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BALD EAGLE YACHT CLUB: Sails against exclusivity PAGE 11

CENTERVILLE LIONS PRESENTS

BACK TO THE 80'S

WEEK-LONG COMMUNITY FESTIVAL
JULY 14-19



SHANNON GRANHOLM | PRESS PUBLICATIONS

CONTRIBUTED

Rad, retro and ready to celebrate

The city of Centerville's Fete des Lacs is scheduled to return July 14 through July 19. This year's festival boasts a Back to the '80s theme and will feature a variety of events including a cornhole tournament, 5K/8K run, fireworks, parade and more. Find more information on page 8 of this week's issue.

Voting begins: Best of Contest is here

The nominations are in, and voting is open for Press Publications' annual Best of the Press Readers' Choice contest.

Community members will vote for a wide variety of their favorites, including restaurants, doctors, schools, artists, services, events and much more.

This year's contest features more than 149 categories, including eight new categories: sweet shop, chicken wings, brat/hot dog, mocktail at a bar or restaurant, meal for the money, apple orchard, electrician company and dispensary.

The contest helps recognize exceptional businesses, Press Publications General Manager Patty Steele said. Winning a badge adds credibility to a business for someone making a buying decision.

"Six years strong and readers still love to vote for their favorites in the local communities, and businesses love to be recognized by their customers," Steele said. "It's also a great guide for our readers to take a look at the top three and decide to try somewhere new they might not have otherwise tried."

The contest continues to gain popularity each year.

Voting is available 24/7 on the Press Publications website at presspubs.com/citizen/bestof. Each reader may vote once per day.

Voting ends at 5 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 2.

Winners and finalists will be recognized in a special section the first week of October. Winners will also be posted online.



New

categories:

- Sweet shop
- Chicken wings
- Brat/hot dog
- Mocktail at a bar or restaurant
- Meal for the money
- Apple orchard
- Electrician company
- Dispensary

New developer takes over Oneka Lake Reserve project

BY SHANNON GRANHOLM
MANAGING EDITOR

HUGO — A housing development that has sat dormant since 2021 has returned.

DRW Property Investments, LLC has requested a preliminary plat and planned unit development (PUD) for Olenka Lake Reserve. The project proposes 50 townhome units on 6.7 acres located north of 150th Street North across from Generation Avenue North.

The property was previously approved for a townhome development known as Oneka Lake Townhomes in 2007. The project was not constructed due to the recession in 2008. A second project for the property was previously approved in 2021 and placed the property into a PUD, but this project was also not constructed.

The city received revised plans for the project from DRW in late May, with revisions in May and June. The current proposed project is heavily based on the 2021

project, including the same name and a similar layout of townhomes around a circular private drive and a small park in the southwest corner of the property.

The major differences between the two projects are the increase in units from 40 (2021) to 50 (2026), and a slightly larger park, increased from 0.45 to 0.5 acres in size.

Associate Planner Max Gort explained that the number of buildings on the site has also changed. Previously, 18 buildings were proposed and now 15 are proposed. "There are more units, but they are smaller and there are fewer buildings," Gort said. The 2021 project called for a mixture of two-and-three-unit buildings. The current proposal also introduces a four-unit building.

Another key difference is the location of the stormwater pond. The previous proposal had a large pond located in the center of the property; the new proposal calls for combining two stormwater ponds on the north



CONTRIBUTED

DRW Property Investments, LLC has taken over the Oneka Lake Reserve Project, which now proposes 50 townhome units located north of 150th Street North across from Generation Avenue North in Hugo.

end of the property into one larger pond.

According to a memo from City Engineer Mark Erichson, grading is proposed in the drainage and utility easement area on the properties directly to the

SEE ONEKA LAKE RESERVE, PAGE 7

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

The Grillium will be featured

The Grillium will be featured by America's Best Restaurants, a national media and marketing company that spotlights independent, locally owned restaurants across the country.

The restaurant, located at 555 W. Broadway Ave. Forest Lake, Suite 7, will host the America's Best Restaurants Roadshow on July 29. The production team will film an interview with co-owner and chef Veronika Rafi and highlight several of the restaurant's signature menu items. The public and members of the media are welcome to attend the filming.

Owned by Russ and Veronika Rafi, The Grillium opened with a menu that blends American cuisine with Pakistani and Slovak-inspired flavors. Russ Rafi, originally from Pakistan, spent years managing restaurants in the United States before opening The Grillium. Veronika Rafi, whose family has Slovak roots, joined the business full time during the COVID-19 pandemic after working as a project manager.

The episode is expected to feature the restaurant's Cajun Chicken Penne Alfredo, Gyro and Cuban Sandwich. Once completed, the feature will be released on America's Best Restaurants' social media platforms, website and YouTube channel. A premiere date will be announced on The Grillium's Facebook page.

For more information about The Grillium, visit www.thegrillium.com.



CONTRIBUTED
The Grillium will be featured by America's Best Restaurants.

Go4Cannabis hosts ribbon cutting



Go4Cannabis recently hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony. The new locally owned dispensary is located at 7114 Otter Lake Road Suite 130 in Lino Lakes.

POLITICAL BRIEFS

Two Republican candidates challenge US Rep Tom Emmer in August primary

US House Majority Whip Tom Emmer, from Delano, will face off against two challengers—Chris Corey, from Big Lake, and Mike Foley, from Elk River—in the upcoming primary election. Emmer has served in the US House of Representatives since 2015 and as majority whip since 2023. He currently represents Minnesota's sixth congressional district. This is Corey's second primary campaign after he previously faced off against Emmer in 2024. This is Foley's first primary campaign.

One Republican candidate faces off against US Rep Pete Stauber in August primary

Anthony Hamilton, from Mora, will challenge US House Representative Pete Stauber, from Duluth, in the upcoming Republican primary on Aug. 11. Stauber has served in the US House of Representatives since 2019. He currently represents Minnesota's eighth congressional district. This is Hamilton's first primary campaign.

Three candidates vie for District 8 in August Democratic Primary

Three candidates are on the Democratic primary ballot for the eighth congressional district: Luke Gulbranson, from Eveleth; John Munter, from Warba; and Trina Swanson, from Hermantown. Munter previously ran in the Democratic primary in 2024. This is Gulbranson's and Swanson's first campaign.

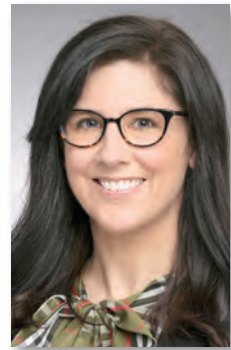
Early voting information

The Minnesota primary election is Aug. 11. In-person and mail absentee voting are now open. Centerville residents may vote early beginning July 24 at Centerville City Hall, 1880 Main St. Hugo residents may vote early beginning July 24 at either Forest Lake Service and License Center, 19955 Forest Road

N. or Stillwater Government Center, 14949 N. 62nd St. For more information, visit sos.mn.gov/elections-voting.

Senator Gustafson Appointed to Legislative Inspector General Advisory Commission

Senator Heather Gustafson (DFL-Vadnais Heights) has been appointed to the Legislative Inspector General Advisory Commission.



The commission will be responsible for recruiting and recommending qualified candidates to serve as Minnesota's first Inspector General, who will lead the newly established office tasked with investigating fraud against state government programs.

"This appointment is an opportunity to help ensure we build an Office of the Inspector General that is truly independent, transparent and focused on serving the people of Minnesota," said Senator Gustafson. "When we passed this legislation, our goal was to strengthen accountability and restore public trust by creating an office that follows the facts, protects taxpayer dollars and operates free from political influence. I'm honored to continue to lay the foundation for that work."

The Office of the Inspector General was established during the 2026 legislative session through bipartisan legislation authored by Senator Gustafson, after first being passed by the Senate in 2025. The new office consolidates oversight functions and provides an independent authority to investigate fraud against state agencies while making recommendations to improve efficiency and accountability.

