



**Sliding hill fun...**See /3B

**Inside:**  
**Ely goes back to school...** See /3  
**Winter sports...** See /1B  
**Wolves and beavers...**See /4B  
**Snowmobile Hot Spots...**See /5B

# the **TIMBERJAY**



Serving the communities of northern St. Louis County since 1989 VOL. 32, ISSUE 6 February 12, 2021 \$1.00

## INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

# Tower plans for three big projects

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**  
Managing Editor

### \$3.6 million in grant funds a major boost

**TOWER**— It appears that 2021 will see at least three major infrastructure projects in and around Tower after the city has learned it's set to receive more than \$3.6 million in state and federal grant funds.

The city council, on Monday, approved seeking bids for the three projects, which include a major reconstruction of Pine Street, a new main that will replace the city's 70-year-old

existing connection to its water tower, and a new and expanded water treatment plant.

The level of grant funding for the water-related projects surprised even the most opti-

mistic of city officials. A \$3.375 million grant from the Army Corps of Engineers was the biggest windfall announced by

See...**WATER** pg. 9



## REGIONAL

### Report says deadly force was justified in shooting by officers

by **DAVID COLBURN**  
Cook/Orr Editor

**DULUTH**—The Dec. 5 shooting death of a 19-year-old Virginia man by two St. Louis County Sheriff's deputies was "reasonable, necessary, justified and authorized," according to a statement and report released Monday by St. Louis County Attorney Mark Rubin, but an attorney for the victim's family is raising serious concerns about the investigation and the report.

Estavon Elioff was shot multiple times and killed by deputies Ryan Smith and Matt Tomsich in a wooded area northeast of L&M Supply in Mt. Iron after Smith shouted that Elioff was taking aim at the officers with what he perceived to be a gun in his right hand. After the fatally wounded Elioff hit the ground, the officers discovered the weapon to be a pink-handled pocket knife with a three-inch black blade.

The shooting was a tragic end to a nearly hour-long search that began when Elioff ran from another deputy who had confronted

See...**REPORT** pg. 10

## ELY WINTER FESTIVAL

# FUN BELOW ZERO



**Hearty local snow sculptors, above, braved sub-zero conditions all week during the 2021 Ely Winter Festival. Middle school art students displayed their work in the Ely ArtWalk, below, left.** photos by K. Vandervort

### Frigid conditions persist during celebration



by **KEITH VANDERVORT**  
Ely Editor

**ELY** - The 2021 Ely Winter Festival was celebrated this week in sub-zero conditions, scaled back due to mandated COVID-19 public health protocols.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, just five local teams braved the frigid cold as they participated in the annual Snow Sculpting Symposium.

Cade Thibodeaux was the lone snow carver at Whiteside

See...**FESTIVAL** pg. 12



**Cade Thibodeaux**

## STATE HIGH COURT

### U.S. Steel may be forced to clean up fouled groundwater

by **MARSHALL HELMBERGER**  
Managing Editor

**REGIONAL**— U.S. Steel may have to clean up groundwater contaminated by the Minntac tailings basin based on a decision issued Wednesday by the Minnesota Supreme Court.

The high court sided with the state's Pollution Control Agency, which had imposed limits on Minntac's sulfate contamination of groundwater near the tailings facility in a permit the agency issued to Minntac in late 2018.

U.S. Steel sued and the state's Court of Appeals had reversed the MPCA, arguing that state rules did not clearly classify groundwater as subject to pollution controls. It was a significant win for U.S. Steel at the time, but this week's high court decision wipes that victory away.

The Supreme Court ruling, written by Justice Paul Thissen, agreed with the Court of Appeals that state rules on the question were ambiguous, since there was language that seemed to support differing interpretations of whether groundwater was subject to pollution controls as "Class 1" water. Class 1 waters are those identified for drinking and other potable uses by humans and, as a result, the MPCA had included the federal drinking water limit on sulfate, of 250 milligrams per liter, in the Minntac permit. The company would have until 2025 to meet that standard.

But given the ambiguity in the rules, the high court determined that an agency decision needs to be given a higher level of deference by the courts. In addition, the court found that the MPCA has consistently interpreted state rules to provide for protection of groundwater, and has

See...**MINNTAC** pg. 10

## CITY OF ELY

### Council considers business license status

by **KEITH VANDERVORT**  
Ely Editor

### Co-owner of store faces drug charges

**ELY** — One of the owners of the Ely Drop and Shop is facing felony charges, and the second-hand store she co-owns with others could face closure over allegations that she sold methamphetamine

from the business, located in downtown Ely.

The city council was set to hold a special meeting on Thursday, after the *Timberjay's* weekly deadline, to consider

suspending the business's license to operate in Ely. The *Timberjay* will report on the council's action, if any, on its website on Friday.

See...**HEARING** pg. 9



**The Drop and Shop secondhand retail store in Ely is the subject of a business license hearing this week by the city council.** photo by K. Vandervort



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### Contact The Timberjay

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## Community notices

### Learn Nordic ski waxing at a free virtual class

ELY - Learn the basics of waxing Nordic skis at a no-charge virtual clinic presented by Ely Community Education.

Tyler Fish, Ely Nordic Wolves coach for 15 years, will teach a two-session Virtual Ski Waxing clinic at 7 p.m. on two Wednesdays later this month, Feb. 17 and Feb. 24.

The class includes tips on waxing skis for every day as well as for competitions like the State Nordic Meet. He will cover ski care and waxing, both for kick and glide styles. The clinic is free and for adults only.

For information and to sign up, go to [elyclasses.com](http://elyclasses.com).

### North St. Louis County 4-H to hold Winter Outdoor Skills Day

REGIONAL- The second annual Winter Outdoor Skills day is Sunday, March 7 from 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. The event is free and will take place at Olcott Park in Virginia. All North St. Louis County 4-H'ers, K-8th grades, are encouraged to take part in this fun event. Kids will have a chance to explore a variety of different outdoor skills including snowshoeing, ice fishing, snow sculpting, and more. Please be prepared to be outside for the entire program and bring a full water bottle. Masks will be required.

The deadline to register is Wednesday, March 3. Space is limited. Please fill out the form at <https://forms.gle/nHNCuRtgoS8AL73C6> to register. For questions or help with registration, contact Nicole Kudrle, Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development, North St. Louis County at 218-749-7120 or [vande422@umn.edu](mailto:vande422@umn.edu).

### College of St. Scholastica introduces new concert series

REGIONAL- A new concert series, Live from the Mitchell, will feature performances by musicians from Greater Minnesota and will include interviews hosted by Brittany Lind. Lind is host of The Duluth Local Show, which airs weekly on The Current, the promotional sponsor of the concert series.

This first concert of the series will feature the acoustic ska duo Woodblind, performing from 7 - 8 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 13. The event will be broadcast from the Mitchell Auditorium and livestreamed on [facebook.com/stscholastica](https://facebook.com/stscholastica) and [YouTube.com/SaintScholastica](https://YouTube.com/SaintScholastica).

Woodblind is made up of Jason Wussow and Viecko Lepisto of Duluth. The concert will include the duo along with guest musicians featured on their newest album, which was released this past summer.

The February concert is made possible by funding from the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation with promotional support from The Current. If your organization would like to sponsor an upcoming concert event, reach out to Breanne Tepler at [btepler@css.edu](mailto:btepler@css.edu).

To stay up to date on upcoming concerts, visit [spotlight.css.edu](http://spotlight.css.edu).

### Research adventure hosted by Ely Wolf Center, Feb. 27

ELY - Experience a day in the life of a wolf biologist by joining International Wolf Center staff here to learn about the methods and discoveries of wolf research in Minnesota.

The all-day class will be held on Saturday, Feb. 27, from 9:45 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The program includes both indoor and outdoor activities in winter conditions, so dress in layers and bring appropriate clothing for freezing temperatures and being out and about in the snow. The day includes a field trip to nearby Northern Tier High Adventure Base to try out wolf tracking skills.

The class includes full day of programming with free admission to the popular weekly What's for Dinner? program. Meals are not provided and time is allotted for meals on your own. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, participants must provide their own transportation during the program and follow staff to each location.

The cost is \$67.50 for IWC members and \$75 for non-members. To register, go to [www.wolf.org](http://www.wolf.org).

## THINGS TO DO

# Gardening webinars by U of M Extension start Feb. 16

REGIONAL - University of Minnesota Extension educators are excited to bring you the second annual Gardening from the Ground Up webinar series to help you achieve your garden and lawn goals. This free webinar series will take place Tuesday through Friday, Feb. 16-19, from 1 - 2:30 p.m. each afternoon. The series will cover a wide variety of topics that are important for any gardener (or homeowner with a yard) to understand.

► Tuesday, Feb. 16: Starting a Garden from Scratch

Set your garden up for success from the beginning. Extension Educators Troy Salzer and Claire LaCanne will discuss selecting a site for a new garden and preparing the site for your plants, as well as practices you can use to get your garden off to a good start.

► Wednesday, Feb. 17: Selecting and Starting Plants for your Garden

February is the perfect time to plan your garden spaces. Join Extension Educators Robin Trott and Shane Bugeja for a review of seed starting, plant propagation, and selecting the right plant for the right place.

► Thursday, Feb. 18: Tree and Shrub Maintenance

From maples to lilacs to raspberries, most woody plants need occasional



Timberjay file photo

maintenance and pruning. Extension Educators Adam Austing and Karen Johnson, will cover some of the best practices to keep plants in your yard healthy and beautiful.

► Friday, Feb. 19: Lawn Care and Pest Management

Extension Educators Katie Drewitz and Claire LaCanne will talk through best management practices for establishing and maintaining a lawn in Minnesota. Topics will include seeding, mowing, fertilization, watering, and

weed control. Methods for disease and insect pest management will also be discussed.

To join us for all or one of these webinars, please go to [z.umn.edu/GardenUp](http://z.umn.edu/GardenUp) to register. When you register, you can choose to attend one or multiple sessions. Pre-registration is required to receive the webinar link. Recordings of the webinars will be sent out at the conclusion of the series.

If you have questions about the webinar series or need assistance

with registration, please call your local Extension office. Residents in St. Louis County may contact the Extension Office at 218-749-7120 or [countyextensionoffice@stlouiscountymn.gov](mailto:countyextensionoffice@stlouiscountymn.gov).

For more news from U of M Extension, visit [www.extension.umn.edu/news](http://www.extension.umn.edu/news) or contact Extension Communications at [extnews@umn.edu](mailto:extnews@umn.edu). University of Minnesota Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

## Northland Foundation awards \$859,000

REGIONAL- From October through December of 2020, the Northland Foundation awarded 81 grants for a total of \$858,612. A large share of grants continues to be aimed at relief and recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Thanks to strong local, regional, and state funding support we have been able to award more than \$5 million in relief and recovery related grants during the last 10 months within northeastern Minnesota, nearly five times what Northland usually processes in a year," stated Erik Torch, Director of Grantmaking. "It has been gratifying to help get additional resources out into communities at

a time when the need is so great."

Nearly \$210,000 was granted to community organizations and school districts for emergency wrap-around early care and education services. The funding was awarded to better support children ages 0-8 who are being disproportionately impacted by the effects of the pandemic, including children from low-income families; Black, Indigenous, and other children of color; and children in rural communities. Grantees will employ a variety of strategies, from technology to help students with distance learning, to mental health supports, and more. Applications for a second round of grants are being accepted through

Feb. 15. Find details at <https://northlandfdn.org/grants/apply-report.php>.

Also included in recent COVID relief and recovery grants were two significant "pass-through" grants of \$100,000 each to the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa and the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. Northland applied for a St. Paul and Minnesota Foundation's Minnesota Disaster Recovery Fund grant, in collaboration with the two Tribal Nations, who will use the awards to bolster early care and education and children-and-youth programming that will help essential workers to continue in their jobs.

Local grants awarded

between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, 2020, include:

► Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Nett Lake received \$100,000 to support COVID-19 relief and recovery efforts with grant funding provided through the Minnesota Disaster Recovery Fund.

► Volunteers In Education, Inc., received \$14,000 to support tutoring and program expansion to bolster academic achievement in Iron Range schools.

► Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota received \$15,000.

► Citizens for Backus in International Falls received \$20,000 to support to-go meals for families in need.

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## CORONAVIRUS

# State COVID-19 vaccination rates climb to 13th best in the entire country

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

## Community spread in region drops to lowest rate since August

REGIONAL- As far too many Minnesotans continue to scramble for far too few COVID-19 vaccine doses being disbursed throughout the state, officials are touting two pieces of good news this week about the vaccination effort.

Minnesota's vaccination rate was mired in the bottom half of states two weeks ago when Gov. Tim Walz issued new directions that 90 percent of vaccines received by providers in

the state had to be administered within 72 hours of receiving them, and the remainder used within a week. Several days later, Walz announced that a slight increase in vaccine supply for seniors 65 and over would be distributed through more than 100 clinics, hospitals, state community vaccination sites, and other locations. The state also launched an online vaccine locator map indicating what providers were receiving doses that

week, and reported that three large-scale, permanent state community vaccination sites would be opening in Duluth, Minneapolis, and another southern Minnesota site yet to be determined. The number of available vaccines was increased in part by reallocating unused doses from the federal Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program, as well as receiving an additional 11,000 doses from the federal govern-

ment.

The moves have apparently paid dividends, as the Centers for Disease Control state rankings on Monday had Minnesota with the 13th highest vaccination rate in the country, with 78.43 percent of the 950,250 total doses delivered to the state having been administered. As of Sunday, 569,164 people had received at least one vaccine dose, and 162,132 had completed the two-dose regimen. In St. Louis

County, the number of first doses administered was 30,167, with the number of those who have completed the series at 8,431.

When the state changed eligibility requirements to allow anyone 65 and older, teachers, and childcare workers to receive the vaccine, about 1.1 million people were added to the pool of people seeking one of 60,000 weekly doses being shipped to the state. The shift created overwhelming demand that has



threatened to swamp the phone lines of some community health care clinics that have received limited doses of the vaccine, and

See COVID...pg. 5

## ELY SCHOOLS

# Ely students return to in-person learning

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY - Memorial school students were back in the classroom starting Monday, as they transitioned from hybrid learning to in-person learning. The adjustment was recommended by the ISD 696 administration team and agreed to by the Ely Safe Learning Plan Advisory Council (ESLPAC) late last week.

Superintendent Erik Erie cited a continued drop in the Northern St. Louis County dashboard data that indicated a descending

trend in reported positive cases of the coronavirus in the region as a determining factor in opening school again.

"The data went down last week to 17.3 (per 10,000 people), and is now below 20 which is one of our markers in the Restart Blueprint of our safe learning plan," he said. The positive case trend dropped from 24.8 three weeks ago and 20.4 two weeks ago.

