

See special section inside

The TIMBERJAY



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\$1.00

ST. LOUIS COUNTY

Land auction nets nearly \$900,000

Undeveloped land plots sell well in online event

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Last week's online land auction of St. Louis County tax-forfeited properties drew a more diverse and unusual group of bidders than in the past, as participants from

Hawaii to Pennsylvania squared off to vie for 73 listed properties.

"We were able to attract attention not only from across the state, but as far away as California, Georgia, Hawaii, Texas, New York, Pennsylvania - all coasts. We got them

all," said Julie Marinucci, deputy director of the county Land and Minerals department.

That's because bidders didn't have to be physically present. The department staged its first large-scale online auction last week, signaling a significant

shift in the department's business model for moving delinquent properties.

"We had started before the coronavirus really took off as just an alternative way to offer some of our properties

See... LAND pg. 9



This small two-bedroom fixer-upper in Soudan was sold this week in the St. Louis County forfeited-property auction. photo by D. Colburn

PUBLIC HEALTH



Fourth of July flip-flop

Ely council reverses course, allows 'patriotic march'

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY - Disregarding public health concerns because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Ely City Council reversed an earlier decision to cancel the city's 2020 Fourth of July parade and instead supports a group of citizens to conduct their own "patriotic march" through town on Independence Day.

Supporters of the effort prompted the

If the parade organizers do not enforce the separation of households by six feet and enforce the use of face coverings, the risk level would be elevated to the second-highest level, and should not be permitted this year. **Jon Erickson, Ely Community Health Center director**

council Tuesday to give their blessing for the event. A request from the local group, who call themselves the "Ely Patriotic Club," asked for assistance from the city

of Ely. City public works department crews would work on the holiday to set up and remove barricades. Law enforcement was requested to control traffic. It is unclear if Ely

fire department vehicles would participate.

"We received push-back from the League of Minnesota Cities in

See... ELY pg. 10

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mining politics stymie funding for water tower

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL - Concerns about public health took a backseat to mining politics on Wednesday as the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board refused to approve funding for a water project on the Fond du Lac reservation, at least for now, because of the tribal government's opposition to mining pollution.

At issue was a \$250,000 funding request from Fond du Lac to help fund the construction of a new

See... POLITICS pg. 9

EXPERIENCES



Lois Pajari with "George Kune," a New Zealand Kune Kune pig. photo by D. Colburn

Day camps draw kids to Country Connection

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

COOK - There was a time this past spring when Cook's Country Connection owner Lois Pajari wondered if the only kids she would see at her farm this summer were baby goats. With stay-at-home orders in place and schools shifting to distance learning, Pajari's plans for a third summer of offering day camps for children from 6 to 12 years old were in doubt.

"How do you plan for life when you don't know if it's going to happen or not?" Pajari said. "I actually stalled out planning all the summer events. It's hard

See... COOK pg. 12

Distant impacts blunt local COVID-19 measures

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

REGIONAL - National news outlets have been painting grim pictures of potential COVID-19 pandemic disasters as hard-hit urban areas reopen to hordes of people ignoring recommendations for continued social distancing and wearing face masks, stoking fears of a potential second wave and new

shut-downs.

Far from metropolitan hot spots, similar behaviors are to be seen here in the rural north lands. Masks are the exception rather than the rule as people venture back out into stores and restaurants. While restaurants and bars have limited capacity and have made arrangements to provide for social distancing, it's common nonetheless to see patrons congregating in

non-family groups to greet each other and socializing after weeks of isolation.

Engage locals in conversations about preventive measures, and you may hear phrases like, "We don't need to worry about it up here," "It's only old people in nursing homes who are at risk," and "It's everyone's personal

See... COVID-19 pg. 10



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Community notices

Fourth of July gift bags for kids

COOK- B.I.C. Realty wanted to do something fun for the kids since Fourth of July parades and festivities have been canceled. Stop by the B.I.C. Realty office in Cook to pick up a free gift bag of toys and candy for kids on Thursday, July 2 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday, July 3 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Free flags in Tower on June 26

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Lake Vermilion Events Board will be handing out free flags on Friday June 26 during the morning and afternoon. Look for the Fourth of July canopy on Main Street. Businesses in town will also be handing out flags for free to help celebrate the birth of our nation.

Ely ski club taking orders for Georgia peaches

ELY- The Ely Nordic Wolves' annual peach sale this year will feature Georgia peaches from Sunburst Fruit Co. as their Colorado grower experienced a killing frost this spring.

A box of peaches (12 pounds or approximately 25-30 peaches) will cost \$30. More than a third of the price of each box of peaches will go directly to the local ski team.

Both of the club's other big fundraisers this year were canceled due to COVID-19.

To order, fill out the form on the Ely Nordic Wolves' Facebook page and click on the submit button. You should see a confirmation message pop-up after you submit your order. There will also be a confirmation email sent. Place orders by Wednesday, July 15.

In order to ensure that your order is submitted accurately, please do not order by replying to an email, use the order form. If you are having trouble submitting your order, see the club's FAQs at <http://elynordicpeaches.blogspot.com>.

A tentative delivery date is planned for early August.

Hwy. 169 culvert repair and replacement began June 15

REGIONAL- MnDOT contractors began repairing and replacing culverts on Hwy. 169 between Hwy. 53 and St. Louis County Hwy. 26 on Monday, June 15. This work is at various locations on the highway and is expected to take approximately five weeks. Motorists can expect traffic to be shifted or to encounter flagging, depending on the location.

This work is being completed ahead of pavement resurfacing that will occur later this summer in this section.

Re-opening plans for St. Louis County buildings

REGIONAL- St. Louis County Courthouses in Duluth, Hibbing and Virginia will re-open to the public beginning Monday, June 15 for court customer service only. Court hearings continue to be held remotely and will not take place at the courthouses. New rules are in place as precautions to protect public health.

St. Louis County Courthouses will be open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., though people needing court services are still encouraged to do so remotely. The courts recognize that some services, including access to public records terminals, can only be done in person. Courts in St. Louis County are part of the 6th Judicial District.

Anyone coming into a St. Louis County Courthouse will be required to wear a face mask. Court security staff from the Sheriff's Office will be stationed at designated entrances to ensure that visitors have conducted a COVID-19 self-screening and will direct visitors to the location where court services are being offered. County offices within the courthouses, along with all other county buildings, remain closed, with services continuing to be available by phone, email and mail, as well as select services offered curbside and by appointment. St. Louis County Environmental Services solid waste drop-off sites have remained open and operating throughout the pandemic. To learn more about how to reach county departments for service, visit stlouiscountymn.gov.

ACTIVITIES

Nelmark prepares to open July 2



EMBARRASS- Hospitality is the main priority at the Nelmark Homestead Museum, so the artisans met recently to determine how to continue that hospitality in the summer of COVID-19. Outbuildings are being cleaned this week, and we will encourage people to enjoy visiting those buildings and displays.

We established our protocols for the summer. Here's what visitors can expect:

- All of our treats will be bagged
- Hand sanitizers at the entrance and in various locations in the museum
- Tables outside, possibly with

umbrellas

➤ Open doors and windows when possible

➤ Regular wiping down of tables and surfaces

We will be taking (one week ahead only) special orders for breads, rolls and pulla this summer. There will not be a regularly scheduled Friday Bread Day. The plan is to have special "donut days" scheduled several days during the summer and there will be a few days when specific breads will be available. Due to the virus and rules concerning food, we have to limit the availability of baked goods. Coffee will be served

for guests inside, with rules enforced.

We will be open on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., from July 2 through the end of September. We will not be open on July 4. By the end of July, Geary Shaw and Ron Sutton will start a Farmers Market on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

On Sunday, Sept. 13, from 4 to 6:30 p.m., Dean Kleven and Debbie Bigelow will be the music group at the Seitaniemi Housebarn for Community Night Out, sponsored by Sisu Heritage.

Bookmobile service to resume, with changes

REGIONAL- The Arrowhead Library System (ALS) Bookmobile will be back on the road starting Monday, June 15, three months after the service was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Like public libraries all across Minnesota, the Bookmobile service will look different when service resumes. For at least the rest of this summer, the Bookmobile will be offering a "curbside" style of service. According to Jim Weikum, ALS Executive Director, "Before the Bookmobile visits their community, patrons are highly encouraged to request items at least a day or two in advance of their scheduled stop." Library users can contact Bookmobile staff via telephone or text at 218-742-6762 or e-mail staff at bookmobile@alslib.info. There's also now a request form on the ALS website at <https://tinyurl.com/ALSbkm>. Sophia Anderson, ALS Bookmobile Coordinator, indicated that, "We will also have paper copies that list many of our newer materials, including books and DVDs." The lists are available on request.

Requested items will be placed in paper bags labeled with the first four digits of the patron's last name and last three digits of the patron's barcode.

June, July and August Bookmobile schedule

Thursday: (June 18, July 9, July 30, August 20)
 Nett Lake (9:30 - 11 a.m.)
 Crane Lake (12:30 - 1:45 p.m.)
Thursday: (June 25, July 16, Aug. 6, Aug. 27)
 Cloverdale (9:45 - 10:45 a.m.)
 Togo (11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.)
 Rauch (2 - 3 p.m.)
 Bear River (4:15 - 5 p.m.)
 Side Lake (5:30 - 6:30 p.m.)
Wednesday: (July 1, July 22, Aug. 12)
 Britt (9 - 9:30 a.m.)
 Bois Forte (11 - 11:30 a.m.)
 Lake Vermilion (12 - 1 p.m.)

These items will be available on a designated table for patron curbside pickup at the patron's scheduled Bookmobile stop. Request form sheets will also be available at the Bookmobile stops that patrons can complete when the Bookmobile arrives in their community. If those requested items are available, Bookmobile staff will retrieve the items from the Bookmobile and place them in a paper bag labeled as indicated above. A bin for returns will be placed on a table and labeled "Returns"

and those returned items will be quarantined for 72 hours before being available again for borrowing. During this curbside phase of Bookmobile service, members of the public will not be allowed on the Bookmobile to ensure a safe environment for the public and the Bookmobile staff.

The other major change for at least the summer months is a somewhat abbreviated schedule to allow the Bookmobile to stay a little longer in many locations to allow library users to adapt to the new

style of service and have more time for Bookmobile staff to offer assistance.

"We hope to restore the full schedule yet this year," stated Weikum. In recent years, the Bookmobile has had over 60 different stops during the course of its three-week rotating schedule. "For the foreseeable future, we will have to suspend 20 of our regular stops," according to Weikum. "It is very difficult for the Bookmobile staff to reduce the number of stops as the staff is very committed to everyone who uses the service." The suspended stops are typically ones that are located within easy driving distance of one of ALS's twenty-seven member public libraries, or quite close to another stop than tends to be significantly busier.

Information about the Bookmobile service, including the new schedule and a map with the locations of the current stops, can be found at <https://www.alslib.info/services/bookmobile/>.

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June 2020

More info at www.stlouiscountymn.gov/hw

<p>Thursday, June 11 Ely Joint Public Works Facility 10am - 2pm 2210 E. Sheridan Ely</p>	<p>Thursday, June 18 Cook Transfer Station 10am - 2pm 2134 S. Beatty Rd. Cook</p>	<p>Wednesday, June 24 Soudan Canister Site 10am - 1pm 5160 HWY 169 Soudan</p>
<p>Virginia HHW Facility at the Regional Landfill 5345 Regional Landfill Road Virginia, MN 55792 (218) 741-8833 Year round hours of Operation: Tuesdays & Saturdays 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Hibbing HHW Facility at the Hibbing Transfer Station 3994 Landfill Road Hibbing, MN 55746 (218) 362-5922 Year round hours of Operation: Saturdays 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.</p>	

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COPPER-NICKEL MINING

Supreme Court will review air quality permit for PolyMet

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

Lower court ruling was victory for environmental groups; court to decide if that ruling stands

REGIONAL — The state’s Supreme Court has agreed to take a second look at a lower court ruling that threw out PolyMet Mining’s air quality permit back in March. It’s the second time in recent months that the state’s high court has agreed to review decisions issued by the Minnesota Court of Appeals regarding PolyMet. Both PolyMet Mining and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency had filed petitions for high court review of the air permit decision back in April.

The lower court ruling was a major victory for environmental groups opposed to PolyMet’s proposed NorthMet copper-nickel mine near Hoyt Lakes. The decision by the Supreme Court to review the March 23 Court of Appeals ruling offers at least the possibility that the permit could be restored or that the Court of Appeals’ order remanding the permit back to the MPCA could be modified.

“We believe the MPCA in its permit appropriately accounted for the potential effects of the

NorthMet Project on the airshed, and are pleased that the Supreme Court will hear the case,” said Jon Cherry, PolyMet president and CEO. “The Court of Appeals’ decision creates tremendous uncertainty for companies who want to invest in Minnesota and must seek permits from the state. This is an opportunity to remedy that situation. We are looking forward to presenting our case to the Minnesota Supreme Court.”

The pro-copper-nickel mining group, Jobs for Minnesotans, also voiced support for the high court’s willingness to hear the matter. “We’re encouraged by the recent announcement,” wrote the group in a press statement. “Also petitioned by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the ruling negates the role of the Legislature and the state agencies’ expertise and ability to do its work and make decisions.”

Among the issues the high court will consider is whether the MPCA erred when it classified the PolyMet permit as a less-stringent “minor permit,” which typically receives less



An aerial view of PolyMet’s facility near Hoyt Lakes. Timberjay file photo

oversight from regulators. Had the MPCA classified the permit as “major,” it would have required the company to deploy the “best available technology” in order to reduce its emissions.

PolyMet avoided that requirement by agreeing to limit the size of its operation. But environmental litigants argued that the company was actually

planning a much larger operation that would meet the definition of a major emitter. Indeed, a financial report issued by PolyMet in 2018 projected significantly higher rates of return with a project that was nearly twice as large as the 32,000 ton-per-day project that PolyMet proposed and permitted, and returned even more at nearly four times

the proposed rate of production. “That’s why the Minnesota Court of Appeals expressed concern over “sham permitting” and told the MPCA to take a second look,” said Kathryn Hoffman, CEO at the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy. “The Court [of Appeals] ruling was well reasoned, and the evidence since then has only gotten stronger about PolyMet’s true intentions. Minnesotans deserve to know the real size and scope of PolyMet’s dangerous mine proposal, and MCEA will defend our position at the Minnesota Supreme Court.”

Despite MCEA raising this issue repeatedly before the MPCA issued the air pollution permit, the MPCA did not address the issue in issuing its permit to PolyMet. The Court of Appeals found that the MPCA failed to explain why it had dismissed the sham permitting issue and had remanded the permit back to the MPCA for more information and analysis.

Briefly

Ely man faces charges in vehicle theft

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – An Ely man faces multiple charges from an incident earlier this month when he allegedly entered a home, took car keys and then drove away in the occupant’s vehicle.

Demitri Anthony Stern, 23, faces charges of second-degree burglary and auto theft, both felonies, and a gross misdemeanor charge of possession of a controlled substance, according to a criminal complaint released by the Ely Police

Department. Ely law enforcement investigated a June 3 report that a 2020 Chevrolet Equinox was stolen from a home at 744 Fifth Avenue East.

The homeowners told police that they found a set of keys missing from a hook inside their house and did not give anyone permission to enter their residence or to drive the Equinox.

During the investigation, Ely Police Chief Chad Houde observed a vehicle with New Hampshire license plates parked at the residence.

In the complaint,

Houde said he was familiar with the defendant and that he drove a vehicle with New Hampshire license plates. Houde said he contacted Stern, who indicated he “had a breakdown” and that he “panicked and switched vehicles” and was at a Virginia medical facility.

A Virginia police officer later located the missing Equinox in the parking lot of Essentia Medical Clinic in Virginia and located Stern, who was in possession of a black case. According to the complaint, Stern admitted to entering the residence, taking the keys

and taking the vehicle. Upon his arrest, the case was searched and was found to contain less than two grams of a substance that later tested positive for methamphetamine.

The burglary charges carry a maximum penalty of ten years imprisonment and/or \$20,000 fine. The vehicle theft charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison and/or \$10,000 fine. The drug possession charge carries a maximum penalty of one year in prison and/or \$3,000 fine.

Pilot uninjured after minor plane crash

ELY – Emergency and law enforcement officials responded to a minor airplane crash Tuesday morning at the Ely Municipal Airport.

Personnel from the St. Louis County Sheriff’s office, Ely Police Department and Emergency Medical Services were called to the airport in Morse Township at about 11:20 a.m. on Tuesday for a reported plane crash.

Upon arrival, according to St. Louis County Sheriff Sgt. G. Toma, it was determined that the

pilot, R. James Campbell, 75, of Lincoln, Neb., the sole occupant of the plane, was uninjured and the Piper Malibu fixed-wing, single-engine plane he was flying had sustained minor damage to the front landing gear and propeller during landing, Toma said.

The incident remains under investigation by the St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office and the Federal Aviation Administration.

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The VCC Textbook Fund was established in 2009 to assist students with financial need in purchasing textbooks and required course supplies. The project was initiated by former Vermilion faculty member, Pamela Brunfelt, who was concerned about the rising costs of textbooks and the fact that some students were unable to purchase books that were required for their classes. 100% of your contribution to this important fund goes directly back to our students. Won’t you please consider making a contribution to help our students succeed?

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OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

Editorial

Mining's influence

How much longer will the Range's political process kowtow to industry?

What has long been an unspoken rule about how taconite funds are allocated on the Iron Range became explicit recently when the legislators on the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board blocked a funding request from the Fond du Lac Band for a project to make drinkable water available to residents of two small, rural communities within the reservation boundaries.

Given the direct connection to public health, it was no surprise that the IRRR staff had ranked the project highly and agency staff deserve credit for their efforts to defend the project against the politically motivated criticism from members of the agency's advisory board.

At issue, as Sen. Tom Bakk made explicit, was that the Fond du Lac Band, in his view, was “anti-mining,” and that was the sole litmus test in his mind for whether the funding could be approved. It was inconsistent, he claimed, for a governmental body to be opposed to mining yet accept tax dollars received from the mining industry.

