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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

PUC orders hearings on Frontier's service

Customers will be able to offer testimony to administrative law judge

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission voted unanimously, last Thursday, to open a formal investigation into Frontier Communications, to include holding public hearings in Frontier's service territory

across the state. At least one, and possibly more such hearings, will be scheduled in northern Minnesota.

The hearings will allow Frontier customers to offer testimony to an administrative law judge on problems and concerns with their Frontier service. The PUC ordered no less than three hearings and no more than six.

While the PUC ordered the actions, the investigation will primarily be handled by the Department of Commerce and the Office of Administrative Hearings, which oversees the work of administrative law judges. The Attorney General's office could also be involved depending on the issues raised in the public testimony.

In ordering the investigation, PUC commissioners made clear that their regulatory authority is largely limited to Frontier's voice telephone service, and that other state agencies would more appropriately address other issues, such as poor internet quality or potentially fraudulent billing practices.

The commission's decision

comes on the heels of overwhelming response to a call for comments issued by the PUC in February. Since then, the PUC has been inundated with complaints about the company's service quality and billing practices — and that prompted PUC staff to recommend further

See...FRONTIER pg. 9

ELY

Maple sap debate coming to a boil

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY — Based on concerns expressed by the Ely Tree Board about the health of Ely's remaining silver maple trees, the City Council will consider taking action later this month to slow the flow of maple sap tapping or to ban the tradition all together.

Mayor Chuck Novak asked City Council members Tuesday night to authorize a public hearing on the issue. The hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 24, prior to the council's study session.

He asked the council how they want to proceed to address the issue. "Do you want to proceed without a hearing? Do you want to move forward with a ban or do you want to set up an ordinance?" he asked. "Let the public weigh in on it, that was my thought. Let's hear from the folks and let the people speak to us."

The Tree Board is developing the city's Tree

See...ELY pg. 10

EASTER CELEBRATIONS



Easter is for kids

Above:
Edwin Swanson, with his father Mack, of Tower, visit with the Easter Bunny at the Tower Civic Center.
photo by S. Ukkola

Right:
Brody Grotberg, 3, of Ely, selects makes his selection of candy at the Easter Egg Hunt at Amici's on Saturday. photo by K. Vandervort

More photos on Page B1



GREENWOOD TWP

Recount cancelled before any counting can begin

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- Who officially won the supervisor races in Greenwood on March 13?

That's a question that remains up in the air even after two attempts at a recount in the weeks since the election. Town clerk Sue Drobac shut down the second attempt at a recount on April 2, before any counting had begun, on account of "too much discourse" from the audience. Drobac has since rescheduled the recount for Friday, April 6, at 1 p.m., and township attorney Mike Couri will help oversee the effort.

The election night count showed incumbent Larry Tahija outpolling incumbent in a different seat) John Bassing 158-153, and Byron Beihoffer outpolling Rick Stoehr 154-148. The two losing candidates filed a request for a recount, which because of the close margin is permitted by law, at the township's expense. A total of 313 votes were cast in the election.

See... RECOUNT pg. 10

CITY OF TOWER

Tower Vision 2025 now required to provide letter of credit

Developer says that was never part of development agreement

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER — City officials here have raised a new potential hurdle for the town home project at the city's harbor, suggesting the city may seek a \$750,000 letter of credit from Tower Vision 2025, before the city agrees to finance its portion of a development agreement with

The Tower harbor town home project faces a potential new hurdle because city officials are requesting a letter of credit from the developer. file photo

the company.

It's not clear whether the request — if the council approves it — will create an impasse for the project, but Tower Vision's master developer Jeremy Schoenfelder said such an arrangement was never part

of the development agreement signed by the city and representatives of Tower Vision.

"We aren't looking to post a letter of credit. We're looking at pre-sales to fund the project," he

See...TOWER pg. 9



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POLITICS

Eighth District DFL candidates offer views at Hibbing forum

Editor’s Note:
The five candidates for the DFL endorsement for the Eighth District congressional seat took part in a candidates’ forum on March 17, in Hibbing. Here is a sampling of their answers to questions and comments from that forum, provided in the order in which the candidates spoke. Their answers are excerpted and slightly edited for clarity.

Question 1) What qualities or qualifications do you have that gives you the skills to turn ideas into bills and get them enacted into law?

Leah Phifer: “I’ve spent the last 10 years enforcing laws with FBI, the Department of Homeland Security and a one-year stint with the Department of Agriculture, so I have spent the last ten years seeing exactly where Congress has failed us, and exactly where we can do better. I’ve seen the effects that these laws have on our communities and on our economy. I would like to

go to Congress so I can start building better laws, stronger laws, that actually keep us safe.”

Kirsten Hagen Kennedy: I was elected to mayor in a Tea Party hotbed. Right now, we’re struggling with the basics of our lives, our farms are struggling, our seniors are struggling, our students are struggling, but most importantly, our middle class has all but disappeared. And so I would go to Washington and work at the same level that I work at now, but for a much larger area.”

Michelle Lee: “I spent the last 35 years covering the stories that impact the Iron Range, that impact Duluth and this big beautiful district, all 27,000 square miles of it. When I first came on as a cub reporter in Duluth, I was schooled by the other reporters, they said there were only three things to remember about the Northland. That our economy had three legs, timber, tourism, and taconite. Basically, that is all you need to know.

“Well I know that every story has more than one side to it, and I had to tell the truth, even though the truth hurt. I will always talk to the people and will always go to conduct the people’s business and I will always tell the truth, because that’s all we have.”

Joe Radinovich: To enact our values and to pass legislation, I think we have to do two things. We have to win... and we’ll need legislative skills, too. They have something in common, because they mean that we have to be able to tell stories and communicate our values so we can build a coalition, and then we have to take that coalition and have to work across the aisle to include the people who may not be with us on every issue. The real trouble we’re going to have in this district is that if we divide ourselves on the issues that we know divide us in this room and across the district, we won’t have the opportunity to legislate in Washington, D.C.”

Jason Metsa: “Passing bills is about



Leah Phifer (on right) makes a point during the March 17 congressional candidates forum held as part of the DFL Sixth District Convention in Hibbing. Also pictured (from left) are Jason Metsa, Joe Radinovich, Michelle Lee, moderator Marshall Helmberger, and Kirsten Hagen Kennedy. photo by M. Roach

building relationships. You are stuck in a room with your colleagues, which means you can compromise a lot, but not on your values. In my six years’ experience in the Minnesota Legislature, I have been able to pass bills in both majority and minority. We have to understand where people are coming from. My grandpa always said you have two ears and one mouth for a reason. I’m authentic with people and I work hard.”

Question 2) One of the current issues we are hearing most about involves the future of copper-nickel mining in Northeastern Minnesota and its impact on the environment. What is your position on that issue?

Kirsten Hagen Kennedy: “We can get it right. We can get mining right. It’s important. We want to keep it here, the unions and the jobs are critical to this region and to the country. We have to have stringent regulations

and buy-in from the companies coming to mine, from the environmentalists and the activists, and the workers in the mines. I also understand that there are permitting processes that have started and people are upset by that. It will probably be decided though litigation before this election is decided. I would make sure we use cutting-edge technology, the best scientific practices, but don’t take food off people’s tables.”

See **FORUM...**pg. 5

COUNTY SCHOOLS

School board OKs MI-B agreement with major changes

by **MELISSA ROACH**
Staff Writer

REGIONAL— The St. Louis County School Board, on March 26, approved a shared services agreement with Mt. Iron-Buhl, but not without questions and some significant changes

from the version proposed earlier in the month. The move further intertwines the two districts, sharing the superintendent, transportation director, and director of teaching and learning positions.

Board members dealt with the details of the collaboration as they wrestled

with votes on compensation for the employees affected by the agreement. Under the original proposal, Superintendent Reggie Engebritson was scheduled to receive a 25-percent increase in her compensation for providing superintendent services to MI-B,

which would add \$40,302 to her annual salary. Engebritson’s recently-approved contract with ISD 2142 totals just under \$180,000 including all benefits, so the increase would have boosted her total compensation to \$220,137.

Under the agreement, MI-B would pay for the additional salary along with a contribution of \$35,967 to cover a portion of Engebritson’s base salary with ISD 2142. That would put MI-B’s total contribution towards the superintendent services at \$76,269.

But board member Chris Koivisto made a motion to lower the compensation to 15 percent of base salary, arguing that Engebritson’s expanded work load under the agreement deserved additional compensation, but not as much as proposed. Board members were still concerned about Engebritson’s schedule and how much of her time would be spent focusing on

2142. Working through the hesitation, the board agreed to set her compensation at 20 percent of her base salary, a 20-percent reduction from the original proposal.

Board members had similar concerns regarding District Curriculum Director Kristi Berlin’s compensation for serving as director of teaching and learning under the agreement, and it was clear some board members wanted to see Berlin focusing her efforts on ISD 2142 full-time.

At one point, board member Chet Larson motioned to withdraw Berlin from the shared services agreement until the principal contract that she is currently in with MI-B was settled on July 1. Engebritson argued that Berlin already is the curriculum director for MI-B and the board would be approving her to continue in that position, using the new title of director of teaching and learning. She said she hoped that

Berlin would “live out the principal contract as the curriculum director to see what we needed.”

Larson argued that Berlin’s position as curriculum director for MI-B wasn’t an “authorized board-approved, sanctioned position”, and since she has a principal’s contract, she shouldn’t be in a new contract at the same time with the new agreement for her shared services.

Engebritson said Berlin would be taking on additional work and deserved the proposed \$15,000 increase in her base salary for doing more. But board member Christine Taylor argued that Berlin’s workload would be the same and that she would continue working the same number of hours. Board member Dan Manick said he would like to see her back with 2142 full-time as curriculum director.

Taylor expressed frus-

See **SCHOOLS...**pg. 5

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ADVANCING EQUALITY

Ely Rotary, AAUW team up to push for equal pay

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – The Ely branch of the American Association of University Women and the Ely Rotary Club are collaborating to make the city of Ely the first equal pay city in the state of Minnesota.

The two-year equal pay project kicks off this month with the goal of making Ely 100 percent in compliance with the federal law that has existed since 1963. Members of the Ely Equal Pay Committee, Joe Owens from the Ely Rotary Club, and Kay Vandervort and Linda Sutton from the Ely AAUW branch, presented the subject to the Tuesday Group gathering this week at the Grand Ely Lodge.

Individuals across the country will join together on Tuesday, April 10, to mark Equal Pay Day. The day will be marked in Ely with an “Unhappy Hour” from 4:30- 6:30 p.m. at Northern Grounds. The Ely event, open to the public, is sponsored by

the Ely AAUW branch and the Ely Rotary Club in cooperation with Northern Grounds.

Individuals who attend Unhappy Hour will receive a 24-percent discount on a selected menu. Snacks will be provided. Information will be available for both employees and employers, including definitions of equal pay, information on current law, and actions and protections for employees who do not receive comparable pay for the work they do.

Despite civil rights legislation that became the law of the land in the 1960s, and advancements in women’s economic status, workplace discrimination still persists. Typically, women who work full time take home about 80 cents for every dollar a full-time male worker earns.

Over a 47-year career, a woman’s total estimated earnings loss compared with a man is \$700,000 for a high school graduate, \$1.2 million for a college graduate, and \$2 million for a professional school graduate.

On the Iron Range, according to Department of Labor statistics, women make 24-percent less than men, or seventy-six cents on the dollar, making the disparity even greater, and further reducing pension and Social Security benefits.

In the United States, women in the work force, along with the inevitable pay disparity, started after the Civil War when African-American women entered the work force, according to Vandervort. “Some white women followed them into the workforce, but they were encouraged to stay at home and make take care of the house and children,” she said. “In the 1880s, Hill’s Social Manual encouraged women to greet their husbands with a smile when they get home from work.”

In World War II, women like “Rosie the Riveter” were called to the factories while men went off to war. In the 1950s, women were sent back to their homes. Women’s liberation grew in the 1960s.

The Equal Pay Act was signed into law by John F. Kennedy on June 10, 1963. The law mandates that men and women receive equal pay for “substantially equal” work at the same establishment. A year later, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that added protections against discrimination based on an individual’s national origin, religion, race or sex.

“In 2009, President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act making it easier for a woman to fight pay discrimination,” Sutton said. “In 2014, President Obama strengthened equal pay laws, making it possible to collect data from federal contractors on the basis of gender and race, only to have that rescinded by the Trump administration in 2017.”

Slowly, progress continues to be made for equal pay rights for women. “Research shows that many of the low-paying jobs, like teaching, social work and nursing are low-paying precisely

because they are considered women’s work,” Sutton said.

Of the 30 highest-paying jobs, 26 are male dominated professions, she said. In contrast, of the 30 lowest-paying jobs, 23 are female-dominated professions.

“Locally, we are launching a two-year campaign that is designed to get 100-percent participation from local businesses in affirming that they provide equal pay for equal work,” she said. “When we accomplish this, we will be the first community in the state to do so.”

She added, “We believe that in addition to being able to promote Ely as the first community in the state to affirm equal pay, there will be a long-term positive effect on economic stability. This will position our community in a way that will attract forward-thinking entrepreneurs and investors to our community, and maybe even some new shoppers for our existing businesses.”

CITY OF TOWER

Charter commission rejects call to allow incompatible officeholding

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER—The city’s charter commission, on March 28, voted 6-1 against repeal of a provision that currently prohibits a member of the city council from simultaneously serving as fire chief, ambulance director or a similar position as head of a city department.

City ambulance supervisor and fire chief Steve Altenburg had sought the change to allow him to also serve as mayor, should he opt to run later this year. Altenburg had proposed to repeal Section 2.05 of the city of Tower’s charter in order to end the prohibition on members of the council from holding “incompatible offices,” as set forth in a number of attorney generals’ opinions dating back decades.

The section of the city charter expressly states that: “no member of the council shall hold any paid or unpaid department head position (i.e. Fire Chief, Ambulance Supervisor, etc.) or full-time position within the city of Tower.”

The provision does

not prohibit Altenburg from running or being elected mayor or a member of the council, but he would need to resign his other positions were he to assume office.

Charter Commission member Dena Suikonen motioned to open discussion of the issue, and said she had contacted the attorney general’s office and was provided some of the history of the provision. She said city officials had previously considered repeal of the provision back in the 1990s but were told by state officials that doing so would be illegal.

“It’s still against the law,” said Charter Commission chair Sheldon Majerle.

Altenburg argued otherwise, citing a law change that allowed the chief of an independent, non-profit firefighting organization to also serve as mayor of a statutory city.

But Majerle said neither of those conditions applied to Tower. “We’re a home rule city, not a statutory city,” he noted. And unlike an independent non-profit fire department, which would be governed

by a separate board of directors, the Tower Fire Department is city-owned and managed, with the city council as the ultimate overseer.

Some of the commission members argued they didn’t have enough information to make such a change. “I don’t think we as a board of seven people should try to undermine what a board at the state level, with educated people and lawyers, has already done,” said commission member Randy Johnson.

“It is not illegal,” said Altenburg. “It’s not. They don’t not like it, but it’s not illegal.”

While it is true that no statute specifically bars the circumstance that Altenburg describes, court cases and attorney generals’ opinions have clarified that individuals cannot hold incompatible offices.

Attorney generals have concluded that the incompatibility arises in the case of a mayor or city council member who simultaneously serves as the fire chief, for example, since the city council maintains the supervisory

authority over the fire chief and the department.

In the end, it’s a question of whether someone can adequately supervise themselves, according to former Minnesota Attorney General Warren Spannaus, who issued two legal opinions on the issue in the 1970s.

“Since the [council] supervises the discharge of the fire chief’s duties, one man serving in both capacities would encounter a conflict of public duties.

This conflict requires the conclusion that the two offices are incompatible,” wrote Spannaus in a 1971 opinion.

Johnson sought to conclude the discussion. “I make a motion that we do not repeal this based on the information we’ve received from the state through Dena,” he said.

Altenburg challenged Johnson’s motion, stating that a motion had already been made by Suikonen. Suikonen’s motion,

however, had been to discuss the matter, and nothing more.

Altenburg said no other motion was necessary, which prompted Johnson to withdraw his motion.

After more discussion, Majerle called for a roll call vote on the question. He said he was voting no on repeal, and all but Altenburg followed his lead, apparently ending the matter for now.

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OPINION

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Editorial

Expand MinnesotaCare

Gov. Dayton’s proposal would expand choice, save tax dollars

The number of Minnesotans who lack health insurance coverage is back on the rise after reaching a historic low of 4.3 percent in 2016. Rising health insurance premiums and lack of quality insurance options in many parts of Minnesota are contributing to the situation, which pushed the number of uninsured in the state to 6.3 percent in 2017. The uninsured population is almost sure to increase again this year.

All of which makes the case for Gov. Mark Dayton’s proposal to expand MinnesotaCare eligibility, essentially creating the public option that should have been part of the Affordable Care Act. The governor introduced this measure last year, but Republicans who control the Legislature have been unwilling to consider it. That’s unfortunate and foolish.

Republicans who now control the Legislature are well aware of the problems in the individual insurance marketplace in Minnesota. That’s why they supported an emergency fix last year that provided a 25-percent subsidy for Minnesotans who earned too much to qualify for the federal subsidies under the Affordable Care Act, but not enough to afford the sharply rising premiums in the individual market.

They also pushed a reinsurance program under which the state agreed to pick up a portion of the costs incurred by health insurance companies operating in the individual market, to help keep premium increases in check.

Yet both of these options cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars a year. Gov. Dayton’s plan would cost nothing, other than a small amount of initial start-up funding. That’s because the governor’s plan would allow Minnesotans who don’t otherwise meet the income guidelines for MinnesotaCare eligibility to buy-in to the insurance program for a market-rate premium.

MinnesotaCare would become, in effect, the public option that the Affordable Care Act should have created.