Memorial students, grades 6-12, have been in a hybrid learning scenario since mid-November. Washington students,

grades K-5, have been in the in-person learning protocol since mid-January.

The ESLPAC meetings, held on Thursdays at 3 p.m., can be observed by the public and the agenda notes and meeting link can be found on the Ely School District Facebook page.

All schools throughout St. Louis County, including Duluth, are experiencing downward trends in reported positive cases, Erie said.

"The other great news is that our ZIP code cumulative data has stayed the same for the last two weeks," he said. "We

feel fortunate that we are able to return to in-person learning while many other schools in our region, and certainly the state, have not yet moved to full in-person learning. We plan to continue robust mitigation protocols, including daily temperature checks for students and employees, along with strict adherence to face coverings while we continue to combat this pandemic."

The original Restart Blueprint called for hybrid learning for all students if the positive data dashboard was between 10 and 19 positive cases per 10,000

people. The measure is one of several indicators that are used in determining appropriate learning models.

Megan Anderson, 6-12 principal, said that at a consultation meeting earlier this week, the regional support team, including the Minnesota Health Department, Minnesota Department of Education, and St. Louis County Department of Health, predicted the county-wide drop in positive COVID-19 case rate data.

"In looking at our local case rate data and other factors, they did give

us the green light to move ahead and bring students back into the building," she said. "We really looked forward to having all the kiddos back in the building for the first time since the middle of September. The kids were super-excited to see each other and to get back into a regular school routine."

Anderson said several students this week transitioned from the distance-learning list to in-school learning.

"A couple of new

See SCHOOL...pg. 5

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# OPINION

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The First Amendment of the United States Constitution

e-mail: editor@timberjay.com

## Editorial

### Good news on stimulus

When you look at the details there's a lot to like in the Biden stimulus plan

There is little reason to hold back on the latest COVID-19 response package that now appears likely to make its way to President Biden's desk as early as next month. Some have claimed that the top line number of \$1.9 trillion is too high, but that number assumes that all of the funds the measure would allocate, are actually spent.

Here's the reality: most of the funds that the bill will allocate come with a variety of criteria that limit eligibility, whether it's for individuals, small businesses, schools, municipalities, or states.

If the funding that's authorized by Congress exceeds the actual need, some of those funds will likely go unclaimed. Indeed, one of the arguments currently being made by critics of the Biden proposal is that some of the funds approved in earlier stimulus packages remain unspent. The final price tag on the package likely won't hit \$1.9 trillion, particularly if the fight against the pandemic begins to show success. It's far better, however, to have the funding authorized now, in case the fallout from the pandemic hangs on longer than we all hope.

There's no question that the impact of the coronavirus continues to plague workers, families, and the economy. The economy lost 140,000 jobs in December and added just 6,000 private sector jobs last month, reflecting a new slowdown likely related to the fall and early winter surge in COVID-19 cases. The Congressional Budget Office released estimates last week that predict the economy won't return to pre-pandemic levels of employment until 2024, at least not without additional stimulus.

And keep in mind that much of Biden's stimulus package is directed, at least primarily, toward addressing the pandemic's costs to society. The package also includes:

- \$170 billion to help schools safely reopen to students. That's important for both the educational and emotional health of students and teachers, and it's equally important for working parents, many of whom have experienced job loss or reduced hours as they must stay home to take care of kids unable to attend in-person classes.

- \$70 billion to ramp up a national vaccine program and to greatly expand testing access.

- Hiring 100,000 additional public health workers to facilitate the ramp up of vaccination and testing. Some of those workers will be earmarked to expand care to underserved populations, including Native Americans, who have been hit particularly hard by COVID-19.

- \$350 billion to assist states and local governments to keep front-line workers, such as emergency responders and teachers, on the job. The pandemic's impacts to the economy have left hard-hit states facing sizable budget shortfalls that could force layoffs and other spending cuts that will further weaken the economy.

The direct economic assistance in the plan will also make a huge difference for millions of American families and small businesses. The plan includes another round of stimulus checks, this time for \$1,400 per person, adding to the \$600 approved in December. Those checks are likely to be more targeted to low-and-moderate-income families, since they are the ones who, by and large, have experienced the greatest economic hit from the pandemic. The plan further expands unemployment compensation for workers, provides assistance for the millions of American families who are now behind on their rent due to job losses or reduced hours as a result of the pandemic, and expands the Earned Income Tax Credit to include more families and boost the credit for both parents and childless adults. The plan includes additional funding for childcare, both to help struggling centers and to make it more affordable for parents so they are able to work.

It's not a perfect plan. There is no such thing that comes out of Washington, or anywhere else. But when you actually dig into the details, it's plain that the vast majority of the spending included in this package is needed and will make life a little less of a struggle for lots of Americans. By addressing the wide range of needs, the plan will help address our public health crisis, get kids back in schools, and make sure their parents have the resources to keep a roof over their heads. And this all contributes to a faster and more robust economic recovery. Let's get the bill passed so everyone can get back to work.



## Letters from Readers

### First and foremost

It seems to me you hear these words so often. So, first and foremost, I was happy to see that the *Timberjay* paper received the top award for general excellence. Getting this award for the seventh time in the past 20 years is excellent for such a small town of Tower. So congratulations to the entire *Timberjay* staff.

The Breitung Township board will miss the service of Chuck Tekautz who will be stepping down after fifteen consecutive years of service. As a young boy, I can still picture Chuck with his dad when they came to do some plumbing on our water system. Chuck's dad Charlie was always fair when it came time to pay. Like his father, Chuck Tekautz was there to help you. The best to you, Chuck.

Leonard Stefanich  
Soudan

### The impact of COVID appeared in a dream

Last week, in one of my dreams, I saw an enormous white facemask covered with thousands of tiny dark spots. The mask came toward me, growing larger and larger, until the dots gradually turned into faces. I counted them all. All shapes. All sizes. All ages. All colors. All genders. I counted four hundred and fifty thousand of them.

Jim Ganahl  
Cook

### New Ely trailhead a good location for Pillow Rock

Despite the good intentions of people to keep the present Pillow Rock site groomed, it has not received

much attention lately. Year after year, the sign remains broken and still erroneously states that the rock is an outcrop – which it is not. It is an erratic.

The value of the Pillow Rock is educational, but it is much like an out-of-circulation book that is not readily available to the public in its presently neglected and obscure location. Though there is a lot of greenstone in the area, the Pillow Rock is one of only a few such specimens in the world, an ellipsoidal lava flow formed beneath the primeval seas 2.7 billion years ago. Its size, color, and pillowed formation make it an historical rarity.

Relocating the rock has been considered. One of the site criteria considered was providing 360 degree viewing and photographic vantage points. The rock would attract photographers as a setting for weddings, family reunions, after wilderness trip get-togethers for treasured archives and memorabilia. With its sculptured-like appearance, the rock represents a sense of permanence and preservation of history. Its continuity will prompt future photography to update the changes in a family photo album against the unchanging backdrop of Pillow Rock.

The new Ely Trailhead offers an ideal site for Pillow Rock on the knoll on the right side of the proposed building. The rock could be seen from Hwy. 169 at the entrance to Ely and would be on city property. The new information facility will have ample parking, restrooms, Ely cultural and art heritage displays, and it will be open all four seasons.

An advantage of the site includes having an adjacent building providing available brochures and a small auditorium for documentaries e.g., for Pillow Rock, Wolf Center, Bear Center, Ely Chamber of Commerce, art exhibits,

coming events etc. The Pillow Rock documentary would show a 10-to-15-minute film on origins and formation of Pillow Rock by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOCC), Nova, or BBC. The movie would include animation of the molten lava flows between the tectonic plates spewing from beneath the Earth into cool water forming "pillows".

People who drive to points of interest like Pillow Rock or like the million people every year who visit Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts, usually look for souvenirs for remembrances or to show friends. Since the city trailhead facility will not be permitted to sell merchandise, local store owners can develop a cottage industry to serve Pillow Rock visitors. Ely has the capacity to make mugs, T-shirts, jewelry, jigsaw puzzles, clothing, post cards, and a host of other products. Both making these products and marketing them would provide a boost to Ely's economy. Another potential product would be books. Ely has an unusually talented group of writers and illustrators for children's books. The timeline of the rock's ecology and its presence over 2.7 billion years could be wonderfully illustrated with pre-historical animals and flora as an educational story for children.

Pillow Rock, in its present location, will never be able to produce its potential educational value nor have a meaningful impact on Ely's economy. A move to the trailhead site would revitalize the historical Ely icon.

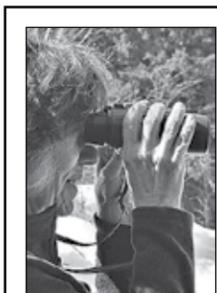
Gerry Snyder  
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# A parable about border walls

By early February, the landscape is heavily blanketed with many layers of snow. Some days I stand in awe at the silent beauty of this season. But there are other days I curse it! Today, it's a little bit of both. Soon I will dive wholeheartedly into the familiar routine of shoveling paths — from the



KATHLEEN  
MCQUILLAN

front door to the woodshed, out to the driveway, and then to the bird feeders.

This morning, after completing my outdoor chores, I moseyed back to the main house. But en route, I noticed a series of little holes tunneled into the snow on each side of my foot path. I was intrigued by the symmetry and

sheer number of them. They were clearly a system, organized by a variety of small creatures. Parallel-running tracks clearly marked favored routes that facilitated travel across an inhospitable landscape for any above-ground excursion. Mice, squirrels, voles, weasels, mink and others, well-adapted to survive even the harshest of winters.

I am an avid gardener. Were it summer, seeing signs of such fervent activity would trigger thoughts of malice for "these

little devils who invade and plunder the precious product of all my hard work" preparing and planting a bountiful harvest that would provide a significant portion of my annual food supply. This cadre of marauders are competent competitors sparing an all-out war to defend what I have presumptuously claimed as "mine".

I am also a lover of birds. Their frequent visits to my feeders not only enhance my quality of life, but also are essential to my mental health!

Especially during winter when birds bring color and movement to our otherwise monochromatic and frigidly snowbound landscape... which brings me back to those tunnels.

Winter has its way of forcing us to hunker down into conditions resembling "solitary confinement," whether it be dens carved in tree trunks, warrens burrowed beneath abandoned brush piles, or hovered around the warmth of a wood stove

See CRITTERS...pg. 5

## America needs to face the reality of Donald Trump

Remember life before all this mayhem? Life for a good portion of America was going smoothly, not to disregard the great issues of the homeless, poor and underserved among us.

In the last four years, what was comfortable has been seriously disrupted.

One wonders why complicit Republican members of Congress will not give it up and move forward regarding the Donald Trump presidency. They are simply not serving America, questioning the election results after being proven again and again that it was not rigged.

Imagine if a previous president had encouraged the Proud Boys and the wild crowd to storm Congress. How far would he have gotten before being lynched? But no, Republicans would have that dismissed! They don't

mind that the rioters were looking to hang the Vice President, that they trashed the Capitol windows, stole items, and killed a few people. What are these Congress people thinking trying to bypass prosecution?

Aside from the coup attempt, there have been four years of craziness, where presidential authority overreached:

- The tax break for the top 1.5 percent: The super-rich have benefited and substantially increased their wealth while essential workers struggled to feed and house their families.

- Complicity with the Russia in its attempt to infiltrate American elections and decision-making.

- Building a border wall at \$34 million per mile between Mexico and the U.S. Is this where we want our tax dollars to be used? Weren't the Mexicans supposed to pay for it?

- What about denial and inaction regarding the coronavirus, leading to 400,000-plus deaths, endless illness, and strain

on the medical systems? Just look at what the lack of humanity and carelessness have caused while denying science. But, of course, such can be dismissed when there are those who've been tricked into believing all of these details are false. We the people have allowed such from our leadership and even supported it. This is truly a shame on our country.

- All those weekend golf trips to Mar-A-Lago—the cost of Air Force One, staff, and Secret Service after criticizing the previous president for golfing too much!

- Lack of concern for clean air and water - as if there is no climate threat at hand.

And what good did Trump do?

- No health care reform.

- Banning Muslims.

- Increasing the federal deficit from \$19.9 trillion to \$27.7 trillion and unemployment from 4.7 percent to 6.7 percent.

- Lying in public

20,000-plus times.

- Calling his military unbecoming names while declaring how much he did for them.

- Advancing partisan majority in the courts.

It is time to wake up, America! Sort out the lies. Change requires moral courage, which we haven't seen much of lately. With the realities we have faced, this is no time to advance the very rich and power hungry, or to use our power to support someone longing to become America's dictator.

**Cecilia Rolando Ely**

## Ely's election makes the case for ranked choice voting

Filing in the special election for Ely mayor closed on Tuesday and we have six candidates who filed. With so many candidates, there'll be a primary

on April 13 to narrow the field to two candidates and a General Election on Aug. 10 between the final two.

I wish we could use Ranked Choice Voting for this election. With RCV, we wouldn't have to hold the expensive, low-turnout primary. Not only is it expensive for taxpayers to pay for two elections, it's expensive for candidates to have to run in two elections. Local primaries tend to have very low voter turnout, and that is especially true in a local primary for a special election.

The purpose of two rounds of elections is to make sure that the candidate wins with the support of a majority. With RCV, we could do that in a single election. Voters rank their preferences and if no candidate received a majority (50 percent plus 1) outright, then an instant runoff process would kick in. The candidate with fewest votes is eliminated and the ballots for this candidate are then counted for those voters' second choices.

This process continues until one candidate earns a majority and wins.

It's like a primary-general election, but combined in a single, cost-effective and decisive election. It's smarter, fairer and easier—for candidates and for voters.

There's a bill this session (HF 89; SF 218) that would give communities like ours the option to use RCV and to use it for state elections, too. It makes so much sense. I urge Rep. Ecklund and Sen. Bakk to support this legislation and give Ely the local control to decide for ourselves how to run our elections.

**Tom Benson Ely**

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



## CRITTERS...Continued from page 4

in a humble log cabin. This is why those little holes in the snow brought me to a standstill — the thought of all those little critters huddled beneath the surface, invisible to my (shiver)naked eye, a place that was warmer, quieter and shadowed by filtered light. I imagined their scurrying about and meeting along shared byways. I wondered, “Do they use lanes like we do? Or sidings, like trains, where one pulls off to the side and lets the other pass first, in some semblance of courtesy or fairness? Are there little exits to hollowed out rooms where lucky finds of seeds and other edibles are saved for the coldest days and darkest nights of the season? Cached away for those times when leaving

their underground shelter could result in either a slow death brought on by the unforgiving elements, or one that is sudden from attack by a hungry predator, also unmercifully driven by an instinct to survive?

Honestly, I hadn't thought about this underworld before, despite having caught an occasional glimpse of something swiftly darting across the path. That's not to say that their tracks haven't intrigued me. More than once I've returned to the house to consult my Naturalist's Guide to help identify who's been traveling through the neighborhood. But never had I experienced such a dreamy examination of life beneath the snow.

