Wednesday, January 3, 2024

Tri County Canary

A supplement of the:
• Leader-Record • McIntosh Times • Grygla Eagle
• Red Lake County Herald (Oklee, Plummer - Brooks - Red Lake Falls)

Taxi in Santa Clara. Walking and horses remain a common form of transportation.

Natalie in Santiago Cuba near the sea.

Cuba Revisited by Gary Boorman

Editors Note: Gary is a 1960 graduate of Clearbrook High School. He went on to get a degree at the University of Minnesota. He was a Pathologist with the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS/NIH) 1978 - 2007 for 29 years; Covance Graphic pathologist at Covance for 2007 - 2011 4 years in Chantilly, VA; Associate editor of Tox Path Society of Toxicological Pathology 2005 - Present 18 years; Pathologist Covance Laboratories Inc. 2007 - Present 16 years. He is now retired and with his wife Natalie live in Chapel Hill, NC.

There is something special about walking out of the airport in Havana in February and being surrounded by tropical air, palm trees and vintage American cars. In 2016 Natalie and I visited Cuba for the first time as part of a Roads Scholar trip. We ended up writing up a brief report about our trip which appeared in the Clearbrook-Gonvick Leader/Record noting that Cuba brought back some memories of my youth. The lack of fast food places, rural gravel roads, the use of walking, biking and horses to get around reminded me of my childhood on a farm near Leonard. In 2016, the Cubans we met were friendly and were upbeat about the future with increased travel and a chance for more family reunions with those who had fled Cuba. Since then we have made two more trips to Cuba with a church group.

The groups have been led by Reverend Tom Warren and his wife Kim Miller from the Peace United Church of Christ from Greensboro, NC. The collaboration between United Church of Christ (UCC) groups and Cuban Churches started in 1978 with an invitation from the Cuban Council of Churches for the United Church of Christ to send a delegation to become better acquainted the life of the Church in Cuba. Reverend Ted Braun (pastor of the UCC church in Carbondale, Illinois) was part of the group and continued leading groups from Carbondale for the next 35 years until Tom Warren, the current leader started leading the groups in 2016. Our grandson went with a youth group led by Kim Miller from this church a few summers ago. Our grandson then introduced us to Tom and suggested that this might be a good trip for us since we were interested in going back to Cuba. This church works with Pastors for Peace which is a ministry of the Inter-Religious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) which has been delivering humanitarian aid to Latin America, the Caribbean and since 1992 to Cuba.

This year we were a diverse group of 19 that gathered in Miami the night before our flight to Havana. Included were Reverend Tom Warren, and his wife Kim, a childhood friend of Tom's from New York, a physician born in Egypt and practicing in the US, a woman born in Colombia (South America) and living in Chapel Hill, a Canadian who was looking forward to re-connecting with a Cuban pastor that he had been a pen pals with since he was 7 and many others. Several were retired pastors including one from Hawaii whose mother was in a Japanese internment camp in California during WWII. One of the pastors has a church in Juneau but also works as a consultant for Alaskan microbreweries because of her interest in the chemistry of brewing. Needless to say there were many opportunities for interesting conversations. It seemed that everyone had decided to visit Cuba for different reasons.

As part of the U. S. Helms-Burton Act we had to sign a certificate stating that our activities had to be with recognized human rights organization or independent organizations designed to promote a rapid and peaceful transition to democracy or independent organizations that strengthen civil society in Cuba. We were to maintain a full schedule with no free time and part of our activity was to promote the Cuban people's independence from Cuban authorities. I assume most Cubans were unaware of this provision. We were very limited where we could stay because the State Department maintains a Prohibited Accommodations List for Cuba where we were not allowed to stay. As far as I could determine this list applies only to Cuba and no other country. It meant that we spent one night in a hostel but the other places were approved hotels.

We were met at the airport by Javier who has worked with Tom for years. Javier taught English at a Havana high school so he is fluent in English, has a great sense of humor and knows how to get things done in Cuba, not always an easy feat. As we left the airport in Havana, the tropical air and the palm trees made us understand why Cuba was an American playground for so many years. Earnest Hemingway fell in love with Cuba and spent many years there writing books including "The Old Man and the Sea" inspired by Cuban fishermen. Part of my interest is the Cuban people, the complex history between our two countries and because I really enjoy walking around in T-shirts in February. Cuba is very close and actually within swimming distance of Florida (See the movie Nyad on Netflix for the story).

One of our first visits was to the literacy museum. In 1961, the literacy rate was between 60 and 75% in Cuba with most of the illiterate living in rural areas or small villages. Approximately 100,000 young folks, many young girls were trained to teach and sent to remote areas with training materials, gas lanterns (many areas were without electricity); factory workers also taught fellow workers who were not literate plus school teachers were sent to rural areas. The campaign lasted 8 months and resulted in over 90% literacy. The campaign was not without risks as some teachers were killed by insurgents that were still active. This is an accomplishment for which the Cubans are very proud. Robert McNamara, as president of the World Bank was a supporter of mass literacy campaigns like the one in Cuba. Our group was met at the museum by an older lady who was quite proud of the effort. When I asked a question, she gently corrected my Spanish and then answered the question. I found out that she was one of the young teachers who went out into the country to teach in 1961. Cuba later expanded this effort to assist in literacy campaigns in fifteen other countries for which a Cuban organization was awarded a literacy prize by the United Nations in 2006.

On Sunday we visited the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Havana. Except for the language it had similarities to some small churches that we have attended in the states. A Sunday school teacher explained the parable of the mustard seed which is one of the smallest seeds but grows into a tree where the birds can lodge in the branches. The teachers had mustard seeds and the kids drew the trees and birds. The excitement of the teacher and pupils was poignant. Ebenezer has been in contact with the Greensboro church for years and Tom had the chance to renew friendships. We brought paper and pencils to share as the church does not have a lot of resources.

In 2016 cruise ships had just started to stop in Havana. Tourists from the USA were starting to be an important source of revenue for small businesses selling to tourists. Folks we talked to in 2016 saw this as a chance for more Americans to get to know Cuba and their people. This year Havana was much quieter than in 2016. Part of this is due to the Covid pandemic which restricted tourism but also banning cruise ships from docking at Cuban ports. Cruise ships were banned by the U. S. Government from stopping in Cuban ports as of June, 2019.

We visited both churches and institutions in Havana and also in Santiago which is located at the other end of the island. Our route took us down the central highway running down the center of Cuba. The central highway was started in 1928 by a contractor from Boston and a Cuban firm. In the 1960 the Soviet Union started to expand the old central highway to a freeway which was about half completed (to just beyond to Santa Clara) when the Soviet Union collapsed and construction stopped with the freeway ending in the woods. The completed freeway is not busy with the occasional modern tourist bus, a few smaller older local buses, bicycles, folks walking and horse drawn carts, usually two wheel carts. It was quite unusual sight for me to see horse drawn carts on a freeway.

