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the **TIMBERJAY**



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EDUCATION SAFETY

ISD 2142 shifts to distance learning

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

Buffer weeks around winter break provide four-week reset

2142 schools have maintained an in-person learning model in spite of soaring bi-weekly case rate numbers that surpassed 50 more than two weeks ago. Fifty is the threshold at which schools are recommended to shift to distance learning.

Bi-weekly case rates lag behind real time data to ensure

See...ISD 2142 pg. 10

REGIONAL- The St. Louis County Schools will bookend their regular two-week winter break with two weeks of full distance learning to help reduce the impact of COVID-19 in the hope that in-person learning can resume Jan. 11.

Engebritson announced the move Monday after discussing the recommendation from county health officials with the district's building principals, indicating that the last day for in-person classes before the break will be Thursday, Dec. 10.

"St. Louis County Public Health made the suggestion last



week about going to distance learning a week before break and a week after break in order to allow staff and families to be

healthy going into the holiday and healthy coming out of the holiday season, so we can return to in-person learning, hopefully for good for the rest of the year," Engebritson told the Timberjay.

Aside from brief transitions to distance learning at Tower-Soudan Elementary and Cherry schools earlier this fall, ISD

A FAMILY'S CHALLENGE

All I want for Christmas

Tower family raising funds for a handicap-accessible van

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy has deprived Aaron Raj of the ability to walk, but that doesn't mean this 19-year-old Tower teenager doesn't have places to go.

Getting around has become a bit more complicated since the family's handicap-accessible van is almost 20 years old. Finding parts for both the van and the add-ons that make the van wheelchair-friendly is sometimes difficult or near-impossible.

The van is actually older than Aaron, and was purchased used when his Duchenne had progressed to the point where he was using a wheelchair. Adding a wheelchair lift to a standard van means moving, converting, and reassembling some of the major

See...VAN pg. 2



Aaron Raj with his mother, Melanie, spent time on the bike trail just outside of Tower earlier this fall. submitted photo



Empowering families.
Fighting Duchenne.

BUSINESS NEWS

Zup's buys Ely Shopko building

Questions remain on future development

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

ELY— The Zupancich Brothers have purchased the former Shopko building for an undisclosed price, company officials have confirmed. But stories differ sharply over future plans for the 38,000 square foot building, built in 2012.

The building has been vacant since the closure of Shopko in June 2019.

"It's a great deal for Ely," said Ed Zupancich, who oversees operations at the company's Babbitt store. A press release issued Wednesday morning by McCullough Companies,

See...ELY pg. 9

Notice to Readers

Due to an outbreak of COVID-19 at the Duluth plant that prints the Timberjay, the layout of the paper had to be changed this week due to the limitations of an alternative press, located in Red Wing. The paper will be printed in Red Wing next week as well, which will create an earlier deadline of noon on Tuesday. The Timberjay hopes to resume its regular printing schedule for our Dec. 18 edition.

COVID-19

State coronavirus vaccine plans hinge on feds

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook/Orr Editor

Distribution will be targeted initially at high risk groups

Malcolm said that now is the time to "double down" on efforts to stop the coronavirus, as the vaccine won't be widely available for months.

"We now know that

See...VACCINE pg. 9

REGIONAL- Despite repeated comments touting two COVID-19 vaccines as "lights at the end of the tunnel," state officials had few details to offer early this week on how

Minnesota will distribute those vaccines as they awaited more guidance from the federal government.

"It's hard to say yet before we get the

federal framework," Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm said in a Monday press conference with Gov. Tim Walz.

"The states have asked for that framework to be

as specific as possible in the interests of time."

"I think the federal plan is certainly the better way to go," Walz added. "If Iowa, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Minnesota

all take different tacks on who's getting this, we have a lot folks in the health care industry who go back and forth across the borders—there needs to be coordination around this."



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EDUCATION SAFETY

Vermilion Country School moving to hybrid learning model

TOWER- With the bi-weekly COVID-19 case rate at over 90 cases per 10,000 people in northern St. Louis County, the Vermilion Country School Board decided to move to a hybrid learning model starting on Dec. 6.

Minnesota Department of Health has recommended districts consider full distance learning when the rate rises above 50 per 10,000, although districts are encouraged to consider local data and district-spe-

cific factors to determine locally-appropriate models.

Most area school districts have now moved to a hybrid or distance model.

VCS had moved to distance learning on a short-term basis two times this fall, once after two staffers came down with possible COVID symptoms (both tested negative), and again after a staffer did fall ill with COVID.

The new learning model was developed by the school teaching staff

and includes having small cohorts of students in the building four days a week. One group of students will be in school Mondays and Tuesdays, and the others on Thursdays and Fridays. Some students will be doing full-time distance learning. Teachers will be in the school full-time.

"We want to keep everyone safe," said school administrator Frank Zobitz.

Students not in the building will be logging into all their daily classes

and electives online. The school schedule will generally remain the same, with core academic classes in the morning. Afternoon electives include performing arts, environmental education, and indoor/outdoor physical education.

"We hope this new model keeps our students engaged," Zobitz said, "and we have one-on-one support available for students as needed."

Zobitz said the staff gained experience after the

mandatory switch to distance learning last March. "We learned what worked and what didn't," Zobitz said.

Students returned from a week-long Thanksgiving break on Monday. Later in the week, students had orientation on the new hybrid cohort model.

The school will send meals to students at home on distance learning. The school has suspended the senior dining program at this time and will decide later whether or not it is

possible to continue that service.

The school office will remain open daily, and anyone with questions can call 218-753-1246.

St. Louis County Schools, including Tower-Soudan Elementary, are moving to a distance learning model at all their sites starting on Dec. 14 and continuing through Jan. 8.

VAN...Continued from page 1

vehicle components. So sometimes even a relatively simple problem becomes a major issue because standard repair parts no longer fit.

Getting around is of even more importance now with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Mesabi East school bus was transporting Aaron to and from his job at the Mesabi East Environmental Education Center, located in the former Plagemann's Greenhouse. While Aaron has completed his high school academics, he is doing post-graduation work for the environmental education program.

"He is really a jack-of-all-trades," said his mother Melanie. "Besides raising plants for the spring plant sale, he makes wreaths, other craft items for sale, and helps with building maintenance."

When the school bus used to transport Aaron and other students from

How to donate

Online donations can be made at <https://www.jettfoundation.org/jgf2020-aaron-raj>. All donations are tax deductible. If you wish to mail a donation, please make checks payable to Jett Foundation and mail them to 36 Cordage Park Circle, Suite 328, Plymouth, MA, 02360. Be sure to write the Raj family name followed by Jett Giving Fund in the memo line (i.e. Raj Jett Giving Fund).

About Jett Giving Fund: Jett Giving Fund is Jett Foundation's matching gift program for families impacted by Duchenne muscular dystrophy who are in need of accessible equipment. Families fundraise half the funds needed for a piece of equipment, and Jett Foundation pays the remaining half for the family. If other resources have already been used to meet a specific need, if there is no longer a specific need, and/or if donations have been received in excess of a specific need, donations made in furtherance of a specific need will be applied for general purposes of the Jett Giving Fund.

this area broke down and the replacement bus wasn't temporarily able to handle a wheelchair, Melanie started driving him back and forth. Luckily, she also works in Aurora, at the America Family Insurance office. Once the pandemic hit, Melanie said, Aaron felt he was safer not going on the school bus because not all the students kept their masks on. In this time of COVID, the environmental learning center is one of the only places

Aaron is going, because other activities he used to participate in have been canceled.

Aaron enjoys going on walks on the paved bike trails in Tower and Soudan with his mother, who is an avid walker. But the electric wheelchair can't handle snowy conditions, leaving Aaron mostly indoors in the winter months.

Winter also means more challenges for the family van. Driving the van to and from Aurora, including getting Aaron and his electric wheelchair in, getting the wheelchair strapped down, and then getting Aaron out again, has become difficult. The prospect of having the van break down on rural roads in cold winter temps also worries the family. The strap tie-down system is out-of-date and some-

times difficult to use, and Melanie said Aaron does not feel secure while riding.

A newer van with a safer "clip-in" style system is on the family's wish list. But the price, at over \$54,000 for a new accessible van, is more than the family can manage.

However, thanks to a program by the Jett Foundation, a new family van may be under the family's Christmas tree this year. The family was accepted into a special grant program which will match donations dollar-for-dollar, up through the end of this year. Most of the donations must come from outside the family, though the family is allowed to contribute some to the project.

Melanie said they have been looking for a used accessible van in

good condition which would bring the final cost closer to \$35,000, meaning they have a total of \$17,000 or so to raise. So far, the fundraiser has brought in a little over \$7,000 towards the goal for a new van. But if the family can find a used van to fit their needs, their goal is not as daunting. One condition of the program is that the van must be purchased from a dealership. Family members, Melanie said, have been searching in Minnesota and Wisconsin for a van, and have identified some possibilities.

While replacing their van is certainly at the top of his parents' wish list this year, Aaron also has his sights set on something else. A lifelong video game player and Mario Brothers superfan, Aaron would like to expand his gaming experiences with the new Sony Playstation 5, a just-released gaming console in very short supply this Christmas season.

"We know that is impossible right now," Melanie said.

But getting a new van is something she is hoping is a real possibility.

So, for a year that has brought challenges for many families, contributing to this fundraiser is a way to make one family's 2020 a year to remember

in a good way.

What is Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy?

Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, sometimes shortened to DMD or just Duchenne, is a rare genetic disease. It primarily affects males, but, in rare cases, can also affect females. Duchenne causes the muscles in the body to become weak and damaged over time and is eventually fatal. The genetic change that causes Duchenne — a mutation in the *DMD* gene — happens before birth and can be inherited, or new mutations in the gene can occur spontaneously.

Duchenne is caused by a genetic mutation that prevents the body from producing dystrophin, a protein that muscles need to work properly. Without dystrophin, muscle cells become damaged and weaken. Over time, children with Duchenne will develop problems walking and breathing, and eventually the muscles that help them breathe and the heart will stop working. Duchenne is an irreversible, progressive disease. There is currently no cure for Duchenne.

Information from *Duchenne.org*

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Two more conversations (via Zoom) to help connect and inspire artists, arts organizations and arts supporters during the pandemic, brainstorm possibilities for community collaboration, and dream about long-term ideas and efforts in the arts community.

Thursday, Dec. 10 from 12 noon-1:30pm
Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021 from 12 noon-1:30pm

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This activity is made possible in part by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

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Community notices

Ruby's Pantry food distribution

COOK- The next Ruby's Pantry will be a drive through food distribution at the old Cook School parking lot on Thursday, Dec. 10 from 4:30 - 6 p.m. Please give a \$20 cash donation at the door. For safety, no one over 60 years of age will be asked to volunteer. Ruby's Pantry is sponsored by St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Alango.

Nelmark Heritage Holidays canceled

EMBARRASS- Nelmark Heritage Holidays, originally scheduled for Dec. 10-12, have been canceled due to COVID-19 concerns. People may call 218-984-2302 for orders of bread and Christmas bakery, and details about when orders can be picked up curbside at the Nelmark.

Household Hazardous Waste drop off sites closed

REGIONAL- St. Louis County Environmental Services has closed its two Household Hazardous Waste drop off sites in Virginia and Hibbing until further notice. Closure of the two HHW sites allows for better staffing at the county's canister sites, transfer stations, and regional landfill, which remain open at this time.

Citizens are asked to keep any household hazardous waste items - such as paint, household cleaners, rechargeable batteries, and fluorescent bulbs, among other things, until the sites re-open, so that the items can be disposed of safely. For people needing to make an emergency drop off of household hazardous waste, staff will try to accommodate as schedules permit. People should call 218-741-8831 to make an appointment.

Because the COVID-19 situation is continually changing, residents are encouraged to call the Environmental Services Hotline at 218-749-9703 before driving to any of the county's drop off sites. The hotline message will be updated daily to alert the public of any site closures.

St. Louis County Environmental Services provides a comprehensive management system for garbage and recycling for all of the county outside the boundaries of the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District. Learn more at stlouiscountymn.gov/environmentalservices.

High school seniors considering 'gap year' must apply for scholarships now

REGIONAL- Yet another consequence of COVID-19 is that many high school seniors are considering waiting a year to start college or trade school, often referred to as "taking a gap year," because they don't want their education to be via online classes.

While scholarship funding organizations allow for gap years, local leaders want families to know students still need to apply while they're in school to be eligible for funding. In fact, in many cases, they need to apply by Jan. 15, 2021 - just two months from now. Deadlines for scholarships are available on their respective websites.

"It would be natural for a student to apply in early 2022 after their gap year, but being a year removed from high school by then, they would unfortunately no longer be eligible for some scholarships. We don't want to see that happen," said Patty Salo Downs, Executive Director of Duluth's Marshall H. and Nellie Alworth Memorial Fund.

Scholarships totaling nearly \$5 million are available to students in northern Minnesota. A broad range of majors are funded, from four-year bachelor's degrees to two-year associate of arts degrees, including vocational and technical degrees for those pursuing careers in the trades.

Information about where scholarships can be found is available on foundation and high school websites, and from high school guidance offices.

Co-hosted by the Alworth Memorial Fund and the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, 30-minute informational sessions will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2021, at 7 p.m.

Participate by computer, tablet or smartphone by logging on to <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/111607813>. Participate by phone by calling 872-240-3311, access code 111-607-813.

Applications are now being accepted for Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation scholarships at www.DSAcommunityfoundation.org. Students may apply for Alworth scholarships at www.AlworthScholarship.org. Completed submissions for these two organizations are due by Jan. 15, 2021.

COVID-19 RELIEF

SLC distributes \$6.2 million in CARES Act funds



Ely's Historic State Theater was one of several businesses to receive COVID-19 relief from the federal CARES Act distributed by St. Louis County. submitted photo

REGIONAL- St. Louis County has successfully distributed a total of \$6,191,800 in federal CARES Act funds to assist small businesses throughout the county. A total of 471 businesses received funding through the county's Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grants.

The money was distributed in two phases. Phase 1, which was completed earlier this fall, provided grant assistance to businesses and non-profits with 25 or fewer full-time employees, for COVID-19 related expenses such as to purchase PPE, cleaning supplies, signage and safety

barriers. St. Louis County awarded \$675,000 to 220 businesses during Phase 1.

Phase 2 focused on businesses and non-profits with up to 100 employees, providing emergency grant assistance of up to \$50,000. These funds could be used for PPE and other COVID-related costs, as well as broader expenses incurred during or as a result of business interruption from the governor's ordered shutdown. The county distributed a total of \$5,517,000 to 355 businesses during Phase 2. These small businesses together employ a total

of 4,980 people in St. Louis County.

In addition to the Small Business Grants, the county has distributed \$1.8 million in CARES Act funds to 12 public school districts and two charter schools within the county. It has also distributed \$2.8 million in funding to community organizations, and \$89,000 in individual assistance.

The complete list of businesses receiving funds in Phase 1 and Phase 2 is available online at stlouiscountymn.gov/cares. Some businesses were eligible and received funding in both phases.

UNITED WAY

It's not just important, it's imperative

UNNEMN needs donations for Buddy Backpacks

REGIONAL- Steve Badanjak worked for Virginia Public Utilities for 30 years before retiring and in that time he's seen many changes in the community.

One of the biggest? "A greater need for financial and emotional support," he said. So when his wife Anne began volunteering to pack United Way of Northeastern Minnesota (UNNEMN)'s Buddy Backpacks to help feed local children, Steve soon began volunteering too.

The Badanjaks have been volunteering with Buddy Backpacks for three years. Steve recently spoke at UNNEMN's Bucks for Backpacks Cash Raffle Drawing party and said, "The Buddy Backpacks program has been providing local children at risk of hunger with food to last throughout the weekends since 2011. It has always been a critically needed program of UNNEMN, and school staff, volunteers, and donors have always been supportive, but organizers say it feels even more important this year. But this year, there is a whole new sense of urgency. It's not just important. It's imperative."



Steve and Anne Badanjak at a recent UNNEMN Buddy Backpacks packing session at UNNEMN's building in Chisholm. submitted photo

"We headed into this school year knowing that even under normal circumstances there is a growing need for Buddy Backpacks," Lampton said. "With the pandemic affecting employment across the region, we knew the need for the program would be higher than ever. We want to help feed as many children as we can. Unfortunately, like anything, it all comes down to dollars."

The COVID-19 pandemic has limited UNNEMN's ability to visit workplaces for its annual campaign, canceled and postponed its largest fundraisers to support Buddy Backpacks, and put financial strain on donors who supported the program in the past.

"We are so grateful to everyone who has donated, who has tried new ways to hold campaigns, who has

supported the new virtual events," said UNNEMN Executive Director Erin Shay. "As hard as we all try, though, we are still behind in fundraising from where we were last year. The harsh reality is that instead of adding children to Buddy Backpacks, we've had to turn our focus to doing everything we can to sustain the program just as it is."

"It's a feeling," she said. "It breaks your heart to know there are children in our community who are going to bed hungry, and we all want to do whatever we can to change that."

The Badanjaks concur. "It has opened our eyes and hearts to help with this much needed program," Anne said.

To support Buddy Backpacks, donations can be mailed to 608 East Drive, Chisholm, MN 55719 or made online at www.unitedwaynemn.org/give.

NOTICE

Range Cooperatives, Inc. Annual Shareholders Meeting

FOR 2020 HAS BEEN CANCELED due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our next Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 2021. Elections will take place for both years 2020 and 2021 at that time. Financial reports are available upon request at the Coop office located at 102 South Hoover Rd in Virginia.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Range Cooperatives, Inc.
Board of Directors



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OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

Editorial

Bakk and Tomassoni

Decision to bolt the DFL caucus was strategic, which makes them more effective

Shortly after the Nov. 3 election, Sen. Tom Bakk talked with the *Timberjay* about his thoughts on the outcome, as well as his goals for his remaining years in the Legislature. Bakk, now 64, has been in office since 1994, and unlike some legislators, he's not content to merely serve time. He has real objectives. He also has long hours of windshield time as he travels back and forth from his district to St. Paul, which gives him many hours to strategize on how to achieve those goals.