Suddenly, a smile arose out of nowhere. “It's kind of like the Rio Grande!” I thought.

But instead of this migration going north and south, it travels east and west. To the east of my cabin are my makeshift but functional bird feeders. To the west is where I plant a large area for my vegetable garden, now fallow and filled with lots of “left behinds,” some fresh frozen, others fermenting — roots, stalks and rejected fruits of my labor, available in various stages of decay, some of which I'm guessing (at least to scavengers) could be quite tasty by now. With all that abundance comes great temptation. I try to imagine how many cross at this spot, magnetically

pulled to what's on the other side. I bet a high number now that we're well into February.

Now, when I spot one of those furry little critters sitting boldly on the feeder, stuffing its cheeks with sunflower seeds, I no longer find myself railing against its greed, depriving needed sustenance from hungry little chickadees and nuthatches. Instead, I find myself softening. And when I discover that a mystery marauder has uprooted the beets or carrots I've left in the ground for a mid-winter treat, I no longer take it as a personal assault. It seems since my day of musing, I've tempered my outlook. Now, I picture all those little guys wisely hoarding everything they can in

order to make it to March, with sunflower and Niger seeds acting as the staple foods, with a garnish of rotting herbs, corn husks, or asparagus spears. From this epiphany, a peace accord is born!

So now it's time for detente. Instead of conducting never-ending catch and release operations, or worse, catch, detain or destroy, I am learning to observe and appreciate. Live and let live. However you word it, I'm putting an end to nasty futile attempts to eliminate these migrants' movement across some invisible manmade border. Aren't we all out for the same thing? Safety, shelter, nourishment, and belong-

ing. Simply put, survival for ourselves and our loved ones? And we'll all work tooth and nail to secure it. That's nature. Our instinct.

So, I'm trying to adopt a new way of seeing. Instead of dominance and control, or total annihilation, I'm rolling out a new policy that eliminates “MDS” — the policy of “Mutually Assured Destruction” — adopted during the Cold War Era, designed to include the for-real nuclear option where nobody gets to win, and switches us over to “MAS” — “Mutually Assured Survival” — and for everybody!

## COVID...Continued from page 3

more than 220,000 people 65 and over registered for random selection for appointments for 6,000 doses of vaccine distributed through nine pilot community vaccination sites.

Minnesotans have even more options for vaccinations with Walz's announcement on Monday that selected Walmart and ThriftyWhite pharmacies, including ThriftyWhites in Virginia and Hibbing, would start receiving limited doses of vaccine through the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program, avail-

able for those 65 and over by appointment only. The vaccine locator map was updated to include links to appointment registration sites. Walz also reallocated 8,000 doses to be administered by 40 Walgreens pharmacies across the state. Reservations for appointments at the ThriftyWhite locations in Virginia and Hibbing were snapped up within a few hours of being opened on Tuesday.

### Area COVID news

The North Country region also got a double dose of good news this

week.

The seven-day average case rate used to assess the potential for community spread of the virus dropped to 2.7 in northern St. Louis County on Feb. 3, according to the most recent data available from the county health department. The last time the seven-day case rate was this low was last August, and it represents a dramatic drop from November's high of 76.1.

For a second consecutive week, only six new positive COVID cases were reported in the com-

bined zip code areas of Orr, Cook, Tower, Soudan, Ely and Embarrass. It was the third consecutive week of no new cases in Soudan, and the second week in a row no new cases were identified in Ely. The numbers reflect trends being observed statewide, but health officials caution that two highly contagious variants of the coronavirus could lead to a resurgence in cases unless people continue to follow COVID safety protocols for mask wearing, social distancing, and gathering in small groups.

## SCHOOL...Continued from page 3

sixth-graders joined us in school, and it was the first time I ever laid eyes on them in our building,” she said. “It was good to finally meet them in person.”

The principal noted that Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday will be regular 8:05 a.m. to 2:50 p.m. class days, and the school district will continue with early dismissal at noon on Wednesdays.

“The regular bus runs will occur at noon on Wednesdays, with Memorial students having the option to pick up a bag lunch on their way home,” Anderson said.

Erie continued, “Not having all of our students in school has been a difficult time for families and our

entire school community. I want to thank our students, parents, teachers, support staff and the Ely community for all that has been done to cope with the challenges the pandemic has brought upon us. It is my sincere hope we are able to continue with in-person learning, have people vaccinated, and limit the spread of COVID-19, until we are able to realize a sense of normalcy that we all seem to crave.”

Most of the Chromebook laptop computers have arrived and district officials started to roll them out in the fifth and eighth grades, according to Erie.

“We expect to distribute Chromebooks to all

second through twelfth-grade students in the next few weeks. Thanks to our Technology Team of Jim Robbins, John Keranen, and Madeline Olson for their diligent efforts in getting these Chromebooks into the hands of our students,” he said.

The Ely school board, while not required to approve the learning plan transition, was advised of the move at their monthly board meeting on Monday night.

Board chair Ray Marsnik asked if students are wearing masks on campus at all times of the school day.

“Do you see them not wearing masks if they are

not directly supervised?” he asked.

“Overall, it has been very good,” Anderson replied. “Like with anything else, kids need to be reminded sometimes. I think they know that is what keeps everyone safe and in school.”

Marsnik added, “It is good news that our entire student body is now back to in-person learning, and according to our health and medical experts, mask-wearing is very important, and I'm sure they would like to see us continue to be in-person for the remainder of the year.”

## the TIMBERJAY



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

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

Week of Feb. 15

**Monday**

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

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

**Tuesday**

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

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

**Wednesday**

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

**Thursday**

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

Vermilion Country School Board- Meetings posted online at [vermilioncountry.org](http://vermilioncountry.org).

## Hockey Day Soudan moved to Sunday, Feb. 21

SOUDAN- Due to the cold weather and the restrictions on the number of people allowed inside the warming shack at a time, organizers have decided to move the event from Feb. 14 to Sunday, Feb. 21 when the temperatures are predicted to be in the 20s.

Youth/boot hockey game will be held at 11 a.m., and the adult Tower vs. Soudan game will begin at 1 p.m. Good Ol' Days will be selling food outdoors. Please bring wood to contribute to the bonfire.

## COLLEGE NEWS

### Gavin Olson named to Dean's List

TOWER- Gavin Olson of Tower earned Dean's list recognition for fall 2020 at the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota. To qualify for the honor, traditional undergraduate students must earn a 3.50 or better grade point average while carrying at least 12 credit hours.

**Call 753-2950**

**to subscribe to the Timberjay!**



## TOWER-SOUDAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Help the TSHS with your Old Fire Hall stories

## A thrifty way for you to support our community

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Historical Society is raising matching funds to renovate the Old Fire Hall in Tower. Part of the fundraising plan is to seek funds from the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS). The MHS grant application needs to address why the building is important to the residents of Tower, Soudan, Lake Vermilion and surrounding townships.

At one time it was used as a jail, city hall offices and, of course, a fire hall. When city hall and the jail moved to another location in 1935 that section of the building was repurposed for community center activities. Dances, bake sales and rummage sales, Girl Scout and Boy Scout meetings, after-school programming, adult meeting groups and many more activities were held in the building. The TSHS needs to know the stories behind the activities that took place for several decades before the current Tower Civic Center was built in 1980, as well as stories handed down from the past.

"Generally, non-profit organizations like ours ask people for money," stated Nancy Larson, TSHS grant writer. "We aren't doing that with this request; we just want to hear from you. We would love to hear your stories."

"The stories folks share with us will also become a part of the oral history of our community," added Kathy Siskar who is on the TSHS Oral History Committee.

"In addition to helping us with the grant



A photo of the fire hall from about 50 years ago. submitted photo

request, we will also be sharing these stories with the community. We invite folks to write their stories and send them to us through the mail, email them to one of us, or give one of us a call. Take your pick! We need your stories!"

All grants received from the MHS will be used to restore the building so it can be used by the community again. Exterior masonry wall repairs to seal the building from further degradation are planned for 2022 if funded by the MHS. Private funds raised thus far through donations to TSHS will match other small grants to replace the roof in summer 2021.

"We are working to see this beautiful building restored so that we can tell the stories and showcase the rich history of the Tower-Soudan-Lake Vermilion region. With your help, we can accomplish that goal," stated Cookie Bonicatto, co-chair of the Events and Fundraising Committee.

To "donate" your story, please contact Nancy Larson at 218-750-7514 or email [communitycoaching@yahoo.com](mailto:communitycoaching@yahoo.com), or Kathy Siskar at 218-753-4521 or email [fkiskar@gmail.com](mailto:fkiskar@gmail.com).

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# TEDA looking for volunteers for committees

TOWER— Want to help Tower prosper economically? If so, consider joining a committee of the Tower Economic Development Authority.

TEDA has established new committees this year to further expand on the exciting work the authority undertook in 2020. New committee members need not be a member of the TEDA board, nor have any previous economic development experience, although such background would be valuable for the work of the committees.

Committees encouraging new members

include:

► Land and Properties Committee— TEDA owns and maintains more than \$2 million worth of land and facilities and the new committee will oversee and manage those resources for the benefit of the city and its economic development.

► Marketing and communications— Getting the word out about the work of TEDA and the resources it can make available to businesses and prospective businesses, and touting the growing number of outdoor recreation amenities in the community,

is an important undertaking, which will be the focus of this committee.

► Planning Committee- If you have ideas of your own or would like to work with others to foster improvement in the community, consider joining TEDA's Planning Committee.

If you're interested, contact TEDA Executive Director Marshall Helmberger at 218-750-2510 or email him at [teda@cityoftower.com](mailto:teda@cityoftower.com).

## COMMUNITY GROUPS

try School, summer baseball programs, and special elementary athletic opportunities at Tower-Soudan Elementary.

The 2021 officers are Marshall Helmberger, president; Joan Dostert, vice-president; and Jodi Summit, treasurer. Anyone wishing to learn more about the group, or to request funding, can contact Jodi Summit at [vcs.charter@gmail.com](mailto:vcs.charter@gmail.com).

### Friends of Vermilion Country School 2020 report

TOWER- Friends of Vermilion Country School held its annual meeting virtually this year. The group is a booster club for the school, and all money raised goes to support school activities and other needs that are not funded through the regular budget.

The group will resume holding monthly bingo events once it is safe to do so. The group is hoping to be able to sponsor a COVID-19 modified Vermilion Run/Walk on the Fourth of July, if state safety guidelines permit.

The group sponsors senior bingo, which is held at the Tower Civic Center on the

first Monday of each month from February through December. Last year, the group was only able to hold bingo in February and March, the two months with the lowest attendance and profits from bingo. The group's two other fundraising events, the Vermilion 10K Run/Walk on the Fourth of July, and the holiday craft show, were both canceled.

In 2020, the group did fund about \$1,650 for projects at VCS.

The group also acted as a fiscal agent for the Ancient Cedar Trail project. The trail project received \$6,964 in grant funding, and still has \$1,974 in grant funds to spend on the remainder of the project, which includes creation and installation of permanent map signs, construction of a shorter boardwalk at the eastern exit of the trail, possible installation of additional benches, and mapping and signage work on trails on the north side of Tower.

The 2021 officers are Muriel Scott, president; and Jodi Summit, treasurer.

## CHURCH NEWS

### Lenten events set at St. James

TOWER- St. James Presbyterian Church of Tower is holding a Lenten Devotion and Community Coffee, Fellowship, and Prayer starting on Wednesday Feb. 17 at church at 10 a.m. Please let Pastor Doug know if you would want to join others from the church and community each Wednesday during Lent.

This group during Lent will be using "Steadfast Love" inspired from Henri J. M. Nouwen.

Our theme this year will be "Christians Sometimes Believe Stupid Things"

1. To Have A Faith That Stands Firm – 1 John 5:3-4 If something does NOT happen the way you think it should, is it because you didn't have enough faith? Consider the difference between Biblical faith and the teachings of those who would make us doubt God's faithfulness in prayer.

2. Let Me Pay The Price – Galatians

6:7-10 Many religious people - and even Christians - believe in some form of "karma". What's wrong with that? And why should we not accept that view of God?

3. We All Mess Up – Romans 8:17-28 "Everything Happens For A Reason" seems Biblical... but it's not. Do you know why it's not true? And do you know what God actually teaches about His purpose and promises in our lives?

4. You're Not More Qualified – Matthew 7:1-6 Almost everybody can quote Jesus' statement: "Judge not". But are they quoting Him properly? Is there something in His words that say more than most people think?

5. Not Influenced By God – Mark 15:8-16 To say we should let our conscience be our guide seems so reasonable. It almost makes sense. But God never said we should do that. Instead He said we should seek to have a clear conscience. How can we accomplish this?

### St. James hosting a free movie night

TOWER- St. James Presbyterian Church is hosting a free movie night on Sunday, Feb. 21 at 6 p.m. The movie REASON will be shown. When a mysterious man appears in a small town, unexplained miracles start to occur, changing the lives of everyone he meets. There's a mother whose five-year-old boy has leukemia, two doctors – one an atheist haunted by his past, the other a brilliant young oncologist who places all her hope in the power of modern medicine – and a blind pastor whose son hasn't spoken a single word in 38 years. All of them will be brought together by the presence of this stranger, who teaches them the true meaning of faith and hope.

Online each week at [www.timberjay.com](http://www.timberjay.com)

OUR COMMUNITY

# Second COVID vaccines distributed at BWCC



**Boundary Waters Care Center staff members, including Helen Tome, left, and residents received the second round of COVID-19 vaccine last week.** submitted photos

ELY - Staff and residents at the Boundary Waters Care Center here participated in their second round of the COVID-19 vaccination last week. Staff and residents received the initial

round of doses of the Moderna vaccination in early January.

“Our long-term care center has worked tirelessly to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the facility,” said Sarah

Spate, BWCC Human Resources/Marketing director. “Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic Boundary Waters Care Center has had only one resident with a positive COVID-19 test result

and zero deaths or hospitalizations related to the coronavirus pandemic.”

She added, “The residents and staff here have had a great experience with both rounds of the vaccine, and are thrilled

to be fully vaccinated. The Boundary Waters Care Center is proud to be doing their part to stop the spread of COVID-19 and help keep our Ely community safe.”

In Brief

**Pink Ribbon Riders return to Ely**

ELY - The 15th running of the Minnesota Snow Run, to benefit the Pink Ribbon Riders, will be held Saturday, Feb. 20 at Grand Ely Lodge.

The day full of fun for both men and women, while helping breast cancer patients in need, will be held from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. With the coronavirus pandemic in mind, the event this year will be a one-day celebration with a morning gathering, snowmobile decorating contest, evening banquet and more.