Sen. Bakk should have thought a bit deeper. For one, while it's true that taconite production tax dollars come from mining, they are in lieu of property taxes. We suspect most Minnesotans, probably even on the Iron Range, are unaware of the fact that mining companies don't pay property taxes for the hundreds of thousands of acres of mine land that they own. Instead, the Legislature allows them to pay only a tax on actual ore production, so they don't incur significant tax obligations during shutdowns or after closure of a mine. If the mining companies paid property taxes like the rest of us, the money would go into the same giant hopper as everyone else's tax dollars, and Sen. Bakk's argument would vanish into the ether since there would be no distinguishing between a dollar paid by a mining company versus a cabin owner, a local restaurant, or a wilderness outfitter.

The arrangement has also given the mining industry tremendous political power in the region, which they have wielded willingly through the influence of Iron Range legislators and their longtime tenure on the IRRR board, where they've overseen the distribution of tens of millions of those mining tax dollars annually to area communities.

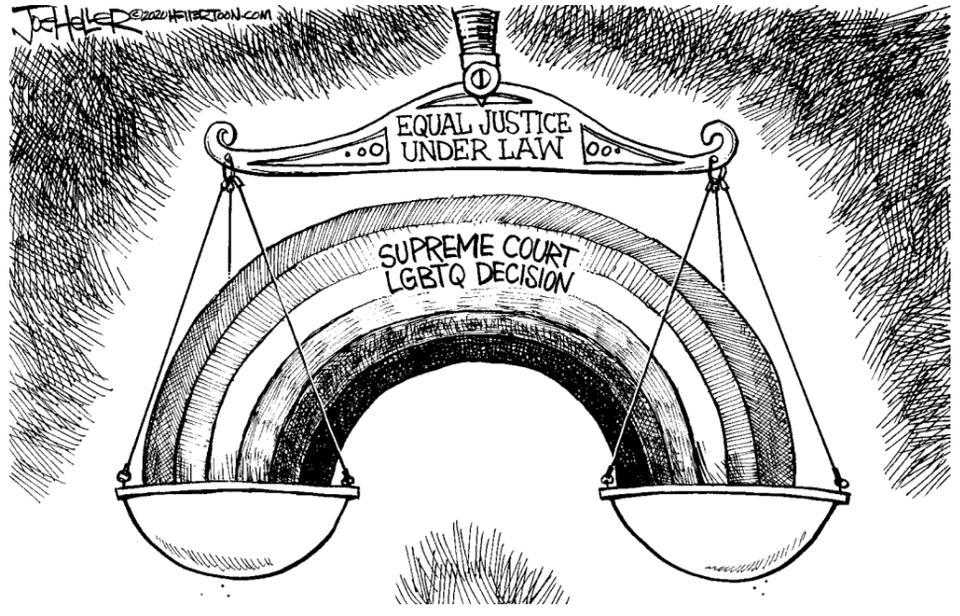
Over the decades that we've covered the deliberations of local units of government, we have heard local politicians more than once cite the cudgel

of IRRR dollars as reason they have to toe the Iron Range delegation's line on various issues, but most particularly on the subject of mining and mining pollution. The delegation's power has diminished in recent years as the board has been limited to an advisory role at the IRRR, but as they demonstrated recently, they can still throw a wrench in the gears when they feel the need.

Without doubt, the board's action is contrary to the principles of a government that operates fairly and with due process for all of its citizens. It's a violation of the same overarching principle that has prompted millions of people to march in the streets in recent weeks to protest the lack of fairness or due process for African Americans in this country. That this most recent IRRR board action was targeted against Native Americans, another minority group that has suffered from bias and discrimination in America, only highlights the tone-deaf nature of Iron Range legislators. At a minimum, they have forgotten the very foundation of representative and constitutional government, which is the imperative to serve all the people equally, not just those who are willing to comply with the political views of those in power.

Finally, the actions of the board reveal the degree to which Iron Range politicians are willing to brand anyone who expresses concern about the negative impacts of mining on the environment as “anti-mining.” That's neither fair nor accurate. Many, if not most, people who oppose sulfide-based copper-nickel mining in northeastern Minnesota are not opposed to taconite mining. But that's a distinction that Iron Range politicians refuse to acknowledge because it makes it easier to vilify those with concerns of any nature, about any mine. Even those who simply advocate for the clean-up of existing mine pollution or suggest that Minnesota should actually start enforcing its supposedly impressive environmental regulations on the Iron Range, is quickly branded an anti-mining heretic who must be shunned, boycotted, or denied equal access to government funding.

The only question is: How much longer is the Iron Range willing to prostrate its political process before the altar of the mining industry? Really. How much longer?



Letters from Readers

IRRR takes part in systemic racism

There is no shortage of stunningly bone-headed moves in the history of Minnesota governance. For sheer bad timing, though, the IRRR Board's recent decision to deny funds for a water project on the Fond du Lac reservation rises above all others.

A seismic shift in awareness and acceptance of the reality of systemic racism towards people of color is occurring around the world. In the midst of this unprecedented awakening, what does the IRRR Board do? It slumbers on, content to participate in systematic discrimination against an Indigenous community.

How else do you explain the unfair treatment of Fond du Lac's grant application to IRRR? An executive order from Governor Walz encouraged Indigenous communities to apply for grants. IRRR staff warned the board that the project met all the grant criteria, scored above other projects, and that “the water serving these folks is not drinkable. It's contaminated at a level that could make some ill.” This, in a community where the lack of clean water negatively affects the health of community members, especially the most vulnerable – children, elders, those with chronic health conditions – who are most at risk of harm from contaminated drinking water, adding another injustice to a system that has handed Native Americans lesser educational, health care, job and housing opportunities.

Senator Bakk said he would not support the grant application because he was “uncomfortable” with the request, characterizing Fond du Lac as opposed to mining. What he fails to recognize is they are asserting their right to defend their culture and traditions, which other units of regional government routinely do, for which they are supported and applauded – and in this case, awarded grants from IRRR,

which was the case for the other nine, overwhelmingly white communities.

The most charitable interpretation of the IRRR Board's decision is they suffer from unintended bias. As Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest, put it in an eerily prescient post written just days before George Floyd was murdered:

“Our cultural worship of individualism and “bootstrap” mentality deprives us of the capacity to empathize with people in need and recognize systemic oppression. When we are in the middle or upper tier of privilege, it is almost impossible to see the many ways the system helped us succeed. We cannot recognize or overcome this “agreed upon delusion” as isolated individuals, mostly because it is held together by the group consensus. The dominant group – in any country or context – normally cannot see its own lies. We have to pay attention to whomever is saying “I can't breathe” to recognize the biases at work.”

In short, we don't have a problem; we are the problem. It's past time to be the solution.

**Steve Wilson
Tower**

IRRRB serves no justice for Fond du Lac

I feel I must speak up regarding the recommendation of the IRRRB which recently decided not to fund a grant application to the Fond du Lac Reservation because the Tribe has taken a stand against mining. There are so many problems with this decision! But here are two reasons I believe the IRRRB should reconsider.

1. The reason we even have special taconite tax funds to disperse in our region is to recapture wealth taken from our area by steel corporations who mine our land. Natural resources are irreplaceable and when they are gone, the profit-making corporations and

the jobs they have awarded will go with them. So, taconite taxes are a strategy to help our region diversify and not be impoverished when mining comes to an end. The money that IRRRB is able to distribute is not intended to support mining. It is intended to help the region develop diverse economic resources. It was meant to be a counterbalance to mining.

2. The second reason I believe IRRRB should reconsider the Fond du Lac request is that all the mining and all the ore extracted from this region was removed from land that was taken by white settlers from Indian people to begin with and passed on to their descendants, us. That is simply undeniable. To be able to share in the tax benefits gleaned from excavating our land, Indian land, is barely just. But it is less unjust than withholding those funds because of a narrow perspective on the issue of mining. Many capable, dedicated citizens disagree about the environmental safety of mining endeavors.

Tribal entities should not be less deserving of taconite tax funds than other municipal and county organizations. It would serve justice and the people of our region to see the IRRRB reconsider this decision and support with similar measure the economic diversity and wellbeing of tribal jurisdictions.

**Lynn Fena
Makinen**

We welcome your letters

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

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

Learning to live with the beaver

In 1995, I received a copy of a book entitled “When Beaver Was Very Great: Stories to Live By,” a compendium of tales from Anishinaabeg storyteller Anne M. Dunn. As I prepared to write about my world surrounded by beaver, Dunn's title story popped into my mind. She writes of an unspecified bygone age when



**KATHLEEN
MCQUILLAN**

beaver grew very large. Prehistoric skeletal fragments from the Ice Age indicate *Castoroides* grew to be eight feet tall and weigh three hundred pounds. Her story is about the competition between Beaver and Human over who would prevail as the world's greatest landscape architects. I'm

not convinced that this contest has ever ended!

Thanks to beaver, I am an

“island dweller”. They are my neighbors, friends, “formidable opponents”, and at times, my nemesis. They live in three creeks that surround my little island of high ground, the creeks that drain miles of untouched spruce and tamarack swamp. The ones where my young sons spent hours catching water bugs and taking mud baths. Well, decades later, these creeks remain an intrinsic part of my life.

They have changed over the years right along with the humans who live along their banks. These small rivulets often

swell into wide tributaries of the Little Fork River, a main artery of the Rainy River Watershed. This relatively nondescript network of streams provides perfect habitat for the American Beaver, *Castor Canadensis*, the second largest rodent in the world. The same river system also became “perfect habitat” for early human settlers to this territory. They, too, saw the many benefits of homesteading beside flowing water. Rivers were “highways” before there were roads. Both beavers and humans know a good thing when they see it.

Here are a few factoids... Beavers live an average of ten years. That's a lengthy lifespan in the wild. They mate for life and are expert homebuilders. In fact, residential home construction is their main occupation, after keeping the family fed, of course. Their expert craftsmanship is a major factor in their longevity, not unlike humans. Beaver lodges house the entire family — Mom, Dad, and kits who reside with their parents for two years before leaving to find a lifetime

See **BEAVER...** pg. 5

Letters from Readers

Response to Van Deusen

After reading last week's letter from Bud Van Deusen, I found myself compelled to respond. I like Bud. I think he's honest and good-hearted, but I feel he needs to be taken to task for his letter. Though I agree with some of the things Bud wrote, I disagree with many. I'll take Bud's points in the order he presented them. His remarks, not necessarily quoted verbatim, are in bold print.

First, **the use of instant, widespread communication demands great responsibility, but it has been abused in the past days and months.** This is true, but it's not just the past days and months when widespread communication has been abused, it has been happening since the inception of social media. In fact, lines of communication have been abused through the ages. We called them propaganda and gossip. As responsible adults, and especially those of us living in a democracy, it's up to us to do our best to sort out truth from spin from outright lie.

Second, **we are affected by emotions that accompany our experiences.** Indeed, we are. More often than not, we would be well served by letting our emotions tone down before making judgments. I will be among the first to say there are (at least) two sides to every story and I must not jump to conclusions. In many cases, however, we are not privy to all relevant facts before being in a position to make up our minds. That is why we can never be 100-percent sure of anything. There is always a chance, however small, of being wrong in what we believe. The clip

showing the killing of George Floyd, a man already handcuffed, leaves slim doubt of the guilt of the cop who killed him, and the demonstrations that follow are not **ignorant rantings showing a lack of understanding.**

By the way, the use of the term "Chinese flu" was uncalled for. There is almost no doubt that COVID-19 originated in Wuhan, China, but the use of that phrase is incendiary. Asian citizens of this country, who had nothing to do with the spread of the disease, have been retaliated against by small-minded people motivated by fear, hatred or anger (to Bud's point). Why perpetuate such retaliation by using that emotionally charged phrase? Words matter.

Third, **power of any kind demands responsibility.** I agree wholeheartedly that power and responsibility should go hand in hand. But, demands often are not fulfilled, and to think, or even hope, that humankind will live up to this principle is unrealistic. Power should demand responsibility, but in the real world, it more often corrupts. Wishful thinking will not change that.

Fourth, **truth is waiting to be told; don't be [mis]led by sensationalism; take time to find the truth.** Truth is not just waiting to be told. We have to work at it by hearing opposing opinions (something most of us do not do well—we'd rather have our own opinions confirmed), then using critical thinking to get as close to truth as we can. Still, reasonable men can disagree. Even after due consideration, your truth and my truth may not be the same. I said earlier that we can never know anything with 100-percent confidence. We have to decide for ourselves how much confidence we need

in a "fact" in order to act on it.

Fifth, **no leader wants to lead by deception and lies.** Has someone been sleeping for the past three and a half years?

Sixth, **fear, not facts, has led to wearing masks.** I can't disagree more. Where did that "truth" come from? What manner of critical thinking led to that conclusion? Was it the hunch of a pathological liar, or was it the word of a vast majority of scientists and doctors who go through years of rigorous training to come to logical conclusions, avoiding irrelevant input such as emotions? What incentive would they have to mislead us, anyway?

Seventh, **no one wakes up and wants to be a thief or murderer.** I cannot put myself in the heads of thieves or murderers, so I do not know if this is true or not. How did Bud arrive at this "truth"? I'm pretty sure he's not a thief or murderer. Did he research it in psychology journals, or did it just come to him?

Eighth, **our country's laws are meant to be upheld (agreed), and we are accountable for our actions.** I wish the second clause were true, but it is not. Look around. Are top banking officials held accountable for fleecing thousands of people out of their life savings? Are advertisers held accountable for selling their snake oil? Are corrupt politicians held accountable by their fellow party members? I think not. Money and power seem to release those who hold them from accountability.

Finally, **we must self-govern.** I am not sure what this is supposed to mean. Based on Bud's letter, he could not have meant that we should have no laws and just rely on our collective righteousness

to do what's good and proper. Perhaps he meant that we shall not be governed by a dictator (someone should tell the man in charge), and that we citizens must invest some personal effort into our governance. If so, I agree. Boiled down to its very essence, I believe self-governing means we have the right, no, the responsibility, to choose whom we want to govern us, and the responsibility to provide our input to our elected officials.

I agree that we the people must take responsibility in order for our democracy to work. At the very least, we must do this by staying informed and involved, by speaking our minds, and by voting. I'm afraid our nation is falling down in that regard. Bud is spot on in his last paragraph where he says, "Only you and I can do this..."

**Rich Floyd
Eagles Nest Twp.**

We can change our social structures

BEING, INDESCRIBABLE BY WORD, BUT EXPRESSED IN THE SPIRIT OF LIVING. A spiritual being is more altruistic than self-serving, clearly more compassionate than indifferent, more cooperative than competitive, favors inclusion over exclusion and will not sacrifice common interests for personal gain. American economic ideology emphasizes the latter over the former.

WHOLENESS SEES OUR WELLBEING IN THE WELLBEING OF OTHERS. We have force-fed the inner beast that devours us, long enough. In disconnect and separation, predatory aggressive leaders divide

us to dominate and control. Together we connect to allow our better angels to flourish and guide us.

MINDFULNESS OPENS US TO FLOURISH TOGETHER FOR THE COMMON GOOD. Human existence is nature's work. Immunity grows stronger from consciousness of wholeness in living and being. Health care as a human right, nourishment and safety, tranquility and caring for each other brings comfort to benefit all. Within everyone there is promise to be actualized.

THE NATURE OF THE FULL LIFE NURTURES OTHERS TO LIVE MORE FULLY. Gross inequality is thief to our safety, security, stability, strength and survival. A political system that deprived persons of life, liberty and property met its death in revolution, so it is that an economic system that deserves the same fate in devolution. We the people, not the few, will rule to live more fully in economic democracy.

LOVE IS THE LIFE-FORCE OF BEING ONE IN THE PRESENCE OF WHOLENESS. Social systems are born and live until they exhaust their usefulness, then they die. Serving few with false promise of prosperity for all, keeping people divided and exploited has lasted nearly three hundred years. Time has run out! The power of love gives us the wisdom to do what is whole, right, good and just. Through dignity of empowerment, there is elegance, beauty and grace.

**Harold Honkola
Tower**

ENGAGED CITIZEN

Lessons from an unsettling and historic June

by KEITH STEVA

Timberjay Contributor

June 2020 has already given us many national chaotic events of such magnitude and import that it will be recalled for decades to come in the same light as the 1960's anti-segregation protests. Our sense of stability and well-being as Minnesotans was put in question as we watched protests and destruction across the state and then the nation. Having learned much, we still have many questions. We will consider just two questions.

The first question, does the President of the United States have unlimited power to use the military for domestic purposes? Article II, Section 2, Clause I states "The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United

States". The Militia is now called the National Guard.

Congress passed the Insurrection Act in 1807 to allow the President to militarily intervene domestically when (a) a state legislature or governor requests assistance from the President for military support to suppress an insurrection, (b) the President considers a need to suppress insurrection, domestic violence, and unlawful obstructions, or (c) there is interference with federal law. Prior to invoking the Act, the President must first issue a warning proclamation to disperse in a reasonable amount of time.

Congress then passed the Posse Comitatus Act in 1878 which limits the President's usage of the military in domestic law enforcement "except in cases and circumstance expressly authorized by the Constitution or Act of Congress" which is currently the three clauses listed above in the 1807 Insurrection Act.



An example of (a): 1992, California Governor Wilson requested federal assistance. President Bush federalized the California Army National Guard and authorized federal troops and federal law enforcement officers to restore law and order to contain racial riots in Los Angeles. The last time part (b) was invoked was in 1872 to enforce a legal election in Louisiana. An example of (c): 1963, President John F. Kennedy federalized National Guard troops and deployed them to the University of Alabama to force its desegregation, to comply with federal law.

The President could conceivably use part (b) as justification to domestically mobilize the

military. Since the enforcement efforts by the various state and city governments were effectively responding and controlling the unrest, and local governments and governors were not asking for aid, it would likely have been seen as an ill-considered, excessive, unneeded action.