The refusal of the Republican Legislature to go along shows the degree to which traditional GOP talking points have been turned upside down when it comes to the health insurance debate. Under the governor’s plan, Minnesotans would have additional choice, for a substantially lower premium. Indeed, the average premium under MinnesotaCare would be about 28 percent cheaper

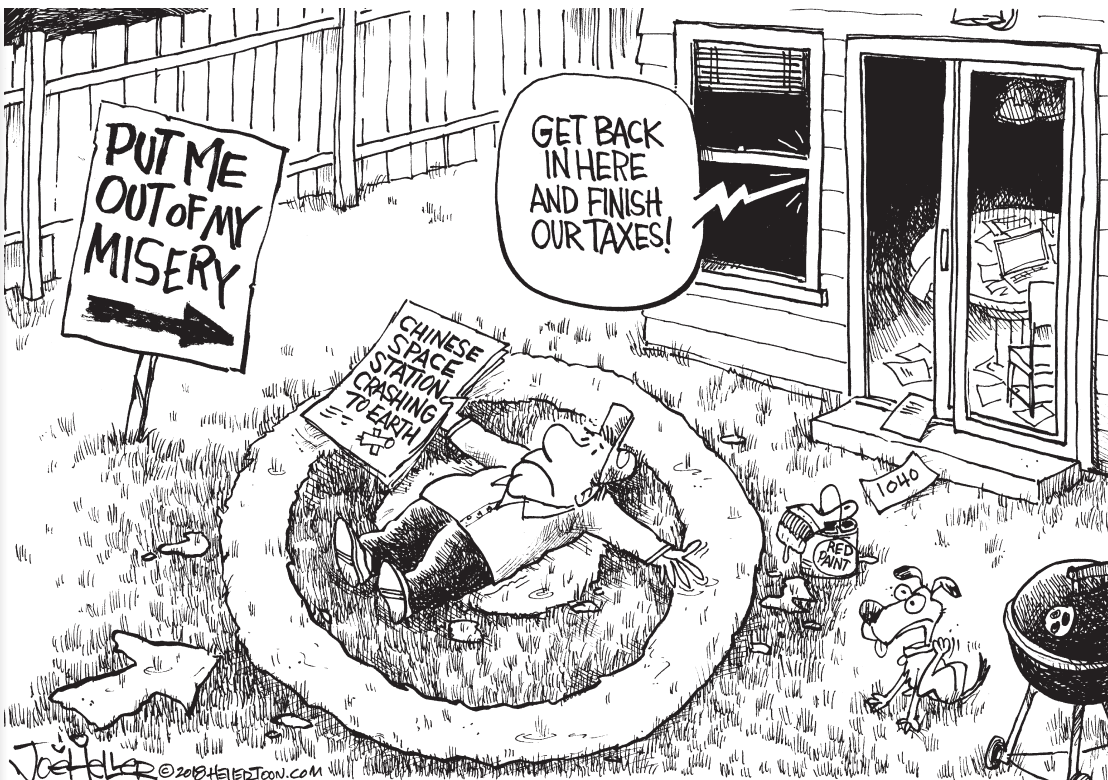
than equivalent private plans, according to the governor’s office. Thanks to large pools of beneficiaries, low administrative costs, and no need to siphon 20 percent off the top for profits and big executive pay packages, premiums for such public plans are naturally less expensive.

The GOP claims to like competition, which is exactly what the governor’s proposal would offer. In St. Louis County, for example, there are only three private sector health insurance providers serving the individual market, and that number is likely to continue to fall. In several Minnesota counties, only one provider exists. That’s not competition, and the lack of choice provides little incentive for providers to improve their offerings.

Because MinnesotaCare is substantially cheaper, Minnesotans of higher incomes wouldn’t need the emergency state-funded subsidies or the costly reinsurance program. They could pay their own way, which one might think would be pleasing to Republican legislators who like to tout personal responsibility. At the same time, Minnesotans who do meet the income guidelines to qualify for federal subsidies, would still qualify, which would further reduce the out-of-pocket impact of their premiums.

And, in most cases, the MinnesotaCare provider network is far better than what’s offered by the private sector. The MNsure exchange is currently overloaded with high deductible plans, which are little more than catastrophic coverage. These are asset protection plans, intended to (hopefully) stave off bankruptcy in the event of a major illness. They don’t provide the affordable day-to-day health care access that many families desire. MinnesotaCare does have a deductible, but it’s so low (\$2.95 per month- and that’s not a typo) that it’s no deterrent to health care access, even for low-income Minnesotans. And forget about staying within your network or getting referrals to specialists. Virtually any provider in the state, including the Mayo Clinic, is “in-network” under MinnesotaCare.

The advantages of the governor’s proposal are significant. It would provide better health care choices for Minnesotans at a lower price. And it would potentially save the state hundreds of millions of dollars a year. What’s not to like? The Legislature should put aside politics and do the right thing for Minnesota.



Letters from Readers

Nice to see desire to protect local maple sap resources

It is refreshing to see how concerned the Ely mayor and city council are for the perceived “over-tapping” of Ely’s maple sap resources. (March 12 Ely city council meeting minutes.)

While one person described the activity as “theft of city property», another proposed that the expanded harvesting be looked into by the “maple syrup police”. A suggestion was made to require the harvesters to obtain a permit to tap maple trees, with city residents exempt, and non-residents having to buy a permit for \$2,000. The Tree Board weighed in with a possible ban on tapping the silver maples, because they may not heal their wounds so easily as other sap-bearing trees.

It is always encouraging to see public servants getting involved in the wise management of natural resources. However, even though agency jurisdiction is different, some of the same city fathers and mothers are all too willing to let “those who don’t live here” have access to and profit from large deposits of sulfide ore not too far from Ely itself. The major stockholder in this case is from Chile, and the potential damage of leaking acids, heavy metals, and sulfates into the BWCAW should concern the leaders of Ely much more than any holes in aging silver maple trees.

**Mark Roalson
Hoyt Lakes**

Where’s Roy Moore when you need him?

Anne Nicol Gaylor, an acclaimed and celebrated atheist, is laughing in her grave down in Madison, Wis. Her minions at her foundation, “Freedom from Religion”, send a letter to St. Louis County demanding the take down of the Ten Commandments Plaque at the Hibbing Courthouse that has been there since the facil-

ity was built 60 years ago. Kevin Gray, the Duluth County Administrator, buckles, like a lap dog seeking affection, and chisels Moses’s Laws off the wall quicker than greased lightning.

I would like to know: WHERE WAS OUR COUNTY BOARD AND ITS CHAIRMAN KEITH NELSON?

Conspicuously the board has remained silent on this issue.

Not long ago, Nelson pontificated down to Tom Rukavina of a personal indiscretion that happened years ago, but when it comes to the shake down of this Wisconsin Atheist Organization he is clearly silent.

I would like to know, when was authority given to the bureaucratic county administrator to destroy county property without the approval of the county board, the duly elected representatives of the citizenry?

To me this is an appalling issue. When an atheist outstate organization has the right to impose their will on us all without the consent of our duly elected representatives, something is definitely wrong, and it is called....”GUTLESS LEADERSHIP!”

**Matt Matasich
Virginia**

Responsible steps to curb gun violence

State Rep. Rob Ecklund’s letter, “Responsible steps available to curb gun violence” included his “support” for universal background checks, closing gun show loopholes, extreme risk protection orders, banning bump stocks and funding to add school counselors and provide more school safety. That’s fine, but, to me, notably missing is any support from Rob to limit the size of bullet clips. I believe that anything above a seven-round clip is unneeded; 17-, 30-, 100-round clips are ridiculously unsafe for society. Unneeded. That’s simple common sense. We’ve witnessed it. Imagine trying to react to someone who doesn’t even have to reload until after

he’s sprayed out 30 or 100 bullets.

It’s also important to note that Rob has given only “support” to the measures he mentions. A check of his legislative site shows that Rob has not authored or co-authored any bills that would actually implement the gun safety measures that he states he is in support of.

There is some major responsibility here to be shouldered by the folks in Rob’s district. We need to back him when he hopefully authors bills involving gun safety measures. No doubt, the NRA/Republican Party will come down on Rob and us. That must not stop us—and Rob—from moving forward on “Responsible steps to curb gun violence”.

Also, there should be an 800-number available to call Rep. Ecklund’s office. Thanks.

**Lee Peterson
Greenwood Township**

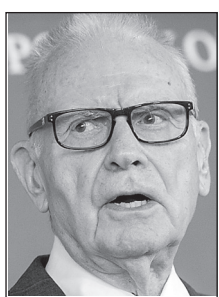
Recount protesters are hurting their own cause

The intimidation and harassment of the Greenwood Township Clerk are continuing as evidenced by the recent election recount attempt. The clerk began the recount process and was interrupted by a representative of one of the candidates who claimed he had the right to speak. The Minnesota Recount Guide, that he referenced, does not allow for public comment outside of challenging a ballot’s validity, but he used his time to berate the town clerk for not having name badges for the candidates or their representatives. In a township of our size, this boils down to a very petty argument as we all know each other quite well. The recount could have been completed and the candidates seated by now if folks weren’t interested in cutting off their noses to spite their faces.

**Barbara Lofquist
Greenwood Township**

Congress tanks in public’s mind—but does it even care?

We’re at a watershed moment in American political history. Our Congress — I’m talking about the people’s body, the institution created by our founders, and not just the men and women who currently inhabit it — is in deep trouble. And no one seems to be



**LEE
HAMILTON**

offering hope.

Its public standing is abysmal, occasionally dropping into the single digits in polling. Very few people seem to respect it, even on Capitol Hill. Small surprise, as the Pew Research Center reported the other day, that “More members of the U.S. House of Representatives are

choosing not to seek re-election to that body than at any time in the past quarter-century.” Since filing deadlines haven’t passed in most states that number is almost certain to grow.

Just as worrisome, power is shifting decisively to the President. The “balance of power” you read about in 7th-grade civics? It’s a myth today. Co-equal branches? Not any more. Members of Congress over the years have delegated much of their power to other

branches, especially the executive, so that they can escape accountability for tough choices. It allows them to focus more on getting re-elected, and on the local and constituent interests that are their electoral bread and butter.

Here’s what may be the most discouraging thing of all: there was a time when congressional leaders would forcefully defend the Congress. They don’t even bother to do that any more. In fact, it’s not unusual to find them

defending their own leadership but criticizing the institution they lead.

To ponder what we can do about it is to confront a long list of daunting challenges. For starters, congressional leaders have abandoned two centuries of precedent, a traditional set of norms, customs and procedures that allowed a body representing the complexities of the entire

Letters from Readers

Students remind us that social activism is back

An ancient parable of six blind men describing an elephant tells how our biases blind us. Each explained their experience: one felt its belly was a wall, another said the trunk was a snake, the third called the tusk a spear, the fourth declared the leg a tree trunk, the fifth thought the tail to be a rope and lastly the ear was said to be a fan. Preconceptions will not reveal truth.

Reacting to mass murder, law-makers call to arm teachers, argue that “guns don’t kill, people do,” ban bump stocks, blame mental illness, or raise the minimum age for purchase of guns. The elephant in the room is that our society allows easy

access to weapons of war in the hands of the wrong people, in the wrong place, at the wrong time for the wrong reason.

Applying “band-aids” will not alleviate gun violence in our society. Protecting people from risks and preventing threats to public health, safety and security is the central role of government. People power and public interest shall supersede private power of the NRA and profit for purveyors of division through fear, force and violence.

What kind of society do we want to live in: separate, isolated and fragmented or connected, together and whole? Will it be an armed camp stunted by fear, suspicion and mistrust or one nation guided by our CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS to “insure domestic tranquility” and “promote the general welfare?” Commitment, translated into votes, will show that

eligible students understand the big picture.

The Valentines Day School Massacre in Florida has energized and mobilized students around the nation into civic engagement. Citizen responsibility, forgotten to many adults, asserts the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Students remind us that serious social activism can be cool!

**Harold Honkola
Tower**

Hello from the blue bag crew

We feel that you may have gotten the wrong impression of who we are due to a recent *Timberjay* article “A Sticky Situation” (March 23, 2018).

So let us introduce ourselves. We are two young Ely families. Each winter we look forward to the upcoming maple

syrup season, a four-generation tradition for both of our families. The tradition began with grandparents from both families who inspired a love of this sweet treat. Due to aging themselves and family moving away they were no longer able to continue, so they passed on their equipment and experience.

For the last several years we have enjoyed tapping in the area with our families. As our families have grown to seven children between us, all under the age of seven, the challenges have grown to include them as we collect sap on roads which have become inaccessible. Wanting to include our children in this family tradition, we began exploring more accessible trees. This led us to the trees in town last year. We were fortunate enough to speak with a gentleman who had been tapping the Ely silver maples for years. He was very welcoming

and was glad to see there were young families participating in maple syruping.

We understand the importance of preserving the health of the trees we are tapping for future generations of tree tappers. We are fortunate enough to have been taught this by our grandparents.

We have enjoyed maple syruping these past years with friends and family! We love to be able to pass these spring days passing on skills to our children and sharing our syrup with friends and family. We have never sold our syrup and are not in any way a commercial operation. We are simply parents trying to pass on a generations-long family tradition.

**Natasha Brekke and
the Blue Bag Crew
Ely**

CONGRESS...Continued from page 4

country to arrive at policy solutions that by and large spoke to the public good.

Today, bills are often drafted outside the committee system, without careful deliberation, consideration, or even participation by most members. The leadership has accumulated more and more power, leaving ordinary members out of the loop, especially in the all-important budget process.

We’re saddled with a Congress that affords special interest groups far too much power. Their representatives and lobbyists swarm over Capitol Hill to influence and cajole, write

speeches, supply talking points, and funnel money and favors of all descriptions to members. And because re-election is so expensive, Congress not only accepts all this, but seeks it out. Ordinary citizens have lost influence in the process.

The body itself has become extremely polarized, which means that the decisions it makes are more extreme. House districts are gerrymandered, which has increased the tendency for them to elect the most extreme candidates in both parties, which only accentuates polarized views when these legislators arrive in Washington.

And Congress has largely rejected its oversight responsibilities, which ought to carry a weight equal to legislating — and which put it on a par with the executive branch. It uses the subpoena power rarely, grills administration and other witnesses only occasionally, and even more rarely holds the executive branch accountable. Want an example? We’ve got half a dozen conflicts going on around the world, armed forces in some 70 countries, we’re incurring casualties and putting our men and women in extreme danger — and Congress holds no hearings of any consequence

to ask what’s going on or what we’re gaining from the commitments we’ve made around the world.

You can take the agenda for reform from this depressing litany. Congressional leaders need to stop manipulating the process and let members vote on the tough issues of the day. Finding ways to stem the tidal wave of money and favors is crucial. So are ending gerrymandering and tamping down the politics of polarization. Congress needs to reassert the authority given it by the Constitution to serve as a check on executive overreach and misguided poli-

cy-making.

Americans have a right to be disappointed in the performance of the legislative branch. But they also have an obligation to speak up about it and demand action not just on a favored bill, but on improving the effectiveness of the Congress itself.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government and a Distinguished Scholar, IU School of Global and International Studies. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

FORUM...Continued from page 2

Michelle Lee: “This issue really sucks the air out of every room that we candidates have been in, because we are so divided on it. And that’s really sad because when we are divided, we will not move forward and nobody will succeed. I know what taconite mining has done for this community and how it can benefit this community. I do have concerns about copper-nickel mining, and I will say that unless we are 100 percent sure it can be done safely, I cannot put my stamp of approval on it. But is my stamp of approval going to do anything? As Kirsten said, this is going to end up in the courts.

I’ve never met a miner who didn’t respect clean air and clean water and I’ve never met an environmentalist who said they didn’t want to help build good-paying sustainable jobs, or that resented a union worker.”

Joe Radinovich: “I come from a family of miners and understand the importance of these jobs. We need materials to live our lives, and these should be ethically-sourced. So

where the world needs these minerals, I think we have an obligation to figure out a process that is science-based that if something is approved, we hold the companies responsible, but shouldn’t impede mining. Twenty percent of the cobalt [mined worldwide] probably passes through mines that utilize child labor.”

Jason Metsa: “We live in a global environment. It’s not responsible or ethical to do it any place without the best regulations, and that’s right here in Minnesota. And we need to make sure that we’re holding the company’s responsible. Unions have the right to have workers report environmental concerns without fear of retaliation. We need transparency and we need to hold companies accountable. We also need to trust those people who are public servants to get the job done.”

Leah Phifer: “I believe that process is critical to looking at this issue. Taconite mining has been the lifeblood of the range, and put food on my family’s table for four

generations and I am dedicated to making sure we have a strong and robust taconite mining industry.

But when we talk about the process, the process doesn’t work if legislators weigh in to put their thumbs on the scales of the process, when we introduce legislation that circumvents the judicial branch, by cutting out four pending lawsuits. That eliminates the EIS standards, as we’ve seen through the MINER Act. We need to make sure that our legislators aren’t intervening so we can truly let the process work the way it is intended. Let the science speak for itself.”

Question 3) How does the DFL unify the party?

Michelle Lee: “The short answer is just keep saying the name ‘Donald Trump.’

I always say the DFL is a big tent. We have to reach out to people, disenfranchised DFLers, independents, and disgruntled Republicans who are dissatisfied with what is happening out there in Washington, to bring

them back into the DFL ‘big tent’. When we’re divided, nothing is going to happen.”

Joe Radinovich: “Democrats unite around economic values. We’re facing technology and mechanization that’s replacing workers across all industries. In mining, farming, in factories, in the grocery stores. And with driverless cars coming on line, we’re facing even more disruption.

This country is the wealthiest we’ve ever seen, and workers are getting a smaller piece of that pie. Three solutions will help us speak across the DFL coalition: expand affordable childcare, free two-year community/technical college, and universal single-payer healthcare. These are three values we can rally around and win this election in 2018.”

Jason Metsa: “Elections are about bringing people together, but I’ve learned through my experience with the Northeast Labor Council that that can be hard. When we had our economic downturn up here we saw everybody together

because we put the little things aside and focused on how we can raise one another up together.

We need to make sure that we’re making investments, to give the next generation the tools to do a little better than ours.

That’s what this is all about, as lawmakers, making sure that we give the tools to that generation.”

