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Holiday Deadlines

Dec. 24 issue... Dec. 21 at 10 a.m.
Dec. 31 issue... Dec. 23 at 10 a.m.
No paper published on Jan. 7

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VOL. 32, ISSUE 50 December 17, 2021 \$1⁰⁰



ISD 696

Ely schools begin search for new leader

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

Superintendent stepping down after about two years on the job

ELY – Superintendent Erik Erie submitted his resignation to the Ely school board this week. Erie, who started his part-time tenure at ISD 696 in the fall of 2019, will leave his post at the end of January.

School board chair Ray Marsnik is taking steps to immediately fill the upcoming vacancy. He told

More ISD 696
School board OKs COVID safe learning plan. **Page 9**

board members Monday night that he was already in contact with a retired school administrator about

filling the post on an interim basis until a more permanent replacement can be hired.

Erie made his intentions known on Nov. 8 in a closed portion of a school board meeting in which board members conducted a mid-year performance evaluation.

“I communicated my desire to

make a change and resign my position with the district as early as Jan. 30, 2022,” he wrote in a letter made public on Monday. “I also let you know that I would be willing to stay on later than that date to allow the district more time to find a replace-

See...ELY pg. 9



Erik Erie



Songs of the season

Tower-Soudan Area Singers take their annual Christmas Concert outdoors



The Tower-Soudan Area Singers braved cold winter air this year, when COVID-19 prevented them from holding their annual indoor celebration. They performed a full concert of holiday carols, under the direction of Rolf Anderson (above) in both Soudan and Tower. Frosty the Snowman also made an appearance. photos by J. Summitt

CORONAVIRUS

Fourth wave of COVID loses a little steam

Hospitals overburdened as Omicron looms

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

REGIONAL- Tuesday's COVID case report from the Minnesota Department of Health brought a little better news for a state still in the throes of the second-worst wave of the pandemic so far.

On Tuesday, MDH reported 9,042 new cases from over the weekend, approximately 25 percent fewer cases than the previous weekend report on Dec. 7. That number is consistent with a concurrent drop in the average new cases per day. Between Dec. 8 and Tuesday, the state averaged 3,429 new cases per day, down 27 percent from 4,725 new cases daily the week prior.

Taken in conjunction with Mayo Clinic projections for the next two weeks that cases will continue to decline, the reports are evidence that the state may have finally passed the peak of the surge that began in August and rapidly accelerated in October and November. However, state health officials have warned in the past that short-term dips in case numbers such as this can't be considered a trend until additional data is added, and none made any statements on Tuesday suggesting the surge is on the decline. As with the recent Thanksgiving holiday, cases could tick upward again after all of the family gatherings, increased travel, and group activities associated with Christmas.

The most recent data reported Tuesday on the St. Louis County COVID dashboard

See...COVID pg. 10



TOWER CITY COUNCIL

Tower Ambulance Service financial challenges continue

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

TOWER — The Tower Area Ambulance Service is continuing to face financial challenges even as the service has responded to

a record number of 911 emergency calls in 2021. At the city council meeting on Monday, Clerk-Treasurer Michael Schultz provided the council with the latest financial report on the service. It shows a con-

tinuing slow drain on the service's operating cash position, which was down to \$12,701 as of November.

At the same time, the service maintained \$83,937 in the ambulance replacement account.

In the six full months since June 1, the TAAS took in \$233,150 in revenue from its emergency services and other sources, while expending \$242,803. About 56 percent of those expenditures were for

wages and benefits for its ambulance personnel, an expense that has jumped sharply since the service switched to a paid on-call system in 2018, with one of the highest on-call wages in the state.

The Emergency Medical Services and Regulatory Board (EMSRB) had strongly recommended in a report issued last May that the

See...TOWER pg. 9



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Community notices

Live Nativity at Babbitt Assembly of God, Dec. 18 and 19

BABBITT- An outdoor living Nativity will be presented at the Babbitt Assembly of God, 29 Babbitt Rd., on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 18 and 19. Performance times are 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. Each presentation is 15 minutes long. There will be live animals. Please dress warmly.

Blood donations needed, schedule today

REGIONAL- The need for blood is constant, but the supply isn't. Founded by the community, for the community, donors with Memorial Blood Centers help supply nearly 40 local hospitals and more than a dozen air ambulance bases. Help hospital patients in need by scheduling an appointment online at mbc.org or by calling 1-888-GIVE-BLD (888-448-3253).

Memorial Blood Centers follows strict safety protocols for donors and staff to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and its variants. Donors are required to wear a face mask or face covering.

Blood donation is safe and essential, and MBC has a COVID-19 self-screening policy in addition to general eligibility guidelines. In general, you may be eligible to donate if you are in good health, 17 years or older— or 16 with written parental consent (form available online), at least 110 pounds, free of antibiotics for 24 hours, unless taken for preventative reasons, and symptom-free for at least 72 hours following a cold or flu.

All donors will be entered to win a 55-inch TV and daily drawings for \$25 streaming gift cards from now until Dec. 31.

Northeast Partnership now accepting proposals for community projects

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

Northeast RSDP supports local innovation by connecting community ideas to University of Minnesota resources. Community members work on diverse project teams that research, design and plan local sustainability projects with University students, faculty and staff.

Northeast RSDP seeks ideas from diverse populations and those who have not previously partnered with the University. In 2022, Northeast RSDP will prioritize projects in RSDP's focus areas that foster a resilient food system that provides sustainably-raised, just and equitable food that is accessible to all; protect the right of nature to persevere and heal, addressing climate change and other ecological impacts, through working together and building bridges for the collective good; increase opportunities around energy efficiency, renewable energy and beneficial electrification in ways that support economic and environmental vitality; and foster resilient, inclusive local communities that welcome all residents and that protect the region's rich and growing cultural traditions, natural assets and vibrant local economies.

Project ideas are being accepted through Feb. 14 and can be submitted online at z.umn.edu/RSDPIdeaBrief. Community members are encouraged to contact Northeast RSDP Executive Director David Abazs at dwabazs@umn.edu or 218-940-2196 to discuss their ideas and ask any questions. Successful projects are selected by the Northeast RSDP community-University governing board through a competitive process.

Examples of projects recently supported by the Northeast RSDP are listed online at z.umn.edu/RSDPProjectExamples.

The Northeast RSDP serves Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine and St. Louis counties and the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Fond du Lac Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa and Grand Portage Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa sovereign Native nations.

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EMBARRASS

Ice Candle and Holiday Gathering, Dec. 18

EMBARRASS- Take a drive to Embarrass on the evening of Saturday, Dec. 18 to remember lost loved ones or to take in the majesty of the display of ice candles in the night. Candles are best enjoyed after sunset. All are welcome to a light meal and conversation at the Embarrass Town Hall from 4-6 p.m.

Santa will come to visit the children and there will be crafts for the kids as well.

Donations of cookies or bars are welcome and are greatly appreciated.

file photos

NORTHERN STAGE WORKS

Auntie Scrooge play at Lyric Center, Dec. 17 and 19

VIRGINIA- Northern Stage Works at the Lyric Center for the Arts is having some fun with the classic Charles Dickens Scrooge character with Auntie Scrooge - a backwards Christmas Carol. Live shows will be held on Friday, Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 19 at 2 p.m.

Directed by theater veteran Pete Pellinen, and written by playwright Tony "Sparx" Palermo, the production tells the tale of Auntie Scrooge, a kindly, old great-great-great-great-grand-niece of the reformed Ebenezer Scrooge, in the style of an old timey radio show. Auntie runs an ice cream company in Connecticut, full of singing cows and traditional goodies, but she runs afoul of conniv-

AUNTIE SCROOGE



A BACKWARDS CHRISTMAS CAROL
BY TONY 'SPARX' PALERMO

submitted photo

ing underlings who seek to replace eggnog with the Taiwanese tea, milk and tapioca beverage, Boba, also known as "Bubble Tea."

In the Scrooge family tradition, Auntie is visited by Marley's ghost, but not Jacob Marley. Instead, it's the late reggae star Bob

Marley in dreadlocks and a Santa suit, dragging gift boxes and chains behind him. He explains how tough it is to be a saint, hoping to save Auntie from future "compassion fatigue."

Hilarity ensues with visits from three spirits, following the model of A Christmas Carol.

"We are excited to present this festive comedy that even the most Scroogiest of folks will enjoy," said Lyric executive director Paul M. Gregersen.

Advanced tickets for the performances are \$18 and can be purchased at lyriccenteronline.org. Proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative COVID-19 test result within 72 hours are required upon entry. Masks are required for all ticket holders. Virtual tickets are also available.

"If you haven't had a chance to see live theater in quite a while, this is a great opportunity to get out. I'm sure the ghost of Bob Marley can relate," Gregersen said.

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ACHIEVEMENT

Cook native is finalist for GRAMMY teacher award

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK - Trevor Nicholas, a Cook native who teaches vocal music at Nicholas Senn High School in Chicago, was named Tuesday as one of ten finalists for the 2022 GRAMMY Music Educator Award.

The ten finalists, chosen from among more than 1,100 nominees, were revealed during a CBS

Mornings television broadcast. Finalists receive a \$1,000 honorarium, with an additional \$1,000 matching grant awarded to their school. The winner will be announced in January and flown to Los Angeles to receive the award during GRAMMY Week.

The Music Educator Award recognizes current educators who have made a significant and lasting contribution to the music

education field and demonstrate a commitment to the broader cause of maintaining music education in the schools. The Recording Academy, known for the music industry’s GRAMMY awards, and the GRAMMY Museum co-sponsor the award.

Nicholas graduated from Cook High School in 2004 and earned a bachelor’s in music education from North Park University

in Chicago in 2008. Nicholas taught music in the Skokie, Ill., school system before moving into the Chicago Public Schools system at Prosser Career Academy High School. Nicholas has been vocal music director and music theory instructor at the Senn Arts Magnet Program since 2016. He recently earned a Master’s in Music Education from the University of St. Thomas.

Nicholas has received widespread recognition for his use of music as a vehicle to help students address trauma in their lives. He has forged numerous professional and creative partnerships in Chicago that have provided unique opportunities to his students and brought more than \$250,000 in grants and donations to the program at Senn Arts.



Trevor Nicholas submitted photo

TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

Two injured in Dodge versus Dodge crash

REGIONAL – Two men were injured last Wednesday morning when the Dodge Ram trucks they were in collided at the intersection of Highway 169 and County Road 21 northeast of Virginia.

According to an incident report from the Minnesota State Police,

a 2007 Dodge Ram truck driven by Tyler D. Carlson, 32, of Cloquet, failed to stop for a stop sign on County Road 21. The truck was hit by a northbound 2012 Dodge Ram truck driven by Andrew G. Merhar, 38, of Babbitt.

The roads were snow and ice covered at the time

of the crash, about 9:30 a.m. Both drivers were transported by ground ambulance to Essentia Hospital. Neither men were wearing seatbelts at the time of the crash, according to the State Patrol. Alcohol was not a factor in the incident, officials said.

Carlson’s fiancé,

Corral Meskill, of Ely, said, “He ended up with a concussion and a broken C3 vertebrae. He’s extremely lucky to not be paralyzed.”

St. Louis County Sheriff’s Department, Pike Sandy First Responders, and the Virginia Ambulance Service responded to the crash scene.



This 2007 Dodge Ram truck, owned by Tyler Carlson, Cloquet, was damaged in a crash last Wednesday on Highway 169 at County Road 21. submitted photo

CITY OF ELY

Most Ely property owners in for a tax break next year

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – Despite a 4.5-percent increase in the city of Ely property tax levy for next year, a subsequent increase in tax capacity will likely result in a reduction in city property taxes for most taxpayers.

A 15-minute Truth in Taxation hearing held last week by the city council here saw no public participants as city officials presented final budget numbers for the 2022 budget. The budget and tax levy will be authorized by the council at their Dec. 21 meeting.

The total 2022 city tax proposed at \$1,977,900 is an increase of \$85,600, or 4.52 percent from 2021.

“Actually, that is right

around our inflationary value, if not a little shy of that,” said Clerk-Treasurer Harold Lngowski.

Taxable net capacity remains steady at \$1,681,106 in 2022, compared to \$1,496,148 in 2021.

“The net tax capacity is used to calculate tax rates after fiscal disparities contributions,” he explained. “My understanding is that fiscal disparities did not change significantly in 2022.”

The city will take in more in local property taxes next year, but many homeowners will get a break on their city tax bill. The owner of a \$100,000 homestead residential property will pay \$88.65 less in city property taxes. The owner of a \$75,000 residential

property will pay \$52 less.

“This is comparing apples to apples and not taking into consideration the increases in market value,” Langowski said. “From what I understand, the market value on residential did go up. Taxable market value on commercial properties also went up.”

For example, a \$200,000 commercial property will see a city tax decline of just over \$300.

“From what we’ve been told by (St. Louis County), overall commercial valuations were reduced slightly and residential were increased,” he added.

“When we do equalization next spring, I’m going to tell you, there are a lot of sales in Ely and

those sales are driving up property values. That’s probably going to be significant on the residential side,” Langowski said. “We eyed a property not too long ago for condemnation. It was cleaned up and sat on the market for less than a week and sold for almost \$200,000. That’s the current market in Ely.”

The total 2022 General Fund budget, including police, fire, streets, administration, parks and recreation, legal consulting and more, will increase by \$257,000, or 7.1 percent, to about \$3.9 million.

The city of Ely will receive \$2,497,100 in Local Government Aid next year, an increase of almost \$50,000. LGA and other state aid makes up about 75 percent of the General Fund

revenue, Langowski said.

The city council’s budget committee will meet once more to review the budget and levy prior to the Dec. 21 meeting when final approval will be voted on.

Other business

In other business at the Dec. 7 meeting, the council:

- Held a moment of silence for former Ely mayor Lolita Schnitzius, Ely’s first and only woman mayor, who died on Sunday, Dec. 5, at the age of 83. “She was mayor until the end,” said current Mayor Roger Skraba.
- Designated the Ely Senior Center as the city of Ely’s 2022 polling place.
- Appointed Scott King to the vacant position on the library board.
- Appointed Emily

Roose to the vacant position on the city’s planning and zoning commission.

- Approved tobacco license renewals for 2022, pending receipts of fees and documentation.
- Approved the closure of City Hall on Dec. 24 and Dec. 27 for the Christmas holiday, and Dec. 31 and Jan. 3, 2022, for the New Year’s holiday.

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Editorial

Get your shots

Vaccine refusers are endangering public health and the economy

Minnesotans who refuse to get vaccinated aren't just harming themselves. They're threatening the public health generally, are slowing economic recovery, and are raising the cost of health insurance for everyone.

The average cost of a single routine COVID-19 patient in Minnesota is just under \$45,000. When a patient ends up in intensive care, the average cost is over \$262,000. As hospitals fill to the breaking point with unvaccinated people sick with COVID, insurance companies are increasing their rates for everyone to cover the cost.

The unvaccinated aren't just pushing our insurance rates higher, they're extending this pandemic. If everyone in the U.S. were vaccinated, it would deny the virus the vulnerable host population it needs to spread and mutate. Until or unless we get our vaccination percentage much closer to 100 percent, we're going to be facing wave after wave of new variants of the virus for the foreseeable future, according to epidemiologists. That's going to continue to act as a drag on the economy, as COVID-related supply chain issues hamper businesses and fuel inflation. It's going to continue to disrupt the education of our young people and prevent all of us from getting back to a lifestyle that we used to take for granted.

Those who claim that vaccines are dangerous, ineffective, or untested, are flat out wrong. Billions of COVID vaccines have now been administered with only the usual side effects expected from any vaccine. That's a sample size too large to dispute.

As for effectiveness, the numbers from the Minnesota Department of Health speak for themselves. As of November, among the roughly 30 percent of the state's adult population that remains unvaccinated, more than 1,000 per 100,000, or better than one percent, were being diagnosed with COVID every week. Over five weeks, that's one out of every 20 people.

By contrast, among the 70 percent of Minnesotans who are vaccinated, the rate of new cases is about one-fifth that of those who have not gotten the shot.

