

Only in Minnesota: a weekly feature in the Eagle

Duluth's beloved Bentleyville Tour of Lights will be returning to Minnesota

The year 2020 will definitely go down in the books as one of the worst in many people's lives. It's been a difficult year for everyone, especially those who have been directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It's impossible to get the year back, but it is possible to shine just a little brightness on what remains of 2020. One way to do that is by visiting this year's Bentleyville. Despite the state of the world, this beloved event is coming back to Minnesota for the 2020 holiday season.

Bentleyville is a popular annual Christmas celebration held in Duluth, Minnesota. It is made up of millions of colorful lights. For years, this has been one of the most popular Christmas displays in Minnesota. People from around the state travel and beyond travel to Duluth to see the lights in person. The event has traditionally been open only to pedestrians. But in 2020, the event is set up as

a drive-thru lights display!

This year, in order to keep the event safe in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, organizers have created a display that can be enjoyed from the comfort of your car. So load up your family and head to Duluth! The event is only open to vehicles that are under 8 feet tall and less than 20 feet long. Masks are not required, as you'll be in your personal vehicle. But attendees are required to stay in their vehicle for the entire duration. This is a great way to see holiday lights in a whole new way! As usual, unique displays will depict favorite animals, holiday characters, pieces of Minnesota culture, and more.

The event lasts from November 21 to December 27. It will cost \$10 per vehicle - paid at the gate - to drive through the event. Being one of Minnesota's best holiday traditions, we think it's well worth it. (Address: 704 W Railroad St, Duluth, MN 55802)

Word of the Week
...enhancing vocabularies
one Grygla Eagle at a time.

Desideratum

\Dih-sid-uh-rey-tuhm\

Noun
Something wanted or needed.

SIMPLY DELICIOUS

By Kari Sundberg, Eagle Editor

Nutella Baked French Toast Casserole

This baked French toast casserole with Nutella is a super easy and delicious dish. It's a 5-ingredient make-ahead breakfast that everyone will love, young and old.

- Ingredients*
- 8 slices bread
 - 4 eggs
 - 1 ¼ cups milk
 - 1 tbsp. vanilla
 - 1 cup Nutella
- Butter for greasing the baking dish

Instructions

Butter an 11 x 7 inch baking dish. (see note below regarding pan sizes). In a medium bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk and vanilla until well combined. Set aside.

Spread Nutella on each of 8 slices of bread. Roll each bread slice into a cigar shape with the Nutella filling on the inside. Dip each bread roll into the egg mixture and place it in the buttered baking dish, seam side down. Continue with the remaining bread rolls, placing them side-by-side in the baking dish, enchilada-style. Pour the remaining custard over the top of the bread.

Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight, until the custard has been absorbed by the bread.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Transfer to the pre-

heated oven for 30-35 minutes until the top of the casserole is golden brown.

Shake some powdered sugar over the top, and drizzle with a little melted Nutella if you wish. Serve with sliced strawberries and maple syrup, if desired.

Notes

An 11 x 7 inch baking dish or pan is really the perfect size and shape for this dish, but if you don't have one, don't let that stop you! Any size will do, like 9 x 9 inch for instance, though you may need to cut a roll or two in half to fit the shape. If you want to use a larger pan, like a 9 x 13 inch, just increase the custard ingredients accordingly. This recipe is pretty forgiving, so don't worry about precise proportions too much.



Goodridge School adds a new parking lot on site

Submitted by Tom Loberg, Goodridge School Superintendent

We recently added a new parking lot space by acquiring the property east of the Goodridge School. It had been the goal of the district to purchase the house and lot east of the school and to turn it into a parking lot for many years.

The property was already sandwiched in between 2 district owned properties, a staff parking lot to the north and a student parking lot to the south.

Purchasing the property just made sense. School board chairman John Lovly had worked on purchasing the property for many years.

In late August, we received word that the property was going to be up for sale through the Estate of Irvin C Hamm. Goodridge Public School purchased the property in September and Tim Hruby and Rodney Hoffman began demolition and removal of the house in late October. Thanks to some nice November weather gravel was hauled in and Tim and Rodney were able to finish leveling it to grade. The end result looked great and was a major improvement to the overall appearance of our building and grounds. The parking lot will be a major asset to the district in the future to help us safely and conveniently accommodate many vehicles at elementary programs, concerts, sporting events, and graduation ceremonies.



