



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 2142

ST. LOUIS COUNTY SCHOOLS

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APRIL 2021

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Superintendent's Update



Supt. Reggie Engebretson, Ed.D

It's Monday, March 15, 2021, as I write this article. One year ago today, I notified all of our staff and families that Governor Walz was closing school in three days. IN THREE DAYS! We had two days to see our students and say goodbye. We had no idea how long school would be closed. A few days? A few weeks? We didn't know. We had two days to get a plan in place to provide childcare to all the essential workers who needed childcare while school was closed. We had two days to get a plan in place to send home food to all of our families. We had eight school days to prepare to teach from a distance – from a computer in our home to the computer/iPad/iPhone in the student's home. This was crazy and it was a time filled with angst, fear, and stress.

It's now a year later and you certainly know the rest of the story, as the late Paul Harvey used to say (remember him?). What a year it has been! As I listen to my superintendent colleagues around the state talk about bringing kids back into school for the first time since last March, my heart goes out to them, to their staff,

(Continued on page 2)

A Class of Calculation

Region-wide accelerated elementary math program benefits student problem solving, thinking, and social skills

By Lee Bloomquist

Math is a common denominator for a group of gifted and talented elementary students within St. Louis County Schools and the region.

A Regional Gifted and Talented Math Program is teaching advanced mathematics through St. Louis County Schools to 49 fifth- and sixth-graders in eight northeastern Minnesota school districts.

“The math skills are important,” Kristi Berlin, St. Louis County Schools director of teaching and learning, said. “But it's also problem solving, the thinking skills and socialization as they solve math problems.”

Accelerated math students from St. Louis County Schools, Chisholm, Ely, International Falls, Littlefork-Big Falls, Mesabi East, Mountain Iron-Buhl and Rock Ridge, are enrolled in the program.

Students utilize Zoom for classes 45 minutes a day, four days a week.

“Dr. Engebretson and I met in the summer of 2019 with area administrators to look at what we could do,” Berlin said. “Everyone has students who are accelerated, but the question was how to get them together. Then, when COVID hit, we had the technology with Zoom and we had teachers who knew how to use it.”

Two St. Louis County Schools distance learning instructors, Lisa Repensky at Cherry Campus and Crystal Poppler at Northeast Range Campus, teach the class.



North Woods Campus Regional Gifted and Talented Math Program students Carsyn Burnett, Aubrey Olson-Stoltenberg, Zoey Burckhardt and Rebecca Koch work on assignments at school.

This year, 24 fifth-graders and 25 sixth-graders are enrolled in the program.

“They're all individuals, but there's a lot of bright kids,” Repensky, who instructs fifth-graders, said. “This is a chance for them to do something special. It's a chance for them to branch out a bit.”

Some students connect to the class from their school. Others from home.

Students in the program are in the top 95 percent of their class level math test scores, recommended by staff, and enrolled with parental approval.

(Continued on page 2)

Northeast Range teacher Ryan Lindsay receives recognition

Ryan Lindsay, instructor at Northeast Range School, was recently honored with the Aspirations in Computing Educator Award. The award, presented by the National Center for Women and Information Technology, recognizes exemplary educators who play a pivotal role in promoting and encouraging gender equity in computing.

Mr. Lindsay teaches a concurrent enrollment computer science class which has included students from Northeast Range, North Woods, and South Ridge Schools. The Mobile Computer Science Principles course involves programming phone apps using a friendly block-based system. The curriculum is online and successful students receive college credit from Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU). District students interested in computer science or just wanting some background in a field that is changing how the world works



Mr. Lindsay is pictured here teaching students in person and through distance learning.

are encouraged to talk with their school counselor about the opportunity to take Mobile CSP.

Mr. Lindsay also teaches a Robotics class, which is another STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) course. The Robotics team received local, state, national and even international press last year for their innovative “gro-

(Continued on page 2)

Changes in Registration for 2021-2022 School Year

Registration will be starting early to help us prepare for the upcoming school year. The earlier you register, the earlier we can set up classes and bus routes for students.

Registration will begin May 24, 2021

• **Supt’s. Update...** *(Continued from front page)*

to the students, and to the families. I can’t imagine going this long without having our students in school. I am so grateful that we have been able to be in school all year. We used the option of taking the week before and the week after the winter holidays for distance learning to help ensure that staff, students, and families would be healthy over the winter break. I think this decision helped us, as our case rate has been very low since January and we have not had to do a “re-set” in our schools due to a high outbreak, like we had to do last fall for two of our five schools.

