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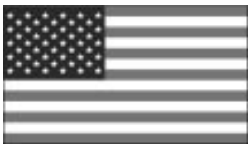
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Northern Herald 50¢

VOLUME 10

NO. 5

North Central Minnesota's Six-Weekly Regional Newspaper

JULY 4 - AUGUST 14, 2005

THE CRAIG LITTLEGHOST TRIAL - LITTLEGHOST ACQUITTED - THIS IS BEMIDJI

Former Xpress Lube Owner Randy Johnson: "I'll Make Sure That You'll End Up In Jail, And I Can Do It Because Debbie Is An Officer."

LEADING EDGE JOURNALISM

from the testimony of former Havoline Xpress Lube employee Scott Brein

BEMIDJI -- Per the former Bemidji Havoline Xpress Lube foreman, Scott Brein, that's what owner Randy Johnson told him, and, apparently, what he sometimes told employees whom he wanted to leave, but didn't have a reason to fire them. If he fired them without cause, his unemployment taxes would go up; if the employee resigned, they didn't. Resignation also reduced the probability of a discrimination lawsuit, such as the one former employee Craig Littleghost is now bringing against Johnson.

"Debbie" is Debbie Johnson, Randy's wife, who works as a bailiff in the Beltrami County Sheriff's Dept., at Bemidji.

Brein succumbed to the threat and resigned. He now works at Tires Plus, Bemidji. Craig Littleghost, however, didn't knuckle under to Johnson's attempted coercion. He knew he hadn't done anything wrong and wasn't about to pretend that he had.

On May 12th, 2005, at Bemidji, following a strenuous trial, and one containing candid testimony damning to Johnson, the Honourable Judge Paul Benshoof found Littleghost *Not Guilty* of the theft charges that Johnson tried, with the help of Bemidji Police Dept. (BPD) Sgt. Lehmann, to bring against Littleghost because Littleghost wouldn't resign (case no. TX-04-4518). Littleghost was represented by public defender Kristine Cannon, Esq.; prosecutor was Asst. Co. Atty. Randall Burg, of the office of Tim Faver, Beltrami Co. Atty.

Unfortunately, His Honour lacked the proper jurisdiction to, at the same time, sentence Johnson to Stillwater, and then Hell, where the likes of him and his ilk belong; but then, a higher court may take

up that matter by and by. For now, per Littleghost, the EEOC has investigated and is prepared to support a lawsuit against Johnson, to relieve him of some of his worldly goods, while he awaits final judgment.

Note: For further detail on this matter, the reader is directed to the breaking stories: Havoline Xpress Lube Tries To Frame Native Employee, NH of 12/20/04, and Discrimination has No Place in Bemidji, NH of 03/07/05 at northernherald.com

Digest of the case background. As of 11/15/04, the date of the alleged incident, Craig Littleghost, a Native American, had been working for Johnson's Xpress Lube for almost 7 mos., longer than any other employee there. He was a devoted worker; hired 04/23/04, he received a positive evaluation, with pay raise, to \$7.50 an hour, in early July. Littleghost also received SSI benefits for a minor disability that didn't affect his job performance. He understood, however, from his SSI worker, that he had to notify his employer, and work reduced hours. When he notified Johnson, per Littleghost, Johnson's attitude toward him changed markedly. His hours were cut to only two hours a day (far less than he could work), and he was denied further advancement.

Per Littleghost, racial statements also started then. The auto service bays are divided into an upper level, where the car and customer are - where the fluids are checked and under-hood maintenance is performed; and the lower level - under the car, where the serviceman does the lube, and other under-chassis work.

Littleghost recalls Johnson

telling him that, "I was one of his first . . . Natives to work for him, and that he didn't want me upstairs, to be seen by any customers, and the Native employees belong downstairs [when customers were there]; . . . before this finding of disability, I was always upstairs helping him out. I was always good with the customers, there was no reason for him to keep me downstairs. And all of a sudden, when this issue (the disability) comes about, he starts telling me to stay downstairs; that he didn't want me to be seen by customers upstairs; that I had no business up there."

Littleghost would later ask that his regular hours be reinstated, as although his benefits might be reduced, he enjoyed his job and would rather work. Littleghost recalls his conversation with Johnson, "I said, 'I'm just interested in making my money here, even if they cut my (SSI) check,'" he said.

When Johnson finally fired Littleghost, on 11/15/04, Littleghost recounted, "he said, 'The only reason why I always held you back is because you had a mental instability,'" and "he said, 'the reason you're not upstairs on the computer is because you have a mental instability.'" In interview, and as can be discerned by his comments, Mr. Littleghost was perfectly cognizant, concise, coherent, conversant, and professional. Whatever his condition is, it is sufficiently minimal to where it is not a factor in his life, work, or dealings with people. Nonetheless, it was clear that Johnson no longer wanted him working at Xpress Lube. The opportunity to force him out would occur on 11/15/04.

Per the trial testimony, other (Continued, "Johnson," p. 9)

In this issue

At Hackensack, Officers Discuss Drug Labs - p. 8
The Best Coming Summer Fests, Events - p. 6

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An Iraq Soldier's Report

LEADING EDGE JOURNALISM

At Bemidji, Sgt. Todd Whipps Says 90% of Iraqis Are In Support of U.S. Effort

BEMIDJI -- To hear some tell it, one would think a large proportion of Iraqis don't really want us there, and are blowing up cars to prove it.

