Inside: Snowmobile safety... See /3 Winter sports... See /1B COVID-19 updates...See /3B Barred owls...See /4B



GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP ELECTION

March 14

Two incumbents ousted

by JODI SUMMIT Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- Incumbents Larry Tahija and Byron Beihoffer lost their bids for reelection to the Greenwood Town Board during the township election on Tuesday.

Clocks spring ahead on

Tahija lost to Barb Lofquist 167-160, while Beihoffer lost by a much wider margin to former clerk Sue Drobac, 184-144.

Interest in the election was high this year, and

Option B fails for second time turnout topped last year's totals, with at least 328 voters casting ballots,

> compared to fewer than 300 last March. Lofquist ran against current chairman Mike

Ralston last year, losing by 12 votes.

Both Lofquist and Drobac strongly opposed Option B, which voters rejected nearly 2-to-1 for the second year in a row. Lofquist has been a

See...VOTE pg. 9

Greenwood fire officials face election complaint

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER Managing Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- The fire chief and assistant fire chief here are facing official complaints over allegations they may have violated a state law that prohibits public employees and officials from using their authority to pressure or compel others to engage in political activity.

On March 2, with a hotly contested township

See...COMPLAINT pg. 9

SCHOOL LITERACY

VENUNG

S

BRAIN FU New vending machine at Ely Elementary School dispenses only book titles

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

ELY - Washington Elementary students received a new vending machine last week. But they can't use their allowance money on juice boxes, candy bars and other junk food.

This vending machine dispenses only books. And this vending machine doesn't take money. It takes golden tokens that students can earn through the school's Paw Pride program by being respectful, responsible, cooperative and safe.

The Ely Community Resource's initiative was unveiled last Thursday during a ribbon-cutting ceremony. ECR's Julie Hignell,

See...BOOKS pg. 9





CITY OF TOWER

Council shows little interest in forming Police Dept.

Tower-Soudan looks to rely on county for law enforcement

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER Managing Editor

TOWER-Residents here will likely be reliant on the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office for emergency law enforcement response for the foreseeable future, as officials in both Breitung Township and the city of Tower appear reluctant to re-establish a local police department in the wake of the resignation of former chief Dan Nylund.

from the school's new Bookworm Vending Machine. A ribbon-cutting ceremony, below, included, from left, Julie Hignell and Jill Swanson, of Ely Community Resource, third-grade students Violet Franciskovich and Eastham, ECR's Janine LaMontagne, and Ely K-5 Principal Anne Oelke. photos by K. Vandervort





Last week, Breitung supervisors said liability and expense were two key factors behind their preference to hand over local law enforcement responsibility to either St. Louis County or the city of Tower. Having Tower assume responsibility for establishing local police was Option Two on a list of five alternatives developed during last week's meeting in Breitung.

But members of the city council, who met here on Monday, expressed little appetite for taking on the task. "Option Two is not an option," said council member Sheldon Majerle. "We do not want that liability and neither does Breitung. It's a big thing and someday something's going to

See...TOWER pg. 10

ELY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Building project starts April 1

Learning, teaching disruptions on the horizon

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

ELY-The construction timeline for the ISD 696 building project calls for the Industrial Arts building to be emptied of the preschool, tech students, learning materials and machinery within a matter of weeks. Superintendent Erik Erie told school board members Monday night that recent meetings and walk-through tours with the project

architects and construction managers

See...BUILDING pg. 10





Snowflakes falling, shovels throwing... It's a great time for a new book, to browse our Fall/Winter Fashions or to get out and have some fun! WINTER RENTALS AVAILABLE Open: Monday-Friday 9-5, Saturday 9-6, Sunday 10-4

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Community notices

Suicide Prevention and Support: How Can I Make a Difference?

REGIONAL- The Lake Vermilion Cultural Center in Tower is holding a virtual program, "Suicide Prevention and Support: How Can I Make a Difference?" on Sunday, March 28 at 3 p.m. on Zoom. The presenter is Ilene Rice, a retired Marriage and Family Therapist with years of experience in suicide prevention. The format will include an introductory presentation by Rice on risk factors, warning signs, mental illness, how to ask the question, and how to respond. Two panelists will ask her additional questions. To register for this free Zoom event send an email to the LVCC at vermilionculturalcenter@gmail.com. You will receive a Zoom invitation the day before the event.

Embarrass Fair needs volunteers! Next meeting is March 18

REGIONAL- The Embarrass Region Fair is run by volunteers and this year there are many openings that need to be filled in order for the fair to continue. Volunteer jobs range from fair day duties like selling wristbands at the entrance to large volunteer commitments such as being in charge of a single event, and everything in between.

The fair committee meets the third Thursday of the month at the Embarrass Timber Hall at 6:30 p.m. Meetings generally run around 90 minutes. The next meeting is Thursday, March 18 at 6:30 p.m. at Timber Hall, 4855 Hwy. 21 in Embarrass.

If you or your family have enjoyed the Embarrass Region Fair in years past, please consider stopping by to see if there is a volunteer role you might be able to fill.

Contact Amber Johnson at 218-600-8517 if you have any questions or want to volunteer.

Rep. Rob Ecklund announces March 30 Virtual Town Hall Meeting



REGIONAL- State Rep. Rob Ecklund invites his northern Minnesota constituents to join him for a Virtual Town Hall Meeting on Tuesday, March 30 at 6 p.m. on Facebook Live to discuss the 2021 legislative session. Rep. Ecklund will provide area resi-

dents an update from the State Capitol and answer questions about issues being considered at the Legislature.

"It's important for me to connect with the people I represent, and while I hope we can have in-person events soon, right now a virtual setting is the best way to get maximum participation from across the region," Rep. Ecklund said. "The diversity of viewpoints and interests people have is as vast as the large area I have the honor to serve, and I hope folks will join us on Facebook for a good conversation about what's important to them."

The event will take place on Rep. Ecklund's Facebook page at facebook.com/RepRobEcklund; and constituents can RSVP on the event page. Constituents are encouraged to submit questions ahead of time at bit.ly/EcklundQuestions.

All constituents from District 3A – which

EIVER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY EIVERT HABITAT HOME TO BE DEDICATED Facebook Live event scheduled for Monday, March 15

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

ELY- Community members here are invited to a virtual dedication on Monday, March 15 for a Habitat for Humanity rehabilitation project.

Brittany Satterwhite and her three daughters, Kiersten, Claire and Kaitlyn, worked together with the North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity organization on renovating an existing Ely "habitat" home from the ground up, located on 11th Ave. near the Ely Recreation Center.

"The family is excited to celebrate this occasion with the Ely community," said Nathan Thompson, executive director of the regional organization. "Join us for the virtual event where we will officially welcome this family into their home and then hang out after the ceremony for a home tour."

The Facebook event will be held at 10 a.m. on Monday, March 15. For more information on this Ely event, call the St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity office at 218-749-8910 or email marnie@nslchfh.org.

"Habitat for Humanity's mission continues to be very relevant in our current times.



The Satterwhite girls, Kaitlyn, Claire and Kiersten, at their new Habitat for Humanity home in Ely. photo by K. Vandervort

Our neighbors in need of simple, decent and affordable homes have struggled to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in overcrowded, unhealthy and substandard living conditions," Thompson said.

Satterwhite's rehab home received new electrical and plumbing systems. New windows and siding were installed before winter settled in and the interior was completed this winter. "Brittany is learning a lot from our construction supervisor, Greg Eisenhuth, as she works with community volunteers on her project,"

Thompson said.

"Before I knew what Habitat truly was, I thought that a person applied to Habitat and just got a free home," Satterwhite said. "I didn't want anything free or to be a burden to anyone. I try to work hard enough so I can make everything work on my own. I was glad to learn that Habitat was about an opportunity to work with volunteers to build and then buy my own home."

She and her three girls moved to Ely just over a year ago and live in an apartment as they continue to work on their new home. "I am looking forward to adding my own touches to the home and to helping the children decorate their bedrooms, something they could not do in the rental," she said.

Thompson said that typical community volunteer guidelines for local Habitat Humanity projects this year were adjusted because of COVID-19. "We had to be more cautious with our volunteers but we are hopeful that things will soon get back to normal," he said.

Applications for new house projects are still being taken. Go to the website at www.nslchfh. org for more information.

ARROWHEAD LIBRARIES

Make your own treasure bag take and make kits

REGIONAL- The Arrowhead Library System (ALS) will be providing Make Your Own Treasure Bag Take and Make Kits to member public libraries to distribute March 15-31. These kits, designed by Mary Mulari, include fabric, supplies, and instructions to create your own felt treasure bag. Sew it by hand or by machine. Bags can be used to store candy, gifts, a baseball or other treasures in the easy-tosew bag. Kits will be distributed at Babbitt Public Library, Cook Public Library, Ely Public Library, Arrowhead Library System Bookmobile and the Arrowhead Library

System Mail-A-Book (patrons must qualify for Mail-A-Book services) among others.

Please note each location has a limited number of kits; feel free to contact your local library for more information. A supplemental step-by-step video tutorial can be found on YouTube by searching for Treasure Bag Craft. A special thanks to the East Range Development Achievement Center (ERDAC) in Eveleth for kit assembly and Hoyt Lakes Public Library Director Sue Sowers for filming the how-to tutorial. The Make Your Own Treasure Bag project and kits were designed by Mary Mulari, sewing instructor and author from Aurora. A nationally recognized sewing enthusiast, she has previously presented



Legacy programs at par- in part or in whole with

includes Koochiching, Cook, Lake, and northern St. Louis counties – are invited to attend the nonpartisan event. Those unable to participate are encouraged to reach out to Rep. Ecklund any time directly via email at rep.rob.ecklund@house.mn or phone at 651-296-2190. Video of the meeting will be available for playback following the event. ticipating ALS member public libraries: Vintage and New Age Aprons, and Recycle, Repurpose and Restyle. She is eager to encourage anyone to sew - the treasure bag project could be the beginning of a new hobby.

This program, sponsored by Arrowhead LibrarySystem,wasfunded money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. To learn more about Arrowhead Legacy Events, please see the calendar at www.alslib.info or like them on Facebook at www. facebook.com/alslibinfo.





COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Available to Individuals 65+

Scenic Rivers is now scheduling appointments for all individuals 65 and over to receive COVID-19 vaccinations at our medical locations. Supply is limited and call volumes are high, so we appreciate your patience. To schedule an appointment in Cook or Tower, please call the number below.





1-877-541-2817 www.ScenicRiversHealth.org 24 Hour Emergency Care Available Through Cook Hospital

WINTER RECREATION Trail Safety emphasized by KEITH VANDERVORT Ey Editor Youth snowmobile training class held in Ely

ELY – More than a dozen area youth recently participated in a two-day snowmobile safety training class sponsored by the

Ely Igloo Snowmobile Club. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the class was split over two days.

Students were required to take an online safety course prior to attending classroom instruction at First Lutheran Church led by Conservation Officer Sean Williams and Ely Igloo Snowmobile Club members Dave Marshall and Mike Banovetz.

Last Saturday morning, the group headed outside to the Vermilion Community College football field for the field portion of the class, involving a pre-trip snowmobile check and operation of a snowmobile through a driving course.

Volunteers assisting in this portion of the training included Ely Igloo Snowmobile Club members Dave Marshall, Mike Banovetz, Alan White, Gavin Marshall, Bria Marshall, Dave Johnson and groomer operator Corey Keen. Ely firefighter Scott Polyner helped set the course and guide students through various turns and stops.

"All 14 students demonstrated proficiency in snowmobile operation and learned some great tips on how to enjoy the sport safely," Dave Marshall said.

Students from Ely included Blake Hegfors, Madison Jonas, Gretta Lowe, Ruby Lowe, Owen Marolt, Sean Merriman, Dawson Murphy, Brecken Sandberg, Lydia Shultz, Molly Vetos, and Julia Zgonc. Jack Anderson and Ian Sunsdahl came from Soudan, and Hannah Swanson traveled from Hinckley to participate.

"Special thanks go out to the instructors and volunteers, the Ely Igloo Snowmobile Club for sponsoring the training, and First Lutheran Church for hosting the class," Dave Marshall said. "Be sure to congratulate these young snowmobilers when you see them out on the trail."

The online course can be found at www.snowmobilecourse.com. Students must be at least 11 years old to obtain certification, and must ride with an adult until age 14.

For more information, contact David Marshall at d.marshall@vcc.edu, or call 218-343-1711.

Clockwise: A student navigates through the course. Stop! A snowmobiler signals their stop. Ian Sunsdahl learns about what lies under the hood from Mike Banovetz. photos by K. Vandervort







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Editorial

Township transparency Why Greenwood Township's

Why Greenwood Township's attorney has it wrong, again

Last week, in this space, we argued that the state's Legislature should end the exemption for townships in the Minnesota Government DataPracticesAct(MGDPA), citingGreenwoodTownship's increasing unwillingness to comply with public records requests.

In follow-up, we want to be sure we did not leave the wrong impression. Township residents do have rights to access local government records, but enforcing those rights is far more difficult and expensive for rural township residents than for Minnesotans who reside in local units of government subject to the MGDPA.

As many of our readers are probably aware, there are different types of law. For our purposes, there is statutory law, which is enacted by the Legislature, and there is common law, which is the body of law developed and refined over the centuries by the courts as a result of countless decisions.

Every resident in Minnesota and elsewhere in the United States has a right under common law to access the vast majority of records kept by their government, including township governments, because courts have determined in a myriad of cases that such access is fundamental to a representative form of government.

After all, the MGDPA didn't exist before 1974, yet residents of Minnesota still had access to government records prior to the enactment of that particular statute, even if they sometimes had to go to court to enforce that right. The Legislature turned to the MGDPA in an effort to clarify the rights of the public, set procedures in place, as well as to define those types of government information that should be considered non-public. Legislators, at the time, were convinced by lobbyists for rural towns that the somewhat prescriptive nature of the MGDPA would be too burdensome for the small part-time staffs employed by most towns - so they carved out an exemption from the statute. In doing so, the Legislature in no way exempted townships from the common law rights to public records that Minnesota residents relied upon for more than a century of the state's existence.

or local media. Under the MGDPA, citizens have the ability to pursue redress through far faster and less costly means, such as seeking advisory opinions or pursuing administrative proceedings at the Office of Administrative Hearings. Advisory opinions on the MGDPA are free and pursuing a case at the OAH is typically much less costly than a trip to district court. In that sense, while rural residents have the right to access town records, they are, effectively, treated as second class citizens in Minnesota when faced with town officials who wish to keep their records secret.

Byexemptingtownsfrom the MGDPA, the Legislature has created the misperception among some town officials and attorneys representing them that rural township residents are effectively stripped of their rights to access town records. Greenwood officials appear to falsely believe that township residents only have the right to access materials included in the agenda packet at town board meetings, since townships are covered by the Open Meeting Law. As a result, Greenwood officials have tightly controlled what goes into the agenda packet, in order to keep public access to a minimum.