As we move closer and closer back to a sense of normalcy, I want you to know that all of our staff — not just the teachers — but ALL staff, who want the vaccine, have been vaccinated. This has helped to reduce anxiety and allow us to keep our staff in school, even if they are a close contact to someone who tests positive. Our numbers within the schools have been minimal, if non-existent. Some of our schools have not had a positive case since December. The other schools have had minimal numbers of positive cases since returning in January. These are good things and I hope we can keep this up until school lets out on June 3, 2021.

As we move into the last few months of the school year, and as the Governor continues to loosen the restrictions, we are looking at being able to provide op-

portunities for our students that they did not have last spring. As I write this, I’m not sure about having a prom, but it’s a possibility. Graduation will move back indoors and not be a drive-up or drive-through ceremony from your car, like it was last year. Outdoor activities for our elementary students will be planned as the weather continues to warm up. We are planning on doing a variety of programming this summer which will allow kids some options for summer fun and skill-building. More information will be coming out in the next few weeks as we plan for activities.

While it feels great to be able to talk about the upcoming activities this spring and summer, I know that we are still in the pandemic and still fighting the virus. We must continue to wear masks and practice social distancing. If we have symptoms, we need to stay home. If our kids have symptoms, they need to stay home. We want to keep the virus out of the schools and keep our schools open.

Thank you parents, guardians, staff, school board, and community members for all the support in helping us keep our kids in school. As the old saying goes, “It takes a village to raise a child,” and it has certainly been a team effort to get through this past year. I couldn’t have done my work without all of you, so please know how grateful I am that you are part of our 2142 team.

Panthers take K-9 loss to heart



Duluth PD Officer Aaron Haller and K-9 Luna.

The tragic loss of Duluth Police K-9 Officer Luna was a very sad event for many South Ridge Panthers. K-9 Officers hold a very special place in the hearts of many community members, especially children.

Coinciding with Snow Week, the Panthers held a coin drive for the Northland K-9 Foundation. This Foundation helps the police departments of Duluth and Superior purchase dogs for police work. One police dog costs about \$15,000 to purchase. The coin drive brought in \$500 Monday through Thursday. Mrs. Cox, the

organizer of the fundraiser, hoped by Friday, the total would reach \$1,000. This would be a significant donation towards the purchase and training of a new police dog.

With ice cream treats on the line for the top two grades, the coins, dollars, and checks came rolling in on Friday like a Northland blizzard. Mrs. Cox spent two hours on Friday counting coins and tallying the money. When all donations were in, the fifth grade brought in the most money with \$474 raised!

The grand total for the whole coin drive was \$1558.10. Thank you to all who supported this fundraising effort for a very worthy cause!



Friday’s frenzy of competitive coin collecting. The fifth grade filled two buckets!

• **Ryan Lindsay...** *(Continued from front page)*

cery bot.” The team engineered and built the grocery bot to ensure socially distanced grocery delivery. They were featured on WDIO-TV, KBJR-TV, MPR and on the international FIRST Virtual Showcase. They were also featured on Podcast 360 and the FORBES website.

Mr. Lindsay participates on a National Science Foundation grant team based out of the College of St. Scholastica who partnered with Southwest Minnesota State University and Capital Community College in Connecticut. Currently in year three of the project, the team is examining concurrent enrollment computer sci-

ence classes as a pathway to broaden participation among females and underrepresented minorities. In Summer 2020, Mr. Ryan presented at the annual Computer Science Teachers Association national conference, which was held virtually. In addition, he has co-authored a published paper and has also served as the Master Teacher for the Mobile CSP professional development program that prepares teachers to teach the course through SMSU.

Congratulations, Mr. Lindsay, on receiving the Aspirations in Computing Educator Award! Well deserved!

• **A Class of Calculation**

(Continued from front page)

“We had zero say no,” Berlin said. “Every parent and student was excited for the opportunity.”

Students in the program still take their regular math classes.

But the accelerated program challenges the students with higher level math skills.

“They do a lot of proportional reasoning and probability work to add value to what they get in school,” Berlin said. “It’s still another class, but there was no hesitation by these kids to take another class.”

Students love the new program, which is focusing on theoretical and experimental probability (odds) and proportional reasoning (fractions and ratios), Repensky said.

“Up until this year, we didn’t have a program for these high-fliers,” Repensky said. “It’s like they can do math in their head. It’s amazing.”

Sixth-grade students anxiously look forward to class, Poppler said.