His commitment to completing the development of the Lake Vermilion State Park was at the top of the list of the things he still wants to accomplish in office. Bakk justifiably views the park and its completion as a crowning achievement of his time in the Legislature, one that both serves his district and helps to preserve the Lake Vermilion experience that he enjoyed as a boy for future generations. It's worth remembering that Bakk worked across the aisle, with then-Gov. Tim Pawlenty, to create the park, even as he faced opposition from some other DFL legislators on the Range. The Cook lawmaker has always demonstrated a greater interest in results than party loyalty.

In his recent interview, he acknowledged that completing development of the park would be tougher as a member of the Senate's minority. "It's painful to be in the minority, but not so painful that I'm going to leave," Bakk said. So, rather than languish on the outside looking in, Bakk found a way to leverage the GOP's slim one-seat majority in the Minnesota Senate to enhance his influence and, very likely, bring big dividends for his district.

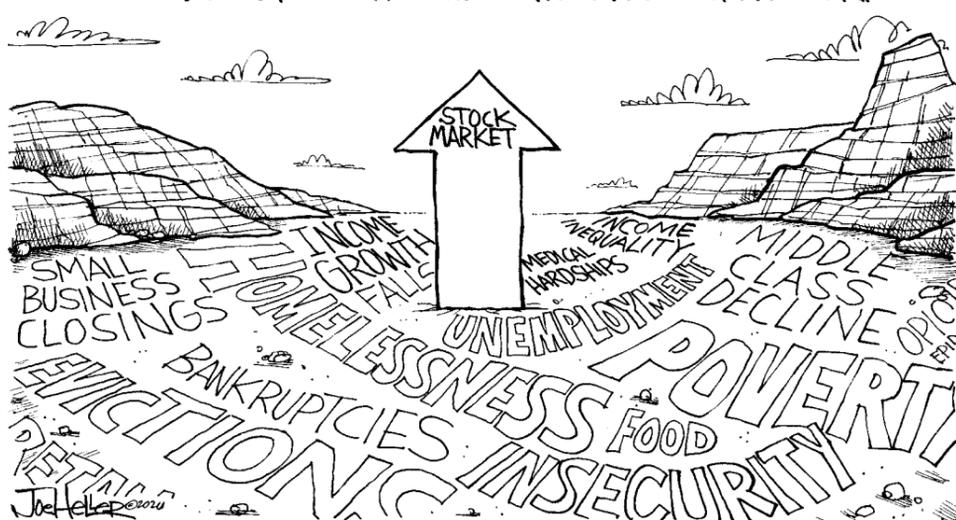
By leaving the DFL caucus to form his own Independent caucus with fellow Iron Ranger David Tomassoni, Bakk engineered his appointment as chair of the Senate's Capital Investment Committee, a perch that gives him enormous influence over where state bonding dollars will be invested. Expect the Lake Vermilion State Park to see the

dollars it needs to fund additional camping opportunities, trails, and a spectacular lodge. Bakk almost certainly received that commitment from Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka as part of his calculus for leaving his party caucus.

We recognize that Sens. Bakk and Tomassoni have taken their lumps for their perceived abandonment of the DFL. They've even been accused of being "kept company men," as if their decision were somehow related to mining. While both Bakk and Tomassoni were disappointed that the DFL Central Committee narrowly voted for a moratorium on copper-nickel mining, there's little reason to see their decision as a retaliatory action. Had the DFL won the majority on Nov. 3, the two Iron Range lawmakers would almost certainly have remained within the caucus. While the DFL may be divided on the question of copper-nickel mining, we expect Bakk and Tomassoni will continue to support the same kinds of DFL initiatives they backed for years, whether it's more funding for education, public infrastructure, strengthening unions, or guaranteeing healthcare access regardless of income. Had it been a repudiation of the DFL and its values, Bakk would have encouraged Iron Range House members to follow suit. He didn't because he recognized that they are most effective remaining within the DFL caucus, which is in the majority there.

This decision was really an effort to remain effective. It was a clever, strategic decision that enhances the two lawmakers' influence, allowing them to better serve their districts. They recognized the unique political conditions inherent in a Senate that is both narrowly divided and hyper-partisan and took advantage to enhance their influence. If we view effective politics as the ability to deliver for one's district, rather than one's party, it's tough to find fault in their decision.

MYSTIFYING MONOLITH FOUND IN THE MIDDLE OF A DESERT



Letters from Readers

DFL stands for inclusion, equality; that's lost on Bakk

It is with great disappointment that we have learned of our Senator Tom Bakk's exit from the DFL state Senate caucus to start a new Independent senate caucus.

The Democratic Farmer Labor party has always had a platform of inclusion and equality. We stand with Farmers, Labor, and all those who believe in a living wage, fair labor practices, protecting Social Security, women's right to choose, racial justice, protecting our environment, and social safeguards that promote fair housing, quality education, and healthcare for all.

It may have been lost on the Senator, but not lost to the DFL organizers of his district, that the party has not shifted, but has become more inclusive, more visionary, bringing more people into supporting a platform for the good of all. The DFL values have not shifted; it is Senator Bakk who has chosen a different path.

We at DFL Senate District 3 expect that Senator Bakk will do the job we elected him to do: to represent the interests of all the people of northeastern Minnesota on the things we care about. We will continue to work with him and any other legislators as we strive to implement our core values and make Minnesota and the world a better place.

Minnesota DFL Senate District 3 includes Koochiching, Cook and Lake counties and parts of St. Louis County.

Leah Rogne
DFL Senate
District 3 Chair
Gheen

Time to get the wolf population under control

The 2020 deer season ended for me without bagging

a buck or even seeing a single deer during the last eight days of hunting in zone 177. I know that I'm not the only hunter who ended up not filling their license or seeing a deer.

The winter of 2019-2020 was hard on the herd with cold temperatures and a lot of snow. The Minnesota timber wolf population needs to be addressed here in northeastern Minnesota as well. I know that I was not the only hunter who saw wolf tracks throughout the season. I talked with one hunter who observed four or five wolves going after two deer from his stand.

All of us look forward to hunting the elusive whitetail and want future generations to be able to do so as well. I know we can't do much about the weather, but we can make our voices heard by letting the powers that be in St. Paul know that a hunting and trapping season needs to be put back on the wolf population. What is being done to control them as their numbers continue to increase?

The declining number of deer licenses purchased this year might just not be that older hunters have quit hunting but also because hunters aren't seeing deer in the woods over the last two seasons.

Let's control the wolf population so that not only I can continue to hunt but that many others can do so as well for years to come.

Mike Korpi
Soudan

Understanding can make for better decisions

As we enter the holiday season and the CDC warns against group gathering, I find it puzzling that so many people disregard the warnings and still try to live as if COVID-19 is nothing to fear.

I'm sure there are multiple reasons for people not following guidelines and not wearing masks but perhaps

some are not familiar with the danger of a virus that spreads exponentially rather than in a linear spread. We are not used to dealing with cases of exponential growth. When I was still teaching high school, I would use a thought problem to help students understand exponential growth. Here is the problem I would give students.

You have two neighbors who will need to have their dogs walked twice each day for the month of February. Neighbor one says his dog is very important to him and so he will pay you \$1,000 per day for doing the chore.

Neighbor two tells you her dog is very important to her and wants you to walk it each day in February. She offers to pay you \$0.01 the first day and to double your pay each day until the end of the month. Which job do you take?

Students did the math and were amazed that starting with a salary of just one cent on the first day and doubling it each day meant that by day nine the amount would be \$5.12 for that day. By day eighteen the salary would be \$2,621.44 for that day and by day twenty-seven the salary would be \$1,342,177.28.

For this problem I have used a formula that the money doubles (2x) each day. COVID-19 is a little different because it has an incubation period. It's reproduction spread takes a little longer but at a higher rate of 3x. In other words, with normal activity a positive case of COVID-19 is spread to three people. After five days it is spread to nine people, and after 10 days it is spread to 27 people and on and on.

So, until we are vaccinated against the virus the only way to stop the INCREASE of the spread is to have contact with the absolute fewest possible people! I hope this helps you make wise decisions.

Andrew Urban
Eagles Nest Twp.



Treasures discovered, gifted and enjoyed by all

The first time I became aware of Mary Smilanich-Batinich of Lake Vermilion was on a *Timberjay* press day when she came swooping into the office on her own deadline, wanting us to help her with one of her many projects. Many times when she would come in



SCARLET STONE

rarely wore socks... although she disputes this. It occurred to me that she didn't mind any chill on her feet and was too busy to concern herself with such things. My employer, Jodi, said, "I don't mind doing anything for Mary because she does so much for the city of Tower." As time went on I adjusted

my perspective to agree with Jodi. In the spring of 2017, she asked my then-husband Bill and

me if we would be interested in being the winter managers for her business, The Vermilion Park Inn, located in Soudan. A great friendship began and I have been co-managing the Inn with Mary and have been a part of many creative adventures with her...such as Midsummer performances, concerts, dinners and fundraisers we have hosted at the Inn, and a fabulous trip she hosted to northern Ireland in the fall of 2018.

This past September, while our very busy season at the Inn was wrapping up, Mary announced she had sold her Lake

Vermilion home on Birch Point and needed to be out by Dec. 7. One beautiful fall evening I made a point to pick up some ice cream and head out to see Mary. We sat in front of the crackling fireplace, telling stories and laughing as we had done on favorite occasions. I soaked it up...for I knew it would soon end. In the fall, this SAME past fall, Mary also sold her home in Arizona and purchased a condo in Minneapolis in a building where she had previously lived. She wants to be near family and friends in the metro area as well as up north. You go, girl! Details

of these moves had to be worked out as well but for now, Mary's main residence will be the Vermilion Park Inn. Her news of selling properties set in motion a large scale process of planning, lifting, hauling and dispersing a multitude of treasures, largely from her 3,000 sq ft lake home known as Dacha Batinich, which is Slavic for country home. In addition to the house, there was a packed garage with an upstairs apartment to deal with, plus a shed Mary had turned into her late husband Alex's antique tool

See **TREASURES...** pg. 5

Letters from Readers

Help protect our most vulnerable during the holidays

In times of distress, we naturally turn to our family and loved ones for comfort. We have witnessed how COVID-19 has sadly upended all sorts of family gatherings this year.

The Cook Hospital and Care Center staff are doing everything we can to provide care, companionship and minimize isolation for our patients, seniors and those with long-term care needs. But, when it comes to protecting our patients and residents from COVID-19, we all need to do our part.

We are doing all that we can to prepare for significant workforce shortages worsened by high levels of the virus surging in the community. We have creatively adapted to the challenges of providing good care while minimizing the spread of this highly contagious, deadly virus.

Following all guidance regarding required personal protective equipment, we are providing dignified care and keeping spirits up for all whom we serve. But when co-workers are absent from work because they are sick themselves or need

to care for a sick family member, or have a high-risk exposure, we are on the verge of having a critical staff shortage.

This holiday season, we kindly ask that you help protect older adults and staff who are most at risk of contracting the virus. COVID-19 has made celebrating the holidays hard, but not impossible.

The Minnesota Department of Health has provided new holiday guidelines. Much of it has been recommended for months: wear masks, practice good hygiene, and social distance.

This holiday season, please consider how your holiday plans impact your neighbors who are most at risk. Try to stay home as much as possible and avoid gathering with people outside your household.

Most importantly, visit with your loved ones in long-term care frequently, but virtually. Share family recipes over Zoom or FaceTime. Send handwritten letters and photos to relatives in long-term care facilities instead of making in-person visits (when permitted). Small steps like these can keep our seniors safe from the virus while maintaining important connections and reducing social isolation.

The next few weeks will be challenging. But by working together, we can protect seniors and keep thousands of health care workers working and caring for our seniors.

We thank you for working with us to protect those whom we serve, and we thank our team members here at the Cook Hospital and Care Center for their dedication, compassion and quality care that they provide each and every day, in all departments!

Stay healthy, and happy holidays.

**Teresa Debevec, CEO
Julie Lesemann, COO
Cook Hospital and
Care Center**

Climate change litigation rises

Climate change litigation is breaking new legal ground. Among these judicial proceedings are significant human rights issues.

Human rights were acknowledged as early as the year 1215 in the Magna Carta, but unsurprisingly do not include references to climate change concerns. Similarly, more recently, human rights were addressed by the

United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, but again no mention of the issues derived from climate change.

Today's climate legal cases revolve around rules, regulations and laws promulgated by governmental entities in addition to the litigation against polluters contaminating the natural environment. The right to human life is endangered by man-made changes impacting our natural environment.

Sixteen young people filed a lawsuit in Montana challenging the constitutionality of Montana's fossil fuel-based State Energy Policy. The plaintiffs allege "that anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions were triggering a host of adverse consequences in Montana, including dangerous rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, increasing droughts and extreme weather events, greater frequency and severity of wildfires, more glacial melt and causing numerous health risks, especially to children" The plaintiffs seek their right to an "environment that includes a clean, healthful environment and a right to a stable climate system"

Although our Constitution is silent on these issues, we take comfort in Thomas Jefferson's

Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." If Jefferson had lived after the Industrial Revolution, would he have included environmental human rights? Aren't they self-evident?

The present Administration has rolled back more than 125 environmental safeguards and terminated U.S. participation in the climate Paris Accords. Will those people who reject the supposition that man-made actions are causing detrimental and harmful climate changes continue to uphold that view? Or will they recognize the climate changes and acknowledge the human rights of people resulting from personal injury due to global warming?

The next four years will be critical for determining whether legal and legislative actions will ameliorate the dangers caused by climate change.

**Gerry Snyder
Ely**

ENGAGED CITIZEN

Making freedom of speech rights accountable

by KEITH STEVA
Timberjay Contributor

First Amendment freedom of speech rights must be matched with transparency and accountability. When the founding fathers wrote the Constitution and specifically called out freedom of speech, the technologies of the time were of course limited. Additionally, when people exercised their freedom of speech rights it was at campaign meetings, in person-to-person conversations, or maybe at a local roadhouse or tavern. Even the written word or printed flyers were easily traced to the writers and authors as well as to the printers.

Today, platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat, and other social media allow their users to exist in absolute anonymity. That's good for the users as it allows them, if they choose, to share their ideas, thoughts, and feelings anonymously. However, it also allows users to bully and threat-

en others, again, anonymously. For example, the lead Georgia election officials are receiving death threats against them and their families. Public health care employees are quitting their jobs across many states as the coronavirus threats to public safety skyrocket—because of threats to them and their families.

Anony **F**irst Amendment rights would not have been conceivable at the time. Would our founding fathers have chosen freedom of speech without accountability?

The social media platforms are not too concerned about much more than providing a platform with services that induce people to use their services so the company and investors can profit from advertising. It is not reasonable to expect that, on their own, the social media companies would institute mechanisms to enforce accountability—knowing who is "speaking" on their platform at any point. They know by implementing an accountability framework



that users would abandon their platform in favor of other platforms that would still maintain the user's anonymity.

But without that, people who are targeted by bullies or threats have no protection or recourse.

Congress is holding hearings regarding Section 230 which states, "No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider." This relieves Facebook and other social media platforms of any responsibility for what users of the platform may say or content they create or resend.

In other words, if an anonymous user places a death threat against another person, Facebook is not responsible for that threat, and doesn't even

need to provide any assistance or relief to the target of the threat. Maybe that makes sense in that clearly the platform would find it impossible to be responsible for what is published as that would be incredibly difficult to accomplish.

But then I would argue that Section 230 be modified such that (a) if a user is only reading or otherwise solely observing content on the social media platform they may remain anonymous if they choose, but (b) the identity must be known of anyone writing, creating, or resending content of any sort, whether pictures, text, emojis, or anything that in any way is created or published content by the user.

In other words, every person who creates content on the platform must be identifiable, reliably, to a real person that the platform must be able to prove identity beyond a reasonable doubt. If the platform is unable to prove the identify of the user who created the content, the

platform would be subject to liability and penalties. No longer could anyone be able to send a death threat to someone without accountability.

The platforms have the ability to determine who their users are. That technology exists today. For example, people apply for credit cards all the time, and you can be sure that the credit card companies are nearly 100 percent certain they "know" the applicant before giving them a card. Section 230 would have to be modified such that all, 100%, of the social media platforms in the United States abide by this rule in order to ensure that the social media companies compete on a level playing field.

We don't have to let cowards and bullies have unlimited anonymous ability to attack, harass, and intimidate others. People need to be accountable for what they say.

TREASURES...Continued from page 4

museum. The property with all its treasures had so many stories to tell.

The lake house was built in the 1950s by Alex, a native of Eveleth, and his Italian born father-in-law, Jim Mancina. Alex and his first wife Mary Ellen Mancina-Batinich occupied the lake home until her death in the 1990s. Then in 1999 after having been friends for several years, Alex and Mary Smilanich married. They winterized the home, built a large great room two-level addition and lived there until Alex's death in 2016 when Mary became sole owner and occupant.

