

SPORTS: Standout athletes earn recognition . P2,6

Lions deliver holiday cheer

BY JAMIE LUND
NEWS@HINCKLEYNEWS.COM

The Sturgeon Lake Lions Club continued its decades-long tradition of delivering fruit baskets to area residents.

“We ordered over \$2,000 worth of fruit and Kwik Trip donated bananas,” said Brian Birkholm, Lions gambling manager. “Kwik Trip has been very helpful to us.”

He explained the Lions sell pull tabs at several locations and they used a portion of that money to purchase the fruit from the Willow River High

SEE LIONS, PAGE 2



TERRY BULLOCKI ASKOV AMERICAN

Mother Nature dumped over a foot of snow over most of Northern Minnesota Sunday into Monday, creating a mostly monochromatic scene as residents slowly crawl out from under the white blanket. This vintage 1921 Fordson tractor doubles as yard art at a rural Pine County home.

Pine County public health warns of increased COVID deaths

BY T.A. LEBRUN
EDITOR@PINECITYMN.COM

Pine County Public Health warned the board of commissioners last Tuesday, Dec. 21, that one person has died in the county each week since September.

The ages of those who have died since September range from 39 years to 95. In total, 48 people have died in Pine County of the virus.

“We are not as high as last November of 2020 but sitting quite high generally,” said Samantha Lo, Pine County Public Health director. “It is not only people in long term care; it’s young people and middle age and people who don’t have a lot of health conditions.”

For total cumulative reported COVID-19 cases in Pine County, there have been 5,610 and have averaged about 150-200 cases per week in the past four weeks. The estimated population in the County is 29,801.

Lo noted that Pine County ranks among the lowest vaccination rates in the state and is currently at the fourth lowest in the state with 49.8% of the residents vaccinated. “We are out and about at many places and at schools ... people can get them but not all are choosing to do so,” noted Lo.

BREAKTHROUGH CASES – RISK MUCH LOWER OF ENDING UP IN HOSPITAL

Lo said that there has been a lot of misinformation about people still contracting the virus even while vaccinated and thus questioning the need for the vaccine.

“We do have people testing positive if they are vaccinated, but people are at a

SEE DEATHS, PAGE 6

County braces for federal vaccine mandate

BY T.A. LEBRUN
EDITOR@PINECITYMN.COM

Pine County is bracing for the federally mandated vaccine requirement which goes into effect Jan. 3. Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNO-SHA) said last Wednesday that it will adopt the federal order on Jan. 3 as well.

County Administrator David Minke said at the Dec. 21 meeting that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) order that was temporarily delayed has now been reinstated and the vaccination requirements appear to be back in place.

Jackie Koivisto, human resources manager for the County, said that according to the federal, and now state, requirement, Pine County will be required to have a listing of vaccination statuses for county employees.

“Either one shot of J&J or two shots of the mRNA vaccines,” said Koivisto of the requirement. “There will also be a mask requirement if unvaccinated, and the County will be required to provide up to four hours of paid time to get the vaccination.”

Additionally, those who work exclusively from home and do not interact with other

employees would not be required to receive a vaccination or if someone works entirely outdoors. If an employee works in a private office and is unvaccinated, they wouldn’t be required to wear a mask there. Those who are vaccinated would not be required to wear a mask.

The federal/state requirement calls for weekly testing for those unvaccinated and places the testing and cost on the employee.

She said that failure to follow the rules could result in discipline on a case by case basis.

The U.S. Department of Labor has indicated OSHA will not issue citations for non-compliance with any of the requirements until Jan. 10, 2022, and it will not issue citations for the testing requirements until Feb. 9, 2022, so long as businesses (of over 100 employees) are making “good faith” efforts to implement the rules. MNOSHA will exercise similar enforcement discretion with respect to the compliance dates and will follow federal OSHA’s timeline.

County Commissioner Terry Lovgren noted that the State pays for its employees to

SEE VACCINE, PAGE 2

Sandstone Ice Climbing Festival back in 2022



KENDRA STRITCH SUBMITTED

Ice climber at Sandstone Ice Park.

BY JAMIE LUND
NEWS@HINCKLEYNEWS.COM

Grab your warm winter layers and head to the Sandstone Ice Park in Robinson Park the first weekend of January.

That’s right, the Sandstone Ice Climbing Festival is back this year after being canceled last year due to the pandemic.

The Minnesota Climbers Association will be hosting the annual event January 7, 8 and 9.

Free camping is available at the park and vaccinations and masking are mandatory inside the tent.

There will be instructional clinics offered throughout the weekend.

The festivities beginning with registration at 11 a.m. Friday, several clinics on the ice, gear maintenance and ending with a bonfire at 5 p.m. both Friday and Saturday.

Coffee and baked goods will be available while they last Saturday and Sunday mornings by Adventure Coffee MN.

The planning committee asks that everyone clean up after themselves and leave the park as clean as they found it.

For updates or more information visit the Sandstone Ice Climbing Festival Facebook page.



VACCINE: Mandate

FROM PAGE 1

be tested and asked if the County could do likewise. Administrator Minke stated that the federal rule does not require the employer to pay for testing.

"We do know that Pine County currently pays for some employees, such as those who work in the jail, to be tested, however," noted Minke. "The Minnesota rule has to be written and then interpreted before we have all the answers. But then there are a lot of lawyers that will be involved but at that point ... there is a significant difference in outcomes of those vaccinated versus unvaccinated." He said that the goal is to get rates low to zero. "Vaccination is the most effective tool we have at our disposal."

