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Vol. 23 • Issue 22

Sat., May 28, 2022

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Mark Hoge assists the next generation of basketball players



Personal basketball trainer Mark Hoge has Crosby-Ironton 8th grade varsity basketball player, Tori Oehrlein, dribble with two basketballs while he challenges her with a resistance drill. He uses the two ball drill with all of his students because during a game situation it makes dribbling seem easier.

Article reprinted with permission from the Crosby-Ironton Courier

By JOAN HASSKAMP

After a professional basketball career took him from Mexico to Massachusetts, Mark Hoge has returned home to Crosby-Ironton.

While he loved playing basketball, Hoge has made the decision to focus his energy on helping younger players. Last October, he formed Hoge's Coaching Clinic. He offers individual and group basketball lessons.

Hoge is currently instructing 14 players. He expects to pick

up more students now that organized school basketball programs have ended. He instructs both males and females interested in improving their games.

As a personal basketball trainer, Hoge not only teaches youth how to dribble and shoot but also the chess side of the game as he calls it. He is equally as focused on teaching his students how to grow a professional mindset and lifestyle.

If the youth are interested in going to the next level, whether that be college or professional, he works on getting youth ready physically and mentally.

"Your personality and how you carry yourself matter as you progress up the ladder in basketball," he said. "Colleges and professional organizations care about how you present yourself."

Hoge's coaching clinic is centered around his winning philosophy. He says the three keys to a successful life are: discipline, dedication and a willingness to learn.

According to Hoge, discipline matters because it applies to all facets of a person's life. "The same principles you need to be successful in basketball

Continued on Page 5

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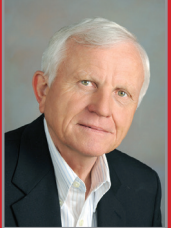
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James Hess charged with murder

A Hill City man has been charged with second degree murder for the October 2021 shooting death of his brother.



Investigators arrested James Robert Hess, 48, Tuesday morning at his home. He was taken into custody without incident and booked into the

Aitkin County Jail. The victim, identified by the Ramsey County Medical Examiner's Office as William Harold Hess Jr., 52, of Hill City, was found deceased from a gunshot wound on May 12, 2022, inside of a homemade camper just west of 380th Avenue in Hill Lake

Township in Aitkin County. The homicide investigation was conducted by the Aitkin County Sheriff's Office and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension with significant assistance from the Aitkin, Itasca, and Mille Lacs Violent Crime Enforcement Team (AIM VCET).

James Robert Hess appeared in Aitkin County District Court on May 25 before the Honorable Judge David Hermerding. His release conditions have been set at \$1,000,000 bail or bond with no conditions, or \$500,000 non-cash bond with conditions, or \$500,000 cash bail with conditions.

Hess remains in the Aitkin County Jail with additional charges pending.

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MEMORIAL DAY

All are encouraged to attend these Memorial Day events.
Past or present military personnel are also encouraged to wear their uniform.
For comfort, bring lawn chairs for outdoor ceremonies.

Aitkin — 11 a.m. at the Aitkin VFW, followed by a light lunch.
Brainerd — 9 a.m. wreath ceremony at the Laurel Street Bridge; 9:45 a.m. short ceremony at the All-Veterans Memorial; 10:30 a.m. parade on 3rd Avenue NE to Evergreen Cemetery; 11:00 a.m. main ceremony at Evergreen Cemetery with the High School Band. For those who can't attend in person, the Evergreen Cemetery event will go live on <https://www.facebook.com/brainerdmemorialday>. There will be a lunch at the Brainerd American Legion, 708 Front Street, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., for veterans and their families. Donations will be accepted.
Crosslake — 10 a.m. the Crosslake/Fifty Lakes American Legion Post 500 will lead the annual Crosslake Memorial Day ceremony the Crosslake Pinewood Cemetery. The public is invited to help pay tribute to the veterans. Everyone is encouraged to bring lawn chairs and umbrellas in case of inclement weather.
McGregor — 1:30 p.m. Lakeview Cemetery, 3 miles west of Sather's on CR 3 (480th St.), Workman Township. Music by Bill Haapoja, free U.S. flags and pocket copies of U.S. Constitution. Combined Palisade and McGregor VFW and McGregor American Legion will conduct graveside memorial services at the grave U.S. Navy Veteran Harold Troop.
Nisswa — noon at the Nisswa American Legion Post 627
Pequot Lakes — 10 a.m. in the Pequot Lakes High School auditorium. Following the event, the color guard will march to Our Savior's Lutheran Church Cemetery to fire a salute for fallen veterans. They will then march to Sibley Park for the dedication of a Navy wreath on Sibley Lake. After the ceremony, the community is invited to a lunch at the American Legion in Pequot Lakes. Lunch will be free and tap beers will be 49 cents for veterans. At 2 p.m., there will be an indoor/outdoor meat raffle with all proceeds going to the Pequot Lakes Fire Department.
Pine River — The Pine River American Legion Post 163 will host three Memorial Day services Monday, May 30, starting at 9:30 a.m. There will be color guard ceremonies performed at each service. The public is invited to attend the commemorative service to honor those who served and those who sacrificed all during military service. The first will take place at 9:30 a.m. at the Pine River dam. The service will then move to Pine Ridge Cemetery on County Road 1 with honors being presented at 10 a.m. The final service will be at 11 a.m. at Swanburg Cemetery, also on CR 1. T