“They are super high achieving math students and they are super excited to be there every day and to learn something different every day,” Poppler said. “They love to work in small groups. It’s fun to have kids from so many different districts. Getting to meet all these kids and the excitement of getting to know each other has been cool too.”

Accelerated learning programs benefit students and the region, Berlin said.

“If we can work together as a region, it doesn’t matter if you have only one



North Woods Campus Regional Gifted and Talented Math Program student Ranier (Ray) Jacobson completes a math assignment.

student who qualifies,” Berlin said. “The key is to have opportunity in the region. These are high-functioning students who can get together, get to know kids from all over the region, continue with that through high school and have this whole new network of students who they can work with. That’s what’s exciting. It’s a real community feel.”

Plans are to continue expanding accelerated educational programs within St. Louis County Schools in partnership with other area school districts, Berlin said.

“We are already starting to see if we can add a seventh-grade accelerated math program next fall and then add a grade level each year. We would also like to add accelerated reading at the elementary level.”



Members of the robotics team, Zoey, Isaac and Oskar, are pictured here along with the innovative grocery bot.

NER SCHOOL ONE ACT TEAM



The Northeast Range School One Act Team placed second in the Sub-Section Contest and, as a result, moved onto the Section Contest where they performed wonderfully and were just a step away from State competition. Their dedication and hard work made their advisor, Mr. Kaufenberg, proud. "Thank you, NER Team, for an amazing experience." Top row, left to right: Hannah Reichensperger, Layne Kaufenberg, Director Mr. Joe, Rylan Poppenhagen, Logan Meskill. Middle row, left to right: Phoebe Morgan, Natalie Backe, Abby Koivisto, Greyson Reichensperger. Bottom, on the floor: Tuuli Koivisto.

NORTH WOODS BOOKMARK CONTEST



The North Woods School library held its annual bookmark contest for I Love to Read Month. Bookmarks were very colorful and bold this year! Each elementary class had a winner. Zoey Burckhardt was the grand prize winner. Her bookmark (pictured below) will be copied and everyone will receive one. *Congratulations to all winners!!*

‘I LOVE TO READ MONTH’ AT NORTH WOODS



North Woods first-graders concluded “I Love To Read Month” with a D.E.A.R Day (Drop Everything and Read).



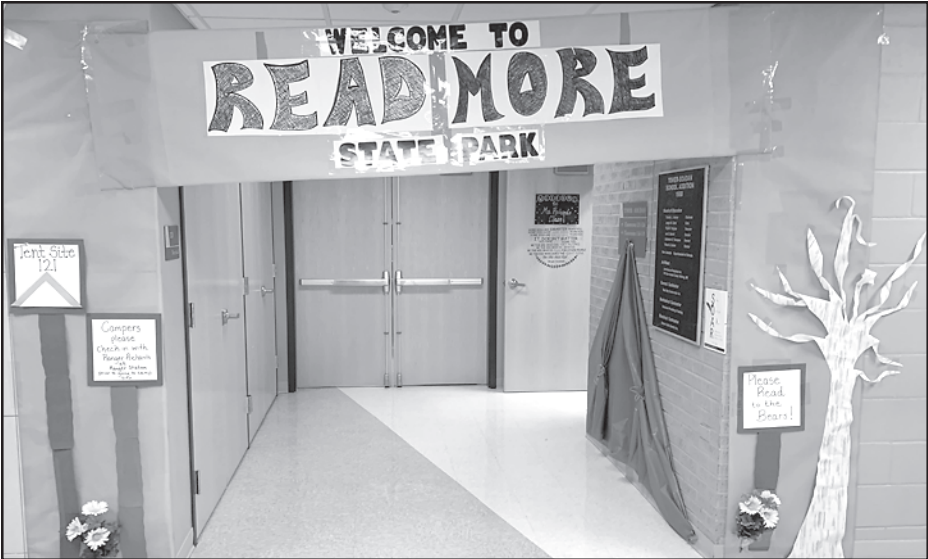
CELEBRATING DR. SEUSS' BIRTHDAY AT NORTH WOODS



