

Spruce Grouse...
See /4B



Inside:
Vaccines on the go... See /10
Habitat house dedicated... See /11
Winter sports... See /1B

the TIMBERJAY



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989 VOL. 32, ISSUE 11 March 19, 2021 \$1.00

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

WELCOME BACK! Capacity limits relaxed as vaccinations expand

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL - As of Monday, restaurants, bars, churches, and more were welcoming additional people through their doors, as significant relaxations of COVID capacity restrictions announced on Friday by Gov. Tim Walz went into effect.

Walz made the announcement with an optimistic outlook for the spring and summer.

“The top line is that Minnesotans are doing an incredible job,” Walz said Friday. “With vaccinations accelerating and with our case positivity around COVID remaining stable, it’s allowed us to make some turns. We’ve got a few more weeks of buckling down

getting this right, but our kids are in school, the Twins are coming back to play for the opener, there’s going to be ample opportunities to join family and friends for cookouts and thinking about what a relatively normal Fourth of July will look like.”

Walz outlined an expansion of capacity limits that went into effect at noon on Monday, including:

► Restaurants can fill to 75 percent capacity indoors, up to a limit of 250 people. There is no percentage limit outdoors. Establishments must continue to close by 11 p.m.

• The occupancy limits on religious services and wedding ceremonies have been eliminated,

See...COVID pg. 9



GET OUTDOORS!



Vintage fun on Elephant Lake

Melgeorge’s Antique and Classic Snowmobile Race marks 35 years

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

ELEPHANTLAKE- The look on Steve Koch’s face conveyed a blend of satisfaction, gratitude, and merriment as he stood on the ice-covered surface of Elephant Lake on Saturday, taking just a moment to gaze back at the lodge he owns with his wife, Carla.

A long line of people waited to get hamburgers and brats at the outdoor food bar playfully named “The Man Stand,” while scattered others mingled and talked. Along one

Kory Johnson, above left, rides a vintage 1965 Ski Doo snowmobile through the race circuit at Melgeorge’s. Wayne Schlauderaff helps his grandson, Case Zachariason, above right, as he gets ready to race. A big crowd gathered on the ice Saturday. photos by D. Colburn

shoreline, people were checking out a row of vintage snowmobiles put there just for show. See...SLEDS pg. 11



UTILITIES

Shocking spike ahead for electric rates in Ely

City council OKs 7-percent increase

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – The city council here Tuesday approved a seven-percent rate hike for electric service as recommended by the Ely Utility Commission. Local utility customers will see the increase in their utility bills later this spring.

At a public hearing prior to the council meeting, Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski said the rate hike within the electric utility fund is necessary to keep pace with a wholesale rate increase from the city’s electric provider, Minnesota Power.

“In response to that we raised our classifications the same seven percent,” he said. Langowski serves on the UEC’s budget and rate committee.

The electric rate for off-peak customers will remain unchanged this year. Water and sewer rates across the board also will remain unchanged.

In 2020, usage rates for electricity were increased by one percent across all categories.

“In late 2020, we received notice from Minnesota Power that our See...ELY pg. 9

TOWER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Grants to assist Main Street businesses

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER— Main Street here is going to have a new look and some new storefronts this summer thanks in part to grants approved this past week by the Tower Economic Development Authority.

The new owners of the former Classy Cars building, and eight other Tower businesses and start-ups, have been approved for funding under a grant program from the Tower Economic Development Authority. M. Helmberger

A total of 15 Tower businesses and Rehabilitation’s Taconite Area COVID Relief Program, along with a \$12,500 match from TEDA’s which tapped \$50,000 from the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation’s Taconite Area COVID Relief Program, along with a \$12,500 match from TEDA’s See...TOWER pg. 10



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Community notices

Canine tick prevention available by email at Ely Vet Clinic

ELY- The Ely Veterinary Clinic recommends using a chewable tick prevention for canines from March through December. For tick prevention medication requests, please email the facility at elyvclinic1@gmail.com. Please include your name, telephone number, and your pet's name. Please include the product and quantity you would like. You can choose from Credelio (lasts for one month) and two different Bravecto options (either given monthly or every 12 weeks). Please state whether you would like to pick up the order or have it mailed to you; allow two business days for order processing.

The Ely Veterinary Clinic's phones have been overwhelmingly busy, so the clinic has come up with this email alternative to try to ease some of the traffic and difficulty of contacting the clinic for purchasing tick preventatives.

St. Louis County SWCD annual tree sale

REGIONAL- Trees are available for your spring planting needs. We are offering a variety of shrubs, deciduous trees and conifers that are sure to improve your wildlife habitat and soils. Reasonably priced between \$30 and \$45 per bundle. We also offer native plant kits to improve pollinator habitat or shoreline vegetation, or add color to your landscape. New this year is a native seed mix designed for septic mounds. Plantskydd and Repellex brands of organic animal repellent products are available to help keep the critters away. All proceeds are used for conservation efforts in the northern part of St. Louis County.

Quantities are limited, so be sure to order early. Order forms and information are available at www.nslswcd.org, via email to info@nslswcd.org or by call/text to 218-749-2000. Plant kit order forms are due by Friday, April 30 and tree orders are due Monday, May 10. Pickup will be in Eveleth on Thursday and Friday, May 13 and 14. Visit our website for more details and online ordering at nslswcd.org.

Boundary Waters Care Center honored with four-star rating

ELY- Boundary Waters Care Center recently received a four-star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Nursing Home Compare program.

Nursing Home Compare provides quality of care information about every Medicare and Medicaid-certified nursing home in the United States—a total of more than 15,000 skilled nursing facilities. CMS provides ratings based on findings within three categories: results from onsite inspections by trained surveyors, performance on certain quality measures, and levels of staffing.

A star rating is provided for each of these sources and combined to calculate an overall rating. A five-star rating is the highest rating a skilled nursing facility can receive. The ratings are calculated from a community's state survey results, quality measures and staffing levels.

The rating system was designed to provide consumers and their families more precise and useful information when considering a care community.

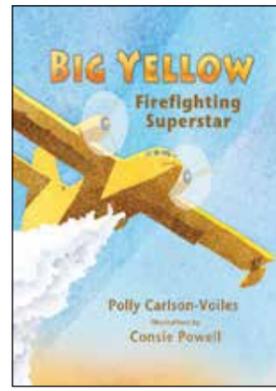
Boundary Waters Care Center is an Ely-based care community where team members are focused on upholding the well-being, dignity, and individual capabilities of each resident. The local care community serves residents and their families with short-term rehabilitation services and long-term care designed to ensure that residents may safely lead a lifestyle with as much independence as possible.

Boundary Waters Care Center is managed by Minneapolis-based Health Dimensions Group (HDG). The organization manages 38 communities in seven states, serving more than 2,000 residents and 2,000 employees. HDG has a long tradition of serving senior communities in the state of Minnesota.

For additional information about HDG, visit healthdimensionsgroup.com, call 763-537-5700, or email info@hdgi.com.

SPRING INTO READING

These new books will sate your family's appetite for learning and adventure



Big Yellow: Firefighting Superstar

Book published by Legacy Bound press, authors Polly Carlson-Voiles and Consie Powell

REGIONAL- This delightful and informative picture book features Big Yellow, a personified water-bombing airplane, who is called upon to help fight a wildland forest fire with water scooped from nearby lakes. Big Yellow: Firefighting Superstar also explores underlying themes of self-confidence and teamwork. This story shows both the in-flight workings of Big Yellow and the actions of human firefighters, brought to life by cheerful illustrations.

Back matter pro-

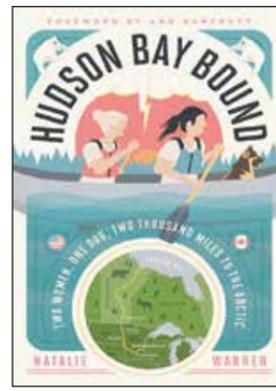
vides details about the Canadair CL 215 and CL 415 water-bombers, about forest fires, and about other aircraft that help with the important job of fire fighting.

Polly Carlson-Voiles is a writer, artist, and retired educator. She was inspired to create this new story after watching a real Big Yellow at work.

Consie Powell is the award-winning author and illustrator of more than a dozen picture books. She finds that images and techniques that show up in her daily sketch journal often provide illustration fodder for her books. She tapped into those frequently in creating the artwork for Big Yellow.

Big Yellow is published by Legacy Bound, Inc., a small press in Minnesota that has won both national and regional awards for their books. They specialize in children's books that encourage children to get outside and enjoy natural settings.

The book is available locally at Legacy Toys in Ely, online at www.legacybound.net, or by calling 1-800-909-9698.



Hudson Bay Bound: Two Women, One Dog, Two Thousand Miles to the Arctic

Book published by University of Minnesota Press, author Natalie Warren

REGIONAL - "Caught between waves and snakes..."

"Sometimes when canoeing, the wind drives you ashore and the only resting place you can find is in a swampy landscape filled with snakes. You will learn later the area is home to the largest concentration of snakes in the world and that is why you had to spend your tired hours

battling waves looking for a snake-free respite."

Hudson Bay Bound: Two Women, One Dog, Two Thousand Miles to the Arctic is an account of two YMCA Camp Menogyn (Gunflint Trail) alumni and best friends making an 85-day expedition from the Minnesota River to Hudson Bay. The book is filled with the everyday excitement and fear surrounding a large challenge, and with the insight of refinement that comes from extended experiences in the vastness of nature.

This book is for anyone who wants to reminisce about their own past adventures, wants to understand why their own loved ones have gone or want to go on a nature expedition, and, most importantly, to whet the palate of those who desire to set out on their own but are held back by other obligations.

Buy this book at upress.umn.edu.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

LVCC to host "Suicide Prevention and Support - How Can I Make a Difference?"



REGIONAL- The Lake Vermilion Cultural Center (LVCC) will host its next Zoom program on Sunday, March 28 at 3 p.m. The presenter will be Ilene Rice, a retired Marriage and Family Therapist who had a private practice in Colorado Springs, Colo. Rice volunteered with the El Paso County Health Department and the Suicide Prevention Partnership conducting "SAFE TEEN Youth Suicide Prevention" in area schools from 2005 to 2009. She was the keynote speaker for the 2015 Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) north-eastern Minnesota Synod Convention and has made

suicide prevention presentations to various groups. In 2017 she began volunteering with the El Paso County Health Department grant program for teen suicide prevention. Due to the high rate of suicide in Colorado, Rice recognized the need to educate the community about the risk factors and warning signs of suicide so friends and family members can be a source of support and help for those struggling with thoughts of suicide.

Suicide statistics for 2020 show an increase in suicides. There is little data on the impact of COVID-19, but it is obvious COVID-19 has added intense emotional and mental stress for many. The LVCC decided this was a good time to sponsor this important program.

Rice said, "Many of us know someone who has made a suicide attempt or has completed suicide. Those struggling with suicidal ideation are just like you and me. They have problems; we have problems. The difference is that, for the moment, we

believe we can handle our problems and do not feel overwhelmed by them. The vast majority of all suicidal people want to live—they want the pain to end. Without a basic knowledge of suicide, we may not recognize or acknowledge the warning signs. Through awareness and education, we can be a support to those contemplating suicide. We can make a difference."

The format of the program will include introductory comments by Rice followed by questions from two panelists. One panelist is Nancy Eichholz, a retired nurse practitioner with over 40 years of experience in the medical field. The other panelist is Becky Peterson, a former pre-K through sixth-grade teacher and elementary administrator with specialized training for high-risk youth facing academic, socioeconomic and emotional concerns. There will be time for some questions from the audience using the chat feature on Zoom.

Rice is a summer res-

ident of Lake Vermilion and now, due to Zoom technology, she can share her expertise with those in our local communities and all others who wish to participate. To register for this free program, send an email to the LVCC at vermilionculturalcenter@gmail.com by Friday, March 26. You will receive a Zoom invitation the day before the event.

The Lake Vermilion Cultural Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit that is working to restore the former St. Mary's Episcopal Church, which was built in 1889. It is located on Tower's Main Street/Highway 169. Even though the building is still being restored, the LVCC has sponsored over 40 programs including lectures, musical programs, art events and an annual dinner theater. For more information, check out the LVCC website at vermilionculturalcenter.org.

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GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

Greenwood election complaint to go to hearing

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

GREENWOOD TWP—An administrative law judge has found probable cause that the top two officers in the Greenwood Fire Department violated a state law that prohibits public officials from using their authority to pressure other public employees to take part in political activity.

Chief David Fazio and Assistant Chief Mike Indihar are expected to face a hearing as early as next month over the allegation that they solicited support from Greenwood firefighters under their authority, to sign onto political ads endorsing a slate of candidates, including Fazio's wife, in the

recent township election.

The complaint was filed on March 8 by JoAnn Bassing, who challenged the incumbent interim town clerk Deb Spicer. Bassing lost that race in the March 9 election by just two votes, so it's possible that the efforts of Indihar and Fazio made a difference in that contest. Bassing has requested a recount, which was being held on March 17. Two incumbent town supervisors, who had also been backed by Fazio and Indihar, lost their contests to challengers Sue Drobac and Barb Lofquist.

The complaint stems from a March 2 business meeting of the fire department during which Indihar, at the absent Fazio's direc-

tion, discussed Fazio's effort to gather support from firefighters for their political cause. At the same time, Indihar spoke favorably of the incumbent slate of candidates and disparaged their opponents. His comments were recorded and the *Timberjay* has obtained a copy of the recording. Township firefighters are expected to attend business meetings and are paid for doing so; the politicking took place during paid work time.

The determination by Judge James Lefave means that the case will go forward to a hearing at the Office of Administrative Hearings in St. Paul, although it likely will be held remotely. In most cases, such complaints

are dismissed immediately for failure to establish what's known as a "prima facie" case. Indeed, the judge did drop one of the two charges against Fazio and Indihar, for failing to include a disclaimer on the political ads, which they ran in the *Tower News* and a free shopper. That ads did not include a disclaimer, which typically states who paid for the ad, but the law exempts political ads that are paid for by individuals or groups of people who don't spend at least \$750.

The complainant still faces a challenge to obtain a conviction. While it's apparent from the recording of the meeting that Fazio and Indihar used their positions to encourage firefighters under their



Greenwood election day sign. file photo

authority to engage in politics, the complainants must be able to demonstrate that at least one of the firefighters the men spoke to felt pressured or compelled to sign their names to advertisements backing the candidates that Fazio and Indihar favored.

Whether any firefighters would admit to feeling pressured would seem unlikely, especially since members of the department who have challenged Fazio's authority in the past say they have faced retaliation within the department.

CRIME

Novak jailed again for drug offenses

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

HIBBING- Repeat drug offender Gary Allen Novak Jr., age 51, formerly of Gheen, is back in St. Louis County Jail after being arrested Friday by Hibbing police on two felony charges of possession and sale of illegal drugs.

Novak has been on supervised release through Arrowhead Regional Corrections since October

2019, after being incarcerated for only 22 months of a nine-year sentence for felony intent to sell 190 grams of methamphetamine. He pled guilty to that offense in December 2017 after prosecutors agreed to drop a second charge of possession of 25 grams or more of methamphetamine.

The new charges against Novak, as indicated on the county jail roster on Tuesday, include one first-degree felony

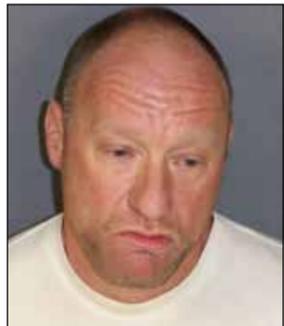
count of possession of 25 grams or more of cocaine/heroin/methamphetamine and one first-degree felony charge of selling 17 grams or more of cocaine. The *Timberjay* attempted to contact Hibbing Police Chief Steve Estey for additional information about the circumstances leading to Novak's arrest, but Estey did not respond to a phone message by press time.

