family. The family would like to thank Dr. Friday, Dr. Rich and Katti for all their support during her courageous battle. A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 17 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Virginia. Pastor Zachary Klump will officiate. A gathering time for family and friends will begin at 12:30 p.m. prior to the service at the church. Family services are provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by her husband, Dave of Embarrass; children, Trina Townsend (fiancé Richard Holtz) of Milton, Wis., Susan (Don) Kline of Pine City and Tom (Darcie) Schmid of Embarrass; six loving granddaughters; a special great-grandson; siblings, John (Leslie) Akins, Stella Soraparu and Fred (Terri) Akins, all of Washington, and Kathy (Gary) Salmela of Soudan; brother-in-law, Jim (Mary) Maki of Winton; sisters-in-law, Jean Loushin, Becky (Steve) Coy, Barb (Jon) Christofferson and Lizbeth (Steve) Smith; many nieces and nephews, cousins, extended family and friends.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Forest service seeking comment on Fernberg Project

ELY— The Superior National Forest is seeking public comment on its proposed Fernberg Project, an extensive forest management effort intended to reduce wild-fire risk along the Fernberg corridor, where numerous homes, cabins, and resorts are located.

According to the forest service, the current vegetation conditions are not well suited

to thrive, given future insect and disease outbreaks, wild-fires, and changing climate conditions.

"The Fernberg Project is focused on creating resilient forests while protecting lives, private property, and firefighter safety," said Aaron Kania, Kawishiwi district ranger on the Superior. "The project was developed in collaboration with the residents of Ely, our

partners and the tribal bands but it's important that everyone be allowed to provide their voice and submit a comment."

The project's draft environmental assessment is available for public review and comment through Feb. 14 at the project page link: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/superior/?project=65214>.

The narrow Fernberg Road corridor stretches 15

miles east of Ely and is bound on three sides by the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The area encompassed by the project totals 174,873 acres of mixed ownership, including approximately 84,000 acres inside the wilderness. Within the wilderness, the forest service is proposing prescribed burning and related activities on approximately 26,000 acres.

Superior National Forest planners have been working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, area tribes, and other partners on this project.

The Kawishiwi District will host the following open houses to provide more information to the public about the Fernberg Project:

Virtual open house, Feb. 4, from 4-6 p.m., via Microsoft

Teams. Virtual open house links are available on the project page link above.

In-person open house, Feb. 5, 4-6 p.m., where the public will be able to review the related documents and maps with staff. The Kawishiwi District Office is located at 1393 Highway 169 in Ely. You can call 218-356-7600 for directions.

HOSPITALS...Continued from page 1

potential loss of the critical access status, which provides rural hospitals with a higher rate of reimbursement for many services.

The Minnesota Dept. of Health had notified affected hospitals in the county of the change back in December, and informed them of the process for reapplication for the status.

That designation appears to have never been in doubt, since the hospitals involved all met the rural designation under state law, which is what determines their eligibility.

While northern St. Louis County is sparsely populated and would certainly meet most definitions of rural, St. Louis County has long been

considered an urban county for most federal programs because its southern-most tip is home to Duluth.

While other hospitals in the region simply reapplied for the rural designation without much fanfare, Ely-Bloomenson CEO Patti Banks reached out to the office of Rep. Pete Stauber, which

responded with a press release on Monday touting a one-page Jan. 10 letter Stauber had sent to the administrator of the CMMS, urging approval of Ely's reapplication. Stauber's office appeared unaware that the change impacting the Ely

hospital would have a similar impact on other hospitals in his district.

Stauber's office then issued a press statement titled: "Stauber Fights to Retain Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital's Designation as a

Critical Access Hospital," which began a flurry of news reports that suggested the Ely hospital's status was seriously threatened.

Yet, even as reports of the threatened status went out, area hospitals were being notified that their reapplications had been approved and their critical access designation would continue.

Cook Hospital administrator Teresa Debevec said she reapplied for the status as soon as MDH informed her of the change. By this week, Debevec had received a letter from CMMS confirming that the hospital's longstanding designation as critical access will remain in effect. In Ely, Banks confirmed that she had received a similar letter this week.

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THE LEGISLATURE

DFL House boycott sparks drama in St. Paul

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota House of Representatives opened its 2025 legislative session with drama on Tuesday, with half the chamber empty as DFL lawmakers made good on their threat to boycott the session, a move they said was necessary to prevent Republicans from taking undue advantage of a temporary one-seat majority to seize control.

No quorum, no problem

The session started routinely, with Secretary of State Steve Simon gaveling the chamber to order, and Republican members being sworn in. DFL members held a separate swearing-in ceremony on Sunday. But after a roll call confirmed only 67 Republicans were present, one short of the 68 needed for a majority of the 134-member House, Simon declared that there was no

quorum and adjourned the session, ruling that no business could proceed.

Republicans, however, immediately took control of the session. Rep. Paul Anderson, R-Starbuck, quickly stepped in as acting presiding officer, while Rep. Harry Niska, R-Ramsey, moved to overturn Simon's adjournment, declaring a quorum present. Anderson then oversaw the election of Rep. Lisa Demuth, R-Cold Spring, as speaker of the House.

"The Minnesota people are counting on us today — not for partisan victories or for political theater but for real results that improve their daily lives," Demuth said in her acceptance speech.

DFL cries foul

While Republicans celebrated their moves, Democrats decried the hijacked session as illegitimate. "What Republicans did in the Minnesota House chamber

today is absolutely stunning," House DFL Leader Melissa Hortman, DFL-Brooklyn Park, said. "They clearly lost on quorum, and they just couldn't handle it. So, they had to have a fake House of Representatives."

Democrats issued a statement denouncing the proceedings as "a sham" and said that the matter will be taken to the Minnesota Supreme Court, asserting that several statutes governing the Legislature were violated.

Interviewed by KSTP News, Hamline University political science professor David Schulz was harshly critical of the dispute between the parties.

"What we're now asking is for the Supreme Court to play parent to the children who are in the state Legislature," Schulz said.

Quorum debate

Central to the chaos is a dispute over the definition of

a quorum. Democrats argue the House needs 68 members present to conduct business, reflecting a majority of the 134 seats. Republicans, however, claim that with one seat vacant, only 67 members — a majority of the 133 currently seated members — are needed.

Demuth stood by the Republicans' actions, emphasizing their temporary majority.

"We're recognizing the basic math and the reality of 67 and 66," she said. "If we return to a tie after the special election, we can re-engage in tied conversations."

Tabke's tight victory

Inflaming the controversy is the contested reelection of Rep. Brad Tabke, DFL-Shakopee. Tabke's 14-vote victory was challenged after 20 absentee ballots were lost in one precinct. A judge upheld his win on Tuesday morning, but Republicans suggested they might still refuse to seat

him, citing the missing ballots. Their resistance is believed to have been a dealbreaker in failed negotiations for a power-sharing arrangement wanted by the DFL that would have avoided the boycott.

"If any of our members had entered the Capitol today, all of these voters' votes would have been revoked," Tabke said after the ruling.

Special election looms

The balance of power now hinges on a Jan. 28 special election for a seat in Roseville, left vacant after the election of the DFL candidate was nullified by a judge who agreed with Republican litigants that the candidate did not live in the district. An almost certain DFL win in a special election would restore the House to the 67-67 tie. If a Republican would win, that would solidify their majority.

Hortman made it clear that Democrats won't return to the House chamber until after

the special election.

"We acknowledge that there is an imbalance right now and that they have an edge," she said. "They just don't have enough human beings to convene the House or to pass a bill."