The second question, was Attorney General William Barr's use of unidentified heavily armed enforcement personnel in military gear to clear the Lafayette Square area around the White House appropriate? According to reporters and eye witnesses a number of the Department of Justice agency enforcement officers from the Bureau of Prisons and potentially other agencies were not wearing uniforms with insignia, did not have identification documents, and would not respond to questions about their agency.

In a democracy, a core practice where law enforcement works for the people and not

against them, law officers must be identifiable and accountable. In September 2014, the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division criticized the Ferguson, Missouri, police department for allowing officers to work without nameplates. The DOJ said, "Officers wearing name plates while in uniform is a basic component of transparency and accountability. It is a near-universal requirement of sound policing practices and required under some state laws." Failure to do so "contributes to mistrust and undermines accountability and conveys a message that officers may seek to act with impunity."

Professional enforcement officers do not suddenly lose their identification and insignia when deployed. Accountability is still a requirement of our democracy. The question remains, why were the officers not properly identifiable?

BEAVER...Continued from page 4

mate of their own. The lodge is a fortress from predators, a shield from Upper North America's bitter winter temperatures, and a remarkable example of engineering genius. A beaver lodge in northern Ontario was spotted in a satellite photo and measured close to 700 feet across. And they last many decades whether active or abandoned.

To locate the ideal place to build a lodge, beaver utilize a heightened sensitivity to subtle, ever-changing sounds of the flow and volume of moving water. And it must have abundant grass, brush, rocks, mud and mature timber, all materials needed in the construction of the lodge as well as the dams that will impede flowage, producing ponds large and deep enough to protect against intruders. As humans terrace hillsides, beavers "terrace" stream beds.

The dams are complex structures built to last. Just try tearing one apart and you'll

know what I mean! John and I have attempted to control flooding on our land many times by punching an opening in one of many nearby dams. With axes, adze and hoes, what might begin as a quick and easy fix soon becomes an extremely laborious undertaking.

Adam begins small but soon its width and breadth increase, the water behind it slows and deepens, and before long, a once-small mass of debris bridges the creek from bank to bank and is soon wide enough to portage. No matter how hard we've tried to interrupt beaver's efforts, more often than not, we have totally failed. The beaver have staked their claim, completely flooding 40 to 50 acres of woods. If undeterred, they will continue building, raising the height of the water even further, claiming more and more territory while dramatically altering the landscape.

Beaver are very smart and

very able to elude predators, including humans fully-tooled with snares, foot traps, conibears, buckshot, and even dynamite. So, in this contest of "man against nature", it's your call who to name "winner" and "loser".

Beaver were once treasured for their thick, shiny fur that made dapper hats, warm coats and chopper mitts. In fact, their pelts were in such demand that beaver were trapped nearly to extinction. When I moved to Linden Grove, it seemed nary a man over fifty hadn't trapped to supplement his household income. Then came synthetics. As the fur market declined, so did the number of trappers. Now, few remain in the area. For some, it's a hobby. But others are contracted by county highway departments responsible for keeping beaver numbers down to prevent highway washouts. This spring, we were visited by three trappers asking to scout and remove beaver from our land.

Before granting permission, we conducted a "cost-benefit analysis" of sorts. You see, these furry fellas don't just make trouble, they make wonderful reservoirs that sustain life even in the driest times of summer — wildlife as well as our own.

We're avid gardeners with a goal of growing and preserving enough produce to feed us year-round. When the bogs dry up, usually by mid-August, so does our creek. But not with beaver around! The beaver pond supplies a continuous source of water all summer long. For that reason, we thank our lucky stars that we're still granted a say over their fate — whether to blow their dams or let them stay. We weigh the value of "many trees saved" against "many lives lost". The pond is home to huge numbers of insects, birds, minnows, frogs, and waterfowl that bring us a lot of joy. They will most likely be sacrificed by trapping and then blasting the dam.

The nights are awfully quiet after the heavy hand of man has sent a hoard of co-habiting creatures downstream in one furious whoosh! Our smaller dam will be spared. Our garden will be watered. We humans will be left behind, able to live on, privileged, relatively undisturbed with our home still intact. We remind ourselves the manmade mud-plain that remains will soon green up again. And, "Glory be!", signs of nature's cycle of renewal will become evident again.

A few days ago, we spotted wood ducks who'd relocated upstream. A bittern, unseen for years, was sighted not far from our culvert. The geese and cranes have stuck around despite the disappearance of our beloved beaver lake. So, let me close with this. Read Anne Dunn's book. It can help us understand this ever-changing world in which we live while in no way diminishing its wonder!

Week of June 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 2:30-5:30 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is Junly 16.

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

Breitung Town Board- 12 noon on June 23.

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.

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



LAKE VERMILION CULTURAL CENTER

Midsummer fundraiser postponed until 2021

Group asking for donations to help with the cost of the roof project



TOWER- The annual Midsummer Gala sponsored by the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center was scheduled for this Saturday, June 20. Due to COVID-19 restrictions it has been postponed to June 19, 2021. The theme will be "Celebrating Norway!" While it was a hard decision to postpone this event, the LVCC looks forward to an exciting program and gala next year.

The Midsummer Gala is the largest fundraiser of the year for the LVCC and the loss of revenue will impact the next phase of

the project, the completion of the roof. While the Highway 169 side of the building is almost complete, the addition of the new roof is essential at this time. All community members are encouraged to send a generous donation to the LVCC at P.O. Box 659, Tower, MN 55790 or donate online at vermilionculturalcenter.org. When finished, the building will host cultural events like concerts, plays and lectures, but will also be used as a community gathering space and a venue for weddings, funerals and other events.

Michelle Rose (pictured at left) is a singer/songwriter who is currently studying at Berklee College of Music in Boston. Her father, Kjell Bergh, came over from Norway when he was 19. Most of Michelle's family lives in Norway. She has enjoyed many trips to Norway over the years, staying at family cabins and visiting relatives and friends. Michelle was scheduled to perform in Tower singing Solveig's Song by Edvard Greig. She is now scheduled to appear in 2021.

Tower Farmers Market opens on Friday, June 19

TOWER- The Tower Farmers Market is looking forward to a safe 2020 season when we open on Friday, June 19 at 4 p.m. at the train. Market vendors will be following COVID-19 safety recommendations provided by the Minnesota Farmers Market Association, including practicing

social distancing, more spacing between market vendors, use of an on-site handwashing station at the market, and more. Face masks are encouraged but will not be required.

Following the guidelines, on-site consumption of food will not be allowed this year.

However, we expect our usual wonderful mix of baked goods, meat, craft, produce, and canned goods vendors to be back at the market. We hope to see you there, too, to support your local vendors who work hard all year to bring you the variety you've come to expect.

New vendors are always welcome. Tables are \$25 for the summer. Check out our Facebook page or call Janna at 753-2916 or Mickey at 984-3951 with any questions.

BREITUNG TOWNSHIP



Soudan water shutoff due to hydrant replacement

BREITUNG- Work on a fire hydrant on South Street briefly shut down water service in Soudan on Monday morning. The township had notified nearby residents but had not expected the work to disrupt water service throughout the town. Residents were surprised to find that no water was coming out of their faucets. Water service was shut off for about half an hour. The hydrant repair was completed without any further disruption. photo by S. Ukkola

Breitung has long list of small summer road projects to complete

by STEPHANIE UKKOLA
Staff Writer

BREITUNG TWP- The Breitung Town Board met in person last Wednesday, with a call-in option, to discuss summer projects.

After the construction of the new town hall building was completed last fall, the board has been sitting on a punch list of twelve small projects that hadn't been completed or had to be revisited by contractors. While many have been completed over the past few weeks, a few things still need to be addressed including sealing a crack under the double doors to the clerk and treasurer's office, sealing the sidewalk cement, and addressing ice buildup on the roof, a project that will have to wait until winter.

Summer roadwork includes:

- Work on a culvert at Birch and South Sts.,
- Raising a manhole on South St.,
- Grading dirt roads,
- Addressing sanitary sewer casting at Mineview St.,
- Possibly removing sanitary sewer casting near the baseball field,
- Changing a fire hydrant at Birch and South Sts.,
- Filling potholes in alleyway between Main and Poplar Streets,
- Doing an exploratory dig near home on McKinley Park Rd. to find a water leak, estimated to be leaking 10,000 gallons of water per day,
- Assessing a water leak near a Main St. home,
- Patching potholes on bike trail from Soudan to McKinley Park,
- Digging, leveling, and installing a liner at the hockey rink before installing new hockey boards,
- Spraying dust control on gravel roads before the Fourth of July, and
- Repairing some and purchasing additional picnic tables for McKinley Park Campground.

stalling a liner at the hockey rink before installing new hockey boards,

➤ Spraying dust control on gravel roads before the Fourth of July, and

➤ Repairing some and purchasing additional picnic tables for McKinley Park Campground.

The board made final payment on the Church Street Sewer project from 2018 and will get a quote for paving behind the police station, where the entrance to the police garage is located. The board and maintenance directors thanked Minnesota Power for putting up the backstop net at the baseball field with volunteer labor. The next Breitung Town Board meeting will be Tuesday, June 23 at noon.

the TIMBERJAY

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

Tower Cemetery Association

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN.

Thank you to ALL who donate.

We still need your support and the support of others.

Checks are to be made out to:

Tower Cemetery Association
PO Box 874, Tower, MN 55790

Thank you,
The Tower Cemetery Board

Transfer station

Soudan Canister

Expanded hours year-round

Monday	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Wed.	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

For info: 1-800-450-9278

Hwy. 77 Canister

Summer Hours through Sept. 30

Tuesday	1 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Thursday	8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Saturday	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday	12 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Recycling canisters available at the canister site when open. For info: 1-800-450-9278

ISD 696

What will school look like this fall?

Update from Ely Schools Superintendent Erik Erie



One of the last school events in March, before the coronavirus pandemic sent students home for the rest of the school year, was the Music In Our Schools concert. District officials are waiting for guidance from the Minnesota Department of Education on what learning protocols will be mandated for the 2020-2021 school year. A final decision should be announced by the end of July. photo by K. Vandervort

Finishing the school year in Distance Learning, without students and teachers in our building every day, many of us wonder what school will look like this fall.

Much of that depends on guidance from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). The Ely Public Schools are already busy planning for the next school year and expect to receive additional guidance from MDE this week.

The three scenarios we are being asked to plan around are:

- ▶ All students returning to school buildings following the most current MDH and CDC guidelines
- ▶ Hybrid model following MDH and

CDC guidelines that provides for social distancing and limitations on numbers of students per classroom

▶ Distance Learning model similar to how we finished the school year We do not expect a final decision from the Governor's Office and MDE until the week of July 27.

As soon as we know the model that will be employed, we will get the information out to all our stakeholders.

By the time school begins on Sept. 8, the Ely area community will have already had the opportunity to vote on a \$10 million bond referendum that can help address the needs of our aging buildings, connect our buildings for safety and security,

and provide new flexible learning spaces for 21st Century Learning.

Early voting with absentee ballots starts June 26, with Aug. 11 as Election Day for the bond referendum. To find out how to take advantage of early voting, and for information about the bond referendum, please visit our district website: <https://www.ely.k12.mn.us/> or visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ely.k12.mn.us/>.

On our website you can find:

- ▶ Bond Referendum Information (similar to the brochure sent this past week to Ely-area households)
- ▶ Press Releases (articles that help explain why the bond referendum is being

proposed)

▶ MDE Review and Comment (documents submitted to MDE and their response)

▶ Tax Calculator (allows residents to determine the expected tax impact for their property)

▶ Ely Referendum Overview Video (link to a four-minute video that explains why the bond referendum is being proposed)

By now Ely-area households should have received an informational brochure in the mail from Ely Public Schools. In that brochure (also on the district website) you can see a site concept plan.

In this conceptual drawing you may notice areas labeled as STEAM Modules

and Maker Space. These are architectural labels that are really place holders for our valued Industrial Technology programs (STEAM stands for Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math).

These classes, sometimes referred to as Industrial Arts or Shop, will get up-to-date spaces to accommodate all the current programming we are now able to offer, including Woods, Welding, Electrical Technology, and Industrial Technology (includes Small Engines and Metals).

Industrial Technology classes are alive and well at Ely Public Schools. We expect that to continue with new dedicated spaces for Industrial Technology to help ensure our students can explore both traditional and 21st Century Learning programs, such as robotics.

You can contact me for more information by calling 218-365-1725 (school) or 218-750-4564 (cell). My email address is erie@ely.k12.mn.us

Thank you for taking the time to be an informed and involved citizen in evaluating the bond referendum plans and voting on or before Aug. 11.

Libraries

Ely library

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

Babbitt library

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

Support groups

AA - Alcoholics Anonymous

AA - 7 p.m. Mondays, and 7:30 p.m.

Wednesdays, First Lutheran Church,

915 E. Camp St., Ely

WOMEN'S AA - Noon Mondays, St. Anthony Church basement, 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 Church.

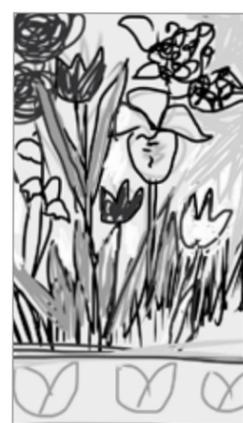
CO-DEPENDENTS' 12-step support group, noon Fridays, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Ely.

ELY FOOD SHELF - Third Wednesday each month, 15 W. Conan St.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION GED - Study materials and pre-test available. Tower by appointment. Call 365-3359, 827-3232, or 1-800-662-5711.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2020



flowers appearing in a timely progression

uniquely their own

AROUND TOWN



Officials from St. Louis County collected dozens of cans of paint and other hazardous materials last week in the parking lot of the Ely Joint Public Works Facility. A steady stream of local residents discarded their unused liquid materials. For more information, go to www.stlouiscountymn.gov/hw. photo by K. Vandervort

Higher Education

Student honored at UW-Stevens Point

STEVENS POINT, Wis. - The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point honored more than 2,660 undergraduate students, including an Ely student, for attaining high grade point averages during the spring semester of the 2019-2020 academic year.

Isabella Stellmach, of Ely, a senior at UW-Stevens Point, received Highest Honors.

Full-time undergraduates who earned grade points of 3.90 to 4.0 (4.0 equals straight A) are given the highest honors designation. High honor citations go to those with grade point averages from 3.75 to 3.89 and honor recognition is accorded to those with grade point averages from 3.50 to 3.74.

Ely student graduates from Iowa State

AMES, Iowa - Nearly 5,100 Iowa State University students, including O'Neill Kingston, of Ely, received degrees this spring.

Kingston received a Doctor of Philosophy, Mathematics.

A virtual commencement ceremony was held this spring at Iowa State University. The traditional on-campus celebrations were moved online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. University leaders recorded three commencement ceremonies to honor graduates.

Ely student honored at UW-Madison

MADISON, Wis. - The University of Wisconsin-Madison recognized students named to the Dean's List for the spring semester of the 2019-2020 academic year.

Thomas Montana, of Ely, a student in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences was named to the Dean's List.

To be eligible for the Dean's List, students must complete a minimum of 12 graded degree credits in that semester. Each university school or college sets its own GPA requirements for students to be eligible to receive the distinction.

Ely student receives scholarships

MOORHEAD - Maxibillion Thompson, of Ely, a graduate of Christian Arts Academy, received two scholarships from Minnesota State University-Moorhead, including a \$6,000 Moorhead Achieve scholarship for his academic achievements, and a \$1,000 Freshman Talent scholarship in Music (piano).

Thompson, the son of Theresa and Craig Thompson, of Ely, intends to major in Astrophysics/Electrical Engineering and minor in music.

The Moorhead Achieve scholarship is given to students admitted to MSUM with a composite ACT score of 26 or higher and a 3.50 GPA.



the TIMBERJAY

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Cook Lions Club sells brats and books for good

Cook Books are now being sold through local businesses

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- Steve Kajala, of Cook, is one of the newer members of the Cook Lions Club, and as its president-elect he recently got the opportunity to learn what the club is all about.

Kajala was joined by club vice-president-elect Liz Storm as they presented a \$500 donation to the Cook Community Food Shelf, bringing the club's 2020 total donations to the organization up to \$2,500.

"The Cook Lions Club works closely with the other local service organizations," Kajala said. "Due to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on many local individuals, the Cook Community Food Shelf has received a much higher demand than normal for distributions. We wanted to be able to help them help others."

Helping others is the Lions Club mission, and locals have bought into that in a big way. The 58-member club is the fourth-largest among 44 clubs in the region, according to longtime member Mark Eyre.

"It's a very large club considering the size of

our community," Eyre said.

Eyre and other Lions volunteers were busy last Friday serving up bratwurst outside of Zup's Market, something they will be doing every Friday and Saturday throughout the summer. The newly-refurbished brat shack on a trailer is in part a result of the Lions' giving in the wake of the fire that destroyed the former Zup's Market.

"After the place burned down, the Lions were volunteering at the little store all winter," Eyre said. "We had five and six Lions there Mondays and Thursdays helping with stocking shelves. Matt Zupancich supports the community, and we support Matt Zupancich."

And in turn, Zupancich gave back to the club. The original brat shack was painted blue and yellow, the club's colors.

"When the store was built, Matt said he had some extra siding, would we like to do it in the colors of the store? He gave us the siding and we did it," Eyre said.

Club member Bob Ulrich took care of the siding, and another member, Jeff Annen, donated

his time to build a trailer so that the brat shack is moveable.

But brats weren't the only item Eyre was selling on Friday. He was also pushing the sale of Cook Books, the \$10 book of coupons that constitutes one of the club's primary fundraisers.

"We've been selling coupon books for 16 years," Eyre said. "Normally we sell them out in the community, but this year we're not going to do any person-to-person selling as we've done in the past."

Instead, the books are available for purchase at Zup's, The Country Store, Cook Building Center, Vermilion Fairways golf course, Cook Optical, and Cook Auxiliary Thrift Store. Eyre is confident people will get their money's worth from the various coupons for golf courses, restaurants, Zup's, and other businesses.

"If you use two coupons out of this book and you don't save \$10, I'll buy the book back personally," Eyre said.