Leah Phifer: “I’ve spent last 10 years working in national security. I left the FBI because the single greatest threat to our national security is sitting in White House right now. The DFL is the party that fights for the values that truly keep the nation safe. Our president will tell you that travel bans and border walls will protect us. I have worked in border enforcement and counterterrorism, and I can tell you that’s the furthest thing from the truth. What really keeps us safe is when every family in this country has food and housing security. When every person has access to good quality healthcare and education. And that’s how we can unite this party. Around those four values, because that is

truly what the foundation of national security is built on in this country.”

Kirsten Hagen Kennedy: “We have to stop talking about fear and talk about hope. The United States of America used to not be afraid as a country. We were not afraid of people who didn’t look like us. I have two brothers who registered to vote in this election for the first time at age 40 and 42 and they voted for a person that my father has still not forgiven them for. It was not a happy Christmas at the Hagen farm. They’re hard workers, one’s a union worker. They just felt left behind. People voted Trump because they felt left behind. To unite, we have to spread the message that the DFL doesn’t leave people behind.”

Question 4) Will you abide by the endorsement?

Radinovich: Yes
Metsa: I’m seeking the endorsement

Phifer: Absolutely
Hagen Kennedy: Yes
Lee: I am seeking the endorsement.

SCHOOLS...Continued from page 2

that the board really didn’t have enough time with each other to talk to about the compensation, contracts, or collaboration all together. “This seems like a major shift. To me, this can really mess with us, and it hasn’t been really communicated down the line, how this is going to be perceived,” Taylor said.

The board voted three times on different variations of the compensation agreement, with nothing passing in the end. The board voted down a motion to table the decision. A second motion to approve the proposed agreement language was amended by Koivisto to eliminate Berlin’s pay raise, but

that was voted down as well. The board gave it another try to pass the proposed compensation, but Koivisto, Larson, Taylor, and Manick voted against, defeating that measure as well.

The sentiment spilled over into the vote to approve Transportation Director Kay Cornelius’s shared service compensation of 15 percent of her base salary (\$9,360). Manick and Taylor felt that Cornelius’s work load with the new software routing system and a new assistant would be alleviated — and the board voted against her additional compensation as well.

In related actions,

the board was hesitant but willing to give the EDULOG transportation tracking software a try, and voted for the purchase of the system. Cornelius had approached the board earlier this month to ask for purchase of the software system, which would be shared with Mountain Iron-Buhl. The \$36,000 per year price tag left Manick skeptical of recouping costs. Both Taylor and Manick felt the company was engineered for urban school districts and may not be the best fit with the sprawling, rural nature of ISD 2142. Taylor said she was disappointed to not find favorable reviews and could not find much infor-

mation on the software company at all. Manick said he would have liked to see a comparable estimate. Koivisto also expressed skepticism over any substantial savings from the software program. He also said he would rather continue to route using GIS, GPS and employ a person. The board then moved to also approve the assistant to the transportation director position.

In other action, the board:

► Authorized the superintendent to request drawings for school expansions and financing options for Cherry and South Ridge.

► Voted 5-2 against

bringing cheerleading on as a sport regulated by the Minnesota State High School League-MSHSL. Taylor lobbied that it is fair for the district to offer the activity as it does any other sport, with member Manick supporting. Engebritson said the administration, principals and athletic directors favor running the program through Community Ed. The only cheerleading program is at North Woods.

► Engebritson told the board she was keeping pace with district activities and keeping focused on issues affecting the district that were coming through the Legislature. One issue is secure rural

schools funding, which she said the district hasn’t seen since 2016. She also mentioned the Forest Management omnibus bill making its way through the Legislature that will approve retroactive payment for two years and fund an additional two years. The school trust lands in the omnibus bill, Engebritson said, has language for four million dollars in aid to the BWCA land swap from the land and water conservation fund. The district is looking at receiving \$66,000 from those funds, based on \$35 per student enrolled (or ADM).

Little League signup on April 12

REGIONAL- B.E.S.T. Golden Knights Little League sign up will be held on Thursday, April 12 from 5 – 7 p.m. at the Tower Elementary School gym, at the Northeast Range Cafeteria, and at the Embarrass Timber Hall. Players may register at any of these locations. There is no registration fee. This year’s program will have teams for ages 4 -16. Children ages 4-7 will play T-Ball or Coach Pitch on teams in Tower and Babbitt. Children ages 8-12 will play Minors and Majors in Embarrass. Children 13-16 will play Babe Ruth in Tower. For more information call Chris in Embarrass at 218-290-2506, Joe in Babbitt at 218-742-4807, and Nate in Tower at 218-780-2242. Find more information on Little League at BEST Golden Knights Little League on facebook.

Tower Soudan Civic Club to meet Wednesday, April 18

TOWER- The April meeting of the Tower Soudan Civic Club will be on the third Wednesday of the month, April 18, at 7 p.m. at the Tower Civic Center. There will be a presentation on the Nelimark Homestead Museum, located in Embarrass, by Jeannine Bjornrud, which will include the history of the home and information on activities offered to the public during the year. Jeannine will also give information on the historical log Finnish homesteads in the area and on the tours offered to the community and visitors. Linda Haugen and Linda Kronholm will be the hosts for the evening, and Cathy Burt will be bringing the door prize. Coffee and dessert will be served, and all of the public is invited to attend. A special welcome to two new members, Susan Ellis of Soudan, and Penny Jackson of Puncher Point.

Writers workshops meets on Saturday, April 14

COOK- The monthly writer’s workshop at Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook meets on Saturday, April 14. Local writers are welcome to attend the Writers Group from 1 – 3 p.m. at 210 S River St. next to Dream Weaver Spa and Salon in Cook. The group coordinator is Ellie Larmouth, 218-753-5327.

Tower-Soudan Women’s Bowling

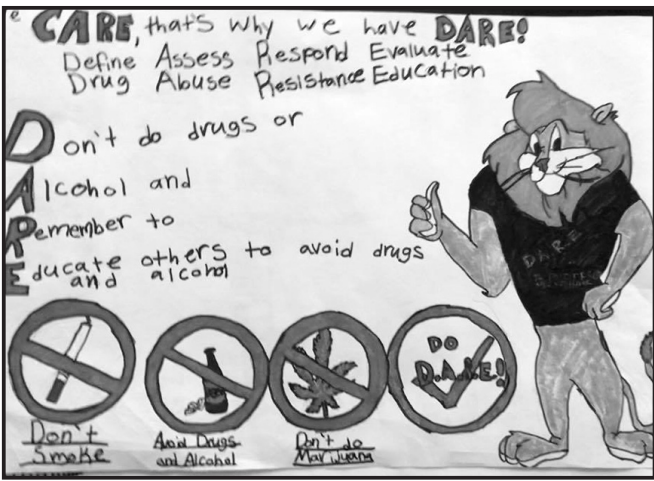
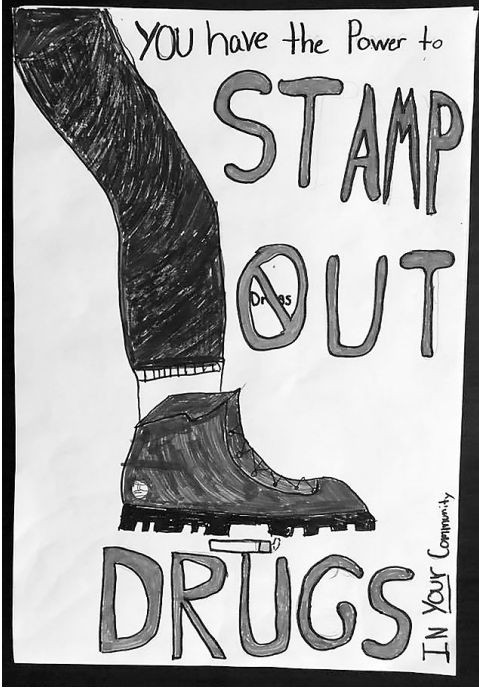
Week of March 28
Team rankings: Broten Construction (156-76); Vermilion Club (148-84); Jeanne’s Cards (148-84). Hi Team Game- Broten Construction 691; Hi team series- Broten Construction 1,992; Hi Ind. Game- Linnea Ryan 188; Hi Ind. Series- Bev Thomas 456.
Week of March 21
Team rankings: Broten Construction (150-74); Vermilion Club (146-78); Jeanne’s Cards (142-82). Hi Team Game- Broten Construction 649; Hi Team Series- Jeanne’s Cards 1,910; Hi Ind. Game- Mary Debevec 170; Hi Team Series- Mary Debevec 477.

Defensive Driving – 4-Hour Refresher Course rescheduled to April 25

SOUDAN- The defensive driving class initially scheduled for April 18 has been rescheduled to Wednesday, April 25 at the Soudan Fire Hall from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. There will also be classes on May 10 and June 12. The four-hour refresher course is offered for drivers 55 years of age and older who have previously completed an eight-hour beginner’s course and who need to re-certify to continue receiving a discount on their car insurance. A certificate of completion will be given to participants to continue the 10-percent car insurance discount. Check your certificate or check with your car insurance agent to learn when you need to recertify. Dana Waldron is the instructor for the class offered under AARP. Class fee is \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members. Payment is payable to the instructor on the day of class. You must pre-register so we can plan accordingly for class space and materials. Please call or text Leone Graf to pre-register at 218-343-3744. If no answer, please leave a message.

BREITUNG POLICE D.A.R.E students to attend Twins game on April 29; will march in parade at the stadium

TOWER-SOUDAN- Breitung Police Chief and D.A.R.E instructor Dan Nylund will be taking the Tower-Soudan fifth- and sixth-graders to a Twins game on Sunday, April 29. The students have participated in a D.A.R.E. poster contest. The artist who has drawn this year’s winning poster (of all submitted state-wide) will be invited to throw out the opening pitch at the game. The students were selected to lead the pre-game D.A.R.E. parade around the field at Target Field. “To have this honor is really special,” said Nylund. The trip is being financed with donations to the D.A.R.E. program from the local commu-



Some of the posters created by the fifth- and sixth-grade students for the D.A.R.E poster contest.



nity, which is picking up the cost of students’ tickets and travel costs. Many of the students’ and adult chaperones’ families are also attending the event at their own cost. Donations are needed to fund the program itself, the high school Truth About Drugs program, special activities, and the D.A.R.E. float in the Fourth of July parade. If you would like to donate to our D.A.R.E. program, donations can be mailed to: PO Box 6, Soudan, MN 55782 or dropped off in person at the police department in Soudan.

BREITUNG McKinley Park Campground to open May 1

by STEPHANIE UKKOLA
Staff Writer

BREITUNG- Campers at McKinley Park Campground will be pleased to find newly-remodeled restrooms when they return on May 1. Both men and women’s restrooms have new ceramic tile and sinks. The showers have been rebuilt with new showerheads and partitions. “They did such a wonderful job,” said campground manager Susie Chiabotti. Work will be completed just after the season begins. The campground will also have half a dozen new steel picnic tables for campers to enjoy. Chiabotti said she wasn’t sure at first how the season would go because of the new state park opening up but advanced reservations have been very good so far and she expects a busy season. “I’m excited to see everyone again.” Chiabotti said.

Campers will soon be able to find a new website for McKinley Park as well. The town board approved spending for a new website after Chiabotti pointed out that the McKinley Park website was difficult to find as it does not come up in Google searches and can only be found off of a tab on the township’s website. The board approved an expenditure of \$1,595 to Tech Bytes of Eveleth for the new website which includes a one-time design fee of \$1,400 and a recurring yearly fee of \$195 for web hosting services.

Police updates

Virginia Police Department will likely be purchasing Breitung Township’s Dodge Charger. Mechanics found that the Dodge needed two replacement head gaskets. The total for repairs was estimated at \$1,300. Virginia PD made an offer to purchase the vehicle for a total of \$8,000 as-is. Rather than repair the vehicle the town board decided to sell it. The vehicle will be sold as-is and will include the specialized police equipment.

The town board bought a new computer for the police department for \$1,426 including software, support, and backup from Roger’s Online of Aurora. The current computer is outdated and slow.

In the department’s search for a full-time police officer all candidates have been interviewed. Five

candidates have been selected for the second stage of the hiring process where they will undergo an extensive background check. Police Chief Dan Nylund expects to have an officer hired by mid-May.

Thompson Farm Road issues

In the process of rerouting the Thompson Farm Road along the site of the township’s gravel pit and the old landfill/canister site, some of the area has been logged off. The rest of the project will be done in two stages. First, Mesabi Bituminous will push back and berm around the edges of the pit by June 1. In the second stage, the new road will be built. Mesabi Bituminous estimated the first phase to cost \$24,500 and offered to trade the work in exchange for gravel from the township’s gravel pit at the price of \$1.25 per cubic yard for a total of 19,600 cubic yards, that they could take over the course of ten years. The town board is considering the offer. No estimate has yet been given for the second phase of the project.

The town board also approved a payment for a Mesabi Bituminous invoice from four years ago that had been disputed. The original amount owed was \$12,000 but the township will pay \$8,000 instead.

Other business

In other business, the town board:

- Approved the purchase of ice rescue equipment and training for \$10,360 from Atlas Outfitters ATR for four firefighters. The firefighters will also receive training from Advanced MN out of Hibbing Community College. Chief Steve Burgess hopes to do the training this spring, but said they may have to wait until fall, depending on the schedule of the trainers.
- Supervisor Greg Dostert reported that additional fencing and netting will be installed at the baseball field to protect players and fans. Dostert is still waiting on a pricing estimate. The flagpole that was ordered earlier this winter will be installed before the start of the baseball season.
- Two residents asked to cut wood from the township’s pit. The township declined citing liability.
- Firefighters received a

pension increase from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per year effective January 1, 2019.

➤ Approved a gravel purchase from a resident for up to 90 yards of pit run at \$2 per yard and five yards of class 5 at \$10 per yard.

➤ Is applying for an infrastructure grant from IRRRB for roadwork on 4th Ave.

➤ Approved spending of up to \$25,000 for improvements to the wayside rest and monument park. The money spent on this project will be part of a culture and tourism grant the Tower-Soudan-Lake Vermilion Events Board is applying for. The grant is for \$15,000 which requires a \$15,000 match from the community. Chairman Tomsich said the grant money will be used to promote the Tower, Soudan, and Lake Vermilion communities on the weekend of June 7, when the new state park has its grand opening. The money will be spent on trying to draw campers into the communities and businesses during their stay.

➤ Received a data request from KSTP television station in St. Paul for the township’s payroll information. The town board approved sharing the information with fees for locating, retrieving, supervision and copies.

➤ Changed legal publication from *The Timberjay* to *The Tower News*, which bid slightly lower.

➤ Raised wage of office cleaner by ten cents up to \$11 per hour, adjusted the part-time police offer starting wage from \$15 per hour to \$15-17 per hour depending on experience, raised wage of the chairman from \$600 to \$650 per month, raised wage of the supervisors from \$500 to \$550 per month, and raised wage of the treasurer from \$20,000 to \$21,000 per year.

➤ Mileage was increased from 53.5 cents per miles as regulated by the IRS to 54.5 cents.

➤ Tomsich will now represent the township on the Mesabi Trail Recreation Board instead of Dostert.

➤ The Breitung Community Picnic is set for Sunday, July 1 from 1-4 p.m.

➤ The Board of Review is set for Friday, April 27 from 1 – 2 p.m.

➤ The next township meeting will be held on Thursday, April 19 at 6 p.m. instead of the fourth Tuesday as usual.

Cook VFW

Open Daily at Noon
CLOSED on TUESDAYS

Happy Hour
Daily 4-6 p.m.
All Beer & Drinks
Bar Menu & Pizza
Available

Event Rentals
Welcome
218-780-6709

Pull-Tabs Sold Daily
Lic. 00390

Sunday FREE Pool

Thursday Bingo
Early Bird 6 p.m.
Progressive Prizes

Friday 4:30-7 p.m.
Hamburger Special

Take-Out 666-0500

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EASTER EGG HUNT



The hunt is on....



Clockwise from top: Children rush to collect their eggs. Brayden visited the Easter Bunny with his mother Shawn Gawboy. Lily and Ivy visited with the Easter Bunny. The Crego brothers picked out prizes. Silas Snyder went home with this giant stuffed dinosaur. photos by S. Ukkola

USDA single-family housing loans and grants available

REGIONAL- The USDA Rural Development Agency in Virginia is accepting applications from individuals who wish to purchase a home or make home repairs to their existing home. Our home purchase loans are available to low-income families who wish to buy homes located in rural communities with a population of 20,000 or less. Loans may be made for up to 100-percent of the appraised value of the home with no down payment required. Mortgages are typically for a 33-year term and approval is based on household income and monthly debt obligation. Applicants must have a good credit history and show repayment ability.

Our home repair loans and/or grants are for very-low income households that already own their home and need assistance paying for repairs. Loans are at an interest rate of one-percent with a maximum repayment period of 20 years. Applicants must meet income and credit guidelines. Grants are available to remove health and safety concerns and are limited to applicants that are 62 years of age or older. For information pertaining to the following counties: Carlton, Cook, Lake, and St. Louis contact the USDA Rural Development office at 218-741-3929 ext. 4 or stop into our office located at 1202 8th Street S in Virginia.

