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TACONITE MINING

Tribes pressure Walz to clean up mining pollution

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER Managing Editor

REGIONAL- Tribal nations from across Minnesota are accusing state regulators of bad faith over their continuing failure to address longstanding pollution concerns, many stemming from lax regulation of the Iron Range's taconite industry.

Despite recent legal vic-

tories, tribal officials and their environmental allies contend that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency continues to drag its feet on enforcement of sulfate standards to protect wild rice as well as other pollution concerns. At the same time, they argue that agency officials

Failures to address violations at Minntac and Keetac facilities cited

MORE MINING

Twin Metals opponents hopeful in wake of political changes. Page 9

haven't always been candid about the extent of pollution from major sources.

They cite U.S. Steel's Minntac tailings basin as a case in point. For several years, MPCA officials had argued that they had addressed pollution discharges from that tailings basin into the Sand River, by requiring the company to pump outflows from a discharge point

back behind the basin's dike. The MPCA used that requirement as justification for their decision not to set sulfate discharge standards to the Sand River in a new permit the agency issued to U.S. Steel in late 2018.

Yet, MPCA officials apparently knew at least a year earlier that Minntac contin-

See...MPCA pg. 9

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC **MASSIVE RESPONSE** Registrants overwhelm COVID-19 vaccination rollout plan

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- While a massive public response to a statewide rollout of pilot COVID-19 vaccination sites on Tuesday threatened to overwhelm a registration website and phone banks, Cook Hospital Director of Nursing Nichole Chiabotti and her colleagues stayed focused on what they've been doing since December, managing and administering vaccinations for hospital staff, emergency responders, and the Cook Care Center. "We're actually in the second week of giving second doses," we had 57 staff members that



CITY OF ELY At least five candidates look to fill mayor seat Primary election to be held on April 13

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

ELY-Let the campaigning begin. At least four current city council members and a former mayor are looking to lead the city of Ely as its next mayor.

Heidi Omerza, Paul Kess, Angela Campbell and Jerome Debeltz filed candidacy papers for the position on Tuesday, the first day of the filing period. Former Ely mayor Roger Skraba is looking to return to the position he once held and threw his hat in the ring on Tuesday. Interim Mayor Chuck Novak, who lost his re-election bid last November, said this week that he had "no answer" when asked by the Timberjay if he will run for election again. "It is too early to tell," he said. "However, I have put a lot of thought into it." Potential candidates have until 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 2, to file for the election with the City Clerk's office. As more than two candidates are seeking the job, a primary election will be held on Tuesday, April 13. A general election will be held on Tuesday, Aug. 10. The Ely city government was under the leadership of Novak last summer when resident Erik Urbas decided to run for elected office for the first time in his life. In August, Urbas withdrew from the race because of an ongoing health issue, but it was too late to remove his name from the ballot. Urbas won, 925 to 800, over Novak, but turned down the job, setting in motion the steps to hold another election. At the beginning of the year, the mayor's seat vacancy was declared and Novak was named interim mayor by a majority vote of the council. Novak will continue to lead the city until at least April or maybe August. Beginning her 14th year on the Ely City Council, Omerza said in a press release that as mayor she would continue

See...COVID pg. 10



Ninety-six-year-old Tower resident Richard Helmberger was among a small Chiabotti said. "Last week group of local seniors to receive a COVID-19 vaccine this week at Scenic Rivers Clinic. The clinic does not currently have any additional doses available (and asked patients not to call for appointments at this time), but will notify patients when they start to receive their expected allotment. photo by M. Helmberger

Ely students 'back in the groove' as they return to school

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

ELY-The sounds of shoes squeaking on the floors, locker doors slamming, and kids talking and laughing in the hallways filled Memorial School last week. Those familiar sounds made it to the ears of 6-12 Principal Megan Anderson as students transitioned from distance learning to hybrid learning.

"It is great to have



students back here," she said.

In-person learning is now in place for the younger students in the Washington building as the school district

See...ELY pg. 11



Ely students follow the mask mandate. photo by K. Vandervort

See...MAYOR pg. 11



Snowflakes falling, shovels throwing... It's a great time for a new book, to browse our Fall/Winter Fashions or to get out and have some fun! WINTER RENTALS AVAILABLE

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Community notices

Ely ArtWalk begins Feb. 4

ELY- Please join us for the annual Ely ArtWalk, running from Feb. 4-28, when the city of Ely is transformed into an art gallery, a window-shopping exhibition of more than 400 pieces of art by artists with direct ties to the Ely area in the shops and windows of downtown businesses.

Thrive Range offers free online stress management course

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

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

To enroll, visit http://bit.ly/ CommunityMicroInterventions (capitalization matters.)

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

Ely library seeks artists

ELY - The Ely Public Library, in cooperation with the Arrowhead Library System, is seeking Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) to create a piece or series of pieces of public artwork for the library.

These pieces will be funded by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Legacy Fund. Artists who are interested should have experience working in stained glass and must live in the seven-county region served by the Arrowhead Library System.

The stained glass produced under this grant should have a theme of historical occupations in this area of Minnesota (mining, logging, etc.), and it will be placed on the Chapman Street side of the library building.

Artists who are interested in applying should obtain an RFQ packet by either printing one from the library's website - www.elylibrary.org - or by calling the library to schedule a pick-up time for a hard copy. Deadline for application return is Monday, Feb. 8, 2021.

For more information, call the library at 218-365-5140.

Northeast Partnership now accepting proposals for community projects

DULUTH- Northeast Minnesota residents with an idea to strengthen their community can now apply for partnership support from the University of Minnesota Extension Northeast Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (Northeast RSDP).

Northeast RSDP seeks ideas from diverse populations and those who have not previously partnered with the university. In 2021, Northeast RSDP will prioritize projects that support local food systems that are economically viable and ecologically resilient, promote just and equitable transitions to clean energy, advance soil health, biochar research, climate resilience and forest biodiversity, and work through the impacts of the pandemic, recession and changing climate with communities by addressing housing, justice and equity issues. Project ideas are being accepted through Sunday, Feb. 14 and can be submitted online at z.umn.edu/RSDPIdeaBrief. Community members are encouraged to contact Executive Director David Abazs at dwabazs@umn.edu or 218-940-2196 to discuss their ideas and ask any questions. Successful projects are selected by the Northeast RSDP community-university governing board through a competitive process. The Northeast RSDP serves Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine and St. Louis counties and the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Fond du Lac Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa and Grand Portage Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa sovereign Native nations.

Celebrate Ely Winter Festival at home

THINGS TO DO

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

Public is invited to make front yard snow sculptures



ELY – Ely Winter Festival organizers invite winter lovers to participate in this year's celebration at home, by creating a snow sculpture in their own front yard. The event runs from Thursday, Feb. 4 to Sunday, Feb. 14.

The 2021 Ely Winter

an amateur snow sculpture contest this year and has not invited out-of-town carvers. Many artists who can't come to Ely this year because of the coronavirus pandemic still want to carve something. Here is their chance.

This is not a competi-Festival is not conducting tion. Just go for it.

If you've never carved before, you may want to check out some instructional videos which will be posted on the Ely Winter Festival Facebook page and on their website. **Snowbank Productions** has given the organization permission to post their videos.

submitted photo

Winter Festival organizers encourage participants to post pictures of the carvings on their Facebook page. If you wish to provide your address, people can drive around Ely and enjoy them. Please tag photos: #elywinterfestival @elywinterfestival.

Minnesota Discovery Center Reopens

CHISHOLM- The Minnesota Discovery Center (MDC) reopened portions of its historic 660acre campus to the public on Jan. 12.

"We are over-themoon about being able to welcome back guests at a limited capacity this week. We continue to follow our COVID-19 preparedness plan to ensure guests can have a safe and enjoyable experience. Winter is such a beautiful season to come relax and enjoy our gorgeous property and we cannot wait to see everyone again,"Executive Director Donna Johnson said.

The Museum and the Miner's Daughter Gift Shop will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday. The Iron Range Research Center is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and until 8 p.m.

one Thursday a month. (Go to www.mndiscoverycenter.com for details.)

Additionally, MDC will be offering snowshoe rentals for youth and adults. Private guided group tours for up to 10 people of MDC's historic campus and the new worldclass Redhead Mountain Bike Park are anticipated to begin mid-to-late February. Film workshops and other exclusive events are expected to start in coming weeks.

What's open

► Museum - The MDC's award-winning 33,000-sq. ft. museum has reopened at 25-percent occupancy (no more than 150 people) per COVID-19 guidelines and mandates. MDC is utilizing its Winter Admissions/ Entrance and guests are required to wear masks on campus.

> The Iron Range

Research Center (IRRC) - The IRRC is open at 25-percent occupancy. Walk-in appointments are welcome (up to five people at a time) or you can call 218-254-7959 to set up an appointment. The IRRC continues to accept online and remote requests via our website.

► Redhead Mountain Bike Park- Redhead Mountain Bike Park will be having a soft opening for fat biking and snowshoeing on designated trails soon. Watch the MDC website and social media for dates and details. Redhead MTB Park is also on the Trailforks app or online at www.trailforks. com.

► Snowshoeing-MDC offers snowshoes to rent to snowshoe throughout the park or to take elsewhere for the day (during open hours). Patrons can call to set up a private tour for up to ten people. MDC's

outdoor recreation team is also launching a series of "Discover Snowshoeing" events in the near future. Watch the MDC website and social media for dates and details.

Precautions are being taken to keep staff and guests safe as MDC reopens on a reduced scale. Masks, gloves, sanitation stations, and sneeze guards are some of the safeguards in place to ensure that the campus is as safe and clean as possible. MDC's Preparedness Plan is in place and follows all required and suggested guidelines from governing authorities. Employees have been practicing self-screening using no-touch thermometers and social distancing is being practiced. Signs directing employees and guests are visible and posted throughout MDC.

Public Health thanks frontline workers

#thankyouwithblue initiative will light up government offices, business and homes

REGIONAL- Public health staff from 11 county and tribal public health departments have partnered on Project Blue Light to honor frontline workers who have been working to keep our community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the week of Jan. 24-31, public health staff from Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St.

Louis counties, along with Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, are asking businesses and individuals to light up the exterior of their home or business with a blue light bulb or string of lights.

Across the Arrowhead region, landmarks, businesses and front porches will be illuminated for Project Blue Light. In addition, employers and

schools are encouraged to designate a day of the week for everyone to wear blue; businesses are encouraged to display signs or banners; and residents are encouraged to hang a poster in a window to honor all frontline workers. Everyone is urged to share a photo of how they are participating with the hashtag #thankyouwithblue on social media.

Frontline workers have kept essential ser-



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vices operating during the pandemic, minimizing disruption to daily lives. They continue to play a critical role in protecting our communities' health and safety.

"Frontline workers not only include medical professionals, law enforcement, firefighters, EMTs, dispatchers and border patrol agents, but also the invisible infrastructure that may not get the same attention," said Willi Kostiuk, emergency management coordinator in Koochiching County. "Some of these are grocery store employees, fast food and restaurant workers, food and supply distribution center workers, mail and package delivery workers, school administration and staff, sanitation, custodial, janitorial, and cleaning service workers, railroad workers, and other professions critical to the life, health and safety of residents. They deserve our recognition and appreciation."

Please join this regionwide effort to turn the Arrowhead blue and say #thankyouwithblue.



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POLITICS

Tribes blast Stauber over efforts to derail first Native American Cabinet member

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER Managing Editor

REGIONAL- Minnesota Eighth District Congressman Pete Stauber is facing withering criticism from across Indian Country in response to his campaign to derail the nomination of Deb Haaland as President Joe Biden's Interior Secretary. Haaland, a member of Congress from New Mexico, would be the first Native American to hold a position in a presidential Cabinet. Her nomination as the chief overseer of America's public lands has been widely seen among tribal officials as a significant reset in terms of the relationship between tribes and the federal government --- which is why Stauber's efforts to derail her nomination have so stunned tribal officials, particularly those in Stauber's own district.

"We write today to express

our profound disappointment," wrote tribal chairs from five different northern Minnesota bands, including Mille Lacs, Fond du Lac, Leech Lake, Grand Portage and Bois Forte. "This historic nomination is more important to us and all of Indian Country than any other Cabinet nomination in recent history," stated the tribal chairs in a joint Jan. 14 letter to Stauber, obtained by the *Timberjay*.

With 574 federally recognized tribes in the U.S., the Minnesota chairs note that it is rare to have virtually unanimous agreement on any issue but agree that supporting the nomination of Rep. Haaland is as close as Indian Country has ever come to having one unified position. "As Ranking Minority Member on the House Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples, your opposition to the first and only American Indian ever nominated

to a Cabinet position is likely to reverberate across Indian Country."

Minnesota tribal officials say they are most upset over the fact that Stauber never consulted with them prior to circulating a letter to members of Congress expressing his opposition to Haaland's nomination. "Out of respect for our relationship with you as the sovereign Native Nations in your district, we would have expected outreach from you in advance so we could have discussed this issue," states the letter.

The anger from tribal officials is over a draft letter, first obtained by NBC News, that Stauber has been circulating among members of Congress in opposition to Haaland's appointment.

Stauber's letter notes that Haaland was an early House sponsor of the Green New Deal,

which calls for major public investments in clean power production as well as improvements in energy efficiency.

In his letter, Stauber calls Haaland a "direct threat to working men and women and a rejection of responsible development of America's natural resources." He cites Haaland's support of a bill authored by Minnesota Fourth District Rep. Betty McCollum, that would expand the existing mining buffer zone around the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness by 234,000 acres. That additional buffer zone would impact sulfide-based mining but would not apply to taconite mining in the affected acres.

Stauber also takes issue with Haaland's support for the Green New Deal, leveling claims about the broad proposal that have been largely debunked. He cites a conservative political action



Rep. Deb Haaland

fund, known as the American Action Forum, as a source for his astonishing claim that the Green New Deal would cost the United States \$93 trillion annually.

In fact, the American Action Forum makes no such claim. Their critical analysis, which does total \$93 trillion, is a

See HAALAND....pg. 5

Surgery services return to Ely hospital

Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital offers surgical services again

ELY - Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital (EBCH) has announced that general surgeon Dr. John Bollins, DO, of Advanced Surgical Associates of Northern Minnesota, LLC, will offer surgical services in Ely.

Dr. Bollins specializes in robotic-assisted and advanced surgical techniques.

Dr. Robert Savereide was previously a surgeon associated with EBCH, starting in 2018, and retired last year.

Associates of Northern Minnesota is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of our patients. We strive to exceed standards of excellence, allowing us to offer the best surgical care possible," said Bollins. "We aim to create a supportive team environment to allow for a better healing experience."

Dr. Bollins earned his medical degree and complet-

"Advanced Surgical ed his surgical residency at Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Athens and Columbus, Ohio. He completed the Surgical Critical Care Fellowship at The Ohio State University College of Medicine in Columbus, Ohio.

Dr. Bollins has worked as a trauma critical care surgeon and general surgeon at Duluth hospitals since 2007. During that time, he served as pediatric trauma director and also as chief of general surgery. He excels in both traditional and robotic-assisted surgery and has accumulated many years of expertise.

EBCH CEO Patti Banks said, "We are pleased to welcome Dr. Bollins to EBCH and excited at the possibilities he brings with his knowledge of advanced surgical technique and robotic-assisted surgery.

Outside of work, Dr. Bollins and his family enjoy hunting, fishing, hiking, and spending

time at their Ely cabin. He made a strong connection to the Ely community when he was still in college.

"My first and only experience with Minnesota before moving up here with my wife and two young children in 2007 was in Ely," he said.

For more information, visit the hospital website at www. ebch.org or call the EBCH Specialty Clinic at 218-365-8793 to schedule an appointment.



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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

Editorial

Minnesota Power Utility taking bold steps toward a clean energy future

Minnesota Power used to be part of the problem when it came to climate change. These days, the company has committed to being part of the solution.

As recently as 15 years ago, the Duluth-based company, part of ALLETE, was generating 95 percent of its electrical power from the burning of coal that fouled our region's air and added mercury to our lakes. It also contributed to the warming of the planet, since the burning of coal releases large amounts of carbon dioxide, a long-lasting greenhouse gas.

