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the **TIMBERJAY**



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989 VOL. 36, ISSUE 10 March 14, 2025 \$1.50

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

U.S. House vote nixes critical area projects

Ely among the biggest local losers as funds for desperately needed water line vanish

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- The last hope that the North Country would see any of the nearly \$40 million in federal funding requests submitted by the state's congressional delegation went up in flames Tuesday night when House Republicans pushed through

a stopgap spending resolution to prevent a government shutdown.

The continuing resolution, passed narrowly by the Republican-led House, eliminates \$13 billion earmarked for local projects requested by individual members of Congress. While competition for the funding is enormous

— the Senate alone had over 19,000 requests submitted in fiscal year 2024—the elimination of the funding means that no local requests, even those that had been on track as of last fall, will see any appropriation.

Democrats in the U.S. House and Senate have made it clear they are adamantly opposed to the stopgap bill so

Tuesday's action may not be the final word. But with a government shutdown looming as early as Friday, pressure to pass the resolution in the Senate will be enormous.

Local effects

City officials in Ely were devastated by the latest devel-

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



Left: An above-ground portion of the Ely water line from Burnside Lake, which was built in 1932.

file photo

CRIME

Babbitt man remains at large after felony assault

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

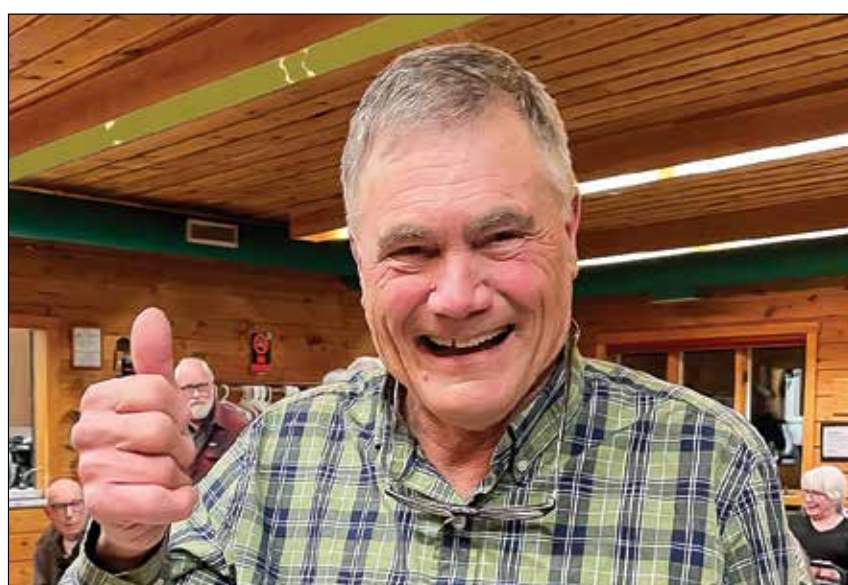
BABBITT- A local man here was charged with felony threats of violence but remained at large as the *Timberjay* went to press. Michael Shaun Jarvis, age 37, was cited on March 4 for an alleged domestic assault on Friday, Feb. 28. The Minnesota Sixth District Court currently lists an active warrant for his detention.

According to court documents, St. Louis County Sheriff's Deputy Scott Garrick responded shortly after noon when a female witness reported to law enforcement that she had been on the phone with a woman acquaintance when she heard the woman scream that she was being assaulted by Jarvis, who is a member of her household. The phone call was then disconnected.

Garrick arrived at the victim's residence where she told Garrick that she was getting ready to leave for work when Jarvis took her keys and wallet and then locked her out of the house. When she got back inside, Jarvis was "slamming things around." He told her that she and her unborn child "deserve to be six feet under." Jarvis then took all the keys to all the vehicles and left the house.

The woman said that Jarvis intimidates and scares her at least weekly. When she mentions calling the police about his behavior, he tells her that he will "stack them up like cordwood" and will "stack her like cordwood." Jarvis was convicted of misdemeanor domestic assault in 2022 and felony stalking in 2023. The woman involved in the latest incident was the victim in both prior cases.

Jarvis received three years of probation for the stalking conviction, sentenced on Feb. 27, 2023.



Left: Paul Thompson, a strong advocate of Option B, reacts positively to Tuesday night's vote in Greenwood. Thompson also won the race for town treasurer but will not have to serve due to the passage of Option B.

photo by J. Summit

TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING

Greenwood approves Option B

Residents approve a \$600,000 levy for next year, double the board's request

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP— Years of turmoil between the town board and its various elected clerks and treasurers, appeared to be more than enough drama for voters here as they overwhelmingly approved Option B, which hands control over the selection of these top officers to the town board.

Turnout was high for Greenwood's annual election on

Tuesday, with 328 voters casting ballots, 77-percent in favor of Option B.

The switch to Option B will take effect immediately for the town treasurer. The clerk will serve out the remainder of her term, which ends in March 2026.

Paul Thompson, who won the election for treasurer, garnering 79 percent of the vote, was clearly excited with the news, which means he will not be seated for the position he sought.

Thompson, who had strongly

backed Option B, received 265 votes to former clerk JoAnn Bassing's 67.

The town board, which met quickly after the close of the annual meeting, presented a draft of the job description that will be used to hire a new treasurer. The treasurer will be accountable to the town board, and responsible for properly handling and accounting for township funds. The board said they will finalize

See...**GREENWOOD** pg. 10

COUNTY SCHOOLS

District again considering a four-day week

District officials to take input on the idea at meetings on Monday

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

VIRGINIA- In a stark about-face from November, the ISD 2142 School Board appeared ready to adopt a four-day school week for next year at a working session on Tuesday, and scheduled a vote on the proposal for its March 25 business meeting.

The district notified parents of the possibility by phone or text messages sent Tuesday night after the board meeting. School officials will take public input on the plan at meetings set for next Monday night, March 17. Meetings at North Woods, Tower-Soudan, and Northeast Range will all be from 6-7 p.m. in the school libraries.

The four-day week was floated last fall, with the possibility that the switch could save the district at least \$500,000 as it struggles to cope with a projected \$1.5 million shortfall. But after the results of a survey found that 111 parents might choose to leave the district if the change was implemented, Superintendent Reggie Engebretson recommended that the board delay the move for a year because the loss of students would cost more in lost state funding than the district would save.

But a majority of board members have apparently had a change of heart, as comments at Tuesday's meeting leaned in favor of the proposal. "I think we need to at this point, budget wise," board member Rob Marinaro said. "I think it's going to be great for the kids to get a little extra day off to recuperate, and that staff can be a little fresher. I think it's going to work. I've heard a lot of positives in the Tower area. (Tower-Soudan Principal John Jirik) has got a pulse on it there and he's hearing good things. I don't think we wait. We want to be leaders, not followers. I think we can enhance our enrollment."

While the board could not vote at a working session, the general consensus was to move the proposal to a vote on March 25. Board member Chris Koivisto indicated that he was "not fully sup-

See...**SCHOOLS** pg. 9

COMMUNITY CARING

Local quilters donate time and creativity

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- Quilting is a hobby that takes time, skill, and patience, but for members of Vermilion Dream Quilters, it comes

Left: Quilting guild members display some of the chemotherapy bags they make for Essentia in Virginia.

submitted photo

with something even more rare these days— a desire to care for others.

The Dream Quilters, a quilting guild with members throughout the area, spent last year not only sewing amazing quilts for themselves and their families. They also donated thousands of hours crafting quilts or other warm and

See...**QUILTS** pg. 10



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Community notices

Embarrass High School class of '66 gathering in Virginia on March 27

VIRGINIA- Embarrass High School class of 1966 will get together on Thursday, March 27 at noon at the Copper Nickel (formerly Michael's on the Course) in Virginia. Please pass the word. Classmates and their spouse or significant other are welcome to join us. We will order off the menu and enjoy catching up. See you there!

Braver Angels tackles DOGE on Thursday, March 20

ELY- The Braver Angels invite one and all to a discussion on the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, the agency created by President Trump with the purpose of streamlining government and eliminating waste. The event will be on Thursday, March 20, at 6 p.m. at the Ely Senior Center, 27 S. First Ave. E.

Millions of Americans are thrilled with the changes President Trump and his administration are bringing to our government. Millions of others fear it's an existential threat to this nation.

If there's one thing we can all agree on, it's that something is amiss in our country and that things are happening quickly. We may not agree on how to deal with the changes, but at Braver Angels, we agree to discuss it with those with whom we disagree. We will actively listen to the perspectives of those with whom we disagree as we share our own perspective without judging the other side. Braver Angels welcomes you whether you've been coming to the gatherings over the past year or if you've never joined us before.

History Happy Hour in Ely on March 19

ELY- History Happy Hour delves into the rich history of the Ely area with pint-sized stories that are informative and entertaining in less than a half an hour. The next History Happy Hour is on Wednesday, March 19 at 5 p.m. in the Lookout Lounge at the Boathouse Brewpub in Ely. The Lookout Lounge is open from 4:30 to 6 p.m. with full service.

March's theme highlights Women's History Month with the various women who helped make our Ely Area towns the thriving communities they are today. Whether they were showing that women were just as capable as men in the wilderness, helping immigrant workers become American citizens or leading our fair town of Ely - we'll cover as many of these leading ladies as possible in 30-minutes.

Join host Jess Edberg, executive director of the Dorothy Molter Museum, as she scratches the surface of a local history topic, inspiring listeners to take a deeper dive on their own.

This program is offered as a free, in-person, 30-minute or less presentation October through May, typically on the third Wednesday of the month at 5 p.m. at the Boathouse Brewpub & Restaurant in Ely.

History Happy Hour is supported in-kind by the Boathouse Brewpub, Ely's Heritage Preservation Commission, the Dorothy Molter Museum, Boundary Waters Connect and the Ely Folk School.

Sheriff's office provides tips to avoid scams

REGIONAL- The St. Louis County Sheriff's Office recently hosted a media briefing to offer tips to help people avoid falling victim to a range of recent scams. These scams can come by email, phone, text or various online apps. Investigators encourage people to report all scam attempts to law enforcement and provided the following guidance to help people recognize and avoid being scammed.

Red flags that something may be a scam

- Someone claiming to have "insider" information
- Offering opportunities to make large amounts of money
- Fraudulent websites or phone apps
- Unsolicited assistance and advice
- Unable to meet in person
- Keeping you on the phone and not allowing you to call back (This prevents the scam victim from being able to verify the caller is who they claim to be)

- Requests for money or personal information
- Fake emergency scenarios
- A car accident occurred and you need to transfer money
- Someone you know in jail needs you to transfer money

Tips for avoiding cryptocurrency scams

- Do not respond to unknown numbers or profiles
- Use caution with what information you share online (Even information that appears harmless may be used by a scammer)
- Use caution on social media and online dating sites

Be especially careful of unsolicited financial, investment, cryptocurrency advice. Never share your personal financial information, especially with someone you have never met. Cease all communications if you are asked to transfer money, buy gift cards, or provide identifying information

PERFORMING ARTS

NLAA's "Matilda the Musical" coming to Ely

ELY- "Sometimes you have to be a little bit naughty." That's the lesson at the heart of "Matilda the Musical," the latest production from the Northern Lakes Arts Association (NLAA). The production will be held at the Vermilion Fine Arts Theater, 1900 E. Camp St., with performances on the following dates: March 27, 28, April 3, and 4 at 7 p.m., and March 29, 30, April 5, and 6 at 2 p.m. April 3 is a special pay-what-you-can performance.

Based on Roald Dahl's beloved novel, this high-energy musical follows Matilda, a brilliant young girl who refuses to accept unfairness and dares to change the world around her. But beyond the magic, music, and mischief, Matilda carries a powerful message — one that director Ian Francis Lah believes is especially relevant today.

"Matilda's story is about finding the courage to stand up when something isn't right," Lah explains. "She doesn't wait for permission, she doesn't back down, and she doesn't do it alone. She shows us that when we come together, we rise. That's something we need to remember in our own communities."



This production is a true celebration of local talent, featuring 13 young performers from the Ely area alongside an incredible

cast of actors, singers, and dancers. Lah sees Matilda not just as a show, but also a platform for young artists to find their voices — both on and off the stage.

"There's something so powerful about watching these kids step into their roles," Lah says. "They're learning confidence, teamwork, and the ability to tell a story that matters. In a world that often tells young people to stay quiet, Matilda is a reminder that their voices matter."

Supporting local theater means supporting these young performers, as well as the dedicated adult cast and creative team behind the production. NLAA is grateful to Ely Family Dental and The Vermilion Campus Foundation for their generous support in making this production possible.

With dazzling choreography, powerful music, and an inspiring message, "Matilda the Musical" is a must-see production for audiences of all ages.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit NorthernLakesArts.org or call 218-235-9937.

SPRING EXPO

Spring Gardening Extravaganza in Duluth on Saturday, March 29

DULUTH- We are excited to announce that the annual spring gardening conference will take place on Saturday, March 29 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Depot, 506 W. Michigan St., in Duluth. This amazing day of gardening is brought to you by St. Louis County Extension and University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners.

This year's theme is Better Gardens for a Better Life: An integrated approach to gardening your way to better health and happiness. Keynote presentations include: The Gardener's Guide to the Human Microbi-

ome; Designing Beauty into Your Landscape and Garden; Gardening for Life, Garden Smarter, not Harder; Deep Dive into Soils, Fertility and Organics; and Gardening for

Better Mental Health. Speakers from the University of Minnesota and local professionals will conduct the presentations.

Participants can choose from 14 breakout sessions in-

cluding: Landscape Design, Houseplant Workshop, Flowers for Cutting, Composting Essentials, Growing Great Garlic, Winter Sowing, Tomatoes and Peppers, Life-Long Gardening Tips, Blueberries and Raspberries, Pruning Trees and Shrubs, Growing the New Hydrangeas, Creating Bee Habitats and Houses, and Growing the Cabbage Family.

The cost for the day is \$40 and includes a catered lunch, refreshments, displays and the 2025 Resource Book published for this event. For more information, visit stlouiscounty.mn.gov or call 218-733-2870.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Board president of UWNEMN: Always looking ahead



LATISHA GIETZEN

REGIONAL - A lot can change in a year, especially at United Way of Northeast Minnesota (UWNEMN), where our programs and partners are continually evaluated to ensure they're making the intended impact.

In addition to operating our long-running programs and providing support to 50+ nonprofits across our 13,500 square mile service area, in my year as board president, we collaborated with leaders across the region and state to mobilize volunteers for our first-ever Day of Action in Keewatin, responded to devastating region-wide flooding, and worked with United Way organizations across the state to release the "United for ALICE" report.

Specifically, learning more about ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) has been very eye opening. There is a lot of work that needs to be done — including building coalition — to affect change, but I believe with UWNEMN at the helm, we can make real improvements for

ALICE in our communities.

That's because United Way's staff, donors, and volunteers are always looking to do more, dig deeper, and help as many people as possible.

When I joined the UWNEMN Board of Directors eight years ago, our team of three was working out of a closet in downtown Chisholm, borrowing space from the city to pack Buddy Backpacks. Now, we have a team of eight working out of a big, beautiful, functional building (thanks to generous donations from Dick Enrico, Minnesota Power, and many others) with two warehouses, a loading dock, and full conference room.

The building is such an asset to the organization and the community, and every time you visit, you see it being put to good use. Heck, last time I stopped in, students were completing their American Red Cross babysitter training.

Our greatest asset, of course, continues to be local people. As we've become more well known in the community, people have brought ideas to us that have inspired programs and collaborations that are making a difference right now for someone in our community. And none of it would be possible without individual donations.

As I reflect on this month's Fund Distribution Day, in which volunteers and donors determined how funds we raised over the past year will be reinvested in NUMBER partner agencies this year, the difference we can collectively make as individuals feels all the more relevant. Our partner agencies are on the ground serving specific specialized needs that UWNEMN alone could never address adequately. Agency staff have the education and training to do this specialized work, but in many cases, UWNEMN's support - and your donations - make it possible.

I anticipate a major focus in the year ahead will be board member development and recruitment. We are going through an interesting period with several long-term active board members reaching their term limits. Incoming Board President Chad Buus is very active and engaging, and I have no doubt he will be successful in cultivating and educating new board members.

My time on UWNEMN's Board of Directors has instilled in me a confidence that our residents are willing and able to work together for the betterment of our neighbors and communities, and I leave my presidency knowing the future of our organization and region is in good hands — our own.

NORTHLAND RESOURCES

Wilderness Health donates resources in the area

REGIONAL - Hygiene kits, dental kits, socks, and more were brought to the Arrowhead region with funding from the Northland Foundation, Otto Bremer Trust and their Community Responsive Fund. Wilderness Health received \$40,000 in grant funding last summer to support social determinant of health needs across all our member hospitals and clinics. Area hospitals including those in Cook and Ely are part of this effort.

Social determinants of health including access to nutritious food, stable housing, reliable transportation, and essential hygiene supplies play a significant role in overall well-being and health outcomes. Our member care coordinators regularly screen for these needs. When acute needs are identified, hospitals and clinics work to meet patient needs in the interim by partnering with local resources. In support of this work, Wilderness Health applied

for a grant from the Northland Foundation funded in part by the Otto Bremer Trust. Wilderness Health was generously awarded \$40,000 to aid in the acute needs identified during social determinant of health screenings. Since August, Wilderness Health has purchased items to assemble over 6,000 hygiene kits and dental kits for adults and youth, over 400 gas cards, 360 pairs of socks, and 700 grocery cards - including a generous donation of 50 cards from Su-

per One Foods — to help alleviate food insecurity. These resources were distributed to member hospitals and clinics just in time for the holidays, ensuring that individuals and families received timely support.

Wilderness Health is deeply grateful for the generosity of the Northland Foundation, the Otto Bremer Trust, and Super One Foods. Wilderness Health is a nonprofit collaborative of independent providers working together to improve rural health care in Northeastern Minnesota and Wisconsin. For more information about Wilderness, visit <http://wildernesshealthmn.org/>.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Funding snafu for Tower-Breitung drinking water plant

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

Change could lead to higher water bills for Tower-Soudan residents

TOWER— City officials here rejected a proposal by the state's Public Facilities Authority, or PFA, that would substantially increase the cost to local ratepayers for the new drinking water treatment plant currently being installed to serve both Tower and Soudan.

For more than a year, PFA officials had indicated that the joint Tower-Breitung Waste Water Board would be responsible for repaying a loan of approximately \$1.04 million. But based on their latest calculation, Tower and Soudan would be responsible for repaying \$1.76 million in loan, a 40 percent increase that ratepayers in the two communities would be required to repay.

The rest of the \$10.7 million project is slated to be paid for through a combination of state and federal grants, including \$3.375 million from the Army Corps of Engineers.

"An additional \$700,000 is a pretty hefty loan," said Tower Clerk-Treasurer Michael Schultz. "We're trying to figure out what happened."

It turns out, it may have been an error by the PFA. According to Schultz, the new higher loan amount is based on the average household income in the communities served by the project. In making that calculation, the PFA used the median household income for all of Breitung Township, which includes a substantial amount of high value lake property which is not served by the project. Schultz noted that the law states that the loan percent-

age is based on the average household income in the area served by the project, which would be limited to the city of Tower along with Soudan, where household incomes tend to be lower than on the lake.

Schultz said city officials are now working with PFA in hopes of getting the authority to recalculate the loan amount using the right household data. "We all feel that through this process, it should get adjusted," said Schultz, although he acknowledged it may not go back to the original loan amount in part because household incomes in Tower appear to have increased more than expected over the past few years.

In the hope that the loan amount will get changed, the council opted to reject, at least for now, the agreement with PFA that included the larger loan amount.