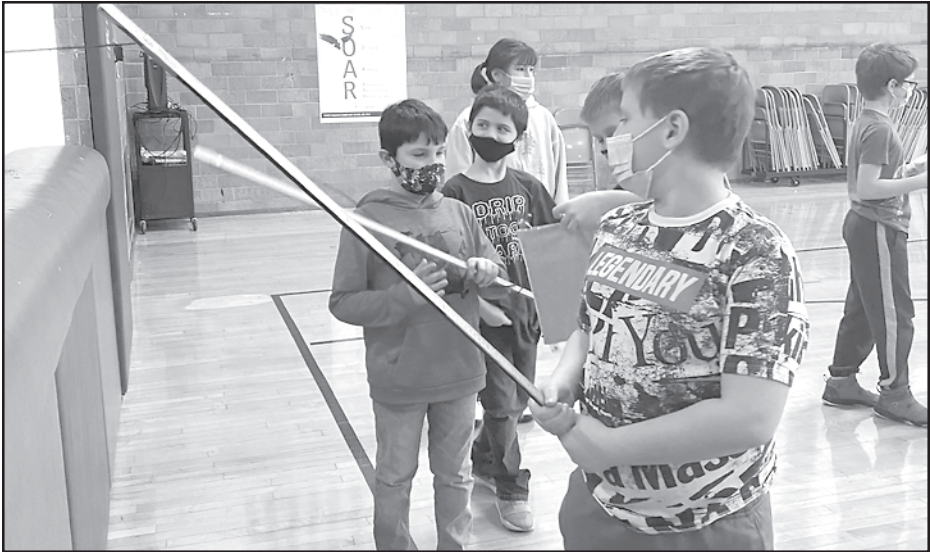
In honor of Dr. Seuss' birthday, pre-school students at North Woods School celebrated "Cat in the Hat Day." The celebration included reading "Cat in the Hat," making "Thing 1" (or "Thing 2" or 3, 4, 5 or more) handprint art, and making and eating a special treat!



'I LOVE TO READ' MONTH AT TOWER-SOUDAN



Staff at Tower-Soudan School kicked off February by decorating the halls using a camping theme for "I Love to Read Month." On February 1, the students went to the gym to go "fishing." The catch of the day included a carrying case with a book and a flashlight inside. Students were very excited to begin reading their books. The campsites (classrooms) went dark and the kids used their flashlights to begin reading. Students were given a form to bring home to monitor how much they read during the month. The goal: encouraging all families to find ways to instill a love and passion for reading throughout the year.



T-S Students 'Go Fishing.' As part of the kick-off to "I Love to Read" month, the students at Tower-Soudan Elementary went "fishing" for books! Each student had previously chosen a book from a Scholastic flyer. Those books were ordered and then put in a special book tote with a small flashlight. When the students went to the "pond" in the gym, they were excited to reel in their new reading packs. Throughout the month, students enjoyed "lights out and read" time in their classrooms with their flashlights and books. Pictured are T-S students "fishing for books."

Kindergarten fun!



T-S Students Are 'Happy Campers.' This year's theme for February's "I Love to Read" month at T-S was "Camp Out with a Good Book." In one picture students pose in front of a camping scene and in the other picture a student pretends to make s'mores in front of a campfire scene.



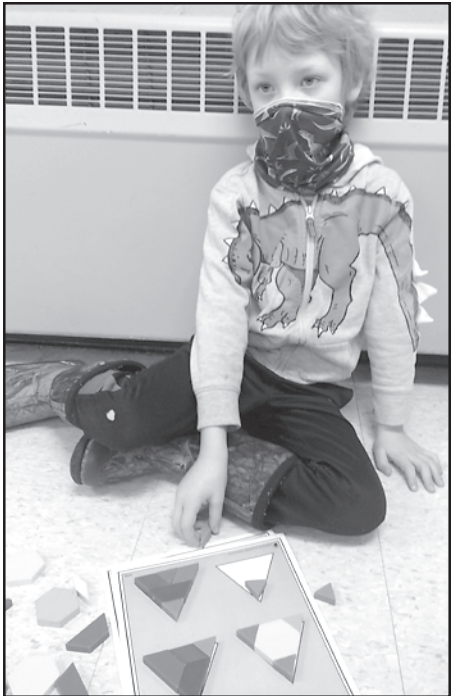
Reminders to Tower-Soudan Families

An events calendar is now available! While the number of events is minimal at this time due to the pandemic, the school hopes to add more events soon. The calendar provides an easy way to see what is going on at the school and can be found on the school's website or Facebook page.

Any family with children attending Tower-Soudan who is not receiving the school's newsletter is invited to send an email to Mr. Jirik at jjirik@isd2142.12.mn.us.

Kindergarten 2021-2022

Kindergarten registration information has been mailed to all families on our Early Childhood census who are not attending the district preschool program. If you are new to the area and have not received any information, please contact your local school.