SAINT LOUIS COUNTY
**ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES**
BETTER WASTE SOLUTIONS

**Area Solid Waste
Facility
site hours**

<p>Northwoods Transfer Station 9384 Hwy 21 N., Ely/Babbitt Winter Hours Mon, Thu, Fri, Sat: 8am–3pm Tue: 9:30am–3pm Wed: 11am–5pm</p>	<p>Cook Transfer Station 2134 S. Beatty Rd., Cook Hours Mon: 10am–6pm Tues thru Sat: 9am–3:30pm</p>
<p>County 77 Canister Site 2038 County Rd. 77, Greenwood Twp Winter Hours Thurs, Sun: noon–5pm</p>	<p>Soudan Canister Site 5160 Hwy 169, Soudan Hours Mon, Wed, Sat, Sun 8am–5pm</p>
<p>Embarrass Canister Site 7530 Koski Rd., Embarrass Hours Sat: 12:30–4:30pm Thu: 10am–5pm</p>	<p>Aurora Transfer Station 5910 Hwy 135 N., Aurora Hours Mon, Thurs, Fri: 8am–4pm Tue, Wed: 10am–4pm Sat: 8am–noon</p>
<p>Household Hazardous Waste Facility 5345 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia Hours Tues and Sat: 8am–1pm</p>	<p>Regional Landfill 5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia Hours Mon–Fri: 8am–4:30pm Sat: 8am–3:30pm</p>

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th

St. Louis County Environmental Services Department
1-800-450-9278
Office hours 8-4:30 Monday through Friday
www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle

AEOA Senior Dining Menu

TOWER- Vermilion Country School and AEOA sponsor a senior dining site at the charter school in Tower. All meals include salad bar, fruit, choice of beverage and dessert. Reservations are appreciated the day before, or morning of, but walk-ins are always welcome. Take-outs available. Seniors age 60 and older who have registered for the program and their partners qualify for special pricing of \$4 per meal, but all ages are welcome at the regular rate of \$5.75. There are no income guidelines. Meals are served from 12:30 – 1 p.m. on days when the charter school is open. Call the school at 218-753-1246 ext. 1003 for reservations, or call AEOA at 1-800-662-5711 ext. 7323 for the one-time registration process.

Week of April 9
Monday- Chicken Alfredo with a Twist, Bread Stick, Vegetable
Tuesday- Two Cheese Enchiladas
Wednesday- Meat Calzone with Marinara
Thursday- Sloppy Joe, Baked Beans
Friday- Jolene’s Egg Roll Casserole, Dinner Roll, Fortune Cookie

Week of April 16
Monday- Country Sausage Gravy in a Bread Bowl, Hash-browns
Tuesday- Italian Meatball Sub, Vegetable
Wednesday- Hamburger Gravy over Mashed Potatoes, Dinner Roll, Green Beans
Thursday- Lasagna, Dinner Roll
Friday- Breaded Pollock, Baked Potato, Bread Stick

Week of April 9

Monday
TOPS - Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tower, at 9 a.m.

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

Tower City Council- 5:30 p.m. on April 9

Tuesday
Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5:30 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is April 17.

Greenwood Fire Dept.- Meetings on the first (drill) and third (business meeting) Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m.

Greenwood Town Board- 6:30 p.m. on April 10

Wednesday
Tower AA- Open Basics- 7 p.m. at St. James Presbyterian Church. Questions, call 753-2332.

Thursday
Vermilion Country School Board- Next meeting is Tuesday, April 24 at 4:45 p.m. Meetings posted online at vermilioncountry.org.



the TIMBERJAY

The Tower-Soudan Timberjay and Cook-Orr Timberjay are published weekly on Friday by The Timberjay, Inc. Offices are at 414 Main St., Box 636, Tower, MN 55790 [218-753-2950], and PO Box 718, Ely, MN 55731 [218-365-3114]. Fax number is 218-753-2916. E-mail address is editor@timberjay.com. Visit our web-site at www.timberjay.com.

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Ely Editor	Keith Vandervort
Office Manager	M. M. White
Graphics/Ad Sales/ Staff Writer	Scarlet Lynn Stone
Ad Sales/Sports	Jay Greeney

Official Newspaper:
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Moving? Questions about your subscription? Call the Tower office at (218) 753-2950.
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Libraries

Ely library

Hours: Monday — Friday,
10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Saturdays — 8 a.m. to noon
Closed on Sundays
Phone: 365-5140

Babbitt library

Monday Noon-6 pm
Tuesday Noon-6 pm
Wednesday Noon-6 pm
Thursday Noon-6 pm
Friday Noon-5 pm
Phone: 827-3345

Support groups

AA - Alcoholics
Anonymous
AA - 7 p.m. Mondays,
First Lutheran Church,
915 E. Camp St.
WOMEN'S AA - Noon
Mondays, Ledgerock
Community Church, Ely -
use 15th Street entrance
BABBITT AA - 7 p.m.
Tuesdays, Woodland
Presbyterian Church.
AL-ANON - Sundays
8-9 p.m. at St. Anthony's
Catholic Church in Ely.
For persons who encoun-
ter alcoholism in a
relative or friend.
BABBITT AL-ANON -
Thursdays, 7 p.m., at
Woodland Presbyterian
Church.
CO-DEPENDENTS' 12-step support group,
noon Fridays, St.
Anthony's Catholic
Church, Ely.
ELY FOOD SHELF -
third Wednesday each
month. 15 W. Conan St..
ADULT BASIC
EDUCATION
GED - Study materials
and pre-test available.
Ely Community Center
Thursday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.;
Tower by appointment.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

Freemans train in Ely for bike tour



ELY - With just a couple of weeks to go before they begin a 1,750-mile bike/book tour from Ely to Washington, D.C., Dave and Amy Freeman were seen training and putting miles under their tires last week in Ely.

“Pedal to DC: A Book Tour to Save the Boundary Waters,” will take the Freemans across nine states this spring. They will depart by bicycle near ground zero of the proposed Twin Metals mine just outside of Ely on April 20, and plan to arrive in Washington, D.C., on June 18.

The public can join the authors at Sustainable Ely, 206 E Sheridan St. to celebrate the launch of their tour on Friday, April 20 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event will include a brunch followed by a group ride. There will also be a presentation and audience Q&A, book signing, and a chance to sign their canoe to show support.

“Riding in traffic while towing a canoe will take awhile to get used to,” Amy Freeman said on a Facebook post. “I am still nervous I will forget the canoe is behind me and clip a parked car, but we are getting more comfortable with every ride and towing the canoe will get easier as the miles roll by.”

The local environmental advocates spent 366 straight days in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, from 2015 to 2016, on an epic trip they describe as “witness activism” to raise awareness of the dangers the proposed copper-nickel mines.

The Freemans, seasoned worldwide explorers who were named National Geographic’s 2014 Adventurers of the Year, used social media to communicate the vulnerable majesty of their surroundings. They blogged daily posts as they paddled, portaged, and dog-sledded more than 2,000 miles across 500 bodies of water.

Last fall the Freemans published “A Year in the Wilderness,” an account of their marathon BWCAW trek and the activism that fueled it.

“We hope this tour will bring renewed awareness of the efforts underway to protect the BWCAW from proposed sulfide-ore copper mining,” Dave Freeman said.

With the help of Milkweed Editions, Save the Boundary Waters, and many other partners, they are organizing as many as 30 events at bookstores, libraries, outdoor stores, colleges, breweries, community centers, and other venues in Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Chicago, Columbus, Pittsburgh, and many more communities all along their route.

“This year marks the 40th Anniversary of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act of 1978 and we hope you will use Pedal to DC as a way to celebrate and protect our public lands during this momentous year,” Amy Freeman said.

To learn more and find updates on the tour, visit <http://www.savetheboundarywaters.org/pedaltoDC>.

Dave and Amy Freeman ride their bicycles and tow a canoe down Sheridan Street in Ely recently as they train for their upcoming pedal adventure to Washington, D.C. submitted photo



the **TIMBERJAY**

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Tuesday Group schedule

ELY - The upcoming Tuesday Group schedule (subject to change) is listed below. All talks are at 12 noon on Tuesday at Grand Ely Lodge.

April 10 – Michael North – Woodpecker research on habitat and data needs in the Northwoods.

April 17 – Kara Polyner – Update on the Underground Optimists

Ely Free Clinic open Mondays

ELY - The Ely Community Health Center is open every Monday evening from 5:30-7 p.m. in the lower level of the Frandsen Bank building on 1st Ave. in downtown Ely.

For more information, call 218-365-5678, or visit their website, www.ely-communityhealth.org, or Facebook page.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2018



march now just a thought
moving into the fourth month

OUR COMMUNITY

Exhibit at Ely-Winton Historical Society features early logging



A photo collection at the Ely-Winton Historical Society features a history of early logging life in the Ely area. submitted photo

ELY - A new exhibit is in place at the Ely-Winton Historical Society’s museum. The William F. Roleff photo collection depicts early logging and life in the logging camps of Northeastern Minnesota. This 18-photograph exhibit is on loan from the St. Louis County Historical Society and is one of their traveling exhibits.

Roleff’s photos show the lumber industry operations and daily life for loggers in northeastern Minnesota in a way that draws in both children and adults. Included are scenes of logs being driven downstream, loggers at work in ice and fresh snow, blacksmiths working metal and shoeing a horse, spartan log bunkhouse interiors, and horse-drawn loads of logs. The vintage black and white photographs, printed from original glass negatives, date from 1912 to 1916.

The Ely-Winton Historical Society Museum is open Tuesday through Friday, noon to 4. The museum is located in the Fine Arts wing of Vermilion Community College, 1900 E Camp St., in Ely. Groups are welcome. Call 218-365-3226 for more information.

‘Smile, You’re in Ely’ set for April 12

ELY - The Ely Chamber of Commerce will hold its annual spring event, ‘Smile, You’re in Ely’, on Thursday, April 12 at the Grand Ely Lodge. The event will consist of a social hour starting at 5 p.m., buffet dinner at 5:45 p.m., recap of the past year, a look at the year ahead, and a guest speaker.

This year’s keynote speaker is Mike Max, sports reporter for WCCO and host of the ‘Sports to the Max’ show. Mike also hosts Lifetouch Media Production’s ‘Life to the Max’ program that highlights individuals who overcome the odds and achieve amazing things.

The topic of Mike’s ‘Smile You’re In Ely’ talk is “Five Reasons People Find Fulfillment” and will cover points such as: overcoming adversity, focusing on what you can control, dealing with failure, surrounding yourself with good people, and the importance of working hard.

The event is open to the public as well as non-member businesses. Members of community organizations and individuals in the area who want to learn more about Chamber functions are invited to attend.

The cost of the event is \$25 and includes a buffet dinner. Pre-registration is required. For further information or to register, stop by the Chamber office at 1600 E Sheridan St, Monday thru Friday from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. or call 218-365-6123. The deadline for registration is Friday, April 6.

SUBSCRIBE (218) 753-2950

ELY MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL



High School Concert Choir shines at state competition

ELY - Members of the Ely High School Choir put in a spectacular day at the recent Minnesota State Music Contest.

The Concert Choir received “Superior” ratings from all three of their judges and brought home a trophy.

The Pop Choir, consisting of Grace Erickson, Katie

Pinckney, Destany Walker, Lily Sauls and Hannah Jankovec, not only received a “Superior” rating but also received a perfect score...40 out of 40.

Lily Sauls and Hannah Jankovec, as well as Lily Sauls and Danielle Krostue, received “Superior” ratings on their duets.

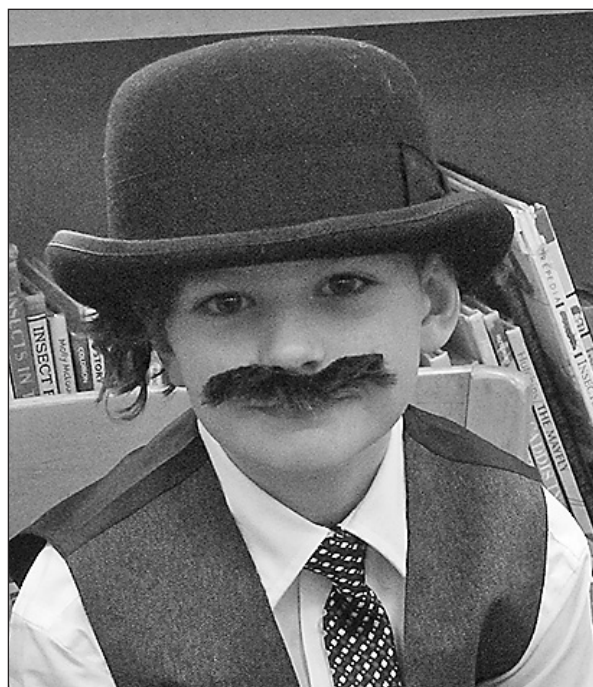
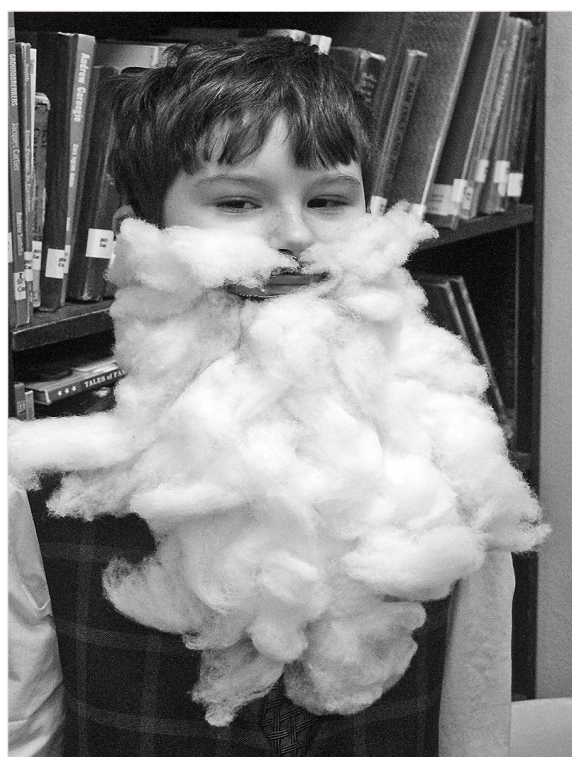
Danielle Krostue, Grace Erickson, Hannah Jankovec, Destany Walker, and Blaise Lah received “Superiors” on their solos.

Hanna Littler and Amelia Pluth received very respectable “Excellent” ratings.

A living wax museum



Washington School fourth-graders held their annual wax museum event recently. Shown clockwise from upper left, are Otto Devine as Jackie Robinson, Allison Popplar as Amelia Earhart, Connor Brennan as Wilbur Wright, and Jack Rintala as Alexander Graham Bell. photos by K. Vandervort



Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

The Boathouse Brewpub is getting another facelift. We’ve been slowly making our building more attractive throughout the last 10 years. We have remodeled our front entryway, put new windows in upstairs, and had the roof completely replaced. Now it’s time for the hard part.

Starting this spring we will be replacing the siding on the back, fixing our crumbling brick infrastructure, and getting a fresh coat of paint. We have enjoyed what the other buildings around us have done and we want to help continue the trend to make downtown Ely look great. It is a big project, but it needs to be done and we are proud to do it.

We want to express a massive “THANK YOU” to our loyal customers. Without you, we wouldn’t be able to undertake such a drastic project. Without you, we wouldn’t be able to be one of the few places in Ely open every day of the week, year round. You help keep 25-plus year-round jobs in Ely and our staff appreciates that!.

We are not sure if we will have to endure random periods of closure due to unforeseen issues during these projects. We ask that you please bear with us through any problems we have to overcome. These projects will take months to complete and we apologize for any inconveniences along the way. Thank you for your patience, your understanding, and most importantly, your business.

-The Staff at the Boathouse Brewpub



Area Solid Waste Facility site hours

Northwoods Transfer Station
9384 Hwy 21 N. Ely/Babbitt
Winter Hours
Mon, Thu, Fri, Sat: 8am–3pm
Tue: 9:30am–3pm
Wed: 11am–5pm

Aurora Transfer Station
5910 Hwy 135 N., Aurora
Hours
Mon, Thurs, Fri: 8am–4pm
Tue, Wed: 10am–4pm
Sat: 8am–noon

Embarrass Canister Site
7530 Koski Rd., Embarrass
Hours
Sat: 12:30–4:30pm
Thu: 10am–5pm

Soudan Canister Site
5160 Hwy 169, Soudan
Hours
Mon, Wed, Sat, Sun:
8am–5pm

Household Hazardous Waste Facility
5345 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia
Hours
Tues and Sat: 8am–1pm

Regional Landfill
5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia
Hours
Mon–Fri: 8am–4:30pm
Sat: 8am–3:30pm

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th

St. Louis County Environmental Services Department
1-800-450-9278
Office hours 8-4:30 Monday through Friday
www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle



Writers workshop meets on Saturday, April 14 at NWFA

COOK- The monthly writers workshop at Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook meets on Saturday, April 14. Local writers are welcome to attend the Writers Group from 1 – 3 p.m. at 210 S River St. next to Dream Weaver Spa and Salon in Cook. The group coordinator is Ellie Larmouth, 218-753-5327.

NWFA has organized artists and their works of art since 2010 at the NWFA Gallery as a non-profit membership organization. Summer gallery hours will be in effect in April from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

Cook bike winners announced

COOK- The following children won bikes at the Cook Kids Easter Party: Tanner Vines, Kensie Herdman, Izzy Martin in the under four category; Ian Gunderson and Cora Goodbird fowwr ages five to six; Jordan Herdman and Emily Raukhola for ages 7-8; and Eli Lindgren and Kayla Poutto for ages 9-10.

Readers and Rappers to meet on Tuesday, April 10

COOK- The Cook area book club, Readers and Rappers, will meet on Tuesday, April 10 at 1 p.m. at the Homestead Apartments in Cook. This month's meeting will be sharing poetry. Ellie Larmouth will be moderator, and hostess is Lisa Simensen.

Those interested in book selection and/or moderating are invited to come early at 12:30 p.m.. The new book club selection year begins in June. Club members who wish to be moderators should choose the book they would like to moderate. Hostess signup will be at this time.

All are welcome to participate.



This year's Easter Egg Hunt at the Orr Legion/Community Building attracted many area families. Children hunted for eggs in hay piles, won prizes including bicycles, and had a wonderful time. submitted photos

Some very lucky children won new bicycles at the Orr Easter Egg Hunt. The bikes were each sponsored by an area business or family.

Left: Kassidy.
Right: Alexis
Below: Evelyn
Below right: Kahlil



Entries now accepted into NWFA photo contest

COOK- Grab your camera! Or dig out some favorite photos! Whether a great new shot or an old favorite, join in the 2018 Northwoods Friends of the Arts (NWFA) fun photo fundraiser.

Entries to this contest will be accepted through May 26 at the Northwoods Friends of the Arts Gallery in Cook. All photos must be original.

Winners will be announced at the NWFA Spring Art Expo/Photo Contest Celebration on June 29.