We spent the night in Santa Clara which is an older beautiful city founded in 1689 on the plains between two oceans (Caribbean 45 miles to the east and Atlantic 30 miles to the west) giving it a Caribbean climate, mostly in the 80's year around with 90's in the summer. Santa Clara is best known for Che Guevara monument and Che's defeat of the Batista army during the revolution. It has a great central park and several great universities. It was interesting to read that Bloomington, Indiana is a sister city of Santa Clara. After an overnight we headed to Santiago at the southwest tip of Cuba.

Leaving Santa Clara we

Cuba....
Continued on page 4

Bring in the New Year the Write Way with Wild Writing Fun and Soup!

Area Writers and Curious Friends to Gather Thursday, January 4th at Bagley Library Gallery

At the Area Writer's group led by Clearbrook's Writer-Storyteller, Ann Marie Newman, we don't always just write. Writing at these gatherings is sometimes just great fun and games. We do really write stuff, but we don't all call ourselves writers. Some come for the fun and to hear what others come up with.

Writers and friends gather on the first Thursdays at 5:30 pm at the Bagley Library Exhibit Room. Storyteller-Writer Ann Marie, like so many who do Art for livelihood, is sometimes creatively tuckered by 5:30 p.m. But, true to her art of writing and storytelling and sharing the fun of it all, she energetically lures an uncontrollable gang of creatives into a session of wild wordsmithing.

Ann Marie has a lot of writing games in her repertoire. She might pull out a box of cards and reach across the table to say "pick one". The card will have a word or two on it. This is a "prompt". After a few people have "picked one" Ann Marie will set the timer on her phone and say "everybody write something using all these words".

For the next few minutes, papers fly and pens scribble and scratch… the only sounds might be a little groan or a "hmmm"… or maybe the sound of a notepaper ripped from its spiral, crumpled and tossed away to start again.

The buzzer goes off and we take turns reading our short written thing that we've tried to use all the prompt words in.

Some are rhymes, some are short stories, some are tear-jerkers, some are hilarious and well… some just don't make any sense at all.

But that doesn't matter. The prompt words have all been used, and that's what matters in this game. And people write. Even if they don't call themselves writers, they write. It's good for people to just write. It gets you started.

Then we read the short story or poem. Whether they are good or not is not important. That the person wrote something and got up to read it is what is important. It's good for people to read what they write.

It is always fun to hear other people's work read by them.

The readings often start out with an apology. That's because we live here. We apologize when we serve up our best hotdish: "This isn't very good, but…" Or when we give a finely crafted handmade gift: "I didn't have a lot of time to spend on this, but…" Or when they read their story or poem: "I probably should have done this differently, but…"

Here are the randomly selected prompts from a recent writers group gathering: "Firefly / Patina / Faded Denim / Red Velvet / Fig Leaf / Tea Leaves / Wishbone"

(With "apologies", it maybe makes no sense, but it was fun)…Here is an example of writing using all the prompts (underlined) while the timer is going… sometimes you have to reach a little:

"Dark gold flecks of tea leaves had collected on the sides of the old cup. A wishbone shaped crack divided the bouquet of old fashioned pink roses that decorated the once white bone china, now aged with a stained and yellowed patina.

I thought about the generations of hands that had held that cup and the circumstances they might have held it in. I thought about who had chosen the cup when it was new and why. I didn't know. I actually didn't even know where the cup had come from.

I liked the feel of the cup in my hand, but I had to turn it sideways to avoid the wishbone shaped crack against my lips as I sipped hot tea.

Maybe it's time to let this cup become part of somebody's fig leaf mosaic project.

I tossed the last of the tea out into the twilight and as I stood, I adjusted my faded denim jeans and straightened my stretchy red velvet shirt.

I saw a firefly flickering, and I followed it into the night."

Oh, yes… of course, you certainly can write at least that good!

The writers group will gather this Thursday eve, Jan. 4th at 5:30 for fun and games with a little extra twist. It's a New Year after all!

There will be word prompts, but also the art on display will be used as inspiration. It is "Illustrated Life and Times: A Tallgrass Prairie Story" (Artist, Cindy Kolling).

Ann Marie has led this kind of activity at other art exhibits. It should be interesting. Written pieces can be put into a notebook and left there to be shared as part of the exhibit.

And there will be homemade soup! If you are willing, please bring a pot of soup. A few extras like crackers or cookies will go nicely too.

All Writers and Friends: Gather! Let's Bring in the New Year the Write way on Thursday, January 4th 5:30 p.m.at the Bagley Library for Homemade Soup and Wild Word Fun!

Ann Marie Newman leads the Writer's Gathering of the Bagley Area Arts Collaborative. A writer and storyteller, she could not resist the lure of the purple typewriter. Although in a hurry to be somewhere, she took a moment to turn a paper into the typewriter and peck out a piece of prose right on the spot. Ann Marie will lead the January 4th Writers Gathering at the Bagley Library.

Gerald Dyrdahl Memorial-Pine Lake 200 Snowmobile Race moved to January 13 and 14

From the race committee. We have made the decision to move our race date to January 13th and 14th. We might have had enough ice by the 6th and 7th, but with schedules opening up from other races not being able to race, we decided to play it safe and move it to the 13th and 14th to be sure we have ample ice.

We appreciate your patience, as it's been a struggle for all of us moving these dates around, but in the end, Mother Nature is in control.

The good news is, we are finally going racing!

Special thanks to all of our raffle sponsors and to everyone who purchased tickets, we had amazing sales!

Prize winners named.

Grand prize was a 1997 Pro 440 class winning ZR 440 from Arlaud Racing, presented by Kost Materials. Winner, Lonnie Carda from New Ulm, MN.

2nd prize was a Beretta Tikka TX3 6.5 Creedmoor donated by Bagley Motorsports. Winner, Austin Kodey from Endwell, New York.

3rd prize was a $500.00 race department gift certificates from Arctic Cat. Winner, Linda Stai from Bagley, MN.

4th prize was a $500.00 race department gift certificate from Ski-Doo. Winner, Dale Osmonson from Gully, MN.

5th prize was a $500.00 race department gift certificate from Polaris. Winner, Joe Breidenbach from Grand Forks, ND.

Happy New Year everyone!

Delton and Dorothy Sebenaler recently celebrated their 70th Wedding Anniversary with family in Bemidji.

DNR, county sheriffs warn of poor ice conditions across Minnesota

Widespread rain, wind and unseasonably warm weather during recent days have degraded ice conditions throughout the state, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

While the week between the Christmas and New Year's holidays has become popular among the owners of deluxe fish houses (known also as wheelhouses), conditions so far this winter mean few, if any, areas of the state have the ice thickness necessary for these types of ice structures. In recent days, DNR conservation officers and county sheriff's deputies across the state have responded to instances of fish houses and recreational vehicles falling through the ice.

In central to southern portions of Minnesota, what had been marginal ice conditions are now open water. The ice farther north has deteriorated as well, with ice-angler rescues having occurred from Upper Red Lake at least three times since Dec. 17. While temperatures are forecasted to drop, ice conditions will remain poor until there's a string of cold days to form new, clear ice.

"Many of us love to spend the New Year's holiday with family and friends on the ice," said Col. Rodmen Smith, director of the DNR Enforcement Division. "But when it comes to ice conditions, the calendar doesn't matter."

Beltrami County Sheriff Jason Riggs, whose jurisdiction includes the popular early ice fishing destination Upper Red Lake, knows that reality all too well.