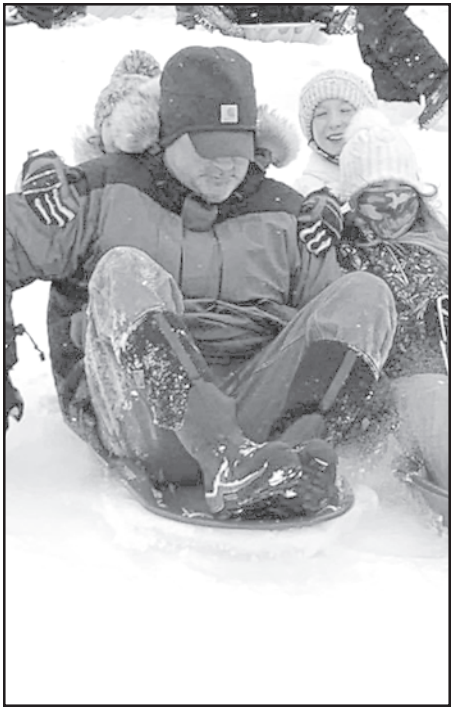
Pictured are Tower-Soudan kindergarten students Cecelia and Bennett making their special creations with pattern blocks!

Happy 100th Day of School



Tower-Soudan second-grader Shenze shows her masterpiece made with 100 mini-marshmallows and 100 toothpicks in honor of the 100th day of school!!

Let's Go Sliding!



Tower-Soudan students enjoyed the sliding hill outside the school during winter weather as part of their gym time with Mr. Chiabotti.

Preschool 2021-22

Preschool registration information has been mailed to all families on our Early Childhood census. If you want information about preschool, please contact DaNeil or your school's preschool teacher. If you did not receive information by mail, we will need to add you to our census. Please call or email DaNeil the following information: Child's legal name, birthday, parent name, address, phone number and email. Children must be 4 years old on or before September 1, 2021, to register for preschool. Peek in to Preschool events will be held at each school in April.

DaNeil 218-749-8130 ex 1116 or dsirjord@isd2142.k12.mn.us



Cherry School Reading Wall of Fame

The following students became members of the "Reading Wall of Fame" by the end of January: Ezekiel Goerdt (K), Levi Lind (K), Lydia Acosta (K), Walker Saver (K), Andrew Peterson (K), Boden Boyer (K), Matthew Wilhelm (K), Jed Asuma (K), Izzy Ojala (K), Aaron Kick (1), Lilianna Acosta (1), Elsa Warren (1), Dominic Bergerson (1), Ellie Besemann (1), Michael Peterson (1), Lydia Cossalter (1), Louis Courteau (1), Elsa Warren (1), Keegin Turkula (1), Micah Biles (2), Grace McNickle (2), Adam Weiss (2), Eliza Johnson (2), Radlee Cooper (3), Brooklyn Alesch (4), Izzy Buresh (4), Hayden Lehman (4), Reed Lind (4), Allie Grotberg (4), Nakoya Zozgornick (4), Hailey Warwas (4), Anniston Stenlund (4), Josey Carver (4), Jackson Bayliss (4), Brodie Puhek (4), Alex Aimonette (5), David Shaver (5), Maggie McLaughlin (6), TehLia Martin (6).

Students had to read books and take AR quizzes to earn 40 points. Kindergarten and 1st-grade students had to read 900 minutes. These students achieved their goal by the end of February. Their pictures are posted in our main hall at the school. Cherry School is so proud of our Reading Tigers!!!

ROAR Soars at Cherry School

Over the last two years, the Cherry elementary school has implemented the ROAR (Respect, On-task, Always Safe, and Responsible) program. This program was created from a PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) initiative. ROAR has resulted in improved school culture and student behavior.

Elementary students in grades Pre-K through 6 follow ROAR expectations each day and enjoy receiving the positive reinforcement that comes in the form of PAWS. PAWS also serve as reminders of the connections that staff make each day with the students.

Through these PAWS, students can be awarded ROAR Student of the Month. February was an especially ROARtastic one as all students participated in a Tiger ROAR art contest and booster event which was the first gym event of the school year! The booster event consisted of reviewing the school expectations and showing videos of both students and teachers following ROAR. It ended with a big surprise revealing the staff member who was playing the part of Stripes, the school's mascot.

ROAR continues to help students soar and succeed!