For more information, go to [PinkRibbonRiders.com](http://PinkRibbonRiders.com).

**Be a firefighter**

ELY - The Ely Fire Department is accepting applications for volunteer firefighters. Applications can be picked up from the clerk's office at City Hall, 209 E Chapman St.

**Breathing Out**

by Cecilia Rolando © 2021



when all else matters an opening of the heart

what else matters most

HAVE A HEART

## Ely Key Club, ECR help American Heart Association

ELY - The Ely High School Key Club is sponsoring a month-long “Hearts for Sale” event to raise money for the American Heart Association.

During all of February participants can surprise family, friends, co-workers, or anybody with 20 colorful hearts placed outside their home or office entrance. They will have 24 hours of enjoyment.

Call Ely Community Resource at 218-365-5254 to reserve your hearts. The cost is \$20. All proceeds go to the American Heart Association.



**Lauren and Abbie Rehbein and Key Club advisor Jill Swanson with hearts.** photo by K. Vandervort

Libraries

**Ely library**

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

**Babbitt library**

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

Support groups

**AA - Alcoholics Anonymous**  
**OPEN AA - 7:30 p.m.** Wednesdays and Saturdays, in-person, First Lutheran Church, 915 E. Camp St., Ely.  
**ELY WOMEN'S OPEN AA - Every Monday** at noon at St. Anthony's Catholic Church, 231 E. Camp St., Ely.  
**BABBITT AA - 7 p.m.** Tuesdays, Woodland Presbyterian Church  
**AL-ANON - Sundays** 8-9 p.m. at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely. For persons who encounter alcoholism in a relative or friend.  
**BABBITT AL-ANON** Thursdays, 7 p.m., at Woodland Presbyterian.  
**CO-DEPENDENTS'** 12-step support group, noon Fridays, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Ely.  
**ELY FOOD SHELF -** Third Wednesday each month, 15 W. Conan St.  
**ADULT BASIC EDUCATION GED** - Study materials and pre-test available. Call 218-365-3359, 218-827-3232, or 1-800-662-5711.

HIGHER EDUCATION

**Montana honored at UW-Madison**

MADISON, Wis. - The University of Wisconsin-Madison has recognized students named to the Dean's List for the fall semester of the 2020-2021 academic year, including Ely student Thomas Montana who is enrolled in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Students who achieve at a high level academically are recognized by the dean at the close of each semester. To be eligible for the Dean's List, students must complete a minimum of 12 graded degree credits in that semester.

**Merhar honored at Iowa State**

AMES, Iowa - More than 11,000 Iowa State University students, including Jenna Judith Merhar, of Ely, were recognized for outstanding academic achievement by being named to the fall semester 2020 Dean's List. Merhar is studying pre-business.

Students named to the Dean's List must have earned a grade point average of at least 3.50 on a 4.00 scale while carrying a minimum of 12 credit hours of graded course work.

**Local students honored at NDSU**

FARGO, N.D. - Two local students were among the 4,312 North Dakota State University students to be placed on the fall 2020 Dean's List.

Izaak A. Nosbisch, of Ely, and Marshall J. Backe, of Babbitt, are studying Mechanical Engineering.

A student must earn a 3.50 grade point average or higher and be enrolled in at least 12 class credits to qualify for the dean's list.

**Lida Dodge receives high honors**

AURORA, Ill. - Aurora University named Lida Dodge, of Ely, to the Dean's List for the fall 2020 semester.

Dodge is majoring in Early Child/Special Education. The Dean's List recognizes full-time undergraduate students who have earned a 3.6 GPA or

higher. Dodge was recognized with high honors this semester, having earned a perfect 4.0.

**Emma Kari honored at UMD**

DULUTH - The University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) announced its Dean's List for Fall Semester 2020.

Ely's Emma R. Kari, a junior enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts, majoring in Graphic Design, achieved a grade point average of 3.5 or higher and was included on the list.

Donald G. Gardner Humanities Trust

**We are now accepting 2021 Arts Grant Applications**

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

Updated grant applications and guidelines are available online at [www.gardnertrust.org](http://www.gardnertrust.org)

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

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Keiko Williams, Executive Director, by the end of August, for help and review of their applications.

Call 365-2639 or email [info@gardnertrust.org](mailto:info@gardnertrust.org)

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

SUPPORTING THE ARTS

**Middle school art student honored**

ELY - Ely Memorial Middle School art student Leo Stalmer, in ninth grade, was recently selected as a finalist for Artsonia's "Artist of the Week" award for the grade 7-9 age group.

Artsonia is an online art gallery for art students. Artwork is published by the teacher and students. Family and friends can view artwork online, comment on artwork, and purchase keepsakes of artwork. Twenty percent of all purchases are donated back to the art program in the Ely schools.

Check out the Ely school page to see what local students have been making this year and in past years, <https://www.artsonia.com/schools/school.asp?id=144443>



# Where there's parking, there will be crafts

Stung by show cancellations, local crafter rolls with the punches with mobile sales trailer

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- It's an idea that's been in the back of Ruth Huismann's mind for years, but it took a wallop from COVID-19 and a nudge from her husband, John, to finally make it happen.

The Huismanns, who live near Greaney, raised five children together, and once they all left the nest, Ruth realized she was at a crossroads.

"It was devastating," Ruth said. "I wondered, 'What am I going to do with my life?'"

The Huismanns own and operate J & R Waste-water Services, a business that has John on the road a good deal of the time dealing with customers all across the state. Ruth does the bookkeeping, but after the kids were gone, she started talking about getting a job. John wasn't much for that idea, and after going back and forth for a while, he put his foot down on an hourly job and instead suggested Ruth get a sewing machine. Rather firmly suggested, as Ruth recalled.

So, Ruth went shop-

ping for a sewing machine, but came home instead with an embroidery machine.

"I had to come and get my son, who's an IT guy, to come and show me how to use that machine because I had no clue," Ruth said.

Those were the humble beginnings of what's blossomed into a multi-faceted craft enterprise named Rag Bag Originals. The embroidery machines have gotten more complex and expensive; her product lineup has grown and diversified over the years, and so has her clientele.

Carting her wares to craft shows for about 15 years has been an essential element of Ruth's success, but in 2020, along came COVID-19 and all of the pandemic-driven changes. Large craft shows were among the casualties.

"I would normally start the first of October and I would do one to two shows a week through Christmas," Ruth said. "Then sometimes I would do a show here in town. Two days, Saturday, Sunday. And then I would turn around and go

to Bigfork in the middle of the week."

Those three big months weren't so big this year. Ruth found three craft shows to attend and helped create one more in Cook for some additional sales opportunities. "I lost a lot," Ruth said. "And the ones they did allow us to have, I came in with half of the amount I normally would make because people were afraid to come.

But the lack of opportunities brought an old idea back to the fore.

"We've talked for a few years about getting me a trailer, just because of the amount of stuff I haul," Ruth said. "And every year, my booth at the craft shows gets bigger because I find a new thing I like to do. When things went bad, and it got so cold, and people still wanted to buy, where were they going to buy?" John once said to buy a sewing machine. While the Huismanns could have gone back and forth on this one, that didn't happen.

"He said, 'Let's just do it. We're just going to do it,'" Ruth said.

Knowing she would



Ruth Huismann is cozy warm in her new Rag Bag Originals mobile trailer shop in Virginia on Saturday.

photo by D. Colburn

soon have a trailer, Ruth had just one requirement.

"I said, 'Make sure when you go look that you're spending MY budget, not your budget,'" Ruth laughed. "My budget is down here. John's is a Cadillac."

And now, Rag Bag Originals has a new home away from home, a trailer big enough to accommodate a boutique-style setup and several customers at a time, that can go wherever Ruth thinks

she might drum up some business.

The trailer is still a work in progress as the couple discovers what works well, and not so well, and they've already been out and about, parking the trailer and pitching the open sign in a parking lot in Virginia on one of the coldest days of 2021. They learned a lesson about space heaters that day.

"We had to open up the top," Ruth chuckled,

"in order for them to get enough oxygen."

The trailer likely represents another crossroads for Ruth, and for Rag Bag Originals.

"I don't plan to do any more indoor shows, really," she said. "I'm 62 and I'm getting tired. I'm not taking stuff in those buildings."

The grid-style permanent wall displays in the trailer are far better than scattering out items on two tables.

## NORTH WOODS SCHOOL

# Student Council, student leaders

by JOHN VUKMANICH  
North Woods Principal

FIELD TWP- This week I want to shine a spotlight on a special group of student leaders.

The North Woods Student Council is advised by two of our teachers, math instructor Amanda Hinrichs and science instructor Amy Cherrywell. If you ever wondered about "what" a student council does, here is how it looks at North Woods!

The Student Council at North Woods School is an organization for students from seventh to twelfth grades. Members are not elected, as is the practice at many schools. Student elections do add to the democratic process, but, as we all know, it can sometimes lead to a lack of representation and accusations that it is a "popularity contest." Members at North Woods apply for membership, and as long as the student is considered to be "in good standing", he/she is welcome to join our Student Council.

Membership numbers are also not capped, and the Student Council currently has 27 members across all grade levels.

The Student Council is responsible for many activities and events at our school. They run our Grizzlies School Store (I like to call it the Bear Lair), which specializes in Grizzly Gear. They carry hoodies, shirts, hats, mugs, mittens, and sweatshirts, to name a few items.

The Council is also in charge of setting up school spirit events such as Homecoming and Snow Week. Along with the advisors and the Activity Director, they set up the dates, choose the themes, build an event/activity list, organize the coronation, and market the events to the student body. Throughout the process they also communicate with me and the Dean of Students to assure that we are aware of what is happening and that they are following school protocols. The scheduling and organi-

zation of certain school dances also is the responsibility of the student council. They line up DJs and chaperones, and assist with check-in and other aspects of the night.

Civic responsibility is an important part of being on the Student Council, too. Although COVID has hampered many of our usual activities, the Council has been a part of Buddy Backpacks and Ruby's Pantry. They do a Highway Cleanup around the school and on Highway 53 near the school. Babysitting Nights have given parents a chance to have a night out. Our teachers know how the Council supports school staff during Teacher Appreciation Week. Each school year, the Student Council is a big part of our Seventh Grade Orientation and our Back-to-School events, helping to guide students and parents around the building and acclimate new students to our school.

Student Council

helps promote positive school culture. This year, they decorated our building with positive messages and handmade posters supporting a bully-free environment. I communicate with them about supporting positive behavior and being present in our elementary, as our young kids seem to really look up to the older high school students. The Council gives our students leadership and organizational experience, and supports the fact that sometimes we need to compromise when we work on something together. This is important for our students' futures.

Our school is appreciative of the Student Council and the teacher advisors who work hard to be good citizens. Now more than ever, civic responsibility is important, and the positivity that our Student Council contributes to North Woods School does not go unnoticed. Thank you!

# Orr Ambulance will resume transfer runs

ORR- After receiving reassurances that Orr citizens would always be first priority, Orr City Council members gave a green light Monday for Orr Ambulance to resume providing transfers originating at Cook Hospital.

The council suspended transfer services in May 2020, and Monday they reviewed an analysis of transfer revenue and expenses covering 2019 and 2020 that was prepared by Ambulance Director Donna Hoffer.

Hoffer's analysis showed that the revenues generated over two years from insurance and patients for the two-year period, \$20,166.38, plus \$541.72 of county out-of-city run reimbursement, easily offset operating expenses of \$13,701.73, yielding a profit of \$7,006.37.

"We know it's a profitable venture," Hoffer said.

Council member Bruce Black expressed agreement with the analysis, but registered a concern.

"My worry is coverage in the city," he said.

Council member Tom Kennebeck also addressed the coverage issue.

"Of all the people on call, there should always be those that should be reserved for the city," he said.

Hoffer was quick and emphatic in her response.

"We will not take a transfer if we do not have the city covered," she said. "Unfortunately, this has occurred in the past, but we won't, we haven't been operating under those conditions. We ensure that there's somebody in the area (to respond to city calls)."

Mayor Joel Astleford summarized the parameters succinctly.

"People that are on call for the city cannot go on a transfer," he said.

Council members authorized resuming the transfer service from Cook Hospital service. The service will be evaluated again next year.

## North Woods School 2020-21 Second Quarter Honor Roll

### A Honor Roll

#### Seniors

Monique Benner  
Zachary Cheney  
Jack Cook  
Emily Fosso  
Olivia Fultz  
Aubrey Koskovich  
Joey Lakoskey  
Zuly Roach  
Brynn Simpson  
Cole Thiel  
Dallas Villebrun

#### Juniors

Erik Aune  
Morgan Burnett  
Tyler Chiabotti  
Joshua Copeland  
Ty Fabish  
Trey Gibson  
Alex Hartway

Joseph Hoagland  
Sierra Jensen  
Taylor Jones  
Abby Koch  
Sean Morrison  
Jacob Panichi  
Olivia Udovich

#### Sophomores

Cooper Antikainen  
Kohen Briggs  
Hannah Kinsey  
Grace Koch  
Kaden Ratai  
Karah Scofield  
Elias Smith  
Steven Sopoci  
Skyler Yernatich

#### Freshmen

Jonah Burnett  
Annabelle Calavera

Brandon Cook  
Addy Hartway  
Evan Kajala  
Helen Koch  
Riley Las  
Victoria Olson  
Autumn Swanson  
Madison Taylor  
Trinity Vidal

#### Eighth Grade

Rory Bundy  
Addison Burckhardt  
Alex Burckhardt  
Ryder Gibson  
Aidan Hartway  
Sierra Schuster  
Amber Sopoci

#### Seventh Grade

Lincoln Antikainen  
Isaiah Briggs

Lauren Burnett  
Josephine Carlson  
John Danielson  
Mya Goggeley  
Isabelle Koch  
Brittin Lappi  
Victoria Mathys  
Isabel Pascuzzi  
Marley Peak  
Payton Scofield

### B Honor Roll

#### Seniors

Christopher Chauklin  
Megan Cote  
Carlos Jensen  
Logan Nurmi  
Andrew Peak  
Natalie Shantz  
Austin Sokoloski  
Elijah Squires  
Zoe Trip

#### Juniors

Jessie Anne Drift  
Kadence Holland  
Katrina Jackson  
Timothy Lilya  
Michaela Luecken  
Nathan Palm  
Arianna Swinson  
Kaya Tschida  
Brianna Whiteman

#### Sophomores

Jared Chiabotti  
Benjamin Kruse  
Garrett Lappi  
Dillon Musakka  
Emily Trip

#### Freshmen

Sean Drift  
Talise Goodsky  
Zefrym Mankowski

Cadense Nelson  
Jesse Palmer  
Coley Rabas  
Ella Smith  
Destiny Weiss

#### Eighth Grade

Jacob Benoit  
John Carlson  
Ella Cornelius  
Jasmine Munson  
Louie Panichi  
Lydia Trip  
Adyson Van Tassell

#### Seventh Grade

Levi Chauklin  
Brynn Chosa  
Matthew Miller  
Megan Taylor

# HEARING...Continued from page 1

Charges against Amanda Stevens, age 40, were filed in the Sixth District Court in Virginia back in December. The two counts include Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree and Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Fifth Degree, both felonies. Stevens could face a maximum of 20 years in prison and up to a \$250,000 fine for the third-degree charge. Her next court appearance is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 22, according to court documents.

