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February 14

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Long Lake Conservation Center strikes creative camping chord

As Minnesota experiences a welcome mid-winter thaw, it's only natural for thoughts to drift toward summer days spent in the great outdoors. This year, families have an exciting new reason to dream of warmer weather — and it comes with a beat.

Long Lake Conservation Center is introducing Camp Nature Rocks, a one-of-a-kind art and music family camp that quite literally rocks. Held in association with the Nature Rocks Concert for Conservation, this weeklong camp blends creativity, nature, and performance in an unforgettable experience.

During Camp Nature Rocks, campers will work alongside professional artists and musicians to create original music and visual art inspired by the natural world. From songwriting to painting, participants will explore their creativity while surrounded by the forests and lakes that make Long Lake a summer favorite.

The camp experience culminates in a show-stopping finale: campers will take center stage at the Nature Rocks Concert for Conservation on Saturday, July 18. Camp mu-

sicians will perform as one of the opening acts for the Jayhawks, while camp artists unveil murals displayed at the concert and individual works featured in the Nature Art Village.

"This is a unique opportunity for young people to learn from professionals and then showcase their talents in front of a large audience," said Beth Haasen, Education Coordinator at Long Lake Conservation Center.

Camp Nature Rocks is part of a robust 2026 summer camp schedule at Long Lake, offering a wide range of hands-on, educational experiences for families and youth.

Summer camp schedule

- Forkhorn I Firearms Safety Training Camp that mixes firearms safety training with traditional summer camp activities. Two sessions to

choose from June 14–18 and June 28–July 3. For more information log on to longlakecc.org/forkhorn-camps

- Family Camp, June 21–24, is for adventurous families interested in exploring nature. See longlakecc.org/family-camp for more details.

- Camp Nature Rocks combines music and art with a camp, July 12–19. Learn more at longlakecc.org/camp-nature-rocks.

- Outdoor Explorers Adventure Youth Camp will build camper's skills in nature and conservation, July 27–31. See longlakecc.org/outdoor-explorers-youth-camp for more information.

- Astronomy Camp were the great outdoors meets outer space, July 31–August 3. See longlakecc.org/astronomy-camp for more details.

Parents and campers can learn more and register for

any of the summer camps at www.longlakecc.org/summer-camps or by calling 218-768-4653. Long Lake Conservation Foundation scholarships are available to help ensure all interested campers can participate.

Even as winter lingers, Long Lake Conservation Center is already setting the stage for a summer filled with creativity, learning, and outdoor adventure.

Perch limit cut on Mille Lacs Lake

Anglers heading to Mille Lacs Lake will need to count a little more carefully.

Since Monday, Feb. 9, the daily and possession limit for yellow perch on Mille Lacs Lake was reduced from 10 to five. This regulation will be in place through Nov. 30, 2026.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is adjusting the limit to help maintain a healthy perch population for the future and to stay within the state's share of the harvestable surplus. In addition to being prized by anglers for the dinner table, the fish are a key species in the Mille Lacs Lake ecosystem and are a primary food source for predators,

especially walleye.

"Many anglers have enjoyed good perch fishing this winter on Mille Lacs Lake, even better than last winter," said Brad Parsons, Minnesota DNR fisheries section manager. "Our perch harvest each of the last two years has been more than double what it was in earlier years going back to 2012. The perch population being high enough to draw significant angler interest is a positive sign for the health of the lake."

State-licensed anglers share the perch harvest on Mille Lacs Lake with Ojibwe Tribes that retain fishing rights by treaty. To conserve the fishery,

the state and the Tribes cooperatively establish an annual safe harvest level through a government-to-government, co-management process. Each party then sets fishing regulations to stay within their share of the harvest. This year, the state's share of the perch harvest is 36,500 pounds. As of Jan. 18, the state had harvested more than 17,000 pounds of perch.

Anglers can find Mille Lacs Lake fishing regulations and regularly updated data on state-licensed angler catches of walleye, northern pike and yellow perch on the Minnesota DNR website (mndnr.gov/millelacslake).