Pine County Public Health Director Samantha Lo added that there would be savings in healthcare costs to the County as well if everyone were vaccinated.

ACTION IN SUPREME COURT

According to a Dec. 22 New York Times article, the Supreme Court said last Wednesday that it would hold a special hearing in January to assess the legality of the federal mandate. The article stated that the court said it would move with exceptional speed on the two measures, a vaccine-or-testing mandate aimed at large employers and a vaccination requirement for certain health care workers, setting the cases for argument on Friday, Jan. 7. The justices had not been scheduled to return to the bench until the following Monday.

In other state vaccine mandate cases, the Supreme Court has upheld the state's vaccine requirements. But with this federal mandate, the question lies in whether Congress has authorized the Biden administration (executive branch) to enforce the requirements.

In the previous Biden mandate, a moratorium on evictions, that was brought before the Supreme Court, the justices blocked the mandate.

Orvedahl named DNT Football Player of 2021

BY MARY ELLEN
NEWS@MORAMINN.COM

Logan Orvedahl has been named the 2021 Duluth News Tribune Football Player of the Year. This is the seventh time a Moose Lake Willow River player has been chosen for this northland honor, more than any other program. In 2000 Matt Hillbrand was chosen. In 2007 and 2008 Nate Zuk received the honor. In 2011 and again in 2012, Jake Disterhaupt, was given the honor. Ezra Szczyrbak was awarded the title in 2013.

This year MLWR had two players on the All-Area Football Team. On defense, MLWR's senior middle line-backer, Ethan Burton, was chosen. He was the All-Northeast District Blue Defensive Most Valuable Player. Burton was the anchor of the Rebel defense that allowed only 10 total touchdowns in nine games and had four shutouts. Burton was a lead

blocker for the Rebel offense that gained 3,151 yards on the ground and had 44 rushing touchdowns this season. The Rebels had two regular season games canceled due to COVID-19 protocols.

Orvedahl, All-Area Player of the Year gained 1,385 yards and averaged more than 12 yards per carry and scored 20 touchdowns for the Rebels. He was named to the Northeast Blue All-subdistrict Team and Offensive Most Valuable Player. Orvedahl had an interception and recorded 20 tackles.

The MLWR Rebels went undefeated in the regular season and won the section title, qualifying for state playoffs.

Orvedahl has speed and strength. He is aggressive and not afraid to hit or take a hit and runs people over. His speed permits him to run away from teams to the end zone. He has worked hard, but knows it is the

offensive line creating great holes for him to run through. They have helped him use his strength and speed in the best ways possible.

There once was a coach that told his quarterbacks/running backs that they should buy their offensive linemen donuts on game day, thanking them for their hard work, encouraging them to keep up the good work at game time.

The MLWR's athletes have had great opportunities to qualify for state playoffs in football, basketball, cross country and track in 2021. Orvedahl also plays basketball, baseball, and wants to try track this spring.

The Moose Lake Willow River athletes are commended for all the hard work and time they have put in year-round to achieve their success and accomplishments in their extra-curricular activities.

LIONS: Local organization continues long time tradition

FROM PAGE 1

School Travel Club.

The students also help pack the fruit and accompany the Lions when they deliver the fruit, which includes apples, oranges, grapefruit and bananas.

Birkholm noted that the number of students dropped this year and hopes that more will join the fun next year.

He said the Lions members drive an estimated 100 plus

miles on their annual route from Rutledge, Denham, Moose Lake, Willow River and more.

The Lions Club is always looking for new members to join. Their current members range in age from 30s to 80s, Birkholm said.

The Lions meet at 7 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the month at the Sturgeon Lake City Hall.



SUBMITTED

Sturgeon Lake Lions Club members pack fruit with the help of Willow River School Travel Club members. Once the fruit is packed, most members help deliver the fruit around the Willow River area.

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The People's Shopping Guide • Pine and Carlton Counties

Casino's source of unplanned entertainment

hope you enjoyed your Christmas. We stayed at our daughter, Tiffany's home.

Her over the top decorating made the house just magical as we gathered to open gifts. We enjoyed a great dinner that Tom planned and made, then we went to the casino that's nearby. It's not something they enjoy particularly but they do like to go once in a while.

And, they know Gary loves his casino stops, so off we went.

As we drove home that weekend, my mind flashed back to another casino we visited about a year ago in Las Vegas.

I mentioned it to him and we both started to chuckle.

Gary and I always stay downtown when in Las Vegas, Nev. The Fremont canopy show is fun to watch and it's a party atmosphere. That also makes downtown a pick pocket's dream. Everyone looks up while they walk through the crowds. The police do patrol, but they can't be standing behind everyone. Gary and I always try to be careful.

Last year one of our favorite restaurants had a special on a steak dinner. It was cheap, and their food is always good, people stood in line to get inside. By the time we finished eating, I was crossing my legs, I needed a restroom. We both jumped up when the cashier stepped over to help a couple already there. It quickly became obvious something was wrong and we couldn't help but hear

the upset cashier trying to get another credit card, and then call for the manager.

We heard the paying woman insist it was "her dad's credit card." That sounded fishy to me right off the bat. Her male companion points to where the cashier cannot look and adds "her father is standing right out there." (Gary and I lean to look, I'm sure looking stupid, and see where he points: no one is there.) Now the male says, "I'll go get him." The woman shoves another card at the cashier, "here's my driver license, I'll be right back." And they were both gone. The cashier knew the cards were stolen (we all did by then.) The manager finally arrives, looks at the cards and dashes out yelling "call security!" The manager returns, saying they are long gone. We quickly pay and leave. I had pressing busi-

ness for the nearest restroom in the casino.