Who they help

Nationally, Lions Clubs are recognized for



From left, Food Shelf Volunteer Maddie Aune, Food Shelf Volunteer and Cook Lions Club Vice President-Elect Liz Storm, Food Shelf Volunteer Lee Ehrbright, Food Shelf Director Cleo Cottrell, Food Shelf Volunteer Lynn Polich, and Lions Club President-Elect Steve Kajala display a check for a recent \$500 donation from the Lions Club. Submitted photo

their committed giving to health-oriented causes, and the Cook club is no different.

"Earlier this year we gave a donation from LCIF, our foundation, of \$70,000 to Cook Hospital for a new lab," Eyre said. "We have given \$150,000 to the Cook Hospital in the last seven years."

But the club is equally committed to giving on a personal level, Eyre noted.

"We give to the students at North Woods School," he said. "Any student that needs glasses and can't afford them, we give glasses from Cook Optical for free."

Diabetes and hearing assistance are other areas the Lions devote their attention to. Eyre noted that the statewide Lions Club organization gave \$1 million to the University of Minnesota for diabetes research.

The club also has financed scholarships for three people to get EMT training to work with the ambulance service.

But whether someone buys a brat or purchases a Cook Book, they can count on their money doing good right here at home.

"The money all stays here in Cook for scholarships and helping the community in different ways," Eyre said.

Good times back on tap as Cook VFW reopens

Burger night, bingo on hold for now

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- In the spirit of Alan Jackson and Jimmy Buffet's hit song "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere," at 5 p.m. Friday in the Azores, a group of islands in the east Atlantic off the coast of Portugal, the Cook VFW turned on the open sign to welcome veterans and patrons back after a COVID-19-imposed three-month shutdown.

That made it high noon in Cook, and bartender Travis Weatherton was eager to welcome customers.

"March 16 would have been our last night," he said. "We miss each other. These are people you've seen on a daily basis and all of a sudden you were just cut off and couldn't see anybody."

There to answer the opening bell on Friday was John Oh, a retired X-ray technician and VFW regular.

"I haven't seen this guy in a long time," Weatherton grinned. "I've seen him on the

road and that's about it." "You'd see the people here once in a while," Oh said. "They were always waving at each other but there was no socializing. I just called a friend up, told him where I was at, and he said 'I'm getting off work right now, I'll be there.'"

Weatherton admitted that a few people driving past his house had stopped after seeing him out in the yard, and he wouldn't let them go before throwing something on the grill and tipping a brew or two.

Within about a half hour, Weatherton and Oh had nine more people to interact with. While the facility has ample room for social distancing and people wearing masks are welcome, everyone was seated at the bar as they renewed their special brand of face-to-face camaraderie.

"I don't know what the word for it is, but you're going to get picked on," Weatherton chuckled. "I love working here, but you're going to get picked on. They're

veterans, that's what they do. They're razzing each other all the time."

Weatherton said the only times the VFW comes close to exceeding the 50-percent capacity limit set by the state is during special events like burger nights and bingo nights. While the VFW won't be restarting those and other group activities until later this summer, Weatherton noted that hosting community events is an integral part of the VFW's identity and contribution to the community.

"We hold a lot of benefits here," he said. "When you consider bingo and burger nights, you're milling through 200-plus people. Funeral services, they're held here as well. Usually that's an average of about three a month. This isn't just a job, it's what we do for the people around here. We take care of people."

Weatherton said he particularly enjoys seeing the kids who volunteer as servers on burger nights.

"I think it helps those

young kids when they volunteer in that kitchen," he said. "Some of their parents aren't even veterans. They're just kids who want to come in and help people."

Re-starting burger nights also will depend on what other volunteers they can recruit, since some past volunteers may be wary of working in large groups of people due to health concerns right now, Weatherton said.

"It's all volunteers," Weatherton said. "It takes about five or six volunteers to run a burger night. We're not going to have that for another month or so. It will depend on if we can get volunteers to come in and operate the kitchen."

But for now, Weatherton is just happy seeing customers again.

"I worked construction for almost 30 years and then got out of that," he said. "You can't just sit around, so I tried my hand at bartending, and in September it'll be three years. I love working here."



Cook VFW bartender Travis Weatherton talks with a customer on Friday shortly after the facility re-opened after being closed for nearly three months for COVID-19. D. Colburn photo

COMMUNITY NOTICES

day services at 8 a.m. and 7 a.m. respectively.

A traditional Latin Mass will be celebrated at St. Mary's the first Saturday of each month, beginning at 9 a.m.

Confession will be heard by Father Nick Nelson 30 minutes before Mass or by appointment. Attendance at weekend Mass is limited to 25-percent capacity.

Community meal will be June 25

COOK- Beat the heat and stop by the community meal on Thursday, June 25 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.

The meal will be served drive-through style in the front parking lot (facing American Bank). On the menu are sub sandwiches and sides. The meal is free and open to the public.

Online embroidery class is Monday

COOK- Professional artist Kris Musto will offer an Introduction to Embroidery class Monday, June 22, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., that will be offered online via Zoom.

The free class, sponsored by Northwoods Friends of the Arts,

promises to be a fun and easy introduction to embroidery, including basic skills and stitches.

Participants will need to have an embroidery needle, embroidery floss in a dark or bright color, a non-stretchy piece of fabric at least 12" x 12", and scissors or a blade to cut thread. Optional supplies are listed in the class announcement on the NWFA Facebook page.

Preregistration is required by calling or texting Lisa at 218-780-1151. The free class is made possible through a grant from Lake Country Power.

the TIMBERJAY

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Catholic Mass times revised

COOK/ORR - Mass and Adoration times for Holy Cross Catholic Church in Orr and St. Mary's Catholic Church in Cook have been updated.

Mass will be celebrated at Holy Cross on Saturdays at 5 p.m. and Thursdays at 5:30 p.m., with Adoration preceding the Thursday service at 4:30 p.m.

Mass at St. Mary's will be at 8 a.m. on Sundays, 9 a.m. on Tuesdays, and 8 a.m. on Thursdays. Adoration will precede the Tuesday and Thurs-

VERMILION COUNTRY SCHOOL

VCS takes graduation on the road

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

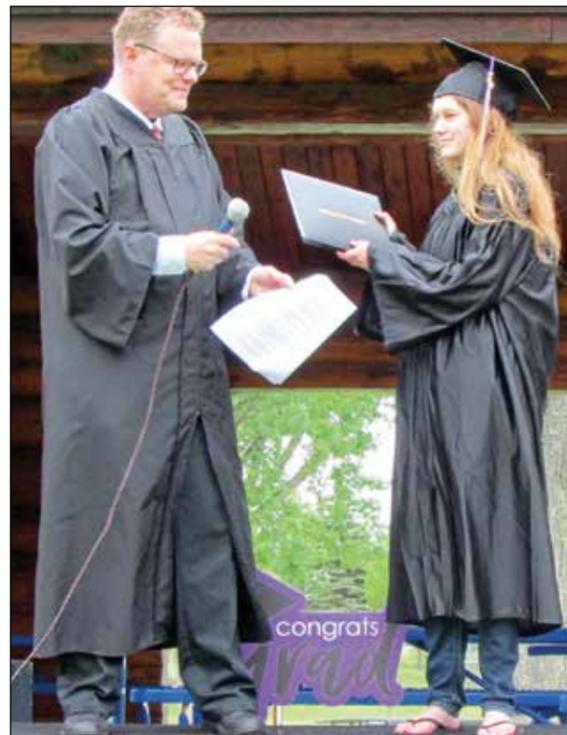
REGIONAL - Vermilion Country School may have a small student body, but the school has always been filled to the brim with family and friends on graduation day. When plans for the traditional in-school graduation ceremony were canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic, school staff decided the best way to celebrate the Class of 2020 was to bring the graduation ceremony to the students, one at a time.

And what does it take to put on a graduation ceremony? A veritable theatrical stage crew ready to assemble (and disassemble) a stage, a walkway, balloons and decorations, music, and a small audience at each graduate's home.

So on Wednesday, June 10, the school vans and an assortment of cars were rolling. At each of the five graduates' homes, a newly-constructed portable stage was put in place, along with a walkway, personalized lawn signs, and balloons. Pomp and Circumstance played over the portable sound system. Teachers and staff assembled with a backdrop of the decorated school vans. Family members stood by as school administrator Frank Zobitz gave a short speech and handed out the diploma. School staff clapped and congratulated, even if they weren't allowed to give out hugs. There was cake for the family to share afterwards,



VCS School Administrator Frank Zobitz presented diplomas to Alyssa Pratt (above), Danica Starkman (right), and Jacob Dorman (left) in three of the five individual graduation ceremonies held last week. submitted photos



a school sweatshirt, and a goodie bag.

"Each ceremony was a little bit different," said school board member Marit Kringstad, who was happy she had taken the day off to attend the ride-along.

Kringstad said the graduates were not quite certain how the ceremony would go, since there hadn't been any rehearsal.

"Frank would start talking to the graduate, with them both up on the stage," she said. "Then he told them it wouldn't be a graduation without a speech."

For a quick moment, Kringstad said, the graduates worried that they were expected to give a speech, but Zobitz, dressed in formal graduation robe attire, then began to talk

to the student and their family. And while graduation speeches often focus on the future, this year's pandemic meant that the present was also on everyone's mind.

"Mark Twain once said I am an old man and have worried about many things, but most of them never happened," Zobitz said. "How many times have you thought about all the problems that may have happened but didn't...or things that were about to happen and didn't...or thoughts about what may happen in the future, but probably won't? Listen to Twain -

he worried a lot, but in the end, most of his worrying was for nothing." Zobitz urged the students not to let negative thoughts get in the way of enjoying life.

"Our thoughts can really control us if we let them. Half the time, the thoughts about our problems are just not real. It's not until we get wrapped up in something we totally enjoy, like watching a movie, hanging out with friends, or drawing, that we recognize how the negative energy in our head has control of us a lot of the time."

Zobitz asked the graduates to be ready to start their future. "It's not a distant reality anymore. It begins here. It begins today. No matter where you go or what you

do, there are challenges ahead. What I'm asking from you, is to meet those challenges straight on with your head held high and your heart wide open. It's not enough to simply try to get by in life. That doesn't move the world forward. You must try to excel in everything you do; strive for excellence in every task, large or small."

Two of the VCS graduates also earned their AA degrees at Vermilion Community College, and they both are planning to continue their college education. Two others are looking at enrolling at area community colleges this fall, and one of the graduates has yet to decide on their future plans.

EVFCU takes up the #CUs4U challenge to recognize essential workers

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- Challenge on.

The Embarrass-Vermilion Federal Credit Union is taking part in a state-wide credit union-powered initiative to recognize essential workers, as well as support local businesses.

On Wednesday, EVFCU presented gift certificates from Tower-area restaurants to employees at Zup's Grocery, one of our area's essential businesses. Other EVFCU offices are making similar donations to workers at grocery stores in Biwabik, Nett Lake, and Hoyt Lakes.

"We were challenged by the Virginia Coop Credit Union," said Tower branch manager Sunday Young. "And now we are challenging North Star Credit Union in Cook."

"It is in our credit union nature to give back to the communities we serve," said Roxi Jensen, EVFCU president. "We are proud of how our CU family is rising to the challenge to support those essential workers at the frontlines of the COVID-19."

"On behalf of our EVFCU Board of Directors and team, we thank all the grocery workers who are there to ensure our families have the foods and goods we use every day. Your

hard work and dedication to the community does not go unnoticed," she said. "We also wanted to reach out to the many local restaurants that have been impacted by the COVID-19 events."

The #CUs4U Challenge was created by the Hiway Federal Credit Union in St. Paul in April, as an opportunity for credit unions to support both local small businesses and essential workers in the communities that they serve.

"Together, as part of #CUs4U, we can help make a difference in our communities while supporting our local small businesses and recognizing and thanking all those

who continue to serve us every day," said Dave Boden, Hiway's President/CEO.

Right: EVFCU teller Vicki Balster (far right) and branch manager Sunday Young (not pictured) presented gift cards to Libby Suihkonen, Lara Poderzay, and interim Zup's manager Jary Jo Threinen. photo by J. Summit



COVID-19 Testing Available

Curbside COVID-19 testing available Mon-Fri at our Cook and Tower Clinics. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to COVID-19 through someone with a known positive test result, please call to schedule a testing appointment.

Testing will not be completed without an appointment.
Scenic Rivers will not bill patients for testing.
Insurance coverage will be processed when available.

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www.ScenicRiversHealth.org

Tower-Soudan loves Fourth of July

Fireworks at Dusk on July 4

We may not be able to have a parade this year, but our community can still show our Fourth of July spirit.

WE WANT TO SEE YOUR PHOTOS

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- Decorated Businesses
- Decorated Boats
- Patriotic Signs
- Decorated Bikes & Floats
- Family 4th Celebrations

Please email them to editor@timberjay.com by Monday, July 6

We will celebrate the Fourth with a color photo display in the Timberjay, the week after Fourth of July, and photos will be displayed online on the TowerMn facebook page.

And don't forget to come and support your local businesses over the Fourth of July weekend

Fireworks at Dusk on July 4

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

VCC has plans in place to open campus for fall semester

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY—Vermilion Community College is preparing to welcome students back to campus this fall, after the campus closed early this spring due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In a letter to students this week, VCC Provost Shawn Bina provided an update on plans in the works by VCC staff.

“There is still a lot that we don’t know about what the future will bring, but this much is certain: Vermilion will be open and ready to welcome you for the start of the fall semester,” he said. The fall semester starts

on Monday, Aug. 24.

Bina said school officials will make adaptations as necessary in accordance with ongoing Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance to safely serve VCC students.

“We are working to continue to provide the unique educational experiences for which Vermilion is known,” he added.

At this point VCC’s plans include allowing residential living within the school’s dorms, offering on-campus food service, and providing academic instruction with a blend of face-to-face learning and remote learning while maintaining social distancing through small in-person

class sizes.

“Because we know that there will be some remote learning involved at VCC this fall, we recommend that all students bring a laptop or tablet with them to campus,” Bina said.

“But make no mistake, the safety, security, and health of our students, faculty, and staff continues to be our top priority. To that end, we are making plans to ensure proper social distancing within all classes. Residence hall capacity will be reduced in an attempt to mitigate risk of (coronavirus) transmission,” he said.

VCC will reconfigure the campus cafeteria meal services and will take actions regarding



protocols for cleaning and sanitizing the campus, according to Bina.

“We will provide additional details in the coming weeks regarding what you should expect for fall as we continue our plans for the fall semester,”

Bina said.

Bina can be contacted at 218-235-2170, or by email at s.bina@vcc.edu.

Obituaries and Death Notices



Richard A. Stern

Richard Allan Stern, 88, of Austin, Minn., passed away at his home on Thursday, June 11, 2020. Graveside services will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, June 20 at Oakwood Cemetery in Austin with Reverend Mark Van House officiating. Clasen-Jordan Mortuary of Austin is handling arrangements.

Richard was born on Oct. 27, 1931, in Iowa City, Iowa, to Harry and Edna (Moothart) Stern. As a child, his family moved to Austin, where he attended Austin Schools and graduated with the Class of 1950 from Austin High School. Following high school, Richard served in the U.S. Army.

On July 21, 1956, Richard was united in marriage to Clarice Maybeth Pembroke. They were blessed with a son, Randy, and had lived their entire married

life in Austin. Following a 20-year career with Weyerhaeuser, Richard went back to school in Hibbing and earned his Associate of Arts degree in Small Business Management. At the same time, he began doing carpentry work and remodeling.

In 1984, Richard began spending time with his son in Crane Lake, where he continued his work as a carpenter and builder. The Crane Lake area allowed him to take advantage of his love of the outdoors. From a young age, he was a passionate deer hunter, and he also enjoyed fishing. In his later years, Richard stopped hunting deer, and enjoyed watching the young bucks grow.

Richard was a person who gave of himself, and was always willing to help anyone in need. He had a soft spot for animals and the family’s hunting dogs. He was a conceptual person, full of ideas, with a “can do” attitude. He was a wonderful role model to his son, and had a positive influence on the lives of many others.

Richard is survived by his wife, Clarice of Austin; son, Randy Stern of Crane Lake; sisters, Joanne Iverson of Rochester and Lorraine (Eldon) Tlam of

Dunnell; and many nieces and nephews, extended family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Harold, Roland, GG and Gerald; and sisters, Maxine and Dorothy.



Michael D. Novak

Michael “Mike” Donald Novak, 53, of Greaney, passed away on Wednesday, June 10, 2020, at his home. A Celebration of Life will be held from 2-6 p.m. on Saturday, June 27 at the Cook VFW. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

Mike was born on July 12, 1966, in Bemidji. He attended Orr High School, graduating in 1984. After graduation, he started his lifelong career as a logger, working for Freyholtz Logging and Rutar Logging. Mike was an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed everything the great northern outdoors offered. He was an avid

hunter, trapper and fisherman.

Mike will be remembered as a man with a big heart, a man who was loyal to a fault, and a man who always put his family first. He enjoyed family holidays and insisted on family Christmas celebrations that brought everyone together.

Mike is survived by his mother, Susan Thompson; father, Gary Novak Sr.; siblings, Debbie (Galen) Johnson, Lisa (Tom) Corbitz, Gary Novak Jr., Wade (Lorrie) Novak, Clint (Janelle) Novak and Terry (Chris) Novak; numerous nephews and nieces; and his beloved dog, Jasper.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents; and his dog, Porky.

JoAnn Carlson

JoAnn Carlson, 70, of Embarrass, passed away on Saturday, June 6, 2020, at her residence. Per her request, no services will be held. She will be inurned in Argo Cemetery, where she will be laid to rest next to her husband, Bob. Arrangements are with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by her son, Jeff (Jonelle) Saranpaa; daughter, Julee Borg; grandchildren, Zach (Bethany) and Gracie; and brother, Charles “Chuck” Carlson of Pennsylvania.