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Author Frank Weber to speak at Brainerd Public Library March 2

The Friends of the Brainerd Public Library invite the community to an afternoon of suspense, insight and conversation when acclaimed author Frank F. Weber visits for a brown bag event on Monday, March 2 from noon to 1 p.m.

Weber will discuss his newest release, Heartbreak Hollow, a gripping psycho-

logical thriller inspired by a true story.

The novel opens with a chilling premise: Eliana Castillo was promised a future — an engagement to the heir of a powerful crime family — but instead wakes up battered and freezing in the woods of Detroit Lakes, with no memory of how she got there or who wanted her dead. As

investigators Jon and Serena Frederick work to untangle a web of secrets stretching from mafia ties to small-town vendettas, the race is on to uncover the truth before it's too late. Blending psychological suspense with procedural realism, Heartbreak Hollow explores themes of love, betrayal and survival.

Weber brings a rare depth of experience to his fiction. A forensic psychologist specializing in homicide, sexual

assault and domestic abuse cases, he draws on years of professional work analyzing criminal behavior and victim trauma. His expertise has been featured on investigative television programs including Snapped, Murdered by Morning and Crime TV, and he has profiled numerous cold case homicides. His novels have earned multiple awards, and in 2024 he received the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Minnesota Psycho-

logical Association, as well as the President's Award from the Minnesota Correctional Association for his forensic work.

The event is free and open to the public. Coffee, tea and snacks will be provided, and



attendees are encouraged to bring a lunch and enjoy an engaging midday break at the library.

For readers who enjoy true crime, psychological suspense or simply a compelling story behind the story, this promises to be an event not to miss.

Three arrested after assault in Garrison

Crow Wing County Sheriff Eric Klang reports that deputies responded Friday, Feb. 6, to a residence near the Mille Lacs/Crow Wing County line, south of Garrison, on a report of an assault.

As a result of the incident, a 20-year-old male was located during a traffic stop in Mille Lacs County. He was airlifted to a medical facility for treatment. His condition is unknown at this time.

Authorities executed a search warrant at a residence on Edgewater Circle

in Crow Wing County as part of the ongoing investigation.

Two juveniles were arrested in connection with the incident. In addition, a 19-year-old male was arrested on suspicion of first-degree assault.

The investigation remains active. The Crow Wing County Sheriff's Office is being assisted by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Tribal Police Department.

No further information has been released.

Theft-by-swindle arrests made in Aitkin County



Aron Lee Melton



Kristi Ann Fox

On February 5, 2026, the Aitkin County Sheriff's Office executed a search warrant in Aitkin County as part of an ongoing investigation into suspected theft-by-swindle involving online marketplace transactions.

The investigation involves allegations that items represented as gold or silver bars were traded. Two individuals, Aron Lee Melton and Kristi Ann Fox, are associated with the investigation and were placed under arrest.

The Sheriff's Office is en-

couraging the public to use caution when buying, selling, or trading gold or silver bars. Even individuals with experience buying or selling gold and silver may be unable to detect counterfeit items without professional testing.

Anyone who believes they may have had similar interactions or has information related to this investigation is encouraged to contact the Aitkin County Sheriff's Office.

The investigation remains ongoing.

Sexual Assault Services community appreciation event in Brainerd

Sexual Assault Services of Minnesota will open its doors to the community on Thursday, Feb. 19, 2026, for a special Sexual Assault Services

Appreciation Event, honoring survivors, advocates, and the many community members who stand alongside them.

The free, public event will

be held from 4 to 6 p.m. at Sexual Assault Services of MN, 606 NW Fifth Street in Brainerd, and is designed as a welcoming space for connection, gratitude, and shared support. Organizers say the evening will focus on celebrating resilience while raising awareness about the ongoing work of advocacy

and healing in the region. A special ceremony at 4:30 p.m. will recognize honored guests and the collective strength of survivors and supporters. The ceremony will include a prayer led by Reverend Jesse Jones of LightHouse Beginnings, offering a moment of reflection and encouragement.

Guests can also enjoy complimentary pizza and treats, along with drawings for prizes donated by generous local businesses. The atmosphere is intended to be warm, inclusive, and uplifting for all who attend — whether they are survivors, advocates, family members, friends, or community members seeking

to learn more.