The delay in obtaining the PFA funds, which include a combination of grants and loans, is having some impact on the city's ability to pay for the ongoing work by Lakehead Constructors. The company is currently floating a portion of the billable costs but is charging interest for doing so.

The council did agree, however, to pay a \$143,000 pay application from Lakehead for a portion of the work to date.

Fire department concerns

In other business, the council discussed the status of their ongoing review of the city's fire department. While the council had discussed a third-party review of the department's operations, Schultz said city officials have held off on that for

now. "We did determine based on our own review, that a third party coming in is not necessary yet," said Schultz.

"We're still addressing some of the obvious items. After we've addressed those, we could still bring in a third party."

Schultz said department equipment has been inventoried and an initial vehicle inspection was scheduled for later in the week. He said new vehicle batteries had been purchased and that the existing batteries appear to work as long as they are plugged in. Batteries became an issue during a fire in the city in January when the departments main engine couldn't be started due to a dead battery.

Council member David Wanless urged the council to insist on updates of the department's operating guidelines and maintenance checklists, along with council oversight to ensure that the department continues to maintain vehicles and equipment, and documents those efforts. "There doesn't seem to have been a lot of oversight of this," said Wanless. "Ultimately, it's up to the council to make sure these things are done."

Wanless also questioned whether the department is even viable given the limited number of firefighters. "Do we even have four members?" he asked.

The council was able to add at least one new member to the department this week, when they approved the hiring of McKenna Villebrun as a new firefighter, contingent on her obtaining all the re-

quired certifications.

In other business, the council:

► Heard public input from resident Laura Garafolo, who urged the council to provide a more open and inviting atmosphere around its public meetings. In the past few years, the council has changed the layout of its meetings so council members face each other rather than the audience, which had been the case in the city for decades. Garafolo suggested nameplates as well, so residents would know the names of council members. "It seems like everybody would appreciate it if it would be a more friendly atmosphere," she said.

► Heard that the city has received a \$482,000 grant to fund sewer, water, and electrical infrastructure for the first six housing units at the Marjo RE property along the East Two riverfront.

► Heard from local HVAC professional Steve Tekautz on replacing the heating system at the civic center. Currently, the center's fuel oil boiler is no longer working, leaving only electric baseboard heating for now. Tekautz said shifting over to a propane boiler system would entail upfront cost, about \$44,000 based on his estimate, but would save money in the long run. The city had received two other quotes for differing options from two other HVAC contractors in early 2024, which ranged from \$35,566 to \$52,300. The council directed Schultz to work with public works supervisor Ben Velcheff to obtain updated quotes and come back to the council with a recom-

mendation on how to proceed.

► Approved a motion to put the city's 2013 ambulance up for sealed bids, with a minimum bid to be determined after more research by Schultz and council member Kevin Norby.

► Authorized application for grant funding from the Minnesota Housing Agency for infrastructure funds for a planned mixed-use development at the city's harbor. The Tower Economic Development Authority will be taking the lead in the grant application.

► Approved a letter of support to encourage Gov. Tim Walz to appoint St. Louis County Commissioner Mike Jugovich to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources, or LCCMR.

► Discussed but took no action on a change in the rental policy for the city's civic center. A revised version will be back on the council agenda next month.

► Discussed revisions to a pending new city ordinance establishing the Gundersen Endowment Fund Committee, particularly the qualifications for membership on the five-person board. A revised version will be back on the council agenda in April.

► Heard from council member Joe Morin on the Tower-Soudan Historical Society's many activities and accomplishments over the past year. Morin had requested that the group's annual report be included in the council packet so council members could see how active the organization has become.

TOWNSHIP ELECTIONS

Morse and Fall Lake township election results

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

MORSE/FALL LAKE— Mike Velcheff easily won election in Morse Township in Tuesday's elections, finishing well ahead of write-in candidate Carolyn Dehnhostel, who ran an active cam-

paign in local newspapers and social media. Velcheff, who garnered 152 votes out of the 206 cast by voters, will assume the seat left vacant by the Jan. 30 passing of Supervisor Len Cersine. Velcheff is a part-time employee of the township and the father of Ely Deputy Clerk Casey Velcheff.

The voter turnout in Morse this year was ten times what it was last year, when just 21 showed up to vote an unopposed Terry Soderberg back into office.

In Fall Lake Township incumbent supervisor Craig Seliskar won handily in an uncontested race.

Left: Morse Township election judges (from left to right) Mary Ann Lekatz, Arlene Today, and Kathy Hutar count the vote after Tuesday's election. photo by C. Clark

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OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

Editorial

A feckless council

City officials in Ely embarrass themselves once again with their WICOLA decision

The remarkable about-face by the Ely City Council last week was embarrassing, and not just because of the head-in-the-sand mentality it represents. The city council has done this before, most prominently with an anti-Iraq war resolution that the council passed back in 2003, an act that prompted an explosion of opposition that drew national attention and ultimately prompted the council to reverse itself.

In retrospect, it's clear that the council had gotten it right the first time. The Iraq War, as early opponents had predicted, turned into a quagmire that cost the U.S. trillions of dollars and damaged our international standing. But at the time, the whole episode just made the council look feckless.

This latest permutation adds a dose of hypocrisy to the rancid brew. It all started with the kind of request that city councils receive all the time, a letter of support for a state grant application from a local organization, in this case the White Iron Chain of Lakes Association, or WICOLA. The group is hoping to advance a promising technology, developed by Babbitt-based Clearwater Biologics, that can address mining-related sulfate pollution in surface waters for far less than the cost of reverse osmosis, which is currently considered by some as the only way to effectively address the problem.

So, who wouldn't support more affordable methods to improve water quality? It seemed a no-brainer, which is apparently why the council gave the proposal its initial endorsement back in February.

But the politics of mining are never far removed from the workings of local government in our region, and this was no exception. Looking for solutions to mining pollution, after all, requires acknowledging that the pollution exists, which is contrary to the current public relations push coming from the industry.

Adding insult was a fact sheet, produced by the Northern Lakes Scientific Advisory Panel, which described how sulfate discharges from the Peter Mitchell pit were impacting lakes downstream, including within the Boundary Waters. That's in addition to a map showing the pathway of pollution from mines north of Virginia, which are raising sulfate levels as far away as Voyageurs National Park.

Some on the council seemed to suggest such maps were politically motivated, which is a far less relevant issue than the matter of their accuracy. We've seen the data that such maps and other graphics included with the grant request are based upon, and they

coincide with the test results.

We know from numerous scientific studies that sulfate pollution can increase the mobilization of mercury into the aquatic food chain. We also know that sulfate discharges can result in a decline in wild rice. These aren't politically motivated facts so much as inconvenient ones, at least for those who would prefer we keep our heads firmly buried in the sand on the issue of mining-related pollution.

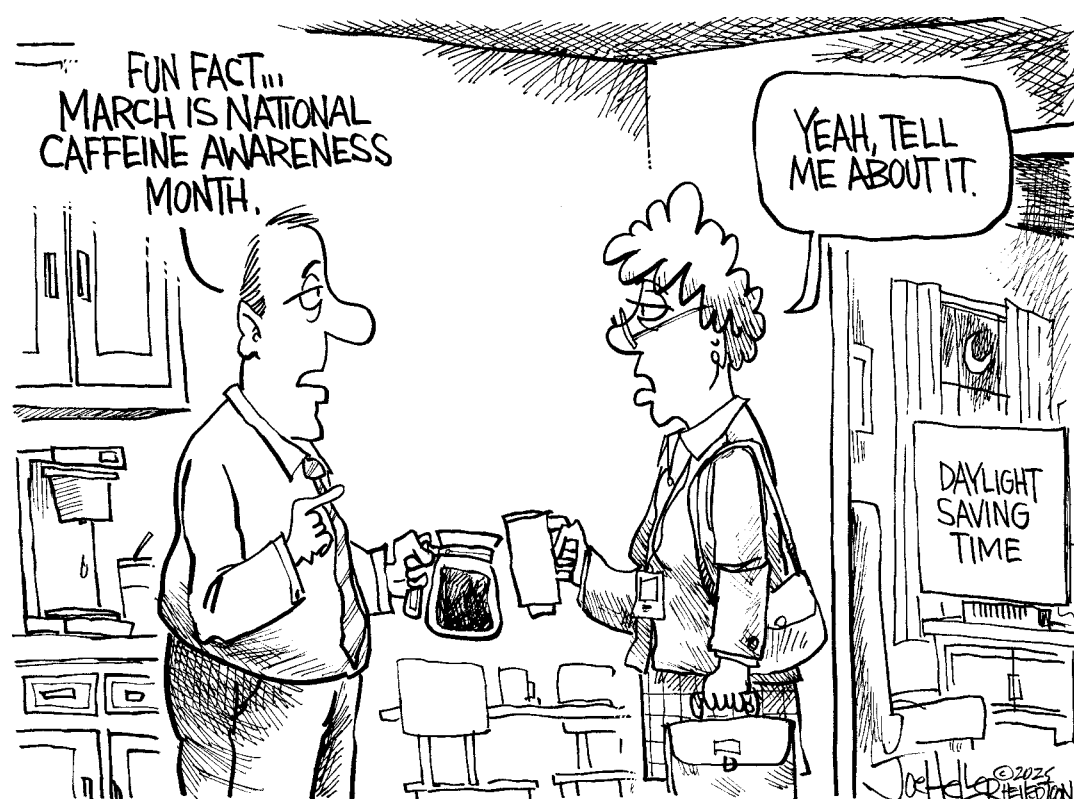
Yet, advocating for technologies that could help to affordably reduce the pollution problem isn't anti-mining, it's pro-water quality, which is a position most mining supporters routinely claim to support. If there's one area where the two sides could come together, you might think this would be it.

Things are never that simple, of course. Behind the scenes, the mining industry appears more than content to keep affordable sulfate-reducing technologies off in the future. The Clean Water Act, after all, provides exemptions from various rules in cases where the only available technology is deemed uneconomical. Treating the sulfate problem currently plaguing the taconite industry could cost billions of dollars to address through reverse osmosis, a process that has its own environmental issues. As long as the industry can claim reverse osmosis is the only available technology, they can pretty much hold off regulators. Sure, U.S. Steel has dabbled with the Natural Resources Research Institute to advance a similar approach, but call us skeptical. They've been "studying" solutions for years, it seems mostly for the purpose of delay.

That's cynical, but not hypocritical, like some on the Ely council. In arguing to rescind the council's earlier decision to support WICOLA's grant request to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources, some councilors suggested it was inappropriate to have given support for the request in the first place since the White Iron chain is located just over the line in Lake County rather than St. Louis.

It was a slender reed to be sure, but it vanished entirely when the council opted to not just rescind its letter of support but take the almost unprecedented step of drafting a letter of opposition to the request. Apparently, meddling in Lake County matters is just fine as long as it's serving the interests of the mining industry.

Given the council's history on the subject, their action may not be surprising. The way it was handled, however, was certainly disappointing.



Letters from Readers

Keep the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame in Eveleth

Hockey is more than just a game in Minnesota — it's a way of life, a tradition passed down through generations, and a cornerstone of our state's culture. Nowhere is that truer than on the Iron Range, where the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame has proudly stood in Eveleth for over 50 years. This hall isn't just a museum — it's a monument to the hardworking communities that built the game and made Minnesota the "State of Hockey."

But today, that legacy is under threat.

There is a movement afoot, led by Senator Karin Housley, a Republican from the Twin Cities and chair of the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame Board, to relocate the hall from its rightful home in Eveleth. While I respect Sen. Housley's passion for hockey, I fundamentally disagree with this misguided effort to strip away a piece of our Iron Range identity.

Let me be clear: I will fight to keep the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame right where it belongs — on the Iron Range.

I have already taken action. I wrote a letter to the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame Board opposing this move, making it clear that any relocation would be a direct affront to the heritage of the Range. I am also planning to introduce a resolution in the Minnesota Senate opposing the move, ensuring that my colleagues in St. Paul understand the stakes. And I am preparing legislation that would prevent any state capital investment dollars from being used to relocate the Hall of Fame. Minnesota taxpayers should not foot the bill for erasing our history.

It is my hope that my fellow Iron Range Legislators stand with me in this fight. This isn't about party lines or political ideology — this is about defending our home

and preserving our proud history.

We must also recognize the legacy of the late Sen. David Tomassoni, a tireless advocate for the Iron Range and a fierce protector of all things hockey. There is simply no way he would have allowed this to happen. In his memory, we must carry on that fight and ensure that the Hall of Fame remains in Eveleth, where it belongs, and where it will continue to inspire future generations of hockey players and fans.

The U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame is more than a building, it is a symbol of our past, our perseverance, and our passion for the game. It is a testament to the legends of the ice who came from small towns and outdoor rinks, who made Minnesota proud, and who deserve to have their legacies honored in the heart of the Iron Range.

I will not stand by and allow this historic institution to be taken from us. The fight is on, and I hope every Iron Ranger, every hockey fan, and every Minnesotan who values history and tradition will join me in standing up to keep the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame on the Range.

**Sen. Grant Hauschild
Hermantown**

Why won't Stauber defend our veterans?

We're hearing that some 80,000 Veterans Administration employees are set to be laid off by the Trump Administration. In what world is this okay?

At a time when the health care needs of Vietnam veterans are increasing because of advancing age and Persian Gulf/Iraq War/Afghanistan veterans are in need of complex care because of the type of injuries and trauma they experienced, why would we lay off people at the VA, many of whom are veterans themselves?

Veterans risked their lives on the field of battle. So, does Stauber now think it's OK to risk veterans' lives on the field of Musk's so-

called efficiency mission?

Call Pete Stauber at 202-224-3121 and ask him what he's doing to reverse this astonishing and heartless decision.

**Leah Rogne
Gheen**

I'm constantly amazed by the Timberjay

Well done, all the way around. Catie Clark and David Colburn — this includes your respective contributions.

I'm used to seeing a high standard from Marshall, but I'm really pleased to see you two coming along so well. Then there's Jodi coming back to the office late in the evening after the Greenwood Township stew session. Lord knows what to make of the Maus mess and the local fire department, but it is fascinating. Reminds me of a bunch of starlings at the feeder, sorting out who gets to eat and when.

I find myself continually marveling at the quality of your newspaper.

Way to go!
**Dave Porter
Minneapolis**



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.

COMMENTARY

The joys of coping at breakneck speed

As I sit alone tonight in my little house on the Soudan hillside, I can't help but wonder what will happen over the course of the next three or six months in the United States with Trump, Musk and this highly incompetent administration at the helm. I am deeply grateful for my sense of humor and seem to have evolved a rubber neck so that I can sustain the oncoming rounds of whiplash as new orders come from a tarnished White House and then are pulled back in a day or two. I just



**SCARLET
STONE**

feel that something HUGE is gonna happen because people cannot tolerate what is going on. Who does this I ask? Competent leaders don't and it's a lot more grave than egg prices and frankly, I am sick of hearing the four letter

word....eggs...eggs...eggs. There are no great policies being unfolded, prices aren't dropping, it is not God's will for this to be happening, but rather it's sheer stupidity, recklessness...all topped off with a heavy smattering of

insanity.

I am personally so glad I get to work with highly educated and humorous colleagues at the Timberjay. Often, upon entering in the mornings, I will just toss out my current gloomy thoughts to Marshall and tell him I need to be talked down off the ledge. One of my co-workers recently told me that I was starting to sound like a reverse QAnon conspiracy believer and that I need to take a chill pill. He says, "There's reasonable anxiety, and unreasonable fear." I confess that it would have helped me to have paid closer attention during civics class in high school in order to have

a better understanding of how organized government works. There are checks and balances and I pick it up as I go, but with so many norms and laws being violated, everything under the sun seems to be in a state of uncertainty. The fences have been torn down and prize horses are running willy-nilly through the fields, and I wonder if we can ever get them corralled again. I am not alone with these thoughts.

Starting before Jan. 21, I was riveted to the TV for so many hours a day to watch the events that were happening at lightning speed. Like so many of us, I started getting depressed as a result.

This went on for weeks as I tried to balance the amount of exposure to the TV and other news sources with positive and normal daily activities. I am fortunate to have developed the ability to be flexible and to adjust quite easily and so I am not in a steady state of gut-wrench anymore. I decided that there is not too much that I can do except to try to be supportive of my friends, stay active in my community and "keep on keeping on," as they say. However, if prompted, I definitely would go screaming and marching down a street in protest with fists pumping and my hair flying madly in the wind. I am quite con-

vinced that at some point, this could happen. So if you see a spectacle like this in Soudan it is most likely me. Until then, I am trying to occupy myself with positive things, like getting back into my knitting and crocheting after decades of abandon. It's time to pull out all the stops on doing all things creative such as sewing, painting my upstairs, and working on some new T-shirt designs for one of my customers. "We still have to live".... is something that my older brother said to me in one of his emails this past winter. He sends me writings of wisdom

See COPING...pg. 5

COMMENTARY

Trump's reality television administration

Anyone paying attention to the news over the past 60 days is undoubtedly trying to adjust to an administration that seems designed to keep everyone off balance and uncertain. It's a recipe for the kind of drama that sustains reality television and, as is the case with most such cheap TV fare, there's very little reality involved.



MARSHALL HELMBERGER

We've seen an endless stream of executive orders coming from the Trump White House in these first seven weeks — a number that surpasses any previous president. Combined with the dismissal of tens of thousands of federal employees and the elimination of entire agencies by Elon Musk's DOGE, the administration is portraying Trump as a man of action who is taking his election as opportunity to reshape the world to his liking.

But there's far less to many of these orders than meets the eye and many are directly at odds with reality. Take Trump's March 1 order ostensibly designed to increase

domestic timber production as a way to reduce dependence on Canadian lumber, issued just days ahead of additional tariffs on goods from north of the border.

Trump's action garnered headlines across the country and likely pleased many of his supporters. It's a made-for-TV storyline, which the media will have forgotten all about long before the reality — namely that Trump's order will have little or no impact — sets in.

In fact, increasing American timber and wood products production is certainly possible, but not without a strategic plan for how to achieve that objective, and a stable and consistent set of policies that builds confidence among investors.

Keep in mind, the wood products sector is extremely capital intensive. Starting even a mom-and-pop logging operation requires investment of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Opening a new lumber or paper mill takes tens or hundreds of millions of dollars,

depending on the size. No one in their right mind is going to make those kinds of investments without confidence that the market conditions that might make that investment favorable today will continue for the foreseeable future. With Trump's on-again, off-again tariffs and almost daily economic policy gyrations (now he says a recession wouldn't be so bad), the only seeming certainty is never-ending chaos. When even the pro-Republican *Wall Street Journal* editorial page is raising alarm bells surrounding the actions of a GOP president, you know the investment community is worried.

The U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management could double or triple their offerings of timber tomorrow, but unless you have the infrastructure in place — from loggers to mills to transportation — that timber isn't going anywhere. The trees don't cut themselves.

What's more, timber sales don't happen without foresters, and the Trump Administration is firing them by the hundreds. I spoke recently to a high official on the Superior National Forest (who I'm not

naming because free speech is not allowed for federal workers under this administration), who noted that on some districts, virtually the entire timber program had been eliminated by Musk's job cuts. An administration that was operating with strategic vision would be connecting the dots here and recognizing that some of their very own actions are in direct opposition to their stated goals.

Trump suggests through his order that he wants to see more wood products mills. Yet, his tariffs on steel products are making the very materials that companies would need to build those plants substantially more expensive. And assuming Trump follows through on his tariffs on Canadian energy exports, the cost of diesel will rise, substantially raising the cost of operations for loggers in border areas.