What happens next

Legal challenges are a certainty. Simon's office confirmed plans to petition the Minnesota Supreme Court to rule on the legitimacy of Tuesday's actions. Democrats are also preparing lawsuits, with Hortman calling the GOP's moves an "astonishing attempt to grab power."

Republicans planned to hold another session on Wednesday to ratify the work of the Rules Committee, which also met on Tuesday without Democrats present. The Rules Committee meets at the start of each legislative session to lay out the parameters that govern the work of the chamber.

FIRE DRAMA

"Boundary Waters" film casting director loses home in LA fires

ALTADENA - The casting director of the film "Boundary Waters" lost her home in the Eaton fire, one of several that has raged across portions of Los Angeles in recent days.

Nothing remains of Catherine Stroud's house in Altadena except a driveway gate, a chimney, and rubble. "We lost our house and all our belongings. We made it out with our son and dog. My heart is broken," Stroud wrote

on her gofundme.com page.

The three-bedroom house was on a tree-lined street in the center of a quiet residential neighborhood that no longer exists.

Stroud was the casting director for "Boundary Waters," which was filmed in Ely in May 2023. The firm's producer, Erin Mae Miller, dropped a post on the "What's Up Ely" Facebook group about Stroud losing her home in the Eaton fire.

"We have had our lives turned upside down and it is completely surreal," said Stroud in a statement sent to the Timberjay through Miller. "The shock and terror of what we went through is real."

Stroud is a partner of London Stroud Casting, a respected Los Angeles TV and film casting firm.

With her family currently homeless, Stroud has set up a GoFundMe page at gofundme.com/f/help-catherines-fam-

ily-rebuild-after-tragedy. "I have never done anything like this (a GoFundMe page), but I have never been through a nightmare like this... I hate to ask for help; however, we will pay all this goodwill forward."

Right: The site of Stroud's home in Altadena, a mile south of the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains and a mile east of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

photo submitted



RECOGNITION

Annual Celebrate Ely award nominations now open

ELY - It's that time of year again to nominate your favorite Ely businesses and employees for the annual Celebrate Ely Awards. Every year, the Ely Chamber of Commerce gives out four awards to those businesses and their workers who make Ely a better place for everyone to work, live, and visit. These prestigious awards seek to recognize the invaluable contributions of the recipients and inspire others to follow their examples. Award recipients will be recognized at this year's Celebrate Ely dinner scheduled for Thursday, April 3.

The chamber seeks nominations for the following awards: the Jackpine Bob Cary Community Spirit Award, the Good Neighbor Business Award, the Good

Citizen Volunteer of the Year Award, and the Excellence in Customer Service Award.

The chamber founded the Jackpine Bob Cary Community Spirit Award in 2009 in honor of local legend Jackpine Bob Cary. As an author, artist, photographer, wilderness guide, and ski racer, Cary helped put Ely on the map when he ran for president as an Independent Fisherman's Party representative.

Cary is remembered for his passion for life and his ability to have fun, epitomizing the spirit that lives on in Ely today. The award recognizes an individual, group, organization, or business that keeps Cary's community spirit alive through the positive promotion of the Ely area and tourism.

The Good Neighbor Business Award is for businesses that go above and beyond to foster an environment of community improvement and support. The owners or managers of these companies demonstrate good business citizenship through an ongoing sharing of their or their staff's time and talent for the betterment of the Ely area. Examples of good neighbor contributions to the communi-

ty include financial contributions to various organizations or fund-raisers, sponsorships of events, volunteer work by owners or their staff, donations of services, facilities, or other resources, and involvement in community organizations or activities.

Any for-profit or non-profit business is eligible for this award. Nominees do not have to be members of the Ely Chamber of Commerce.

The Good Citizen Volunteer of the Year Award is for that person who is always stepping forward to assist others. Their work may include assisting neighbors,

serving as active members of area clubs and organizations, or just lending a hand no matter the situation. Please help the chamber recognize a community member for their ongoing service to the Ely community by nominating a worthy volunteer for the Good Citizen Volunteer of the Year Award.

The Excellence in Customer Service Award is for those who personify excellence in customer service. The chamber seeks your help to find those who excel as the face of the business where they work. Please nominate those who have gone the extra mile

in serving their clients.

To nominate a business or individual for one or all of these awards, please send a short statement (150-500 words) to the Ely Chamber of Commerce about why you feel they deserve recognition. Please identify specific, recent achievements that describe the nominee's work and impact on our community. Submit your nominations to the Ely Chamber of Commerce, 1600 E. Sheridan St., or via email at director@ely.org. Nominations will be accepted through Feb. 3.

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ELY SCHOOLS

New Ely School Board member seated

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- In a blitzkrieg meeting of just 26 minutes, the ISD 696 school board approved the novel and unusual step of retitling a piece of property it apparently owns in Morse Township.

Before he passed away last September, Ray Marsnik, the former chair of the school board, told school board member Tony Colarich that the district owned a property on Hwy. 1.

"I never knew about it," Colarich remarked. "We went to the assessor's office to see if they could find something on it but there wasn't anything under ISD 696 but they did find something under ISD 12. So, we thought it was a good idea to get the title cleaned up in case someday we'd like to sell it."

The 3.9-acre parcel was donated to ISD 12 in 1911 by Henry and Sophia Sauri of Ely. It became the site of the White Iron School which educated students in the early- and mid-20th century. It has a 600-foot frontage along the Bear Island River just north of where it crosses Hwy. 1, opposite the road to the Ely Municipal Airport.

No raises

School board member Tom Omerza made a case that the school board should not increase its compensation in 2025. "I would like not to do raises for the school board based on the recent audit we had



The Ely school board's newest member Erin Marovitz (left) at her first meeting on Monday evening, sitting next to board member Jennifer Westlund (right). photo by C. Clark

and how we're spending more than we're taking in ... to help with as we work as the finance committee toward balancing the budget. We need, as a school board, to lead the school district, to show that we are concerned about the budget, to act accordingly, and to keep ISD 696 alive and strong."

Taking Omerza's lead, the school board voted against increasing its compensation by 2.3 percent, consistent with the current

rate of inflation.

The school board then voted to use the 2024 compensation rates for 2025.

In keeping with the effort to balance the budget, the school board also voted to direct the district administration to recommend reductions in programs and positions along with the reasons for making the cuts.

New faces and roles

The school board also elected

officers for 2025. Rochelle Sjoberg, who served as interim chair following Marsnik's passing, will be the new chair. Hollee Coombe will be clerk and Tom Omerza will be treasurer.

Monday's meeting was the first for the school board's newest member, Erin Moravitz. Moravitz was elected in November after she ran a successful write-in campaign for her school board seat.

In other business matters, the school board:

- Approved the financial report, receipts of \$885,131 receipts, and disbursements of \$316,383 for December 2024.

- Designated 6 p.m. on the second Monday of each month as the day and time of the regular school board meeting.

- Designated 6 p.m. on the fourth Monday of each month as the day and time for the monthly study session.

- Approved the *Ely Echo* as the official district newspaper for 2025. The Echo was the only paper to submit a quote.

- Designated the Klun Law Firm as the district's legal counsel for 2025 and authorized the superintendent and school board chairperson to contact legal counsel at a rate of \$135/hour. The rate in 2024 rate was \$125/hour.

- Designated Highland Bank, U.S. Bank, the Minnesota School Liquid Asset Fund, and PMA Financial Network as the district's financial institutions.

- Designated Jordan Huntbatch, ISD 696 Payroll, Benefits and Finance Manager, as the district staff member to conduct electronic fund transfers.

- Approved the 2025 IRS standard mileage rate of \$0.70/mile for reimbursement for school district travel during 2025.

- Approved the contract between ISD 696 and Ely Blue Line to operate the Ely Ice Arena from Oct. 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025.