The exteriors of the buildings are painted red with white trim and the house features a true Swedish Halsingland porch off of the kitchen. It's authenticity is reflected in the intricate wood trim brought from Sweden and painted red, forest green and mustard yellow. In true style, a rising sun incorporated in the trim of the porch must always face east. The beautiful stone fireplace in the cathedral-ceilinged great room can be admired from the loft that has a unique wood and glass panel crafted railing. The master bedroom suite is amazing. The walk-in closet was perfect for Mary's

clothing and all her luggage! The huge artistic white and blue tile accented Jacuzzi bath is a dream for anyone. This large bathroom with nooks and crawl space held a special secret when one of the moving crew discovered Mary's set of sterling silver flatware that had been missing for quite some time. A sigh of relief was shared by all.

There were other surprising discoveries in the process. When a friend of Mary's kids from the cities was cleaning up high in the tool museum, she came across a wood box of old letters, memorabilia and personal effects from a deceased WWII veteran. Mary-Ellen Batinich's brother Tony had been attending Vanderbilt University when he was drafted into the Army. The box held letters written from his sweetheart back in Eveleth. He had gone to California for paratrooper training and perished with eighteen other young men when parachutes had no time to open due to the plane being too low to the ground. A devastating end. Finding such historic personal items in the old shed was a humbling moment for all who were present that day.

Many of Alex's wonderful antique carpentry tools from the shed will eventually be on

display at the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center (LVCC) on Tower's Main Street. Several items have been sold with monies being donated as part of the ongoing fall fundraiser "Raise the Roof for Alex".... honoring Alex, an Iron Range philanthropist, on what would have been his 100th birthday on Nov. 10, 2020. We had a two-day Covid-With-Care garage sale in early October that was a combined effort of masked family and friends. Funds raised from that sale were also gifted to the LVCC.

Over the past couple of months, as we cleaned and sorted through thousands of books, tools, china and other collectibles, we heard many stories, such as Mary and Alex having the massive antique Swedish floor-to-ceiling white tile stove (Kakelugn) disassembled and shipped across the ocean. Mary advised that the older stoves are now considered national treasures and not allowed to be sent out of Sweden.

Treasures equally as valuable although not as large as the stove were throughout the home. Mary operated a tour company in the cities for fifty years and her collections reveal this. The lower level windowsills display inset

tiles from travels to Jerusalem, Gibraltar, Europe, Scandinavia, Africa and Peru. The tiles on one of her master bedroom windowsills are of the Canterbury tales while other sills in the room feature replicated tiles from Machu Picchu. The two blue and white pottery light sconces on one bedroom wall were wrapped and carefully tucked in her carry-on luggage when she traveled from Spain on one occasion. The bedroom fireplace was built by friends from Sweden with special craftsmanship. The unique features of Mary's home go on and on. On the main level, a one-of-a-kind wood corner hutch and a nearby beautiful blue buffet were hand-painted by noted Norwegian Rosemaling artist and friend, Teresa McCue Thompson. The lovely keepsakes have been enjoyed by many! Friends, relatives, politicians, artists and luminaries from all walks of life who have visited and stayed at Mary's passed by the painted pieces. The dark walnut grand piano which accompanied more than one song-fest will remain with the house after the closing. Purchased in Chicago after WWII, it belonged to Alex's first wife who was an accomplished pianist. Family photos

were displayed on its surface, set upon a beautiful olive green patterned silk shawl with ten inch silky black fringes. This gorgeous piece from Chicago which draped the piano for decades was gifted to me, its greatest admirer. I look forward to a trip out of town where I can wear it somewhere besides the grocery store or the gas station!

It is now past Thanksgiving, the autumn colors have given way to snowflakes and blue waves have turned to ice. The closing of the property sale is just days away. The Magic Erasers, Pine Sol, paper towels, vacuums and mops have done their inside duties and we cleaners are easing our sore muscles. The outdoor crew with trucks and trailers is hauling the final garage items away. We are now in the calming wake of a job well done and can look back on helping our friend move through this time of change in which she is anticipating the next chapter in her life. She will continue to help advance the progress of the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center, operate the Inn, and do a multitude of other projects. I will continue spending time with an amazing woman and friend.

Week of Dec. 7

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

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

Tuesday
Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from **2:30-5:00 p.m.** Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is Dec. 15. **Please note change in hours.**

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

Greenwood Town Board- 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 8. Dial-in meeting, contact clerk's office for details.

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.

TSHS begins aluminum can drive fundraiser

TOWER-SOUDAN- The Tower-Soudan Historical Society is starting an ongoing "Aluminum Can" collection drive. Funds from the cans donated will go toward projects and the work of the Historical Society.

The fenced-in trailer is behind the Historic Fire Hall located next to the Tower Post Office on Main St. Please place your aluminum cans inside of a garbage bag and place them in the fenced trailer. Thanks so much for your continued support of the Tower-Soudan Historical Society.

Other donations or memberships can be sent to TSHS, PO Box 465, Tower, MN, 55790.

Another turkey winner

Valerie Schroeder was the winner of the turkey at UBetcha Antiques in Tower.

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



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(218) 753-2950
www.timberjay.com**



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NOTE: Changes of address must be sent or called in to the Tower office. Out-of-state delivery may take 2-3 weeks. For prompt out-of-state delivery try the First Class Subscription: \$100 year or \$10 per month.

Read the entire paper on-line every week. On-line subscriptions cost \$29.95/year; details at www.timberjay.com.

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

HOLIDAY GIVING

Last week to get donations in for Operation Santa

Donations needed by Dec. 11: toys, gift cards, clothing, and cash welcome

TOWER- Just one more week to shop for Operation Santa. We are expecting to need gifts for more children than last year, and already have 150 children from 46 area families on our list.

Operation Santa is a local fundraiser which purchases Christmas gifts (toys, gift cards, and warm winter items) for children whose families use the Tower Food Shelf. Last year we served over 170 area children.

Take advantage of the great deals on toys, many of which are being offered right now, to bring some joy into a child's life.

Cash donations are welcome; checks should be made out to Operation Santa and delivered or mailed to The Timberjay, PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790.

The effort is organized by the Timberjay and the Tower Soudan Civic Club, with help from many area groups, businesses, churches, organizations, and individuals.

Lake Country Power's Operation RoundUp® program has once again made a very generous donation to the Tower Soudan

Civic Club to help cover the cost of purchasing warm items for the children.

We are looking at donations of toys, games, art supplies, and sporting equipment for children, and gift cards to either Target or Walmart for our teenagers (\$10 or \$15). Stocking stuffer type gifts and holiday candy are also appreciated.

We are always in need of gifts for infants and babies (must be labeled as safe for children under three). Gift ideas for children include games, action figures, building toys, dolls with accessories, craft sets, art supplies (including crayons and markers), sporting goods (basketballs, footballs, playground balls, sleds), puzzles, cars and trucks, and science kits.

Please don't worry about picking out the right gift; I promise there will be a child on our list who will love whatever you pick out!

If you purchase a toy that uses batteries, please also send a spare set! Donations of batteries (especially AA and AAA) are also



appreciated.

We also accept gently-used holiday decorations and gifts for the adults who use the food shelf.

Donations can be dropped off at the Timberjay in Tower, and will be distributed at the food shelf on Dec. 15. **Families who use the Tower Food Shelf and have not yet signed up, should call Jodi at the Timberjay at 218-753-2950, or can email editor@timberjay.com.**

Northeast Range First Quarter Honor Roll

A Honor Roll

Grade 12
Anne Barich
Oskar Koivisto
Willa Koivisto
Alexia Lightfeather
Phoebe Morgan
Gracie Sperling
Ethan Zaitz
James Zupancich

Grade 11

Audrey Anderson
Erin Backe
Joscelyn LaSart
Rylan Poppenhagen
Hannah Reichensperger

Grade 10

Logan Meskill
Kassidy Turner

Grade 9

Aubree Gerlovich
Hailey Lindquist
Ruby Milton

Grade 8

Kyle Kratz
Danica Sundblad

Grade 7

Mabry Prall

B Honor Roll

Grade 12
Robert Bielejeski
Christopher Ferguson
Isaac Hendrickson
Luther Johnson
Ariel Kalinowski
Brayln Lislegard
Sadie Theel
Trinity Warlof

Grade 11

Kenny Aase
Wyatt Gorsma
Landyn Houghton
Amara Lampton
Thia Lossing
Alysia Miller
Ryan Milton
Jenna Smith
Calvin Winger

Grade 10

Mariah DeJoode
Layne Kaufenberg
Jacob Mackai
Jennie Nelson
Emily Westvik
Jonathan Zaitz

Grade 9

Abby Koivisto
Zander Lislegard
Mikko Maki
Wesley Sandy

Grade 8

Noah Backe
Joshua Burton
Chelsey Nelmark
Greyson Reichensperger
Maizy Sundblad
Ian Sundahl
Lydia Wright

Grade 7

Chloe Adkisson
Hannah Aldrich
Avery Buschman
Tuuli Koivisto
Robert Swartz

Annual Lights of Love Campaign now underway

Virtual tree-lighting ceremony planned for this year

REGIONAL- The 30th annual Virgie Hegg Hospice Partners (VHHP) Lights of Love campaign, the group's largest fundraiser

of the year, begins in November to commemorate National Hospice Month and National Family Caregivers Month. Last year's Lights of

Love raised approximately \$6,200. Fundraising goals are achieved through the dedicated efforts of our Board of Directors working together with a community of supporting individuals and businesses. Please help us continue the tradition of remembering and honoring loved ones by supporting VHHP through this Lights of Love campaign.

VHHP's mission is to bring comfort care services to enrolled hospice patients and their families as well as hospice eligible patients in our local communities. VHHP also sponsors two education scholarships for students enrolled in the North Woods School and Tower enrollment area, pursuing a medical career, and one scholarship for college students.

Your tax-deductible donations may be given in honor or memory of a loved one. All Lights of Love contributions and dedications will be published in local area

newspapers during the month of January, unless otherwise noted on the donation form.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, VHHP will not be hosting any public tree lighting events in the Orr, Cook, or Tower communities. Please visit our Facebook page for a virtual tree-lighting ceremony.

For more information about Virgie Hegg Hospice Partners, visit our website at www.vhhp.org or contact Becca Bundy, Program Director at 218-780-5423. To donate, you can find a donation form on our website. Please make checks payable to VHHP Lights of Love and mail to PO Box 244, Cook, MN 55723. PayPal is also available via our website. Donations are tax-deductible.



Area Solid Waste Facility site hours

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th

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



ELY VFW POST 2717

Essay contest: 'What is patriotism to me?'



The Ely Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2717 honored local middle school students for writing the top three essays for the 2020 Patriot's Pen Essay Contest. This year's topic was "What is Patriotism to Me?" and dozens of Ely students entered the contest from Mrs. Cavalier's language arts classes. The top three winners were awarded certificates of accomplishment along with cash prizes. In first place was Aksel Skustad, left, second place went to Molly Brophy, middle, and in third place was Lydia Shultz, right. Aksel's winning essay will go on to compete against 28 other posts at the district level. Due to COVID-19 public health restrictions, Post Commander Tony Rechichi and VFW member Michael Pope "virtually" coordinated the essay contest and awarded the prizes. "This annual event offered a great opportunity for Ely students to reflect on their patriotism in conjunction with Veterans Day," Cavalier said. submitted photos

Libraries

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

Babbitt library

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

Support groups

AA - Alcoholics

Anonymous
OPEN AA - 7:30
p.m. Wednesdays and
Saturdays, in-person,
First Lutheran Church,
915 E. Camp St., Ely.

ELY WOMEN'S OPEN

AA - Every Monday
at noon at Ledgerrock
Community Church, 1515
E. Camp St., Ely.

BABBITT AA - 7 p.m.

Tuesdays, Woodland
Presbyterian Church

AL-ANON - Sundays

8-9 p.m. at St. Anthony's
Catholic Church in Ely.

For persons who
encounter alcoholism
in a relative or friend.

BABBITT AL-ANON

Thursdays, 7 p.m., at
Woodland Presbyterian.

CO-DEPENDENTS'

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

ELY FOOD SHELF -

Third Wednesday each
month, 15 W. Conan St.

ADULT BASIC

EDUCATION GED

- Study materials and
pre-test available. Call
218-365-3359,
218-827-3232, or
1-800-662-5711.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2020



a snow covered lake
turns to drawing pad on ice

a stick becomes brush

ISD 696

Update from Superintendent Erik Erie

Ely Public Schools moved to Distance Learning the week of Nov. 30. Distance Learning for students in the Memorial building started Wednesday, Dec. 2. Washington Elementary students began Distance Learning classes on Thursday, Dec. 3.

Transition planning in both buildings were held earlier this week. These planning days are provided for in guidance from the Minnesota Department of Education and will not require additional student days to be added to the school calendar. We are projecting a transition back to a Hybrid model or In-Person learning on Jan. 11.

The decision to move to Distance Learning has been a difficult one as we recognize that most students learn best with in-person instruction and that our teachers are most effective at engaging students when we provide in-person learning.

Given the most recent COVID-19 case rate data from St. Louis County and the increase of cases in the Ely area, we felt the move was necessary. When I refer to "we" it is because the administration does not make this important

decision in isolation, which affects so many in our school and community.

Last month, the administration brought a recommendation to the Ely Safe Learning Plan Advisory Council (ESLPAC) that a move to Distance Learning should be considered based on current data and expected trends. ESLPAC reviewed the case rate data and endorsed the move to Distance Learning. The School Board Chairman was consulted and School Board Members we notified of an expected change to the Safe Learning Plan. We wanted to wait for details on when to start Distance Learning and project a return until we met with the Regional Support Team.

Last Monday, the school administration met with the Regional Support Team from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to receive guidance while reviewing current data and expected trends. The MDH Regional Support Team and St. Louis County Public Health endorsed a move to Distance Learning for the Ely School District and will provide guidance when a transition back to students in the school

buildings is advisable.

Details of the Distance Learning Plan were presented to the Ely School Board. Following the School Board meeting, messaging was sent to families and employees with details of the transition to Distance Learning.

I want to acknowledge that this move to Distance Learning is not an easy one for families, including our employees with children in school. We will do our best to meet the needs of our families in continuing to provide support during this Distance Learning period. Some of those services include school lunch with breakfast, child care for qualifying Tier 1 workers, and mental health support. Families are encouraged to contact their building Principal for questions about these services.

As safety measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic can be very isolating, mental health does become a real concern, so we encourage all to be aware and seek support for people in need.

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



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

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NLAA presents holiday radio show

ELY – The Northern Lakes Arts Association will present "It's A Wonderful Life... A Live Radio Show," just in time for the holidays. The production is adapted by Philip Grecian and based on the film by Frank Capra.

Live performances will be held Friday-Sunday, Dec. 4-6, at Studio 23, 45 E. Chapman (the former Yugoslav Home, above NAPA store). Online streaming of the performances will be available Dec. 11-13.

NLAA will be observing appropriate COVID-19 protocols (face masks, social distancing, etc.) for the performances. For more information, email contact@northernlakesarts.org, or call 218-365-5070.

SAINT LOUIS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES BETTER WASTE SOLUTIONS

Area Solid Waste Facility site hours

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

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th

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

Our Community

Ely Area Food Shelf to offer pick-up

ELY – Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and public health restrictions, the Ely Food Shelf will only offer curbside boxed food pickup in Ely and Babbitt and delivery to the Ely senior apartments.

►Ely curbside pickup – Wednesday, Dec. 16, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please approach the food shelf from the west end of Conan Street following the signs and volunteer directions. A volunteer will approach the driver's side of the car to obtain your name, address, phone number, family size and their ages. Please have a designated area (trunk or seat) clear and ready for groceries. Remain in the car and a volunteer will load your groceries.

►Babbitt curbside pickup - Saturday Dec. 12, 10:30 a.m. to noon at the Babbitt Municipal Building. Please call 218-235-8912 by Friday, Dec. 11 to request a food pick-up in Babbitt. The same directions above will apply to Babbitt except follow the directional signs in the Municipal parking lot.

►Ely apartment delivery to Grahek, Zenith, Pioneer and Sibley facilities will be made on Thursday, Dec. 17, between the hours of 10 a.m. and noon in the following order: Zenith 10-10:30, Pioneer 10:30-11, Sibley 11-11:30 and Grahek 11:30-12.

Volunteers will not be delivering directly to each apartment except for Zenith apartments which have outdoor access. Pioneer, Sibley and Grahek apartment boxes will be labeled with each apartment number and placed in the apartment building's community room for pick up. Please pick up your boxes or arrange for someone to assist you. Boxes should be picked up within 30 minutes of delivery to avoid spoiling.

Call 218-235-8912 by Wednesday, Dec .16 to reserve a delivery.

Subscribe: 218-753-2950

VHHP Lights of Love fundraiser gets underway

REGIONAL- The 30th annual Virgie Hegg Hospice Partners (VHHP) Lights of Love campaign, the group's largest fundraiser of the year, begins in November to commemorate National Hospice Month and National Family Caregivers Month.

Last year's Lights of Love raised approximately \$6,200.

Fundraising goals are achieved through the dedicated efforts of the VHHP board of directors working together with a community of supporting individuals and businesses. Help continue the tradition of remembering and honoring loved ones by supporting VHHP through this Lights of Love campaign.

VHHP's mission is to bring comfort care services to enrolled hospice patients and their families as well as hospice eligible patients in our local communities. VHHP also sponsors two education scholarships for the North Woods School and Tower enrollment area for students pursuing a medical career, and one scholar-

ship for college students.

Your tax-deductible donations may be given in honor or memory of a loved one. All Lights of Love contributions and dedications will be published in local area newspapers during the month of January, unless otherwise noted on the donation form, which is available online at www.vhhp.org. Please make checks payable to VHHP Lights of Love and mail to PO Box 244, Cook, MN 55723. PayPal is also available via our website. Donations are tax-deductible.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, VHHP will not be hosting any public tree-lighting events in the Orr, Cook, or Tower communities. Please visit the VHHP Facebook page for a virtual tree-lighting ceremony.