Times have changed, however, at least since Minnesota Poweradopted its Energy Forward strategy. As we reported in December, Minnesota Power was the first utility in the state to generate 50 percent of its electricity from renewable sources, predominantly wind and hydro, with a growing component of solar.

And there's more progress where that came from. As we reported last week, under an Integrated Resource Plan that the company plans to file Feb. 1 with the state's Public Utilities Commission, Minnesota Power expects to be generating 70 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030 and to fully phase out coal in its generating mix by 2035.

By 2050, the company now plans to be generating electricity using 100 percent carbon-free methods.

That's a bold initiative, and Minnesota Power deserves credit for its commitment to addressing climate change. Customers deserve credit as well, because as with many electric utilities, customer demand for change has certainly been a major part of the push for clean energy.

Leadership from the corporate boardroom has also, clearly, been part of the solution in the case of Minnesota Power.

What's perhaps most remarkable is that the changes, to date, have been made with remarkably little impact on customer power rates. For years, calls for a shift to renewable sources of power were met with claims that such a transition would lead to skyhigh electricity prices. That claim hasn't come to pass, in part because it failed to account for how quickly the cost of renewable sources of electricity would fall. For utilities, it's now cheaper to add more wind and solar capacity than it is to boost production from coal, natural gas, or nuclear.

That's one reason that now-former President Trump's calls to boost the U.S. coal industry were so misguided. Nobody is building new coal capacity in the U.S., not only because it's environmentally destructive, but because it's too expensive. That's the same obstacle that has kept new nuclear capacity largely off the table in the U.S. With the public increasingly demanding action on climate change, and with renewable sources of power now cheaper than traditional methods, utilities are increasingly recognizing that consumer demand and less costly forms of power generation now go hand-in-hand.

Renewable sources of power can also be added in smaller bites, so utilities can step up their capacity incrementally as demand rises. That means they limit the investment risk that comes with funding multi-billion-dollar projects. Building even a modest new coal plant in the U.S. today costs upwards of \$2 billion. Nuclear is even more expensive, which has kept that industry on ice for decades here in the U.S.

While the rise of renewable energy is eliminating demand for traditional fuels, like coal, jobs lost in those industries are more than made up for by new job creation in the renewable energy sector. And whereas jobs in the coal or oil and gas industry tend to be located in only certain parts of the country, the economic impact of renewable energy is spread much more widely across the country. Minnesota, for example, already has many times more jobs in the renewable energy economy than it ever had in traditional



Things to be grateful for

OPINION

This is my first letter to the editor. I typically lay low in life. However, in a time of such unrest due to the attack on our nation's Capitol and due to the negative impact of COVID-19, I felt a high need to focus on gratitude for a few things instead.

Here goes...thank you Mike Popesh and the Ely snowplow crew for keeping Ely's roads clear and in timely ways. I'm looking forward to summer again and when it gets here, I am grateful for whomever lines Sheridan Street with beautiful flower planters - what a wonderful way to welcome others to our little town! Thank you to the first responders and rescue squads in this region; the stories I've read always make me grateful for their work. Thank you to the successful women business owners in Ely such as Patti Steger, Cindy Beans, Kelly Klun, Peta Barrett, Sandy Lakner, Susan Schurke, Nicole Bolt, and Kathy Cyriacks, to name a few, who are good role models for our young girls in town! I am grateful we have our iconic movie theater back in all its glory. Thank you to all those who keep veterans in the forefront in Ely - much to be proud of there. So, in a time when all the bad can

hands now. People were hurt and killed.

Letters from Readers

I firmly believe in a two-party system. I believe there needs to be changes made. I don't think any House or Senate member should have more than two terms. Mitch McConnell and Nancy Pelosi should be voted out of office their next term. It is interesting to see how wealthy people become after a few years in office.

Ialso believe that Supreme Court Justices should be retired at the age of 65.

President Trump was responsible for the loss of the Senate seats in Georgia after calling the Secretary of State to find some ballots. People of color came out and voted in masses. There was a lot of outside money spent on the election and a lot of door knocking.

Personally, I am a lifelong Democrat. I have many friends that are Republicans. I respect them for their beliefs.

I am an 88-year-old enlisted Korean veteran. I put my life on the line to protect our democracy where we have the freedom of speech, freedom of religion and the right to vote! Something many countries don't have.

God Bless America. **Roland Fowler** Embarrass

Thanks for shopping locally

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the friends and neighbors who chose to "Shop Local" during this past holiday season. It really does make a difference to our city and area businesses.

I want to thank each and every one who shopped with us at Nordic Home North. If you have not had the chance to check us out yet, I invite you to do so.

We serve Norwegian krumkake and hot apple cider "To go" all winter.

Thank you again and Happy New Year!

> **Marit Kringstad Nordic Home North** Tower

The voters opted for steady leadership over a dumpster fire

Imagine, if you will, the Democrats actually pulled off the spectacular election fraud the Republicans accuse them of. Do you not think they would have shifted a few Congressional house seats their way as well? As it is, they lost seats. While they were at it, why not give themselves a filibuster proof majority in the Senate, and maybe have gotten rid of Mitch McConnell and Lindsey Graham, as long as they were going to all the trouble. Just think about it for a minute. So why is it so hard for Trumpers to believe that Americans are tired of the constant stench of the dumpster fire that is the now-former Trump administration. If Biden really did pull this off, that alone shows more skill, finesse and mastery of complex problems than Trump showed in four years. Even so, that's not how Biden won. The electorate wanted steady, competent, experienced leadership. Not a petulant bully.

energy sectors.

That's why the shift to a green energy economy is such a win-win. We enjoy cleaner air, more jobs, and we fight climate change at the same time. Which is why every American should be on board with the push to a greener future.



overshadow the good, I'm focusing on gratitude. Mary McGrane Ely

Capitol riot was a sad day for America

I promised myself I would never write a letter to the editor, but after witnessing the events of the past few weeks I felt compelled to do so.

It was one of the saddest days of my life. The protest on the Capitol was made up of white supremacists, and Trump's Proud Boys. You can lay the blame on President Trump for his greed for power. He definitely has blood on his

New administration will be a breath of fresh air

Over the past few years, I have been reading the Timberjay religiously, consuming all the information on the editorial page. The Jan. 15 paper seems to culminate the feelings about the outgoing President. Since 2016 the page has changed in its discontent with the existing administration, getting more upset with Trump's rhetoric. Writers are expressing their views that seem to correspond with the editorial position. The new administration will be a breath of fresh air to many of us.

Skip Dickinson Britt

Tim McKenzie Ely

Listening until you actually hear someone

Conversations, discussions, arguments, rants, they're all happening all over the country concerning the events of Jan. 6 in our nation's capital. As a person who's always trying to figure out what makes people tick (including myself), I have to say that I don't get it; that

is, I don't get how so many people could disagree with



me so completely, because I think I'm reasonable, fairly well-informed, and thoughtful (and right). However, what I've learned is that everybody else thinks that, too, about themselves. It's like the sense of humor thing and the driving thing; I've heard that everyone thinks they have

a good sense of humor and everyone thinks that they're good drivers. Well, clearly, there are a lot of bad drivers out there running off the road and crashing into other cars or just causing havoc on the highways, and there are plenty of people who don't get my sense of humor. Since I know I have a good sense of humor, that must indicate we can't all be right.

But what is clear is that we have become very stratified in our self-defined worlds, and we all find it very difficult to look outside of our own particular layers of opinions to understand someone else's point of view or even to be able to hear what they have to say. The political mess we've been living through makes that crystal clear.

Don't misunderstand me: I am not one of those who are saying, "We should just let bygones be bygones and let the healing begin." No, I think people need to face the consequences of their very illegal actions. But what has struck me is that people who believe the opposite of what I do will use exactly the same words that I do. For example, there's a huge Trump flag (still!) flying in my

neighborhood with the words on the bottom, "No more B.S." Really? I think, are you kidding me? Yeah, NOW it's true, but only because Trump is leaving office. Another Trump supporter said Trump was being unfairly treated, that he did nothing to incite the mob, that there was no justification for impeachment. He said "conservatives" are being stripped of their civil rights and they fear for the future of the country. He added that we must stop this culture of hatred

See LISTEN...pg. 5

Letters from Readers

We must do the right thing, not the safe thing

My generation came of age in the late 1960s and 70s, at the apogee of that tumultuous time in history. As it relates to the turnings of history, VJ Day and the assassination of President Kennedy bracket this era of high ideals.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 was a turning point, one that set in motion a relentless series of challenges to white racism. Our entire nation was suddenly caught in the intersection of two images, black and white, where it was always thought there was only one. World War II did not destroy the values represented by fascism: racism, nationalism, militarism, bureaucracy, secret police, the violence of war abroad and the repression of freedoms at home, the supremacy of things over the individual.

That high era of utopian experimentation came to an abrupt end with the assassination of our president on Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas. The horror of the murder of JFK has been an open wound on our collective psyches ever since. The moral purity of our youth had been silenced.

Less than three months later, a delightful group from Liverpool, England, came to America, and Beatlemania overtook us, plunging us into entertainment and carnal oblivion, a flight from memory and grief. We let go, for a time, of the shock and sorrow for the butchered president and the fall of Camelot. Then came 1968, the

year we graduated from high school.

On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, where he was speaking in support of striking city sanitation workers. Several sanitation workers had been killed on the job due to unsafe working conditions, and black workers received no pay if they refused to work in bad weather or were sick.

MLK had recently come out against the Vietnam War, stating, "We all need to become protestors against war, apostles for peace, in a world gone mad with violence."

He said, "The evils of capitalism are as real as the evils of militarism and the evils of racism." While the military was ready for aggressive military action ten thousand miles away in Vietnam, it was not ready to defend blacks against violence at home, as we still witness today.

Then, on June 5, 1968, the day we graduated from high school, presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles at the Ambassador Hotel. Once again, an apostle for peace had been silenced.

The scars of the open wounds of history had been viciously reopened, and our commitment to social reform and our quest for a more perfect society, born of the 17th century European Enlightenment, had again been stymied.

In 1954, Hollywood was making the animated film version of George Orwell's anti-totalitarian classic, Animal Farm. The book's ending in which the animals realize that both groups are equally corrupt, is a trenchant rejection of the binary worldview.

Allen Dulles, Director of the CIA, and his brother John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, along with the help of CIA operative Howard Hunt, arranged for Hollywood to script that only the pigs were corrupt, and that ultimately patriotic rebels overthrow them. The Dulles brothers realized that the message in the book Animal Farm contradicted all of what the United States was saying about the cold war.

History is not just an investigation or illumination of some distant past, but also an intervention in the present for the sake of our collective future. We must anticipate the possible future without denying the past.

The answer is always the same: the right thing, not the safe thing. We must construct the Manichean narrative of the American past. We must be historians who reject objectivity and be activists who refuse to sit down and shut up, citizens who hate war and violence and dare to criticize the country.

We must embrace a different moral ethos, a moral autonomy, in hopes of creating a world where war and violence are no longer the default option for American affairs throughout the world. That was Martin Luther King's plea to a scourged mankind.

The 1960s and 70s

were heady times in our youthful drive to change the world. And now our children, because of their own eyewitness to violence and ignorance, have joined us in the fight we seemed to have lost, against war, violence and hatred. We must not fail them but join them in our collective zeal to transform the world.

That is what Dr. King called on us to do, as our enduring duty.

As JFK noted, "Those who make peaceful evolution impossible, make revolution inevitable."

> Tim Duff Ely

Stauber's extremist views keep showing

Representative Pete Stauber has done it again. After supporting until the last possible moment his party members who denied that President Biden had won the election, and only after the insurrection at the Capitol, did he vote at the end to accept the votes of the Electoral College. Gee, Thanks, Pete. Let's not forget that he supported the bogus, disloyal lawsuit that sought to disenfranchise EVERY voter in Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin. The Supreme Court did its duty and threw it out.

Now, he has circulated a letter to his GOP colleagues urging them to oppose the nomination of New Mexico representative Deborah Haaland, the first Native American to be appointed as Secretary of the Interior. The tribes

in Minnesota have blasted Stauber, saying that this is a slap in the face of a historic nomination through which Native Tribes will finally have a seat in the Cabinet.

We do not need to wonder why. It's all about mining, especially copper-nickel mining and "our way of life," Stauber's constant mantra, as though all the people in our huge **Congressional District** are miners. Throw in pipelines, which have ruined thousands of acres of sacred Native land and threaten their water. I think it's a travesty for my representative to try to undermine the possibility of a modicum of national influence for our Native neighbors here and across the U.S.

The Interior Department uses sound science to manage and sustain America's lands, water, wildlife, and energy resources. Prospective Secretary Haaland will lead such agencies as the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Geological Survey, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the National Park Service. These bureaus are valuable and essential to all of us.

I'm thankful that Rep. Stauber will not be effective in this doomed effort. However, as we've seen all along, he has to get his name out there again and again letting people know he's a true believer.

Carol Orban Ely

Keep pressure on the new administration

There's a new team in Washington and I hope they can make America great (finally). I hope it doesn't continue to bully the world. It must stop economic boycotts against Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, and make peace with the world. Why is there no Department of Peace in the U.S. government? Supporting Israel in its genocide against the Palestinians is criminal. Spending 60 percent of our income tax dollars on the military is obscene. (This money needs to be channeled into fixing our health care system and fighting global warming.) Money and the mega-rich corporations control "our" government. Is that democracy? It's hard to imagine that the new president will change any of these things since as a senator he voted, for example, to fund the criminal war against Iraq. And both he and the new vice president support Israel in its occupation and crimes against the Palestinians.

I fear that this team of good orators will end up by doing exactly what the American government always does and that is to please the American corporate interests. We need to try to force them to do the right things. Will they listen to us? One can only hope.

> Steve Johnson Ely

HAALAND...Continued from page 3

ten-year estimate, not an annual expense. And the vast majority (approximately 85-90 percent) of that expense is for universal health care coverage and a jobs guarantee, not for the clean energy transition that is the primary focus of the proposal.

Advocates of the Green New Deal cite analyses that show the net result of the investments recommended as part of the proposal would yield significant new job creation.

Tribal officials say they recognize the need for balance between environmental protection and the need for jobs. "We understand that you walk a fine in balancing the interests of industry versus the environment," wrote Mille Lacs Band Chair Melanie Benjamin in a separate letter to Stauber. "Your letter cites your concern about jobs yet Indian tribes are the largest employer in your district."

Tribal officials, in their joint letter, are calling

efforts to derail Haaland's nomination. "Ultimately, Indian tribes are eager to see how Rep. Haaland in her appointment as the Secretary will lead and transform the function of many Interior divisions on behalf of Tribes and enhance self-determination and self-governance within this next adminis-

The *Timberjay* sought comment for this story from Congressman Stauber's office. He did not respond.



any number of economic line in the Eighth District on Stauber to end his tration."

LISTEN...Continued from page 4 -

for those with differing opinions and that peace can only be achieved through conversation, discussion, and eventual concessions from both sides. Wait a minute...that's my line! Did this man actually ever listen to the words coming out of Trump's mouth for the last four years and beyond? What about the civil liberties of those who have been murdered in the frenzy of racist rhetoric the Donald likes so much? Of the voters whose votes he attempted to invalidate? It is so "1984," and if you haven't read George Orwell's book, you might want to.

I can sound flippant about all of this, but I'm really not. It breaks my heart that we humans do things so badly. It just seems like evolution lost steam after the Galapagos turtles. Why don't we learn more quickly how to do it better, how to stop hurting each other?

I do believe that there is good in every human being, somewhere. Sometimes it may be hard to access, but very few babies start out as bad actors; that damage happens along the way. I also recognize that I'm no saint. I'm often impatient, judgmental, and crabby, and most days, I could be more disciplined. I try not to inflict myself on others on my worst days, but that doesn't make me considerate; it just means I'm trying to look better than I am.

If we're honest, we'd admit that many days we find our pets better company than a lot of our fellow humans. BUT, given all that, I do believe we can do a better job understanding each other and getting along. After all, my words fell out of that Trump supporter's mouth, so maybe we do have common ground to build on. What's the magic solution?