This false perception led Greenwood attorney Mike Couri to suggest that this newspaper did not have the right to access a letter from an attorney from the Minnesota Association of Townships, portions of which the town clerk read at a town board meeting. That same letter would be easily accessible if it were in the possession of any city in our region, but the township's attorney falsely argues that the public or media have no right to see this letter because it is possessed by a township. According to Minnesota Newspaper Association Attorney Mark Anfinson, who knows this area of law far better than Mr. Couri, the public and this newspaper do have a right to access the letter under common law. Unfortunately, the cost of enforcing that right is too burdensome to pursue. Which is, perhaps, the biggest pitfall with the Legislature's decision to exempt townships from the MGDPA. In doing so, they took the burden of compliance away from town governments and placed it on the backs of rural citizens who care about their local governance. That's a flawed decision, one that the Legislature needs to correct.



Letters from Readers

Misquotes and mean quotes

OPINION

In last week's *Tower News* "Meet the Candidates" interview, I was misquoted.

I did not say, "If there is a tie after the supervisors have voted on an issue, then the clerk is able to vote." What I did say is– "If a supervisor needs to be appointed, for any reason, and there is a tie, the clerk is able to vote to break the tie."

And in response to Carmen Deluca's letter to the editor in the *Tower News*. I will not dignify the letter with an answer. How can someone who wanted me to run for clerk, ACTED like my friend, jumped up and down when I said I would run, NOW hurt me tremendously in a public newspaper?

What a sad little man. Sue Drobac Greenwood Twp.

States can make sure we elect our president by popular vote

little because South Dakota will always go to the Republicans. Why should I vote, it won't matter? Currently there is little incentive in super majority states for the minority party voters to vote. If NPV were implemented, my minority vote in a super majority state, or Minnesota for that matter if my party doesn't win, will still count in the popular vote count. It inspires me to vote even if my state will go to the other party.

Would small population states lose a voice and be overlooked? No, small population states are more than assured their voice is heard through the United States Senate where each state is equally weighted, regardless of population. For example, California, with a population of 39.61 million gets two senators, as does Wyoming with a population of 581,075. The smallest 25 states by population with one half, 50 of 100 Senate seats, represent 16 percent of the nation's population. The smallest 12 states, represented by 24 senators, or one quarter of the entire Senate, represent three-percent of the nation's population. That "loud voice" from the small states does not change with NPV. An interesting analogy is Minnesota voting. Let us say that the state of Minnesota is like the United States, and Minnesota counties are like the states, and the Governor of Minnesota is like the President. If we modeled the Minnesota governor election on the Electoral College model when we vote for governor, we would tally how many counties voted for a Republican and how many counties voted for a Democrat. If we did that, of course, the governor would always be a Republican as only 13 of 87 counties typically vote Democrat, yet the election of the governor is often a close race and both parties have held it. For a statewide race it makes sense for a popular vote for the governor, who works for all of the people of the state.

The Electoral College election method is not in the U.S. Constitution. It can be changed without a Constitutional amendment. A NPV bill circulating in state legislatures across the country guarantees assigning the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes. The bill has been passed by 15 states and the District of Columbia and comprises 196 electoral votes. When a number of additional states accounting for an additional 74 electoral votes pass the bill, those states will allocate all their votes based on the popular vote result. The other states having not yet passed the bill may still allocate their electoral college votes as they do currently, but it won't matter as the states agreeing to the popular vote method will have sufficient electoral votes of 270 to elect the president regardless.

In previous legislative sessions the Minnesota House has passed the NPV bill, but the Minnesota Senate has not. If Minnesota were to adopt the NPV bill, our ten electoral votes would boost the total of votes awarded this way to 206 - only 64 more electoral votes would be needed to adopt NPV. Thinking about our democratic principles, our Constitution, states' rights, and how often recent winners actually lost the popular vote, maybe NPV is a great idea.

Unfortunately, enforcing a common law right generally requires going to court, a prospect that is extremely expensive and time-consuming for the average citizen Is a national popular vote (NPV) for president a good idea? The NPV simply elects the president as the candidate who garners the most popular votes cast in the general election without regard to who wins any specific state. If a candidate wins the most popular votes, the candidate is the winner. Yes, Hillary Clinton would have won the 2016 election, by nearly three million votes.

A fundamental principle of democracy is my vote is equal in all regards to everyone else's vote. Bill Gates's vote and my vote should have an equal impact on the outcome of an election.

If I live in state like South Dakota which is a super majority Republican state, and I vote Democrat my vote means very

Keith Steva Cook

We welcome your letters

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

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

Goodbye chromophobia, welcome courage

Many would agree that discussing maladies and afflictions isn't a favored topic of conversation. But get above the age of sixty-five and it is often the first one out of the gate. Younger than that, and we're still sharing notes on raising children or the latest woes at work. If you're lucky to have retired early enough, travelogues might start replacing the dramas of family



life. Or perhaps you've found joy and contentment with sweet little moments spent with the grandkids. But it seems, as the years march on, nothing can compete with the in-depth coverage of our aches and pains. It's human nature to

seek company when the road is

rough and illness is often the most important thing happening. Nonetheless, there are times I harken back to some phone chats with my cousin, a semi-retired parish priest, who once implored, "Let's skip the organ recital." At first, I was confused but once I got it, I could only chuckle and then willingly go along with his request. He obviously needed to talk about fun stuff.

Friends' reports of sore wrists, twisted ankles, or routine medical exams that unexpectedly turned into scary trips to specialists only seem to be increasing. I suppose it comes with the territory. So far, I've been pretty lucky. But I must confess, I'm knocking on wood, knowing full well that it could be my turn next.

There is one affliction, however, that I am ready to disclose. You may not be able to empathize with my suffering but it is real, and when it pops up, it creates significant distress! I live with a condition labeled "chromophobia", from the Greek word "chromo" meaning color. I never knew there was such a thing until recently. And, I'm not sure I have a case that meets the formal diagnostic criteria (if there are any) but I do know I've got something, and it really bugs me.

I first noticed the problem during the summer before ninth grade. I'd been attending a Catholic elementary school but would soon be transferring to a public high school. As summer waned, I realized that this school

See COLOR...pg. 5

Hydrogen may offer a greener future for transportation

General Motors plans to stop making gasoline-powered cars and trucks by 2035 and produce only electric battery-operated vehicles.

The ability of our aging national electrical grid may not be able to handle the additional recharging of millions of electric battery-powered cars. Moreover, GM will encounter stiff sales competition from green hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. Hydrogen fuel cell cars produce electricity for an electric motor and do not get power from a battery. A process known as reverse electrolysis takes place- hydrogen reacts with oxygen from ambient air providing electrical energy to power the car with zero emissions.

Hydrogen is limitless, the most abundant resource in the universe, can store massive amounts of energy, far more than today's batteries can hold, it's scalable, and its electricity can be transmitted through wires. Proton exchange electrolysis can economically separate water into hydrogen and oxygen and it does not emit harmful emissions. Green hydrogen is developed using renewable power sources such as wind,

solar, hydro power and geothermal for processing. Batteries, on the other hand, are circumscribed by environmental degradation of mining of lithium and the other metals used to

manufacture batteries, and raw materials are subject to sensitive inflation pressures, especially for the finite natural resources, and to transportation reliability both domestically and foreign.

The advantages of batteries are low maintenance, except for recharging, which can take five minutes up to an hour. Batteries generally have shorter driving range than hydrogen fuels and their performance is affected by extreme weather temperature changes. Their capacity deteriorates over varying periods of time whether the battery is used or not. Batteries are heavy and can weigh as much as 12,000 to 15,000 pounds for a long-haul Class 8 truck. Lithium-ion batteries are shipped in bulk as "class 9 miscellaneous hazardous material" for domestic or international shipments by land, sea or air.

If hydrogen garners a large share of the domestic fuel market, there is the expectation that part of the existing three million miles of domestic pipeline can be repurposed for hydrogen transportation and that the present 125,000 gasoline service stations can add hydrogen pumps, especial-

ly since hydrogen will be displacing gasoline sales and consequently there will no longer be a need for some of those pumps and pipelines for oil or gasoline.

Letters from Readers

Hydrogen fuel cells are already being evaluated and tested not only for cars and trucks, but also for municipal buses, school buses, heavy equipment, trains, ships, airplanes and stationary heating and cooling for buildings.

Major U.S. and foreign companies are committing billions of dollars for building hydrogen facilities. Some of the companies are Cummins Engines, Air Products & Chemicals, Linde PLC, Aramco, Airbus and a significant number of smaller companies usually focusing on niche applications. One, for example, has focused on forklifts used by Amazon and Walmart. Hydrogen forklifts save time refueling, go longer without refueling, and do not have a decline in power during usage. Power is constant, silent and the forklifts do not emit noxious fumes. Another company is focusing on long haul trucks. Some auto companies already have hydrogen test cars on the road: Toyota, Renault, Honda, Mercedes, Hyundai and BMW.

Some states have issued zero-emission regulations that limit the number of years gasoline vehicles will be permitted on the road, with California being out front on this issue. It is likely that the federal government will issue its own limits on how long the internal combustion engine will be permitted on the highways.

Estimated foreign and domestic corporate and governmental expenditures for hydrogen development are \$400 billion to 2030, then \$2 trillion to 2050.

> Gerry Snyder Ely

Candidates need grounding in the science of coppernickel mining

In the Feb. 26 edition of the Timberjay, the story "Ely mayor candidates square off at voter forum" featured comments from Ely mayoral candidates regarding the proposed Twin Metals copper sulfide mine. As a part-time resident and full-time taxpayer in the Ely community I found the comments alarming, lacking basis in fact, and without regard to advocating for the community they wish to represent.

What the candidates failed to mention is that while the area has a proud legacy of safely mining iron ore, there is no history of copper sulfide mining in our community, and for the candidates to directly compare the two when communicating to their constituents is at best misleading. There is no comparing the two types of mining – the EPA calls hard-rock mining, or sulfide mining, the most toxic in the country.

There are important questions our mayoral candidates should be asking of state and federal regulators. For example, why did Chilean mining company Antofagasta (the ninth-largest mining company in the world) set up Twin Metals for this project? Is it to limit the parent company's liability and leave American and Minnesota taxpayers to pay for any damages? We've seen this happen many times across a range of environmental disasters around the world.

Have the candidates asked about the everyday impacts of the project? Will Twin Metals pay for the damages to Ely area infrastructure when hundreds of trucks hauling equipment and materials will be required? How about the ambient damage it will cause to the tourist and Ely visitor experience? As our businesses look to recover from the economic damage of COVID-19, do we really want to take action that will dissuade further tourism to our region?

Our communities' legacy is grounded in both

a history of mining, and also in the preservation of our natural lands with the BWCA. It's time that today's elected officials recognize that our natural environment has inherent value in its wildest form - like the generation of leaders who established the BWCA. It is time yet again for us to recognize that when our natural environment is healthy, so is our air, our water, our children, and our communities.

I ask that the mayoral candidates ground themselves in the science of copper sulfide mining, understand the risks, and ask thoughtful questions about the true impacts on our community. To date, it seems like they are just taking the easy way out.

Kim Goodwin Lake Vermilion and Deephaven



COLOR...Continued from page 4

year, I'd no longer have the security of my school uniform — a navy blue jumper with matching knee-highs and saddle shoes. Oh, and white blouses, of course. Some girls wore frills or lace but I never went for that. "Plain and simple" was my style, probably because frills were harder to iron.

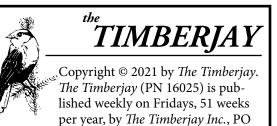
In ninth grade, I was thrust, pretty much unprepared, into a competitive fashion milieu. My classmates were really into looking good! At first I panicked. How would I ever fit in? I had no experience choosing trendy outfits. And matching colors? Definitely not my forte. Prior to that September, I couldn't have cared less. But now my inexperience and ineptitude showed. The next big challenge would be art class. I hadn't experienced anything even close since Kindergarten. Coloring books were the nearest exercise in creativity and they had lines. My crayon box had eight familiar choices. But soon I'd be forced to buck up. The teacher, Miss Salzburg, was a tall, imposing figure at the front of the classroom. She'd present the lesson, introduce the project, and then set us free to create while she sat perched on her desk, legs crossed in her shockingly short skirt, just waiting for us to ask for help. I remember vividly the first time I mustered my courage to approach her with my assignment. It was a cardboard placemat upon which I'd glued leaves cut from scraps of leather in varied shades of autumn. The phrase, "Fall has Fell" kind of dribbled across the top in a style intended to mimic falling leaves. One look and Salzburg went berserk! In her booming voice, she called everyone's attention to the front of the room and chastised me for using poor grammar and much more stupidity! What I had thought was kind of clever went over like a lead balloon. If her legs hadn't been blocking the way, I would have crawled under her desk. I was so embarrassed I thought I would faint.

I had a couple more mandatory art classes before being allowed to graduate but after that encounter, there was no noon I rummaged through the closet, seeking something to stimulate my imagination. I came upon a tote filled with embroidery floss buried among a few boxes of partially completed and abandoned craft projects. As fate would have it, there neatly folded amidst the discards, was an unspoiled linen dishtowel calling out for my creative impulse.