It's no different than his "drill, baby, drill" mantra. As the Independent Petroleum Association of America recently reported, Trump's new tariffs on steel and aluminum products are hampering the oil and gas sector, which boomed under President Biden. "The American oil and natural gas industry hinges on

the availability of steel — particularly for well construction, surface management, and for pipelines to gather and safely move its product to market," notes the IPAA on its website. "Unfortunately, the implications of these new trade policies can hinder the progress of any Energy Dominance agenda," concludes the group.

An administration that was thinking strategically would endeavor to actually understand the industries they claim to want to support and would implement policies designed to achieve those goals.

That, however, requires the kind of detailed policy work that Trump abhors. It requires an actual concern for these industries, rather than a focus on endless self-aggrandizement, which is the hallmark of this president. With Trump, it's all about the invented story line, which makes each day of this administration like just another episode of "The Apprentice," designed to make Trump look good for the cameras.

The facts on the ground, the reality behind the cameras, couldn't matter less. With this president, it's all just for show.

Letters from Readers

Many women have played key roles in U.S. history

Many of us are aware of the WACS and WAVES and the roles they played during WWII. In addition, many women worked difficult civilian jobs in manufacturing and in agriculture during wartimes from the Revolutionary War to the present. Many chose to be nurses and medical drivers. We have many women proudly serving in the military today in various roles.

Frances Perkins was an educated social worker who took on the abuses done against women immigrants in New York City in the 1920s and 30s. She lobbied corrupt politicians (in Tammany Hall) to intervene and pass laws against tricking female immigrants into prostitution and indentured factory work. Later, working for the state of New York under then-Gov. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, she was in charge of factory safety. She had witnessed a previous factory fire in downtown New York City where the doors were locked and women jumped out the windows into nets that didn't quite work that well. She saw firsthand the corpses lined up in the street. It was only the tip of the iceberg in terms of unsafe working conditions nationwide.

Roosevelt, when elected president, appointed Perkins as Labor Secretary, the first female cabinet member. During those Great Depression years, she and her various contacts recrafted national labor laws: unemployment compensation insurance, workplace safety mandates, workman's compensation for the injured, and legalizing unions. The crown

jewel to all this was Social Security, financed by a payroll tax.

Another prominent woman was Jean Laidlaw, a young accountant who served as a member of the British Western Approach Tactical Unit in WWII. In that role, she crafted and played "war games" to determine how Nazi U-boats were destroying so many merchant supply ships undetected. She figured it out and it led to so many German subs being destroyed that Hitler withdrew most of them from the shipping lanes. There is a series about her on the Sky History Channel.

Last, but not least, is Francis Oldham Kelsey, Canadian-born pharmacist. After hiring on with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, she became a reviewer of safety for new drugs being proposed for the market. She went head-to-toe with the drug company wanting to market Thalidomide to treat morning sickness during pregnancies, etc. She claimed over and over that the drug peddler had not proven the chemical's safety and she won out. Unfortunately, the drug was accepted more readily in Europe and other countries and many severe birth defects were the result. Ms. Kelsey later led the Division of Scientific Investigation at the FDA. She was voted into the Women's Hall of Fame and was the recipient of many awards such as the Presidential Award and many other honors. Thankfully, she kept many of us from a life of disability.

**Mark Roalson
Hoyt Lakes**

We're not getting what Trump promised

Fewer than half of Americans who voted last November wanted Trump to be president. Most who voted for him were probably aware that he is a spiteful, self-interested billionaire with little regard for truth or decency. They held nevertheless on to their faith that as president he would honor his promises to stick up for "the little guy," dedicate himself to the public good, and make their lives better.

But just a few weeks into Trump's presidency, it's clear that "looking out for the little guy" is not even on the agenda. On the contrary — the initiatives brought forth by Trump's gang of millionaires and billionaires are upending the lives of people who are already struggling to get by.

Here in the Arrowhead, for example, dozens of people have been thrown out of their jobs, and hundreds more have been told that they're next. These are hard-working friends and neighbors doing critical work in our area — maintaining roads, fighting fires, enforcing the law in our national forests and throughout the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. They facilitate visits to the BWCAW, those visits providing a major source of tourism revenue in the area.

With the high cost of groceries and housing in the Arrowhead, families here are already walking a financial tightrope. Being thrown out of work is a disaster; many may be forced to leave the area. And considering the many other contributions these friends and neighbors and their fami-

lies make to the community — even just through purchases at local grocery, gas, and hardware stores — their loss is a blow to all of us.

And even when one's job is not directly threatened by Trump's initiatives, people's financial survival may be. Many people here work two or three part-time jobs, without benefits, to try to make ends meet. To keep their heads above water, they may need a boost from time to time from federal food assistance programs such as SNAP or WIC. And without employer-provided health benefits, Medicaid, Medicare, and other federal health care program assistance become a matter of life or death for struggling Arrowhead families. But Trump's initiatives are curtailing and threatening this crucial assistance.

Even worse, instead of getting relief from hardship, we have the threat of higher prices caused by Trump's initiation of foolish trade wars with our closest allies and trading partners. This includes Canada, from which we import everything from groceries to lumber to plants and flowers. Meanwhile, Trump unapologetically and gallingly pronounces that he knows full well that the higher prices caused by his ill-advised trade wars "will cause pain" for ordinary Americans.

The people who voted for Trump didn't vote for any of this. No one voted for this. People voted for a better America — not for government by the wealthy, with disregard for ordinary people. They voted for bringing back an America where the voice and well-being of the common person actually mattered. Post-election, however, we

can see that none of that is in play. We all should be angry about it.

**Charles Hathaway
Grand Marais**

An open letter to Rep. Pete Stauber

A lot of people are really mad at you right now. I watched you the other night standing up and clapping like an idiot at every lie Donald Trump told in his recent speech to Congress.


I have heard people talking in this town, even some Republicans, about the rising price of groceries, which Trump promised would go down on his first day. Eggs were \$4.49 when Biden left office. They were \$12.50 in our local grocery store last time I looked, after only six weeks of Trump. The stock market is crashing and now Trump is talking about a possible recession. Major purchases such as cars or houses will cost at least 25 percent more, thanks to Trump's ri-

diculous and aggressive tariffs against our (former) allies Canada and Mexico. Someone should really explain to him how tariffs work.

I can't wait until Elon is done cutting Medicaid, which helps people in nursing homes pay their exorbitant costs, and poor people with children to pay their medical expenses. Not to mention cutting food stamps, SNAP, and other programs, which will literally take food out of the mouths of children to pay for whopping tax cuts for the already richest jerks in the country.

I realize you are scared of Trump. He will call you and scream at you if you dare to stand up to him. You would be better served to become a little more afraid of your constituents, you know, the people who voted for you to represent them. Do your job and represent them, instead of the billionaires who bought Trump. Mid-terms are on their way.

**Kate Furness
Ely**



**the
TIMBERJAY**

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Find more letters to the editor on page 9

COPING...Cont. from page 4

and spirituality every week and I have appreciated the positive and thought-provoking excerpts.

I think that my early life living in Alaska did give me some skills that could benefit me in a depression or dreadfully-awful-living condition. After all, I can build a fire, can and preserve food, haul water, take sponge baths and live a rustic lifestyle if need be. My dad used to preach "food, heat and shelter" are the three things you need to stay alive. I never forgot it because of the drama he used in his voice to convey these words of parental advice. I was doing more than just baking cookies as I would listen to him expound over a glass of Jim Beam while

he sat at the kitchen counter in the evenings speaking his words of wisdom coupled with emotion-filled memories of his parents and by-gone days back in Chisholm, where he grew-up. Dad, too, was trying to cope with the concerns of the day, proving that no generation gets through this life without trial.

I was lying in bed last night thinking that if the electric power grid went down, I could set up an outdoor house of sorts...so stocking up on toilet paper is not a bad idea. Suddenly, my thoughts raced as quick as a cockroach skittering under a rug to sensing the need to buy a propane heater because without power, my furnace won't work. "Good

grief," I whispered to the walls in my room as I rolled over and freed my legs from a cat that was lying across them. I could have used a big melatonin sleeper pill for sure. Here's another thought, "maybe I should get some of those big plastic buckets and load in some bags of rice, dried beans and get cans of meat and other things that have a shelf life." I started thinking about what a waste of money it would be to have it sitting there for an extended period of time. I fell back to sleep and left all of those tumbling thoughts behind.

It can get rather grim, so in the mornings when I wake up, I often put on fun clothes, a colorful hat, jewelry, and some wild eyewear pur-

chased from online sources and go out somewhere to do something social or take in a bit of retail therapy. After I do retail therapy, however, I feel guilty about spending money when there are people who need food and clothing because Trump has shut off foreign aid.

What a balancing act it is to move through the days of this administration, and we still have about 3.5 years left of this. I do know that I am of no use to anybody if I don't take care of my mental and spiritual health... so I confess, a bit of retail therapy has helped. I have a couple of male friends who have rushed to buy new vehicles to beat the tariffs and I just may buy a new hat.

Week of March 17

Monday
Embarrass Al-Anon Family Group- Hope Lutheran Church, 5088 Hwy. 21, 6 p.m.
Tower City Council- 5:30 p.m. on March 10

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 March 18.
Greenwood Fire Dept.- Training meetings on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Thursday
AA Meeting- Lake Vermilion 12x12 (Open) 6:30 p.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tower. Use the rear side door entrance.
Breitung Town Board, 6 p.m. on March 20
Vermilion Country School Board- Meetings



TSHS weekly winners
TOWER- The \$100 winner of Week 26 Charlemagne's 52 Club is Trent Manderle of Oak Creek, Wis.
History Tidbit: The Vermilion Neighborly Women's Club was established on November 16, 1932. Its motto is "Better neighbors, better workers for a better community." This club held the honor of being the oldest rural club in continuous existence in St. Louis County. The first project was establishing a medical loan closet.

Tower area students named to University of Minnesota Twin Cities Dean's List
MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL- The following students have been named to the 2024 fall semester Dean's List at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. To qualify for the Dean's List, a student must complete 12 or more letter-graded credits while attaining a 3.66 grade point average.
Cooper Hanson, of Tower, Senior, Carlson School of Management
Allison Maus, of Tower, Junior, Col of Educ/Human Development.

Breitung residents approve levy increase
SOUDAN- Breitung residents approved a \$33,000 increase for the 2026 levy, a 4.46-percent increase, bringing the levy up to \$773,000.
In the township election, Stephen Tekautz received 42 votes for supervisor, and Teresa Dolinar received 49 votes for treasurer. Both newcomers were running unopposed. More reporting on the annual meeting in next week's Timberjay.

Community meal at Immanuel
TOWER- Immanuel Lutheran Church is hosting a free community meal on Wednesday, March 26 from 4:30 - 6 p.m., or until the food is gone. The meal includes lasagne, salad, and breadsticks. Eat-in or take-out available. All are welcome to attend.

Bookmobile stops
REGIONAL- The Arrowhead Bookmobile will be in the Tower-Soudan area on Wednesdays: March 19; April 9 & 30. Stops include: Bois Forte (Boys & Girls Club): 11 - 11:30 a.m.; Greenwood): 12 - 1 p.m.; Soudan: 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.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Harbor View Spa adds new services, tattoo removal

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- Beth Debeltz is growing her spa business in Tower, adding new services and equipment to rival larger "med spa" businesses located in places like Duluth and the Twin Cities. She is hoping more area residents, as well as summer visitors, will stop by to learn about all the services now offered.

"People are driving to Duluth for services we do here," she said, during an open house event she held in late February. Harbor View Spa and Boutique now has four staff, all certified, who do massage; hair, nails, and cosmetology services; and provide "med spa" services using state-of-the-art equipment and medical-grade skin care products. "You name the condition and we can treat it," said Debeltz. They also offer treatments to help people with arthritis joint pain.

They recently added equipment to do laser tattoo removal. The laser tattoo removal works best on black inks and some other colors, Debeltz said, but doesn't work as well on reds. They can do tests on smaller areas to see how effective it will be on a colored tattoo. The laser treatment also helps with removing sun damage spots.

Other new services include teeth whitening, and micro-needling to help build back collagen and elastin in the skin.

The skin treatment equipment the med spa uses, from Lumenis, has many optional features, allowing Harbor View to add on new services.

The equipment uses radiofrequency to gently heat the skin. This contracts the collagen so that new collagen is produced. Doctors use the same type of treatment to treat muscle spasms and poor circulation.

During the open house, staff demonstrated a new piece of equipment that provide skin smoothing and cellulite treatments using a heat wand to treat loose skin. Debeltz said it takes about six treatments to get the final results, and then less frequent maintenance treatments to maintain the results longer term.

Jen Cole, who is the cosmetologist at Harbor View, had a sample treatment done on her neck. There was no discomfort as the wand was gently massaging the area being treated.

People who have been using weight-loss drugs have found skin tightening treatments to be effective in dealing with excess skin, DeBeltz said.

The spa also offers several types of facials, including micro-exfoliation and micro-needling.

The nurses on staff can administer botox and fillers.

Debeltz is proud of her staff and their expertise.

"I am passionate about health and wellness



Above: Tom Piskor, a representative from Lumenis, was training Harbor View staff on their new equipment. (from left) Beth Debeltz, Michelle Alaspa, Beth Anderson, Jen Cole, and Alana Carmody.

Left: Michelle Alaspa learns how to do a skin tightening treatment. Below: Beth Debeltz in one of the spa's treatment rooms. photos by J. Summit



close to home," she said. "This business is my baby. Everyone here is certified and trained to use the equipment."

Harbor View offers initial consultations for \$30, which is then credited towards any treatments the customer may decide to move forward

with. They also offer a payment plan. The spa and boutique are located in the Idea Warehouse building on Tower's Main St. The spa and boutique is open Wednesday through Saturday in the winter, with evening hours on Thursdays. The hours will expand during the summer.

COMMUNITY GATHERING

Game night!



TOWER- Turnout was small, but hopefully community game night at the Tower Café will be returning soon for an evening of fun, games, and making new friends. With the aroma of fresh-baked cinnamon rolls and muffins wafting out of the kitchen, folks ranging in age from preschool to senior citizen played a variety of games and puzzles, while making new connections and possibly new friends.

Josh Forsman, of Ely, came with two of his children, both game-playing enthusiasts. He taught some easy-to-learn tabletop and party games from his own personal collection. And even his young daughter

Zoe, who made new friends playing Uno with the Swanson family of Soudan, was quick to teach another card and counting game to the other young game-players present.

"We do want to try this again," said café owner Jen McDonough. "I love to help build our community."

Jen's mother Marge played cribbage and was even up to learn a new party game.

A couple from Ely stopped by for a quick dinner, browsing the collection of free books and puzzles available to take home. The café now has a dedicated little free library and puzzle library bookshelf area, available whenever the café is open.

Above left: Josh Forsman teaches a new game to Marge Moser. Afterwards they played a few rounds of cribbage. Left: Zoe Forsman (on right) taught a new game to Dot Swanson. Below: Toivo Forsman played a tabletop strategy game with his father Josh. photos by J. Summit



HOCKEY

Rock Ridge hockey players headed to state tournaments



VIRGINIA- Local hockey players are heading to state tournaments as players on the Rock Ridge Bantam A and Peewee A teams. Nico Lenci, of Tower, is headed to the Bantam Minnesota State

Tournament with his Rock Ridge Bantam A teammates. Nico Lenci, a sophomore at Rock Ridge, scored a total of six goals and five assists in games that qualified the team for the state tournament.

Rockridge Peewee A team is also headed to state. Nolan Lenci is one of the goalies on that team. Nolan is a seventh-grader at Rock Ridge.

Left: Nolan Lenci Right: Nico Lenci



WINDOW INTO YESTERDAY

The American Fraternal Union



by DAVID KESS
Ely-Winton Historical Society

On the corner of Fourth Ave. E. and E. Harvey St. stands an imposing, tan-colored stone building whose history has become unknown. The property is now owned by the E. Chapman Properties LLC, which belongs to the Ott family. The current occupants are the Ely Community Resource and Range Mental Health.

The building has a long history. Beginning in 1933, it served as the home office of the American Fraternal Union, or AFU, a fraternal insurance company that started life as the South Slavonic Catholic Union. The union was founded in Ely in 1898 and operated for 113 years. It ceased to exist after a merger with another business in 2011.

Like many immigrant-support groups, fraternal organizations and benefit societies formed when significant numbers of immigrants sought to protect themselves from injuries and deaths due to the working conditions prevalent more than a century ago. Among them were the Saint Cyril and Methodius Societies. These later joined to form the South Slavonic Catholic Union.

The South Slavonic Catholic Union was a nonsectarian and non-political legal reserve life insurance society. It sought to encourage and foster acts of fraternity, to promote good citizenship, and to provide death benefits, and indemnities for the loss of a limb, or accidents, sickness, and surgical benefits. Benefits were first set at \$2 and \$3 a day.

The credit for organizing such

a fraternal group first came from Joseph Agnich, of Ely, who eventually became the first president. Death benefits then were increased to \$800 and sick benefits were established at \$15 a day. This was in 1898. After 94 member deaths, 18 of which were in Ely, benefits were increased substantially.

The first office in Ely for the union was in the original State Bank Building. That building later became the home of Louis Stember's Jewelry Store. Today, it is the home of the Blue Loon boutique. The union then moved up the street to the newer State Bank building, which is now part of the Boathouse building. The third move in 1917 was to the Slogar building at 116 E. Sheridan.

In 1933, during the Roosevelt presidency, the union moved to a new home office in a new, imposing

building of quarried stone designed in the "Public Work Administration Moderne" architectural style, located on the corner of Fourth Ave. E. and E. Harvey St. Ely City Hall, the Ely Post Office, and the former Ely Community Center were also built in a similar "Depression Moderne" style. By 1941, the name of the organization was officially changed from the South Slavonic Catholic Union to the American Fraternal Union.

In 2011, the decision was made to merge the AFU with Catholic United Financial whose home office was in Minneapolis. The Ely AFU office at the corner of E. Harvey and Fourth Ave. E. was closed.

The building was shuttered and put up for sale. Kevin Richards bought the property for an undisclosed amount and used it for several years for storage. It finally caught the eye of business property owner John Ott, who bought it in 2015 and remodeled it into the office space now used by Ely Community Resource and Ely branch of the Range Mental Health Center. The location has proved particularly convenient for the Ely Public School population these nonprofits serve from across the street.

The extensive collection of sources for this column was assembled by Leona Janezich, a longtime employee of the AFU. The history is on file at the Ely-Winton Historical Society Office and Museum at Minnesota North College, Vermilion Campus, 1900 E. Camp St. Winter office hours are noon to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. The office phone is 218-365-3928 and the email is ewhsmuseum@gmail.com.

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.

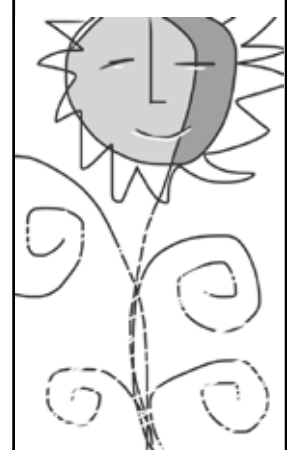
For those interested in being a host, or who have a speaker suggestion, contact Lacey Squier by email at ElyTuesdayGroup@gmail.com or call her at 218-216-9141.

Upcoming Tuesday Group speakers:

►March 18: Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance with Christopher Riccardo

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2025



the sun and blue skies
encouraging all again

evaporation

AROUND TOWN



Left: The Ely Chamber of Commerce held a local job fair at the Kawishiwi Ranger District office last Thursday. The event featured ten employers, including several outfitters. photo by C. Clark

Right: The Northern Lakes Arts Association hosted a lecture on 2D design by award-winning artist Paul LaJeunesse on Saturday at Minnesota North College. submitted photo



COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

Babbitt Public Library

BABBITT- The library's hours are changing. Starting on Monday, March 17, the library will be open Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Fridays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The Friends of the Library is now accepting applications for table space from crafters and vendors for the Up North Craft Fair on Saturday, June 7. To reserve a table, contact the library at 218-827-3345, or email babbittlibraryfriends@gmail.com.