"This event is about coming together," organizers shared. "It's about honoring strength, saying thank you, and reminding one another that no one stands alone."

The event is open to the public, and community members are encouraged to help spread the word.

LEGAL NOTICE

(Published in NewsHopper Saturday, Jan. 31, Feb. 7 & 14, 2026)

LIBBY TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING

The Libby Township Board will meet at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at the Palisade Community Center. Township supervisor Tom An-

derson may attend remotely via phone or Zoom. The purpose of this meeting shall be to discuss and decide matters that may come before the board.

Dated this 22nd day of January, 2026
Jane Grimsbo Jewett, clerk
Libby Township
2.91



WOODTICK INN
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Friday, Feb. 20 MEGA MEAT RAFFLE 6:30PM • LIVE MUSIC TO FOLLOW
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Saturday, Feb. 21 noon - 3 p.m. Fishing is allowed on East or West Rabbit Lake.
Entry fee \$10. Four species of fish will be weighed in: walleye, northern, panfish and bass.
The weigh-in station is at the Rabbit Lake Landing off County Road 31 north of Cuyuna. All entrants must have a valid fishing license and all DNR rules and regulations apply. Fish must be live to be registered in the contest. Northern must be within the allowed slot limit (24-to-36-inch northern must be thrown back).
Sign-up today at the Woodtick before all the spaces are full!
For more information call the Woodtick at 218-772-0252.

ICE FISHING CONTEST AWARDS/AFTER-PARTY
Saturday, Feb. 21 4 p.m.
Winners will be announced at the Woodtick following the contest at approximately 4 p.m.
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Saturdays 1 & 3 p.m.
Sundays 3 p.m.
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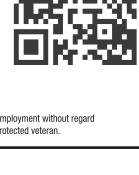
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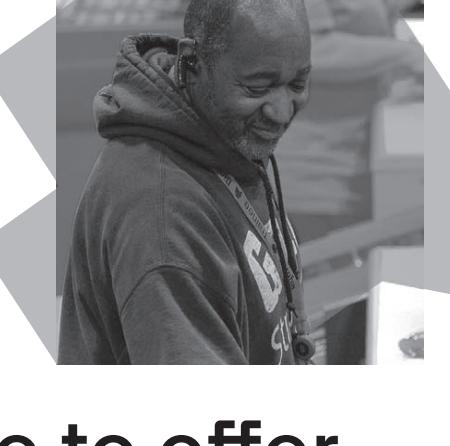
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COMMUNITY EVENTS

February

16th - Cribbage players wanted, 1-2:30 p.m. at The Brainerd Center, 803 Kingwood St., Brainerd.
 18th - Cascade Church Cascade United Methodist Church Free Come and Eat Supper, 5:30 p.m. Call 218-534-3507 for a reservation. Cascade is located between Deerwood and Crosby at 22781 Black Lake Road, Deerwood on Highway 6 and 210.
 20th & 21st - Triple Fest Snow & Ice Drag Racing at Breezy Point Resort
 21st - Woodtick Inn's Annual Rabbit Lake Ice Fishing Contest, noon to 3 p.m., entry fee is \$10. Cash prizes will be awarded for winning weight walleye, northern, panfish and bass caught on East or West Rabbit Lake. Winners will be announced at the Woodtick following the contest at approximately 4 p.m. For more information call the Woodtick at 218-772-0252.
 21st - Fishing for Ducks Ice Fishing Contest in Garrison on Mille Lacs Lake, starting at noon. Visit fishingducks.org.
 23rd - Cribbage players wanted, 1-2:30 p.m. at The Brainerd Center, 803 Kingwood St., Brainerd.
March
 2nd - Cribbage players wanted, 1-2:30 p.m. at The Brainerd Center, 803 Kingwood St., Brainerd.
 7th - Ski Plane and Wheels Fly-In, Drive-In and Chili Contest, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Aitkin Municipal Airport, 1190 Air Park Drive, Aitkin. Serving chili and hot dogs. Sample six kinds of chili and vote on your favorite.
 9th - Cribbage players wanted, 1-2:30 p.m. at The Brainerd Center, 803 Kingwood St., Brainerd.
 14th - 52nd Annual Crosslake St. Patrick's Day Parade and Celebration. Event information available at crosslake.com/stpatday
 16th - Cribbage players wanted, 1-2:30 p.m. at The Brainerd Center, 803 Kingwood St., Brainerd.
 20th & 21st - Brainerd Lakes Home Show & Expo at the Essentia Health Sports Center