I think it's pretty simple-not easy, but simple. I think at the heart of most misunderstandings and a lot of violence is the inability or unwillingness to listen. Most of us are born with the ability to hear, but listening well is a skill that needs to be developed. Think about the most common words that are tossed at others during arguments: Do you ever listen to me? Can't you hear what I'm saying? How many times to I have to tell you this? I don't think you've heard a word I've said. You never listen to me. What are you, deaf? I'm NOT going to say it again! Those are all signs of human beings longing to be heard, to be understood.

Since the early 90s, I've practiced co-counseling, aka Re-evaluation Counseling or R.C., a form of peer counseling. It's based on the idea that we all need to be able to listen well and be listened to; to talk about what's going well in our lives, what could go better, and what's getting in the way of achieving our goals. Many of us do not have that in our lives. Having learned some basic techniques, each person takes an equal amount of time to talk freely and confidentially with the other person listening without judgement, advice, or comments.

Instead of cultivating listening skills, I feel that we have become addicted to our own opinions, compulsively commenting even when we have nothing of value to say. The sound of our own voices lulls us into thinking we're quite brilliant and so should keep talking. The need to spew out our judgements keeps us opining, giving us a high that demands more, like snorting cocaine. After all, without our opinions, who are we?

I challenge you to give this a try. Try visiting with a friend for ten minutes without voicing an opinion. OK, maybe three minutes. Instead, say nothing or try those three magic words, "Tell me more." Listen with fascinated attention, like Nancy Reagan did with Ronnie. You might find it difficult. But you also may find that you learn more listening than you ever did when you were talking. You may get to know your friend better, more deeply, than you ever have, even if you have known each other for years.

And imagine what mighthappenifyoureally listened to someone who heartily disagrees with you. That forbidden topic you always avoid might come to light, safely. You might just find it's a relief not to have to be right about everything all the time. Maybe I'll give that conservative who is longing for peace a call. 2950]. Fax number is 218-753-2916. E-mail address is editor@timberjay.com. Visit our website at www.timberjay.com.

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Week of Jan. 25

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 Feb. 16..

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

Breitung Town Board-12 noon on Jan. 26

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.

COLLEGE NEWS

Ryan Hujanen named to Itasca Community College Dean's List

GRAND RAPIDS-Ryan Hujanen, of Tower, is among the 217 students named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids. Hujanen was named to the High Honors list, with a GPA between 3.5 and 3.99. Hujanen is a student in the engineering program on the Virginia campus.

Jacob Bjork named to the Itasca Community College

ST. MARTIN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH Souper Bowl Sunday' booya on Feb. 7

TOWER- Mark your calendars, the St. Martin's youth will again be hosting their annual "Souper Bowl of Caring" on Sunday, Feb. 7. This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, there will only be take-out meals available.

Take-out dinners may be picked up from 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the church social hall. The dinner includes booyah (vegetable beef soup), rolls, and choice of desserts. Freewill offerings will be accepted. All proceeds will be donated to the Tower Food Shelf.

For the past 16 years, the youth at St. Martin's have been donating the ingredients for the booyah. They come in the day before and peel, cut, and dice the vegetables. This year, we have a group of parishioners who will make the desserts on Friday.

Everyone in our community is encouraged to support the youth on this worthwhile project.

'Souper Bowl of Caring' began as a senior high youth fellowship that has spread nationwide. It enables young people to see that by moving beyond themselves and working together, they can make a difference in their community.

This year, fundraiser to offer take-out service only



VERMILION COUNTRY SCHOOL

Hybrid school schedule giving students plenty of one-on-one time with teachers, staff

TOWER- Students at Vermilion Country School moved to a hybrid learning system in December. As the final days of the second quarter approached this past week, students were working on completing all their classwork, often with some gentle nudging from school staff. Each student had a personalized printout that showed any missing classwork, and teachers and staff were making sure students had what they needed to complete their work on time.

Keeping students engaged and participating has been a challenge for all schools in this pandemic time, but with a small student body, teachers at VCS are doing their best to connect with their students every day.

With the move to a hybrid schedule, the school divided students into two cohorts - some attend school on Mondays and Tuesdays, the others on Thursdays and Fridays. When not at school, students attend classes online and complete projects at home. A few students have opted to remain in every-day distance learning. The small cohort model has given teachers opportunities for more time spent giving individualized instruction, and making sure students stay engaged and on track. School administrator Frank Zobitz said that, with the welcome downward trend of COVID-19 infection rates, the school board will look at increasing the number of days students attend in person. School staff are also starting to be vaccinated as part of the statewide effort. The state has also sent the school a supply of in-home COVID-19 test kits for teachers and staff. The hybrid model hasn't changed the focus on getting students outdoors. Environmental education teacher Mike Joint has been taking small groups out snowshoeing and exploring Tower's new trails in the oldgrowth cedar woods near the school. The curriculum at VCS has a focus on environmental education, as well as hands-on learning and community service.





Above: Environmental Ed teacher Mike Joint heads out on a snowshoe hike with students. submitted



Dean's List

GRAND RAPIDS-Jacob Bjork, of Babbitt, is among the 217 students named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids. Bjork was named to the Honors List, with a GPA between 3.25 and 3.49.



Above: Office manager Jolene Herberg gets ready to pack up take-home school lunches. Right: At-home COVID-19 tests for school staff. Middle right: A student checks off remaining semester tasks. Bottom right: Language arts teacher Karin Schmidt does a quick check on a paper before it is handed in. photos by J. Summit

School Choice Week

As a free public charter school for grades 7-12, VCS is among a select group of Minnesota schools celebrated during National School Choice Week, the last week in January.

"In Minnesota, community members are sharing the message that families benefit from choices and flexible learning opportunities," said Andrew Campanella, president of National School Choice Week. "This National School Choice Week, let's celebrate how great educators and schools of all types inspire kids to learn, grow, and give back to the community."

VCS attracts students from Tower-Soudan, Ely, Embarrass/ Babbitt, Aurora/Hoyt Lakes, and the Virginia/Mt. Iron areas. Transportation is available from neighboring towns. The school also provides breakfast and lunch. While students are in the hybrid-learning mode, the school sends home frozen meals and other foods to be reheated on days they are not in the school building. You can learn







more about the school at www. vermilioncountry.org.

COMMUNITY NOTICES

Skating parties set

SOUDAN- Chimpy's skating parties are now underway, with the next party set for Saturday, Jan. 23 from 12 noon – 2 p.m. There will be free food, including hot dogs, burgers, pizza, drinks, and snacks. The skating rink is being kept in good condition, and children also have fun playing on the huge snow piles adjacent to the rink and playing on the swings and playground.

Rink attendant Jayne Sundeen will be offering food at the rink for skaters on Tuesdays and Wednesdays after school, weather-permitting.

The rink warming shack is open daily, weather-permitting, weekdays from 4 - 8 p.m., and weekends from 11 a.m. - 8p.m. with safety provisions in place and reduced capacity.

Sponsors this year includ-

ed Jerry Palo and the Tower Firemen's Relief Association. Anyone interesting in donating money should contact Chimpy at Zup's in Tower.

St. James movie night on Sunday, Jan. 24

TOWER- St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower is hosting a free movie night on Sunday, Jan. 24 at 6 p.m. This movie was originally scheduled for last Sunday, but is now set for Jan. 24.

"A Man Called Peter" is the true story of how one man's faith uplifted a nation. Considered one of the finest films to deal with religion, "A Man Called Peter" is the compelling story of Scottish minister Peter Marshall, who as a young man traveled to Washington, D.C., and became the pastor of the Church of the Presidents. By the time of his death, he was the chaplain to the Senate and a greatly respected man. Although he was a Presbyterian, the wisdom and sincerity of his sermons appealed to people of all faiths. Featuring outstanding performances by Richard Todd and Jean Peters, "A Man Called Peter" is also a touching love story, and received an Oscar nomination for Best Cinematography.

OUR COMMUNITY

Ely community pays tribute to Robert Niskala

ELY – A solemn, impromptu tribute parade was held late last Wednesday night for an Ely man known for leading the community's Ely Honor Guard for Fourth of July parades and other events that called for military honors for many decades.

Robert "Nisky" Niskala, 68, of Ely, died Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021. The news stunned Ely veterans and the entire town. That night, several hundred of Niskala's family and friends lined Sheridan Street from Central Avenue to Second Avenue West for Niskala's 10:30 p.m. parade to the local funeral home.

Past the tears of many mourners, many holding American flags, and with a police escort, Ely Honor Guard members carried



ibraries

Elv 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



The Ely Honor Guard, above, posted the American flag at the opening of the City Council meeting Tuesday night in honor of Robert Niskala, who died last week. Niskala, is shown below, at left, during a 2019 Veterans Day program at Ely Memorial High School. He was born in Winton and graduated from Ely High School in 1970. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and served in the Vietnam War. He returned home and worked 30-plus years at Inland Steel Mine in Virginia. photos by K. Vandervort

the flag-draped casket into Kerntz Funeral Home.

Ely City Council members honored Niskala Tuesday. At the beginning of their meeting, the Ely Color Guard was in attendance to post colors for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence was observed in his honor.

Fellow Ely Honor Guard member Roger Skraba described Niskala as a "class act." He said the veteran kept everyone in check. "Everyone respected Bob because he gave you respect. And he was a family guy to the core."

Skraba said the Ely community will miss Niskala. "He snowplowed for a lot of people., for those who didn't have any means. And he wouldn't take a cent for it," he said. "You can't put a price on that. He was just that genuine."

In a Facebook post last

week, Rep. Pete Stauber said, "I was deeply saddened to learn of the recent passing of Ely local legend and Vietnam veteran, Bob Niskala. It was very moving to hear that dozens of folks lined the streets in Ely for an impromptu memorial to honor Bob's life and contributions to the community. This was a fitting tribute for the man who headed the Ely Honor Guard and dedicated so much of his time organizing local events that celebrated Ely's veterans. My prayers are with Bob's loved ones and the entire Ely community during this difficult time.'

A private family service is planned for Friday, Jan. 22 at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely. The service will be live-streamed on Facebook. Supporters may join the family as military funeral honors are per-



formed by the Ely Honor 12:15 p.m. on Friday. Guard near the flagpole COVID guidelines will at the Ely Cemetery at be followed. There will be a celebration of life this summer.

Ely Police Department Report - Dec. 15-31, 2020

Arrests/Citations:

► Traffic Stop Individual was issued a citation for Driving after Suspension.

► Shoplifter-Individual issued a cita-

Officers were contacted to locate an individual with a possible health problem. The individual was brought to the Ely hospital.

► Vehicle Crash -

Officers were contacted about an individual that may be having a mental health issue. Officers determined that the individual was not a harm to themselves or others.

agency.

► Notification -Officers notified an individual of a family member passing away.

► Vehicle in the Ditch- Officers located a

Disturbance - Officers were contacted about a barking dog. The dog stopped barking prior to officers arriving.

▶ Parking Problem -Officers were contacted

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

Support groups

AA - Alcoholics Anonymous **OPEN AA - 7:30** p.m. Wednesdays and Saturdays, in-person, First Lutheran Church, 915 E. Camp St., Ely. **ELY WOMEN'S OPEN** AA - Every Monday at noon at St. Anthony's Catholic Church, 231 E. Camp St., Ely. BABBITT AA - 7 p.m. Tuesdays, Woodland Presbyterian Church **AL-ANON** - Sundays 8-9 p.m. at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely. For persons who encounter alcoholism in a relative or friend. **BABBITT AL-ANON** Thursdays, 7 p.m., at Woodland Presbyterian. **CO-DEPENDENTS'** 12-step support group, noon Fridays, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Ely. **ELY FOOD SHELF -**Third Wednesday each month, 15 W. Conan St. ADULT BASIC **EDUCATION GED** - Study materials and pre-test available. Call 218-365-3359, 218-827-3232, or

1-800-662-5711.

tion for Theft.

► Domestic Assault Individual arrested for Domestic Assault, 5th Degree Assault, and Obstruction.

► Vehicle in the Ditch - Individual arrested for 3rd Degree DWI Test Refusal, Carrying a weapon under the influence, and Obstructing Legal Process.

> Traffic Stop -Individual arrested for 3rd Degree Driving While Impaired, Operation of Snowmobile on State Highway, and Fail to stop at stop sign.

► Curfew Violations Located three juveniles out after curfew and intoxicated. Three individuals issued citations for Curfew and Underage Consumption.

Complaints:

≻Check Welfare -

Officers were contacted about a vehicle that hit a deer. The deer was unharmed and the vehicle had minor damage.

► Call Back-Officers were contacted about ATV laws within city limits.

► Parking Complaint Officers were contacted about a vehicle that was not parked properly. Owner of the vehicle was contacted and the vehicle was moved.

► Trouble Neighbor - Officers mediated an argument between neighbors

► Unknown Trouble - Officers were called to a local business for an open 911 call. It was determined that the call was made by mistake.

▶ Public Assist Officers assisted an individual back into their residence

≻ Mental Health -

>Attempt to Locate -Officers located a vehicle that did not have their headlights on while driving at night. Informed the driver that headlights are required at night.

▶ Motor Vehicle Crash - Officers responded to a two-vehicle crash. Both vehicles had minor damage.

Animal ≻ Disturbance - Officers were contacted about a dog that was barking all day. Officers gave the dog a verbal warning and advised the owner.

▶ Public Assist -Officers were contacted by an individual to collect property from a residence. The individual was advised they had to wait for the homeowner.

> Public Assist -Officers were contacted to deliver papers to an individual. This was referred to the proper

vehicle that went into the ditch. All occupants were unharmed.

► Lost Dog - Officers were contacted about a dog that ran away. The dog returned a short time later. Dog admitted to wanting to stretch his legs.

► Suspicious Activity Officers were contacted about an individual that was running down the road. Officers determined the individual was running due to weather and lack of proper cloth-

> Assist Other Agency - Officers assisted a neighboring agency with a drug call.

► Suspicious Activity - Officers were contacted about a group of individuals throwing snowballs at a residence. Officers were not able to locate the individuals.

> > Animal

about a vehicle that was parked unattended for an extended period of time. The vehicle was moved after officers issued a warning.

► Civil Issue -Officers were contacted about a civil issue between a business owner and former employee. Officers mediated the situation.

► Suspicious Activity - Officers were contacted about an individual that was attempting to get into a vehicle. Officers located the individual and gave them a ride home as the individual was confused.

► Harassment -Officers were contacted about an individual being harassed. This case is under investigation.

≻Gas Leak - Officers assisted the Ely Fire Department with a possible gas leak at a local business.

Learn to snowshoe at Ely Folk School

ELY - Experience a great way to get outside in the winter and explore areas that are inaccessible other times of the year or in deep snow on foot or skis. The Ely Folk School is hosting a Learn to Snowshoe class next month.

The class on Sunday, Feb. 7 will start inside with a brief history of snowshoeing and a discussion of the different types of snowshoes and their uses. You'll also get some tips and tricks for a successful venture, including that all-important one, how to get up in case you fall. Participants will the head out nearby for an hour or so to try out their new skills.

The class runs from 1-3 p.m. and tuition is \$30. Register at https://elyfolkschool.coursestorm.com/.../ learn-to-snowshoe1.

Higher Education

Ely students honored at Gustavus Adolphus

ST. PETER - The Fall Semester Dean's List at Gustavus Adolphus College includes two Ely students, Susan Cook and Emma Larson.

The list comprises students who have earned a 3.7 grade point average (based on a scale in which 4.0 = A) or higher for the semester ending in December 2020.

Thompson makes Dean's List

MOORHEAD - Maxibillion Thompson, of Ely, was named to the Minnesota State University Moorhead Dean's List in recognition of academic achievement in the fall semester 2020.

Thompson is majoring in Physics. Students must maintain a 3.25 or

higher grade point average and carry 12 graded credits to qualify for the honor.

Student embraces COVID pain in artwork

North Woods senior shines emotional light on plight of elders isolated and confined by pandemic

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP - The assignment North Woods School visual arts teacher Rachel Betterley gave her students was fairly straightforward: Create a drawing using the techniques of famous artist Edward Hopper by using light to tell a story or compel a viewer to feel or think a certain way.