Cherry Preschoolers Celebrate 'I Love to Read' Month



In the month of February, every time these preschoolers finished reading a book at home, they cut out a paper "snowball" and wrote their name on it. Their parents wrote the name of the book on the snowball. Their teacher, Ms. Deb, then placed the snowballs into the "mystery picture" as they were turned in. The first goal was to reach 350 books

read... the reward: a pajama and popcorn party for the children! The second goal was to reach 500 books read... the reward: an ice cream party! The final count of 503 books read resulted in more than enough snowballs to reveal the "mystery picture"... a unicorn and a rainbow!

Cherry Preschoolers Make Suet Balls



Cherry School preschoolers are pictured here making suet balls for the birds. Once done, the preschoolers walked to the school forest and hung them in the trees. The children enjoyed going back to the school forest to check on the feeders and to see the variety of animal tracks left in the snow.

"Small Schools With Big Opportunities -- Where Everybody is Somebody!"

Parents — We are here for you!

Check out the Parenting Resources section on our website at <https://www.isd2142.net/page/3003>. On the website you will find four different newsletters that are changed monthly along with a parent involvement library full of short brochures on a variety of topics parents are interested in.

NER students busy during I Love to Read Month



Northeast Range elementary students were busy during I Love to Read Month in February. Students tracked their reading minutes each week and participated in dress-up days and activities highlighting some of the “I Survived” books by author Lauren Tarshis.

I Love to Read Month was extra special this year as the school held a grand ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new book vending machine made possible by the Bonnie J Christensen Trust. Bonnie was a long-time teacher at the school and the donation received from her trust was earmarked to promote literacy and an excitement in kids for reading. All elementary students were eligible to choose a book from the vending machine through various reading activities or if they were caught SOARing by being Safe, Offering kindness, showing how to be Always Responsible & Respectful. The ceremony included Mrs. Engman, Principal, and second-grade students Breezy and Lexa. The event was recorded and sent to all classrooms for students to watch.



ECFE – Early Childhood Family Education

If you have questions about ECFE, please contact the ECFE staff at your school! We are here to support you as a parent! Please reach out! Join us for a class!

School	Staff	email
Cherry	Lori Udovich, Parent Educator Jocelyn Jerkovich, Child Educator	ludovich@isd2142.k12.mn.us jajerkovich@isd2142.k12.mn.us
North Woods	Becky Chopp, Child Educator Lori Udovich, Parent Educator	bchopp@isd2142.k12.mn.us ludovich@isd2142.k12.mn.us
Northeast Range	Jane Bradford, Child Educator Sarah Hansen, Parent Educator	jbradford@isd2142.k12.mn.us shansen@isd2142.k12.mn.us
South Ridge	Christina Nelson, Child Educator Sara Lorbiecki-Brown, Parent Educator	chrishnelson@isd2142.k12.mn.us slorbieckibrown@isd2142.k12.mn.us
Tower-Soudan	Mary Larson, Child Educator Sarah Hansen, Parent Educator	mlarson@isd2142.k12.mn.us shansen@isd2142.k12.mn.us

South Ridge students earn ‘Paws-itive Paws’



Mr. Bernard, South Ridge School principal, presents awards to elementary students for earning "Paws-itive Paws" during the month of February. Students earn Paws-itive Paws for being recognized doing one of the three "R's".... being Respectful, being Responsible, or being Ready to Learn. Each month 17 students are recognized. *Congratulations to all students earning Paws-itive Paws!*



Tower-Soudan students enjoy the sunshine and fresh air during "mask breaks."



Help us build our Early Childhood Mailing List!

Do you have a child under the age of 5? If so, we would like to add you to our Early Childhood mailing list. Please call and leave a message for DaNeil at 218-749-8130 ex 1116 or email her at dsirjor@isd2142.k12.mn.us. Or you can contact your school Early Childhood team and ask them to add you to the Early Childhood list. We need: Parent and child’s name (legal names), child’s birthday, address, phone number and if you have an email we would like that too!