It wasn't long before I needed a color plan. There my tribulations began. I was suddenly reliving every failed painting class; the scene in the quilt shop that sent me flying to the car in tears, totally overwhelmed by the simple task of choosing some fabric; recalling every situation in which color choices triggered these proverbial meltdowns. The effects of my condition still surround me. If you were to look in my closet, you'd see my wardrobe consisting of brown, olive drab, black and dark blue. My home decor? No Feng Shui for me. Over the years, I've made attempts to break through this innate avoidance of all things bright and beautiful, but my efforts have left me frustrated and demoralized, resigned to living in a creative straight-jacket. This January's lockdown would push me into trying once again. I began to embroider with the usual excitement but within a week I could feel myself faltering until I froze with insecurity. I knew I needed help. I called an artistically gifted friend. She listened like a trained therapist, asking all the right questions. Then came her assessment. "Kathy, all you need is some inspiration! Go to the internet." "But," I murmured, "I don't know where to look." Undeterred by my shocking ignorance, she patiently instructed, "Google!", and rattled off several sites to explore. Instagram, Pinterest, and then a site called Domestika that offered classes. There it was. "The Theory of Color for Embroiderers: A course for beginners." I couldn't resist. Within seconds I dove right in... clicking, clicking, clicking Enroll, then PayPal, and finally, Start the Class. Just like that an instructor appeared, seated in her colorful studio surrounded by supplies. I was registered and raring to go! She began speaking in Spanish. Up popped fast-moving English subtitles. "Wow!" I thought, "A chance to brush up on my Spanish!" mothballed since leaving Tucson forty-some years ago. And if the muse was on my side, an opportunity to increase my understanding or better yet, banish my phobia altogether! I've now progressed to Unit Three with twelve to go. Sometimes, I must prod myself to sit down and rediscover the joy of a full two hours "in the zone." I have resumed my stitching project, French knot by tiny French knot. I have no idea where it will lead me, or if I'll actually finish it, but I'm worrying about that less and less. More important is that I'm beginning to understand that, to be an artist you must be strong of heart, willing to risk the expression of your unique imagination. Brave enough to trust your intuition. "Letting go and feeling the flow" that can feel like inching across a freshly encrusted caldera, uncertain of your footing and what might happen should you break the fragile surface. Experiments can fall short of expectations, leaving an artist feeling vulnerable. Forging on requires enor-

mous courage and fortitude. I have yet to discover if I'm up to the challenge. I can only imagine being that brave. Nothing less than lion-hearted, free to be myself! I don't know if I'll ever get there, but I

must tell you, I've made my color wheel. Now it's time to give it a spin.



more excitement or joy. I never had any expectations for developing my creativity. Mostly, I was terrified to show anyone anything I'd made. The verdict had been delivered. I would never be an "artist". So I decided I'd stick to writing. The nuns had been devoted teachers of grammar. And, having cut my teeth on The Lives of the Saints, I knew that Catholics could weave a good story. I also knew I could write poems. I'd been doing it a lot since receiving accolades in second grade from Sr. Joseph Rita for the short rhyme I wrote asking God to keep my daddy safe in heaven until I could get there. She was so pleased that she mailed it to my mom with a star on top and a note to "keep encouraging me." (I still have that note and the poem written with a young girl's diligent hand.) Writing became my only creative outlet and still is. But wait. There was one exceptional experience, an embroidered sampler I stitched during the summer of my senior year while glued to late night TV. I'd fallen in love with Dick Cavett. I'm telling you all this only because it provides a backdrop for what's going on in my world today.

This January, I was feeling restless. One after-

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TOWER-SOUDAN LOCAL NEWS

Week of March 15

Monday

TOPS - Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tower, at 9 a.m. Canceled until further notice.

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

Tuesday

Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5:00 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is March 16.

Greenwood Fire Dept.-Meetings on the first (business meeting) and third (drill) Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Wednesdav

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

Thursday

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

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

Thrive Range offers free online stress management course

REGIONAL- Thrive Range is now offering a free, online stress management course, "I'm Making It Matter with Micro-Interventions". The course is for anyone who has struggled with mental health and/or substances; friends, family or other supporters of someone who has mental health challenges; or anyone who wants to learn coping (DBT) skills.

The course teaches micro interventions. Micro-interventions are small steps and coping skills you can do in five minutes or less to improve your health or support others. People say this micro-interventions class improved their life. 92 percent reported improved stress management and 75 percent said it improved relationships. Those who complete the course receive a certificate and option for free continuing education credits. This course can be completed on a phone or computer in two hours or less.

BREITUNG TOWNSHIP Voters raise levy by \$40,000

Residents ask town board to seek patrol time from St. Louis County Sheriff

by STEPHANIE UKKOLA Staff Writer

BREITUNG- Residents of Breitung Township made a recommendation to the township board at the annual meeting Tuesday night to pursue patrols with the St. Louis County Sheriff's office on a temporary basis until the board decides on a lo,ng-term solution to the police department situation.

The temporary patrols come with a heavy cost, as they would be staffed with a county officer's overtime hours, and because of that all the shifts Breitung requests are not guaranteed to be filled.

"I can tell you, you guys are going to have a tough time filling those shifts," said Jim Hill, the former Breitung police chief who retired in 2011.

The cost for temporary patrols is \$70 per hour, which covers the officer's pay, overtime, benefits and the squad car. If the township enters a long-term contract, the cost would be between \$100,000 and \$122,000 per year for 40-hour-per-week coverage. In comparison, the township of Breitung now pays about \$130,000 and the city of Tower pays about \$115,000 for coverage.

Breitung Township will pay for the temporary patrols with money saved from the suspension of their own department, including funds already paid to them from the city of Tower. This month they have \$13,427 saved or the equivalent of 192 county patrol hours.

Breitung and Tower could also choose to partner and split the cost of county patrols, either halving the price tag to about \$50,000 each or adding an extra 40 hours per week of patrol time for the communities.

Chairman Tim Tomsich, who was chosen as moderator for the meeting, raised concern about the liability of having a police department, giving the example of frequent public data requests, including one that came that morning.

"We don't have a police department, we have an annual election going on, and we got



Breitung Election Judges Katy Popesh and Polly McDonald were covid-safe in their plexiglass enclosures during voting last Tuesday. photo by S. Ukkola

a request," he said. They want 'everything related to that case because the data practices act says, 'I can.' Well, it turns out you don't get everything. Had the police department just released that data we would be in court defending something, so that's just some of the exposure."

"I get real nervous thinking we have to call St. Louis County to have somebody come up and deal with some of the problems," said Vermilion Park Inn owner Mary Batinich. "It makes me nervous that we don't have police protection fairly close at hand. I think we deserve local police protection, all of us, health-wise, safety-wise.'

Hill pointed out there's a lot of things police do that you don't realize, as they are there as a first responder, and "to have somebody that's involved in the community, it's a big difference."

Supervisor Chuck Tekautz pointed out the educational programs the officers ran in the Tower Elementary and Vermilion Country schools such as DARE and the Truth About Drugs.

Tomsich brought up another case where he had received an email expressing concern about how Chief Nylund handled a domestic abuse case, citing a possible \$10,000 fine to Nylund for wrongfully reporting abuse against a vulnerable adult.

"This is just one of the liability cases that are out there," he said. "Dan contacted the county attorney's office and one of the attorneys had told him, 'You don't have anything to worry about; you were doing your job.' He was doing his job, and this is what happens," said

Tekautz wins write-in for supervisor seat

Chuck Tekautz won back his supervisor seat with a last-minute write-in campaign. Tekautz had decided to retire after several years of serving the township and newcomer Terry Anderson was running unopposed for the seat. Tekautz heard concern from citizens about Anderson's seasonal residency and decided to throw his name back in the hat just a week ahead of election day. Tekautz won 61-43.

Jorgine Gornick, running unopposed for treasurer, also won back her seat with 102 votes.

Levy going up

Residents raised the levy by \$40,000 for a total levy of \$656,000.

Residents followed the board's recommendation and raised the township levy by \$30,000 to cover additional costs for roadwork, shoulder work and snow removal.

"\$30,000 isn't enough it could be \$130,000 and we'd get most of it done but this is over a plan on a year-by-year basis and we'll try to tackle and catch up with maintaining the roads," said Tomsich.

Residents then voted, as a separate matter, to replace the boards at the skating rink with marine plywood for \$10,000.

"I don't think we had a busier year ever before," said Dostert. "We've never had better ice there."

CW Dirtworks leveled the ground and laid a plastic tarp on the rink's ground last summer for \$8,000.

"They found an 18-inch wide hole in the ground that went all the way to the (old Soudan school) basement," said Dostert.

Tomsich.

To enroll, visit http:// bit.ly/CommunityMicro-Interventions (Capitalization matters).

Anyone living on the Iron Range, go to http:// bit.ly/RangerStressMgmt.

Call 753-2950 to subscribe to the **Timberjay!**



Breitung and Tower meet on police issue

by STEPHANIE UKKOLA Staff Writer

BREITUNG- Needing to make an immediate decision about the future of the Breitung Police Department, the township board voted 3-0 at a special meeting Wednesday, March 3 to pursue patrol from St. Louis County Sheriff's office in the wake of the resignation of police chief Dan Nylund, whose last day was Friday, March 5.

When Nylund turned in his two-week notice, the board immediately notified the county that their services would be needed as of Saturday, March 6. The board's motion Wednesday was to go a step further than emergency-only coverage and to find out what costs would be for different levels of coverage and patrol.

Since the Breitung Police Department will no longer have a chief of police the department is considered defunct or suspended.

The Breitung Board, Tower Mayor Orlyn Kringstad and Tower Council Member Dave Setterburg all said they've heard feedback from residents who say they like having a local police force.

"People on the street are telling me they like the community-based police officers that have a presence in Tower. I think it's a positive for the community." said Kringstad.

"Everyone I've talked to is positive for maintaining the police force and keeping things going. There's definitely the interest in maintaining," said Setterberg.

However, the group discussed how the general feelgood interests of having a local police force must be weighed against the substantial costs and liabilities of maintaining the department.

Chairman Tim Tomsich brought his concerns to the table.

"I'm questioning whether I can support the concept of the township of Breitung continuing to have a police department. I'm not questioning whether we need a local police presence; I worry about the current society attitude toward law enforcement and the risk of significant legal matters. The employer bears that brunt. For over 40-some years our officers have never been charged with making mistakes, but I can see it happening," he said.

He asked if the city of Tower might be interested in being the employer or if it could be run as a committee like the wastewater board or ambulance commission. "But then it would be more expensive with a \$6,000-\$7,000 audit yearly, so that wouldn't seem right," he said. "I would be very hesitant to have the township of Breitung exposed to all that risk."

"If one officer were to go on administrative leave for months at a time we would be stuck, scrambling. We (the board) are administering this department on a part-time basis. It turns out it really isn't part-time, it's a lot of extensive work to keep this department going, and that's what we're faced with. We're starting at ground zero, doing the whole recruiting, on-boarding, training, everything from zero and I think that's too much of a burden for this board to take on and once we get there there's all the exposure to the liability."

George Burger from the Ely Police Department had volunteered to serve as Breitung's temporary police chief at eight hours per week, only enough time to do necessary paperwork, which would allow for the department to operate minimally, creating an alternative to St. Louis County coverage. Tomsich was not in favor of that idea, "Mainly because having a part-time chief working with part-time officers just increases our exposure to risk even more."

Breitung Supervisors Chuck Tekautz and Greg Dostert concurred.

"The biggest problem I see," said Tekautz, "is there's so much exposure (to being sued)."

"We've had a couple close calls where we could have been sued," said Dostert.

"With an agreement with the city of Tower over the years there hasn't been a profit motive," said Tomsich, "You have to ask yourself, why is the township of Breitung opening themselves up to all this exposure in this zero-sum game? It's a lot of work, a lot of management, way more than we signed up for. It's only going to get significantly worse after March 5 to get this up to snuff with a chief and another full-time officer. And then we still have this exposure and all of this activity is going to occur on the Breitung side and Tower will be there writing a check once a month."

The Breitung board and Tower officials identified five options for future police coverage in the area:

► Have St. Louis County cover the Tower/Soudan area on an emergency-only basis.

► Have St. Louis County cover the Tower/Soudan area on a regular basis for a cost.

> Tower and Breitung could have separate police departments or contracts with St. Louis County.

► Rebuild the Breitung Police Department and hire a chief and another full-time officer.

➤ The city of Tower would take over as the community with a police department and Breitung could contract with them.

"Certainly we want to come up with the option that has the best common benefit for both communities," said Kringstad.

NEW ELVITES

Starting over in the year of coronavirus

Vermont family looks to begin new life in Ely

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

ELY - John and Andrea Kannas are adjusting to a new normal after 2020, the year of the coronavirus, turned their life upside down. Like many people, the pandemic forced them to re-evaluate their life. The couple and their three children moved from Vermont to Ely last fall. With one North Country winter under their belt, they are looking forward to spring.

John worked back east as a safety and environmental official for a major hospital. With all the new rules and regulations involved in keeping 8,000-plus employees safe surrounding the COVID-19 response, the family hardly saw him. Andrea was 10 years into running her own chiropractic business.

They moved to the area last fall, just in time for their children, Addison, 9, Sawyer, 7, and Madoc, 5, to enroll in the ISD 696 school district. They are renting a place in Babbitt and hope to begin building a home this spring on family land at Bear Island Lake.

"We were looking for a change so we could focus more on what is important to us - our kids," Andrea said. "We were looking for more quality of life and reconnecting with nature in a different way. The lovely water up here is very appealing. We were given this opportunity. I was able to sell my practice and John got a new job. The universe kind of opened up and guided us to Ely."

Andrea just recently opened her new business, Healthy Families Chiropractic, in the James Drug Building, and John has been working as the safety manager at Fortune Bay Resort Casino. "His stress level has gone down significantly."

The family didn't just throw a dart at a map and it landed on Ely. Their relocation is a sort of homecoming. In the 1960s, John's mother, Elizabeth (Betty) Hay, was the physical education teacher at Babbitt and lived here for a couple of years. She bought property on Bear Island Lake. John, who grew up down state came up north to go camping when he was a child. "In so many ways, it is kind of like a dream come true," Andrea said. "Sawyer just wants to go fishing all the time."

There were lots of parts of the move that

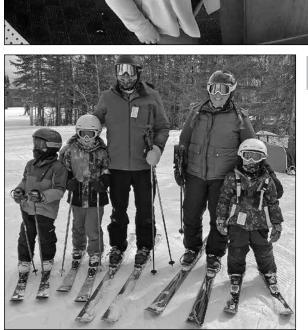
Andrea Kannas, right, at her Healthy Families Chiropractic office in the James Drug **Building off Chapman** Street in Ely. photo by K. Vandervort

were scary for the Kannas family. "We left everything that was comfortable and secure," Andrea said. "We both had incomes. The kids had their friends and (social) networks. Leaving all that was pretty scary. We took a leap of faith."

Andrea and her family didn't seem to mind the polar punishment of mid-February. Vermont has some pretty cold days too."The people here have been so great and so welcoming," she said. "They all opened space for us in their lives and their businesses. The genuine kindness has been more than we could have hoped for."

Andrea described Ely as a "safe zone" for residents as well as visitors. "People are so stressed about what they're supposed to do and not do. One of my goals with my business here is to create that safe space for people to come and heal and for their bodies to function better," she said.

As a family chiro-



The family, John and three children, Addison, Sawyer and Madoc, recently skied at Giants Ridge. submitted photo

practor, Dr. Kannas said she is "passionate about helping clients design their own health to enjoy all of life's adventures. This is a team effort and feedback is vital to your success," she said.

"I'm here to help you live your best life with less stress and a more integrated nervous system. One of

the most important aspects of Healthy Families Chiropractic is creating a safe, comfortable and positive environment that is free of judgment. When you're here, make yourself at home, relax, connect and allow your body to heal and restore," she said.



While a number of school districts across the state have still not had their students back in school for full In-Person Learning since last March, we are thankful that Ely Public Schools has been able to have our students back

health community, along with Principal Oelke and Principal Anderson, who have coordinated the effort to get our employees vaccinated.