'Light is so important," Betterley said. "It helps create dramatic effects. Whether they're emphasizing a person's face, or their body, or creating a certain ambience, mood or tone, light is what helps do that in their drawings.'

One of her students, senior Megan Cote, took the assignment in a much different direction from her peers, using the opportunity to shine her own light on the unsettling but real state of despair felt by elders in long-term care settings who have been trapped and cut off from their families and loved ones during the coronavirus pandemic.

"I chose this because I wanted to show how some people are confined, not seeing their family members for months on end while being inside of an old-folks home or anywhere else where they don't get to see many people," Cote said. "I just wanted to make a message people can relate to, that can move them so they understand how some people may feel."

The pencil drawing, on display in a glass case in a school hallway, is stark and jolting. Using light for emphasis, as did Hopper, an otherwise dark room is harshly illuminated by the beacon of a glaring but malfunctioning screen of a small TV on a desk. Seated in front of the desk staring at the screen is a bespectacled old woman wearing locks and chains, with

more chains securing the chair to the desk. A barely visible calendar on the wall includes a sobering notation: "Days since last visit – 81."

"I had the scene mostly thought out before starting, but along the way I added smaller details to make the art more realistic and to portray a greater meaning,' Cote said. "The chains represent imprisonment and sadness. I put the error message on the TV to give the artwork a darker feel. The date on the calendar shows that the woman hasn't seen any family or friends in a long time, also giving the artwork a sense of isolation and despair."

The woman isn't someone specific, Cote said. She created the woman as a composite of various images in her mind of elderly women to create a person who evokes a sense of familiarity among many different viewers. "The process in creating this was very frustrating," Cote said. "At first, I couldn't get the proportions right on the old woman, and then I had some other challenges like not knowing where to go from here. But towards the end everything started to click, and I was able to show what I wanted to."

"Every year I always get a few students that really, truly capture the dramatic essence behind the assignment," Betterley said. "She's a senior in high school who is showing and taking the time to care to tell us that this is happening. Megan's been in art long enough to feel comfortable expressing those emotions, and when you have that comfort level, the meaning and concept behind it can just be elevated."

Cote's interest in art came long before formal art classes, nurtured from an early age by her mother, Ericka Cote, who studied art education at



North Woods senior Megan Cote created this drawing to connect viewers with the plight of elderly people living isolated lives because of COVID-19 restrictions. submitted photo

Bemidji State University.

"She's an amazing artist," Cote said. Betterley said she sees a connection between Cote's choice of a subject and what students have experienced during the nearly year-long pandemic.

"I think they can relate because they felt that isolation, too, when they were all distance learning," she said. "Between the students and their isolation and the isolation of people in nursing homes, I feel in a way that they probably have a lot of similarities in that feeling of loneliness."

It took about two days for Cote to create the drawing, Betterley said, and something that facilitated her work was her receptivity to feedback and suggestions. "Some students might fight the little critiques," Betterley said. "She's one of those types that are just open to growing and adding more. I might give her subtle little suggestions here and there and she's always open to the ideas I might give as options. But she's also confident enough in her skills that she knows what she wants to do."

While much of the feedback Cote has received about the piece falls outside what would typically be considered

"positive," it sends a clear and welcome message to her - message conveyed, mission accomplished.

"People who view the piece usually ask me, 'Why would you want to show something like this, it's so sad and heartbreaking?" Cote said. "So technically, I'm hearing what I wanted to. Because of this reaction I know I have shown how I feel."

Quotes for Good" benefits local organizations

COOK- State Farm Insurance refreshed its marketing focus several years ago, retiring a catchphrase that was synonymous with the nation's leading insurer for decades, but there's little doubt that the phrase "good neighbor" should be dusted off, shined up, and attached firmly to local State Farm agent Tim Johnson of Cook.

Thanks to Johnson's participation in a relatively new community-focused endeavor called "Quotes for Good," Volunteers in Education (VinE), a program that provides volunteer math and reading tutors primarily for elementary school students, has \$1,200 more to put toward its efforts.

VinE Executive Director Cassandra Hainey and longtime educator and VinE contributor Bailey Conger, from Cook and an actual neighbor of Johnson, were at the State Farm office on Thursday to receive the donation. In a year when even tutoring has had to embrace online connections due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the money will be put to good use.

"This year the need has not decreased, it's increased," Hainey said. "We have costs associated with each tutor that uses Zoom, for example - that's a new cost. Every one of our tutors has to go through a background check, and that's an additional cost either from us or the volunteer. The coordinators are doing more this year because they have to set up every tutoring session, making sure it's being recorded and communicating with teachers and students to make sure everybody has the correct information."

From its humble beginnings in 2009 serving schools in Cook, Tower, and Babbitt, VinE is now in all of the Rock Ridge, Mt. Iron-Buhl, and St. Louis County district schools. And while this year's COVID juggling has been difficult and left VinE with more volunteer tutors than students, a new collaboration with St. Louis County Social Services will connect VinE tutors with foster children who need extra support.

Hainey said that while an immediate use for the funds would be

subsidizing background checks; it will be used to support other aspects of VinE's operations, also.

This is the second organization Johnson has helped through the "Quotes for Good" program, the first being the Cook Food Shelf.

Johnson makes the choice of an organization to raise funds for, and he gives \$10 for every insurance quote he gives during a period of two months. While the State Farm corporate office provides a small subsidy to agents who participate, the lion's share of the money donated comes from Johnson's own business income.

"It's based on quotes, not on business written," Johnson said. "It doesn't obligate people. Most agents do one group a month, but I just felt that with the local organizations I'd do two months to give them time to promote it more. It's been fun, and I'm glad that people like it and appreciate it."

Before moving to Cook in 2009, Johnson said he knew he wanted to become part of the fabric of the community and



State Farm Insurance agent Tim Johnson, of Cook, presents a \$1,200 check to Volunteers in Education representatives Bailey Conger, center, and Cassandra Hainey. photo by D. Colburn

find ways to give back.

"I think we have an obligation as businesses to give back, because I wouldn't survive without the people of this region," Johnson said. "That's how my business has been built. But it's especially important now, because with COVID-19, it's been more difficult for groups to do fundraisers."

Johnson's current "Quotes for Good" organization is Friends of the Lake Vermilion Trail. Johnson has been involved with the trail project for about 10 years, and the Friends group is just starting to gain some good traction in fundraising. Johnson hopes the upcoming "Quotes for Good" donation will give them a good boost.

And who comes after that? Johnson said he hasn't decided yet, but he'll be looking for another charitable organization to support.

"It's been fun and I look forward to working

with the next group," Johnson said.

Community meal offered on Jan. 28

COOK- Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook is hosting a drive-through community meal on Thursday, Jan. 28 from 4 to 6 p.m. The menu will include sloppy Joes and sides. This event is free and open to the public.

SULFIDE MINING

Twin Metals opponents hopeful in wake of political changes

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER Managing Editor

REGIONAL— This week's transition to new leadership in our nation's capital has sparked a renewed push in both Washington and St. Paul for permanent protection of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area from the risks associated with sulfide-based copper-nickel mining within the wilderness watershed.

And that could have major repercussions for the proposed Twin Metals mine near Ely, which is dependent on maintaining two existing federal mineral leases and obtaining a third lease without which the company says its mine won't be financially viable.

That third lease won't be issued if critics of the proposal are successful in advancing a new measure authored by Minnesota's Fourth District Rep. Betty McCollum, which would permanently protect the Boundary Waters from mining pollution by expanding the existing mining protection zone around the wilderness to include 234,000 acres of the Superior National Forest surrounding the proposed Twin Metals mine site.

That measure had little chance with Republicans in charge of the Senate, but recent Democratic wins in the Georgia special elections will leave Democrats in charge of that body as of next week, opening a lane for such a measure to advance to passage.

And a companion bill is set to be introduced by

members of the Minnesota House and Senate, which would enshrine those protections in state law as well. "State and federal laws offer permanent protection to the wilderness, but the Boundary Waters remains threatened by the prospect of a copper-sulfide mine on its border," said Rep. Kelly Morrison, chief author of the protection bill in the Minnesota House.

The announcement for that legislation comes on the heels of the introduction of the "Prove It First" bill, on Monday in St. Paul, which would require scientific evidence that a similar sulfide-based copper mine was able to operate for at least ten years and was successfully closed for at least ten years without causing pollution. Supporters say that measure is based on a Wisconsin law which was approved in that state with broad bipartisan support. "Minnesota's waters and the people of Minnesota are not guinea pigs, and the communities that work and live downstream of these proposals like Duluth and Fond du Lac deserve strong legal safeguards. We cannot ignore the long track record of pollution from the sulfide mining industry. That's why a "prove it first" approach makes sense," said Kathryn Hoffman, CEO of Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy.

The various bills represent just one avenue among a number of pathways now available to protection for the Boundary Waters, according to

Becky Rom, National Chair of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters. The campaign is also hopeful about the prospect of executive action by the Biden administration, including re-engaging the study examining the impacts of a 20-year mineral withdrawal. The Obama administration had initiated that study just weeks before Trump took office, but the Trump administration later canceled the study, without releasing its findings, and rejected a mineral withdrawal, which would have prohibited any new mineral leasing on about 234,000 acres of the Superior National Forest. Rom believes that decision may get a second look from the Biden administration.

The two existing Twin Metals leases could also face scrutiny by the new administration. The Obama administration had canceled those leases in its final weeks in office, but the Trump administration reversed that decision as well, claiming that a longstanding and bipartisan legal interpretation within the Department of Interior regarding the company's rights to renewal was in error. A number of Ely area businesses and environmental groups are in the midst of a legal challenge of Trump's decision to reissue the two leases to Twin Metals.

But those cases could berendered mootif Biden's Interior Department concludes that the Trump administration improperly renewed the Twin Metals leases. "We believe the

new administration will audit the illegal actions of the Trump administration and we see the renewal of the leases as among those illegal actions," said Rom.

If the Biden administration doesn't move to reverse the decisions of the Trump administration, the campaign is hopeful the courts will. The campaign has three lawsuits already percolating through the courts that are intended to block the proposed mine, one way or another.

TMM influence diminished?

While top officials with Antofagasta, Twin Metals' parent company, appeared to hold considerable sway over the Trump administration, that's unlikely to be the case with the incoming Biden administration. Indeed, both Tom Vilsack, the incoming Secretary of Agriculture, who oversees the U.S. Forest Service, and Debra Haaland, the incoming Secretary of the Interior, who will oversee federal mineral leasing, are on record as skeptics of the Twin Metals proposal.

Haaland, who will be the first Native American to head the Interior Department, voted in support of McCollum's Boundary Waters protection measure when she first introduced it last year. Vilsack has publicly expressed his belief that copper-nickel mining within the BWCAW watershed poses an unacceptable risk to both the wilderness and the wilderness-based economy that has grown up around

it. As agriculture secretary under Obama, it was Vilsack who ultimately greenlighted the decision by the Forest Service to veto renewal of the Twin Metals leases. In an op-ed he penned in honor of the 40th anniversary of the Boundary Waters Wilderness Act, Vilsack wrote of that decision, noting: "What stood out most was not only that the Boundary Waters is a priceless wilderness (although it certainly is that), but also that it was the right decision to make for the economic development of the region."

Opponents of the Twin Metals mine have pointed to economic analyses that suggest the economic pluses of a copper-nickel mine could easily be offset by its negative impacts on the amenity-based economic development already in place in the Ely area. That's a point that was reiterated by Steve Piragis, who operates Piragis Northwoods Company, one of Ely's largest private employers. "Copper-nickel mining, wherever it exists, is a problem for surrounding ecosystems and the businesses that depend on it," he said. "Businesses that have grown up around the Boundary Waters have been sustainable for over a century."

While opponents of the Twin Metals proposal are encouraged at their prospects with the incoming administration, a Twin Metals spokesperson said company officials expect to share the new administration's priorities, "including the transition to a green economy and the emphasis on domestic supply chains as part of our economic recovery."

Twin Metals officials claim that Minnesota contains 95 percent of the known nickel reserves in the U.S., along with 88 percent of the cobalt and 75 percent of platinum group metals, some of which will be important to a shift in the world's energy economy. "Slamming the door on the opportunity to develop those resources would be irresponsible, not just for our state's future, but also for our country's ability to secure these minerals domestically in an area where we have stringent worker and environmental standards," stated the company in response.

Company officials dismiss economic studies that suggest the mine could actually reduce income growth in northeastern Minnesota and believe that any ban on mining would be detrimental to the region. "The Twin Metals project alone brings the promise of \$1.7 billion in private investment through construction of its underground copper, nickel, cobalt and platinum group metals project. Once operational, the mine will support 750 full-time employees and create another 1,500 spinoff jobs," stated Twin Metals spokesperson Kathy Graul.

MPCA...Continued from page 1

ued to discharge large volumes of polluted water into the Sand River, a Lake Vermilion tributary, through several uncontrolled seeps from under the basin dike.

A 2017 investigation by the federal Environmental Protection Agency documented those seeps, noted tribal officials in a letter to Gov. Tim Walz last October, which was obtained by the *Timberjay*. That letter, signed by the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and nine of the state's tribal nations (the Bois Forte Band being the lone exception), notes that the MPCA had denied the existence of those seeps in issuing its new permit to Minntac. "Had the Fond du Lac Band (and tribal amici, including Grand Portage) not stepped up to litigate this and other problems with this permit, this falsehood would have stood unchallenged," note the tribal representatives in their letter. "What is new here is the evidence that MPCA knew it was in the wrong all along. This means its findings, and the agency's statement in the litigation on this issue, seem all to have been in bad faith." The Minnesota Court of Appeals threw out the new Minntac permit just over one year ago citing its failure to regulate seeps, among other issues. The court also found that the permit failed to set any water quality-based effluent limits, which is a failure that environmental groups and tribes have cited frequently in mining-related permits. The state's Supreme Court heard arguments in a subsequent appeal in November but has yet to enforcement action, but said her agency remained "focused on completing the permit process that it believed would result in actions by USS Minntac that would improve water quality."

Part of a pattern

In fact, pollution concentrations appear to have increased in 2020, perhaps due to the drier conditions. Discharges in 2017, for example, averaged 54 milligrams per liter of sulfate, or well above the 14 mg/l set in the company's permit. Through October of 2020, discharges from the same outflow averaged 62 mg/l in 2020, a 15-percent increase since the new permit limits took effect. In questions submitted to the MPCA for this story, the Timberjay asked whether MPCA officials were aware of the permit violations or if any enforcement action had been taken to address them. The MPCA did not respond. "It's hard to argue that anything that advances the protection of aquatic resources has actually happened as a result of that [permit]," said Nancy Schuldt, chief water quality specialist with the Fond du Lac Band, who has been working on the sulfate issue for more than a decade.

that its hands are tied by the Legislature, which enacted a law in 2016 that prohibited the agency from requiring companies to expend funds to improve sulfate pollution, that provision only applies to certain state permits. The Court of Appeals found that the Legislature lacks the authority to suspend enforcement of federal permits, such as the water discharge permits, known as NPDES permits, at issue with Keetac. Despite a string of recent legal victories for tribes and environmentalists on mining pollution cases, the facts on the ground remain virtually unchanged according to Paula Maccabee, legal counsel and advocacy director for Water Legacy, which has joined forces with the tribes to push for better regulation of the mining industry. Maccabee said she worries that news reports of legal victories are giving the public the impression that progress is being made in the cleanup of mining pollution in northeastern Minnesota. In fact, she says, companies like U.S. Steel continue to avoid action and evade responsibility thanks to their political influence in St. Paul.

"What is frustrating to many of our supporters is that the rules on the books do not seem to apply to the mining industry," said Maccabee. "The agencies allow them to think they're above the law."

issue its decision.