For more information about Virgie Hegg Hospice Partners, visit the website or contact Becca Bundy, Program Director, at 218-780-5423.



Members of Orr Ambulance pose with two new suction units purchased with a generous donation from the family of Ronald Larson. Pictured are, seated, from left, Wendy Deatherage, Brenda King and Kara Knutson; standing, from left, Bill Hoffer, Jessica Gaskell, Patrick Hoffer, Donna Hoffer and Josh Gaskell. submitted

Donation benefits Orr Ambulance

ORR- Thanks to the benevolence of the family of Greaney native Ron Larson, both units of the Orr Ambulance service are now equipped with new portable Laerdal suction units.

Larson, a gifted

craftsman and carpenter who operated Homemaster Builders, was born in Greaney in 1934 and passed away on May 12, 2020, in Woodbury. His family designated Orr Ambulance as a recipient of memorial gifts.

"We have never had these units, so we have a brand-new option to improve patient care," Director Donna Hoffer said. "One unit was placed on each of the two ambulance rigs. This equipment will come in handy

during those difficult emergency situations.

"On behalf of the Orr Ambulance Service personnel, I would like to thank the family of Ronald Larson for the memorial gift."

Winter doodling mats added to NWFA community arts program

COOK- As fall completes its transition to winter, Northwoods Friends of the Arts is also transitioning to a new edition of its doodling placemats, a signature piece of their "Curious and Creative Art Adventures" program.

While COVID-19 restrictions have forced participating restaurants to close for indoor dining through Dec. 18, many continue to offer takeout and can include the new Winter placemat with your order on request. Participating businesses include Montana Cafe, The Crescent, The Landing, Britt Lounge, the Dam Supper Club, The Vermilion Club and The Village Inn in Virginia. The doodling placemats are also available at Zup's Food Market in Cook.

Ely artist Cecilia Rolando designed the Fall

placemats that kicked off NWFA's promotion in October, and she also created the Winter placemat.

Britt artist Jim DeVries has also designed four creative activity sheets to be published in a local free newspaper.

Doodlers are encouraged to share their creations by emailing a photo to NWFA at nwfamn.org@gmail.com with "C&C Adventures" as the subject line.

A third facet of the Curious and Creative Art Adventures program is an art notebook containing creative activities, lessons, and craft plans created by NWFA artists and assembled by gallery manager Alberta Whitenack. The booklets are available at the NWFA Gallery at 210 S River St. in Cook.

"Friends of tHearts Holiday Market" is the featured exhibit in the gallery,

which is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. In addition to one-of-a-kind gift possibilities of intriguing wood carvings, paintings, pottery, fiber arts/crafts, cards and calendars, masks and

small gift items, gift certificates are now available for purchase in the gallery as well.

Masks and social distancing guidelines are followed in the gallery.

Visit the NWFA website at www.nwfamn.org.

THANKSGIVING CHEER



Orr Lions Club members Tom Antikainen and Heather Fealy prepare to deliver Thanksgiving food boxes last Wednesday. In partnership with the Orr Community Lions Foundation, Pelican Bay Foods, and other donors, the Lions Club was able to provide 10 needy families with Thanksgiving meals. The club is planning a similar project for Christmas, and also supports The Giving Cupboard food shelf at the ORR Center. submitted photo

Book club will meet via Zoom on Tuesday, Dec. 8

COOK- After a November hiatus, the Readers and Rappers book group will resume its monthly meetings by going virtual next Tuesday, Dec. 8 for a discussion of "Educated" by Tara Westover via Zoom.

Mickey Maki will moderate the 1 p.m. discussion of Westover's

2018 memoir of overcoming her survivalist Mormon family's isolation in order to go to college. Westover emphasizes the importance of education to enlarging her world in a book chosen by Amazon editors as the best of 2018.

Shawna Kishel will host the Zoom meeting.

Members should check their email prior to the meeting for an email from Kishel containing a link to the meeting. Call Kishel at 218-666-5096 with any questions about the Zoom meeting format.

The book selection for January will be "Virgil Wander" by Leif Enger.

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Ash River Trail Canister Site 11391 Ash River Trail Winter Hours Sat: 12:30pm-4:30pm	Kabetogama Lake Canister Site 10150 Gamma Rd Winter Hours Wed: noon-4pm Sat: 8am-noon	Sturgeon Canister Site 8380 Hwy 73 Hours Sun: 10am-4pm
Orr Canister Site 4038 Hwy 53 Winter Hours Tue, Thu: 9am-noon Sat: 8am-noon	Portage Canister Site 6992 Crane Lake Rd. Winter Hours Tue, Sat: 1pm-4:30pm	County 77 Canister Site 2038 County Rd. 77 Winter Hours Thurs, Sun: noon-5pm
Cook Transfer Station 2134 S. Beatty Rd. Hours Mon: 10am-6pm Tues thru Sat: 9am-3:30pm	Regional Landfill 5341 Regional Landfill Rd, Virginia Hours Mon-Fri: 8am-4:30pm Sat: 8am-3:30pm	St. Louis County Environmental Services Department 1-800-450-9278 Office hours 8-4:30 Monday through Friday www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle
Household Hazardous Waste Facilities		
5345 Regional Landfill Rd., Virginia Tue, Sat: 8am-1pm	3994 Landfill Rd, Hibbing Sat: 8am-1pm	

Winter hours effective October 1st through April 14th



VACCINE...Continued from page 1

there is light at the end of the tunnel, especially with the vaccines coming soon," she said. "We know, though, that it's not going to be a short tunnel. The vaccine supply is going to be limited for some time. It's going to take time for it to be rolled out and made available to everyone."

Meanwhile, Walz expressed concern that skepticism surrounding COVID-19 and the vaccine could dampen the vaccine's effectiveness if people choose not to take the double-dose regimen.

"I candidly would tell you I'm deeply concerned about some of the mistrust around the vaccine," he said. "I get it. We need to make sure we're putting out that good information as we're getting it there. We've gotten better at understanding what works and what doesn't. The ultimate goal here was to slow the growth of COVID until we got to a point where we had a vaccine. The challenging news is that it's coming at a time when we're exactly at the worst place in the pandemic. What happens during a series of shots spread out over two weeks for the vaccine? Are people going to get that first shot and say 'Woo hoo, I'm outta here?'"

Walz later turned a question about false

rumors on the internet about his personal worth and out-of-state travel into an opportunity to reemphasize the danger of false information about COVID-19.

"The thing I most worry about is if you're willing to believe those types of things without any proof, you're probably not going to listen to me when I tell you to wear a mask," he said. "Those type of things undermine faith in our institutions, they undermine the faith in the system. For the people who want to vote against me, you can find a million reasons that are probably true rather than resort to this. As a governor, the last thing you would ever want to do is to close a business. Your job as governor is to not do what is politically expedient, it's to do what you believe the science shows is in the best interests of protecting the health and safety and wellbeing of Minnesotans."

Emerging clarity

Efforts to bring more substance to the vaccine distribution discussion commenced on Tuesday as state Infectious Disease Division Director Kris Ehresmann explained why people should have confidence in the accelerated vaccine development process, emphasizing that no steps were eliminat-

ed from the testing and approval process for past vaccines.

Manufacturers were able to get a "jumpstart" in developing a COVID vaccine because of advances in research and technology, Ehresmann said, and portions of clinical trials happened simultaneously rather than one after another. The federal Operation Warp Speed provided the financial security for companies to begin manufacturing vaccines as soon as possible, unlike past vaccines that weren't produced until after they were approved by the FDA.

"I can say with confidence that the ways we've been efficient have not impacted vaccine safety," Ehresmann said. "Only the vaccines shown to be safe and effective will be used."

A vaccine developed by Pfizer will be reviewed for approval by the FDA on Dec. 10, and a second by Moderna is slated for review on Dec. 17.

Ehresmann said the state has its own advisory group that will review and modify the federal guidelines to best suit the state's needs, and that the vaccine will be made available to progressively wider groups through a three-phase process.

"There will not be enough vaccine initially for all who want to receive

it," Ehresmann said.

In the first phase the vaccine will not be available to the public but will be administered locally and regionally to targeted groups. The second phase will focus on broader distribution to those most vulnerable to the virus, Ehresmann said. The third phase will be widespread availability to the general public, with an emphasis on ensuring the vaccine is distributed fairly.

"We know there is a lot of excitement and people will have more questions," Ehresmann said. "It will take some time for the vaccine to be rolled out to everyone who wants it."

County updates focus on vaccine

Interest in the vaccine also was keen at Tuesday's meeting of the St. Louis County Board of Commissioners as Public Health Director Amy Westbrook presented an update.

"In northeast Minnesota we're taking a regional approach," Westbrook said. "There will be a small amount of vaccine coming to the region and we will have to prioritize in subgroups where that goes."

Commissioner Keith Nelson pressed Westbrook for a more specifics.

"When are we going

to have some definitive timelines as to vaccine availability?" he asked. "The questions out there are causing a lot of apprehension and that is something we can ill afford."

Westbrook noted many of the same things covered by Ehresmann. As for the general public? "We'll be looking for that to happen into 2021."

Nelson responded

"There's this huge debate out there whether to take the vaccine or not," he said. "As one citizen I have full trust and faith in our system. But what steps are we taking locally, because people are going to be more apt to believe the local health agencies that this is safe."

Westbrook acknowledged that there may not be "the total confidence we're looking for," and said that the state health department is planning an educational campaign but that nothing had been planned locally.

"I would encourage our public health service in St. Louis County to plan something," Nelson responded. Commissioner Patrick Boyle was less concerned about a vaccine and more worried about the current rapid rise in cases in the county.

"I feel like we're putting the cart before the horse," Boyle said. "I'm

still worried about where we're at. We still have four to five weeks of intense hospitalization and ICU stays. Where are we at with our hospital beds? What is our public health team saying to those folks when it comes to the holidays?" Westbrook echoed his concerns.

"I don't want to speak for the hospitals, but statewide and regionally they're really close to capacity," she said. "We're seeing a lot of transmission occur outside of confined settings. We won't see the effects of Thanksgiving for another week or so. I don't know what will happen for the Christmas holiday, but we're concerned. It's not a good forecast for the next couple of months."

Federal development

An advisory group to the Centers for Disease Control provided some additional direction late Tuesday when it recommended the first round of vaccines should go to frontline healthcare workers and residents and staff of long-term care facilities. CDC Director Robert Redfield and Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar will have to approve the recommendations for them to become official CDC guidance for states.

ELY...

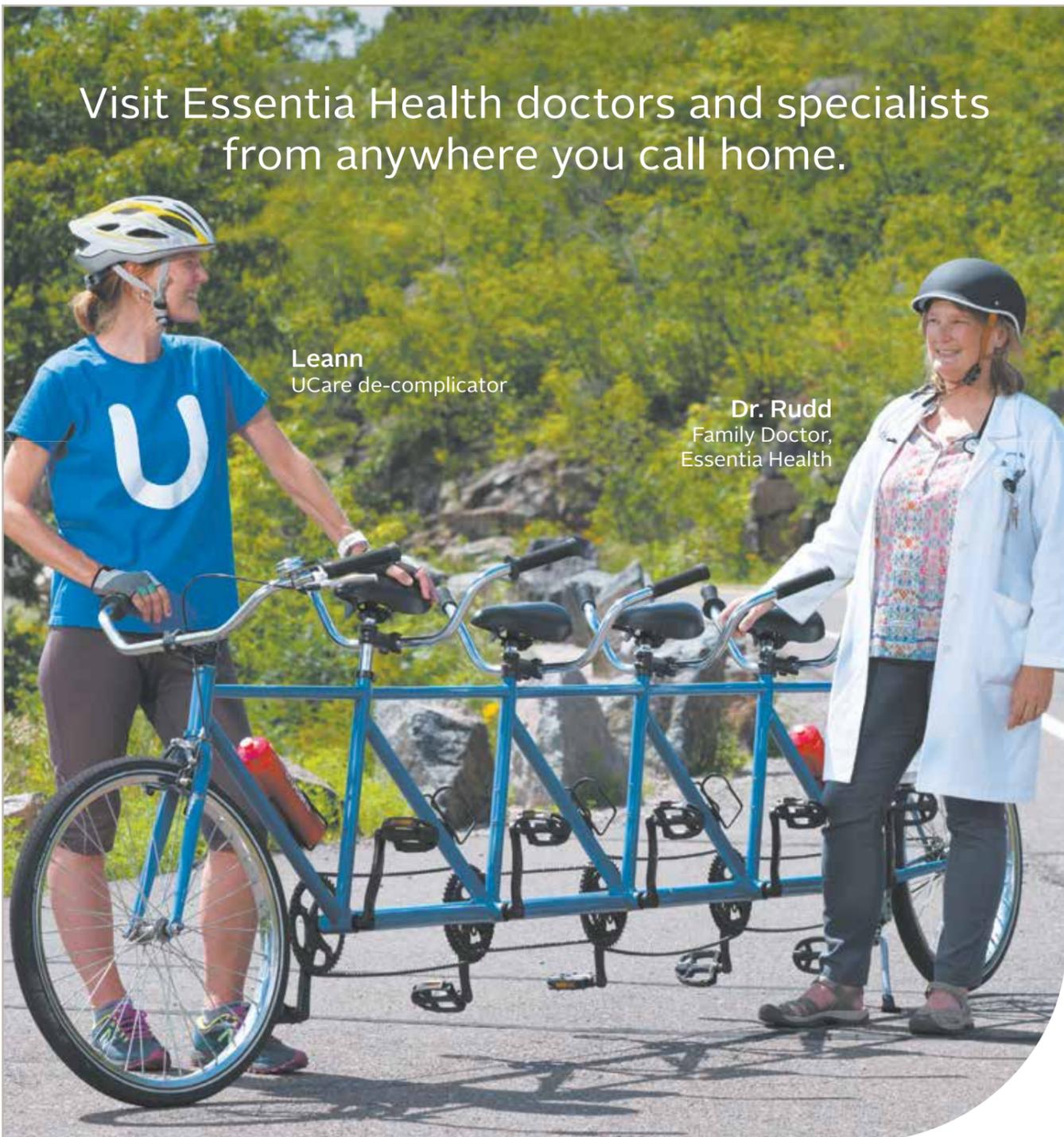
Continued from page 1

the now-former owner of the property, suggested that other Ely businesses would be part of a planned reuse of the building, but Zup's officials said there are no agreements in place, at least at this point. The McCullough Companies later backtracked on their initial statement, which named the other businesses. The *Timberjay* is not naming those businesses out of fairness to all the parties involved.

Jim Zupancich said they have spoken to other parties about a number of possibilities, but no agreements are in place. The owner of one of the businesses named in the initial press statement offered "no comment" on the release.

The new building will likely allow the Zup's Grocery in Ely to undertake a major expansion. The current store, located at 303 E Sheridan St., is 18,000 square feet, or nearly half the size of the former Shopko, located 12 blocks east at 1500 E Sheridan. The former Shopko parking lot is also substantially larger.

One Zup's official did confirm that the Ely store would relocate to the new facility, although another official indicated that a final decision on the move has not yet been made.



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CITY OF ELY

Ely approves regulations on short-term rentals

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – Vacation and short-term rentals within the city of Ely will now be regulated and licensed following city council approval on Tuesday of a long-debated ordinance.

The ordinance will allow property owners to rent their properties for a period of less than 30 days.

The ordinance has been in the works for more than two years and has gone through multiple revisions with the city's Planning and Zoning Committee and consultations with St. Louis County and the Minnesota Department of Health to incorporate their rules and regulations, according to Ely City Attorney Kelly Klun.

A split council approved a first reading of the ordinance in October with Paul Kess and Angela

Campbell voting against the measure. Kess and Campbell remained unsatisfied with the revision and amendments, but the council passed the ordinance on a 5-2 vote.

A public hearing held prior to the council meeting on Tuesday included a couple of clarification questions from the Ely Chamber of Commerce and two commercial lodging establishments. Two letters received from out-of-town property owners with investment rental properties in the city indicated objections to the ordinance.

Council member Al Forsman sought to amend a limit on the number of permits allowed in various city zoning districts, derived by the Planning and Zoning Committee from the percentage of households in the city.

He made a motion to

allow the city council to set the number of short-term permits by resolution at the beginning of each year.

"At the beginning of the year, we set our fees, like for building inspections and other permits," he said, "and this would be no different. The number of permits could be determined by how much the population increases and decreases. We can address those changes without going through the whole ordinance (amendment process) at that time." That amendment was approved unanimously.

Forsman also suggested an amendment to exclude such dwellings as rooming houses or bunkhouses maintained by a couple of wilderness outfitting businesses in the city as part of their business facilities. These establishments are already taxed, licensed, inspected

and regulated as a commercial business. That amendment was approved unanimously.

Kess repeated his objection to allowing short-term rentals in the city's residential or R-1 Zoning areas and made a motion to amend the ordinance to remove the R-1 Zoning District.

"If we allow rentals in these (residential) areas, it changes the character of the neighborhood," he said. "There is the potential for constant changeover for people who live right next door." He also mentioned public safety, traffic, noise and disturbance as other factors in his amendment, and that the short-term rental ordinance is unfair to the commercial lodging establishments in the city.

"It is difficult now in Ely to find an apartment," he said. "If we allow this to happen everywhere in the

city's R-1 districts, it will be more and more difficult to live in Ely."

Council member Ryan Callen asked what will become of the short-term rental units already established in the city's residential areas.

"Are we going to tell them they can't have them anymore?" he asked.

"So the question is: those 15 or 16 (short-term rentals) that already exist would have to shut down their operation?" Mayor Chuck Novak asked.

"Yeah. In my mind, they were never allowed to be in an R-1 district," Kess said.