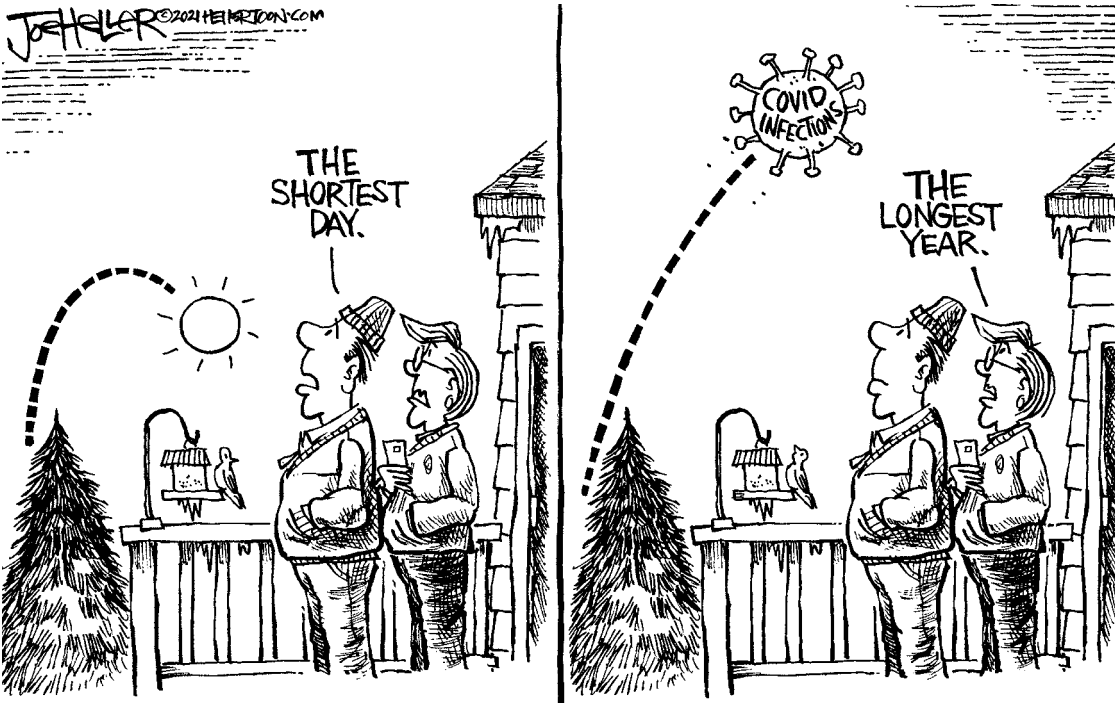
But the rate of new cases isn't the most important measure. Among the vaccinated, hospitalizations are rare. Among those ages 18-64, just one vaccinated Minnesotan is ending up in the hospital for every ten who are unvaccinated. Among those ages 65 and up, vaccinated individuals are 15 times less likely to end up hospitalized than their non-vaccinated neighbor. That's not conjecture or spin. That's based on the actual data here in Minnesota.

If someone tells you that vaccinations don't work, or that your chances of catching COVID or winding up in the hospital are the same whether you're vaccinated or not, that person is completely misinformed. Do them, and all of us, a favor by providing them with the facts.

The other piece of the puzzle right now is getting your booster. While the fully vaccinated are much better off than the unvaccinated, there is no question that the immunity their vaccines provide wanes over time. The data show that getting a booster shot greatly enhances your immunity, so make an appointment today.

In any pandemic, we know there is going to be illness and death, often through no fault on the part of the victims. But now that we have the tools to end the current pandemic, there should be consequences for those who refuse to do their part. Health insurers charge higher rates for smokers, because they are more likely to incur medical expenses. By charging them a higher rate, it means we all don't have to pay for the bad choices others make. Insurers should start applying the same principle to individuals who refuse to get their COVID vaccinations. Why should responsible people have to pay more because others would rather believe a crackpot on Facebook over experts in the field?

It's time for everyone to step up the plate and take some personal responsibility. It's time for the political posers to get real. It's the only way we're ever going to get past this pandemic and get back to a semblance of life as we knew it before COVID-19. Want to really Make America Great Again? Get your shots.



Letters from Readers

Attending school events means a lot to our kids

As the school year is progressing, I am reminded of the time when my granddaughter was in fifth-grade choir at Forest Lake School in Grand Rapids. My family went to her spring concert and sat in the front row so we could see all that was happening. At one point I noticed my granddaughter, Taiya, talking to her friend and I could see her say, "That's my dad, my grandpa, my great-grandpa and great-grandma." She then sat up to sing with the biggest smile on her face. It brought tears to my eyes and a choke to my throat to know OUR presence was that important to her. I recalled then for a moment when "I" was in school band. I searched and searched the auditorium to see where MY folks were sitting. I knew they were there... I just had to CONNECT with them.

Later, at Forest Lake School, we had milk and cookies with the kids. My granddaughter introduced me to her friend. Her friend simply said, "No one from my family came." Need I say how hurt that made me feel? If you are a parent, grandparent, uncle, or aunt, MAKE TIME to go to these events and support your kids. Give them hugs that they deserve. Do it TODAY.

Brian Carlson
Grand Rapids

A universal bill of rights is in keeping with message of Christmas

"In our day, these economic truths have become accepted as self-evident. We must establish a second Bill of Rights under which a new basis of security and prosperity can be established for all, regardless of station, race, or creed.

"Among these rights are:

- The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries, or shops, or mines of the nation.
- The right to earn enough to provide adequate food, clothing,

and recreation.

➤The right of every farmer to raise and sell his earthly yield at a return which will give him and his family a decent living.

➤The right of every businessman, large and small, to trade in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competition and domination by monopolies at home or abroad.

➤The right of every family to a decent home.

➤The right to good medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health.

➤The right to secure protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident and unemployment.

➤The right to a good education.

"All these rights spell security.

"After this war is won, we must be prepared to move forward, in the implementation of these rights, the new goals of human happiness and well-being."

These were the words of the second Bill of Rights, of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1944.

This holiday season, let's remember a little child born in the midst of a stable, with simple people, his mother and father, and three travelers, who were led to the stable by a star in the night.

Here was a baby, whose first cradle was a feedbox for animals, who would come to stand among wise men and the learned.

They would be tenderly taught not to be of selfish conscience and to be defined only by their riches, but to explore the unplumbed depths of the human heart, to set aside the arrogance of their learning, their wisdom, and their earthly mammon, so that in the end, after all trial has been made and every expedient tested, they would discover that the simplest way is the best, and humblest means the surest.

It was the babe born inside the crumbling mud walls and the low ceiling of the stable who would come to spark the mind of man, a spark that would kindle the world with the flame of eternal light, the loving spirit of enduring justice and mercy for all mankind.

A universal Bill of Rights.

Tim Duff
Tonka Bay

We all hope for the best medical response possible

I applaud Lee Peterson's recent effort to educate us all on the possibility of improved emergency response to our area. We enjoy service now but can it be improved? Yes!

None of us can predict when a heart attack, stroke, bite from the chain saw or loss of snowmobile control will strike. What we all hope for is that the best medical outcome will take place if an issue strikes us. By organizing and constantly evaluating emergency medical response, the best hopeful medical outcome may be achieved. The medical Golden Hour attempts to focus for us that the best outcome will be greatly influenced by the promptness and type of care we receive.

Emergency medical response should not be controlled by any political body. A political body can help by providing a planning, coordinating, and evaluating mechanism carried out by the professionals involved in emergency medical services. To this end, I urge the Greenwood Board of Supervisors to step forward and provide an atmosphere that will serve all full time and summer residents in our great north country.

Chuck Richards
Greenwood Twp.

We welcome your letters

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

We ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

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

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

Reflections following another school shooting...

Since the announcement of another mass shooting, this time at a high school in Oxford, Mich., a sickening feeling persists in the pit of my stomach. Details have slowly come out. We know that a 15-year-old boy has been arrested for the murder of four of his classmates



KATHLEEN MCQUILLAN

and wounding of several others. According to reports, the weapon was purchased just days before the killings by the boy's parents as a "Christmas present" and stored in a drawer. Officials at the school had called the parents that

morning to discuss the alarming messages their son was posting on social media that revealed his intent to commit violence. The posts included his cry for help. Despite these forewarnings, it appears that neither the parents nor school administrators did anything more to thwart his tragic actions.

Of course, this horrific incident is being thoroughly investigated to determine the chain of events leading up to the killings and who should be held account-

able. The facts gathered will mostly serve the purpose of pressing appropriate criminal charges. But other questions as or more important will likely remain unanswered, such as, "What should we have done to prevent this, yet another senseless attack on innocent children? And what should we do now to prevent it from happening again?"

In a recent interview with the BBC, an expert researcher on gun violence stated that mass shootings

like this one are "a uniquely American problem"—both for their frequency and randomness. And yet, he explained, we have done little as a nation to effectively address the issue.

The statistics on gun-related deaths—be they suicide, accidental or intentional homicides—show the numbers just keep rising. Despite our shared shock, and wringing of hands, it begs the question why nothing ever changes. We've documented thousands of individual inci-

dents. We've conducted the research. The information we need to make change is readily available. Perhaps what we don't examine closely enough is the speed at which Americans are able to numb themselves to grief and give up any hope for change.

Immediately following the carnage, we are hungry to track every detail and follow every thread of the story. Who were the victims? What is the history

See KIDS...pg. 5

MAP-MAKING

Should the Eighth District go from border to border?

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

Congressional redistricting proposals have different answers

REGIONAL- Every ten years, after the U.S. Census Bureau finishes collecting data for its decennial census, politicians throughout the country await the announcement of new population counts that trigger redistricting. It’s the often-contentious redrawing of Congressional and state legislative district boundaries, as well as those in smaller political subdivisions that use population to determine their local electoral boundaries.

The 2020 Census held additional anxiety for Minnesotans in the very real possibility that the state could lose one of its eight seats in the U.S. House of Representatives to another state that was growing more quickly.

But Minnesota actually dodged that bullet, so the state’s Eighth District survived for at least another ten years. With an April 1 count of 5,709,752 residents, Minnesota held onto the House seat by the slimmest margin since 1940. A total of 89 Minnesotans made the difference between maintaining eight congressional seats or losing out to New York.

Reshaping eight Congressional districts is a much more favorable task for the Minnesota House Redistricting Committee, as the committee’s ranking Republican, District 16B Rep. Paul Torkelson, of Hanska, recently acknowledged to the *Timberjay*.

“We’ve been kind of on the brink before, but we’ve never been this close to losing that eighth member,” he said. “Thank goodness our census workers were ambitious and got out and did the work in spite of COVID to count every person they could find.”

However, finding consensus on a plan to fairly distribute the extra

400,000 Minnesota residents to ensure equal representation across all eight Congressional could well prove elusive—it certainly has in the past. Preliminary maps from the DFL and Republicans currently being considered by the Redistricting Committee have significantly different ideas, particularly for the districts representing Greater Minnesota.

With 78 percent of the state’s population increase occurring in the Twin Cities area, most Greater Minnesota districts will need to expand in area in order to account for the shifting demographics.

Each of the eight Congressional districts has a population target of 713,312 people, a number that can be achieved in as few as 135 square miles in the Twin Cities, according to Redistricting Committee Chair Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown). But metropolitan growth means significant changes elsewhere, and there’s no greater change geographically than what the DFL proposes for the North Country’s Eighth District, a seat currently held by Republican U.S. Rep. Pete Stauber.

The DFL plan to hit the population target would extend the existing Eighth District west to the North Dakota border, increasing its size from 32,696 square miles to 44,418 square miles, Murphy said. That’s roughly the same size as the state of Ohio.

“The Eighth District has always been invested in the mining industry, the timber industry, the shipping industry, the paper industry, and the tourism industry. Those are our economic ties to the world,” Murphy said. “That stretches out to North Dakota in the sense that there’s

always been some farming in the Eighth District, and we still have large farms in the northwest. Farming interests have a base with shipping in some respects, so when we had to gain miles, it made sense to go from border to border.”

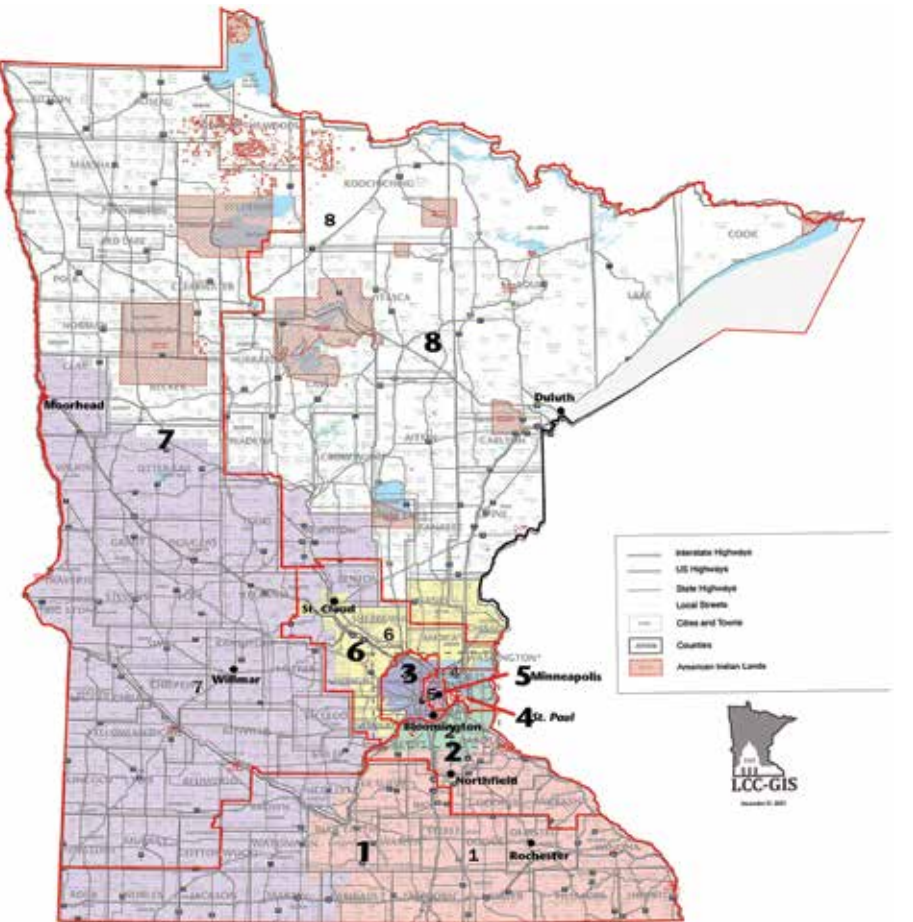
The Seventh District, which covers the western portion of the state from the Canadian border south to within one county of the southern border, would then shift south to the border and expand eastward to the edge of the Twin Cities metro area. The First District, which covers the southern portion of the state from border to border would be modified to encompass the southeast corner of the state, gaining the additional population it would need by expanding northward to the Twin Cities.

“Past courts are stuck to the idea that well, let’s change a little here and a little there, but not too much and let’s keep people comfortable,” Murphy said. “We were bold. We said that because of the changes and shift in population we need to address those in a fair and honest way. That’s the first map, getting people to talk.”

Torkelson was certainly ready to talk about and contrast his party’s plan with that of the DFL.

“In general, the districts we have in Minnesota have been drawn fairly well, and we don’t see a need for dramatic changes statewide,” Torkelson said. “Districts have changed, flipped from one party to another, and to me that’s an indication that the districts were drawn pretty well in the first place.”

Indeed, the Republican map proposes only small geographical changes for the Eighth District to attain the population goal. A farmer by profession,



The initial DFL proposal for Congressional redistricting in Minnesota shows an Eighth District that stretches from border to border, an area the size of the state of Ohio.

Credit: MN Geographic Information Services

Torkelson took issue with Murphy’s farming rationale to justify the DFL’s proposed expansion of the Eighth.

“There certainly is some agriculture in the northeast, and it’s dramatically different than the agricultural scene in the (Red River) Valley,” he said. “They don’t compare very well and they contrast quite a bit.”

An essential element that the DFL plan doesn’t take into consideration, Torkelson said, is the traditional strength of labor, some of it organized.

“I don’t really see that same nature going on across the whole northern part of the state,” he said. “I think it’s really a stretch

to do that. The Valley has a kind of personality and landscape all its own, and it needs to be in one Congressional district.”

Such are the types of debates that have been going on since the Redistricting Committee began meeting and receiving testimony, district by district, since August, and will most certainly continue on into the start of the new legislative session in February. Murphy and Torkelson were both cordial and complimentary of the work of the committee thus far, but emphasized that stark differences remain unresolved with both Congressional and state legislative redistricting proposals.

And those aren’t the

only two maps under review. A third alternative is in the hands of the committee, and four redistricting proposals have been filed directly with the courts, which will in all likelihood be called upon to settle the matter as they have in past redistricting history.

Redistricting maps and data for all seven redistricting proposals are available on the Geographic Information Services 2020 Redistricting webpage at <https://www.gis.lccmn.gov/redist2020/plans.html>.

The *Timberjay* will take an in-depth look at proposed changes to state Senate and House districts in an upcoming issue.

KIDS...continued from page 4

of the perpetrator? Was there a motive? But for those suffering closest to the center of the cyclone, what spins through their heartbreak is their repeating question, “Why, why, why?” Although we have stunning statistics that warrant national outrage, instead we defer to inaction. Today, I’m with the parents. Why are we so prone to complacency?