Richard J. Jaeger

Richard Jon Jaeger, 49, of Victoria and Babbitt, passed away on Friday, June 12, 2020. A Memorial Mass will be held at 11 a.m. on Monday, June 22 at St. Anthony’s Catholic Church in Ely with visitation for one hour prior. Deacon Greg Huter will officiate. Arrangements are with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

He is survived by his wife of 25 years, Theresa Klassen Jaeger of Victoria and Babbitt; daughter, Emily Jaeger of Victoria and Babbitt; father, Frank Jaeger of Babbitt; sisters, Connie (Curt) Koivisto of Babbitt, Carleen (John) Flint of Grand Forks, N.D., and Mary (Mark) Bodine of Babbitt; brothers, Michael (Sandra) Jaeger of Babbitt and James (Kevin) Jaeger of Bloomington; father-in-law, Jim (JoAnn) Klassen; mother-in-law, Gail Best, sisters-in-law, Patty and Jenna; brothers-in-law, Bart and Michael; numerous nieces and nephews; and his faithful companions, Astro and Gut.

Joseph E. Jamnick

Joseph Edward Jamnick, 60, of Silver Bay, died on Friday, June 12, 2020, at St. Luke’s Hospital in Duluth, after a two-month battle with cancer. Graveside services will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 20 at Beaver Bay Cemetery in Beaver Bay. A celebration of life will take place from 3-6 p.m. on Saturday at the Johnson residence, 1003 S 2nd Ave E in Ely. Arrangements are with Cavallin Funeral Home of Two Harbors.

He was survived by his children, Donald Jamnick and April Jamnick; grandchildren, Madison, Jackson, Adeline and Carter; mother, Theresa

Jamnick; siblings, John (Diane) Jamnick, Theresa Harris, Matt (Shelly) Jamnick and Ann (Warren) Johnson; sister-in-law, Debbie Jamnick; and many aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins.

Judith K. Johnson

Judith K. Fredrickson Johnson, 78, of Babbitt, passed away on Sunday, June 7, 2020, in her home surrounded by family and friends. A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Contributions to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Babbitt are preferred in lieu of flowers. Arrangements are with Kerntz Funeral Home in Ely.

She is survived by her beloved husband, Darrel; son, Christopher (husband Hal Lebo); sisters, Marlyn Allen and Christine (Robert Monetti); and many nieces and nephews.

Gary H. Hauta

Gary Henry Hauta, 68, of Cook, passed away on Friday, May 29, 2020, at his home after a fourteen-month battle with cancer. A public graveside memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, June 20 at Greenwood Cemetery in Virginia.

He is survived by his wife of 37 years, Patricia King Hauta of Cook; stepson, Forrest Pearson of Cook; sons, Nolan (Amanda) Hauta of Dubuque, Iowa, and Evan (Hannah) Hauta of North Branch; grandchildren, Hugo Hauta and Milo Gary Hauta of Dubuque, Iowa, and Aubriella Franzmeier of North Branch; mother, Pearl “Sunny” Dishneau Hauta Hecomovich of Angora; siblings, Kathleen Snell of Angora, Justin (Laura) Hauta of Cook, Jason (Jan) Hauta of Elk River and Jennifer Hauta of Coon Rapids; as well as numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

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LAND...Continued from page 1

that had been through our standard in-person auctions and didn't sell," Marinucci said. "Ahead of our June auction when we had to make some choices because of the current COVID-19 restrictions, we went much larger with 73 properties online, and we had great success."

The sale, held from May 28 to June 11, surpassed all expectations with 48 properties selling for a total of \$896,000.

Fourteen of those properties, most undeveloped plots zoned as Forest Agricultural Management or Multiple Use-4, were sold north of the Iron Range, and most garnered bids well in excess of initial listing prices.

A 5.22-acre site along Retreat Lodge Rd. in Greenwood Township listed for \$3,000 sold for \$25,300. A 40-acre parcel on Hwy. 25 west of Angora listed for \$9,750 sold for \$19,000. A 1.5-acre site on Wahlsten Rd. in Vermilion Lake Township sold for \$16,100, well above its

\$9,200 list price.

Even small tracts sold well. An approximately 50' by 100' parcel in the Vermilion Grove area of Greenwood Township brought more than 13 times the list price of \$100, selling for \$1,325.

"We haven't had a chance to dive into the numbers, but we did notice that some of those rural properties really went well," Marinucci said. "I think it was a combination of a few different things."

Those reasons all had to do with the accessibility and time provided by the online format, as more people could participate and had more time to do their homework about potential purchases, as evidenced by the number of phone inquiries staff fielded, Marinucci said.

"I think our traditional in-person format is limiting," she said. "It's usually held during the day and people have to be there in order to participate. I think that was a differentiator."

Still, as staff moni-

tored the sale's progress, it held elements akin to the environment of in-person auctions.

"We did keep an eye on it as it progressed," Marinucci said. "We had some early activity that was fun to see, but we knew that like any auction most of the excitement comes in the eleventh hour. There was definitely a lot of activity the last day or so."

The department is using PublicSurplus.com as its auction site, and potential bidders have to create an account before participating in an auction.

A unique feature is a proxy bidding system that automatically increases a person's bid in predetermined increments up to, if necessary, a maximum amount set by the bidder. The feature alleviates the need to respond individually to each and every counter bid.

Ongoing sales

When properties don't sell at auction, they get

moved to an available list of properties that can be purchased at any time for the list price, either through full payment up front or by contract, the length of which is determined by the sale price, Marinucci said.

"It's what we call over-the-counter sales, but right now our counters aren't exactly open," she said, referring to the fact that most county offices remain closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. "We've got well over 200 properties on our currently available list."

Those listings can be viewed on the county website, but Marinucci said that many may be grouped in smaller lots and offered for auction again online. Properties with structures such as houses are good candidates.

"We're looking at putting some of those up online for our continuing online auction," she said. "We plan to be launching another smaller subset of properties in the next

couple of days. Our goal is to have a continuous selection of property available online. We continue to backfill as things sell."

While the transition to online sales has been gradual, the success of last week's land sale provided additional reinforcement for making the shift.

"We learn every time we kind of get through these, but this most recent auction really was an eye opener to the possibilities," Marinucci said. "I think the more we refine our target marketing with these different properties and getting it in front of groups, we hope we continue to see this level of success."

Still, Marinucci doesn't see in-person auctions totally disappearing.

"There are certain pieces that the in-person auctions cater to," she said. "I don't know that they'll every fully go away, but I think that the online presence will definitely be a bigger part of the business model. It's tough to argue

with the success of this online auction."

Marinucci noted that the Land and Minerals department receives no money from the county general fund but operates in part from the revenue generated by land sales.

However, taxpayers benefit in two ways from land sales, the first being that the parcels sold go back on the county property tax rolls.

The second comes from the surplus revenue generated by department activities, including land sales.

The department can set aside 50 percent for timber development and economic and recreational development. The remaining funds are then split between the county general fund, school districts, and townships.

For 2018, those distributions totaled nearly \$200,000.

POLITICS...Continued from page 1

water source, tower, and water treatment facility for the communities of Mahnomen and nearby Brookston. According to IRRR grant manager Chris Ismil, the water currently available to the two communities does not meet drinking water standards. "The water serving these folks is not drinkable. It's contaminated at a level that could make some ill," he said. According to Ismil, the request had ranked highly under the scoring used by the IRRR, a state agency.

The two rural communities are part of the taconite tax relief area, meaning they qualify for the taconite production tax funding from the IRRR. The production tax is levied on Iron Range taconite mines, on a tonnage basis, in lieu of property taxes.

But mining politics quickly intervened in the discussion about the merits of the proposal.

"I'm pretty uncomfortable with this request," said Bakk. "I'd like to do something for this part of the taconite relief area

because we don't get many requests, but I can't remember us ever doing a grant to a local unit of government that is publicly anti-mining."

Bakk noted that the Fond du Lac band has pushed for implementation of the wild rice standard for sulfate pollution, which he said has posed challenges for the PolyMet copper-nickel project. He also complained that the band is a party to a lawsuit intended to require U.S. Steel to clean up pollution discharges from its Minntac tailings basin north of the Virginia. "They're putting Minntac's operations at risk."

"I can't ever remember a unit of government opposed to mining that came to us and asked for mining tax dollars. I can't understand it. I can't support it," he said.

Other members of the board, which is comprised of northeastern Minnesota legislators, echoed Bakk's sentiment.

"I, too, am uncomfortable, for all the reasons that Sen. Bakk brought up," said Sen. David Tomassoni,

DFL-Chisholm.

The Fond du Lac request was one of ten infrastructure requests before the IRRR board on Wednesday. It was the only one that prompted objections from the board.

Other members of the board appeared to look for other ways to provide the funding. Rep. Dave Lislegard, DFL-Aurora, questioned whether the funds could be directed to another local unit of government.

But IRRR staff pushed back, noting that the Fond du Lac had applied for the funds, as is their right under the law and policies in place at the agency. "The Fond du Lac reached out and applied like any other entity in the service area," said Ismil. "To be honest, it scored above other projects. From the state's policies and procedures, it met all the criteria and it scored high."

IRRR Commissioner Mark Phillips noted that the agency had made outreach to the four native

bands located within the taconite service area as part of an executive order from Gov. Tim Walz for more face-to-face contacts to inform native leaders about funding opportunities from the state. "I totally understand the issue," said Phillips, "but I don't know what the legal ramifications are if we are a state agency and we offer a program and they meet the requirements." Phillips questioned whether the agency could face a legal challenge if they withhold funds over a difference of opinion over mining.

Some board members began suggesting other reasons for withholding the funding. Rep. Julie Sandstede noted that the agency had recently been audited and wondered if there was anything in the Fond du Lac proposal that might raise questions from an auditor.

"If this were to be examined, are there questions in your mind, are there issues that need to be explored?" she asked.

IRRR attorney Al Becicka responded: "The legal answer to that would probably be no," although he acknowledged that the board could strike the project if it saw fit to do so.

Bakk complained that, too often, communities come to the IRRR first, rather than pursuing other sources of funding, such as the state public facilities authority, or PFA, which often provides water and wastewater infrastructure loans to governmental units. "I don't know if they're eligible for PFA," said Bakk, but he urged IRRR staff to see if the band had applied for those state dollars.

In fact, the information packet provided to board members indicated three other funding sources were tapped for the \$1.347 million project, including \$131,450 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, another \$131,450 from the Indian Health Service, and \$834,243 from the band itself.

Tomassoni said he thought the board needed more information and motioned to table the request. After more discussion, the board voted unanimously to table any approval of the project.



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ELY...Continued from page 1

regard to the governor's current (COVID-19) order and our ability to authorize a parade," said Ely City Attorney Kelly Klun. "That being said, individuals do have First Amendment rights and they are going to exercise that right in the form of a patriotic march. The city has no objection and our legal requirements require us to work with the committee to make sure we have a route that is acceptable."

The Patriotic Club reportedly purchased their own insurance policy for the event. It is unclear if medical costs would be covered for participants and/or spectators if they contract the coronavirus while attending or participating in the event.

A route mostly mirroring traditional Fourth of July parades here will be followed. Organizers reportedly applied for a permit with the state Department of Transportation for use of Sheridan Street, a state highway right-of-way. An alternative route was also offered that would use only city streets. Rather than ending at Whiteside Park, the patriotic march would extend to 16th Avenue to allow for social distancing.

Details for the event were outlined in the request, although it is unclear what time the march would begin:

► People should not be able to put out chairs ahead of time. This will encourage people to spread out.

► Using the same route keeps the

90-degree corners to three, and we will station people at each corner.

► Due to the late start (and) the number of parade participants, we expect the parade length to be much shorter.

► We encourage kids to decorate their bicycles and be part of the event.

► The Ely Honor Guard has offered to lead the parade and the Ely Klown Band will provide live music.

Mayor Chuck Novak said, "Traffic control would happen no matter what and you don't need MnDOT approval." He also said no city permit would be required for the group to hold the event.

Earlier decision reversed

Previously, the city's official Fourth of July committee informed the council that sanctioned the annual fireworks display, would be canceled this year. Communities across the Iron Range, the state and the nation made similar decisions because of social distancing and other health concerns due to COVID-19.

At that time, the council nixed any other grassroots efforts to hold celebrations because of public health concerns.

The city's Fourth of July committee memo, read and accepted at the June 2 council meeting, stated, "The Ely Fourth of July Committee has been closely monitoring the continually-evolving situation around

COVID-19. Ely's Fourth of July parade draws thousands of people each year. Because of the uncertainty around what the coming months will hold for large gatherings and health and safety recommendations, we have made the decision to cancel Ely's 2020 Fourth of July parade. The Fireworks by Premier Pyrotechnics will still go on the night of the Fourth. This has been a very tough choice as Ely's Fourth of July Parade is always a highlight of the summer. We hope next year we can have a bigger and better celebration."

Prior to the council accepting the official Fourth of July Committee's recommendation at the June 2 council meeting, council member Al Forsman related that a group of citizens, spearheaded by the publisher of a local media company, was already planning to disregard public health concerns in this community and hold their own protest procession through the streets of Ely.

At that June 2 council meeting, Mayor Novak adamantly pushed back on any celebration not sanctioned by the city.

"I would offer this," Novak said at the time, "we have some rules out of St. Paul that we have to adhere to. But the driving force here is that we have a lot of boards and commissions and the council has to beg for volunteers sometimes. These volunteers put their heart and soul in and wrangle with

having to make this type of decision. I'm not in any mood to override their decision. I'm going to respect our committee's decision."

Council member Heidi Omerza supported the mayor.

"I find it very interesting that when we cancel the event, people are suddenly coming in wanting to take over and have a parade. I question the validity of this group of people," she said on June 2.

Health concerns

Cases of coronavirus are spiking as more communities ignore health officials' guidelines for widespread use of protective face masks, social distancing and sheltering in place.

Around the state this week, deaths from COVID-19 continued to climb, with state Health Department officials reporting on June 16, nine more Minnesotans have died from the disease, pushing the total above 1,300 since the pandemic began. Overall, more than 30,000 Minnesotans have tested positive for COVID-19. A recent model frequently used in the past by the White House projects the number of coronavirus-related deaths in the United States at 200,000 by October.

According to Jon Erickson, executive director of the Ely Community Health Center, Minnesota and especially northern Saint Louis County are classified as a low-risk

areas as the level of virus transmission and serious cases of COVID-19 are decreasing or almost non-existent.

"However, one factor has the potential of changing this is that we are now seeing a lot of tourists and visitors coming to experience what Ely has to offer, but since we have no way to check where these people are coming from, we have a hard time assessing what the future risk level really is," Erickson said.

"Researching the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for Community Gatherings and Events, there is an established risk metric which would classify the Ely Fourth of July parade as a moderate risk as long as the parade organizers enforce physical distancing rules (where individuals from different households remain spaced at least six feet apart and wear face coverings)," he said.

"If the parade organizers do not enforce the separation of households by six feet and enforce the use of face coverings, the risk level would be elevated to the second-highest level which is the higher risk classification and should not be permitted this year," Erickson added.

"My position is also influenced by the general laissez-faire of the community in wearing face coverings in community gatherings and supermar-

kets," he said. "In my observation, too many people are not following the general CDC guidelines so that asking the parade organizers to enforce these rules when the community is not supporting them would not be a good decision."

Other business

In other action, the council:

► Accepted a request from the K America Foundation to vacate their purchase agreement to develop the Community Center into a Korean Cultural Center. In a May 30 email to the city of Ely, Yoon Byongchan wrote, "While we thought the coronavirus was our greatest hurdle, it seems the deadliest virus is racism." City officials will refund the group's \$30,000 purchase price after legal and other expenses are calculated. Council member Angela Campbell abstained from voting on the matter.

► Initiated efforts to search for a new Zoning Administrator upon request from Tim Riley, who is stepping down from the position.

► Passed a resolution seeking funds from Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation for the demolition of a house at 15 S. Central Ave. that was destroyed in a fire last week.

► Approved an amplification permit for the State Theater to conduct an outdoor movie event on Friday, July 3 in the Rockwood Bar and Grill parking lot.

COVID-19...Continued from page 1

responsibility if they think they're at risk."

While running counter to the guidance of the CDC and state and local health officials, people may be erroneously drawing on the relative success St. Louis County has had in avoiding major impacts from COVID-19, as well as the manner in which the virus is playing out across the state.

"I can understand why people feel like it's over - it's nice out, fewer people are getting sick," said Amy Westbrook, Public Health Division Director for St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services Department. "I

think we're doing a good job at things like social distancing and adhering to the governor's orders, and I think that's a big part of why we've seen our numbers decrease."

However, backtracking on those practices now is cause for concern.

"If we change what we've been doing as a community, which has been good social distancing, good prevention and control, good health behaviors, those numbers may change quickly."

For the time being, COVID-19 appears to have reached a plateau in the county. As of May 13, 100 cases and 12 deaths

had been recorded in St. Louis County. A month later, only 23 cases and two deaths have been added to those totals. In the north lands region, the Timberjay has reported just two identified cases, one in Ely and one in Tower.

Another key indicator, hospitalizations, is also encouraging. As of June 12, only one COVID-19 patient in St. Louis County was hospitalized, and they were not in intensive care.

Over half of those infected in the county have been people living in congregate living facilities (41 percent) or have been health care workers (15 percent).

Risk remains

While Westbrook

acknowledged the numbers are encouraging, she cautioned against people becoming complacent.

"It's a pandemic, so it's not going away," she said. "It's a new virus that's out there that none of us have ever seen before until recently. This one especially is very contagious. It's easy to get and easy to think that we're not spreading it, but we should still as a community be very cautious."

Summer is tourist season in the north lands, and although all major community festivals have been canceled, bountiful outdoor recreation facilities and summer lake homes and resorts hold the possibility of introducing

sources of infection.

"Certainly, lots of people like to go north for the summer, so there is potential for others to come in from outside our towns and communities," Westbrook said. "We don't know if they're coming from places that have higher incidence, but just having people from more areas can increase the risk of transmission and infection."

One thing communities can do to counter the possible threat is to continue modeling appropriate preventive measures such as social distancing and wearing masks, Westbrook said.