But stationed there, Sgt. Todd Whipps, U.S. Army Alpha Co., 720th MP battalion, at Baghdad, tells a more realistic story. That the faction opposing U.S. involvement comprises only about 10% of Iraqis - mostly the old guard loyal to Saddam Hussein, and some Islamic extremists; the rest are glad we're there. Sgt. Whipps gets lots of positive feedback - happy waves, thumbs up, and the like, whenever he goes out from his base to the public places, and it gives him a good feeling about what we're doing.

What we're doing, while keeping the civil peace, is building a new infrastructure of public works, from schools to sewer systems, upon which the Iraqis can base their capitol city, and much of it will be better, healthier living than before.

Whipps describes the Baghdad streets when he arrived, "We had to drive 3 blocks [where] there [was] about 16 inches of raw human sewage [for] that entire 3 block length; and there was food stands not 5 feet from it, and kids playing around it; and it was just disgusting; ... people would cover their faces because the stench was so bad ... it was running right past a hospital.

"We started dropping work requests and stuff to our higher headquarters that 'we need to get this cleaned up'; ... now... [we're] putting in an entire new sewer system to clean up the streets."

The job. Whipps's primary job involves training the new Iraqi



Home on 15 day leave, Sgt. Whipps, who lives in the Twin Cities, is reunited with parents, Daniel and Diane Whipps, of suburban Bemidji, wife Annette, and daughters, Lauren, 11, and Lindsey, 10; by the family barbecue at Daniel's house.

Police. "Our mission is to train IPs, which is Iraqi Police. Force protection issues, how to deal with the community, because they're not used to that one on one relationship. We train the IPs to go out, and do joint patrols with them, mounted and dismounted, and we go out and talk to the people - the business owners, the shops and stuff. And you start to get a feedback from them, ... and they're happy that we're there because we're cleaning up the bad element that's in the neighborhood. We clean up schools . . . our job is to make these communities safer and for these people to take pride in where they live and what they do," he said.

Whipps said he feels good when he goes out in the morning to work with the Iraqi people, "You look forward to it, because you can actually see that the people care about what's happening to their country ... our job is to make these communities safer ... overall the response is pretty outstanding; during the elections (where insurgents tried to keep people away from the polls by threats), it was phenomenal - I've never seen that many people walking down the streets thumbs up, waving, showing us the little ink stains from 'cause they voted, giving us the (Continued, "Iraq," page 10)

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BEMIDJI --
In the wake of Rollie Morud's

(former ISD #31 superintendent) administration, each year, many ISD #31 parents try to avoid the corruption perceived in the public schools by alternatives including home schooling, if they have time for it, and now, the newer, charter schools.

Charter schools are kind of a hybrid: like a private school, they operate independently of the public school district and may be more geared to the learning needs and preferences of the students and their parents; but they are state-funded in the same per pupil measure as are the public schools, and generally are open, without tuition cost, to all students on a nondiscriminatory basis. The Schoolcraft elementary school, which operates on the Concordia Language Villages campus¹ north of Bemidji, has been in much demand and, reportedly, has had a waiting list of several years for its Kindergarten entry. But its neighbour, *Voyageurs Expeditionary High School*, also at Concordia, may not be the alternative to corrupt educational practice; in fact, Voyageurs may simply have its own brand of it, and one particularly devastating to young people.

Voyageurs sells itself, in part, by buzz words like *expeditionary learning*, and *outward bound*. The school claims to utilize travel, to U.S. destinations, as well as Europe, Central America, and Asia, as part of its learning program. It advertises that at least 25 school days are off-campus.

But *Northern Herald's* recent investigation into a complaint turned up that some students are promised that travel; and then not allowed to participate in it, on a basis which may be discriminatory, or at least abusively discretionary, at the whim of the school's staff; and further that if Voyageurs decides to exclude a student from a trip, they're not above using dishonest and deceitful means to justify the exclusion, including going so far as giving the student a lower grade than deserved, so the school can then pretend to have based the exclusion on an

Voyageurs Charter School May Not Be Corruption Solution.

As of February 14th 2005, Voyageurs reported, in a letter to Mr. & Mrs. X, that their child had passed math with an A-, passed his other courses, and further, in his first year in high school, Student X "has been respectful to teachers, quiet in class, and does most of the work that's completed in class."

By this time, also, Student X had taken other overnight Voyageurs field trips; he had no behavioural problems on these trips, or otherwise in school.

But on January 28th, the school had learned, by way of a note that he had written, that Student X was (as many teenagers do) having suicidal thoughts. There was no episode in school, nor while in transit on the bus, nor any attempt, otherwise, to carry out the thoughts. "There was just concerns that he was, maybe, thinking about it," Mrs. X said. Suicidal thoughts, and sometimes actions, are not uncommon among teenagers; learning of this, however, Voyageurs took immediate action to the detriment of Student X. He was not allowed to attend school, and barred from the school bus. He remained unable to attend school for a period of weeks. Mrs. X spoke to the Voyageurs principal, Dave Den Hartog, about schoolwork and whether his absence from class would affect his ability to take the New York trip; she made arrangements to pick up his assignments so he could do them at home, and Den Hartog assured her that Voyageurs would hold his reservation for the trip.