Meanwhile, tribal officials are now asking Gov. Walz to direct the MPCA to undertake a joint enforcement action with the EPA to address the ongoing discharges into the Sand River. Tribal officials contend those discharges, which include high levels of sulfate, have decimated once-robust wild rice beds in the Twin Lakes, located just downstream. The EPA had proposed a joint enforcement action after documenting the seepage and pollution violations, but MPCA officials refused to take part

Tribes are also asking the governor to direct state regulators to finalize a list of what are known as "impaired waters," to include wild rice lakes impacted by high sulfate levels.

While the MPCA did not respond to questions for this story, the agency did provide documents in response to a public records request by the *Timberjay*. In an Oct. 26, 2020 letter responding to tribes, MPCA Commissioner Laura Bishop denied that her agency opposed an EPA

Minntac, it turns out, isn't the only taconite facility where tribal officials and environmentalists say MPCA actions have fallen short. While environmental groups once saw the agency's issuance of new permits to U.S. Steel's Keetac plant and tailings basin in 2011 as a victory, lack of enforcement of the now nearly decade-old permit has become yet another symbol of MPCA's reluctance to challenge the political clout of the mining industry.

The Keetac permits were the first in the state to set explicit water quality standards for the discharge of sulfate, to protect wild rice. Even so, the permits provided the company with years to bring its discharges within the levels set in those permits. But those deadlines, set for August 2018 and August 2019, both came and went with no apparent improvement in the level of sulfate pollution, according to sampling data, obtained by the Timberjay, that the company submitted to the MPCA under the terms of its permit.

While the MPCA has argued in the past

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"I cannot disagree with that," said Schuldt. "They [mining com-

panies] invest in legal rationales for avoiding regulatory enforcement. It is their business model and it's cheaper than investing in technology that might address the problem," Schuldt added.

"We have no illusions about whether the cost of clean-up would be expensive, but otherwise the public carries the cost when we eventually have to pay for another Superfund site."

The *Timberjay* sought comment from U.S. Steel for this story. The company did not respond.



Read the news online at www.timberjay.com

TOWER AREA AMBULANCE

Ambulance Commission discusses raising subsidy rate from \$15 to \$20

by JODI SUMMIT Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- A proposal to raise the 2021 per capita subsidy rate from \$15 to \$20, which helps fund the purchase of new ambulances, will be forwarded from the representatives of the Tower Ambulance Commission to their respective governmental bodies for approval.

The former head of the city's ambulance service, Steve Altenburg, had requested an increase in the ambulance subsidy last year, but that request was denied and the commission instead opted to approve a one-year agreement at the previous rate of \$15.

But this year, with the department under new leadership and the commission feeling more informed about the finances and management of the service, the request for an increase in the subsidy was met on a more positive

note

. TheTowerAmbulance

Commission consists of representatives from each of the governmental units in the ambulance's service area. The subsidy payments are put into a dedicated ambulance replacement fund. The department purchased a new ambulance in 2019 at a cost of approximately \$250,000. That account currently has \$43,066 plus a \$7,477 payment from the city of Tower to reimburse the fund for ambulance mileage on non-emergency transfer calls.

The ambulance put on 7,477 transfer miles in 2020, with over 4,000 of the miles in January and February, before the commission asked the department to stop taking non-essential transfer calls because of the wear and tear placed on the ambulances. Since that time, according to the new Ambulance Director Dena Suihkonen, non-emergency transfers have mostly been for local residents. The service did see an increase in transfer miles in November and December, a total of 1,511 miles, many related to COVID-19 patients. The ambulance service also provides transfer service for residents at the local assisted living facility, who need to be transported to or from area hospitals.

"In our community we have to take care of our members who are living here," Suihkonen said.

A question was raised by Eagles Nest representative Larry McCray who said the transfer miles noted for January and February did not match mileage numbers previously reported. Suihkonen said the mileage numbers were taken from the submitted run reports but said she would doublecheck.

Suihkonen said the service is mostly using the new ambulance, Rig Two, for wintertime transfers because the heat on the older rig is not sufficient to keep the staff and patients warm during colder weather. This also is giving the service a chance to test out all the ambulance features while the unit is under warranty, and the service has had the company come to Tower to fix an issue with the backup cameras. The state of the depart-

ment's two "back-up" ambulances was a concern to commission members. Both are rated in poor condition. One unit, the 2005 rig, has been put in storage for the winter. The 2013 rig has 108,450 miles and needs emission system repairs.

Suihkonen told the commission members she was working with grant writer Nancy Larson and would be submitting a grant for funding for a new ambulance later this month. Raising the annual per capita subsidy payment to \$20 would bring in \$53,160 a year compared to \$39,870 currently. In addition, Bois Forte has been contributing \$5,000 a year, and the city of Tower, as of 2020, makes payments to the fund based on transfer mileage.

Fortune Bay subsidy amount

McCray asked why the commission was not asking Fortune Bay for an increase in their annual contribution to the subsidy account.

"We had 77 calls to Fortune Bay in 2019," McCray said, "the second largest in 2019."

Suihkonen noted that there were only 46 calls to Fortune Bay in 2020.

"They have been hit hard by the COVID closures," she noted.

McCray said he felt that Fortune Bay's contribution was too low, and said he thought the payment should be based on the average number of calls compared to other municipalities.

But others noted this was not a reliable way to set funding for the subsidy account and would also set a precedent for other small townships in the service area which do not have high call volumes.

Suihkonen reminded the commission that Fortune Bay was in the ambulance service area.

"We are not going to stop going there," she said.

"Greenwood Township pays based on their population, which includes the reservation population," said Bois Forte Representative Josh Villebrun, who said he would bring the matter to the tribal council, which sets the annual donation. Bois Forte also makes annual donations to area fire departments.

COUNTY SCHOOLS

ISD 2142 school board welcomes two new members

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editorw

REGIONAL- ISD 2142 School Board Chairman Dan Manick will continue in that role for another year after he was the only one nominated for the position at the board's organizational meeting on Jan. 5.

The board welcomed two new members, Bob Larson and Lynne Hilde. Bob Larson was selected to be vice-chair.

Board member Pat Christensen continues as the designated clerk, and member Chris Koivisto was named treasurer. Their overall responsibilities were later assigned by a board resolution to administrative assistant Jeanne Sopp and business manager Kim Johnson, respectively. The board approved

a \$400 per month stipend for board members, with a rate of \$12 per hour to be paid for participation in special meetings, committee meetings, workshops, and conferences. Travel time for those events will

be reimbursed at the same rate.

The one mildly contentious item on the agenda came when the board considered the designation of the district's official newspaper, which last year was the *Cook News Herald*.

Koivisto suggested that the district should consider awarding the designation to the *Timberjay*, noting that as of the first of the year the new consolidated format of the newspaper gave the *Timberjay* a larger coverage area of the district than that of the *Cook News Herald*.

After several minutes of discussion, the board voted 4-3 to continue with the *News Herald*, with Koivisto, Hilde, and Troy Swanson voting against the motion.

The board formally adjourned the organizational meeting and then immediately convened a special meeting to approve a purchased services agreement from the Mt. Iron-Buhl district.

The agreement includes \$73,771 desig-

nated for underwriting the salary and benefits of Superintendent Reggie Engebritson, who also serves part time as superintendent for Mt. Iron-Buhl. Additional services provided by ISD 2142 for teaching and learning, transportation, payroll and benefits, and licensed nursing, plus a service fee, brings the total cost of the agreement to \$223,321 for FY2021-22. The board also gave

final approval to a revised labor agreement with the district's custodial unit.

The agreement makes revisions to health coverage consistent with other district labor agreements, revises the section pertaining to bids for changing job classifications, and makes several changes in pay rates for various categories of full and part-time custodial staff. The wage rate for head custodians was increased by \$1.75 an hour, making their monthly compensation \$3,120 up to one year's tenure and \$3,607 after one year in the current school fiscal year.

COVID...Continued from page 1 -

got their second dose, and we have about 30 staff members that will be getting their second dose this week."

Still, not all staff members chose to participate when the first doses were administered on Dec. 22, Chiabotti said. Many expressed reservations about the safety of the vaccine, although some have changed their minds after seeing how those vaccinated have fared. Only one person experienced side effects with the first shot, and just two have exhibited side effects so far after receiving a second dose. "We are at about 65 percent of our staff that have been vaccinated," Chiabotti said. "We have staff members that have some medical issues going on who can't get vaccinated right now. The rest of them aren't willing to get the vaccine. We've done a lot of educating and we're continuing to reach out to those staff members on an individual basis and provide them with a lot of scientific medical information to encourage them to obtain the vaccine. We did get five more people to sign up this week, so our percentage will go up a little bit more." Inadditiontotheirown staff, Cook Hospital has administered the vaccine to the ambulance crews in Orr and Cook and the Bois Forte Police, using the Pfizer vaccine distributed weekly from the Hibbing hospital through the regional Northeast Healthcare Preparedness Coalition, Chiabotti said.

challenge of coordinating distribution of the vaccine across multiple providers and settings, the county health department also set up a clinic at the Cook Ambulance hall to vaccinate emergency sion among those seeking vaccinations.

"It's very common for people in the community to confuse the hospital and the Scenic Rivers clinic." Chiabotti said. "We are in the same building, we have the same physicians, but we're two separate entities. The clinic is getting their own supply of vaccine. We're set up to vaccinate our staff and everyone that is part of our entity, but we've never done public vaccinations before. That goes through the clinic systems." Chiabotti said that if hospitals are eventually recruited to bolster the public vaccination campaign, they would work closely with Scenic Rivers to facilitate the program. The best advice for people wanting to get vaccinated is for them to work through their primary physician or healthcare provider, Chiabotti said. "I know some clinics have waiting lists. Some clinics are going to do notifications via text message," she said. "Your best bet is to contact your primary care physician or provider and find out what the process will be."

"If you are positive and have some underlying health conditions, that monoclonal therapy could prevent you from getting severe illness, but you have to get it within ten days of onset of symptoms," Chiabotti said. "The trickiest thing with monoclonal therapy is that people aren't getting tested right away when they become symptomatic, so by the time they come in and get tested and get the results, it's been more than ten days." Thirteen patients have received monoclonal antibody treatments at Cook Hospital, but others have likely missed out because they didn't get tested when they first started showing symptoms, Chiabotti said. The treatment has to be prescribed by a physician who has evaluated a patient against a number of other criteria, but it has to happen within that ten-day window.

ment that it was scrapping their original directive to target discrete small groups. Instead, to boost the number of people getting vaccinated, anyone age 65 and above would now be eligible to receive the vaccine. All vaccines being held back for later delivery for second doses would be released as well to speed up the process. Gov. Tim Walz and state health officials took a "trust but verify" stance in response to the announcements, a reaction that was correctly prudent when just days later the administration admitted they didn't have a second-dose reserve - all of its vaccine supply was already allocated and distributed. However, late last week Minnesota officials embraced the 65-and-older eligibility criteria, and on Monday increased the pool even more by including child care workers and K-12 teachers in the group eligible to be vaccinated this Friday and Saturday at one of nine pilot vaccination sites throughout the state. Health officials estimated this expansion made an additional one million Minnesotans eligible to be vaccinated. But Walz warned on Monday that the state's weekly federal allotment of 60,000 doses was woefully short of meeting the anticipated demand, and health officials confirmed that only 11,000 of those doses would be available through the pilot sites, including one in Mt. Iron. When the pilot site registration website and phone center opened at noon on Tuesday, overwhelming demand far outstripped the meager supply. State Infectious Disease Director Kris Ehresmann issued a press release late that afternoon detailing the deluge.

"Since registration

And illustrating the

responders.

"They showed up in Cook to do some vaccinations and all the EMS folks that wanted the vaccine had already come in through the hospital to get their vaccine," Chiabotti said. Hospital staff have also administered the Moderna vaccinetothoseintheCook Care Center who wanted to receive it. Cook Hospital offered to assist with vaccinations at area assisted living facilities, which fall under the responsibility of the federally managed pharmacy vaccination program, but the offer was declined, Chiabotti said. Given immense issues with scheduling and staffing, that wasn't a problem for Chiabotti.

"This is a small facility, and we all have our own jobs that we have to do on top of this. We don't have that luxury of having extra staff available to take on all these huge, massive projects. We're doing it just fine, it's working very well, and we have a great team that is working on the vaccination efforts. But we still have our normal jobs to do as well."

For now, hospitals are part of the effort to vaccinate the general public. That responsibility lies in part with community health clinics like Scenic Rivers Health Services in Cook and Tower, which has created some confu-

Antibody treatments

Cook Hospital offers the monoclonal antibody treatments that can decrease the severity of COVID-19 and the chances of needing hospitalizations and emergency room visits, but Chiabotti said that the treatment often can't be used if people weren't tested when they first develop COVID-19 symptoms. "We're really trying to encourage the testing sooner rather than later," she said. As with vaccines, the hospital doesn't provide testing for the general public, although they do administer a rapid test for emergency room patients with severe symptoms. Chiabotti encouraged people to arrange for testing through their community health clinics.

State pilot sites

The landscape for vaccination plans across the country changed dramatically last week with the Trump administration's surprise announceopened at noon today, we've experienced continuous high call volume to the vaccine registration call center and traffic to the web registration page," Ehresmann said. "More than 232,000 calls have been processed through the call center as of 3:45 p.m., and at the peak the website was processing more than 10,000 hits per second."

The online site experienced slowdowns and was temporarily closed to better manage the traffic, Ehresmann said, but they didn't stop processing registrations. As of 4:15 p.m., 5,000 people had been scheduled for first and second vaccination appointments. "Unfortunately, there is no way to get around the fact there will be frustrations as we continue to deal with the extreme supply shortage," Ehresmann said. "What we are seeing is extraordinarily pent-up demand for vaccine. Nearly one million Minnesotans age 65 and over are trying to get a few thousand doses of vaccines that have been made available to Minnesota."

Another round of appointments will open up on Tuesday, Jan. 26 at noon. Register online at https://mn.gov/covid19/ vaccine/find-vaccine/ index.jsp, or call 833-431-2053.

ELY...Continued from page 1

cautiously navigates the challenges of teaching students during the continuing coronavirus pandemic.

ISD 696 switched to distance learning around Thanksgiving as COVID-19 cases trended upward in the community. Students stayed home through the Christmas holidays and returned to in-school learning on Jan. 12, just as the number of positive cases began inching upward again.

In the weekly meeting of the Ely Safe Learning Plan Advisory Council on Jan. 14, K-5 Principal Anne Oelke said, "It's nice to have the kids back. They are getting back in the groove, they are good at all this COVID stuff. They're little soldiers. They are awesome and are experts at COVID (protocols)."

She explained that the Washington School is set up more like a hybrid model to keep the kids separate and safe.

"We have pretty much

cohorted all of them into small groups. Even for our bigger groups, like for music, we have split those in half so they are not all in the same area at the same time," she said. "Interventions are done on computer to limit the staff from moving around the school too much."

Anderson agreed with Oelke on the positive aspects of having students back in the building. "We certainly missed them and welcomed them back in the school."

Cohorts of students attend schools on Mondays and Tuesdays. Other cohorts are in school on Thursdays and Fridays. All students maintain distance-learning on Wednesdays.

With school returning to some in-person models, and following the holiday break with likely more in-person events and celebrations, the number of positive COVID-19 cases is also going up.



Second graders at Washington Elementary School in Ely returned to in-person learning last week. photo by K. Vandervort

Superintendent Eric Erie reported three positive cases of COVID-19 in the school community last week, bringing the cumulative total to 14 for the school year.

"With contact tracing,

there were no other groups affected," he said.

School nurse Betty Erickson confirmed that the recent positive tests in the school community involved distance learners and occurred over the holiday break.

"There was no exposure to anyone at school," she said.

The St. Louis County COVID-tracking dashboard for northern county schools went up slightly last week, from 17.34 positive cases per 10,000 people, to 21.7, but was nowhere near the 92.3 positive cases at the beginning of January.

"Central St. Louis County went down about 10 points," Erie said.

In the past week, in St. Louis County, deaths from COVID-19 increased from 225 to 237. The number of deaths in the state of Minnesota continues to climb, from 5,528 to 5,724 last week.

"That is nearly 200 more deaths and that is a significant number," he said.