Stevens is believed to be one of the co-owners of the Ely Drop and Shop, located at 204 E. Sheridan St. and she has regularly worked at the retail store.

Rumors that the thrift store was a source for illegal drugs have cir-

culated in Ely for some time, and in a statement to the city council, Ely Police Chief Chad Houde stated that the department had been investigating the claims.

Upon taking over as chief in 2020, Houde said he reached out to members of the Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crime Task Force, who began their own investigation, which tended to support the reports circulating in town.

According to the probable cause statement attached to the criminal charges, the task force set up an undercover purchase of meth from Stevens last October, using a confidential informant who told officers he/she had previously bought meth from Stevens at the store. At that time,

Stevens allegedly sold the informant approximately 1.61 grams of meth. A text message alleged to have come from Stevens to the informant read: "Come to donations. I'm at work. And please don't be so loose when you text. That's how I ended up in prison last time."

The complaint further states that a review of Stevens' criminal history revealed a prior conviction for a second-degree controlled substance crime in 2009.

In a supplemental report, the St. Louis County Sheriff's Department indicates that prior to the undercover purchase by the informant, its deputies and members of the drug task force had "conducted numerous hours of surveillance and observed

high amounts of suspicious vehicle and foot traffic to and from the business." The report also stated that officers had observed "multiple individuals that were the focus of an ongoing investigation into the use/sale of controlled substances, including but not limited to methamphetamine, frequenting the business."

According to the statement from Houde, the other owners of the business say they were unaware of the illegal activity until they learned of it recently. The business's majority owner, Kristin Krings, insisted in an interview with Houde that she knew nothing of Stevens' activity until late January, when she was informed by Stevens about the charges she was

facing.

According to Ely City Attorney Kelly Klun, however, the confidential informant stated that Krings was aware of the activity.

Two other minority owners, Casey Moravitz and Rosario Thole, also indicated they were unaware that illegal drugs were being distributed through the store.

Stevens claimed that she transferred her shares to another owner last year, but her statement contradicts the statements of the shop's other owners, who all agreed that Stevens owns 25 percent.

While Krings is the majority owner, and her name is the only one to appear on the business's license, Klun said the names of the other owners

should have been included when Krings applied for the business license.

It's unclear what steps the Ely council might take. "The City of Ely Code grants the council wide latitude when it comes to granting, limiting and revoking business licenses," Klun said in her statement to the council. According to the City Code, the city council may, for reasonable cause, revoke a business license for a variety of reasons, including the conduct of illegal activity at the premises.

Read more about this development and reaction from the downtown business community at [www.timberjay.com](http://www.timberjay.com), and in the Feb. 19 edition of the *Timberjay*.

# WATER...Continued from page 1

Matt Tichel, who operates the joint Tower-Breitung water and wastewater system. Three-quarters of the funds will go toward the replacement of the communities' joint water treatment plant as part of the Tower-Breitung Wastewater Board's (TBWB) effort to address surface water contamination of the existing wells that serve the two communities. The remaining 25 percent will help to cover the cost of installing Tower's new water main.

The two communities are planning to jointly bid the projects in hopes of achieving a more favorable price. The TBWB will pay for the cost of the water treatment plant, while the city of Tower will shoulder the roughly \$1 million cost of replacing its water main, although most of that will now be covered by grants.

The Army Corps grant was a major windfall for the two projects, currently estimated to cost a total of \$4.5 million. "There are only a few of these given out in the entire Midwest," noted Tichel.

Breitung Township has also obtained a \$250,000 grant from the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation for the project and is planning to apply for another \$250,000 from IRRR. While the city of Tower will ultimately likely need to tap a loan from the state's Public Facilities Administration (PFA) to pay for the remainder of the water main replacement, it now appears it will be just under \$200,000, or a tiny fraction of the two projects' overall cost. The TBWB will also need to borrow some PFA funds, said Tichel, which could prompt a modest increase in rates to cover the loan. Even so, the level of grant funding should keep rate hikes to a minimum. "It's

very rare to get 90 percent funding on a project like this," said Tichel. "This is going to benefit both communities greatly."

## A real need

Tichel told council members that a wellhead protection study done in 2014 found that surface water was infiltrating into the wells, bringing the risk of both viral and bacterial contamination. "We tried to find another source of water," said Tichel, but he noted that finding large sources of good quality groundwater in the area is difficult. "The state park spent hundreds of thousands of dollars looking and ended up with nine gallons per minute," said Tichel, or far less than required to serve both Tower and Soudan. Tichel said he and SEH engineers explored tapping drinking water from Lake Vermilion, but concluded the cost was too high. So, in the end, they concluded that purifying water from the existing well was the most cost-effective approach.

Tichel said the project will involve removing the existing water treatment plant and replacing it with one with twice the capacity. That's designed to provide redundancy, eliminating the possibility of getting untreated water into the system if the existing treatment plant were to fail. The project also entails closure of two of the system's wells and

rehabbing the remaining wells to reduce the inflow of surface water.

Tichel noted that the existing water treatment plant, installed in 1999, was designed to treat well water, which typically has less contamination than surface water. To address the surface water contamination, Tichel has had to deploy additional chlorine treatment of the water, which creates elevated levels of trihalo-methanes and haloacetic acids, which can cause health problems of their own. The level of those contaminants in Tower and Soudan's water has generally been running below allowable levels, but the levels do vary and have been close to, and occasionally over, the safe limits at times.

Tichel said replacement of the water main is also critical to the city, since any break in the pipe would cut off the city's only source of water. He said the new pipe will be PVC, which should last "beyond any of our lifetimes." Soudan had installed a new main several years ago, so its main doesn't need replacement.

Council members said they were pleased to hear the latest news. "So, we'll have better quality water, a redundant system, and everything will be state of the art and brand new," said council member Dave Setterberg,

who offered thanks to everyone involved in the project and grant applications.

## Pine Street

The city also received good news on its nearly \$850,000 Pine Street reconstruction with the preliminary approval of a \$152,000 grant from the Community Development Block Grant along with a \$100,000 award from the IRRR. The St. Louis County Board will still need to approve the CDBG funds, but that's typically just a formality, according to Nancy Larson, the city's grant writer and manager. The city has already received \$472,000 toward the project from the state Local Road Improvement Program, although those funds have to be expended by the end of 2022, so the council approved soliciting bids for the project, with the understanding that the project could still be shelved or modified if bids come in too high. The bid request is expected to include some alternates to allow the city to trim the overall project cost if necessary. Despite the good news on funding, the city likely still faces a funding gap, currently estimated at about \$64,000, but the exact amount won't be known for sure until bids come back.

St. Louis County will

actually undertake the bidding and contracting on the project, which means the city won't face cash flow issues as is common with major projects that are funded on a reimbursement basis.

In other action, the council:

➤ Approved 4-1 with little discussion the request by the Breitung Police to suspend on-call coverage from February through April to cut costs. The council had rejected the request at a special meeting on Feb. 1, mostly over a lack of information. Setterberg said he had gotten more information and was satisfied that the impact would be minimal. The city would save about \$1,500 from the change. Council member Joe Morin voted no.

➤ Heard from Clerk-Treasurer Victoria Ranua, who asked for city council input on the format and substance of city department reports. Ranua also asked if the council would like to see additional reports that they aren't currently getting and she asked council members to think about it and come back to the issue at an upcoming council meeting.

➤ Heard from city grant manager Nancy Larson and ambulance director Dena Suihkonen about current applications to FEMA for a new

ambulance as well as a new ambulance cot and radios. "It's a very competitive process," said Larson, although she said she believes the city has a competitive request. The ambulance request, which was set to be submitted on Feb. 12, totals \$226,000. The smaller request for the radios and cot will be submitted under a separate category. The city purchased a number of new radios recently, said Suihkonen, but the previous ambulance director and fire chief had allocated them all to the fire department. She said a number of them did not come back after several resignations from the department last March. She said she has been unable to locate any paperwork on which radios were issued to which members, in information she would need to make a more formal demand for the return of radios.

"The only paperwork I have on radios dates back to the Bernie Zollar era," she said.

➤ Gave approval to a request by the Wagoner Trails Club to allow for grooming of a 1.3-mile segment of the Prospectors ATV Trail for skate skiing.

➤ Approved adding the monthly city claims to the consent agenda.

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Entrants **MUST** attend a "It Starts on River" meeting. Watch for date... Accepted projects can earn **\$1,000** per project. Open to all without prejudice.

**NOTICE**  
 Ely area food shelf

**Wednesday, February 17**  
 the Ely Area Food Shelf will be distributing food curbside from **11 AM-5 PM**  
 at the **FOOD SHELF** located at 15 West Conan Street.  
 (Directions: Approach from West Pattison Street then watch for signs and follow the directions of volunteers directing traffic.)

Curbside pick-up will continue. We will take your household info in one area, you will drive ahead to load your food. Please wear a face mask if you have one. We have plenty of food, so it is not necessary to line up early. To avoid congestion arrive after 1 PM.

We will be delivering food to the apartments and townhouses Thursday, February 18. Babbitt delivery in municipal parking lot Saturday, February 13 from 10:30-11:30 AM. Please call 218-235-8912 to reserve delivery or volunteer.

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ELY SCHOOL DISTRICT

# ISD 696 building project likely to start before school year ends

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – Will Ely students be issued hard hats later this year? More details are emerging on the \$20 million facilities project for the Ely school district as plans are tentatively set for construction to commence on May 17, two weeks before the end of the school year.

Superintendent Erik Erie and the school board are making plans for a ground-breaking celebration in April with demolition starting the next month.

At their monthly business meeting, Monday night, held at Ely City Hall to allow for school board members to physically attend while COVID-19 public health protocols remain in place, Erie addressed several new developments in the project, including new building relocation, main water line replacement, building demolition and student/classroom displacement before the end of the year.

As Erie related from a recent facilities committee meeting, a decision was made to relocate the additional bus garage for the district's student transport vans and SUVs to near the Ice Arena, rather than adjacent to the existing bus garage.

"We wanted to build the new structure next to the existing garage, but that presented some problems with storm sewer and underground utility conflicts," Erie said. "We are still working on what the additional cost will be."

The ongoing lead-in-the-water problem on campus is being addressed. In addition to installing new water fixtures and building water pipe replacement, a new main water line on Harvey Street, estimated to be more than 100 years old, could go a long way in mitigating the problem.

"We continue to evaluate (water) service lines into the building," Erie said.

School board member Tony Colarich, who also serves on the facilities committee, noted that the length of the main water line under Harvey Street runs nearly 500 feet from Fourth Avenue to Sixth Avenue. "It looks like that line was installed in 1905," he said. "What impact that line has on the lead-in-the-water problem has not been determined."

With building demolition and construction set to begin prior to the end of the school year, the impact on students is yet to be determined.

"We do know that we have to move industrial arts equipment out of the building, but again, (timing) is subject as to when they need to get at that (Industrial Arts) building. The band classroom and Happy Days preschool program may be disrupted in May," Erie said.

The demolition of the former steam plant between the Memorial and Washington buildings is one of the items at the top of the project list and will likely also begin in May, according to Erie.

## Costin Group agreement

Board members unanimously approved renewal of a lobbying agreement

with the Costin Group for one year at a cost of \$2,000 per month.

New board member Darren Visser voiced his support for the lobbyists, Gary Cerkvenik and Ely alum Jeff Anderson, but looked for clarification on the contract cancellation clause.

"I want to make sure that we don't just write a check for \$24,000 tonight without having some sort of review process," he said. "I want to make sure there is some sort of review process to make sure we are getting what we expect for our money. I have full faith in them, but we do need some sort of a check process."

The renewed agreement calls for a 90-day cancellation provision by both the Costin Group and ISD 696. The Costin Group will continue to bill the school district on a monthly basis and provide regular activity updates, according to board member Rochelle Sjoberg.

Board chair Ray Marsnik related a recent development where the Costin Group continues to go to bat for the Ely school district in St. Paul. They have included ISD 696 in efforts to promote a state legislative action to exclude sales tax on materials, products and supplies for school build-

ing construction through the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools, he said.

"Costin Group contacted (our legislators) Sen. Bakk and Rep. Ecklund, and they are working on a revised bill to include Ely in on this for our building project," Marsnik said. "This could mean a few dollars (savings) if that goes through. That shows how the Costin Group is working for us."

Colarich put the impact on that proposed sales tax legislation into perspective. "With state sales tax at about seven and five-eighths percent, and our \$20 million project, if we were to extrapolate

out the cost of materials at perhaps \$5 million, we're talking about \$400,000 (in savings)," he said.

## Other business

In other business, the board:

► Listened to and accepted the fiscal year 2020 financial audit presentation by Devin Ceglar of Walker, Giroux & Hahne, the district's auditor.

► Introduced the district's new payroll benefits and finance coordinator, Jordan Huntbatch.

► Adopted the 2021-22 school year calendar that calls for 172 total attendance days, with the first day of school on Tuesday, Sept.

7, 2021, and the last day of school on Friday, June 2, 2022.

► Approved Jill Homer's request for a leave of absence from Feb. 16 to March 15, with a possible extension through the end of the school year, without pay and without loss of rights and privileges from her paraprofessional position.

► Approved Donna Kari as head speech coach, Dylan Fenske as volunteer assistant junior high boys basketball coach, Reed Peterson as assistant boys basketball coach and Megan Wognum as head volleyball coach.



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#24633

HEATED SEATS, ECOBOOST, FORD PASS

### 2020 ESCAPE SE AWD

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CITY OF ELY

# Ely mayoral candidate forum will be televised on Thursday, Feb. 18

ELY – All six Ely mayoral candidates are set to participate in a voter’s forum on Thursday, Feb. 18, beginning at 6 p.m.

Due to coronavirus concerns, the event at Ely City Hall will not be open to the public, but will instead be broadcast live on Ely

cable access channel 11 and 98, and streamed live on the AAUW Ely Branch Facebook page.

A recording of the event will also be available for later viewing on YouTube under the title Ely Mayoral Candidate Forum 2021. The event

is co-hosted by The Ely Rotary Club and the American Association of University Women-Ely Branch.

Residents wishing to submit questions for consideration should e-mail them by the end of Friday, Feb. 12, to khv771@

gmail.com.