Novak's history with drug offenses dates back

to August 2008, when the *Duluth News-Tribune* reported that Novak had been charged with growing marijuana on his Gheen property, sale and possession of marijuana, possession of methamphetamine. He was convicted of a fifth-degree felony possession charge. Novak's criminal record also includes felony convictions for three thefts, two charges of receiving stolen property, and possession of a pistol/assault

weapon by a felon. He also has convictions for misdemeanor domestic assault, two misdemeanor petty thefts, and multiple traffic violations.

Novak is currently being held without bail by the Department of Corrections.



Gary Novak Jr. submitted photo

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OPINION

“CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW...
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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

Editorial

Stimulus spending

Let's put our COVID relief dollars to work close to home

If you give most people money, they're likely to spend it. That's the sound economic theory that will be playing out over the next few months in the U.S., thanks to the impact of the COVID relief bill, now enacted into law.

This is relief and economic stimulus that will put money in the pockets of low and middle-income Americans, which means these dollars won't go to an offshore account in the Caymans as part of some millionaire's hoard. These are dollars that will be spent, for the most part, right away, and that's why we should all be mindful of just how and where we spend our stimulus money.

Yes, this is another reminder that our dollars help our communities grow when we spend them here at home. Just consider the numbers. Between Ely, Tower, Cook, Orr, and Babbitt, local residents will be receiving close to \$9 million in stimulus money over the next several weeks. Add in all the outlying townships and you double that.

Sure, we could all go online or to Walmart and go on a spending spree with our stimulus money. And all those dollars distributed to the North Country will be quickly vacuumed away to points unknown, leaving our local economy wondering what all the fuss was about. When it comes to “the economy,” what's happening right here is what matters the most to the future of “our economy.”

How we spend our money makes a difference. Small town Main Streets have struggled for years as retail dollars that used to be spent in locally-owned shops, restaurants, and other businesses are increasingly ending up in the pockets of huge chain or online retailers—and that situation only grew worse during the pandemic. Some of our local businesses have closed permanently as a result. Others are hanging on by a thread. If we spend our stimulus money locally, it will provide a critical shot in the arm for many of them, and that makes a difference for the entire community.

While big box retailers do at least provide a few jobs locally, they don't provide the same economic impact as retailers with local ownership. What's more, numerous studies have shown that these big chain

retailers often displace as many jobs as they create. They also bring with them new demands on community infrastructure and a variety of other public services, that local property owners must pay for.

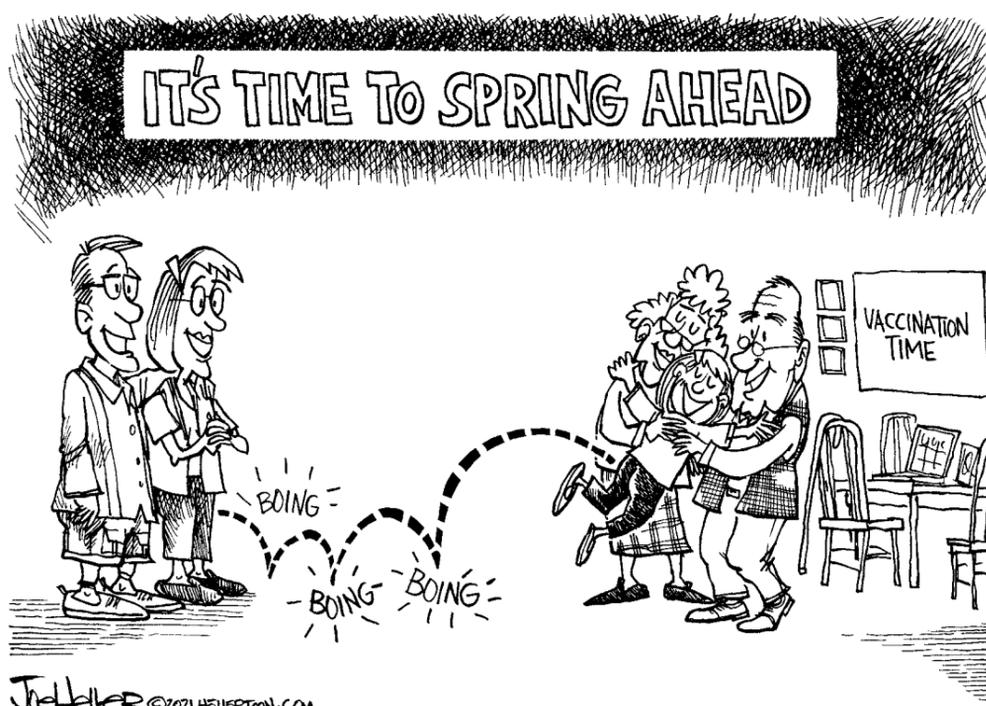
Big chain retailers don't spend that much in the local economy, so dollars spent there don't really circulate throughout the local economy. When a big box builds a new store, they don't hire the local architect or contractors because each store is essentially a clone, built in most cases by contractors brought in from elsewhere. They use national suppliers for building materials and for the products they eventually sell. They don't use the local ad agency or the insurance broker down the street. They don't hire a local accountant and they rarely, if ever, advertise in the local newspaper.

Locally-owned businesses do all of these things, and because they do, the money you spend with a local merchant or restaurant owner works its way throughout the area economy, creating a multiplier effect that benefits us all.

We know that most folks will use at least some of their stimulus funds for online purchases. But remember that the big online retailers essentially contribute nothing to our communities. At least a big box store has a building, hires a few local workers, and pays property taxes. You can't say any of that when it comes to an Amazon, for example. They suck dollars out of our communities, never to be seen again.

Before looking at Amazon, see if you can't buy it online locally. Many businesses in our area have attractive and efficient websites that sell what you're looking for and are probably competitive on price as well. They need your dollars more than a gazillionaire like Jeff Bezos does, and when you spend it locally, it continues to circulate here at home.

That's why the stimulus bill offers a real opportunity, one that has the potential to bring a sizable economic impact to our region. Let's spend our dollars here and help make sure that it does.



Letters from Readers

Sudbury shows the impact of nickel mining

It's so easy to see the future that nickel mining will bring—just visit Sudbury, Ontario.

Be sure to fly over it, or use a drone, to get past the floss next to the highways.

Or just Google “Sudbury Mining Pollution.”

If you're interested in reality instead of the rosy hopes of people who can't think past their hopes and prayers that the world can be like it was seventy years ago, start here: <https://www.thesudburystar.com/news/local-news/tragedy-of-pollution>.

**Dave Porter
Minneapolis**

We support a competent and apolitical fire department

As the *Timberjay* reported last week, it seems as though attempting to manipulate election results is no stranger to Dave Fazio. He did so during the school district referendum in 2009, by running an ad that encouraged the public to “Vote Yes for Lower Taxes.” He then admitted that he knew taxes would not be lowered. That's not a mistake; it's a lie.

Recently his attempt at manipulating election results reached even further. As evidenced in an audio tape from a recent fire department meeting where Fazio was not in attendance, he attempted to solicit contributions for an ad supporting his chosen candidates through the senior firefighter in attendance, Assistant Chief Mike Indihar. During the business meeting, Indihar then went on to campaign for the support of his favorite candidates. In his speech to the firefighters and EMRs in attendance he states, “For some reason, they (the opposing candidates) don't like the township and don't like the fire department.”

I have to admit to opposing actions we know to be wrong, such as retaliation for reporting OSHA violations, or campaigning for chosen individuals during a township election at a meeting where those in attendance are being paid by public funds and in a publicly-owned meeting place. This isn't the first time Mr. Indihar has taken advantage of his position and the situation at hand. He went after then-board candidate Barb Lofquist, stating, “Barb Lofquist who is going to run for the board says that I am not qualified to be chief.” Indihar was at that point filling in for Fazio who had retired as chief for three months beginning in January of 2020 and then strangely reapplied for the same position. Barb's reasoning regarding Indihar's qualifications was drawn from the fire department/pension records prior to Fazio, that show he responded to less than 10 percent of pages to 911 calls. Those same chiefs also questioned the validity of the resume presented when Indihar applied for assistant chief. He furthered his campaigning against Ms. Lofquist when he stated to the attendees at that meeting that, “when you guys go to vote, this person is not your friend.” The fact of the matter is there aren't any residents I know in Greenwood who object to supporting a fire department as long as it's well trained by competent instructors, led by officers who know their jobs, and has a properly equipped staff that isn't subject to political hijinks.

**Rick Stoehr
Greenwood Twp.**

The nation's debt exceeds our economy

Can you keep a secret? For years and years, most modern economists have been telling us not to worry about our national debt. As long as our national debt is smaller than our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), say the

economists, our federal government will remain solvent. We'll be able to pay our bills. There won't be a run on the bank. This morning, according to a quick computer search, our national debt is \$28 trillion dollars. Our GDP is \$21 trillion dollars.

**Jim Ganahl
Cook**

Find the truth at govictory.com

As Paul Harvey used to say, “and now for the rest of the story.” If you are as tired as I am of hearing how we have to be so very careful about not spreading the coronavirus while illegal immigrants are streaming over our southern border (over 1,000 last month alone), and walls are ineffective, why are there so many more illegals coming into our nation now than when Mr. Trump was president? Why is there a wall around the Capitol? Why is the National Guard still there? Go to govictory.com and listen to victory news and Flash Point. The March 10 victory news program is especially insightful.

**Marilyn Mueller
Greenwood Twp.**

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.

We ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

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

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

Keep your mitts off my body rhythms!

On Sunday morning, I joined my faith community on Zoom, and we were chatting as we do every Sunday before the meeting for worship starts. Then, oddly, one person waved and disappeared, and more followed. Why were people leaving before the meeting started? Then it hit me: the strange ritual of moving time



BETTY FIRTH

around had happened again, literally passing me by, and I'd missed the meeting for worship. My reality had been altered and the feeling of disorientation was instant...not to mention embarrassment.

I have long considered this changing of the clocks silly, and disruptive to the complex

psychological, physiological, metaphysical, and philosophical aspects of time, and I've been in good company with these reflections. Albert Einstein said, “Time is an illusion.” Author Mario Benedetti wrote, “Five minutes are enough to dream a whole life, that is how relative time is.” and science fiction writer Ray Cummings penned, “Time is what keeps everything from happening at once.”

Cavalierly changing our timepieces messes with our internal clocks. We have animal

bodies, we are creatures of the Earth and Cosmos, and no matter how much we attempt to manipulate our daily rhythms of sleep, body temperature, eating, and activity, Mother Nature will rule as the master clock in our brain synchronizes those rhythms with the rising and setting of the sun. German researcher Till Roenneberg says, “This is one of those human arrogances—that we can do whatever we want as long as we are disciplined. We forget that there is a biological clock that is as old as living organisms,

a clock that cannot be fooled.” He explains that our internal circadian rhythm follows the sun and actually changes in four-minute intervals, exactly the time it takes for the sun to cross one line of longitude.

The practice of daylight saving time (DST: and yes, “saving” is singular) has been called self-imposed jet lag. Similar to crossing time zones, the body adjusts better to “gaining” time, traveling

See **TIME...pg. 5**

Letters from Readers

Where is Stauber's support for working people?

This letter is addressed to those who voted for Pete Stauber in last November's election. Pete Stauber voted NO for the American Rescue Act (commonly referred to as the COVID Bill) along with the three other Republican members of Congress. Here's what Stauber and the rest voted against. The following items are key components of the American Rescue Act of 2021.

► **Vaccine distribution:** In the bill there is \$20 billion to create a national vaccine distribution plan to facilitate setting up community vaccination sites and assist in vaccination shortage.

► **Unemployment insurance:** The past unemployment law would have expired on March 14; this bill will extend coverage to Aug. 19.

► **Stimulus payments:** \$1,400 for individuals earning up to \$75,000 per year and more for families.

► **Housing assistance:** \$30 billion in emergency rental payments to avoid evictions.

► **Minimum wage increase:** Presently the federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour and has not been increased since 2009. This bill would increase

the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2025 which would provide for gradual increases between 2021 and 2025.

► **Child tax credit:** Children ages 6 through 17 would see an increase from the present \$2,000 per child to \$3,000.

Please review this list and I am confident you will ask WHY our Eighth District Congressman voted NO for these necessary provisions. Pete Stauber has only followed the Republican playbook of not helping working folks, especially those from northern Minnesota. Bring this list with you as you vote in 2022!

Footnote: The U.S. Senate passed the American Rescue Act on Saturday, March 6. In both the House and the Senate there were ZERO Republican votes in favor. The final measure does not include the minimum wage increase, but please stay tuned as the Democrats are determined to increase the minimum wage in the future.

Mary Louise (Mavetz) Icenhour
Proud member of the Minnesota DFL and North of the Divide Progressive Network
 Ely

Stand up for our local businesses

A front-page ad proclaiming a "National Stop Wearing the Mask Day" in the Cook shopper, is certainly not the way to encourage people to shop in Cook.

If we aren't careful, we will throw it all way—all the sacrifice over the last year—by letting down our guard so near the finish line.

After a year of isolation, doing the least possible shopping to minimize possible infection with COVID, I am eager to feel safe patronizing my local businesses.

But if employees or customers in local businesses aren't wearing masks—and wearing them properly (no exposed noses), I'm not going to shop there.

And tourists aren't going to shop there, either. They'll stop once and then make a safer choice the next time. Let's copy Cook County, which had a unified county-wide masking and distancing protocol resulting in zero COVID deaths and a banner tourism year during the pandemic.

It's been a rough year. Don't make things worse for our local businesses and communities.

When you wear a mask, you're not giving

in to some sinister government plot to take away your freedom. You're making the kind of sacrifices our parents and grandparents made to survive the 1918 flu pandemic, win World War II, stop the 1950s polio epidemic, eradicate smallpox, control tuberculosis and much more.

Stand up and mask up so our local communities can go back to business as usual when it's safe.

Leah Rogne Gheen

COVID and the beggar society

We all belong to that great lost tribe of people who feel that all will be well with our lives, that all the power we lack will be supplied, and all anguish, unrest and confusion, the dark damnation of man's soul, can be somehow magically healed if we eat the right bran for breakfast or win the lottery. Our impulse has not been to embrace life, but rather to escape from it.

Our sentence and our curative from the pandemic of COVID, is in our reclamation of the past in order to rightly reclaim the morality of our future.

Our fictive beliefs are symptoms of a greater thought virus. These fictive beliefs are often ignorantly and narrowly held. They

become treasured parts of people's deluded sense of self. They become the sacred talisman to soften fears and promise hope. The cancer of these fictive beliefs rids the dissonances of people's minds, by suggesting that there really can't be millions of virtuous and faithful citizens identically mad at the body politic, regardless of party, that for so long has not been doing what the people want.

Playing devil to our own Faust, we are unable to see the snare that's been rigged in the thicket. We often persuade ourselves of things to be true, things we feel to the bottom of our feet to be false.

A new iteration of an enemy has come. It has been one year since the viral enemy of COVID has arrived, not armed in brutal might and from the front, but subtle, sly, and infinitely cunning.

The inscrutable virus, the cancer of COVID, and the vertical integration of power and ownership that follows, has willed its way to now, where we find ourselves in an entreaty of pitifully begging for alms of mercy, a beggarly scrap of encouragement, a \$1,400 payday, a "happy meal" palliative, a specious fractional release of debt and servitude, a step toward our ultimate dispossession.

We are so lost, so naked and lonely in America. We have become a moral and ethical desert, after forty years of the fraud of neoliberal economics. It has turned us into pitiful beggars for alms of mercies from a corporatized government that doesn't do the people's work.

Our sentence and curative for the cancer of COVID, the viral endemic that continues to engulf us is to join together, think together, and actuate the greater good, the magic consonance of pristine logic and knowledge, that will bring about the progressive change so desperately needed today.

Tim Duff
 Tonka Bay

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TIME...Continued from page 4

westward, or shifting the clock back in the Fall than to "losing" time traveling eastward or shifting the clock forward in the Spring. Roenneberg's research monitored people's sleep and activity levels for eight weeks after time changes, also considering their "chronotypes" as night owls or morning larks. Both groups' timing for sleep and peak activity adjusted easily when daylight saving time ended in the fall but never adjusted with the change in the spring, especially true for the night owls.