The eight-member advisory commission, with two members from each legislative caucus, will conduct a nationwide search and recommend candidates to the governor for appointment as Minnesota's first Inspector General, subject to Senate confirmation.

CONSTRUCTION BRIEF

Otter Lake Road at County Road J closed July 6

Construction continues on the Interstate 35E and County Road J interchange. July 6 to Aug. 20, weather permitting, Otter Lake

Road will be closed at County Road J. There will be no access to County Road J during this closure. Throughout July, work will continue on connecting Otter Lake Road into the new roundabout.

Also in July, Crews will work on connecting the new bridge to

the roundabouts on County Road J. They will also work on paving and curb pouring on the north side of County Road J. Work will continue on the west roundabout and new southbound exit ramp on 20th Avenue.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

JULY 9, 2026

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THE CITIZEN 3

ONGOING EVENTS

HUGO SENIOR CITIZENS PLAY '500'

When: 12:45 p.m. Thursday, July 16 and 30, and the first, third and fifth Thursday of every month
Where: Rice Lake Centre, 6900 137th Street N.
Details: Games begin at 12:45 p.m. Refreshments and coffee served. All senior citizens from the area invited.
Contact: Jim at 763-639-4756 or allenj4992@gmail.com

HUGO SENIOR CLUB

When: 5 p.m. Monday, July 20 and every third Monday of every other month
Where: Rice Lake Centre, 6900 137th Street N.
Details: Annual senior dinner for members with bingo after.
Contact: Jim at 763-639-4756 or allenj4992@gmail.com

CRIBBAGE

When: 1 p.m. Monday, July 27, and the first and fourth Monday of every month
Where: Rice Lake Centre, 6900 137th St. N., Hugo
Details: Senior citizens from Hugo and surrounding area are invited to an afternoon of cribbage. Coffee and refreshments served.
Contact: Alice at 651-429-4413

MARKETFEST

When: 6-9 p.m. Thursdays
Where: Downtown White Bear Lake
Details: Community summer festival with over 200 food and vendor booths, live music, car show, kids activities, specials at local merchants.
Contact: marketfestwbl.com

WHITE BEAR LAKE FARMERS MARKET

When: 8 a.m.-12 p.m. Fridays
Where: Clark Avenue, between Second Street and Third Street
Details: A tradition since the 1970s, the farmers market features more than 50 vendors.
Contact: whitebearlake.org or 651-429-8526

CURRENT EVENTS

FRIDAYS WITH FIREFIGHTERS

When: 10 a.m.-noon Friday, July 10
Where: Hugo Fire Department, 5323 140th St. N.
Details: Stop by to meet firefighters, go for a ride in a truck, jump in a bounce house and eat popcorn. Due to construction, traffic can only head west on 140th. Fenway traffic is southbound only, and 130th traffic is eastbound only. You can get into the station from Highway 61 normally. However, to get back to 61, you will need to take Fenway South to 130th. 130th has traffic flowing east to 61.
Contact: 651-762-6362

SUMMER SIGNINGS DURING THE FARMERS MARKET

When: 10 a.m.-noon Friday, July 10
Where: Lake Country Booksellers, 4766 Washington Square, White Bear Lake
Details: Authors Dean Hovey and D.L. Dixon will sign copies of their latest collaboration "Woke Up Dead," #13 in the Pine County mystery series; and Laurie Lynnsee with sign copies of "The Song Calls," the first in a new mystery series co-written with A.W. Powers.
Contact: lakecountrybooksellers.com



FETE DES LACS COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

When: July 14-19
Where: Hidden Spring Park, 1601 Lamotte Drive, Centerville
Details: Enjoy Centerville's classic summer get-together, featuring a water-ski show, kids DJ, fireworks and a parade. Festivities kick off 6 p.m., July 14.
Contact: 651-429-3232 or centerville-lions.com

ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB

When: 2:30 p.m. Sunday, July 12
Where: Keller Regional Park, shelter #3
Details: Three-mile hike on paved trail followed by annual potluck picnic.
Contact: stpaulhike.com

THE MUSIC OF THE BEACH BOYS

When: 2 and 7 p.m. Sunday, July 12
Where: Hanifl Performing Arts Center, 4941 Long Ave., White Bear Lake
Details: Pet Sounds Live presents the music of the Beach Boys. Ticket information online.
Contact: lakeshoreplayers.org

BOBBER-STYLE FISHING CAMP

When: 10 a.m.-noon Monday, July 13 – Wednesday, July 15, and Monday, July 27–Wednesday, July 29
Where: Tally's Dockside, 4441 Lake Ave. S.
Details: Kids who have completed grades 1-5 can experience the fun of "bobber-style" catch and release fishing at various spots around White Bear Lake with a guide. Equipment provided or bring your own. Registration required.
Contact: 651-407-2018 or communityed.mahtomedi.k12.mn.us

CENTERVILLE MAIN STREET MARKET

When: 5:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 16
Where: Centerville Elementary, 1721 Westview St.
Details: Local artisans, live music and food vendors prior to the Bald Eagle Waterski show next door at 7 p.m.
Contact: centervillemn.com or facebook.com/CentervilleMainStreetMarket

BASICS OF ESTATE PLANNING

When: 5:30-6:30 p.m. Thursday, July 16

Where: Mahtomedi District Education Center, room 103

Details: Learn the basics including wills and trusts, power of attorney, health care directives, estate tax and the common misunderstandings of estate planning. Registration required.
Contact: 651-407-2018 or communityed.mahtomedi.k12.mn.us

SUMMER SIGNINGS

When: 10 a.m.-noon Friday, July 17
Where: Lake Country Booksellers, 4766 Washington Square, White Bear Lake
Details: Linda Norlander will sign copies of "What the Fields Saw" and "The Secret of Raven's Valley;" and Mama Rose will sign her debut "Fearless: 27 Affirmations to Change Your Life" during the Farmers Market.
Contact: lakecountrybooksellers.com

LEARN TO STAND-UP PADDLE BOARD

When: 11-12:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 18
Where: Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve, 7373 Main Street Lino Lakes
Details: Learn the basics, then explore on the water. Equipment provided. Register online.
Contact: anokacountyparks.com

STORYTIME AT LIONS PARK

When: 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 22
Where: Lions Volunteer Park, 5524 Upper 146th St. N, Hugo
Details: Come to a special Storytime at Lions Volunteer Park. Join the Washington County Library at the pavilion for stories, songs, movement and more at this inclusive and welcoming storytime for children of all ages and their caregivers.
Contact: WashCoLib.org/Events

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Summer Challenge Kick-Off to benefit Hugo food shelf

The Hugo Good Neighbors Food Shelf has launched its Summer Challenge Kick-Off, with donations made through July eligible for a matching grant from Open Your Heart, a Minnesota nonprofit dedicated to fighting hunger. Summer is one of the food shelf's busiest seasons as children are home from school. More

families seek assistance while donations typically decline. Community members can help stretch their impact by making an online donation. For more information or to contribute, visit the Hugo Good Neighbors Food Shelf website at www.hugoodfoodshelf.org/give/.

Election season letter guidelines return

Letter writers who want to

endorse a candidate or issue on the ballot will need to pay a fee to have their letter published. Press Publications' election letter guidelines state that election season is when filing first begins until the day of the election. Letters not relating to the election are still free. Paid letters longer than 350 words will be charged extra. Paid letter writers must call the front desk at 651-407-1200 to arrange payment prior to publication. For the full list of guidelines, see page 4.