Ely resident Micca Leider, a first-time candidate for public office, will join four current city council members, Angela Campbell, Jerome Debeltz, Paul Kess and Heidi Omerza, and former Ely mayor Roger Skraba

on a primary ballot for an election on Tuesday, April 13. The top two vote-getters will face off in a general election on Tuesday, Aug. 10.

The voter’s forum will be held in the council chambers at Ely City Hall. Topics to be discussed

at the forum may include, government funding, diversity, the coronavirus pandemic, Community Center building, economic development, long-term vision for the community, law enforcement oversight, ethics, and protecting the environment.

## FESTIVAL...Continued from page 1

Park early last Thursday. He was getting a start on “And the Horse He Rode in On,” which was an interpretation of the current cancel culture across America.

“This is a smart phone grinding up an image of a Civil War general, Robert E. Lee, on his horse, called Traveler,” he said. He had help on the project from his daughter, Tracy.

Chris and Oskar Koivisto and Timothy Loney carved a “nine-foot steampunk raven” in approximately 21 hours over three days.

Jaime Stocks, Sarah Malik and Sarah Moldenhauer worked together on a whimsical “Otter Slide” with three cute critters.

Carl Karasti and his team of snow sculptors created a hands-around-a-globe structure, and Patrick Knudson and his team produced a giant fish called “Ely Trout.”

EWF Executive Director Shauna Vega praised all the local artists who worked in the brutal conditions last weekend.

“Their dedication to the traditions of our wonderful event are really



“Ely Trout.” above, is one of five snow sculptures in Whiteside Park.

appreciated, especially this year when we have to take so many precautions,” she said.

The Ely ArtWalk, however, does resemble past years, but with a twist. Dozens of Ely businesses are displaying hundreds of locally-produced pieces of art. Spectators walk along the downtown corridor and participate in “window shopping” for their favorite pieces

“To enhance everyone’s ability to experience

and enjoy the festival, we added a virtual experience to both the Ely ArtWalk and the Snow Sculpting Symposium,” said EWF Board Chair Chris Kloppenberg.

In fact, the Ely ArtWalk will be offering daily virtual participation opportunities, including a major Facebook activity, all month with a real-time live video feed. Tours of stores will be posted daily and include talks with artists, and information for buying art.

“This will allow our in-town and out-of-town friends an opportunity to enjoy the festival from home,” Kloppenberg added.

The virtual experience this year includes daily Snow Sculpting Symposium progress videos and a virtual walk through Whiteside Park after the sculptures were

completed. Art enthusiasts may also watch daily Ely ArtWalk videos featuring different artists each day.

“The Ely Winter Festival is committed to celebrating winter, community, and art while keeping the community safe and healthy. We are complying with all state mandates in place and we can still celebrate while staying safe,” Kloppenberg said.

The residents of Ely’s Carefree Assisted Living facility also created art for this year’s Ely Winter Festival. Drive by the facility at 140 S. 2nd Ave W to see a variety of window displays.

“Local Scout troops also made snow sculptures in the yard,” Vega added.

The 2021 Ely Winter Festival received major support from Ely Family Dental and Twin Metals Minnesota. This annual Ely activity is made possible



Cade Thibodeaux levels off the top of his snow block early last Thursday in sub-zero temperatures. photos by K. Vandervort

by the voters of Minnesota through grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council, through a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund. EWF is also made possible in part by the Donald G. Gardner Humanities Trust.

Many traditional events are missing from this year’s celebration because of COVID-19. There is no Whiteside Park skating rink. The Kubb tournament and Great Nordic Beard Fest were called off this

year. There are no literary gatherings, or hikes to Sigurd Olson’s cabin or Hegman Lake. The sled dog meet-and-greet event was also canceled.

“This was a very tough decision, but we know it’s important to keep Ely safe,” Kloppenberg said.

“We’ll be back with a traditional festival in 2022,” she said. Next year, the festival will be held Feb. 3-13, 2022.

For more information, go to [www.elywinterfestival.com](http://www.elywinterfestival.com) and [www.elyartwalk.org](http://www.elyartwalk.org).

## Correction

The *Timberjay* may have inaccurately reported that recent rate increases imposed by the *Ely Echo* as the city of Ely’s official publication were contrary to state law. Upon further research, we feel that the statute is ambiguous. Therefore, it was inappropriate to suggest a violation of the statute when it was not clear that was the case. In this suggestion, the newspaper overreached. The error occurred in the editing process and was not created by Ely Editor Keith Vandervort. The *Timberjay* apologizes for any confusion.

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# SPORTS

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## BOYS BASKETBALL

# Back-to-back wins for Ely

## Sophomore Bianco pours in 39 points to lead Wolves over Lions

by JORDAN PRICE  
Contributing Writer

COTTON- Ely sophomore Joey Bianco exploded for 39 points and nine rebounds as he helped lead the Timberwolves to an 84-58 rout of Lakeview Christian, Tuesday night.

While Ely struggled with shooting at times, Bianco's hot hand helped the Wolves build a 39-23 lead by the break. The

Wolves put it all together in the second half, eventually burying the Lions on their own turf.

"We played well overall, but at times we did not shoot or defend like I know we can," said Head Coach Tom McDonald.

Adding to Bianco's stellar night, Harry Simons tallied 16 points, along with five rebounds.

The blow out "W"

against Lakeview Christian followed an 82-71 home-court win against Mesabi East last Friday. Ely had a one-point lead going into the locker room, but again, the Timberwolves put the pedal to the medal and finished strong.

"I thought we shot and defended better in the second half, especially after our sluggish first-half," said McDonald. "We had 10 first-half turnovers, which

**Right: Ely's Joey Bianco looks for room to maneuver under the basket as Mesabi East defenders put on the squeeze.**

photo by J. Greeney

definitely contributed to our slow start. We only had three turnovers in the second-half, which allowed us to take the lead and hang on for the win," said McDonald.

See **ELY BOYS...**pg. 2B



## BOYS BASKETBALL

# Grizzlies on a roll

## Team improves to 6-1 after victory over International Falls

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

INTERNATIONAL FALLS- For the North Woods boys basketball team, Tuesday's 78-68 road win at International Falls was a test of survival. For the Broncos, it was the game that got away too early.

T.J. Chiabotti scored 13 of the Grizzlies' final 15 points in the final four minutes of the game, the last 11 of those coming from the free-throw line as the North Woods junior found multiple ways to get to the line.

The Grizzlies needed every one of those charities to keep the Broncos in check. Trailing 38-25 at the half, the Broncos cut the North Woods lead to eight, 63-55, when Chiabotti was fouled on a made layup and dropped in the ensuing free throw. The Broncos got back within nine three times, and each time Chiabotti stepped up with a pair of free throws to hold them at bay.

North Woods got off to a 6-0 start and never trailed in the game, but it wasn't because the Broncos lacked scoring opportunities. The Broncos had little difficulty working the ball down low, but they fired up one short-range blank after

**Top: North Woods' Jonah Burnett and Davis Kleppe get in the face of a Littlefork ball handler last Friday.**

**Right: Kleppe stares down the Vikings' point guard.**

**Lower right: Nice shoes! Forget the day of plain Jane Converse All-Stars. Brendan Chiabotti was sporting a full rainbow of colors on his shoes this past week.**

photos by D. Colburn

another, with North Woods hitting the glass hard to deny second-chance buckets.

Leading 13-10, Jonah Burnett ignited the run that would put North Woods safely ahead with a three-pointer. Chiabotti scored on a layup and a trey, Sean Morrison dropped a pair of buckets, and Davis Kleppe nailed a hoop in a 14-2 run that gave North Woods its largest lead of the game at 27-12.

While all the North Woods guards are capable of bombing from long range, the Grizzlies collected only three treys in the game. Instead, when they weren't running the break, the Grizzlies focused on working team-

See **NW BOYS...**pg. 2B



## NORDIC SKIING

# Ely boys, girls top GR meet

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

GIANTS RIDGE— Ely skiers dominated the course here last Thursday as both the boys and the girls squads bested Mesabi East and Duluth Denfeld. Both teams were led by first place individual finishes, by senior Jasper Johnston in the boys competition and sophomore Zoe Devine for the girls.

"We had a good day last week," said Ely Head Coach Paula Anderson. "It was really a treat to ski the section and state classic course in a regular meet, without all of the pressure."

Johnston, who finished the 5K classic course in 15:39, crushed the field, beating teammate and second-place finisher Gabe Pointer (17:04), a junior, by a minute, twenty-five seconds. Ely junior Jon Hakala (18:19) and classmate Micah Larson (18:30) finished fourth and fifth respectively as the Wolves claimed four of the top five spots in the competition to cruise to an impressive 392 points. Second place Mesabi East finished with 372 points, to 371 for Denfeld.

Devine had a tighter contest for her

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

# Grizzlies wallop NER

by DAVID COLBURN  
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP –The North Woods girls put together a dominating first half on Tuesday as they trounced the visiting Northeast Range Nighthawks, 70-23.

Everything clicked for the Grizzlies in the first half, as they opened with a 15-0 run keyed by seven points from Helen Koch. All five starters scored in the offensive blitz.

The Grizzlies ran a ferocious man-to-man defense that resulted in steals, turnovers, blocks, and defensive rebounds as they held the overmatched Nighthawks scoreless for the first 6:39 of the game. North Woods pushed the pressure out well beyond the three-point arc, keeping Northeast Range from establishing any sort of offensive rhythm.

The Grizzlies' offense was firing on all cylinders – fast breaks, crisp offensive sets, and buckets off offensive rebounds – as they steadily built their lead. When a three-point battle ensued midway through the first half, the Grizzlies got the best of it with three treys from Kiana LaRoque and a fourth from Brianna Whiteman to go up 27-11 with nine minutes remaining. While the

See **NW GIRLS...**pg. 2B

HOCKEY

# Back in action, Ely slips to Rebels

by KEITH VANDERVORT  
Ely Editor

ELY – The Timberwolves hit the ice here last Saturday, but struggled to put the puck in the net, ultimately losing 7-2 to the Moose Lake Area Rebels. It was the first action for Ely’s hockey team in nearly two weeks due to pandemic-related cancellations by opponents.

Ely, which has struggled all season, fell behind 3-0 after the first period on the Rebels’ 13 shots to the net, tended by sophomore goalie Ben Cavalier. Ely recorded five shots on goal in the first stanza, and 15 scoring chances overall. Moose Lake Area peppered Cavalier with 29 shots.

Ely scored two goals in the second period, one by Cole Macho, who scored with an assist by Jakson Hegman, and the other by freshman Drew Marolt, who scored his first goal ever as a varsity player.

The Rebels tallied four more goals in the second frame to put the game largely out of reach. Both teams were held scoreless in the third period with Cavalier turning away three shots on goal.



Left: Ely goalie Ben Cavalier blocks a shot during recent action against the Moose Lake Area Rebels. The Rebels peppered Cavalier with 29 shots on goal.

photo by K. Vandervort

A disciplined Ely team was called for just one penalty, two minutes for slashing by Jimmy Zupancich in the first

period. Moose Lake had 21 minutes in the sin bin on five penalties, minor flags for interference, slashing and holding,

and two major penalties in the third period, both by freshman forward Dawson Fjosne for checking from behind along with

a misconduct.

“We have a pretty young team this year, and I sense some of our younger players have a bit of anxiety as they go up against players who are older, stronger and faster,” said Head Coach Ben Johnson. “After they scored those two goals, they loosened up a bit and started playing with more confidence. No matter what happens this year on the scoreboard, we are having a good learning season and these guys are all playing tough and learning to play as a team. It is impressive to see them grow.”

The Timberwolves were scheduled to travel to Duluth Marshall on Tuesday. Ely hosts two home games, Mora on Saturday, Feb. 13 at 2 p.m., and Bagley at 6 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 19, before traveling to Chetek, Wis., on Feb. 20.

## NW BOYS...Continued from page 1B

mates free for drives to the bucket and short and mid-range jumpers.

Chiabotti dominated scoring in the second half, collecting 27 of the Grizzlies’ 40 points en route to a game-high 37 points. Darius Goggeley was the only other North Woods player in double figures with 11. Eight different Grizzlies scored in the contest.

The Grizzlies likely

needed a challenging contest after overwhelming Littlefork-Big Falls 102-34 on Friday at home.

Any concerns North Woods Head Coach Will Kleppe had about past slow starts by the Grizzlies were erased right from the outset. Frenetic full-court pressure throttled the Vikings’ offense as the Grizzlies went on a scoring tear, grabbing a 22-6 lead with the game barely five

minutes old. If the game had been a boxing match, L-BF might well have thrown in the towel at half-time with the pummeling they were taking, as North Woods held a 44-point, 63-19 lead.

Kleppe devoted practices to defense in the runup to the game, and the Grizzlies were even more effective in the second half, allowing only 15 points. North Woods

forced a mind-blowing 46 L-BF turnovers, with 34 of those coming on steals. While the Grizzlies cooled slightly on offense in the second half, they put up 60 more shots in the game than L-BF, 84-24, and hit 46 percent of them.

All ten Grizzlies scored in the game, with five of them reaching double figures. T.J. Chiabotti led all scorers with 22, Jared Chiabotti and Brenden

Chiabotti each scored 16, and Darius Goggeley and Sean Morrison tallied 11 apiece.

The Grizzlies are riding a five-game win streak and take a 6-1 record into a Friday road game at Mesabi East. The Giants are winless in five games thus far. North Woods will return home on Friday, Feb. 19 to play Virginia. The Blue Devils lost to Eveleth-Gilbert

on Tuesday, a team the Grizzlies beat by 21 points.

Home contests for all Grizzlies basketball teams, boys and girls, are livestreamed online on the NFHS Network. The service has monthly and annual subscription options.

## NW GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

Grizzlies kept on rolling, the Nighthawks sputtered, scoring just one more basket and a free throw to trail 42-14 at the half.

Determined not to let off the gas, the Grizzlies came out of the locker room intent on ramping up their running game. While the scoring pace dropped off as offensive miscues mounted, the North Woods defense remained relentless, allowing only nine total points and shutting

the Nighthawks out for the final seven minutes of the game.

Grizzlies Head Coach Liz Cheney utilized a platoon system in the game, substituting five players at a time in order to get more minutes of game experience for her non-starters. The system worked well, with all but two players scoring and fairly consistent play from whatever group was on the court for a given stretch.

One of Cheney’s main goals for the game was for the Grizzlies to maintain their intensity for all 36 minutes of the game. Given the outcome, mission accomplished.

“What we really needed to do was to focus on playing our game of basketball,” Cheney said. “We talked about that at halftime again, the level and the speed of the game that we want to maintain and how can we make

sure that we’re playing with intensity and speed, because that’s how we like to play basketball.”

Defensive intensity has been a hallmark for this team early in the season, but Cheney was pleased to see what was happening on offense, too.

“To be able to have scoring somewhat evenly spread around through multiple players shows that the girls really came around,” Cheney said.