The take and make kit for kids for a shamrock man. Take one home while supplies last. The April kit will be mixed media collage and will be available to take home starting March 31.

Two sessions are left in the library's free adult watercolor painting class, on Tuesdays, March 18 (watercolor birds) and March 25 (watercolor figures), from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. No experience necessary. All skill levels welcome. Call 218-827-3345 or stop by the library to sign up. Please sign up only for the classes you can attend. Walk-ins are welcome if there is room available.

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.

Ely Public Library

ELY- The library is holding another of its fabulously fun murder mystery events on Saturday, March 22, from 1:30-4 p.m. This event is for adults and students in grades 9-12. The theme of the event will "Death at the circus." Participants must sign up and choose a character for this event in advance. Participants must register by noon on Tuesday, March 18.

The library will hold a "Move and Groove" session for preschoolers and an accompanying adult Tuesday, March 25 at 10:30 a.m. The library's Jessie will lead kids in simple dances and stretches.

Join the library for a special three-hour workshop, "Carving Your Clan," with Jeffrey Tibbetts, on Wednesday, March 26, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. This activity is for teens and adults. The workshop blends ceremony, culture and art to deliver a unique hands-on experience as participants will carve a physical representation of their choosing from stone, while developing an understanding of the Ojibwe world view. This program has a limited number of spots available so register in advance. The library will

not accept registrations for patrons below the age of 13. Younger teens will need to be accompanied by an adult.

The Get Crafty group will meet for a session of coloring for adults on Thursday, March 27, at 1 p.m. Register in advance so the library can arrange enough supplies for participants.

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.

Printmaking Workshop

ELY- Rachael Pace, the Northern Lakes Arts Association 2025 Artist in Residence and winner of the 2025 Creative Spirit of the North Award, will teach an introductory relief-carving printmaking class on Saturday, March 22, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Vermilion Fire Arts Theater, 1900 E. Camp St. The cost is \$30 and includes materials. The workshop is limited to 20 participants so register early to insure a seat, at northernlakesarts.org/programs and click on the link for March 22.

Sister Act Auditions

ELY- The Northern Lakes Arts Association will hold auditions for the nuns

in the musical "Sister Act" on Saturday, March 22, from 3-4:30 p.m. at the Vermilion Fire Arts Theater, 1900 E. Camp St. This is a corrected time for the auditions, originally scheduled later in the evening. NLAA moved the audition to avoid conflicting with the ECR Auction.

Annual ECR Auction

ELY- This year's art auction for the nonprofit Ely Community Resource will be on the evening of Saturday, March 22, at Ely's Historic State Theater, 238 E. Sheridan. The doors open at 5 p.m. for viewing and appetizers. The evening will include a raffle and both live and silent auctions of works by local artists. The auction begins at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10.

Estate Planning Class

ELY- Ely Community Education will host local lawyer Kelly Klun for a free class on wills, trusts, and estate planning, on three Wednesdays, from 5:30-6:30 p.m.: March 26, April 23, and May 28. The class will be in the Ely Public Schools Media Center, 600 E. Harvey St. Use door No. 1 in the center of the building complex and turn right after the double doors. The media center is on the right across from the new gym. Register at ely.k12.mn.us/community.

The Pierogi Class

ELY- The famous pierogi class is back! Doris Kolgji is once again teaching for Ely Community Education on how to make pierogis. This year's class will be on Saturday, March 29, 1-4 p.m., at the Ely Senior Center, 27 S. First Ave. E. The cost is \$34. You will bring home a baking sheet of your own pierogis. Attendance is limited to 25. Register at ely.k12.mn.us/community.

Elyites on Dean's Lists

MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL- Nathan Nettifee, a senior at the College of Science and Engineering at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities was named to the Dean's List for the fall 2024 semester. To qualify for the Dean's List, a student must complete 12 or more letter-graded credits while attaining a 3.66 grade point average.

SAINT PETER- Gustavus Adolphus College has named Elyite Amelia Pluth to its Dean's List for the fall 2024 semester. The list comprises students who have earned a 3.7 grade point average or higher.

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

Hours: Monday – Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Starting Monday, March 17:
Monday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Tuesday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Wednesday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Thursday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Friday 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

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 Ledgerrock 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.

COOK CITY COUNCIL

Township per capita goes up for fire protection

New safety requirements drive large increase in expenses over next three years

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- Unless the Trump administration's slashing machine comes for OSHA regulations, the costs to operate the Cook Fire Department will go sky high over the next several years, Shane Johnson told the Cook City Council at its Feb. 27 regular meeting.

The primary driver, Johnson said, are new OSHA regulations set to go into effect in 2026.

One of those requirements is that department personnel have medical workups every two years to determine their fitness for duty. Going well beyond a standard physical, Johnson said he discovered that testing could cost between \$5,500-\$6,200 per person.

"Times 30, that's \$250,000 roughly every two

years," Johnson said. "It's pretty hard not to get behind this stuff being that it's for our own safety."

Trucks will have to have quarterly and annual inspections, between \$150-200 a truck, plus the cost of any necessary repairs, Johnson said.

"And we have another mandate coming down that all equipment is going to only have a 10-year lifespan – that's on engines, ladders, tenders," he continued. "I'm looking at about \$600,000 is where we have to be in three years to stay in business." That's up from the current budget of \$202,000.

Johnson said the solution for raising the per capita rates for the townships covered by the department came largely from the township representatives themselves, after hearing about the looming financial challenges. The

plan, which had yet to be officially approved by all of the townships, would raise per capita rates by 50 percent a year for three years.

The council agreed to revisit the issue at its March meeting.

Other business

In other business, the council:

► Accepted donations for the library book fund of \$250 from Owens Township, \$100 from Alango Township, \$400 from the Cook Timberwolves Snowmobile Club, and \$100 and \$20 from private donors.

► Spent about ten minutes debating revisions to the minutes of the Jan. 23 meeting before voting to approve them.

► Announced that Cook Hospital will host a "Live Well Be Well" Health Fair

on Saturday, June 14 from 9 a.m.-noon.

► Reviewed, updated, and approved the monthly calendars of city council and committee meetings.

► Approved a bid of \$3,765.60 from Northern Comfort Company for a recliner sofa, a recliner and one end table requested by the ambulance service for the room where staff stay while waiting to be called out. A lower bid from an out-of-town merchant was obtained and originally recommended, but council members stated the importance of shopping locally as justification for accepting the higher bid.

► Heard from Library Director Crystal Whitney that SEH was working on responses to requests from FEMA for clarification of the restoration and dry-flood-proofing estimates for the library. The city is still waiting

for a decision from FEMA about what option they will choose to fund for the library's flood recovery. The city is hopeful FEMA will choose to fund a new library out of the flood plain.

► Also heard from Whitney that a heating issue at the library had been repaired.

► Approved an agreement with Revize Software Systems for a re-design of the city's website to improve navigation and access to frequently sought information. The re-sign will comply with guidelines for ADA accessibility.

► Heard a report from engineer John Jannick that the IRRRB had awarded \$180,000 to the city for the Eldien housing project. Jannick said that represented about 50 percent of the project cost, and that construction bids may be taken before the end of April.

► Martinson reported that she would like to see a total capital development framework developed with a plan that identifies funding sources.

► Approved covenants for the Eldien housing development.

► Approved a revised land use zoning map.

► Authorized the city attorney to draft and send letters to owners of properties the city would like to annex inviting them to request annexation.

► Heard that owners of blighted properties who have been appropriately notified are starting to be charged fines for not cleaning up their properties as required. If not paid directly, the fines can be collected by being added to their tax bills.

GRIZZLIES IN WONDERLAND



It was a full house for "Alice in Wonderland" at North Woods School on Friday.

Top left: Mad Hatter Amber Sopoci, who directed the play, talks with Alice.

Bottom left: The various "tweedles" were played by Iley Murray, Audrey Bryson, and Bonnie Iverson.

Above: Alice Sopoci took on the role of the King of Hearts.

The play was sponsored by North Woods Community Education. photos by D. Colburn



NORTH WOODS WELLNESS DAY



Top: North Woods students Rebecca Koch, Gage Aune, Sawyer Glass, Vinny Pascuzzi, and Evalyn Thiel facilitated an activity to help other students identify their personal strengths. Bottom: Nothing brings a sense of wellness quite like a pair of llamas and an alpaca, as Caleb Rutchasky, Jack Anderson, and Elwood Spears find out. submitted photos

RAINY BASIN

Water Levels Committee selects rule curve for Rainy, Namakan lakes

REGIONAL- Operators of the dams on Namakan and Rainy Lakes will keep lake levels at or below 65 percent of the rule curve in April, in accordance with the Water Levels Committee's (WLC) regulation plan adopted on Monday.

The plan calls for Rainy Lake to be maintained between 35-65 percent band of the rule curve, while Namakan Lake will be managed to the 40-65 percent band.

The spring water level targets were established based on an evaluation of current conditions and forecasts, including the following factors:

► Conditions are drier than normal.

► Slightly below-normal snow water equivalent across the entire basin.

► Deep frost depth that could enhance spring snowmelt and/or rainfall runoff.

► Seasonal forecasts

from April through June that indicate warmer than normal temperatures and equal chances of above- or below-normal precipitation.

► River forecast simulations indicate a below-normal risk of spring flooding.

The committee had broader parameters for setting this spring's targets by operating under a combined high flood risk and normal rule curve.

Community items

Drawing, painting classes still enrolling at NWFA Gallery

COOK- Local Artist Jim DeVries will hold a class in Beginning Ball Point Pen Drawing on Thursday, March 20 from 6-8 p.m. at the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook.

DeVries is a genuine illustrator and receives most of his inspiration from the outdoor places where he works and plays as a naturalist at the Laurentian Environmental Center. He will assist students in choosing a subject, developing a composition and completing a drawing using only a ball point pen.

The class fee is \$15 for NWFA members and \$20 for non-members. Sign up to be a member and enjoy class discounts and news about upcoming classes, events and exhibits.

For those with an interest in painting, sign up for Painting Rocks with Watercolor with artist Linda Smith. This two-hour workshop will be on Saturday, March 22 from 10 a.m.-noon, and will give students the opportunity to experiment with a variety of techniques.

The class fee is \$15 for NWFA members and \$20.00 for non-members.

Pre-registration is requested by visiting www.nwfamn.org; emailing nwfamn.org@gmail.com; calling Alberta Whiteneck at 218-666-2153, or by signing up in person at the gallery at 210 S. River St. on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The class size will be limited to 10 persons.

Also, take advantage of the gallery's open hours through the end of March to visit the "A Shot in the Dark" photo contest and cast your

vote for your favorite. Voting closes at noon on Friday, March 28, and winners will be announced later that day at a gallery reception from 5-7 p.m.

Lions Club breakfast benefit is on Sunday

COOK- The annual Cook Lions Club breakfast to raise funds for the Cook Food Shelf will be Sunday, March 16 from 9 a.m.-noon at St. Mary's Catholic Church, 124 5th St. SE.

Pancakes, fruit topping, scrambled eggs, sausage, coffee and orange juice will be on the menu, and take out is available. A free will offering will be accepted.

The fundraising breakfast is supported by donations from Homestead Mills and Cook Zup's.

Contact Steve Kajala at 218-750-0310 or Colette Huisenga at 612-213-7603.

Wellness day a hit at school

FIELD TWP- North Woods School held a successful Wellness Day last week for students in grades 6-12. It was planned by the Wellness Day Team, which is a branch of the High School Leadership Team. This student-run event focused on raising mental health awareness and providing valuable resources to support overall well-being.

Throughout the day, students had the opportunity to

explore a variety of regulation strategies, participate in interactive activities, and receive mental health swag and prizes. The event featured partnerships with several outstanding organizations, including Bois Forte Behavioral Health, Range Mental Health Center, and Cook's Country Connection. Students also benefited from the expertise of Melissa Hawk and her Health and Wellness Program, as

well as the calming presence of Mrs. Lamwers and her therapy dog.

The team expressed its appreciation to Jill Stark and Michelle Long for their guidance and support in making this event possible. The dedication and leadership demonstrated by students made this an inspiring and impactful day for the entire school community.

Hartway makes dean's list at U of M

COOK- Addy Hartway, a junior in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, has been named to the 2024 fall semester Dean's List.

A student must complete 12 or more letter-graded credits while attaining a 3.66 grade point average to qualify for the honor.

Read us online at
www.timberjay.com
check out our e-edition

More letters from readers

Dear members of the Ely community

I am writing to provide a continued message of transparency regarding the financial health of our school district. Last year, we were faced with economic challenges, and we needed to make significant cuts. We are currently in year two of the reductions and are experiencing additional challenges that will lead to increased expenditure reductions for the 2025-2026 school year.

The district continues to face challenges that include declining enrollment, increased operating expenses, unfunded mandates from the state, and unforeseen circumstances, such as the economic downturn. Despite our best efforts to mitigate the impact of these challenges, the Ely Public School District is faced again with the difficult task of making tough decisions to ensure the long-term financial stability of our district while continuing to provide a high-quality education for all students. Due to these challenges, the district faces a \$460,000 expenditure reduction for the 2025-2026 school year.

Our administration, department heads, finance committee members, and school board members are working to identify areas where budget reductions can be made. We will continue to work with our staff to identify the specific cuts. Our reductions will impact our district's

operations, including staffing, programs, and services. The district finance committee, school board, and staff will continue to meet throughout March to discuss and finalize specific reductions, which will be communicated in April.

We understand that news of budget reductions may be unsettling for our families and community members, and we want to assure you that we are committed to maintaining the quality of education that the Ely Public School District is known for. We will strive to make thoughtful and strategic decisions that prioritize the needs of our students and align with our district's values and goals.

We will remain transparent and communicate and provide regular updates. We value your feedback and support as we work together to navigate these challenging times. Thank you for your continued understanding as we confront these difficult decisions.

Anne M. Oelke
Superintendent
Ely Public Schools

Who does Stauber represent?

For most of my life, I have tried to stay up to date with government happenings. I like to believe I have become familiar with the workings of Congress. I have helped with political campaigns, met and conversed with many of my state and federal representatives, watched them work and visited their offices in

D.C., and even received a nomination to the U.S. Naval Academy from one.

Never have I felt one of my members of Congress has represented me less than during my time in Minnesota's Eighth District. If you know me, you know I am happy to talk and work with people from across the political spectrum. I fully understand that there will always be ideological differences between people, and that is great. The more ideas out there, the better. But Congressman Stauber's performance leaves me asking the question: how is he even working for his constituents?

Frequently, I listen to the activities on the floor of Congress. The only times I have heard Rep. Stauber talking on the floor in the past month or two have been (1) advocating for relaxing fracking regulations and (2) advocating for relaxing offshore drilling regulations. I certainly use petroleum products, but I am skeptical that these two issues really represent the most pressing needs of his constituency. Do these stances serve to benefit the profit margins of oil companies, or is he hoping this will someday trickle down to the prices we pay at the pump? I do not hear all that happens in Congress, but I am concerned that this is all I hear from Rep. Stauber when I tune in.

I would argue that a more pressing concern for his constituents is his lack of knowledge about DOGE. DOGE has fired members of our community. DOGE is actively

reducing the number of good jobs with benefits in our area and the ripple effect may be massive. I have been calling Rep. Stauber to ask him how many federal workers have lost their jobs in his district and which federal agencies employ people here. These people, and their families, are his constituents. But Rep. Stauber's offices (D.C. and Hermantown) have no idea how many have been fired or from which agencies, in his own district. Maybe he would get a pass if he was working to oppose DOGE, but he is not. Rep. Stauber supports this work and is even a member of the DOGE Caucus. What does he do, as a member of the DOGE Caucus? I asked his office that, too, and shockingly, they do not know.

Our members of Congress exist to give closer representation to the people than our U.S. Senators can. But who does Rep. Stauber represent, and how? On a recent stint of 10 days back in his district, could he even be bothered to visit Ely? Will he protect jobs that currently exist in Ely and throughout his district? Or will he just stand by while our friends and neighbors, his own constituents, are fired and classified as "waste, fraud, and abuse" by his DOGE team? Maybe you should call him, too.

Hermantown office: 218-481-6396 • Washington, DC office: 202-225-6211.

Riley "Ozzie" Reif
Ely

We will all feel the impact of Trump's senseless policies

President Trump graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a bachelor's in economics, which is a wonder since he clearly doesn't grasp the basics of this field of study.

Now as President, more people have been and will be harmed by his lack of understanding of economics. Having started a trade war, our domestic prices will rise to compensate for the increase in tariff taxes and contribute to an overall increase in inflation.

More important than the rise in inflation will be souring of our long-term beneficial relationships. Canada, for example, will expand their exports to permanent new markets. In addition, the animosity created by the abrupt unilateral decision to impose tariffs on Canadian citizens will be reflected by their withdrawal from other activities such as travel to the U.S. The tariff action will reduce our yearly tourist industry revenue and the tax revenue to our state and federal governments. Canadians spent \$20.5 billion in the U.S. last year and supported 140,000 jobs, according to the U.S. Travel Association. Existing cancellations of this year's reservations are already piling up.

Trump's decision to save money by mass, indiscriminate firing of federal employees will cause anguish and hate of our government. It will

cost voters more to restore services that were scrubbed, most of which were critical to the well-being and actual lives of our citizens. It is repulsive to see Musk dancing around waving a symbolic chain saw and gloating about the indiscriminate mass firing of thousands of federal employees.

It is doubtful that Trump thought about the economics of his decision to fire government workers—it saves less than one percent of the approximately \$7 trillion federal budget.

Trump's sudden action to abrogate longstanding trading alliances will defame and stain America's reputation for at least a generation.

foreign nations will no longer trust America's ability to sustain our electorate to make good voting decisions having elected a convicted felon who is a continuous liar with shockingly poor judgment. He has created six business bankruptcies and has been involved in over 4,000 lawsuits, with additional lawsuits still pending.

Finally, Canada is planning to reciprocate Trump's tariffs which comes as no surprise. Minnesota will no doubt feel the impact on the import of more than \$14 billion of products and \$700 million of electricity coming over the border into our state.

Gerry Snyder
Ely

FUNDING...Continued from page 1

opment out of Washington. Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski said the city had survived the funding gauntlet and was still on the list for as much as \$3.9 million to help finance the city's replacement of its 1930s-era water line from Burntside Lake along with several bridges that support the line over wetlands. "It's pretty catastrophic if we can't get congressionally directed spending for this project," said Langowski. Ely's project was one of 15 in the state that had appeared headed for passage, but with the uncertainty in the nation's capital in recent weeks, Langowski said he had grown increasingly nervous. "I was fearful this was going to happen," he said. "I guess it's part of the collateral damage of everything else going on in Washington."

Langowski said the city will likely have to resort to more loan funding for the project and will now need to look at phasing of the work,

which he said will lead to higher costs overall.

The nearly five-mile-long water line is Ely's only source of drinking water and its age and poor condition makes it highly vulnerable to disruption that could prove disastrous for the community. Ely's request had support from Rep. Pete Stauber as well as both of Minnesota's U.S. senators, giving it excellent prospects in the funding competition.

But Ely's wasn't the only project to lose out. Also in need of repair are the city of Cook's wastewater treatment stabilization ponds. Extensive erosion has created a risk for failure, which could result in flooding of nearby properties and significant health risks. Additional repairs to the wastewater treatment plant and replacement of lift station pumps would have been included. Stauber requested \$3.15 million for the project, while Klobuchar and Smith each requested \$315,000.