But by mid-March 2005, Mr. and Mrs. X were notified that their son would not be permitted to take the trip. *Northern Herald* began an official inquiry into the matter, and in initial interview, Den Hartog maintained that because Student X was, in January, thought to be suicidal, it would not be in the interests of the school, or him, to allow him on the trip. Den Hartog also said that since being approved for the trip, Student X had failed a class (due to being prevented, by the school, from attending it). In that interview, Den Hartog stated to Mrs. X, and

(Cont'd, "Voyage Into Heck," p. 5)

¹ The charter schools, while not affiliated with Concordia, use the space during the school year when the Language Villages aren't in session.

objective standard. Apparently, the *expeditionary* experience includes exposure to the evils of real-world prejudice and corruption at their best; but these are things, some would argue, by which kids don't really need to be victimized, when they're in high school. If they live in Bemidji, there'll be plenty of time for that later.

The *Northern Herald* investigation focused on the treatment of a certain 9th grade student, whom we'll call *Student X*, with parents, *Mr. & Mrs. X* (a juvenile, the student's identity isn't relevant to an understanding of the story - particularly as this sort of thing has happened to other kids there, too).

Student X enrolled at Voyageurs in the fall of 2004. He was a special ed student, from Bemidji, for whom an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) had been previously prepared and which was submitted to the Voyageurs registrar upon enrollment. Student X had suffered from depression and ADHD, but his medication controls it and per Mrs. X, he has no history of misbehaviour at school.

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As the school term progressed, Student X was presented the opportunity to go on a Voyageurs field trip, to New York City and Washington D.C. He applied to take the trip, was approved by the school, and he deposited \$75 to his travel account at Voyageurs as required to hold his reservation. (Students are required to deposit money for the travel and/or help with school fundraisers to pay for it.)

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a tower of this size is devastating; failure to provide technical information regarding the tower, as required in the zoning ordinance; failure to provide any documentation regarding research for alternative sites, or for an existing tower that could accommodate their needs (again, these are specifically required in the zoning ordinance for Cass County); and health concerns for people and animals in the range of the tower.

We did file an appeal after the original decision to approve the application was made - our attorney, Jim Peters from Alexandria, felt that we had a good case and we had proven that the application submitted didn't meet the requirements set by the county; but the judge addressed none of the issues brought out and simply said that the applicant's form was acceptable as it stood.

This tower will belong to a "church" and will be exempt from taxes - they are going to lease the land and payment of that lease will be in the form of a donation receipt - again giving someone a significant tax advantage. We see two beneficiaries of this project while hundreds are afflicted with the presence and consequences of the tower.

The public needs to become more aware, and involved in the processes that are allowing the proliferation of towers. Changes need to be made in the zoning ordinances to protect the land and the people who live on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. -- Marla Sullivan Steve Stephan Concerned Citizen's Committee Pine River, MN
NH adds: In the end, this mess had a happy ending. Vern Erickson decided to withdraw his

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Letters to the Editor

Radio Tower Spikes Concern

There has been an ongoing battle for the last year over a proposed 1,000 foot tower in Ansel Township, Cass County. At this time, after many \$\$s in legal fees, we have decided not to appeal our case because it is obvious that for whatever reason, the Planning and Zoning Board and Cass County want to see this tower go up.

TN. Vern Erickson, MD, from Park Rapids, and James Johnson, from Backus, have been the driving force behind this project. A group of people opposed to the tower, the Concerned Citizen's Committee has put a lot of time and money into this battle. To put it briefly, we fought this tower on the following issues: Too close to a wilderness area; extreme hazard for birds (the kill rate from

church group from the tower project at that location, and put their radio station on another tower. Unfortunately, this did nothing to recompense the Concerned Citizen's Committee for all of the money they had to spend on the legal battle. Still, his decision was more reflective of, and in keeping with area residents' preferences and concerns. All's well that ends well! To avoid confusion, we note that the station that caused all this concern is a new one, and is not affiliated with the very excellent and professional station KDKK, also of Park Rapids. -- Ed.

Where It's Not On Sept. 20, 2001, President George W. Bush said: "This will be an age of liberty here and across the world. ... Freedom and fear are at war... They [our enemies] hate our freedoms... our freedom of speech... They follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism...."

"I ask you to uphold the values of America; ... we are in a fight for our principles and our first responsibility is to live by them. ..."

Still, there are some people that just don't buy it. They hang the flag, but don't believe you should be able to read the news if they don't agree with it. Don't look for Northern Herald at these places:

BEMIDJI: K-MART, Gene Frost, mgr., Sta-Mart, Subway (Bemidji, Park Rapids and Brainerd only), E-Z Stop, McDonald's (Bemidji, Brainerd only), Burger King (Bemidji, Grand Rapids only), Paul Bunyan Mall, Marketplace grocery, Lueken's grocery, Southside Restaurant, Countryside Restaurant, Coachman Cafe, Maid-Rite, South Shore Maytag Laundry & Tanning, Smoke Shop, Wally's Oil, The Cabin **PARK RAPIDS:** Northern Convenience/Phillips 66, Wimpy's Cafe, A&W, J&B Foods, CENEX/Taco Bell (Park Rapids only), SA (Park Rapids only), Petro Pete's **CASS LAKE:** Teal's SuperValu, Food & Fuel, Sportsman's Pizzeria, Palace Junction Service **NEVIS:** Northwind Grocery **OTHER PLACES:** Galen's Super Valu, Bagley, Godfrey's Super Valu, Backus, Buckler's Super Valu, Pine River, Countryside Restaurant, Blackduck, Holiday (Deer River only)

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Northern Herald

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Editor.....Adam Steele

Cartoonist Doug Kallberg

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Guest Column

The Way I See It

by Brian M. Carlson

As the school year ends I am reminded of the time when my granddaughter was in 5th grade choir at Forest Lake School in Grand Rapids. My family went to the spring concert and sat in the front row so we could see all that was happening. At one point I noticed my granddaughter, Taiya, talking to her friend and you could see her say "That's my dad, my Grandpa, my Great-grandma, and my Great-Grandpa." She then sat up to sing with the biggest smile

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Prof. Brian Carlson

on her face. It brought tears to my eyes and a choke to my throat to know that OUR presence was that important to her. I recalled then for a moment when *I* was in school and how I searched and searched the auditoriums to see where my folks were sitting...I knew they were there...I just had to CONNECT with them.