Our 21st Century Facilities Project continues to move ahead and preparation to break ground this spring is on track. Bids are being advertised this week and a special School Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 6 to award the bids. That special meeting will be held at 6 p.m. in the Washington Auditorium to allow the bidders and public the opportunity to be present while maintaining social distancing protocol. At this time, our Administration Team is working with our architectural firm, ARI, and construction manager, Kraus Anderson, to coordinate plans for the phasing of the project which includes demolition of the old Boiler Building and the Industrial Arts Building. The Memorial Media Center addition will also come down this summer and the Washington Media Center will be part of the demolition process to make way for a new Early Childhood Center in that spot. Classrooms in for Band, Industrial Technology, and Happy Days Preschool. The spaces they move to for the remainder of this school year could be different from the alternate spaces they occupy for the start of school next year. The administration is still evaluating options in consultation with our teachers and construction managers. Parts of the Memorial Building will also see some renovations this summer. The boilers will be moving into what is currently the boys locker room. The swimming pool area will also start to be converted into usable space this summer and eventually is slated to be a new fitness center. In the summer of 2022 as progress on the new addition continues, renovation in the Memorial School building will be taken up in the classrooms and hallways. The Washington Elementary hallways will also be finished in the summer of 2022. The 21st Century Facilities Project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2022 for the opening of that school year.

It is an exciting time but also a complex process as we build for 21st Century Learning

₋ıbrarıes

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

Support groups

AA - Alcoholics Anonymous **OPEN AA - 7:30** p.m. Wednesdays and Saturdays, in-person, First Lutheran Church, 915 E. Camp St., Ely. **ELY WOMEN'S OPEN** AA - Every Monday at noon at St. Anthony's Catholic Church, 231 E. Camp St., Ely. 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 encounter alcoholism in a relative or friend. **BABBITT AL-ANON** Thursdays, 7 p.m., at Woodland Presbyterian. **CO-DEPENDENTS'** 12-step support group, noon Fridays, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Ely.

in our school buildings.

We are on our ninth week in a row without a positive case in the schools. In our schools, we continue to do temperature checks, require face coverings, and maintain social distancing to combat the COVID-19 pandemic that has claimed the lives of over 6,500 people in Minnesota this year and more than 500,000 people in our country.

While less than 17 percent of people in our state have been vaccinated for COVID-19, we are pleased to report that this week we expect to have 100 percent of our employees vaccinated who have signed up to do so. A big thank you goes out to our local

School speech

Esther Anderson

placed fourth in

of extemporane-

ous reading at

weekend. This

meet involved

42 schools and

speakers, all in

submitted

team member

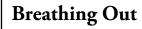
Washington Elementary are expected to be renovated this summer. Those renovations include new ceilings, lighting, flooring, doors, paint, and windows.

Prior to any of these things happening, we need to remove any hazardous materials from the buildings so construction can begin. The abatement process of removing hazardous materials in preparation for construction is expected to take at least two weeks.

To achieve the established start day of May 17 in turning over the Industrial Arts Building to the construction managers Kraus Anderson, we need to find alternate spaces

on our campus, while conducting school at the same time. It will certainly require a great deal of cooperation and patience on the part of all school stakeholders, but in the end we will have an Ely Public Schools campus that honors our historic buildings and connects them to a new addition making our campus safer, more secure, and a school we can continue to be proud of.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at eerie@ely.k12.mn.us or 218-750-4564.



by Cecilia Rolando © 2021



quiet wilderness



We are now accepting 2021 Arts Grant Applications

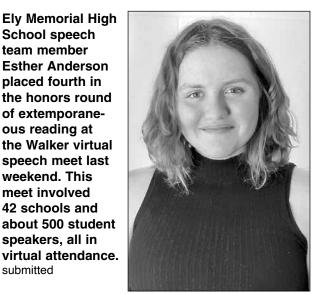
for Individual Artists, Project & Youth Grants, Scholarships & Operational Funding

Updated grant applications and guidelines are available online at www.gardnertrust.org

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS: 12:00 noon on Fri., March 19

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Keiko Williams, Executive Director, by the end of August, for help and review of their applications. Call 365-2639 or email info@gardnertrust.org

Youth Grant applicants must call Keiko by Friday, March 5 to schedule a grant review meeting.



Don't forget to vote in Ely

Absentee voting for the Ely mayoral primary election continues. Voters will need to complete an absentee ballot application, available in the Ely City Clerk's office or the foyer in the entrance of City Hall.

Voters can also call 218-365-3224, ext. 2, or email (deputyclerk@ely.mn.us) to have an application sent by mail.

The City Clerk's office will be open Monday - Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Saturday, April 10, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., and Monday, April 12 from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. for early primary election. For the general election, absentee/early voting opens on Friday, June 25. The City Clerk's office will be open Monday - Friday ,8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 7, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., and Monday, Aug. 9 from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. for early general election voting.

COMMUNITY GIVING

Agent makes donation for trail development

First section of Vermilion Lake Trail moves into engineering phase as fundraising continues

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- Long a dream of many area hikers, a trail connecting Cook and Tower in the vicinity of the southern shore of Lake Vermilion is slowly but surely coming to life.

That effort got a boost last week when Cook State Farm Insurance Agent Tim Johnson presented Friends of the Lake Vermilion Trail representative Carol Booth with a \$1,300 donation as a result of funds raised in Johnson's "Quotes for Good" program, to which he makes contributions from insurance quotes he generates during a twomonth period.

It's a project in which Johnson also invests his time and effort as vicechair of the LVT Joint Powers Board, which is responsible for developing, owning, and managing the trail.

Friends of the Lake Vermilion Trail was formed in response to the challenge of raising matching funds for trail development, and also to raise community awareness.

While work is ongoing to plot the course and recruit private landowners along the proposed trail for trail passage as needed, Booth said that things have come together to get started on environmental assessment and pre-engineering work for a 4.5-mile section of the 40-mile non-motorized trail that runs from Tower to the Y-Store intersection.

FLVT initiated a fall/ winter fundraising drive to get matching funds for a \$4,000 Northern St. Louis County Trails Task Force grant for the work, and the response has well

eclipsed that, totalling almost \$12,000. Booth said that contributions in addition to Johnson's have come from Lake Country Power, the Cook Lions Club, Ely Rotary Club, the Larkin Hoffman Daly & Lindgren Foundation, and private individuals.

Because of their fundraising success, FLVT has retained JPJ Engineering to begin the planned work on the Tower-to-Y-Store section.

This is just the beginning for FVLT, as funds will be needed for similar work all along the trail, in addition to matching funds for easements, engineering, and construction in a project that may take up to 20 years to fully complete, with a new phase happening every two to three years. A spring/summer fund drive is in the works for matching funds to secure



State Farm Insurance Agent Tim Johnson, of Cook, presents a \$1,300 donation to Friends of the Vermilion Lake Trail representative Carol Booth last Thursday. photo by D. Colburn

and build out this initial section.

The partners on the Joint Powers Board include the cities of Tower and Cook, the townships of Owens, Beatty, Greenwood, Vermilion Lake, and Kugler, and the Bois Forte Tribal Government. More information about the trail and how

to get involved or make a donation can be found online at lakevermiliontrail. org or the Lake Vermilion Trail Facebook page.

NORTH WOODS SCHOOL **North Woods students celebrate Snow Week**

Snow Week at North Woods School, and despite limitations on what we can do in terms of the size of gatherings, the week is proceeding along with a similar feel. The coronation was held on Tuesday, March 9, with the audience limited to two family members per candidate. This is similar



to the protocols that we have to follow for sporting events. While the student body was unable to watch the event in person, the coronation was streamed from the gym into the classrooms so that students could watch it live. Snow Week Queen is Brynn Simpson, and King is Cole Thiel. Congratulations to all of the candidates: Queen candidates Aubrey Koskovich, Shandra Hanninen, and Joey Lakoskey, and King candidates Sam Frazee,

FIELD TWP.- It's Logan Nurmi, and Brandt Boutto.

The Student Council takes the lead in planning Homecoming and Snow Week, and last year they decided to try something new: interactive quizzes. Before you file that into the "that sounds lame" category, here's how it works: The quiz is called a "Kahoot!", and students sign up on their iPad or computer with a team name. The quizzes take place at lunch and feature questions on random topics including pop culture, general trivia, and even some student-related questions. The competition is heated, with teams vying for door prizes, fame, and fortune.

This year's celebration features a first-time event (at least for Snow Week), a lunchtime dodgeball tournament. Teams of six signed up to create the bracket. Each and Junior High Champion. The winning team mismatched gets bragging rights and Fishin' In the Dark (Counthe satisfaction of knowing that if dodgeball were vs. PJs, Fancy (Preppy), an Olympic sport, they and of course Our House might have a chance!



Dress up days included Thrift Shop Day (wear girls basketball teams

team of six must include at King Cole Thiel and Queen Brynn Simpson are surrounded by their royal court during Snow Week least two female students. coronation ceremonies at North Woods School on Tuesday. Students forming the royal entourage Games are played at lunch include, front row, from left, Princess Zoe Kisch, Queen candidate Joey Lakoskey, Thiel, Simpson, each day to narrow down and Queen candidates Aubrey Koskovich and Shandra Hanninen; back row, Prince Austin the field to a Senior High Sokoloski, and King candidates Brandt Boutto, Logan Nurmi, and Sam Frazee. submitted photo

> clothes), try Day), Workout Gear (Grizzly Gear) on Friday. Both the boys and

played at home. The teams are preparing for the Section 7A tourney, which will actually take place this year. As I type, we are waiting for the Section 7 committee to release their guidance

and bracket information. More information will likely become available once the regular season is all wrapped up.

Thanks to our student council and supervisors Amy Cherrywell

and Amanda Hinrichs for all the work they put into making our events special.

Happy Spring out there!

Orr council tackles airport crack sealing issue

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- City officials expressed uncertainty at Monday's Orr City Council meeting over guidance they received from their airport engineer regarding a needed crack sealing project at the airport.

City Clerk Cheri Carter said that crack sealing was last done in 2016.

"We've been hearing it's going to be \$115,000 and our share will be \$5,900," she said. "You only get state and FAA funding for certain portions."

Representatives from Benchmark, the city's general engineering firm, and RLK, Inc., its aviation engineer, were recently at the airport to assess conditions and take measurements. Airport Manager Rocky Hoffman said the visit generated conflicting information from RLK.

"We went over stuff with him in the meeting, and he emailed Cheri the next day with the complete opposite of what we said and what we could do," Hoffman said.

Mayor Joel Astleford asked Hoffman about the extent of crack seal issues.

"Is it in good enough shape that you can seal over what you have, or do you have to come up and cut it back out?" Astleford asked.

"There's some you could go right over and

then there's some of the big ones that you have to cut out, I'm sure," Hoffman said.

Carter expressed some frustration with the lack of progress with airport issues.

"We have been working on the beacon and crack sealing for a year now, and we're not making headway," she said.

Councilors discussed options for cost savings for the project, most notably working with St. Louis County or a township in the area that has crack seal equipment that would be cheaper than having a private contractor bring in equipment from a distance.

Carter said that Wednesday was the deadline to turn in initial information about the project to the FAA.

'Well, get the footage and turn it into them, I guess," Astleford said.

Meanwhile, city officials will continue communicating with RLK to understandings clarify about issues related to the project.

Maintenance supervisor Paul Koch reviewed bid specifications for a new boiler at the old city hall building that were prepared by Nels Gabrielson of Gabrielson Heating and Service.

"The boiler has been replaced once and so I had him write what should be done to bring it up to snuff because there's no sense replacing the boiler

and then next year doing the same thing after it freezes," Koch said.

To fund the replacement, the city will apply for a Community Development Block Grant COVID-19 grant.

"They've got \$353,000 there that no one is applying for," Carter said.

"We don't need all that," Astleford quipped.

The council reviewed proposals for a new pointof-sale system for the Orr Muni with Manager Chet Nieman. Total Register Systems installed the current system in 2015 and recommended the store buy two new computers for \$1,923.

An alternative proposal from Safe Harbor

Payment Systems would provide the necessary payment stations for \$39 per month each, with an additional shipping charge. The price includes onsite installation, technical support and warranties.

Nieman said an advantage of the Safe Harbor system was its more detailed inventory listings, as opposed to general inventory categories used by Total Register Systems. He said Melgeorge's has reported good experiences with the Safe Harbor system.

The council approved going with the Safe Harbor system.

BOOKS...Continued from page 1

Jill Swanson and Janine LaMontagne, along with K-5 Principal Anne Oelke and third-grade students Elliot Eastham and Violet Franciskovich, marked the introduction of the new machine in the school hallway near the school office.

"Thanks to our 'Give to the Max' donors, Northland Foundation, the Ely Rotary Club, and the Ely Kiwanis Club for helping us make this happen," Hignell said. "This is a way to encourage the enjoyment of reading and to reinforce positive behavior for our students."

Oelke explained that staff and teachers are encouraged to "catch" Washington School students in Ely earn golden tokens as part of the school's Paw Pride program to be used to "purchase" books from the school's new vending machine. photo by K. Vandervort

students being respectful, honest, helpful, and safe through the school's Paw Pride program.

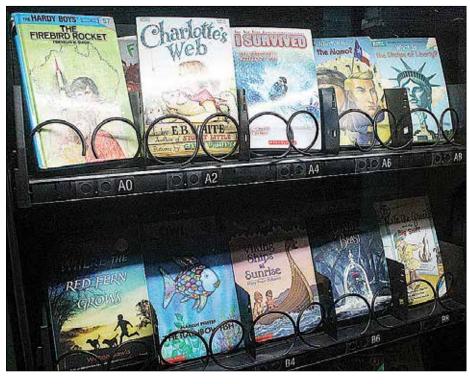
"Those behaviors are celebrated here at Washington School and this is a fun way to tell our students that we appreciate them," she said. "Students receive tokens that they can use in the vending machine to get a book."

Only 100 tokens are available so they will likely go fast with all the good behavior going on around the school. Hignell revealed that tokens can be recycled and used again.

But the machine could soon be empty of books so additional titles will always be needed.

"More books will be purchased through ECR to fill the vending machine," she said.

If you are interested in helping provide books for the vending machine, monetary donations can be sent to Ely Community Resource, 111 S. 4th Ave E. Ely, MN 55731, Attn: Book Vending Machine.



VOTE...Continued from page 1

strong supporter of former clerk Drobac. She was against the installation of the surveillance cameras in the clerk's office and noted that this system did nothing to improve actual safety for the clerk. If safety wwe the issue, she noted, the town board would have decided to install a decent security system, with an emergency button in case there is an emergency.

Lofquist also hopes to get seasonal residents

more involved in township matters and is in favor of increasing public input at meetings, including virtual meetings, and would like to see the board continue to offer the option of virtual attendance at meetings once in-person meetings resume.

Drobac ran for clerk last year and easily beat Debby Spicer, 186-102. Spicer was appointed to the clerk position in September when Drobac resigned from her seat, citing the board's decisions to cut her office hours and pay, to install surveillance cameras in the office and several other measures passed by the board which Drobac felt were intended to harass.

Drobac pledged to increase the transparency of township business.