- Hired Amrita Peterson as a cafeteria aide position effective Jan. 2.

- Approved the request from Max Gantt, K-12 Physical Education/Health teacher, for parental leave from April 28 to May 30.

- Approved the following extra-curricular positions for the 2024-25 musical: Emily Weise - music director; Crystal Poppler - choreographer; Karin Schmidt - band director; John Scully and Nick Holtz (split stipend) - technicians; Cathy Gucciardo - costumer; Vince O'Conner - accompanist.

- Approved the Ely Public Schools 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.

- Approved a resolution authorizing the district to apply for and accept grant funds from Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board revenue bonds for the athletics facility complex project for \$5 million.

CANNABIS

Interim cannabis director Briner resigns; OCM taking comments on draft rules

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Just as Minnesota's cannabis industry begins to take shape, the Office of Cannabis Management's (OCM) interim director Charlene Briner has resigned effective Friday, Jan. 17, according to an announcement from Gov. Tim Walz issued last week.

Briner inherited the role after Walz's first pick for the director position, Erin DuPree, abruptly resigned in September 2023 just one day after her appointment when allegations surfaced that she had sold illegal cannabis products through her Ap-

ple-Valley-based business.

Tasked with creating an entirely new regulatory office, Briner brought years of government experience from roles at the Departments of Education and Human Services and as an adviser in the state House of Representatives.

"Charlene Briner has gotten Minnesota's emerging cannabis industry off the ground in a safe and responsible way," Walz said in a statement. "It's no easy task to build a regulatory framework around an entirely new industry from scratch, but under Charlene's leadership, Minnesota laid the foundation for a successful marketplace for years to come."

But the rollout of adult-use cannabis has been anything but smooth of late. After rejecting about two-thirds of the 1,800 applicants for a social equity license lottery, OCM was forced to cancel the December lottery due to lawsuits challenging the validity of the denials. The lottery was intended to give a head start to social equity entrepreneurs well ahead of a general lottery for all prospective vendors and ensure that cannabis products would be available for the industry's rollout, but now both lotteries will be held back to back in late spring or early summer, likely delaying the rollout.

Nonetheless, Briner put

a positive spin on the work of the agency.

"I am incredibly proud of the team we've built, and the milestones met in our ongoing work to stand up this new office and implement Minnesota's cannabis law," Briner said in a statement. "I am confident the talented public servants continuing their important work will do so in a way that exemplifies OCM's commitment to launch a safe, accessible, and equitable cannabis industry."

OCM will continue without a permanent director for now as Walz named Eric Taubel, OCM's general counsel, as the agency's new interim director. Taubel has played a significant role in

drafting cannabis regulations and negotiating tribal compacts. His background includes legal expertise from the Departments of Education and Commerce, as well as private practice experience.

"Eric is a proven, effective leader who brings legal expertise and a deep understanding of state government and regulatory affairs," Walz said. "He will ensure continued growth and success as we work to make Minnesota competitive in this emerging industry."

Rulemaking

Meanwhile, before walking out the door, Briner announced on Monday that OCM has published draft

rules and has opened a 30-day public comment period to finalize the framework for the adult-use cannabis market.

"Today marks another significant milestone in the work to launch a safe, equitable, and responsible cannabis marketplace in Minnesota," Briner said. "Consumer health and safety and access to safe products were our primary focus as we crafted clear, consistent rules that reflect industry standards and best practices. We've gone above and beyond statutory requirements to ensure that anyone impacted by these rules has a chance to weigh in."

The proposed rules are available for review on OCM's Rulemaking webpage at <https://mn.gov/ocm/laws/rulemaking.jsp>. Individuals have until 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 12, to submit formal comments through the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) website. Detailed instructions for the process are available online.

All submissions will be part of the public record and can be reviewed online.

After the current comment period ends, OCM will review and incorporate reasonable suggestions before submitting the rules to a state judge for approval. Once cleared, the rules head to the Secretary of State's office and the governor, who has a 14-day veto window. If all goes smoothly, OCM expects to publish the revised final rules for adoption by the end of the first quarter of 2025, Briner said.



Memories of the Early Days

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

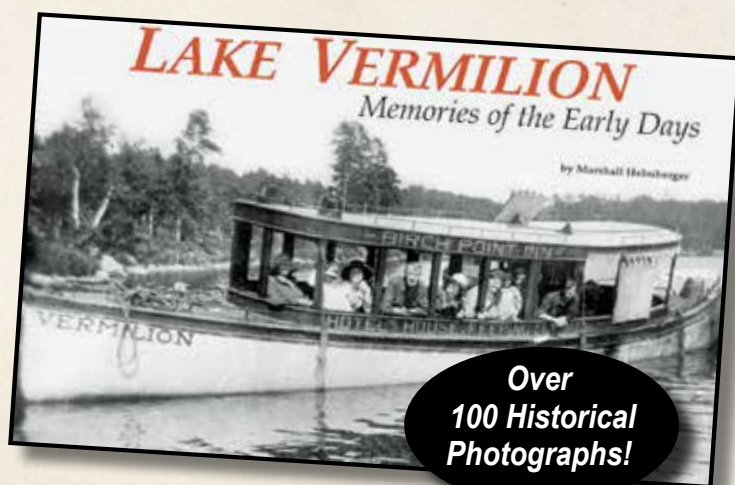
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GIRLS BASKETBALL

Ely win streak ends at seven

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

DULUTH— The Ely girls basketball team's win streak ended at seven this week as the Timberwolves ran into a buzzsaw at Duluth Marshall here on Tuesday.

The Wolves fell 96-49. No other information was available as of press time.

Playing at home on Saturday, the Wolves took advantage of red-hot outside shooting as they poured in 12 treys combined to overpower Hill City/Northland 57-31. Ruby Lowe had the big performance of the night as she led all scorers with 18 points, all of them from three-point range.

Eight was the lucky number for three of her teammates as Lydia Schultz, Zoe Mackenzie, and Audrey Kallberg scored eight points apiece. Mackenzie and Kallberg each connected twice from beyond the arc. Schultz picked up four of her points on the charity stripe.

Amelia Penke posted seven points, including a trey, along with 14 rebounds for another strong performance. Clare Thomas added four points and six rebounds while Maija Mattson added eight boards.

The Wolves were scheduled to host International Falls on Friday night. They head to Bigfork on Monday to take on the Huskies.

BOYS BASKETBALL



The Grizzlies' Aidan Hartway drives for a shot against a Hibbing defender during Tuesday's game at North Woods. photo by D. Colburn

Grizzlies hit rough patch

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- Turnovers and inconsistent execution of their offense led the North Woods boys basketball team into two double-digit losses this past week, falling on the road to Mt. Iron-Buhl, 78-64 on Friday, and losing at home to Class AAA Hibbing 93-69 on Tuesday.

The Grizzlies were at a height disadvantage against Hibbing, which features 6'7" sophomore center Raymond Brau alongside numerous other six-footers in their starting lineup. Brau scored 20 of his team-high 22 points in the first half as the Bluejackets took firm control of the game by the break.

After falling into a 15-5 hole in the early going, the Grizzlies gamely fought back to within four at 28-24 in a run punctuated by three-balls from Louie Panichi and Talen Jarshaw. But the Grizzlies offense went

See GRIZZLIES...pg. 4B



BOYS BASKETBALL

Wolves keep winning

Team improves to 10-2 after latest win over Bigfork

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

ELY— The Wolves improved to 10-2 on the season here on Tuesday after easily outpacing Bigfork, 79-54. "Bigfork played well against us this time," said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald. The Wolves took an early lead but the Huskies managed to keep it close, trailing 33-23 at the half. "We pulled away midway through the second half and wore them down defensively," said McDonald. "We didn't shoot the ball well against their zone but did enough to get the win."