Disruptive side effects include disorientation and sleep deprivation, which can in turn cause fatigue and hormonal changes. People often report feeling more anxious and irritable with increased emotional outbursts. Personally, I love having something to blame for being crabby as well as a valid excuse, certified by sleep specialists, to take a nap, but I'd still rather the government leave my body rhythms alone and allow me to get crabby or sleepy on my own recognizance.

Here's some history and some myth-busting about how this all got started. Daylight saving plans were neither created to benefit farmers nor supported by farmers. They actually fiercely opposed DST because they still lived with the natural rhythm of the land and the animals with the sun dictating their schedules, which DST disrupted. They had to wait an extra hour for dew to evaporate to harvest hay and cows weren't ready to be milked an hour earlier to meet shipping schedules. Cows aren't quite as suggestible or agreeable as human beings when it comes to messing with their internal body clocks.

Benjamin Franklin has been incorrectly credited with originating the idea of moving the clocks forward. What actually happened: In spite of his adage, "Early to bed and early to rise," he was grumpy about being awakened at 6 a.m. by the summer sun, so he published a satirical essay which suggested that people should get up earlier to save money on candles.

Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada, was the first location to use DST in 1908, and Germany and England followed suit in 1916. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson first signed it into law in 1918 as part of the war effort, to be repealed seven months later. Although advocates touted energy conservation as a benefit of DST during the world wars and periods of oil shortages, higher

usage of both air conditioning and heating offset energy savings.

The historical timeline of DST, variously called fast time, war time, and summer time, is a hodgepodge of local practices being enacted, repealed and continually tweaked in the U.S. and around the world. Initially, states and local jurisdictions could do whatever they wanted to. In 1965, Iowa had 23 different pairs of beginning and ending. St. Paul began daylight saving two weeks before Minneapolis, perhaps determined to be first in their ongoing municipal competition. Travelers on a 35-mile bus ride from Steubenville, Ohio, to Moundsville, West Virginia, passed through seven time changes. Can you imagine being a train scheduler or a broadcaster? Finally, in 1966,

the Uniform Time Act was passed, standardizing DST, but states could still opt out as Hawaii, Arizona (with the exception of the Navajo Nation), and several U.S. territories have done.

The current U.S. schedule was set by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, enacted in 2007, extending the DST period to eight months from the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November. Currently DST is used in over 70 countries, affecting over a billion people. Think about that: over a billion people exhibiting irritability and emotional outbursts, all at the same time.

Proponents of DST argue that it saves energy, promotes health through outdoor leisure activity during summer evenings, reduces traffic accidents and crime, and is good

for business. Supporters pretend to be urban workers, retail businesses, outdoor sports enthusiasts and businesses, tourism operators, and others who benefit from increased light during the evening in summer. Opponents argue that actual energy savings are inconclusive, that

DST causes sleep deprivation, mood disorders and increased health risks such as heart attacks, and that changing clocks twice a year is expensive and disruptive, canceling out any benefits. I'm solidly in the second camp and protest through my poetry.

Time Change

They took an hour away today,
 one I could have used.
 I needed that extra bit of sleep;
 I feel a bit abused.

Who do they think they are, these folks,
 to take time I hold dearly?
 Someone somewhere thought it best
 to take this hour yearly

and move it over somehow
 from March into October,
 when they decide to give it back.
 That's hardly sane or sober.

These same folks cast dour looks
 if you're late to a meeting.
 They'll glance at watches sourly
 in lieu of friendly greeting.

They're the ones who always have
 appointments that are set
 months in advance with schedules
 and deadlines to be met.

When you say how you feel time,
 how it changes in your mind,
 stretching out or fleeting by
 or stopping, you'll usually find

they'll act as if you've lost it
 even though you speak sincerely.
 Yet they'll take an hour of your life
 and move it cavalierly

to where they think it ought to be
 from Spring into the Fall.
 I think it ought to be my choice
 if it moves at all.

If we must take a springtime hour,
 then why can't we just use it
 on the day we need an hour most?
 Why do they get to choose it?

Perhaps I'd like some time in May
 to watch the tulips flower
 or maybe June would be the time
 to sail an extra hour.

I could plunk it into August
 to keep summer a bit longer.
 I think we need to speak out now
 to make our voices stronger—

To let them know we won't be had
 by time manipulation.
 To use our hour as we wish
 without capitulation.
 —Betty Firth

the **TIMBERJAY**



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

Week of March 22

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 April 20

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

Breitung Town Board-reorganizational meeting on March 23 at 12 noon.

Wednesday
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.

Greenwood Township-Reorganization meeting on March 25 at 6:30 p.m.

Holy Week schedule at St. Martin's, St. Mary's, and Holy Cross
Holy Thursday - 5:30 p.m. at St. Mary's in Cook
Good Friday - 3 p.m. at Holy Cross in Orr and 6 p.m. at St. Martin's in Tower.
Holy Saturday - 8 p.m. at St. Mary's in Cook
Easter Sunday - 8 a.m. at Holy Cross in Orr and 11 a.m. at St. Martin's in Tower.

St. James hosting movie night on March 21 at 6 p.m.
TOWER- St. James Presbyterian Church is Tower is hosting a free movie night on Sunday, March 21 at 6 p.m. This month's featured movie is "A Matter of Faith." A Christian girl, Rachel Whitaker (played by Jordan Trovillion) goes off to college for her freshman year and begins to be influenced by her popular Biology professor (Harry Anderson) who teaches that evolution is the answer to the origins of life. When Rachel's father, Stephen Whitaker (Jay Pickett) senses something changing with his daughter, he begins to examine the situation, and what he discovers catches him completely off guard. The movie is rated PG.

TOWNSHIP UPDATES

Embarrass residents set 2022 levy at \$166,000, same as 2021

EMBARRASS- Residents at the Embarrass Annual Meeting voted to set the 2022 levy at \$166,000, the same as 2021. The board had proposed a \$3,500 reduction, lowering the levy to \$162,500, mainly with small reductions in the road and bridge fund, fire fund, and historic properties fund, along with an increase in the capital fund. The township does have some upcoming projects planned, including work on the town hall roof, blacktop in front of the town hall, water and

electrical upgrades at the campground, and the information/visitor center restroom project. The vote to keep the levy at \$166,000 was 10-2, with the extra \$3,500 going into the general fund. The breakdown of the levy showed \$96,500 in the general fund; \$6,000 in road and bridge; \$28,000 for fire; \$8,000 for town hall; \$4,000 for recreation; \$5,000 for PERA; \$9,500 for insurance; \$7,000 for capital; and \$2,000 for historic properties. Upcoming township

events include the Memorial Day service at the cemetery on May 31; holiday ice candle celebration on Dec. 18; Sauna Day on June 12; Embarrass Region Fair Aug. 27-29; and Community Night Out at the Seitaniemi on Sept. 12. All events may be changed due to COVID-19 safety protocols. The board informed residents that the current campground caretaker will not be returning next year, so the board will be discussing this at their regular March meeting.

Vermilion Lake annual meeting, election results

VERMILION LAKE TWP- Voters in Vermilion Lake Township elected Frank Zobitz to the three-year supervisor term, Sarah Schmidt to the one-year supervisor term, and Steve Lotz to the two-year treasurer term. All three were currently serving on the town board and ran unopposed. Seventeen residents voted in the election. At the annual meeting, a small group of residents approved the board-suggested levy of \$37,800. This included \$21,300 for the general fund, \$5,500 for the road and bridge fund, and \$11,000 for the fire department fund. The group set tentative dates for the annual fall potluck and spring cemetery clean-up day.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Dream Quilters cancel April 1 meeting

TOWER- The Vermilion Dream Quilters will be unable to resume in-person meetings April 1 as hoped. Current CDC guidelines encourage even those fully COVID-19 vaccinated to avoid medium-sized indoor gatherings. Governor Walz has loosened Minnesota guidelines, but sets 15 as the maximum for

indoor gatherings, well below our past attendance numbers. He has stated that the next three to four weeks should give us a strong indication of how the new variant strains will affect us. The Dream Quilters' officers will continue to evaluate before deciding whether to meet in May.

St Martin's Annual Pasties Sale

TOWER- It's that time of year again. St. Martin's is getting ready for their Annual Pasties Fundraiser. Orders are now being taken; the last day to order is April 5. To order, call the rectory office at 753-4310, stop by the rectory to see Maryann, or stop in at Jeanne's Card Shop. Orders and money may also be

mailed to St. Martin's, P.O. Box 757, Tower, MN 55790. When you order be sure to indicate if you want rutabaga, or not, in your pasties. The cost is still \$6 a piece, and must be paid at the time of the order. Pasties will be available for delivery/pick up the week of April 19; we will call when your order is ready.

TOWER-SOUDAN ELEMENTARY



Swinging into spring



Top: From left, Nai'lee Moyer, Ava Redetzke, and Jade Drift get an upside-down view on a warm, early spring afternoon. Above left: Kija Chosa tries out his new mud boots in a puddle on the edge of the playground. Above right: Most of the swings were in use as students got some afternoon mask-free time. photos by J. Summit

THANK YOU!

For your continued support!

JORGINE GORNICK

Breitung Township Treasurer

Online each week at timberjay.com

ELY MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

Students benefit from little library online auction

Community collaborates with woods, art students

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – As many as 10 little libraries, built by woods students and decorated by art students at Ely Memorial High School, are up for auction. Bidding ends Sunday, March 21.

All proceeds benefit Ely students and promote reading literacy in the community.

“Little Free Library” is the world’s largest book-sharing movement. Hosting a little library on your property inspires readers of all ages to borrow a book from you. Today in the United States, more than 30 million adults cannot read or write above a third-grade level. Studies have repeatedly shown that books in the hands of children have a meaningful impact on improving literacy. “They beautify and build community. Let everyone know that Ely loves to read,” said online auction organizer Heather Cavalier.

This project was made possible by grants from Essentia Health Foundation and Lake Country Power Round Up.

The grants were written by Story Portage, a local non-profit promoting personal narratives and literacy programs that enhance the quality of life in Ely. “A huge ‘thank you’ goes out to Rob Simonich, our shop teacher, and Kelly Chick, our art teacher, who both inspire students to create many beautiful projects,” Cavalier said.

Each little library measures 26 inches wide, 16 inches deep, and 39 inches tall, and comes with a six-foot post to bury in your yard for year-round stability.

Libraries must be picked up at Ely Memorial High School by the bidder before April 1. Winning bidders should make payment by cash or check to Story Portage.

Contact Cavalier for more info at hcavalier@ely.k12.mn.us, or call 218-365-6166 ext. 1794.

The Little Free Library program was received the 2020 World Literacy Award from the World Literacy Foundation. The organization is a top-rated nonprofit by the Great Nonprofits organization and recently received Guidestar’s Platinum Seal

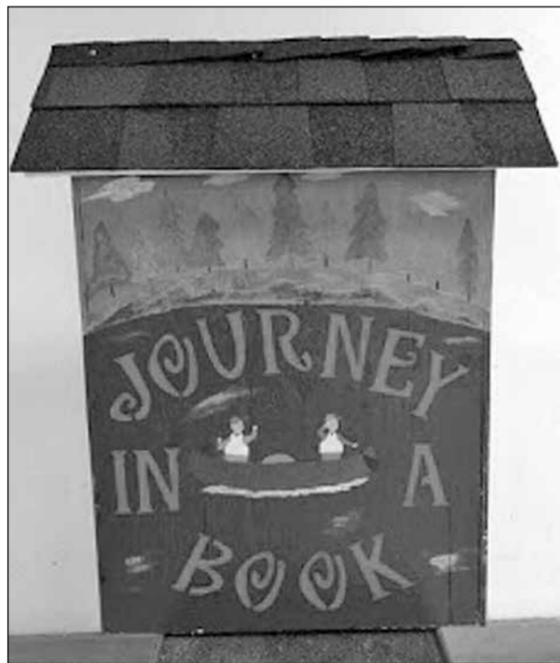


Bidding ends Sunday, March 21 for the online auction of 10 little libraries made by Ely Memorial students. Each one comes with a six-foot post for mounting. submitted photos

of Transparency.

Little Free Library is a recipient of the Library of Congress Literacy Award, the National Book Foundation’s Innovations in Reading Prize, Library Journal’s Movers and Shakers Award, the Women’s National Book Association’s Second Century Prize, and the Force for Positive Change Award.

As of March 2020, there were more than 100,000 registered Little Free Libraries in all 50 states and 108 countries. Learn more about the Little Free Library movement at www.littlefreelibrary.org.



COVID-19

Spiking coronavirus ‘still a threat’ to Ely-area residents

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – On the same day that coronavirus pandemic public health guidelines were loosened across the state this week, the Ely community began experiencing “a spike” in positive COVID cases, according to Essentia Health-Ely Clinic.

As confirmed by St. Louis County Public Information Officer Dana Kazal, in terms of the case rate per 100,000 residents, since the beginning of March for northern St.

Louis County, the rate has roughly tripled from 5.31 (on March 1) to 15.92 (March 15) cases.

“For Ely in particular, there have been 14 cases in the last two weeks, which is more than in the two prior months combined,” she said. There were 10 cases in January, three cases in February, and 14 cases in the first half of March.

For those who would like to be tested, are experiencing symptoms, and/or have been exposed to a positive person, call Essentia’s COVID-19

hotline at 1-833-494-0836 or schedule a test via MyHealth.

Clinic officials said, “Please remember to wear your mask, wash your hands, continue to social distance and get tested if exposed.”

Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital added, “While we are working on vaccinating as many people as quickly as possible, COVID-19 is still a genuine threat to the communities we serve. The best way to stay safe is to Mask Up, Social Distance, and follow the

CDC and MDH guidelines. If you are experiencing symptoms, get tested and follow all quarantine guidelines.”

EBCH officials added, “Please remember that our healthcare system is small, and our phones can be easily overwhelmed.”

For the first time in more than two months, the Ely Public Schools COVID-19 positive test count climbed by one on Monday, increasing the cumulative positive test count to 17 for the school year.

The Ely High School

hockey team’s season ended abruptly with a report of COVID-19 on the team. The Timberwolves were set to travel to International Falls on Thursday for their first playoff game.

“Our hockey team is out of the playoffs and in quarantine this week because of a positive COVID-19 test,” said 6-12 Principal Megan Anderson. She confirmed that a 10th-grade learning cohort in the school is also affected by the positive coronavirus case.

AROUND TOWN

Want your yard egged?

ELY – Carefree Living in Ely is conducting a fun fundraising event for Easter. Ely children can celebrate Easter with yards filled with colorful Easter Eggs.

Choose how many stuffed eggs you want delivered (in the front yard or backyard) on Friday, April 2, or Saturday, April 3. Only yards within the Ely city limits qualify for this “Easter

Eggstravaganza.”

Friday night delivery costs \$25 for 30 eggs and \$35 for 50 eggs. Saturday night delivery costs \$30 for 30 eggs and \$50 for 50 eggs. All proceeds benefit the Ely Carefree Living Activities Department.

All animals must be indoors during scheduled drop off.

For more information, email carolyn.schiltzspectrumhealth.com or call 218-365-2261.

Dog obedience class offered

ELY – Ely Community Education is offering an in-person dog obedience class this spring. Paula McKenzie will focus on developing a connection between owner and dog, and positive reinforcement for both participants.

Designed for mature, three-month-old and older dogs, this class provides the foundation for a well-mannered pet. Beginner Obedience will help dog owners learn how to clearly communicate with their dog.

“Find out how to clearly ask your dog to come when called, walk on a loose leash, sit, down, while developing a positive relationship between you and your dog,” she said. “You and your dog will enhance success by practicing skills at home between classes.”

All classes will be held outside, beginning Monday, May 17, and run seven Mondays from 6-7 p.m., concluding July 5. The cost is \$120.