As I rushed through the restroom lounge area I noticed a familiar woman in there, kicking back, lighting a cigarette. When I stepped out of the restroom, I was just in time to see the male companion finish swapping out his hat, and hoodie into a backpack, right in front of Gary. It was bum luck for those two, pulling their scam in front of a former Security Officer from a Minnesota Casino and a former TSA Officer. And what a stroke of luck, the restaurant manager and a security team were tipped off and waiting with her male companion when she stepped out of the restroom. Yup, what happens in Vegas should definitely stay in Vegas, but looking back it still makes us both smile, just a little.

I hesitate to sum up 2021's

pandemic results. I pray we get some better luck in the coming year and COVID-19 disappears, apparently it is going to take luck. Late November, Johns Hopkins University said the death toll numbers were over 770,000 due to COVID-19 or complications from COVID-19. So, even though we have free vaccinations available this year, 2021 had a higher death total by 15,000. The Delta variant is the worst culprit. The defiance of unvaccinated is understood, but I'm not so sure that should apply in a pandemic. Let's get rid of the disease first.

MAXINE MEYER is a columnist for the Askov American and Pine County Courier. She can be reached at 612-590-6907, or email mnmaxgram@yahoo.com.



Finlayson News
Maxine Meyer

Celebrate the New Year with new recipes



Food N' Friends
Mary Ellen Dewey

IF YOU have a favorite recipe you would like to share, send it to Mary Ellen at recipe@pinecountycourier.com. ENJOY!!

CHOCOLATE BUTTER MINT FONDUE

- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 jar (7 oz.) marshmallow cream
- 1 c. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1/3 c. crushed butter mints
- 1/4 c. milk
- Strawberries, pineapple chunks, marshmallows, cubed pound cake, shortbread cookies, cream-filled cylinder cookies, pretzels

In a medium saucepan combine the sweetened condensed milk, marshmallow crème, chocolate pieces and butter mints. Cook and stir over low heat until chocolate melts. Stir in milk. Transfer to fondue pot; place over fondue burner. Dip strawberries, pineapple, pound cake, pretzels and/or cookies into fondue mixture, swirling to coat. Makes 6 to 8 servings. Can use a small crock pot if a fondue pot isn't available.

HOT BACON CHEESE DIP

- 2 pkg. (8 oz. each) cream cheese, cubed
- 4 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 c. half-and-half cream
- 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. dried minced onion
- 1 tsp. prepared mustard
- 16 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
- Tortilla chips or toasted French bread slices

In a 1-1/2 slow cooker, combine the first 6 ingredients. Cover and cook on low for 2-3 hours or until cheeses are melted, stirring occasionally. Just before serving, stir in bacon, if desired, top with crumbled bacon. Serve warm with tortilla chips or toasted bread.

SESAME CHICKEN BROTH FONDUE

- 1-1/2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into 1-inch thick pieces
- Dipping sauce:**
- 1/2 c. soy sauce
 - 1/4 c. rice vinegar
 - 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
 - 1 Tbsp. honey
 - 2 tsp. sesame oil
 - 1 garlic clove minced

Cooking broth:

- 4 c. chicken broth
- 2 tsp. minced ginger

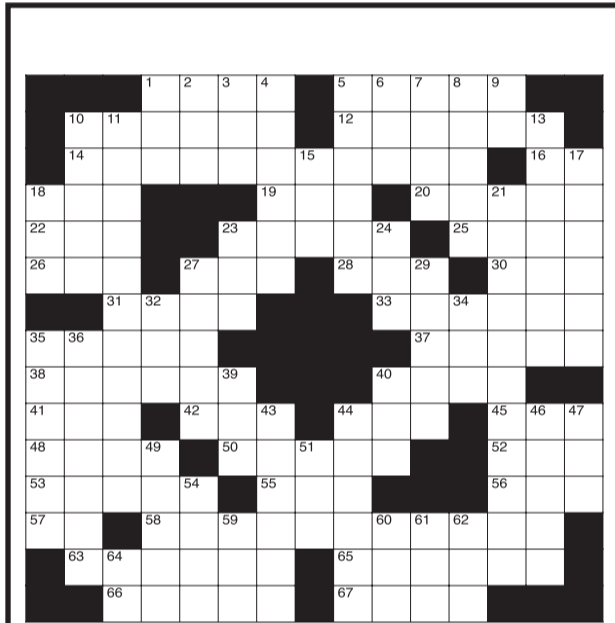
First prepare the dipping sauce whisking together the soy sauce, rice vinegar, lemon juice, honey, sesame oil, and garlic in a small bowl. Set the mixture aside. (It should stand at least 15 minutes before it is served.) Bring the chicken broth and ginger to a bowl in a large saucepan. Pour the mixture into fondue pot and set the flame to keep it at a simmer. Spear your dippers of choice onto a fork or skewer and submerge them in the broth to cook the chicken (about 5 minutes). Other dippers suggested: fresh cheese ravioli or tortellini, broccoli florets, or small button mushroom. Dip the cooked pieces into the prepared sauce. Serve 4-6.

OUT AND ABOUTS

JANUARY 4, 2021

Everyone's Table

Come to Everyone's Table for a FREE community meal and a chance to get together with friends and neighbors every 1st and 3rd Tuesday at the John Wright Building, 130 Oriole Street East. Drive all the way around to the back of the building. The next meeting will be on January 4, serving from 4:30 - 6 p.m.