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COMMUNITY EVENTS

May
28th - The Crossing Arts Alliance Set of Three Stacker workshop Rings with Jim Reed, 12-3:30 pm. To enroll call TCAA at 218-833-0416

June
4th - Pequot Lakes Cherry Car Show and Craft Fair, 9am- 4pm, Trailside Park, corner of Hwy. 371 and Co. Rd. 11, Registration 7 am with \$10 fee. For more info call 218-821-2496.
6th - The Friends of the Brainerd Public Library Brown Bag Lunch Summer Author Series is back in person in the large meeting room of the Brainerd Public Library on Mondays in June and July at noon.
8th - Free Health Care Fraud, Waste & Abuse Prevention Online Class choose between 10am - 11:30 am session or 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. Attendees will learn how to detect and report potential errors, fraud and abuse; review potential fraud and scams targeting older adults, how to read their Medicare Summary Notice, learn tips to help protect their Medicare beneficiary number, and how to protect-detect-report Medicare scams and fraud. It is offered online using the easy-to-use Microsoft Teams meeting platform. To register go to: www.arrowheadaging.org/classes-workshops-trainings or call the Senior LinkAge Line at 800-333-2433. We are committed to accessibility. If you have an accommodation request that will allow you to participate in the class more fully, please contact Lynelle at lhanson@arc.org by June 3, 2022.
8th - Crosslake Ideal Lions will meet 6pm at Crosslake Center Picnic Pavilion with social hour at 5:30. Interested persons are invited to attend and enjoy potluck.
9th - Plant Sale, starting at noon, at the Northland Arboretum.
9th - Music in the Park at Crosby Memorial Park on Serpent Lake, 5 pm. Admission is free.
18th - Hog Roast Fun Day Fundraiser 10am Beer Garden, 11am - 2pm Bake Sale and Sloppy Joes, afternoon live music by Mike and Jan Cherry, with other activities being planned including a fundraising raffle with over \$4,000 in fabulous prizes. Raffle tickets are available now from all Legion Members and at the Deerwood Legion. Tickets are also available for a 50/50 Cash Drawing in advance and the day

Send Your Photos, News and Community Events to hopper@crosbyironton.net

OBITUARIES

ELMA JOHNSON



Elma Linnea (Chelmen) Johnson, 99½, of Aitkin died peacefully on Tuesday, May 17, 2022. Elma, who lived independently in her own home until March of 2022, died at Aicota Health Care Center after experiencing health issues.

Funeral Service for Elma will be 1:00 p.m. on Friday, July 15, 2022 at First Lutheran Church, Aitkin. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service at the church. Private burial will be in Dorris Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorials be given to First Lutheran Church, Aitkin, or the Lutheran Church in Liberia L.I.F.E Liberia Agricultural project.

She was born at home in Lac Qui Parle County on November 10, 1922. Elma had a varied and interesting life. During World War II, she worked at the Boeing Aircraft plant in Seattle, WA. When the war ended, and the men came back to work, Elma worked as a secretary at the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis. It was there she met Arne Johnson. They married in 1950 and had five children. Elma's work after marriage was homemaking, childrearing, being a store clerk at the Aitkin Ben Franklin store, and serving many years as the organist at First Lutheran Church in Aitkin. Her hobbies were knitting and hardanger embroidery. She was an avid reader and taught

all of her children to love books. Those who know Elma, speak of her as a woman of strong Christian faith and an ability to connect with and care about people of all ages and situations. Up until her illness in March, she served as the head of the Prayer Shawl and the Prayer Chain ministries at First Lutheran Church of Aitkin. She was a counselor and friend to families in the LGBTQ community and an active presence at Sunday worship.