North Woods’ Helen Koch moves the ball past Willa Koivisto.

photo by C. Stone

“They were patient, they were able to set up the offense, and they fast broke when those opportunities came.”

The success of the substitution scheme served to reinforce something Cheney has believed since the start of the season.

“That shows that we’re not just five or six deep,” she said. “All of them have something to

offer. I’m looking forward to finding those groups that click.”

Madison Spears scored 14 points to lead the Grizzlies, with Brianna Whiteman and Kiana LaRoque chipping in 11 each. Nine of the team’s 11 players scored in the game.

The Grizzlies were scheduled to be on the road Thursday at Ely, and will return home to host

## NORDIC...Continued from page 1B

first-place showing, as she finished in 19:03, besting senior Lydia Skelton, of Mesabi East, by two seconds. Ely sophomore Phoebe Helms took third with a time of 20:07, while classmate Sydney Durkin took fifth with a time of 21:21 and senior Julia Schwingamer took sixth with a time of 21:28. Freshman Ava Skustad

(21:49) rounded out the top ten finishes for Ely. The Wolves finished with 389 points, just ahead of Mesabi East’s 383 and well ahead of Denfeld’s 346.

The Wolves’ previously scheduled Feb. 11 meet was scratched this week. They’re next scheduled to compete at Mt. Itasca on Tuesday, Feb. 16. They’ll be in Duluth on Feb. 23.

## ELY BOYS...Continued from page 1B

Emmett Faltesek came to play for the Wolves as he was the leading scorer with 23 points. Bianco was like a Swiss Army knife, scoring 20 points, eight rebounds, and seven assists. Simons had a nice

display with 20 points, while Brock Latourell added 11 points and Will Davies had nine rebounds.

The Timberwolves will face Mt. Iron-Buhl on the road on Tuesday, Feb. 16 at 7:15 pm.

## Memories of the Early Days

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

Written by Marshall Helmberger • Published by the Timberjay

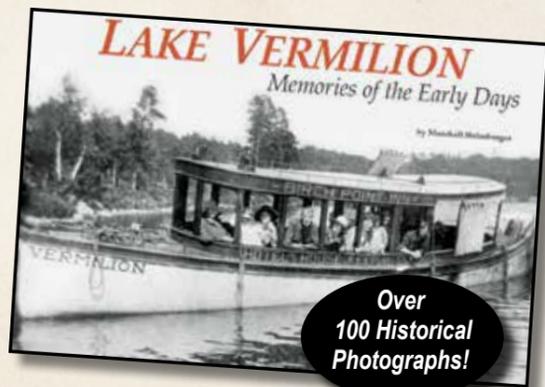


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# This is how to have fun in the snow

by JODI SUMMIT  
Tower-Soudan Editor

TOWER- The *New York Times* "At Home" section had an online article of mostly worthless tips for playing out in the snow last week. If they really wanted some practical tips, they should have contacted the students at Tower-Soudan Elementary, who spent a chilly afternoon on the school's sliding hill last Thursday.

These kids know that you don't need fancy gear to play out in the snow, because plastic sleds and saucers work just fine. They cost less than a cheeseburger and fries at Good Ol' Days, and provide fun all winter, or until they bust in half, which can happen when kids attempt to sled off the back of a garage roof into a waiting snowbank. Yes, I watched a group of boys doing this a couple of weeks ago. I know this isn't necessarily as dangerous as it sounds, because my own son, now safely grown up and more sensible, did similar things at that age.

These kids know that snow pants don't need to match your jacket, and if either have a few holes or rips, they will still keep you warm. Hats and mittens are preferred by any adult around, but kids seem to find them optional. They know you don't need some fancy organization system to hang them up at home. Any closet or hook will do, as will the back of a chair when a decent hook isn't available. They may prefer a pile on the floor, but parents know this is a really bad idea because of how damp,



sweaty coats smell the next day.

These kids know that sledding is more fun with friends. There are races to the bottom, sled trains, and what only can be described as mosh pit sledding, where the children, to be honest it's all boys, end in a pile of sleds, arms, and legs, and it's hard to tell which belong to whom.

These kids know that sledding isn't just for kids. They kept urging the teachers and paras to take turns, mostly because it is fun, and secondly, standing at the top of the hill just makes you get cold, while running back up the hill with a sled will warm you up. They also knew that their teachers and paras often volunteered to haul more than one sled back up the hill.

As for parents, most have learned that kids need at least a couple of winter jackets and snow pants, because after some serious sledding they get filled with snow and immediately become sopping wet masses that

can take a day to dry.

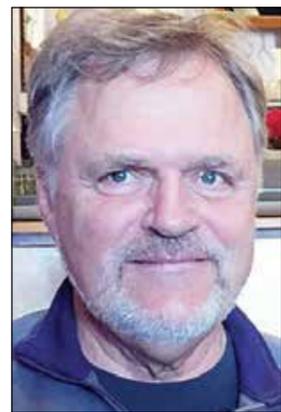
As for mittens, you can never have too many pairs. By the end of winter, you will find several pairs outdoors under the melted snow, and more yet in the large lost and found pile in the school hallway. If you are lucky, the lost and found mittens might be in a pair, but usually they aren't, and the matching one is nowhere to be found. Parents also know you need to buy mittens early in the season. By January, when you realize your supply is dwindling, Target is selling swimsuits, not winter gear. And parents know that the sledding season, up here, can last into April, while the ice sometimes doesn't melt on the lakes until mid-May.

Kids also know that sledding is a perfectly fine activity when the temperatures dip below zero, though they might have a harder time convincing their teachers to supervise the sledding hill during recess or afternoon gym time!

Above: A group of elementary boys gets ready to launch their sleds down the hill, and then crash at the bottom. Below: Deniko Dupree saucers down the hill. Bottom: (from left) Kalya Drift, Nai-lee Moyer, and Caitlynn Goodbird. photos by J. Summit



## Obituaries and Death Notices



### Michael C. Wood

We are profoundly saddened to share that Michael Cheney Wood, 69, of Aurora, passed away on Monday, Feb. 1, 2021, at his home, following a brief illness. A private memorial service is being planned. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a donation be made to the Superior Hiking Trail or a trail system of your choice. Family services are provided by Bauman-Cron, a Bauman Family Funeral Home in Virginia.

He was born on Aug. 31, 1951, in Chicago, Ill., to John Cheney Wood and Suzanne Watson Wood, both of whom predeceased him. Michael attended Alfred-Almond Central in Almond, N.Y., graduating in 1969. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. John's College in Santa Fe, N.M., where he studied the great books and liberal arts. He later spent time in New York City, dancing with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. He and Marjory

Johnson were married in Minneapolis on May 29, 1996.

Over the course of his work life, Michael was known for his creative and innovative approach - applying technology solutions to business problems in New Mexico, Australia, and Minnesota, for Sophia Learning, Solution Design Group, Fujitsu, and BORN Information Services, among others. His important work in weather/nuclear winter modeling (Los Alamos National Labs) contributed to the end of the Cold War. His continued, endless curiosity about climate change and scientific inquiry was applied to many aspects of his life's pursuit of knowledge.

Michael's love for family, friends, and the outdoors is reflected in every memory of him, from ski patrol in New Mexico, to canoeing in the Minnesota Boundary Waters (at one time taking a wrong turn into Canada), to shuttling grandchildren to school, or testing a new sleeping bag on the porch in the dead of winter. He believed in our responsibility to protect the environment and respect the Earth. He was always willing to step up, with grace and generosity, when called upon by friends or family.

Michael loved the trails, mountains and lakes of Minnesota and the mountains of New Mexico.

He hiked the entire 310-mile Superior Hiking Trail over the course of several years, and a number of sections of the North Country Trail. His passion for hiking, cycling, skiing, camping, and other outdoor activities was clear to anyone who crossed his path.

Michael is survived by his wife and best friend, Marjory Johnson Wood; son, Galen Wood of Minneapolis and his daughters, Maia and Sofia; daughter, Ranier Wood of Santa Fe, N.M., and her son, Oliver; grandchildren whom he and Marjory raised, Erinn Wilson, Tyler and Gabe Wood; sister, Carol Wood (Ken Maracek) of Plattekill, N.Y., and their daughter, Casey Maracek and son, Avery Maracek (Gillian Hammond); and numerous additional grandchildren, great-grandchildren, extended family and friends.

We will miss his intelligence, kindness, wit, and laugh.

### Marlene Akkanen

Marlene Stone Akkanen, 85, of Babbitt, passed away on Saturday, Feb. 6, 2021, at Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital. No services are being held at this time. A celebration of life is being planned for spring with burial in Argo Cemetery in Babbitt. Arrangements are with Landmark Funeral

Home in Virginia.

She is survived by three children, John (Jean) Akkanen of Embarrass, Gust Akkanen of Brainerd and Linda (Steve) Graupman of Cloquet; sister, Dorothy Mellsmoen of Oakdale; 11 grandchildren, Questa (Jon) Knapper of Aurora, Jenna (Pat) Rosenquist of Larimore, N.D., Lanay (DJ) Asmus of Alexandria, Ben (Amanda Hilde) Akkanen of Virginia, Darren Akkanen of Hibbing,

Rachel (Jesse) Wiitanen of Embarrass, Ross (Dawn) Graupman of Eagan, Neil (Kristina) Graupman of Hermantown, Amy (Matt) Eldridge of St. Johns, Fla., Lindsey Allrich and Michael Allrich, both of Andover; 11 great-grandchildren; daughter-in-law, Lori Akkanen of Gilbert; and son-in-law, Scott Allrich of Andover; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

### Beatrice L. Waisanen

Beatrice L. Waisanen, 80, of Angora, passed away on Saturday, Feb. 6, 2021. A virtual service will be held via Zoom at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021. The Zoom link will be posted on the website of Mlaker Funeral Home of Cook.



## COVID-19 Testing Available

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

Testing will not be completed without an appointment.

Scenic Rivers will not bill patients for testing.

Insurance coverage will be processed when available.

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# Outdoors

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## FUNDING

### County OKs grants to fight AIS Vermilion Lake Association to receive \$42,191

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

LAKE VERMILION— A number of local organizations, including the Vermilion Lake Association, will receive grant dollars to continue the fight against aquatic invasive species as a result of action this week by the St. Louis County Board.

The county approved a total of \$654,530 in grants, made possible from a funding allocation from the Minnesota Legislature.

The North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District received the largest grant among the eight organizations that received funds this week. The district will receive \$398,600 to continue to manage watercraft inspections, decontamination, and public education on a dozen major lakes in the county, including Bear Island, Burntside, Crane, Kabetogama, One Pine, Pelican, Shagawa, and Vermilion.

The board approved a separate allocation of \$42,191 to the Vermilion Lake Association to further the association's AIS efforts on Vermilion. In addition to watercraft inspections, cleaning, and education, the VLA also engages in habitat evaluation and threat assessments as well as early detection and response.

VLA president Pat Michaelson said the financial backing from St. Louis County makes the association's work possible. "We cannot do this without their generous support," he said.

Jeff Lovgren, who coordinates the VLA's AIS prevention efforts noted that the work is ongoing and substantial. "The AIS challenge at Lake Vermilion is very large," said Lovgren. "About 16,000 boats launch at Vermilion's 40 public and private accesses each year. With serious threats like Eurasian watermilfoil, stary stonewort, and zebra mussels expanding in Minnesota lakes, we must do all we can to protect Lake Vermilion, its fisheries, its recreational boating, its property owners, and its business community."

This year, Lovgren said, increasing the number of inspections at Lake Vermilion resorts will be a key project for the association. "Our resorts attract many visitors from out of state and from regions in Minnesota with AIS infestations which could threaten our lake," he said.

Countering this growing AIS threat takes an army of volunteers and significant funding. "Our AIS volunteers will donate over 1,500 hours in 2021," said Michaelson, who organizes VLA's volunteer team. "Their efforts allow us to stretch our funding much farther."

See GRANTS...pg. 5B



## WILDLIFE RESEARCH

# Study: Wolves use ambush to catch and kill beavers

With extremely poor vision, beavers rely on smell to detect wolves lying in wait

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER  
Managing Editor

VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK— Fresh wildlife research conducted here is shedding new light on gray wolves— and it's upsetting the traditional view of how these top predators pursue their prey. The study, led by Tom Gable, a PhD researcher at the University of Minnesota, was published this week in the journal *Behavioral Ecology*.

For decades, biologists have considered wolves almost exclusively as pack hunters, which used cooperative chases and their stamina to run down large prey, often by exhausting animals like deer or moose.

Yet, wolves can also be solitary hunters, particularly during non-winter months, when they rely on beaver for much of their diet. But how does a wolf catch a semi-aquatic prey that spends little time on land and never ventures far from the safety of its pond? Turns out with patience, and a lot of waiting.

Through a variety of methods, an ongoing study of gray wolves focused on the greater Voyageurs ecosystem has demonstrated that wolves use ambush hunting, a method usually associated with cats, which wolves have successfully adapted to catching beavers.

This study challenges the classic concept that wolves are not ambush predators. "It is the first systematic analysis of wolf ambushing behavior," said Gable "and overturns the traditional notion that wolves rely solely on hunting strategies that involve pursuing, testing, and running down prey." Instead, wolf hunting strategies appear

highly flexible with wolves able to switch between hunting modes depending on the prey they are hunting.

"Over a five-year period, we estimate that our field research team collectively put in over 15,000 person-hours to search nearly 12,000 locations where wolves had spent time. Through this effort, we ended up documenting 748 locations where wolves waited to ambush beavers but were unsuccessful, and 214 instances where wolves killed beavers," said Sean Johnson-Bice, a co-author of the study.

Beavers have extremely poor eyesight and rely almost exclusively on their sense of smell to detect predators on land, which is where they are most vulnerable. While large in size and remarkably strong when it comes to hauling logs and branches, beavers have few defenses on land against a predator the size of a wolf— other than trying to avoid them. Yet, they can't rely on eyesight to do that. Indeed, a video prepared by the researchers, using a life-sized cardboard cutout of a reclining wolf, showed that beavers were all but oblivious to the visual indicator of a predator in wait.

The new research reveals that wolves recognize the beaver's reliance on smell and that they carefully positioned their ambush sites downwind of areas where they expected beavers might be working.

"The results are very clear" says Tom Gable, the study's lead-author: "89-94 percent of the ambushing sites were downwind, where beavers were likely unable to smell wolves."

Gathering data on how wind direction influences wolf ambushing behavior wasn't easy, note the researchers. "Scientists



have long thought that ambush predators are able to strategically choose ambush sites in areas where prey are unable to detect them via scent. Until now though, documenting these hunting tactics in exhaustive detail proved extremely challenging," he adds.