Forsman objected. "(Short-term rentals) were not prohibited before."

Novak added, "If I put myself in the shoes of someone already operating one of these, I would sue the living crap out of the city if I was told I have to

shut down. We would be opening ourselves up to a lot of litigation over this."

Council member Heidi Omerza said the new ordinance "legitimizes" short-term rentals in the city. "We've talked about this for two years now. We can control the number of units in a neighborhood. We are balancing the playing field in a responsible and respectful way and taking a very balanced approach to this," she said.

Kess' amendment to exclude short-term rentals in R-1 zoning districts was rejected on a 5-2 vote. Just Kess and Campbell voted in favor of the amendment.

Following approval of a couple of clerical modifications suggested by Klun, council members approved the amended ordinance on a 5-2 vote with Kess and Campbell voting against the ordinance.

ISD 2142...Continued from page 1

the numbers are as accurate as possible, but the trend in the county since Oct. 24 is alarming. Cases per 10,000 in the northern portion of the county more than doubled from 42.7 to 89.2 on Nov. 21, the most recent date available. The countywide rate rocketed from 39.9 to 157.1 over the same time period.

While Tower-Soudan's situation was temporary, a significant number of positive COVID cases at North Woods School cropped up this past week, Engebritson said.

"Tower-Soudan has

had very few people out for quarantine and no positive cases in weeks," she said. "North Woods is seeing an increase in numbers of folks out for quarantine and positive cases. They had ten positive cases reported over the break (Thursday through Sunday). These ten were not from ten individual households. We have had one positive case reported since Monday morning."

Engebritson said that most of the positive cases have originated from contact with people in the community, including family members, rather

than at school.

"It's not always clear how the close contact became positive," she said.

Starting distance learning this week would not have given families enough notice to make the arrangements necessary to accommodate distance learning, and Engebritson said available data supports continuing in-person learning through Dec. 10.

Lessons learned when the district made the abrupt switch to distance learning this past spring will make this go-round better, Engebritson said.

Teachers have received more training on the use of online learning platforms and have had the opportunity to teach students how to access and utilize the technology they need. The district is also trying to get more internet hotspots out to families who have poor connections.

The district has distributed an online survey for parents asking who will need childcare and school meals during the two weeks of distance learning. Bus and van drivers will transport children for childcare and drop off food on Wednesdays.

Students who may need additional in-person help will be invited to come to their respective schools where staff will be available, Engebritson said.

Most of those who have been in close contact with positive COVID cases have tested negative for the disease, but current guidance requires them to quarantine for 14 days, which has put a strain on staffing across the district, Engebritson said. She is hopeful that the Centers for Disease Control will follow through with proposed changes to the

guidelines that would reduce the quarantine time to seven to ten days, which would relieve some of the burden.

And while the district is taking steps intended to bring children and staff back to school buildings on Jan. 11, Engebritson strongly encouraged students and parents to continue to follow the guidelines for mask wearing, social distancing, and gatherings, and to stay home when sick and get tested if they have symptoms or have been exposed to someone positive.

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EXCELLENCE

Reichensperger commits to play volleyball for Illinois State

Northeast Range junior is following in her mother's footsteps to full academic ride

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

TOWER—As a teenager growing up in suburban Chicago, Jodi Rogers-Reichensperger admits she wasn't all that interested in school.

"I was a horrible student," she said. "It was not something that ever interested me. College? I never even gave a thought about it."

"Then, volleyball happened."

Forced by her parents to choose between being grounded for a year or finding an extracurricular activity to be involved in, the reluctant ninth grader chose volleyball. By her senior year she was good enough to join a club team and attract the attention of college recruiters.

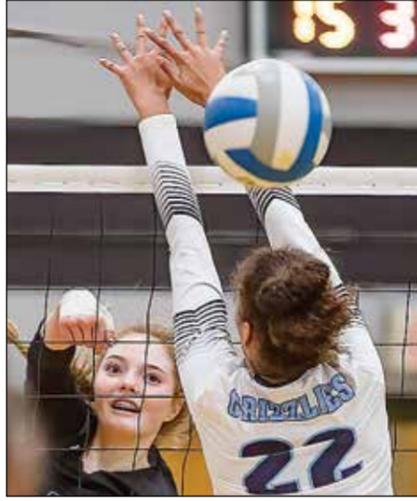
"I went to the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities and played on a full athletic scholarship for the Gophers," Jodi said.

She never went back to Chicago, and instead eventually found her way to Tower.

"I never pictured myself in a town of 500, but here I am," she laughed. "I've been here 23 years now, and it's been an amazing place to raise kids."

And now one of those kids, Northeast Range junior Hannah Reichensperger, is following in her mother's

See COMMIT...pg. 2B



Above: Reichensperger slams the ball past a North Woods defender earlier this season. Right: At home with her new Illinois State swag. submitted and file photos



FOOTBALL

Ely coach steps down

Cory Lassi to take time to raise a growing family



by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY—Memorial High School football's biggest supporter, Coach Cory Lassi, is turning in his whistle and clipboard after more than a decade on the sidelines.

"For the past 11 years, I have been blessed with the opportunity to be on the sideline as an assistant and head coach of the Ely Timberwolves football team," Lassi said in announcing his decision last week.

The 2004 Ely High School graduate was a former Timberwolf football standout, and played for Vermilion Community College for two years prior to transferring to St. Cloud State to earn his education degree.

"My first year teaching elementary school in Ely was also my first year of coaching," he said. Lassi played a key role in a

decade-long resurgence of the Ely high school football program, including state tournament appearances in 2012, 2013, and 2015. He was an assistant for eight years and stepped into the head coach position three years ago.

Lassi said he is moving on from coaching to spend more time with his family, including a daughter born just before Thanksgiving. He and his wife, Missy, also have a two-year-old son.

"During those 11 seasons, I have grown in so many ways as a teacher, a coach, and as a person," he said. "I have taken away so many wonderful relationships with former and current coaches, players, managers and families. I have been able to create memories that I will bring with me the rest of my life. As Missy and I waited for the arrival of our daughter, I can't help but to think

See LASSI...pg. 2B



The Ely High School varsity girls volleyball team were honored at the Ely State Theater last week for going undefeated, with a perfect 12-0 record, for the season. With the play-offs canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Timberwolves nonetheless relished their school record. Members of the team, McKenna Coughlin, Raven Sainio, Kate Coughlin, Katrina Seliskar, Annikka Mattson, Kellen Thomas, Courtney Eilrich, Madeline Kallberg, Rachel Coughlin, Madison Rohr and Charly Flom, gathered at the State Theater last Wednesday. photo by K. Vandervort

HUNTING

Area deer registrations finish well below last year

DNR blames tough winters, many hunters also cite wolves

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL—Those North Country hunters who failed to get their deer this year apparently had plenty of company. With final registrations now in for the 2020 firearms deer season, hunters tallied a total of 4,544 deer in the DNR's Tower work

area, which includes deer permit areas 117, 118, 119, 130, 131, 132, 176, 177, and 178.

That's down 16 percent over season totals in 2019. While a lower harvest was expected given the reduced number of antlerless permits issued by the DNR this year, the buck harvest was off as well. Hunters in the Tower work area registered 3,607 bucks this

year, compared to 4,173 last year. That's down 14 percent.

"The buck kill is the best indicator of population change over time," noted Tom Rusch, Tower DNR wildlife manager. Recent severe winters, with months of deep snow cover, have affected both winter survival of

See DEER HUNT...pg. 5B



Area Deer Harvest

Preliminary final numbers			
Year	Bucks	Antlerless	Total
2019	4,173	1,229	5,402
2020	3,607	939	4,546

Preliminary harvest totals for permit areas in northern St. Louis and Lake counties, including 117, 118, 119, 130, 131, 132, 176, 177, and 178.

COMMIT...Continued from page 1B

footsteps. A standout on her school and club teams, Hannah recently made a verbal commitment to play volleyball for Illinois State University.

But while Jodi likes to look at this as a sort of full circle situation, an Illinois girl coming to Minnesota to play college volleyball whose Minnesota daughter will be going to Illinois, their stories of how they got there are vastly dissimilar.

While Jodi was coerced to play volleyball, Hannah was literally born to it.

"Hannah was born in 2003, and her first volleyball experience was probably in utero," Jodi chuckled.

Jodi was coaching the Tower-Soudan volleyball team at the time, and Hannah was along for the ride, arriving during the season. The entire team visited Jodi and Hannah in the hospital the day after Hannah was born, and it wasn't long before they saw them again.

"She was born on a Thursday and we had a game on the following Monday," Jodi said. "That Monday I was sitting in the stands with my four-day-old child."

Hannah was of course too young to remember that, but she only needs to traipse over to Tower-Soudan Elementary for a reminder, a team picture of smiling volleyball players with a baby in the middle.

Hannah accompanied

Jodi to practices, and her earliest memories of volleyball don't involve the ball.

"I have very vivid memories of me laying on the stage in the gym as the girls are running their warm up laps and me giving them high fives," she said. "And then eating powdered doughnut holes on the bus."

The ball entered the picture when she was around four or five years old.

"I remember sitting on the bleachers, with my butt right on the edge, in almost perfect passing form with my arms out and my mom just tossing me balls and me sitting there passing and passing and passing," Hannah said.

From that point on, volleyball was just a regular part of Hannah's life.

"I've never felt pressured to play volleyball," she said. "I just grew up with it and loved watching it and learning what all of my mom's players were learning. And then in fifth grade, I started playing for our little elementary squad."

When the high school moved out of Tower, Jodi moved on to Northeast Range in Babbitt to teach and coach, and that's where Hannah went to school, too. As a seventh-grader, she quickly let everyone see that there was already something special about her game when Jodi had her fill in at the last minute

for an injured high school varsity player.

"I can't remember if we won or lost, but I know we went five games," Jodi said. "She was only allowed to play in three sets that match, but she led the team in kills and blocks."

Seventh grade was also the year Hannah tried out for Minnesota North, an off-season club team based in Duluth.

"She made the 13-1 team, which is the thirteen [year-old] national team," Jodi said. "I think that was her first taste of 'Holy cow, this is awesome!'"

"It was just another level of play that I hadn't seen before," Hannah said. "I was with girls who were also committed to the game and loved it and were really good at it. I guess I've always been very competitive and that is the level where I found the competition."

As a sixth-grader Hannah played with a seventh-grade club team in Virginia, and again over her years with Minnesota North she's skipped a level to play with more advanced players. Jodi has also been coaching for Minnesota North, and mother and daughter have helped each other with the transition back-and-forth between the high-powered, high-skill level of club ball and the more varied talents of high school volleyball.

And while Hannah has come to appreciate her talents, she's quick to

acknowledge that they're a combination of some natural ability and hard work.

"I did have skills naturally, like reading and blocking and passing," she said. "But I've played club for four years now and I've worked four years straight at improving everything that I already have."

This past year Hannah signed up with an online recruitment service where she posted videos of her playing, as well as basic personal information and statistics. A common practice in recent years, it became an essential tool for being seen by college recruiters when the COVID-19 pandemic hit last March. Minnesota North's season was canceled, which meant the only way coaches could see her perform was online.

Past exposure and current videos paid off on June 15, the first day colleges were allowed to contact potential recruits. Hannah heard from over 50 schools who were interested in her.

"It was just super exciting," Hannah said. "I guess I didn't realize just how much I had grown and how good I was at volleyball. It was reassuring, I think, because I had worked hard. I wanted to do this, and it was finally happening for me."

Not every school was an option, as COVID-related changes at the college level that automatically gave players an extra

year of eligibility also cut back on the number of scholarships they had to offer. Iowa State, one of Hannah's top choices, fell by the wayside as a result.

"They ran out of scholarships, and they hadn't been able to see me play as much as they needed to, which I definitely understood," Hannah said. "So then it was down to UMD and Illinois State, which I think is the hardest decision I've ever made. But the final decision is the best decision I've ever made."

Hannah and Jodi communicated with Illinois State Coach Leah Johnson for about a month and a half before making an unofficial visit to the campus, one in which direct contact with the coach and the team was prohibited by NCAA rules. They watched practice, the campus felt welcoming and comfortable, but Hannah found a week later that she still couldn't make a decision. A phone call with Johnson helped her get over the hump.

"We figured out what was holding me back from making a decision was just the fear of making the wrong decision," Hannah said. "And then she said, 'Let's talk next week after you think about it.' And as soon as I pressed the button to hang up, I knew that that is where I wanted to go."

Hannah is as interested in Illinois State for the academic possibilities it provides as she is in

playing volleyball.

"I'm not exactly sure what I want to do, but I'm leaning toward political science, with more of an environmental stance on it," Hannah said. "I want to do big things. Illinois State has a political science program and graduate program. We talked with the academic coordinator and she said there are so many opportunities for graduate students with Chicago being so close." Jodi admits she was pulling for Hannah to pick UMD because she would get to see her play more often.

"I'm saying, 'I want to see you play,' and she's like, 'I'm worried about my education,'" Jodi said. "That's the kind of kid she is."

However, Jodi, her husband Bob, Hannah's younger brother Greyson, and perhaps even her five older siblings will likely find a way to get to many of Hannah's matches. For one thing, Jodi's parents still live in the same house in Villa Park that she grew up in, just a couple of hours from the Illinois State campus in Normal.

"We've looked at round-trip tickets because Duluth has flights direct to Chicago now, for pretty cheap," Jodi said.

But for now, mother and daughter are happy to have both a direction for Hannah and one more season together.

DEER HUNT...Continued from page 1B

deer as well as limited the reproductive potential of female deer, according to wildlife managers. Many area hunters also put the onus on heavy predation from gray wolves as a factor in their lack of success.

Rusch noted that the buck harvest is down most sharply in permit areas on the north and east sides of the Tower work area,

reflecting the impact of deeper snow in recent years than experienced in areas to the south and west. Even so, the declines were found across the board, with lower buck registration numbers in every permit area in the Tower work zone.

Meanwhile, the antlerless harvest was down 24 percent compared to last year, most likely

reflecting the reduction in the number of antlerless permits issued this season as well as fewer deer overall.

The record-setting warm temperatures over opening weekend likely impacted hunter success, by limiting deer movements, which typically peak in early-to-mid November as part of the annual rut. Bucks are

typically highly active during that period, but they risk overheating in the kind of temperatures the area experienced opening weekend, which likely reduced their activity.

But temperatures in the 60s were quickly replaced by the fourth day of the season with sub-freezing highs and 5-9 of fresh snow around the area. The colder tempera-

tures increased daytime buck activity and provided hunters better visibility in the woods as well as tracking snow that remained for the remainder of the season.

On a statewide basis, hunters had registered 175,536 deer as of Monday, including 93,395 bucks and 82,141 antlerless deer. The latest numbers remain prelim-

inary until the DNR has an opportunity to review them for accuracy and include the additional deer harvested during the muzzleloader season, which continues into December. The department will issue final numbers on the season in February.

LASSI...Continued from page 1B

how lucky I am to have such an amazing family. The only regret that I have from my years coaching is missing out on time with my family," he said.

The Timberwolves are coming off a 2020 campaign that was initially delayed to a spring schedule, then re-instated to a late fall start because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ely ended the shortened season with a 3-2 record.

The team finished above .500 for the first time in three years, and was knocked out of the Section 7 playoffs by Bigfork. Just a couple of days later, Lassi sub-

mitted his resignation. "After days of thinking, I have decided to make a difficult but right decision for me and my family. I am resigning from my position as head coach so I can focus my attention on my beautiful, growing family," he wrote.

"My number one job right now is being here for my family and I want to make sure I am," Lassi said. "To be a head coach you have to give 100 percent of your time and effort and put everything into the program, and not just the months of August through October, but all those off-season months,

too."

Lassi did not close the door completely on coaching again.

"I'll be honest, it was hard to walk away. It left a weird feeling. And I don't think I've coached my last game," he said.



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RENEWABLE ENERGY

Solar thermal heating installed at two homes on the Vermilion Reservation

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

VERMILION RESERVATION- Three Bois Forte Band members have been trained to install solar thermal panels on residential housing as part of a larger effort to “honor the sacredness of clean water, energy, and food,” according to event organizer Dani Pieratos.

“The experience was like what I’ve been wondering about, what modern Anishinaabeg lifeways post-covid and post-carbon will look like,” said Pieratos. “Caring for our Mother Earth by using innovative technology that truly works for the greater common good, and not against, is very exciting to visioning holistic futures that fit our values.”

“Tribal sovereignty fits very well into the idea of energy sovereignty,” she said. “With localized control and accountability to our resources like food and energy, self-governance can better fit Indigenous values that care for people, the animals, and the planet as part of a whole instead of fractured decision-making.”

During a three-day session on the Vermilion

Reservation in late October, representatives from 8th Fire Solar, a tribal-owned business located near the White Earth Reservation, trained four tribal members, three of whom were from Bois Forte, to install the passive-solar heating units. Two tribal elders were chosen to have the units installed on their homes, free-of-charge. The project is now working with some potential dealers for the panels in the area and hopes those trained will be hired for area installations. The panels can be installed by contractors as long as they have some experience in HVAC work, said Pam Fairbanks, administrative assistant for 8th Fire.

A second project tentatively planned for 2021 would bring additional installations to some homes in Nett Lake.

“8th Fire Solar wrote Bois Forte into another grant to afford the solar thermal panel install and training,” said Pieratos. “We’re connecting with others at White Earth since they’re working on a large solar project for their tribal government that Bois Forte could model for their tribal service buildings.”

Fairbanks said their business was ready to take off last winter, right when

the pandemic shut things down. After a very slow spring and summer, she said, business has finally improved. The panels are manufactured at their plant near the White Earth Reservation.