The images of the injured enter us on a visceral level but soon begin to fade amid the distractions of our daily lives. Finding solutions to gun violence, on the other hand, requires greater public empathy and a longer period of engagement with mourning lost lives, publicly analyzing the underlying causes, and identifying steps we can take to initiate effective strategies for systemic prevention and immediate intervention when needed. It will require dialoguing within our communities, respectful and thoughtful debate, and working together to build consensus as we move closer to agreement that enough is enough.

From previous experience, we know that our viewpoints will likely collide. Most of us are innately conflict-averse. After all, getting along sure feels easier, usually works better, and in these times, is probably safer. But if we choose to keep dodging the task and with our focus just on getting along, we should probably expect the usual result of getting nowhere.

Grappling with gun violence will be hard work. Next question is, are we willing to accept this challenge and actually face the problem? Or, have we already surrendered,

believing that gun violence is now a part of our everyday lives — our new normal? Has numbing ourselves really become the only coping mechanism we have left, living our lives like a game of Russian Roulette?

Personally, I’m not willing to accept that. There are lots of examples in our history where we’ve reached some magical moment when we collectively asserted, enough is enough. And things began to change. Our clarion call today might be, never again.

How we Americans will come to agree on what the founders were thinking when they wrote the Bill of Rights certainly will be a hurdle. But I think there is room for agreement here, also. The founders probably did not foresee what is happening in America today where so many innocent Americans are murdered every day by so many other Americans. When they included our Constitutionally-protected “right to bear arms,” this isn’t what they had in mind. They provided the framework and were counting on us to apply common sense and a commitment to the common good, as we sifted through their wording to apply them to our particular challenges in the 21st century. Our pathological attachment to a self-destructive interpretation of the “right to bear arms” has disallowed us to advance legislation that would reduce the incidents of gun violence and save lives.

The news from Oxford, Mich., has lost its place among headline stories. Our shared horror has begun to wane, moving us back

toward complacency, partly due to our shared perception of powerlessness. A trial date will be announced. People will start talking again about who is charged and whether they will be convicted. Interest will spike for a short time, and then drop back down to “business as usual.” Not so for the survivors and the families of those killed. They are left with the painful burden of grief, and their lives changed forever.

As I look at the police photo of the 15-year-old boy charged in this case, with his tousled hair and blank stare, I feel like weeping. Not because I condone his actions. But because this boy falls into a different category of victims, those who have lost their futures in part due to “our uniquely American problem.” Our nationwide fixation on guns and violence is so deeply embedded in our culture that it is now part of our national identity, a strange form of madness.

How did we get to this point? A part of it is about the money. The making and selling of arms and ammo are highly lucrative enterprises. Weapons come in many forms and scales of firepower. Huge investments are made in their production. And sophisticated information campaigns receive massive funding designed to reach the general public and influence our lawmakers. The goals of these marketing efforts not only sell arms, but also ideas, and shape our national image. Legislators must try to balance the interests of gun manufacturers with the needs for public safety. Factor in their insatiable search for campaign contributions and the

puzzle is complete. Despite lots of independent surveys that show the majority of Americans are in favor of laws that will increase gun safety and prevent gun deaths, it has become nearly impossible to pass state or federal legislation.

Now we are recovering from this mass shooting, secretly wondering when it will happen again. Instead, if we were a healthy nation, we would be asserting that now is our moment in history to address our nation’s obsession with violence and addiction to firearms. Our compulsive need to use guns to solve every conflict is a sickness that demands our attention. When so many among us are driven to self-destruction and compelled to take others with them, this is not normal. Ethan Crumbley stated clearly that he could not control his thoughts and needed someone to help him. And the adults who could have responded chose instead to send him back to class. How sad is that?

A nation has its collective conscience. Ours is crying to pay attention to a condition that threatens us all. Let’s admit it. Way too many people own guns who shouldn’t, and too many own types of guns that they don’t need and shouldn’t have. Americans know this because we talk about it a lot. There is no easy fix. Crafting policies and the plans to implement them will take hard work and our unyielding commitment to make it happen. Taking on this issue is a true test of our faith and trust in each other. I think it’s time we quit acting like we can’t.



the

TIMBERJAY

Copyright © 2021 by *The Timberjay*. *The Timberjay* (PN 16025) is published weekly on Fridays, 51 weeks per year, by *The Timberjay Inc.*, PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790. Business/Editorial Office at 414 Main St., PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790. Call (218) 753-2950 to subscribe. E-mail address is editor@timberjay.com. Periodicals postage paid at Tower, Minnesota.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Timberjay, PO Box 636, Tower, MN 55790.

This award-winning community newspaper published each week serves the communities of Tower/Soudan, Cook/Orr, and Ely.

Publisher	Marshall Helmberger
General Manager	Jodi Summit
Cook/Orr Editor	David Colburn
Ely Editor	Keith Vandervort
Staff Writer	Stephanie Ukkola
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Graphics/Ad Sales	Scarlet Lynn Stone
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Official Newspaper:
City of Tower, Townships of Bearville, Eagles Nest, Embarrass, Kugler, Vermilion Lake, Field, Morcom, Leiding, Crane Lake, ISD 707.

Member: Minnesota Newspaper Association, Lake Vermilion Resort Association, Lake Vermilion Area Chamber of Commerce, Ely Chamber of Commerce, Orr Chamber of Commerce.

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Week of Dec. 20

Monday

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

Tuesday

Tower Area Food Shelf- Open on the third Tuesday of every month from 2:30-5:00 p.m. Located in the back of the Timberjay building on Main Street. Next food shelf day is Dec. 21.

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.

Breitung Town Board- 12 noon on D3c. 23

Thursday

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

Tower/Soudan Community Bible Study- Thursdays from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at the Tower Elementary School cafeteria. All are welcome. Call 218-984-3402 for more info.

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

Area Churches set Christmas Services

St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Soudan

Christmas Eve Service at 3 p.m. with Pastor Greg Anderson.

St. Martin's Catholic Church in Tower

Friday, Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve 4 p.m. at St. Martin's in Tower and 7 p.m. at Holy Cross in Orr

Saturday, Dec 25 - Christmas Day 9 a.m. at St. Mary's in Cook.

Regular Mass times resume on Dec. 26. Please note that there will be no Saturday evening Mass at Holy Cross on Christmas Day.

In anticipation of Christmas, a Penance Service will be held at St. Martin's on Sunday, Dec. 20, immediately following Mass.

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tower

Christmas Eve Services at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Christmas Day Open Sanctuary and Communion from 9-11 a.m.

St. James Presbyterian Church in Tower

Christmas Eve Service at 7 p.m.

Movie Night at St. James on Dec. 19

TOWER- St. James Presbyterian Church will host a free Movie Night on Sunday, Dec.19 at 6 p.m. This month's movie is "Christmas with a Capital C." Christmas has always been a time of love and tradition in small town Trapper Falls: hometown of Mayor Dan Reed (Ted McGinley). With his brother Greg (Brad Stine), they drape the town in Christmas cheer concentrating on the nativity scene. When Dan's high school rival Mitch Bright (Daniel Baldwin) returns home after 20 years, he takes offense to seeing the town's Nativity scene in violation of separation of church and state. Mitch wants the Nativity scene removed and the word Christmas switched

TOWER-SOUDAN ELEMENTARY



Christmas card contest winners announced

TOWER- The *Timberjay* would like to thank all the elementary students who participated in the Christmas Card Contest this year. As usual, we saw the imagination and creativity of our local children. The following students were awarded prizes this year. Watch for these winners' drawings in the *Timberjay* in our Christmas and New Year's editions, plus drawings from many other elementary students.

Winners listed in order, first, second, and third.

Kindergarten: Matio Medicine-Perez, Cameron Villebrun,

Brayden Purkat

Grade One: Ayva Anderson, Shelby Troop, Cecelia Majerle and Emmett Flood (tie)

Grade Two: Silas Snyder, Nash Lenci, Levi Clemenson

Grade Three: Harley Banks, Josie Feather, Dylan Crego

Grade Four: Kija Chosa, Nolan Lenci and Jason Villebrun (tie), Kayla Drift

Grade Five: John Stellmach, Norman King, Ava Redetzke and Nai'lee Moyer (tie)

Grade Six: Arlene King, Claire Jonas, Jack Ranua



LVCC volunteers decorated the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center on Dec. 1. The public is invited to come and take photos next to the Santa and sleigh in front of the hall. Back row (from left): Margaret Maki, Jack Roddy, Linda Kronholm, Elaine McGillivray. Middle: Kathy Siskar, Teresa McCue Thompson, Terry Vagle. Front: Linda Haugen, Doug Workman. Not pictured: Susanna Erickson, Mary Jo Hyland, Dwight Johnson, Mary Batinich. submitted photo

Local students earn degrees at Minnesota State University, Mankato

MANKATO- James Boyd, of Embarrass, and Mikayla Mellesmoen, of Embarrass, both graduated Summa Cum Laude from Minnesota State University, Mankato at the end of the fall 2021 semester.

James Boyd earned a BSE in Integrated Engineering, with Summa Cum Laude honors.

Mikayla Mellesmoen earned her BS degree in Environmental Science, with Summa Cum Laude honors.

Fundraiser set for Laulunen family

REGIONAL- A GoFundMe account has been set up for the Martin and Robin Laulunen family who lost their Pike Township home in a fire on Nov. 30. The family has seven children.

The house was built in 1960 by both the family's grandfather and great-grandfather. It was truly a family treasure and the fire destroyed the home and all the contents. Any funds raised will be going towards supplies, power tools, and ultimately to the reconstruction of the home. To donate, visit <https://www.gofundme.com> and search for Laulunen family. The fire appeared to start in the basement area, and then quickly spread to the rest of the home. No injuries were reported. The Pike-Sandy-Britt, Embarrass, and Vermilion Lake firefighters all responded to the fire.

MAIN STREET

Tower-Soudan Historical Society awarded \$285,618 for exterior renovation at the Historic Fire Hall

TOWER- The Tower-Soudan Historical Society (TSHS) was just awarded a \$285,618 Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage grant for the Tower Historic Fire Hall Exterior Rehabilitation. The grant, awarded through the Minnesota Historical Society, fills the funding gap for the \$425,000 masonry project.

TSHS has also secured \$140,000 for this project through the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Downtown Street-scapes Program, Tower Economic Development Authority, Minnesota Power Foundation, Mortenson Family Foundation, Frandsen Bank and Trust, and individual cash donations. MacDonald and Mack Architects, a Minneapolis architecture firm specializing in historic preservation and stewardship of existing structures of all ages, will oversee the 2022 project.

Tower's Historic Fire Hall tells the story of Tower as the first mining town on the Range, and offers Tower-Soudan-Lake Vermilion residents, season-

al residents and visitors a look into the social history of early iron ore mining in Minnesota. The building housed the city hall and jail, in addition to the fire department. It was used as a community center for social activities for many years after the city hall and jail were relocated in 1935. It was sold to a private party and leased to businesses after the Civic Center was built in the 1970's.

The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its significance in the theme of social history.

This past summer, the TSHS completed the roof replacement on the building. The original doors and windows were restored in 2019. The exterior restoration project is a continuation of achieving the goal of the TSHS to develop and offer the community an updated year-round facility where visitors can learn about Tower and Soudan's vital role in the development of the iron mining industry that has had a lasting impact on the re-

gion and helped to shape its cultural identity.

It will also tell the story of the early days when the Tower Harbor was a transportation hub and bustling commercial center with a hotel, outfitters, and a boat builder. Steamboats ferried train passengers to logging camps and resorts which were only accessible by water, thus pioneering Minnesota's resort and tourism industry on Lake Vermilion in the early part of the 20th century, several decades before tourism became an important industry throughout the state of Minnesota.

TSHS plans to further develop the Historic Fire Hall into a history education and event center, and offer an outlet for local artisans, making it a unique destination-shopping/educational experience. The TSHS will continue to sponsor a variety of community pop-up events. The monthly Charlemagne's Attic Sales, History Talks on Main Street series, and tours of the jail and city/fire hall will continue

throughout summer 2022.

TSHS is currently requesting donations to install restrooms in the Historic Fire Hall so more public events can be held in the building. Please consider making a cash donation, tribute or memorial donation, or annual pledge. Multi-year pledges to support preserving the fire hall and sharing the history of the area can be made by contacting Nancy Larson at 218-750-7514 or Louise Gately at 515-229-8757, or at tshsdonations@gmail.com

TSHS is a 501(c)(3) organization that operates the Historic Train Depot Museum and Visitor Information Center at Tower's western entrance, and is restoring the Historic Fire Hall History Education Center. Donations of any size can be mailed any time to the Tower-Soudan Historical Society, PO Box 465, Tower, MN 55790 or made through PayPal by linking to the website at www.towersoudanhs.org.

WINTER SPORTS



The Ely High School boys hockey team started the season with three road-game losses, but turned things around last Saturday in the friendly confines of the Ey Ice Arena. The Timberwolves blanked Moose Lake Area, 6-0. Ely will play at home this Saturday at 2 p.m. and next Tuesday at 6 p.m. before taking a break for the holidays. See more coverage on Page 4B. photo by K. Vandervort

Folk School takes COVID precautions

ELY – As the Ely area experiences its highest number of COVID-19 cases since the pandemic began, the Ely Folk School board of directors announced this week that they are enacting a mandatory face mask use protocol, effective immediately. In addition, all students taking indoor, in-person classes must be vaccinated, including the booster shot, if eligible, starting Friday Dec. 17. In a Facebook post EFS officials said they will revisit the public health policy monthly following the advice of their professional medical advisors. “We regret that this means some of our students may need to postpone participation in the classes they want to take,” officials said.

Breathing Out

by Cecilia Rolando © 2021



winter white quiet
roused by noise of the snow plow
awakened at 3

‘TIS THE SEASON



The Ely Chamber of Commerce’s annual Mrs. Claus Party was held outdoors again this year with a drive-thru event due to COVID-19 public health concerns. Kiddos were presented with goody bags by Santa’s elves, and Santa and the Mrs. waved to them. The Chamber’s Ellen Cashman, right, did get a chance to visit with the couple up close. photos by K. Vandervort



Ely Police Department Activity Report Nov. 15-30, 2021

Arrests/Citations

➤Domestic Assault- Individual arrested for Domestic Assault and Terroristic Threats.
➤Domestic Assault- Individual arrested for Domestic Assault.
➤Theft- Officers received a complaint of a theft. This case is under investigation.
➤Civil Issue- Officers were contacted about a disagreement about a vehicle. This case was mediated.
➤Fraud- Officers were informed about a scam on Instagram.
➤Suspicious Activity- Officers were contacted about two vehicles parked in a parking lot. Officers searched the area and did not locate any vehicles.
➤Hit and Run- Officers were contacted about a vehicle hitting another vehicle and driving away. This case is under investigation.
➤Attempt to Locate- Officers were called about a vehicle driving at a high rate of speed. Officers located the vehicle and the driver was given a warning.
➤Assault- Officers were contacted about an assault that happened prior. This case is under investigation.
➤Suspicious Activity- Officers were contacted about a person with a gun walking in the woods. Officers educated the individuals on hunting within city limits.
➤Assist Other Agency- Officers assisted a neighboring agency with

a mental health call.
➤Mental Health- Officers were contacted about an individual that was having a mental health issue. Officers determined that the individual was not a harm to themselves or others.
➤Public Assist- Individual let back into their residence.
➤Damage to Property- Officers were contacted about damage to a business. This case is under investigation.
➤Public Assist- Officers were requested to stand by at a local business while an employee was terminated.
➤Medical- Officers assisted the Ely Ambulance with a medical.
➤Animal Disturbance- Officers were contacted about a dog that may have

been poisoned. This case is under investigation.
➤Disturbance- Officers were contacted about an argument between two people. Officers mediated the situation.
➤Security Alarm- Officers were contacted about a security alarm at a local business. Officers determined this to be a false alarm.
➤Theft- Officers were contacted about a theft. This case is under investigation.
➤Hit and Run- Officers were contacted about a vehicle hitting another vehicle and driving away. This case is under investigation.
➤Trouble Neighbor- Officers were contacted about a neighbor running a generator after hours. Officers arrived and the generator was shut down.

➤Animal Disturbance- Officers were contacted about a dog that was on the ice. Officers determined this to be a rock that was thrown earlier.
➤Found Property- Officers were contacted about a purse that was found. Officers located the owner and they picked up the purse.
➤Mental Health- Officers were contacted about an individual that was having a mental health issue. Officers determined that the individual was not a harm to themselves or others.
➤Order Violation- Officers were contacted about a violation of an order. The individual ran when officers arrived on scene. The individual will be arrested for violation of a D.A.N.C.O. and Fleeing on Foot.
➤Disturbance- Officers

were contacted about an argument between two people. Officers mediated the situation.
➤Fire Alarm- Officers assisted the Ely Fire Department with a fire alarm.
➤Unwanted Person- Officers were contacted about a person that was unwanted at a local business. The person left when officers arrived.
➤Check Welfare- Officers were contacted to check on an individual that was not answering their phone. Officers located the person safe.
➤Mental Health- Officers were contacted about an individual that was having a mental health issue. Officers determined that the individual was not a harm to themselves or others.