"If our community has the expectation of each other to practice those good health behaviors and requests, or highly encourages, or even requires a mask to enter a business facility, that will be followed by any tourist coming in," she said. "It's really a standard the community sets."

The mistaken belief that coronavirus is a disease that affects primarily older adults is one likely driven by the attention given to deaths from the disease. Long-

term care deaths from COVID-19 account for about 80 percent of deaths statewide, and outbreaks in congregate living facilities have received extensive media attention as well.

However, those most likely to be diagnosed with COVID-19 are younger, Westbrook said.

"We have a slightly lower median age for our cases in St. Louis County," she said. "The bulk of people are 20 to 39, and a few years higher than that. Our greatest numbers [of infections] are in those young adult and mid-year adult populations."

And while urban areas have borne the brunt of the pandemic thus far, Westbrook noted that rural areas in Minnesota, in neighboring states, and across the country have been reporting an uptick in cases.

"We have had cases reported in both urban and rural settings across our county," she said. "If people are thinking it's a city problem, that's just not true, and that's not borne out in the data, either."

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GREENWOOD TOWNSHIP

Greenwood Town Hall and pavilion still closed for public use

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP—How to set a policy for public use of the town hall facilities during the time of COVID-19 was a question without an answer at the June 9 Greenwood Town Board meeting.

The board had earlier stated that township facilities were closed to public use, and had put warning tape around the pavilion area.

But people have still been using the pavilion area. “They tore down the tape we put up right away,” said Supervisor Byron Beihoffer.

Supervisor Carmen DeLuca told the board that people have also been leaving garbage down at the area, including fish guts and dirty diapers.

Chairman Mike Ralston said the township needs some more concrete direction on what would need to be done to reopen the town hall and allow reservations/rentals at the pavilion.

“There is guidance from the state limiting the size of gatherings,” he said, “but someone will need to clean and sanitize afterwards.”

Board members won-

dered if such cleaning would need to be done by a professional cleaning service. “If it’s not done correctly, we will get complaints,” Ralston said.

A representative from the Minnesota Association of Townships who was helping the board run the meeting via teleconference told them there is information on the MAT website. She did not know if the township would need to use a professional cleaning service.

Supervisor Larry Tahija suggested the township get a quote from Servicemaster, and then could add the expense onto the rental fee and/or deposit. He said they should also find out if the regular town hall cleaner could do that work.

The tennis courts, bocce courts, and playground are being used by the public.

“We can put up signs that the pavilion is not open for public use, and to use at your own risk,” said Ralston.

With all the open questions, the town board did not take any action on the issue.

“The short-term answer is the town hall facilities are not open,” Ralston said. “We need to develop a plan.”

In related news, the board heard that over

\$800 worth of recreation equipment in the skating rink storage building was missing. The missing equipment includes three professional bocce ball sets, a garden wagon, bean bag boards and bean bags, and a propane bug sprayer.

The recreation committee realized the equipment was missing this past month. The equipment was all in storage as of last November. The committee said they know of seven individuals who have keys to the storage shed, and they had contacted all of them but none knew of anyone who had accessed the building over the winter.

“There was no skating this winter so no one should have been in there,” said Ralston.

“We do want to get the equipment replaced,” said Beihoffer, who is also on the recreation committee.

Ralston said the township can file an insurance claim, which would cover some of the replacement cost. The township will also file a report with the county sheriff. All the items had been purchased with private donations and donated to the township.

Budget

Ralston said the board needs to look at cutting the budget for 2021, since the residents only approved a levy for \$150,000 instead

of the \$250,000 requested by the town board.

“We need to cut some spending somewhere,” Ralston said. “I haven’t heard back from any of the supervisors.”

Ralston had asked for input from other supervisors at last month’s meeting.

“We still have over \$600,000 in funds,” said DeLuca. “We can take some time before we panic.”

Broadband

Ralston reported that the response rate on the CTC and Paul Bunyan internet surveys was about 20 percent. John Bassing told the board there was another important survey now underway by the regional broadband group, and he urged all township residents to complete it. A link to the survey can be found at www.ramsmn.org under the broadband tab. Bassing said they are hoping to have the surveys completed by the end of June, because some grant money for projects may be available this summer. Paper copies of the survey are also available at the town hall.

Clerk’s office video footage

Clerk Sue Drobac asked the board, again, about what the policy is for viewing the security

camera videos.

“Who can view the footage?” she asked. “When and where are they being viewed? Who will keep a log of the viewing? Does the recording repeat over itself?”

Ralston said they would take board approval to get a copy of the video. At this time, the township has no official policy governing these issues.

Ralston said the footage goes onto the township’s website cloud storage. He said the website tech people would have access to it and it is not viewable in real time.

DeLuca said he wasn’t even certain that the recordings were actually being saved at this time. The last he had heard, there were some technical problems between the video equipment, the township’s internet provider, and the web-based storage system.

Other business

In other business, the board:

► Voted to allow Immanuel Lutheran Church to use the parking lot area for a “drive-in” service, where parishioners sit in their cars and listen to the service over a radio broadcast. These services would be held once a month in the summer, unless the church decides to resume in-house worship.

► Denied, on a 4-1 vote, a request to donate a used boat to the township, with the idea the boat would be sold and money donated to the fire department. The town board said they would rather the individual sell the boat themselves and then donate the money.

► Heard the state demographer’s population count for the township, as of April 2019, was 896 with 416 households.

► Heard there had been problems with the two township office computers connecting to each other after a recent software upgrade but the problem was being resolved. Treasurer Pam Rodgers was upset that she was not informed when the upgrade work was being done.

► Will meet with residents on Birch Point Extension to discuss a brushing policy. The township just had the roadway ditches cleared of brush, and some residents were unhappy. The township would like to set up guidelines for the width and height of brushing. They will also discuss snowplowing, and perhaps how often the road needs to be plowed.

► Approved purchasing six no-contact fever thermometers for first responders.

ALTERNATIVE POWER

Minnesota Power to triple solar energy portfolio investment

REGIONAL—In an effort to spur economic recovery in the region as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Minnesota Power is accelerating its plans to invest \$40 million in new solar energy projects.

The company announced its plan for approximately 20 megawatts of solar arrays in northern Minnesota in a filing this week with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. The MPUC in May asked utilities to evaluate projects they could speed up as a way to kick-start local economies and put people back to work.

The three solar projects will also help meet the state of Minnesota’s Solar Energy Standard more quickly and further advance Minnesota Power’s EnergyForward strategy to bring more carbon-free energy to the company’s customers and the region. When completed, Minnesota Power’s energy portfolio will include approximately 30 megawatts of solar energy, including the existing 10-megawatt solar array at Camp Ripley.

The package of proj-

ects and proposed locations include Minnesota Power’s Laskin Energy Center, adjacent to the Laskin Energy Park in Hoyt Lakes, the company’s Sylvan Hydro Station near Brainerd, and a site in the city of Duluth. Minnesota Power is working with Duluth city leaders to identify the eventual location for that project. Together, the three projects will supply enough energy to power at least 4,000 homes.

“We believe Minnesota Power can and must play a strong role in the economic recovery of the communities where we live and work,” said ALLETE President and CEO Bethany Owen. “Moving up the timetable of planned solar projects will boost the tax base of local economies, add solar panels from regional manufacturers when possible, and support local construction jobs. At the same time, we remain committed to providing safe, reliable and affordable power while meeting our plan for 50 percent renewable energy by 2021.”

While details remain to be finalized, the three solar projects will leverage

existing electrical infrastructure with the bulk of actual construction to get underway in 2021. In order to bring the projects online in 2021, Minnesota Power intends to move quickly on submitting requests for approval to the MPUC.

Minnesota Power also operates a community solar garden with a 40-kilowatt array in Duluth and a 1,000-kilowatt array in Wrenshall, and continues to explore community solar options.

Other efforts to aid economic recovery

As part of its efforts to help in Covid-19 recovery efforts, Minnesota Power is proposing changes to its business expansion incentive for new small businesses and existing small businesses looking to expand. Lowering the eligibility threshold to 250 kilowatts of new electric demand will make the discount program accessible to more small businesses.

Minnesota Power also is looking forward to working with customers on a potential mine

truck electrification pilot. While policy-makers have focused on the electrification of transportation and buildings, electrification of industry is a key interest of Minnesota Power and its mining customers. The company is evaluating the potential for a pilot project that could include support for a site-specific analysis, replacement or retrofitting or a portion of an existing haul truck fleet, engineering and installation of the catenary system and substations, and service extension to the trolley line.

The company also has taken a number of other steps to help its customers as the nation grapples with the pandemic, including:

► Proposing an early resolution of its 2019 rate review that was approved by the MPUC earlier this month. A resulting refund of \$12 million puts much-needed dollars back in the pockets of customers.

► Suspending disconnections and waiving late payment charges for residential and small-business customers.

► Assisting customers experiencing financial hardships with payment plans.

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Let's Celebrate Ryan's Achievements!!



LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST from NOAA weather

Friday				Saturday				Sunday				Monday				Tuesday			
72 50				75 53				72 51				70 49				70 50			
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.
06/08	62	45	0.83	06/08	61	47	0.15	06/08	64	46	0.62	06/08	82	55	1.65	06/08	63	48	0.82
06/09	83	57	0.06	06/09	83	56	0.05	06/09	83	56	0.06	06/09	84	63	0.01	06/09	82	56	0.02
06/10	85	56	0.01	06/10	84	55	0.18	06/10	86	55	0.82	06/10	61	52	0.53	06/10	85	54	0.10
06/11	60	48	0.09	06/11	62	46	0.07	06/11	60	48	0.10	06/11	64	45	0.10	06/11	60	48	0.10
06/12	64	36	0.00	06/12	64	37	0.00	06/12	64	41	0.00	06/12	63	39	0.00	06/12	65	37	0.00
06/13	66	33	0.00	06/13	64	31	0.00	06/13	62	39	0.00	06/13	70	36	0.00	06/13	62	30	0.00
06/14	67	40	0.00	06/14	66	41	0.00	06/14	68	40	0.00	06/14	73	45	0.00	06/14	67	37	0.00
Total			6.21	YTD Total			6.17	YTD Total			6.35	YTD Total			NA	YTD Total			4.88

COOK...Continued from page 1

to plan when you have no guidance.”

Pajari said she scoured news reports, the CDC website, and any information she could find for clues about what the future would hold but had a minor setback in early May.

“The governor’s stay-at-home order was supposed to be lifted at the beginning of May and it wasn’t, so we were stalled again,” she said.

Once the go-ahead for outdoor group activities was given, Pajari was ready to get going. With a base of happy past clients and people who had expressed interest in January and February before coronavirus restrictions were enacted, she started marketing her day camps in earnest.

This past Monday a group of ten youngsters ages six, seven, and eight from Cook, Angora, Babbitt, Chisholm, and Virginia eagerly kicked off the farm’s first three-day camp of the summer.

“We limited the camps to only ten kids at a time,” Pajari said. “It’s at each person’s acceptable level of risk. If you’re not comfortable bringing your child, for heaven’s sake don’t.”

However, families didn’t seem to be deterred. The first two sessions were booked to capacity, and the others are filling fast.

“We didn’t lose any of our past camp kids,” Pajari said. “All the families believe this is OK. Most of our activities are outside, so we feel it’s pretty safe.”

The camps are structured around things Pajari said she liked doing when she was young, although it’s not just play time – education about animals, plants, and farm life is woven into activities throughout the day.

“We play in the gravel pit, play in the woods,” Pajari said. “They collect eggs, do farm chores, take care of plants and critters. It’s great. We focus on a different animal group every day. We’re teaching

kids respect, responsibility, how to be outside, and how to care for things. It’s been a lot of fun.”

Another thing the youngsters learned about Monday was flexibility, as intermittent rain fell throughout the day.

“The rain wasn’t great, but we rearranged the day. We’ve got a lot of inside activities as well as outside,” Pajari said. “You come in and work on the inside stuff when it’s raining and go outside when it stops, or you put on rain gear and go out anyway.”

The day camp is the first opportunity many of the children have had to socialize with peers since school buildings were closed in mid-March, so Pajari also adapted her plans based on what the children wanted.

“They’re wanting a lot more free outside play together,” she said. “They don’t necessarily know each other, so that’s fun to watch. We just watch and see where it goes.”

Haley Bogdan, who just completed her sophomore year at North Woods School, has been coming to Pajari’s farm since she was two years old, and helped with the first day camp two summers ago. She’s back this year to help out as a paid staff member. She’s worked with another day camp in the past, but likes helping at Cook’s Country Connection.

“It was a lot of fun to do it again in a more familiar setting,” she said. “There were some girls today who were kind of shy but they really came together and had fun. It’s nice to see kids back together, especially now.”

Pajari has a space on the farm where people can camp, and she picked up an extra volunteer in Emily McCarthy, who was staying there with her father and sister.

“I love animals,” she said. “It’s nice to help out. I volunteer at a day care so I’m used to it. It’s pretty fun.”

“Emily came here with her sister as a little kid before this was ever open to the public,” Pajari added.

Meanwhile, Sasha Hansen isn’t an official volunteer, but as a veteran day camper of two years, he knows his way around the animals so well he might as well be on staff.

“Lois let me and my mom raise a pea hen,” he said. “She turned me and my mom pretty much into a farm. She started us with chickens and then guineas and now rabbits.”

“It all started with black dirt for your garden,” Pajari chuckled.

Hygiene was already a regular routine at Cook’s Country Connection, so handwashing and sanitizing wasn’t an issue. Pajari has health department signs posted “everyplace,” has limited the number of people who can be inside the barn, and has closed off an indoor play space.

“We do disinfect our coin-operated feeders every hour and we wipe down the playground equipment every hour, so that’s a little different,” she said. “We’re outside. It’s pretty safe.”

Three-day camp sessions are held Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, with sessions scheduled in June and July. Cost per session is \$150, or \$50 per day. More information, including enrollment, can be found online at cooks-country-connection.com.

TOURISM

Ely animal sanctuaries re-open

Bear Center now open; Wolf Center set to open doors on June 22

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions for businesses, The North American Bear Center opened for the season this week, and the International Wolf Center is gearing up to reopen on Monday, June 22.

“The Governor lifted the closed order for our type of business and we opened to visitors on Monday,” said Bear Center Senior Director Scott Edgett.

The North American Bear Center is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

“There will be some restrictions in place and our visitor capacity will be limited to 25 percent or 65 people,” Edgett said. “Please be patient with us as we work through our new protocols. For your safety and ours, all our staff will be wearing masks/face coverings and we will be cleaning and sanitizing public spaces and places of contact frequently throughout the day.”

Hand sanitizer will be available for use by visitors.

“We also ask you to do your best with social distancing and maintain six feet between you and our other visitors,” he added.

Call the North American Bear Center at 877-365-7879 for more information.

“And please check our website, www.bear.org, often, as we update our programs and other Covid-19-related information,” Edgett said.



Wolf Center

The International Wolf Center is set to open to the public starting Monday, June 22. The center has been closed since March because of the pandemic.

“We’ve heard from so many of our supporters who are eager to visit the Wolf Center and connect with our ambassador wolves, and we’re relieved to finally be able to announce our opening date,” said Grant Spickelmier, the center’s executive director.

Many changes are planned to ensure the safety of visitors and staff members and to comply with state guidelines. Admission tickets for the Wolf Center must be purchased online before arrival and limits will be placed on the number of visitors allowed in the facility at one time.

“I know that the changes we

have in store will be a departure from the normal operations here, but we’re making them all to keep everyone safe,” said Krista Harrington, the Ely Interpretive Center manager.

Since the center closed, numerous free programs have been offered online and the Wolf Center has reached thousands of people it normally wouldn’t have, she said.

“Several of these programs will continue even after the Wolf Center reopens, most notably our new webcam partnership with Explore.org and our webinar wolf biology series,” she said.

Back in April, the Ely Wolf Center deferred bringing in two wolf pups until 2021 due to health concerns over COVID-19.

“The process of bringing in wolf pups and socializing them is intensive and involves several staff and volunteers providing 24-hour care and monitoring over several weeks,” Spickelmier said.

He said it was determined that the potential health risks to the Wolf Center staff and volunteers were too high to justify moving forward this year.

Typically, adding pups on a four-year cycle to the Wolf Center’s pack of ambassador wolves helps maintain pack dynamics.

“Since two pups will not be brought in this year as planned, Wolf Care staff are developing a new management plan to support the Ambassador Pack until pups can be added in 2021,” he added.

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CLEAN

- Boats, trailers, and gear
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DRAIN

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- Remove drain plug and open all water draining devices
- Trash unused bait



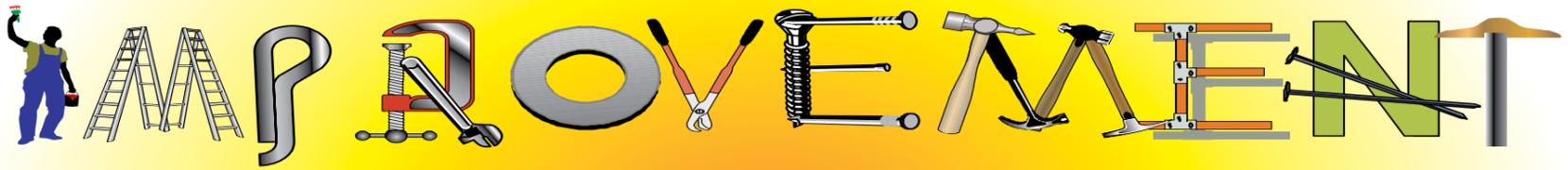
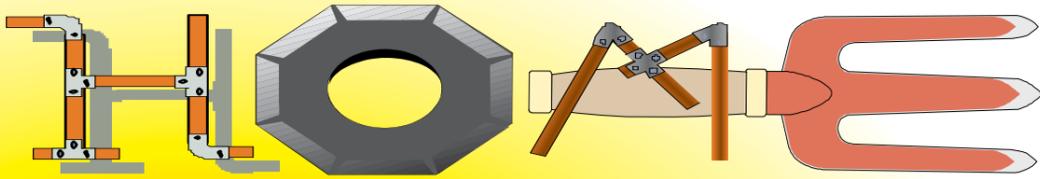
DRY

- Everything at least five days before going to other waters
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Spring



Extend your season with a solar greenhouse

With high interest in home-grown food, is now the time to invest in a greenhouse?