Caid Chittum once again proved Ely's top scorer with 28 points, with point guard Jack Davies right behind with 25 points and seven assists. Drew Johnson, who has become the third leg of the Wolves' offensive trio, notched a double-double with 15 points and 11 rebounds.

Playing at home on Saturday, Davies'

See WOLVES...pg. 4B

Above: Ely's Drew Johnson moves the ball down the court while a Bigfork defender follows.

Below: Ely's Wyatt Tedrick goes up for a jumper under heavy pressure. photos by J. Greeney



ARCHERY

Wolves, Grizzlies score wins

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- Middle school archers stepped to the fore for Ely and North Woods at archery meet at North Woods School, with the Wolves capturing the team title in 3D target shooting and the

Left: North Woods' Lila Pearson takes aim during recent archery competition. photo by D. Colburn

Grizzlies winning the bullseye competition.

The 3D middle school competition was fierce, with Ely edging runner-up North Woods by only two points, 1508-1506, in the seven-team competition.

Seventh-grader Hayden Weidemann led the way for Ely, placing first in his grade level and first overall among 58 middle school boys. Payson Kundering found the mark on the girls' side,

placing second among eighth grade girls and second out of 42 middle school girls overall. Other top finishers for Ely included eighth-grader Hunter Kosinski, fifth in his class and 16th overall, eighth-grader Trynn Weisinger, sixth in his class and 18th overall, and eighth-grader Ryann Schlosser, seventh in her class and 11th overall.

See ARCHERY...pg. 4B

NORDIC SKIING

Ely boys dominate at Pincushion

Olson tops field at Cook County meet

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ELY- The Ely boys Nordic ski team dominated the competition at the Cook County Invitational at Pincushion on Tuesday, with Eli Olson winning the championship and the Wolves capturing six of the top nine spots in a solid team win.

Olson's time of 15 minutes, 30 seconds on the 5K course was six seconds better than runner-up August Capps of Duluth East. Beginning with Aksel Skustad in fifth with a time of 15:56, a parade of five Wolves in a row crossed the finish line. Dylan Durkin was sixth with a time of 16:03; Otto Devine was seventh, 16:03; Wyatt Devine placed eighth, 16:05; and Oliver Hohenstein finished ninth, 16:08 in the field of 30. Ely edged Duluth East 478-475 for the team title.

The girls had three skiers

See SKIERS...pg. 4B

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Grizzlies girls lose a pair

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

SOUTH RIDGE- The North Woods girls couldn't have played two more wildly different games than last week's home contest against state-ranked Mt. Iron-Buhl and Tuesday's road game against South Ridge, although both resulted in losses.

The rebuilding Grizzlies may have played one of their best all-around games of the season against the Panthers on Tuesday, controlling the tempo and leading throughout most of the game until a spirited South Ridge rally in the closing minutes ended with a last second game-winner, 52-50.

See NW GIRLS...pg. 4B

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Outdoors

Our lives in the
Northwoods

BEARS AND HUMANS

Superior's bear order appears to be reducing conflicts

In a season with high numbers of bear complaints elsewhere, problems in BWCAW were down sharply

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL—This past year brought plenty of weather extremes, from a record mild winter to record June rain, followed by a worsening drought. Such conditions made it a tough one for the region's bear population, which relies heavily on natural foods that rarely produce well under extreme conditions.

The limited natural foods prompted a sharp increase in bear nuisance reports across northern Minnesota—except for within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, where a new wilderness-wide order designed to reduce human-bear interactions, may have helped keep this longstanding problem in check.

At a time when other bear problems were on the rise in the region, Superior National Forest

officials report that nuisance bear complaints fell sharply within the 1.1-million-acre Boundary Waters wilderness. Fewer than ten such reports were recorded last year, just a fraction of the average of 40-50 reports experienced over the previous four years.

Forest officials note that several factors can influence the number of bear-human interactions, so they aren't claiming the

Right: Nuisance bear complaints were up this past year in most of the region, but not in the BWCAW.

file photo

reduction was solely due to the forest order.

The order, labeled 09-09-24-02, requires all overnight campers within the BWCAW use

See **BEARS**, pg. 3B



SUPERIOR NF

Forest service lists repairs in wake of flood

REGIONAL—The severe flooding in the wake of the June 18, 2024 rain event that dropped as much as nine inches in a matter of six hours on parts of the North Country, had an impact on much of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, particularly on the western end. Meanwhile, high winds from that same storm caused substantial blowdown, particularly on the eastern end of the wilderness.

BWCAW work crews spent weeks repairing damage to portages, entry point parking lots, and hiking trails. The following list highlights some of the major storm repair work completed in 2024 within the 1.1 million-acre wilderness area.

► Border Route hiking trail - five miles of blowdown cleared.

► Moose River North portages - 360 feet of tread rebuilt.

► Moose River portage - 100 feet of rip rap bank stabilization.

► Trout Lake portage - 250 feet of portage reconstructed.

► Mudro Lake entry point - parking lot and access road repaired.

Rangers cite common BW violations

REGIONAL—Wilderness rangers with the U.S. Forest Service reported a total of 150 law enforcement actions in the wilderness in 2024, about a quarter of which resulted in actual citations.

These remote rangers tour throughout the wilderness during the active months and conduct thousands of interactions with visitors as part of their jobs. The vast majority of the interactions are cordial and focus on travel tips or Leave No Trace principles, which are frequently ignored by wilderness visitors.

Among the most common violations reported by rangers during 2024 are:

► Burning of trash, specifically plastic bottles.

► Cutting live vegetation.

► Leaving campfires unattended.

► Using oversized motors on motorized lakes.

► Illegally using motors on Lac LaCroix.

► Causing tree damage from hammocks.

► Finding soap and soap residue left in the water.

► Finding wipes, feminine products, and diapers in latrines.



THE ECONOMICS OF OFF-ROAD

Study finds growing economic impact from off-road riders

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL—Riders of off-road vehicles are bringing millions of dollars in economic impact to northeastern Minnesota. That's the key finding in a newly released study conducted by the University of Minnesota Extension, in partnership with the Northeastern Minnesota ATV Joint Powers Board.

The study looked at the impact of riders of ATVs and so-called side-by-sides, who are now taking advantage of a growing trail system throughout the region. It concludes that those riders generated an estimated \$36.1 million in economic activity in 2023. This includes direct spending on lodging, dining, fuel, equipment, and other related expenses, as well as indirect benefits such as job creation and wages.

"The study underscores the vital role that ATV riders play in the economy of northeastern Minnesota," said Brigid Tuck, lead researcher from the U of M Minnesota Extension. "The influx



Above: Off-road vehicles, including ATVs and UTVs, traveling on the Prospectors Trail.

New trails, and the new off-road campground at the Lake Vermilion State Park are expected to increase the economic impacts off-road tourism in our area.

file photos

of visitors who ride and explore the region's ATV trails is helping sustain small businesses and creating jobs, which strengthens the

economic fabric of this rural area."

Representatives from the joint powers board, the extension service, ATV Minnesota, and area legislators and county officials gathered in Duluth on Jan. 7 for a press conference to elaborate on the study's findings.

The study details the growing role of off-road vehicle tourism in driving local economic activity, creating jobs, and supporting busi-

See **IMPACT**, pg. 3B

Outdoors briefly

No charge at state parks on Monday

REGIONAL—If you're thinking about a visit to a Minnesota state park this winter, you can do so for free this coming Monday, Jan. 20. It's a federal holiday to mark Dr. Martin Luther King Day, so most government offices and some businesses are closed for the day.