Deer season opener brings luck to hunters



Deer season is here with opening weekend bringing some “buck luck” to quite a few hunters. Sisters Ashlyn and Jessika had a great opening morning hunt in Espelie Township! Their bucks went down almost back-to-back; when one was found, the other was taken down! Photo courtesy of Ashlyn Henrickson



Samantha Sjustestad got her first deer ever – this 9-pointer taken down on Saturday, November 7th. Photo courtesy of Sami Sjustestad



Erik Jensen got his trophy buck last Saturday morning near Highlanding at about 100 yards from his stand. Photo courtesy of Erik Jensen



Stephanie (Klamar) Buchner shot this 11-point buck at her family's cabin NW of Middle River last Saturday morning. Photo courtesy of Stephanie Buchner



Evan Rubischko shot this 10-point buck opening morning up by Ditch 20! Photo courtesy of Pam Rubischko

THANK YOU ★ VETERANS ★

Happy Veterans Day to all the men and women who served and continue to serve this country. We thank you for your service and protection.



Action shots from above! You can see on the far right, how the refueling process works in the air.

Lt. Col. Verbout... Continued from front

Training. At that point, he was able to choose the RC-135 Intelligence platform, which does measurements and signals intelligence, to name a few. With this, would come a move to Fairchild, Washington, where Jeremy would go through survival, POW and resistance training. “They teach you how to survive in the woods, how to get through “prisoner of war” training and how to resist interrogations and things like that,” he shared. “They try to break you and look at your loyalty to the government as if it was a real situation where if you went down as a navigator behind enemy lines, how would you save your life, resist the enemy and not give up classified information.”

This true-to-life training, which included being put in a 55 gallon drum for a long period of time, prepared him for his next move to Offutt AFB in Nebraska where he would spend the next three years as a Navigator on the RC-135 Cobra Ball, which was one of the airplanes used for signals intelligence. He was also a civilian flight instructor at the Offutt Aero Club, teaching other Air Force members and civilians how to fly. Jeremy also got his Master’s Degree in Aero Space Operations and Human Factors while at Offutt, which is also where he met his now wife Stephanie, who was originally from Anoka, MN.

While in Nebraska, Jeremy got picked up for pilot training due to how many hours he had flown and his experience. The selective Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training brought him to Sheppard AFB, Texas, for about a year, where the primary focus was learning how to become a fighter pilot. Jeremy flew the T-37 Tweet and T-38 Talon, both of which are jet trainers where he flew with NATO partners as the class leader for the Americans, the Germans, Dutch, Danish and Norwegians. No missions at this point, but just figuring out how to fly military fighter-type aircraft. At this point, Jeremy could pick a fighter, bomber or a trainer; he was lucky enough to get his first choice, which was an F-15E Strike Eagle. At this point, the Verbouts were married with their first child, living off base. After more than a year there, the family then moved to Seymour Johnson AFB in North Carolina, where another 10 months of training took place to learn about the missions, the weapons, the capabilities of the airplane, how to operate as a formation and a unit, and how to work with your other entities.

As the trend would continue, the family would be moving again. This time overseas to RAF Lakenheath, England, where according to Jeremy’s official biography, it states: Director of Staff, F-15E Fight

Lead, 494th Fighter Squadron, from April 2007-July 2010. At this point, Jeremy was flying (and leading) the Strike Eagle operationally, and was on call, doing missions. Two trips to Afghanistan took place in 2007 and again in 2010 that were four months long each, where he was deployed to Bagram Air Base to offer support to the men and women on the ground, and to the establishment of the country. Jeremy also went to Romania, Sweden, Spain and a couple trips to the United States. “A lot of deployments and a lot of flying. I could talk for days just about my time out of Lakenheath,” he shared.

While in England, Jeremy and Stephanie’s second child, Troy, was born. You can gather how many times the family was making their way around the globe. Jeremy explained that he was gone a lot and it was starting to take a toll on his family life. After accomplishing his goal of flying fighter planes, an opportunity presented itself when the U-2 program reached out to him. Soon after, he was hired and a part of that elite U-2 community based out of Beale AFB, California.

The U-2, nicknamed “Dragon Lady” is a high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft operated by only a select few. This is truly an elite club in which Jeremy was a part of, flying operationally for about 12 months. He flew out of Osan Air Base in South Korea and United Arab Emirates Al Dhafra, supporting combat operations. While in the middle east, Jeremy was supporting troops on the ground with signals intelligence and imagery intelligence, etc. While in South Korea, he was doing what’s called SRO – Sensitive Reconnaissance Operations, which are generally directed by the United States Secretary of Defense.

It was this experience within U-2 program that brought Jeremy even further in his career – to the Pentagon. His biography says it best: August 2012-July 2015, U-2 Program Element Monitor, Headquarters Air Force, Pentagon, Virginia.