"Most years, the ice would be thick enough by now for vehicles and wheelhouses, and we'd be seeing a steady procession of them heading north," he said. "But this year isn't 'most years,' and the ice is changing constantly. It's absolutely vital that anyone who heads out checks the thickness frequently, pays close attention to the weather, and has a plan in case the worst happens and they wind up in the water."

General ice safety guidelines

No ice can ever be considered "safe ice," but following these guidelines can help minimize the risk:

- Always wear a life jacket or float coat on the ice (except when in a vehicle).
- Carry ice picks, rope, an ice chisel and tape measure.
- Check ice thickness at regular intervals; conditions can change quickly.
- Bring a cell phone or personal locator beacon.
- Don't go out alone; let someone know about trip plans and expected return time.
- Before heading out, inquire about conditions and known hazards with local experts.
- Parents and guardians should talk with their children about staying away from the ice unless there's adult supervision. This includes lakes and rivers, as well as neighborhood ponds, retention ponds and anywhere ice forms.

Now is a great time to start saving for next Christmas by opening a
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MCCL March for Life this month

RESERVE YOUR SEAT!! Call 218-444-1071 (Q107 FM radio) to save your place on the bus leaving the Cenex Station on 71 South, Bemidji at 7:30 a.m., Jan. 22, 2024, for the MCCL March for Life in St. Paul that starts at noon. Price: Free will offering of any amount to MCCL Chapter 45. Bus returns the same evening after a stop for supper. Bring a sack lunch for the trip there. 12,000 baby models will be placed on the Capitol steps to commemorate the babies who were aborted in Minnesota alone in 2022. Go to www.mccl.org/march for more information and to register to place a life-size baby model on the Capitol steps at the March. Please consider sacrificing this day for the babies.

Sons of Norway meeting scheduled

The Sons of Norway, Granlund Lodge #240, will hold its monthly meeting on Thursday, January 11, at 2:00 PM. This is an afternoon meeting with coffee and sweets provided. The meeting includes planning for the 2024 programs and all are encouraged to attend with ideas to help make this year extra special for members and guests. Mark your calendar for Thursday, January 11, at 2:00 PM for the Sons of Norway meeting at the Embassy Center in Fosston. For more information or questions, please contact President Wes Roland at 435-1230.

Gully Area Sportsman's Club
COYOTE HUNT
Entry Fee $20
Jan. 1st - Mar. 30th 2024
Sign up & rules may be picked up at
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R42C

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SHORTY'S PLACE, 268-4199
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Sat. & Sun., Jan. 13th & 14th, 2024
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CLASSIFIED ADS

Part Time Extension Secretary Clearwater County

Applications are being accepted for an Extension Secretary position, under the general supervision of the 4-H Program Coordinator. This position serves as the first point of contact for customers and performs general office duties including: responding to public inquiries or requests by providing resources and referrals, typing correspondence, entering detailed program and financial data, maintaining detailed office records, provides clerical and technical office support for the 4-H Youth Development Extension Program and staff. Assists 4-H program coordinator in planning and developing 4-H county fair resources and events, exhibitor cards and processing of fair premium checks.

Required Qualifications are a high school diploma/GED and two years post-secondary education in administrative course work or two years of related clerical office experience.

Salary range $17.83-$23.34

Applications may be obtained from the Clearwater County Service Center located on the 2nd floor of the Clearwater County Courthouse or on the website at www.co.clearwater.mn.us.

Applications will be accepted until position is filled.

More information can be obtained at the Clearwater County Auditor/Treasurer's Office at the Clearwater County Courthouse on second floor or by calling 218-694-6130. R42-43C

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR

The Clearbrook-Gonvick School District is seeking a highly-skilled, energetic, and innovative 1.0 FTE Career and Technical Education Instructor with Construction Careers and Manufacturing Technology licensures preferred beginning in the 2024-2025 school year.

Requirements: MN Teaching License in Construction Careers or Manufacturing Careers and/or Trade Industry is preferred. Individuals with strength and experience in woodshop, welding, construction, and agriculture are encouraged to apply, as well as those who are interested in extra-curricular or coaching activities. Position is open until filled.

Please submit letter of interest, resume, credentials, and three references to:

Clearbrook-Gonvick School
16770 Clearwater Lake Rd
Clearbrook, MN 56634
Attn: Melissa Weems, HR
Or email the materials to:
mweems@clearbrook-gonvick.k12.mn.us
For questions, call: 218-776-3112 Ext. 105

Clearbrook-Gonvick School District ISD #2311 is an equal opportunity employer. R40-43C

RENTALS

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Position Is Open Until Filled

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$40.18 – $54.97/hr. Position Closes January 10, 2024

Deputy Patrol:
$28.56 – $37.29/hr. Position Closes January 10, 2024

Campground Host – Cross Lake – Tilberg Park/NE of Fosston:
$1,948.84/month. Position Is Open Until Filled

Loader Operator I/Fosston:
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Mechanical Maintenance Technician I/Fosston:
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For an application, full job description and general job opening information go to www.co.polk.mn.us and click on "Careers" or call 218-281-5408 Polk County Administrator's Office. EOE R49tfc

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R40tfc

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-Full-time kitchen cook or 2 part-time kitchen cooks: Must enjoy working with kids, be able to work in a standing position for a period of time, and pass a ServeSafe food safety course.

-Two (2) Full-time Custodial Cleaners or part-time Custodial Cleaners: Job requirements include the ability to thoroughly clean while paying attention to detail with some lifting and bending required.

-Para-educator: Must enjoy working with children one-on-one or in a small group setting and have passed, or have the ability to pass, a para pro-exam which will be administered by the School District.

All positions include the following benefits: PERA retirement plan, paid holidays, sick time, personal time, vacation time (12 month positions only), and unemployment during the summer for positions less than 12 months. Wage range is $15.27-$17.36 per hour dependent on years of previous experience. Must be able to pass a background check. Applications can be found on our school website or call Melissa Weems at 218-776-3112 Ext. 105 with any questions or to have an application emailed to you.

Please submit application, resume, and letter of interest to:
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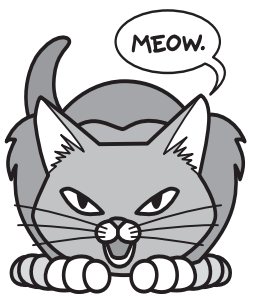

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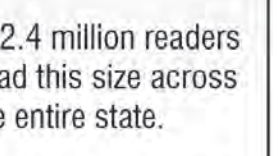

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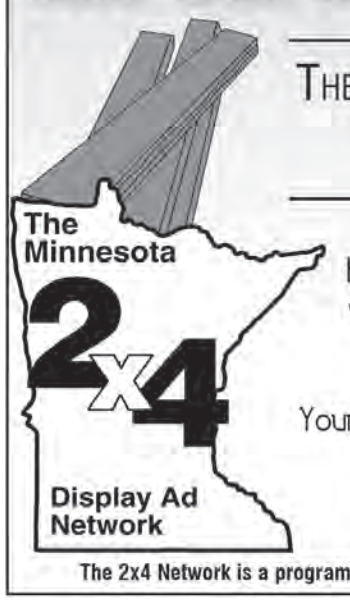

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Theology in the Trenches

By Kathleen Kjolhaug

The Neighborhood Is Changing

Our son came home. He came home with his wife and their family. They came home to stay. To stay with us was the plan—for a while—until plans could be finalized as to where their next move would take them. We soon found out that they not only liked it here but wanted to stay and raise their family—in the country—on the farm. Their little crew will be the sixth generation to live in this house. Yes, in this house—not just on the farm or on the land—in this house and we think that's nothing short of amazing to be downright honest.