CLUES ACROSS

- Chinese Muslim group
- Alternative name
- Resounds
- Supporter
- Furnishes anew
- Beloved Hollywood alien
- Supervises flying
- Ballplayer's tool
- Coarse edible red seaweed
- Former CIA
- Basketball player
- Travel necessities
- Honey producer
- Military analysis (abbr.)
- Diego, Francisco, Anselmo
- Mental sharpness and inventiveness
- Popular Easter meal
- Man (Spanish)
- ___ de la ___
- Counterweights
- Made a harsh, grating noise
- Monetary unit
- Commercials
- Cool!
- Partner to cheese
- Expression of creative skill
- Unit of angle
- Transported
- N. American people of Kansas
- Computer game character Max
- Moved swiftly
- Everyone has one
- Tin
- A mole is one
- Nocturnal hooved animals
- Oppositional to
- Monetary units
- Not on time

CLUES DOWN

- Hogshead (abbr.)
- Misery resulting from affliction
- Defunct European group
- Line on a map
- Becomes less intense
- Back muscle
- Frosted
- Ethiopian town
- Midway between south and east
- Wipe from the record
- In a continuous way
- Breathe
- Cleaning device
- Male organ
- Tab on a key ring
- Criminals
- Taxi
- Cheer of encouragement
- Wartime American escort carrier
- Polish river
- Current unit
- Life form
- Painful contractions
- Glowing
- Press against lightly
- Melancholic
- Something you can be under
- Of the mind
- E. Indian cereal grass
- Couple
- Sharpshoot
- A baglike structure in a plant or animal
- ___ Blyton, children's author
- Human gene
- Data mining methodology (abbr.)
- Examines animals
- Mineral
- Cools your home

2022
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Holding leaders accountable for climate change

To the Editor:

I want to thank the Pine County Courier and Steven Palmer for his letter to the editor, "Single Most Important Issue," from December 16, 2021. Mr. Palmer wrote about critical problems affecting our planet including global warming and pollution: "Lots of other issues may seem important but they won't make much difference if there is no place for future generations to live." He urged us to hold politicians accountable for addressing these issues.

For years I also worried about climate change, but truthfully it didn't get much beyond worry. Then came 2021 with its parade of extreme weather events, which in Minnesota included drought, toxic smoke from Canadian wildfires and the first-ever confirmed December tornadoes. I decided it was time to act.

Needing to better understand effective climate change solutions and meaningful actions I could take, my research led me to the Citizens' Climate Lobby, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization that works to "create political will for a livable world." From CCL I learned the necessity of reducing carbon emissions to zero by 2050 if we are to limit global warming and avoid the worst effects of climate change.

I also learned there is one type of climate change policy used by most of the developed world—unfortunately not the United States—that has the endorsement of scientists and economists alike: a price on carbon. CCL supports "carbon fee and dividend": a cost-effective approach in which corporations pay a gradually increasing fee on carbon emissions, stimulating the development of clean energy solutions. The fees are returned to households to spend as desired, ensuring that the transition away from fossil fuels is affordable for citizens. Research shows that a carbon fee of \$15/ton that rises by \$10/ton per year would cut fossil fuel pollution by 30% in the first five years alone.

As Mr. Palmer emphasized, we must hold our leaders accountable for addressing climate change and other threats to our planet. Contact Representative Stauber and Senators Klobuchar and Smith to urge them to support carbon pricing. Now is a crucial time to call/write as Congress continues discussions about the Build Back Better bill and which climate measures to include in it. Visit CitizensClimateLobby.org to learn more and click a link to easily contact our members of Congress. Remember, taking meaningful action today will help ensure a livable world for our children and future generations.

**Patricia Fettes
Wyoming, MN**

Infrastructure bill has many perks

To the Editor:

Here are a few of what I feel are Bidens accomplishments.

Since January 2021 there was zero help from the GOP or Senator Joe Manchin, whose state of West Virginia has 93% of the people at or below the poverty level and could benefit from all of these programs. Unemployment is at 4.6%, the lowest in 50 years, which created 5.6 million jobs. The stock market has risen 37% and the Federal Reserve chairman predicts 5% GDP growth for 2021. Wages are up 3.1% to help offset pandemic caused inflation. The American reserve plan has reduced family food insecurities by 24% and distributed 46 billion in child tax

SEE LETTER, PAGE 6



Predictions you can bet on

WITH THE NEW year, what will our economic forecast be? The old brokers would say, "Just watch the first five days of January and that will tell you what the month will be like, and January will tell you what the year will be like."

ONE OF THE traditions for Kathy and I is to deliver homemade cookies to each of our newspaper offices. It's an opportunity to say thank you and wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of our dedicated staff, who like a lot of other people have gone through a very difficult year. Our management staff always asks what to expect and project for 2022.

The following is a compilation of those questions and answers:

- Inflation will continue. It has risen higher than it has for decades. It could be like the 70s when interest went to 20%. The Federal Reserve has already announced they expect to raise interest rates three times in 2022 and that should have a slowing effect.
- Petroleum or gasoline at the pump, heating oils and diesel fuel will likely settle down, but we need to open some pipelines and get our refineries up to previous levels so we could export rather than import.
- The virus will linger and there will be different mutations. As it spreads through more of the population and we get more vaccinated, it will begin to die off.
- Small business, especially in the hospitality industry, will continue to have challenges.
- We have noticed that the

delinquent tax lists were down from last year. More people are conserving their cash, especially those above 60 years of age with the concern of the cost of care as they age.