Elma is survived by her children: Linda (D.Jensen Seyenkulo) Johnson Seyenkulo of Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa; Rodney (Carol) Johnson of New Holstein, WI; Laurel Johnson of Bloomfield, NE; five grandchildren: Sarah (Aaron) Tessaro, Abby (Mark Thierman) Johnson, Apu Seyenkulo, Kenata Seyenkulo, Yongor Linnea Seyenkulo; three great-grandchildren: Corinne Tessaro, Alex Johnson, Quinn Thierman; sister-in-law Ardelle Chelmen; and several nieces and nephews.

Elma's last line on phone conversations is one she leaves as a parting remark in her death: "Know you are loved."

She was preceded in death by her husband, Arnold (Arne) Johnson; parents, Rev. R.S. Chelmen and Mable (Wigen) Chelmen; an infant son; son, Randy Johnson; brother, C. Kenneth Chelmen and sister, Regina Swedberg.

Arrangements are with Sorensen-Root-Thompson Funeral Home & Cremation Services in Aitkin. www.srtfuneral.com

RICHARD SMEDBERG



Richard "Dick" Ralph Smedberg, 88 of Aitkin, died Friday, May 13, 2022.

There will be a gathering for friends and family Saturday, July 2, 2022 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Aitkin American Legion Post #86.

Dick was born on November 8, 1933 in Hennepin County to Fred and Edna (Olson) Smedberg. Dick and Lois remained in Hennepin County for many years as they raised their family on Lake Minnetonka. Dick was a craftsman and constantly honed his trade through many projects throughout the Twin Cities. Richard and Lois lived in Spring Park before he put his carpenter skills to the ultimate test by building their retirement home on Nord Lake in Aitkin County, one structure at a time. The lake kept them tightly connected with family and friends each summer. Dick and Lois loved hosting guests out on the pontoon, swimming and fishing by day and in front of the campfire by night. Dick was fond of water sports and

always had a new watercraft for guests to try. His laugh was infectious and the laughter was never-ending at the lake. Richard was a regular at the Aitkin American Legion Post 86 where he enjoyed participating in activities and the telling of just a few stories. Richard loved to dance and could be found on the dance floor when the right polka came along. His many friends at the Legion were a remarkable source of companionship and support in the years after Lois' passing.

He is survived by his sons: Gregory (Brenda) Smedberg and Mitchell (Teresa) Smedberg; four grandchildren: Jesse, Angela, Joseph and Adam; four great-grandchildren: Kayla, Alexandra, Jude and Marley; brother, Dale.

In addition to his parents, Dick was preceded in death by the love of his life, Lois; son, Bradley; sisters: Elna and Lynn and brothers: Roger and Rex.

Arrangements were with the Sorensen-Root-Thompson Funeral Home and Cremation Service of Aitkin. Leave online condolences at www.srtfuneral.com.

More Obituaries on Page 4

READER RIBBETS

Rep. Dale Lueck legislative update

As this goes to press, we have two working days left in this year's legislative session. The final details of legislation that will be passed is being chiseled out in House/Senate conference committees.

There remains significant tension as to how to deal with the approximately \$7 billion of excess tax collections. We are still not quite halfway (11 months) into the current fully funded \$52 billion-dollar state budget.

I remain convinced that a major portion of the excess tax dollars should be returned to the taxpayers with permanent tax reductions. We must more closely align tax collections with authorized state government spending. We must also maintain a robust reserve account for a rainy day.

It's clear to me that if the current administration in Washington continues to fail to take action to reduce the extreme

cost of energy our economy is headed for a serious recession on the scale, experienced during President Carter's Administration.

I continue to push to permanently eliminate the state income tax on seniors' social security pensions and selective reduction of other tax rates. My liberal friends across the aisle in House are not very warm to that idea. Their approach focuses on permanently increasing various tax credits and expanding and creating a host of new entitlements.

That is not permanent tax reduction, rather it simply redistributes tax dollars. New and increased tax credits sound good on the first look. However, that approach establishes a new level of entitlements that must be paid for year after year by other taxpayers.

When times get tough in the next recession, many will be out of work and consumer

spending will dramatically fall. That sets the stage for new tax increases to maintain those new entitlements. Over the past 40 years Minnesota has repeatedly fallen into that trap. Minnesota citizens rank among the highest-taxed citizens in the country, alongside the residents of New York and California.