"The township should have nothing to hide," she said.

Both successful candidates were also strong supporters of bringing broadband internet to the township.

Interim Clerk Debby Spicer narrowly kept her position for the remainder of Drobac's previous term, outpolling JoAnn Bassing by two votes, 165-163.

Interim treasurer Belinda Fazio, who ran unopposed, won with 265 votes.

Option B, which would have given the town board the authority to hire

a clerk and/or treasurer, lost by a lopsided 215-110. The results of the

election were announced during the board of canvass held following the annual meeting, where the decision was made to reconvene the meeting on Thursday, July 22, at 6:30 p.m.

Head election judge Kathy Lovgren read the election results and Chairman Mike Ralston asked for a motion to accept the results. There was a long pause before Larry Tahija finally said he would put the motion on the floor. When none of the other supervisors volunteered to second the motion, Ralston did. The vote to accept the election results was unanimous.

The winning candidates will be sworn into office at some point prior to the board's annual reorganization, set for Thursday, March 25.

COMPLAINT Continued from page 1

election just one week away, the Greenwood Fire Department's top two officers used a fire department business meeting to weigh in on one side of the political feud that has consumed the township for the past several years. Fire chief David Fazio, who was not present at the meeting, had provided an agenda for assistant chief Mike Indihar, who actually presided at the fire department gathering. Firefighters in Greenwood are township employees and are paid to attend business meetings, like the one held March 2.

While the meeting mostly focused on fire department business, Indihar, reading from the agenda provided by Fazio, brought up the pending election and Fazio's solicitation of support from firefighters for political advertising in support of the four incumbent candidates, including Fazio's wife, who was running for town treasurer. "The last thing he's got on there [the agenda], Dave's looking at putting a recognition of our township supervisors in the Tower News and the free flyer that goes out all over," said Indihar." I think he's contacted pretty much everyone he wants to be on there, basically that a group of us believe in Larry Tahija and Byron Beihoffer and Debbie [Spicer] and Belinda [Fazio] as really supporting us and the community. Indihar went on to disparage the candidates challenging the incumbents, claiming, without evidence, that they wish to disband the township fire department and hand it, plus township tax dollars, over to Tower. Indihar added that he believes the challengers don't understand or care about the township or its residents. Firefighter Jeff Maus, who has been a frequent critic of department leadership, was recording the meeting as he has done ever since he was subject to retaliation for filing a whistleblower complaint to OSHA. The township

was required to pay a settlement to Maus after state investigators found that the fire department had eliminated Maus's position as a captain in the department as payback for his referral of safety concerns to OSHA.

At the March 2 meeting, Maus said he believed immediately that Indihar's words and the actions by Chief Fazio that Indihar described were improper. "The immediate thing I felt was that we're all here as employees to go over fire department business," Maus said. "Why were they telling us who we should be voting for?"

Minn. Stat. 211B.09 prohibits public employees or officials from using their official authority or influence to compel others to, among other things, "pay or promise to pay a political contribution, or to take part in political activity." By asking firefighters under their supervision and authority, to add their names to political advertising supporting specific candidates, including Fazio's wife, Fazio and possibly Indihar may have run afoul of the law. The Timberjay has provided both Indihar and Fazio, as well as town board chair Mike Ralston, an opportunity to explain their actions or comment on the incident. Neither Fazio nor Indihar responded. Ralston, in response, initially suggested that the *Timberjay* was reporting "hearsay," until he was informed that the newspaper had an audio recording of the meeting. One of the questions stemming from the incident is who paid for the ads that were published in local media, since the ads did not include the required disclaimer. That failure, by itself, is a misdemeanor, and is likely to be part of the complaint, or complaints, at least one of which was filed electronically with the Office of Administrative Hearings on Sunday, two days before the township election. If Fazio solicited funds for the ad from firefighters under his authority, it could add additional grist for a complaint.

Ralston noted that the ads that appeared did have a disclaimer that said they did not reflect the official position of the fire department or the township, although it remains unclear who paid for the ads. Ralston said he's not aware of any claim that's been presented to the township for payment. to retaliation by the fire department and that he was entitled to legal protections.

Bassing said it's clear that the actions of Fazio and Indihar were wrong. "I felt it was unethical for sure, very possibly illegal," she said. "They were being paid by the township and essentially held a political rally. It's a job I'm seeking and they gave unfair advantage to my opponent."

That advantage may have made a difference, as Bassing lost her bid by just two votes.

Supervisor candidate Sue Drobac said she has also joined Bassing's complaint. "It's absolutely illegal what they were doing," she said. Drobac did win her contest, defeating incumbent supervisor Byron Beihoffer by 40 votes.

Fazio's second time

The complaint filed this week with the OAH isn't the first one that has involved David Fazio. In 2010, the OAH found probable cause that Fazio, then head of the ISD 2142 teachers union, had engaged in false campaigning for running an ad ahead of the controversial 2009 school board referendum that stated: "Vote Yes for Lower Taxes."

Fazio later acknowledged that he was aware that a "yes" vote on the referendum would lead to a tax increase for district voters. The OAH eventually cleared Fazio of the charge, however, after his attorney argued that the teachers were simply following the claims made by the school board about the impact of the referendum. In subsequent rulings, the OAH, the state's Court of Appeals, and the Minnesota Supreme Court found that those arguments by the school board were also misleading, which resulted in the eventual determination that the school district had improperly promoted passage of the ballot measure. Public bodies, including school districts, are supposed to remain neutral when it comes to elections or ballot measures.

Complaints filed

Among those who has already filed a complaint is Joann Bassing, who is challenging Spicer for the town clerk position. Bassing said the pressure that firefighters would face to comply with Fazio's request is obvious. "When you have someone in an organization that is higher up than you it puts pressure on you to be supportive of them," she said.

Maus said anyone on the Greenwood department understands the risks associated with bucking those in authority. "They've been shown through example, that if you don't stay in lock step, you'll be shunned," he said. Maus said few in the department will even speak to him in the aftermath of his complaint, and some have even urged him to quit the department, something he has refused to do. In his earlier case, state investigators found that Maus had been subject

> J=1\$x Jean

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ACCOUNTING

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Data based on the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey of the following participating schools within Northern St Louis County: Chisholm, Ely, Hibbing, Virginia, Mt. Iron-Buhi, St. Louis County, and Mesabi East. These data include Grades 8, 9, & 11.

C These ads are placed by EPARC, Ely Prevention, Awareness, Recovery Coalition and made possible through funding provided by St. Louis County

TOWER...Continued from page 1

happen."

No one on the council spoke up to challenge Majerle and the discussion quickly turned to the two most likely options — contracting with the sheriff's office for some level of local patrolling or relying on the sheriff's office on an emergency basis, as is already the case for rural townships in the region.

CouncilmemberDave Setterberg said using the sheriff for local patrolling would cost \$70 an hour, which would put the cost of even half-time patrol coverage at \$305,760, or about \$35,000 more than it cost to operate the Breitung department in 2020. If that cost were split between the two communities, the city of Tower would see an approximately \$35,000 increase in its annual police costs. In recent years, the city has paid nearly a third of its local levy for police coverage.

Quarter-time coverage from the county would cost \$152,880, which would save the two communities approximately \$120,000 over current spending levels.

The final option that Breitung officials had proposed was to separate the two communities and let each determine its own law enforcement solution. But Mayor Orlyn Kringstad said he didn't like that option. "I like to see close cooperation with Breitung, rather than separating the services," he said.

Majerle urged more discussion with Breitung officials and he motioned to request a special meeting between the town board and the city council, a motion that the council approved. The council set no date for the meeting, as councilors wanted more information and more public input before holding a joint session. Town supervisor Greg Dostert, who attended Monday's meeting, told the council that township officials were also waiting to hear from residents at Tuesday's annual meeting, where the police

department was expected to be a major topic of discussion. "We should know more about how the citizens feel about it after that," he said.

Council members said they've heard from residents on both sides of the issue, although many seemed to see an advantage in having a local police department.

Kringstad said he agrees. "I really feel like community policing is important, however the public needs to understand that the police contract is the largest expense, other than payroll, for the city." he said. The city's police contract with Breitung was set at \$115,000 this year, out of a total local levy of \$394,000. In addition, the city was expected to purchase a new police vehicle this year, an expense the city may now not have to incur.

Ambulance business plan

In other emergency services business, the council agreed to a temporary pause on completion of a business plan for the ambulance service while the city works with the Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board, or EMSRB, on a rural ambulance service assessment. Clerk-Treasurer Victoria Ranua told the council that the assessment will take about 3-4 months and would provide an in-depth analysis by individuals with considerable knowledge about rural ambulance operations. "This similar level of analysis would have cost us \$20,000-\$30,000," said Ranua, reminding the council of the price tag from private consultants that the city had solicited last year.

Ranua described it as a rare opportunity, since the EMSRB typically only does five such assessments annually, which are paid for by the state.

Setterberg said the assessment would delay completion of the business plan. "But it will

make it more robust," he added.

Councilor Kevin Norby asked if the city could request some comparison data between Tower's ambulance service and other rural services in the state. "I think that would be very helpful," he said.

In other action, the council:

➤ Tabled action on a citizen suggestion that the city purchase a generator for the civic center to use as an emergency shelter location. The council will seek more information on the request.

➤ Voted to cancel a lot lease on N. Third Street that had been in the name of James Frazee, who recently died. The council tabled action on a neighbor's request to acquire the lease lot from Frazee. But council members wanted to get a valuation on the lot and consider whether it makes sense to continue leasing city lots, rather than selling them to residents.

► Approved allocat-

ing \$2,500 toward the completion of a master trail plan for the community. Nancy Larson has advocated for the plan as a valuable tool to obtain additional funding for various trail connections and hiking opportunities in Tower. The Arrowhead Regional Development Commission has agreed to undertake the planning effort for \$10,000. Larson said she expects the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation will fund half of that cost, while the Tower Economic Development Authority has already agreed to fund \$2,500.

➤ Approved seeking a St. Louis County COVID grant for a floor cleaner and sanitizer for the civic center. The equipment would cost about \$3,000.

➤Gave the clerk-treasurer additional clarification of what they would like to see from various department reports.

BUILDING...Continued from page 1 .

revealed the challenges ahead for school administrators.

To facilitate the continuing education of 500-plus students in the school buildings, while commencing on the \$20 million renovation project, work will begin in earnest on Thursday, April 1 by vacating the Industrial Arts building to prepare for asbestos removal.

The 16-month construction window must be strictly adhered to for the project to be completed by the first day of class of the 2021-22 school year. For two summer building seasons of about 65 days each, most students and staff will be off campus, but for the 2020-21 school year, classes will be in session in the midst of a construction zone.

Erie said the new timeline for vacating the Industrial Arts building came to light just last week as the construction manager, Kraus-Anderson, considered the time required for asbestos and hazardous material abatement that must be completed after the building is emptied for the safety of students and staff.

"That's what led up to this new date, but it did kind of smack us right in the forehead," Erie said "We are talking about moving out the band department, all salvageable industrial arts equipment and classes, and the Happy Days preschool. We need to find alternative spaces because education and teaching will not stop."

Upon learning the new information, school administrators immediately sent a construction project update letter to teachers and staff.

School district parent and former school board member James Pointer criticized the administration Monday night for sending out a "vague" statement about the impending education transition to accommodate the construction. He repeated rumors and speculation that included "band moving to the auditorium, industrial tech moving to a bus garage, and Happy Days (preschool) moving off campus" because of space limitations.

"It has been a year since we have been in this pandemic. Our band and industrial arts students, since last spring, they basically didn't get any (education). Happy Days essentially closed down. It is short-sighted now to basically kick them out for two whole months of their classes and put them in these weird places. There should still be a way to make the timeline work without having to boot all these kids out," he said.

Pointer went on to

criticize any changes to the Happy Days preschool arrangement. "It is a wonderful feeder system for the Kindergarten class, and if they lose out on two months of their education it is going to affect the Ely school because our Kindergarten teachers will have to work harder next fall," he said.

He called for the school board to reconsider the April 1 deadline.

"Let the kids stay in their classrooms," Pointer said. "Find a way to work around this. Maybe have the contractors work double shifts. To be kicking the kids out and put them in a bus garage or other location is unsafe. We need to be thinking about our kids, and not just the project at this point."

Erie said the recent meetings with construction managers gave school administrators some flexibility in juggling educational needs with work zones.

"They hope to have all the Washington building classroom renovation work and the campus's new early childhood center, to be relocated to the existing elementary school media center area, ready by this fall," he said.

R e n o v a t i o n s this summer to all the Washington classrooms include installing flooring, ceiling, lighting, doors, new windows, and paint-

ing, Erie said. The hazardous material abatement schedule is critical at the start of the construction timeline, Erie stressed, because no demolition can start until that step is competed.

The project timeline indicated that demolition is on schedule to start on May 17 for the Industrial Arts building, swimming pool and boys locker room area in the Memorial building, and the former boiler building. "Kraus-Anderson has 16 months to complete this project," Erie said. "They have two summers and then during the school year. This is much different from building a new building on a vacant lot somewhere. Vacating the Industrial Arts building by April 1 came as a shocker to all of us." He also stressed that the asbestos abatement procedures are mostly unknown until the work starts. "They have taken some samples and have an idea what to expect; they really won't know until they get in there," he said."Asbestos abatement needed in the Washington and Memorial buildings will begin after school ends in June. It looks like they will be doing abatement while demolition in other areas." It could take up to three weeks to move materials and equipment out of the Industrial Arts building. "We will do everything we have to get all salvageable items out of there in three weeks," Erie said. "This really backs things up." He assured school board members that the school calendar will not be altered in light of the new construction timeline.

6-12 principal, said the staff is considering a variety of options for moving classes for the rest of the school year.

"We are looking at moving some industrial arts classes into the choir room and finishing up the year with electronics (curriculum). The shop students should be able to finish up their Adirondack chairs in the next three weeks," she said.

Band classes could move into another Memorial building classroom for the rest of the year, according to Anderson.

"It has been unfortunate this year that those students didn't have a band year with COVID," she said. All music instruments are already in storage.

Erie said ISD 696 is in continuing talks with ISD 2142 to collaborate with Industrial Arts and Band classes. "We are exploring all options," he said. "We still need to nail down where those classes will be next fall." Erie added that the Memorial building swimming pool area will be renovated this summer and could first be used as a temporary learning space during construction before being converted into a fitness area. "That could be a possibility for band or some other teaching area," he said. "That is an area they are committed to getting ready this summer. Stretching out the timeline, Erie said that in the summer of 2022 the renovation of all the Memorial building classrooms will take place, along with new driveways and parking surfaces as well as the completion of the new commons/gym addition. "Also at that time, they will go back to the Washington building hallways and finish that project," he said. "They will be working and building around us and we will be teaching around them," Erie said."It is going to be messy and people are going to have to make some sacrifices. There has been a lot of angst among the administration and teachers. Stay tuned for another project update on March 22."