- As salaries increase, businesses are looking at more efficiencies. You have probably noticed a lot of fast food places are encouraging online orders. More people are being cross-trained to be able to handle a variety of jobs to help cover the shortage of employees and the difficulty in hiring.
- The great resignation that has been taking place across the nation is an indication that lifestyles are changing and household incomes are dropping. People appear to be adjusting accordingly.
- Health care workers who have been under a lot of pressure for the last couple years are retiring, which is a serious concern as the pandemic continues.
- Supply chain interruptions will continue in 2022. Grocery stores, hardware stores and others who depend on the supply chain are not getting their orders filled and are finding it difficult to have preprints distributed when their customers will not find all of the specials available.
- Home prices continue to increase significantly, in many cases faster than inflation driven by low mortgage rates, which will likely move up as the feds increase the monetary interest rates.

- Pricing of medical care continues to rise as so many of the facilities are now operated like big business.
- Social media will continue even though over 70% of the population has indicated they do not trust the information on many of the media venues.
- Newspapers and their websites will continue to work harder to bring essential news to their readers even though many of the staffs have been depleted.
- The federal government will have more difficulty in passing spending bills with the high debt that has accumulated. Political parties will continue to battle and it will not always be in the interest of the American people.
- Crime will continue, especially in large cities, but it is also moving into the suburbs.

Keep the faith. Predictions like this have been made many times over and we grow and survive. It appears to me as Americans we are losing freedoms, our democracy and our moral fiber. Keep praying.

GENE JOHNSON is the Publisher Emeritus, Press Publications, White Bear Lake, MN and owner of Northstar Media. He can be reached at ppinfo@presspubs.com.

ASKOV AMERICAN



"The most important thing a community newspaper does is recognize the value of the lives of ordinary people."



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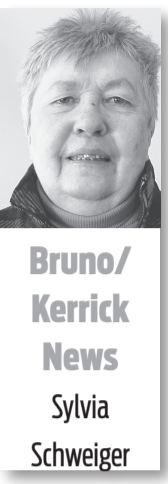
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Tuesday and Friday Closed.

BRUNO/KERRICK NEWS

Derrell and Jean Jensen enjoyed Christmas Eve at Frans and Jude Jensen's home in Moundsview along with four Jensen brothers and their sister Mary. Four of the cousins also attended. Christmas Day Derrell and Jean went to Minneapolis to visit Jean's son and family, then to Maple Grove for dinner with Jean's brother and family.



**Bruno/
Kerrick
News
Sylvia
Schweiger**

Mitch and Liz Clausen hosted a traditional Danish Christmas dinner on Christmas Day attended by Laura, Gordy and Amber Reed; Jeff and LeeAnn Johnson; Jesse, Genny, Grady, Dane, and Jordy Swenson; Katie, David, April and Daniel Clausen. Genny & Jessy Swenson and Mitch and Liz Clausen went to the Vikings VS Rams game at US Bank Stadium on Sunday afternoon. After the church service, Jesse, Genny, Grady, Dane and Jordy Swenson, Arnie, Nikki, Brooke and Ciara Cekalla, Jack and Sharon

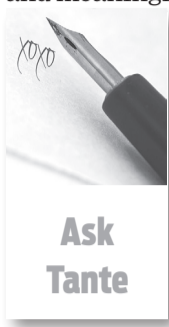
Ring and Sylvia Schweiger enjoyed Christmas Eve at Jeanette Swenson's home with food, conversation, kids scavenger hunt and opening gifts. Jack and Sharon Ring and Jeanette Swenson were Christmas Day dinner guests at the Sylvia Schweiger home and had a nice afternoon. Remember if you have any news that you would like to share, please contact me at either my email address: storebo1@frontier.com or call me at: (320) 838-3554.. Thank you everyone that has shared your news over this last year. Happy New Year!!!

Always be kind, patient

Dear Valued Readers,

This is the time of year to reflect on matters of importance and the pursuit of lives that are well spent and meaningful. It's a time to be thankful for the blessings we have received. To put things in perspective, a therapist once stated that the population of the world is now 7.3 billion, and at any given time there are at least 5 billion people who would

gladly traded places with us. In spite of COVID-19 and social unrest and the problems we deal with daily, we can all find things to be grateful for even while enduring painful losses. I resolve in the coming year to practice patience and kindness to those I encounter and in doing so effect a change in my own small corner of the world. I'm starting small by remembering to say "please" and "thank you" and "pardon me" when it's called for. Little things can make a big difference. Try to be kind. I wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year with great love from your Tante Ingeborg.



**Ask
Tante**

WILLOW RIVER NEWS

Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." It is hard to consider all the people who want to bring darkness and fear into the world.