Send your community events information to hopper@crobyironton.net or send us a message via www.NewsHopper.net/contact/

Area Births, Open Houses, Engagements, Weddings & Community Events are published **FREE!**

Send your community events information to hopper@crobyironton.net

Cascade Methodist Church Come and Eat Supper set for Feb. 18

There's something special about a shared meal — the kind that brings neighbors together, fills the room with conversation, and feels a little like home. That's exactly what Cascade United Methodist Church is serving up with its next Come and Eat supper on Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 5:30 p.m.

The Come and Eat supper is a free monthly community meal, offered as a lo-

cal mission of the church. Its purpose is simple and heartfelt: to gather families, friends, and neighbors around the table to enjoy a home-cooked meal and good company. No agendas, no pressure — just food, fellowship, and a warm welcome.

Held on the third Wednesday of each month, the supper has become a favorite tradition for many in the

area, drawing people of all ages who are looking for connection as much as comfort food.

Reservations are requested to help with planning. To reserve a spot, call (218) 534-3507.

Cascade United Methodist Church is located between Deerwood and Crosby at 22781 Black Lake Road, Deerwood, near Highways 6 and 210.

OBITUARY

THOMAS JOHNSON

Thomas "Tom" Randall Johnson, 82, of Farm Island, Aitkin, passed away Wednesday, February 4, 2026 in Golden Horizons, Aitkin.

Private services will be held at a later date.

He was born January 27, 1944 in Minneapolis to Don and Dorothy (Bohline) Johnson. Tom graduated from Robbinsdale High School and later the University of Minnesota. Tom was united in marriage to Mary Soulen on March 28, 1980 in Minneapolis. Tom enjoyed sailing, boating and time with family

and friends.

Tom is survived by his loving wife, Mary Soulen Johnson; sister, Sandra Commers; nieces, Leigh Hendrickson and Jayne Commers.

Tom is preceded in death by his first wife, Wendy Seagren and his parents.

To sign the guestbook online, go to: www.srtfuneral.com. Arrangements are with Sorenson-Root-Thompson Funeral Home and Cremation Service, Aitkin.

Koop Funeral Home

32 East Main St., P.O. Box 7 • Crosby, MN 56441
 Mary & Nick Zillmer, Owners/Directors

- Traditional, Graveside & Memorial Funerals
- Cremation Service
- Out-of-town Arrangements
- Pre-arrangement Plans

218-546-5531

Locally Owned & Operated

Sorenson-Root-Thompson

Funeral Home & Cremation Services

Aitkin, MN

218-927-2614

McGregor Funeral Home

& Cremation Services

McGregor, MN

218-768-3136

Traditional Funerals • Cremation Services
Celebration of Life • Pre-Planning Services

Directors: Jason Brezinsky
 Jerry Thompson • Tad Brezinsky

www.srtfuneral.com

Flammable • Caution • Warning • Danger • Poisonous • Toxic • Explosive •

Never dump household hazardous waste such as pesticides, fertilizers, paint or solvents down the toilet, down the drain, into a storm drain, open waterway or ditch. Beyond posing a threat to our health and environment, such dumping is illegal.



Crow Wing County Household Hazardous Waste Facility OPEN p.m. Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. November 1st to April 30th

Automotive • Paint • Home Improvement • Workshop Crafts • Lawn • Garden • Household Cleaners

Read the Warning Labels: A product has one or more hazardous properties, if it shows the single words: Corrosive, Flammable, Caution, Warning, Danger, Poisonous, Toxic, Explosive or Reactive. It does not become any less hazardous when you throw it away.

Please Note: The Household Hazardous Waste Facility

DOES NOT ACCEPT Fluorescent Light Bulbs, Business or Farm Hazardous Waste.