“It took us a while to get all the materials we needed to build them,” said Fairbanks. “They use special glass that we couldn’t find. We finally found a company in Duluth that could manufacture the glass in the size we needed to make.”

Fairbanks said the goals of their company are many. They are working to make homes more energy-efficient using renewable energy, they are providing manufacturing jobs, and they are training people, especially tribal members, to become installers. More installation trainings are planned next year, including one in Nett Lake.

The panels are mounted on the south-facing walls of a home or garage. They are built from a special type of glass that maximizes the amount of heat generated as sunlight hits the black panels. The heated air is then vented into a home, reducing heating costs by an average of 20- to 25-percent, according to

8th Fire Solar. The panels rely on the innovative solar furnace systems developed by RREAL (Rural Renewable Energy Alliance). A thermostatically-controlled fan blows the collected air heat into the house during the day and automatically closes the dampers to keep the cold out at night or when the sun isn’t shining. The specially-designed system creates airtight, seamless connection between the panels and house. The units are designed to enable uniform air distribution, flexible installation, and maximum heat capture. 8th Fire says their panels are the most efficient and economical high-performance solar air heating panels in the country.

Bois Forte Elder Tracey Dagen said the two panels installed on her home have made a big difference already.

“When the sun is shining, they produce lots of heat,” she said, “And yesterday it was cloudy, and they were still throwing off heat.”

The cost to operate the system is about \$20 per year for the electricity needed to run the fans, Fairbanks said. The fans are adjustable, so a homeowner can regulate how much heat they want



A team works to install solar panels on a Vermilion Reservation elder's home, free of charge. submitted photo

blown into their house. The internal venting can be directed to specific areas of the house, so they can help heat a larger living area or be directed into smaller bedrooms. The units can also be installed on a garage wall, to heat the garage interior. They have also been installed on greenhouse high tunnels, to extend the growing season. The units are expected to last at least 20 years. A single panel costs about \$2,500 plus installation costs, Fairbanks said.

The panels are not suitable for all locations. Homes must have a south-facing wall that

receives enough sunlight, so part of the training involved learning how to use meters to test the solar potential of a site.

The training project was made possible by funding from the North West Area Foundation and the Minnesota Department of Commerce. Locally, the project was organized with help from Bois Forte Food Sovereignty and Sustainability Group and the Rutabaga Project. You can learn more about 8th Fire Solar online at 8thfiresolar.org, email info@8thfiresolar.org, or on facebook.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Kishel buys former Tower car dealership

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

Plans for businesses, apartments in the works

TOWER— One of Tower’s most blighted Main Street commercial properties has a new owner and the changes at the site are already apparent. Miranda Kishel, a motivated young developer, has acquired the building long owned by Ron Abrahamson Sr., with plans to establish new business ventures there and possibly complete the construction of as many as five apartments in the building’s upstairs.

The building, originally built back in 1927, was once a Dodge dealership, and later housed a used car lot known as Classy Cars. In 1999, Abrahamson

attempted to convert the site to a gas station and added a second story to the building, but never completed the work or opened for business. Since then, the site had been used mostly to store Abrahamson’s accumulation of old cars, boats, and assorted junk. Abrahamson had received a blight notice this past summer, but city officials delayed action on the blight after learning that a sale of the property was potentially in the works.

As part of the sale of the property, Abrahamson’s children had agreed to clear out the vehicles and boats. They also

auctioned off years of accumulated stuff that had packed the inside of the building for decades and removed the filling station canopy that Abrahamson had installed as part of his aborted venture to open the station.

“They did a great job of cleaning the place up,” said Kishel, who officially became owner of the property on Nov. 27.

Kishel acknowledges that renovating the 8,000 square-foot building is a daunting undertaking, but it’s one that she plans to take on in phases. In the first phase, she expects to develop a space for a healthy and

bulk foods store, which would include a commercial kitchen, and another that will serve as a co-working space for those with home-based businesses who need more reliable internet and some of the other amenities of a standard office, such as a professional conference room and an answering service. She plans to create a third space on the ground floor, which is still available for rental.

Kishel said she is still trying to determine whether to finish off the second story for apartments or a commercial use. She estimates she could easily fit five

apartments on the second story, which remains a mostly-unfinished open space with numerous large windows. “It’s a massive space upstairs and it’s a blank canvas right now,” said Kishel.

Right now, Kishel said she’s finalizing floor plans for the ground level and hopes to begin actual construction as early as January.

The work won’t be limited to the inside, however. “We plan to modernize, but to do so in keeping with the town, similar to the credit union. Hopefully some timber beams with woodsy colored siding,” Kishel said.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Classrooms close as COVID cases rise

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

Healthcare stressed as Thanksgiving aftermath looms

REGIONAL- Ely schools have switched to distance learning and ISD 2142 schools will follow suit as a key indicator of COVID-19 case rates for schools shot through the roof last week amid continuing unchecked spread of the coronavirus throughout the region.

Biweekly case rates in northern St. Louis County have suggested a switch to distance learning was in order for the past several weeks. Based on state guidance, case rates above 50 per 10,000 population should prompt a switch to distance learning. The region surpassed that threshold in late October and jumped further, to 89.2 as of Nov. 21.

Ely announced its switch to distance learning before Thanksgiving and on Tuesday, ISD 2142

Superintendent Reggie Engebretson announced that North Woods School, Tower-Soudan Elementary, and the other district schools would follow suit, beginning on Dec. 14. (see related articles)

The moves come as the region’s communities experienced more big jumps in positive COVID-19 cases in the week prior to Thanksgiving. Per zip code area data, Ely had 24 new cases identified, moving from 99 to 123 total cases. Tower’s total case count jumped by 14 to 62 overall. Other increases and total case counts include Cook, nine new and 67 overall; Orr, eight new and 61 overall; Embarrass, five new and 53 overall; and Soudan, one new and seven overall. In total, 51 new cases were

reported in the region last week.

The county crossed a new milestone this week with a total of 9,088 cases reported since the start of the pandemic, including 112 deaths.

Data obtained on Tuesday from a new Response Capacity dashboard created by the Minnesota Department of Health reveals that northeast Minnesota hospitals may be hard pressed to deal with an anticipated influx of new cases after the Thanksgiving holiday. Health officials expect an increase in positive COVID-19 tests within two weeks of the holiday, and a surge in hospitalizations typically follows within two more weeks.

As of Nov. 30, 89 out of 102 available ICU beds in northeastern Minnesota

were filled and 50, or more than half of those patients, were diagnosed with COVID-19. Non-ICU hospital beds are also filling up, with 613 of 689 available beds occupied, 130 by COVID-19 patients. In St. Louis County, 203 newly hospitalized patients were admitted in November, more patients in one month than in the prior seven months combined.

State Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm reinforced on Monday that the rapid growth of the pandemic in recent weeks is at crisis levels.

“This virus is in every single county in every corner of our state,” Malcolm said. “More than a third of Minnesota counties have had case rates over 100 – ten is the high-risk threshold. We

went over the 300,000 case mark this past weekend and sadly it looks like we’ll get to 400,000 in the next couple of weeks. The number of people being admitted to hospitals since mid-October has tripled. Weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions reached a new high.”

Malcolm said that lack of available staff is compromising the health-care system’s capacity to respond to the recent surge. “The concern has shifted from physical capacity to the ability of the health systems and hospitals to staff the beds,” Malcolm said.

Strained capacity will likely be pushed to the limits in upcoming weeks as the impact of Thanksgiving holiday gatherings is increasingly felt, Malcolm said.

Malcolm noted that while cases in long-term care facilities had stabilized for a time, they’re on the rise again, fueled by cases among both staff and residents. The state has mobilized resources to assist facilities that are short-staffed due to positive COVID-19 cases and mandatory quarantines for staff who have been exposed to the virus but haven’t tested positive.

“We’re working with 56 facilities currently that have staffing needs,” Malcolm said.

Ely Carefree Living and Boundary Waters Care Center of Ely were on last week’s list of facilities reporting at least one positive COVID-19 case among staff or residents within the past 28 days.

Revised Ely school plans reviewed

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – Recent meetings of the ISD 696 facilities committee with the architect and construction manager resulted in the release of revised plans that offer more detail of the \$20 million building project.

Schoolboardmembers recently reviewed detailed plans of the new structure that will link the Memorial and Washington buildings and provide a secure entrance along with centralized district and school offices. The centerpiece of the project will also feature a new gymnasium, cafeteria, updated kitchen, media center, commons area, industrial arts and music classrooms.

Representatives of Architectural Resources, Inc. and Kraus Anderson have visited the Ely school campus several times in recent weeks, according to Superintendent Erik Erie, to solicit input from teachers and staff. Modifications to original plans continue to evolve. “A special kitchen consultant meeting resulted in that area being nailed down and we looked at the office areas and made some changes,” he said.

Erie noted that the district and high school offices are now located on the east side of the new linked structure, and the school media center is located closer to the Washington building.

“More bathrooms

and a janitor room are now located near the (industrial arts) shop, and we added a tool room,” Erie told school board members. “There will also be a mezzanine area above the industrial arts area. And that will also provide access to the air handler units and the roof. We also want to bring in more natural light to the (commons) area.”

Erie also described the secured entrance and access to the school building. “All access will be controlled for safe school access. Even the doors into the offices will be locked and we can ‘buzz’ people in,” he said. “We are making sure the building is secure, including the offices.”

Early childhood education spaces will be housed in the current Kindergarten classrooms. Those classrooms will be re-located to the west side of the Washington building.

Facility designers were scheduled to be on campus on Dec. 3 to present final numbers on the amount left to spend on the project after the architects and construction managers are paid for their services, Erie said. “We are asking for a budget and what we can do with what we actually have to spend,” he said.

He noted that re-locating the large propane tank from the campus front yard to the arena parking lot was not part of the original plan. “We have to



know how much that will cost and what the trade-off might be,” Erie said. Last month the facility committee released plans for a new student and visitor drop-off area that indicated the re-location of the propane tank.

School facilities director Tim Leeson reported that the Memorial building roof replacement project may happen this winter yet, depending on the weather.

“I’m pretty content with where we’re at with this plan so far,” said 6-12 Principal Megan Anderson. “I think this is the best of what we’ve seen so far.”

The new gymnasium

that will provide more space for physical education classes, and with limited seating, will help with adding more practice space and middle school and junior varsity events. A large glass window on one side will serve as a viewing area, according to Erie.

Outgoing school board member James Pointer objected to counseling areas being located next to the media center and not providing enough privacy, and he also voiced frustration with the band and choir areas not in adjacent locations. “Are we getting rid of choir?” he asked.

“No, we are not getting

rid of choir,” Erie assured him. “Choir will be located on the second floor of the Memorial building not far from where it is now, and near the current (high school) media center.”

Erie also noted that the school counselor is mostly involved with guidance duties, and is more conducive to being near the media center. “We are in a different era now. You want the counselor near the media center. We have private conference rooms when required,” he said.

The project remains on schedule to bid in February. Work is expected to begin in the spring with completion slated for the beginning of the 2022-

2023 school year.

ISD 696 voters approved a \$10 million bond referendum in August to help fund the project. The Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation also awarded the school district with a \$7 million grant.

Schoolboardmembers are also considering a transition to a full-time Payroll and Benefits Coordinator position and are studying a proposed job description and salary schedule. The position would be classified as confidential/supervisory, and could pay as much as \$60,000 per year. They will likely approve the staffing change at the Dec. 14 board meeting.



Memories of the Early Days

A fascinating look back at the early history of the Lake Vermilion area

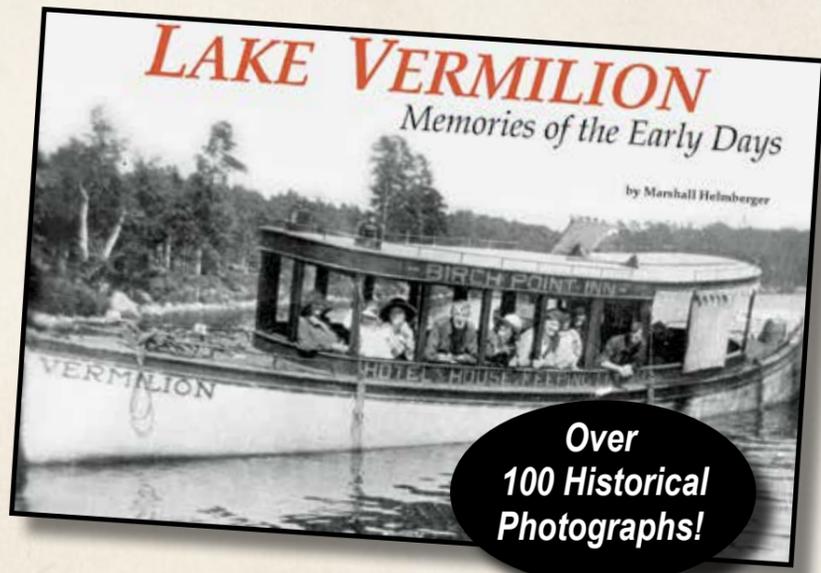
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ely renews contract for economic advisor

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

John Fedo will continue duties for at least two more years

ELY — The city's economic advisor is doing more than just economic development these days.

Members of the Ely Economic Development Authority discussed John Fedo's expanded St. Paul lobbying duties on the city's behalf, and recent successful grant-writing efforts in voting to approve a two-year contract renewal that will continue to pay him \$4,000 a month in 2021 and 2022.

Ely city council members, acting as members of the economic authority, voted 6-1, on a motion from Mayor Chuck Novak and support from authority member Al Forsman, to renew Fedo's contract.

Authority member Jerome Debeltz said he appreciates Fedo's efforts to help with economic

development for the city. "I hope we can keep going. Under your influence we've gotten a lot of jobs created here and that makes a big difference in our community."

Novak said as he lobbies on behalf of the city at the state capital, he appreciates being accompanied by Fedo "who has lots of contacts and long-standing relationships. His experience as a former mayor of Duluth really helps a lot."

Novak continued, "The value we get with Mr. Fedo here is a lot greater than what we're paying him."

Authority member Angela Campbell did not agree that Fedo's efforts are worth the money and voted against the motion.

Campbell read from a prepared script, "I can't

support another two-year \$96,000 binding contract. The Ely economy is experiencing businesses closing and layoffs of employees during the COVID pandemic. There is no certainty when the businesses will be back to normal. Many taxpayers are burdened with setbacks. I just can't justify the \$96,000. We, as good stewards of the city's moneys, must be accountable to our citizens. It is the taxpayers' money and the rent from our city buildings rents that are paying Mr. Fedo's salary. I just think it is really tough right now."

Forsman said he supports Fedo's economic development efforts and suggested that the pandemic may offer more incentive to continue to utilize the economic advisor. "It's kind of like advertising. When

times are tough, you don't pull your advertising funds away. You have to invest in your advertising and get your face out there so people know what you are trying to do and accomplish," he said. "I think we need someone to get out there and support our businesses when we need it most."

Novak added, "Looking at cost versus benefit is a good rule of thumb. We work as a team." He noted that Fedo was instrumental in gaining grant funds for the 17th Avenue projects and business park expansion. "I don't have a problem investing," he said.

EEDA president Heidi Omerza said Ely's economic development efforts "improved dramatically" since the days of "trying to piecemeal something together" with volunteers.

"I've been to a lot of places round the state," Omerza continued. "They always know who John Fedo is. They know his reputation and they say he's top notch. He will get the job done for us. That's enough for me. Without him, I don't want to know what Ely will look like two years from now."

COVID business assistance

EEDA members voted to issue forgivable loans to four local businesses. The program, dubbed the City of Ely COVID Assistance Program, is funded through a partnership with the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation and is a direct response to the economic downturn created by the coronavirus pandemic.

Local businesses, Land O' Lakes Insurance, The Pebble Spa, and Dirty Dog Manufacturing (Hand Done T-Shirts), will be adding two full-time positions and receive \$22,000. Voltz Technologies will add one new full-time position and receive \$11,000.

The loans will be forgiven, according to Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski, as long as the employees are paid \$15 per hour and stay on the business payroll for at least two years. The program was funded largely by a \$125,000 grant from IRRR and a \$30,000 match from the city of Ely.

"This program is focused specifically on adding new employees and at the same time seeing business improve themselves," Fedo said.

Tower Economic Development Authority funds available

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER — The Tower Economic Development Authority has money to lend to businesses in the city.

The funds will be available for a wide range of uses by businesses, including business acquisition and working capital, making

the program different from the city's longstanding commercial rehabilitation or storefront program, which was largely limited to facility improvements.

Once the loan funds are distributed and repaid, they will become part of a revolving loan program managed by TEDA. The low-interest loans

are funded through the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation's COVID-19 community relief program. The IRRR issued a total of \$2 million in grant funds to area cities and economic development authorities for the program. TEDA currently has about \$70,000 avail-

able for lending under the program. Funds must be lent out by June 30, 2021.

"We're encouraging businesses in Tower to contact TEDA as soon as possible if they need assistance as they address the uncertainties posed by the current pandemic," said TEDA executive director Marshall Helmberger. "If

TEDA hasn't lent these funds out by next June, we risk losing the money. We'd rather see the funds help our local businesses sustain themselves during these challenging times."

The program will require a 1:3 match from participating business, meaning that the business will need to provide at

least one dollar in private investment for every three dollars in loan funding. Loan guidelines and an application form are available on TEDA's new website, at cityoftower.com/veda. The guidelines and loan applications are accessible under the Incentives portion of the website.

BREITUNG TOWNSHIP

Some McKinley Park camping rates to increase next year

by STEPHANIE UKKOLA
Staff Writer

BREITUNG — Some campers at McKinley Park will see rate increases next summer despite a very financially successful 2020 season.