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 The LORD is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:1

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Service times are subject to change. Contact your local church or check church web sites for service time and online service information. To make changes or to advertise here, call 651-407-1200

Rooting for us

A recent article in the White Bear Press about a local Revolutionary War connection sparked a grade-school history lesson memory. When I was in about third or fourth grade, I shared with the teacher that one of the ancestors on my family tree had fought at the battle of Bunker Hill during The Revolutionary War. She expressed skepticism and suggested that maybe I was making it up. I told my mother what happened after I got home from school and she proceeded to find a newspaper clipping that I could use to help verify the ancestral connection. If I remember correctly, the gist of the article was about how Josiah Pierce, an ancestor on my mother's side of the family, travelled a considerable distance (at the time) to attend an anniversary gathering of the historic battle. Mom placed the yellowed newspaper clipping in an envelope and allowed me to take it to school — with the promise that I would treat it with care and keep it safe. The teacher responded graciously when I showed her the clipping and encouraged me to use it for a future show and tell session.



Angle of View
Paul Dols

With surprising and sometimes humbling results, I've occasionally shared family history with friends and colleagues. I recall sharing with a former editor in the newsroom about the ancestor on my family tree who fought at the battle of Bunker Hill. He politely listened and then shared that his wife (who was originally from the east coast) could trace her ancestry back to the family that owned the land (actually Breed's Hill) where the historic battle took place. After reading the book "Mayflower: A Story of Community, Courage, and War" by Nathaniel Philbrick, I shared with a colleague that an ancestor on my mother's side of the family tree was a passenger on the Mayflower. She shared that she also had an ancestral connection to that time in history and was a descendant of Massasoit, the chief of the Wampanoag tribe who befriended the Pilgrims. According to Philbrick, the Pilgrims likely would have perished during the first winter without the assistance of Massasoit. As it was, nearly half of the colony died during the first winter, including my ancestor Thomas Rogers. His children survived and were most likely adopted by William Bradford.

One of my favorite TV shows is "Finding Your Roots" with Henry Louis Gates Jr. Throughout the run of the show, the Harvard professor has presented detailed family histories to numerous famous and notable people ranging from America Ferrera to Sharon Stone, who was quite surprised to discover that she was a direct descendant of Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman Emperor. A recent interview with Professor Gates revealed that researching genealogical history is complicated and the findings are not always good news. He said that he has an ethics protocol. If something is discovered that will forever change someone's understanding of their family, he won't surprise them but will reach out first to ask if they want to know. Secret affairs and involvement in the slave trade are among the surprise findings that have required the use of the ethics protocol. As an example of how personal family history can be complicated, along with researching direct lineage going back to the Mayflower and the Revolutionary War, my father also discovered a branch of our family tree that includes the notorious Benedict Arnold.

Reading well-researched historical books like "Mayflower" have helped me keep ancestral heritage in perspective. I find that when a more complex and detailed explanation of the myths we grew up with is revealed, it can help to better comprehend the complicated and messy period of history we're currently experiencing and maybe help infuse us with the strength and perspective we need to successfully move forward.

Paul Dols is photojournalist/website editor for Press Publications. He can be reached at 651-407-1238.



We are good neighbors when we look out for each other

Having good neighbors is wonderful. Who lives next door can make or break a neighborhood. We have probably heard the phrase "a good neighbor is worth their weight in gold," and it is certainly true! A good neighbor makes life easier, less stressful and more enjoyable. The opposite is also certainly true. Having a bad neighbor can be rough. We probably come to appreciate our good neighbors more after we have had bad neighbors.



Pastor's Ponderings
Tim Heinecke

So what makes a good neighbor? One obvious thing that comes to mind are how they act. They speak openly and honestly with us. We do not have to worry about them gossiping behind our backs or stirring up trouble. They pick up after their pets. They are not throwing loud parties (or they at least invite us over if they are having a loud party!). They might help keep an eye on our place when we are out of town or help take out the trash.

Overall, a nice neighbor is kind, honest, courteous and pleasant to be around.

This should come as no surprise. Good neighbors are something everybody has always appreciated. Nearly 2,000 years ago, the Apostle Paul wrote to Christians living near Philippi about what it means to be a good neighbor. He said, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:3-5)

Being a good neighbor means we are looking out for each other. We are not only concerned about ourselves. We also care about what is best for others. In fact, this is exactly what Jesus does for us. He is looking out for us and cares about what is best for us. In fact, this is the entire reason why He entered our world: to forgive and save us!

Many people might remember the children's TV show "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood." This children's show featured Fred Rogers and had 31 seasons. His famous song has entertained generations

of kids as he sang "won't you be my neighbor?" He covered many different stories and issues as he talked about what it means to be a good neighbor. His kind, calm and patient attitude has often been considered as a model of how to be kind to others. Many people do not realize Fred Rogers was also an ordained minister in the Presbyterian church. His faith and relationship with Jesus helped shape how he treated others.

Since we appreciate having good neighbors, how can we be one? While every situation, neighborhood, and living arrangement is different, we thankfully have a great guide on how to be a good neighbor: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

We are good neighbors when we look out for each other and we want what is best for others. Enjoy the good neighbors around you and have fun being a good neighbor!

Tim Heinecke is the pastor at New Life Church - Lutheran in Hugo.

THE CITIZEN | ELECTION LETTER GUIDELINES

- Election season is considered to be when filing first begins until the day of the election.
- Limited to 350 words. Paid letters running longer will be charged \$10 per 30 words after that.
- Letters are free unless endorsing a candidate, party or question on the ballot. Endorsement letters will have a \$50 fee. Please call 651-407-1200 to arrange payment by credit card or mail a check payable to Press Publications to 4779 Bloom Ave, White Bear Lake, MN, 55110. Endorsement letters are labeled, "paid letter."
- Letters for or against a candidate will qualify as paid letters.
- Submissions must include a full name, address and phone number for verification.
- Letter-writers must live, work or have another connection to Press Publications coverage area.
- Letters are meant to express opinions. If letter-writers include facts, they must attribute those facts to a reputable source.
- Due to space limitations, letters that don't address local issues are not guaranteed publication.
- Repeat unpaid letters by the same writer about the same subject matter will not be published. Repeat paid endorsement letters will be published as space permits.
- Four weeks (or issues) must pass between publication of unpaid letters from the same writer. Exceptions may be made for rebuttal letters at the editor's discretion.
- Submissions containing libelous or derogatory statements will not be published.
- Letters by campaign managers or candidates designed to champion the candidate's position on a specific issue will be accepted as paid letters.
- Letters reprinted as part of letter-writing campaigns are paid letters.
- All letters are subject to editing.
- We reserve the right to not publish any letter.
- The deadline to submit a letter is 5 p.m. Wednesday the week prior to publication.
- The last batch of letters to be printed before the Nov. 3 election will be printed in the Oct. 29 issue and must be received by 5 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 21.
- To submit a letter, email news@presspubs.com or mail/deliver it to Press Publications.

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Carter C. Johnson - Publisher
cjohnson@presspubs.com
Gene Johnson - Publisher Emeritus
ppinfo@presspubs.com
Patty Steele - General Manager
marketing@presspubs.com
Shannon Granholm - Managing Editor
citizennews@presspubs.com

Mary Peterson - Production Manager/
Designer
artmanager@presspubs.com
art@presspubs.com
Paul Dols - Photo Journalist
photos@presspubs.com

Circulation
circ@presspubs.com
Obituaries
obits@presspubs.com
Classifieds
classified@presspubs.com
Call a Specialist
callaspecialist@presspubs.com

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OBITUARY

Donald Meyer

Of Hugo, Minnesota, passed away on June 21, 2026, at the age of 82. He was born on October 8, 1943, in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was preceded in death by his parents, Joe and Marge Meyer, and brother Bob.



Donald is survived by his wife of 57 years, Floreen; children Brett, Melanie (Chris) Steensland; grandchildren Natalie and Jack; and his brother Ron.

A memorial service will be held at 11 am on Saturday, July 25th, at New Life Lutheran Church in Hugo, Minnesota, with visitation prior, 10 - 11 am.