Another multimillion-dollar project in Cook supported by Smith and Klobuchar was the replacement of the aging steam boilers at Cook Hospital, which were installed in 1959. \$3,360,000 was requested for upgrading to a more efficient hot water boiler system.

In Tower, two projects to provide better housing options will miss out on federal funding. Both Klobuchar and Smith had earmarked \$1.75 million for the Marina Drive water and sewer extension. Klobuchar also requested \$7.846 million for Vermilion Housing Corporation to rehabilitate 52 rental units in four buildings in Tower and Soudan that are nearly 50 years old and are deteriorating. Smith requested \$2.6 million for the same project.

Two other Ely projects were also hopeful of receiving funding, and both were supported by Klobuchar and Smith. The Ely Area

Community Foundation sought \$600,000 to create an innovative community hub for individuals of all ages to provide healthy living services in partnership with a variety of nonprofits. Ely Community Health Center planned to increase access to medical and dental services if it had received \$46,000 requested.

A final big-ticket item that's been in the planning stage for years, a new wastewater treatment and collection system for the Ash River Sanitary District, received a nod from Smith for \$4 million.

In total, the House action was the final straw for nine area projects supported by Sens. Tina Smith and Amy Klobuchar and Rep. Stauber that could have brought as much as \$39.572 million to the North Country if all been approved at the highest-requested amounts. Smith was the leading advocate for area projects, with requests for nine projects totaling \$31.49 million, including a \$14.9

million MnDOT request for road safety improvements in Morse Township. Klobuchar's list of seven requests totaled \$17.8 million, while Stauber requested funding for two projects totaling \$7.07 million.

Smith voiced her opposition to the House action. "Donald Trump and Republicans in Congress have decided to force a continuing resolution that sidelines critical investments in clean water infrastructure across St. Louis County, clean water in Ely, supporting rural health care for the Range and more—investments that help keep our communities strong and our economy growing," she said.

The cuts are happening because of the House's failure to pass the standard appropriations bills for FY 2025. Partisan fighting over the budget scuttled the normal process of passing a bill by Sept. 30, forcing the House to pass a continuing resolution to keep the government operating through December. The House has failed twice

since then to pass a budget, in December and now in March, with the third continuing resolution on Tuesday intended to keep the government afloat through Sept. 30. As funding for member requests can only be included in an appropriations bill, the House killed that part of the budget by its action on Tuesday.

Alternatives for federal funding are likely going to be harder to tap as well with the Trump administration's assault on spending through the activities of Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency. DOGE targeted over 2,600 federal agencies with its initial spending freeze in January and is looking to deeply slash funding in many departments while completely eliminating others. Even where grant program funding remains untouched, there will likely be delays in processing applications due to the massive reductions of federal employees being pursued by Trump and Musk.

SCHOOLS...Continued from page 1

portive at the moment," while board chair Lynn Hilde said he was "mostly there."

Noting that the schedule would require class periods to be lengthened to 60 minutes, Koivisto said, "A longer class period is not going to help academics. The majority of studies and anything I've read says more frequent and shorter class periods benefit the students academically."

School-age care

A factor that appeared to influence opinions was the presentation of a plan for school-age care for Kindergarten through sixth grades at the schools on Fridays, designed to alleviate concerns expressed by many parents about finding placements for their children when school is not in session.

Board member Mallory Manick talked about the plan, which was formulated by a board committee in consultation with district staff.

The program would offer half-day or full-day options that parents would pre-register and pay for online a week in advance to facilitate planning and food service, Manick said. Drop-ins would not be allowed. Adult staff would come from either new hires

or current district part-time staff wanting to pick up additional hours. Staffing could be supplemented by 17- or 18-year-old high school students to provide appropriate staff-to-child ratios, Manick said. Each school would have a site supervisor similar to the district's community education early childhood programs who would be trained to address issues such as child medications or emergencies. Sites would be able to offer lunch and a snack, and possibly breakfast.

Manick also talked about developing a schedule of enrichment activities and academic supports similar to programming in the Carlton district's Friday school-age program.

"We could have a catalog of things you can sign up for and do on Fridays when you're not in school," she said.

Marinero noted that the district would work with individual communities to explore partnerships with local organizations for alternatives if the number of participants at a given school doesn't support having a program. And students from one school could be enrolled in school-age care

at another district school. Given the number of concerns about care expressed in the fall survey, school officials are thinking that the program will help to retain a large number of students who might otherwise have left the district.

No help for staff cuts

Whatever funds the district saves if it switches to a four-day week would largely go to offset the large deficit in the unassigned fund balance, the source of the district's shortfall for next year.

The funds won't restore teaching positions that have been cut because of the deficit.

"That would be used to keep our fund balance from going into a larger deficit," Finance Director Kim Johson said. "It's not going to eliminate or reduce the number of staff reductions that are going to be necessary. We'll have to watch that year over year as we keep an eye on the fund balance because we're going to have to grow it to make sure that we don't go (into statutory operating debt)."

North Woods-area board members and current parents Manick and Jarrett Bundy took the opportunity to voice strong objections to the cuts

at North Woods, which represent about half of the cuts across the entire district. "I'm concerned about North Woods Elementary," Manick said. "I see this (enrollment) number of North Woods dropping, and it's not because of COVID. It is because parents are unhappy with the academics and extracurriculars offered at North Woods, and they're going to MIB and Rock Ridge. I know four kids in the fifth grade alone that left this year. They did not move out of the district, they're all still living in Cook. They went to MIB and Rock Ridge."

The cuts and combinations of classes is causing parents to look elsewhere again this year, Manick said.

"I know of at least 25 kids that are leaving, I could name 25 just off the top of my head who are promising they're gone," Manick said. "And my kids might be with them because look at these classes. I invite anyone to go into Mrs. Panichi's sixth-grade class with 33 kids in there."

Manick ticked off a list of anticipated class sizes for next year in the elementary school — 28, 29, 31, 26, 32, and 30.

"Those are huge class sizes," she said. "You're really

going to affect these kids' education and the teachers by putting 30-plus kids in a classroom. It's too many kids — they're crammed in there. It's going to set them up for all these years to be struggling. I can see with my own son that he's going to struggle next year."

Managing the disruptions caused by behavioral issues was also a concern expressed with instruction in larger classrooms, and Bundy amplified that concern to the school in general.

"I'm hearing the same thing from teachers and parents. (Administrators) aren't doing their job, period," Bundy said. "From what I'm hearing at school, what students are getting away with, it's not good for what we're leaving at that school. When my kids come home and tell me they smell marijuana four out of five days in school, something's got to be done. Nothing's getting done because it just keeps happening."

"If you're hearing specific things about administration, I need to know," Engebritson responded. "I hear the frustration and the way that kids can vape without people really knowing it, and I understand.

I've heard about the smell, and we're trying to catch those kids and we're watching the cameras, and we've had law enforcement, so it's not easy. But if there are concerns you feel that administration's not doing it, then I need to know."

Marinero suggested that board members take their concerns to Engebritson directly for her to have an opportunity to address them before they're brought to the board.

"I'm happy to hear what you said, but she didn't have a chance to fix it and she's kind of just hearing about it," Marinero said. "I want to be fair with her, too."



QUILTS...Continued from page 1

cozy gift items for those in need of a special kindness, including people undergoing life-saving medical treatments, infants and children in area hospitals, or area veterans.

The group donated well over 500 items in 2024, including quilts, pillowcases, knitted items, fabric bags, stuffed animals, and slippers. That included 70 chemotherapy survival bags, colorful quilted bags used to hold supplies for patients undergoing treatment at Essentia in Virginia. They crafted almost 100 chemotherapy hats for patients there as well. They sewed Christmas stockings for adults living at Vermilion Senior Living in Tower and donated items for the Festival of Trees fundraiser for Northwoods Partners. They even created five pet beds for the Mesabi Humane Society and donated a quilt to a Habitat for Humanity family. The Lake Vermilion knitting group, made up of several quilting guild members along with a few others, tallied over 12,000 hours of volunteer time in 2024, donating almost 500 knitted items to babies being treated at the NICU unit at the Mayo Clinic.

A large sample of the



Above: Members of the Vermilion Dream Quilters Guild with a selection of the hundreds of items they've created for gifts for others experiencing health or other setbacks in life.

Right: Jill Wagoner (at left), of Soudan, holds her recently completed quilt with help from another guild member.

photos by J. Summit

items being readied for donation this year were on display at the group's monthly meeting in Tower, at St. Martin's Catholic Church.

"We are so pleased with all the different types of items being made and donated,"



said group member Kathy Lovgren. "I was so proud of all the donations," Lovgren added. "It shows that our

members do more than just sew for their families. They care about their communities and people in need."

GREENWOOD...Continued from page 1

the job description at their reorganization meeting, which is set for Wednesday, March 19 at 5:30 p.m.

Steve Bradach easily won the contest for the open supervisor seat, outpolling former supervisor Sue Drobac 261-65.

Residents boost levy

Board Chair Lois Roskoski gave a presentation on the 2026 budget, comparing township spending to that in neighboring areas like Tower, Breitung, and Eagles Nest.

Approving the township levy is the main point of business for a township annual meeting.

"Our levy is small, and we are the wealthiest community," she said.

With a fund balance of \$534,347 at the end of 2024, the town board asked for a \$300,000 levy for next year, with projected spending of \$343,130.

Roskoski did present figures of "needs and wants" that were not included in the 2026 budget. These included replacement of the fire department's rescue snowmobile, replacement of the fire department's indoor water tank, costs to remodel/upgrade the town hall kitchen, resurfacing the tennis court, maintenance on the town hall roof and replacement of several windows. But the big item on the list was the purchase of a new fire truck with an estimated price tag of \$650,000.

Roskoski told the over 50 residents assembled for the meeting that the township had spent \$146,000 more than levied in 2024, though this

included the almost \$100,000 spent to resurface the town hall parking area, which was paid out of township reserves.

The township had built up a sizable reserve of close to \$1.3 million in previous years and had been slowly bringing this amount down by drawing on these reserves.

The 2026 budget presented did show a \$56,000 surplus.

Steve Bradach asked if the township should look at levying more than the \$300,000 requested.

"There is going to be a new fire truck," he said. "Either we pay interest or start setting aside more money."

"We do have money set aside," said Roskoski. "But it certainly won't cover a new fire truck."

Mary Worringer, who served on the board previously, said the board also needed to be looking at setting aside funds for the maintenance of Birch Point Extension.

"The road needs to be safe," Worringer said, "and it is not safe."

Roskoski said the township has a road fund with about \$25,000 set aside, and they are receiving about \$5,000 a year in road aid.

"That is not adequate," Worringer said. She noted that many people oppose spending money on this road since they do not personally benefit.

"I don't play pickleball," she said, "to be bitching and moaning and complaining about a road doesn't make sense to me."

Mike Ralston, who was moderating the meeting, said the township needs to have money set aside to protect

their assets.

JoAnn Bassing suggested bumping up the levy to \$600,000, noting that the average homeowner in the township is only paying around \$200 a year in township taxes with the projected \$300,000 levy.

Debby Spicer wondered if the township should only raise the levy bit by bit.

"There are a lot of elderly people on fixed incomes," she said. "We don't want to tax people out of their homes."

A motion was made by Dan Carnicom to set the levy at \$600,000. For the first time in many years, the vote was taken by a voice vote, not by paper ballots. The vote passed with less than a handful of no votes registered.

Board of audit

Clerk Debby Spicer presented the board of audit results from February.

"Disbursements were reviewed by the supervisors," she said. "I can't remember... did the disbursements and receipts match?"

The board of audit reports did not match.

"Some checks were missing from last February with no explanation," said Spicer, noting this was from before she took the clerk seat in March.

Former clerk JoAnn Bassing said the missing checks had all been voided, and this information was recorded in monthly meeting minutes. Bassing said that these checks were kept in a locked drawer in the office.

"I did ask the treasurer (Jeff Maus) for the voided checks," said Spicer. "But he

said he didn't have them. They weren't entered into CTAS. That's all I have to say about that."

The clerk uses the CTAS system to enter financial information, but the treasurer had been using a different bookkeeping system.

"That was the worst board of audit I'd ever been to," said supervisor John Bassing. "And I've been to a lot of them."

"How do we deal with the fact we don't have a reconciled audit?" asked Ralston. Roskoski said she had talked to the state auditor's office, and they said to submit the set of books the board felt was correct, then after the election, can work to "get things right."

A motion to delay accepting the board of audit was approved.

Annual meeting business

Supervisor Paul Skubic gave a brief road report, noting that potholes were repaired on Birch Point Extension last year, and the board had already approved brushing the sides of the road for this year.

Supervisor Craig Gilbert gave a brief summary of fire department activities in February, but no annual fire department report was given, as is usual practice.

Paul Thompson, president of the township's recreation board, talked about the progress made since last year's annual meeting.

"Last year we were debating on whether or not to build pickleball courts," he said. "Tonight we have four new courts and are waiting for the snow to melt for play to begin."

The courts cost \$128,000, which included fundraising costs, Thompson said. Over

The group gives creative types, who often are working alone, a chance to connect with and learn from their peers.

"I get inspired seeing all the things being made," said Jill Wagoner. "I like to gather with other quilters," Wagoner said as she showed off a beautiful large, kitchen-themed quilt she had recently completed.

Lois Garbisch, of Cook, said enjoys seeing all the beautiful items being created, and wishes she had more time to complete projects. "Life is just too short," she said.

While many members are avid quilters, others are creative types who also enjoy sewing. Alberta Whitenack is a quilter, but also an artist, and active member of the Northwoods Friends of the Arts in Cook. She attends guild meetings with a group of friends who drive over from Cook each month. The guild is open to all who want to learn more about quilting.

Trash to treasures

The guild held their annual "Trash to Treasures" bucket raffle fundraiser at their March meeting. Members brought in a wide collection on unused fabrics, patterns, notions, and other quilting-related items that were raffled

off, raising just over \$300 for the Tower Food Shelf. And while some members truly were excited to win the items of their choice, others just saw the raffle as a chance to raise funds for a good cause.

Dream Quilters

The guild started about 25 years ago in Tower, after Corinne Hill opened a quilting shop on Main Street. The quilt shop is now closed, but the guild lives on.

The group meets monthly on the first Thursday at St. Martin's Catholic Church in Tower. In winter, meetings are in the afternoon, but the rest of the year they start at 6:30 p.m. Membership in the guild is \$15 a year. The group sponsors sewing days, quilting challenges, and quilting retreats, open only to members. Meetings feature a demonstration, usually focusing on sewing and quilting techniques, and time for show-and-tell where members bring in completed projects to share with the group. Group member Kathy Lovgren said the retreats are one of the most popular benefits of being a member of the guild. Anyone wishing to learn more about the guild can contact Kathy at 218-753-2413.

\$54,000 of this came from private donations, \$25,000 from the township, and the rest from four grants. The recreation board raised \$105,000 for the project.

"This is what our community can do when we decide to come together," he said, thanking all the volunteers who work to keep the town hall grounds and recreation facilities in good shape.

Thompson said the committee has projects planned for 2025, including landscaping, adding more wood shavings to the playground area, and resurfacing the tennis court.

"We should have been putting aside \$2,000 a year

for the tennis court since it was built in 2014," Thompson said. "This is something that needs to be done periodically." Thompson said they would be asking the township for \$17,000 for this project, and the rec committee hopes to raise another \$12,000. The tennis court was built by the township.

Thompson said they are looking at purchasing wind screens for the fencing on the courts, which could be sponsored by area businesses.

The recreation committee is planning a grand opening for the new pickleball courts in June, and have plans for offering lessons for beginners, and for other social events.

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VERMILION COUNTRY SCHOOL

Annual meeting highlights recent school successes

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER- This year's annual meeting of the Vermilion Country School in Tower, held Feb. 17, gave school director Sam O'Brien and the board a chance to review the school's remarkable success this year and discuss goals for the future.

While the school had experienced enrollment ups and downs in its early years, enrollment has stabilized over the past two years thanks to the school's focus on student-centered learning practices. "The school has taken bold steps to build a program that meets students' needs," said O'Brien. The school is currently at capacity and is not taking new enrollments for the final quarter, though new students are being enrolled for the 2025-2026 school year. The school serves students in grades 7-12 across a wide area, ranging from Ely to Nett Lake, to the Iron Range.

"Our ability to provide an environment that meets the needs of our students, and supports them to move forward to independence, continues to be the key to enrollment stability," O'Brien said. "Focusing on meeting student needs will continue to be the foundation



Breitung Police Chief Dan Reing teaches a CPR class to students at Vermilion Country School. file photo

of our program."

And while students have been joining the school throughout the first half of the year, not one has left so far, a marked change from previous years, said O'Brien.

The school has 41 students attending in person, and another 22 students enrolled in the school's personalized learning program, where they meet weekly with teachers and participate in group school activities. This program meets the needs of older high school students who have part-time jobs, family responsibilities, or other reasons they were not able to attend school on a regular basis. The school also has three seniors doing

full-time PSEO.

Additional funding through state grant programs has allowed the school to provide the staffing needed for students who were struggling in their previous school environments. VCS has three full-time special education teachers, a full-time school social worker, special ed paraprofessionals, and mental health and chemical dependency staff. This has allowed the school to provide intensive academic and social support to students who have special education needs, often on an individualized one-to-one basis. The school's Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services, or ADSIS, program

complements the special education services, working with students who are not quite on grade level and need extra help and support, but who do not qualify for special education. The school has also worked to identify students who qualify for special education services, but who weren't receiving them at their previous schools.

The school's student-centered learning model has attracted staff who want to be part of an innovative teaching environment, O'Brien said. The school also works with a teacher-powered-schools model, which gives teachers the tools they need to make decisions on how the school is run. The school staff has been mentored throughout the year by educational professionals from three different organizations, helping to build and maintain the school's new programming.

Of the five seniors enrolled at Vermilion Country School this year, at least four have been accepted at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. One student, O'Brien reported, wasn't even considering college last year, and has since received multiple merit scholarships to attend the four-year university. Three of these students have been doing full-time PSEO (post-second-

ary enrollment option) at area community colleges. In total, eight VCS students were doing either full- or part-time PSEO this year. Some students are taking these college classes online during their regular school day, which means their teachers can help them, if needed, and make sure they are on track with their classes.

"Students gain confidence through their PSEO classes," O'Brien said. "It really helps them realize they are ready for college."

The school is looking to build on its personalized learning program next year, and possibly adding an Ojibwe language-based program. The school is also seeking a grant to offer an after-school program for junior and senior high school-age students in cooperation with Waawaate (www.waawaateprograms.org) and the Bois Forte Heritage Center.

Students at VCS have had a busy winter: volunteering at the Tower Food Shelf, participating in first aid and CPR training with Breitung Police Chief Dan Reing and his wife Yvette. They were treated to a special performance of "Romeo and Juliet" by the Northern Lakes Arts Association, and are participating in numerous field trips,

including ice fishing and the trampoline park in Duluth.

Science students are working with a small-scale aquaponics system they built, and art students have been taking a pottery class, and waiting for the new kiln that has been ordered which will enable students to produce functional pottery like mugs and bowls. The school is also purchasing equipment for maple syrup harvesting, wild ricing, and fish-smoking.

Finances and staffing

The school's finances are stable, with a fund balance equal to about 15 percent of its annual budget even though school spending has increased with the additional staff. This year's budget calls for adding additional cushion to the fund balance, which is currently on track. The school's financial success is in marked contrast to neighboring school districts, many of which are struggling financially in the post-COVID environment.

The school's staff is expected to see a few changes for next year. One teacher is retiring, and another will be leaving to attend graduate school full-time, so the school will be recruiting a few new staffers, and expects to be posting positions soon.