At the Breitung Town Board's Nov. 24 meeting, campground manager Susie Chiabotti recommended keeping rates the same across the board, but Chairman Tim Tomsich said that projects at the campground required the rates to increase. The rest of the board voted in favor

of increases.

Three docks at the park are degrading and will be replaced this upcoming summer at an estimated cost of \$15,000. The board also noted past costs for a culvert, gravel work, a new pump and new benches. Maintenance director Tom Gorsma mentioned that the playground will also need to be replaced in the future.

Seasonal rates will be raised from \$2,800 to \$3,000. Winter storage rates will increase from \$500 to \$600. Monthly with electric rates will increase from \$950 to

\$975 and monthly without electric will increase from \$625 to \$650. Boat launch prices will also rise from \$8 to \$10 each time and from \$60 to \$70 for seasonal launch passes.

Revenue at the park was up \$7,085 from 2019, bringing in \$165,626 in total. Chiabotti said the park's expenses, such as garbage and electric, also increased. Chiabotti thanked the board and township employees for their support at the park and the board in turn complimented her on her management of and cus-

tomers service at the park.

Skating rink

The skating rink was leveled by CW Dirt Works and had a fabric and plastic lining installed and new doors built by Luke Poderzay. The rink has had ongoing problems with water used to flood the rink draining and poor-quality ice. The construction crew said they found an 18-inch hole, four feet deep. The entire project cost about \$8,000.

The rink will be open this winter but the warming shack will not be. Skaters

will have to warm up in personal vehicles and change into skates outside. Rink attendants will still be on-site and social distancing rules will apply.

In other news, the board:

► Heard from maintenance director Tom Gorsma that new maintenance assistant Keith Mattila is doing well. One condition of Mattila's 60-day probationary period was to attain an air-break endorsement on his CDL. The board waived the condition on the advisement of Gorsma,

who said there had been difficulty scheduling the driving test due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

► Heard from Officer Dan Nylund who reported that he's received many donations for Shop with a Cop, a program where the Breitung Police take local children shopping for Christmas gifts. "We're doing good, the community really stepped up," he said. To make a donation, send a check to Breitung Police at PO Box 6, Soudan, MN 55782 and note that the money is for Shop with a Cop.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Tower man charged in Ely liquor store break-in

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY — A 20-year-old Tower man faces a felony burglary charge following a Nov. 21 incident at Lakeshore Liquor, 438 E. Sheridan St.

William Allen Taylor Laitinen was charged with burglary in the third degree

after he was taken into custody while still in the business at approximately 8 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 21, according to a complaint filed in St. Louis County 6th Judicial District by the Ely Police Department.

Law enforcement was dispatched to the scene after the store's owner, Eric St. Martin, reported a

broken window at his business. St. Martin appeared to have disrupted the burglary attempt.

"The guy was still inside," St. Martin told the *Timberjay*. "He had his shoes and socks off and was just sitting in there."

He estimated the damage to the building and inventory totaled about

\$2,000.

Police said Laitinen allegedly threw a rock through a door window, entered the building and put as many as ten bottles of alcohol, ten packs of cigarettes, six packs of rolling paper, six rolls of pennies, two rolls of nickels, three rolls of quarters, and four blue lighters into a back-

pack.

Police found Laitinen inside the building. He was arrested without incident.

The suspect agreed to speak to police, according to the complaint, and admitted that he went into the store to "grab one or two bottles of liquor so he could get drunk with his girlfriend." Laitinen admit-

ted to taking the bottles of alcohol and packs of cigarettes, and said he "took coins to do laundry."

The burglary charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in jail and a \$10,000 fine.

MINING

Feds greenlight Cleveland-Cliffs acquisition of ArcelorMittal USA

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — The Federal Trade Commission has given the green light to the acquisition of ArcelorMittal USA by Cleveland-Cliffs Inc. The FTC's Bureau of Competition alerted the company this week in a notice of early termination of the waiting period for mergers of major players

in a single industry. The federal government has oversight over such mergers and acquisitions to head off undue market influence as a result of too little competition.

This clearance represents the most significant milestone toward the completion of this transaction and re-affirms the anticipated closing of the deal in December 2020, according to a statement issued by

Cleveland-Cliffs.

"We are pleased that the federal antitrust authorities have cleared our transaction ahead of schedule," said Lourenco Goncalves, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer. "With that, we have a clear path toward closing this transaction next month, as planned. We look forward to realizing the benefits of operating these assets under Cleveland-Cliffs and are

excited with the significant optimization potential that will come from the integration with our current footprint."

As a result of the pending acquisition, Cleveland-Cliffs would become the largest flat-rolled steel producer in North America, said Goncalves. "We pledge to take great care of our expanded workforce and to support manufacturing

in our country, through the safe and environmentally friendly production of steel. More than ever, we are ready for a great future for Cleveland-Cliffs and our people."

The completion of the transaction remains subject to other customary closing approvals and conditions, all of which the company expects to settle before the completion of the transaction.

Cleveland-Cliffs has, until now, been focused almost exclusively on the mining and production of iron ore, operating both the Northshore and United Taconite mines on the Iron Range. ArcelorMittal currently operates the Inland Steel mine in Virginia in addition to operating 24 other mines and steel-making facilities around the country, employing approximately 18,000 workers.

THE ECONOMY

Business success takes thorough planning

Bear Island Surveying completes change of ownership

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY - Bear Island Surveying, an Ely-based land surveying company that was recently purchased by two of its employees, took advantage of services of the Northland Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for a successful transition.

New owners Jen Zgonc and Mark Crenshaw said SBDC facilitated the transfer of ownership by assisting them with business plan development, financial analysis and projections, financing scenarios and business valuation.

“Determining the value of the existing business and identifying a fair purchase price was the most important piece of the puzzle,” Zgonc said. “The fee to hire out that service can often be very high. Betsy Olivanti at SBDC, free of charge, completed for us a rule-of-thumb valuation through financial analysis and then helped us determine what purchase price the cash flow projections would support. This allowed us to negotiate a reasonable purchase price with the owner.”

Bear Island Surveying was originally founded in 1960 as Zenith Surveying. Over the past 60 years, the company had a couple of owners and name changes until becoming Bear Island in 1996 under the ownership of Bruce ‘Charlie’ and Gail ‘Sue’ Chernak. When the Chernaks expressed an interest in selling the business, Zgonc and Crenshaw seized the opportunity to become

owners of a company they had both been employed at for many years.

Under the new ownership, Bear Island continues to provide property boundary surveys, site plans, topographic surveys, FEMA floodplain surveys, platted subdivisions, condominium surveys, lot splits, ALTA surveys, easements, wetland delineation and legal descriptions. Clients include private land owners, commercial businesses such as Minnesota Power and Lake Country Power, and governmental agencies like United States Forest Service and Saint Louis County.

Zgonc is an Ely native who graduated from University of Minnesota Duluth and has been employed at Bear Island for more than three years. Crenshaw was raised in Pine River and moved to Ely to take a job with Bear Island 14 years ago. They are now business partners



New owners Jen Zgonc and Mark Crenshaw, on right, with previous owners Charlie and Sue Chernak.

and employ two full-time and two part-time employees in their downtown Ely location.

“The company is growing strong. Our services have been in high demand through the COVID-19 pandemic, in part due to the low mortgage rates,” Crenshaw said. “We are continuing the tradition of being a locally-owned business and working with

the people and organizations in northeastern Minnesota.”

For Development Partnership grant information email Whitney Ridlon or call her at 218-735-3004. For SBDC business consulting services email Betsy Olivanti or call her at 218-228-8552, ext. 102.

Editor’s Note:

A recent issue of *The Ranger*, a publication of

the state Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation, featured Ely business Bear Island Surveying that used business planning services by the Northland Small Business Development Center for a successful change of ownership.

CIVIL UNREST

Fed warrant highlights right-wing connection to George Floyd unrest

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — Months after civil unrest in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd rocked Minneapolis, law enforcement officials are beginning to reveal the extent to which outside agitators may have contributed significantly to some of the estimated \$500 million in damage to portions of the city’s Lake Street commercial district.

The most recent glimpse into the unrest is found as part of a newly released federal arrest warrant that charges a Texas man, Ivan Hunter, with involvement in the destruction of the Third Precinct office of the Minneapolis police. A months-long investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation has pieced together the involvement of members of a right-wing sect calling themselves the “Boogaloo Bois,” which the FBI describes as a “loosely-connected group of individuals espousing violent anti-government sentiments.”

According to an affidavit from FBI Special Agent Jason Bujold, the term “Boogaloo” refers to the group’s belief in an impending second civil war in the U.S., which its members hope to foment.

By tracking social media posts and through the use of informants, the FBI was able to demonstrate how members of the Boogaloo Bois coordinated their activities in an apparent attempt to inflame protests against the killing of George Floyd, an African-American man, by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin back in May.

Hunter was in contact with a Minnesota organizer of the Boogaloo Bois, Michael Solomon, who posted on Facebook on May 26, asking for group members to contact

him if they were enroute to Minneapolis. Hunter responded to Solomon’s request, posting “72 hours out” and “can you give me any confirmation of KIAs?” KIA is most commonly an acronym for “killed in action.”

A North Carolina man, Benjamin Teeter, responded as well. “Lock and load boys. Boog flags are in the air, and the national network is going off.”

The next day, on May 27, Hunter gave Solomon an update. “We’re still in route. Once we arrive we’re going to get a central command established and primary and secondary comms channels.”

On May 28, as Hunter arrived in Minnesota, he informed Solomon he was with a team of five individuals. Subsequent messages confirm that the individuals planned to meet at a Cub Foods next to the Third Precinct office. That same night, at 10:04 p.m., a security video shows two men walking into the precinct office with Molotov cocktails. Two individuals have been charged with that apparent arson, but investigators, as yet, have no evidence of their connection to the Boogaloo Bois.

Police do have evidence that Hunter was present outside the office, however, and that he fired 13 rounds from an AK-47-style rifle through the glass doors and windows of the precinct office, while other individuals were inside. Clothes, particularly an unusual skull face mask, worn by the shooter are similar to items seen being worn by Hunter. Police recovered shell casings consistent with an AK-47 rifle outside the Third Precinct office the following day.

Hunter returned to Texas the day after the shooting. Two days later, on May 30, he posted on Facebook: “I set fire

to that precinct with the black community.” He subsequently clarified that he was referring to the Minneapolis Third Precinct office.

Just three days later, investigators say Hunter was present at a George Floyd protest in Austin, Texas, where police stopped Hunter for traffic violations. During the stop, police observed that he was in possession of an AK-47 style rifle, two AR-15 rifles, and numerous clips. Texas police officers report that Hunter acknowledged being a “leader” in the Boogaloo Bois in south Texas and that he had been present in Minneapolis when the Third Precinct was set on fire.

Hells Angels member may have sparked wave of arson

The arrest warrant for Hunter comes about two and a half months after Minnesota investigators linked the man who torched the AutoZone store on Lake Street to the Minnesota chapter of the Hells Angels, who “wanted to sow discord and racial unrest,” by sparking looting and arson, which perpetrators hoped to blame on Antifa, a left-leaning movement named for its expressed opposition to fascism. On May 27, two days after Floyd’s killing, the 32-year old suspect spray

painted the door of the AutoZone store, suggesting that everything in the store was “free.”

Security video then shows him, dressed all in black, breaking out plate glass windows to the store with a sledgehammer. The account of the incident was contained as part of an affidavit connected to a search warrant and was first reported by the *Star Tribune*.

The incident at the AutoZone was the first major case of arson and looting, and police investigators say it appeared to spark a wave of similar destruction that all but destroyed a large portion of the Lake Street commercial district before spreading to other parts of the city. Up until that point, protests of the Floyd killing had been largely peaceful, according to media reports.

The destruction became a major fault line in political campaigns across the country, including in northeastern Minnesota. President Trump repeatedly blamed the destruction on members of Antifa. According to numerous media reports, including an exhaustive analysis by the Associated Press, no one with any apparent connection to Antifa has been charged in connection with violence in Minnesota during the Floyd protests.

THE LEGISLATURE

Ecklund to chair new, expanded House committee

REGIONAL — District 3A Rep. Rob Ecklund, DFL-International Falls, has been appointed to chair the new Labor, Industry, Veterans and Military Affairs Finance and Policy Committee in the Minnesota House. The appointment, by House Speaker Melissa Hortman, follows Ecklund’s re-election to a fourth term representing the sprawling northern Minnesota district.

“I’m excited to take on this new role to help working people, small business owners, and those who’ve served our nation have the opportunity to succeed,” Rep. Ecklund said. “With Minnesotans facing a variety of challenges,

our committee will do everything we can to help people get through these tough times. I thank Speaker Hortman for the opportunity.”

Rep. Ecklund, a retired member of the United Steelworkers and a Marine Corps veteran, currently chairs the House Veterans and Military Affairs Finance & Policy Committee. With the expanded committee jurisdiction, Rep. Ecklund will focus on protecting workers, creating new good-paying job opportunities, building a climate for businesses to grow, and removing barriers for military veterans.

The 2021 legislative session convenes on January 5.



Rob Ecklund

Ecklund calls for more aid to businesses, workers

REGIONAL — Rep. Rob Ecklund, DFL-International Falls, is calling for urgent economic aid to workers and small businesses in Minnesota. Ecklund’s call for state economic support comes in the wake of this week’s budget forecast by Minnesota Management and Budget projecting a \$641 million surplus for the current budget cycle.

That same forecast points to a \$1.273 billion deficit for the 2022-2023 biennium, which begins July 1 of next year. The forecast suggests an improved budget picture over previous budget forecasts, which had foreseen a greater economic impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous federal and state fiscal stimulus had helped to mitigate some of the economic impacts of the pandemic. Most of those stimulus measures have now run out, just as many business-

es are facing additional restrictions due to the spike in COVID-19 cases.

With the improved budget outlook, Ecklund said it’s time to provide more economic aid.

“Workers, families, and small business owners continue to experience an economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Ecklund. “To make sure folks can make it through these tough times, we need to pass a relief package, and we need to do it soon. I’m hopeful we can reach a compromise on this critical aid in the very near future.”

On Nov. 24, House DFLers and Gov. Walz announced a new plan, which includes direct aid to small businesses, an eviction moratorium, a 13-week unemployment extension, and emergency \$500 payments to struggling families.

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Community Notices

Are you looking for affordable housing?

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER— Are you interested in owning your own affordable home in Tower? The Tower Economic Development is looking for a family interested in partnering with the North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity to build a new home on property located on S Second St. in Tower.

Habitat for Humanity is an international organization that helps make home ownership possible by partnering with volunteers and other agencies to provide affordable housing for individuals or families. The North St. Louis County Habitat for

Humanity (NSLCHF) serves 14 communities in the North Country, including Babbitt, Cook, Ely, Embarrass, Tower, and Soudan. Prospective families for a Habitat home are expected to invest at least 200 hours of volunteer time, or "sweat equity," into building their own home or other Habitat homes in the region.

The prospective homeowners must also have the ability to repay a very affordable 30-year mortgage.

Anyone who meets the qualifications may be considered for a Habitat for Humanity home without regard for their race, religion, age, gender, or political views.

If you would like to be

considered, you can request an application by emailing habitat@nslchf.org with the subject title Application Request. You can also stop by their office located at 5558 Enterprise Dr. NE in Virginia. The office is open from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday. You can also download an application from their website at www.nslchf.org/how-to-apply. You can also contact TEDA Executive Director Marshall Helmeberger for assistance at 218-750-2510 or at teda@cityoftower.com.

Ely Joint Powers legislative meeting canceled

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – The annual Ely Community Economic Development Joint Powers Board legislative meeting scheduled for Monday, Dec. 7 at the Grand Ely Lodge has been called off due to renewed public health restrictions from the coronavirus pandemic.

"Because of the new health restrictions, the GEL called and said they could not accommodate us," Ely Mayor Chuck Novak said late last month.

Gov. Tim Walz recently reinstated several restrictions

on public gatherings because of dramatically increasing cases of COVID-19, including bans on indoor dining. The new limits made the gathering of 50-plus people for the annual lunch meeting an impossibility.

State Senator Tom Bakk, who recently bolted from the DFL to form an independent caucus, had committed to the local event and was poised to explain how his actions could help the North Country. State Rep. Rob Ecklund, aides to U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith and Rep. Pete Stauber were also scheduled to attend.

The annual gatherings typically bring many lively discussions on topics important to the Ely economic development picture, including the debate over sulfide mining and environmental protections in the nearby Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness watersheds.

"I don't know if we can reschedule our meeting," Novak said. "We might just try again next year."

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Recede
- 4 Petrol
- 7 Potato
- 11 Settled down
- 13 Mischief-maker
- 14 Cautious
- 15 "Bye"
- 16 Neither partner
- 17 Rice or Tyler
- 18 Ledge
- 20 Dispatch
- 22 Mary – cosmetics
- 24 Half a wet-weather pair
- 28 Game like pinochle
- 32 Hoosier
- 33 Valhalla VIP
- 34 Dog's foot
- 36 Burrito cousin
- 37 Fifth-day Christmas gift
- 39 Paraphrase
- 41 Impressionist?
- 43 Feathery neckpiece
- 44 List-ending abbr.
- 46 It brings out the kid in you
- 50 Coffee
- 53 Run-down horse
- 55 Stead
- 56 Need for
- 41-Across

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59					60					61		

- 9 Samovar
- 10 Coloring agent
- 12 TV news pun-dits, often
- 19 Online info page
- 21 Once around the track
- 23 "Uh-huh"
- 25 Gumbo need
- 26 Membership
- 27 Advertise strongly
- 28 Drill
- 29 Fix a manuscript
- 30 Galvanizing stuff
- 31 Listener
- 35 "Charlotte's —"
- 38 Collection
- 40 Weep
- 42 Tall and slender
- 45 Kegler's pathway
- 47 Morning co-host Kelly
- 48 Rip
- 49 Quest
- 50 TV drama that spawned "NCIS"
- 51 Expert
- 52 Energy
- 54 Pistol

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EMPLOYMENT

POSITION OPENING Ely Public Schools High School Special Education Long-Term Substitute Teacher 1.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Ely Public Schools is looking for a High School Special Education long-term substitute teacher starting approximately January 4, 2021 through February 19, 2021. Salary and fringes as per the Master Agreement between ISD #696 and the Ely Education Association and School Board policy. A background check is required.