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Home-grown is hot in the age of COVID-19. For many North Country residents, the requirement to stay home appears to have boosted interest in gardening — and that's a good thing.

With food prices sky high, there's more reason than ever to grow your own food. And while a short season

can make that a challenge here in the North Country, season extenders like row covers, hoop houses, and greenhouses, can open up a whole new range of growing opportunities for those who want to take their own food production to the next level.

For me, the decision to build a solar greenhouse in 2015 has completely transformed my own ability to grow food at home. I've been a home gardener for more than 30 years here,

but nothing did more to jump start my wife Jodi's and my food production than the greenhouse.

For most folks in our area, the gardening season is pretty much wrapped up by the end of September — and that had long been the case for me as well.

Not anymore. Since building our greenhouse five years ago, the gardening season now extends nearly

See **GROWING...pg 2B**

- INSIDE...**
- 👉 Log Home Finishing
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GROWING...Continued from page 1B

ten months of the year, and with little to no supplemental heating.

A solar greenhouse is different from most greenhouses, because the glass is mostly limited to the south side wall. The rest is framed, insulated and sheathed, so it's designed to hold the heat gathered from the sun. Most greenhouses are all glass or plastic and they lose lots of their heat overnight. A typical greenhouse might hold temperatures, at best, eight degrees above the outside conditions. A solar greenhouse, like the one I built, regularly holds the inside temperature as much as 30 degrees above the outside air overnight. That means I don't have to worry about below freezing temperatures in the greenhouse, in most cases, until the overnight lows begin to reach around zero. For me, the planting season now begins about March 1, at a time when deep snow typically still covers the yard, and the harvest of even sensitive crops like tomatoes and peppers can go until well into deer season. We routinely harvest harder crops well into December.

While I like the greenhouse design I developed, which has worked well, there is plenty of room for flexibility in design. There are, however, several key characteristics to a successful solar greenhouse. If you incorporate these elements into your design, you should have similar results. These design characteristics are the following:

► Proper orientation- It may seem obvious, but make sure your greenhouse is properly aligned so the glass wall is facing south. I have a small amount of glass on the east and west walls, just for a



little more light early in the day and toward evening. While I used salvaged plate glass on my greenhouse, if you don't have that opportunity, you can purchase double-walled polycarbonate in 4x8 foot sheets, which are designed for greenhouses and offer more insulative value than a single sheet of plate glass. I also put a layer of translucent plastic sheeting on the inside of the greenhouse, trapping a three-inch layer of insulating air between the plate glass and the plastic. The plastic also helps to diffuse the bright sunlight, giving a more even light throughout the greenhouse.

► Heat storage and recovery- Greenhouses can produce a lot of heat during the day, which you can utilize to keep it warmer overnight, just like off-peak heating of your home. There are a number of ways to accomplish this, but the easiest I've found is to heat rocks. I built an eight-foot by four-foot box from plywood and 2x4s and ran a four-inch perforated PVC pipe down the middle, then filled the rest of the box with rocks ranging from pebbles to bowling ball size. On either end of the box, I have four-inch PVC pipe that goes up to the ceiling of the greenhouse, where it connects to four-inch black plastic drain tile that runs

along the ceiling. Inside the PVC pipes, I have small fans, designed for computers, which operate more or less continuously during those portions of the season when I need a little heating assist at night. The fans pull the warm air from up on the ceiling down into the rocks. By the end of a sunny day, those rocks are quite warm to the touch and overnight the fans help slowly disperse that heat into the greenhouse.

► Ground insulation- This is especially important if you're hoping to operate the greenhouse later into the fall and to start planting while it's still winter, like in early March. The insulation limits frost penetration underneath the greenhouse, which helps you to warm and stabilize interior temperatures, particularly in late winter.

► Provide for natural ventilation- Even if your heat storage system is working fine, you can still overheat your greenhouse on a sunny, mild day. And that's why you want to ensure plenty of natural ventilation. I designed my greenhouse with what's known as a clerestory roof, so I could easily vent heat from the peak of the roof, using windows rather than roof vents. The upper windows open and close automatically using an ingenious vent opener that's sold for just this

Above left: Four-inch black plastic drain tile attached to the ceiling to direct heat to the heat storage unit.

Above: The ductwork entering the heat storage box, which is filled with rocks. Once inside, the PVC duct is perforated.

Above right: A side vent with automatic opener.
photos by M. Helmberger

purpose and is available from many greenhouse supply shops. They use a type of wax that expands as it warms and as it does so, it pushes a metal rod out of a black metal cylinder. As the rod pushes out, it operates a mechanism that opens a vent window or shutter to let excess heat escape. In order for those vents to work effectively, you'll also need a vent through a side or back wall that opens as well to allow cooler outside air to enter the greenhouse as the warm air escapes.

Air movement not only helps to cool the greenhouse, it also helps to slow the growth of fungi and molds that can get out of control in a greenhouse without adequate ventilation.

To heat or not to heat?

One of the questions you'll want to answer is whether to put supplemental heating into the greenhouse. I installed a small through-the-wall propane heater in my greenhouse just for those late winter nights when

the temperatures still drop well below zero. I don't use it at all in the fall, because by the time I have to worry about freezing, the days are so short that plants really don't grow or mature at that point.

For sustainability reasons, I make a point to minimize my use of artificial fossil fuel heating and by understanding the greenhouse's capabilities, I've used the heater very little the past couple years. I hooked up a 23-gallon propane cylinder two years ago and likely still have enough left after two seasons to cover the heating needs for next year.

Expanded growing

The greenhouse has substantially expanded my growing operation, both in terms of growing area and the length of the season. It's not unusual to have three rotations of crops in my greenhouse growing bed. I might start out with hardy greens in the early spring, switch to broccoli or green beans once the lettuces start to fade, then finish up the year with hot

peppers.

The greenhouse provides space for all my vegetable and flower starts and the main growing bed, which is 20 feet long, currently has a dozen broccoli, eight kale plants, a couple cabbages, chard, lettuce, two tomatoes, and I've got ten pepper plants waiting in the wings once I finish harvesting the broccoli later this month.

I also built a growing bed on the outside of the greenhouse, which allows me to take advantage of the protection and warmth provided on the structure's south side. I've got bush green beans growing in that bed right now and I'll plant another round of broccoli for fall harvest once the beans have past their peak. Those broccoli plants are just popping in my starting pots right now.

Combined with about a dozen other raised beds, the greenhouse has allowed us to convert our food production from supplemental to a mainstay. The end result is that we're now able to grow a significant portion of our food needs right at home in a surprisingly limited space.

Next, we're looking to add chickens to the mix. But that's a story for another time...

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STAINING

Make the right moves to protect your log home

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL— If you've made a major investment in a log home or cabin, you know it's critical that you protect it from the elements — and that's where the right preparation and finish makes the difference.

There are plenty of log finishes on the market, yet the key to success is found first in the proper preparation of the wood, according to Bob Kenel, known as Grizzly Bob to those who have followed Cabin Fever, his television show featuring log homes that airs on the National Geographic channel. Kenel has been a log home contractor for decades, working around the country, and has built log homes on both Lake Vermilion and Burntside Lake. He's also the past President of the Great Lakes Log Crafters Association, so you can be sure that he knows his stuff.

While he mostly hung up the tool belt a few years ago, he continues to work as a sales manager for Sashco, one of the most reliable log home product manufacturers in the country.

Yet, whatever product you choose, Kenel said preparation is key to the success. "Wood prep is just critical," said Kenel, "and probably 50 percent of people don't do it right."

There are really five key steps to proper wood preparation, according to experts like Kenel, including:

► Make sure the loose wood is gone— This means wood that's free of loose wood fibers, remaining bark, or peeling paint or stain. Even the best finish in the world won't do the job if you've got problems underneath. If your logs are new, a good cleaning with a power washer (enough to create a little "fuzz" on the logs) may be all that's necessary before you start staining. But if you have old finish that needs to go, or unfinished wood that has grayed or yellowed, you'll want to consider what's known as "media blasting." It's similar to sandblasting, but you utilize materials like crushed glass or corn cobs, rather than sand. This will remove any loose material, getting you to bare and slightly-roughened wood that



will readily accept your new finish.

► Make sure your wood is clean— If you've media blasted your wood recently, you should already have this covered. But if you're simply doing a maintenance coat, for example, you need to be sure the surface of the existing stain is thoroughly cleaned before you apply any additional stain. The top half of exterior logs, in particular, tend to gather plenty of contaminants, like pollen, dust, and bird droppings, which will reduce the ability of your finish to adhere to your logs and encourage the growth of unsightly mold which can permanently stain your logs. Consider using a log cleaner as part of the cleaning process.

► Give a little texture to your wood— Smooth logs may feel nice, but they don't grab and hold a log finish like they should. Power washing that's strong enough to roughen the log surface, or media blasting, are two effective ways to raise a little texture on your logs. A sanding tool, known as an Osborne brush, is another way to create the texture you need for applying a log finish. Keep in mind, this isn't necessary if you're applying a maintenance coat, since you want the finish to adhere to the original finish.

► Be sure your wood is dry— If you've recently power washed your logs, that's great. But give them at least a couple sunny days to dry. Better yet, if you know someone with a moisture meter, invite them over for a beer and take a few readings.



It should be 18 percent or dryer for good results.

► Be sure your wood isn't too hot or cold— This is somewhat relative, since warm means anything between 40 and 90 degrees F. You'll want your wood temperature in this range throughout the application of the finish and for at least three to five days after you're done to allow it to cure properly. Keep in mind, these temperatures apply to the wood itself, not just the air temperature. If it's 80 degrees outside, but you're staining in the sun, the wood might be a lot hotter than 90 degrees. Have a surface thermometer on hand if you're not sure.

Finishing choices

For best results and protection of your log home or cabin, you'll want to apply a finish both inside and out, and your choices are greater these days than in the past. Not that long ago, virtually all log finishes were oil-based and largely limited to various

shades of brown. These days, most log finishes are water-based or are an emulsion of water and oil and there's a wide variety of colors to choose from. These new products are designed to be safer to use and less toxic for the environment.

However, if you're looking to re-stain an older home with a pre-existing finish, you may want to stick with an oil-based product just to ensure adequate adhesion. The good news is, you don't have to guess. The various finish manufacturers and dealers know their products well and can offer you free advice on the best one for your particularly project.

As for color, while you might like the look of natural logs, for exterior purposes, you'll probably want to consider some type of colored tint. As exterior logs are exposed to the elements, they'll change color over time, and it might not be what you were hoping for. Tinted finishes could well leave you with a more natural look in the end. In

Left: If you're going to invest in a log home, you'll need to know how to protect your investment.

Below left: Brushing is the best way to apply a log finish.

addition, colored stains typically offer increased protection from ultraviolet light, which means you won't have to refinish as often as with a clear finish.

While we used to think only in shades of brown for log homes, most finish manufacturers are now offering other colors as well. While a greenish tint might not be your cup of tea for your logs, it might make a nice accent color. There's no point limiting your project to a single color, after all.

As for the interior, if you like the nice golden hues you used on your home's exterior, you can use a similar color inside. While many folks go with a natural finish on their interior, remember such stains offer less UV protection. Regardless of the color, you'll want to apply at least a single coat of finish to your home's interior, because finished logs are much easier to dust and keep clean. That's especially important in places like the bathroom and kitchen.

Even the best log finishes don't last forever, so you'll need to refinish periodically as part of your routine maintenance. How frequently you'll need to refinish is highly variable. A sunny south face of your log home might need a maintenance coat every three or four years, while the shady north side might continue to look brand new for as much as ten years. Interior walls might last as long as 15 years.

Applying the stain

The best way to apply stain to a log cabin is with a brush. You can probably spread the stain more quickly with a sprayer, but even if you use a sprayer, you'll want to go over everything with a brush to make sure the stain adheres and that you have even coverage. After all, if you're going to invest the time and money to prepare your wood and purchase the stain, there's no point skimping on the application. If you take care all along the way, you'll have a final product that will look great for years to come.

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IN THESE TIMES

Take a hack at home office makeovers

With more of us working close to home, there's more reason than ever to do it right

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Once upon a time, if someone called you a hack, they weren't speaking kindly. They were usually suggesting that you lacked certain skills, and your struggling attempts at trying to accomplish something beyond your ability proved that you were merely a "hack".

But in the digital age of home and self-improvement, "hack" has taken on an entirely new meaning. Clever, easy solutions to common tasks or needs have come to be referred to as "hacks," to the point where websites like Lifehacker, Home Hacks, Ikeahackers, and others draw thousands of viewers every week looking for the latest tips on how to make life easier and simpler, and often how to do so on the cheap.

The stay-at-home orders and distance learning strategies imposed to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus suddenly shone a spotlight on the need for functional home office space. While some already had dedicated office space at home, others scrambled to figure out someplace that could "make do".

And while restrictions are being lifted and more people are returning to work, many have realized the value of having dedi-



Left: You can make working at home more pleasant, functional, and healthful by taking advantage of some of these simple and inexpensive ideas.

cated workspace at home. If you're among them, here are some popular home office hacks to get your creative juices flowing.

Desks

Central to any home office space, large or small, is a place to put a computer and work materials. Standard office desks can be cumbersome, expensive, and may not fit your available space.

A frequently used alternative is to get a couple two-drawer file cabinets to use as pedestals and some sort of a board or counter to lay across the top for a desktop.

Gone are the days when one had to settle for steel-gray file cabinets and a board. Sturdy

translucent plastic storage units with colored accents are cheaper and lend a contemporary flair. White laminated melamine particle board can be easily cut down to a size and shape that fits your space, and the edges easily finished with matching tape.

Another alternative for desktops can be found in the kitchen aisles of lumber yards and home improvement stores – sections of pre-laminated countertops in a variety of patterns. Pre-cut four-foot sections are usually available, and custom lengths can usually be cut right in the store.

Kitchens are a good place to start if you're thinking about creating a standing desk, an increas-

ingly popular alternative with demonstrated health benefits. While few people can dedicate a section of counter space to office use, take note of the height. Counters are designed for standing work, and so give you a good place to start.

The most common hack to create a standing workspace is to buy a standing desk converter from an office supply store that sits on a desktop and raises to accommodate standing work, providing flexibility for sitting or standing. However, it's possible to create a standing space by stacking items large enough to accommodate your laptop.

Boxes from a store, or shipping boxes, may be the perfect height to put

Lighting

As more daytime work has transitioned to home and people are spending more time in their home offices, it's important to have good lighting available throughout the day.

If working during the daytime, locate your home office space near a window, if possible, to provide daylight as a primary or secondary light source. Try to position your workspace so that light from the window, or other sources, doesn't create a glare on your computer screen. Task lighting from desk lamps is preferable to overhead lighting, which is often too dim for desk work and can create an additional source of glare. Task lights are often adjustable in height to control the brightness on a work surface and can be moved as needed.

Taking care of those essentials hits the basics, and leaves room for putting your personal touch on a workspace. Other essential items to consider include ventilation, storage, and traffic patterns. Whether carving out a nook in an attic or taking over a little-used closet, there are plenty of options available to make a new home office space both functional and inviting.

Chairs

If there's one item home office aficionados should go ahead and spring for from a store, it's a good office chair. Good doesn't mean spending \$600 or more for expensive brands. But expect to spend between \$100 and \$200 for a chair that offers reasonable adjustability and support. If you've created a home desk from scratch, adjustability will be important to be at an appropriate sitting height for desk work. A new, sturdy chair will reap benefits over time with its design for good ergonomic support.

And for determining the right height relationship between your chair and work top, there are numerous sites online that describe proper measurements. Search for "ergonomic office measurements" to start.



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ENJOY THE JOURNEY

Creative gardening: the fun's in the process

by SCARLET STONE
Timberjay staff writer

One of the greatest things I enjoy doing in the summer is making my yard more attractive with a variety of annuals, perennials and adornments. I know there are millions who share this passion of bringing unique creative touches to your yard, so when you drive past there's a wow-thrill factor knowing your place doesn't look like anyone else's.

Call it luck, if you are like me and purchase a home with absolutely nothing besides grass growing in the yard. This was the case when I came upon my current home on a corner lot in Soudan in July 2017. Shortly after moving in, it was nearly full steam ahead with purchasing trees and shrubs for the new yard. I found two fast-growing red maple trees for the front yard and about 10 lilac bushes at local greenhouses to place around the perimeter near the city sidewalks. Soon after, I added a smaller flower garden with annuals and perennials, plus other little floral displays here and there.

This spring I decided the streetside corner where an addition joins the main house was very plain so I began to look for ideas about what to put there for interest and delight. Pinterest, an online idea site, is a great source, so I started looking and saw all kinds of old doors being used for yard decoration. Some had panels removed and replaced with chicken wire inserts. Others featured old farm tools such as an old wooden peg-rake attached vertically to the door and still there were others with shelves and various flower or herb pots displayed. I thought this would be really fun and I could leave it up year-round, having fun doing



seasonal displays with the old door as my backdrop.

One of my favorite shopping places these days is Facebook Marketplace with its extremely affordable prices. There are always interesting items being sold or given away. Just before Memorial Day weekend, I was perusing Marketplace with a nice cup of coffee in hand and came upon a listing for a FREE old weathered wood door over in Britt. The knob and other metal pieces were rusty and charming, plus the top of the door revealed some very weathered, crumbling, pale yellow paint. A

perfect piece!

Moments later I discovered an old upright rusty cream separator listed for \$20 over in Chisholm. I envisioned it with flower pots on it and vines pouring down here and there. I contacted the sellers of both items and to my luck they were both still available, so I was in business and on my way to creating my new outdoor, decorative, farm-themed garden corner.