We were eager to take the little crew in for the long haul but an opportunity to move came sooner than later and we are in the middle of making plans to do just that. Speaking of just—we will be just up the road a few miles—up on the bluffs near where my husband's parents once lived. When we went to look at the new property, it felt as if we were going home. From the homestead to the bluffs we will be moving as He goes before us always.

As I walked this morning, I could hear the sounds of building going on. A new home is being built for yet another family, and a little further over another home being built will house those moving back to their farms.

The young are moving back and at the same time parents (now turned grandparents) are moving on to their next phase in life. Little did I know one year ago that we'd be looking to move off the farm. But you know? For the past two years God has been preparing my heart. Whispers came here and there that this house needed resurrecting. It needed new life to make things come to life once again.

The letting go process hasn't been easy—yet grieving is necessary because when we let go of something that has meant much, it is supposed to be hard. Yet, as we go through the process, He's allowed me to see more clearly the realities.

1. The reality is: Our son and his family want to make this their home.

2. The reality is: God has allowed us to see tender moments of their parenting style as we watch in awe—within the confines of the family farm.

3. The reality is: "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:3).

4. The reality is: He is working far in advance beyond what the eye can see.

5. The reality is: "What no eye has seen…what no human mind has conceived the things God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

When I trust my short sighted vision, I find it's often obscured and am reminded that my trust must be in Him. It calms the storm as I pray, "Jesus I trust in You." In the quietude He provides. He has—He will—and He will continue to provide even in the midst of change.

In the mean time, I am grateful He goes before us always and I look forward to seeing what He has prepared as well as what is to come. Thank you for accompanying us on this journey. Amen.

Ask a Trooper

by Sgt. Jesse Grabow Minnesota State Patrol

Question: I am applying for a new job that will have questions about my driving record. Can I visit with someone from Law Enforcement to get a copy of that?

Answer: No, this is not something that Law Enforcement agencies can provide.

If you want to know what employers and insurers see, the Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) division has made it easier than ever to get a copy of either your certified or noncertified record. A certified driving record includes your entire driving history in Minnesota. A noncertified record shows a five-year history of driver convictions. You can now use the online record request to get your records.

Here's how it works:

• Visit drive.mn.gov and select Sign Up in the login panel to create a MyDVS account.

• You'll need to request a MyDVS Registration Letter to create your account. This letter is mailed to the address on file with DVS and contains the unique Letter ID you'll need to create your account.

• Once you receive the Registration Letter, complete the sign up to create your MyDVS login.

• After you login, you can purchase your Driving History Record through the MyDVS portal.

What you need:

• Your Minnesota driver's license number.

• Your Social Security Number.

• Checking or savings bank account to submit payment.

• A printer if you'd like a paper copy of the record.

• If your driving privileges are not valid, you will need to use the Driver's License Status Lookup at drive.mn.gov to view reinstatement requirements.

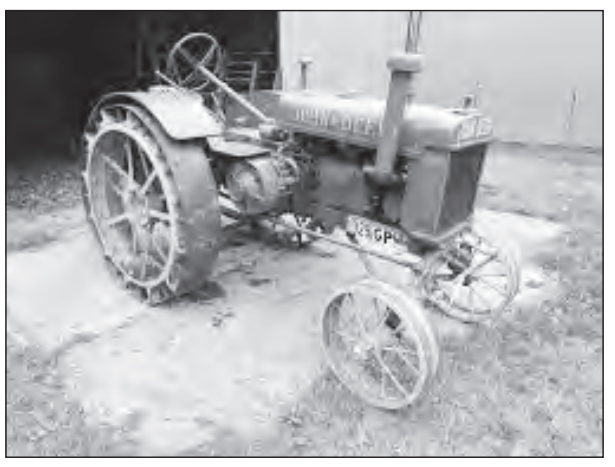
You cannot get a copy of someone else's driving record online, only your own. Customers who want a copy of someone else's record and are legally entitled to the information, need to complete a DVS Records Request form, available at DVS Documents, Manuals and Forms and either mail it to DVS or visit the DVS office in downtown St. Paul.

A portion of state statutes were used with permission from the Office of the Revisor of Statutes. If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota, send your questions to Trp. Jesse Grabow – Minnesota State Patrol at 1000 Highway 10 West, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501-2205. (You can follow him on Twitter @MSPPIO_NW or reach him at, jesse.grabow@state.mn.us).

The Graham-Bradley

By Auctioneer Eric W. Mickelson

The Graham brothers, (Joseph, Robert, and Ray), were raised on an Indiana farm. They seemed to have a knack for business adventures. They developed a kit to change a Model T Ford into a truck and even made an unsuccessful attempt at a tractor. In 1927, they got into the automobile business. The Graham Paige automobiles were ahead of their time and considered very well made!



GP John Deere on Steel!

In 1936, Sears & Roebuck made a deal with Graham Paige to produce tractor for them. When Sears got together with Graham-Paige the tractor was called Graham-Bradley.

The tractors were released for sale in 1937 and sold through Sears & Roebuck and the Graham Paige automobile dealerships. Several were produced in 1938 and 1939 was the last year of production. There aren't many Graham Bradley tractors left. No more than 2300 were actually built and somewhere between 350 to 500 are still known to exist. Considering the tractor was only built for a short period of time, I guess there's no wonder. The Graham history is a fascinating story to learn.

I don't know if it was the lingering depression, the outbreak of WW II, or a reported dispute with Sears, but the Graham-Bradley tractor met an early demise. Although full of advanced features for its time it simply was one of the many tractor companies to fall by the wayside. I wonder what it would be like today to order your farm tractor from the Sears & Roebuck catalog?!!?

How about a little tractor trivia!

1. T or F The six cylinder engine of the Graham-Bradley tractor was basically the same as the one used in Graham Paige cars.

2. From 1937-1939 how many Graham-Bradley tractors were produced? A) 5,000 B) 2243 C) 2975 D) 465

3. T or F To use the belt pulley on a Graham-Bradley tractor a lever had to be used to disengage the transmission as it was used in turning the belt pulley.

4. T or F Did Graham-Bradley produce a standard tread tractor?

5. What was the color scheme of the Graham-Bradley tractor.
A) green and yellow B) orange and black C) Red and Silver D) Blue and White

Answers: 1. T 2. B. 2243 3. T 4. T 5. C. Red and Silver

Duran announces run for House District 02A

Bidal Duran, a Deputy Sheriff for the Hubbard County Sheriff's Office and United States Marine Corps Combat Veteran, announced Friday that he will be seeking the Republican endorsement for House District 02A, currently represented by Rep. Matt Grossell who announced his intent to retire earlier this year.