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Megan Anderson,

TOWNSHIP DAY

Greenwood Township delays annual meeting to July 22

by JODI SUMMIT Tower-Soudan Editor

G R E E N W O O D TWP- Close to 50 township residents attended the virtual Greenwood Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday, but all quickly realized that conducting such a meeting virtually was a lesson in frustration.

In all, it took nearly an hour to open the meeting,

and decide on a day to continue the meeting.

After determining the names of all the voters in attendance, each step of the meeting included a one-by-one roll call vote.

Mike Indihar and Jeff Maus were both nominated for moderator. A vote was held, and Indihar was elected. A roll call vote to accept the agenda was held, as well as a motion to allow Interim Clerk Debby Spicer to read a statement by the Minnesota Association of Townships on the reasons to continue the meeting to a date in the summer, when the meeting could be held outdoors if needed. The town board's suggestion of moving the meeting to June 8 was challenged by John Bassing, who put a motion on the floor to

continue the meeting to July 22. "This gives us more

time to make sure it is safe, and most people are vaccinated," Bassing said.

Almost simultaneously, others had put a motion on the floor for the June 8 date.

"I think Carmen [DeLuca] made a motion first," said Dave Fazio. But moderator Indihar noted he had recognized Bassing first, and that was the motion on the floor.

Some wondered if there would be conflicts with other meetings on that date, and some discussion started on what date in July would work. Discussion in the telephone conference format was not really workable, with multiple people trying to talk at the same time, because it was impossible to see who wanted to talk. Indihar closed the discussion and called for a vote.

Most voted in favor of moving the meeting to July 22, with notable dissents from current board and fire department members.

The current town board has suggested setting the 2022 levy at \$150,000. Voters will decide on the levy at the July 22 meeting.

EMERGENCY WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS U.S. Forest Service prepares for burn season at Ely Ranger Station by burning brush

ELY – Smoke hazard signs on Hwy. 1 just east of Ely late last week drew curious onlookers. With the winter's limited snow cover lingering over much of the landscape in the North Country and current drought conditions, many people are already thinking about the forest fire threats this spring.

That includes the U.S. Forest Service, which was proactively managing forest and brush around buildings and workshops at their Kawishiwi Ranger District office to provide defensible space ahead of the upcoming fire season.

On their Facebook page, local USFS officials said trees were cut about a year ahead of time and piled into stacks to dry out. When conditions are safe, and the ground is covered in snow to prevent the fire from spreading, they light the piles.

About 25 acres around the Kawishiwi headquarters are being burned this spring. Some other federal land will be treated by Ely International Wolf Center personnel, according to the USFS.

Forest Service offi-

Former Fortune Bay employee pleads guilty to embezzlement

TOWER- Former Fortune Bay Resort Casino employee Jennifer Lynn Boutto, of Orr, pleaded guilty on Tuesday to embezzling more than \$300,000 from the Bois Forte Band operation over a six-year period. Boutto was charged in December 2020 by former Minnesota District U.S. Attorney Erica MacDonald with embezzlement and theft of tribal funds. She acknowledged stealing \$315,739 from Fortune Bay by issuing false cash refunds against the invoices of previous Fortune Bay customers. According to a press release from the U.S. Attorney's office, Boutto began work at Fortune Bay in 2008 as a reservationist before later being promoted to front desk supervisor. When Boutto issued a false refund she would then take that amount of cash out of the Fortune Bay vault. Boutto executed this scheme 2,994 times between January 2013 and October 2019. U.S. District Court Judge Eric Tostrud accepted Boutto's guilty plea and will schedule sentencing at a later time. The judge allowed Boutto to remain free, with conditions, until her sentence is determined. The charge of embezzlement and theft from an Indian tribal organization carries a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment and/or an unspecified fine, according to Title 18 of the U.S. Code.

cials say they welcome the public to visit the district office to learn more about "firewise" practices and defensive actions to prevent fires.

The burning practices of North Country residents

and their neighbors can contribute to the risk of home loss from wildfire. The number one cause of wildfires in Minnesota is escaped debris from spring burning. The Forest Service offers these tips to

avoid such risks:

► Rather than burning leaves and debris, consider alternatives like composting.

> Don't dump sauna or wood stove ash with hot embers in the woods around your property. Do not dispose of ashes until they are cold to the touch.

➤ Make sure recreational fires are made in a fire-safe pit or container and completely extinguished before leaving. Before lighting any outdoor fire, check for local restrictions and permit requirements.

► Avoid lighting fires when high winds, high temperatures and low humidity are present or predicted.



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NORDIC SKIING

Ely qualifies four for state competition Johnston sweeps the boys field; Devine takes third overall for the girls



by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

GIANTS RIDGE -Four Ely Timberwolves skiers were headed to state

Left: Ely junior Gabe Pointer during freestyle competition last week at Giants Ridge. He was among four Ely skiers to qualify for the state ski meet.

photo/Allison Kate Photography

competition this Thursday and Friday on the heels of strong qualifying runs at the 7A sectional meet at Giants Ridge last Wednesday.

"We had a great day," Ely Head Coach Paula Anderson said. "We would have loved to have qualified a team or two, but we did qualify four individuals so that makes us very happy." Senior Jasper Johnston,

who has dominated the competition all season, did it again during last week's sectional competition. Johnston swept the boys field, winning first in the 4K classic (10:28) by a full 30 seconds, first in freestyle (10:10), and first overall (20:38). Ely junior Gabe Pointer scored seventh-place finishes in the classic (11:35), freestyle

(11:31) and overall (23:06). "Jasper had a perfect day, he dominated both races, which was what he wanted to do," Anderson said. "This will give him lots of confidence going into state. Gabriel had two very solid races and qualified as the fourth individual qualifier."

See NORDIC...pg. 2B



BOYS BASKETBALL T-Wolves stun Grizzlies Ely rallies in second half for big win over longstanding rivals

by DAVID COLBURN



GIRLS BASKETBALL



The Nighthawks' Morgan Bush eyes the bucket for a layup during Monday's game in Ely. photo by J. Greeney

Ely downs Two Harbors

by JORDAN PRICE Contributing Writer

TWO HARBORS- The Timberwolves showed Two Harbors they've come a long way this season as they downed the Agates here on Tuesday, 42-33. Ely had lost their first game of the season to Two Harbors, so they were to even the score.

Cook-Orr Editor

ELY- Ely's Joey Bianco hit the go-ahead bucket here with 1:33 remaining and a desperation North Woods three at the buzzer failed to connect as the Timberwolves came from 13 points down to shock the Grizzlies, 63-60, last Friday.

The Timberwolves took advantage of horrendous second-half shooting by North Woods to steadily cut into a 42-30 halftime deficit. The Grizzlies were an icy cold six-of-32 shooting, or 19 percent, after the break, and hit just one-of-14 from beyond the arc.

Emmett Faltesek kicked off the Ely surge with a trey, and the Timberwolves collected additional three-pointers from Bianco, Will Davies, and Harry Simons as they trimmed the gap to 51-49. Mason Davis scored on a fast break to knot the score 51-51 with seven minutes remaining.

Darius Goggleye put the Grizzlies on his shoulders over the next four minutes, scoring nine points to put the visitors back up 60-56. But two Goggleye free throws at the 3:13 mark would be the last points scored by the Grizzlies. After the Grizzlies'T.J. Chiabotti missed twice from the charity stripe, Brock LaTourell nailed a trey to pull Ely within one. On the Timberwolves' next possession, Bianco muscled his way past North Woods defender Davis Kleppe to regain the lead, 61-60.

North Woods had to foul

pushes the ball down court against Ely's Jason Kerntz.

Right: Ely's Brock LaTourell works the ball against Grizzlies' defender Alex Hartway.

Lower right: Ely's Joey **Bianco drives past North** Woods defender Davis Kleppe for the go-ahead score.

photos by D. Colburn

multiple times to put Ely in the one-and-one, and with only 14 seconds remaining Faltesek calmly canned a pair, forcing North Woods to go for a three to send the game to overtime. The Grizzlies got two shots at it, but both failed. North Woods Head Coach Will Kleppe gave the Timberwolves credit for disrupting the Grizzlies' offense in the second half to get back in the game. "People who look at the box score figure we weren't shooting, but we shot it plenty," Kleppe said. "When Ely picked up their defensive intensity, we forced some shots instead of making the extra pass for one that would be a higher percentage. That's plagued us all year. When we get a small lead and teams bring the defense we play more individually instead of as a team and that has turned some wins into losses."

The Grizzlies' second-half collapse marred a stellar firsthalf run where they outscored Ely 35-12 and turned a ten-point

See BOYS BBALL...pg. 2B

"The game was a little sloppy, but a big run in the second half that was sparked by our defense put the game out of reach," said Ely Head Coach Max Gantt. "It wasn't our prettiest win, but it was a win we needed and earned. Sometimes you have to just find a way, and we did that."

Grace LaTourell had a big night for Ely, pouring in 17 points and tallying six rebounds and four assists. Rachel Coughlin was a powerhouse on defense

See ELY GIRLS...pg. 2B

Tough week for Grizzlies

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP-For a team sporting a lineup heavy on freshmen and sophomores, the North Woods girls basketball team has had an unenviable draw to close out its regular season.

Mt. Iron-Buhl, Cherry, and South Ridge are the top-ranked teams in Section 7A and Cook County and Floodwood aren't far behind in sixth and seventh positions. MIB and Floodwood were the first to score wins over the Grizzlies, and this past week Cook County and Cherry picked up where they left off.

Friday's home loss to Cook County, 75-59, gave a good glimpse into the Grizzlies' potential. The game was a nail-biter up until the final seven minutes, when North Woods inexplicably faltered, scoring just two buckets the rest of the way.

See GRIZZLIES...pg. 2B

BOYS BASKETBALL

Grizzlies maul Mariners as Goggleye hits 1,000

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- In the North Woods boys 104-33 blowout of Silver Bay on their home court on Tuesday, the most frenzied flurry of lineup changes came after the game, when it seemed everyone wanted to get their pictures taken with the Grizzlies' Darius Goggleye.

Foregoing traditional parent night activities because of COVID-19 restrictions, North Woods declared Tuesday to be "senior night," which meant unofficially that it was "Darius Goggleye Night," since he's the team's only senior.

It was the perfect night to fete Goggleye, because on a chip shot basket at the 8:12 mark of the first half Goggleye hit the career scoring milestone of 1,000 points. Play was halted momen-



tarily as Goggleye received the landmark ball and congratulations amidst a standing ovation from the fans.

Under a blue-and-white balloon arch hastily erected after the game, Goggleye and a 1,000 points sign were the two constants as different groups of teammates, coaches, family, Left: North Woods senior Darius Goggleye scored his 1,000th career point Tuesday night against Silver Bay.

file photo

friends, and fans took turns for over ten minutes getting their pictures taken with the Grizzlies senior.

"Darius is all the things you hope for in an athlete," Head Coach Will Kleppe said. "He is dedicated, hardworking, coachable, mature, humble but intense at the same time. It's been my pleasure to get to work with him during his varsity career and watch him develop into the young man whose hard work (and the hard work of his teammates) led him to the 1,000-point milestone."

It was a festive end to an evening in which the Grizzlies reasserted themselves after last

Friday's disappointing 63-60 loss to Ely and reclaimed some of the style and swagger that characterized their previous nine wins.

The Grizzlies welcomed the 4-11 Mariners with a full-court defensive tornado that generated a whopping 31 steals and 34 turnovers overall, miscues that North Woods turned into 46 points.

The offensive onslaught was so overwhelming that the Grizzlies scored more points in the first half, 64, than they scored the entire game at Ely. Silver Bay could muster only 20 points in response.

Almost everything was clicking as the team shot 55 percent from the field and a red-hot 48 percent from beyond the arc while dishing out 29 assists. The Grizzlies dominated the battle of the boards, 46-24. The only areas outside of Head Coach Will Kleppe's normal game targets were free throws, where the Grizzlies hit 11-of-18 for 61 percent, and turnovers, with 14.

Goggleye was 5-of-11 from the field and netted six free throws for 16 points, but T.J. Chiabotti scored a game high 20, and Brenden Chiabotti hit for 17. Alex Hartway popped in 13, and all ten Grizzlies made it into the scoring column.

North Woods wraps up its regular season with a home game Friday against South Ridge and a Saturday road game at Mt. Iron-Buhl, and then will wait for the sectional tournament bracket to be announced on Monday. The Grizzlies are already a lock to host a first-round matchup on Thursday, March 18.

Ely routs Lakeview Christian to rebound after losses

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

E L Y - Th e Timberwolves came off of a two-game losing streak, beating Lakeview Christian in a blowout, 88-56, at home on Tuesday night.

The Wolves led 44-32 at the half and never looked back. "We played a bit better defensively in the second half. It was nice to play well after struggling on Monday night on both ends," said Head Coach Tom McDonald.

Emmett Faltesek, senior guard, led with 26 points, six rebounds, and five assists. Sophomore Joey Bianco had 16 points, nine assists, and seven rebounds. Junior guard Harry Simons collected 16 points and senior Will Davies had 13.

The win against Lakeview Christian was much needed after their disappointing loss the previous night.

The Timberwolves struggled offensively and couldn't compete with size as they lost to Greenway 65-48 on Monday night.

The Wolves were down 29-24 at the half, but the Raiders were too tough to overcome on their home floor. "We never got into a rhythm offensively and really struggled containing their center inside. It was a struggle for us all night," said McDonald.

Joey Bianco scored 20,EmmettFaltesek added 14, and Harry Simons had six rebounds.

"It was a disappointing game for us after playing so well over the weekend," said McDonald.

On Saturday afternoon, Ely suffered another loss to Nashwauk Keewatin,67-60;however, McDonald was pleased with how they played considering the Spartans are the number one team in the section.

It was a barnburner as the Wolves cut the lead to just one late in the game. They had a number of good looks late that could have given them the lead, but just couldn't hit the shot they needed.

"We were behind 38-26 at the half, and again had a good comeback against a very good opponent," said McDonald.

The Timberwolves will play at Cherry on Friday, with a 7:15 p.m. tipoff.

GRIZZLIES...Continued from page 1B

Up until then, the Grizzlies stood toe-to-toe with the Vikings. North Woods went on a 10-0 run midway through the half that included a 15-foot baseline jumper by Shyla Adams, a triple by Hannah Cheney, a hoop down low by Hannah Kinsey, and a deep pull-up three-ball by Helen Koch. That put the Grizzlies up 30-21. Cook County narrowed the gap to one, but a basket by Talise Goodsky gave North Woods a 36-33 lead at the half.

"That's one of the most solid halves of basketball we've played all season," Grizzlies Head Coach Liz Cheney said. "They passed the ball a lot

and worked together really well. It's a really great time to be seeing that come out of your team."