THE LEGISLATURE

Bill would sweeten incentives for large data centers

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— A bipartisan group of lawmakers is once again proposing to sweeten and extend tax incentives for the construction of large data centers in Minnesota, and that comes at a time when public awareness and opposition about the impact of such centers is growing.

The measure, first introduced last year by Sen. Grant Hauschild, DFL, of Hermantown, has about dozen co-sponsors in the Legislature this session, including Senate Tax Chair Ann Rest. Hauschild's measure won approval in Rest's committee late last month, despite mixed takes on the measure by several groups represented at the hearing.

The state has given sales tax exemptions for construction and equipment-related purchases for data center operators who make at least \$30 million in purchases since 2011 and the financial impact of that law has grown over time.

Hauschild's bill, which would provide the up-front tax break for data centers, would be limited to the largest facilities, those that spend at least \$250 million in equipment purchases. Hauschild says the measure is needed to ensure that Minnesota remains competitive with neighboring states in order to attract more data centers, essentially vast server farms, that provide the computing capacity that powers the internet, cloud storage, artificial intelligence, and the creation of cryptocurrency.

At last week's hearing, Hauschild argued that data centers help many of the devices that we use daily operate. "With this new age of technology that we're in, people don't realize that the things they use each and every day come from the cloud. They come from technology. They come from data centers," he said. Hauschild said the growth of data centers is spurring significant new construction as well. "This bill will provide thousands of construction jobs and hundreds of permanent well-paid positions in these new technology facilities."

That view was echoed during the hearing by Joel Johnson, representing the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, or IBEW,

which represents over 15,000 electrical workers from around the state. "This is one of our key priorities for this session," said Johnson. "We believe that if we are to fully take advantage of the benefits of hyperscale data centers, we need to make sure that state laws and taxes are aligned to encourage their construction here in the state. Having them built and operated here in Minnesota means literally thousands of jobs for IBEW members when the facilities are being built and hundreds of permanent jobs when the centers are operational."

Hauschild noted that the data centers also provide a substantial property tax impact for many communities and said they can help to replace other large industrial operations, such as coal burning power plants, that are disappearing in the state and taking their property tax base with them.

Concerns about growth

While many communities are eager for the tax revenue such centers can generate, as the size of the facilities grow in scale, their impact on communities has increased as well. Neighbors often complain of noise from enormous cooling fans that run 24 hours a day, as well as nighttime security lighting.

But the centers present broader concerns as well, according to Kathryn Hoffman, CEO of the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, which has recently begun to focus on this emerging issue.

The facilities use staggering amounts of electricity, oftentimes more than the rest of the cities where they are located combined.

Hoffman said that has implications for Minnesota's commitment to meet clean energy goals. For years, despite growth in the economy, power demand in Minnesota and around the country has remained relatively flat as residential, commercial, and industrial power users adopted energy conserving technologies. Stable power demand has made it easier for utilities to meet energy needs while still making the transition to renewable forms of energy. But power demand is now rising in Minnesota and nationally, largely due to the rapid spread of power-guzzling data centers.

This sudden increase in demand, combined with the expectation that data center growth will continue for the

foreseeable future, prompted the state's Public Utilities Commission, or MPUC, last month to grant Xcel Energy's request for a new natural gas-fired power plant to meet the skyrocketing demand from data centers.

That means utilities will need to invest in more generating capacity over the next 15 years, complicating the state's goal of 100 carbon-free electricity by 2040. Xcel says it will meet that goal five years early, even as it invests in the expanded capacity, which it says will mostly come from wind, solar, and the greater use of battery storage.

Hauschild says he's a proud supporter of the state's climate-related clean energy goals. "The beauty of those goals is they are an across-the-board regulation that requires meeting standards, so these data centers will still require our utilities to meet climate goals. I'd rather these data centers be under our climate goals than in China or Iowa where they do not have these goals."

Vast users of water

If the power usage of data centers is enormous, their use of water could become an even bigger issue, and it's one that's not well regulated or understood. A large new data center can literally double a community's demand for water, which is used mostly for cooling the thousands of computer servers contained in such facilities. Since most of these facilities are located in suburban locations or small cities with existing municipal water supplies, they don't need to obtain water withdrawal permits, which would give the public some idea of the scale of the water usage by these centers. "The amount of water being used by these facilities is not getting the scrutiny it deserves," said Hoffman.

And what happens to all the water that these facilities utilize for cooling? Hoffman said it's not at all clear, since there is so little transparency or any standard framework around the permitting of such facilities. Assuming it is discharged into municipal wastewater treatment systems, it is likely to rapidly consume capacity for many small communities, requiring costly expansion of systems, a cost that is likely to fall on ratepayers.

Hauschild said that no community is being forced to accept a data center if their

utility capacity is insufficient, but for those that do have the capacity, they can be a major tax generator.

"Communities have every right to deny permits based on their utilities and the state is still involved in any permitting processes," Hauschild added. "In addition, many data centers are utilizing recyclable circular water systems which would reduce the use and output."

An expensive corporate giveaway?

Residents who live near proposed data centers say they're worried they'll end up facing higher costs for basic services and question why these huge companies need tax breaks to support projects that they believe will harm their neighborhoods.

"These developers prioritize their profits over our electrical supply, water resources, home values, air quality, and overall quality of life, while the risks are left to the people," said Cathy Johnson, a Farmington resident who is

opposed to a proposed large new data center in that small community south of the Twin Cities. "Placing an industrial-scale facility in the middle of residential neighborhoods, with no clear guard rails on its water and energy use, is reckless," she added. "We need our leaders to prioritize the well-being of our community over corporate profits."

The state is already giving up a considerable amount of revenue under the existing law allowing rebates of sales taxes for data centers. The impact of the existing law has grown over time and currently costs the state just over \$100 million in lost revenue annually, according to the Legislature's Tax Expenditure Review Commission.

The additional cost of Hauschild's measure might never be known — a point that critics of the measure made at last week's hearing. Currently, data center operators taking advantage of the sales tax exemption are reimbursed after paying the tax, and they have to submit receipts to the

Department of Employment and Economic Development, which provides a way to track the cost of the program each year. Hauschild's bill would provide the exemptions up front for qualifying data centers, which means the companies would never have to document their expenditures. Without such documentation, critics argued there would be no easy way to determine the additional fiscal impact of the measure.

Regardless, critics question the wisdom of the state exempting some of the world's largest companies from the sales tax. Because Hauschild's bill requires data centers to purchase at least \$250 million in equipment to qualify for the extra exemption, critics say only the largest data center operators, like Google or Amazon, would benefit.

Hoffman was blunt in her assessment. "My take is it's an open-ended blank check to the largest companies that have ever existed."

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MELGEORGE'S ELEPHANT LAKE RESORT



It was hard to find anything to complain about on Saturday at the Antique and Classic Snowmobile Races at MelGeorge's Elephant Lake Lodge and Resort, save for a handful who thought the wind might have been a bit brisk. The turnout featured old favorites and newcomers alike for circuit and drag strip racing in a festive atmosphere.

Left: Wayne Schlauderaff of Detroit Lakes pilots his popular Snow Mater around a curve.

Bottom: The best seat in the house for watching the circuit racing may have been the one that was the farthest away from the start/finish line.

Right: Windshields like this television-shaped one weren't designed with aerodynamics in mind like today's snowmobiles.



photos by D. Colburn

FINANCES

State faces projected \$6 billion budget deficit

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Minnesota's state budget outlook could be described as moving from feast to famine, as a historic \$18 billion surplus at the outset of the 2023 legislative session has drastically shifted to an estimated \$6 billion shortfall for the 2028-29 biennium.

The February 2025 Budget and Economic Forecast released last week revealed that the near-term budget picture remains positive, although the projected \$456 million surplus for the 2026-27 biennium is a \$160 million decline from earlier estimates. But by 2028-29, the state is staring down a \$5.995 billion shortfall, an increase of \$852 million since November's projection.

State officials say rising costs, particularly in education and health services, are outpacing revenue growth. Shifting federal policies have added uncertainty, leaving lawmakers divided over how to address the growing deficit.

Minnesota remains in relatively strong financial shape for now. The 2024-25 biennium is on track to end with a \$3.742 billion surplus, only \$10 million lower than previous projections.

Revenues for this period are now estimated at \$61.728 billion, with total expenditures forecast to reach \$70.975 billion, \$304 million higher than November estimates. The state will rely on past budget surpluses to balance the books. The largest increase in expenses is in health and human services, which rose by \$284 million due to increased medical assistance costs. Spending in other areas remained largely unchanged.

Slimmer margins

The 2026-27 budget is no longer expected to have the buffer lawmakers had hoped to see. The projected surplus has fallen to the \$456 million, significantly less than the \$616 million estimate in November.

State expenditures will continue to rise faster than revenues. Projected revenue for 2026-27 stands at \$64.494 billion, a 4.5 percent increase from the current biennium, driven largely by growth in individual income and sales

tax revenues. However, corporate tax collections are expected to decline slightly due to projected lower profits.

At the same time, state spending is expected to reach \$67.78 billion, a \$791 million increase from earlier estimates. The most significant increases in spending estimates from November to February projections include:

- Health and human services – up \$339 million to a total of \$24.147 billion.

- E-12 education – rising \$197 million and totaling \$25.562 billion.

- Property tax aids and credits – growing by \$17 million and reaching \$4.753 billion.

Rising inflationary pressures are a major factor in the worsening budget outlook. The estimate for discretionary inflation has increased from \$926 million to \$1.145 billion.

Impending shortfall

The 2028-29 biennium projections hold the biggest future threat to state funding. The projected budget shortfall now stands at \$6 billion, nearly \$900 million worse than the December forecast. If inflationary cost pressures are excluded, the structural deficit would still be \$3.98 billion.

"We've chosen to highlight the uncertainty, because it does feel really significant in this moment," Erin Campbell, commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget said when introducing the projections last week. She warned that federal budget decisions and potential economic shifts could either worsen or improve the situation.

Partisan debate

The worsening budget outlook has intensified the political divide at the Capitol. Gov. Tim Walz attributed the increased deficit to economic instability under President Donald Trump and shifting federal policies.

"Basically, the only thing that's changed since November is Donald Trump's chaos to the economy," Walz said. "It changes day to day. It provides the uncertainty that we don't need."

Republicans, however, argue that Democrats' spending decisions over the past two years are to blame.

"This was an irresponsible spending spree, and now we have to figure it out," said House Speaker Lisa Demuth, R-Cold Spring. "We cannot and will

not raise taxes to fill this gap, especially after Democrats raised taxes on Minnesota families by more than \$10 billion over the last two years. My expectation is that Democrats will come to the table with savings and cuts, not tax increases, to fix the mess they created."

But House DFL Leader Melissa Hortman countered, saying state lawmakers may have no choice but to step in if federal spending cuts on programs like Medicaid move forward.

"When the federal government walks away from its obligations, the state has to step in, and we simply won't have the resources to keep up," Hortman said. "This will have dire consequences for the people of Minnesota and our state budget."

Economic trends

The state's projections try to account for future economic trends, a picture made much more uncertain by the Trump administration's actions in its nearly two months in office. Some tariffs and possible labor shortage from immigration restrictions have been factored in, along with an overall trend toward slowing job growth and economic growth beyond 2025 and mildly increasing inflation through 2026.

Minnesota's economic outlook mirrors national trends, though its softening job market remains slightly stronger than the rest of the country. Lower birth rates and an aging population will constrain labor force growth, potentially limiting wage increases and overall economic activity.

Lawmakers have about two months to craft the next budget, with tough decisions ahead.

Some legislators have suggested canceling programs that rely on uncertain federal funding, while others are looking at spending reductions across agencies. Discussions over whether to tap into the state's \$3.5 billion rainy day fund could also intensify as policymakers seek ways to plug budget holes.

Despite the growing shortfall, Walz urged lawmakers to avoid waiting on federal action before crafting solutions for Minnesota.

"We are not going to chase the chaos," he said.

MinnPost contributed to this article.

Ely dog killer seeks plea bargain

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- An Ely man has petitioned for a plea bargain for his acts of assault and animal cruelty in Ely last September.

Iver Paul Lepisto, age 19, was charged with six counts on Sept. 29, including felony third-degree assault, felony discharge of a firearm in city limits, felony attempt to disarm a peace officer, a gross misdemeanor for animal cruelty, and misdemeanors of assault and possession of drug paraphernalia. He petitioned the Minnesota Sixth District Court in Virginia on Monday to plead guilty to the felony third-degree assault and animal cruelty charges. In return, Minnesota will grant a stay of imposition on prison time and dismiss all other charges so long as Lepisto complies with the conditions of probation. The exact probation terms will be imposed by the court at a sentencing hearing yet to be scheduled.

According to a witness statement by a family member injured in last fall's incident, Lepisto shot a pet dog belonging to another family member outside their house at 435 E. East Boundary Street. Police later found the dog shot through the chest and placed on the

passenger side of Lepisto's vehicle.

After killing the dog, Lepisto then brought the gun inside the house and returned outside, where he was reported to be yelling, while shirtless, in the yard.

The witness hid the gun while Lepisto was outside. When Lepisto discovered this, he became enraged and began to assault her. A report by the Ely Police Department officers stated that Lepisto was fighting with the witness when they arrived at the residence. The Ely PD had to forcibly restrain him from attacking his family member and as they tried to place him in handcuffs. When asked if he had been using drugs, he said he had used "methamphetamine, PCP, and other substances."

The injured family witness was treated at Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital for a fractured nose and lacerations to her mouth, face, and scalp. Lepisto was released on \$30,000 bail on Oct. 22 directly to Northland Recovery for substance abuse treatment. His release agreement stipulated he must visit with a parole officer in person twice a month, abstain from all drug and alcohol use, and avoid the possession of firearms.

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SECTION 7A BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS

Grizzlies fall in quarterfinals

North Woods bounced out by Cherry



The Grizzlies' Scott Morrison releases a soft jumper in the lane against Northland last Wednesday in the first round of tournament action. photo by D. Colburn

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- In a battle of beasts, only one wild animal ruled the court on Saturday as the Cherry Tigers stalked, swarmed, and shredded the North Woods Grizzlies, turning their Section 7A playoff game at Esko into a 104-40 ferocious feast.

With the Tigers averaging 100 points per game over their last eight games and topping North Woods by 50 in January, the Grizzlies knew they had to play a perfect game on both ends of the floor to have a hope of keeping up with the defending state champs. But knowing and doing aren't the same thing when talent, size, and speed are stacked against you, and the Grizzlies found out quickly why Cherry is the odds on favorite to repeat this year.

The Tigers worked the ball inside early as they built a 12-3 lead, the Grizzlies' lone basket coming on a Louie Panichi trey. After a Grizzlies time out the Tigers connected on a trey and revved up their running game, bolting to a 19-3 edge before Talen Jarshaw broke the string with a free throw. Aidan Hartway and Trajen Barto drained buckets and Panichi drained a charity to get the Grizzlies to within 14 at 23-9 at the 9:34 mark, the closest they would get to the Tigers the rest of the

game. The Tigers kicked it into gear from there, closing out the half on a 47-9 run to take an insurmountable 70-18 lead at the break. The pace slowed down in the second half as both benches saw liberal playing time, with Cherry coasting into the sectional semifinals against Cromwell-Wright. A pair of Grizzlies' seniors led the way in scoring for North Woods. Louie Panichi scored 16, and John Carlson, who started the game after coming off the bench this season, dropped in 10.

The scenario was a much better one for the Grizzlies in the tournament opener last week, as eighth-seeded North Woods got the opportunity to play one more home game against No. 9 Northland. The Eagles won the regular season contest over North Woods, also on the Grizzlies home court, and Northland rode the confidence from that win to an early 16-5 advantage. But a deep three from the corner by Jarshaw brought the Grizzlies out of hibernation, and a deuce and a charity by Aidan Hartway capped a 15-2 run as North Woods took a 20-18 lead.

The Grizzlies kept the heat on, taking their first double-digit lead of the night at 29-19 on a Trajen Barto bucket, and pushed

See GRIZZLIES, pg. 4B



Wolves fall to Rangers

Season ends at 17-11 after 67-37 drubbing

by Marshall Helmberger
Managing Editor

Above: Ely's Drew Johnson looks for a shot.
Right: Wyatt Tedrick plays tight defense.
Below: The Wolves' Jack Davies launches up for a two-pointer.

photos by Frank Zobitz

ESKO— The Timberwolves' season came to a definitive end here on Saturday during the quarterfinal round of the Section 7A basketball playoffs. The Wolves managed to connect on just 15 of 62 shots as they fell 67-37 to Mt. Iron-Buhl.

"We could never get into an offensive flow with their physical defense," said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald. "We just struggled with our shooting. I thought we did well enough trying to contain them on defense but could never generate enough offense to make it a game."

Senior Caid Chittum, Ely's leading scorer this season, scored 24 of Ely's 37 points during what proved to be the final game of his high school basketball career. Ely sophomore Leo McKrahl came off the bench to notch ten rebounds, while fellow sophomore Max Brandriet added six boards.

Ely had a more impressive outing March 5 when they hosted McGregor in the playoffs' opening round, winning 61-45. "We played really well on the defensive end and did enough on the offensive end to get the win," said McDonald. Chittum and junior Jack Davies notched 20 points apiece while junior Drew Johnson added

15. "Senior Wyatt Mattson gave us a spark with hustle plays and ended up leading us in rebounds with nine," said McDonald. Davies added six assists.

Saturday's loss ended the season at 17-11. "It was a nice turnaround from last year's 11-16 season," noted McDonald. "Caid Chittum set two school records...the 50-point game against Bigfork in December and also a season scoring record of 713 points." Chittum ends his high school career with a total of 1,467 points.

McDonald had kudos for his team and he is hopeful for a successful season next year, assuming his players work on their skills during the off-season. "It was a very nice group to work with as they came to practice every day with a great work ethic and great attitudes," he said. "We have the potential to being pretty good but it will all depend on the work they put in from now to November."



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Outdoors

Our lives in the
Northwoods



A visit to Isle of Pines

Dorothy Molter's wilderness home

A year and a half ago, my husband and I signed up for the Dorothy Molter Museum trip to the Isle of Pines on Knife Lake to visit where Dorothy lived most of her life. The trip was for three days and two nights of winter camping in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Because of the lack of snow and ice, the excursion was canceled last year and rescheduled to leave Feb. 28 this year.

Jess Edberg, the museum's director, was coming on the trip, but she managed to do something to her knee and had to bail at the last minute. No one else was signed up for this year's trip, so it was just myself, my husband Sean, and Paige May, the White Wilderness Sled Dog Adventures guide. This outfitter, with their kennel in Isabella, contracts with the museum to provide the guide services for the yearly winter trip into Dorothy Molter land. It was daunting that by the time we left, it was just three of us since this was the first time winter camping for Sean and me.

The adventure left the Moose Lake parking area next to the Scouting America Northern Tier Adventures camp sometime after 9 a.m. Friday morning was windy with moderate snowfall, which gave me some concern, but we layered for winter weather. We bought Wintergreen two-layer parkas at the end of 2023 when we started planning the trip. The parkas had the windbreaker outer jacket and a fleece jacket inside. It was a good choice for upper wear. Despite the nasty crosswind on the trip out, we were both comfortable.

Mushing there

Paige drove what he called a freight sled with a team of eight dogs. Sean and I followed in a lighter sled with our gear and a six-dog team. We recorded a GPS track heading out to the Isle of Pines. The 13.6-mile trip crossed Moose, Newfound, Ensign, Vera, Portage, and Knife lakes took two and a half hours. We arrived at our campsite in time to chow down on lunch.