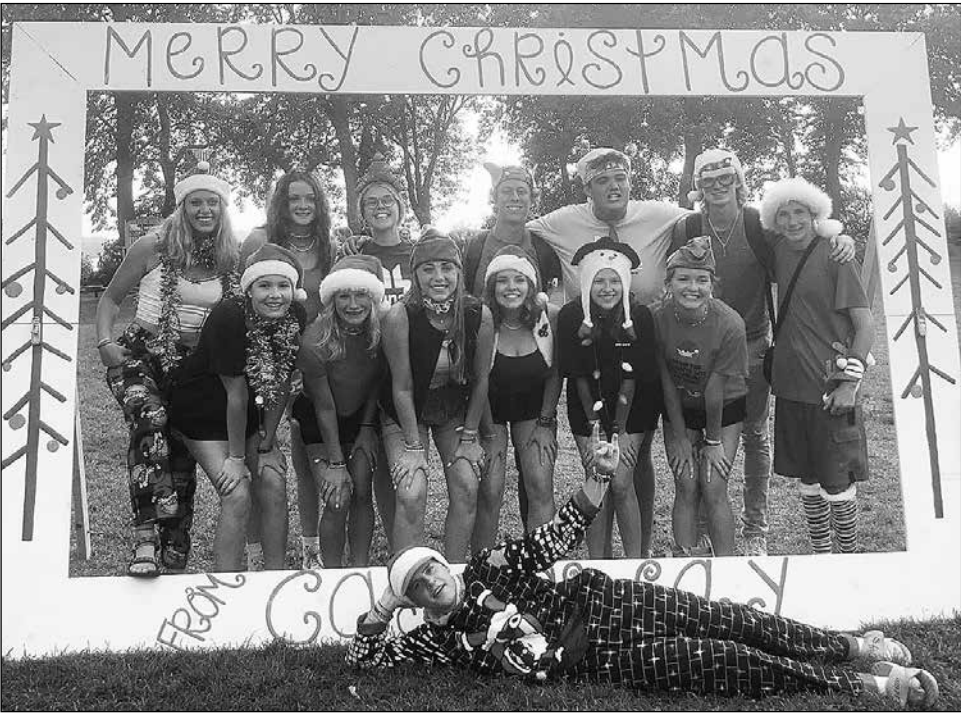
Babbitt library

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.
SUNDAY NIGHT AA - at St. Anthony’s Catholic Church is cancelled.
ELY WOMEN’S OPEN AA - Every Monday at noon at Ledgerock Church, 1515 E. Camp St., Ely.
BABBITT AA - 7 p.m. Tuesdays, Woodland Presbyterian Church
AL-ANON - Sundays 8-9 p.m. at St. Anthony’s Catholic Church in Ely. For persons who encounter alcoholism in a relative or friend.
BABBITT AL-ANON Thursdays, 7 p.m., at Woodland Presbyterian.
CO-DEPENDENTS’ 12-step support group, noon Fridays, St. Anthony’s Catholic Church, Ely.
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION GED - Study materials and pre-test available. Call 218-365-3359, or 1-800-662-5711.
CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS:
Babbitt: 3rd Monday of Month: 6-7:30 p.m. at Carefree Living
Ely: 4th Monday of Month: 10-11:30 a.m. at Ely-Bloomenson Hospital

The Ely High School Young Life organization gathered Monday night for their last club meeting of the semester and celebrated with a Christmas theme. Participants wore their best or worst Christmas gear. Prizes were awarded for best dressed. And there were many ugly Christmas sweaters on display. submitted photo



Arts group receives \$1,300 from Quotes for Good

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

COOK- Cook State Farm Insurance Agent Tim Johnson was spotted at the “Arts, Antiquities and Other Curiosities Sale” at North Woods Friends of the Arts Gallery last week, but he wasn’t there to buy. He was there to give.

NWFA is the latest community organization to benefit from State Farm’s “Quotes for Good” program, in which the company makes a donation for each insurance quote Johnson makes during a two-month period. Johnson also matches the company’s donations with funds of his own, and once again the benefit yielded good results.

Johnson presented a check on Dec. 9 to NWFA Chair Shawna Kishel and Secretary Judith Ulseth for \$1,300. They were both pleasantly surprised by the amount.

“We had no idea it was going to be this successful,” Kishel said. “That’s awesome.”

Ulseth said they were looking forward to discussing possible uses for the money with the full board.

“It will be something specific and special,” she said. “We really didn’t expect that much.”

The donation from Johnson was a welcome

milestone after more than a year of COVID-induced adaptations NWFA has endured to continue its mission of supporting and celebrating the arts, both visual and performing, in the Cook region.

NWFA continued to host special exhibits at the gallery, but a favorite activity to go along with them had to be curtailed.

“We couldn’t do receptions,” Kishel said. “That’s been the biggest loss because it’s fun to be able to get together.”

“We were known for our receptions, with Alberta Whitenack doing the food,” Ulseth said.

However, the lack of receptions didn’t translate into a lack of patrons. Kishel said there has been “a wonderful turnout” for the exhibits.

“It’s not a big space, but it isn’t a crowded space, so people do drop in and we have had quite a few people throughout this summer,” she said. “We have masks required and nobody seemed to have a problem with that.”

COVID restrictions also meant saying a temporary good-bye to one of NWFA’s mainstays, its in-person classes, and also open studio time. Instead, the group offered a harmonica class via Zoom and created a couple of gallery videos for their website and Facebook

pages.

The group also enlisted the aid of its members to create fanciful thematic coloring sheets reflecting the seasons, that were distributed to area restaurants and other businesses.

“We’ve kind of resumed classes now with masks and smaller numbers, a maximum of ten people in a class,” Kishel said. “Our woodcarvers’ group has started again. Studio time hasn’t started, but I think we’ll go back and offer it.”

“There’s a lot we missed, but we’re focused on what we can do,” Ulseth added.

With the restriction on indoor activities, one of NWFA’s most popular activities the past two years has been Music in the Park.

“It just boomed,” Kishel said. “We could be outside and the musicians and people wore masks if they wanted to and took them off if they didn’t. And we also had our annual concert, without food, without drinks, but we did have our raffle, and we had a good turnout for that.”

NWFA also altered or enhanced some of its fundraising activities due to COVID, but its major fundraising source is also its most reliable.

“This year our memberships have done really



NWFA Chair Shawna Kishel, left, and Secretary Judith Ulseth, right, are all smiles while receiving a \$1,300 donation from Cook State Farm Agent Tim Johnson last week. photo by D. Colburn

well,” Kishel said. “We use our membership as our base for covering our rent and administrative costs. That came pretty close to paying the rent because that’s our biggest expense.”

The organization also benefited from random acts of kindness.

“People would just come in and bring checks,” Ulseth said. “They said they knew it was a bad time so they wanted to help out.”

And also keeping the organization humming are increased sales in the gallery.

“So financially, we’re doing OK,” Ulseth said.

And now, thanks to Johnson’s donation, they’re doing even better. Kishel said that Johnson is the organizations’ insurance agent, and that he just called one day asking if NWFA would like to be a Quotes for Good beneficiary.

NWFA could end up being the last Quotes for Good recipient in the area, at least for the foreseeable future. Johnson said that State Farm is bringing the program to a close, in

anticipation of upcoming activities to mark the company’s 100th anniversary.

But the end of the program doesn’t at all mean the end of giving for Johnson or State Farm, he said. He expects there will be new charitable initiatives forthcoming from the company, and Johnson’s own support of local causes, which started years before Quotes for Good, will remain strong.

ORR CITY COUNCIL

Council tackles blight, budget, and property taxes

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

ORR- The extras who showed up to Monday’s Orr City Council meeting were there to talk trash, as an anticipated resolution of a long-standing blight complaint against the owners of the property at 4735 Pine was on the agenda. County property records list Tim Francke, with a Menasha, Wis. address, as the responsible taxpayer, and list a total of seven owners all sharing the 4735 Pine address, including Jeffrey Francke,

Robert Francke, Timothy Francke, Colleen Francke-Lusk, Linda Hunter, Theresa Little, and Pamela Messman.

“This property has been the subject of numerous complaint from residents since July of 2018, regarding the accumulation of junk vehicles, debris, and trash,” Mayor Joel Astleford said, reading from the formal statement of purpose for the special hearing. “The City has sent written notices of violation of the city’s blight ordinance on Aug. 1, 2018, May 13, 2019, and April 14, 2021.”

“It’s as bad or worse than what you stated, in my opinion,” said neighboring property owner Jim Gray.

Astleford then went off script, saying, “Well, this has been a long time coming.”

“Well, Joel, what I guess I don’t understand is why the delay in dropping the hammer on the situation?” Gray asked.

Astleford and Clerk/Treasurer Cheri Carter both chimed in to explain that the city had been hampered by a blight ordinance that didn’t withstand legal scrutiny.

“We had to add to our blight ordinance in order to make it legal,” Astleford said.

Since the onset of winter has made quick remediation of the problem difficult, if not impossible, Astleford suggested that the council pass a resolution giving the owners until May 15 to have the property cleaned up. If not done by that date the city will have the authority to hire someone to do the clean-up. A lien will be placed against the property and the owners will be billed for the cost.

Several attendees

were concerned that the action would cost the taxpayers money, but they were assured the property owner has to assume all charges for the cleanup.

Councilor Bruce Black moved to approve the action with a change to May 1, 2022, for the deadline. The motion passed unanimously.

Levy and budget

The other major items that received no comments from the audience during the Truth-in-Taxation hearing were the proposed five-percent property tax levy increase and

proposed city budget for 2022.

The five-percent increase is consistent with prior increases in recent years and is two-percent less than what was originally proposed, as city staff found places to cut expenses. Property with an estimated market value of \$150,000 will see an increase of \$97.34 in their property tax bill.

The levy increase and the proposed \$127,513 operating budget were both unanimously approved.

NORTH WOODS SCHOOL

Character building happens in many ways at school

by JOHN VUKMANICH
North Woods Principal

FIELD TWP- It’s been a challenging couple of years when it comes to accountability. As Principal, I feel that I am in the accountability business. There exist difficulties from the ongoing pandemic, political strife, challenges to our accountability systems, and the list goes on. Anyone who watches the national news has seen lots of bad news, and if one isn’t careful, you may end up shaking your head and wondering, “What’s up with this?” We may also end up asking ourselves, “What happened to good character?”

It is still here, but as a “soon-to-be 50-year-old” I can say that I catch myself worrying about it sometimes. When I start to feel that character is under assault, all I need to do is walk down the hallway and interact with a few students. Sure, there are some who make choices that are not appropriate, but the majority still operate under high levels of character and make good decisions.

Do you know any

adults who struggle with this? Yup, me too. We really do work hard at North Woods to help our students build and maintain good character. It is part of the partnership that we have with our families and our community. How do we do it? What do we do?



JOHN VUKMANICH

First comes academic rigor. This has different meanings for different kids and families. For some, they highly value academic achievement and the pursuit of academic excellence. Others see less value in it, and that is totally understandable. We don’t expect every kid to reach the same level of achievement (although the state Department of Education seems to). We do expect effort. We expect academ-

ic honesty. We expect our students to be engaged in the activity. This helps build character. Ever have to do something you didn’t want to, or didn’t think was important? Most of us have and learning this in school helps prepare us for life and jobs that give us challenges.

Keeping a schedule contributes to building character. Many kids struggle with being on time. I was raised to believe that if you are on time, you are late. “On time” means five minutes early. People who are consistently late drive me nuts. We have some students who are never on time. Ever. I know that there are dynamics taking place that we need to accommodate and show flexibility, but realistically, how can a person hold a job without being on time? Being on time shows respect for those who depend on you. It shows good character. When I work with kids who are late, this is the angle I take. Some don’t change until they have to.

We work on character through our behavioral expectations. Do all adults get along? No. Do kids?

Nope. Do they like all their teachers? Nope. Do we all have to learn to co-exist at school by following certain norms and expectations? Yes. Given the current state of affairs in our present time, I would say that we do much better in school than the rest of the world. Is it perfect? Never. However, the expectation that we treat each other with respect, even when we disagree, is an expectation for good character.

Sports and activities also provide valuable opportunities to build character. The Minnesota State High School League has specific guidelines and expectations for athletes. If student-athletes do not follow these guidelines, there are penalties. If they do not earn passing grades, there is a penalty. The same thing goes for any chemical violations. Make a poor choice at school? There is a penalty. It is not fun to have to deal with these situations, as activities are very important to so many students and families, but the root of our efforts is to build good character and sportsmanship.

Character is also built through participation in service organizations. Many of our students belong to Student Council, Youth In Action, Student Council Buddies, Teacher Assistants, Scouts, Nij Nation, youth groups, and other organizations that promote human service and giving back to the community. Providing services to others gives perspective and builds appreciation for the positives in our lives. It builds character.

North Woods also uses a reward system that promotes good character traits. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a program that supports students to make good decisions and be rewarded for it. North Woods is proud to say that we are a PBIS school, and every week we have a group of kids who receive rewards for doing what is right.

North Woods and several other schools in our district and area have partnered to promote student leadership, another character-building pursuit. The pillars of this program are to celebrate the great

things that we do at North Woods and to celebrate the diversity and togetherness that we share. We will be empowering our students to have discussions and help guide our school as we look to the future to promote strong character and leadership. Everyone has a place at North Woods. Everyone has the ability to contribute to our environment and expectations.

As I have explained to many kids over the years, demonstrating good character doesn’t cost any money. It is something that you possess that nobody can take away from you. Good character is making the right choice when nobody is watching. My hope is that every student leaves North Woods with the basic understanding that regardless of our circumstances or path in life, we can all operate with character and integrity. Character.....pass it on!

Ely school board approves safe learning plan

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – Ely school board members approved a safe learning plan this week that establishes benchmarks or metrics in which the protective face mask requirements for school buildings could be dialed back when COVID-19 finally abates.

At their final meeting of the year Monday, board members also rebuffed an attempt by one of its own to “sunset” the Ely Safe Learning Plan Advisory Council (ESLPAC) that has been responsible for working with school administrators and the local medical professionals to establish and maintain health protocols as the coronavirus continues to rage through the school and Ely community.

The ESLPAC has worked for months to develop a roll-back plan for the protective face mask requirement that was put in place at the beginning of the school year because of increasing cases of COVID-19.

The protective face mask requirement will be maintained for quite some time as reported active COVID-19 cases in the school continue to rise. A substantial and sustained trend downward of coronavirus cases is now required for administrators to consider implementing a “face masks recommended” protocol.

Slight modifications to the plan were again made last week following the latest ESLPAC meeting, but Erie and the school principals were satisfied to

Votes 5-1 to keep COVID advisory council intact

present the plan for board consideration Monday night.

The conditions that would initiate a face mask recommendation, rather than a requirement, include:

► Local ZIP Code case report below the “high transmission” range for three consecutive weeks.

► Opportunity for all students in the Washington Elementary building (ages 5 to 11) to be fully vaccinated by Jan. 30, 2022.

► Local COVID-19 outbreaks and conditions in the school and Ely community to be considered prior to face mask protocol changes.

There are some exceptions to the metrics, including an increase in positive cases in a classroom or among activity participants, if the local hospital is required to divert patients to another facility due to an increase in local COVID cases, and if the local transmission rate moves to a “high” level for three consecutive weeks.

Superintendent Erik Erie noted that three consecutive weeks of between three and six positive COVID cases would be required to consider a “face mask recommendation” protocol. As of Monday, the current COVID-19 active positive test count at the school stood at 17. Two new cases were reported since last Friday, Dec. 10. The cumulative positive test count is 79 for the current school year. A total of 48 positive cases were recorded during last school year.

“We tried to stay with something simple and easy to track,” Erie said. “It will still be far from where we are right now to get below the metric (to change protocols).”

Board chair Ray Marsnik was the only “no” vote to adopt the ELSPAC Safe Learning Plan. “To be honest with you, we are spending way too much time on this,” he said. “It seems like every meeting and study session we have we spend a good portion of time discussing this. I strongly believe that we should stick with the mask (required) mandate, and we lift it only when our medical professionals say it is safe to do so. That’s my feeling.”

Tom Omerza, the school board’s ESLPAC member, pushed the board to make a decision on adopting the Safe Learning Plan.

“We can’t just have fuzziness going into the future. We have to know what direction we are taking on the school campus,” he said. “When you look at what the administration has been doing trying to protect the campus and the community, they have done a great job, especially when you correlate it to what the (Ely) community is doing.”

He continued, “Outside of the hospital, clinic and dental office, where everybody goes there is no community effort or very little community effort to try to control this coronavirus. It seems like we are fighting this battle without a lot of help from the local community. We need to provide

some direction to move past where we are at. Let’s provide an opportunity to get the community, when things are under control, to get to the mask recommended (protocol). The metric we want to use is the one that we can hopefully control the most. We are trying to provide a light at the end of the tunnel.”