Deaths in the United States crossed the 400,000 mark on Tuesday, with nearly two million deaths reported across the planet. Public health protocols for teachers and staff were adjusted prior to the holiday break in anticipation of the return to in-person instruction.

"Now they are 'strongly recommending' that both masks and shields be worn by teachers," Erie said. "We are also strongly recommending that our teachers and staff wear both forms of protection. We are not requiring both at this time."

Face shields and masks are available for all ISD 696 employees.

Voluntary saliva tests for the coronavirus were available for teachers and volunteers on campus beginning last week, according to Erie. Saliva test clinics, both in the Memorial and Washington buildings, will continue to be held on campus about every two weeks. "We hope our employees take advantage of that," he said.

MAYOR...Continued from page 1

her advocacy as a tested and transparent leader for the Ely community.

"I first decided to run for council for my children's future in Ely," Omerza said. "That is more important today than it has ever been, keeping Ely viable and vibrant, beyond all our tomorrows, but keeping today in mind."

She said she hopes to bring "her knowledge, expertise and passion" gained over the last 14 years to the mayor's seat, "especially her parenting skills, teaching experiences, and common sense to solve problems."

Omerza has served as president of the Coalition of Greater MN Cities (CGMC) board and is currently still on the CGMC board as the LGA Tax Co-Chair, president of the League of MN Cities, and is currently the president of the Greater MN Partnership.

"This is a feat that no other Ely mayor or council member has

vacant council seat.

"I was elected and that led to a run of about ten years on the council," he said. "I was off the council for some time and got the bug again and continue to serve." He ran for mayor four years ago and lost to Novak by six votes.

Kess has been active in the community in a number of capacities, as a member of the Development Council and the local sled dog race committee.

"As mayor, the shortterm is important right now. We need to make sure Ely citizens and businesses get all the available help they can to get through the COVID (crisis)," he said. "The city tries to make sure programs are available for businesses, and we need to continue that. We need to define policies to help our city's businesses."

He also called for the city to be vigilant to continue to help the hospitality industry here. "There are some businesses that are making it through, but many are struggling. We need to make sure that those businesses and our citizens are getting the resources they need.' Kess asserted that he remains an advocate for lower taxes. He is currently a member of the council's budget committee. "We need to keep the budget under control," he said. "As the state budget struggles, I assume that pain will roll downhill and we will be expected to share in that. I think I have the experience and depth of knowledge to help guide the discussion on how we respond. "

Campbell serves on the city council and previously ran for mayor. In a statement to the *Timberjay*, she said. "I'm running for mayor of Ely because the simple truth is this, I can make a difference. I can make an impact. I want to move Ely forward with experience, integrity, trust and commitment."

Debeltz is a native of Ely and graduated from Ely High School in 1970. He has served on the city council for 28 years. He said he ran for mayor "quite a few years ago" and lost, and wants to continue his service to the community.

"I hope we can keep our streets in good shape and our workforce going," he said. "Ely is a great place to live and visit and I hope we can make Ely a better place." He said he is focused on the need for good-paying jobs and the continuation and improvement of health care, especially for veterans. Skraba held three terms as mayor following several years on the council in the late 1990s.

He was first elected mayor in 2004, lost a re-election bid to Novak in 2006, beat Novak in 2008, and was re-elected to hold the seat in 2010. He then lost to Ross Petersen in 2012.

"I ran for the state House of Representatives three times, as a Democrat, I n dependent and Republican," he said. "I want to get back involved with everything that's going on in the world. It is so polarized right now."

Skraba is doing carpentry work this winter and is a longtime fishing guide in the area.

"I'm very comfortable in the mayor's seat because I represent all people, and I make no bones about it. Sometimes you have to make decisions that are not what you want, then it goes where it goes and that's what I respect. The majority votes for what they want. I can offer my influence and my knowledge for people to make a decision that's good for the community. The politics is the part that sucks the most.'

the Minnesota Mayors Association when he was in office, Skraba said he talked with his peers about solving the same issues. "I brought those ideas back to this community to help

everyone," he said. "The transition from being on the city council to being mayor was mind-boggling," he added. "During those days we were always searching for a clerk-treasurer or a city administrator, and I did a lot of that work on a de facto basis."

As a member of



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accomplished," she said.

Kess welcomed the growing field of candidates.

"I'm a fan of democracy and giving the voters a choice is a good thing," he said.

He was first elected to the city council in the mid-1990s after serving on the Charter Commission and being appointed to a

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ELY SCHOOL DISTRICT

School board rejects pay raise for committee work

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

ELY – A new year brings new members to ISD 696 school board. Darren Visser and Hollee Coombe replace two former members who did not seek re-election, Heidi Mann and James Pointer. Board members met recently to re-affirm a number of organizational positions and policies.

Ray Marsnik remains as board chair. Rochelle Sjoberg was re-elected as board clerk and Tom Omerza returns as board treasurer.

While accepting a cost-of-living increase in their stipends for serving on the panel, board members declined to give themselves a raise for serving on board committees.

A motion to establish compensation levels for 2021 with a 1.2-percent raise for inflation was passed unanimously. Board members will now be paid \$195 per month (plus \$30,000 in life insurance), and the board chair will receive \$251 per month (plus \$30,000 in life insurance). In addition, board members will be paid \$56 for the monthly study session.

Marsnik reminded the board that the life insurance benefit is for board members who are younger than age 65.

Board member Tony Colarich sought to amend the board compensation motion to include pay of \$15 per board member for each board committee meeting they attend.

Visser said he would not be opposed to the idea of considering committee compensation on an individual basis, but voiced concerns with the motion.

"Some committees take an immense amount of time, but to do a blanket statement across the board could open up a precedent for the rest of our bargaining units," he said.

Marsnik said the school board has as many

don't think any of us are here for the income. We are here, hopefully, to help the kids. Given where we're at, with the ramp up of expenses due to the pandemic, the facilities project, and the last couple of rounds on (salary) negotiations, I'm of the desire to set the example and show that we are watching expenses. This whole thing here is for the kids. Certainly, some committees are spending an inordinate amount of time. I would be more for

staying where we're at." Marsnik added that he could find very few regional school districts that compensate board members for committee work. "The only one in our area is ISD 2142, and they show an annual salary of \$4,800," he said. "We are in the ballpark of most districts."

The motion to include committee work in the pay scale was defeated on a 4-1 vote. Colarich voted for the motion, while Marsnik, Omerza, Visser and Coombe voted against it. Sjoberg was absent from the meeting.

Parking lot sinkhole

Superintendent Erik Erie's update on the facility renovation project included new information on a development that could cost taxpayers another \$140,000 or more.

"In the stadium

parking lot area, we had a sink hole develop last summer," he said. "We don't really know what is underneath that. In fact, we had a student step in it. It has been patched up, but we found out that is the one parking area not covered by the (\$20 million) project. I was a little surprised by that."

He said all the other campus parking lot areas are slated for renovation.

An estimate from project supervisor Kraus-Anderson indicates that to repave the area would cost about \$86,000, and completely rebuilding the lot for long-term use would run about \$144,000.

"We don't know what the issue is, but there is a problem underneath," Erie said.

"In looking at how to cover that cost, we are looking at an abatement bond," he said.

The district's financial advisor is exploring that option and will provide an update to school board members at the Jan. 25 study session. "They will explain how by financing the Long Term Facilities Maintenance bond and combining that with an abatement bond, we can have a favorable outcome. We don't want to significantly affect the taxpayers any more than we told them."

Other business

In other business,

board:

Accepted the resignations of paraprofessionals Donna Carlson and Sarah Spate.

► Accepted the resignation of Head Volleyball Coach Andrea Thomas, effective immediately.

► Accepted a leave of absence request from assistant boys basketball coach Tim Omerza for the 2020-21 season.

➤ Approved a request fromKindergarten teacher Megan Devine for another leave of absence, without pay, for the 2021-22 school year.

➤ Hired Jordan Huntbatch for the fulltime Payroll, Benefits and Finance Coordinator position for \$53,000 per year.



as 17 committees.

"I estimate that would be approximately 150 meetings per year," he said. "With Tony's motion that we pay \$15 per meeting, that would amount to \$2,250 per year, about \$375 per board member, or an additional \$31 per month."

Adding the \$195 per month for board meetings, plus \$56 for study sessions, and the projected \$31 proposed committee pay, would be \$282 per month or \$3,384 per year compensation for each board member.

Marsnik compared school board member compensation rates around northern Minnesota. "Out of 31 other school districts, ten districts pay more than Ely and 21 pay less," he said.

"International Falls pays \$3,120. Greenway and Mesabi East are at \$3,000. Duluth is at \$7,560 per year. Nett Lake is \$6,000 per year. The rest were all pretty close to the same."

Colarich pushed for the compensation increase.

"Board members, at times, are spending more time on committee assignments during the month than regular school board meetings," he said. "That commitment should be represented."

Omerza stated, "I

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NORDIC SKIING

Ely skiers hold their own in early season

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER Managing Editor

DULUTH— Ely skiers took the top spots in a tough field here on Tuesday, but both the boys and girls finished second overall on the challenging 5K Spirit Mountain course.

Ely junior Gabriel Pointer took first place in the varsity boys competition, with a time of 12:20.4. Jon Hakala finished in the fourth spot (13:07.8) and Micah Larson finished seventh (13:38.7).

For the girls, sophomore

Zoe Devine dominated the field, finishing first with a time of 13:59.0. Phoebe Helms finished in sixth place and was the only other Ely competitor to finish in the top ten.

"Ely did well individually, but we're definitely in a building year team-wise," said Ely Head Coach Paula Anderson. The boys competed this week without their standout, Jasper Johnston, who was competing in the CXC Cup, a qualifying regional competition for the Junior Nationals in Cable, Wis. Johnston took first place in the Right: Ely senior Julia Schwinghamer shows determination as she climbs a hill during competition at Hidden Vallye last week.

photo by L. Anderson

classic competition during that event.

The Wolves faced more tough competition last Thursday, as they hosted both Grand Rapids and Mesabi East during their season debut held at Hidden Valley. Ely girls

See SKIERS...pg. 2B





Left: The Grizzlies' Sean Morrison watches the ball intently as an opponent looks to pass.

Below: The Grizzlies' Jared Chiabotti goes up for a jumper.

photos by D. Colburn

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Wolves struggle in early going

by JORDAN PRICE Contributing Writer

ELY- The Timberwolves are in search of their first win in a COVID-19 shortened season as they fell to Bigfork, Deer River, and Two Harbors this week.

In Bigfork on Tuesday, the Huskies proved too tough to handle as Ely lost a heartbreaker 44-41. Sarah Visser led the way offensively for the Wolves, with 14 points, and was an aggressive force all game. Grace Latourell notched 12 points while Katrina Seliskar tallied eight and Rachel Coughlin seven. "We played a hard-fought game," said Ely Head Coach Max Gantt."We took care of the ball much better and made a push at the end. Unfortunately, we came up a little short. With that being said, we are continuing to improve everyday." Tuesday's match-up was a closer contest than the

BOYS BASKETBALL

Feast and famine Up and down week for Grizzlies

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- With three games in six days to open the 2021 high school boys basketball season, the North Woods Grizzlies have experienced both feast and famine, scoring blowout wins at Carlton and Cherry with a lackluster loss at home against Northland sandwiched between them.

North Woods came roaring out of the gate last Thursday at Carlton, with their pressure defense, running game, and offensive sets clicking about as well as Head Coach Will Kleppe could ask for in a season-opening 110-46 thrashing of the Bulldogs.

Led by lights-out shooting and 34 points by Jared Chiabotti, the Grizzlies could have gone scoreless

See GRIZZ..pg. 2B



Ely boys off to a strong start with back-to-back wins



by JORDAN PRICE Contributing Writer

ELY— The Timberwolves are off to a good start in an abbreviated boys basketball season as they tallied big back-to-back wins against Bigfork and Mt. Iron-Buhl this past

Left: Ely's Will Davies drives to the bucket during last Friday's game against Mt. Iron-Buhl.

photo by J. Greeney

week.

Playing at home on Saturday, all five members of Ely's starting lineup reached double digits in scoring for the second straight game. It was all Ely in the early going as the Wolves jumped to a 22-0 lead en route to a 95-50 shellacking of the Huskies. Joey Bianco led the way with 26 points, followed by Will Davies, 22, Emmett Faltesek, 15, Harry Simons, 14, and Brock Latourell, 10. Simons and Bianco both had six rebounds, Faltesek had nine assists, and Bianco had seven. "We shot the ball well in the first half of the game and played well on the defensive end of the floor," said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald.

Saturday's big win came on the heels of their 75-58 season-opening victory over Mt. Iron-

See WOLVES...pg. 2B

See ELY GIRLS...pg. 2B

Grizzlies girls split in week's action

by DAVID COLBURN Cook-Orr Editor

FIELDTWP-For a team as young as the North Woods girls basketball team, opening the season last Thursday on their home court paid dividends in a hard-fought 47-41 win over Nashwauk-Keewatin.

The Spartans entered the game touting seven seniors; the Grizzlies don't have any. North Woods has five freshmen; the Spartans don't have any.

But performance, not age, is what mattered, and the Grizzlies found a crucial edge in something more likely expected from their older opponents – poise.

North Woods got an immediate boost when Brianna Whiteman, one of only two juniors on the team, popped down a trey on the game's opening shot. Freshman Madi Dantes and sophomore Kiana LaRoque contributed points as the Grizzlies forged a 9-4 lead.

When the Spartans came

See NW GIRLS...pg. 2B

HOCKEY

Blizzard buries Ely Ely falls 5-1 in season opener

by KEITH VANDERVORT Ely Editor

ELY – A very young Ely High School varsity hockey team opened the 2021 season here last Saturday with a 5-1 loss to the Burnett County (Siren, Wis.) Blizzard.

The Timberwolves' lone senior, Jimmy Zupancich, scored Ely's only goal of the game at 6:16 in the third period, with an assist from Jack Mathias and Jakson Hegman.

The Blizzard took a 2-0 lead after the first period and made it 4-0 after two. They scored another goal at 12:05 in the third to finish the game.

The Timber wolves had 11 shots on goal in the contest, all in the last period. Ely has one junior on the team, goalie Chase Sandberg, who stopped 29 of 34 shots on goal.

"We have a very young team this year, but their work ethic is beyond compare," said Head Coach Ben Johnson. Four sophomores on the team, Logan Loe, Lexi Halberg, Jakson Hegman, and Kole Macho, are joined by a slew of eighth and ninth graders.

"This is by far the youngest team I've coached here at Ely," Johnson said, "but they are learning to play as a team and have loads of hustle and heart."

Ely travels to Greenway on Tuesday, Jan. 26, and to North Shore on Tuesday, Feb. 2. The Timberwolves host Moose Lake on Saturday, Feb. 6.



Ely junior goalie Chase Sandberg got a workout last Saturday in Ely's season opener against Burnett County. Sandberg blocked 29 of 34 shots. photo by K. Vandervort

NW GIRLS...Continued from page 1B-



GRIZZ...Continued from page 1B

in the second half and still won the game by 20, piling up 66 points by halftime while holding Carlton to 22.

Creating turnovers and cashing in on the other end of the court is a hallmark of Grizzlies basketball, and North Woods defenders wreaked havoc on the outmatched Bulldogs, converting 29 turnovers into 44 points. T.J. Chiabotti, Alex Hartway, and Brenden Chiabotti benefitted from the relentless pressure by scoring 18, 17, and 13 "A typical first game," he said. "A little sloppy for both teams, but we shot the ball well so we opened the game up early. It was evident that kids were still trying to find their roles on the floor, but that will be a work in progress. Overall we had no problem with effort and hustle."

Northland

When the Grizzlies took to the floor on Saturday for their home opener, their foe was bigger, stronger, and more talented than Carlton, and the Northland Eagles were back to take the lead 18-17, Whiteman immediately responded with a 15-footer to reclaim it for North Woods.

After building a 27-20 advantage, the Grizzlies watched their lead shrink to just two, but a pair of clutch free throws by freshman Helen Koch in the waning seconds of the first half doubled the edge to four, 29-25.