For those hoping to take advantage of the day off to get outdoors, it's the perfect opportunity, although Mother Nature is forecasted to serve up some chilly temperatures, even for a Minnesota January, with much of the state expecting subzero high temperatures.

The free day is part of a recent program by the Department of Natural Resources to waive vehicle permit fees at all 73 state parks and recreation areas during one day each season of the year.

The 2025 free park days are scheduled as follows:

- Monday, Jan. 20.
- Saturday, April 26.
- Saturday, June 14.
- Friday, Nov. 28.

"While Minnesota state parks and recreation areas are open 365 days per year, most visits occur in the summer," said Ann Pierce, director of DNR's Parks and Trails Division. "Minnesota state parks truly shine year-round, and winter is a special time to embrace the state's natural beauty and recreational opportunities. We're hoping people will come out and join us on Jan. 20."

DNR to begin some trail grooming in wake of recent snow

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL—Recent snowfalls have raised hopes that the North Country may have at least an abbreviated snowmobile season, after all.

Snow that fell late last week and over the past weekend left a fairly consistent six inches of fresh powder on the ground. While that normally isn't enough for trail grooming, Joe Majerus, Tower DNR area trails supervisor is hopeful that the 3-5 inches of hard-crusting snow left over from the late December rain and meltdown, that's now hard frozen underneath the fresh snow will create a tough base that won't erode as quickly is often the case with less crusted conditions.

But Majerus isn't making any promises. "We are going to try to groom where we can, it probably won't be everywhere," he said. Swamps, as usual, are likely to prove the biggest challenge for groomers. The mild conditions during November and December slowed the freeze-up of swamps although Majerus said they're starting to solidify now with the recent cold temperatures. Even so, Majerus said low water from the late summer and fall drought has made many swamps rougher, which won't help with the grooming process.

Majerus expects this first round of grooming will be completed before the Dr. Martin Luther King weekend, which often marks the beginning of peak snowmobile season.

"I imagine it won't be pristine, but it will be as good as we can get with what we have to work with," he said.

IMPACT...Continued from page 2B

nesses in St. Louis, Lake, and Koochiching counties.

Tuck said the study, assisted by counters placed on numerous regional trails by clubs, determined the region experienced over 219,000 trail visits in 2023, with 80 percent of those coming from riders living outside of the area.

"It's bringing people to the region that maybe would not otherwise come to northeastern Minnesota," she said.

The study's findings may help to build an economic argument for increased motorized recreation in the region. While off-road vehicles are popular with many, that view is not universal and local groups have faced pockets of opposition during trail system planning.

Business benefits

According to the study, out-of-town off-road vehicle riders, defined as those traveling more than 50 miles to the area or staying overnight, spent an average of \$144.10 per day and typically stayed for 4.5 days. Those numbers are based on self-reported spending by off-road vehicle users.

Their spending primarily benefited lodging, restaurants, and bars, with local businesses such as fueling stations and equipment shops also seeing increased revenue. By comparison, local riders, who averaged six people per party, spent approximately \$38.50



St. Louis County Commissioner Paul McDonald talks about the decision by local officials to create a joint powers group to push for more funding for off-road vehicle trails.

photo courtesy of St. Louis County

per day, mostly on food and drinks.

Ron Potter, president of ATV Minnesota, highlighted why so many riders are coming to the region's trails.

"We're starting to market this expansive trail system that we have, and I think that's what's bringing people up," he said. "Generally, it takes a mountain or something to attract people, but we've got endless woods and lakes and streams that other parts of the country just don't have."

The region's trail network spans more than 1,000 miles and includes popular routes such as the Voyageurs Trail, which connects Ely to Crane Lake, and the Prospectors Trail, linking Ely, Tower, Soudan, Babbitt, and Embarrass. Survey data from

nearly 1,000 riders revealed that 85 percent of visitors cited ATV trails as the primary reason for their trip.

"When we asked survey respondents 'how did you hear about it?' the most common response was via word of mouth," Tuck said. "There is a positive reputation out there that is bringing people to this area."

State Sen. Grant Hauschild, DFL-Hermantown, said that the trails highlight the region's natural beauty.

"When you look at that \$36 million number, what you're seeing is like the magic that people are experiencing, and they're just opening up

their wallets to live this experience that they don't get in the Twin Cities. They don't get it where they come from," Hauschild said.

Between 2019 and 2024, local governments, ATV clubs, and other organizations have invested \$11.7 million in trail development and maintenance. The study found that the projects supported by this funding generated \$16.8 million in economic activity, including \$6 million in labor income and 100 jobs. The trail network's continued expansion into Koochiching County, including plans to connect to the Blue Ox Trail and International Falls, is expected to further enhance the region's appeal.

"Once we get connected to International Falls, then we can connect to the Blue Ox Trail, which will connect us all the way over to Bemidji," Potter said. "So, the trail system and where it's going to pull from is not only going to be a state draw or a regional draw. It's going to be nationwide."

Jobs and communities

The economic impact extends beyond tourism dollars. The study found that ATV-related activities supported hundreds of jobs in industries ranging from hospitality and retail to trail

maintenance and construction.

"This is about economic development. This is about jobs. This is about recreation—all things Minnesota holds near and dear," said Mike Jugovich, vice chair of the St. Louis County Board. "We now have the data to back up and support the funding and continued funding of trails, maintenance, and trail development throughout northeast Minnesota."

Both Hauschild and state Rep. Roger Skraba, R-Ely, said that the study provides key data for policymakers advocating for continued investment in the trail system. Hauschild noted that proceeds from ATV registrations feed into a statewide fund dedicated to trail development. "Because of organized efforts, such as those being led by the regional ATV Joint Powers Board, northeastern Minnesota is punching above our weight and getting more than our fair share of that ATV-dedicated account," he said. "We need to make the case to other legislators from the Twin Cities, from Mankato, from other places that, look, your people own these licenses, they own these ATVs, and they're coming to our region to utilize our outdoors and our land for their benefit."

Skraba reiterated a position he's stated before that

he believes businesses in the region would benefit even more if riders could use highway right-of-way to access businesses near to trail crossings, rather than having to wait for expensive, lengthy alternatives to be built. He said he would advocate for the change this legislative session as a member of the House Transportation committee.

Potter noted that ATVs have faced criticism in the past for their environmental impact and safety concerns, but that the increasing number of organized ATV clubs has changed public perception.

"Ten years ago, there were no clubs," he said. "Now there are 70 in Minnesota, and they're stepping up. They're maintaining the trails. They're doing environmental reviews before the trails are built. We're partnering with equestrian clubs, snowmobile clubs. So, I think acceptance of that activity has gone up because riders have stepped up and done their part to be responsible."

The complete study is available online at <https://www.sehinc.com/hubfs/Website/Online/northeastern-regional-atv-joint-powersboard/Economic-contribution-of-ATV-trails-in-NE-MN-FINAL.pdf>.

BEARS...Continued from page 2B

bear-proof food containers or hang their food packs at least 12 feet in the air and six feet from the nearest tree trunk, a standard that may not be possible at all wilderness campsites. Many campers have since turned to certified bear-proof containers which are designed to block the enticing smell of foods as well as hold up against the efforts of a bear to open the containers.