There is no limit to the number of entries you may submit. However, each entry requires a completed entry form. The entry fee is \$10 per photo. This fee is waived for students who may submit up to three photos at no charge.

Photos must be either 5x7 or 8x10. A white mat and protective sleeve is provided for each entry and must be used. It insures photo display consistency.

The contest has two categories: Adult



and Student. Students are defined as those attending elementary or high school or a home school program equivalent.

Judges will select the winner in each category considering originality, technical merit and artistic value. A People's Choice prize will be awarded to the photo with the greatest number of viewer votes. Viewers of the exhibit may vote for their favorite from June 6 until June 29 during gallery hours.

Prizes: A family membership or renewal plus the following:

- Adult - \$75, the opportunity to exhibit/sell up to three photos for one month
- Student - \$25, the opportunity to exhibit/sell up to three photos for one month.
- People's Choice - \$50 with the winning photograph framed.

Additional information and entry forms are available at the NWFA Gallery in Cook, from nwfamn.org or by calling Alberta W. 218 666-2153. The Email is nwfamn.org@gmail.com.

2018 Wings and Things date set for Saturday, April 28

COOK- Mark your calendars and get ready to indulge yourself in delectable wings and the opportunity to win fabulous prizes in drawings and raffles! Cook's Friends of the Parks has scheduled Wings and Things 2018 for Saturday, April 28 from noon to 8 p.m. at the Cook VFW. All proceeds for this event will benefit the future endeavors of the Friends of the Parks.

Tickets for the main raffle are already on sale at Zup's, the Country Store, the Credit Union, the VFW, and from Friends of the Parks members. Prizes for the Main Raffle are \$500 cash for 1st

place, a \$200 Zup's gift card for 2nd place, and a \$100 gift card from the Country Store/Vermilion Motel for 3rd place.

Donations for the event of any amount from businesses, organizations or community members would be greatly appreciated. Also needed are prizes and baskets for the raffles. Perhaps an individual or a group would be able to put a basket together with items or donate a prize. Contact Val Annen, Carrolle Wood, Tammy Palmer, Diane Brunner, Jeannie Taylor, or Sue Thomas if you have something that needs to be picked up, or you may leave donations at the courtesy counter at Zup's.

Get ready to eat

wings, play Bingo, win prizes, and be prepared to have a great time at Wings and Things 2018!

Businesses in Cook region to display art during Spring Art Expo

COOK- The Spring Art Expo 2018 is registering local businesses and artists for the 8th annual event sponsored by Northwoods Friends of the Arts. Artists will be exhibiting artwork in local businesses in and around Cook beginning June 8 until June 29.

All publicity for this event is provided by NWFA including posters, news articles and a pamphlet listing all of the participating businesses. The Spring Art Expo coincides with Cook's Timber Days celebration as well as many other activities such as classes, a concert, receptions and a 50/50 cash drawing.

If your business has space to display artwork



Cook Lions Norene and Roger Butalla are pictured donating the proceeds from last month's Pancake Breakfast to Cleo Cottrel, for the Cook Area Food Shelf. submitted photo

or if you, as an artist, want to display your work, please register your business by e-mailing nwfamn.org@gmail.com or contacting the NWFA Gallery at 210 S River Street in Cook. The gallery is open Thursday

and Friday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. To have your business listed in the Spring Art Expo pamphlet you must register by Friday, April 13.

NWFA was created in 2010 as a non-prof-

it organization by local folks in Cook with a mission to support the arts in all forms in the region of Cook. Membership is only \$15 annually.

Bookmobile schedule

Visit your library on wheels, the Arrowhead Library System Bookmobile.

Thursday, April 12, May 3, 24

Nett Lake – Community Center 9:30-10:15 a.m.

Crane Lake – Ranger Station 11:15 a.m. - 12 noon

Orr – Lake Country ReMax building 1:45 - 2:30 p.m.

Kabetogama – Town Hall 3:15 - 3:45 p.m.

For further information on the Bookmobile or Mail-A-Book services, write or call the Arrowhead Library System, 5528 Emerald Ave., Mt. Iron, MN 55768 218-741-3840, or check our website at www.alslib.info.



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201 Hwy 53 SE Cook, MN 666-0205

Fall/Winter Hours

Sun: 7 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Mon-Sat: 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Effective October 1

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www.timberjay.com

Timberjay subscribers get free access to the online e-edition



COOK EASTER EGG FUN



Above: There was plenty of fun (as well as lots of great prizes!) at this year's Easter Egg Hunt in Cook. Far left: Tori (left) and Brittany Phillips visited with the Easter Bunny. Left: Kendal Duame dressed for the occasion. Below: Children waited to get balloon animals created by Lion Jeff Shirle.

photos by Pam and Sierra Wattering



GRIZZLY UPDATES

It's time for state testing

Spring at school is not just a season in terms of weather and sports, it is also the start of state testing season for student grades 3-11. Academic accountability is a big deal in education these days, among other things. Teachers and administrators want to see all of our students do well.

The State of MN Department of Education, known in education circles as "MDE," measures schools on many factors including test scores, attendance, and graduation rates. There is no disputing the fact that an excellent teacher in front of an excellent class usu-



JOHN VUKMANICH

ally leads to excellent results. However, there are two factors in this equation. We hope that students will take their jobs as learners as seriously as their teachers do teaching. Teachers work very hard to align the curriculum

they teach with the state's standards and to cover the content that is expected. This way, students are being taught what the state says is important, and is therefore included on the MCA (MN Comprehensive Assessments) Test. Great teachers find ways to teach the standards along with other related/important content and find a way to make it relevant for all of the students in the class. It's not easy!

When it comes to testing season, the school is asking that you, as families, do your best to support your students doing well on their assessment tests. Ensure that your

kids have a set bedtime, eat a proper meal, and take the test seriously. We know that kids are tested often at school between the MCAs, the STAR Assessments, and the regular classroom tests. All of this is done to help ensure that schools are doing their best to meet the needs of our students. To our Grizzlies students: Do your best!

Your Principal,
John Vukmanich

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- Cremation
- Pre-Need Planning
- Monuments by Warren Mlaker

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Area Solid Waste Facility
site hours

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SERVICES
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11391 Ash River Trail
Winter Hours
Sat: 12:30pm-4:30pm

Kabetogama Lake Canister Site
10150 Gamma Rd
Winter Hours
Wed: noon-4pm
Sat: 8am-noon

Sturgeon Canister Site
8380 Hwy 73
Hours
Sun: 10am-4pm

Orr Canister Site
4038 Hwy 53
Winter Hours
Tue, Thu: 9am-noon
Sat: 8am-noon

Portage Canister Site
6992 Crane Lake Rd.
Winter Hours
Tue, Sat: 1pm-4:30pm

County 77 Canister Site
2038 County Rd. 77
Winter Hours
Thurs, Sun: noon-5pm

Cook Transfer Station
2134 S. Beatty Rd.
Hours
Mon: 10am-6pm
Tues thru Sat: 9am-3:30pm

Regional Landfill
5341 Regional Landfill Rd., Virginia
Hours
Mon-Fri: 8am-4:30pm
Sat: 8am-3:30pm

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1-800-450-9278
Office hours 8-4:30
Monday through Friday
www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle

Household Hazardous Waste Facilities
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Tue, Sat: 8am-1pm
3994 Landfill Rd, Hibbing
Sat: 8am-1pm

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th



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COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

Call for Veterans of Foreign Wars members in Babbitt area; meeting set for Monday, April 9

BABBITT- Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1539 of Babbitt is in need of active members to attend monthly meetings and assume the role of officers. Without your participation, we will be forced to shut down the post. In doing so, this will affect our involvement in the community and surrounding areas. We will lose our voice and lessen our impact in rural Minnesota. Please get involved so we can be heard locally and on the state and national levels. Do this for us, our families, and our community. A special meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 9 at the Senior Center in Babbitt.

Small Parts Players to perform musical adaptation of The Tale of Peter Rabbit this weekend

VIRGINIA- Small Parts Players presents the musical, The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny, by R. Eugene Jackson, with music by David Ellis. This sparkling musical adaptation of Potter’s wonderful story is filled with delightful tunes that will make everyone smile. From Mr. McGregor’s This Is War and Caw and Kem’s Bugs and Berries, to the beloved finale of The Family That Sings Together, this event will have you hopping with delight. The musical will be performed Thursday, April 5 through Saturday, April 7 at 7 p.m. with a Sunday matinee at 2 p.m., at the Lyric Annex 516 Chestnut St. in Virginia. Tickets are on sale now at <https://squareup.com/store/irrrp-SPP>.

Native Skywatchers art exhibit at Lyric Gallery in Virginia

VIRGINIA- Native Skywatchers-Earth Sky Connections will be featured in The First Stage Gallery at the Lyric Center for the Arts, 510 Chestnut St. in downtown Virginia, from April 5 to 28. Native Skywatchers–Earth Sky Connections weaves together art, science, and culture in a way that will inspire learners to create art inspired by the stars and Earth. Gallery hours are Thursdays through Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The gallery is free. All are welcome.

Watercolor workshop at Lyric Center

VIRGINIA- All are invited to the Fun with Flowers watercolor workshop with Sarah Guy-Levar at the Lyric Center for the Arts in Virginia. This watercolor workshop is perfect for both beginning and experienced painters. The two-day workshop will cover easy step-by-step drawing instructions and proven techniques to create watercolor paintings of daisies, sunflowers, roses, and tulips. In an atmosphere of creativity and fun, we will usher in the beauty of summer.

The workshop will be held on Friday, April 27, from 3 to 9 p.m. and will continue on Sunday, April 28, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at The First Stage Gallery, 510 Chestnut St. in downtown Virginia. Register online at <https://squareup.com/store/the-first-stage-gallery> or at the gallery Thursday or Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Vermilion Dream Quilters meet on Thursday, April 12

TOWER- Vermilion Dream Quilters will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 12, in the social hall of St. Martin’s Catholic Church in Tower. Our program this month will focus on four types of quilt borders, each presented by a guild member. This month’s show and tell will be special since 44 of our members are joining together the prior weekend for our annual retreat in the Grand Ely Lodge ballroom, and lots of great things usually happen there! Join us and tickle your creative side. Guests and visitors are welcome, and you might choose to join us in the year(s) to come! Our hostesses this month are Bonnie Harma, Corrine Hill, and Donna Filson. Vermilion Dream Quilters is a guild with members from throughout the Iron Range and Arrowhead Region and is open to anyone interested in quilting and creative sewing. Members encourage and instruct each other and share tips. For more information, please contact Corrine Hill in Tower at 218-753-4600.

LIFE ON THE LAKE

New owners settling in at Glenmore Resort

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- Glenmore Resort is the classic example of a northern Minnesota family resort. And new owners Mickey and Paul Hrvol are aiming to keep it that way. “We are from a community like Tower, so this is the perfect fit for us,” said Mickey.

The Hrvols moved from Sullivan, a small town in central Illinois, earlier this winter.

The couple had been vacationing at small resorts on Lake Vermilion on and off for the past 20 years. They both worked the past 30 years as bankers, at a small community bank. With both their sons in college, they decided now was the time to act on their dream.

“It’s just something we always wanted to do,” Mickey said.

The two have settled into resort life quickly.

Paul is renovating the upstairs of the former owner’s home into a new “Lake House” cabin. The lower level of the home is the resort’s office.

“It has a beautiful lake view from the bay windows,” said Mickey. With new paint, carpeting, kitchen cabinets and appliances, the new three-bedroom cabin will be ready for rental later this spring. The rest of the cabins are all ready to go.

The couple will be moving into the garage, the second major project they are undertaking before the summer season. Future plans include turning that garage into another cabin, and then building themselves a new year-round home.

“It’s just the two of us,” they said, “and we don’t need that much space.” They also realize they will be spending most of their time running the resort.

The couple’s younger son, Zach, who is studying to be a physical therapist, will be working at the resort this summer as a dock boy. Their older son is in chiropractic school in Illinois.

And of course, the resort has a new dog, a beagle named Minnie, who is getting used to her new home and job as resort dog.

So far, the jump into resort



Paul and Mickey Hrvol are busy getting ready for their first summer as resort owners on Lake Vermilion. photo by J. Summit

ownership has gone smoothly. The couple said that previous owners Leroy and Nancy Forstrom have been quite helpful, and since the Forstroms are still living in the Lake Vermilion area, they are a great resource. The sale of the resort was brokered by Minnesota Resort Sales, and realtor Dan Houle of Ely.

The Hrvols are not planning any major changes to how the resort runs. They have added one cabin, so the resort now has eight cabins available. The resort is open year-round. They are planning some upgrades in each cabin in the future, as time allows.

All the resort’s cabins feature carpeting, fully-equipped kitchens, modern baths, Weber grills and microwaves. And for those not ready for a totally rustic experience, free high-speed wireless internet access is available for guests. Cabins sleep from four to ten. They have purchased some new rental boats for resort guests and are planning on bringing electrical service to the docks.

The couple enjoys hunting and fishing, but realizes that now they might just enjoy fishing by watching their resort guests out on the lake.

Their neighbors, and new friends they have met in the Tower-Soudan area, are also exceeding expectations.

“Everybody has been very friendly and welcoming,” they said. “We are enjoying getting to know our neighbors.”

They both love the convenience of shopping in Tower, and appreciate the local restaurants and coffee shop, as well as the grocery store, lumber yard, and hardware store.

“It’s also very convenient for our guests,” they said, “since we don’t have a bar or restaurant on site.” Glenmore is located on Pike Bay, just two miles from Tower.

The resort has had snowmobilers renting cabins on weekends while the snowmobile trails were in great condition. But now the focus is getting ready for the summer rush.

“We already have some reservations for this summer,” they said. “There is a lot of repeat business. Leroy and Nancy did a good job running the resort.”

ORR

Orr Council seeking input on new comprehensive plan at their meeting on Monday, April 9

by MELISSA ROACH
Staff Writer

ORR- The Orr City Council is seeking comments from interested area residents on Monday, April 9 at 7 p.m. on the city’s comprehensive plan, which is currently being updated.

Last year Arrowhead Regional Development Commission representatives met with Orr city officials, employees, and residents to gather input for the development of a new comprehensive plan for the city. The long-term, public-driven plan looks at housing, transportation, agriculture, natural and cultural resources, economic development, utilities and community facilities, intergovernmental cooperation, land use, and the strategic implementation of priority projects. In the planning document, the city takes aim at community improvements at the city park with a revital-

ized beach, fishing pier, DNR boat launch upgrades, as well as keeping water/sewer infrastructure upgrade projects and affordable housing needs in the balance.

Top priorities for the new comprehensive plan include some projects that are currently underway, such as high speed broadband internet for the city. The city has already made some progress toward internet inclusivity with the Grizzlies Community through the Blandin Foundation’s rural broadband initiative with dedicated funds to help communities reach broadband goals. Other strategies include working with Bois Forte to expand broadband to Orr, and working with Paul Bunyan Communications to install a fiber connection to the St. Louis County Sheriff’s outpost at the ORR Center. The city also recognizes the ORR Center, and its success, as a priority, and

will continue to act as a fiscal agent when needed.

The comprehensive plan also includes the Orr General Store, the oldest building in the city. The building is now abandoned and recognized as a public nuisance. The plan details the path the city will take to regain control of the property, eliminate the blight and return it to a useful purpose. The plan also sets a goal of a new garage, with sleeping quarters for the Fire and Ambulance Departments.

Affordable housing continues to challenge city officials with a lack of real estate available. The planning document calls out much of the current housing stock as deteriorating, and in need of rehabilitation. The city has set a goal to improve the situation by offering various affordable and sustainable housing options. Much of the housing plan includes the removal/clean-up of blighted properties and helping residents

improve the condition of existing properties. Other measures seek the development of new housing options for families and seniors.

The city will work to cultivate a sense of place by promoting and supporting nearby bicycle, snowmobile, ATV, skiing, and hiking trail connections within the region. Recent law and ordinance changes allowing ATV use on paved roads, have led to an increase in ATV traffic into the city. The extra traffic within the city has highlighted the need for a city directory of services. Pedestrian safety is also addressed as the city aims to add sidewalks to improve local access to the downtown area.

The new comprehensive plan updates includes the improvements the city has made since the last plan was created in 2011. The IRRRB requires an updated comprehensive plan in order for the city to receive funding from the agency. City officials will discuss a draft of the new plan the development commission has put together, at the city council meeting next week.

Dear Family and Friends

Thank you for all of the love and support for the loss of our mother, grandmother, wife, sister, and friend Patricia Maki Doble. She was truly an amazing woman and it was so nice to hear all the wonderful stories of how she impacted the lives of so many. She was a friend to everyone she met and she will surely greet each one of us again when we meet again. Please accept this as our card of thanks as we continue to grieve the loss of an amazing woman. Thank you for all of the prayers as well.

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TOWER

Nordic Home North - Linda Solum
Tower-Soudan Agency - Audrey Stern
Bob's Service & Towing - Bob Pratt
Soudan Store - Lynn Watts
Vermilion Fuel & Food - Patti Bee
Sulu's Espresso Café - Kathy Lovgren

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Zup's Tower Grocery - Jeff Dunbar
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ELY

Frandsen Bank, Ely - Clint Gregory
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Blomberg's Cenex Store - Patti Shusta
Ely Flower & Seed - Cheryl Jahr
Ely Surplus - Michale Kallen

Mealey's Gift & Sauna Shop - Grant Netzer
Front Porch Coffee & Tea - Barbara Monetti
Ely Northland Market - Bev Syrjanen

BABBITT

Ely Area Credit Union - Debbie Franson
Blomberg's Convenience Store - Mitch Johnson
Lossing Building Center - Michelle Putzel
Zup's in Babbitt - Tony Merhar

EMBARRASS

EVCU, Embarrass - Lars Koski

FRONTIER...Continued from page 1

investigation, including public hearings throughout Frontier's service territory.

"The total number of comments and complaints, often with detailed documentation, indicate that widespread problems with service quality, customer service and billing exist," concluded the commission staffers in their report.