Poise came to the fore again in the second half when the youthful Grizzlies relinquished but regained the lead twice. Freshman Talise Goodsky scored

Left: North Woods' Kiana LaRoque looks to pass under heavy pressure. photo by D. Colburn

on a fast break to erase the first deficit, and LaRoque put the Grizzlies up for good with a trey that made the score 40-37 with eight minutes remaining.

Scores by Dantes, freshman Hannah Cheney, and sophomore Madison Spears kept the Grizzlies ahead as they closed out the 47-41 win.

Dantes led North Woods in scoring with nine, followed by Whiteman with eight, Spears with seven, and Koch and sophomore Hannah Kinsey with six each.

The Grizzlies had a decidedly tougher time of it when International Falls came to North Woods on Monday.

Turnovers and missed shots

from both teams were the rule in the early going, with the Grizzlies not scoring for the first seven minutes until a Dantes fast break bucket broke the drought. North Woods went another six minutes without a basket before Whiteman scored a three-pointer, trimming the Broncos lead to 13-5. International Falls led 19-10 at the half, and while North Woods continued to sputter the Broncos steadily pulled away to win 50-24.

Whiteman, Dantes, and Kinsey each scored six points in the loss.

North Woods was scheduled for another home contest on Thursday against Eveleth-Gilbert.

inside, scoring 16 and 14 points. Overall, the Grizzlies converted on only 36 percent of their

good battle in the first half. While the Grizzlies never trailed after breaking a 6-6 tie, each time it looked like they had a chance to pull away the Tigers responded. Cherry twice whittled ten-point deficits down to five, but two free throws and a three-pointer by Davis Kleppe on consecutive possessions boosted North Woods to a 41-30 halftime edge.

Coming out for the second half, quick baskets by Goggleye and Brenden Chiabotti ignited a crushing 21-4 run that squashed any hope the Tigers had for a comeback, trailing now 62-34. The Grizzlies were back on track, relentless on offense and defense as they closed out a 94-56 win. "The kids showed maturity and poise coming off Saturday's loss and

didn't pout or get frustrated when we took the floor on Tuesday," Kleppe said."I thought the energy and overall atmosphere was much more positive than on Saturday night and it showed in how we played together. A lot of good defensive rebounds allowed us to push the ball and get some transition baskets that we rely on as a part of our game. Our defense created 26 turnovers which is going to give teams trouble. Cherry has some talented young players but we didn't give them any easy looks at the

points respectively.

The Grizzlies made 50.6 percent of their shots and nailed 15 of the 32 three-pointers they put up. Jared Chiabotti hit six of his ten trey attempts.

While obviously pleased with the outcome, Kleppe didn't let the final score obscure his game assessment.

primed for an upset.

Both teams struggled in the early going, but Darius Goggleye scored on a putback of a missed shot to stake the Grizzlies to a 14-9 lead.

Northland fought back with five players scoring in a 14-2 blitz that put the Eagles up 23-16 at the 8:45 mark, and suddenly

SKIERS...Continued from page 1B-

finished second in a tight classic contest, with a team score of 375, while the boys, competing without Johnston, finished third with a score of 286.

Grand Rapids took top honors in both the boys and girls competitions, with scores of 390 and 387 respectively.

"It went very well," said Anderson. "It was so great to be able to race again."

Pointer was the top Ely finisher, taking the third spot in the boys field with a time of 26:29. Junior Jon Hakala wasn't far behind, finishing in fifth with a time of 28:02. Junior Micah Larson was the only other Ely boy in the top dozen, with a time of 29:47. Sophomore Zoe Devine led the Ely girls, finishing in fourth place with a time of 29:50, while fellow sophomore Phoebe Helms finished in fifth with a time of 30:08. Junior Gracie Pointer finished in ninth with a time of 34:47, while senior Julia Schwinghamer and sophomore Cedar Ohlhauser took 11th and 12th respectively, with times of 36:09 and 36:20. Other Ely girls finishers included Sydney Durkin (14th; 37:28) and Abigail Thompson (18th: 39:00).

The Wolves are back in action next Thursday, Jan. 28, at a dual classic and skate competition. The location and start time for the event have yet to be determined.

30 points. Aided by subpar North Woods shooting, the Eagles stretched their lead to as many as 20 points in the second half before settling for an 81-67 win.

the Grizzlies found them-

selves in catch-up mode.

dling and high-percentage

shooting kept North Woods

from revving up its transi-

tion scoring attack, and in

the face of a stout Eagles

defense the Grizzlies'

shooters went cold. By

halftime the Eagles had

attacking the bucket and

passing out to the perime-

ter, four Northland players

notched double-digit

scoring efforts, led by

sophomore Alec Wake's

By aggressively

forged a 44-31 lead.

But good ball han-

Three late three-pointers boosted Jared Chiabotti to the top of North Woods scorers with 18. T.J. Chiabotti and Goggleye did most of their damage shooting led to a lack of focus and intensity on the defensive end. We didn't mix it up on the boards like we have to do as a smaller team, but the positive was I knew we would come back refocused and work harder the next time."

shots from the field, hit

50 percent of their free

throws, and saw their

points off turnovers drop

Kleppe said. "It was a good

eye opener for us that a

lot of teams are going to

measure their success by

how they do against us.

We had a bad shooting

night, which is going to

happen from time to time.

Our issue was that poor

"We got outplayed,"

to 18.

Cherry

The Grizzlies were indeed primed to bounce

basket."

T.J. Chiabotti took the scoring honors by pouring in 32 points, including four treys. Jared Chiabotti dropped in 17 and Goggleye finished with 14.

The Grizzlies were scheduled to hit the home hardwoods again on Friday, hosting Eveleth-Gilbert.

WOLVES...

Continued from page 1B

Buhl. Faltesek led scoring for Ely, with 21 points, while Davies added 16 and Bianco 14. Simons added 12 while Latourell contributed with ten points.

"We played well on both ends of the floor and it was a great team effort. It was a good win against a very good opponent," said McDonald.



ELY GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

day before, when Deer River kept Ely's offense off track on the way to a 47-23 win. Rachel Coughlin, with eight points, proved Ely's top scorer, while Sarah Visser and Madeline Kallberg added four points apiece. "We had issues scoring, but were in it most of the game. We just ran out of gas down the stretch." said Gantt.

The Timberwolves' season began at home last Thursday with 35-28 loss to Two Harbors. Ely had the lead going into the locker room at the half, but foul trouble, unnecessary turnovers, and a struggle to score in the second half were too much to overcome. Katrina Seliskar led scoring for the Wolves with eight points while Grace Latourell added six. Rachel Coughlin tallied eight rebounds and blocked two shots.

"We played good defense all game. However, we have to take care of the ball better," said Gantt. "This team is young, and because of that, there are girls with new roles on the court. With the young team that we have, it is important that we find ways to generate some offense"

Ely junior Gabe Pointer cruises down a slight hill during competition at Hidden Valley last Thursday. photo by L. Anderson

TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

Greenwood may postpone annual meeting until June

by JODI SUMMIT Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP-Residents in Greenwood Township will most likely get a little longer to decide on setting their 2022 levy. The Greenwood Town Board, at their Tuesday meeting, discussed postponing the March 9 annual meeting until June 8 to allow for an in-person gathering, which could be held in the fire hall (with open doors) or at the pavilion.

Voting for the township election will still be held on March 9. Safely hosting an in-person annual meeting that day, which regularly attracts well over 50 people, or attempting to hold the meeting virtually and assuring the chance for residents to vote anonymously on the levy and other items, would be complicated, said Chairman Mike Ralston.

"This is the people's meeting, not a board meeting," he said.

Ralston asked that residents with ideas on other ways of hosting the meeting in March email them to the township interim clerk and said the item will be on the regular agenda in February. Ralston said options once the weather is warmer would be to hold the meeting in the fire hall, with the doors open, or hold it in the pavilion area.

While townships are required to hold their annual meeting on the second Tuesday in March, they have always had the option of opening the meeting and then adjourning it to a later date, in effect postponing the meeting. Ralston said the board could opt to open the annual meeting on March 9, appoint a moderator, set a date for the adjourned meeting, and announce election results. The township has adjourned their annual meeting on at least a couple of occasions in the past, holding it during the summer.

Since last spring the board has been holding its meetings via teleconference, where board members and the public phone in.

Interim treasurer Belinda Fazio presented a draft 2022 budget for the board to review. The budget draft reduces spending from 2020 levels to account for \$27,500 in grant funding received for COVID-related expenses; reduces the clerk and treasurer salary by 40 percent with additional hourly pay for extra work requests; includes an increase in insurance and legal costs "due to continued lawsuits filed by Jeff Maus" and adds funding to allow for two or three sets of fire department turn-out gear to be replaced annually. The budget assumes a levy of \$150,000. The budget projects revenue of \$282,500 (including the levy) and expenses of \$331,800, leaving the township with a projected fund balance of \$480,143, which is 1.29 percent of expenditures.

The town board did not present a budget at the annual meeting last year, and residents on a tie 32-32 vote refused to approve the board's request for a \$250,000 levy, instead approving by a one-vote margin a levy of \$150,000.

Other business

In other business, the town board:

➤ Welcomed back supervisor Paul Skubic, who had been out the past two months after he was hospitalized with COVID-19. "I am happy to be back home and able to attend meetings," Skubic said.

► Heard there had been a verbal altercation between

Interim Clerk Debby Spicer and residents who were filing for office on Jan. 12. According to John Bassing, Spicer, when called on the phone on Tuesday afternoon, had been reluctant to give out information on who had already filed, but eventually did release the public information. When potential candidates arrived at the town hall to file their papers, voices were raised, and Spicer called Supervisor Carmen DeLuca, who then came to the hall. DeLuca said the residents were attempting to intimidate Spicer. The board said they will review the surveillance footage of the incident, and they apologized to Spicer for the situation she was put in.

➤ Appointed election judges, the absentee ballot board, and passed a resolution to allow the hiring of a spouse of a board member as an election judge.

➤ Heard that state grant funding may be available for township road improvements. Ralston was given the go-ahead to contact local engineering firms for estimates. The grant covers project costs but requires the township to pay for engineering costs. The township is looking into the possibility of doing an overlay on Birch Point Road Extension.

➤ Heard that the fire department was awarded a grant to purchase a washer/dryer/ extractor for fire turnout gear. The grant will cover \$16,521 of the total cost of \$18,357, which includes installation, electrical, and plumbing costs.

➤ Approved \$100 donations to the Heiam Foundation, Cook Library, and Northwoods Care Partners. The board tabled the request from the St. Louis County Fair, opting to wait to see if the fair will be held this year.

➤ Told residents that they are encouraged to call St. Louis County Environmental Services to check on canister site hours and days of operation. The canister site was closed unexpectedly one day due to employee illness.

➤ Heard from Interim Clerk Spicer that the township is not being charged a disconnect fee from Frontier because the company could not locate a signed contract from the township. The township had been told they needed to pay over \$1,600 to disconnect their DSL service, which they were no longer using due to the installation of broadband.

Ely Health Center awarded Dental Innovator grant

ELY – The Ely Community Health Center will be receiving a grant from Blue Cross/Blue Shield to hire a Dental Innovator and Coordinator.

According to ECHC director Jon Erickson, the new coordinator will work with local dental clinics and the county public health administrations for both Lake and St. Louis counties to create new and innovative programs for improving oral health. The goals of this position

will be to:
➤ Develop relationships
with local dental clinics to arrange for periodic use of their facilities on "off" days.

➤ Develop relationships with schools that provide oral health programs, including the University of Minnesota and other local colleges and universities.

➤ Schedule periodic "pop up" dental clinics for patients who cannot afford dental care or do not have access to dental care.

➤ Work with local independent school districts to arrange oral health care education and services. ➤ Work with assisted living and nursing homes to provide basic oral health care services, including fluoride treatments.

"We are currently in the process of interviewing people for this position and hope to have some additional announcements by early March as to the roll-out of the program," Erickson said. "We wish to thank Blue Cross/ Blue Shield for their generous grant and to the Carlton, Cook, Lake and St. Louis Counties Community Health Board who facilitated the grant application for both Lake Superior Community Health Center and ourselves."

Obituaries and Death Notices



nephews, extended family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; son, Tom Vraa; and siblings, Robert and Adeline.

Janet M. Croteau

Janet Marie Korpi Croteau, devoted wife, loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, passed away on Friday, Jan. 15, 2021, surrounded by family at Edgewood Vista Memory Care. Janet's family would like to extend a very special thank you to Hannah and the staff at Edgewood Vista for the care and love they had for their mother. A Memorial Mass for Janet was held on Thursday, Jan. 21 at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Virginia with Fr. Brandon Moravitz celebrating. Current COVID mandates including masks and social distancing were followed. Inurnment will be in Lakeside Cemetery in Biwabik at a later date. Arrangements are by Ziemer-Moeglein-Shatava Funeral Home in Gilbert. Survivors include her children, Terry (Lee) Croteau of Lake Vermilion-Tower. Bob (Cecilia) Croteau of Biwabik and Scott (Crystal) Croteau of Cedar Island Lake; grandchildren, Jason (Holly) Croteau, Tara (Matt)Anderson, Celene Butler, Tawnee Croteau and Kendra (Joe) Lewis; great-grandchildren,Cody,Jacob,Daniel,Erika, Lucas, Max, Alanna, Brent, Beau and Sophia; great-great-granddaughter, Leila; sisters, Jacquelyn Thompson, Helen (Dick)Axelson and Debbie Vito: sisters-in-law, Merle Korpi and Joyce Zidarich; and numerous nieces, nephews and close friends.

Prominent Iron Range journalist dies

Bill Hanna served as longtime editor of the Mesabi Daily News

REGIONAL— Bill Hanna, the longtime editor of the Mesabi Daily News, died Jan. 11, 2021, at the age of 70. Hanna was a dominant journalistic voice in the region through the 1990s until 2016, when he suffered a massive heart attack that all but ended his journalism career.

From his perch as news editor and later executive editor of the MDN, the largest newspaper on the Iron Range, Hanna rarely shied away from controversy. He was a strong advocate for the mining industry, and a staunch critic of environmentalists, whom he viewed as a threat

Delores M. Vraa

Delores M. "Laurie" Vraa, 82, of Embarrass, died on Thursday, Jan. 7, 2021, in Essentia Health - St. Mary's Medical Center. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 23 at the Embarrass Town Hall. Spring inurnment will take place in the Embarrass Cemetery. Memorials are preferred and may be directed to the family, 5593 Taylor Road, Embarrass, MN 55732. Family services are provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

She was born on Sept. 13, 1938, in Goodridge, the daughter of Reuben and Florence (Rindahl) Stenvik. Laurie married Curtis Vraa on March 9, 1957, in Goodridge, and they moved to the Embarrass area in the early 1960s. She was a longtime employee at Jenia's Appliance in Virginia, a member of Hope Lutheran Church in Embarrass, and a former member of the Aurora Women of the Moose. Laurie loved to bake,cook,dance,snowmobile, travel, and enjoyed winters in Yuma, Ariz.

Laurie is survived by her husband of 62 years, Curtis; children, Steven (Joanie) Vraa of Embarrass, Neal (Nancy) Vraa of Red Lake Falls, Kevin (Robyn) Vraa of Embarrass and Michael (Amy) Vraa of Babbitt; sister, Betty Coan of Thief River Falls; and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces,

Ethel J. Barnes

Ethel Jane Barnes, 85, of Cook, passed away on Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021, at the Cook Care Center from an aggressive form to the industry.

He was born and raised in northeast Minneapolis, once a working-class bastion, and he held true to his working-class roots throughout his career. Hanna worked at a number of newspapers around the country before coming to the Range to serve as editor of the Virginia paper in 1985, where he spent the remaining years of his life.

In his later years, with full-time work no longer possible, Hanna continued writing personal columns on area personalities, which were published regularly in the MDN. A few of his columns more recently appeared in the *Timberjay*.