"I'm grateful to Rep. Grossell for his service to this district, and hope to continue his record of strong support for our law enforcement, veterans, and for the conservative values of this district. I'm excited to bring my leadership experience from years in law enforcement and the Marine Corps and be the voice our district needs in Saint Paul to push back against the out-of-control Democrat agenda of higher taxes, wasteful spending, and other extreme policies that are disastrous for Minnesota."

Bidal has served our area as a Law Enforcement Officer since 2013, initially working at the Bemidji Police Department as a patrol officer and recently made the move to Hubbard County to work as a Deputy Sheriff. During his Marine Corps service, Bidal was deployed to Sangin, Afghanistan as a team leader with 3rd battalion, 5th marines, India Company. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Bemidji State University, a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice Leadership from Concordia University Saint Paul, and is currently obtaining a PhD in Public Management and Leadership from Walden University.

Bidal's plans for the spring and summer will include several events to meet the citizens of District 2A and allow them a chance to voice their concerns and hear their ideas on what they'd like to see happening in our district. His core campaign priorities are public safety, stopping government overreach, restoring fiscal responsibility to the state budget, and engaging with the community.

Bidal lives in Bemidji, MN, has been married for 15 years, and has three daughters. In his free time, he enjoys hunting, fishing, spending time with family, and playing basketball and slow-pitch softball. Bidal is looking forward to being a voice for the people to representing our values.

Cuba....Continued from front page

had only 360 miles to drive to Santiago but shortly after we left the improved freeway ended abruptly and we were back on the old small central highway. This did give us a close up view of the country side and small towns. However with the towns, pot holes in the road, and lunch in Camaguey, Cuba's third largest city it became a twelve hour trip, not unlike travel in the USA before we developed the freeway system. We had a remarkable driver who was able to navigate the narrow streets.

We checked into a nice hotel in Santiago, Cuba's second largest city in the southeastern part of Cuba. The hotel was originally a mansion with a view of the sea but now serves as a small but beautiful tourist hotel. Several days were spent with Reverends Elmer Lavastida and Gisela Perez who worked as pastors at of the Second Baptist Church in Santiago and direct the Lavastida Training and Education center which is named for Elmer's father who was a Presbyterian minister and missionary in Eastern Cuba. Elmer and Gisela work for more freedom to practice religion and for the betterment of women in Cuba. Elmer met personally with Castro to improve the role of Protestants in Cuba and won some concessions. The Lavastida center promotes social services, family health and ecology. The Latin American patriarchal society has made it difficult for women as they have become more educated with more economic responsibility. This challenge in Cuba, not unlike our own, is for couples to share more domestic responsibilities when both work outside of the home.

Elmer and our group member from Ottawa, Canada talked about how they began writing letters over seventy years ago when Elmer's aunt who had a friend in Canada suggested that they become pen pals. They even had a copy of a letter written by one of them as a seven year old.

We were fortunate to be guests of the Orfeon Choir of Santiago which was founded in 1960 to develop and promote choral music in Cuba. It is comprised of volunteers that practice on their free time. One of the Orfeon Choir recent recognitions was first prize at the International Choral Festival and Competition in 2020 competing against 40 other choral groups. We listened to the Choir in a small room and it was exceptional. Because of limited access to resources they were not able to make CDs to sell which was disappointing.

Cuba is concerned about the changes in climate and have notice increased droughts. We visited a permaculture project that is working to provide food with less intensive water use. We also visited a polyclinic that provides health care. The government provides health care to all citizens and our airfare ticket included insurance in case someone needed medical care. Cuba's infant mortality is lowest in Latin America and their life expectancy actually exceeds ours.

Time went by very quickly and soon it was time to head for the airport at Holguin which is close to Santiago. The airport was quieter than our last visit and it was interesting to note that most of the flights listed were from Canada with ours being the only American flight.

We still find Cuba a beautiful county with a complex history especially with our country. My recommendation is if you are curious you might book a trip with Road Scholar which has multiple trips to Cuba, or contact Tom Warren in Greensboro who organizes a trip every February. For students Kim Miller leads a work group in the summer to Santiago. Our grandson was part of adding room to the Lavistida Center when he went and we had lunch in that room during our last stay. I find Cuba an interesting puzzle with very friendly people who welcome the chance to talk to Americans.

NEW YEAR'S WORD SEARCH

G	B	P	J	K	P	P	E	C	O	U	N	T	D	O	W	N	G	P	I
N	U	N	J	N	O	I	S	E	M	A	K	E	R	C	H	E	E	R	S
S	O	L	Q	Y	C	H	V	K	C	H	A	M	P	A	G	N	E	R	U
R	I	I	A	U	A	B	V	H	G	O	A	L	S	N	M	K	J	Q	L
R	E	V	T	P	C	O	N	F	E	T	T	I	F	I	V	C	B	V	M
G	J	M	P	U	A	M	Q	A	Y	G	E	T	A	R	B	E	L	E	C
U	V	Y	A	A	L	V	C	D	J	I	L	L	A	B	S	B	D	G	P
K	V	W	Y	E	C	O	R	A	D	N	E	L	A	C	N	N	J	J	G
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J	I	A	E	G	L	Q	H	W	B	L	U	N	J	K	M	H	C	D	S
M	C	L	O	C	K	B	R	F	L	B	L	I	S	C	F	U	G	B	R

NEW YEARS WORD SEARCH *Answers on page 5*

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OBITUARIES

Obituary for William G. Ness

William G. Ness, 85, of River Falls, WI, passed away on December 28, 2023. With his can-do attitude and generous spirit, Bill made outsized contributions to the Northwest Minnesota community.

William Ness was born on May 22, 1938, to Lilly and George Ness. Billy, as he was known as a boy, grew up on a farm about seven miles northeast of the small town of Gully in Northwest Minnesota. On the farm, he helped raise all manner of livestock from chickens to hogs to beef cattle. While working with his dad on the tractors and farm implements, Billy not only mastered some colorful language (much to his mother's chagrin) but developed a sharp mechanical aptitude that would serve him well in his future career in the snowmobile industry. Bill had many memorable moments growing up on the farm, which included the following:

Before they had indoor plumbing, he would have to go to the outhouse in minus-whatever temperatures and use pages from a Sears & Roebuck catalog for purposes other than ordering merchandise. `

On occasion, he and his sister, Norma, would take a shortcut to school through a pasture where they were frequently chased by an unwelcoming bull.

Speaking of surly animals, they had a horse in the 1940s that was so mean, George aptly named it "Adolph."

On a bear hunt, Bill feared for his life—not from the bear—but from the other overeager hunters who sent bullets whizzing past him.

In her later years, Billy's Grandma Ingaborg lived on the farm in a small cottage they named "Ma's House." Although Bill had fond memories of his grandma, she was apparently a sore loser when he would beat her at checkers. He and Grandma would tune into their favorite radio programs, including The Lone Ranger.

In his teen years, Billy became Gonvick High School's star pitcher. He actually received a baseball scholarship for the University of North Dakota, but blew his arm out before he could take advantage of it.