The next day my son Keaton and I rambled off in my Jeep on an adventure to fetch the treasures. After a brief stop in Cook at a favorite greenhouse,



Left and above: Deployed with a little creativity and artistic sense, items that some might consider junk can turn a plain corner of the yard into an attractive and interesting display. photos by S. Stone

we headed west on northern roads to Chisholm for the cream separator. Once at the seller's house, I noted he had all kinds of old items in his garage and yard but I held myself back. If you are like me, it's tough not to get carried away in such a situation. Stick to the point. I knew there were a few parts missing on the separator, but unless you had a farmer's trained eye it would not be noticed. Once we had it in the Jeep we left his place and made a quick stop at the Chisholm Cemetery to pay a memorial visit to a few family plots, before heading back east to track down the door in Britt. I love rambling down a previously untraveled road, which we did, to find the old farm site and the door. Emerging from the evergreen-lined driveway, I spotted it...leaning against an outbuilding, waiting to be picked up. It fit in the back of my Jeep with the cream separator, and the flowers tucked here and there.

My son took over driving at this point; he said, "Mom,

knowing you, I expect you want to take some backroads home?" I answered, "You got that right!" After about a week, I did a Google search to find images of cream separators so that I would know how to put the pieces back together. The big bowl at the top was missing the hardware that attached it to three arms and it needed to be at the top or it would not look like much of anything. I studied the piece, looked around the garage, and noted a heavy black plastic flower pot from last season. When upside down the upper edge fit perfectly under the prongs of the cream separator's three arms...so with a heavy utility knife I cut the remaining part of the flower pot away. I fastened it in place with wire. Great ingenuity...bolstering my belief in the phrase... "enjoy the process!" Once in place in the yard, I went ahead and planted vines and flowers in its various bowls and rested some flower

See **PROCESS...pg 6B**

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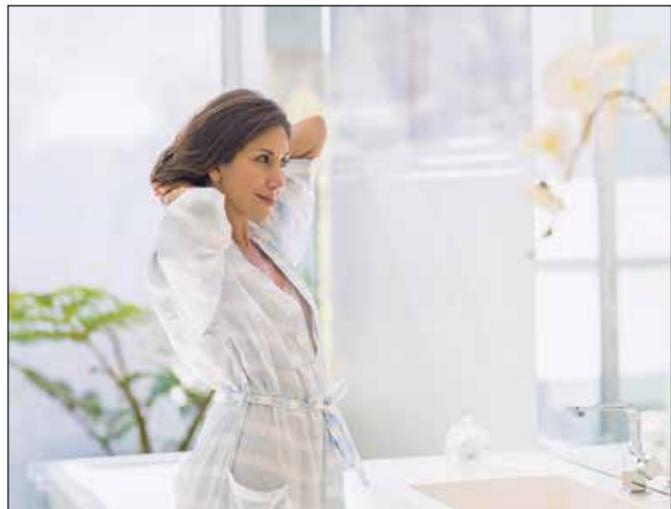
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MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR HOME

More amenities for a bathroom remodel



Bathrooms have evolved greatly in recent years and that means homeowners need to consider new approaches during remodels than in the past.

REGIONAL—What began as a utilitarian space for personal sanitation has, in modern times, transformed into one of the most coveted rooms in the house. Bathrooms have become a place to relax and unwind, and new bathrooms are on the tops of many homeowners' wishlists.

Bathrooms can be as lavish as budgets allow. Wish lists can include everything from luxurious soaking tubs to rainfall showerheads to chaise lounges to televisions or home entertainment systems contained in the space. Those contemplating their own bathroom renovations may draw inspiration from the following features.

► Hot water recirculation system: Few things can be as disappointing as desiring a hot bath or shower only to find that the hot water tank has been drained. The home remodeling company Normandy Remodeling says that water recirculation systems provide on-demand hot water.

In such systems, hot water may continuously run through the pipes or there may be a pump underneath a sink. Either way, one needn't wait for the water to warm up any longer.

► Double undermount sinks: Bathroom time is at a premium, especially when people must prepare and leave the house together. Rather than jockeying for position around a single sink, dual sinks enable more breathing room and time efficiency. Undermount sinks are easy to clean because there is no lip around where the sink meets the vanity, preventing the accumulation of grime and gunk.

► Glass-free shower: Soap scum and water deposits can form on shower doors, even for homeowners who are diligent with cleaning. A sizable shower prevents water spray and affords the ability to forgo glass doors or curtains, thereby cutting down on cleaning and making the room feel more modern.

► Multihead shower: When redoing the shower, account for various shower heads so that the water can cascade across the body more completely. This provides a spa experience at home.

► Touchless faucets and soap dispensers: These aren't just for public bathrooms anymore. Touchless faucets and dispensers are more sanitary and convenient.

► Separate toilet room: A shared bath almost necessitates this type of set-up. The toilet is housed inside its own small space and closed away from the rest of the bathroom. It's more private and convenient this way.

► Heated flooring: You need not worry about stepping out of a warm shower onto a cold floor when heated flooring is part of the equation. This option is available in various flooring materials as well.

Remodeling a bathroom boils down to certain coveted features that can really set a space apart.

PROCESS...Continued from page 4B

containers on the flat level surfaces. I hauled the door over and put it in place behind the cream separator, fastening it to the house siding with a screw. This was all coming together very nicely. In the messy garage, to my surprise, I dug out a couple of ornate wrought iron brackets that I had picked up at a garage sale years ago. I also spotted a 2 x 10 board with moss growing on it and cut a short section with the best moss, screwed it to the door, creating the perfect shelf. On the shelf I placed my old water kettle I found in the woods back in Fairbanks, Alaska in 1983.

It had a hole in the bottom and it was banged up so I had spray-painted it black and from then on have used it in my kitchen or garden at various chapters of my life. After looking at the pieces together for a few days I decided it was too much rust for my particular look! I masked off the plants with an old sheet and spray painted it flat black, in the quiet of the morning, before the wind came out to play. When dry, I added some white stenciling here and there for contrast, to perk it up a bit. I stood back and decided the door needed a little bit of primitive twig and berry stuff happening



A cream separator bowl becomes an attractive pot. Letting your imagination run free is a great way to redesign your yard. photo by S. Stone

on it, so I got out my step-ladder and acrylic paints and flipped on that touch, finishing with no spray

fixative...because weathering will be a good thing. Next to the door I stuck in a double wrought iron plant

hook and elected to make a banner from a panel of flour sack cloth that was in my remnant box. I sewed some heavy upholstery fabric as a backing, adding three drapery weights at the bottom to help hold it down. At the top I added a horizontal wood lath to the back to hold it taut then sewed on some straw colored three-eighth-inch jute rope with knotted and frayed ends for a hanger. It looks great and when it fades will look better yet. I am still searching for the design element I am going to put on the flat black circle area of the cream separator. A floral motif or a perky word?

Time will tell. A friend gave me an old butter churn that she had in her garage so I now have that standing out in the display as well...to add more interest and charm. Each item came from a place in the Minnesota northwoods and they would have great stories to tell if they could talk, as the saying goes... so it is nice to pull them together and show them off in a way that makes my home and yard more lovely to passers-by and unique to my personality.



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AROUND THE YARD

Garden sheds should be a long-term investment

REGIONAL — Backyard sheds can be useful assets. Sheds can free up storage space in the garage, basement or other areas of the house that have become gathering spots for gear typically used outdoors. Sheds are ideal for housing mowers, tools and even pool-care equipment. But they can be put to other uses as well, such as being key spots to engage in hobbies or even as a child's clubhouse.



Various factors should be considered before building or buying a shed. A storage shed can be a significant investment. Once placed, sheds may remain in their dedicated spots for years to come. That means careful thought should go into the planning process.

► Check your local building codes first. Before you accumulate building materials or order a shed, be sure to know the ins and outs of shed codes. The codes may impact the shed's placement, construction, the materials used, size, and numerous

other factors. It's much easier to amend plans beforehand than to face the hassle and expense after learning you did things incorrectly.

► Choose placement wisely. Spend several days assessing the yard and thinking about the uses

Left: With a pleasing design and solid construction, a garden shed can be a permanent asset.

for the shed. If you plan to store pool floats and chemicals inside of the shed, it should be located close enough to the pool to be convenient. Look at the lay of the land. If there is a soggy patch of land that can turn swampy under the shed's foundation, that is a poor location choice. If you need access to electricity, placing it far away from the house could necessitate running expensive wiring.

► Consider the design. Just because a shed is for storage doesn't mean aesthetics should be over-

looked. Choose a shed style that complements your home. You may also want to match certain architectural features, like arched doorways or dormers. Design also may relate to practicality. For instance, storing a riding mower inside may necessitate dual doors that open widely.

► Invest in quality materials. Spending a little more and using quality materials can ensure it lasts long enough to be cost-effective. The right materials will be resistant to splitting, cracking, decay, and insect damage.

► Prepare the site well. A proper foundation for the shed is almost as important as the shed itself. You cannot just drop the

shed on the lawn and leave it, as the shed can sink or structural issues may arise if it is placed on a weak base.

► Blend into the environment. Surround the shed with shrubs or plants so that it blends into the yard and complements the space.

► Deck out the interior. Use every storage tool at your disposal to maximize floor, wall and even rafter space for storage. Plan where items will be kept and customize the storage options around those locations.

Sheds can be an asset and improve storage capability in the backyard.

SAVING ENERGY

Low-cost fixes to trim your utility bill

REGIONAL — Home renovation projects can pay numerous dividends. Renovations can have a positive effect on resale value, make homes more livable for residents and, in some ways, make homes more affordable.

Renovation projects that aim to conserve energy can save homeowners substantial amounts of money. Such projects don't often require considerable effort or even sizable financial investments, which can make homeowners skeptical as to just how much they can save after completing the project. But the scale of a project may have little to do with how much homeowners will save. For example, the U.S. Department of Energy notes that a relatively effortless task like turning back a thermostat between 7° and 10° F for eight hours per day can save homeowners as much as \$83 per year. A more labor-intensive task like planting shade trees saves

homeowners an average of between \$35 and \$119 per year.

Project: Install exterior low-e storm windows

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How much can I save? Homeowners who install low-e windows can save between 12 and 33 percent on their annual heating and cooling costs.

Project: Seal uncontrolled air leaks

What is it? Air leaks let cool air in during winter and warm air in during summer. Caulking, sealing and weather stripping all cracks and large openings can cut back on air leaks that are costing you money.

Project: Plant shade trees

What is it? If you plant a deciduous tree between six and eight feet tall near your home, it will begin

to shade your windows within a year of being planted. Depending on the species of the tree and the home, the shade tree will begin shading the roof within five to 10 years. The DOE notes that shading is the most cost-effective way to reduce air conditioning costs.

Project: Insulate the water heater tank

What is it? New water tanks are likely already

insulated. But homeowners with older hot water tanks can insulate their tanks with a water heater insulating blanket kit.

Even the smallest DIY projects can produce big savings. More information about energy-saving home improvement projects can be found at www.energy.gov.

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SUPPORT GROUPS

Ely AA GROUPS TO MEET BY PHONE- Starting immediately, the Ely Wednesday and Saturday AA Groups will not meet in person. A conference call meeting has been set up. At 7:30 on either night, call 978-990-5000, and enter the access code, 965850#. Once the meeting has started, use *6 to mute and unmute your phone. If any other group would like to set up phone meetings, please call Anna Nimity at 218-290-2681 for assistance.

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

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

ELY CO-DEPENDENTS MEETING- Fridays at noon-St. Anthony's Church Classroom 3-Use west side entrance. For more information go to coda.org on the web.

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS- Meetings every Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Virginia.

BABBITT AL-ANON- meets Thursdays at 7 p.m. at the Babbitt Assembly of God Church.

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

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

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

MEETING in Ely! "New Ideas" WOMEN IN RECOVERY: 12 Steps. For women seeking help and hope to recover from any addiction: drugs, alcohol, food, gambling etc. Every Thursday noon at St. Anthony's Catholic Church. Come join us! Q: 218-235-3581.

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

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

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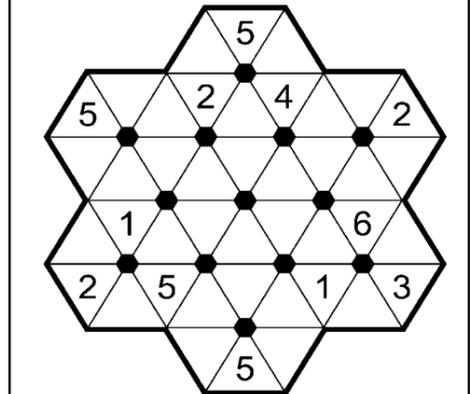
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SCRAMBLERS

solution
 1. Absent; 2. Margin; 3. Bygone; 4. Eschew
 Today's Word
MOTHERS

SNOWFLAKES by Japheth Light

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



DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆◆◆
 ◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult
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Answer

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

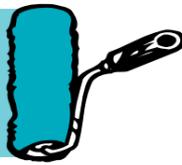
Super Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Painter of limp watches
 - 5 By the day, as payment
 - 12 "It doesn't matter"
 - 20 Moran of "Happy Days"
 - 21 The tiniest bit
 - 22 Hot pepper
 - 23 Group of wolves decide which hockey disk to use?
 - 25 Brought upon oneself
 - 26 USNA frosh
 - 27 "— Miz"
 - 28 Bring in
 - 30 Moniker, in Marseilles
 - 31 Mervyn of film
 - 33 Misplaced the most recent
 - 38 Sun circlers
 - 41 Braga of film
 - 42 Nervous —
 - 43 Notice folks quarreling about a skewer?
 - 45 Kind of latte
 - 47 Sportswriter Pasquarelli
 - 48 Name of 12 popes
 - 49 Folksy denial
 - 50 Parisian "to be"
 - 51 Actor Robert De —
 - 52 Six-legged scurrer
 - 53 Gift add-ons
 - 55 Farm structure is built in
 - 59 Liam of "Nell"
 - 61 Raises up
 - 63 Yemen's largest city
 - 64 — time (never)
 - 66 Give a big speech
 - 67 Baseball Hall of Famer Waite —
 - 69 Preside
 - 71 Students
 - 74 To no avail
 - 78 Put a clump of tree-trunk greenery in disarray?
 - 80 Bath powder
 - 82 Philosopher Lao- —
 - 83 Optic layer
 - 84 Throw easily
 - 85 Paddle's kin
 - 86 Stuff in ale
 - 87 Rev.'s talk
 - 88 City on I-80
 - 89 Group working on a jackdaw's gullet?
 - 94 Slate clearer
 - 96 Miller rival
 - 97 Optometrist
 - 98 Knock out a pier-dwelling mallard?
 - 101 "— good you let him know": Hamlet
 - 102 "My country, — ..."
 - 103 Lock fastener
 - 104 Plant seeds
 - 105 Shuts noisily
 - 109 Preserve
 - 112 Exited the elevator to the high-ceilinged SoHo flat?
 - 116 How keyless music is written
 - 117 Quito locale
 - 118 Like — of sunshine
 - 119 Little jaunt on a little horse
 - 120 Cyclone
 - 121 Where Coca-Cola is "KO"
- DOWN**
- 1 Johnny of "Ed Wood"
 - 2 Central Asia's — Sea
 - 3 Pooch pests
 - 4 Rorschach test features
 - 5 Luau chow
 - 6 Hemming in
 - 7 Type in anew
 - 8 See 95-Down
 - 9 Bettor's note
 - 10 Series-ending abbr.
 - 11 Succeeds
 - 12 Spin around
 - 13 — -Barbera
 - 14 "The Middle" network
 - 15 Poked fun at
 - 16 Register
 - 17 Indiana county whose name is a red color
 - 18 Afore
 - 19 Gun, in slang
 - 24 Parts of hammers
 - 29 — good clip
 - 32 Ice-T's style
 - 33 Hack
 - 34 — roll (lucky)
 - 35 Deriding look
 - 36 — Nevada
 - 37 Partner of a mortise
 - 38 Hearing ainer
 - 39 Share a view
 - 40 Artery
 - 41 Minneapolis-to-Dallas dir.
 - 44 Hit with a zapping gun
 - 45 The Beatles' "Let —"
 - 46 Collision
 - 50 Register for
 - 51 Hoops cable channel
 - 53 Pole carving
 - 54 Advice giver
 - 55 Yankee Yogi
 - 56 Bob — restaurants
 - 57 Per-unit costs
 - 58 "Bye Bye Bye" boy band
 - 60 Rumba's kin
 - 62 Garden soils
 - 65 Johnny who cried "Come on down!"
 - 68 OPEC fuel
 - 69 Idolize
 - 70 Keystroke or mouse click
 - 72 Canadian gas brand
 - 73 Detached, in mus.
 - 75 Old game console
 - 76 Lanai and Skye, say
 - 77 Product label wds.
 - 78 Ruminated
 - 79 County in New Mexico
 - 81 Tree once associated with bow welders
 - 85 Pained cries
 - 86 "Dirty Sexy Money" actress Zoe
 - 88 Symbol atop the Kremlin
 - 89 Pair of poetic lines
 - 90 Mythical bird
 - 91 Mork's planet
 - 92 Pitching whiz
 - 93 Sausage, in Stuttgart
 - 95 With 8-Down, swims without a suit
 - 96 They made LPs passé
 - 99 Kid
 - 100 West with 21 Grammys
 - 101 — lie (fibbed)
 - 104 Funny Laurel
 - 106 Gossamer
 - 107 Degs. for playwrights
 - 108 Eye malady
 - 109 GPS drawing
 - 110 From — B
 - 111 Ring legend
 - 113 Prefix with law or tourist
 - 114 Cat coat
 - 115 Swing to and —

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20				21							22								
23				24							25								
26					27					28	29			30					
				31	32				33	34			35			36	37		
38	39	40					41						42						
43							44					45	46				47		
48							49					50					51		
52					53	54				55	56	57				58			
59			60				61	62								63			
				64			65	66					67	68					
		69	70				71	72				73	74			75	76	77	
78						79						80	81				82		
83						84						85					86		
87						88				89	90	91			92	93			
94			95					96						97					
98							99	100					101						
				102				103					104			105	106	107	108
109	110						111												
116										117								118	
119																		121	



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