Erie added that the Safe Learning Plan could be considered as a “living document” with metric changes continuing.

“One of the things that was brought up at our study session was about vaccination status,” he said. “If we reached a certain threshold, like 75 percent or something, maybe we don’t have to even look at (positive case) metrics. That is one of the things that the health care community has said, too.”

In the Ely school district, according to information provided by 6-12 principal Megan Anderson, as of Dec. 9, more than 63 percent of Memorial students are fully vaccinated for COVID-19. In the Washington building, more than 26 percent of students are fully vaccinated.

COVID advisory council remains

School board member Tony Colarich’s suggestion to reduce the size and scope of the district’s safe learning advisory council failed convincingly when his was the only “yes” vote on the agenda item.

The motion, “to reconfigure the Ely Safe Learning

Plan Advisory Council (ESLPAC) to reduce the membership to consist of the superintendent, principals and a school board member,” was in jeopardy of dying on the vine when no board member would support Colarich. Marsnik stepped down from his position as board chair to support the motion for discussion.

The advisory council members, as many as 18, consisting of teachers, staff, employee union representatives, students, parents, local medical professionals, and public health representatives, collaborate and discuss health protocols and safety measures as they relate to the school community. They have been working with the Ely school administration as they develop campus health rules and learning recommendations. Since the beginning of the school year, the group has met in-person and virtually on Thursday afternoons. At one point last fall, the school board called for more members to serve on the council to provide more diverse representation.

“The purpose of this is not to limit or eliminate public opinion,” Colarich said. “The open forum is still available through emails. It makes it difficult, when there is a large committee with diverse opinions, to come up with a consensus. I feel that the committee is polarized and divided, and it needs to be streamlined and functional to make decisions.”

School board member

Rochelle Sjoberg said she felt the purpose for the group was to allow for a way to bring parents and the community together.

“It clearly shows the transparency through their discussion. I don’t think anybody should have an expectation that this group is 100 percent having the same thoughts. The differences of input that everybody puts into it has made it what it is. I don’t want to see us dissolve this group with such a pertinent topic right now,” she said.

School board member Darren Visser agreed. “You are not going to get everybody to agree,” he said. “It is bringing a bunch of different people from different areas together to have a conversation. This is face-to-face conversation. It is not through email. You have the medical community. You have parents. You have school administration. This is a diverse group getting together, and you don’t see that in our society much anymore.”

Omerza added, “If you don’t have a diverse group representing what we are trying to do here on campus, which is education and safety, then you don’t know it all. We can’t function off of ignorance.”

Erie said the school administration team endorsed keeping the ESLPAC in its current configuration.

Marsnik, Omerza, Sjoberg, and Visser were joined by board member Holly Coombe in voting to reject the motion 5-1, with Colarich voting in the affirmative.

ELY...Continued from page 1

ment, but not intending to go beyond June 30, 2022.”

He added, “The reason I feel the need to make a change at this time is personal and related to health issues that are impacting my well-being.”

Erie started with ISD 696 in the summer of 2019 on an interim basis and worked hand-in-hand with former superintendent Kevin Abrahamson until he could attain his superintendent’s license. Erie was hired to the part-time position in the fall of 2019. He renewed his contract for a two-year term in the summer of 2020.

Marsnik presented a summary of Erie’s performance evaluation conducted last month. The summary was somewhat

vague and lacked details of what was discussed at the closed session.

“The board recognized the fact that the district has gone through some difficult times over the past year and Superintendent Erie was faced with tough challenges and difficult challenges. The evaluation did not only look at past performance, but also looked at ways to improve future performance and communicating future expectations.”

The performance evaluation summary noted that a goals-based evaluation process was used and that the goals set for Erie last July were evaluated and discussed:

“Improving organizational skills, timely decision making, oversight

and awareness of the district’s budget, delegating responsibility to employees, and timely completion of duties, projects and tasks were the areas discussed and evaluated.”

The evaluation summary continued, “The board found Superintendent Erie to be very personable and open to discussion. He is a hard worker who has kept our building and renovation project moving forward and on schedule. He is someone who is knowledgeable, committed and passionate about education.”

During his superintendent’s report at the Monday night meeting Erie said, “I would like to thank the school board for

being supportive of me in this position and giving me this great opportunity. You put a lot of trust in me, and I want to thank you for that. The employees have been very welcoming, as has the community. Ely is certainly something very special.”

Erie was on the job just six months before the world of education was turned on its head with the coronavirus pandemic. COVID-19 immediately rose to the top of his to-do list as K-12 students in Ely transitioned from in-person learning to hybrid and distance learning educational models.

“It’s taken a lot of collaboration, and we truly have accomplished a lot,” he said.

At the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, Erie took the full brunt of criticism from a small but vocally vicious anti-face-masking group in the community who vilified Erie for following science and the recommendations of the medical community in re-instating the mask requirement to keep students safe within the walls of the Ely school campus.

“Our employees have really been tremendous through this whole COVID process,” he said.

During his brief time at the helm of ISD 696, Erie was handed the reins of continuing to develop a school facility renovation project that resulted in the successful passing of a bonding referendum that

helped fund the \$20 million project. He will leave his post before that vision is realized with the opening of the new school addition in the fall of 2022.

Erie touched on his resignation letter that mentioned his own health concerns.

“There is no serious overriding health concern right now, other than a lot of weight gain from all the time I spend in the car,” he said. “I do want to be able to enjoy the relatively good health that I have right now.”

He stressed that he will help the district in transitioning to new leadership.

“I will be flexible to what your needs are moving forward,” Erie said.

TOWER...Continued from page 1

service immediately lower its on-call pay to a level that’s financially sustainable.

“The current paid-on-call structure is costly and inherently brings some additional risks related to the [Fair Labor Standards Act] and IRS rules of on-call,” stated the EMSRB in an operations review of the TAAS. “Essentially, TAAS is paying on-call staff what could be considered a livable wage which is not how on-call staffing is intended to function.” The EMSRB also found that the high rate of on-call pay had not proven effective at encouraging new recruitment or retention of ambulance personnel.

The city council, however, has taken little action on the EMSRB’s on-call recommendations to date. The city has, however, moved this year to increase run pay for on-call personnel in an

effort to avoid overtime liability.

The TAAS has improved its on-call coverage in recent months, with an average of 80.6 percent coverage over the last seven bi-monthly pay periods. That’s a substantial improvement over the roughly 50 percent coverage the department was experiencing under the prior administration. “We are working on recruitment and hope to continue to increase coverage to reach the 100 percent required by the EMSRB,” said Ambulance Director Dena Suihkonen. “As always, building takes time and we are seeing growth in our service.” As the department improves its coverage, however, its wage costs are expected to increase accordingly.

The council took no action on the financial report.

In related action,

the council did approve a motion to spend up to \$3,000 to cover the cost of sending up to five members of the ambulance service to a three-day EMS conference in Duluth in January. Councilors agreed that the conference could be a morale booster for the service and provide some valuable training for members.

Other action

In public works business, the council approved the purchase of a 2010 John Deere grader from St. Louis County for \$60,000, although the council will still need to identify the source of the funds to buy the equipment. The city’s 1970s-vintage grader is now barely operable and basic repairs would run close to half the cost of purchasing the much-newer grader, according to council member Joe Morin, who has researched the issue for the council. Morin

said the 2010 grader has relatively low hours, at about 4,600, and that it should easily last the city 20 years. “The grader has a trade-in value of \$80,000-\$90,000, however the county has agreed to sell it to the city for \$60,000,” reported Morin. The council will be working to identify the source of funds for the purchase. Morin said the county is willing to hold on to the grader until the city has the financing in place.

In other business, the council:

► Tabled action on the proposed police contract with Breitung Township after council member Kevin Norby asked whether the city would be liable to continue to pay the township in the event of a work stoppage. The council is expected to bring the contract, and possible clarifying language, back to the council at its Dec. 27 meeting. The police

contract, if approved, will take effect on Jan. 1, 2022. The new arrangement with the township is expected to cost the city \$65,346 next year, a savings of about \$50,000 from the previous contract. Breitung will maintain a full-time chief under the agreement, but the two communities will rely on the St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office for response when the chief is not on duty.

► Tabled action on the city’s 2022 budget after technical difficulties kept Schultz from displaying documents on the civic center screen. Mayor Dave Setterberg said he anticipated a small surplus in 2021 and he was optimistic about the city’s future finances as a couple significant debts, including payment on a TIF district and repayment of a 2019 emergency loan from the League of Minnesota Cities. “Right now, it’s tight,” said Setterberg. “In

two years, it gets a little better, in three years it’s a lot better.” The council will now need to approve the 2022 budget at its Dec. 27 meeting.

► Tabled action on the city’s new wastewater ordinance, as final changes had not been added to the text.

► Approved forgiving a portion of an old water and sewer bill that a Main Street property owner acquired with the purchase of a neighboring Main Street lot. The owner has agreed to pay \$158 in exchange for forgiveness of the rest of the outstanding amount.

► Unanimously approved the recommendation of the Tower Economic Development Authority board to appoint Dianna Sundahl to fill a board vacancy.

► Agreed to post a seasonal maintenance worker job to assist with snow removal.

Consumers beware of these scams of Christmas

► **Look-alike websites:** Be wary of emails with links enclosed. Some may lead to look-alike websites created by scammers to trick people into downloading malware, making dead-end purchases and sharing private information.

Meanwhile Orr saw an increase in new cases, from two last week to seven new cases in the past seven days. Cook reported six new cases, up from five last week, while Tower reported five new cases, up from four the week before. Soudan's new cast count also jumped, from three last week, to four in the most recent report.



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SUPPORTING THE ARTS IN ELY

An old-time radio show

‘It’s a Wonderful Life’ presented by NLAA

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY - Northern Lakes Arts Association’s first radio play event, “It’s a Wonderful Life,” concluded last weekend with two live performances at Vermilion Community College and a show streamed online.

This authorized adaptation, Philip Grecian’s “It’s a Wonderful Life: The Radio Play,” was taken from the original 1946 film by Frank Capra. Grecian, an alumnus of the Colorado Creede Repertory Theatre, is an award-winning writer/director for film, video and audio productions.

Director Vince O’Connor, with musical direction by Irene Hartfield, presented the retelling of the story of George Bailey, the unsung, big-hearted hero of small-town Bedford Falls and his lovable, bumbling guardian angel.

NLAA’s radio play was performed on



the VCC Fine Arts Theater stage with the actors in period costumes from the 1940s. Numerous gadgets and props provided the sound effects.

The Ely event involved more than a dozen local cast members and more than 60 speaking roles. Cast members included Grayson Scoggin, Katie Paige, Gil Knight, Karin Schmidt, Cade Thibodeaux, Vince O’Connor, Julie Maystadt, Irene Hartfield, Crystal Poppler, Gabe Mann, Tracy Thibodeaux, Alison Poppler, and Brennan Rue. Additionally, almost all sound effects were created live by Greg Mann.

Ely-area actors, including Greg Mann on sound effects at right, presented, “It’s a Wonderful Life: The Radio Play,” last weekend at Vermilion Community College. photos by K. Vandervort



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1-877-541-2817
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PETE STAUBER HAS FAILED US!

Pete Stauber says NO to helping everyday MINNESOTANS!

Pete says NO to us.



Just say NO to Pete.

PETE VOTED NO TO PRESIDENT BIDEN’S BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE & JOBS BILL (HR 3684)

NO to repairing Minnesota’s decaying roads, bridges, airports, railroad system & ports, which would create thousands of high-paying union jobs here & ease supply chain problems.
NO to expanding broadband coverage to provide high speed internet for rural Minnesotans when our jobs & kids’ schooling depend on it.
NO to improving our water system & replacing lead pipes to protect our families’ health.
NO to upgrading the power grid & infrastructure to deliver clean, reliable energy & heat to Minnesotans, including expanding the number of EV charging stations.
NO to preparing for the impacts of climate change, cyberattacks & extreme weather events like wildfires, floods & droughts that devastate our local communities & economies.

Pete says NO to cheaper RX drugs and affordable health care.

PETE VOTED NO TO PRESIDENT BIDEN’S BUILD BACK BETTER PLAN (HR 5376)

NO to affordable childcare & free high-quality pre-school for every 3 & 4-year-old in Minnesota.
NO to extending child tax credits that help our families stay out of poverty.
NO to asking our richest corporations & wealthiest millionaires/billionaires to pay their fair share in taxes, leaving our beleaguered middle & working class families to carry the burden.
NO to lowering drug prices & making health insurance more affordable for all families, especially our elders & those with chronic health conditions.
NO to investments in home & community-care programs for our elderly parents & disabled family members.
NO to tax cuts for Minnesota’s struggling, low-wage workers, but Pete seems just fine with Republican tax cuts for billionaires.
NO to tax credits to fight climate change.

Pete says NO to fixing roads and bridges across America that would use American steel made with OUR IRON ORE.

Pete says NO to asking our billionaires and our richest corporations to pay their fair share in taxes, leaving working folks to carry the burden.

PETE VOTED NO TO PRESIDENT BIDEN’S COVID RELIEF PACKAGE (HR 1319)

NO to a \$1,400 check for Minnesotans when families were devastated by COVID.
NO to increasing unemployment checks for hard-hit Minnesotans.
NO to increasing the ability to get vaccine shots in arms quickly to end COVID.
NO to help for struggling Minnesotans to pay rent & utilities when they were laid off during COVID.
NO to helping K-12 schools reopen safely during COVID and beyond.
NO to giving financial help to restaurants & other local Minnesota businesses to stay open during the worst of the pandemic & keeping workers in our communities on the payroll.
NO to making health insurance less expensive during the worst pandemic in U.S. history.
NO to helping put food on the tables of laid off workers & the hardest hit Minnesotans.

PETE VOTED NO TO THE PROTECTING AMERICANS WITH PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS ACT (HR 986)

NO to repealing the Trump administration’s policies that would allow insurance companies to exclude or charge more for Minnesotans with pre-existing conditions.

PETE VOTED NO TO THE PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE ACT (HR 842)

NO to protecting & expanding workers’ rights to organize, form a union & engage successfully in collective bargaining for safer working conditions and fair wages.

PETE VOTED NO TO THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT (HR 4)

NO to standardizing our elections across the U.S. & ensuring that all eligible Americans can exercise their constitutional rights by making it easier to register & vote.
NO to ending partisan redistricting and to securing free & fair elections, a no vote that undermines democracy.

PETE VOTED NO TO THE PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT (HR 7), THE EQUALITY ACT (HR 5), and to REMOVING THE DEADLINE FOR RATIFYING THE ERA

NO to our mothers, daughters, wives, sisters, aunts & grammas by refusing to eliminate pay differences between men & women for the same work, when women consistently make less \$ than men for doing the same job.
NO to removing the deadline for ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment, which is a vote against amending the U.S. Constitution to finally recognize that “the equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”
NO to the Equality Act that prohibits discrimination based on sex.

PETE VOTED NO TO PROTECTING OUR PRECIOUS WILDERNESS (HR 2546 & 823) and NO TO OTHER CONSERVATION BILLS THAT PROTECT WILD PLACES

NO to multiple conservation measures that protect vulnerable & majestic wild areas & the plants & animals that live there during the greatest species extinction crisis in human history.
NO to stopping the destruction and exploitation of our natural world, that includes our precious water resources, fragile coastal areas, the extraordinary Arctic & many of our last wild places, putting profits to his billionaire donors ahead of protection.

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GIRLS BASKETBALL

Ely tops Mariners in 70-29 rout

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

SILVER BAY — The Timberwolves had plenty to celebrate on their long bus ride home Tuesday night as they thoroughly dominated the Mariners here in a 70-29 rout.

The Wolves came out fast and built an insurmountable 43-13 lead by the halftime break. Younger players got a chance in the second half, but the Wolves continued to build their lead.

Ely’s Madeline Perry had a breakout performance, putting up 20 points, while Grace LaTourell posted

Loses 57-56 home heartbreaker to International Falls

another strong night with 17 points. Sarah Visser added 11 points, while Lily Tedrick and junior Madeline Kallberg added eight points apiece.

“We played tough defense all night and shot the ball well in spurts,” said Ely Head Coach Max Gantt. “We took care of business against a younger team. That’s what good teams do.”

Tuesday’s win was a nice rebound from last Friday’s 57-56 heartbreaker against International Falls, played at Ely. “I’m proud of how hard our girls played defensive-

Right: Ely’s Madeline Perry takes aim for a jump shot under heavy pressure from a Broncos’ defender. photo by J. Greeney

ly for sure,” said Coach Gantt. “We battled their size as best we could all night. The game was close all night, but we just fell short in the end.”