**Willow
River News
Kathi
Bennett**

Last week someone said to me that they didn't think life was ever going to get back to "normal". That statement made me pause. A part of me wanted to shout that it was going to get back to normal soon. But I was stopped by a voice (you may call it an angel or the Holy Spirit, or my alter ego Marjori, ha ha) that said to me that "normal" is constantly changing. This was brought home to me when talking to a friend about the loss of our loved ones at the holiday time. We were talking about the fact that the holidays do not feel the same as when they were here, but that didn't mean that the holidays were worse, just different. It's okay for us to grieve the people we have lost and the things that have changed in our lives. It is even okay for us to be angry about the losses. It is not okay to spread hate and fear. I choose to believe in the goodness of my neighbors, family, and community. They have been a great source of comfort. They definitely drive out hate with love. I wish you all a Happy New Year with health and happiness, but above all hope and love. The business hours for city hall are Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for the clerk. The Utility Billing Clerk is there on Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. City hall is open even though there is no car in front, except Wednesdays. We are closed on Wednesdays. At the school: The winter break has been lengthened: It is now December 23 to January 3. At St. Mary's/ St. Isidore's Church: Friday, December 31, 2021 there will be no morning Mass. However, Friday, December 31, 2021 will be the Solemnity of Mary Mass at 5pm at Holy Angels. Then Saturday, Jan. 1, 2022 the Solemnity of Mary Mass will be held at St. Mary's at 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at Holy Angels Church. The Knights of Columbus meeting will be held on January 23, 2022. The meeting will be at St. Isidore's Church with Rosary at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting will follow at 7 p.m. There will be a meeting on January 5, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. at Holy Angels in the social hall. This will be for all current and interested parishioners in the parish cluster who desire to minister to the homebound. These ministers will take the Holy Eucharist to those parishioners who are not able to attend Mass and would like to receive the Eucharist. If you are aware of anyone in the cluster community who may be interested in receiving this ministry please bring those names with you to the meeting. The Knights of Columbus will lead the Rosary on the fourth Sunday of the month at St. Mary's. Thursday Mass will continue to be at St. Mary's Church at 8:30 a.m. St. Mary's Church has Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 1 to 5 p.m. every Wednesday. The Legion of Mary meetings are held at St. Mary's Center every Monday at 5 p.m.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

New School building project to begin soon in Duquette

**100 YEARS AGO
DECEMBER 27, 1921**
- Ollie Olesen and Miss Lilian Olesen both of Askov were married in Duluth.
- The school board and contractors held an inspection of the new schoolhouse in Duquette and all looks fine, so school will begin in the new building next week.
- T.J. Albert Johnson family moved into their new home in the west part of Askov.

**75 YEARS AGO
DECEMBER 26, 1946**
- The "King of Kings" is to be shown at the Emanuel Lutheran Church in Bruno on News Years Eve. There will also be special music by the Bruno Presbyterian Church Choir.
- Mr. and Mrs. Gale Plether are the proud parents of a baby girl born on December 21. She will be known as Marilyn Alvina.
- Under the sponsorship of Jens H. Jensen Post 243, Askov School is organizing a school patrol to aid in taking accident prevention measures.
- Mr. and Mrs. Henry Eaton announced the birth of a boy, Robert Clarence, on December 18.

**50 YEARS AGO
DECEMBER 30, 1971**
- Minnesota has new Photo Driver Licenses making it impossible to forge or counterfeit thanks to a new tamperproof polycarbonate plastic material.
- Two marriages recently took place. Eva Bloom and Bruce Makela were married in Askov on December 18 and Carol Bonnell and Scott Erickson were married in Elgin, Illinois on November 27.
- Donkey Basketball comes to Askov on January, 7. It will be held at the school with the Askov School faculty playing the Askov Firemen.

**25 YEARS AGO
DECEMBER 24, 1996**
- Pine County Commissioners hear and listen to many complaints about the county taxes.
- Askov youth, Brandon Beavens, was killed in a snowmobile accident on Highway 23, Saturday, Dec. 21.
- Cardiac Rehabilitation is now a part of Mercy Hospital and Health Care in Moose Lake.
- Emery Nedegaard, long time Askov resident passed away on December 17. Funeral Services

were held on December 21 at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church.
- Roy and Mag Sebald attended the commencement service for their daughter Gail Lusvardi when she received her BA degree in elementary education.

**10 YEARS AGO
DECEMBER 22, 2011**
- With the release of the top two administrators at Sandstone Hospital, the board has hired a transition team to help with the new changes.
- Judy Loken has now joined the East Central School Board for a two year term.
- Tiffany Meyer, daughter of Gary and Maxine Meyer, graduates and received her Bachelor of Science degree in international business.
- Titus Lee was born to Justin Mortensen and Lauren Raiche. Proud grandparents are Randy and Cindy Mortensen. The great grandparents are Buzz and Sally Mortensen and Ed and Joyce Schaumburg.

EAST CENTRAL SCHOOL LUNCH MENU

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Thursday, December 30 No School | and milk | Blue line: Chicken Alfredo, breadstick, Mandarin oranges, corn and milk |
| Friday, December 31 No School | | Silver line: Sub sandwich, chips, Mandarin oranges, corn, and milk |
| Monday, January 3 Blue line: Corn dog, fries, apple-sauce, green beans, and milk Silver line: Burrito, refried beans, applesauce, green beans, | Tuesday, January 4 Blue line: Cheese burger, fries, tropical fruit, broccoli, and milk Silver line: Spaghetti, breadstick, tropical fruit, broccoli, and milk | |
| Wednesday, January 5 | | |

DEATHS: Pine County has lowest vaccine rates in state

FROM PAGE 1

greater risk [for hospitalization] if they are unvaccinated," said Lo. "If you are fully vaccinated, your risk of ending up in the hospital is very low."

She said that a troubling part is that if a COVID patient is taking up a bed, when it could have likely been avoided by getting vaccinated, there are not enough hospital beds for everyone else and that other ailments and accidents haven't stopped happening.