Cook County took a 40-39 lead three minutes into the second half and went up 46-39, but the Grizzlies didn't fold. Scores by Madison Spears, Madi Dantes, and Kinsey got the Grizzlies back to within one, 46-45. When Goodsky hit a short jumper with 7:31 remaining, North Woods was hanging tight at 56-55.

But then the well went dry for the Grizzlies, and the Vikings closed out the game and the win on a 19-4 run.

1 - 4 run.

normal rotation, and in the final Vikings run her team "ran out of gas."

"We were tired and started making mistakes," Cheney said. "(The Vikings) had a couple of key steals and after that we just kind of fell apart."

One thing the young Grizzlies are still searching for, Cheney said, is how to keep charging when their energy gets zapped.

"Where do you get the gas when your tank is empty?" Cheney said. "It's got to come from your heart and soul, and we don't have the experience to tap into that yet."

Kinsey led North

13 and Koch chipped in 11.

At 12-4 and second in the section standings, host Cherry was a formidable opponent on Monday, but as they did against MIB, the Grizzlies got off to a good start. The score was knotted at 10 each six minutes into the game. But Cherry's talent and experience kicked in from there, as the Tigers rolled to a 48-17 halftime lead and an 84-29 win.

"They're a solid team led by several seniors," Cheney said. "We knew that Cherry was going to be tough. They deserve the ranking they have in our section."

score in double figures with 12 points.

North Woods was scheduled to end its regular season on the road Wednesday at South Ridge, the section's thirdranked team.

But whether it's six minutes here or a half there, Cheney is using whatever she can to educate and motivate her players, helping them to keep perspective.

"I feel like we're building something good and exciting," Cheney said. "We just need to celebrate our little successes. I think we use these tough teams as a way to learn about who we are as a team and where we're at. We might not be the section champion contender this year, but if we can stay focused on who we are and what we're doing, that puts us in a better position next year."

With a record of 5-9 and sitting 13th in the section going into the South Ridge finale, the Grizzlies' first round sectional game will more than likely be on the road on Wednesday, March 17, although seedings and matchups won't be decided until next Monday.

Cheney said that early foul trouble altered her

Woods scorers with 14 points, while Spears hit for

Dantes was the only North Woods player to

BOYS BBALL...Continued from page 1B

deficit into a 13-point lead, 39-26. Five Grizzlies scored in the streak, including five three-pointers from T.J. Chiabotti. But the effort may have taken a toll in the second half.

"Credit to our guys to make that comeback in the first half but it takes an extraordinary amount of energy to make those runs," Kleppe said. "That showed in the second half when we started to tire out."

Ely's ballhandlers took away an essential element of the Grizzlies' success this season by taking care of the ball and limiting the opportunities for North Woods to score in transition. The Timberwolves turned the ball over only ten times, compared to 16 turnovers for the Grizzlies. Ely also had more steals and deflections than North Woods. "Ely is always a team in our report that doesn't turn the ball over," Kleppe said."They did a very good job of moving the ball to open players by attacking

the basket. We want to keep the turnovers under 12. Ely forced us into some double- and triple-teams and we lost possession."

Bianco led Ely scorers with 18, and Faltesek was hot on his heels with 17. Simons also reached double figures with 11.

For the Grizzlies, Goggleye and T.J. Chiabotti tied for scoring honors with 17 each and Jared Chiabotti scored 12.

The loss marked the fourth in five games for the Grizzlies, who were scheduled to play at home on Tuesday against Silver Bay. South Ridge, the toughest opponent remaining on the Grizzlies' schedule, will visit North Woods on Friday. The Grizzlies will close out regular season play on the road on Saturday at Mt. Iron-Buhl.

Ely was back on the court last Saturday against Nashwauk-Keewatin and lost 67-60. They were tripped up again on Monday at Greenway, 65-48. The Timberwolves were scheduled to play their final home game on Tuesday against Lakeview Christian before wrapping up the regular season on the road on Friday at Cherry.

Sectional tournament play for both teams will begin Thursday, March 18, with their opponents to be determined after regular season play concludes. First-round games will be played on the home court of the higher-seeded team.

Blazing Fast

ELY GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

and scooped up seven boards. Katrina Seliskar notched ten points and five boards.

The Timberwolves had little trouble with a young Northeast Range squad in Ely on Monday, as they topped the Nighthawks 60-31. "It was a good team win," said Gantt. "We started a little slow, but our defense helped us get going with some easy baskets and we cruised after that."

LaTourell against led offensively, with 18 points, while adding four steals. Madeline Kallberg notched ten points and four steals, while Sarah Visser did it all, scoring nine points, six assists, six boards and five steals. Playing in International Falls last Thursday, Ely fell to the Broncos, 57-41. The Timberwolves shot 25 percent from the field and that was the story of the game.

"We got open looks and created quality offense, but we just couldn't put the ball in the basket," said Head Coach Max Gantt.

Sophomore guard

Grace LaTourell had 18 points, five rebounds, and three steals. Sara Visser had nine points, seven rebounds, and three steals.

The Wolves' defense wasn't an issue, but with an off-shooting night, they were never able to make a run because they couldn't string together any baskets in a row.



NORDIC...Continued from page 1B

Sophomore Zoe Devine captured first in the girls freestyle (12:36), took third in the classic (13:03), and finished third overall (25:39) to secure her spot in the state meet. Sophomore Phoebe Helms claimed the fourth individual qualifying spot by finishing 11th overall (27:46), taking ninth in freestyle (13:24) and 15th in classic (14:22).

"Zoe won the freestyle race which was really exciting,"Anderson said. "She held her overall place at third and was happy with that. Phoebe really moved up in her skate race which was really fun to see."

Both state compe-

titions will be at Giants Ridge, with the girls skiing on Thursday, March 11 and the boys on Friday, March 12.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Walz expands access to COVID-19 vaccines

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL – About 1.8 million more Minnesotans became eligible to receive the coronavirus vaccine on Wednesday as Gov. Tim Walz announced that the goal of vaccinating 70 percent of those 65 and over has been reached nearly three weeks ahead of projections.

"We asked most Minnesotans to wait patiently while we protected Minnesotans at higher risk and got shots to at least 70 percent of our seniors," Walz said in a Tuesday press conference. "We will hit that milestone on Wednesday – well ahead of schedule. More Minnesotans will now be eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine, beginning this week."

The generally upbeat press conference was somewhat tempered by the continuing emergence of the B117 coronavirus variant first identified in the United Kingdom, which has been identified in 15 Minnesota counties (but not St. Louis County) and is partially responsible for a large outbreak in Carver County linked to school and club sports and gyms.

"I feel a real sense of urgency around this," Walz said. "The variants are a concern that's out there, and it feels like a race to get folks vaccinated and tamp down the variants at the same time, to reduce the impact that they will have."

Walz has also accelerated the schedule he released two weeks ago by making the next two priority groups, Tier 2 and Tier 3, eligible at the same time. The Tier 2 group, of about 80,000 individuals with specific high-risk health conditions along with food processing plant workers, will still be a top priority, but a much broader group of people can also start receiving the vaccine right away.

Those newly eligible to sign up for vaccination appointments include:

➤ Minnesotans with specific underlying health conditions: Sickle cell disease, Down syndrome, those in cancer treatment or immunocompromised from organ transplant, oxygen-dependent chronic lung and heart condi-

Obituaries and Death Notices

Joseph R. Kobe

Joseph R. "Joe" Kobe, 70, of White Iron Lake-Ely, passed away peacefully at his home on Saturday, March 6, 2021. The family plans to honor and celebrate Joe's life with extended family and friends later this summer. Family arrangements are by Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Debbie Zoretic Kobe; siblings, Merijo Kobe, Jim (Mary Ann) Kobe, Bill (Bonnie) Kobe, Kathy (Mike) Horstman, Theresa Hildebrandt, Mark (Rhonda) Kobe, Jeanne (Larry) Schwartz and John (Wendy) Kobe; stepchildren, Donald (Sonia) Dickerson, Brian (Aleyda) Bailey, Sarah (Brad) Westerberg and Courtney (Josh) Engquist; four grandchildren; and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Lorraine V. Huset Lorraine V. Lien

Huset, 84, formerly of Babbitt, passed away on Monday, March 1, 2021, at Boundary Waters Care Center in Ely. Funeral services were held on Tuesday, March 9 at Babbitt Evangelical Lutheran Church. Family arrangements were by Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

She is survived by her son, Randy Huset; daughter-in-law, Judy Huset; son-in-law, James Lyons; brother, Del (Irene) Lien; 12 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Robert A. Wood

tions.

► Food processing plant workers.

> Those with rare conditions or disabilities that put them at higher risk of severe illness, as identified by a physician.

The Tier 3 group includes:

➤ Those age 45 years and older with one or more underlying medical conditions identified by the CDC.

Those age 16 years and older with two or more underlying medical conditions.

➤ Those age 50 years and older in multi-generational housing (households where people from three or more generations reside, such as an elder, a parent and a grandchild).

➤ Essential frontline workers – agricultural, airport staff, additional childcare workers not previously eligible, correctional settings, first responders, food production, food retail, food service, judicial system workers, manufacturing, public health workers, public transit, and U.S. Postal Service workers.

Walz and Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm both emphasized

preciate the stellar care

and support from Bound-

ary Waters Care Center,

Northwoods Partners, and

Dr. Joe Schwinghamer. A

summertime memorial

gathering will be planned

in Ely. Kerntz Funeral

Home of Ely is entrusted

wife, Shirley Lobe Wood;

son, Dan Wood of Ely;

daughter and son-in-law,

Barb and Rich Kuzma of

Eagan; son and daughter-

in-law, Brian and Kim

Wood of Eagan; grand-

children, Mandy (Andy)

Wineberg, Jill (Derek)

Brown, Jordan (Krista)

Kuzma, Daniel (Mary)

Wood, Sara (Dan) Mac-

Coy and Louisa Wood;

nine great-grandchildren;

He is survived by his

for arrangements.

that those age 65 and older who haven't yet been vaccinated also remain a top priority, as do all others in groups previously eligible for the vaccine.

Given current estimates of vaccine supplies, Malcolm said that the groups in Tier 2 could all be vaccinated in two weeks. She estimated that it would take four to six weeks to vaccinate the larger groups in Tier 3, setting the stage for another broad expansion of eligibility in April.

Based on conversations with federal officials, Walz was optimistic that a partnership between Merck and Johnson & Johnson to manufacture doses of the one-shot vaccine could increase vaccine supplies beyond current projections and accelerate the timeline.

Easing restrictions

Still, Walz didn't hesitate to say that talks are underway to start easing restrictions and providing guidance soon.

"State tournaments are coming up," he noted. "And the idea that I want to see parents and grandparents and student bodies see their kids and friends play in a state tournament is really important to us. We're trying to figure out how to do that as safely as possible and get that guidance out on why we're trying to balance this race on the vaccine versus a variant going up."

Officials have been working with professional sports teams and large

entertainment venues, both of which have been hit extremely hard by crowd size restrictions and need 30 days or more of advance warning to accommodate new guidelines, Walz said.

Community event planners, wedding planners, and others looking ahead to summer also could find some hope in Walz's comments.

"You're going to be able to do an awful lot of stuff coming this summer, and we'll start putting out more guidance," Walz said. "We certainly believe it is time to make some of these changes so that 30 to 60 to 90 days out we can give certainty to those folks and they can start planning accordingly. We feel much more competent about giving guidance after the first of April."

And given that vaccination levels and coronavirus measures vary in different areas of the state, another change could be looming.

"We actually think it might be the case now with the vaccine and where we're at that almost a county-by-county or regional approach might be the way it works," Walz said. All of this hinges

All of this hinges on Minnesotans remaining vigilant about basic COVID-19 precautions while the vaccination effort continues, including mask wearing, social distancing, and staying home when you feel ill, Walz emphasized.

Walz again urged

Minnesotans who have not yet been vaccinated to sign up through the state's Vaccine Connector webpage to receive notification of when they become eligible and where vaccines are being administered in their area. The Vaccine Connector can be accessed at https://vaccineconnector. mn.gov/. Fully vaccinated get good news

Fully vacinated get good news

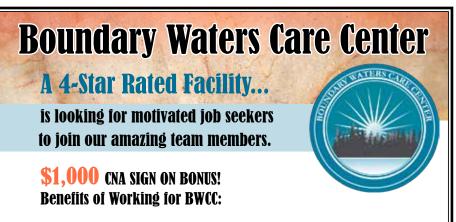
There was good news from the Centers for Disease Control on Monday for those who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. People who have had the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines are consider fully vaccinated two weeks after they receive their second dose. Those who get the Johnson & Johnson vaccine are fully vaccinated two weeks after their shots are administered.

Once fully vaccinated, people may:

> Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or staying six feet apart.

➤ Visit with unvaccinated people from one other household indoors without wearing masks or staying six feet apart if everyone in the other household is at low risk for severe disease.

➤ Refrain from quarantine and testing if they do not have symptoms of COVID-19 after contact with someone who has COVID-19.



Boundary Waters Care Center, a 4-Star Rated Facility, is looking for

Robert Alden "Bob" Wood, of Ely, passed away peacefully with his loving family at his side on his 94th birthday, Friday, Feb. 26, 2021. The family wishes to acknowledge and apbrothers, Harry (Clarice) Wood of Kenai, Alaska, and John Wood of Rudyard, Mont.; and many cousins, nieces, nephews and friends.

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OUTDOOR RECREATION

I'm putting winter camping on my bucket list

Camping is an activity that instantly reminds me of summer. Warm weather, eating loads of junk food, the smell of sunscreen and bug spray; the list goes on and on. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I could go camping in the winter.

I never knew

winter camping was even possible until I moved up here to



the Northwoods. I am slightly afraid of it, as I think many people are. However, a number of my coworkers and friends who live in the area love it and say it's a must-do.

Winter camping definitely has its perks, as in no bugs and no crowds. Based off of what I've heard, there is nothing more peace-

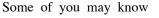
ful or challenging then camping during the cold months. With

that being said, winter camping takes skill and preparation, but the learning curve is definitely possible.

Piragis Northwoods Outfitters is my go-to for winter clothing, but little did I know, they are also a hub for winter camping gear and trips. I had a nice conversation with Tim, their outdoor camping specialist, and he provided me with a multitude of information that makes me even more excited to try it. He told me the winter camping season generally runs Right: Jordan makes cocoa during a recent outing. Is winter camping next on her itinerary?

submitted photo

from late November to the end of March. March is Tim's favorite time to get out and camp because cross-country skiing across the lakes is the best, and you can travel longer distances. The days are also longer, and generally milder.



See WINTER CAMP... pg. 5B



THE NEIGHBORS

Listening to the barred owl Who-cooks-for-you? Inquiring owls want to know

WILDFIRE RISK

Now is the time to finish up spring burning

REGIONAL—Drought conditions combined with the early warm-up across the state are setting the stage for what could be a damaging spring wildfire season. That's according to the Department of Natural Resources, which is urging property owners to help prevent wildfires by using burn-free options for spring brush and yard cleanup.