Later, at Forest Lake school, we had milk and cookies with the kids... my granddaughter introduced me to her friend... her friend simply said, "NO ONE from my family came."

Need I say more how hurt that made me feel? If you are a parent, grandparent, uncle or aunt, MAKE TIME to go to these events and support your kids....and give them the hugs they deserve...TODAY.

Brian Carlson is an 11 year veteran of the Grand Rapids Township Board and a communications professor at Itasca Community College. He has been involved in many projects bettering the Grand Rapids Area, for residents and tourists, alike, including producing the summer Music on the Green program in downtown Grand Rapids. Carlson has been President of the Minnesota Fishing Federation, which produced the well-attended spring Grand Rapids Outdoor Show at the IRA Civic Center.

"Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one."

-- A.J. Liebling

But that's not the way it is in Northern Minnesota. A community cannot progress without open communication.

Send letters (800 words or less) for publication, or consumer comments, to: NORTHERN HERALD - Letters (or Consumer Forum) - P.O. Box 1535, Bemidji, MN 56619. Sign your letter and print your name, address & phone number for verification. Consumer comments may be edited for space. Letters may be printed anonymously, if sender prefers and so indicates, but we have to know who sent it to verify contents.

News Tips, which are not for ad verbatim publication, may still be called in or sent anonymously.

As Northern Minnesota's regional community newspaper, we will print virtually any responsible material, whether submitted as paid advertisement, or opinion. Inserts (flyers, etc.), other paid advertising, guest columns, and letters, however, do not necessarily reflect the editorial position of this paper. Also, while we maintain a high standard of authenticity of our reporting, we do not independently corroborate the contents of letters and guest columns; the writer alone is accountable for their veracity. We will not publish material that we know to be incorrect, but we're Northern Minnesotans, so we don't know much. Like it that way.

Stories from Back Issues News, like history, is cumulative. Many stories in *NH* follow up or make reference to previously reported stories. These past articles can be found in **The Library**, at our web site, above. **Our pictures are even better online!** That's because, although sometimes small in the print edition, the pics are high resolution; so when you view them in our online edition, you can enlarge them for even more detail!

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Editor's Note: The annual Woodcarver's Fest (This is *really* big!) is at Blackduck July 30th, and Blackduck is an easy hour's drive through particularly scenic woods, on good paved roads, to the Effie Rodeo.

Wranglers To Ride at North Star

EFFIE -- There are those - you know the type - they like to go to rodeos in air conditioned indoor buildings, like their baseball that way too - and they look down at the traditional independent rodeos like North Star for their rules (not many!) But the cowboys like it that way. That's why when on the circuits, the best in the business, nationwide and even some from abroad, like to come back and meet, talk shop, and ride hard each year at the **North Star Rodeo** right here at **Effie**, Minnesota. The 2005 event will be no different, except maybe a little bigger and even more enthusiastic; said Chief Ramrod, Howard Pitzen, "We've never gotten entries *this* early before."

This is *real* rodeo. It's where the most important things are riding well, staying on, and getting your eight. Perhaps that's what's made this rootin' tootinest rodeo a dramatic success with the fans.

This will be the 50th year of North Star, reputed to be the longest running rodeo with the same management and location. Each year, rodeo buffs pack the huge stands almost to capacity, under the big sky, come rain or shine, the way providence intended rodeo to be. After all, the cattlemen on the range couldn't choose their weather either - they had to know how to rope and ride regardless; in real rodeo, when the dirt's wet, it just makes it better sport.



This year's stock. Late May, Howard and Billie Pitzen got back from the *bucking horse sale* at Miles City, Montana. Howard reported, "the number of broncs ... was down this year, but the quality was up." He purchased several horses, including one from the Brookman bucking stock breeding program of Malta, Montana; and another from John Benson's program. Said Pitzen, "It's kind of like buying a used car, you have to have it for awhile before you know whether you got a bargain or not." But North Star, which also has its own breeding program, has gotten horses which have gone on to become famous there, including *Fever Reliever*, *Big Sky*, and *White Eye*; all of which have won awards and trophies when on lease to Cimarron Rodeos. The new stock,

NORTHERN HERALD SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Each issue, Northern Herald makes many copies available, free, to area public and private schools for use as a learning aid. "I just don't get it." If your school doesn't receive copies, and wants to, have your 12th grade Social Studies teacher (we're a little too real for younger students, who at that stage of life should only be exposed to the stories and fables that they read in the other papers) contact *NH* at 218-759-1162.



Above, Slipknot, one of North Star's rodeo clowns. The job of the clowns is an important one - to protect the down cowboys by distracting the charging animal.