"There are only three beds available in the entire Central region," said Lo. "If you have a car accident or a heart emergency, a COVID patient is taking up a bed and it is a ripple effect in the community. I'm legitimately concerned as a parent looking at the beds available."

OMICRON VARIANT

Lo addressed the recent variant of

COVID-19, Omicron. She said that this variant was only identified a little over month ago and "is spreading like wildfire." A couple weeks ago it was 3% and now 75% in the United States. "This is an exponential growth and not great for our already overwhelmed health-care system," added Lo.

With Omicron, the incubation period is shorter at about three days. Lo said that this makes contact tracing difficult.

"It's clearly more infectious but probably not more severe," she said. "It could be less severe because of immunity."

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

Public health recommends getting vaccinated as soon as possible. "It really does work," stated Lo. "The risk is low and the benefits are very high." She added that they would like to see

everyone get boosted in light of the onset of Omicron. "We are seeing that two doses are not enough to get protection, but the booster really kicks up antibodies."

She also suggested people wear a mask and have everyone get tested before attending holiday events together. Rapid tests are available at Walmart and Walgreens. And the recommendation is still in place that if one is feeling sick, they should stay home.

DISCUSSION

County Commissioner Josh Mohr asked if the booster vaccine gets people sick. Lo responded saying that their general observation has been that it has "hit somewhere in the middle" of how people first responded to the first two doses.

"In looking at numbers, it is amazing how much the vaccine helps people stay out of the hospital," noted Mohr. "You

can still get it, and not even know you have it, but the majority of people don't end up in the hospital."

Commissioner Terry Lovgren asked about antibodies and if someone tests positive for antibodies, how long they last.

Lo responded and said, "We never want to suggest that you get COVID for the antibodies. If one is positive for antibodies, it does not mean the antibodies are high enough to fight off another round of it." She added that whether one has been vaccinated or had COVID, the booster or first vaccine will help antibodies shoot up and stay high.

"The [antibody] test doesn't tell you the level and to what level you're protected," Lo added.

Mikrot smashes school record



CONNIE MIKROT PHOTOGRAPHY

Senior Natalie Mikrot scored her 2000th point in the Willow River gym scoring a three and the first points of the game against Crosby-Ironton. She surpassed all other players in Moose Lake High School and Moose Lake Willow River's history (boys and girls). Geoff Probst's scored 1848 career points by the time he graduated in 2005. Adri Juszczak's career points scored were 1680 and she graduated in 2015. The three-point shot came into effect in the 1987-88 basketball season. Annie Adamczak scored 1535 Moose Lake High School career points and graduated in 1982, before the three-point shot.

LETTER: Biden bills benefit public

FROM PAGE 4

credits to poor families as well as given \$28,000 dollars per employ to employ retention tax credits of small businesses. They have given \$250 billion to state, local and tribal governments for COVID-19 relief.

The infrastructure bill is so good that the GOP takes credit for it.

It brought Minnesota \$6.8 billion for infrastructure, 4.5 billion for roads and bridges. It invested \$65 billion for broadband internet to rural Minnesota and 2.4 million jobs to Minnesota by 2025. There is \$55 billion included to upgrade the clean water act.

The bill included \$66 billion to modernize the railway system rail transportation and invested 7.5 billion for electric vehicle charging stations, the more electric vehicles, the less pollution and less oil from Middle East.

The bill invested \$21 billion to super fund pollution cleanup in Brown field sites, abandoned mines and oil wells. Republican office holder, Pete Stauber said, "no one wants an infrastructure bill more than me." Yet, with kickbacks, Jim Hagedorn voted against it. But they will take credit for it when money comes to their districts. Some projects were less perfect, like leaving Afghanistan, but at least the war is over and the troops are home after 20 years. We have shortages due to the shutdown over COVID-19, but at least he is trying to move the country forward. He voted no to everything that would benefit the American people unlike the GOP who only vote yes to destroy democracy and benefit Trump and his party of anti-government radicals and voter right extremist.

Rick Volk

Pine County Board joins opioid lawsuit

BY T.A. LEBRUN

EDITOR@PINECITYMN.COM

The Pine County Board of Commissioners discussed a number of items including an opioid lawsuit settlement and elected official salaries, among other topics.

Pine County Attorney Reese Frederickson said at the meeting that the County was part of a litigation that sued manufacturers and distributors of sale of opioids and that the County is considering whether they should continue with the process. Frederickson added that there are a number of possibilities on how to use the settlement money, which would be approximately \$50,000 per year for the next 18 years.

"We could establish a solid program to combat drug addiction in the county," noted Frederickson.

Frederickson explained the history of the lawsuit in a later email saying that initially the states would be receiving most of the settlement money, not the local jurisdictions. "The small jurisdictions held out for a better deal and refused to join until most of the money went to these jurisdictions. Minnesota is one of those few

states where the local jurisdictions cover the public health issues," said Frederickson. He added that the State eventually agreed to send 75% of the settlement to local jurisdictions, and came up with a formula of how much money each jurisdiction would get. Minnesota's estimated settlement is over \$250,000,000. Of that, Pine County would receive an estimated \$1.2 million over the next 18 years.

"So, given the favorable amount to Pine County, the County decided to join the settlement and end its lawsuit with the four entities," said Frederickson.

Jared Shepherd, of Campbell Knutson, P.A., and one of the attorneys working on the opioid litigation, said that the Minnesota Attorney General convened an expert panel on public health and came up with a number of ways the counties can use the settlement money. "The uses are pretty flexible," he added.