A representative of the Department of Commerce also presented the com-

mission with the results of an initial assessment of Frontier's compliance with quality standards that the department has established for telecommunications providers. One of those standards includes restoring lost phone service. The state's goal calls for restoration within 24 hours in 95 percent of the cases. In fact, based on complaints from Frontier customers, the company failed to meet

this standard 65 percent of the time.

Another state standard requires that customers should not be on hold for longer than 60 seconds, on average, from the last menu item in the answering system before reaching a live service representative. But Frontier failed to meet that standard in ten of the last 14 months, indicating a 70-percent failure rate. During several of those months, hold times

averaged four minutes to as long as seven minutes before reaching a live representative.

The PUC commissioners left it up to the ALJ, the Department of Commerce, and Frontier to agree on dates and locations for the public hearings, as well as the total number of hearings.

The commission also ordered that Frontier provide a quality service questionnaire in upcoming

billing to customers, along with notice of the public hearings. The company will also be required to publish notice of the hearings in legal newspapers in counties where Frontier operates.

An attorney for Frontier objected to the advertisement requirement, suggesting that it would likely be costly for the company. But commission members said they felt the ads were

important to inform the public about the hearings and the investigation and included the requirement in their final action.

Following the hearings, the ALJ will issue findings which will form the basis for a report by the Department of Commerce. The PUC asked for the DOC to issue its report within 90 days of the last public hearing in the matter.

TOWER...Continued from page 1

said. Schoenfelder said he felt he was clear with the city from the beginning on how the project could proceed. "Our thought from the beginning was to fund the design of the town homes, and then presell the units in order to finance the project."

It's not clear how set city officials are in their latest demand. No reporter from the *Timberjay* was present at the March 29 special meeting because city officials failed to notify the newspaper of the special in apparent violation of the Open Meeting Law. The newspaper's written request for notification of harbor committee meetings was refiled with the city in February. Under state law, the city is required to notify anyone who is on record requesting notice of special meetings. The harbor committee had not met since September.

In response to an emailed question, City Clerk-Treasurer Linda Keith said the harbor committee was providing Tower Vision advanced warning. "It is not unusual or unlikely for a city council to request a [letter of credit] so this was a heads up to TV 2025 to be ready for such council request," Keith wrote.

Schoenfelder, who has extensive experience as a developer, said it was unlikely that any financial institution would be willing to invest in the project purely on speculation, particularly in a remote market where such a project has not been done before. Financing the project based on pre-sales helped to limit the risk for all the parties involved, said Schoenfelder. "If they're asking us to take on more risk, we're not interested," he said.

Project delays

Delays in the project have proven costly, as updated construction figures for this year

showed a sizable jump from last year. "As time goes on, particularly in a time like now, everything gets more expensive," he said. "So, we're exploring other options to keep a better price point for buyers."

Despite the delays, Schoenfelder said he's not going to point fingers, and he remains confident that the project will be ready to move forward once the final permits are in place. He said the city's engineer now anticipates having the final wetlands permit in hand by July. Tower Vision CEO Orlyn Kringstad said he had hoped to start construction in May, but work on the project can't begin, said Schoenfelder, until all the permits are in place.

While city officials did not respond, the city's commitment to extend roads and utilities to the town home is expected

to be costly. The city has obtained some funding to cover a portion of the cost, but not as much as city officials had originally hoped. That raises the stakes for the city as well.

Schoenfelder acknowledged the challenges, particularly as the city and the developers try to negotiate the multi-

ple jurisdictions, wetland issues, and poor soils in some cases. "There is a lot going on from an integration perspective to make it all happen," he said. "I am certainly still optimistic. There are challenges, but that's nothing new. You can usually work through the challenges."

Schoenfelder said he

remains determined to bring the project to fruition. "We're still pushing as hard as we can to get there by July. Everything

is starting to come together now. We do get closer all the time."

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RECOUNT...Continued from page 1

The initial recount, set in March, was cancelled after Clerk Sue Drobac was informed she had not given the proper notice to the candidates involved. After consulting with the township attorney, and finding a date that was acceptable to H. Jeffrey Peterson, an attorney and township resident who was acting as a representative (though not as an attorney) for candidate Beihoffer in the recount, the recount was set for Tuesday, April 3 at 1 p.m.

Drobac, the township's election official, oversaw the recount attempt and had appointed two experienced election judges, Mary Richard and Carol Maus, to do the actual counting of the ballots.

But before the ballot box was unsealed and any counting could begin, Peterson began to object to the setup of the recount. Peterson began by stating he was not at the meeting as a legal representative, and that he had never been involved in a recount. He noted he had read the state statutes and the state guidelines on recounts, which are all available online.

He told the clerk she needed to know the procedure so she could follow the rules.

At this point, the meeting began to get unruly.

Mark Drobac, who was in the audience, asked why Peterson was wasting all this time, and asked him to give specific suggestions.

Peterson stated that the clerk had not set out

written guidelines as to how to proceed, had not set up the room properly for the recount, and that the people officially involved (township election officials, candidates, and their representatives) all needed to have name tags so they could be properly identified, and that the candidates and their representatives needed an area that was separate from the public. The candidates involved, and their representatives, are allowed to directly observe the recount and the ballots, but the public is not.

Clerk Drobac noted that these were mainly suggestions, from the state guidelines. The guidelines, titled the 2016 Recount Guide, cover all Minnesota elections and the guidelines are not specifically

targeted at township-level elections. The guide specifically states that portions of the guide contain certain procedures based on best practices, rather than statute or rule.

The clerk had consulted with the Greenwood Township attorney prior to the recount.

Peterson questioned whether the clerk had read the guidelines or contacted the township's attorney.

Mark Drobac then stated, from the audience, that they should just reseal the box and do the recount another day. And at that point, Clerk Drobac appeared to agree and started re-taping the ballot box, which had only been partially un-taped, and formally closed the recount meeting.

Anthony Sikora, a

reporter for *The Tower News*, started arguing with the clerk.

"You just proved that Greenwood can't hold a fair election," said Sikora. "You wouldn't be the only town... You guys don't know what you are doing."

The accusations against the township clearly riled the two candidates who had requested the recount. The two would like to see the recount happen as soon as possible.

Both Bassing and Stoehr, who each contacted the *Timberjay* after the meeting, said they felt the clerk was ready for the recount, and were happy with how it was going to proceed. Neither felt there was any election wrong-doing. They both agreed that with the close margin they would like

to see the paper ballots counted by hand, rather than the machine that the township used on election night. Bassing, who continues to hold his old seat at least until the recount is conducted, questioned Peterson's strategy, because his protests again led to a delay in the seating of Beihoffer, who Peterson was representing.

The Greenwood Board delayed doing most of its reorganization at its last meeting, because the new members had not been seated. The board meets again on Tuesday April 10. The board's meeting to canvass election results, set for April 4, was also cancelled, and is expected to be held on Sunday, April 8 at 2 p.m.

ELY...Continued from page 1

Plan and is considering including language that bars all tapping of trees currently being planted and those that will be planted in the future.

"Tapping is not advised on stressed trees even in more natural settings, and the boulevards provide a continually stressed condition," the Tree Board said. "We are concerned also that the energy that a tree requires to heal from tapping is energy taken away from other activities those

stressed need to perform to survive."

"While we prefer that community members refrain from tapping our older silver maples, banning the tapping of the older trees would likely be contentious and does not seem worth acting on, given that the trees are near the ends of their lives," the Tree Board said. "Education in the present and not allowing tapping in the future is the best way to proceed."

The issue came to

the attention of the City Council after dozens of maple trees around town were recently tapped with similar brackets, hoes and blue plastic bags.

In comments last month, Novak defended what he referred to as the "maple syrup gang," several local citizens who have been tapping the city's trees for years. "It has been kind of a ritual with them. This year it is different. All of a sudden we have metal brackets and blue bags all over town," he said.

According to Novak, who said he discussed the issue with one of the locals, the influx of tappers is from out of town, and he said they could be

selling the maple syrup commercially. "I asked the Police Department to find out who these people are with the blue-bagged taps and where they are from. If they are doing this commercially, they have to have a Department of Health license, and be registered as a business. My personal perspective is this is theft of city property," Novak said.

The "blue bag tree tappers" came forward this week to be heard. Natasha Brekke, whose family lives in Morse Township just outside of town on Johnson Creek Drive, addressed the council in open forum Tuesday night.

"We have the blue bags in town, and I would

like to let you know that we are just two Ely families out collecting maple (sap) with our families. Between the two families we have seven children age six and under," Brekke said. "We have been doing this for years and this is a four-generation tradition in our family and the equipment we use is inherited equipment."

She said they are not an out-of-town commercial operation, as was reported. "We share our maple syrup with our friends and family," she said. "In fact, it is a really fun activity when we boil down our syrup. We have cookies and coffee at our sugar shack and neighbors stop by. It is important for

us that our children learn how to properly tap maple trees."

Novak invited Brekke to attend the public hearing at the end of the month. He reiterated that the family lives outside the city limits. Last month he suggested the city issue permits to tap maple trees on city property. "The permit would be waived for local citizens," he said. "It would be \$2,000 for those who don't live here."

The public hearing begins at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday April 24 in the council chambers.

Other business

- In other business, the council took the following action:
- Approved the City Council and city staff to attend Broadband Day on the Hill on April 17;
 - Approved the City Council and staff to attend the Smile, You're in Ely event on April 12;
 - Voted to authorize mortgage satisfactions for Sarah L. Burger and Donald S. Beans and Joan Kjorsvig-Beans;
 - Postponed action on appointments to the Charter Commission;
 - Approved a residential rehab loan of \$10,000 for Scott Mills and Wende Nelson to replace a water line to their property on Yukon Drive;
 - Approved a residential rehab loan of \$10,000 for William and Helen Cusack to put a new roof on their Washington Street home;
 - Approved the request from Gardner Humanities Trust for in-kind services to help install the Freenote Harmony Park in Whiteside Park.

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July 8th-10th - The show is open to the public free of charge, from 1-4pm daily.

All pieces submitted will be the choice of each artist. Display space will be available on a first entered basis. Ely Arts and Heritage Center is a 501(c)3 organization which uses its funds for arts, educational and heritage programs.
For an application to the
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please e-mail: art@elygreenstone.org
Artists Contact -
Sandy Brandley 218-235-8491



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TURNING THE PAGE

Faithful Embarrass weather watcher calls it a career

Roland Fowler was a staple on local and national news as he reported on the region's bone-chilling temperatures; new weather recorder set to take over

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

EMBARRASS- Roland "Charlie" Fowler really enjoys the cold weather. And in his slow but animated drawl, he loves talking about it. Fowler has become a staple on local and national weather broadcasts as the face and voice of Embarrass, which relishes the spotlight when its temperatures dip down below what most of the country considers habitable.

Embarrass is mostly known for two things: its historic Finnish log buildings, and its bone-chilling weather.

Fowler has been faithfully recording the weather in the "cold spot" for over 30 years, the last 20 of which he has been an

official weather observer for the National Weather Service. As part of this job, he records each day's high and low temperature, along with any precipitation, which then becomes a part of the official weather record.

"Every major network has been up here," said Fowler, who has also talked on the air with Garrison Keillor and Jimmy Kimmel.

"It's been interesting," he said, "and Embarrass gets a lot of publicity out of it."

Fowler is turning 86 later this year, and said it was time to turn the job over to somebody else.

"I didn't know how long I could keep going out through the snow to read the temperatures," he said.



Roland Fowler stands in front of the official weather box from which he's recorded Embarrass's brutally-cold temperatures for over 30 years. photo by Max Helmberger

The job, of course, is totally volunteer, though the weather service provides the equipment and training.

Fowler needed to make sure that the new official weather spot would record the same achingly cold temperatures as at his house. Tower, which

holds the official Minnesota state cold temperature record of -60 degrees F, recorded in 1996 at Kathy Hoppa's home on Hwy. 135, found that its official temperatures rose a few degrees when the official weather station was moved (after Hoppa retired from her official weather observ-

er stint) to a house that sits a bit higher in elevation.

Fowler found the perfect recruits in Tanaya and Cody Wills, who own Trapline Convenience and Liquor Store, located on Hwy. 21, a stone's

See **WEATHER...**pg. 2B



EASTER FUN in Timberjay Country



Above: Dozens of Ely-area families participated in the Ely Community Resource Easter Egg Hunt Saturday afternoon at Amici's Event Center.

photo by K. Vandervort

Left: Sully Roesch won an Easter basket during the Cook Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday.

photo by P. Wattering

Above right: Wyck Conger-Bliss looks excited with her new stuffed toy at the Cook Easter Egg Hunt.

photo by P. Wattering



Above: Kids raced to pick up eggs in the Tower Easter Egg Hunt.

photo by S. Ukkola

Left: Nova Harman tries out the soft lap of the Easter Bunny in Orr.

photo courtesy of the Orr Chamber of Commerce



CITY OF COOK

Timber Days planning getting underway

Glitch in MnDOT aeronautics directory could have pilots flying in circles at Cook Airport

by MELISSA ROACH
Staff Writer

COOK- The city council gave Timber Days organizers Carrolle Wood and Dianne Brunner thumbs up to move ahead with the annual summer event. Wood asked to move the event’s fireworks display from the old Cook school (now Red Water Complex) to the Cook Community Center/Doug Johnson Recreation Area. She said the charge they incur for having the fireworks display at the school has caused them to look elsewhere.

“I don’t think people know how much it costs to put this event on,” said Wood. Administrator Martinson did not think the city’s insurance would cover the fireworks, since it is city property,

although she would look into it. The city can still support the Timber Days event with a donation, and Wood thought the group would do more in asking for community donations. Martinson suggested looking into the city insurance policy and Wood will look into the cost and coverage of an insurance rider for the display to be held at the rec area.

An error in the Minnesota Dept. of Transportation Aeronautics Directory may cause safety issues at the Cook Airport. The publication lists the Cook Airport with the wrong flight pattern direction for the runway. “It is listed that we are a right traffic runway, when it should be listed as a left traffic runway. It could be a very big concern for us,”

City Administrator Theresa Martinson told the city council. Airport Manager Jim Prepodnik had spotted the mistake right away. Mayor Harold Johnston asked if the city would be liable for a collision. Martinson told the council that the DOT has been contacted, and they put out an additional addendum and updated it online. “We have done everything we can. The books have all been printed and there isn’t much more we can do,” she said.

The council also passed a motion to work out a possible agreement with the 2142 school district, for North Woods baseball team to use the ballfields. Stephany Beaudry received a call from the school last spring to see if the city would be open to letting junior varsity use the

field for practice. The council agreed to move forward with allowing the district to use the rec area ballfields if needed. The district would need to purchase ag-lime, and move the mound. The city would continue to maintain mowing the grass.

Other business

In other action, the council:

- Approved submitting an application for funding from the IRRRB for a maintenance building.
- Approved a temporary liquor license and ticket sales for the Northwoods Friends of the Arts “Church of Cash” fundraising event that is planned for June 15.

In other news, the Ambulance Dept. is continuing community outreach with events. The first will be a presentation on illicit drugs and the opioid epidemic on

Monday, April 23, from 6–7:30 p.m. at the Cook Community Center. Another event planned for May 5 (11 a.m. – 2 p.m.) that will address strokes and concussion awareness. This will also take place at the Cook Community Center. The department is also planning for the mock crash at North Woods to bring awareness about distracted driving as well as drinking and driving.

The Fire Department received a grant from the Red Cross for smoke detectors. The department has also obtained a Firewise grant which will allow for a NFPA officer to visit to educate the department on community outreach for wildland fire awareness.

ELY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

April Fools? For Ely, there’s no joking this year

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – Ten years of celebrating April Fools Day with jokes that gained national attention for Ely has come to an end. No joke.

A post on the Ely Chamber of Commerce website Sunday stated, “No foolishness for April Fools this year. We will be back in a couple of weeks with something new.”

The reason given was that the coinciding of Easter on April 1 made it inappropriate this year. Future plans were not revealed.

Rather than April Fools, it appears that April 15, Tax Day, may get some attention instead.

Chamber takes a hiatus on longtime public relations grabber

Tax Day isn’t necessarily a bad day for all tax-paying Americans (a majority actually get a refund), and President Trump’s new tax cuts promise many more happy Tax Days for many more people in the future, according to Ely Mayor Chuck Novak. “We’re going to turn one of the most unpleasant days of spring into something more uplifting.”

April Fools Day has been a tourism marketing boon for the Ely Chamber of Commerce over the years. In recent years, the “Canoeber” campaign, billed as “the world’s first water-based

ride-sharing program,” and the introduction of the electric canoe paddle, have all helped to launch another summer vacation season in the “greatest small town in the world.”

Other notable pranks included: a ban on drones in 2015 was an effort to protect the privacy of residents and visitors; “The Ely Channel,” a 24-hour TV channel all about Ely, with shows like “Sauna Wars” and “Iron Range Chef,” came out in 2014; in 2013, Ely said, “Tweeting’s for the birds,” and banned social media; Ely announced that

Dairy Queen bought the naming rights to the BWCAW in 2010. In 2009, Ely announced a bid for the 2016 Olympic Games; and there was also the time that Canada annexed Ely.

Despite numerous organizations and companies jumping on the April Fools bandwagon in the past several years with mock products and announcements, the Ely Chamber of Commerce said they continued to get hundreds of phone calls and thousands of people visiting their website on April 1.

In the past, dozens of

bloggers wrote about Ely’s April Fools campaigns and the Chamber of Commerce said they have received emails from as far away as Okinawa and Antarctica from people who’d heard the news and were checking in to see if it was real – or to reminisce about their trips to Ely.

A news release said that “While the Tourism Bureau has ended this historic, award-winning tourism campaign, it’s hoping to keep the spirit of the campaign alive this year in social media.”

Stay tuned.

WEATHER...Continued from page 1B

throw from Fowler’s house.

“Our temperatures have been within a single degree of each other,” Fowler said.

Tanaya Wills said they will be ready to take over the duties once the station is moved over and they receive the necessary training. The couple keeps pretty busy running the store, which they have owned the last four years, but are sure they will have time for their new weather-related duties. Trapline is the new meeting spot in Embarrass, with a convenience and liquor store, and is open daily.