Bill's pursuit of an engineering degree at UND got off to a shaky start when he and a buddy's surveying measurements were off by a depth of 10 feet. Luckily, he didn't need to rely on a surveyor's theodolite to pursue a degree in electrical engineering.

In 1959, his cousin Patsy set him and his friend up on a double date with two girls from her school. Before the date, Bill and his friend flipped a coin to see who would sit next to which girl. Fate put Bill in the seat next to a Michigan girl named Henrietta Goulette. Maybe it was the ambience of the fabulous Third Base supper club in Brooks, Minnesota. Maybe it was the peppermint schnapps they drank that night. Or maybe it was Henrietta's good looks and charm. Whatever the cause, Bill fell head over heels for Henrietta (aka Hank) and proposed to her on the third date. They were married in Henrietta's hometown of Iron Mountain on August 13, 1960, and went on to have three sons and two daughters.

In 1960, Bill began his career as an electrical engineer at Remington Rand Univac in St. Paul. In 1961, Lowell Swenson convinced him to move to Thief River Falls, Minnesota, and work as the chief engineer at the Dow Key Company, a coaxial relay manufacturer. In circa 1964, Swenson again talked Bill into making a leap of faith to a startup company called Arctic Cat, which began manufacturing a newfangled contraption called the snowmobile. It turns out that Arctic Cat caught lightning in a bottle, and snowmobiles sold like hotcakes. In 1967, Bill accepted the director of engineering and corporate director positions at Arctic Enterprises. During this time, he filed several patents, and many of Bill's innovations are still used in snowmobiles today.

As part of his role in securing the parts supply chain and developing new markets, Bill travelled the world, visiting dozens of countries (more than 20 trips to Japan alone), no small ask for a man who suffered from severe claustrophobia and hated being trapped in a metal tube at 30,000 feet. While Bill was flying over Sydney on a flight to Hong Kong, the Quantas crew depressurized the plane, opened a hatch, and started tossing everything out. When Bill jokingly asked an attendant why they didn't land the plane and look for the bomb, the attendant dryly replied, "Sorry, mate, it's an altitude-controlled bomb."

In addition to interesting destinations, Bill also met more than his share of famous and infamous people, ranging from U.S. Presidents to Saudi sheiks to Japanese industrialists to Chicago mobsters.

Despite all of Bill's career successes, one of his finest and proudest professional moments rose out of the ashes of failure—the dark days following the bankruptcy of Arctic Enterprises. Bill remembered that bittersweet time: "Many of my friends, officers and the marketing people who had worked at Arctic Enterprises before its demise, had already left town for new careers. It was also rumored that Polaris was hiring the best engineers from the old company, and that the AEI plant, which had turned out so many quality sleds was slated for grain storage." To add to the gloom, the economy was in the tank and interest rates were skyrocketing, causing snowmobile sales to sputter.

Despite these challenges, distributors, dealers, a trucking company, Thief River Falls business people and former employees had verbally committed to back a new company. However, there were many hurdles to overcome before the new company could begin production. Working out of former AEI President Lowell Swenson's condo, which he provided rent-free, a small group of entrepreneurs from the old company, known as "The Boys from Thief River," started hammering out the details and making the new company a reality. They worked for no salary for many months and received only a minimal salary the first year.

Thanks to the dedication of the employees and the first board of directors, Thief River Falls celebrated on August 1, 1983, as the first new generation of Arctic Cat snowmobiles came off the line.

Years later, Bill recalled, "As I drive by the plant and see the hundreds of workers' cars in the parking lot of Arctic Cat, I often remember that clear fall day in 1982 and I feel a great sense of satisfaction and pride in the people of Thief River Falls and the surrounding area who worked so hard to make it all possible."

As if that wasn't enough, Bill took on a second challenge as co-owner of Northern Woodwork, an architectural wood products manufacturer in Thief River Falls. By keeping the company in TRF, another 40 jobs were preserved in Northwestern Minnesota.

Throughout his career, Bill held various corporate and education directorships. Bill was honored with the Governor's Award in Minnesota, was named Thief River Falls Outstanding Boss in 1974, received the Thief River Falls Chamber of Commerce President's Award in 1989, was recognized by Snowmobile Magazine for being "1 of 25 who made a difference in the industry," and was inducted into the Snowmobile Hall of Fame in 1996.

Although his instrumental role in bringing back the Cat was Bill's proudest "professional accomplishment," he would repeatedly tell people that his family was the thing that brought him the most pride. Following his semi-retirement (i.e., Bill never really fully retired), he loved spending time with family including:

Farming with his son-in-law, Jim, and his grandsons.

Snowmobiling and enjoying a bonfire with family out on his hunting land near Somerset, Wisconsin

Boating on the St. Croix River near his second home in Hudson.

Cooking out at Squaw Lake on a warm summer day.

Deer hunting with his sons and grandsons, utilizing questionable Gully, Minnesota hunting strategies.

Bill never lost his wanderlust and continued to travel with Hank. It helped that their dear friend, Annette Bergan, was also a travel agent and talked them into multiple excursions that were not for the faint of heart. Moreover, Bill treated his family to memorable vacations through the years.

Ask people who knew Bill to describe him in one word, they would no doubt say, "generous." Although Bill wanted to sneak out of the induction ceremony for the Knights of Columbus, he gave generously to a fund for retired clergy. He also made substantial donations to his alma mater UND and to research for Alzheimer's, which afflicted his wife. Bill paid for his grandchildren's higher education—no small feat in this age of jaw-dropping college costs. Bill hated cheapskate behavior and had little respect for men who took their whiskey bottle home instead of leaving it behind for the other party guests. Bill and Hank were the ultimate hosts, and throughout the 1970s, some of the biggest town soirees happened at the Ness home.

Bill was preceded in death by parents George and Lilly, sister Norma, infant siblings Janice and Glen, and niece Debbie. He is survived by beloved wife Henrietta; five children Greg (Karyn) Ness, Teresa (Jim) Mattison, Jon Ness, Jeff (Naomi) Ness, Rachel (Scott) Berger; 14 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren; and too many friends to be named here.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. with visitation one hour prior and lunch afterward, Saturday, January 13, 2024, at O'Connell Family Funeral Home, 520 S. Eleventh Street, Hudson, WI 54016. His service will be live-streamed on O'Connell Family Funeral Homes website.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to the NW Minnesota Snowmobile Display Center at Peter Engelstad Pioneer Village, 825 Oakland Park Road, PO Box 127, Thief River Falls, MN 56701 or to a charity of your choice.

Submit Obituaries & Memorials
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Cozy up to winter movie releases

Even though it may have been many weeks since the nation collectively adjusted their clocks to "fall back," now that the holiday twinkle lights that illuminated homes and businesses have been put away, mid-winter darkness may seem even more apparent. The hours of daylight are incrementally increasing, but with the sun still setting relatively early, those eager to fill the evening hours may be wondering how to pass the time.

Watching a movie is an ideal activity for the cold, dark evenings of winter. Nestled in the theater with a bucket of popcorn and other favorite treats, moviegoers will not be bothered by falling snow or the sun setting outdoors. It's time to gear up for a new year of feature films. Here's a look at movies coming to big and small screens soon enough.