Please wear clothing that is suitable for the weather. Due to construction, the Ely Ice Arena is not available, so all

classes will be held in the arena parking lot

McKenzie has spent a good portion of her life working with dogs. She has acquired a vast amount of experience in all aspects of ‘a dog’s life’, from years of working with dogs of all sizes, shapes, and breeds. She has taught Obedience Classes for over ten years for Ely Community Education.

In the past, she helped train and work with certified therapy dogs. She also helped teach reading skills to elementary students through the Reading to Rover Program.

Ely Public Library hosts Hogwarts events

ELY – The Ely Public Library will be presenting their annual Hogwarts House Cup Championship later this month with a twist.

This year’s activities will take place over the span of an entire week. Participants can pick and choose which items they would like to complete - everything from Trivia nights to scavenger-type hunts around town to activities to do at home.

Here is the list of free activities that will take place throughout the week (some are at specific times): Madam Malkin’s Masks, Virtual Adventure, 7/31 Challenge, Banner Challenge, Mystery Challenge 1 - Musical Challenge, Mystery Challenge 2 - Owl Post Challenge, Mystery Challenge 3 - Live Trivia Night (in cooperation with the Ely State Theater), Online Trivia Night, Exploding Snap Game,

House Friendship Bracelet Making, Costume Photos, Wand Making, House Crossword, House Word Find, Hogwarts Recipe, Hogwarts Bookmark Coloring.

All participants need to be registered to earn points for the events. Prizes will be given out to participants who earn the most points overall and in some separate challenges.

In addition, the Ely State Theater, will be showing Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them during the last weekend of March. The Ely library will have a photo booth opportunity set up at the theater which can earn participants in the House Cup programming additional points. Regular admission required.

To register, please contact the library at 218-365-5140. Participants will receive a packet with information and some supplies.

Libraries

Ely library

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

Babbitt library

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

Support groups

AA - Alcoholics

Anonymous

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.

ELY FOOD SHELF -

Third Wednesday each

month, 15 W. Conan St.

ADULT BASIC

EDUCATION GED

- Study materials and

pre-test available. Call

218-365-3359,

218-827-3232, or

1-800-662-5711.

CAREGIVER

SUPPORT GROUPS:

Babbitt: 3rd Monday of

Month: 6-7:30 p.m. at

Carefree Living

Ely: 4th Monday of

Month: 10-11:30 a.m. at

Ely-Bloomenson Hospital

Conference Room B

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2021



sunlit days longing

for the cadmium yellows

bulbs answer with green

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Cook Hospital starts new therapy program

Physical and lifestyle improvements are central to cardio/pulmonary rehabilitation

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- Cook Hospital has revamped and rebooted a cardiac rehabilitation program it once had years ago and has also added a complementary pulmonary rehab program. "We started thinking about it last year," Chief Operating Officer Julie Lesemann said. "Our physicians felt these services would take off. The three physicians we have through the clinic have been impressed with patient outcomes."

Lesemann noted that the program is opening at a time when many post-COVID-19 sufferers who are having difficulties with daily life activities may benefit from it, but there is also a broader group of people the program is ready to serve.

"When we've done community surveys, COPD will definitely be present in our communities for pulmonary rehab," Lesemann said. "With cardiac rehab, we have very strong levels of cardiac issues that folks experience." To get started, the programs will operate twice a week with clinicians provided through a collaboration with Fairview Hospital in Hibbing. Lesemann said that as the program moves forward, Fairview will help them train a qualified rehab nurse or therapist, over about six months for Cook Hospital to deliver the services independently.

The overall focus of the cardio/pulmonary rehab program is to provide a medically supervised environment to safely strengthen hearts

and lungs and to support healthier lifestyles and quality of life.

What patients won't find is a "cookie cutter" approach to their situation. "It's very individualized with the therapist and physician," Lesemann said. "Working together, the therapist comes up with a treatment plan based on what the patient's diagnosis is. It's based on what the patient can tolerate - one person may need to start slower than another for the same diagnosis."

Treatment plans may involve anywhere from 18 to 36 sessions, depending on individual goals and insurance coverage.

Physical activity will be a key component of both cardiac and pulmonary programs, and the hospital has set up dedicated space and equip-

ment in its wellness/rehab center, sharing some of the available equipment and purchasing specialized equipment specifically for the program. Activities may involve the use of recumbent bikes, step machines, or treadmills, as well as hallway walking programs.

While it required some costly upgrades to software, Lesemann said, cardiac monitoring is state-of-the-art high tech. Patients will wear a small cardiac monitor that transmits information wirelessly, allowing them freedom of movement and the ability to go on hallway walks.

Another common theme for cardiac and pulmonary rehab plans is learning to cope with and counter the emotional tolls of stress, anxiety, and depression related to having a disease. The

programs share patient education and lifestyle coaching elements as well, but these will be particularly tailored to an individual's unique needs. Dietary changes, weight loss, or smoking cessation may be indicated for some patients, while others may need specific instruction on breathing techniques, oxygen usage, or guidance on how to perform everyday tasks in ways that conserve energy.

Patients must be referred by their doctor to participate. Examples of cardiac conditions that may qualify for the program are chest pain (angina), heart attack, heart surgery, angioplasty or stent placement, and congestive heart failure. In addition to post-COVID conditions, COPD, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, asthma, and lung

cancer are examples of qualifying pulmonary conditions. Patients should work with their doctors to determine if cardio/pulmonary rehab is appropriate for their condition.

Lesemann said that the hospital had its first pulmonary patient on March 9, and by the end of the week there were a dozen referrals to the program, half for cardio and half for pulmonary. It was a stronger start than some expected, Lesemann said.

"Fairview was hoping for just a couple to start with," she said. "We're excited to get started to serve the community."

For more information about the cardio/pulmonary rehabilitation program, call Cook Hospital at 218-666-5945 or visit the website at www.cookhospital.org.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Cook church offers free meal

COOK- Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook is offering another of its monthly drive-through community meals on Thursday, March 25 from 4 to 6 p.m. This month's menu is baked chicken, wild rice, and vegetables. Meals are free and open to the public.

Photo entries being accepted

COOK- Entries continue to be accepted until May 1 for "Finding Light," the photography contest sponsored by Northwoods Friends of the Arts in Cook as a fundraising event.

There is an entry fee of \$10 per photo. Photos may be submitted in 5x7,

8x10 and 8x12 sizes. The top of each photo should be marked to ensure appropriate matting and display. Students who are 18 or younger may enter up to three photos free of charge.

Photographers are encouraged to submit a short description, written thoughts, or a poetic verse to be displayed with each photo during the exhibit, although this is optional.

Winners will be decided by gallery visitors who vote on their favorites during the contest exhibit from May 6 to May 29. First place will receive \$100, and the runner-up will get \$50.

Contestants may sell their photos at prices predetermined by NWFA, with a portion of each sale going to the organization's fundraising. En-

try forms are available online at nwfamn.org and at the NWFA Gallery at 210 S River St.

Entries should be mailed to NWFA, PO Box 44, Cook, MN 55723, or dropped off at the gallery during open hours on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Contact NWFA by email at nwfamn.org@gmail.com, the website at NWFA.MN.ORG or Facebook.

NHS raising funds to fight leukemia

COOK- The National Honor Society at North Woods School is conducting an online "Pennies for Patients" drive from March 15 through April 2 to raise money for

the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Donations will go to support blood cancer research and patient services. Leukemia is the most diagnosed form of childhood cancer.

NHS has set up an online donation page at www.herosquad.org. Click on the "Find Your School" button and search for North Woods School, Cook, MN to be taken to the school's page. Patrons have the option to make a general donation to the campaign or earmark their donations for specific classrooms. Search for elementary classrooms by a teacher's last name. Junior and senior high classes can be found by searching for grade levels, such as "12th grade".

STAR-SPANGLED SINGER



Instead of a recording, the National Anthem before many home North Woods basketball games this season, including last Friday's South Ridge boys game, has been sung by eighth-grader Mya Kinsey. photo by D. Colburn

NORTH WOODS SCHOOL

Walk a mile in a North Woods principal's shoes

FIELD TWP- What does a principal do all day?

Some days I am not 100 percent sure what I actually accomplished, but the day was so busy from start to finish that I didn't even eat my lunch.



JOHN VUKMANICH

School principals and what they do are often misrepresented -- look at movies like "The Breakfast Club" and "Ferris Bueller's Day Off". The principals in these iconic pop-culture films are portrayed as vindictive, incompetent, and "out to get kids." What makes me laugh most is that I simply do not have that kind of time!

In reality, I deal with only a small percentage of the behavioral problems at North Woods. The Dean of Students, Mr. Oehler, shoulders the responsibility for the ma-

majority of those issues. I do handle some of them if he is occupied, or if the incident is major enough to require my assistance.

Dealing with student behavior is easy when a parent is cooperative and understanding. When a parent is defensive and confrontational, it is very challenging. Back to the movie analogy, I can assure our students and parents that we are not out to get anyone, nor are we looking for trouble. Trouble finds us.

It's been a tough year with COVID and the polarized political climate. Our students are well aware of what is happening, and much like adults, they take a stance on certain things. We navigate through it pretty well at school, and the majority of students and families remain pretty well centered in terms of common expectations for proper behavior at school. The current struggles with our country questioning the role of authority and law enforcement do bring about some challenges. Nobody likes to be in trouble, but the question of how those who violate the rules are treated makes me, as a person in a position of authority, feel much more ques-

tioned. Certain instances lead me to feel as though my character and integrity are on the line. It's really tough to put your heart and soul into doing what is right only to end up accused of being in the wrong. It's probably the biggest challenge to the job. I want all students to feel like they are treated fairly.

Nobody likes being accused of violating the rules, and we can run into trouble when the school environment is questioned or when students refuse to admit wrongdoing based on factors that had little or nothing to do with what happened. Kids make mistakes, and all I want to hear from the student is, "Sorry, I won't do that again." All I want to hear from the parent is, "Thanks for letting me know, we will talk about it at home." If not a single student was in trouble ever, I would be a happy camper.

Back to what I do every day. It's a mix of management, leadership, customer service, logistics coordinator, teacher, mentor, counselor, disciplinarian, financial manager, cheerleader, human resources, scheduler, public outreach, problem solver, complaint

department, and some days even janitor. I have mopped up my fair share of spilled milk and the mop fits my hands just as well as anyone else's.

Still, the list doesn't cover everything. Not all aspects of the job apply every day. In a small school, the principal wears a lot of hats, and some days I feel like I don't do anything well but do a ton of average

things. Prioritizing what needs to be done and delegating some of what has to be done are daily responsibilities.

I feel that my biggest role is to help kids get to where they need to be by offering the accountability and flexibility that they need and to help teachers do the best they can. Through it all, I try to be accessible and down-to-earth, relatable and

personable. I know that I cannot make everyone happy, but I can make school the best it can be for the majority of our students. That's what gets me out of bed every day.

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ELY...Continued from page 1

purchased power would be increased by seven percent," Langowski said. "Our current contract expires at the end of 2024 with a three-year lead time notice to inform them of EUC's intent to either automatically renew or explore other options."

In preparation for upcoming power provider contract decisions, EUC recently joined the Northeast Minnesota Municipal Power Agency to partner with other local municipalities to negotiate fair market wholesale rates across the Iron Range, according to Langowski.

Electric bill examples provided by the EUC at the public hearing indicated that a small home in Ely would see a monthly electricity cost in the summer of \$42.77 in 2021, compared to \$40.20 in 2020. On the winter bill, a monthly electricity cost in 2021 is estimated at \$87.04, compared to \$81 in 2020.

In another example, for a family of five, the summer electricity cost in 2021 could be \$98.10,

compared to a 2020 cost of \$91.20. The winter electricity cost in 2021 could be \$184.47, compared to the winter cost of \$170.80 in 2020.

EUC budget and rate committee member Rob Wilmunen added that if 2020 had been a normal year (non-COVID), the rate committee would have been looking at increases to the water and sewer rates because of decreased usage.

"We had quite a few months where restaurants and motels didn't use nearly as much water as they would have in a normal year," he said. "We are taking a pause to see if flows and volumes rebound back and our budget comes back. A seven-percent increase in the electric (rate) is significant, but we can't afford to take the losses in the water and sewer, like we had in 2020, two years in a row."

Wilmunen noted that maintaining healthy utility rates in the city is "attractive" for future bonding and CDBG funding.

Langowski said the

Tax credits with some renewable energy projects actually reduced the city's electric rate for a while.

Harold Langowski, Ely Clerk-Treasurer

Municipal Power Agency is hoping to see future rate savings from Minnesota Power.

"If we don't see any significant savings, we may go out on the market and look for other providers to purchase wholesale power," he said. "They know the seven percent stings. Nobody is happy with it. There should have been a way to reduce the impact on customers. Maybe (Minnesota Power) will come back in a couple of months with different rates. Time will tell."

The lone Ely resident who attended the public hearing inquired if the electric power rate increase was due to "the drive for the new Green Deal" and efforts to utilize more renewable power sources.

Langowski surprised

everyone in the council chambers when he said "tax credits with some renewable energy projects actually reduced the city's electric rate for a while." He added that market conditions affect rates.

"Our contract with Minnesota Power guarantees their rate of return on investment," he said. "Ely, as a municipal utility, has no guaranteed rate of return. That has been a touchy subject for many years."

Library reopening

The Ely Public Library is considering re-opening plans, but don't expect anything to change until at least May. The library, like all city buildings, has been closed for the past year due to COVID-19 public health concerns. The city remains under the

emergency rule that can only be lifted by council action.

Library Director Rachael Heinrich said the library board held a lengthy discussion last month on reopening the facility.

"There was not a consensus on the library board, from my point of view, on what route they want to take," she said. "The council would need to lift the emergency order as a first step. It certainly depends on the COVID situation."

Mayor Chuck Novak indicated that the lifting of the city's emergency order, and approval of a library reopening plan, could likely happen at the second council meeting next month).

Other business

In other business, the council:

► Approved the recommendation from the Heritage Preservation Commission to submit two grant requests of \$177,350 each to replace the Pioneer Mine retaining wall.

► Approved a recommendation from the Park and Rec Board to accept rentals requests at the Rec Center, Semer's Park and Whiteside Park, following updated COVID safety guidelines.

► Approved moving forward with a private developer to develop a housing project by the Trezona Trail and Miners Lake.

► Accepted the resignation of John Zobitz as First Assistant Chief for the Ely Fire Department and Ely Police Chief Chad Houde as firefighter, and allowed Ely police officer Christian Deinhammer to join the EFD pending pre-employment requirements.

► Approved a memorandum of understanding with Morse Township concerning a land swap.

► Approved a contract for construction services with Pathfinder Trailbuilding at Hidden Valley for mountain bike trails.

COVID...Continued from page 1

however social distancing is still required.

► Venues for celebrations and receptions can host those functions at 50 percent capacity up to a maximum capacity of 250.

► Salons and barbers can serve the public at 100 percent capacity as long as they can provide adequate social distancing.

► Entertainment venues can go up to 50 percent capacity, indoors and outdoors, up to 250 people.

► Gyms, fitness centers and pools can go up to 50 percent capacity. The limit for outdoor classes has been expanded to 50 people.

► Outdoor social gatherings can have up to 50 people and indoor gatherings up to 15 people, with no limit on the number of households in attendance.

► Youth sport pod sizes can increase to 50 for outdoor sporting activities. Pod sizes were previously 25.

One of the changes will have varied effects on current attendance restrictions that apply to high school basketball sectional tournaments that kick off this week. Depending on the size of gyms and subject to the decisions of host schools, a few more fans may get to watch tournament games in person in some gyms.

However, state basketball and hockey tournaments will have expanded access, as venues such as the Target Center, that are designed for large events, can expand their seated capacity up to a maximum of 3,000 people beginning April 1. Large outdoor facilities will be able to admit up to 10,000 spectators.

Statewide daily case numbers, case positivity rates, hospitalizations and deaths all have decreased dramatically from December's peak. Walz acknowledged that relaxing restrictions comes with some risk, particularly with variant coronavirus strains present in the state, but said that it was time to balance those risks against social and economic benefits. He emphasized that basic protocols for wearing masks and social distancing remain in effect and should be followed.