Wilson Tool founder recognized with Ken Wilson Way

Ken Wilson, founder of Wilson Tool International, will be recognized with a new honorary street sign designation, Ken Wilson Way, as he celebrates his 95th birthday on July 10.

The designation will appear beneath the existing Farnham Street sign near Wilson Tool, honoring Wilson's role in building a company that began in 1966 as a small Minnesota tool shop and has grown into a global manufacturer serving the sheet metal fabrication industry.

The recognition comes as Wilson Tool marks 60 years in business in 2026, while maintaining strong roots in the White Bear Lake and Hugo communities where the company set foundation in its early years.

For employees, neighbors and others familiar with the company, Ken Wilson Way is a modest but meaningful tribute to Wilson's lasting impact through the jobs created, opportunities supported



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Ken Wilson, founder of Wilson Tool International, celebrates the company's 60th anniversary with two of his daughters Dianne Carlson (left) and Shelley Renner.

and local manufacturing presence strengthened throughout nearly six decades.

For more information about Wilson Tool International, visit <https://wilsonstool.com/en-us>.



CORRECTION

In the June 25 issue of The Citizen, the article "Resident veterans honored during ceremony," one of the veterans should have been identified as Robert Holmstrom. We apologize for the error.

PUBLIC SAFETY BRIEFS

Vehicle fire claims victim in Forest Lake

The Forest Lake Fire Department was dispatched to a reported vehicle fire in the 100 block of 5th Street NW at 11:38 p.m. on Saturday, June 27.

Upon arrival, fire crews found a fully involved vehicle fire located in the driveway of a residence. During firefighting operations, one occupant was located inside the vehicle. Firefighters quickly extinguished the fire.

The incident is currently under investigation by the Minnesota State Fire Marshal's Office. The deceased was transported to the Ramsey County Medical Examiner's Office. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Assistance at the scene was provided by the Hugo Fire Department, Wyoming Fire Department and the Forest Lake Police Department.

The identity of the deceased is being withheld until family members have been notified. The Forest Lake Fire Department extends its deepest condolences to the family and friends affected by this tragic incident.

Engen makes 1st court appearance

Minnesota State Rep. Elliott Engen (District 36A), who was charged with fourth-degree DWI following a traffic stop

in White Bear Lake in March, made his first court appearance June 26.

Engen, 27, was charged with speeding and DWI - alcohol concentration 0.08 within two hours. (See "Minnesota State Rep. Elliott Engen arrested on suspicion of DUI," White Bear Press, March 27, 2026.)

Engen's pre-trial is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Aug. 28.

Hugo woman pleads guilty to threatening house speaker

Rachel Marie Welsch, 43, of Hugo, pleaded guilty to one count of threats of violence Monday, July 6 after threatening Minnesota House Speaker Lisa Demuth via voicemails.

According to court documents, starting in January, Welsch allegedly called Demuth and Rep. Patti Anderson almost daily leaving voicemails regarding several different political issues that were described as angry sounding and made vague indirect threats.

As part of the plea agreement, Welsch will receive five years of probation instead of prison time. However, she could still receive up to 90 days in jail. Her sentencing is scheduled for Sept. 10. Per the agreement, Welsch is not allowed to contact Demuth, who is a candidate for governor.

WEEKLY WAG



Kookie is a beautiful Great Pyrenees/Newfoundland mix with a big heart to match her big fluffy self. Kookie is one-and-a-half years old, and she weighs almost 80 pounds. Kookie is a friendly gentle giant, and she loves nothing more than to be with her people. She is an affectionate, sweet snuggle bug. She also enjoys going for walks and has a playful streak.

Kookie is house trained and crate trained, although the crate is her least favorite place. She would do best in a loving, forever home where someone is home most of the time. Kookie is also devoted and watchful. She is people oriented and protective of those she bonds with. Kookie will do best with an adopter who appreciates large, guardian-style dogs and can give her calm, consistent leadership. Kookie is in need of a home where she feels safe, loved and understood. She has so much love to give and she will make a wonderful companion.

If you are interested in learning more about Kookie or adopting her, please fill out an application at www.ruffstartrescue.org. Once your application is received, Ruff Start Rescue will contact you as soon as possible.

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POLICE REPORTS

The Washington County Sheriff's Office reported the following calls for service in Hugo:

Washington County Sheriff's Office deputies responded to a report of an assault at a local park in the 5000 block of French Drive N. at 3:46 p.m. May 17. Callers used 911 to report that a white Tesla filled with juvenile males had opened fire with Orbeez guns, attacking several small children. One juvenile male was identified and issued with a citation on scene. At 2:22 p.m. May 20 deputies met with management staff at Waters Edge Community Center about coming up with a plan to deal with juveniles using Orbeez guns on the property. After a discussion, management approved a plan.

- A business in the 14000 block of Forest Blvd. N. at 6:51 p.m. May 17 reported a shoplifter who stole \$140 worth of Kratom. Kratom is an evergreen tree, native to Asia. The glossy leaves are used as herbal medicine.
- Deputies accompanied the Hugo Fire Department at 10:31 p.m. May 17 to a private residence in the 13000 block of Europa Court N. that had been struck by lightning and was damaged. There was no immediate threat to the structure. At 6:36 a.m. the next morning, deputies were called out to a structure fire at another residence in the 13000 block of Europa Court N. that had also been struck by lightning overnight.
- An individual of undisclosed identity was arrested on warrant at a business in the 15000 block of Forest Blvd. N. at 8:40 a.m. May 18.
- Deputies took a call at 11:46 a.m. May 18 from Oneka Parkway N. and Heritage Parkway N. about e-bikes

not following traffic rules.

- A solicitor was reported operating in the 6000 block of 145th Circle N. at 1:48 p.m. May 18. Deputies received another solicitor complaint from the same block at 6:02 p.m. that same day.

Deputies received a complaint about juveniles using gel blasters in the 15000 block of Farnham Avenue N. at 7:13 p.m. May 18. They conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle involved in the activity and identified the occupants.

- Upset residents in the 14000 block of Victor Hugo Blvd. N. called the WCSO at 5:52 a.m. May 19 to complain about the street cleaner disturbing them. Upset residents near 157th Street N. and Granada Avenue N. phoned in at 6:15 a.m. that morning to complain about the noise. Deputies took both calls as information.
- Residents near Oneka Lake Blvd. N. and 157th Street N. at 6:50 a.m. May 19 joined the parade of callers complaining about noise from work vehicles in the early morning hours. Deputies contacted the company involved and advised them of the situation and the county noise ordinance.
- A motorist was cited for a moving violation as well as a non-moving violation in the 15000 block of Forest Blvd. N. at 10:06 a.m. May 19.
- A .22LR (Long Rifle) round was reported found in an exam room in the 14000 block of Victor Hugo Blvd. N. at 1:49 p.m. May 19. Deputies stopped by to pick up the round for disposal.
- Deputies took a call regarding a trailer in the 15000 block of Ingersoll Avenue at 3:34 p.m. May 19. They surmised that the trailer had been bought at auction, as the caller wanted to know the identity of the previous owner. Deputies advised the caller that law enforcement can divulge whether the trailer was stolen property, but not who it had belonged to previously.
- A motorist was arrested at 12:49 a.m. May 20 in the 12000 block of Fenway Avenue N. for registration and insurance violations. During an inventory search,

deputies found drugs.