I determined that mushing might not be my thing. The one time I drove the sled, I was driving through deeper snow. We had to break a new trail to avoid some dangerous ice across a beaver dam. At one point, I went to push off with my foot to help the dogs pull through the snow and sank in up to my thigh. I stopped the dogs but fell on the claw brake with the snow hook out of reach, hanging on for dear life because the dogs wanted to keep running. That twisted my knee enough that I let Sean do the rest of the mushing for the trip to the Isle of Pines.

I felt better about almost losing



Top: The view from the back of the second dogsled, with Paige and the freight sled up ahead.

Above: The camp tucked up against the sunny side of Isle of Pines on Knife Lake.

Right: Paige holds a nice lake trout, one of several he caught over the weekend.

photos by C. Clark

the sled on Friday when Sean fell completely off Sunday afternoon.

The west half of the trip traveled Moose, Newfound, and Ensign lakes, all long, straight lakes that are similar in character. The trail to the Isle of Pines was more interesting on the eastern end. After passing Ensign Lake, we crossed a passage through bogs and ponds, with the aforementioned beaver dam blocking a creek. It was followed by a winding path over Vera Lake and a stretch of woods and bogs before leveling out onto Portage Lake. The trail then popped over a little ridge and dropped onto Knife Lake with the Isle of Pines in front of us to the northeast. The eastern half of the trail with its bogs certainly wasn't a route any canoe would take.

Making camp

Arriving at the Isle of Pines just after noon, we got to work getting the dogs staked out and setting up the hot tent. Paige was great. He had previously camped around the Isle of Pines and knew the perfect spot to avoid the wind. He also knew a few good fishing spots. We were on the ice right up against the southeast shore of Dorothy's Island, watching the swirling, blowing snow as we stood in a place of calm air leeward of the island.

As Paige set up the first holes for ice fishing, I grabbed a camera to see if I could capture some views



of the Isle of Pines, walking across Knife Lake. The island that once hosted a resort was smaller than I expected. When I took pictures from BWCAW campsite #1249, a fifth of a mile away, the island dwarfed the hot tent and our dog sleds. If the drifted snow on the ice hadn't been so nasty in spots, it would take less than 15 minutes to walk around it. On a map, the perimeter was only a half mile, not counting the two little satellite islands off the Isle's northeast tip where Dorothy had some of her resort cabins.

The walk back from campsite 1249 left me wondering about my sanity. I shouldn't have waited to take my first winter camping trip in my sixties. The quads above the turned knee decided they wanted to share the knee's misery. This left me rationing the amount I wanted to walk through the snow. Not for the first time on the trip, I wondered what Dorothy Molter would have thought. And immediately, an older woman's voice spoke from inside my head, saying, "Kwithubeliakin."

Dorothy in winter

During the more than five decades that Dorothy Molter lived on Isle of Pines, she cut and stored ice packed in straw every winter. She used that ice the rest of the year to keep her foodstuffs cold. Looking

at the steep slopes on almost all the sides of the island made me appreciate just how much work that was. A hand-cranked winch hauled the ice blocks up that steep slope from the frozen lake. It and the icehouse were at the highest spot on the northeast side of the Isle of Pines. I watched the blowing snow blast through the trees where the winch and ice house were once located. I tried to imagine turning that winch handle, pulling up ice block after ice block until the ice house was full, in a winter wind like Friday's snowstorm.

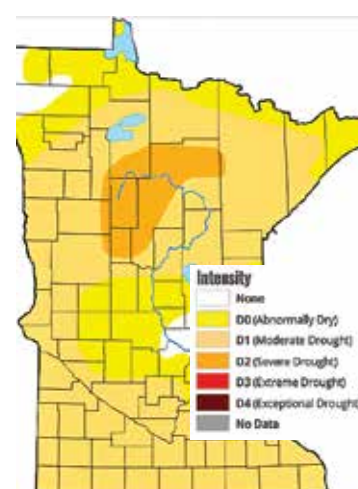
Over a shrimp and steak dinner Friday night, we talked about trying to find Dorothy's famous ribbon rock. We decided we might be unable to locate it, given the thickness of the drifted snow, especially downwind of Canada less than a half mile away. Instead, we would start the day with ice fishing, which was just good enough to suck up the whole day, but we managed to tolerate catching all those lake trout without an excess of suffering. The fresh fish chowder for Saturday's dinner was worth the learning curve on winter camping. And I want the lemon bar recipe.

Sleeping

We didn't keep the stove going

See **CAMPING**...pg. 3B

WEATHER



Drought limiting risk of spring flooding

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**
Managing Editor

REGIONAL- Forecasters predict a wet weekend here in the North Country, but it likely won't be wet enough to ease the ongoing drought conditions in the region, which have persisted since last fall. While the border region is considered abnormally dry, at least 80 percent of St. Louis and Lake counties are currently in moderate drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. A large portion of north central Minnesota, including a small portion of western St. Louis County, is considered to be in severe drought.

"We have been dealing with drought basically since late last summer," said Ketzler Levens, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Duluth. "We've gotten enough precipitation that things haven't gotten worse, but we haven't gotten enough precipitation to actually see improvements in that drought."

Weather reporting stations across northern St. Louis County were all reporting less than two inches of precipitation so far this year as of the *Timberjay's* Wednesday press time. Precipitation is running anywhere from 40 percent below average in Orr to 12 percent below average in Tower.

The continuing dry weather has left limited snowpack on the region's landscape and that snowpack diminished even further with the near-record high temperatures seen in the region this past Sunday and Monday. That could well mean the spring fire season will start earlier than usual again this year. Indeed, parts of southern and west-central Minnesota were already subject to red flag warnings earlier in the week due to high fire danger from warm temperatures, low humidity, and high winds.

Flood risk minimal

Given the current conditions, it's no surprise that the National Weather Service is predicting a low risk of spring flooding this year. Matt deWolfe, with the Lake of the Woods Control Board, cited data from the Midwest Regional Climate Center's Winter Severity Index which shows that this winter has indeed been mild, which bodes well for limiting flooding.

"It's basically a formula to try to measure how bad the winter has been," deWolfe said. "We're technically in the mild, just below the moderate, zone. High water years tend to have a more severe winter leading into spring, and we are well below where those winters were at this time of the year. We obviously don't know what's coming next for the next month or two, but I think this is a good indicator that compared to those years, we're in a better position in terms of the winter conditions."

Water flows into the Rainy Basin are running from the bottom range of normal to well below normal,

See **DROUGHT**...pg. 3B

CAMPING...Continued from page 2B

during the night. We were in our sleeping bags well before 9 p.m. on both evenings. Paige, who was doing most of the work running the camp, zonked out immediately and slept until daylight. I regretted not bringing a book to read, which is my usual relaxation before bed. I played a puzzle game on my cell phone, which had a signal on and off all weekend, and fell asleep after 10 p.m.

The first night in the -40 degree-rated sleeping bag was tolerable. Both Sean and I observed uncomfortable toes and some back stiffness. The hoarfrost around the opening of the mummy bag was a revelation. It was something I didn't expect, given that most of my camping experience has been in the deserts out West. Sean and I both added padding underneath and an extra pair of socks on Saturday night, which made a big difference in comfort.

I woke up at 6 a.m. and played games on my phone both mornings. I brought my tablet into the big sleeping bag on Saturday night, thinking I could start working on this article while waiting for the stove to get lit. I discovered that I didn't have room to type without opening the top of the bag to the cold morning air. I was glad when Paige started the stove sometime after 7 a.m. It was -5 degrees on Saturday morning and not much warmer on Sunday morning.

Winter Cabin

The day of ice fishing on Saturday was restorative, especially after fresh fish chowder. After dinner, we walked onto Knife Lake to look at the stars. Even with a sliver of a crescent moon providing a bit of light, it has been a long time since I've seen the stars so thick. Venus and Jupiter were prominent.



Stopping to talk with ski campers along the way.

Canis Major was too low to be seen, but Taurus, Gemini, every one of the Pleiades, and all of Orion were wreathed in the glow of the Milky Way. Sirius was almost as bright as the planets. The international designation of the BWCW as the world's largest dark sky sanctuary is well-earned. We were disappointed we saw no northern lights, but the starry sky Saturday night had its own appeal.

By Sunday morning, Sean and I concluded that locating the boat house and winter cabin site was practical, given the patterns of wind-drifted snow we had observed. The boat house and winter cabin faced east, looking out on a cove. That cove was just around the point east of our campsite. The drifted snow was a chore to get through, but the location of the boat house was easy to determine from the map of the shoreline.

The location of the winter cabin was a climb upward from the shoreline through deep snow. The cabin site looked out over the top of the boathouse. The view is northeastward up Knife Lake, with numerous little islands dotting the view toward the spruce-studded horizon. The snow-blanketed clearing

where the cabin was is now populated by a few birch trees and brush invading the space. Not only did the bowl of the cove protect the cabin from the worst of the wind, but the view four decades ago must have been amazing. I don't think the photos I took could match the view Dorothy must have seen every winter night before she died in 1986.

I know I will never look at the winter cabin, now on the grounds of the Dorothy Molter Museum, with the same eyes again. In the future, I'll be looking out the cabin door and seeing Dorothy's view up

Knife Lake.

Knife Lake highway

One surprise was the traffic of travelers in the Boundary Waters. We passed groups of ski campers, both traveling out and back. We also watched an impressive sixteen-dog team with a freight sled pass our camp as we were fishing, followed by a kick sled pulled by a pair of sled dogs. Paige knew all these folks, who were all sled dog guides. Troy Vega had hired the freighter team to take him and his two black-and-white dogs up Knife Lake for some winter camping and fishing. The two dogs, Grommet and Ziptie, were both retired dogs from White Wilderness. The freighter left Vega somewhere northeast of us and passed our camp, heading back to the landing at Moose Lake later Saturday afternoon.

Vega was followed by another friend of Paige's, Rawley Crow. He was pulled on Nordic skis by a big yellow, fluffy, friendly sled dog named Chance.

Learning experience

While everything is stiff and aching, don't ask me if I'd do this again. I suspect my fondness for ice fishing will

win over my intrinsic slothful and indolent nature in just a few months. Once my knee and thigh are happy again, I might suggest mushing again in a spot where the snow isn't quite so deep.

I now know to wear two pairs of dry socks to sleep with extra padding underneath. I have also learned my lesson on trying to type on a tablet inside a mummy bag. Next time, I'll remember to bring a book – or at least download one onto my phone.

I also will be changing my Idaho ice fishing habits with the lessons Paige gave me for catching trout in Minnesota. I realize now that my ice fishing habits, fine-tuned for catching rainbows and kokanee salmon in Idaho, aren't right for ice fishing here, which might explain some of my less-than-great days trying to fish for trout in Miners Lake.

I also will be looking at the cabins at the Dorothy Molter Museum with new eyes now that I have seen where they were placed on the Isle of Pines.

Sled dogs

The dogs were the true stars of the trip and did all the heavy work. Helping with the

dogs was one of my favorite parts of the trip. Each dog got a frozen brick of meat and kibble for food in the morning and evening. After the dogs melted the snow down to ice where they were sleeping – and they had a lot of nap time – we gathered balsam branches to line the depressions and made them balsam-lined beds.

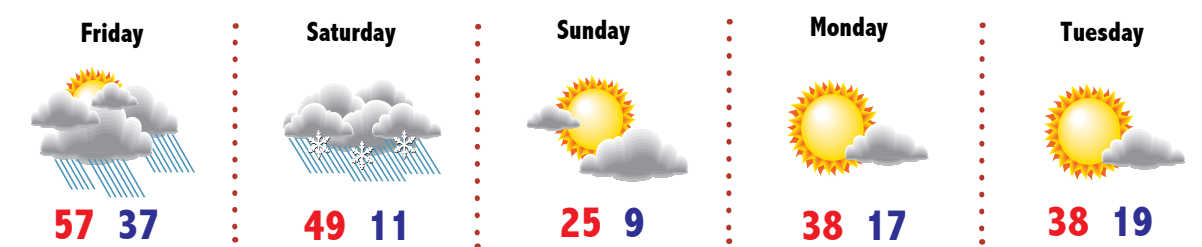
Every time another sled dog or skiing party passed us, the 14 dogs would go off, barking and howling. Of course, one of the dogs was a real chatterbox, and he made noise whenever he was awake. I knew his voice well before Saturday night when he started up the rest of the dogs for a five-minute howling session around 10 p.m. Sean and I were amused. Paige slept through it.

None of the dogs ever refused all the attention we gave them. I nicknamed one of the dogs on the freight sled "Ilene," since that's what she did against me every time I walked past.

Now I can tell all my friends that I went winter camping with me as the only gal in a group of 16 guys – and 14 of them were real dogs.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather



Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.
03/03	34	na	0.00		03/03	34	3	0.00		03/03	36	-3	0.00		03/03	36	-2	0.00		03/03	34	-4	0.00	
03/04	50	na	0.00		03/04	50	18	0.00		03/04	49	12	0.00		03/04	49	15	0.00		03/04	51	17	0.00	
03/05	32	18	0.02	0.2"	03/05	na	na	0.00		03/05	32	21	0.01	0.2"	03/05	32	20	0.01	0.2"	03/05	34	21	tr	0.2"
03/06	27	6	0.00		03/06	28	-2	0.00		03/06	28	6	0.00		03/06	27	2	0.00		03/06	28	-4	0.00	
03/07	28	na	0.01		03/07	28	1	0.00		03/07	29	8	0.01	0.2"	03/07	28	6	0.01	0.4"	03/07	28	9	0.00	
03/08	24	5	0.04	0.9"	03/08	26	2	0.00		03/08	26	7	0.02	0.4"	03/08	26	5	0.01	0.5"	03/08	26	0	0.04	0.6"
03/09	40	20	0.00		03/09	43	16	0.00		03/09	43	21	0.00		03/09	42	18	0.04	0.8"	03/09	43	21	0.00	
YTD Total			2.01	52.2"	YTD Total			1.04	36.0"	YTD Total			1.72	50.0"	YTD Total			1.26	41.1"	YTD Total			1.47	45.3"

Outdoors briefly

Trail closures arrive with the thaw

REGIONAL — The Minnesota DNR has begun temporarily closing some DNR-managed roads and motorized trails as seasonal melting makes them too soft to support vehicle traffic without

causing damage. The duration of the temporary closures in state forests, state parks, recreation areas, and wildlife management areas depends on local weather and surface conditions, which are difficult to predict.

"Spring thaws create wet, unstable conditions. Closures protect our roads and trails

from damage and costly repair, and keep people and equipment safe, too," said Matt Huseby, DNR forest roads program coordinator.

For information on road and trail closures, visit the DNR's road closure webpage (mndnr.gov/closures). Information is updated weekly on Thursdays by 2 p.m.

DROUGHT..Continued from page 2B

deWolfe said, measures consistent with the ongoing drought conditions.

Computer simulations using the available data show a less than ten percent chance of minor flooding for three rivers in the basin. The Kawishiwi near Ely has an eight percent chance of minor flooding, the Vermilion River at Crane Lake has a seven percent chance, and the Little Fork at Littlefork has less than a five percent chance. The chance for moderate flooding for all three is less than five percent.

One wild card in the flood equation is an unusually deep layer of frost in the soil. While there are few direct measurements available, Levens pointed to the 30-inch frost depth at the NWS Duluth office, 12 inches deeper than average, as an example of the severity of the frost. The frost depth at Big Sandy Lake is 48 inches, more than two feet deeper than average.

"We've had some very

cold temperatures through January and early February, which has allowed us to put a lot of frost in the ground on the U.S. side," Levens said. "The soil temperatures themselves are interesting – they're not the coldest we've ever seen, suggesting that if we got some warm temperatures they would start to thaw out. But there's a lot of soil to thaw out, and this could lead to really poor infiltration, meaning that instead of acting like soil, the soil acts more like asphalt and water would just run off. That can happen either with snow melting or if we were to get a rain on frozen ground event."

The other unknown factor is rain, and the three-month forecast holds little in the way of clues, as it predicts equal chances of below average, normal, and above average precipitation. "We'll likely continue to see that rain is going to play a really big factor," Levens said. "If we get any heavy rains

on top of melting snow, that would be a concern, especially with how frozen our ground currently is. That frost depth, again, is probably one of the most likely places where we have that uncertainty with spring flooding."

David Colburn contributed reporting for this story.

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EDUCATION

Ely Public Schools receive over \$40,000 in donations

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- It must have felt like Christmas in March for Ely Public School board members on Monday as they received an astounding \$43,558 in donations from four donors.

While the board is accustomed to receiving small donations from district patrons throughout the year, Monday's donations were extraordinary. They included:

- \$38,182 from the Ely Educational Foundation. The money is earmarked for the following items:

- \$2,800 for wall art, \$3,800 for a floor mat and runners for the commons entry area, \$6,000 for a smart board and stand, \$1,890 for an art grid, \$12,200 for a projector for the auditorium, \$1,500 for concrete for tables, \$2,380 for computer science instruction, \$477 for Spanish instruction, \$1,685 for the Washington Elementary School end-of-year festival, \$750 for "Fresh Food Fridays," and \$4,700 for floor hockey equipment.

- \$3,360 from the Touchdown Club for weight room equipment.

- \$1,000 John R. Musich for the Bill Braun Courage Scholarship.

- \$1,016 Vicky Cherne with a match from the Land O' Lakes Foundation as a general donation.

Like many other school districts, Ely is struggling with increasing costs due to inflation and unfunded state mandates, and declining revenues due to falling enrollments, loss of federal funding, a disproportionately declining state funding formula, and related factors. Faced with a projected half million-dollar shortfall for this fiscal year, the district has taken extraordinary measures to spread cuts over fiscal years and is actively seeking more spending reductions that will not directly

affect students. One of those measures has been to ask the district's supporters and the surrounding community to contribute or to find ways to raise more money.

As can be seen from Monday's school board meeting, the Ely Educational Foundation and others have stepped up to do what they can to keep ISD 696 both independent and solvent.

In other business, the board:

- Approved receipts of \$706,587, disbursements of \$304,412, and the financial report for February.

- Hired Kayla Foy for a cafeteria aide position effective Feb. 28.

- Accepted the resignation of third grade teacher Elyssa Erickson effective at the end of the school year.

- Accepted the resignation of head hockey coach Jake Myers effective at the end of the 2024-2025 season.

- Approved the following spring season coaching positions: Frank Ivancich, head baseball coach; Will Helms, head boys track coach; Jill Ellerbroek, head girls track coach; Max Gantt, assistant baseball coach; Kelsey Ivancich, assistant softball coach; Aaron Donais, assistant baseball coach (stipend paid by Northeast Range); Darren Visser, assistant boys track

coach; Beth Ohlauer, assistant girls track coach; Jayne Dusich, volunteer assistant track coach; and Derek Johnson, volunteer assistant baseball coach.

- Heard the second of three readings of a policy regarding personal electronic communication devices.

- Approved 2025-26 school calendar option B, which 60 percent of the district's faculty and staff preferred. Option B features a longer winter break and three four-day weekends in the spring.

ELY FOR ELY

Group hosts workshop on buying/selling a small business

by CATIE CLARK
Ely Editor

ELY- Looking to buy a small business? According to Steve Dunnom of Sunbelt Business Advisors, now is a great time thanks to the ongoing retirements of the baby boom generation.

Dunnom, along with Emily Roose of the Entrepreneur Fund, highlighted business prospects during the monthly Ely for Ely meeting at the Community Hub on Tuesday.

"The baby boomers are set to retire completely by 2037," said Dunnom. "If we do the math for the next 12 years, 66 percent of the 118,000 Minnesota small businesses with employees



Nick Dunnom

is going to be 77,808 (boomer-owned) businesses. That's 6,490 businesses per year that are going to be making

the (ownership) transition, divided by 365 is 18 business per day that baby boomers will be selling."