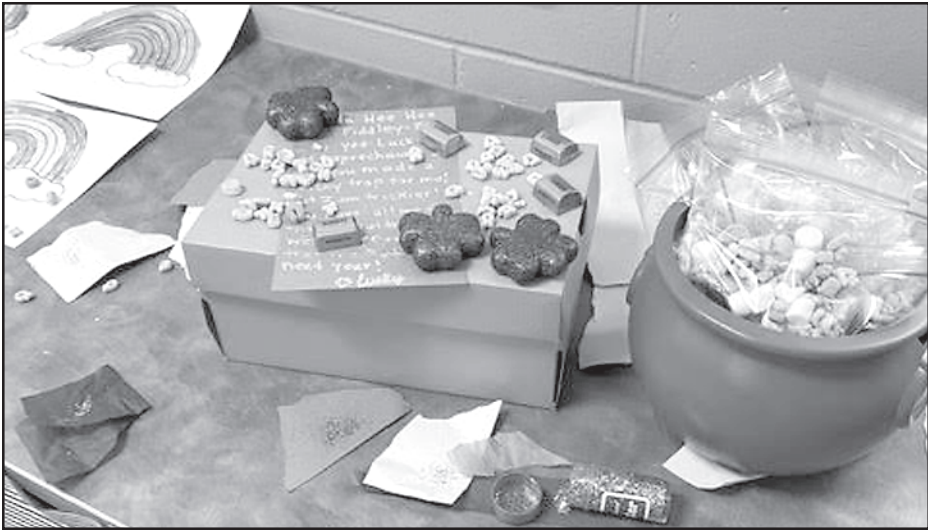
STEM Day for North Woods Pre-schoolers



On a recent STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Day in pre-school at North Woods School, the kiddos became little engineers. They looked at their building materials and made a plan. Then, they made their plan come to life. Pictured here are some of their creations, including a flag proudly displayed on one of the buildings.



LUCKY? OR NOT?



When Ms. Thompson's pre-schoolers came to school on March 17, they found that Lucky the Leprechaun had visited their North Woods School classroom in the early morning, and in his mischievous manner, he created a mess! He tipped over a bin of large-size Lego-style building blocks on the carpet. He tipped over smaller bins of learning manipulatives on tables. Many of the little chairs were found lying on their sides.

The pre-schoolers knew it was Lucky who created the mess because he left behind his hat and some of the things he likes most, including shamrocks, miniature marshmallows, and golden-wrapped chocolate nuggets. He also left a note telling them he had visited many classrooms in his lifetime, but no one has ever

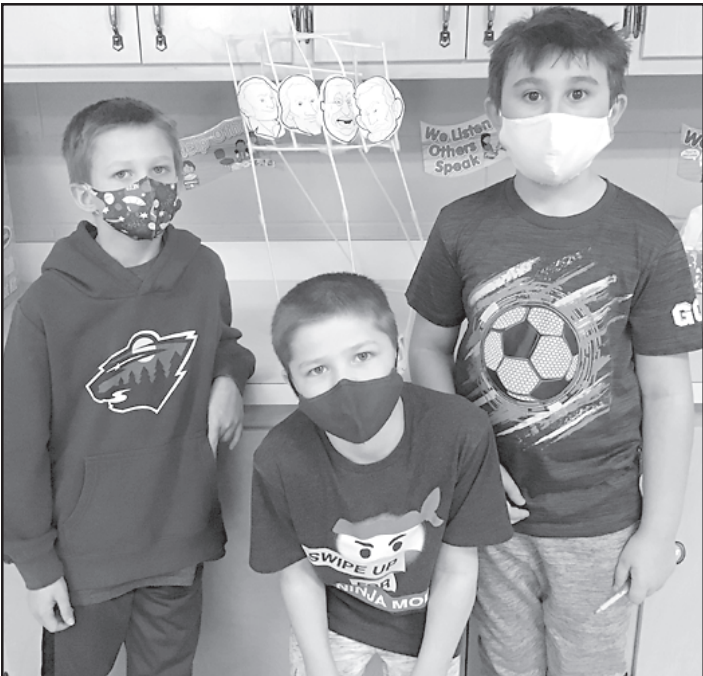
been able to catch him.

The students were determined they could build a trap, lure Lucky to it, and capture him. They started by creating a plan for their trap. Next, they set to work building what they were sure would be the perfect trap.

The students returned from recess and lunch only to find that Lucky had been back to their classroom while they were gone! But, he didn't get caught in their trap! Instead, he left them a nice note acknowledging that they made a tricky trap with his favorite things to lure him, but telling them that he was even trickier and was able to escape. He wished them luck in trying to trap him next year, grabbed his hat, and left them some yummy treats!