Our citizens are currently struggling with high inflation, extraordinary high gas prices, increased food costs and now even baby formula shortages. We have about a \$7 billion budget surplus. I will continue to work on sending a big chunk back to taxpayers and save some for a rainy day. My liberal friends in the House should not be holding that up for billions in new entitlement spending.

Stay tuned, we are in the ninth inning!

Representative Dale Lueck
Minnesota House
District 10B

Importance of primary elections

You may have heard of primary elections, but let's talk a little about what they really are and why they are so important. Here are a couple examples of the purpose of primaries.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: County Commissioner positions are only allowed two names on the November general election ballot. When more than two people run for the same district seat, they are put on a primary ballot. The top two vote getters in the primary are moved on to the November ballot.

STATE SEATS: In Minne-

sota, political parties elect delegates to nominate and establish a party-endorsed candidate to run for Minnesota House, Minnesota Senate, Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State and State Auditor. People of the same party can still file and run against the endorsed candidates in the primary election. Only one candidate can be left per party on the general election ballot.

HOW IT WORKS: Each person chooses to vote a party-specific ballot. Non-partisan seats will be listed on all party primary ballots. Partisan

seats will only have the candidates for that party listed on the primary ballot. Choosing one or the other in no way forces you to vote that way in the general election nor does it require you to "register" with any party.

I strongly urge everyone to participate in the primary election on August 9, 2022. Early voting starts on June 24, so start your research on candidates now.

Travis J. Leiviska
Candidate for Aitkin County
Commissioner - District 3

LEGAL NOTICES

(Published in NewsHopper Saturday, May 28, 2022)

CITY OF CUYUNA NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: Notice is hereby given the Cuyuna City Council will convene for their regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, June 14, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. at the Cuyuna Fire Department to conduct the following public hearing:

Ordinance Amendment

03-2022 to amend the City of Cuyuna Zoning Ordinance No. 903.18, which addresses enforcement, violations, and penalties. The proposed amendment provides alternative methods of enforcing the Cuyuna Zoning Ordinance and additional provisions necessary related to payment of City costs for enforcement actions.

All interested persons are invited to attend these hearings at the Cuyuna Fire Department, 24849 Minnesota

Avenue, and be heard or send written comments to City of Cuyuna, PO Box 536, Deerwood, MN 56444 or via email at brittney.cotner@sourcewell-mn.gov. A staff report is made available at the Cuyuna Fire Department typically one week before the scheduled meeting.

Dated this May 20, 2022
BRITTNEY COTNER,
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Mark Hoge basketball trainer | Continued from Page 1

apply to real life as well," he said. "You have to trust the system and trust in each other. In a job you have to discipline yourself to do the work and develop the right attitude. As an individual you have to be willing to discipline yourself off and on the court."

Hoge's goal is to steer his students in the right direction. "Mindset, discipline, and determination are what make a great player," he said. "They are the keys needed to operate under pressure. Discipline makes the difference between being good or great and winning or losing. Talent doesn't separate good from great. It's a mindset. Great players are team supportive, know their role and do what is asked of them."

Hoge, the son of Barb and the late Paul Hoge, said the greatest players always lead by example. "Michael Jordan never asked another teammate to do something he wouldn't do himself," he explained. "A disciplined player will box out, pass the ball and play defense. The best players work together with others. They put team ahead of individual interests."

A professional mindset and attitude are essential because colleges treat basketball as a business more than a sport, he said. "If a player has a poor attitude, the organization won't want that player," he added. "Colleges want a disciplined culture in their program."

When scouts and coaches come to high schools on a recruiting visit, they are looking at far more than talent. That's because talent isn't the key to winning. "A team with less talent will beat a more skilled team if they are more disciplined," he said. "You win together and you lose together. Basketball is a team sport, not an individual sport."

"Coaches will not only talk to the coaches the recruit played under but also to the teachers, kitchen staff and janitors," Hoge said. "They want to see how you treat others because you're going to represent their culture and business. When you go to play for them, they want to make sure you have a business and professional mindset. They'll look at

personality, attitude, how you carry yourself and how you interact with others. They want someone who represents their organization in a professional manner. They want someone who fits into their culture. If you don't, they'll pass on you."