Buying an existing business

"Buying a business instead of starting one has a lot of advantages," Dunnom said, citing Small Business Administration statistics suggesting that only 10 percent of start-ups succeed but that the continued success rate for established businesses after a sale is much higher, at 98 percent.

"Of course, if you buy a failing business, that success rate is not going to be 98 percent, which is why it's important to do your due diligence," Dunnom advised. The success rate was defined as five years of payments on the financing to purchase the business.

Local economy

Roose listed all of the advantages of small businesses for small towns. "Out of every \$100 spent at a local small business, \$68 goes back into the local economy. Only \$13 stays locally if it's a big business from out of the area. Small businesses create local jobs, support local events, provide local services for residents, and create tourist-friendly downtowns."

Both Roose and Dunnom agreed that those looking to buy a business should work with qualified business advisors and brokers and should be prepared for a business ownership transition that would take at least two-to-three months.

Dunnom is a broker for Sunbelt Business Advisors, the largest business brokerage in the Midwest. Roose is the Ely-area business advisor for the nonprofit Entrepreneur Fund, which is a certified federal small business lender. The fund also provides no-cost business consulting for small businesses and start-ups.

Coming up

The next Ely for Ely session is tentatively scheduled for April 8. It will feature Ely Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski speaking on how businesses can successfully interact with local government. The time and place are currently TBA.

Obituaries and Death Notices



Anthony J. Brandenburg

Anthony "Tony" James Brandenburg, 54, of Minneapolis, passed away unexpectedly at home on Monday, Feb. 24, 2025. A celebration of life will be held in the spring. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Brandenburg Prairie Foundation, an organization that was close to Anthony's heart. Touch the Sky Prairie in Luverne was a very spiritual place for him, where he loved to wander and reflect. Donations may be sent to Brandenburg Prairie Foundation, c/o Brandenburg Gallery, 11 E Sheridan St., Ely, MN 55731. Please state Anthony Brandenburg Memorial on your donation. Memorials may also be directed to The Re-

reat, an organization that is committed to helping people who suffer from substance abuse. Checks can be sent to Charles Vaubel, Financial Manager, The Retreat, 1221 Wayzata Blvd. E, Wayzata, MN 55391. Arrangements are with David Lee Funeral Home in Wayzata.

Born on Nov. 7, 1970, in Duluth, Anthony attended elementary school in Worthington, junior high school in Two Harbors, and high school in Wayzata. He started his professional photography career early. At age 11, he realized that lemonade stands would not be a viable career choice and published his first story, which he wrote and photographed, in National Geographic World magazine. He attended Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) while juggling an illustrious photo career working with magazines such as *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Newsweek*, *Glamour*, *Self* and many others. He was co-creator/developer of "365 Things to Avoid in the Twin Cities" and designed over 50 album covers. His designs and campaigns won multiple awards and honors. One of his websites was prominently featured in *Graphis* magazine as one of the 10 best

interactive sites for 2005.

In 2001, he co-founded a full-service communication design firm, BNDH, while continuing to assist his father on various projects including designing books, making movies, web development, and printing fine-art prints for the Brandenburg Gallery. He was a talented musician and was very well-known in the Minneapolis music scene.

Anthony lit up every room with his smile and always knew how to make people laugh. He loved to be reminded that he "looked better with shorter, thinning hair." We know that he touched many lives, was well-loved, and will be missed by many. Thank you to everyone who was a good friend to Anthony. We are forever grateful for the impact you made on his life.

Anthony is survived by his son, Lindsey Brandenburg of St. Paul; parents, Jim and Judy Brandenburg of Ely and Medina; sister, Heidi Brandenburg (Nels Pierson) of Ely; niece, Olivia Ross; and nephew, Liam Ross.

He was preceded in death by his loving grandparents; and uncle, John Deitering.

Deidra M. Mankus

Deidra Margaret "Deeds" Mankus, 27, of Orr, died on Monday, March 10, 2025, in Hibbing. Deidra would want anyone seeing someone struggling with addiction to please reach out. She craved to be free but lost her battle way too young. A celebration of life will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 15, at Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service.

She is survived by her mother, Gina Mankus of Chisholm and her father, Mark Mankus of Orr; grandfather, Leonard (Lucy) Mankus; sister, Danielle (Dallas) Johnson; brother, Dylan (Kathryn) Mankus; nephews and nieces, Carson, Cyrus, Ava, Layne, Waylon and Blake (mother Katie); the Family Beach Crew; and numerous friends.

Gary A. Novak Sr.

Gary Allen Novak Sr., 82, of Greaney, passed away on Saturday, Feb. 22, 2025, surrounded by family. Per his wishes there will be no services. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

He is survived by his

brothers, Keith and Beryl; children, Debbie, Lisa, Wade (Lorrie), Clint (Janelle), Gary and Terry (Chris); and numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Michele R. Meier

Michele Rena Meier, 62, of Cook, passed away on Monday, March 2, 2025.

There will be a private graveside service held in the spring or summer of 2025. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

Lawrence J. A. Kupka

Lawrence "Larry" James Addison Kupka, 83, of Embarrass, passed away on Saturday, March 8, 2025, at New Perspective Senior Living in Barnum with his family by his side. Graveside services will be held on Friday, June 20 at Argo Cemetery in Babbitt. Pastor Christine Forsythe will officiate. Arrangements are with Range Funeral Home in Hibbing.

He is survived by his daughter, Chris (Scott) Hautala of Hibbing; son, Lance (Katherine) of Hibbing; daughter, Heather (Joe) Tomczak of Eveleth; six grandchildren; three

great-grandchildren; sisters, Linda (Gary) Typpo and Margaret (Harold) Janke; sister-in-law, Bonnie Olson and her daughters Connie Olson and Shanon (Keith) Urbanski; nieces, Sharon (Gary) Libal and Sandy (Gary) Lemke; sister-in-law, Beverly (Jonathan) Hill; and many other extended family members.

Robert T. Colombo

Robert "Bob" Thomas Colombo, 78, of Brazil, formerly of Ely, passed suddenly on Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2025. Funeral and burial services were held in Brazil. His family is planning a celebration of life to be held this summer in Ely.

He will be lovingly remembered by his wife, Rosalia of Brazil; daughters, Melissa Colombo of Wisconsin and Brittney (Red) Corbin of Colorado; sister, Carolyn (Kent) Halberg of Wisconsin; three grandchildren; two great-grandsons; former spouse, Kathy Grivette; and many wonderful friends.

GRIZZLIES...Continued from page 1B

the lead to 13 at the break, 44-31.

The second half was all about maintaining that lead against the dangerous Eagles, who closed the gap to just five at 52-47 with 13 minutes remaining to complete the comeback. But TaySean Boshey-Wilkerson broke free under the basket for a score, and Scott Morrison followed up with a basket down low to right

the Grizzlies ship, and they pushed the lead back up to 67-52 at the 10:23 mark on a bucket by Hartway. The Eagles made another push to get back within single digits at 69-61, and they were still within eight with under six minutes to play, but they would get no closer. Panichi punctuated a big North Woods surge with a steal and fast break score to put the Grizzlies up 86-68

with 3:30 to play, and North Woods breezed home from there to claim an 88-74 win.

The Grizzlies took advantage of an off-night shooting for the Eagles, who hit only 32 percent of their shots, while the Grizzlies scorched the net by making 49 percent of their opportunities. The Grizzlies were also stellar from the free throw line, hitting 14 of 18 attempts.

North Woods had five players score in double figures for the night, led by 23 from Panichi. Jarshaw scored 19, Morrison had a breakout game with 14, Hartway scored 12 and Kalvyn Benner tallied ten.

Grizzlies Head Coach Andrew Jugovich was pleased to see Morrison's hard work pay off with a good outing.

"Ever since the middle

of the season he's put in a lot of work on (junior varsity), and seeing how he attacks on JV when we have a low block position open, I knew he was capable of it, and tonight he really took full advantage of it."

Jugovich switched up defenses for the game, playing a zone instead of the team's preferred man-to-man, and the strategy paid off.

"I'll give the boys credit - they don't play zone often, but against a team like that we had to go zone and it worked out pretty well," Jugovich said.



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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.

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SNOWFLAKES
by Japheth Light

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦
♦ Easy ♦♦ Medium ♦♦♦ Difficult

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Super Crossword INTELLECTUAL TREAT

ACROSS

1 Accord, Civic and Pilot
7 Blue toon
12 Hubbubs
16 Honorary deg. for a jurist
19 Unicellular organism
20 Subdued, with "down"
21 Receives a salary, say
23 Boston baseballers
24 Verb form in "I used to solve puzzles," e.g.
26 Position of advantage
28 Stuff in some viral genes
29 How- (manuals)
30 Detroit-to-Philly dir.
31 Job opening
33 Literary finale
36 War deity
40 Pre- (replace)
44 What's allotted in soccer when a player is hurt
46 Sell in stores
49 Thinned out
51 Bohemian lager

52 "Fathers and Sons" novelist
54 Notion, in Nice
55 Story
56 Lions' locale
57 L-Q linkup
58 "Little" co-star Rae
62 In the best-case scenario
65 Sibling who looks the same
68 Japanese menu item
69 Fall mo.
70 Suffix of superlatives
71 Korean, e.g.
72 Molar requiring extraction, maybe
76 Title for Gandhi
78 "Good Will Hunting" director Gus Van —
79 Virtuosos
80 Screening airport org.
81 Oodles
82 Love deity
83 Dog with a reddish, wiry coat
88 Beirut's land
92 Barney Fife portrayer Don

93 Charred clouds
94 Retreat in the clouds
96 Downs food
98 Good friends
99 River mouth features
100 From scratch
102 Horse's kin
105 San Francisco's — Valley
106 Aged
107 Invention of Rorschach
115 Painful podiatric problem
119 Geronimo's people
120 2003-16 Cowboys quarterback
121 Large spoon
122 "Peanuts" girl
123 Former United rival
124 Has- —
125 Lectern, e.g.
126 Group of PC experts ... or what this puzzle's 10 theme answers are?

DOWN

1 Mata —
2 Boding sign
3 Signals "OK"
4 Lucy's Arnaz
5 House
6 "Wailing" instruments
7 Rouse
8 NYC cultural center
9 Like many insensitive jokes
10 Smells awful
11 32nd prez
12 Will Smith's role in "Men in Black"
13 Ten: Prefix
14 Hitter Mel
15 Concorde, e.g., in brief
16 Ointment base
17 Thin, supple and graceful
18 34th prez
22 — fours (teacakes)
25 Fern leaf
27 Golf ball prop
32 "Salt" co-star Schreiber
33 Port city near Buffalo, NY
34 TV's Gomer
35 Neighbor of Belg.
36 Grande of pop, to fans
37 Gun, as an engine
38 Greek vowel
39 Christmas party headwear
41 Fuel efficiency stat
42 Forecasts
43 Found on a radio dial
45 "What's —?" (Bugs Bunny's greeting)
47 Like tilted type
48 Break in the action
50 State bird of Hawaii
53 Marina del —
54 Beginning ltr.
57 Volcano in Calif.
58 "We're in danger here!"
59 Loretta of "M*A*S*H"
60 Thailand, once
61 Noted visitor to 60-Down
62 Wife of Osiris
63 Part of Russia's parliament
64 Fox Sports competitor
66 Webpage
67 Pakistani city
69 Lyric poems
73 Occult cards
74 Low-budget, in adspeak
75 Other, in Oviedo
76 Wrestling pad
77 Stein drinks
82 "Watermark" singer
83 Apropos of
84 33rd prez
85 Radio host Glass
86 Japanese menu item
87 Tpk., e.g.
88 Cornea cover
89 Still, at this late date
90 Salami alternative
91 Vein's cousin
92 Japanese fencing style
95 Sam of Sam's Club
97 Actor Mineo
101 Be victorious in
103 "Same goes for me"
104 Honoree on Mar. 17
106 "I'm buying"
108 Zilch
109 Potter's oven
110 Ran, as dye
111 Sharp-tasting
112 Brutus' "Behold!"
113 Actor LaBeouf
114 Burst (with)
115 Hairy sitcom cousin
116 Celestial ball
117 Suffering
118 Golf's Ernie

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.

TGXSGGJ AXMLHDHA UJF
EGAOKJAG XRGE G MA U
AOUZG. MJ XRUX AOZG MA
KHE OKSGE XK ZRKKAG KHE
EGAOKJAG.
— AKHEZG HJWJKSJ
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Weekly SUDOKU

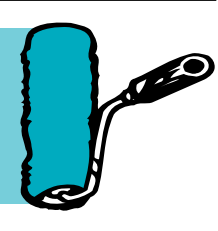
Answer

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

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 Bids for the construction of the Project will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 4429 Highway 53, Orr, MN 55771 until Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. local time. At that time, the Bids received will be publicly opened and read.

The Project includes the following Work:
 Remove and replace all existing Runway End Identifier Light (REIL) and Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) equipment and associated electrical components, including constructing new foundations and site grading and restoration.
 Bids are requested for the following Contract: PAPI and REIL Replacement
Obtaining the Bidding Documents
 Information and Bidding Documents for the Project can be purchased online at: www.bollig-engineering.com

com under the bidding tab through the designated website QuestCDN.com for \$40.
 Bidding Documents may be downloaded from the designated website. Prospective Bidders are urged to register with the designated website as a plan holder, even if Bidding Documents are obtained from a plan room or source other than the designated website in either electronic or paper format. The designated website will be updated periodically with addenda, lists of registered plan holders, reports, and other information relevant to submitting a Bid for the Project. All official notifications, addenda, and other Bidding Documents will be offered only through the designated website. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for Bidding Documents, including addenda, if any, obtained from sources other than the designated website.

Office. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for full or partial sets of Bidding Documents, including addenda, if any, obtained from sources other than the Issuing Office. Bidding Documents may also be examined at the Orr City Office located at 4429 Highway 53, Orr, MN 55771, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8am and 4pm.
 Printed copies of the Bidding Documents may be obtained from the Issuing Office by paying a deposit of \$100.00 for each set. Bidders who return full sets of the Bidding Documents in good condition within 10 days after receipt of Bids will receive a full refund. Non-Bidders, and Bidders who obtain more than one set of the Bidding Documents, will receive a refund of \$60 for documents returned in good condition within the time limit indicated above. Make deposit checks for Bidding Documents payable to Bollig inc.
Pre-bid Conference
 A Pre-bid Conference will not be held for this project.
Wage Rates
 State of Minnesota and Federal Davis-Bacon prevailing wage rates apply to this contract. Instructions to Bidders For all further requirements regarding bid submittal, qualifications, procedures, and contract award, refer to the Instructions to Bidders that are included in the Bidding Documents. **This Advertisement is issued by:**
 Owner: City of Orr
 By: Angela Fabish
 Title: City Clerk
 Date: March 7, 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF MINNESOTA COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT DISTRICT COURT PROBATE DIVISION Court File No. 69VI-PR-25-11
 Estate of James Floyd Saatela, aka James F. Saatela, and as James Saatela, Decedent
 NOTICE AND ORDER OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION OF INTESTACY, DETERMINATION OF HEIRSHIP, APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 It is Ordered and Notice is given that on April 15, 2025, at 1:30 pm, a hearing will be held in this Court at 300 South

5th Avenue, Virginia, Minnesota, for the adjudication of intestacy and determination of heirship of the Decedent, and for the appointment of Michael R. Saatela, whose address is 8370 Tamarack Dr., Mountain Iron, MN, 55768 as Personal Representative of the Estate of the Decedent in an UNSUPERVISED administration. Any objections to the petition must be filed with the Court prior to or raised at the hearing. If proper and if no objections are filed or raised, the Personal Representative will be appointed with full power to administer the Estate, including the power to collect all assets, to pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, to sell real and personal property, and to do all necessary acts for the Estate.
 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: March 6, 2025
 BY THE COURT
 Leslie Beiers
 Judge of District Court
 JENNIFER MILLER, Court Administrator by Stefanie Higgins as Deputy
 Attorney for Petitioner
 Angela E. Sipilä
 Sipilä Law Office, LLC
 412 1st St. S.
 Virginia, MN, 55792
 Attorney License No: 024501x
 Telephone: (218) 741-5000
 FAX: (218) 741-5000
 Email: ange@sipilaw.com
 Published in the Timberjay, March 14 & 21, 2025

Super Crossword

Answers
 HONDAS SMURF ADOS LLD
 AMOEBATONEDGETSPAID
 REDSOX IMPERFECTTENSE
 INSIDETRACKRNA TOS
 ESE SLOTEPILOG
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The Issuing Office for the Bidding Documents is:
 Bollig Inc
 1721 Technology Drive NE,
 Suite 100
 Willmar, MN 56201
 Prospective Bidders may obtain or examine the Bidding Documents at the Issuing Office on Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and may obtain copies of the Bidding Documents from the Issuing Office as described below. Bidding Documents may also be examined Partial sets of Bidding Documents will not be available from the Issuing

EMPLOYMENT

BARTENDER WANTED – COOK VFW
 Flexible hours. Call the VFW
 at 218-666-0500 or Shirley at
 218-750-3474

Hatchery Night Watch Staff
 We are hiring one more person for Spring 2025, about April 7 – May 16, working 5 days/week in 8-hour shifts of evenings and nights at the Pike River Fish Hatchery. \$19/hour.
 Contact Keith Reeves at MN-DNR Tower Fisheries, phone 218-300-7803 or email keith.reeves@state.mn.us
 AA/EOE, Veteran Friendly

Highway Laborer (Seasonal)
 \$16.89 - \$17.62 Hourly
 Apply Today
 www.stlouiscountymn.gov
 or call 218-726-2422
 Equal Opportunity and Veteran-Friendly Employer

m
 DEPARTMENT OF IRON RANGE RESOURCES & REHABILITATION
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST 1
 Permanent, Full-Time
 The Communications Specialist 1 will schedule, coordinate and plan special events and tradeshows for the agency. Attend and provide support for the commissioner at public events. Administer agency communication activities to assist with the development, implementation and analysis of agency communication programs to include community outreach and public engagement. Assist with planning and implementation of agency's strategic plan and priorities including program evaluation and program guidelines.
 This position will require reporting to the primary work location in Eveleth, MN and may be eligible for a hybrid/telework schedule.
 Learn more and apply online at mn.gov/careers
 Job ID: 84291
 Application deadline: March 17, 2025
 GREAT BENEFITS PACKAGE
 AA/EOE, Veteran Friendly
 Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 28, March 7 & 14, 2025

Weekly SUDOKU

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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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CryptoQuote
 answer
 Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response.
 — Source Unknown

SNOWFLAKES
 solution

Wanted: Tractor Trailer Delivery Drivers looking for a Local Career
 CDL Class A. Year round work. Home every night.
 Tractor Trailers based in these areas: Hibbing, Grand Rapids, Virginia, Esko - and we need 4 drivers to fill them.
 Min 75000 miles OTR, clean record, no accidents, safety attitude. Tanker and Hazmat work, but we train for these.
 • Range of pay last year \$65K-\$95K, depending on FT hours worked.
 • Family Insurance at a reasonable co-pay. You choose the deductible.
 • 401K with 20% match
 • Part Time available also.
 We have not had a lay-off in last 15 years. Reason for posting: Growth
 If you are a quality Class B driver living in these areas:
 Ely/Babbitt, Virginia, Hibbing, Silver Bay
 We have work available close to home.
 Taking care of our customers is our #1 priority.
 If you have that mind-set, please apply.
 Contact: Krissy/recruiter at 218.741.9634 • kwarvas@eoctrimark.com
 or our website: edwardsoilandpropane.com/careers.
 Edwards Oil and Propane, 820 Hoover Rd, Virginia, MN 55792