Frederickson said they had settled with four of the defendants and Shepherd added that "the big one" still not settled is Purdue Pharma. "The federal judge rejected bankruptcy and their role in how much

they had to contribute in their bankruptcy," added Shepherd.

Pine County Administrator David Minke noted that the attorney piece is done now, and it was time for counties to step in, adding that a legislative change to Minnesota Statute 256 and to the Opioid Epidemic Response Advisory Council would be needed next.

"Then the money can flow more clearly to local governments," said Minke. "Once we get through settlement, public health will be the lead in determining how the money will be used."

He added that Pine County has a significant addiction problem. "This won't solve all those problems but can leverage other resources to make a dent in the problems we have in the County," said Minke.

County Commissioner Steve Hallan, of Pine City, said that the drug coalition may have an idea on how to use the money as well.

The resolution authorizing Pine County to participate in the settlement process was passed with all commissioners in favor.

ELECTED OFFICIAL SALARY DISCUSSION

During the public forum

section of the meeting, Sandstone Township clerk, Ailene Croup, spoke with concerns of increasing county elected officials' salaries. She said that in Sandstone Township the average household income is \$45,000 and felt that the board should keep salaries down so residents aren't overly burdened.

County Commissioner Josh Mohr opened the discussion on setting salaries as part of a regular agenda item. "In the last couple of years, we tried aligning the sheriff to right in the middle of neighboring counties and compared about five or six counties," said Mohr. "The sheriff was pretty low on the scale for a few years."

Commissioner Matt Ludwig noted, "This salary is for an office. We all know law enforcement is pretty important, and it's something that I take into consideration."

Commissioner Terry Lovgren added, "I can't see just anyone stepping in and doing Reese or Jeff's job."

The county attorney's salary was discussed. Commissioner Mohr said, "There was much discussion and trying to compare similar counties ... this

puts him pretty much in the middle for salaries. And we all know he could probably go somewhere else and make a lot more money. He does a great job and we're lucky to have him."

Commissioner Ludwig added, "The county attorney is the highest position in law enforcement because he decides who's going to be prosecuted and advises the sheriff's office staff - it's the whole fabric of what keeps us a civil society."

Ludwig also said that Frederickson has taken on the prosecutions for the cities in the county which has brought in approximately \$40,000 in revenue.

Lovgren added that there are more cases going to court than in previous years. "We know we're safer because we have people that will stand up for our rights," she said.

The elected officials' salaries were approved with a 6% increase for the sheriff's salary and a 5% increase for the county attorney, and the county commissioners set their salaries and per diems with no increase from last year.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICES

CITY OF STURGEON LAKE NOTICE OF POLLING PLACE 2022 ELECTIONS
To the voters of the City of Sturgeon Lake; In the County of Pine, State of Minnesota.
Notice is Hereby Given, The City Council of Sturgeon Lake has designated the Polling Place for all 2022 Elections. Polling Place Location is City of Sturgeon Lake City Hall, 3084 Farm to Market Road Sturgeon Lake MN
Published in the Askov American on December 30, 2021

City Of Denham Meeting Notice
January 10th 6:00 pm*
February 14th 7:00 pm
March 14th 7:00 pm
April 11th 7:00 pm
May 9th 7:00 pm
June 13th 7:00 pm
July 11th 7:00 pm
August 8th 7:00 pm

September 12th 7:00 pm
October 10th 7:00 pm
November 14th 7:00 pm
December 12th 7:00 pm
Other Meeting Notes
January 10th - Annual Meeting
All meetings held at Denham Run Bar & Grill (87439 Denham Rd)
The dates and times of these meetings may change. If there is a change it will be posted at the city park kiosk.
Jillian Maki
Clerk, City of Denham
Published in the Askov American December 30, 2021

STATE OF MINNESOTA COUNTY OF PINE TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT DISTRICT COURT PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No. 58-PR-21-94
NOTICE AND ORDER OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR PROBATE OF WILL AND APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate of Emalyn Madonna Sullivan, Decedent
It is Ordered and Notice is given that on January 26, 2022 at 9:30 a.m., a hearing will be held in this Court at 635 Northridge Dr. NW, Pine City, Minnesota, for the formal probate of an instrument purporting to be the Will of the Decedent dated, September 25, 2003, and ("Will"), and for the appointment of Robert A. Sullivan, whose address is 457 Eldridge Avenue West, Roseville, MN 55113, as Personal Representative of the Estate of the Decedent in an UNSUPERVISED administration. Any objections to the petition must be filed with the Court prior to or raised at the hearing. If proper and if no objections are filed or raised, the Personal Representative will be appointed with full power to administer the Estate including the power to collect all assets, to pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, to sell real and personal property, and to do all necessary acts for the Estate.
Notice is also given that

(subject to Minnesota Statutes section 524.3-801) all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the Personal Representative or to the Court Administrator within four months after the date of this Notice or the claims will be barred.
A charitable beneficiary may request notice of the probate proceedings be given to the Attorney General pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 501B.41, subdivision 5. Patrick W. Flanagan
Judge of District Court
Amy Willert
Court Administrator
Dated 12/14/2021
Attorney for Petitioner Steven H Snyder, Esq.
Steven H. Snyder & Associates
11270 86th Avenue North
Maple Grove, MN, 55369
Attorney License No: 014065X
Telephone: (763) 420-6700
FAX: (763) 420-9588
Email: steve@snyderlawfirm.com
Published in the Askov American
December 23, 30, 2021

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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HAPPY NEW YEAR



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