Hoge attributes his success to his willingness to learn from what's put in front of him. "While working a basketball camp when I was a senior in college, I learned a post move watching a fourth grader," he said. "I saw the kid make a move and I thought it was really an effective move so I added it to my arsenal. You always have to be open to learning something new. It was a good lesson to realize you can learn from anyone."

The 2010 C-I graduate played on state tournament teams in 2008 and 2010. He said the teams succeeded because they had a team concept. "There was no selfish play," he said. "We all followed the team system. We all did what we needed to do. We all led by example. We respected each other. We all rebounded and played defense. We were disciplined and played as a team"

Hoge is thankful he played for Coach Dave Galovich at C-I. "Coach Galovich is one of the greatest coaches of all time," he said. "He runs professional plays and professional drills. In college I realized how lucky I was to come from a high school program that teaches the entire game to players. I would never have played professionally, if not for Coach Galovich."

A 1,000-point scorer at C-I and an all-state selection, Hoge went on to play collegiately at the University of Jamestown from 2011 to 2014. Twice he was named an NAIA All American. During his career, he was First Team All-Conference, Conference MVP and Most Valuable Senior. He finished his career seventh on the all-time scoring list and first all-time in steals.

Hoge's personal training sessions are held in the Crosby-Ironton gymnasiums. The sessions are structured according to the age level. For younger kids he incorporates

more drills. He stresses basic skills including dribbling, passing, proper footwork and proper shooting form. "If you possess a strong skill set you will be able to play effective basketball no matter what system you're in," he said.

Eli, 11, and Madi Pexsa, 9, of Pillager, are two of his students. According to their mother, Nicky Pexsa, the kids look forward to their weekly lesson. "Mark makes it fun but he also motivates them," she said. "He knows how to push but not too hard. He knows how to connect with them."

When working with older kids, Hoge employs more complex drills which are relevant to the game. In practice, he has players of all ages dribble two balls which he said benefits the player during a game situation because it makes dribbling seem easier. "Training your brain to think about more than one thing is effective because in a game situation it makes the game feel slower for the player," he said.

Hoge also trains Crosby-Ironton varsity eighth grader, Tori Oehrlein. "He challenges me with my skills and helps me grow my game," she said. "We break down game film which is very helpful. From the film I can see what really happens in the game."

His philosophy is to prepare kids both mentally and physically to play the game. "To have a successful career in basketball just having physical skills won't be enough," he said. "Players have to develop a mental toughness to separate the good from the great."

Hoge teaches his students if they are interested in col-



Mark Hoge of Hoge's Coaching Clinic, explains a shooting drill to Eli and Madi Pexsa of Pillager. All lessons are held in the Crosby-Ironton gymnasium. Hoge trains players interested in improving their game. He currently he instructs 14 players. For younger players he stresses basic skills including, dribbling, passing, proper footwork, and proper shooting form.

lege ball, they have to market themselves from a young age. He said in Division 1 programs they are looking for players well before their senior year. Coaches and scouts are scouting out players in junior high or even younger. "Just being good in basketball isn't enough," he said. "There are thousands of good players. You need to show why you are the person their program needs. You need to work at basketball every day."

While Hoge knows he still can play basketball at a professional level, after much contemplation he made the decision to focus on helping others. It was a difficult decision because he said he loved basketball the minute he was born.

In retrospect, he realizes he didn't take the proper steps when he was in high school. "I didn't understand how the basketball world worked when I

was in high school," he said. "I didn't understand or know how to get the proper exposure. I didn't know what I needed to do to get the opportunities to play for a bigger college. It made it more difficult for me to enter the professional ranks. I now know what the colleges and professional teams are looking for and I want to share that knowledge with younger players."

From personal experience he knows the challenges kids face playing for a smaller school. "I want to help any player who wants to advance to the next level," he said. "You never know who is around you. You have to be ready for opportunities that arise."

When Hoge was recently

presented with an opportunity in his own life, he took it. Several weeks ago, he accepted a position as a Wealth Management Investment Representative with Unity Bank. While this ends his professional career, he is excited about the direction his life is taking.

"Training kids is one of the greatest joys in my life," Mark said. "I'm going to focus on helping the next generation get the opportunity to play. I want kids to get the opportunities I missed out on. My goal is to form good people as well as good players."

For more information, visit Hoge's Web page: www.hogecoachingclinic.com or e-mail: mhoge2214@gmail.com

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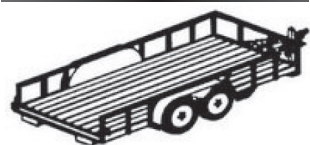
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