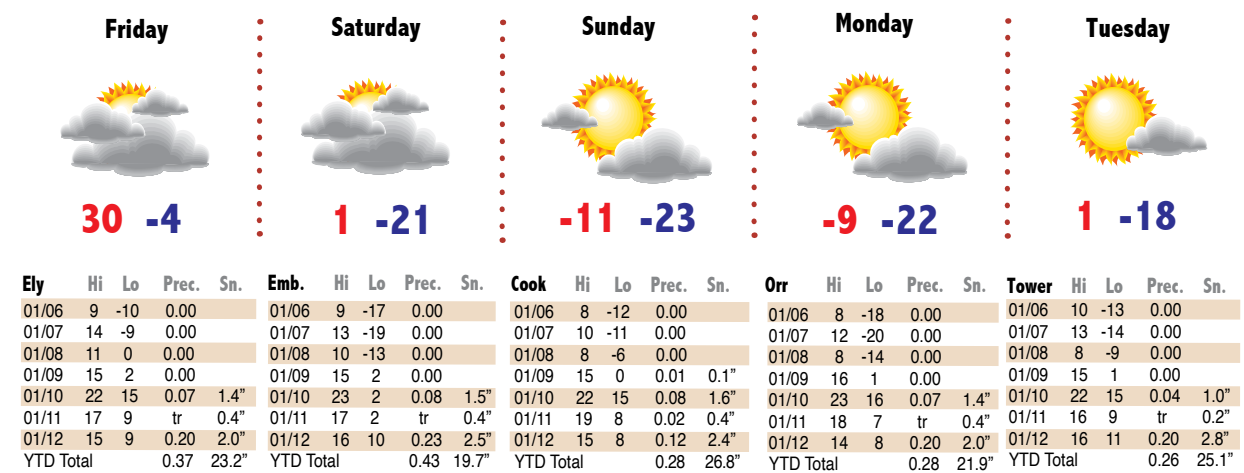
While the new order was seen as a hassle by some, forest

officials say it was designed to address a growing problem they were seeing with bears raiding food packs, which can seriously impact anyone's canoe trip in the wilderness, particularly for canoeists who may be many miles into the wilderness interior.

The order is in effect annually from March 1-Nov. 30 and is not in effect December-February, when virtually all bears are in their winter dens.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather



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HOCKEY

Ely scoring drought continues in latest losses

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER Managing Editor

INTERNATIONAL FALLS— Ely's scoring drought continued this week as the Wolves fell 8-0 to the

Broncos here on Tuesday, managing just 11 shots on goal on the night. The Wolves have scored a combined total of just five goals in the past seven games, all losing efforts. The Wolves, who had

shown potential in racking up a 3-4 record in the early season, have hit hard times since their last victory, back on Dec. 21.

Playing in Siren, Wis., this past Saturday, Ely was

buried by the Blizzard 5-1. The Wolves fell behind early in the first quarter and watched the Blizzard pile up four on the scoreboard until late in the third quarter when Hunter Halbakken lit the lamp at the

12:49 mark. The Blizzard added insurance less than two minutes later to wrap up scoring for the day.

The Wolves will try to get back on track during an extended home stand on

Friday when they host Lake of the Woods. They'll be back in action Saturday against Wadena in a 2 p.m. start and will host Proctor on Tuesday night.

GRIZZLIES...Continued from page 1B

flat from there, scoring just one point over the next six minutes as Hibbing surged to a 45-25 lead. Kalvyn Benner ended the Grizzlies drought with a bucket and one, but the Bluejackets took a commanding 50-32 lead into the locker room at the half.

North Woods never made a serious dent in the deficit during the second half as Hibbing had no difficulty in closing out the 24-point win. Jarshaw led the way in

scoring for the Grizzlies with 24 points, including 10 from the free throw line. Panichi scored 22, including three triples, and Benner reached double digits with 12, also canning three treys.

"Tonight we knew what we were in for," Grizzlies Head Coach Andrew Jugovich said. "We knew they were big, but I was not prepared for how big they were and how great a player Ray Brau is, a boy who may not even have his

drivers license yet. He was unstoppable underneath."

Mt. Iron/Buhl

Benner got the Grizzlies off to a promising start against the Rangers on Friday when he swished a three on the opening possession, but MIB responded with a 7-0 run. North Woods kept the score close as Panichi scored on a putback for a 9-9 tie. But capitalizing on North Woods errors, the Rangers put together a 10-0 run to lead 19-9. MIB pushed the lead out

to 17 by halftime, 39-22.

The Grizzlies steadied themselves in the second half, but although they bested MIB 42-39 in the period, the damage was done as MIB prevailed by 14 points.

North Woods had four players scoring in double digits, with Panichi's 18 points topping the list. Benner scored 16, Jarshaw dropped in 12, and Aidan Hartway notched 10.

Grizzlies Head Coach Andrew Jugovich acknowl-

edged that the Rangers' first half run was decisive.

"We had ten turnovers in the first half against MIB and we had five by our point guard, and that's just something we can't afford to do," Jugovich said. "The second half we had four combined, so that's how we were able to keep with them. MIB is in the top ten or 15 teams in the state and we hung with them."

The Grizzlies have lost their last four games and

currently stand at 7-6 on the season. Getting back in the win column soon could be difficult as they were scheduled for a tough road contest against Northome/Kelliher on Friday followed by a matchup with defending Class A state champion Cherry on the road on Jan. 23.

WOLVES...Continued from page 1B

hit four three-pointers in the final 90 seconds of the first half to spark an Ely resurgence after a slow start against Northland. The Eagles had led 30-28 just ahead of the break, until Davies' spree—which included a trey at the buzzer—sent the teams to the lockers

with Ely up 40-30.

"We played much better in the second half and got them into running time," said McDonald. By the time the final buzzer sounded, the Wolves were up 78-46. Davies ended up with 24 points on the night along with seven

assists. Chittum led scoring for Ely with 27, along with 12 rebounds for a double-double. Johnson notched his own double-double with 19 points and ten boards.

In Nashwauk last Friday, Chittum poured in 28 points in the first half and 42 points

overall to lead Ely to a 76-61 win over the Spartans. "We had a really good half and led 46-26 at halftime," said McDonald. "We shot the ball really well and defended well."

The Spartans, who were 4-5 coming into the game,

rallied in the second half, closing the gap to nine at one point. But Ely rebounded to win by 15.

Davies added 18 points for the Wolves and eight assists, while Johnson narrowly missed a triple-double with an astounding 23 rebounds

and ten assists in addition to eight points.

The Wolves were set to host Mt. Iron-Buhl on Thursday and travel to Duluth Marshall on Saturday for a 2:30 p.m. tilt. They'll be back in town next Tuesday to host McGregor.

SKIERS...Continued from page 1B

place in the top half of the field, with Anna Larson leading the way with a time of 19:52, placing ninth. Mattie Lindsay finished 11th with a time of 20:32, and Anna Dunn placed 12th with a time of 20:47. Duluth East and Ely were the

only two schools in the team competition, with Duluth East taking the crown.

Mesabi East

On Saturday the Wolves competed in the Mesabi East and Giants Ridge Invitational at Giants Ridge, where 47

schools had skiers entered in the freestyle/classic event, billed as the nation's largest Nordic ski event.

The Ely boys captured third place overall, behind Brainerd and Wayzata. Durkin took sixth in classic with a

time of 13:47.6, followed by Hohenstein in 30th in 14:58.8 and McClelland in 34th in 15:06.

In freestyle, Olson took sixth in 12:27.1, followed by Skustad in 17th in 12:54.6 and Otto Devine in 37th in 13:25.2.

The girls finished 18th in the team competition. Anna Dunn was the team's top classic skier, placing 25th in 17:23.9. Rena Johnston placed 45th in 18:50.7, and Alla Harding finished 87th in 21:01.8. In freestyle, Larson

took team honors, finishing 52nd in 16:42.9. June Nelson came in 62nd in 17:06.7, and Elsa Ellerbroek placed 73rd in 17:36.8.