When staking out beavers, wolves appear to also be surprisingly patient. They spend substantial periods of time waiting next to areas where beavers are active on land, such as near beaver dams and trails. "Wolves waited an average of 4 hours during each stakeout. But they often waited 8-12 hours or more, and one wolf even waited-in-ambush for 30 hours!" said the study's second-author Austin Homkes.

The researchers note that these behaviors were not unique to a few wolves. Instead, wolves from multiple packs across several years used the same ambushing methods, suggesting that this behavior is widespread throughout the Voyageurs ecosystem and likely other boreal regions in North America where wolves hunt beavers. Voyageurs National Park is home to an estimated 3,000 beaver, but the species is commonly found throughout northern Minnesota. With less competition from human trappers than in the past, wolves appear to be taking advantage of the bounty, at least in those months of the year when beaver are available. Related

**Top: A beaver, in daylight, ambles unconcerned in front of a cardboard cutout of a wolf. Wolves are key predators of beaver, so researchers believe the lack of concern over such an image suggests that beavers don't rely on sight to detect predators.**

**Above: A nighttime shot of a beaver hauling an aspen branch past the life-size image of a wolf. Researchers have concluded that beavers rely on smell to detect wolves. The latest research has also documented that wolves will engage in ambush hunting tactics to catch beaver. That runs counter to previously held beliefs about how wolves hunt.**

photos courtesy T. Gable

research from Voyageurs has documented that beavers make up an average of 42 percent of a wolf's diet in summer. While beaver remain active throughout the year, they spend the winter months within their lodges, which are largely impregnable to wolves.

Notably, wolves and beavers are found in the same habitats throughout much of the northern hemisphere, so the implications of the latest research have wide applicability, according to the research team.

We're your most reliable local news source!

**GRANTS...**Continued from page 4B

The Burntside Lake Association will also receive extra dollars, totaling \$19,125, for their ongoing AIS efforts, which will build upon the work already underway by the soil and water conservation district.

Other AIS funding awarded by the county board this week includes:  
 ➤ \$98,000 to Wildlife Forever for marketing their Clean Drain Dry initiative

aimed at public awareness and education.  
 ➤ \$30,000 to Canosia Township for boat inspections and public education on Pike and Caribou lakes.  
 ➤ \$24,450 to the University of Minnesota Sea Grant for a pilot project to install CD3 hub stations at four public water accesses near Duluth. The stations will allow boaters to self-inspect their own boats.

**LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST**

from NOAA weather

Friday					Saturday					Sunday					Monday					Tuesday				
<b>-6 -27</b>					<b>-6 -22</b>					<b>-3 -21</b>					<b>7 -11</b>					<b>12 -7</b>				
Ely	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Emb.	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Cook	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Orr	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.	Tower	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Sn.
02/01	31	21	0.03	0.7"	02/01	30	20	0.03	0.7"	02/01	29	19	0.05	02/01	31	21	0.18	2.5"	02/01	29	19	0.00	0.3"	
02/02	22	19	0.00	02/02	30	18	0.00	02/02	20	17	0.01	02/02	22	19	0.00	02/02	20	17	0.00					
02/03	27	19	0.00	02/03	25	17	0.00	02/03	24	15	0.00	02/03	27	19	0.00	02/03	26	16	0.00					
02/04	35	21	0.02	0.3"	02/04	34	19	0.03	0.3"	02/04	34	18	0.00	02/04	35	21	0.00	02/04	35	19	0.01	0.2"		
02/05	25	-5	0.02	0.4"	02/05	25	-6	0.06	0.4"	02/05	24	-7	0.00	02/05	25	-5	0.01	0.3"	02/05	24	-8	0.00		
02/06	4	-13	0.00	02/06	4	-14	0.00	02/06	2	-15	0.00	02/06	4	-13	0.00	02/06	3	-17	0.00					
02/07	-6	-25	0.00	02/07	-9	-27	0.00	02/07	-10	-27	0.00	02/07	-6	-25	0.00	02/07	-9	-28	0.00					
Total					YTD Total					YTD Total					YTD Total					YTD Total				
0.36 49.6"					0.62 35.8"					0.66 48.2"					0.38 NA					0.26 37.6"				

# Check Out These... Snowmobile **HOT** Spots

### Area Trail Conditions

**Taconite Trail**  
Fair to Good Condition, Groomed  
1-4" base, 7-19" snow on ground

**Arrowhead Trail**  
Fair to Good Condition, Groomed  
1-4" base, 6-19" snow on ground

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**6** **SAMZ Place**

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**Sewing**

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**RESORT CARETAKER COUPLE WANTED**

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

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

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

Seasonal position. (May 1 through mid-October). Some paid time off will be provided. Personal and job references will be required. Competitive salary. Required to live at resort 24/7. New 2021 Coachman 30' RV [model] set up on private lakeside site. For further information on the resort, please see our website at www.vintagevermilion.com.

Please send a cover letter/resume to akoski@stadigjohnson.com.



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For more information contact Sarah Spate, Human Resources, 200 W Conan St, Ely, MN 55731, or sspate@boundarywaterscc.com, or 218-365-8756. 2/12



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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**Bearville Township Board of Audit**

Bearville Township Board of Audit Meeting The Bearville Township Board of Audit is scheduled for Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. at the Bearville Town Hall. This meeting will consist of auditing the books for the year ending December 31, 2020 and preparing proposed levies to submit to the Annual Town Meeting.

**March Board Meeting**

The Bearville Township Board of Supervisors March meeting is re-scheduled to Tuesday, March 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the Bearville Town Hall. Masks are required. Due to social distancing in-person attendance by the public will be limited. **Online access to the meeting will be available. Please contact Kathy Cressy, Clerk if you would like to attend. 218-376-4495 or bearvl@frontiernet.net.**

Kathy Cressy, Bearville Township Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 5 & 12, 2021

**KUGLER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF AUDIT and REGULAR MEETING NOTICE**

The Kugler Town Board will hold their Annual Board of Audit on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 6 p.m. at the Town Hall. The regular monthly meeting will follow. Social distancing and mask-wearing rules will be followed.

Christopher Suihkonen, Town Clerk

Published in the Timberjay, Feb. 12, 2021

**King Crossword**

**ACROSS**

- 1 To boot
- 5 Tummy muscles
- 8 Writer Rice
- 12 Appeared suddenly
- 14 Earth
- 15 Regatta
- 16 Pout
- 17 " - a Camera"
- 18 Decisive moments
- 20 A Musketeer
- 23 Prejudice
- 24 Reddish horse
- 25 Lake activity
- 28 CCV x X
- 29 Pre-diploma hurdles

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12				13				14			
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	32		33					34			
			35				36				
37	38	39				40					
41					42	43			44	45	46
47					48						
49					50			51			

- 30 Dig in
- 32 Straw hats
- 34 Carton sealer
- 35 School orgs.
- 36 Used a sponge
- 37 Stir-fry veggie
- 40 Crony
- 41 Slanted type (Abbr.)
- 42 Yacht lover's event
- 47 French 101 verb
- 48 Veteran
- 49 Easy targets
- 50 Ballot marks
- 51 Whig's rival
- 10 Egyptian river
- 11 BPOE members
- 13 Historic times
- 19 "Phooey!"
- 20 Branch
- 21 Pyramid, maybe
- 22 Saintry ring
- 23 Wild pigs
- 25 Challah holder
- 26 Tide variety
- 27 Be slack-jawed
- 29 "Beetle Bailey" dog
- 31 Danson of
- "Cheers"
- 33 Granny Smiths
- 34 Mild cheese
- 36 Bulb measure
- 37 Slapstick arsenal
- 38 Jazzy James
- 39 Seniors' org.
- 40 Cushions
- 43 Flamenco cheer
- 44 Med. plan option
- 45 Not 'neath
- 46 Like some humor

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**Weekly SUDOKU**

by Linda Thistle

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

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

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦**

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**



**NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING**

**VERMILION COUNTRY SCHOOL**

The Vermilion Country School Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021 at 5 p.m. at Vermilion Country School. If you wish to attend remotely, please email fzobitz@vermilioncountry.org for information. There will be an overview of school operations, along with election of board members. Any questions, please contact Jodi Summit at 218-753-2950 or jsummit@vermilioncountry.org.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

# TIMBERJAY CLASSIFIEDS

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

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## SUPPORT GROUPS

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

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

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

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

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

BABBITT AL-ANON- meets Thursdays at 7 p.m. in the upstairs of Woodland Presbyterian Church.

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

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

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## King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

ALSO	ABS	ANNE																	
POPPEDUP	SOIL																		
BOATRACE	SULK																		
IAM	CRUISES																		
ATHOS	BIAS																		
ROAN	BOATING																		
MML	ORALS	EAT																	
BOATERS	TAPE																		
PTAS	WIPE																		
PEAPOD	PAL																		
ITAL	BOATSHOW																		
ETRE	OLDTIMER																		
SAPS	XES	TORY																	

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## Super Crossword AM TOO!

- ACROSS**
- 1 Kuwaiti rulers
  - 6 Pin to hang a chapeau on
  - 12 Clothes
  - 16 "This is so frustrating!"
  - 19 Maui porch
  - 20 Single-celled creature
  - 21 Old term for margarine
  - 22 Sooner than, in sonnets
  - 23 Incriminated dancer
  - 25 Possible cause of sneezing
  - 27 Petri dish gel
  - 28 A handsome Greek god put half-and-half in his coffee?
  - 30 Scholars' milieu
  - 34 See 56-Across
  - 35 Mini-plateau
  - 36 Cornhusk-wrapped treats found in an underground vault?
  - 43 Pizazz
  - 44 Psychic glow
  - 45 Volt-per-ampere unit
  - 46 Stephen of film
  - 49 Temporarily smiling broadly?
  - 56 With 34-Across, "Green Eggs and Ham" character
  - 59 Sweetheart
  - 60 Oklahoma city
  - 61 Shoe retailer
  - 62 Former flying inits.
  - 63 Gas suffix
  - 64 Tuscany city
  - 66 Negative particle
  - 67 Iowa's tree
  - 68 Tony-winning musical performed in France's capital?
  - 73 Graynor of "The Sitter"
  - 74 Nabisco treats
  - 76 Valleys
  - 77 Wish to undo
  - 78 Pince- —
  - 79 6/6/44
  - 80 Colonel North, briefly
  - 82 Broadway star Rivera
  - 84 Spokane-to-Boise dir.
  - 85 Actor Ralph having reached a saloon's counter?
  - 89 "— -haw!"
  - 90 Suffix with brilliant
  - 91 Rod go-with
  - 92 Memo starter
  - 96 Group journey that has made everyone really hungry?
  - 104 Memo starter
  - 106 British rocker Brian
  - 107 Cold carnival treats
  - 108 Group of truck drivers who were once in the same college fraternity?
  - 115 "After that ..."
  - 116 Belgium's capital
  - 117 Doubled radius of a toy on a string?
  - 122 Go astray
  - 123 Intro studio course
  - 124 By wagering
  - 125 Plant used to make tequila
  - 126 Hankering
  - 127 Pony pattern
  - 128 SEALS' mil. branch
  - 129 Renowned
- DOWN**
- 1 Pixieish one
  - 2 Damage a bit
  - 3 — funk (sad)
  - 4 Ninth Muslim month
  - 5 Gangster Bugsy
  - 6 Singer Emmylou
  - 7 "Yo te —"
  - 8 Roman wrap
  - 9 Small chirp
  - 10 Spanish river
  - 11 Illuminated like old streets
  - 12 "Beat it, kid!"
  - 13 Actor Guinness
  - 14 Back area
  - 15 Foreshadow
  - 16 Some math specialists
  - 17 French city
  - 18 Ibsen's "— Gable"
  - 24 Matriarch
  - 26 Pitch a tent
  - 29 "— -di-dah!"
  - 30 Feasted
  - 31 Nev. neighbor
  - 32 Docs' org.
  - 33 — worse than death
  - 37 Rhine feeder
  - 38 Nev. neighbor
  - 39 Yoga pad
  - 40 Corn bases
  - 41 Cronus' wife
  - 42 Singer Sumac
  - 47 Audience extras
  - 48 Really suffer
  - 49 Licked parts of envelopes
  - 50 Actress Chaplin
  - 51 KOA patron
  - 52 Newsy bits
  - 53 Tax-free bond, in brief
  - 54 Israeli airline
  - 55 Adult males
  - 56 Supported
  - 57 Oscar winner, e.g.
  - 58 Not go right or straight while driving
  - 64 Paper unit
  - 65 Actor Ziering
  - 66 Lend — (listen)
  - 69 Inuit-language word for "house"
  - 70 Small error
  - 71 Chi-Town daily paper
  - 72 Let — sigh
  - 75 Popeye's gal
  - 80 Old Dodge
  - 81 Corrosive cleansers
  - 82 Rice — (cereal)
  - 83 Assists
  - 86 Archer's skill
  - 87 Pt. of NATO
  - 88 Ball balancer
  - 92 In a single try
  - 93 Wicked act
  - 94 Wingtip tip
  - 95 Walk- — (small roles)
  - 97 Santa — (hot winds)
  - 98 Entraps
  - 99 Walk- — (no-appointment customers)
  - 100 "I meant someone else"
  - 101 Real thing
  - 102 Qatari port
  - 103 "The — Cometh"
  - 104 Monks' home
  - 105 — Haute, Indiana
  - 109 Despot of old
  - 110 Architect Saarinen
  - 111 Utah ski site
  - 112 Ages on end
  - 113 Meg of film
  - 114 Japanese noodle
  - 118 Actor Patel
  - 119 Tit for —
  - 120 Night before
  - 121 Ruby, e.g.

## SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

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

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ◆◆◆

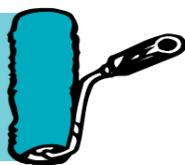
◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

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



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(SNOWFLAKES)  
solution

Super Crossword

Answers

EM	IR	S	HAT	PEG	GARB	GAH
LAN	AI	AMO	EBA	OLEO	ERE	
FR	AMED	ROGERS	HEAD	COLD		
	AGAR	APOLLO	CREAM			
AC	ADEM	I	JAM	MESA		
TAM	AL	S	FROM	THE	CRYPT	
EL	AN		AURA	OH	M	REA
			FORTH	ET	IME	BEAMING
SAM		LOVER	TULSA	ECCO		
TWA	ANE		SIENA	AN	ION	
OAK	PAR	ISHAM	L	T	ON	ARI
O	REOS	G	LENS	RUE	NEZ	
DD	AY	OLLIE	CHITA	SSE		
BEL	LAMY	UPTO	THE	BAR		
YEE	INE		REEL	ASTO		
	FAM	ISHING	EXP	EDITION		
ATT	N	ENO		SNO	CONES	
BET	A	TEAM	S	T	ERS	THEN
BR	USSELS	YOYODI	A	METER		
ERR	ARTI	ON	ABET	AGAVE		
YEN	ROAN	US	NAVY	NOTE		