- A motorist stopped for expired registration at 2:24 a.m. May 20 on 170th Street N. and Farnham Avenue N. was cited for that offense.
- A resident in the 4000 block of Ethan Trail N. at 7:34 p.m. May 20 reported a theft that occurred in Anoka County. Deputies gave the complainant the Anoka County non-emergency number to file the report.
- A motorist on Forest Blvd. N. and 177th Street N. was cited at 9:31 p.m. May 20 for speeding and failure to provide current proof of insurance after being pulled over for speeding. A second motorist was cited at 9:48 p.m. May 20 on 147th Street N. for making a right turn before stopping at the red light. A third motorist was cited for driving after revocation at 12:33 a.m. May 21 on 159th Street N. and Foxhill Avenue N., following an expired registration traffic stop on a vehicle of which he was not the owner.
- Deputies were dispatched out to the scene of a disturbance in the 15000 block of Glenbrook Avenue N. at 2:31 a.m. May 21. When they arrived on the scene and spoke to all of the arguing family members involved, they learned that the child was upset because her father had stolen her weed. Deputies advised everyone to separate for the evening. Washington County Sheriff's Office deputies were dispatched out to Lions Park in the 5000 block of Upper 146th Street at midnight May 24 on a report of juveniles shooting what appeared to be a BB gun at several kids by the skatepark.

Deputies were sent out to the 13000 block of Europa Court N. at 4:45 a.m. May 24 on a report of two suspicious people walking along the road. On contact, the parties advised deputies they'd been locked out but didn't need assistance as they were just planning to walk to the gas station.

- It was a busy overnight for deputies as they were called out again to the 13000 block of Europa Court at 6:24 a.m. May 24 on a report of an individual who appeared intoxicated and was complaining about a lost phone. Deputies arrived on scene, found the phone and transported the person home.
- A motorist was arrested following a traffic stop at 3:55 p.m. May 25 in the 5000 block of 147th Street N.
- Deputies issued a citation to a driver on Emmet Drive and Education Drives N. at 5:48 p.m. May 25 for failure to provide proof of insurance, following a traffic stop for failure to signal a turn.
- Property retrieval issues were reported at 7:18 p.m. May 25 in the 5000 block of Farnham Drive N., after the complainant requested deputies to stand by to mediate. The person at the retrieval site would allow only cats to be picked up and was aggressive toward deputies. Both parties were advised of what this civil matter entailed. Later that evening, at 7:59 p.m., the original complainant advised the WCSO that the original gate keeper was now allowing property to be retrieved, after deputies and the complainant had already left. Deputies advised the two parties they would need to handle the situation between themselves or in court.
- Deputies on patrol at 8:25 p.m. May 25 in the 5000 block of Upper 146th Street N. observed juveniles in the park with e-bikes. They advised the youths of park rules and prevailed upon them to leave.
- A motorist weaving back and forth over lanes in the 17000 block of Forest Blvd. N. at 11:16 p.m. May 25 was arrested for DWI.
- A resident in the 12000 block of Fondant Trail N. at 3:09 p.m. May 26 reported his neighbor for stealing his rain gutter. After a brief investigation, deputies concluded that neither the neighbors, nor anyone else for that matter, committed any kind of theft.
- A scooter was reported stolen at 6:36 p.m. May 26 from the 15000 block of Farnham Avenue N.
- When deputies arrived at a park in the 15000 block of Farnham Avenue at 8:29 p.m. May 26 to see about juveniles with gel blasters, they met the complainant who told them the youths in question did not have gel blasters but were playing

- basketball at the park. However, the youths did shoot at others on a separate occasion, the complainant said. As long as the committers of a previous crime were available, deputies gave them a talking to about the severity of the previous incident they must have thought they had gotten away with.
- Car wash employees in the 14000 block of Victor Hugo Blvd. N. at 5:47 p.m. May 27 reported their wash bay machine damaged after a vehicle with an attached trailer hitch rack entered the facility. When the rubber strands of the wash hit the trailer hitch rack, they became tangled up in the grates and pulled on the wash bay machine, damaging it. It is unknown whether this car wash had the usual plethora of signs warning of misadventure should vehicles enter the wash bay with equipment attached.
- Management of the Blue Heron in the 14000 block of Victor Hugo Blvd. N. at 5:24 p.m. May 28 reported an unruly patron who refused to listen to staff and asked deputies to issue a trespass notice. The subject was also reported to have urinated outside the business, an act caught on security camera as well as by the eyes of witnesses. Deputies mailed a citation to the subject and issued a trespass notice at the scene.
- Two juveniles were caught climbing to the roof of the elementary school in the 15000 block of Forest Blvd. N. at 8:02 p.m. May 29. Deputies detained them and released them to their mothers.
- A juvenile, 14, biking in the 14000 block of Forest Blvd. N. was stopped in his tracks by deputies on patrol at 3:54 a.m. May 30. The youth told deputies he was planning to bike from Hugo to Maplewood. It is unknown at what hour the would-be marathon biker started his journey, but he clearly didn't get far. With curfew laws violated by several hours, the biker was made to summon his brothers to pick him up.
- A motorist was arrested for undisclosed offenses at 9:26 a.m. May 30 in the 5000 block of 127th Street N. A second motorist was arrested that day at 10:10 p.m. in the 6000 block of 170th Street N. for offenses that were revealed. Following a traffic stop for exhaust and window tint violations, that motorist was arrested for DWI.

Loretta Harding

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ONEKA LAKE RESERVE: Housing project returns with revised plan

FROM PAGE 1

north to expand the size of this stormwater pond. City staff will continue working with the applicant on the detailed grading of the pond to minimize impacts to the neighbors that abut the property in the Sweet Grass Meadows neighborhood and Oneka Lake View North.

“We did have some comments from our engineers that we’re going to work with (the developer’s) engineer on addressing. It’s pretty minor stuff ... overall, they think that the plan should work,” Gort said.

Several neighboring residents expressed concerns about the ponding going into their backyard and losing their view of the woods. Gort explained that both the Sweet Grass Meadows and Oneka Lake View developments have various ponds located at the back of property lines, all within drainage and utility easements, to allow for their alteration or expansion in the future if necessary.

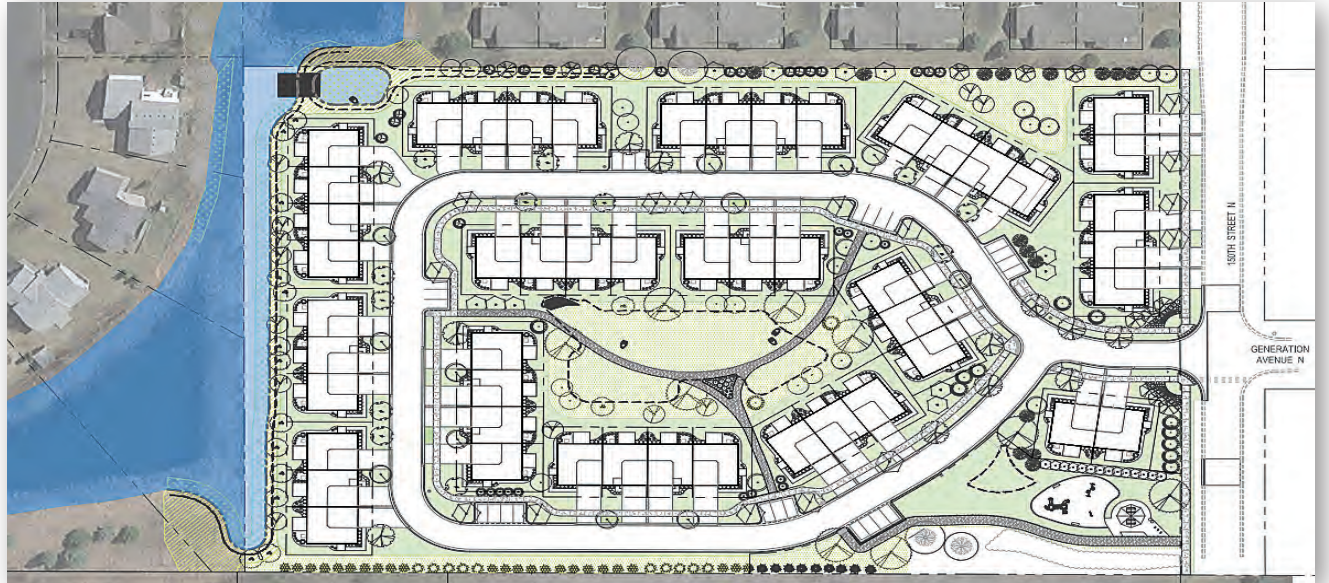
“It’s a little bit of a relic of how development was done 20, 25 years ago,” he said. “Nowadays we wouldn’t be extending individual property lines over those ponds. We would just create outlots for them, so that we don’t have situations where people feel like their land is being taken away from them when this was always supposed to happen in the first place.”