International Falls deployed several different defenses throughout the match, which forced Ely to adjust. “I thought we did a good job of doing that,” said Gantt.

See **ELY GIRLS**, pg. 4B



NORDIC SKIING

Mixed day for Ely at Proctor meet

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

PROCTOR — The Ely girls Nordic ski team looked strong in their season debut here last Thursday, as they finished third in a field of nine teams from across northeastern Minnesota.

Gabe Pointer and Jon Hakala both had strong performances for the boys team.

Ely junior Zoe Devine was Ely’s top finisher in the girls varsity competition, taking 13th place with a time of 19:53.9 on the 5.4 kilometer course. She had help in the team competition from Phoebe Helms (20:27.5, 18th), Ava Skustad (21:14.3, 24th), and Gracie Pointer (22:02.4, 33rd), to finish just ahead of Mora in the team competition, with 319 points. Duluth East finished first, with 380 points, while Grand Rapids finished second, with 343 points. Team scores are calculated based on the top four finishes for each team.

In the boys competition, Pointer finished in ninth place with a time of 17:18.3, while Hakala finished in 17th place, with a time of 18:06.7. With only three finishers, the Ely boys finished in seventh place in an eight-team field with 243 points.

Ely had several other bright spots in the junior varsity competition, as eighth-grader Otto Devine finished third in the boys competition, with a time of 12:44.7 on the 3.6-kilometer course. Freshmen Dylan Durkin and Eli Olson finished in seventh and eighth in the 55-skier field. For the girls, Rena Johnston finished in ninth place, with a time of 15:40.3.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Grizzlies slip at Two Harbors

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

TWO HARBORS – The North Woods girls basketball team dropped a Friday road contest to 7AA Two Harbors on Friday, 53-43, in a game that ultimately slipped away from the Grizzlies at the free-throw line.

In the first half, charities helped the Grizzlies stay close, as five North Woods players made good on 11 of 18 free-throw attempts.

“Two Harbors got into foul trouble early, so we were only halfway through the first half when we were in the double bonus,” Grizzlies Head Coach

See **NW GIRLS**, pg. 4B



BOYS BASKETBALL

Romps move Grizz to 4-0

A lockdown defense is making North Woods tough to beat

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- Line-ups change, point distribution changes, but two more North Woods blowout wins on the hardwoods this past week illustrated what Grizzlies Head Coach Will Kleppe expects from whomever is on the floor – intense lockdown defense.

It was defense that came to the fore in the Grizzlies’ 77-39 win last Friday against 7AA Hinckley-Finlayson, a heightened necessity as five North Woods players didn’t suit up for the game, apparently due to violating a minor team rule.

“I don’t have an answer – student confidentiality,” Kleppe said when asked about the absent players. “We

Above: The Grizzlies’ Alex Hartway grabs the ball away from a Hinckley player during last Friday’s match-up at North Woods.

The Grizzlies’ T.J. Chiabotti goes in for a jump shot.

photos by D. Colburn

maintain a high standard and we follow the protocols, and that’s what I have to say about that.”

Bryce Chosa and Jonah Burnett got their first starting assignments of the season alongside regulars T.J. Chiabotti, Alex Hartway, and Sean Morisson, and the quintet quickly put the Jaguars on notice that they were in for tough night.

See **NORTH WOODS**, pg. 4B



BOYS BASKETBALL

Wolves edge Silver Bay, 62-56

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

SILVER BAY — The Timberwolves improved to 3-1 on the season after edging the Mariners here on Tuesday, 62-56. Junior Joey Bianco poured in 28 points to lead Ely offensively, while eighth-grader Jack Davies hit six three-pointers on his way to 24 points.

“It was a struggle from the

Notch first road win in International Falls since 2005

start and we played well enough to come out with a win,” said Ely Head Coach Tom McDonald. “I thought our defense was much better in the second half, and we shot the ball a bit better in that half.”

Tuesday’s win was a needed rebound after Monday’s home-court loss to Two Harbors.

“They were just too much to handle,” said McDonald. “They’re a very balanced team and they shot the ball well and defended against us well.”

Bianco had another strong performance, scoring 24 points, while adding seven rebounds and eight assists. Junior Erron Anderson posted eight boards

in the contest.

Playing in the Falls last Thursday, the Wolves achieved something that has eluded them at the border city for more than 15 years— a 61-48 victory. “We hadn’t won at the Falls since 2005 so it was nice to come out

See **WOLVES**, pg. 4B



Outdoors

Our lives in the Northwoods

WILDLIFE RESEARCH

VNP wolf study captures image of enormous bear

Researchers estimate the animal, seen just south of VNP, could tip the scale at 800 pounds



by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

Put hundreds of trail cams out in the forests of the North Country and you're likely to have some

Left: A gigantic black bear was caught on a trail camera in early October, just south of Voyageurs National Park.

photo courtesy Tom Gable
Voyageurs Wolf Project

pretty interesting recordings of wildlife. And that's certainly been the case for the researchers with the Voyageurs Wolf Project, near Voyageurs National Park.

That includes hundreds of images of wolves, including wolf pups, along with beaver, fisher, lynx, bobcats, and black bears.

But of all the images of black bears, few have compared with the monstrous

black bear recorded by one of the trail cams on Oct. 7 of this year. Researchers recently posted a short clip of video showing a massive bear so large that its stomach was nearly dragging on the ground. *See timberjay.com to watch the giant bear amble (waddle?) through the forest.*

"It's a pretty incredible animal," said Tom Gable, lead researcher on the project.

The video was shot about five miles south of Voyageurs National Park, near Long Lake.

The big bruin, almost certainly a male, was apparently just passing through on his way to a nice winter den somewhere, where he will certainly have adequate fat reserves to get comfortably through the winter. It's the

See **BIG BEAR**, pg. 3B



A northern shrike looks for prey from a convenient perch. Their population in Minnesota has been stable in recent years.

CITIZEN SCIENCE

Time to count the birds

The Christmas Bird Count helps us understand bird population trends

Minnesota's gray jay population has fallen by 24 percent since 1970. In that same period, the state's spruce grouse population has dropped by more than half. This is based on just some of the vast amount of data collected each year as part of Audubon's Christmas bird count, one of the largest and longest-running citizen science projects in the world, which involves many dozens of North Country residents annually in December and early January. Those bird enthusiasts will be out in force in the area again over the next few weeks, taking part in the 122nd annual count.

While birds associated with the boreal forest are generally declining in Minnesota, other bird populations are growing, in some cases rapidly. Wild turkeys, a species that was once rare in Minnesota and was unheard of here in the North Country until a few years ago, is experiencing a population explosion, with an annual increase of 28 percent. At that rate, a species' population doubles in less than three years. If you've seen more wild turkeys near you over the past few years, at least you know it's not your imagination.

The red-bellied woodpecker population in Minnesota has increased 3.97 percent annually in recent years, and is another species that has expanded its range to the north. Participants in the Ely Field Naturalists are now reporting regular sightings of this woodpecker in the Ely area. But putting scientific heft to anecdotal observations takes much more data, and that's where the Christmas Bird County comes in.

Each of the Christmas counts is held within a 15-mile-wide count circle, centered on a specific point. CBC participants count all the birds they see on that day within the count circle. Some birders spend the day skiing or snowshoeing through the woods. Others drive the backroads, and still others count the birds at their feeders from the comfort of their living room.

While the count is open to all and is free of charge, all participants will want to contact the count compiler ahead of time so they know where you plan to count or can assign you a count area.

The bird counts are held in a two-week window right around Christmas, and this year the counts in northern St. Louis and Lake counties are all after Christmas. The Ely area count is set for Sunday, Dec. 26, while the Aurora count is set for Thursday, Dec. 30. The Cook count will be held Saturday, Jan. 1, while the long-running Isabella count is set for Sunday, Jan. 2. (See contact information for all the counts on the accompanying chart on this page.)

It's a fun way to spend a day, but it's also important scientific work that has helped professional researchers document changes in bird populations over the decades— and those population trends for hundreds of species are now available on Audubon's CBC website with an interactive archive that lets you explore changes in bird populations at state, national, or global scales. The best way to find the interactive page is to go to Audubon.org and search for "Christmas Bird Count." Once there, click on the "Christmas Bird Count Trends Viewer."



MARSHALL HELMBERGER

Bird Population Trends in Minnesota



Pine Grosbeaks: A large and spectacular northern finch that breeds in northern and central Canada and winters in northern Minnesota.
Down 0.13 percent annually.



Spruce Grouse: A boreal forest grouse species that is a year-round resident in far northern Minnesota.
Down 4.09 percent annually.



Pileated Woodpecker: With the extinction of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, the pileated is now the largest woodpecker in North America.
Up 3.6 percent annually.



Canada Jay: Also known as the gray jay, the whiskeyjack or the timberjay, it's a boreal forest species that is likely being affected by climate change.
Down 1.74 percent annually.



Great Gray Owl: North America's largest owl is resident from Quebec to Alaska, including northern Minnesota.
Up 2.42 percent annually.

Data courtesy Audubon's Christmas Bird Count Trend Viewer

Local Christmas bird counts

► **ELY**— Sunday, Dec. 26. Contact Bill Tefft at efnbill@gmail.com or 218-235-8078

► **COOK**— Saturday, Jan. 1. Contact Julie Grahm at 218-666-2450 or jg.grahm@gmail.com.

► **AURORA**— Thursday, Dec. 30. Contact Steve Falkowski at debfalk@gmail.com.

► **ISABELLA**— Sunday, Jan. 2. Contact Steve Wilson at 218-753-6110 or clevergrayjay@gmail.com.

BOOKS

Jaques' classics on the canoe country reissued in paperback

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

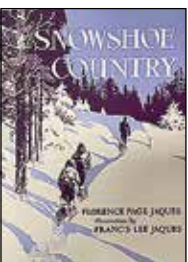
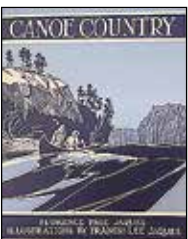
REGIONAL— Two classics of North Country nature writing have been republished in paperback by the University of Minnesota Press. When *Canoe Country* and *Snowshoe Country* were first published in 1938 and 1944 respectively, Florence Page Jaques and her husband Francis Lee Jaques, charmed readers with her accounts of adventure and travel in the Quetico-Superior and his iconic illustrations, which came to symbolize the North Country for many.

Their writings and their eventual advocacy for protection of the canoe country played a major role in the early efforts to preserve the region for future generations.

Florence Page Jaques was a well-traveled New York sophisticate when she visited the canoe country and fell in love. In her books, she writes firsthand accounts of her adventures, including traveling by foot, canoe, snowshoe, and dog sled. Her stories are accompanied by her husband's drawings, which captured the beauty and the power of the seasons in the wilderness, from cascading falls to lakes capped by thick ice and deep snow.

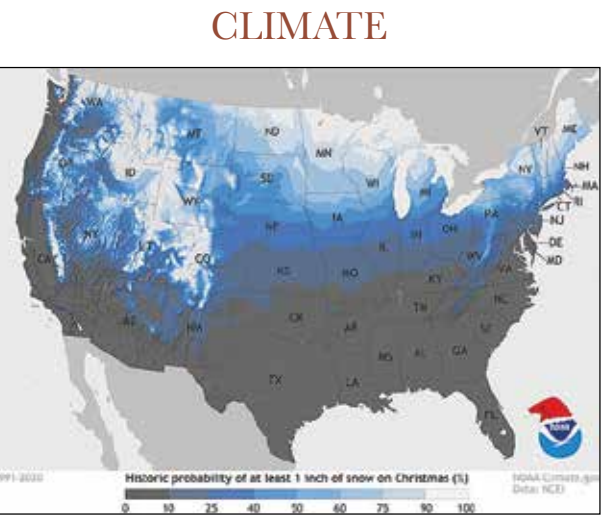
Florence Page Jaques, born in 1890, collaborated with her husband on eight books during the course of her career as a nature writer and poet. Francis Lee Jaques was born in Aitkin in 1887 and became world-renowned for his art, which includes major collections housed in the Museum of Natural History in New York and the Bell Museum at the University of Minnesota.

The books, available this month, are available for \$14.95 at www.upress.umn.edu.



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In the North Country, it’s always a white Christmas

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — If you’re dreaming of a white Christmas, it turns out there are few places in the lower 48 states better than right here in the North Country. Indeed, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, virtually all of the northern third of Minnesota has a nearly 100 percent chance of a white Christmas, which is defined as having one inch or more of snow on the ground as of Dec. 25.

Northern Minnesota isn’t the only place all but guaranteed to have snow on the ground for Christmas. High elevations in northern New England and the Rocky Mountains, a small part of northern Wisconsin and the UP of Michigan, and parts of northeastern North Dakota also experience a white Christmas anywhere from 90-100 percent of the time, according to data maintained by NOAA.

In central Minnesota and the Red River valley, there’s a white Christmas nine out of ten years, on average, while that dips to eight out of ten years in the Twin Cities.

Here in the North Country, it’s easy to take a white Christmas for

granted, since most parts of the area have at least one inch of snow on the ground for more than 140 days out of the year, according to data maintained by the Department of Natural Resources. In most years, residents here can expect a white Thanksgiving, a white St. Patrick’s Day, and even a white Easter, as any parents or children who take part in outdoor Easter egg hunts could attest.

Snow cover data from the DNR includes:

- Crane Lake- 150 days with one inch or more, with 121 days with six inches or more.
- Babbitt- 144 days with one inch or more, with 114 days with six inches or more.
- International Falls- 145 days with one inch or more, with 113 days with six inches or more.

But the snow cover title definitely goes to the end of the Gunflint Trail, where DNR records and estimates show 175 days with snow cover of one inch or more, which is nearly half the year. The same area experiences 160 days with six inches of snow or more on the ground, and an impressive 100 days with snow cover of 24 inches or more.

BIG BEAR...Continued from page 2B

only footage the research team has captured of the giant bear, which is why they don’t believe the bear is resident in the Long Lake area.

The researchers believe the bear likely weighed somewhere between 700 and 800 pounds, although it’s hard to know for sure.

According to Gable, officials at the Vince Shute Sanctuary, near Orr, believe the bear may have been among the hundreds of bears that visit the sanctu-

ary each year for the large amount of nutritious food put out by sanctuary staff to attract wild bears. The sanctuary was especially popular with bears this past summer due to the ongoing drought conditions, which sharply limited the wild foods available to bears. At least we know one bear that didn’t miss many meals.

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LAKE COUNTRY FORECAST

from NOAA weather

Friday

14 4

Saturday

14 -3

Sunday

22 8

Monday

16 -5

Tuesday

12 -4

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.
12/06	28	9	0.32	7.7"	12/06	26	8	0.33	8.0"	12/06	25	4	0.28	7.5"	12/06	21	-11	0.45	7.5"	12/06	26	1	0.53	6.4"
12/07	7	-17	0.00		12/07	8	-18	0.00		12/07	4	-3	0.00		12/07	10	-11	0.00		12/07	1	-20	0.00	
12/08	10	-8	0.01	0.1"	12/08	10	-8	0.00		12/08	9	-9	0.01	0.2"	12/08	18	5	0.01	0.1"	12/08	10	-12	0.00	
12/09	22	5	0.02	0.5"	12/09	22	3	0.02	0.3"	12/09	21	7	0.00		12/09	28	18	0.01	0.3"	12/09	22	3	0.00	
12/10	28	8	0.03	0.6"	12/10	28	5	0.04	0.4"	12/10	28	15	0.01	0.2"	12/10	27	12	0.00		12/10	28	1	0.00	
12/11	27	7	0.00		12/11	26	1	0.00		12/11	27	9	0.00		12/11	30	3	0.00		12/11	26	-2	0.00	
12/12	30	4	0.00		12/12	29	-1	0.00		12/12	27	6	0.00		12/12	39	21	0.00		12/12	29	-2	0.00	
YTD Total			17.73	15.8"	YTD Total			21.10	14.1"	YTD Total			19.61	14.7"	YTD Total			22.17	12.2"	YTD Total			23.77	13.8"

SULFIDE MINING

Forest Service, BLM seek public comment on mineral withdrawal

Comments on impact study being accepted through Jan. 19

by MARSHALL HELMBERGER
Managing Editor

REGIONAL — The public will have its first opportunity to weigh in in person on the federal proposal to institute a 20-year moratorium on new mineral leasing on about 225,000 acres within the Superior National Forest, near Ely.

The Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service will hold three virtual public meetings in January to allow for comment on the moratorium proposal, known as a mineral withdrawal. The meetings are set for:

- Wednesday, Jan. 12, from 1-4 p.m.
- Saturday, Jan. 15, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Tuesday, Jan. 18 from 5-8 p.m.

The Zoom link to register for the meetings will be available online no later than two weeks before the first meeting at <https://go.usa.gov/xesF7>.

Before including your address, phone number, email, or other personal identifiable information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including this personal information—may be made publicly available at any time. While individuals may request the BLM to withhold personal information from public view, the BLM cannot guarantee it will be able to do so.