NW GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

Both teams had trouble shooting in the game's opening minutes, but the Grizzlies got off the skids when Brynn Chosa picked up a loose ball and drove the length of the court for North Woods' first score. Isabelle Koch followed up with a long trey, and Tatum Barto stole the ball on the press and scored to put the Grizzlies up 7-0. North Woods took a 19-9 lead on another Koch

triple, and the Grizzlies held onto that ten-point lead going into the half at 28-18.

A mid-range jumper by Nevada Gauthier and a deuce by Chosa put the Grizzlies up by 12 at 33-21, and North Woods led 44-33 with just over seven minutes remaining. From there, the Panthers slowly but surely cut into the Grizzlies lead, narrowing the gap to 48-46 with 2:42 left.

South Ridge used a pair of free throws to knot the score at 48-48, then scored with 30 seconds left to take a 50-48 lead. North Woods worked the ball down low to Sierra Schuster for a bucket that tied it again, but South Ridge scored in the final seconds to hand the Grizzlies the heart-breaking loss.

Barto led the Grizzlies in scoring with 14 points, Chosa

had 11, and Koch connected on three triples for nine.

Mt. Iron/Buhl

When the state-ranked MIB Rangers walked onto the floor at North Woods last Thursday, the only real question to be answered was how big their winning margin would be. The Grizzlies simply didn't have the personnel to match up against the

taller, more athletic Rangers, and that showed in a devastating way in the first half as North Woods went scoreless from the field and trailed 61-2 at the break. Things eventually got a little bit better for the Grizzlies in the second half, but when Emarie Gibson finally scored the Grizzlies' first field goal at the 9:46 mark, the Rangers were up 84-4. Having a bit more success against the

Rangers' bench players, North Woods tallied eight more points the rest of the way as MIB cruised to a 98-12 win.

The Grizzlies were scheduled for a Saturday game at Nashwauk-Keewatin before returning home to face Moose Lake-Willow River on Tuesday.

ARCHERY...Continued from page 1B

Eighth-grader Cooper Long paced the Grizzlies to their second-place finish, ranking second in his grade and fourth overall among middle school boys. Clark Danielson placed fourth among seventh-grade boys and sixth overall. Michaela Brunner topped the middle school girl shooters with a fifth-place finish among eighth-graders and sixth overall, followed closely by

eighth-grader Tikka Debeltz, who placed sixth in the class and seventh overall. Sixth-grader Shay Wilcox placed fourth in her class.

Elementary 3D

Fifth-grader Bailey Brunner shot lights out in 3D competition, logging the highest score of any age of Grizzlies' archers with a 274, placing her first among fifth-graders and first among all 34 elementary

girls. Fourth-grader Chester Talberg took fourth place in his class and seventh overall for the boys. North Woods was not entered in the team scoring competition.

The Wolves placed third in the five-team elementary division, with fifth-grader Sawyer Kannas topping Ely archers with a fifth-place finish in his class and fifth overall. Classmate Ryker Russ was right behind with

sixth-place finishes in the class and overall, and fellow fifth-grader Elam Moran placed eighth in the class and ninth overall. Eve Chase had the best performance on the girls' side, notching fourth place in the fourth-grade girls group and eighth overall.

High School 3D

The Wolves placed fourth in the seven-team competition, led by Sabrah Hart's team-high score of 283, slotting in second among 11th-grade girls and second overall among the 47 division competitors. Ninth-grader Laydan Hart also took second in his class and second overall among the boys. Taylor Hren placed third among tenth-grade girls and eighth overall, while 11th-grader Cylvia DeBeltz placed fifth in her class and ninth overall.

John Danielson was the top-ranking Grizzlies archer with a second-place finish among 11th-grade boys and tenth overall. Classmate Lincoln Antikainen was right behind in third and 11th overall. Merilee Scofield, the only girl shooting for North Woods in high school 3D, placed tenth among tenth-grade girls.

Middle school bullseye

The Grizzlies' Cooper Long captured the eighth-grade championship in leading North Woods to a first-place team finish in middle school bullseye competition. Long's score of 279 was the best among all ages of North Woods archers and ranked third among 87 middle school boys and seventh among all archers. Seventh-grader Brock Long took second in his class and ninth overall, while eighth-grader Brady Swanson scored a sixth-place finish in his class and 11th overall. Michaela Brunner turned in the top girls' performance in the division with a fifth-place finish in eighth-grade and sixth overall. Tikka Debeltz placed eighth among eighth-graders and 13th overall. Seventh-grader Kaidence Scofield nabbed fourth place in her class and 14th overall.

The Timberwolves finished third in the competition. Seventh-grader

Hayden Weidemann nabbed his second first-place class finish of the day and ranked second among all middle school boys. Eighth-grader Payson Kunding turned in another stellar performance as well, placing second in her class and second overall. Sixth-grader Aspen MacCoy placed third in her class, sixth-grader Owen Kurnava placed sixth in his class, and eighth-grader Ryann Scholsser took ninth in her class.

Elementary bullseye

Both schools had individual archers shooting in the elementary division but did not compete for the team title.

The Grizzlies' Bailey Brunner claimed her second double first of the day, winning the fifth-grade girls class and ranking first among all 54 elementary girls. Brunner's score of 269 ranked 15th among all grades competing at the meet. Chester Talberg placed fourth among fourth-grade boys and Brittany Phillips placed seventh among fifth-grade girls.

For the Wolves, Sawyer Kannas scored fourth place among fifth-grade boys and fourth overall. Eve Chase finished fourth among fourth-graders and 11th overall.

High school bullseye

Again, neither school was entered in the team competition for this division, but had several outstanding individual performances.

Laydan Hart had Ely's top score of the day in bullseye with a 283, placing second among ninth-grade boys, third in the division, and third among the 208 boys of all ages. Tenth-grader Taylor Hren was tops in her class, sixth overall, and eighth among the 180 girls of all ages. Eleventh-grader Sabrah Hart finished fourth in her class, ninth in the division, and 13th among all shooters.

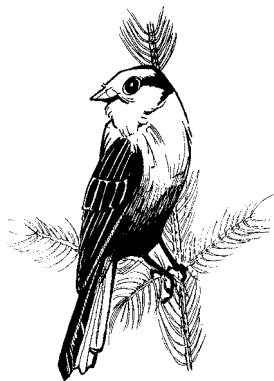
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SUPPORT GROUPS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

King Crossword - Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.



CryptoQuote answer

All I want is the best of everything and there's very little of that left.
- Cecil Beaton

Word Spiral Answer BATTERIES

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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: ♦♦♦♦ Medium ♦♦♦♦♦ Difficult

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CryptoQuip

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

Clue: F equals N

UQS ZLVFA EQCBW'G BLLGS
CFECGLN HXWS QCG AVHG
JNSUUZ GLNS. C ULBW QCH
"UQCG ULLUQ GXQBB JXGG."