The developer noted that they plan to plant a line of trees along the property line to maintain a buffer from the new development and existing developments.

Neighbors also expressed concerns relating to traffic, mainly along Generation Avenue. Gort explained that when Generation Avenue was built all those years ago, it was designed to accommodate this kind of density. “Goodview (Avenue) a little further east is a wider road because it’s meant to be the collector that actually takes traffic from not only that neighborhood, but everybody to the north down to Oneka Lake Boulevard,” Gort explained.

The only area the developer is requesting flexibility on is from the standards on the required setback between buildings. The project proposes 20 feet in between buildings, where 30 feet is required. “I think that 20 feet between buildings is something people are pretty accustomed to in the city,” Gort said.

DRW Property Investments, LLC, and Lennar, are



CONTRIBUTED

A key difference between the 2021 and the 2026 proposal is the location of the stormwater pond. The previous project had a large pond located in the center of the property; the new proposal calls for combining two stormwater ponds on the north end of the property into one larger pond. The new plan also calls for 10 additional townhome units.

proposing to utilize LP siding on all four sides of the building. The Planning Commission directed city staff to continue to work with the development team to refine the proposal to better meet the city’s standard of “four-sided design” as well as the multi-family design guidelines.

Gort added that the application is “generally consistent” with the standards and requirements, and recommended approval of the preliminary plat and PUD to the Planning Commission, provided the developer meets a list of 14 conditions.

One of the conditions, is that the developer complies with all the items laid out in the earlier mentioned memo from the city engineer, including that the developer continues to work with city staff on the detailed grading of the pond to minimize impacts to the neighbors. The memo also states that the developer needs to remain in contact with the property owners to the

north and east of the development during construction of the pond.

Another condition is that the developer installs a crosswalk from the sidewalk on the west side of Generation Avenue, north to the public park.

Ultimately, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the preliminary plat and PUD to the City Council. The item was on the council’s agenda for approval July 6, after press deadline.

If approved, Gort says there are several things that will have to be completed prior to receiving their building permits and final approval, including a development agreement.

Managing Editor Shannon Granholm can be reached at 651-407-1227 or citizennews@presspubs.com.

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Celebrate the present with a blast from the past at Fetes de Lacs

BY EMMA MASSO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Since 1991, the city of Centerville and the Centerville Lions Club have hosted Fetes de Lacs celebrations.

This year, Centerville's 35th annual Fetes de Lacs will take place over six days, from July 14-19, with a "Back to the '80s" theme. Community favorite events will be returning, as well as new and bigger celebrations according to Mel Lawlis, the Lions Club outgoing president.

The festival will kick off on Tuesday, July 14 in Hidden

Spring Park with Music in the Park. Wednesday will be a family-oriented safety night where kids can check out the fire department's firetrucks and watch the Life Link helicopter land. Thursday will be the kick-off for Main Street Market and the Bald Eagle Water Ski Show. Friday will feature a kid-friendly DJ show, junior cornhole tournament and 18+ bingo event with fireworks at night. Saturday holds many events including the "Back to the '80s" parade, fun run, cornhole tournament and car show. Lastly, the canoe/kayak/pad-

dle board race marks the end of the festival on Sunday.

"The parade is really big, and it is probably the biggest part," says Lawlis. "I think the Lions also work really hard for Saturday, for everybody to kind of come up and just enjoy the day and hang out with their family and friends up there."

The "Back to the '80s" parade will take place on Main Street, with participants from around the community volunteering to help put it together. The theme was chosen based on the fun the Lions Club thought the community would have with dressing up and listening to

80s music, says Lawlis.

The Lions Club focuses on having activities for people of all ages, but they pay special attention to ensure the celebration includes events for children that are in a fun, but relaxed environment.

"It's family oriented, it's really built around families," says Lawlis. "We try to get activities that the families will enjoy doing together. We try to make sure there is something for everyone."

Lawlis says that the more volunteers there are, the bigger the events can be. They accept volunteers of any age, and you

can get involved by going on their website at centervillelions.com or message them on Facebook.

"I want people to know they do really live in a great community, and that the Lions enjoy giving back to the people that support us all year," says Lawlis. "So, I think that's really what I would like them to get out of it, that they live in a small community and this is for them to get out and get together with their neighbors and just enjoy themselves."

Logo Contest winners revealed

The Fete Des Lacs Committee has announced the winners for the 2026 Fete des Lacs 5/8K Fun Run & Paddle des Lacs Logo Contest.

At Centerville Elementary, Addy Droessler won first place, Graham Saffert won second place and Kendall Morris received honorable mention.

At Centennial Middle School, Meilynna Li won first place, Harper Haack won second place and Fatumo Yusuf received honorable mention.

First place winners at both schools received a prize of \$100;



second place winners received \$50 and honorable mentions received \$25. The two first-place winners will have their logos on the 5/8K Fun Run & Paddle des Lacs T-Shirts and runner bibs.

The annual 5/8K Fun Run/Walk is scheduled for 7:30 a.m. Saturday, July 18, at Laurie LaMotte Memorial Park. Paddle des Lacs is scheduled for 11 a.m. Sunday, July 19, on Centerville Lake. Participants should meet at Trailside Park.

Parade honor caps police chief's law enforcement career

BY SHANNON GRANHOLM
MANAGING EDITOR

Even though he retired at the end of June, outgoing Centennial Lakes Police



Jim Mork

CONTRIBUTED

Chief Jim Mork couldn't ride off into the sunset without a proper sendoff first. Mork has been selected as this year's Fête des Lacs Grand Marshal.

"Chief Jim Mork has demonstrated unwavering dedication to our community throughout his career, always going above and beyond to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents. His leadership and integrity made him an obvious choice for this year's grand marshal," said Katie Hogan, marketing coordinator for

the Centerville Lions.

Mork, born in Tokyo, Japan, worked in law enforcement for nearly three decades. He started out his career with the Fridley Police Department in 1997 and held the positions of problem response team officer, detective, patrol sergeant and investigations division lieutenant.

In 2020, he was hired as police chief of the Centennial Lakes Police Department (CLPD) after Police Chief James Coan retired.

He earned his bachelor's degree in history from Bethel College and a master's degree in police leadership, administration and education from the University of St. Thomas.

"We wanted to honor Chief Mork's time of service and his positive impact here on the CLPD. His retirement marks the end of an era, and the parade committee / Centerville Lions Club felt it was important to recognize his outstanding commitment and contributions in a special way," Hogan said.

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North Star Rodeo highlights skills of frontline workers

Xcel Energy hosted its second annual North Star Rodeo at the company's Hugo Training Center in Hugo, Minnesota on Friday, June 12. The competition provided a close-up view of how line workers and natural gas workers make critical equipment repairs and respond to power outages and emergencies to ensure the delivery of safe, reliable energy.

Hundreds of Xcel Energy employees and their family members gathered at the rodeo to cheer on the nearly 100 Xcel Energy line workers and natural gas workers from Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Colorado and Texas who tested their skills through a series of simulated, life-like scenarios.

"Our line workers are dedicated to ensuring our communities are powered with safe, reliable electricity for all of life's moments," said Todd Conner, senior vice president, Distribution at Xcel Energy. "These men and women work around the clock responding to power outages after severe weather events, often in unfavorable conditions, and are an essential part of our workforce as we build the grid of the future."