The land being considered for a mineral withdrawal, which has been subject to copper-nickel exploration for years, is located in the upper reaches of the Rainy River watershed. While the affected land is located outside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, the U.S. Forest Service contends that mining in the area is likely to impact water quality downstream, including in a large portion of the BWCAW.

Because of that risk, the Forest Service initiated its request for a mineral withdrawal in October.

That began a two-year moratorium on new mineral leasing in the affected area while the Forest Service completes an environmental and economic analysis of the proposed 20-year withdrawal. The virtual meetings next month are being held to give the public a chance to comment on the proposed withdrawal and the scope of the Forest Service study. The public comment period ends on Jan. 19.

The proposed mineral withdrawal, by itself, will not affect the two existing mineral leases currently controlled by Twin Metals, although it would halt the company’s plans to obtain a third mineral lease it contends is necessary to construct its proposed copper-nickel mine about eight miles southeast of Ely. That third mineral lease application was recently rejected by the Bureau of Land Management due to the two-year moratorium already in effect.

Fishing report

Ely area

Finally we are getting some excellent temperatures for making great ice and making it fast. There have already been a few reports of ice as thick as 9 inches on some of the smaller lakes in the area. Four-wheelers have become a common sight on many area lakes now. High winds after the snowstorm seemed to keep the feared slush issue to a minimum.

Pike fishing was excellent

this last weekend as a big weather change got pike of all sizes snapping. Anglers found active pike fishing shallow bays in 10 feet of water and less. Medium-sized sucker minnows, dead or alive, and frozen smelt, suspended under a tip-up was the most popular way to catch pike. Multiple groups reported catching several in the high 30s to low 40s-inch range.

As ice conditions improve and anglers are now getting to some of the more popular walleye locations,

good reports have been coming in. Anglers have been finding walleyes in 20-27 feet of water. The base of main lake points that drop into the main lake basin have been the best locations so far, according to reports. Active walleyes were hitting jigging spoons and rippin’ raps, during the evening bite. Live shiners and rainbows fishing under a bobber or tip-up was also very effective on walleyes and shouldn’t be overlooked.

Courtesy Steven Renneberg, Arrowhead Outdoors, Ely

Ask Brock the Doc

Seeking Treatment

Q: Should I avoid the Emergency Room since hospitals are full?

A: If you are experiencing new or concerning symptoms, you should always seek medical care regardless of the capacity of the hospital or whether there is a pandemic or not. Research has shown that patients who have delayed care for new and concerning symptoms could have quite advanced disease such as heart attack, stroke, appendicitis, and heart failure, by the time they go to the hospital. These all could potentially have been prevented with early treatment.

Emergency rooms are required by law to stabilize and treat anyone who comes into the hospital seeking medical attention. Emergency rooms across the nation, including EBCH, have created policies to address high numbers of patients and COVID-19 safety protocols. Among these policy changes are updates to PPE for health care workers, visitation policies, universal masking, and screenings for injury and illness.

It is critical to seek care for any symptoms, including pain and loss of function, that are new and concerning. If you're unsure if your symptoms are serious enough for a trip to the ER, your primary care office or nurse advice line are good resources to connect with. A medical care setting will have the best infection control, PPE, and universal masking policies in place. EBCH is always ready and able to address your medical concerns in the safest environment possible.

Q: What is vaccine shaming?

A: Vaccine shaming is the practice of making others feel guilty or ashamed for their medical choice of whether or not to get vaccinated. It is important to remember that everyone is an individual and has their reason for getting, or not getting, immunized against COVID-19. When talking with people about the vaccine, it is important to be respectful and encourage conversation. Most people won't change their minds in response to being shamed. However, they may be willing to listen if they can express their concerns and know that someone understands their fear or anger.

If, for whatever reason, you are unable to be vaccinated against COVID-19, there are still ways to help protect yourself and others from contracting and spreading COVID-19:

- Wear a mask when in public settings
- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer
- Socially distance at least 6 feet from others when in a social setting

Dr. Brock Urie is an Emergency Room Physician and the Chief Medical Officer at Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital. Dr. Urie graduated from the University of MN Duluth, with his Bachelor’s Degree in Biology and attended Medical School at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine. He completed his Residency in Emergency Medicine at Western Michigan University’s School of Medicine in 2015. During residency, Dr. Urie served as a flight physician and county medical control physician, and a clinical instructor of Emergency Medicine.

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Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital is committed to caring for and enhancing the health and well being of the community it serves.

HOCKEY

Wolves notch shutout over Moose Lake Area

by KEITH VANDERVORT
Ely Editor

ELY – After years of struggle on the ice, the Timberwolves hockey team is showing signs of new life.

The team has already scored 17 goals in its first six games of the season, nearly doubling its scoring total from all of last year.

On Saturday, they notched a 6-0 home-ice shutout of Moose Lake Area, for their first win of the season.

They followed up on Tuesday with a 4-2 loss to Lake of the Woods. Details for that game were not available by the *Timberjay's* press time.

At last Saturday's matinee game, Ely and Moose Lake went scoreless in the first period. The Timberwolves managed to get just five shots on goal against a smaller, faster Rebels team that peppered senior goalie Chase Sandberg with 10 shots to the net.

Ely Coach Jake Myers said he was disappointed with the way his team came out in front of the home crowd. "We came out slow and weren't making smart hockey plays," he said. "I saw a lot of unnecessary passes After the first intermission, they came out like a team. They started moving their feet, and started to shoot the puck. They started to crash the net."

At 9:43 in the second period,



Deegan Richards put Ely on the board with an assist by Logan Loe. Just a minute later, at 10:54, Kole Macho lit the lamp to give Ely a 2-0 advantage.

With an Ely player in the penalty box, sophomore defenseman Wes Sandy hit a short-handed goal at 12:14, with assists by Tommy Homer and Macho, to give the Timberwolves a 3-0 lead after two periods. "That was awesome," Myers said. "Wes just fired the puck from the top of the circles."

Ely came out in the third period looking for more goals, and it took just 25 seconds for Macho to hit the back of the net on a power play on an assist from Zupancich. Loe scored back-to-back goals just ninety seconds later to give the Timberwolves a 6-0 lead.

Ely was three-for-seven on powerplays, and the Timberwolves defense kept the Rebels from scoring on five power plays. "I see a lot of improvement on our power plays, and they're buzzing lately," Myers said.

Ely had 27 shots on goal compared to 31 for Moose Lake. The Timberwolves served 10 minutes in the penalty box on five infractions. Moose Lake was called for four penalties for 14 minutes. "It was nice to see senior goalie Chase Sandberg's first career shut-out," Myers said.

Moose Lake brought just ten players to Ely due to some academic ineligibilities and injuries, according to Myers. "They are a hard-working team, and they had a lot of close games this year. My

Left: Ely's Jakson Hegman fends off a Moose Lake defenseman for puck control up against the boards.

photo/K. Vandervort

players kind of thought they could get an easy win but realized after that first period, they still have to work their butts off for every game. They woke up and started playing hard."

Last Tuesday, Dec. 7, the Timberwolves lost to North Shore, 3-1, to lose their third game of the young season. The Storm held a 1-0 lead in the third period when Ely sophomore Sam Leeson lit the light to even the score. He was assisted by Brady Eaton and Chase Anderson.

North Shore came back 30 seconds later, with just over a minute to play, to take the lead, and added another quick score 15 seconds after that. Ely goalie Chase Sandberg stopped 44 shots on the night, while Ely launched 24 shots to the net.

The Timberwolves were called for five penalties. North Shore had four.

The Timberwolves (1-4) are scheduled to host Burnett, Wis., on Saturday, Dec. 18 at 2 p.m. nInternational Falls will visit the Ely Ice Arena on Tuesday, Dec. 21, before taking a break over the holidays.

RECOGNITION

NW volleyball honors awarded

FIELD TWP- The North Woods volleyball team celebrated this past season's accomplishments at an awards banquet this past Sunday.

Senior Morgan Burnett received the Arrowhead All-Conference Award from the league's coaches and was recognized with a team award for tallying 1,000 set assists for her Grizzlies' career.

Burnett and fellow senior Olivia Udovich also received academic All-State honors from the Minnesota State High School Coaches Association for achieving cumulative grade point averages above 3.8. The team was also recognized for classroom excellence with the association's Academic Silver award, given to squads with a collective grade point average between 3.5 and 3.74.

Season statistical leaders were also noted and player-voted awards and athletic letters were passed out.

SPORTS ACHIEVEMENT

North Woods' Eric Aune commits to play football for Hamline

by DAVID COLBURN
Cook-Orr Editor

FIELD TWP- North Woods Grizzlies standout wide receiver/safety Erik Aune will continue his football career next fall with the Hamline University Pipers.

The 6'1" senior became a favorite target of North Woods quarterback Ty Fabish after joining the Grizzlies in his junior season. Aune previously was an all-state receiver and defensive back and state statistical leader in receptions, receiving yards, scoring receptions, and interceptions for his eight-man state championship team in Louisiana.

At North Woods he was honorable mention all-district last year and a pre-season second-team all-state defensive back pick this year.

"I heard from about a dozen programs, but it came down to Hamline and the University of Wisconsin-Stout," Aune said. "In the end, Hamline just seemed like a better fit for me."

Aune said he's ready to play on either side of the ball for the St. Paul-based Pipers, an NCAA Division III school that plays in the Skyline division of the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. Hamline's program gave him the best opportunity to contribute immediately,

he said.

"They suit up everyone for every game home and away," Aune said. "Everyone has an opportunity to start and play."

An academic honors student with a 3.9 grade point average, Aune said he's looking at studying business analytics, with an eye toward a master's degree and possibly moving into the college football coaching ranks.

Right: North Woods senior Eric Aune, seen here returning a kick against Barnum in September, has committed to play football for Hamline University in St. Paul.

photo by D. Colburn



NORTH WOODS...Continued from page 1B

A driving score and two treys by Chiabotti and a free throw by Chosa staked the Grizzlies to an early 9-4 lead, with the Jaguars' points all coming at the free-throw line. When H-F dropped in a three-pointer to pull within 12-9, the game looked to be shaping up as a tight one, but that illusion was short-lived.

Over the next 11 minutes, Grizzlies defenders were almost perfect, allowing only one basket, a three-pointer, in 18 consecutive possessions. Led by eight points from Chiabotti and scores by Morrison and Hartway, the lead ballooned to 26-12, giving Kleppe

the freedom to work other players into the game. By the time the Jaguars' Randy Skaff scored at the 2:46 mark, North Woods held a commanding 40-14 lead.

Chiabotti put on a scoring clinic, confounding H-F defenders with slashing drives, shake-and-bake mid-range jumpers, and four bombs from beyond the arc for 26 first-half points as the Grizzlies went into the break with the game well in hand at 46-19.

"We didn't set much up specific for him," Kleppe said. "He just found opportunities and did a fantastic job."

Chiabotti put up 32

points on the night, and also led the team with 11 rebounds and eight steals.

Kleppe praised the leadership of seniors Chiabotti and Morrison, but also had good things to say about first-time starters Chosa and Burnett.

"Bryce and Jonah stepped up huge, right into the lineup and we really didn't miss a beat," Kleppe said. "I thought Jonah's rebounding was excellent, and the same for Bryce. We had a limited bench tonight, but they all had big plays and I just couldn't have been happier with the way they all stepped up."

Burnett also had a big

night scoring, knocking down 19 points. Hartway and Morrison scored eight points each.

Nashwauk-Keewatin

Another hyphenated foe came to North Woods on Tuesday, and the Grizzlies were equally unkind to Nashwauk-Keewatin, sending the Spartans home on the losing end of an 83-50 beatdown.

The Spartans had some success working the ball inside against the Grizzlies but came up empty more often than not. North Woods again took command early at 23-9, getting scores from their trio of Chiabottis –

T.J., Jared, and Brenden –and Hartway, Morrison, and Chosa. The Grizzlies then inexplicably went flat, notching a solitary free throw and four consecutive turnovers in eight possessions, before getting back on track for a 40-20 halftime lead.

After the break, the Grizzlies' defense relied heavily on harassing Spartan shooters and wiping the glass after missed shots. That gave North Woods more opportunities to work from offensive sets, opening up driving lanes and scoring opportunities. While the overall game pace felt

slower, the Grizzlies still relentlessly increased their lead, doubling up the score at 60-30 and 70-35 en route to a 33-point 83-50 win.

Game statistics were not available before the Timberjay's press time.

The 4-0 Grizzlies had a home contest scheduled for Thursday against Moose Lake before heading into the winter break with a road trip to Remer to take on Northland. The Grizzlies will play in the Granite City Classic tournament on Dec. 29-30.

NW GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

Liz Cheney said. "That's what helped keep us in the game."

The Grizzlies trailed by just three at the half, 26-23, with Hannah Kinsey's seven points topping a group of six Grizzlies who tallied scores, including three-balls from Kiana LaRoque and Talise Goodsky.

The Agates' foul troubles continued in the second half, but Two Harbors guard

Karly Holm came out on fire. Hitting at will from all over the floor, Holm's 16 second-half points fueled a Two Harbors blitz that extended their lead to as many as 17 points in the second stanza.

"I feel like she single-handedly beat us in the second half," Cheney said. "It was like the North Woods five against Two Harbors No. 3. We just

couldn't stop her."

Hampered by the inability to knock down inside shots, the Grizzlies nonetheless had the chance to hang in from the free-throw line. North Woods went to the charity stripe 20 times in the second half but couldn't keep pace with their first half performance, converting only six.

"I've preached to the girls for years that free

throws win games and free throws lose games, and if you want to pick one reason why we lost, you could say it was our free-throw shooting," Cheney said. "Every aspect of the game was in our favor to pull out the win. We just could not make our free throws or our short shots."

Helen Koch, Goodsky and Kinsey tied for team scoring honors with ten

each.

Coming into the game at 3-1, a win against a 7AA opponent would have been a welcome feather in the Grizzlies' cap, but Cheney takes heart from knowing this was a winnable game.

"When you lose by ten and it's free throws, we know what we can do about that," she said.

The Grizzlies will close out the 2021 portion of their

schedule on the road, with away games at Fond du Lac and International Falls on Thursday and Friday and winter break tournament games at Aitkin on Dec. 28-29. They'll return to the friendly home hardwoods on Jan. 4 when they take on Carlton.

ELY GIRLS...Continued from page 1B

Gantt lauded the defensive play of Madeline Kallberg. "She battled in the post and created turnovers in our press," he said.

Madeline Perry had another strong night offensively, noted Gantt, particularly in the first half. "It was nice to see her get going

offensively," said Gantt.

Despite the loss, Gantt said it was probably the best the team has played so far in the early season.

"Hopefully, we can come out on top in the next close one," said Gantt.

Stats were unavailable as of press time.

Looking ahead, Gantt said his team will face some tough tests, including a Monday night home game against Chisholm and a

Tuesday night match up with Cook County, at Grand Marais.

WOLVES...Continued from page 1B

of there with a win," said McDonald. Bianco again led the way for Ely, with

23 points and nine boards. Davies added 19 points, while Anderson notched

nine rebounds.

Looking ahead, the Wolves host Cherry Friday

night, with a 7:15 p.m. start. They're set to travel to Grand Marais on Tuesday

to take on Cook County. The Ely Holiday Tournament is set for Dec. 28-29.

GREENWOOD

No decision yet on water fix for town hall

by JODI SUMMIT
Tower-Soudan Editor

GREENWOOD TWP- Widespread coverage of high arsenic levels in the town hall’s water supply, while generating some unwanted publicity for the township, has led to information on some potential treatment options, according to Supervisor Barb Lofquist.

Lofquist said she has been working with the Water Control Corporation, located in the Twin Cities, and their BrassMaster filtration systems, which are approved by the state to remove arsenic.

Lofquist is currently waiting on quotes from two Iron Range plumbing companies that could install this type of system. This system, she said, will also put less load on the town hall’s septic system, because it does not use as much water as a reverse osmosis treatment system, which is one of the other options for addressing the problem.

“What about drilling a new well?” asked Chairman Mike Ralston.

Lofquist said the costs of drilling a well are quite high, and there would be no guarantee that the water would have a lower arsenic level. Recent water testing showed the township’s existing well water has arsenic levels ten times over the maximum allowable limit.

The new system would limit the amount of clean water available. Lofquist said this will mean the water spigot at the town hall, used by many township residents and cabin owners, would only be available for residential use. The township would not have enough water to allow for commercial use, such as the minnow dealers who used to refill their tanks at the town hall. Minnow dealers are required to transport minnows in groundwater, rather than lake water, to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

The town board left open the option of calling a special meeting later this month to discuss quotes on the filtration system.