T-S Students Study Transfer of Energy & Engineering

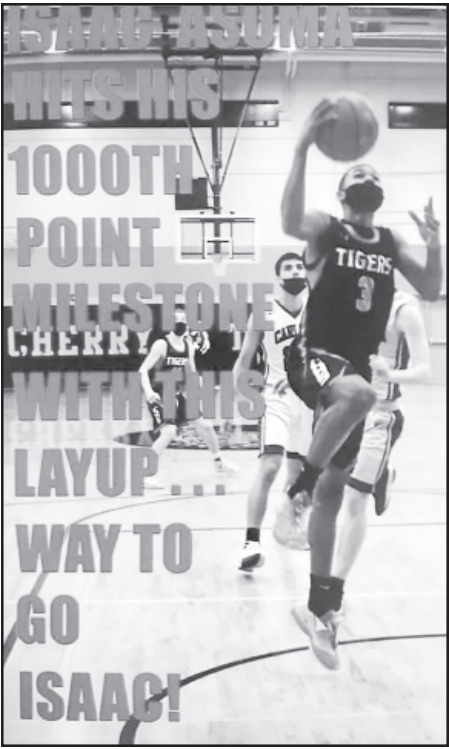


Tower-Soudan third- and fourth-grade students are pictured here in their study of the transfer of energy and engineering (making a chain reaction machine) and balanced forces (creating their version of Mount Rushmore).

We Love Whales

Tower-Soudan first- and second-grade students recently learned about animals that migrate and hibernate in the winter months. After learning many cool facts about gray whales, the students received their own stuffed whales. Levi is excited to show his new pet whale.





Thursday, February 25, 2021, was a big night for freshman student Isaac Asuma, as he scored his 1,000th point in the varsity basketball game against Carlton. The Cherry Tigers won the game 84-46. Isaac scored 38 points, which included five 3-point shots. Congratulations, Isaac! *(Photo credit to Darlene Stenlund Thomas, Cherry High School Alumnus Class of 1977 and Cherry Fan Photographer.)*

CONGRATULATIONS, LAUREN!

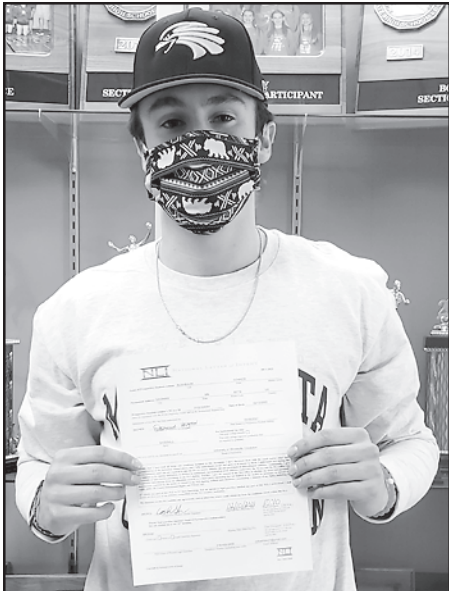
Monday, March 8, 2021, was a big night for junior student Lauren Staples, as she scored her 1,000th point in the varsity basketball game against North Woods. The Cherry Tigers won the game 84-29.

Congratulations, Lauren!

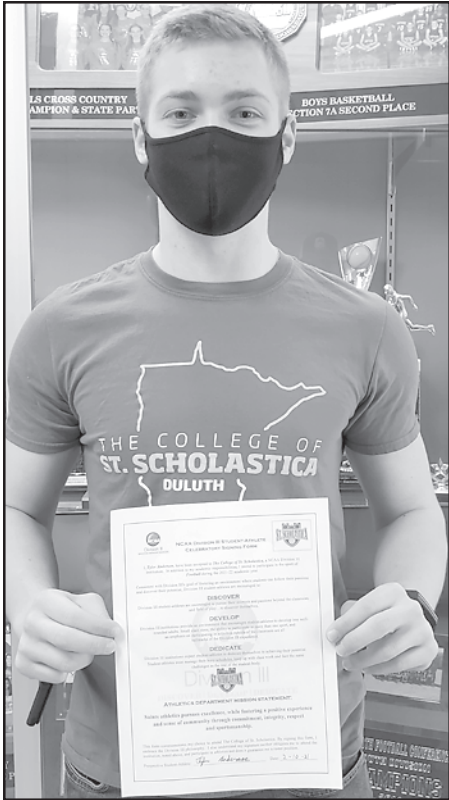
(Photo credit to Darlene Stenlund Thomas, Cherry High School Alumnus Class of 1977 and Cherry Fan Photographer.)



Sign Letters of Intent



Connor Bushbaum, a senior at South Ridge, signed his National Letter of Intent to attend the University of Minnesota - Crookston to play baseball. *Congratulations and good luck, Connor!*



Tyler Anderson, a senior at South Ridge, signed his National Letter of Intent to attend the College of St. Scholastica to play Football. *Congratulations and good luck, Tyler!*