"Our natural gas technicians maintain a vast network of underground natural gas lines that enable essential heating and appliances for homes and businesses," said Laura Boisvert, senior vice president, Gas at Xcel Energy. "We're proud to offer our technicians a chance to build camaraderie alongside our line workers. Rodeos give our employees the ability to show off their skills to their families and earn recognition through friendly competition."

From rescuing a 'hurt man' (dummy) from the top of a power pole in a timely manner, to connecting a natural gas line from a street to a home, these crews demonstrated how their daily actions help ensure safe and reliable service for the communities in which they live and work.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

The North Star Rodeo, an annual competition, honors the essential work of Ecel Energy line workers and natural gas workers

First-place teams will compete in the National Gas Rodeo in Cincinnati, Ohio in September and the International Lineman's Rodeo in Overland Park, Kansas in October.

Electric team standings:

- 1st Place: Joe Snyder, Dustin Hess, Chayse Nash (St. Paul)
- 2nd Place: Bryce Koval, Dylan Vitense, Terry Schloer (Eau Claire, Wisconsin)
- 3rd Place: Andrew Uthoff, Cory Hestekin, Riley Cade (LaCrosse, Wisconsin)

Natural Gas Team Standings:

- Four-to-five person teams
- 1st Place: John Wagner (White Bear Lake), Sam Novitsky (White Bear Lake), Trevor Nowack (White Bear Lake), Carter Engebretson (St. Paul)



- 2nd Place: Nathan Perry (Newport, Minnesota), Logan Reindahl (White Bear Lake), Jose Flores-Querido (Newport), Bodee Oneil (Newport), Alex Holt (St. Paul)
- 3rd Place: Josh Wethammer, Joe Sontoya, Marcus Cherry, Joe Todora, Joe Famoso (St. Paul)

Two-person teams

- 1st Place: Connor Brantner, Luke Zeilinger (Menomonie, Wisconsin)
- 2nd Place: Tony Ortiz, Damen Feiertag (Hudson, Wisconsin)
- 3rd Place: Sam Hedegaard, Izak Gruber (Hudson)

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80105

Memories inspire Marketfest poster winner's artwork

BY MADELINE DOLBY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Sophie Johnson, 10, can't remember a time she didn't like art. Sophie, who is also a fifth grader at North Star Elementary in Hugo, is this year's Marketfest poster winner.

Sophie's poster showcases the pavilion in downtown White Bear Lake with a bear standing on the top step.

"I've always loved that spot (the pavilion). We've been there a few times with our family in the past few years. Honestly, memories were my inspiration," Sophie said.

The image was created out of watercolor. Sophie, who typically doesn't paint with watercolor, explained if she would've used normal paint she didn't know if she'd be able to get the correct color or if it would look as good. She used watercolor to make the image "pop."



Sophie Johnson

This is the first year Sophie has entered an art competition of any kind. She said the reason she entered the poster contest was because she wanted to get her artwork out in the community.

"I've always wanted people more

than my family to know about my art," Sophie explained. "Before it was just my grandparents, my parents and my brothers (who knew). Everyone who goes to downtown White Bear will see it (her artwork) and know about it."

Sophie's mom Grace Johnson said the family was notified through an email that Sophie had won the competition.

"I got teary eyed and I was like 'Oh, she won!'" Grace explained. "We thought she had a chance, and she is really good at art."

Sophie said it was a big shock when she found out she'd won the contest. "My dad told me...I was really excited. I was jumping up and down."

Outside of art, Sophie likes to bake, is on the swim team and dances. Next year, she said she wants to participate in track, volleyball and swimming.

As the winner of the contest, Sophie will receive \$100 along with a poster and T-shirt featuring her design.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

A closer look at Sophie's winning artwork. She said she got inspiration for her poster design from memories.

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Local athletes on Kokoro's 14-2 team recently traveled to Orlando, Florida compete in the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) National volleyball tournament. The team was undefeated at 11-0 into the semifinals and brought the Number-one team to a third set but ultimately lost, capturing fifth in the nation amongst 96 teams.



Makenna Korus

Local players include: Makenna Korus, of Hugo, Scarlett Milles, of Hugo, Norah Berg, of Centerville, and Abby Nyquist of Mahtomedi. Other players hail from Stillwater, Hudson, River Falls and Cottage Grove.

Korus was selected as one of the All American Athletes of the tournament.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Local volleyball players capture fifth place in the nation amongst 96 teams at the Amateur Athletic Union National volleyball tournament in Orlando, Florida.

CATCH OF THE WEEK



CONTRIBUTED

Nora Felber, of Hugo, hauled in two big ones 15 minutes apart. She caught a 16 pound, 40 inch northern pike and a 14 pound, 37 inch northern pike from a canoe in Quetico Provincial Park in mid-June. She is pictured with her father, Adam Felber.

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Bald Eagle Yacht Club sails against exclusivity

BY LOGAN GION
STAFF WRITER



The Bald Eagle Yacht Club (BEYC) races Hobie 16-foot catamarans during its annual regatta. The regatta has run every year since 1972. BEYC has existed since 1899.

LOGAN GION | PRESS PUBLICATIONS

For many, the term “yacht club” bubbles up images of old money, gatekeeping and snobbery. The Bald Eagle Yacht Club, however, takes a different approach: Their membership costs about as much as an electric toothbrush and there is no official clubhouse.

“We’re a social club with a sailing problem,” joked Ted Jagger, Bald Eagle Yacht Club chair. Ted has been a member of BEYC for more than 40 years. While he and his wife, Annette Jagger, sail five-to-six times a week on multiple classes of boats, BEYC’s summer regatta mainly focuses on Hobie 16-foot and Hobie Wave catamarans.

“Fleet 52 is one of the oldest Hobie fleets in the country,” said Annette. Ted added that the club’s summer regattas—whose winners receive points for the Hobie Class Association of North America (HCANA) racing season—have been going on since 1972. BEYC itself has been around since 1899.

One of the reasons the Hobie regatta has continued for more than half a century, longtime club member Kevin Chase explained, is that the Hobie 16’s design has remained consistent during that time.

“My boat’s 31 years old,” Chase said, “and if you put that side-by-side with (my neighbor’s boat), which is two years old, you’d be hard-pressed to see much of a difference in the boats.”

Annette stated that one can find a used Hobie 16 for a reasonable price. Indeed, looking online, they run about half of a month’s rent, with minimal upkeep expenses. Ted added that the Hobie 16’s design does not leave room for many modifications. Chase explained that fewer modification options keep spending down.

“It’s all about one design,” Chase said. “Because as soon as you start getting

into the formulas ... it becomes a check-book kind of thing. Who’s got enough money to keep it competitive?”

One does not even need to own a boat to join BEYC, as plenty of veteran members are happy to have novices on their crews, during practice runs at first, then during official races. Families who join may also enroll their children in the club’s annual sailing school.

Members can also be as casual or com-

petitive as they want. Ted, for instance, was ranked fifth in the nation in the late 1980s. Both he and Annette will compete at the HCANA World Championship in September, held in Mississippi.

“We are so old, we get to be in the—not just Masters, not just Grandmasters—but Great Grandmasters Class,” Annette chuckled. The club’s attitude towards competition, however, keeps the social aspect in mind.

“Be competitors, but be better friends,” stated Ted.

“It’s fun to be in the pack,” Annette added. “If you win by a leg, then it’s boring.”

Chase agreed, “We have this thing in common, this love of sailing. You like to see friends do well with things, so you help each other out.”

In a time when hobbies are expensive and socializing is digital, BEYC presents a reasonable, analog alternative. A clubhouse does not tie BEYC together. Members are instead moored by community and shared enthusiasm.

“The fun part about it is that it’s fun,” Annette said before bursting out laughing.

The Bald Eagle Yacht Club races Hobie boats every Saturday and Sunday throughout the summer and into fall. For information on how to join BEYC, contact Kevin Chase at kcchase@comcast.net.