Moving the official weather equipment to the Trapline location means that Embarrass temperatures will be reported right away, via computer, and Embarrass will make the news more often. Fowler was not able to record his temperatures online, and had to phone in his readings, which meant they weren’t available early in the morning for the weather broadcasts.

The actual move will need to wait until the snow is melted, so the equipment can be dug out at Fowler’s

and moved to the Trapline. “It’s time to turn the reins over to somebody else,” he said. “I am getting slowed down by my age and I can’t do all the things

I want to do.” Fowler is also putting in his final year as a volunteer for the Embarrass Region Fair, and figures he has volunteered for the fair the last

40 years. This year, he was still out pounding the pavement selling the ads for the fair book, another volunteer gig he will be giving up this year. He has also been a 30-plus year member of the Embarrass-Vermillion Credit Union board, serving as chairman for the last 10 years.

Fowler admits he has gotten more than his share

of attention over the years. And he still is upset that an equipment malfunction meant that Embarrass did not get an official reading the morning that Tower hit -60 degrees. A Taylor thermometer that hit -64 degrees that morning by Timber Hall was sent in to be calibrated and shown to be accurate. But that temperature could not be

officially recorded.

Fowler said the new thermometer system can read temperatures as low as -100 degrees.

“I hope nobody ever has to read that!” he said.

Fowler said Embarrass hasn’t seen a real cold stretch in a while. But when it does get cold, he often fields phone calls, a job that will soon move to the Wills family.



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COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NOTICES

ARROWHEAD LIBRARY SYSTEM

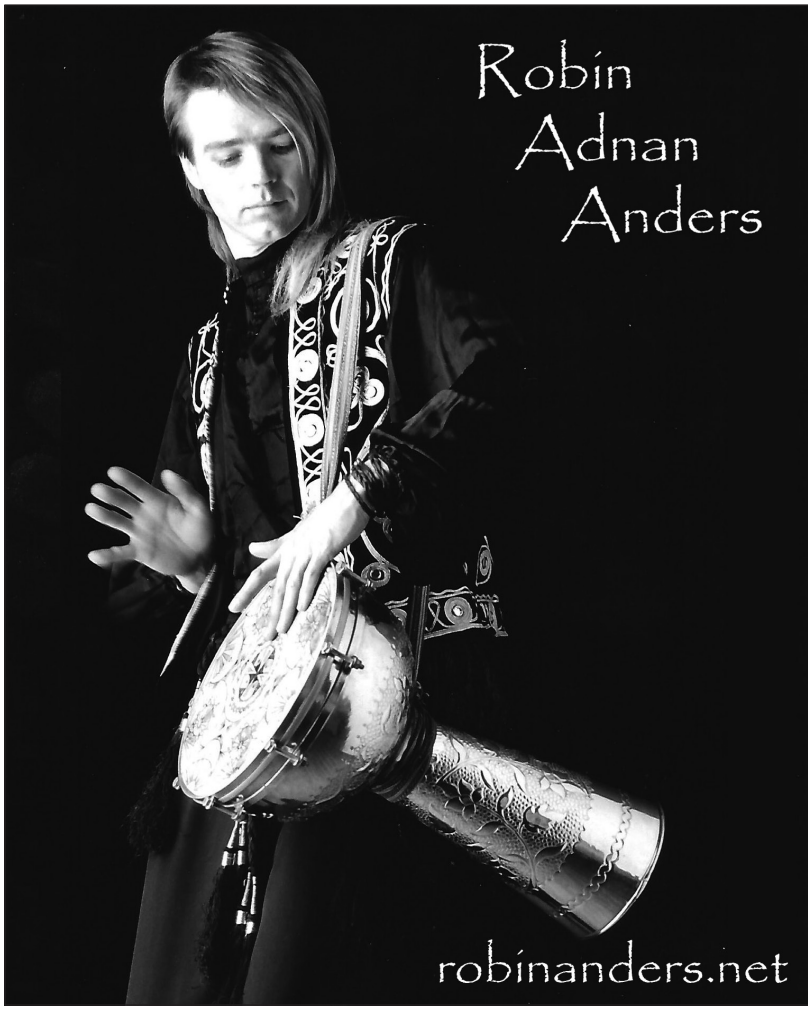
Drums of the World program at area libraries

REGIONAL- The Arrowhead Library System is pleased to present Robin Anders's Drums and Percussion of the World, a free program being offered for ages 6 and up on Wednesday, April 11 at 1 p.m. at the Babbitt Public Library and later that afternoon at 3:30 p.m. at the Ely Public Library. Enjoy a demonstration of several different drums and percussion instruments from many cultures on five continents including Africa, North and South America, Asia, India, and the Middle East.

Robin has toured in these countries performing, teaching, and giving workshops for over 45 years. His Middle Eastern percussion video, Voices of the Doumbek, is available in the libraries of most major cities all over the world. He has great stories and anecdotes from his travels that are both entertaining and educational.

The program ends with an audience participation segment where Robin invites everyone to play together on percussion instruments and experience the drums first hand. Don't miss it!

This program, sponsored by Arrowhead Library System, was funded in part or in whole with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. To learn more about Arrowhead Legacy Events, please see our calendar at www.alslib.info.



info, find us on Twitter [www.twitter.com/ArrowheadLegacy](https://twitter.com/ArrowheadLegacy), on Pinterest at <https://www.pinterest.com/alexisleitgeb/legacy-events>, or

Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/alslibinfo>.

COOK

Lots of upcoming events at Northwoods Friends of the Arts

COOK—Northwoods Friends of the Arts is holding a variety of events throughout the coming months. From April 4 to 28, artists Lyn Reed and Kris Musto explore the historical context of aprons with the Aprons in April Exhibition. A reception will be held Friday, April 18, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the NWFA Gallery, 210 S River St. next to Dream Weaver Spa and Salon in Cook.

➤ NWFA is also hosting the Your Best Shot Photo Contest. Registration is open from now until Saturday, May 26. See the NWFA website for details.

➤ The 8th Annual Spring Art Expo seeks businesses to display

art and artists to exhibit. The exhibition will run from June 8 to 29 in Cook and the surrounding area. Registration is open until April 13.

➤ The Winter Writers Group meets for the last time on Saturday, April 14 from 1 to 3 p.m. For more information, contact Ellie at 218-753-5327.

➤ Open Art meets Saturday, April 21 from 12 to 3 p.m. Contact Sue at 218-666-5279 for details.

➤ Woodcarvers meet Thursdays from 6 to 8 p.m. Contact Howard at 218-741-7941 for details.

➤ The Grape Expectations Watercolor workshop by Mary Beth Downs, to be held April 19

and 20, is completely booked with a waiting list.

➤ The NWFA April meeting will be held Tuesday, April 17 from noon to 2 p.m., with the Spring Art Expo Planning Committee convening prior at 10:30 a.m.

Since 2010, NWFA has organized artists and performers as a non-profit membership organization. Gallery hours in spring and summer are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. The website is nwfamn.org. You can also reach NWFA on Facebook and Instagram.

Spring Gardening Extravaganza has growing tips for all

DULUTH- A variety of expert growers offering advice on a variety of gardening topics, including producing fruits and vegetables and sustainable flower gardening and pollinator plants will be heard at the 2018 Spring Gardening Extravaganza. The annual gardening program will be held Saturday, April 14, at First United Methodist (Coppertop) Church, 230 E. Skyline Parkway in Duluth from 9 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. David Zlesak, Associate Professor in Horticulture from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls presenting on cutting-edge rose and landscape plant research. Dr. Zlesak is a noted rose breeder who has been instrumental in implementing the Earth-Kind rose project. He also successfully introduced the Above and Beyond shrub rose. Former St. Louis County Master Gardener Julie Overom also will speak. Overom will soon introduce a new disease resis-

tant shrub rose called Cherry Frost.

Meanwhile, a panel of growers will share insights on the essentials of growing fruits and vegetables in the Northland. Douglas "Farmer Doug" Hoffbauer; Gary Rantala, formerly of Embarrass GR Greenhouse; and Deb Erickson Byrns from Byrns Greenhouse in Zim all have received the Farm Family of the Year Award in their distinguished careers, and will be speakers at the program.

Additional breakout sessions include: grafting apple trees and shrubs, propagating roses, starting plants from seed, vermiculture (worm) composting, honeyberries, asparagus, raspberries, spotted winged drosophila, native pollinator plants, designing perennial gardeners, and creating color with annuals and perennial flowers.

Additional speakers include: Tom Kasper, noted horticulturist and proprietor of Bending Birches Greenhouses; Beth Wiemken,

MN State Fair winner in onions; Dan Schutte, conservationist and proprietor of Shoreview Natives; Catherine Ahlgren, Rosarian and St. Louis County Master Gardener, Emeritus; Bob Olen, St. Louis County Horticulturist and Educator; Kendall Dykhuis, St. Louis County Agronomist and Educator; and Jan Hibbs, local gardening enthusiast.

The program fee is \$35 per person, which covers handout materials, 2018 Fruit and Vegetable Variety lists for Northern Minnesota, and refreshments.

This program is presented by St. Louis County Extension and University of Minnesota-St. Louis County Master Gardeners. To register or learn more about the program, call the St. Louis County Extension Office at 218-733-2870 or visit stlouiscountymn.gov/ext.

Calling all self-published authors: Minnesota libraries launch statewide author contest

REGIONAL- Arrowhead Library System, in partnership with MN Writes MN Reads, the Minnesota Author Project, and Minnesota's other regional public library systems, is pleased to join in the announcement of a new statewide contest that will accept submissions of self-published young adult and adult fiction. The winners will be recognized as the top self-published books in the state. This year's contest kicked off on April 1 and submissions will be accepted through June

30. Authors can submit at <https://indieauthorproject.librariesshare.com/minnesota>.

Winners in each category will receive \$1,000, sponsored by the Minnesota Library Foundation and BiblioLabs, as well as a write-up in the December print issue of Library Journal, one of America's oldest and most renowned trade publications for library news, a Library Journal digital review, honors at the American Library Association Midwinter Conference in Seattle,

and opportunities to promote your book(s) in Minnesota public libraries. If available, print copies of the winning titles will be purchased and made available for checkout through Minnesota's public libraries.

Each book that is submitted to the contest must be self-published, in the genre of young adult or adult fiction, written by a Minnesota resident, and available in either PDF or ePUB format. Multiple submissions are welcome.



EFN sponsoring program on loons

ELY- The Ely Field Naturalists invite you to Get Ready for Loon Season. Trumpeter swans began returning weeks ago and the sounds and sights of loons will be announced sometime in April. Many people will participate in a higher level of interest and reporting on loons this year due to opportunities beyond reports to the phenology calendar at the Ely Field Naturalists Blog.

In 2016, the earliest report of a Common Loon was on April 13. Join us at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 11 in Classroom CL104 at Vermilion Community College to share new information and to prepare for new reporting opportunities. Sherry Abts has returned from recent meetings with loon researchers in South Carolina and Wisconsin, and she brings her knowledge and enthusiasm to address the Common Loon as our State Bird of Interest in the Year of the Bird - 2018.

Ely Field Naturalists programs are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Bill Tefft at 218-235-8078.

Tree clearing project begins April 4 along Highway 135 in St. Louis County

EMBARRASS- The Minnesota Department of Transportation has contracted with YTS Companies to clear trees along Highway 135 between the PolyMet entrance and Lehto Road (mile marker 23.2 to 27.45). The project begins Wednesday, April 4 and will be completed in mid-May.

Motorists may encounter daytime flagging operations and/or shoulder closures Mondays through Fridays.

Trees and brush will be completely removed within 45 feet of the roadway to improve safety, increase sight distance and increase solar exposure to the road surface during winter months.

Residents living near the tree clearing project were notified in person or by letter last week. For updated road condition information, call 511 or visit www.511mn.org.

Ruby's Pantry in Cook on April 12

COOK- The next Ruby's Pantry Food Distribution will be Thursday, April 12, from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at the old Cook School. Registration begins at 3 p.m. for a \$20 cash donation at the door. Volunteers are asked to please arrive at 3 p.m. Please bring your own containers. Ruby's Pantry is now offering online registration at rubyspantry.com starting Friday, April 13, for the May distribution, for a \$21 donation at sign-up. Ruby's Pantry is sponsored by St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Alango. For more information, contact Sue Kolstad at 218-741-3925 or Amy Viita at 218-666-2220.

Essentia Health grief support group in Ely on Wednesdays

ELY- Experiencing the death of a loved one can be a very difficult experience. Learning about the grief process and having support from others can help a great deal. Please consider reserving your spot to participate in this 6-week grief support group. It is open to anyone in our area who has experienced the death of a loved one.

The group meets Wednesdays from April 18 to May 23, from 2 - 4 p.m. in Conference Room B of the Ely-Bloomenson Hospital, 328 W Conan St. in Ely. There is no cost to participate, but we ask that you please register by Friday, April 13. Register by calling 1-877-851-2213 or 218-749-7975. The group is facilitated by Catherine Burt of East Range Hospice Family Grief Support Services and Linda O'Neill DeRemee, LSW, and is sponsored by Essentia Health St Mary's East Range Hospice.



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THANK YOU

Unfortunately, the final tally in the election is yet to be confirmed, but even so I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank those who supported me during the election for Greenwood Township Supervisor. Win or lose, I will continue to be involved as I have over the last few years and will continue to observe the activities of the Township Board with one question on my mind, and that is "How will this action affect the taxpayers of Greenwood Township?" It should be part and parcel of any discussion, wouldn't you agree?

Rick Stoehr, Greenwood Township



Outdoors

Our lives in the
Northwoods

WEATHER

North Country winter was a tad colder than average

Precipitation was close to normal; season could be notable for the extended period of continuous snow cover

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — While there's still plenty of snow on the ground in the North Country, the calendar says that winter is over, which means it's an appropriate time to assess how Mother Nature treated us all this year.

While the winter prompted plenty of complaints as a particularly cold one, the final numbers suggest that perhaps North Country residents have become spoiled after three straight mild winters. In fact, temperatures were

below normal on average, but well within the normal range of variability. Across northeastern Minnesota, the average temperature from Dec. 1 through March 31 was 10.9 degrees, which is 3.2 degrees colder than normal. Meanwhile, precipitation came in close to normal at 3.63 inches, down 0.25 inches from average for the four-month period.

December and January were mostly unremarkable weather-wise, with temperatures quite close to average. February was the coldest

month in the region, with an average temperature for the month of 5.1 degrees, which was 7.3 degrees below average. Embarrass recorded the coldest February in the region, with an average temperature for the month of minus 1.5 degrees. A weather station 25 miles east of Ely recorded an average temperature of minus 0.9, while most other recording stations in the local area averaged just above zero. Kabetogama averaged 0.4 degrees, Tower recorded 1.8 degrees, and Orr came in

See WEATHER...pg. 5B



Late winter this year has been notable for abundant sunshine and frequent and frosty mornings. Here, morning sun backlights frost on birch branches on the edge of the Lost Lake Swamp.

photos by M. Helmberger



WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

Bat numbers continue to fall

But some evidence bats may be seeking areas less conducive to deadly fungus

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

SOUDAN MINE — Bat numbers here have declined yet again according to the latest winter survey, although there is reason to hope that the worst of the impact from white-nose syndrome could be over.

The note of optimism is based on a sharp decline in the number of bats that have emerged from the mine this winter. Last winter, thousands of bats emerged from the mine mid-winter, virtually all of which died due to the cold. But according to James Pointer, interpretive supervisor at the Lake Vermilion Soudan Underground Mine State Park, fewer than ten bats have emerged from the mine this winter.

Whether that's because so few bats remain, or because bats are finding better places to hibernate in the mine, is unclear. The labyrinth created by the mine offers differing conditions for bats, and some places are less conducive to the growth of the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome.

There's some evidence that bats in the mine are figuring that out and are gravitating to areas where there's more fresh air and cooler temperatures, which appears to limit the growth of the fungus.

Above: A bat in the Soudan Mine shows signs of white-nose syndrome. Note the fuzzy white patch near its nose.

Above right: A frozen bat clings to a pipe near the Soudan Mine shaft. It was one of thousands of bats that died in 2017 after emerging from the mine in midwinter.

Right: A bat wing showing evidence of infection from the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome.

file photos

There's also evidence in the latest bat survey that bat mortality in the mine remains significant. According to Pointer, the latest survey found just 116 bats in the three levels (the 12th, 17th, and 27th) that are surveyed every year. Portions of those levels are part of a standard survey route that park staff cover every year. Every five years, the park conducts a more thorough survey across the bulk of the mine.

Last year, DNR staff counted 440 bats in the three-level survey route, which was a significant drop from the 600-800 bats that had been typical before the introduction of white-nose syndrome. "What we don't know is if they died, or are simply moving elsewhere," said Pointer.



The survey, which involved just two park staff on March 7, was limited this year intentionally, said Pointer. "We're trying to be conscious of what we're doing," he said, in hopes of minimizing disturbance in the mine during the hibernation season. "We're even trying to limit maintenance work during that time," he said.

Bat researchers first documented the presence of the deadly fungus in the Soudan Mine five years ago, but researchers didn't find evidence of a significant number of bat deaths until last winter. That would make the current winter the second year of the die-off phase. The Soudan Mine has been known as the state's largest bat hibernaculum, which was previously home to an estimated 10,000-15,000 bats.

So far, the effects of the fungus have played out similarly at Soudan as they have elsewhere in the U.S., where 90-95 percent of infected bats

have died. It typically takes two or three years from the time the fungus is first detected in a hibernaculum before it begins to impact large numbers of bats. In the case of the Soudan Mine, the first sign of significant mortality appeared during the winter of 2015-16, and bat deaths spiked significantly from there last winter. It remains unclear whether the remaining bats have figured out ways to resist the fungus or have a greater tolerance. Pointer noted that all of the bats they recorded during their most recent survey were little brown myotis. Another species, the northern long-eared bat, has also been found in significant numbers in the mine in the past, but that species is known to be highly susceptible to white-nose syndrome, so it's possible that mortality of that species has been significantly higher.

Outdoors briefly

Bears will be out and about soon



by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — There's still plenty of snow in the woods, but that doesn't mean the bears aren't getting restless.