The Collection Site is at the Landfill Nine Miles Southwest of Crosby on Highway 210

For more information call

Crow Wing County Land Services at 218-824-1010.

Explosive • Reactive • Flammable • Caution • Warning • Danger • Poisonous • Toxic •

Winter Specials

Thursdays 4PM-8PM

All You Can Eat Broasted Chicken**
 Your choice of white or dark meat.
 Served with mashed potatoes & gravy,
 seasonal vegetable,
 coleslaw & a dinner roll \$19

Fridays 5PM-8PM

All You Can Eat Fish Fry**
 Served with coleslaw, french fries,
 seasonal vegetable & a dinner roll \$21
 (**No go containers for reorders on AYCE specials**)

Saturdays 4PM-8PM

Chef's Choice Dinner Special

Sundays 9AM-Noon

Crepe Bar
 Crepe's filled with your choice of
 Peach, Strawberry or
 Blueberry compote. \$4/each

Ruby's & Bear Pine Bar

Winter Hours: Thursdays 4-8 p.m., Fridays 11 a.m.-8p.m., Saturdays 8 a.m.-8p.m., & Sundays 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Ruttger's Retail

ruttgersretail.com

The Garage Winter Hours
 Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
 Sunday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

POOL OPEN

Front Desk/ Lobby Shop/ Pool Hours
 Sunday-Wednesday 7 a.m.- 8 p.m.
 Thursday-Saturday 7 a.m.- 10 p.m.

Call 218-678-2885 to BOOK A FUN POOL PARTY
 for your kids, friends, or family celebrations.

2 Indoor Pickleball Courts
 Sunday-Wednesday 7 a.m.- 8 p.m.
 Thursday-Saturday 7 a.m.- 10 p.m.
Call 218-678-2885 to reserve.

Bay Lake SALON & SPA at Ruttger's

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
 or by Appointment Call 218-678-4667

ruttgers.com/spa • 17455 Old Hwy. 6, Deerwood

AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

Signup at www.redcrossblood.org

Thursday, February 12
 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.



Rockin' Ice Bocce

Saturday, February 14

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Games will begin at 9 a.m. sharp

A fun combination of bocce & curling.

The day includes ice games, bonfires, food and drink, music, and plenty of laughs.

Sign up here!
 by Monday, February 9

For questions call 218-678-4666

or email: rob.rathsack@ruttgers.com

PRIZES • PRIZES • PRIZES!

1st place \$500 - 2nd place \$250 - 3rd place \$100

PLUS PRIZES The top 3 teams will ALSO get to pick from the following:

• Oktoberfest 2-Night Stay • 4-Person Round of Golf • \$50 Resort Gift Card



Sweetheart Supper

\$185

for 2

Menu includes: Reservations recommended 218-678-4644

One complimentary glass of champagne per person.

1st Course (Shared) Grilled Lamb & Shrimp
 Garlic-herb marinade and house-made blueberry habanero reduction.

2nd Course (Select Two) Winter Berry & Burrata Salad
 Mixed greens, arugula, seasonal berries, toasted almonds, burrata cheese, mint vinaigrette and balsamic glaze.

-OR- Short Rib French Onion Soup

3rd Course (Shared) Dark honey molasses bread
 served with honey cinnamon butter.

4th Course (Select Two or One Surf n' Turf) Firecracker Shrimp
 Roasted red pepper risotto, wilted spinach, aged Parmesan and micro greens.

-OR- Coffee-Chili Rubbed Ribeye

16 oz. Braveheart Black Angus coffee-chili rubbed ribeye grilled to your liking, topped with garlic herb compound butter, grilled asparagus and au gratin potatoes

-OR- Surf n' Turf (Shared)

20 oz. Braveheart Black Angus coffee-chili rubbed ribeye grilled to your liking, topped with garlic herb compound butter. Two 4oz broiled lobster tails with citrus herb butter, au gratin potatoes and asparagus for two.

5th Course (Shared) Pistachio Honey Baklava Cake

Served with vanilla bean ice cream.

25039 Tame Fish Lake Rd., Deerwood

218-678-2885 • ruttgers.com