Ambulance

Tower Mayor Dave Setterberg attended the Dec. 14 meeting to give an overview of the work being done to create a new business plan for the Tower Area Ambulance Service. He was also there in response to a recent meeting with Virginia Fire Chief Al Lewis, in late November, that focused on wider issues facing ambulance services statewide, and the lack of funding for emergency medical services in rural areas.

“We would like to thank the EMS personnel in Greenwood,” he said, “and the township for the subsidy you provide.”

Setterberg said the city is working with both the EMSRB

(Minnesota Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board), and the Small Business Administration to produce a workable business plan for the ambulance service in the future.

“There are a lot of rumors and misnomers,” he said. “I took it upon myself to go through 35,000 journal entries, starting in 2006.”

Setterberg said they found no wrongdoing, but they did find instances where the city transferred money out of the ambulance fund, as well as times the city paid money back into the fund.

According to Setterberg’s accounting, the fund had a \$431,000 balance on paper. Of that, he said, \$135,000 was in the ambulance replacement account (now in a separate fund account) and \$135,000 was the insurance payment for the garage adjacent to the fire hall that burned in 2014.

“So, the balance in 2018 should have been closer to \$170,000.”

“There are a lot of questions and controversy,” he said. “We need to make a fresh start.”

“You inherited a financial mess,” Lofquist said to Setterberg. “We understand that.”

The city has been taking some of the recommendations from the EMSRB report, and then also working on budgetary options to find what is affordable, Setterberg said. He noted that running the ambulance service is a lot of work for the city, as well as a large financial obligation. The service is now close to offering 100-percent coverage with on-call personnel, but this comes at a cost. The service is paying out over \$200,000 in wages, with a total budget closer to \$500,000.

He wondered if the township had specific issues that it wanted the city to address.

“It is the lack of Advanced Life Support,” said Lofquist. “That is lost time for a patient.”

Setterberg said that Greenwood had not relayed that concern to the city.

“If there are issues, bring them to us so we can look at where it is going,” he said. “It would be nice to work together.”

“The meeting was based on a grassroots concern,” said Ralston. “The meeting was held here to basically identify the fact there is a concern about getting ALS for this area.” Ralston said that Virginia taxpayers are funding their service at a rate of two million dollars a year.

“There are big mountains to climb,” Ralston said.

“You are getting a great service for about \$15,000 a year,” Setterberg said.

Greenwood resident Lee Peterson, a longstanding critic of the city’s ambulance service management, asked why the city had not produced a business plan yet, which is part of the subsidy agreement.

“It needs to happen,” Peterson said.

Setterberg said the process is ongoing.

Peterson said Greenwood needs to look at hiring someone to do a study of EMS service options for the wider area.

“There is some funding available for this,” he said

The board took no action on the issue.

Broadband

Supervisor Sue Drobac and Barb Lofquist tabulated the results of the broadband survey that was mailed out to township residents. The township received 371 responses from individual households.

“The vast majority want high speed internet and are interested in bundling internet and phone service,” Lofquist said.

The results of the survey will be used as part of grant applications, and by possible future broadband providers. Decisions on grant funding, which had been expected by the end of this year, have been delayed into next year. The good news is there is more grant money available.

“Our township application is still in the process,” said Ralston.

One grant would totally fund the project, at over \$9 million, including installation on the Vermilion Reservation. The outlook on that grant is looking favorable, Ralston said.

Clerk duties

Clerk Debby Spicer gave the board documentation of the hours she spent on the job in April and May, once she became the township’s elected clerk. Prior to that, starting in October of 2020, she was hired to be the interim clerk at an hourly wage of \$27/hour.

She asked the board for additional compensation to cover the hours above the 12 hours a week the township office is officially open

“I was told if I presented this I would get compensated,” she said. “I worked 134.75 hours and was paid for approximately 76 hours.”

“How do you know what you are paid per hour?” asked Lofquist.

Spicer said she had an email from Ralston saying her pay was \$27 per hour, and that the deputy treasurer also told her she would be paid for extra duties.

“They are not authorized to do that,” said Lofquist. “This is a public service, not an hourly job.”

Spicer read from a letter from the city attorney that said the township should expect to pay for clerk duties that are outside the statutory duties of a clerk as defined by state law.

Spicer’s list included work performed, for example, during the regular six office hours on

April 1. That included getting mail, opening and distributing mail, opening email and filing, drafting board of audit minutes, and answering the phone.

The clerk is currently paid a salary of \$1,391 a month.

Ralston asked if any of the extra hours were for specific training, but Spicer said no, they were daily duties imposed by the board that were normally done by the clerk, but were not statutory duties.

“The clerk is a salary position,” said Drobac, who was formerly the township’s elected clerk. “If we can hire someone to open the mail, do filing, answer the phone, send a meeting notice, update the calendar, respond to voicemails, to me these are clerk’s duties. Then we could lower the clerk’s salary.”

“I agree,” said Ralston.

Spicer noted that Drobac had quit the clerk’s job after the board reduced her office hours from 20 to 12 hours per week, and then correspondingly reduced the clerk’s salary.

“You said you couldn’t do the duties in the time given,” Spicer said to Drobac.

Drobac said there were other issues involved, although Drobac has discussed increasing the clerk’s hours at previous meetings.

Spicer said the upcoming township election will take up all her time between now and March.

No one on the board was willing to make a motion to pay Spicer’s request, and the issue was dropped.

Later in the meeting Spicer said she did not think it was worthwhile to print out public packets.

“Last month it took over three reams of paper to print out packets,” she said. “Why do we need to waste paper? I am not doing that anymore.” Spicer said printing out packets for the supervisors and one public packet to place on the board table should be enough.

Some suggested the packet could be scanned and emailed to those on the notification list and made available on the township website. This month’s meeting agenda was not placed on the township website, as it normally is, either.

“You are welcome to continue doing that,” she told the board.

Other business

In other business, the board:

➤ Approved claims on a 4-1 vote, with Drobac voting against, but held one where sales tax had been issued on a large repair bill for a fire truck. The bill needs to be reissued with the sales tax taken off, it was noted.

➤ Approved payroll on a 4-1 vote with Drobac voting against.

➤ Approved an across-the-board salary increase for township and fire department offi-

cials of five percent on a 4-1 vote with Ralston voting against.

➤ Voted 3-2 to continue using ADP to process payroll, with Drobac and Lofquist voting against. The bill from ADP last month was \$348, over twice the normal fee because they needed to do adjustments to correct the actual pay period on the checks. Drobac said when she was clerk it took about 45 minutes to do the payroll. Current treasurer Belinda Fazio asked to remain with ADP, because the service allows direct deposit, does the annual W-2 forms, and has accountants who check the tax filing reports. The township previously used free software available through the Minnesota Association of Townships. Ralston said he would like to review this issue again in a few months.

➤ Will look into classifying fire department members as volunteers versus employees, which would reduce the township’s obligation to withhold payroll taxes. “They would be responsible for their own taxes,” said Ralston. The issue was referred to the fire department for review.

➤ Approved changes in the fire department’s operating procedures so that they now only recommend members complete the state Firefighter I and II training. Safety Officer Rick Worringer said there is room on the department for members who are trained locally to do duties such as driving trucks, getting and pumping water, but not specifically working on the dangerous parts of a fire. “Currently for every person up on a fire,” Fire Chief Dave Fazio said, “there are three in the back providing support.” Currently almost all the department members have completed this training.

➤ Approved setting the fire department response pay rate at a flat \$20 per hour starting in 2022. Currently the rate is \$20 for the first hour, and then \$10 for any additional hours per call. Fazio told the board is would increase costs by between \$1,600 and \$2,000 a year.

➤ Discussed some changes needed on the township’s new website design.

➤ Worringer said his wife Mary was interested in starting up an auxiliary type informal group that would provide food on fire calls. Drobac said she was also willing to help out.

➤ Approved the purchase of new turnout gear for four firefighters who are trained for interior work but have outdated gear. The older gear is suitable for members who are working the exterior of a fire scene, so can possibly still be reused. The gear will cost approximately \$3,200 per set.

➤ Approved \$100 donations to the W.C. Heiam Foundation and Northwoods Partners. They acknowledged a donation from the Greenwood Quilters.

Obituaries and Death Notices



Mary E. Anglesburg

Mary Elise Edberg Anglesburg, 83, of Bemidji, originally of Orr, died on Friday, Dec. 10, 2021, at Havenwood Care Center. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 17 at St. Philip’s Catholic Church in Bemidji. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service at the church. Interment will be at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in Bemidji under the direction of Cease Family Funeral Home of Bemidji.

She is survived by her son, Gregory (Kimberly) Anglesburg of Bemidji; and grandchildren, Jennifer and Alex Anglesburg.

Mae K. Loe

Mae Kathryn “Tootsie” LaTourelle Loe, 82, longtime resident of Ely, passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021, surrounded by family and loved ones at Ely Bloomenson Community Hospital. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 17 at Ely United Methodist Church. Visitation will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 16 at Kerntz Funeral Home in Ely and from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Friday at the church. In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred to Ely United Methodist Church. Family arrangements have been entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

She is survived by

her husband of 62 years, Rod Loe; children, Pamela Turnbull (Mike), Patrick Loe (Brielle) and Michael Loe (Leslie Kurre), all of Ely; brother, Robert “Jeep” LaTourell (Naomi) of Ely; sister, Mary Huelman (Bob) of Surprise, Ariz.; grandchildren, Alexis Baack (Jeff), Blaine Turnbull (Alexandra), Morgan Loe and Logan Loe; great-grandchildren, Beckett Baack, Brexley and Hollis Turnbull; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Bennett T. Nylund

Bennett “Ben” T. Nylund, 84, of Springdale, Ark., originally of Cook, died on Saturday, Dec. 4, 2021. He will be laid to rest on Friday, Jan. 7, 2022, at Fayetteville National Cemetery in Fayetteville, Ark., with full military honors. Memorial contributions may be made to Shriner’s Children Hospi-

tal at lovetotherescue.org or to a favorite local charity. Arrangements are with Heritage Funeral Home of Springdale, Ark.

He is survived by his sisters, Bea Amundson, Janet Tomsich and Karen (Lee) Schaar; four children, Stuart Nylund, Steven Nylund (Brandon Polk), Stacy (Bill) McCullough and Shelly (Rick) George; seven grandchildren, Michelle Nylund, Cori McCullough, Tanner Nylund, Kayla McCullough (fiancé Logan Waters), Logan (Emily) George, Spencer George and Avery Polk; three great-grandsons, Waylon Waters, Nolan Waters and Kingston Polk; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Kenneth Forsman

Kenneth Forsman, 71, of Ely, passed away on Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021, at his residence in Hib-

bing. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, at St. Anthony’s Catholic Church in Ely with visitation one hour prior.

Lolita M. Schnitzius

Lolita M. Schnitzius, 83, longtime resident of Ely, passed away on Sunday, Dec. 5, 2021, at Carefree Assisted Living in Ely. A celebration of life, the Final Farewell Jack Benny Party, will be held in 2022. Look for the notice in your local Ely papers. Cremation was entrusted to Kerntz Funeral Home of Ely.

She is survived by her sister, Joan Jander of Germantown, Wis; brother, Jack of Alameda, Calif.; nephews, Alan Jander (Georgene) of Monument, Colo., and Brian (Ann) of Freehold, N.J.; niece, Karen (Tom Brenn) of Sussex, Wis.; and great-nieces,

great-nephews and their families.

Marian M. Nord

Marian Marcella Holmbo Nord, 96, longtime resident of Cook, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, Nov. 24, 2021, at Milaca Elim Meadows in Milaca. A celebration of life will be scheduled for a later date at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cook. Foley Funeral Home in Foley is assisting the family with arrangements.

She is survived by her son, William (Christine) Nord of Zimmerman; grandson, Travis Bodick of Fridley; brother, George (Judy) Palo of Duluth; and nephews, Bill Aune, Rick Aune, Glenn Aune and Jim Aune.

EMPLOYMENT

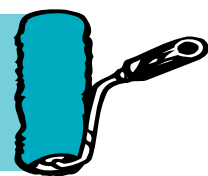
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COMMUNITY NEWS

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall
Replica coming to Iron Range in June

CHISHOLM – Chisholm will host the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF)’s The Wall That Heals national tour after being delayed two years due to the pandemic.

United Way of Northeastern Minnesota (UWNEMN)’s United for Veterans committee had successfully applied to make Chisholm a stop on the tour, which brings the largest Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall replica in the country and a mobile education center to communities across the nation each year. The tour was meant to stop in Chisholm in June of 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Wall That Heals will be in 29 communities in 2022 – its 27th year – and will be in Chisholm from June 23-26.

“We are even more excited now than we were two years ago,” said UWNEMN Executive Director Erin Shay. “It is such an honor to bring this

exhibit to Iron Range veterans and their families, and this delay in scheduling has given our United for Veterans committee even more time to fine tune plans to make The Wall’s stay in Chisholm as meaningful as possible.”

As hosts, the United for Veterans committee will provide the location, volunteers, and preparations necessary to replicate the experience a visitor would have at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The committee will soon be soliciting sponsors and volunteers as well as planning events and ceremonies to honor local Vietnam veterans in the days leading up to the arrival of The Wall That Heals.

“Hosting The Wall That Heals provides an opportunity to honor and remember all those who served and sacrificed in the Vietnam War and to educate visitors on the continuing impact of the Vietnam War on America,” said VVMF Presi-

dent and CEO Jim Knotts. “VVMF’s mission is to honor and remember all those who served in the Vietnam War, and we are ready to work with our 2022 hosts to deliver a safe opportunity for thousands to experience the healing and educational aspects of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 2022.”

The Wall That Heals is nationally sponsored by USAA and transported thousands of miles across the country each year through a partnership with the Truckload Carriers Association (TCA) and the trucking industry. Local sponsors of the exhibit’s stay in Chisholm are currently being secured and will be announced at a later date.

Two VVMF staff members lead volunteers on site, educate visitors and students, and ensure the reflective atmosphere of The Wall. More information on The Wall replica and mobile education center can be found at www.thewallthatheals.org.

Essentia Health holding virtual advance care planning classes

REGIONAL- Essentia Health is hosting free advance care planning (ACP) classes on the following days:

- Wednesday, Jan. 12, 2022, 9-10 a.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Advance care planning is a process that helps you think and talk about your choices for health care in the future. It’s important for every adult to have an advance directive,



also known as a living will or health care directive.

Everyone is invited to join in thought-provoking conversation to discover the value of ACP, reflect on your values, choose a health care agent, explore goals for treatment and take steps toward completing a health care directive for yourself. By having these conversations proactively, you can ensure that your preferences are understood if you become unable to make medical

decisions for yourself due to an accident, injury or sudden illness.

For the safety of our communities, these classes are currently being offered virtually. More information is available at www.essentiahealth.org/patients-visitors/advance-care-planning/


If you are unable to attend a virtual class but are interested in learning about advance care planning, our pre-recorded webinar, is available as well.



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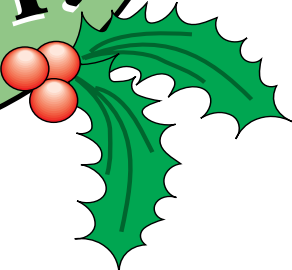


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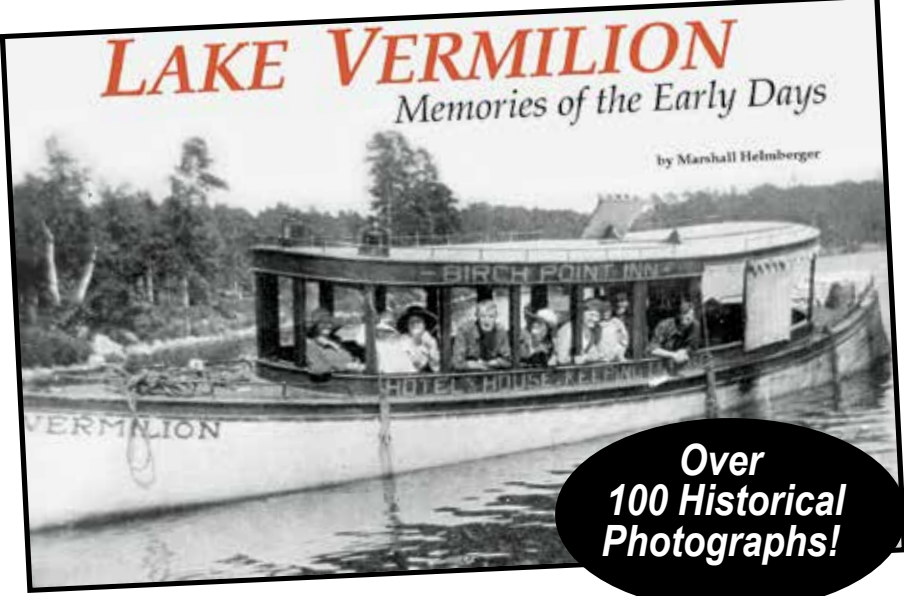
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