No one said it was going to be easy! Left, Troy Pitzen, of Peru, Iowa, exhibits excellent form, as he rides his bull, a product of the North Star bucking stock breeding program, at last year's North Star Rodeo at Effie.

as well as North Star's proven, and their "rough string" can be seen in action at this year's North Star Rodeo.

Cowboys of particular note will include Vince Bruce, trick roper extraordinaire, and Nat'l Finals rodeo clown Duane Reichart. For this 50th, an extra performance

has been added on Thursday (family bargain night), which is also Old Timers' Night, particularly for cowboys who have competed at North Star in the past.

Effie lights up all during the rodeo weekend with many concessions, goings-on, and flea markets in town. The big annual Parade at Effie will be Saturday evening, following the rodeo performance; this year, for the first time, Mr. Pitzen will be Grand Marshal

As always, from breakfast to dinner there'll be good food available, reasonably, at the chuck wagons right on the rodeo grounds. Camping and parking is free; campers are advised that there is no well on the grounds, so should bring drinking water. A lot of the spectators in the stands like to bring

is leathery and almost tasteless, except for the artificial chemical-like maple flavour. It's much as if the bacon had been kept 'til well after it's prime, and then, as a cover-up, doused with the artificial maple. Definitely not something most would want to put on the breakfast table, or use in cooking.

THINGS THAT JUST DON'T WORK

"There is no product that someone cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper. Those who consider price alone are this man's lawful prey."

This column is cumulative, and provided for consumer awareness. Signed consumer submissions are welcome.

For review of the following things that just don't work, from past issues, see *Things That Just Don't Work* at northernherald.com:

- PATTON® Oil-filled Electric Radiators
- CELLULAR-ONE®
- HI-VAL® (I/O MAGIC®) CD-RW drives
- SYMPHONIC® VCRS.
- LEXAR® Compact Flash cards
- OFFICE MAX® REBATES
- HEWLETT-PACKARD® product support
- carsoup.com

RODEO

50th Annual NORTH STAR STAMPEDE

JULY 28TH, 29TH, 30TH, 31ST

Rodeo starts at 5 p.m. Thurs. and Fri.; 2 p.m. Sat. & Sun. Adults \$10 Kids \$5 Thursday is Family Bargain Night: Adults \$8 Kids \$4

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Quality Farm Produce, June-Oct. at our Farm Market
 VEGETABLES - BERRIES - MELONS - JAMS, JELLIES - HONEY
 MAPLE SYRUP - UNIQUE COUNTRY BAKING MIXES - BULK
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Editor's Recommendation: In the Park Rapids area, this is where people in the know buy their veggies and fruits! The most delicate essences of veggies are lost quickly on the shelf. Whether at table, or by campfire, taste for yourself the difference that farm fresh produce makes!

a big umbrella, for both shade (top row only, please), and in case it rains.

Voyage Into Heck fr p. 2

to *Northern Herald*, that Student X, however, was *not* suspended any longer from attending school or riding the school bus.

Immediately following the start of the inquiry, and on March 18th, Principal Den Hartog sent a letter to the parents. By that time, he'd developed "reasons" to attempt to justify his discretionary action of bumping Student X from the trip. The letter gave as reasons that Student X had 1) had an out-of-school suspension; and 2) "exhibited consistent inappropriate behavior." Said Mrs. X, "[this is] a complete contradiction" to the letter the school had sent them in February (ante).

Student X, who suffered from depression anyway, was devastated by not being allowed to take the promised trip. "It's a once in a lifetime thing, and he's being denied it - he's met all the requirements; he's paid \$75 to hold his spot," the boy's mother said.

And, even after Den Hartog stated that Student X was not suspended, Voyageurs *continued* to prevent Student X from attending or riding the school bus.

The parents pressed on for justice, however. They began to take steps necessary to initiate legal action against the school for bumping their son from the trip, and also for not implementing the required IEP (at one point, Den Hartog said that he was not aware of any IEP). The matter came to head on April 6th, 2005, on which (Cont'd, "Voyage Into Heck," p. 11)

Consumer Corner

Readers are invited to submit consumer complaints or compliments to this column, and to our Auto Service Forum. Send info c/o this paper, P.O. Box 1535, Bemidji, MN 56619

CONSUMER CAVEAT

carnation brand™ bacon including ends [with] natural & artificial maple flavor added.

It's hard to imagine the aroma of bacon frying *not* being a pleasant one. But if one prepares this product, that's what they may find, and the sickly chemical smell lingers in the kitchen for hours afterward. As for the taste, we'll get to that.

With most cuts of pork generally a good value, the price of a pound of *bacon* may now be what Filet Mignon once was; some once dependable firms, like Corn King, have deceptively shrunk the size of the package from a lb. to 12 oz., resulting in a \$2 package equating to \$2.66/lb. In this market, buying ends and pieces, usually in bulk boxes, is often a good deal.

Prices range from less than 80¢, to over \$2 (at *Marketplace*) a pound.

Usually, the boxes contain bacon that just didn't slice right, so to put it in the more expensive perfect length packages. Some prefer the ends and pieces, because some are often thicker sliced. In addition to frying the slices for breakfast, the odd shaped pieces and hunks are perfect for a pot of beans or split pea soup.