"Open burning of debris is the number one cause of wildfires," said Ben Lang, a DNR forestry assistant supervisor based in Bemidji. "That's why composting, chipping, or taking brush to a collection site are the preferred alternatives for brush and yard clean-up year-round and even more so in the current dry conditions."

Below-average snowfall this winter came on the heels of an abnormally dry fall in 2020. What little snow there is will quickly melt away, revealing very dry grasses – fuel favorable for wildfire ignition and spread. Lang said it shocks residents every year to learn that 75 percent of Minnesota wildfires occur in the months of March, April and May. "A spark doesn't care what month it is," Lang said. "One spark on dry vegetation can quickly become a wildfire.' Annual spring burning restrictions will soon go into effect. These seasonal and temporary constraints curb the open burning of brush and vegetation. The timing and length of restrictions depends on the weather and how fast things "green up" in the spring. Residents can get daily updates on burning restrictions and current fire risk on the DNR's website at www.dnr.state.mn.us. The DNR reminds residents that burning permits are not required if there are three or more inches of continuous snow cover.

few nighttime inquiries preceded the appearance of a barred owl in the yard on a recent morning. "Who-cooks-for-you?" is the distinctive vocalization of this mid-sized owl, which is relatively common here in the North Country, where it prefers large areas of mature, unbroken forest. It always makes me think of my wife Jodi who, in fact, does the cooking around here.

We hear barred owls inquiring occasionally around our house on the eastern edge of the Lost Lake Swamp, although we see them only rarely. The barred owl is generally active

at night, when it preys on small nocturnal mammals, including mice, voles, and flying squirrels. Every once in a while, usually about this time of year, when I assume the supply of small mammals might be running low, one will show up in the yard during the day, pre-

sumably in hopes of catching a red squirrel, which are probably tough to find at night when they are curled up sleeping in a tree cavity. Thanks to our bird feeders, our yard is an excellent spot to hunt for red squirrels, and I certainly Above: A sleepy barred owl rests during the day near the Lost Lake Swamp.

Right: A barred owl peeks from a nest cavity near Ely.

file photos

MARSHALL

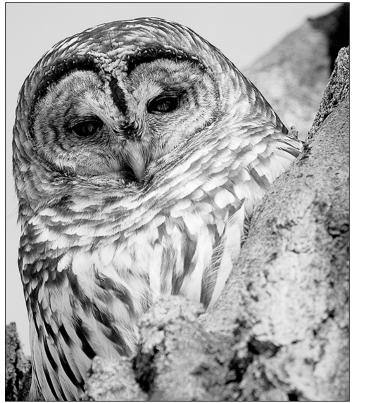
HELMBERGER

wouldn't be a bit perplexed if an owl, or any predator for that matter, managed to cart away a half dozen or so. By late winter, with their regular food sources disappearing and the spring hormones kicking into gear, the red squirrels here are, let's just say, a bit out of control. Once,

> many years ago, a barred owl spent days hanging around the feeders, looking increasingly listless, to the point I worried it was starving. So, I sacrificed a red squirrel and attached it to a string and tossed it on the ground near the owl and started pulling it along the top of the snow. Like a shot, the listless owl sprang to life and grabbed that squirrel faster than I

could blink. At least he ate well that day.

We hear barred owls only occasionally here in part because they occupy large territories— about 700 acres or more depending on the



quality of the habitat, based on available research. That's a lot of ground to cover, so most of the time, even our resident owls wouldn't be within earshot.

They tend to vocalize more this time of year, however, as they are now in the midst of courting activities ahead of the nesting season, like most owls in our area. A few years ago, our resident owls obviously nested nearby since we heard them every night for weeks. Owls have a wide range of interesting, sometimes eerie, calls and hoots, so having them in the neighborhood always makes things interesting at night. It's the main reason I look forward to being able to open the windows again at night once the warmer weather arrives. There's a whole nocturnal world out there in the woods, that most of us never experience, except through those night sounds we hear

See OWLS...pg. 5B

If you need a burning permit, they are available online on the DNR's website.

Those interested in obtaining a burning permit from their local Township Fire Warden can call their local DNR Forestry office for information on active wardens in their area.



WINTER CAMP...Continued from page 4B

that I recently began cross-country skiing. My fiancé, Ty, and I now ski nearly every day. When I was chatting with Tim at Piragis, he mentioned that familiarizing yourself with snowshoes or cross-country skis is your first step when considering winter camping, since you'll need experience with one or the other to get around.

This past Sunday, Ty, our friend Kyle, and I thought it would be fun to do a day adventure to see if we would be able to travel the long-distances necessary to winter camp. Our plan was to ski across a lake to find a spot to make hot chocolate, and then ski back. We did just that. It was the best day I've had in a long time. We parked at the Bass Lake Trail parking lot and skied across Little Long Lake until we found a nice piece of shoreline to enjoy our hot beverage.

This past summer, Ty and I completed a three-day backpacking excursion on the Superior Hiking Trail. It was the first time I had to filter my water, carry my own equipment, and eat freeze dried meals. I became accustomed to using camp cookware and found that both food and beverages taste 100 times better when you have to work for it, even if the quality isn't nearly as good as your typical homecooked meal.

"Fun" wouldn't be the right word to describe the experience-it was more about overcoming a mental and physical challenge.

On our recent day trip, Ty initially questioned my intentions when I asked him to pack ingredients for hot chocolate, as he thought it might be a hassle, but little did he know it would create one of our favorite memories of the winter thus far. In my opinion, it's the little things that make a relationship work long-term, so when he carried a half-gallon of milk in his backpack while skiing across the lake simply to make hot chocolate for me, I knew I'd found the right guy. It was the best hot chocolate I've ever had. There's something about firing up your camping stove, heating the milk, and dumping in the premade powder to make the most perfect concoction. Of course, you can't forget the marshmallows! We climbed up an incline only to overlook nearly the whole lake as we were able to warm up our insides before taking off for home.

Due to my successful day trip, winter camping is now on my bucket list. Tim recommends taking a guide when venturing out for the first time. Tips such as gathering the correct firewood as well as heating strategies for cold winter nights are among the many reasons why having a guide can be beneficial for new campers.

"There's nothing like playing cribbage in your tent, only to go outside to see the northern lights off in the distance and the full moon shining," Tim exclaimed.

Winter camping isn't for the faint of heart, but with the right equipment and guidance, it can be very enjoyable. One thing's for sure — it'll be an experience you won't soon forget!

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

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Outdoors in brief

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Rainfall monitoring network seeks volunteers

REGIONAL-The state climatology office needs volunteer rainfall monitors for the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS). The network includes more than 20,000 volunteers nationwide who measure precipitation in their backyards using a standard 4-inch diameter rain gauge.

Volunteers perform rainfall monitoring activities at home and submit their reports online. The data are used to verify high rain totals

OWLS...Continued from page 4B

from bed.

Unlike the owl of many years ago, the one that showed up recently didn't seem listless. It was still relatively wary when I went outside, camera in hand to try to capture a few images. It certainly looked sleepy, but that's not unusual when you see nocturnal creatures during the day. I prefer not to have my picture taken at bedtime either.

Perhaps because barred owls are nocturnal, we don't know as much about their behavior as we do with diurnal (active during the day) birds. But biologists believe that barred owls mate for life, and both the male and female are actively involved in raising the young. As with most raptors, the 2-3 eggs that a female barred own normally lays in the spring hatch in a staggered

PO BOX 185, ORR, MN 55771

218.374.3621

after big events, monitor drought conditions and inform projections about floods, make precipitation maps more accurate, and provide needed guidance on Minnesota's changing climate.

Volunteers are particularly needed outside of the immediate Twin Cities metro area. To participate, rainfall monitors must purchase or provide a standard 4-inch diameter rain gauge (available at discount through CoCoRaHS) and have internet access to submit

way. That means one of the owlets will be the largest, with the second in line somewhat smaller, followed by the runt of the brood if they lay three eggs. The larger owlet dominates the nest and gets most of the food. When prey is abundant, all the nestlings are likely to survive, but when food is scarce, the staggered hatching helps to ensure that at least the oldest bird survives. Nature may seem cruel, but it always has its reasons.

The barred owl can be fairly easily distinguished from most other owls found in the North Country. It's much larger than the small saw-whet or the rare boreal owls, also found here. It's smaller than both the great horned and the great gray owl, and it lacks the ear tufts of the horned owl and the reports. CoCoRaHS provides online training on how to observe weather trends and how to submit precipitation reports.

To sign up to become a CoCoRaHSrainobserverorformore information, visit the website or contact Luigi Romolo at luigi. romolo@state.mn.us. The website includes lesson plans for STEM students and instructional videos for all participants.

prominent white "mustache" of the great gray. Both of these larger owls also have yellow eyes, another distinguishing characteristic from the black-eyed barred owl.

The barred owl used to reside primarily in the forests of the eastern U.S., but fire suppression and tree planting in the Great Plains enabled this species to expand its range all the way to the West Coast, where it now competes with its very close, and controversial, relative, the spotted owl, potentially contributing to the spotted owl's endangered status. The two species are so closely related that they also interbreed, which could eventually cause the disappearance of the spotted owl and the generation of a new species. Now there's something to think about...



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PUBLIC NOTICES

King Crossword Sealed Bids Due Sunday, **CITY OF TOWER** CALL FOR SEALED BID March 21, 2021 **CITY OF** ACROSS Tower City Hall Outside Drop Box, or Mail to City of Tower, 1995 Polaris 1 Nightwear, for **Big Boss UTV** Box 576, Tower, MN TOWER 12 13 short 55790. Chain Drive, Mileage 3,070 Bids open Monday, March 22, 4 Rm. coolers Sold as is, Where is Needs 6 new tires, **OPENING** 2021 at Council Meeting 15 16 7 Fable writer Needs full fluid change Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 26, March 5, 12 & 19, 2021 12 Decay Questions, call Ben at 18 19 Opening on ad-hoc Blight 218-410-9736 Ordinance Review Committee. Looking for 13 Prefix with Minimum bid: \$400 citizen volunteer to help develop a city blight 20 21 22 athlete plan and budget. Apply online at cityoftower. com/positions-available or at clerk.treasur-14 Preamble **CITY OF** 27 28 er@cityoftower.com. 15 Mode lead-in TOWER Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 26, March 5, 12, 2021 16 Soundly 32 33 31 defeated **OPENING** 35 36 18 Zilch **EMPLOYMENT** 19 Berth places 38 39 **Tower Economic Development** 20 Retain **Authority Board Member** 22 Away from 45 **POSITION OPENING** NNW Send or email a letter of interest to: 49 50 51 Ely Public Schools 48 23 Roundish 'do TEDA, c/o City of Tower, PO Box 576, Tower, MN 55790 or email **Assistant Girls Track Coach** 27 Writer Harper 53 clerk.treasurer@cityoftower.com 29 Sitting room Ely Public Schools is looking for an Assistant Girls Track Coach for the 2021 spring sea-son. Background check required. Published in the Timberjay, March 12, 2021 31 Prepared 56 apples for Qualifications include: baking breaking gp. 9 Pigs' digs Bachelor's Degree preferred; **EMPLOYMENT** 10 Metal source 32 Owned by us 34 Street punks 55 Small barrel ≻ Previous coaching experience preferred; Must be available for several practices/ 35 Uproar 56 Musical pace 11 Group of meets per week from March through June, 37 Rotating part 57 Thither whales including some weekends and during school **Network Director** 17 Get ready. 38 A Great Lake 58 Billboards break periods. 39 Actor Stephen briefly **Elv Behavioral Health Network** Application and full job description is avail-41 Dumbstruck DOWN 21 West Point able at: www.ely.k12.mn.us The Ely Behavioral Health Network (Ely A complete application must include the 45 Striped 1 Bit of mischief freshman BHN) is currently hiring for a half-time to fullfollowing: 2 "Salt" star 23 Bakery lure District Application time Network Director. equine ➤ Resume 47 Hockey's Angelina 24 "Alice" wait-The Ely BHN is a collaborative network which Mail materials to: Ely Public Schools, Attn: Superintendent, 600 E. Harvey St., Ely, MN 55731 or email mwognum@ely.k12.mn.us 3 Trite Bobby ress includes area nonprofits, mental health providers, public health, healthcare providers, 48 Performed to 4 Perched on 25 Scepter and community members. Our goal is to work 26 Hosp. areas together to expand access to, coordinate, the end 5 Vacation at Stipend: \$2,996 and improve the quality of behavioral health 52 Gun-lobby 28 College URL sea care in the rural North East (NE) Iron Range communities of Babbitt, Ely, Embarrass, Isabella, Soudan, Tower, Winton and sur-Deadline to apply: March 19, 2021; open ender 6 Locations org. until filled 30 "Eureka!" 53 Broadcaster 7 Has a bug rounding townships. Published in the Timberjay, March 12, 2021 54 Code-8 Disney deer 31 "Evita" narra- 51 "Uh-huh" The Network Director will work under the direction of the BHN Governance Group to © 2021 King Features Synd., Inc. implement the network's goals and objectives. This is an in-person role responsible for grants management, financial management, reporting, networking, and managing a team of staff to implement the BHN's work. 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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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Moderate A Challenging ♦ ♦ HOO BOY!

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Considerations of personal privacy, time and resources prevent the newspaper from investigating ads placed in the classified section. If you respond to an ad, we urge you to use the same care and prudence that you would use when conducting business in any other situation.



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

VIRGINIA AA WOMEN'S MEETING- Ladies by the Lake. WOMEN'S Tuesdays at 12 noon. Peace United Methodist Church, 303 S 9th Ave, please use side door and parking.

OPEN MEETING-Thursdays at 7 p.m. a Woodland Presbyterian Church at

NOMELUKI by Japheth Light

One Low Price

There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6

around each of them. No number can

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short

pecans 107 Cornell's city plant swelling 111 Mother, in Spain 112 Stocking material 74 Cry buckets 113 Appears 115 Tennis star Arthur 116 Whole bunch ability, for 118 Actor Ferrell 122 Sooner than, 84 Fancy pourer to bards 86 Yours, in the 123 Ending for

MARINE

Acacia Blvd. and Central Drive in Babbitt

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

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

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

 King Crossword — Answers Solution time: 26 mins.

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38 Fashion's Wintour100 End of the riddle39 Riddle, part 2108 Roll-call call43 Emotes, e.g. 46 Pupil locale109 "30 Rock"			call "	4 Bank acct. accrual 5 — Yards (Orioles' stadium)			 37 Cato's 750 40 Small brook 41 Actors' aids 42 Melancholy instruments 				King James Bible 87 Equine, in tot-speak 88 Really, really				butyl 124 — Lanka 125 Fa-la linkup 126 Water flow stopper					
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