"Minnesotans should continue to take simple steps to protect the progress we've made, but the data shows that we are beating COVID-19," Walz said in a statement issued Friday morning. "The most vulnerable Minnesotans are getting the shot, and it is becoming increasingly more safe to return to our daily lives. The sun is shining brighter."

Cases rising

While Walz's statement is encouraging, it comes at a time when the downward trend in positive cases has reversed and is headed back up.

The state's seven-day positive case average, which had been relatively stable for several weeks, crept up from 3.5 to 3.9, but remains below the five percent benchmark signaling heightened risk of community spread.

Areas of St. Louis County have also been trending back up in the seven-day average of new positive cases. The most recent data from the county COVID-19 dashboard shows that the seven-day average for the northern part of the county has jumped from 2.7 on Feb. 3 to 9.7 on March 10, barely below the threshold of 10 that marks escalating community spread. From a low of 6.7 on Feb. 18, the overall rate for the county jumped back into the escalating spread category on Feb. 24 and was on the rise at 12.1 on March 10.

Evidence of the increase can be found in the North Country in the new positive case numbers for the Ely ZIP code that were provided to the *Timberjay* on Tuesday by the St. Louis County Department of Public Health. (See story on page 7.)

Other zip codes monitored by the *Timberjay* had minor or no increases in that two-week time frame.

State health officials continued their warnings Monday about the potential for the more contagious B117 virus variant to gain a significant enough foothold to fuel another spike in positive cases. They noted that the number of counties where the variant has been found increased from 15 last week to 20 this week.

St. Louis County

Communications Manager Dana Kazel confirmed for the *Timberjay* that no cases caused by B117 have been found in the samples from the county tested by the state laboratory, but she urged caution.

"We can't conclusively say it isn't here because right now MDH has the capacity to test only 5-10 percent of all cases statewide," Kazel said.

Normal COVID-19 testing does not identify which strain of the virus is responsible for a positive test result. Labs from around the state send a small portion of their positive tests to the state lab, where genetic testing is done to identify specific virus strains.

Vaccine expansion

As of Tuesday, more than 1.2 million Minnesotans had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, with over 729,000 having completed their vaccination series. As of Sunday, 60,593 people in St. Louis County had received their first doses of the vaccine, and 35,588 had completed the series.

Along with last week's significant expansion of those eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations, as reported in the *Timberjay*, the North Country will have another local option available to those seeking to get vaccinated.

Cook Hospital, which recently held a three-day, 300-dose vaccination clinic at the Cook Community Center, is scheduling appointments for all eligible groups for vaccinations that will begin on Friday.

Scenic Rivers Health Clinics in Cook and Tower and Essentia Ely Clinic already had been offering vaccination appointments to those 65 and older and have now expanded access to accommodate all or part of the newly eligible groups.

However, on the state's Vaccine Locator webpage that was launched Feb. 1 to help Minnesotans "more easily find and connect with local vaccine providers in their area," the *Timberjay* discovered on Tuesday that Essentia Ely Clinic is the only one of the above that shows up

on the map.

So, if someone in Tower or Cook used the Vaccine Locator map, they would be shown that the closest sites for them to get vaccinated are in Ely, Aurora, and Virginia, even though appointments are available in both Tower and Cook.

State officials have said that the maps would be updated as more providers were added. Since Scenic Rivers has been adminis-

tering shots for weeks, the *Timberjay* reached out to the Minnesota Department of Health for an explanation for the missing providers.

MDH Information Officer Doug Schultz responded on Tuesday.

"The map is updated by providers themselves," Schultz wrote in his email. "We have provided a link they can use to input their information into the system. We are con-

tinually updating it and we will do some specific outreach to these providers to encourage them to include that information as soon as possible."

In another expanded vaccination effort, the Bois Forte Band this week activated a Mobile Vaccine Unit that will take clinicians to Duluth and the Twin Cities to administer vaccines to band members, their descendants, and members of their households.

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This activity is part of Artists on Main Street, a partnership between the City of Cook and Rethos, with support from the Bush Foundation.

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Contact to Register: Crystal Phillips, Cook Public Library

Call: 218-666-2210

Email: crystal.phillips@alslib.info

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Bois Forte Band debuts mobile vaccine unit

NETT LAKE — While Bois Forte clinical staff have stayed busy administering COVID-19 vaccinations for Bois Forte Band members, employees and others in the region, the Tribal Council knew there was still more need and wanted to extend this service even further. So, this week, instead of having people only come to them, Bois Forte is taking vaccinations on the road.

“Not everyone can make it to our clinics in Nett Lake or Lake Vermilion so we are offering a Mobile Vaccine Unit,” said Bois Forte Tribal Chairwoman Cathy Chavers. “We talked to Governor (Tim) Walz about our plans, and he was really impressed with what we are doing.”



The Bois Forte Mobile Vaccine Unit took its maiden voyage this week. Pictured left to right are: Terry Defoe, Darnell Goggleye, Sue Larson, Ericka Cote, Bill Durie, and Julie Skoglund. submitted photo

While the driving force behind the Mobile Unit is to provide vaccines to band members, Chavers said descendants and household members

will also be eligible to receive the vaccine.

Bois Forte’s District 1 Representative Shane Drift was tabbed to be at the wheel of the unit’s maiden

voyage to Duluth and the Twin Cities, accompanied by Bois Forte Clinical staff. The unit was scheduled for a 10 a.m. stop in Duluth on Thursday, with another scheduled for 5 p.m. that afternoon in the Twin Cities. Another round of vaccines was to be administered beginning at 10 a.m. on Friday in the Twin Cities.

The Mobile Vaccine Unit will return to the Urban Offices on Thursday, April 15 and Friday, April 16 to provide the second dose of the Moderna vaccine.

“We want to help our band members get vaccinated,” said Drift in response to why he wanted to volunteer his time to the project.

Sign-ups have been brisk thus far and Chavers anticipates the interest will

be even greater as the news travels about the Bois Forte Band’s efforts. Initially 40 people were scheduled for the Duluth Urban Office Mobile Vaccine Clinic, while an additional 140 had signed up for the Twin Cities trip.

Bois Forte has also provided vaccinations to area firefighters, EMS personnel, teachers, and others.

“By providing these services, we’re helping the county and the state in getting people vaccinated,” said Bois Forte Community Health Nurse Teri Morrison. “They are backlogged, and we are doing what we can to help them out.”

Chavers said she has received a lot of positive comments and that it is nice to assist in efforts to

get people vaccinated.

“We want to show the positives that we do for communities,” said Chavers, who sometimes gets frustrated that tribes are featured in a negative light. “We care about people. We are compassionate – that is who we are as Ojibwe people. We are trying to protect our resources and our resources are our people. That includes family, friends and our co-workers.”

Longtime Secretary-Treasurer Dave Morrison agreed.

“Governor Walz really commends us for the tribe reaching out and going above and beyond,” said Morrison. “We’re all about helping our neighbors, our communities, and the surrounding communities.”

TOURISM AND RECREATION

South Kawishiwi pavilion to get improvements through Great American Outdoors Act

REGIONAL—Several local improvement projects have been selected for the Superior National Forest this year as part of the Great American Outdoors Act. The selected projects will be the first round of improvements to address deferred maintenance on the Forest.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the U.S. Department of Agriculture will invest \$285 million to help the Forest Service address critical deferred maintenance and improve transportation and recreation infrastructure on national forests and grasslands.

This investment is made possible by the newly-created National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund, established in 2020 by the Great American Outdoors

Act. These funds will allow the Forest Service to implement more than 500 infrastructure improvement projects essential to the continued use and enjoyment of national forests and grasslands.

The Great American Outdoors Act is a direct response to the backlog of deferred maintenance on national forest and grasslands, according to Joanna Gilkeson, USFS public affairs specialist.

Funding is included for roads and bridges, visitor centers, campgrounds and other facilities.

The South Kawishiwi Pavilion is slated to receive structural repair and restoration.

“This is a historic CCC era log structure near the Kawishiwi River, and



The South Kawishiwi pavilion is located near Ely. photo courtesy USFS

is a popular place for weddings, reunions and other events,” Gilkeson said. The Great American Outdoors Act project replaces two rotted logs near the main entrance of the pavilion, located at the South Kawishiwi Campground, and constructs a new ramp to restore accessibility. “This project will complete the restoration on the structure which began in 2010, allowing for the building to be fully useable by the public once again,” she said.

Repairs and upgrades in the Kawishiwi District include improvements to the Secret Blackstone Trail. “Workers will bring the trail back up to maintenance standards by improving tread and the trail prism, improve

and clear water diversion devices along the trail, and clear any fallen trees or brush,” she said.

Multiple Superior trails will receive deferred maintenance and rehabilitation, including trail maintenance on 13 trails over 20 miles, trail bridge replacements, replacement of wooden staircases with rock stairways, repair and replacement of puncheon, and improvement to erosion control.

Also, as many as 20 recreational facilities across the Superior National Forest, including campgrounds, will receive facility upgrades. Projects include trail/pathway maintenance, erosion control, pavilion updates, replacing and repairing docks and swimming

platforms, replacement of picnic tables, tent pads, fire rings, and other minor constructed features.

Ely-area projects include:

- Snowbank Landing- canoe landing erosion control, replace dock and repair retaining wall.

- South Kawishiwi Campground - upgrade signage and gate, replace parking barriers and repair campground stairways.

- South Kawishiwi River swim site and picnic area - upgrade signage, parking barriers, and stairways.

- South Kawishiwi Riverboat access- replace parking barriers.

- Fenske Lake Campground - pavilion repair (northern Bedrock historic corp), upgrade signage, parking barriers, gates, and pathway.

- Fenske Lake swim site - replace watercraft swim rescue station.

- Fenske Lake fishing pier- repair dock and railings.

- Birch Lake Campground - upgrade solar well, gates, signage, parking barriers, and stairways.

- Fall Lake Swim site - upgrade signage, parking barriers, and

stairways.

- Fall Lake Campground - upgrade signage, parking barriers and stairways.

- Prairie Portage Dock (basswood lake) - replace dock.

“Our forests and grasslands are one of our nation’s greatest treasures and one of the most effective natural carbon captures that exist to help combat the effects of climate change,” Secretary Vilsack said “Millions of people each year enjoy forests and grasslands, and these investments will promote public-private partnerships, tourism and recreation, protect public lands and ensure our national forests are accessible to all. These investments will also serve as a catalyst for rural economic development and employment opportunities.”

The Great American Outdoors Act authorizes funding under the Legacy Restoration Fund annually through fiscal year 2025. Forest Service economists estimate that projects funded with these dollars will support roughly 4,400 jobs and contribute \$420 million to the gross domestic product.

TOWER...Continued from page 1

storefront loan program. TEDA’s recently established finance committee reviewed and approved nine of the 15 proposals, with awards ranging from \$1,500-\$12,000. The committee approved a total of \$62,500 in awards.

TEDA also assisted businesses in applying for additional grant dollars, from the AEOA’s Business Energy Retrofit (BER) program, which helped them obtain an additional \$30,292 for improvements to Main Street buildings that house businesses, or soon will. Local business owners will invest private funds as well for the improvements.

Perhaps the most ambitious project is already underway. Miranda Kishel and her father Brett have joined forces to completely renovate the former Burgess garage, which later became Classy Cars before closing nearly two decades ago. The previous owner, Ron Abrahamson Sr., had built a second story on the building more than a decade ago, but the plan to create apartments never went forward. The entire space is currently being renovated for a variety of business uses, including for the opening of a natural and whole foods shop, a proposal that also received funding assistance from

TEDA.

New owners are expected to be in place later this month in the former Hendrickson Electric building next to the Tower Café. The new owners are tapping a TEDA grant and BER funds for the necessary upgrades to open their new business, South Shore Creamery, which will sell ice cream and other tasty treats.

Vermilion Fuel and Food is slated for a storefront facelift and other needed improvements, tapping funds from both TEDA and BER. Adventure Seaplanes was another major recipient of TEDA funding, to assist in the purchase of necessary equipment to launch Adventure Air Charters at the Tower Airport. The new service will provide affordable customer flights for up to six passengers, arriving and departing from the Tower Airport, seven days a week.

est in Tower and these grant funds have enabled TEDA to help move a number of ideas forward and enable needed improvements to a number of area businesses,” said TEDA President Stephen Peterson.

Among the other recipients of funding were:

- Good Ol’ Days for a new and efficient air-cooling system.

- Vermilion Lumber for a new roof and fascia replacement.

- MarJo Motel for new screen doors and electrical and heating upgrades.

- Vermilion Country School for signage.

TEDA will be working closely with the awardees over the next 100 days to ensure that their projects remain on track. Under the IRRR funding rules, the funds must all be expended by June 30. The awards to businesses will be paid out on a reimbursement basis as they provide invoices for documented expenses.

“There’s a lot of inter-

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ely community dedicates Habitat for Humanity home

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – Community members here virtually dedicated a Habitat for Humanity rehabilitation project this week.

Brittany Satterwhite and her three daughters, Kiersten, Claire, and Kaitlyn, worked together with North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity to renovate an existing Ely “habitat” home from the ground up, located at 463 11th Ave. near the Ely Recreation Center.

“The family is excited today to celebrate this occasion with the Ely community,” Nathan Thompson, executive director of the regional organization, said Monday. “We officially welcome this family to the Ely community. Habitat for Humanity’s mission is very relevant, especially in our current times. 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.”

Satterwhite partnered with Habitat for Humanity and the federal U.S.D.A. 502 program to build and affordably purchase her new home with assistance from the St. Louis County Community Development Block Grant program.

“This home in Ely was our first project started and dedicated during this coronavirus pandemic,” Thompson said.

Thompson likened the Habitat program to “the old barn-raising” mentality.

“Friends and neighbors in the community get together and someone has a few dollars to lend to buy materials, other people have time and skills to come and help, the family pitches in with their own



Nathan Thompson, above, executive director of North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity, dedicates an Ely home Monday morning. Brittany Satterwhite, left, and her three daughters, Kiersten, Claire and Kaitlyn, will soon live in their new home. photos by K. Vandervort

Kiersten, age 7, Claire, age 5 and Kaitlyn, age 3,” 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. The family will complete the house purchase procedures this spring.

“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.”

“I look forward to adding my own touch to the house,” Satterwhite said. “Being able to choose the shingles, siding, doors, countertops and lighting has been a lot of fun. I will finally be able to decorate my house the way I want. I can’t wait to landscape the outside and have a nice yard for the girls

to play in, a spot where we can just relax outside and enjoy each other’s company and a garden/flower area for the girls to grow their favorite things. The girls can’t wait to decorate their own bedrooms. They have big dreams of building treehouses, forts, having a trampoline and swimming pool outside. They can’t wait to invite friends over and make lots of new memories! So many endless possibilities they will have.”

To adhere to COVID-19 public health safety plan and protocols, the event was not open to the public. Habitat for Humanity recorded the event and it is available for viewing on their website, www.nslchfh.org.

North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors President Greg Krog and other board members welcomed St. Louis County Commissioner Paul McDonald, Congressman Pete Stauber, Grace Lutheran Church Pastor Eric Thiele, Habitat staff and volunteers to the event.

“This is all about helping people take a step up in life,” Krog said.

Commissioner McDonald said tax-forfeited lands around the county are often utilized to support the Habitat for Humanity organization.

“Anything we can do to help families get affordable housing, we’re all in,” he said.

McDonald reminisced about his basketball coaching days at nearby Vermilion Community College.

“Years ago there was a Habitat project up on White Street, where I live, and I took a number of my basketball players to volunteer. It was an eye-opening experience for them to see teamwork in action. Habitat for Humanity is teamwork in action,” he said.

North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity has been working to build affordable homes in the North Country since 1995.

“Working to build simple, decent and affordable homes, the organization has served over 100 families in 15 communities on the Iron Range,” Thompson said.