But the recent **carnation brand™** product, distributed by Dubuque Foods, Inc. of Austin, Minn. and sold by *Lueken's*, Bemidji, and other stores, appears to be clearly substandard. In cooking, it exudes a sickly-stale aroma heavily laced with an unpleasant *Mapleine*-like chemical smell. In our opinion (tastes vary) the cooked product

Summer Ice Cream!! Where To Get It!

Nothing says summer like a good ol' ice cream cone - just the thing to cool down an otherwise hot day. As with all things, though, in this there are values and *values*. Some retailers decided to make common ice cream a boutique item, and the consumer pays for the fancy. In Bemidji, if one just has to have a **very expensive ice cream cone**, they can find it at the new **Cold Stone** store. There's nothing on their menu for under \$3. The fountain at **Wal-Mart**, next door, however, serves Breyer's (the best) all natural for about **\$1.20**. They don't have a stone, but for the difference, one could stop at a quarry and buy a few.

In Bagley, the place to go is **Coaches Corner** for real hand dipped ice cream, at a price that won't burn you up. They'll even

make an old-fashioned hard ice cream shake if one wants. Similarly, in **Solway**, it's **Hwy 2 Express** (formerly Selmo's Service).

The Hwy 38 scenic drive between Grand Rapids and Effie is one of the Northland's most picturesque. It's a great weekend outing. And to make it perfect, a lot of people will want to stop for a cone at **The Outpost**, about 10 miles N. of Grand Rapids.

For those who like genuine sodas, there are still a few authentic fountains around. One of them can be found at **Sun 'n Fun** (below), in **Hackensack** where they still make these traditional goodies and other summer coolers.



After our marked successes in eliminating the perils of alcohol, marijuana, and drug use from U.S. society, it only follows that we'd try it with tobacco. Perhaps coffee will be next. -- A. Steele



HAS MOVED!

Come on over and enjoy a pasty at our new location: **1407 Hwy 2 W** (next to Jerry's Liquors), Grand Rapids

Inside and garden seating

★★★ Editor's Recommendation: This is a wonderful meal of meat, potatoes, and veggies wrapped in a delicious baked pastry crust, with gravy. It's quite the treat! Stop in and take a whiff - the homestyle quality is obvious.

Eat in or take out - pasties are available half, or fully baked.

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(Pasty shown with avocado and parsley garnish added)

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How To Not Be Bugged by Fruit Flies

The three months of Minnesota summer are here, and with it, lingering into fall, are the creatures of Providence that go with the seasons. While all of them are necessary, there are some of them that, left to their own devices, become mislocated - creatures that people don't really need at large in their homes. Most agree that fruit flies fall into this category.

The tiny fruit flies, sometimes called gnats, tend to appear, almost spontaneously, anywhere that overripe or bruised fruit occurs. They're a particular nuisance to those who can and preserve, and

to those who make wine - in a moment we'll understand why.

Some of the mystery of the fly is explained by the fact that a favourite food of these aviators isn't actually the fruit, it's the microscopic yeasts which exist in household air and multiply, becoming abundant, in food, particularly fruit which is overripe or has exposed flesh. That's what draws the flies and why they're particularly drawn to a yeasty beverage like a glass of wine (the fly's digestion neutralizes the alcohol, so he can enjoy a sober meal). Contrary to popular belief, their eggs aren't usually present in grocery store fruit - that's because

The Best Area Events & Fests - July and August

Whether you're visiting, or lucky enough to live here, these are some of the best fests and happenings during those brief three months when we thaw out, come alive, and make the most of the summer! It's when the sun shines, and so does every northern community. *You won't want to miss these!!*

• **Jun.-Aug.** Every Tues., Kid's Fishing Contest at Hackensack; 11a-1p

July

• 11th & 12th Sweetheart Days, Hackensack (For those going to Moondance, this fun fest is just before, and right around the corner - about 10 miles from the Moondance Fairgrounds)

• 13th - 16th Moondance, Walker

• 28th - 31st North Star Rodeo, Effie

• 30th - Woodcarver's Fest, Blackduck

August

• 3rd - 7th Clearwater Co. Fair, Bagley - A fair deal on the best fair in the Bemidji-Bagley area!

• 5th - 7th, White Oak Rendezvous,



This Year! Meet Benjamin & Dolly Franklin!

WHITE OAK Rendezvous

August 5th - 7th at Deer River, Minn.

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Free Firewood
NEW WHITE OAK MOTEL NEARBY

On Stage: Northwind Crossing; Five Mile Chase

Activities for all, from wandering minstrels, to the blacksmith, canoe building, and many period craftsmen, to traders row, the black powder shoot, all ages tomahawk throw, and much more!



a non-profit historical society
218-246-9393
<http://www.whiteoak.org>

Editors recommendation: This is **not at all** a commercial rip-off like "Renaissance Fair". It's put on by a state-sanctioned historical society and learning centre; it's very reasonably priced, genuine, and loads of fun for the whole family. -- Ed.