DNR Tower Area Wildlife Manager Tom Rusch says bears are already starting to show up in southern St. Louis County, so it's probably only a matter of days before they start wandering the woods again here in the North Country. And like anyone who's just getting up from a five-month nap, they're hungry. And that means it's time to remember we live in bear country and should plan accordingly.

Anyone living near bear habitat is reminded to be aware of bears this spring and check their property for food sources that could attract bears.

As bears emerge from hibernation, their metabolism gradually ramps up and they will begin looking for food at a time when berries and green vegetation can be scarce. Pet food, livestock feed, bird seed, compost or garbage can attract bears, and that can lead to property damage and present dangers to bears.

The DNR offers some tips for avoiding bear conflicts.

Around the yard

► Do not leave food from barbecues and picnics outdoors, especially overnight. Coolers are not bear-proof.

► Eliminate birdfeeders or hang them 10 feet up and 4 feet out from the nearest trees.

► Use a rope and pulley system to refill birdfeeders, and clean up spilled seeds. Where bears are a nuisance, birdfeeders should be taken down between now and Dec. 1.

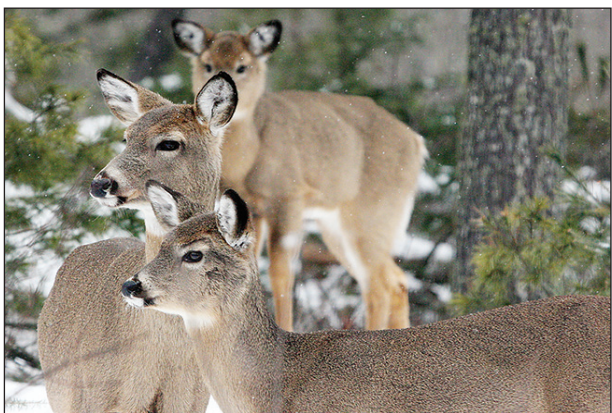
► Store pet food inside and feed pets inside.

► Limit compost piles to grass, leaves and garden clippings, and turn piles regularly. Do not add food scraps.

► Store garbage in bear-resistant garbage cans or dumpsters. Rubber or plastic garbage cans are not bear-proof.

DEER IN WINTER

Winter severity index creeps closer to average



While the region has seen snow on the ground for more than five months, snow depths for much of the winter weren’t deep enough to pose problems for deer. file photo

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Winter severity for the region’s whitetail deer population is creeping closer to the average range in some portions of northern St. Louis and Lake counties. That’s due to continued cool temperatures and snow depths that are still running above the 15-inch threshold in many parts of the region.

As of March 28, the index had topped 120 points in just one deer permit area— PA 117, which mostly encompasses the Boundary Waters. Most of its points, a total of 71, were attributed to snow depth, while the area recorded 53 subzero days for the remainder of its point total.

By contrast, PA 177, which encompasses Lake Vermilion, was at 89, with 56 points for subzero temperatures and 33 days

for snow depth. The DNR, which established the WSI as a ready reference for deer management, considers a final index reading of 100 or below as mild, 120 as average, and 180 or over as severe. The index gains a point for every day with a subzero reading and another point for every day with a snow depth of 15 inches or greater.

With most areas in northern St. Louis and Lake counties still adding a point to the index due to snow depths, and with no substantial warmup in the immediate forecast, the winter is likely to end up close to average, or just slightly milder than average.

“As far as deer are concerned, this was pretty run-of-the-mill historically,” said Tom Rusch, DNR Tower area wildlife manager. “It’s been a pretty normal winter.”

WEATHER...Continued from page 4B

at 1.1 degrees.

Depending on weather over the next few weeks, this otherwise fairly average winter could be remarkable for one thing—the period of continuous snow cover. Much of the region has had at least one inch or more of snow cover since Oct. 27, when an early season snowstorm dumped more than a foot of snow across much of northern St. Louis County. If snow cover lingers three more weeks, which is certainly possible, that would mark six months of continuous snow cover, which means North Country residents could legitimately claim to have experienced six months of winter— and

would also likely set the record for the longest continuous period of snow cover ever recorded in Minnesota. According to state climatologist Pete Boulay, the current record for longest continuous snow cover is 172 days, set in Duluth in the winter of 1955-56. Currently, the North Country is at 162 days of continuous snow cover.

While many residents are likely eager for spring, it is worth noting that the snow crust makes this the best time of the year for traveling in the woods. So, quit complaining and get out and explore! Spring will be here soon enough.

READ the Timberjay!

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST from NOAA weather

Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
22 9					23 6					32 15					35 15					37 18				
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.
03/26	40	22	0.01	0.1"	03/26	37	19	0.25	4.0"	03/26	38	19	0.02	0.3"	03/26	34	27	0.02	0.3"	03/26	39	19	0.00	
03/27	33	28	0.22	4.5"	03/27	31	28	0.11	1.5"	03/27	31	27	0.46	5.5"	03/27	46	27	0.47	6.0"	03/27	32	25	0.45	5.0"
03/28	44	29	0.00		03/28	42	23	0.00		03/28	45	27	0.02	0.2"	03/28	43	25	0.00		03/28	44	27	0.00	
03/29	45	20	0.01	0.1"	03/29	43	29	0.00		03/29	44	15	0.00		03/29	30	10	0.00		03/29	44	14	0.00	
03/30	32	10	0.00		03/30	28	15	0.00		03/30	30	8	0.00		03/30	23	3	0.00		03/30	31	5	0.00	
03/31	27	9	0.00		03/31	21	6	0.00		03/31	25	0	0.06	1.4"	03/31	21	9	0.00		03/31	24	6	0.00	
04/01	24	8	0.00		04/01	20	6	0.00		04/01	21	0	0.00		04/01	30	7	0.00		04/01	23	6	0.00	
Totals			1.79	68.5"	Totals			2.21	68.9"	Totals			2.51	75.8"	Totals			NA	NA	Totals			2.49	65.8"

LEGISLATION

DNR concerned about hydro jets bill

Devices designed to clear weeds and sediment from around docks

by TIM SPIELMAN
Editor— Outdoor News

ST. PAUL— Concerns about the use along shorelines of implements known as “hydro jets” last summer prompted the Minnesota DNR to issue a statement regarding the legalities of such devices.

In part, the news release stated, “These products are often advertised to control or remove ‘muck’ and ‘weeds’ from a lake bottom. However, using hydraulic jets in this manner is not allowed in Minnesota.”

The statement from the department was in response to several DNR conservation officers having responded to complaints about removal of lake vegetation in that manner.

This session, the Minnesota Legislature has weighed in on the matter, with bills introduced by Rep. Josh Heintzeman, R-Nisswa, and Sen. Justin Eichorn, R-Grand Rapids, that would allow the use of “aquatic current devices” to remove aquatic plants.

An ACD, the legislation states “means a dock-mounted device

with a motor of no more than one horsepower that creates a current in the water with an attached, submerged propeller ...”

There are certain restrictions on the device: no more than 8 inches in diameter; directed upward at an angle of 5 degrees or more; and at least 12 inches above the lake bed or stream bed.

While DNR officials are awaiting a hearing on the bill in order to learn the particulars of it, they do have some concerns as they pertain to the protection of aquatic plants, which are threatened by the ACD when used if pointed downward.

The problem in the recent past, according to Bob Meier, DNR assistant commissioner, was that lakeshore property owners purchased the devices and proceeded to use them illegally.

“We changed our educational material, which we think made (the rules) more clear,” Meier said.

That said, “We have issues with the whole bill,” said Meier, adding that the measure is sponsored by manufacturers of the ACDs.

While the bill might instruct operators of the devices not to

point them downward, which would uproot vegetation, use when pointed upward might lead to the pushing of loose and floating mats of vegetation from one property to another. “It makes my problem, your problem,” Meier said.

Tracking the use of the devices might be problematic under the terms of the legislation, according to Jon Hansen, aquatic plant management consultant for DNR Fisheries.

Under certain conditions, according to Senate bill 3602, an aquatic plant management permit isn’t needed to operate the devices.

Hansen said use of the ACDs fall into a “somewhat gray area” when it comes to aquatic plant protection. They can be destructive to plant life when pointed downward. Pointed another way, they can create a nuisance for neighboring lakeshore property owners.

He said the DNR had sought clarification via legislation on their use, but, “This bill is not exactly what we wanted,” he said.

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Obituaries and Death Notices



Wilbert Strong Sr.
Wilbert Strong Sr., 79, of Nett Lake, joined his family who left before him, on Monday, March 26, 2018. A Traditional Wake was held on Friday, March 30 at the ENP Bois Forte Community Center in Nett Lake. Traditional Funeral Services were held on Saturday, March 31 at the ENP Bois Forte Community Center in Nett Lake. Spiritual Leader was Billy Blackwell and Spiritual Advisor was Gene Goodsky. Casket bearers were Jay-r, Jonathan, Chesty, Shane,

Luke, Jacob, Josh and Wilber. Honorary casket bearers were Gary Donald, Bill Tibbetts, Frank Barto, Jerome Whiteman, Leonard Howard, Gary “Squeek” Strong and Harvey Thompson. The family requested that no red clothing be worn by attendees. Arrangements were with Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook.
Wilbert was born to Herbert Sr. and Emma (Boness) Strong on Nov. 4, 1938, in Nett Lake. Wilbert joined the Marine Corps when he was 17 years old. He served in the Korean War. Wilbert was a man who was very talented both as a career person and as an artist. Wilbert was a pipefitter by trade but was also skilled in small engine repair, carpentry and welding. He traveled to each end of the United States working: The Alaskan Pipeline, 3 Mile Island, and the Texas oil rigs. His job excursions were also adventures.

When he worked on an oil rig in the ocean near Pensacola, Fla., he would feed sandwiches to the sharks below. During a job in Louisiana, he went swimming in a pond, unknowing to him, that was full of alligators.
Wilbert was a talented artist. He was a perfectionist wood carver and every work he produced was exquisitely detailed. His favorite subjects to carve were birds and sometimes snakes. One of Wilbert’s carvings, a loon, was purchased by the RTC and given to Governor Mark Dayton as a gift. Wilbert cherished his heritage and spoke fluent Ojibwe. He was a high-ranking Midewiwin.
He is survived by his daughters, Connie Strong and Kathleen Strong; grandchildren, Jay-r Carlson, Cheryl Carlson, Jonathan (Denise) Carlson, Gregory “Chesty” Strong, Sophia Ida Strong, Shane Herbert Lien, Patricia Ann

Lien, Wilber Lien, Emma Lien, Wyatt “howling mad” Strong, Joshua Strong, Christen (Josh) Crout, Jacob Heggen, Luke Strong (and his wife); and two great-grandchildren, Cheyanne Strong and Darren “Sonny” Jenkins Jr.
Wilbert was preceded in death by his parents, Herbert and Emma; favorite grandmother, Rose Beargrease Strong and grandfather, George Strong; beloved wife, Patricia (Tibbetts) Strong in 1973; children, Wilbert Strong Jr., Gregory Dean Strong, Gary Donald Strong, Dawn Marie Strong and Kristopher Todd Strong; granddaughter, Patricia Kathleen Strong; siblings, Joanne Boness Donald, Herbert Jr. Strong, Clara Jane “Strong” Whiteman and Reginald Silas Strong.
James R. Shuster
James “Jim” Robert Shuster, 65, of Greaney,

passed away on Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018. A celebration of Jim’s life will include visitation on Friday, April 6 from 6-8 p.m. at Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 7 at Calvary Lutheran Church in Orr with visitation one hour before the service. Burial will follow the funeral at St. Bridget’s Cemetery in Greaney. A reception in Jim’s honor will be held at the Orr American Legion Hall after the burial.
Gerard Rogers
Gerard “Jerry” Rogers, 61, passed away unexpectedly at his home in Virginia, on Thursday, March 22, 2018. Funeral arrangements are pending the ability of his newborn granddaughter to safely travel to Minnesota. Family services provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his loving wife of 36 years, Sharon Horton Rogers; children, Amy (Mike) Irwin of Marana, Ariz., and Andy (Karla) Rogers of Babbitt; grandchildren, Alexandra Irwin, Jameson Rogers and newly-born Gianna Irwin, who was welcomed on March 27, 2018; twin brother, Pat (Cindy) Rogers, and brothers, Steve (Angie) Rogers and John (Bonnie) Rogers, all of Virginia; sisters, Kathy (Donna) Schlotec of Proctor and JoAnn (John) Luhtala of Duluth; brothers-in-law, Steven (Melissa) Horton of St. Charles, Mo., and John (Susan) Horton of Andover; sisters-in-law, Mary Anne Horton of Oakdale, Libby (Glenn) Ferris of Marshfield, Wis., Kathy (Kevin) Hoyhtya of Center City, Leslie (Kim) Erickson of Boca Raton, Fla., and Maggie (Ken) Holkko of Virginia; numerous extended family and friends.

EMPLOYMENT

Nett Lake School Custodians Wanted

The Nett Lake School is taking applications for (1) full-time and (1) part-time custodian. Applicants must have a high school degree or equivalent, valid MN Drivers License, pass a pre-employment physical, drug test and a criminal background check. Interested parties must submit their application by 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 28.

Applications can be picked up at the school office or you can apply on line at www.nettlakeschool.org

Submit application to : James J. Varichak, Superintendent, Nett Lake School, 13090 Westley Drive, Nett Lake, MN 55772. ttn

Nett Lake School Teachers Wanted

The Nett Lake School is seeking applications for (2) elementary teachers for the 2018-19 SY. Applicants must submit a letter of interest, resume, copy of their valid MN teaching license or eligible for a variance and three letters of reference. Applicants may apply online at www.nettlakeschool.org. The district will begin reviewing applications on Friday, April 20.

Submit to: James J. Varichak, Superintendent, Nett Lake School, 13090 Westley Drive, Nett Lake, MN 55772. ttn

Vermilion Country School Special Education Paraprofessional

\$14.00 per hour, benefit package (prorated at 20+ hours/week), approximately 180 days/school year plus a few training days, approximately 8:30 am to 3:15 pm, except with additional duties

Full job description online at www.vermilioncountry.org/employment

The Vermilion Country School (VCS), is a grades 7-12 public charter school in Tower. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to: interact with staff, students, parent/guardians, and the community; facilitate academic and personal goal-setting; assist students with skill development in reading and math; monitor student progress; manage the physical needs of students as needed; chaperone field explorations; records maintenance and due process paperwork; proctor assessments and diagnostic tests; supervise students during lunch and out in the community; address behavior issues in accordance with school policy; maintain strict confidentiality; assist office staff and director as needed.

Minimum qualifications: Experience working with children, and a commitment to their learning; Excellent math, reading, and organizing skills; Excellent computer and office machine skills; Mature, friendly, and responsible; Commitment to the school’s mission and vision; Positive references; A minimum of 60 semester credits or the amount required to complete two full years of fulltime enrollment as determined by the institution of higher education attended; or an AA, AS, or AAS (or higher) degree; or a passing score on an assessment from the state-approved list (The ParaPro test has been approved for state-wide use. The cut score is 460.) Additional desired qualifications (please see website).

Position will remain open until filled. Please e-mail resume, cover letter, transcripts of college work and/or ParaPro score, and three letters of recommendation to:
Vermilion Country School,
P.O. Box 629, Tower, MN 55790
kfitton@vermilioncountry.org
www.vermilioncountry.org


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Bids can be mailed to Attn Linda Keith, City of Tower, PO Box 576, Tower, Minnesota 55790 or hand delivered to Attn Linda Keith, City of Tower, 602 Main Street, Tower, Minnesota. Bids will be accepted until 12 PM, Monday, April 9, 2018.

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Nett Lake School Indian Home-School Liaison/Director

The Nett Lake School is seeking applications for an Indian Home-School Liaison/Director. This is a 35 hr./wk for 42 weeks position. A complete job description and application can be found at www.nettlakeschool.org or you may stop by the Nett Lake School. Salary will be based on qualifications and experience.

The district will begin reviewing applications on April 20, 2018. This position will remain open until filled. ttn

CHILD CARE CENTER Classroom Teacher

Job Overview
The Little Eagles Childcare Center in Tower is hiring a Lead Teacher to provide quality, engaging and safe care for the children in the Tower/Soudan area. The Lead Teacher will teach and supervise the children alongside a team of like minded caregivers to promote the development of their social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth.

Minimum Requirements:
➤ Hold an AA degree in Early Childhood Education from an accredited college
➤ 1040 hours experience as a teacher, aide or student intern
➤ Experience working with young children and families
➤ Possess current First Aid/CPR certificate or must be able to obtain
➤ Ability to pass a background study
➤ Able to lift 50 pounds and occasionally more; and able to kneel, bend, stoop, and sit on floor to attend to children’s needs

Responsibilities
➤ In partnership with the Director, design and follow a full schedule of activities and discover suitable teaching material
➤ Provide basic care and caregiving activities
➤ Use a wide range of teaching methods to enhance the child’s abilities
➤ Evaluate children’s performance to make sure they are on the right learning track
➤ Communicate with parents and update them on the progress of their children
➤ Observe children’s interactions objectively
➤ Identify behavioral problems and determine the right course of action
➤ Collaborate with other colleagues
➤ Adhere with teaching standards and safety regulations

Preferred Candidates also must have the following qualities:
➤ Proven experience as a child care provider or assistant
➤ Excellent knowledge of child development and up-to-date education methods
➤ Methodical and creative
➤ Patience, flexibility and love for children
➤ Strong communication and time management skills
➤ Leadership and organizational skills

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Weekly SUDOKU
by Linda Thistle

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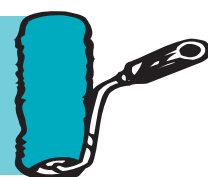
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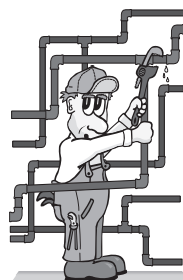


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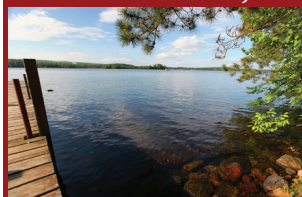


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