If you want to see a long list of incredible accomplishments, take a look at that professional biography, which includes another position at the Pentagon in 2018/2019 as Chief, Joint Readiness Division, Headquarters Air Force, Pentagon, Washington D.C.

With many moves, titles and assignments under his belt, the Verbouts made another move overseas in 2016 to Cyprus where Jeremy was Commander, 1st Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron.

While there, Jeremy commanded 138 people, a number of airplanes and a 45 million dollar operation, all the while flying 17,000 hours over two years and negotiating/sign-

ing the first ever international agreement. This was the best experience out of his entire 20 years, according to him. After Cyprus, Jeremy went back to the Pentagon for a year doing Air Force readiness and working with leaders in preparation for another war. He was also hired to go work at DARPA in the DC area where he was a deputy program manager for experimentation, working classified programs for the Department of Defense.

It was all of this (and MUCH more) that brought him up to 20 years of service. Lt. Col. Jeremy “SEAL” Verbout (SEAL is his call sign. All fighter pilots earn one, usually by doing something stupid. SEAL stands for “shoots early, aborts late”) decided it was time to move home and retire from the United States Air Force, which was effective November 1st, 2020. With the option to go to another commander position and be promoted, Jeremy decided to pursue retirement. “We would have had to move again and I’d know exactly what my career would look like,” he explained. With moving about every 1.5 years thus far, the Verbouts wanted to call Minnesota home.

Jeremy and Stephanie have three kids. Erika is 14, Troy is 11 and Samantha is 8. With years of living all over the globe, the family has settled down in the White Bear Lake area and are all feeling thrilled to be back home in Minnesota, closer to family!

Jeremy has visions that include starting his own companies and a potential run for political office – national or executives within the state of Minnesota. He says, “I’m interested in helping Minnesota. I love the population here. This state has hard-working, honest and good people. I came back to help the state and represent those people amongst so much divisiveness and a lack of honor and respect.” When asked to provide advice for dreamers like his younger self, he stated, “People give up on their dreams entirely too early. Come up with logical steps to get there. We live in the freest, most prosperous country in the world – we have limitless opportunities. Nothing holds people back but their personal mind set.”

Let’s take a look at some of the items on Jeremy’s professional biography.

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters

Air Medal with five oak leaf clusters

Aerial Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster

Air Force Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster

Air Force Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster

Afghanistan Campaign

Medal
Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal

Global War on Terrorism Service Medal

Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal

Also included on bio:

Lt. Col. Jeremy D. Verbout retired from the United States Air Force as the Deputy Program Manager for Experimentation at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Adaptive Capabilities Office, Alexandria Virginia. He supported DAPRA’s Assault Breaker II program development of an all-domain, multi-level security, constructive, virtual and live joint experimentation environment within the Vanguard Force DevOps Environment in San Diego, California. Additionally, he was the Joint All-Domain Command and Control liaison to the Department of Defense coordinating Assault Breaker II programs efforts and technologies with Joint partners.

Colonel Verbout entered Air Force as a graduate of the University of North Dakota and is a graduate of Undergraduate Navigator Training and Undergraduate Pilot Training. He served as a Training Officer, Tactics Officer, Chief of Mobility, Deputy Chief Wing Inspections, Squadron Director of Staff, U-2 Program Element Monitor, and Squadron Director of Operations. He completed his Commander assignment at the 1st Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron (aka Project Olive Harvest), Royal Air Force (RAF) Akrotiri, Cyprus. Prior to his position at DARPA, Colonel Verbout served as the Chief, Joint Readiness Division, Director of Training and Readiness, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Headquarters Air Force, Pentagon.

Colonel Verbout is a Navigator and Senior Pilot with more than 3,100 flight hours and 830 combat hours in the T-43, RC-135U/S/W, T-37, T-38A/C, F-15E, and U-2S. He has flown combat missions in Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and Inherent Resolve and Secretary of Defense directed Sensitive Reconnaissance Operations mission globally.

The following is part of what Melissa Gould, Jeremy’s sister, shared in honor of his recent retirement:

“Jeremy has always been an excellent example of a true patriot. He has immense respect and love for God, country, and human rights and dignity. Whenever you ask Jeremy about how he feels about our country, military, and service men and women you can see pride and emotion in his eyes immediately.”

Thank you for your service to our country, Jeremy, and Happy Veterans Day.



This is an older picture of Jeremy, Stephanie, their children and Jeremy’s mom, Sherry Verbout, all pictured in front of one of the most famous spy planes ever built, the U-2, which Jeremy operated out of Beale AFB.



Taken from the program at his retirement ceremony, you can see how decorated Lt. Col. Jeremy “SEAL” Verbout truly is!