Deer River, F & Sat.: 10a - 7p ; Sun: 10-4

- 13th Corn Fest at Backus
- 13th Harvest Fest at Remer

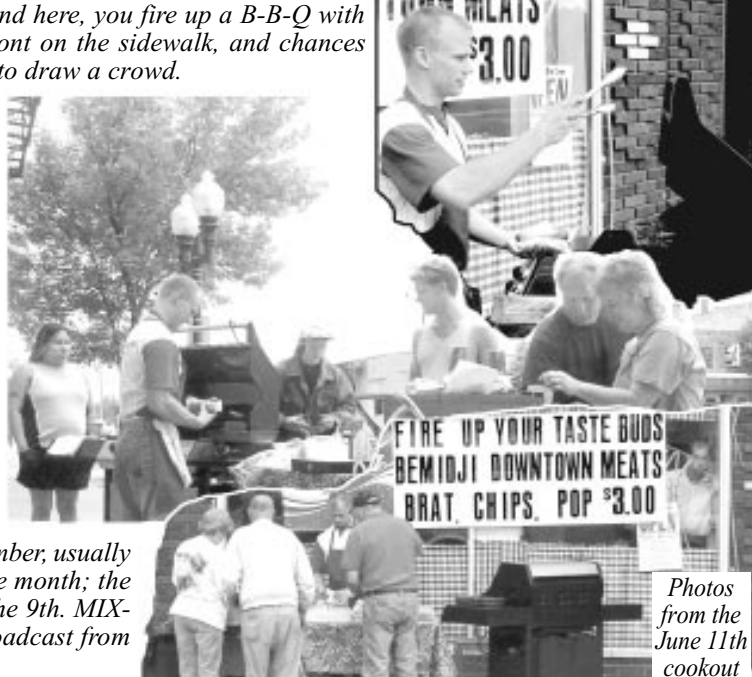
In Focus

BEMIDJI -- Around here, you fire up a B-B-Q with good brats out front on the sidewalk, and chances are, you're going to draw a crowd.

So it is this summer at **Bemidji Downtown Meats**, as they offer the public a chance to try their product, hot and fresh off the grill, at 2nd & Minnesota Ave.

Good brats made right there, some with wild rice, and chorizo that brings memories of streetside breakfast at an Acapulco sidewalk cafe, are some of Downtown Meats's specialties.

Owner **Dustin Merseth** will be grilling out front, over the lunch hour, 11 am 'til 2 pm, one weekend each summer month through September, usually the first Thurs., Fri. and Sat. of the month; the July cookout will be the 7th thru the 9th. MIX-103 has scheduled a live radio broadcast from the July 7th event.



Photos from the June 11th cookout

Clements Trying to Build Hotel on Justice Souter's Land

WEARE, NH -- In the wake of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court **Kelo** decision in late June, which give cities the ability to take private homes, businesses, and land under *eminent domain*, to give it to other private entities in the name of purported economic benefit to the community; Logan Darrow Clements, a Rhode Island man, intends to build a hotel on land, in Weare, New Hampshire, now occupied by the home of the

Honourable David Souter, one of the Supreme Court Justices who rendered the majority opinion in the Kelo case.

In a release, Mr. Clements pointed out that "the City of Weare will certainly gain greater tax revenue and economic benefits with a hotel" there, rather than Mr. Justice Souter's home.

Weare building code enforcement officer Chip Meany received Clements's proposal June 27,

2005, only days after the Court decision. "My understanding is, his plan is legitimate, and he plans to build a hotel," said Meany, who, in response, advised Clements of the process he will have to undertake to obtain the land through eminent domain condemnation, and get the hotel project approved.

Per Meany, Clements will first have to take the matter before the 5 selectmen (city councilmen) of Weare, then go before the planning board, and finally the zoning board, as the land is presently zoned rural-agricultural; before Meany's office would be able to consider issuing a building permit.

it's usually picked slightly underripe and wouldn't be attractive to the fruit fly; if you have fruit flies, they probably came from outside.

But if you have them, where they came from probably isn't as pressing an issue as how to get them to go somewhere else. The life cycle of the fly, from egg to larva to reproducing adult, is about 8 days. So if one is seeing flies inside, it's important to ensure that there aren't any old potatoes, fruit peelings or garbage present where they can lay eggs and multiply. Highly innovative creatures, they can even multiply in sink drains - if they are, a plastic bag sealed (e.g. with the tape of ducks) over the drain overnight will usually show flies in it by morning.

Contrary to legend, the lifespan of the adult fly is considerably more than one day. After removing potential breeding grounds, the best poison-free way to eliminate adult flies, as well as keep the home free of those which may, from time-to-

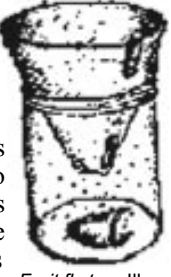
time, stray inside, is with a simple and very effective make-it-yourself "fly motel"

This design does a good job. To make one that's reusable, just take an old empty glass or clear plastic jar, like from Hellmann's mayonnaise (or Miracle Whip, if your flies have indistinguishable taste), cut a large hole in the top (if the top is plastic, the hole may be burned with a lighter), and cut a larger hole in the paper gasket for a tight rim fit. Twist a piece of typing paper and cut so as to make a wide, squat funnel with about a 1/8" opening at the narrow end, and secure seams, so as to be fly-proof, with the tape of Scotland (those Scottish are so innovative), or that of waterfowl.

Securely fasten (again, so to be fly-proof) the funnel (inserted through the hole) to the top of the lid, with tape of waterfowl.

Bait the jar by dropping the bait to the bottom (it should not reach the funnel). One of the best baits is a crumpled paper towel dampened with a little bit of wine. Don't open the Ch. Haut Brion; for these purposes, a bit of generic blush works fine. If your flies are AA, then a piece of overripe banana, a fruit skin, or peelings, or a combination of the above, also works well. Then just screw on the lid. If you've seen flies in the home, you'll probably discover you had more of them than you thought. With this live trap, they crawl in, but, for whatever reason, can't figure out how to get out. Most will be caught within a few hours; they can easily be released back into the outdoor environment, and the trap rebaited and left to catch any more that may wander in.