· **"Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day Movie" (January 5):** A Mexican-American family who have lost connection to their culture and each other embark on an epic road trip that ends up going wrong in various ways. Eva Longoria and Jesse Garcia are featured in the film available on Disney+.

· **"The Beekeeper" (January 12):** A man is on a brutal campaign for vengeance. The stakes are elevated when it is revealed he is a former operative of a clandestine group known as "Beekeepers." The film stars Jason Statham, Josh Hutcherson and Minnie Driver.

· **"Mean Girls" (January 12):** This is the film adaptation of the musical version that made waves on Broadway. The Plastics, an A-list clique at school, welcome a new student, but things go awry when she makes the mistake of falling for the ex-boyfriend of the Plastics' leader. Tina Fey, John Hamm, Jenna Fischer, and an assortment of teen stars comprise the cast.

· **"The Book of Clarence" (January 12):** Set in biblical times, the movie tells the tale of Clarence, a down-on-his-luck denizen of Jerusalem trying to capitalize on the influence of the Messiah for his own gain. Benedict Cumberbatch, Omar Sky, James McAvoy, and LaKeith Stanfield are among the cast members.

· **"Distant" (January 19):** Josh Gordon and Will Speck star in this movie about an asteroid miner who, after crash-landing on an alien planet, must find the only other survivor. He is faced with harsh terrain,

a lack of oxygen and strange creatures along the way.

· **"Madame Web" (February 14):** Dakota Johnson stars as a clairvoyant in this Spidey spin-off action movie.

· **"Ordinary Angels" (February 23):** A hairdresser rallies a community to help a widower save the life of his daughter who is critically ill. The movie is based on a true story, and features Alan Ritchson and Hillary Swank.

· **"Kung-Fu Panda 4" (March 8):** Poe and friends take on a chameleon foe while on the search for a new Dragon Warrior. The original cast returns and includes the voices of Jack Black, Angelina Jolie, Dustin Hoffman, and more.

This winter, families and friends can rally together to chase away the chill and darkness with movies that light up the big and small screens.

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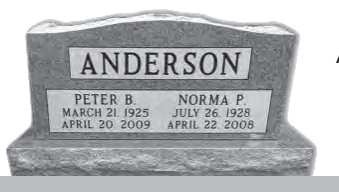

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According to the American Red Cross, winter is one of the most difficult times of year to collect enough blood products to meet patient needs. That is because, among other things, busy holiday schedules and harsh weather often result in canceled blood drives. Furthermore, seasonal illnesses such as the flu force potential donors to forgo their blood donations. That is just one of the reasons that National Blood Donor Month, which has taken place each January since 1970, is such an important observance. Donating blood saves many lives and improves health for many people. According to the World Health Organization, "Blood is the most precious gift that anyone can give to another person - the gift of life. A decision to donate your blood can save a life, or even several, if your blood is separated into its components - red cells, platelets and plasma."

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Word Search Answers for this week

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Carlson Writes Attorney General Ellison, State Commissioners

"When do you think the state's Chief Legal Officer will be getting around to enforcing the law?"

In a letter authored by former Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson to Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison and three commissioners of state agencies, Carlson noted that "you have been hearing from us for some five years about serious corruption and illegalities in state government but we have not had the privilege of a single substantive responsive."

Carlson referenced what he called "corrupt actions" by employees of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) "who put the financial interests of Glencore above the safety and well-being of the people of Minnesota." For many years, Glencore and its PolyMet subsidiary have attempted to secure leases and permits to mine near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northeast Minnesota.

The former governor referenced the findings of the Minnesota Supreme Court which found actions of the MPCA employees to be "arbitrary and capricious" while also revoking a permit to PolyMet.

Carlson also noted that the U. S. Justice Department in 2022 accepted Glencore's guilty plea on a variety of bribery charges and its agreement to pay $1.1 billion in fines for its actions.

In the letter, Carlson asked Ellison why he didn't come forth and investigate Glencore following its guilty plea. "Was there outside pressure?" Carlson asked, adding, "When do you think the state's Chief Legal Officer will be getting around to enforcing the law?"

Carlson did reference a November email exchange with a state senator attesting to the "firm grip the mining industry has on our state's legislature," and suggesting "It is abundantly clear that caucus leaders have utilized coercive and illegal tactics to compel conformity with the wishes of a corporate interest and against those of the public."

Editors: The following you'll find the December 26 letter from Carlson to state officials and a November 28 email exchange between Carlson and Attorney General Keith Ellison.

Document 1: Carlson December 26, 2023 letter

To: Keith Ellison, Minnesota Attorney General

Brooke Cunningham, Minnesota Department of Health

Katrina Kessler, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Sarah Strommen, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

If we may, we would draw your attention to a public message you posted entitled "About Our Office "which described the purpose and responsibilities of the Office of Attorney General. You stated that you were "the chief legal officer of the state of Minnesota"and further declared that "the office welcomes hearing from the public."

Well, with all due respect, you have been hearing from us for some five years about serious corruption and illegalities in state government but we have not had the privilege of a single substantive responsive.

You have had more than two and a half years to fully review the study by the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota which concluded that the legislature was granting special favors to wealthy campaign contributors including the opportunity to "shape" legislation. In brief, public policy is being sold. This is clearly illegal and totally corrupt but, so far, your office has done nothing.

Further, you have had nearly five years to investigate the wholly corrupt actions of several employees of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency who deliberately violated the law by withholding from the public important pollution information relating to PolyMet which is owned by Glencore. In essence, these offenders were state employees who put the financial interests of Glencore above the safety and well-being of the people of Minnesota.

To be clear, allow us to again remind you of the findings of the United States Department of Justice which stated the following in May, 2022 after Glencore's plea of guilty and its agreement to pay $1.1 billion in fines:

"The scope of the criminal bribery scheme is staggering. Glencore paid bribes to secure oil contracts. Glencore paid bribes to avoid government audits. Glencore bribed judges to make lawsuits disappear. At bottom, Glencore paid bribes to make money - hundreds of millions of dollars. And it did it with the approval, and even encouragement of its executives."

Many nations that have been exploited by Glencore's "criminal bribery scheme" and whose land and resources were permanently harmed by Glencore's mining operations would certainly agree with this assessment from our nation's Department of Justice.

However, that is not the case with Minnesota State Government where the Governor and legislative leaders of both parties are intent on protecting this corrupt company. As previously noted, the Legislature has for five years consistently refused to hold any hearings on any legislation not acceptable to the mining industry and the Governor has reneged on his promises to reform the mining laws etc. The state has even employed, at the expense (over $6.5 million) of the Minnesota taxpayer, a Denver law firm that specializes in representing mining companies to assist Glencore with the permitting process.

How is it that millions of dollars of Minnesota taxpayer money can be spent to aid a convicted corporate felon while the state government is oblivious to the safety and well-being of the public?