Families are selected based on their need for housing and their willingness to partner in the building of homes. Families must also demonstrate their ability to pay Habitat’s affordable mortgage.

“Habitat works through community support which provides volunteer labor to build homes and staff committees. Individuals, businesses, churches, organizations, foundations and government sources all contribute to provide funding for building materials to construct homes,” Thompson added.

Applications for the homeownership program are now being accepted for upcoming building seasons.

SLEDS...Continued from page 1

Along the other shore were 120 or so competitors in the 35th annual Melgeorge’s Antique and Classic Snowmobile Race, fraternizing with family, friends, and anyone else (there are no strangers at this event) as they awaited their turns navigating the circuit and drag racing courses.

The turnout was among the best ever, Koch said, and well more than the 70-some who turned out last year.

“The good weather really brings the people out,” he said.

The temperature was already in the high 40s and the skies crystal clear when the festivities kicked off at noon, more than perfect for gathering outdoors toward the end of a Minnesota winter, but perhaps not so ideal for getting traction. Days of unseasonably warm weather created slick track conditions, leading to wild gyrations by many riders trying to lean their vintage sleds through the curves. Most fared well, a few, well, not so much.

However, while competition is serious for many, all are more serious about having fun at the race, and no one was having more of that than nine-year-old Case Zachariason. He was there with his mom, Marisa, and her boyfriend, and Case’s grandparents, Wayne and

Dawn Schlauderaff, all of Detroit Lakes.

Case has been snowmobiling all his life, Wayne said, and his love of the pastime was showcased in an article on the Snowmobaby website when he was only four. It’s a treasured activity he loves sharing with his “Papa” Wayne.

“I’ve been riding all my life, too, and I hate to admit it but I’m 57,” Wayne chuckled.

“It’s pretty fun,” Case said. “My Papa and me built a Tow Mater snowmobile. We have two of them.”

Christened “Snow Mater” and “Mini-Snow Mater,” the sleds are adult and child-sized versions of rough, vintage Snow Pony machines. They’re decked out in cartoonish style with huge eyes on the windshields and big teeth on the front to resemble the rusted but loveable Tow Mater tow truck from the animated movie “Cars.” And this weekend was special because Case was debuting an added wrinkle – he was towing a bright red race car behind him as he raced.

“This car we just put together here last week, and the first time it’s been hooked behind there is today,” Wayne said. “We didn’t know if Case would pull it or not. But he wanted to go get it, so we did. Yeah, he liked it. You

know little kids, you’ve got to have them on board.”

The first snowmobile off the line in the drag race coughed and sputtered to a halt about 40 yards down the track. As the driver and others unsuccessfully labored to restart it, Case was second to go, lending a comical sense of irony at the sight of an already loaded tow truck whizzing on by.

The car was Wayne’s idea, Case said, and the Mini-Snow Mater isn’t the

only cartoon-themed sled Case has.

“I have a Thomas the Train and a Minion,” he said.

Working on the snowmobiles with his Papa is just as much fun as driving, Case said.

“It’s something we got into a number of years ago with the cartoon show cars,” Wayne said. “There’s actually a guy in Hurley, Wis., who made one similar to this, but we’ve got a lot more detail

in it.”

It was a number of years ago, Wayne said, when he realized he had a serious obsession with vintage snowmobiles.

“There’s too many to count,” he laughed. “I’ve got probably 30 or more. We’re not brand loyal. That doesn’t matter.”

Wayne said this was the seventh consecutive year that they have come to Melgeorge’s.

“We come here every year. It’s a lot of fun,” he

said. “We do about six shows a year. We’ve been all the way to Casper, Wyo., several times for shows. But we really like this. It’s a good way to wrap up the season.”

And the dynamic grandpa-grandson duo didn’t mind the somewhat slushy and slick conditions at all.

“Trying to make the corners, it is what it is,” Wayne said. “It’s all for fun.”



BE A HERO!

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thru Sunday, April 11, 2021



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- Tell your friends near and far to donate to the Ely Food Shelf in March.
- Plan a drive at your school, business or organization. Ideas like non-perishable food collection, a can-struction art challenge, a competitive coin drive, department or business challenge, bar challenge, deals, discounts, or round up purchasing can motivate and make for a fun, friendly competition and raise morale.
- Have our Food Shelf Director speak to your group about food insecurity.
- Host a social media challenge or donate individually to the Ely Area Food Shelf.



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STATE NORDIC SKI MEET

Johnston finishes fifth, other Ely skiers do well

Mild conditions hamper Ely girls racers, cooler temps brought fast times in boys competition

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

GIANTS RIDGE—Mother Nature offered up starkly different conditions for the Ely boys and girls skiers here last Thursday and Friday, and it had an impact on the final results of the state high school Nordic ski competition.

Ely standout skier, senior Jasper Johnston, who raced in fresh snow and below-freezing conditions on

Friday, finished in the top five at the statewide contest for the second year in a row, while Ely's other contenders finished lower in the pack.

"Jasper had a solid classic race and the top six boys in that race were separated by seconds," said Ely Head Coach Paula Anderson. "He had a great skate race and ended up in fifth place, out of third by 1.4 seconds."

Ely's other male competitor, junior Gabriel Pointer, had a

Right: Jasper Johnston kicks into high gear during state Nordic ski competition last Friday at Giants Ridge. Johnston finished in fifth overall among 158 competitors.

submitted

solid meet, finishing 69th overall, although the course didn't play to his strengths, noted Anderson. "He is mostly a climber and the course

See **NORDIC...**pg. 2B



BOYS BASKETBALL

Grizzlies take final two

Were set to start playoff drive on Thursday at home

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- The North Woods Grizzlies warmed up for sectional tournament action this week by closing out the regular season with a pair of wins over South Ridge and Mt. Iron-Buhl.

The Grizzlies played host to South Ridge on Friday in the annual battle for "The Claw," a traveling trophy awarded to the winner that was created by a South Ridge shop class when both schools were new. Coming in with a 12-5 record that included a recent overtime road win at Cherry, the Panthers had high hopes for ending four years of North Woods dominance and reclaiming the trophy.

Instead, what the Panthers got was a nightmare courtesy of one of the Grizzlies' best defensive performances of the season as North Woods kept a firm grip on "The Claw" with a 79-36 beatdown of their district rivals.

Five three-balls from four North Woods players helped the Grizzlies grab a 21-11 lead with just under seven minutes remaining in the half, and then came a haymaker punch in the form of a 20-2 run that was largely fueled by ferocious defense. Alex Hartway's quick hands set the stage with a steal and fast break bucket.

Above: North Woods' Jared Chiabotti battles a South Ridge player for a loose ball.

Right: The Grizzlies' Alex Hartway, left, and Davis Kleppe apply pressure to a South Ridge player.

Lower right: T.J. Chiabotti drives the lane for a layup against South Ridge.

photos by D. Colburn

T.J. Chiabotti got into the thievery when he sneaked behind an unsuspecting South Ridge guard to swipe the ball and race for another score. The Grizzlies snagged five steals in the run and collected treys from all three Chiabottis—T.J., Jared, and Brenden—and held an insurmountable 41-13 lead at the half.

Although the Grizzlies had a height disadvantage, they won the rebounding battle 33-27, grabbing 16 caroms on the offensive end. North Woods forced 25 turnovers, collecting an astounding 21 steals.

"We came out with a high level of energy and set the pace early," Head Coach Will Kleppe said. "It all started with our defensive intensity which led to a number of transition baskets. I thought Alex Hartway played some of

See **GRIZZLIES...**pg. 2B



GIRLS BASKETBALL

T-Wolves hit stride as playoffs loom

by JORDAN PRICE
Contributing Writer

ELY- The Timberwolves were heading into the playoffs this week coming off a convincing win in their regular season finale last Thursday. The Wolves relied on stout defense and aggressive play at the basket to rack up a 68-46 win over Greenway, the highest point total the team has scored all season. "Our last home game was a 22-point win. Now that's a great feeling," said Head Coach Max Gantt.

The game remained close in the early-going and the Wolves took just a six-point lead into the break. But Ely dominated the second half, helped by a few key three-pointers down the

See **ELY GIRLS...**pg. 2B

Grizz looking for an upset

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- The North Woods girls basketball team knew things wouldn't get any easier after a March 8 loss to Section 7A's second-seeded Cherry. Next up to finish out the regular season was third-seeded South Ridge.

The Panthers proved to be too much for the Grizzlies to handle, as host South Ridge got off to a fast start and led 44-19 at the half before coasting to a 75-34 win. Madison Spears was the only North Woods player to score in double-figures with 10.

"They came out hard right away and we were kind flat the whole game," North Woods Head Coach Liz Cheney said. "South Ridge seemed to be getting multiple chances when they were on offense. When we were on offense, they kept us to one shot. Their defense was really good and tight."

It was the fifth consecutive loss for the 5-10 Grizzlies, who had to take on the first, second, third, sixth and seventh seeds in the section in that stretch. North Woods is seeded 12th in the sectional tournament and was scheduled to play at fifth-seeded Chisholm on Wednesday. A 5-12 matchup is a popular and often successful pick for upsets in March Madness bracket contests, a fact not lost on Cheney.

"I've had that exact conversation with the girls," Cheney said. "If you follow college basketball you know there are a lot of 5-12 upsets."

North Woods was bumped out of last year's tournament by Chisholm. The Grizzlies will have had a week to work on offensive and defensive adjustments, and Cheney was optimistic that "if we can just put all those pieces together" the Grizzlies could pull off the upset. If North Woods wins they would play again on Friday against the winner of the game between Cromwell-Wright and Nashwauk-Keewatin.

HOCKEY

Ely finishes winless season; COVID nixes playoffs

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – The young Ely hockey team finished the 2020-2021 season without a win, following a 10-0 loss to Duluth Marshall last Thursday at the Ely Ice Arena. Their playoff season ended abruptly this week with a report of COVID-19 on the team. The Timberwolves (0-11) were seeded 10th in the Section 7A playoffs and were set to travel to International Falls on Thursday.

“Our hockey team is out of the playoffs and in quarantine this week because of a positive COVID-19 test,” said 6-12 Principal Megan Anderson. She confirmed that a 10th-grade learning cohort in the school is also affected by the positive coronavirus case.

In their final game of the season last Thursday, Ely kept the Hilltoppers to just one goal in the first period. Goalie Chase Sandberg turned away



Left: Ely defenseman Alex Merriman deflects a shot away as goalie Chase Sandberg looks on.

photo by K. Vandervort

11 other scoring chances. The Timberwolves took six shots on goal in the period.

Duluth poured on the heat in the second, scoring six times on 24 scoring chances to take a 7-0 lead, and added three more goals in the final period. Ely finished the game with 12 shots to the goal.

Both teams were called for six penalty minutes on three

infractions.

Ben Cavalier replaced Sandberg in goal at 17:54.

The Timberwolves endured a brutal three-game road trip to start the month of March, losing 11-0 to International Falls on March 4, dropping a 9-2 match at Bagley/Fosston on March 6, followed by a 9-0 loss at Eveleth Gilbert on March 9.

In the game against

International Falls, Ely fell behind 4-0 after the first period, was down 10-0 after two periods, and gave up one more goal in the final frame.

All of the Timberwolves’ 15 scoring chances to the net came in the final period. International Falls had 63 shots on goal against Ely goalie Chase Sandberg.

The Broncos scored on two of three power plays in the game. The Timberwolves had three power play opportunities.

Against Bagley Fosston, Ely scored in the first period after falling behind 1-0 early. Jimmy Zupancich scored an even-strength goal at 7:52 with assists by Drew Marolt and Jack Mathias.

The Flyers scored twice more in the first period to make

the score 3-1, and three more times in the second period to increase their lead to 6-1. After the Flyers took a 7-1 lead early in the final period, the Timberwolves scored again at 12:09 on an even-strength goal by Mathias with an assist by Zupancich. Bagley/Fosston scored two more times in the period.

Ely had 37 shots on goal and The Flyers had 16 scoring chances. The Timberwolves were 0-4 on power play chances while Bagley/Fosston was 0-5.

The Eveleth/Gilbert Wolverines took a 2-0 lead in the first period, added one more goal in the second, and tacked on six more goals in the final period. The Timberwolves had eight shots on goal for the night. The Wolverines took 58 shots to the net against Ely goalie Chase Sandberg. Eveleth-Gilbert was 0-3 on power plays.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Ely drops season final match to Cherry

by JORDAN PRICE
Contributing Writer

IRON JUNCTION—The Tigers proved elusive for Ely in their season

finale as Cherry’s impressive shooting ability made the difference in a 71-49 contest. “We never got into a flow on either end of the floor,” said Ely Head

Coach Tom McDonald. “Cherry shot the ball very well against us and we had no answers defensively for them.”

Sophomore guard

Joey Bianco led the wolf pack with 14 points, while senior Brock LaTourell scored 12, and senior Will Davies notched 10.

“We shot poorly, at 32

percent, and I never really felt we were in the game with them because of that,” said McDonald.

The Timberwolves will host Lakeview

Christian Thursday evening at 6 p.m. in the opening round of the Section 7A playoffs.

NORDIC...Continued from page 1B

was pretty flat,” she said.

While the fresh snow and colder temperatures favored fast times for the boys, mild temperatures and sloppy snow on Thursday, hampered Ely’s two female competitors, sophomore Zoe Devine and classmate Phoebe Helms.

“Zoe was a little frustrated with not feeling as competitive as she would have liked, but she gave it her best anyways,” said

Anderson. “The girls meet was super challenging with the warm temperatures,” said Anderson. The classic race, in particular, proved daunting as the racers struggled to find the right wax for the conditions. “Most of the girls in the field were using zeros which are a waxless racing ski for 32 degrees and above,” said Anderson. “Unfortunately, our girls don’t own zeros, so we struggled in the classic

race.”

Both Devine and Helms fared better in the skate portion of the competition, helping to lift their overall marks.

Devine finished in 34th place in the skate portion of the contest, an improvement on her 39th place finish in the classic, for an overall finish in 35th place. Helms finished in 76th place overall, on the strength of her 60th place showing in the skate

Right: Zoe Devine competes last Thursday during the state Nordic meet at Giants Ridge.

submitted

competition.

While Ely will lose its top skier with Johnston’s graduation this year, three of its four state competitors will likely be returning to the course next year, setting the stage for another promising season.



GRIZZLIES...Continued from page 1B

the best ‘on ball’ defense I’ve seen from our team this year. We moved the ball well on offense and the result was a better shooting percentage. It was nice to see the three-pointers falling.”

T.J. Chiabotti tallied 21 points in the win, and Brenden Chiabotti knocked down 15.

The Grizzlies had little time for rest as they were back on the court on Saturday at Mt. Iron-Buhl.

North Woods fans surely had unsettling images of the Grizzlies’ loss to Ely in their heads in the second half as they watched the Rangers erase a 53-38 North Woods advantage to take a 64-63 lead with 3:37 remaining. The Rangers exploited double-teaming pressure from the Grizzlies by finding open players to

knock down four treys in the 26-10 run.

That lead lasted all of 12 seconds, as Darius Goggeley scored, was fouled, and converted the free throw, then scored again on the next possession on a dish from a driving T.J. Chiabotti. Holding the ball outside to milk the clock, Chiabotti again drove the lane and found Shane Morrison for a bucket that put the Grizzlies firmly in control at 70-64, leading to a 72-66 win.

“We were high energy in the first half, but we played a fast-paced game the night before so in the second half we slowed down a bit,” Kleppe said. “Our guys showed some maturity when MIB momentarily took the lead. We continued to attack the basket and got some

good high/low baskets from Darius and Sean. Defensive buy-in has been improving. Guys know that if they are not contributing on defense, I can’t keep them on the floor regardless of their offensive potential. That in itself has been motivation.”

North Woods hit 46 percent of their shots overall and 36 percent from three-point range.

T.J. Chiabotti scored 26 points on 10-of-21 shooting, including five treys. Darius Goggeley dropped in 14, Sean Morrison had 11, and Jared Chiabotti scored 10.