Hanna will be remembered as a mentor to many younger journalists, including his work as a journalism instructor at Mesabi Range and Technical College. In another initiative, he formed a collaborative of Iron Range papers to annually hire a promising young reporter to cover the Legislature in St. Paul. Many of those reporters went on to permanent positions in other prominent Minnesota newsrooms.

of cancer, after a diagnosis two months ago. A visitation will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 23 at Mlaker Funeral Home. A graveside service and burial will be held in the spring. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

Carol J. Kangas

Carol Jean Tuomala Kangas, 83, of Sandy Township, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by her children on Monday, Jan. 11, 2021. The family would like to thank Essentia Hospice for the care and kindness they gave Carol. Services were held on Monday, Jan. 18 at Range Funeral Home in Virginia. Burial followed at the Ely Cemetery. Arrangements were with Range Funeral Home in Virginia.

She is survived by her brother, Sandford Ersbo of Mt. Iron; children, Deborah (Bruce) Hoff of Gilbert, Sheri (Wally) Hunsinger of Rocky Top, Tenn., Lorinda (Rex) Purcell of The Villages, Fla., Richard (Diane) Tuomala of

Dale City, Va., and Jacinta (Alan) Woehrle of Becker; stepchildren, Kelly (Arron) Sheffield of Sandy Township, Kim (Mike) Peterson of Britt, Kerry (Helen) Kangas of Embarrass, Kris (Gordon) Meacham of Embarrass and Kendall Kangas (Donna Ohlgren) of Champlin; grandchildren, Bryan, Brandon and Nick Hoff, Wallace III and Kristopher Hunsinger, Patrick Jones, Wilson Purcell, David and Dylan Tuomala, Jacob and Katlyn Woehrle; step-grandchildren, Joshua, Luke and Christopher Beyer, Jim Peterson and Karen Devak. Kayla Pandel, Renee Lane, Melissa and Marcell Meacham; nine great-grandchildren; and 10 step great-grandchildren.

Helen I. Lehman

Helen Ida Lehman, 100, of Orr, passed away on Friday, Jan.8,2021.A graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday,May 1 at the Silverdale Cemetery. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service at the graveside. Lunch will follow at the Silverdale Community Center. Arrangements are with Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.

Reva M. Tyssedal

Reva May Houser Tyssedal, 82, of Virginia, formerly of Embarrass, died on Dec. 12, 2020, at Essentia Health in Virginia.

Survivors include her children, Scott (Cris) Tyssedal of Minneapolis, Jeff (Lori) Tyssedal of Embarrass and Loni Baird of Babbitt; grandchildren, Krista, Jeff, Tiffany, Trevor, Tyler and Brandon; nine great-grandchildren; siblings, Eva Shaine and Bob Houser; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Billy S. Wilke

Billy Starr Wilke, 42, passed away on Thursday, Jan. 7, 2021, at the Virginia Hospital. A memorial service was held on Friday, Jan. 15 at Mlaker Funeral Home in Cook. A reception followed at the Cook Muni.



EXCEPTIONAL WEATHER

North Country on pace for warmest Dec-Jan on record

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER Managing Editor

REGIONAL- Barring a surprise, it now appears that residents of the North Country will have experienced the warmest December-January period on record, once the full month of weather data is in the books in just over a week.

That's according to state climatologist Pete Boulay, who ran the numbers this week at the request of the Timberjay. lows have contributed significantly to the record-setting warmth, according to Boulay, who ran comparisons using weather data from International Falls, which has the longest reporting period of any weather station in the region.

Overnight lows through the period, to date, have averaged 12.3 degrees, which shatters the previous record of 9.7 degrees, set back in the winter of 2005-06. But this season's high

Exceptionally mild overnight temperatures are also setting a record, at least to date, with an average of 27.5 degrees. That compares to the previous record of 26.3 degrees set back in the winter of 1920-21.

> 'That's truly remarkable, actually," said Boulay.

> While the data for January 2021 remains incomplete, Boulay said it's now unlikely that any cool-down will topple this year's December-January period as the warmest on record. Through Jan. 19, the

average temperature in International Falls since Dec. 1, has been 19.9 degrees. That's a whopping 2.6 degrees above the previous record for the period, 17.3 degrees, dating back to the winter of 1913-14. "At this point, it would really have to cool down to drop from first place," said Boulay.

And while temperatures were running closer to average this week, the extended fore-

See WINTER....pg. 5B



On the lookout for lynx

Outdoors in brief

A current

Minnesota

Yellow

signifies

abnormally

dry, while

indicates

moderate

drought.

the orange

drought map.

DNR cancels 2021 aerial moose survey

REGIONAL- The annual aerial moose survey conducted by the Department of Natural Resources has been canceled this year out of concern for the health of wildlife staff.

DNR biologists and helicopter pilots who take part in the survey each year typically work in close quarters in the helicopter cockpits, and DNR officials determined that posed too big a risk this year due to the prevalence of the coronavirus.

The survey is typically conducted in January and the results form the basis for a report on the state's moose herd that is generally released in April. Interest in the moose report has been high since sharp declines in the northeastern Minnesota moose population were documented beginning around 2010.

Recent results have shown the moose population holding steady, albeit at a lower baseline.

Cook area photographer gets her wish with close-up shots of this boreal forest cat

or Becky Smith, of rural Cook, her recent first encounter with a Canada Lynx wasn't necessarily a surprise. "I had a few tips where it was," said Smith, recounting her recent sighting of one of these elusive northern wild cats a few miles south of Cook.

A roadkill deer had proved to be an attractant for the animal and word had spread among area residents that a visit to the spot was a good bet for anyone wanting to see a lynx.

Smith, a photographer who loves

cats in general and had long wanted to see a lynx in the wild, had been trying to coax her skeptical husband to drive over to the site. Finally, he agreed. They drove to the rumored location of the roadkill, and there was the lynx,

right where others had seen it earlier.

MARSHALL

HELMBERGER

After shooting photos from the car. Smith decided she wanted to get closer. "I got out of the car and walked slowly forward until he was probably 25 feet from me," she said. "It was protective of the deer carcass, and I was scared. It's a good thing I have an image stabilizer, because my hands were shaking."

But fear didn't keep Smith from her goal of capturing images of the cat. While uncommon and often difficult to spot, lynx aren't known to



Top: A lynx eyes photographer Becky Smith, who says she was scared as she maneuvered around the lynx to capture images from different angles.

Above: Walking slowly away, the lynx displays the "dipped in ink" appearance of the tip of its tail. It's a key field mark that's useful for distinguishing a lynx from a bobcat.

Right: The lynx blends in once he reaches nearby brush, one reason these cats are rarely seen.

photos by B. Smith



HABITAT

DNR unveils new pollinator license plate

REGIONAL- DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen recently unveiled the design of Minnesota's newest critical habitat license plate, featuring native pollinators including a bee and butterflies. The new license plate is available now online and at deputy registrar and driver's license offices statewide.

"Many Minnesotans share a commitment to maintaining healthy populations of bees, butterflies and other native pollinators," Strommen said. "This beautiful new critical habitat license plate is an opportunity to show your support for pollinators while providing important funding to preserve habitats."

There is no need to wait for current license plate tabs to expire, as the license fee is prorated when a critical habitat license plate is purchased.

The \$30 annual contribution to the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Critical Habitat Program helps to preserve important wildlife

See LICENSE....pg. 5B

See LYNX...pg. 5B

Fishing report

Ely area

Pike remained fairly active again this last week, with a few well over 40 inches being reported. Large suckers or smelt fished under a tip up, along weedlines or rocky points was very productive for anglers. Depths ranged from 10-25 feet of water.

Crappie and sunfish anglers reported a con-



LYNX...Continued from page 4B

cast shows continued above-normal temperatures returning next week. And Boulay said long-term models don't show any clear signs of a change in the weather, although he said that certainly could still happen. He said the winter of 2018-19 was an example where mild conditions dominated the first half of the winter, only to be replaced with plentiful snow and cold that hung on well into April. Boulay sees less sign of such a dramatic change this winter. "In 2019, we knew by now there was a change coming,' he said. While the longterm models continue to suggest at least a modest cooldown, Boulay said such predictions haven't come to pass yet this winter. While January in northern Minnesota is typically dominated by frequent intrusions of the polar vortex, the arctic chill has been replaced by mild and moist air masses for weeks. "We really haven't even had a glancing blow,"

said Boulay. At least for now, the

polar air masses have shown up in unusual places this winter. "Places like Spain and Japan are cold right now," said Boulay. "There is cold air out there, just not here."

sistent bite this last week.

in 20-30 feet of water.

Small jigs tipped with wax

on sunnies, while small

minnow was more effec-

the basin.

WEATHER...Continued from page 4B—

Outdoors, Ely

Dry conditions continue

The remarkable lack of snow in recent weeks is only adding to the mild nature of the current winter. So far in January, most parts of the North Country have seen less than two inches of snow, continuing a snow drought that extends back to November. While total snowfall for the season doesn't rank much below average, nearly half of that snow fell in mid-October and melted during the record heat experienced in early November. That's left much of the area with less than ten inches of snow on the ground, well below average for this time of the year.

be shy around humans, so Smith was able to move slowly around the lynx, while trying to shoot from different angles. "It just watched me the whole time, but never made any indication it was scared," said Smith.

After about ten minutes, the lynx apparently decided to put a little distance between himself and Smith. "It was just looking at me as I was angling off to one side, then it went up a bank, where it stopped above and watched me."

Smith isn't saying publicly where the lynx was being seen, mostly to protect the lynx. She said Facebook rumors have already suggested the lynx was subsequently killed, although other reports say the animal is still very much alive.

"I've been curious to drive by and see what I can see," she said.

The Canada Lynx was once the only wild cat one was likely to see here in the North Country, although a recent influx of bobcat into the area has changed that. Lynx are well-adapted to life in boreal regions, with their thick coats, long legs, and huge feet, which allow

LICENSE...Continued from page 4B

habitat and plant communities such as wetlands, prairies, old growth forests and endangered orchid sites. Contributions over \$30 go toward buying and managing important natural habitats, which are preserved as public lands. These lands are open to compatible public use, like hunting, hiking and wildlife watching.

The winning license plate design by artist Timothy Turenne depicts the monarch butterfly, Minnesota's state butterfly, and



The lynx watches without much alarm as a photographer advances on its position. photo by B. Smith

them to walk atop deep snow, much like their primary prey - snowshoe hares.

Lynx can be told from bobcats by their tufted ears, very large feet, generally lighter color, and by the "dipped in ink" tip of their short tails. While bobcat also have black on their stubby tails, the black tip

is more mottled, with some white or brown mixed in. Bobcat have significantly smaller feet than lynx, which generally puts them at a disadvantage compared to the lynx in areas with deep snow.

January 22, 2021 **5B**

rusty patched bumble bee, recently designated as the state bee.

In addition to purchasing the new license plate, Minnesotans can take other steps to help pollinators:

► Grow milkweed, the monarch host plant, and other native flowers to provide nectar resources.

► Provide open ground and unmown roadsides as appropriate. ► Reduce pesticide use.

The DNR supports native pollinators by restoring and managing the ecosystems and plant communities they rely on for food. For example, restoration and management activities on DNR-administered lands provide approximately 1.1 million acres of habitat in the northern conservation core for monarch butterflies. The DNR continues implementation of Gov. Tim Walz's 2019 Pollinator Executive Order through participation in the Mid-America Monarch Conservation Strategy and other proactive and durable pollinator conservation measures.





 On the Taconite Snowmobile Trail Near Giants Ridge Ski Resort **RENT THE ENTIRE INN!** (call for rate)





LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

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EMPLOYMENT

SEEKING PART-TIME MANAGER **ELY-WINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



Ely-Winton Historical The Society, located in the Fine Arts wing of Vermilion Community College, is seeking a manager for the day-to-day operation of the Ely-Winton Historical Society

office and museum. Duties include responding to oral and written communications received, overseeing the Society's artifacts, displays, videos, books, and festivals, coordinating research with the public, grant writing, and communicating with both Vermilion Community College and the Ely Chamber of Commerce. Computer literacy a must

Compensation: Rate of pay will start at \$12.00 per hour. Average hours: 20 hours per week. There will be a three-month probationary period after which the rate of pay will be determined.

Anticipated date of hiring is April 1, 2021

For more information or to submit a resume, contact Margaret Sweet, Ely-Winton Historical Society, c/o 1900 East Camp Street, Ely, MN 55731. 218-365-3226 or 218-827-2386, or email ewhsmuseum@gmail.com

Resumes will be accepted if emailed or postmarked by March 15, 2021.

An Equal Opportunity Employer Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 22, Feb 5, 19 & March 5, 2021

POSITION OPENING Ely Public Schools Paraprofessional

Ely Public Schools is looking for a Paraprofessional for the 2020-2021 school year; background check required.

Qualifications include:

 AA Degree or two years of college required Preferred experience working with school age children

Evidence of ability to work cooperatively and communicate effectively in a collaborative settina.

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

complete application must include the following:

- District Application
- Resume'
- **College Transcripts**
- 2 letters of recommendation

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

Starting Rate of Pay: \$16.57/hour

Hours: 6.5 hours/day

Deadline to apply: January 25, 2021; open until filled.

Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 15 & 22, 2021

Network Director • Ely Behavioral Health Network

The Ely Behavioral Health Network (Ely BHN) is currently hiring for a half-time to full-time Network Director. The Ely BHN is a collaborative network which includes area nonprofits, mental health providers, Public Health, healthcare providers, and community members. Our goal is to work together to expand access to, coordinate, and improve the quality of behavioral health care in the rural Northeast (NE) Iron Range communities of Babbitt, Ely, Embarrass, Isabella, Soudan, Tower, Winton and surrounding townships.

Steger Mukluks Factory Position	ACROSS 1 Witticism
If you do not believe Corona Virus is a health threat and do not regularly mask and distance in your everyday life when outside of your family bubble, please do not apply.	4 Out of dange 8 "Price Is Right" guess
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Operator/Cutter. Will train.	13 Vacation
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All interviews will be online.	36 Dud on

Employment Opportunity Paralegal/Legal Assistant

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- 2+ years office experience required
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office products
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- Competitive wage with benefits

Please email your resume with a cover letter to: marylee.erickson@klumlaw.com_or_mail to: Klun Law Firm, PO Box 240, Ely, MN 55731. 1/22



Forestry Board Gundersen Trust Planning/Zoning Commission Airport Commission Tower Economic Development

King Crossword

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Information Technology (IT) PT Information Specialist

Activities T Activities Assistant

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TO APPLY: www.cookhospital.org/join-our-team/ More Info? Contact Human Resources 218-666-6220 humanresources@cookhospital.org The Cook Hospital & Care Center offers competitive pay and be including PERA retirement, Health and Dental coverage, Life an

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- BĂ/BS degree
- Experience in grants management
- Experience working in and managing teams

TO APPLY: If interested, contact us for more information at jennys@elybhn.org. If apply-ing, email resume, cover letter, and three references to jennys@elybhn.org by February 8, 2021.

Published in the Timberjay, Jan. 22 & 29, 2021

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Apply at: https://cityoftower.com/ positions-available

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FUNERAL SERVICES

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SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!



Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle



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 A Challenging ♦ ♦ HOO BOY!

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

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 fami-lies in ways such as: comfort care, massages, last wishes and more. For more information, contact Program Director Becca Bundy at 218-780-5423 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.

CO-DEPENDENTS FI Y 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.

AL-ANON-BABBITT 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 Embarrass hosts an Al-Anon group on Monday evenings at 6 p.m. 218-984-2037.

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

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

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

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



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hammer

to one's

Mexican

40 Part of LED

41 '60s protest

coin?

38 — -Cola

(tough spot)

instrument

your face

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play it?

that tightens

79 Jazz

no doubt

121 Schnozzola

123 Tall, tapering

122 Generally

pillars

124 Eat away

whatsoever?

29 Vidal of hair

played a lion

34 Drink a bit of

35 Besides that

36 Ave. crossers

care

33 Bert who

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



information call 218-728-3199 Anonymous is a (Narcotics non-profit organization.)

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

	— King Crossword — Answers												
S	Solution time: 27 mins.												
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SCRAMBLERS
solution
1. Angry 2. Cloak;
3.Nearby; 4. Inane
Today's Word
CRANKY



shape along the border of the puzzle.										
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