- Qualifications include:
- Current Minnesota teaching license, Special Education preferred
 - Previous teaching experience preferred
 - Excellent communication skills including verbal and written

Application available at: www.ely.k12.mn.us

- A complete application must include the following:
- District Licensed Application
 - Resume
 - Copy of official transcripts
 - Current Minnesota teaching license
 - 3 letters of recommendation

Return materials to: Ely Public Schools, Attn: Superintendent Erik Erie, 600 E. Harvey St., Ely, MN 55731 or email mwognum@ely.k12.mn.us.

Contact Memorial Principal Megan Anderson at (218) 365-6166 ext. 1724 or manderson@ely.k12.mn.us with any questions.

Start date: January 4, 2021

Application review to begin: December 10, 2020; open until filled.

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 4, 2020

PUBLIC NOTICE

Bearville Township Virtual Meeting Notice

The December 8, 2020 Bearville Township Board of Supervisors Meeting will be held virtually. Meeting will convene at 6:30 pm. Please contact Kathy Cressy- Clerk, by phone: 218-376-4495, or bearvl@frontiernet.net if you wish to attend.

Kathy Cressy, Bearville Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Dec. 4, 2020

EMPLOYMENT

MASSAGE THERAPISTS

Now hiring massage therapists at our Virginia and Ely locations!

Training begins in January and spots are limited! Amazing pay and tons of perks!

Email your resume to elypebble@gmail.com 12/11

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Virginia 741-1481 Hibbing 263-3276
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Super Crossword

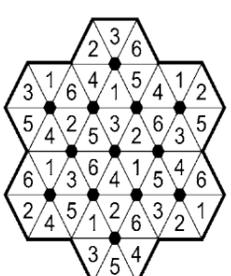
Answers

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D	W	E	L	L	S		E	A	R	N	E	R		P	E	T	C	A	R	E		

Call 753-2950 to subscribe to the Timberjay!

FIND It HERE

SNOWFLAKES solution



Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

- ♦ Moderate
- ♦♦ Challenging
- ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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TIMBERJAY CLASSIFIEDS

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

HAIR CARE

DREAMWEAVER SALON & DAY SPA- Open Monday-Friday 8:30 - 6:30. 218-666-5594. tfn

HOSPICE

VIRGIE HEGG HOSPICE PARTNERS can provide help for patients and their families in ways such as: comfort care, massages, last wishes and more. For more information, contact Program Director Becca Bundy at 218-780-5423 or vhhpdirector@gmail.com. This ad is paid for by Virgie Hegg Hospice Partners.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Ely AA OPEN GROUP MEETINGS- in person meetings, Wednesdays & Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, 915 E Camp St., Ely

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. in the upstairs of Woodland Presbyterian Church.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP- Are you troubled by someone's drinking? Al-Anon Family Group is a community-based mutual support program for the friends and families of alcoholics. It is confidential and open to anyone affected by someone else's drinking. Hope Lutheran Church in Embarras 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.

ELY WOMEN'S OPEN AA MEETING- Every Monday at noon at St. Anthony's Catholic Church, 231 E Camp St., Ely. Enter through side door.

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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Line classifieds cost 30¢/word, \$6.00 minimum. Classified ads can be run a second time at half price (private parties only). We now accept payment by Visa, Mastercard and Discover. Call your ad in to 218-753-2950. Display (boxed) classifieds are billed by the "inch"- please call for prices and information on discounts. Call Today - 218-753-2950 or 218-365-3114

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Super Crossword PUZZLING-LY

ACROSS

1 Like many announcers' private side comments
 8 Glistening
 14 Give a cue to
 20 Sounded like a frog
 21 Durbin of old Hollywood
 22 Worrier's cry
 23 Deeper level of longing?
 25 Walk like a little 'un
 26 Coll. website suffix
 27 Slandered really badly
 28 "Uh-uh"
 30 Legal claim
 31 White water whereabouts
 35 Give it a go
 36 Place to bathe on the grass outside a house?
 38 "Marvy!"
 40 They cause actions
 42 Really boring chairs, desks and tables?
 47 Two-grid vacuum tube
 52 Cry to a matador

DOWN

1 Earthy color
 2 Artist Kahlo
 3 Mist over
 4 — jongg
 5 Mamie's man
 6 Plunk lead-in
 7 Häagen-Dazs rival
 8 Storied fireman Red
 9 Microbe-ridden
 10 Byway
 11 Camelot wife
 12 Raggedy —
 13 — opus
 14 Road hazard
 15 Sorority "P"
 16 In a curious way
 17 Word before circus or blitz
 18 More ashen
 19 Latest thing
 24 Singer John
 29 Be next to
 32 Small hotel
 33 Conquers
 34 Writer Bellow
 36 Connect with
 37 Match well
 39 Duo + one
 40 Tally a total
 41 1982 Disney cyberfilm
 42 "— better believe it!"

ACROSS

53 Manning of the Giants
 54 Far-off
 56 Of charged particles
 57 Extreme type
 59 Lysol target
 61 What 1066 is famous as?
 64 Territory split in 1889
 66 Pertaining to
 68 Bad, to Jules
 69 Viral malady
 70 "Allow me to provide a leavening agent, if nothing else?"
 76 Blvds. and aves.
 78 China's Long March leader
 79 Aquatic bird
 80 — Leone
 83 "Pray that I find some cool gross stuff!"
 88 Isle of Man man, e.g.
 90 Scout unit
 91 — pittance (hardly any)
 92 Garage job
 94 Apat, to bards
 96 Short snooze

DOWN

97 Bit of voice mail
 100 Hankering to take pictures of small and distant objects?
 103 Places for milk products
 105 Bored feeling
 106 Measure of how much a ship swerves off course?
 110 2000-15 TV series
 112 Facet
 116 Horror film lab aide
 117 With 108-Down, deteriorate
 118 Pre-entree dishes
 121 Lanai wreath
 122 Join the club
 124 Chatter that's engaging?
 129 Entertainer Uggams
 130 Give kudos
 131 Arms depot
 132 Abides
 133 Breadwinner
 134 What vets provide

DOWN

43 Penne — vodka
 44 Sloppy smooches
 45 Wry twisting
 46 — Haute
 48 Acuff of song
 49 Like a swap
 50 Radio tuner
 51 Hose color
 55 Otter's kin
 58 "Bosh!"
 60 Go extinct
 62 Bub
 63 "Tis so sad"
 65 "You lookin' —?"
 67 Nosh
 71 Stable stock
 72 Seamless transition
 73 Von — family ("The Sound of Music" clan)
 74 — oxide (anesthetic)
 75 The, to Hans
 76 Emulated a fish
 77 1 p.m. is one
 81 Horse color
 82 iPad downloads
 84 Oct.'s 744
 85 Union general George
 86 Darling type
 87 Bodily joint
 89 Aquatic bird

ACROSS

93 Lofty trains in Sicily
 98 Groups of geese
 99 Dubliner's land
 101 Model Klum
 102 Dog's bark
 104 Key in anew
 106 Give in (to)
 107 Nixon veep Spiro
 108 See
 117-Across
 109 Dryly comical
 110 In the vicinity
 111 Not as risky
 113 Kagan of justice
 114 Romero of "Batman"
 115 Work's name
 118 Lasting mark
 119 Related (to)
 120 Take a pic of
 123 — Abner
 125 Legendary coach
 126 Three, in Bari
 127 D.C. winter hrs.
 128 Remote button abbr.

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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Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

The **Timberjay** classified ads reach readers of all three editions every week.

Call 753-2950 to place yours now!

Obituaries and Death Notices



Bryan L. Hoffmeister

Bryan L. Hoffmeister, 60, of Wyoming, Minn., passed away on Monday, Nov. 16, 2020, at his home. There will be no memorial service at this time. In lieu of flowers, please direct memorial donations to the Veterans Administration. Mattson Funeral Home and Cremation Services of Forest Lake is assisting the family.

Bryan was born on Jan. 9, 1960, in Elmhurst, Ill., to William and Ann (Schelde) Hoffmeister. He graduated from Ely Memorial High School in 1978 and completed his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from North Dakota State University and the University of Minnesota. Bryan enjoyed many aspects of mechanical engineering with a strong interest in the field of aerospace engineering.

In 1978, Bryan enlisted in the Minnesota Army Reserves and spent three years in Germany where he was in the position of military police. In 1991, he re-enlisted and then attended Officer Candidate School for the Army Reserves and became a Second Lieutenant.

Bryan always had a "need for speed," and spent many of his younger years building and racing dirt bikes. Later, he became interested in racing cars, spending countless weekends working on his Porsche and Mini Cooper, getting them in top shape for racing. When he wasn't working on the cars, he spent his time racing them at racetracks in Brainerd. Bryan enjoyed snowmobiling around the trails in northern Minnesota and in Michigan with his daughters, family and friends. Bryan was also an avid

downhill racer and recreational skier and enjoyed trips to many states and ski resorts out west. He began racing in northern Minnesota in high school and raced in the Alps while in the Army.

Bryan is survived by his mother, Ann M. Shelde; sister, Suzanne (Jayson) Lass; two daughters, Alexandra Cole and Madeline Hoffmeister; three grandsons, Nathan Hoffmeister, Emery Cole and Jaxon Moreland; and nephews, Levi and Logan Lass.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Archie and Dorothy Masters, John and Marie Perkins; father, William L. Hoffmeister; and step-father, Gordon Shelde.



Emily E. Wahlberg

Emily Elaine Wahlberg, 81, of Burntside Lake-Ely, died peacefully at home on Thursday, Nov. 19, 2020. A gathering of family and friends will be held in the summer of 2021. Memorials are preferred to Northwoods Partners, Cripple Critter Ranch or the VCC Foundation.

Emily was born on Nov. 24, 1938, in Ely, to Reino and Rachel (Rosdet) Wahlberg. She was a graduate of Memorial High School, Ely Junior College, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Illinois.

She taught high school science in Illinois for 31 years, and retired to her summer property on Burntside Lake. Emily built her dream house, operated Burntside Heritage Tours, and established beautiful flower gardens and welcoming habitat for humans and critters. Emily was active in the community, especially supporting the arts, the DFL, the winter festi-

val, VCC, and the Town of Morse. Her last determined act was to get out to vote on Nov. 3.

Emily is survived by Barbara Berglund; her brother, Richard (Dana) Wahlberg of Duluth; many friends, cousins, nieces, step-nieces, great-nieces and great-nephews; and special helper and friend, Heather Flikke Griffith.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and brother, Jerry in 2013.

Richard W. Miller

Richard Wayne Miller, 79, of Bensalem, Pa., formerly of Embarrass, passed away on Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2020, at St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne, Pa. Visitation will be held from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5 in Bauman's Vermilion Funeral Home in Tower. A committal service will follow at 1:30 p.m. in the Embarrass Cemetery. Family services are provided by Bauman-Vermilion, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Tower.

Richard was born on August 21, 1941, to Wayne and Dolores (Rieber) Miller in Fargo, North Dakota, the oldest of 11 children. He graduated from Embarrass High School and then served in the United States Navy. After his discharge from the Navy in 1962, Richard and his beloved Norma started their family in the Twin Cities area. He worked for Simer Pump before being hired at the Reserve Mine in Babbitt until their closing in the early 80's. He then became an over-the-road tractor-trailer driver until moving east in 1986, where he worked as a heavy equipment mechanic for Giles and Ransome Caterpillar until his retirement in 2011.

While living in Embarrass, Richard served his community as Scout Master of the Embarrass Scout Troop, as the Justice of the Peace, and as the Embarrass Constable. Richard was an incredible father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother, uncle, son, husband and friend. He shared unconditional love for all and taught his children and grandchildren the true meaning of love and

family.

Richard is survived by his children, John (Sharon) Miller of Claymont, Del., Dean Miller (Carin Scholl) of Babbitt, Cheri (Lance) Rodriguez of Bensalem, Pa., and Lisa Miller-Cusmina of Leesport, Pa.; brothers, Ken Miller, Ben (Theresa) Miller, Paul Miller and Lynn (Debbie) Miller; sisters Eileen (Don) Landers and Marsha (Clyde) Sink; grandchildren; great-grandchildren; nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

He was received into heaven by his loving wife and soulmate, Norma Hanson Miller; parents; brothers, Walter, Michael, Timothy and Brian; and many other family members and friends.

Sheryll A. Baier

Sheryll Ann Sjoberg Baier, 73, of Ely, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2020, at the Boundary Waters Care Center in Ely, after eight plus years of battling cancer. A family memorial for Sherry will be held in the summer of 2021. Family arrangements are entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

She is survived by her husband of 55 years, Bob; children, Bob (Sandy) Baier of Ely, Janelle (John) Huntbatch of Ely, Dan Baier of Moose Lake and David (Lissa Roberts) Baier of Hibbing; grandchildren, Janae, Bryan, Jordan, Brittany, Sydney, Jace and Blake; great-grandchildren, Bennett and Henry; and brothers, Greg (Anna) Sjoberg and Gerald Sjoberg.

Bonnie Zupancich

Bonnie Deyak Zupancich, 80, of Ely, passed away on Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2020, at Ely Bloomenson Community Hospital. A private service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5 at St. Anthony's Church in Ely for family and close friends. Capacity limit, face masks, and social distancing will be in effect. Memorials to her special charities, the American Diabetes Association, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely, would be appreciated. Family arrangements

are entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

She is survived by her loving husband of 60 years, James; son, James Jr. (Andrea); daughters, Stacy (Steve) Nelson and Kelly (Mike) Mavetz; sisters, Marge Mich and Helen Koschak; grandchildren, Alex and Erika Maple, Kirsten (Logan) Trout, Jim Zupancich III, Mackenzie and Grace Nelson, Brooke, Morgan and Taylor Mavetz.

Robert E. Niewierowski

Robert E. Niewierowski, 82, of Ely, passed away on Friday, Nov. 20, 2020, at Essential Health St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth after a brief illness. A private gathering of family was held on Thursday, Dec. 3 at Kerntz Funeral Home with burial at the Ely Cemetery. Family arrangements are entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Barbara Kazimer Niewierowski; children, Edward, Robert Jr., Andrea (Michael) Kennedy, Alicia (John) Alcock and Amy (Dan) Klaibor; grandchildren, Annie (Cory) Adams, Michael Jr. (Hannah) Kennedy, Kimberly Alcock, Emma Alcock, Lindsay Alcock and Haley Klaibor; great-grandson, Robert Harrison Adams; sister-in-law, Michelle Kazimer; and nieces, Desi and Gaby Morales.

Denise A. Cruser

Denise Angele Cruser, 94, of Babbitt, formerly from Gilbert and Two Harbors, went to be with her Lord and Savior on Monday, Nov. 23, 2020. We are positive that she was happy to find out her name was finally "in the book."

She is survived by her children, Terry (Lynn) Cruser of Bella Vista, Ark., Cheryl Elliott (friend Jerry B.) of Babbitt, Linda (Ed) Kobe of Venice, Fla., Michelle (Ed) Putzel of Babbitt and DeRae (Kevin) Smith of Hinckley; nine grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren; nieces, Sylvie (Eric) Delcroix of Wervicq-Sud, France, and Sandrine (Philippe) Laroche of Verderonne, France;

and nephew, Sylvain (Marianne) Castelain of Wervicq-Sud, France.

Lucine D. Renskers

Lucine D. Preston Renskers, 85, of Hibbing, formerly of Embarrass, passed away on Friday, Nov. 20, 2020, at Heritage Manor in Chisholm. Services will be held at a later date. Arrangements are with Dougherty Funeral Home of Hibbing.

She is survived by her sons, Richard Brownlee, Thomas Brownlee, Bradley (Denise) Brownlee and Mathew Brownlee; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; five sisters; one brother; and many extended relatives and friends.

Lori Mae Nurmi

Lori Mae Saarikoski Nurmi, 58, of Angora, died unexpectedly at her residence on Friday, Nov. 20, 2020. A memorial service was held on Saturday, Nov. 28 at the North Woods School Gymnasium. Masks were required and a Zoom link was provided. Arrangements were with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

Chester R. Jorgenson

Chester "Chet" R. Jorgenson, 67, of Shorewood, originally of Cook, became a forever angel on Monday, Nov. 16, 2020, at the U of M Hospital. He fought the good fight after a complex medical surgery. A celebration of life will be held in the spring or fall of 2021.

He is survived by his children, Sarah Jorgenson (Brian Williams) and Daniel Jorgenson (TaMairah Lyon); grandchildren, Kathlina, Landon and Danny Lynn; good friend and co-parent, Deborah Jorgenson Nelson; siblings, Sue Jorgenson of Minneapolis, Robert I. Jorgenson of Chisholm, Priscilla Hiipakka (Howard) of Cook, Gloria Gagnon (Steven) of Virginia and Sonja Cramer (David) of Beaver Dam, Wis.; many nieces and nephews; and a ton of friends.

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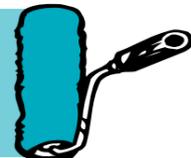
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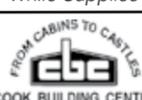


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