Hugo resident wins Scholarship Shoot-off at national archery tournament

Brecken Lee, a sophomore at Lakes International Language Academy, is receiving a \$5,000 prize for her performance at the National Archery in the Schools Championship Tournament. The national event is held every year in Daytona, Florida.

In April, Lee placed first in the NASP Western Nationals after scoring a personal-best 296/300 in Bullseye. Consequently, NASP invited Lee to compete in the Scholarship Shoot-off. In the shoot-off, the top-five scorers from Western and Eastern Nationals compete for the most outstanding performance. Lee won the top prize.



CONTRIBUTED

Brecken Lee poses with her first-place award, earned at the NASP Championship Tournament Scholarship Shoot-off in Daytona, Florida.

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Hugo native releases first novel inspired by friendship and mischief

For many people, writing a book remains a lifelong dream. For White Bear Lake High School graduate and Hugo native Ben Widmyer that dream became reality with the publication of his debut novel, "The Knock That Never Ends."

The suspense novel follows four friends whose seemingly harmless game of ding-dong ditch sets off a chain of events that continues to affect their lives a decade later. Inspired by childhood memories, strong friendships and a love of storytelling, Widmyer completed the book after losing his job in 2025. He recently spoke with the Press about the inspiration behind the book, the writing process and what he hopes readers take away from the story.

Q. Tell us a little bit about yourself.

A. I'm married to Kelli Widmyer (2009 White Bear grad) with two kids: Raelynn is 8 and Paxton is 4. I grew up in Hugo and graduated from White Bear High School in 2008. I am a senior accountant for Crenlo Engineered Cabs.

Q. What inspired you to write "The Knock That Never Ends?"

A. I've always dreamed of writing a book or a movie, but I never thought I'd get one published. It started as something to do when work got a little slow but when I was laid off from my job at GAF (Roofing) in October 2025, in between looking for a new job, I decided to finish it and eventually look into getting it published.

My wife and I see a lot of movies, so I've seen a lot of movies that have come out that have been based

on a book. I say this half-jokingly, but before I started writing this book, I asked myself, "If I were to ever write a book that might turn into a movie, what would it be about?"

I played my fair share of ding dong ditch while I was in high school and occasionally you had those houses where the people reacted quite a bit differently. This just evolved on that concept.

Q. Can you give readers a brief overview of the story without revealing any major spoilers?

A. The book starts out with four friends who are just looking for something to do on a Friday night. They decide to play a game of ding dong ditch, but it ends up spiraling into something bigger. Ten years pass and they all get pulled back into the drama.

Q. How did the title come to you, and what does it symbolize?

A. I don't want to give away the story, but you are probably wondering why a book about playing ding dong ditch, which usually requires ringing the doorbell and running away, is called "The Knock That Never Ends" but it is explained during the story. It symbolizes how one seemingly innocent game turns into something much bigger and follows them well into adulthood.

Q. What themes did you most want readers to take away from the book?

A. The best way I can describe the theme would be "True friendship can overcome betrayal." You'll find throughout the book that the four friends stick together no matter what, even when someone they thought they could trust betrays them.

Q. Was there a particular scene that was especially challenging or rewarding to write?

A. Definitely the scenes where the group of friends bicker back and forth. The characters are based off my two best friends, Matt and Jesse, whom I've known for over 25 years and my brother Zach, whom I've known forever. We've all spent a lot of time together so writing those scenes and using real life examples were a lot of fun.

Q. How long did it take you to write the book from first idea to publication?

A. I started working on it back in May 2025. It really started as something fun to do in my free time but as I continued with it, I got more and more drawn into the story. It really got to the point where I wasn't sure

if it would ever be published, but I owed it to myself to finish it. I submitted it to the publisher in March of this year and now it's available.

Q. What conversations do you hope the book sparks among readers?

A. I hope for older readers that it takes them back to a time when they did something stupid with their friends. Writing this book brought back a lot of memories that I hadn't thought about in years. Also, how strong the bond of friendship can be. I mentioned earlier that I've been friends with these guys for almost my entire life and they've been there for me in a lot of good and bad times, and I think you'll really see that demonstrated throughout the book.

Q. What advice would you give aspiring writers who are working on their first book?

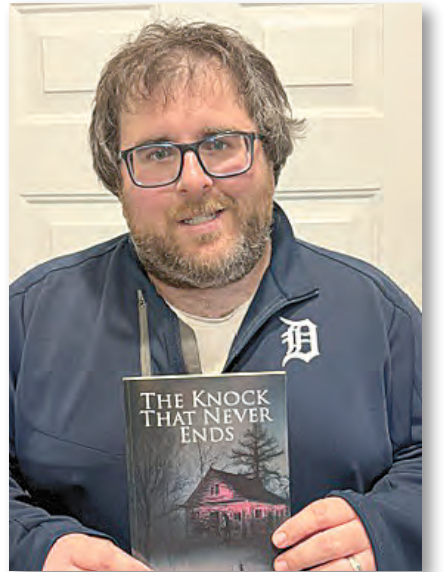
A. Stick with it. It is a process that takes a long time but seeing your ideas published for the whole world to read is so rewarding.

Q. Where can readers find your book?

A. It is currently on Amazon and Barnesandnoble.com. I'm hoping to get copies in some physical book stores in the near future.

Q. Do you have any plans to write another book in the future?

A. Without giving anything away, I will say I do feel like I left this book in a prime spot for a sequel. One that I have been actively working on. Stay tuned!



CONTRIBUTED

Hugo native Ben Widmyer has published his first book, "The Knock That Never Ends," and he is actively working on the sequel.

Compiled by Shannon Granholm

PUBLIC NOTICE

**CITY OF HUGO
BOARD OF ZONING
PUBLIC HEARING**

The Hugo Board of Zoning Appeals and Adjustments will hold a public hearing on Thursday, July 23, 2026 at Hugo City Hall at 6:30 p.m. to consider a variance request from John and Dianne Rawson, 12686 Ingersoll Avenue North, Hugo, MN 55038. The request is to allow for the construction of an enclosed porch over the footprint of an existing deck approximately 50 feet from the ordinary high water level (OHWL) of Sunset Lake, where a setback of 100 feet is required by ordinance. The subject property is generally located north of 122nd Street North and west of Ingersoll Avenue North, and is legally described as Lots 18, 19, 20 and 21, Block 2, Sunset Park, Washington County, Minnesota. Full legal description is available at City Hall.

Anyone wishing to comment on the request can be heard at this time. Please call Max Gort, Associate Planner at 651-762-6311 if you have any questions or comments on the application and would like to participate in the meeting.

Max Gort, Associate Planner

Published one time in The Citizen on July 9, 2026.

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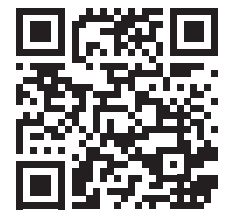
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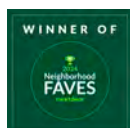
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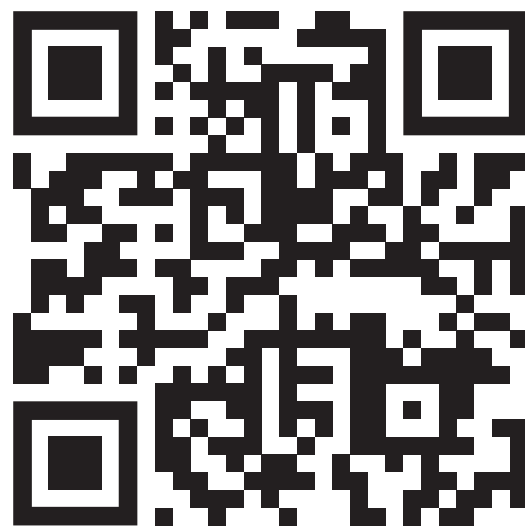
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