In August of this year, the Minnesota Supreme Court found the actions of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in 2018 to be "arbitrary and capricious" in issuing a permit to PolyMet (Glencore) and revoked the permit and severely chastised the agency for the illegalities previously cited. It should be noted that you, as Attorney General, paid no attention to this lawless behavior when you assumed office in 2019 and continued to ignore it even after the recent ruling of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Now, we, the undersigned, have sufficient experience in government to know that agency employees rarely take questionable actions without very specific orders from the agency's Commissioner who takes his direction from the Governor. We ask you as Attorney General to tell the people of Minnesota: Who gave the illegal order?

And since Glencore specializes in bribery, why did you not immediately come forth and investigate? Was there outside pressure? Did you, as the Attorney General, consider referring this matter to other enforcement entities such as the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the U.S. Attorney's Office, or the FBI? Did you seek any outside assistance?

Finally, our communication to you this past November 28 contained an email from a State Senator attesting to the firm grip the mining industry has on our state's legislature. This Senator outlined the bullying, the threats etc. that prevent legislators from being able to represent the best interests of the people of their district and the state. It is abundantly clear that caucus leaders have utilized coercive and illegal tactics to compel conformity with the wishes of a corporate interest and against those of the public.

When do you think the state's Chief Legal Officer will be getting around to enforcing the law?

Rest assured that, unless we receive a serious response from you, we will proceed with other authorities.

Respectfully,

Arne Carlson, Retired Governor – Independent Republican

Tom Berkelman, Retired Legislator - DFL

Janet Entzel, Retired Legislator - DFL

Document 2: November 28, 2023 letter

To: Keith Ellison, Minnesota Attorney General

Dear Attorney General Ellison,

As you know, we sent you our report entitled, "The Future Is Today"(August, 2021) which outlined the enormous rise of special interest influence in our state's legislature and documented the extraordinary increase in political donations to the legislature's four party caucuses. We noted, for instance, that for the 2020 legislative elections, they amassed over $26.5 million or some $130,000 per incumbent. As a former legislator, you know that massive sum of money did not come from neighborhood coffee parties or local bean feeds.

That report also cited a most important study (May, 2021) by the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Policy at the University of Minnesota that concluded that our Minnesota State Legislature was granting special favors to wealthy contributors including the opportunity to "shape" legislation. This selling of influence is clearly corrupt. Public policy belongs entirely to the people.

Professor Larry Jacobs, a co-author, observed: "Big money in our politics is a threat to our elections and lawmaking. "

Further, Associate Professor Kathryn Pearson, also a co-author of the study, found that "these patterns of spending make partisan politics a team sport, contributing to the rise of partisan polarization that makes legislating difficult."

Hence, we not only have the illegal selling of influence to wealthy donors but the resultant partisan gridlock as well. This corruption is a direct assault on the public's right to a clean government that is "of the people, by the people, for the people".

For some five years, we have written published commentaries outlining this widespread corruption with a focus on the subservience of the Governor and the legislature (both parties) to domestic and foreign mining conglomerates.

Even the Minnesota Supreme Court took note of this submissiveness in August of this year when they severely chastised the Minnesota Pollution Agency for allowing some of its employees to withhold from the public a variety of concerns relating to pollution by PolyMet which is owned by Glencore, a well-known global polluter with a specialty in the bribing of public officials. In essence, these employees whose salaries are borne by the taxpayer were actually working for the interests of a foreign mining conglomerate instead of the people of Minnesota.

Yet, nothing was done. Absolutely nothing. Both the Office of Attorney General and the Governor failed to launch any type of investigation to determine who gave the order to those employees to deliberately violate the law. Nor did the legislature show any interest whatsoever. Instead, life went on. A gross illegal act was ignored and those employees who betrayed their loyalty to the public, were retained, given pay raises and, in one instance, made Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources.

There appear to be no limits to the generosity afforded to the rich and powerful.

Attached is a communication from a State Senator verifying the absolute loyalty legislative caucuses have to the monied interests. In this case, the Senator refused to buckle under to the will of the mining industry and his own caucus leaders punished him by orchestrating a well-funded primary campaign against him.

Clearly, the will of the people and their right to representation was thwarted by corrupt caucus leaders. Perhaps the worse of this is that this example of successful coercion is used to this day to maintain conformity and obedience.

This is the smoking gun. This selling of public policy to the affluent few must stop. Not only is our very limited supply of healthy drinking water in serious jeopardy but our democracy as well.

We, former legislators from different parties, unite in calling upon you to fully investigate all matters cited in this communication. The public's right to representation must not be subordinate to money and its corruptive power.

We look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Arne Carlson, Retired Governor – Independent Republican

Tom Berkelman, Retired Legislator – DFL

Janet Entzel, Retired Legislator – DFL

END

George Washington and his troops crossing the Delaware River.

Crossing the Delaware

By Eric W. Mickelson

On February 22, 1732, in Popes Creek, Virginia, George Washington was born. We know he was indeed the first President of this nation. In fact 4 of the first 5 Presidents were born in Virginia. Although several universities and other educational institutions are his namesake, Washington himself did not attend college. He is in fact the only major founding father without a college education. George left school at the age of 15 because his family could not afford his college education. George Washington you could say was a self taught man. He was a surveyor, mapmaker, inventor, and farmer. Washington studied and was able to use better farming methods. In fact, although he is of course known to most as a soldier and a statesman, he really thought of himself as a farmer first.

His skills as a mapmaker and his knowledge of the countryside helped prove his success in the French and Indian War. Which leads me to the Revolutionary War. When the Continental Congress met they voted to make George Washington commander of the Continental Army.

As I was sitting around this Christmas weekend I thought of the iconic painting of George Washington and his troops crossing the Delaware River…. on Christmas Day!

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War many of the battles were not going well for George Washington and his Continental Army. You must remember that he was leading what we might call a ragtag bunch of men against the English, considered by many to be the strongest military in the world at this time. George Washington hoped a surprise attack and victory would boost the moral of his worn out soldiers. Who was he attacking? Near Trenton, New Jersey there was a regiment of about 1,400 Hessian Soldiers. These were German Mercenaries hired to fight by England. The attack was set for Christmas 1776.

Three separate groups were to cross the river at different points to set up the attack, but only Washington's group made it across, they were delayed three hours because of the difficulty caused by the ice in the river. Heavy artillery and horses were also transported across the river. This was accomplished by what they called Durham Boats, which were shallow cargo vessels between 40 and 60 feet long! Eighteen cannons weighing up to 1750 pounds each. To make matters worse when Washington and his men reached the launching point the drizzle turned into a driving rain with sleet and snow.

With the crossing accomplished there was still a 10 mile march to get to these Hessian Soldiers. Washington considered delaying the attack with all the set backs but in the end Washington and his army attacked on the morning of December 26th defeating the Hessian encampment and doing what he hoped. The victory gave his ragged troops hope.

Washington.

The famous painting of this crossing was painted by a German Artist named Emanuel Leutze. The painting became famous on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The message of the painting is a brave leader George Washington and comrades crossing the frozen Delaware River on their way to victory in the Battle of Trenton. The painting was shipped to the United States and exhibited in New York and The US Capitol Rotunda in Washington DC. It was called by some the grandest most majestic painting ever exhibited in the United States, quite a statement! The painting is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

You may have your own opinion on George Washington. Many of his life accomplishments speak for themselves. His leadership was instrumental in the forming of our country, The United States of America.