The Grizzlies finished the regular season at 12-5 and are seeded third in the Section 7A tournament. They were scheduled to kick off the tourney with a home game against

14th-seed Hill City on Thursday. A win would have the Grizzlies playing at home again on Saturday against the winner of the Ely-Lakeview Christian game.

While attendance is limited to only those on a preapproved list, the Grizzlies got some good news on Tuesday from ISD 2142 Superintendent Reggie Engebritson, who gave the go-ahead to increase the number of spectators allowed per player from two to three. “Adding a few for the tournament will be nice, although gym size and seating availability will still keep fan numbers down,” Kleppe said. “It is still nice to be playing and to start a run in the section tournament.”

ELY GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

stretch from freshman Sarah Visser that closed out any chance the Raiders would mount a comeback. Visser and freshman guard Grace LaTourell each notched 20 points on the evening. LaTourell fought back from ankle trouble and had a big second half for the Timberwolves,

scoring 14 in the stanza. Rachel Coughlin was a force underneath, collecting 16 rebounds, while Taylor Gibney notched 14 points, eight of which were crucial free throws. Madeline Kallberg scored eight points.

“The win showed us how far we have come

as a team,” said Gantt. “We have a three-game win streak heading into the playoffs and I believe we are playing our best basketball of the year. I couldn’t ask for much more than that. I have to say, I am very proud of how hard we have been working to get to this

point.”

The Wolves were set to visit Floodwood for their first playoff game on Wednesday night as the *Timberjay* went to press. See the latest on that contest at timberjay.com.

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STATE BUDGET

State projects budget surplus, not deficit

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ST. PAUL- Prospects for Minnesota's next two-year state budget got a huge shot in the arm earlier this month when budget officials projected a \$1.6 billion surplus for that period, erasing the dire specter of multi-billion-dollar shortfalls predicted just months ago.

A less severe economic impact than anticipated from the COVID-induced downturn set the stage for a combination of higher than anticipated revenues, lower state spending, and an increased surplus in the current fiscal year to contribute to a dramatic reversal in the state's budget projections, Minnesota Management and Budget officials said. Just seven months ago they predicted a whopping \$4.7 billion deficit. The picture had improved by November, but MMB was still looking at a shortfall of \$1.27 billion when the Legislature reconvened in January.

"I feel like we've been on a yearlong roller coaster," said MMB Commissioner Jim Schowalter. "With today's fiscal information, we know that we're able to weather last year's volatility without untimely cuts."

A significant difference between the current projec-

tion versus that in November, according to state economist Laura Kalambokidis, is the inclusion of the anticipated boost to economic activity from two federal coronavirus stimulus packages – a \$900 billion stimulus passed in December and the \$1.9 trillion package just signed by President Biden.

Kalambokidis cautioned that there are assumptions built into the state's projection that are subject to uncertainty. It assumes a continued decline in the coronavirus pandemic. She noted that the impact of December's stimulus is still uncertain. The projection assumes increased consumer spending, but many consumers chose to save last spring's stimulus checks rather than spend them. There is also the inherent uncertainty of making a projection 28 months into the future. A change in any assumption would affect the overall projection.

"Small changes can cause big changes," she said.

Schowalter pointed out that about \$1.4 billion of the projected surplus comes from one-time infusions of cash. A once-predicted budget shortfall in the current year's budget has changed to a projected \$940 million surplus due primarily to better than anticipated tax revenues. Schowalter said this was

largely a result of lower wage earners bearing a higher burden of the pandemic's economic downturn than high wage earners.

Another \$491 million of the projected surplus is attributed to a mandatory disbursement from the state's budget reserve fund, a move passed in 2019 as part of that year's compromise over the 2020-21 biennium budget.

"The bulk of this money is from one-time resources," Schowalter said. "We'll have to be careful and manage it appropriately."

Still, the news is undoubtedly positive, and none were more upbeat about it than Gov. Tim Walz.

"It's good news that our fundamentals are strong," Walz said. "There is every reason to be optimistic about the future."

As the legislature works on the budget for the next biennium in this new fiscal scenario, Walz emphasized that they should look to address the hardships experienced by the small business community and hospitality industry during the battle against the pandemic.

"We went to war in this thing, and we sent some to the front lines," Walz said. "Whenever we do that we pay hazard pay to our soldiers."

Tax hike debate

When Walz introduced his \$52.4 billion "COVID-19 Recovery Budget" for the biennium at the end of January, the state was still looking at a \$1.27 billion deficit. To counter that, Walz proposed \$1.6 billion in tax increases that would primarily impact Minnesota's wealthiest individuals and corporations. Republicans immediately fired back at the announcement, with Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka declaring, "We are not going to increase taxes on anyone."

Now, a projected surplus roughly equal to the tax increases Walz proposed has done little to quell party squabbling over the matter.

Walz's proposed tax package includes:

► A new fifth tier income tax rate of 10.85 percent for those with incomes over \$1 million (married filing jointly), \$750,000 (head of household) or \$500,000 (single), affecting an estimated 21,000 households.

► An increase in the corporate tax rate from 9.8 to 11.25 percent.

► A cigarette tax increase of \$1 per pack, an increase in the tax on moist snuff, and a gross receipts tax on vaping devices and products.

The plan would also ex-

pand the lowest tax bracket, decreasing the taxes of over one million households by an average of \$36.

DFL leaders and advocacy groups continue to push for some tax hikes on corporations and high earners, for what they term as tax fairness issues rather than a requirement to pay for new spending.

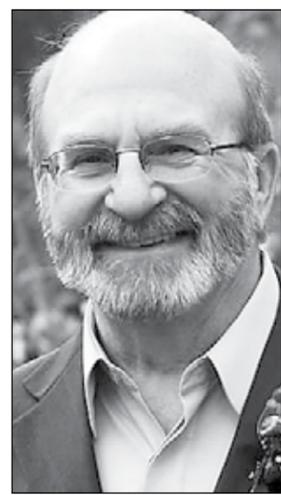
Republican leaders used the \$1.6 billion surplus as additional reinforcement for their opposition to Walz's tax proposals.

House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt was among those who were quick to speak out on the plan.

"Raising taxes will slow our economic comeback and make it harder to bring back jobs and paychecks to where they were before the pandemic," Daudt said. "We know the Governor's tax hikes will not become law this year, and we can save ourselves weeks of headaches if the Governor and Democrats acknowledge that now. We're ready to roll up our sleeves and work together to pass a responsible budget without raising taxes."

MinnPost contributed to this article.

Obituaries and Death Notices



John E. Turk

John Edward Turk, 74, of Lake Vermilion-Tower, passed away surrounded by family at Abbott Heart Hospital in Minneapolis on Thursday, March 4, 2021. A celebration of life will take place on Saturday, June 26 at Fortune Bay Resort Casino for anyone wishing to share the love and life of a truly great man. There is no greater honor than to be remembered as kindness, as love, as the light in others' time of darkness. Family services are provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower.

John was born on Sept. 26, 1946, in Hibbing, to Henry and Elaine (Deger) Turk. He was joined in marriage to his best friend, Sally Trenti, at their home on Sept. 17, 2011. John was the ulti-

mate outdoors man; he enjoyed fishing all year round and hunting (rifle, bow, and muzzle loader). He also traveled out west and to Alaska to pursue his dream hunts.

John's selfless dedication to help others recover their lives, his compassion, and love for family and friends will truly be missed.

John is survived by his wife, Sally; children, Jena Jamison, Stefanie O'Neil, Dustin Turk (Sarah), Jameson Turk and Brandon Turk (Stacy); bonus children, Rebecca Kimbell (Michael) and Dan Frosaker (Stephanie); grandchildren, Dylan Jamison, Sydney Jamison, Jackson Turk, Alayna Turk, Henry Turk and Henley O'Neil; bonus grandchildren, Mason Kimbell and Owen and Noah Frosaker; great-grandchild, Delilah; sister, Jean Johnson (Ron); niece, Terra Boldt; and nephew, Jason Boldt.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Henry and Elaine.

Julie A. Fogelberg

Julie Ann Floyd Scheuring Fogelberg, 60, of Cook, loving wife, mother, sister, daughter and grandmother, passed away on Thursday, March 11, 2021, with family by her side. A celebration of life was held on Monday, March 15 at

First Baptist Church in Cook. Memorials may be made to Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry or First Baptist Church in Cook. Memorials to VLM will be directed to the Patti Alt Campership Fund to make sure that every kid who wants to go to camp has the opportunity to do so. Memorials made to First Baptist Church will also be used to fund camper scholarships to Trout Lake Camp. Arrangements were with Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook.

She is survived by her mother, Audrey Floyd; husband, Steve Fogelberg; daughters, Rochelle (Ryan) Rentschler and Katie (Joe) Lorenz; stepdaughter, Amy (Steve) Stepec; stepson, Nels Fogelberg; sister, Jill (Mike) Klapatch; brother, Gregory (Sandy) Floyd; sisters-in-law, Kay Johnson and Chris (Dean) Walden; brother-in-law, Rick Fogelberg; grandchildren, Audry and Rex Rentschler, Madden and Allie Lorenz, Jack, Henry, Evelyn and Lucy Stepec.

Vienna V. Takkunen

Vienna Virginia Anderson Takkunen, 94, of Orr, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, March 9, 2021. A celebration of life will be held later this summer, followed by a family burial in Orr. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

Kenneth M. Colbenson

Kenneth M. Colbenson, 85, of Kannapolis, N.C., died on Sunday, March 7, 2021, at Tucker Hospice House in Kannapolis after complications from COVID. Ken was cremated and an informal graveside service will be held at 1 p.m. on

Friday, June 4 at Argo Cemetery in Babbitt. All are welcome to attend the burial and share memories and parting words. Depending on the Minnesota COVID restrictions at that time, an informal gathering will be held after the service at the Sawmill Saloon and Restaurant in Virginia.

He is survived by his

son, Robert (Cindy) Colbenson; daughter, Cheryl (Michael Holmes) Colbenson; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; three brothers; and two sisters.

THANK YOU!

You helped raise **\$26,500**
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are receiving Imagination Library
books this year!

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Event Decor: Suzie & Steven Henke
 Event Emcee: Kristen Vake
 Imagination Library Video: CBS 3
 and to all the Power of the Purse participants bidding on items to support Imagination Library!

Our sincerest apologies if we omitted anyone!

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Outdoors

Our lives in the
Northwoods

CLIMATE

Above average temperatures continue in area

Except for the February cold snap, the area has run well above normal throughout the winter

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — As the snow steadily disappears from the North Country weeks ahead of normal, it's apparent that the impact of this winter's la Niña was much less than expected. La Niña is the term for a cold Pacific current that alternates with its warmer opposite, known as el Niño, both of which tend to impact weather patterns through-

out much of North America.

In Minnesota, the la Niña current is most often associated with colder and snowier winters, and that's what many forecasters were predicting this year for the Upper Midwest. Instead, except for two weeks in February, it was one of the mildest winters on record.

"Mid-February was an island of cold in the middle of a very warm winter," said Pete

Boulay, Minnesota state climatologist. That cold spell was intense while it lasted, giving northern Minnesotans a taste of life in a place like Yakutsk in northeastern Siberia. Indeed, across the North Country, the temperature during that two-week stretch averaged anywhere from 15 to nearly 20 degrees below zero, with an overnight low of minus-50 reported east of Ely and plenty of minus-40s

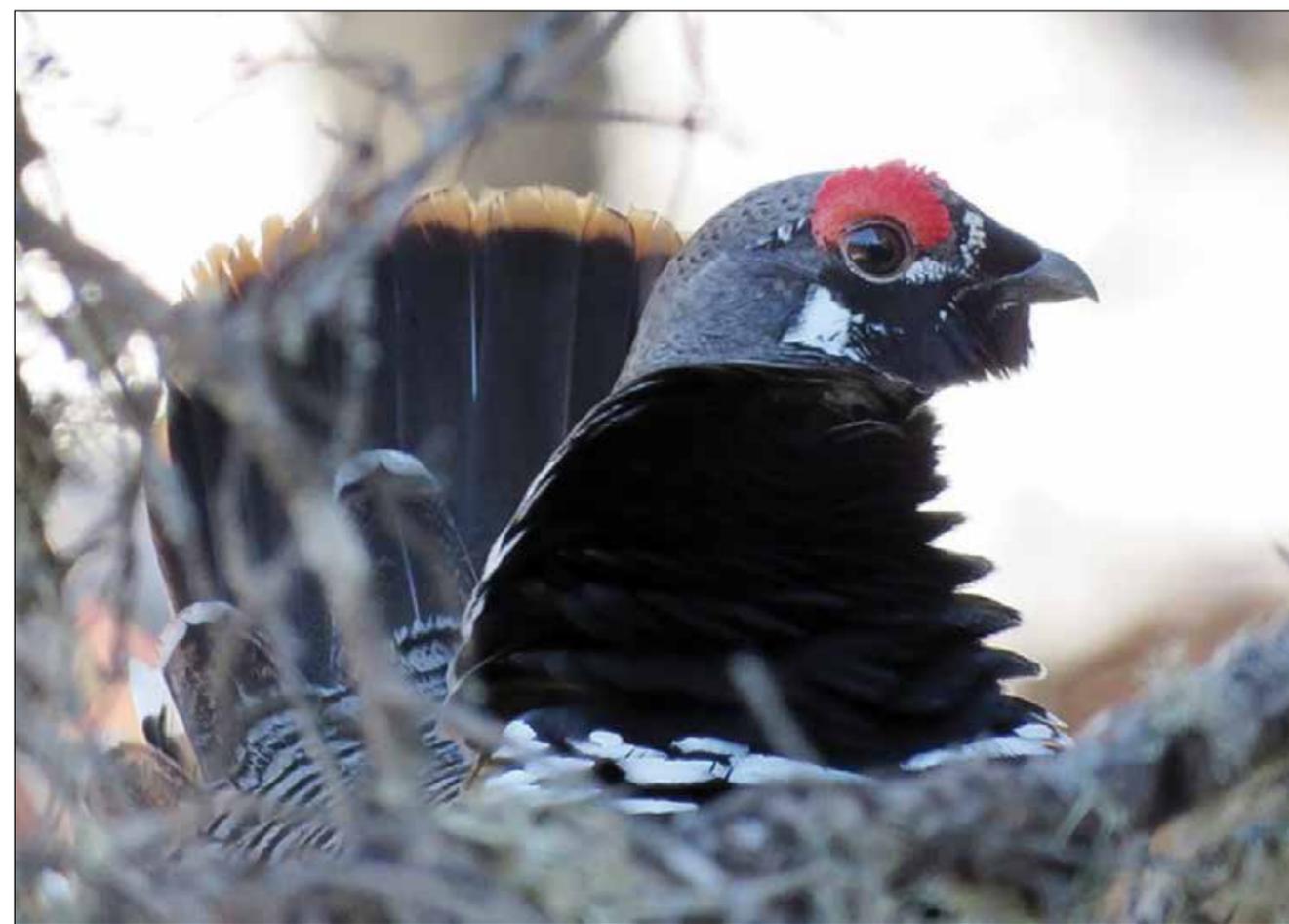
around the area.

For the two-week stretch, the average temperature ran anywhere from 20-29 degrees below *normal*, a departure from the norm that is exceptional over such a span. According to Boulay, the region has probably seen bigger departures, but over shorter periods of time. "The trick for this one was how long it lasted," said Boulay.

But for that two-week cold

snap, the region was headed toward one of its mildest winters on record. As it was, the meteorological winter (Dec.-Feb.) ended in International Falls as the 13th warmest on record, according to Boulay. Climatologists turn to International Falls for comparison, since it has the longest period of record of any weather station in the region.

See **WINTER...**pg. 5B



SPRUCE GROUSE

Love is in the air

For these conifer-loving grouse, the mating season is underway early

According to the calendar, spring arrives Saturday, but out in our area bogs, the spruce grouse have been thinking spring for a while now. It's actually a bit earlier than usual, since the spruce grouse breeding season usually kicks into high gear come April. But given our early warm-up, the search for love in the swamp is heating up ahead of schedule.