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Weekly SUDOKU Answer

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

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Super Crossword JOINED FOR A PURPOSE

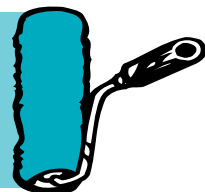
ACROSS

- 1 Wish-granting spirits
- 7 Greek vowel
- 12 Records file
- 20 Punch combo
- 21 Splotchy GI garb
- 22 He played AI Bundy on TV
- 23 Planners of campus events
- 25 Often-pickled red vegetable
- 26 Atop, in poems
- 27 Lena of "The Reader"
- 28 Latin "I love"
- 30 Patron saint of sailors
- 31 Brotherhood
- 39 Capital of a Mexico state
- 40 Hard to find
- 41 Burdened
- 42 Travail
- 44 Political campaigners for a particular issue
- 50 Wonderment
- 53 Dragon in "The Hobbit"
- 57 Suffix with racket
- 58 Not at all tight
- 59 Medieval protectors of trade
- 63 Icebox
- 65 Boise's state
- 66 Gel in a lab
- 67 By means of
- 68 Claimed psychic gift
- 69 Regulators of a moral code
- 76 Bath fixture
- 79 Printer fluid
- 80 Years on end
- 81 More devious
- 85 Surfs the internet, e.g.
- 88 Fighters of animal cruelty
- 92 Madison Ave. contact
- 93 Sea, in Paris
- 94 Corrective eye surgery
- 95 Pitching star
- 96 It consists of 13-player football teams
- 100 Aspirin target
- 103 Japanese alternative to massage
- 104 "Carpe —!"
- 108 Newspaper of the USSR
- 112 Managers of houses in a subdivision
- 118 SpaceX founder Musk
- 119 Formed a lap
- 120 "Leave — the pros"
- 121 Anna of fashion
- 122 It has Cut and Copy commands
- 126 Apt playing card for this puzzle's theme?
- 131 Company VIP
- 132 Barrymore or Waters of "Pinky"
- 133 Consignment shop deal
- 134 "I have no idea!"
- 135 — Dame
- 136 A whole lot
- 9 One-sharp musical key
- 10 Sticky gunk
- 11 Hit — (run into some trouble)
- 12 Urbane
- 13 Fruity drink
- 14 Foot part
- 15 Busy crawler
- 16 Artsy cap
- 17 Garlicky mayonnaise
- 18 Replay speed, briefly
- 19 "Your Song" singer John
- 24 Whole lot
- 29 Ice cream drink
- 32 "Tsk!"
- 33 — -friendly
- 34 She was Mrs. Gorbachev
- 35 Stephen of "Still Crazy"
- 36 Nuptial oath
- 37 Buddhism branch
- 38 Point of view
- 43 K-O linkup
- 45 Toon frame
- 46 Fish eggs
- 47 Seep out
- 48 Wiends
- 49 Crime doer
- 50 French bud
- 51 Join nuptially
- 52 Pitching stat
- 54 Sharp as —
- 55 Popular Aussie boots
- 56 Avocado dip, for short
- 60 Fidel's cohort
- 61 Sweltering
- 62 "... sad and dreary everywhere —": Stephen Foster
- 63 Suitable
- 64 Disloyal sort
- 67 Ivy and kudzu
- 70 Go in haste
- 71 Electees, e.g.
- 72 Diner offering
- 73 "— Lisa"
- 74 PC key
- 75 Gin inventor Whitney
- 76 Ski lift type
- 77 Pakistani language
- 78 Tennis' Björn Medina flight
- 89 Country east of Arg.
- 90 Little drink
- 91 Giraffe's kin
- 93 Be certain
- 97 Actor Ayres
- 98 A, in Berlin
- 99 Self-help author
- 101 Lyric-penning Gershwin
- 102 Ballplayer of D.C., in brief
- 105 Apple computer camera
- 106 Bible book before Job
- 107 Mark with multicolored spots
- 109 Optical
- 110 Exact look-alike
- 111 Licoricelike seeds
- 112 Listens to
- 113 Classic song
- 114 Actress Shearer
- 115 PC key
- 116 Dutch painter Jan
- 117 Dove's call
- 123 Roman 1,200
- 124 Biblical verb suffix
- 125 — de plume
- 127 Figure skater Midori
- 128 To's partner
- 129 Company VIP
- 130 Timothy Leary's drug

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11		12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			
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EMPLOYMENT

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Ely Public Schools Substitute Cafeteria Aides

Ely Public Schools is accepting applications for substitute cafeteria aides. Training will be provided. A background check is required.

Qualifications include:
► Preferred experience working with school age children
► Evidence of ability to work cooperatively and communicate effectively in a collaborative setting

Application (non-licensed) available at: www.ely.k12.mn.us or in the District Office

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

Rate of Pay: \$15.85/hour

Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 10 & 17, 2025

POSITION OPENING

Ely Public Schools Substitute School Nurse

Ely Public Schools is accepting applications for substitute school nurses. A background check is required.

Qualifications include:
► Valid state license to practice as a registered nurse or a licensed practical nurse

Application (non-licensed) available at: www.ely.k12.mn.us or in the District Office

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

Rate of Pay: \$29.06/hour

Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 10 & 17, 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS
SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT
PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No. 69VI-PR-24-220

Estate of Harold Duane Robinson Jr., Decedent

Notice is also given that (subject to Minnesota Statutes section 524.3-801) all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the Personal Representative or to the Court Administrator within four months after the date of this Notice or the claims will be barred.

Dated: December 18, 2024
BY THE COURT
Andrew R. Peterson
Judge of District Court
Jennifer Miller
Court Administrator
Chelsea Opdahl, Deputy

Attorney for Petitioner
Lisa A. Haster
Metropolitan Law Group
LLC, Park Office
5775 Wayzata Ave, #700
St. Louis Park, MN, 55416
Attorney License No: 310979
Telephone: (612) 524-9414
Email: lisa@metropolitan-lawgroup.com

Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 10 & 17, 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.

WRR Y TWLM YH MFD
ADHM BE DXDKNMFYLU WLC
MFDKD'H XDKN RYMMRD
BE MFWM RDEM.
— JDJYR ADWMBL

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Super Crossword

Answers

GENIES OMEGA DATABASE
ONETWO CAMOS EDONEILL
STUDENTUNION BEETROOT
OER OLIN AMO ELMO
FRATERNALORGANIZATION
TOLUCA RARE LADEN
TOIL ACTIONGROUP
AWE SMAUG EER LOOSE
MERCHANTGUILD FREEZER
IDAHO AGAR VIA ESP
ETHICS COMMITTEE
TUB INK AEON SLYER
BROWSES HUMANESOCIETY
ADREP MER LASIK ACE
RUGBYLEAGUE PAIN
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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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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WORD SPIRAL

B O O
E O T
I O E

Fill in the missing letters to reveal the nine-letter word that starts at one of the four corners and moves clockwise around the perimeter before ending in the center.

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CryptoQuip answer

The young child's loose incisor made his gums pretty sore. I told him "This tooth shall pass."

King Crossword

- ### ACROSS
- 1 Kitten's cry
 - 4 Bit of advice
 - 7 Prop for Sherlock
 - 8 Vice President Burr
 - 10 Ancient Greek region
 - 11 Future ferns
 - 13 Mental agility
 - 16 Rds.
 - 17 Pitchers
 - 18 Stickum
 - 19 Unpaid TV ads
 - 20 Close
 - 21 Revue segments
 - 23 Lover's meeting
 - 25 Smack a baseball
 - 26 1982 sci-fi film
 - 27 Signing need
 - 28 "— of One's Own"
 - 30 1959 Kingston Trio hit
 - 33 Burger King, for one
 - 36 Kilt pattern
 - 37 Lubricated
 - 38 Canary snacks

- ### DOWN
- 1 Short skirts
 - 2 Grand tale
 - 3 Least strong
 - 4 Piglike mammal
 - 5 Golf clubs
 - 6 Beans go-with
 - 7 Sulk
 - 8 Campfire leftovers
 - 9 Stallion sounds
 - 10 Mensa stats
 - 12 Animal's nose
 - 14 "Jabberwocky" starter
 - 15 Inherited
 - 19 Peach center
 - 20 Wd. from Roget
 - 21 Hard work
 - 22 Sunflower
 - 23 Walked (on)
 - 24 Date movies, for short
 - 25 Beach lotion letters
 - 26 Animated figures
 - 28 Pursuing
 - 29 Highways
 - 30 Sasha's sister
 - 31 Alliances
 - 32 Moreover
 - 34 Sloth's home
 - 35 Employ

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