Actually, spruce grouse aren't only found in swamps here in the North Country. But this is a bird of the coniferous forest and so the extensive black spruce forests

commonly found in our vast peatlands make good habitat for this northern species. But they can also be found in any predominately coniferous woods, and are particularly fond of jack pine as well as spruce, which means they can be found in upland areas as well as swamps. In northern Minnesota, they range from as far west as Red Lake, east to the tip of the Arrowhead, although their populations tend to be local-

ized and they are nowhere near as common as our ubiquitous ruffed grouse. If you haven't seen one before, you're probably not alone. Unlike their more common cousins, spruce grouse rarely flush when humans walk by, so we're far more likely to simply walk right past them. Their reluctance to flush for

a human has given them the common name, "fool's hen," but given that this species lives where humans are rarely seen, there's little reason for these birds to react to our presence. Even grouse hunters will try to avoid them most of the time, since their meat is darker and gamier

than their delectable cousins, the ruffed grouse. Even so, the DNR estimates the annual spruce grouse harvest in the state at 10,000-20,000, which doesn't seem to have an impact on the population.

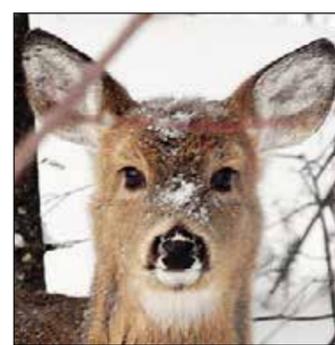
Like all grouse, the breeding season comes with a bit of fanfare. Grouse of all kinds are famous for their breeding displays, which combine visual display with

See **GROUSE...**pg. 5B

Above: A male spruce grouse, his red comb raised, is on the lookout for receptive females. The early warm-up this year has the spruce grouse looking for love a bit earlier than usual.

Below: A female spruce grouse shows interest, but is still playing hard-to-get.

photos by J. Grahn



Talk to the DNR about whitetails

REGIONAL—Do you have thoughts or questions about deer in your area? Then mark your calendar for Wednesday, March 31, from noon until 8 p.m., when wildlife staff from the Department of Natural Resources are dedicating time to discuss deer-related topics on the phone.

Local wildlife managers across the state invite the public to ask their deer-related questions and offer thoughts on deer issues. In addition to discussing general concerns about deer, individuals can ask DNR staff about last year's harvest data, share their own observations of local deer populations, discuss their thoughts on the upcoming 2021 deer season, or learn more about the deer population goal-setting process or chronic wasting disease management.

The DNR Tower area office can be reached at 218-300-7860. To find contact information for other DNR wildlife managers in your area, visit the deer open house webpage. Area managers always welcome calls from the public, so those who are not available during the dedicated time are encouraged to call at their convenience any time during business hours (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).

Cattail burning slated for VNP

VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK— Park staff here will be conducting prescribed burns throughout park wetlands in late winter and early spring to treat areas of invasive hybrid cattails. The work, which will be done in March and April, includes burning floating and rooted cattails as well as other wetland areas to remove dead vegetation, rejuvenate wetland plant communities, and reduce woody plant encroachment.

Hybrid cattails have invaded approximately 500 acres of wetlands in Voyageurs, displacing native communities of plants such as wild rice, sedges, rushes, and native cattails. This long-term project will improve habitat for wildlife, provide enhanced opportunities for fishing, and help restore wetlands to a more diverse, natural state.



MARSHALL HELMBERGER

MINING

Teck American seeks to extend nonferrous exploration near Babbitt

REGIONAL— A company that's been exploring for minerals near Babbitt is seeking a one-year extension on its state mineral leases. The Department of Natural Resources recently announced that Teck American Inc. has submitted a plan to continue drill operations about five miles southeast of Babbitt. The company has been searching there for metallic mineral deposits since 2007.

Teck's proposed exploration plan requests a one-year extension to complete exploration activities initially proposed in November 2019. Under the original 2019 exploration plan, Teck prepared new trails and drill sites for six of eight drill sites. The latest proposal includes new access trails to reach a drill site at Section 28

and the northern site at Section 36.

In the 2021 plan, Teck proposes to drill exploratory borings on two sites using the diamond core drilling method. In support of hydrologic explorations, Teck's new plan also includes drilling environmental holes on six sites using sonic, reverse circulation, air rotary, or diamond core methods. Any drilling in wetlands will occur in winter; drilling at upland sites may occur at various times throughout the year. All drilling activity, including sealing, will follow regulations set by the Department of Health.

Upon DNR approval, Teck has the right to explore state-owned lands consistent with the exploration plan, any stipulations, and applicable laws and rules.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Please, don't feed the deer

REGIONAL— While deer feeding is only restricted in select areas in Minnesota, the DNR discourages feeding deer statewide. Although deer feeding can be well-intentioned, the risks of supplemental feeding outweigh the potential benefits. Some examples include:

➤ Disease risks – When animals congregate at concentrated sources of feed, there's an increased risk of disease transmission, including chronic wasting disease (CWD),

which has been detected in our free-ranging deer populations.

➤ Other health risks – The bacteria, protozoa and fungi that inhabit the stomach of deer comprise a unique and fragile micro-ecosystem. Feeding corn or other high-quality grains to a deer that has been subsisting on very low quality forage for a long time period can lead to a cascade of detrimental health effects including death.

LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather

Friday				Saturday				Sunday				Monday				Tuesday			
51 29				54 38				51 31				49 30				48 33			
Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec. Sn.
03/08	47	28	0.00	03/08	48	29	0.00	03/08	50	26	0.00	03/08	54	30	0.00	03/08	49	28	0.00
03/09	53	31	0.00	03/09	53	28	0.00	03/09	54	30	0.00	03/09	59	39	0.00	03/09	52	33	0.00
03/10	56	36	0.00	03/10	57	35	0.00	03/10	56	35	0.00	03/10	41	27	0.00	03/10	58	34	0.00
03/11	41	23	0.68 8.2"	03/11	41	23	0.87 9.0"	03/11	39	24	0.20 3.5"	03/11	39	18	0.25 4.3"	03/11	40	22	0.68 7.8"
03/12	39	2	0.12 0.2"	03/12	41	1	0.00	03/12	38	6	0.15 2.5"	03/12	32	3	0.00	03/12	40	1	0.00
03/13	29	0	0.00	03/13	33	-2	0.00	03/13	30	5	0.00	03/13	50	21	0.00	03/13	35	3	0.00
03/14	30	23	0.00	03/14	51	22	0.00	03/14	50	29	0.00	03/14	41	21	0.00	03/14	50	22	0.00
Total	1.29 62.3"			YTD Total	0.73 46.8"			YTD Total	0.72 57.1"			YTD Total	0.68 NA			YTD Total	1.02 46.7"		

GROUSE...Continued from page 4B

a variety of sounds. We'll soon be hearing the drums of ruffed grouse echoing through the woods all across the region. In more open parts of the region, the sharp-tails will be appearing to dance, strut, and inflate their air sacs on their own breeding leks, where groups of males will compete for the attentions of interested females.

Back in the thick conifers, the spruce grouse will be putting on their own displays. The impressive males, with their brilliant red combs and their striking black and white feather patterns

spend most of their time strutting in a somewhat open, often mossy location. At times, they stop, stand erect, and audibly snap their yellow-tipped tail feathers out in a fan. Their most noteworthy display is what's called a flutter flight, which often starts with a few wing flaps on the ground (like the start of a ruffed grouse's drum) before the male ascends noisily to an exposed perch 10-15 feet in the air. From there, he'll pose and puff himself up for a minute or two, before descending in a flutter back to the ground, hopefully having attracted

the attention of a receptive female. Guys of every species seem to think alike, don't they?

As showy as the male is, the female is just the opposite, with her brown and black mottling designed to blend perfectly with the dappled light that filters through the conifers to the forest floor, where the hen will soon be nesting. She'll lay about a half dozen eggs and the young birds are ready to follow their mother through the woods almost right away. Along the way, they feed mostly on insects, which are a lot more nutritious than the

spruce and pine needles they'll subsist on half the year as adults. The young birds stick with mom through most of the summer and then the broods start to scatter through the fall and winter.

We don't really know how well spruce grouse are doing in Minnesota. Anecdotal, they seem to be scarcer than I remember thirty years ago, but maybe I'm not spending as much time in the spruce swamps as I used to. Overall, the population seems to be fairly stable, although an ongoing study by a DNR biologist should start giving us a better idea

WINTER...Continued from page 4B

And those mild conditions quickly returned as the polar vortex receded north by the last week in February. So far in March, temperatures have

been running eight-to-ten degrees above average, with temperatures forecast to reach the mid-50s, or as much as 20 degrees above average, by the

weekend. The average high in the area as of March 19 is 36 degrees, with an average low of 14.

And with the exception of last week's storm,

which dumped six-to-nine inches of snow on the area, the region has experienced an exceptionally sunny and dry 2021 so far.

Even with the roughly half-inch of liquid contained in last week's snow, the area has still seen less than half its normal precipitation so far this year.

"The la Niña didn't behave like it should have," said Boulay.

And there's little sign it's going to change that behavior anytime soon. Both the 6-10 day and 8-14 day outlooks show a strong probability that above-normal temperatures will continue. With snow rapidly disappearing, the region could experience significant spring fire danger before the month is out.

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We're Looking For Volunteer Drivers to Transport People to/from Medical Appointments

About the Program

What do volunteer drivers do?
Volunteer drivers provide individuals in need of transportation with a means of getting to and from medical appointments.

Do volunteer drivers receive reimbursement?
All volunteer drivers are reimbursed at the maximum federal mileage rate. Mileage is reimbursed from the time the drivers leave their home until they return home.

Who qualifies to be a volunteer driver?
Anyone who is:

- Age 21 or older
- Has a valid driver's license
- Has proof of insurance
- Has a clean driving record
- Has not had a suspended license or DWI within the past 3 years
- Has had no felony convictions

What type of insurance coverage must a volunteer driver have?
A volunteer driver is required to provide enough insurance to allow them to drive legally in the state of Minnesota.

What type of vehicle can be used?
The vehicle must be safe, dependable and clean. Volunteer drivers use all different types of vehicles from small subcompacts to large SUVs.

How can I become a volunteer driver?

Call Transportation Coordinator:
Scott Olson at: (218)735-6886
or
scott.olson@aeoa.org.

PUBLIC NOTICE

**Town of Embarrass
LOCAL BOARD OF APPEAL
AND EQUALIZATION**
Important Information Regarding
Property Assessments

The Board of Appeal and Equalization for Embarrass Township will meet on Thursday, April 15, 2021, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m., at Embarrass Town Hall, 7503 Levander Road.

The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor.

If you believe the value or classification of your property is incorrect, please contact your assessor's office to discuss your concerns. If you disagree with the valuation or classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may appear before the local Board of Appeal and Equalization. The board will review your assessments and may make corrections as needed. Generally, you must appeal to the local board before appealing to the county board of appeal and equalization. With the COVID-19 pandemic, we ask that you call and schedule your time to keep the public gathering at a minimum.

Published in the Timberjay, March 19, 2021

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Tower City Hall Outside Drop
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Bids open Monday, March 22,
2021 at Council Meeting

*Published in the Timberjay,
Feb. 26, March 5, 12 & 19, 2021*



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- Environmental Services**
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Casual Laundry Aide
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ACROSS

- 1 Gearwheel tooth
- 4 Baby elephant
- 8 Bar bills
- 12 Coffee vessel
- 13 — about (circa)
- 14 Panache
- 15 Salty expanse
- 16 Chills and fever
- 17 — avis
- 18 Driver's aid
- 21 Superlative suffix
- 22 Inlet
- 23 Protractor measure
- 26 Actress Lucy
- 27 "See ya!"
- 30 Old salts
- 31 "The Bells" author
- 32 Edge
- 33 Sea, to Henri
- 34 Periodical, for short
- 35 Belt holders
- 36 Summer cooler
- 37 "Alice" waitress
- 38 Fortress on the Thames
- 45 Pearl Harbor site
- 46 Stage show
- 47 Docs' bloc

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13						14		
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- 49 Give temporarily
- 50 Use a ray gun
- 51 Bygone jets
- 52 Talks nonstop
- 53 Before
- 7 Giveaway array
- 8 Towel material
- 9 Jai —
- 10 Hoedown site
- 11 Unforeseen problem
- 19 Morays
- 20 Vichy water
- 23 \$ dispenser
- 24 Scot's denial
- 25 Spike's warning
- 26 Journal
- 27 Buddy
- 28 Shriill bark
- 29 Type measures
- 6 Lummox
- 31 Magnificent
- 32 Benefit
- 34 Ruin the veneer
- 35 British insurer
- 36 Vendettas
- 37 Be on either side of
- 38 Raiments
- 39 Rowboat needs
- 40 "Huh?"
- 41 Dog bane
- 42 Stupor
- 43 Actor Epps
- 44 Scruff

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**Administrative Assistant
(Part-time) Position
Availability**

The City of Cook is hiring a part-time administrative assistant primarily for its municipally-owned ambulance service, a BLS service providing emergency care to city and area residents. This non-emergency, uncertified position assists the Ambulance Director in all daily activities providing administrative and clerical support for all major functional areas such as the department's general administration, billing/bookkeeping, recordkeeping, maintenance activities, and volunteer staff training, as well as safety training for all city employees. This position may provide administrative support to other city departments (fire).

Minimum qualifications include: H.S. diploma/equivalent; some administrative support experience; familiarity with word processing, spreadsheets, databases, and internet use/web search; and ability to properly handle confidential data/information. Starting wage up to \$12.01 per hour, with an opportunity for step and cost-of-living increases.

To apply: visit City's website cookmn.us or call Cook City Hall at (218) 666-2200 for required application forms. Position will remain open until filled.

Published in the Timberjay, March 19 & 26, 2021

**SUMMER CARETAKER
VERMILION**

Vintage Vermilion Cabins and Retreat is seeking a couple for our caretaker position. The retreat is an attractive, completely updated 5-cabin rental, housekeeping resort on Black Bay on Lake Vermilion.

Duties include yard work, boat tending and routine maintenance on buildings/property and equipment on-site, cabin prep for guests (cleaning, changing linens, laundry) and serve as resort host(s) (which includes welcoming visitors, explaining amenities, answering questions and providing assistance as necessary).

Should possess basic carpentry and mechanical skills, be self-starters, presentable appearance with an outgoing personality that enjoys and promotes effective interaction with guests. Moderate physical activity required. Should have own truck.

Seasonal position (May 1 through mid-October). Some paid time off will be provided. Personal and job references will be required. Competitive salary, bonuses. Presence required at resort 24/7. On site residence provided for caretakers in luxury 35' Keystone Mountaineer, 3 slides, 2 TVs, brand new 12" King mattress, a.c., set up on private lakeside site.

For further information on the resort, please see our website at www.vintagevermilion.com. Please send a cover letter/resume to akoski@stadigjohnson.com. ttn

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EMPLOYMENT

**Ambulance Director
Position Availability**

The City of Cook is ready to hire a salaried director for our municipally-owned ambulance service, a BLS service providing emergency care to city and area residents. The director is accountable/responsible for the success of this important public service, the coordination of a city-wide safety program, and active participation in the City's emergency management efforts. The position reports to the City Administrator and directly supervises all volunteer staff and a part-time administrative assistant.

Minimum qualifications include: H.S. diploma/equivalent, state-approved EMT certification, at least three years of administrative and supervisory experience, valid MN Class D with EVOC or ability to attend. Able to be bonded under City's selected insurer and insurance coverages. This is a FLSA-exempt position offering a starting pay from \$44,803 to \$49,795 DOQ with the City's benefits package.

To apply: visit City's website cookmn.us or call Cook City Hall at (218) 666-2200 for required application forms. Position will remain open until filled.

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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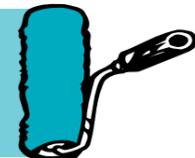
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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