Add'l sources: www.discovery.com/area/skinnyon/skinnyon970718/skinny1.html
www.pestproducts.com/fruitfly.htm



Fruit fly trap illustration and info source: University of Kentucky Entomology dept. <http://www.uky.edu/Agriculture/Entomology/entfacts/>

NH Northern Herald recommended



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Editor's Recommendation: This is a very good pizza, and the Italian-style hot peppers and garlic crust dipping sauce that come with, free, are a perfect accompaniment. It's freshly-made, weekends, 'til 2 am. Why pay more? *Time-Saver: Call in your carryout order; it can be ready by the time you get there!*

In Focus



At left, a Bemidji Police Dept. Reservist receives his award from Sgt. Plasschaert.

Awards were issued in categories of Basic Law Enforcement Training (BL); Advanced Law Enforcement Training (AL); Community Service (CS); and Leadership (L).

In the photo below, receiving awards were Andrew Cashin-AL, CS; Brad Rittgers (not in

BPD Reservists Receive Awards

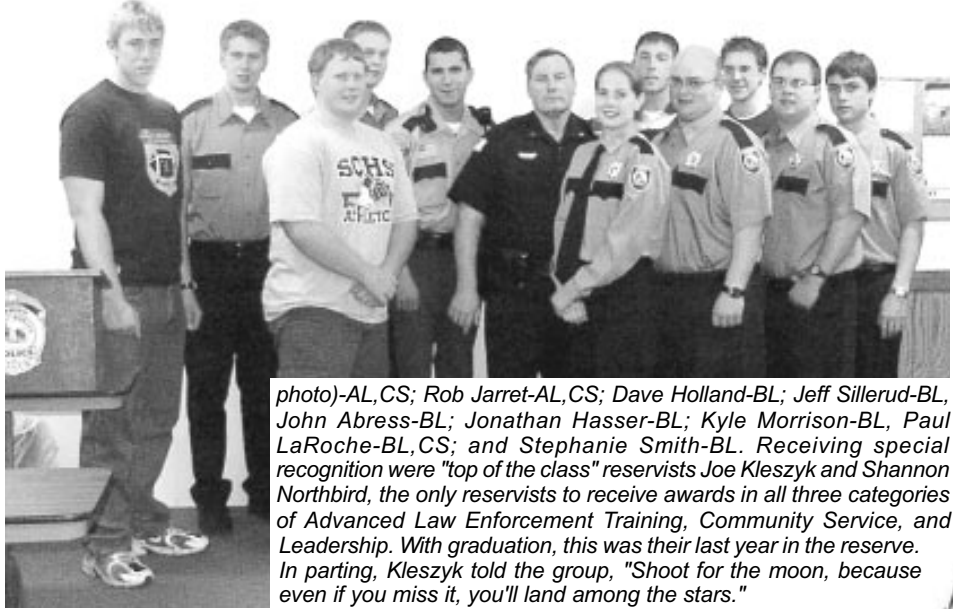


photo)-AL, CS; Rob Jarret-AL, CS; Dave Holland-BL; Jeff Sillerud-BL, John Abress-BL; Jonathan Hasser-BL; Kyle Morrison-BL, Paul LaRoche-BL, CS; and Stephanie Smith-BL. Receiving special recognition were "top of the class" reservists Joe Kleszyk and Shannon Northbird, the only reservists to receive awards in all three categories of Advanced Law Enforcement Training, Community Service, and Leadership. With graduation, this was their last year in the reserve. In parting, Kleszyk told the group, "Shoot for the moon, because even if you miss it, you'll land among the stars."

BEMIDJI -- 12 Bemidji Police Department (BPD) Reservists were recognized and issued Certificates of Achievement in four areas of law enforcement work, May 7th, 2005, at a special ceremony at the police training facility in Bemidji. After the awards, a special cake and refreshments were served.

Sgt. Les Plasschaert said that reserve unit evolved from the Explorer program. The reservists perform essential law enforcement functions that don't require a peace officer's license. This results in increased availability of the peace officers for tasks that do. Some of the reservists' assignments include crowd control, animal control, parking, meth lab precursor control, and pawn shop clearing.

Plasschaert said that the reserve program results in more police service, at less cost. For about \$300 in uniforms and equipment, each reservist does

work that would otherwise cost the City about \$10,000, if done by an officer. The reservists get up to 4 years of on the job training, which may be valuable as a resume item, and can advance to be considered for police jobs on graduation.

In the comprehensive reservists' training program which includes everything from equipment to traffic stops to self-defense to firearms training, Plasschaert emphasizes their creed of duty, integrity, honour, and honesty. He told the unit that in police work, "One person screws up and we're all going to take the heat for it."

Becoming a reservist. Reservists are enlisted and trained in the fall - Aug. & Sept. They must be at least 18 yrs., or close to 18, and a student in a college Law Enforcement or Criminal Justice-related program. For more info, interested persons may contact Sgt. Plasschaert at 218-751-9111.

Some theorists believe that, at one time, the snake walked on legs. We know, however, that it has been without them since about 5700 years ago, when

Eve ate the apple, on or shortly after the 6th day of Creation.

At right, visiting guest speaker and renowned herpetologist

Jim Gerholdt displays the reticulated python at Headwaters's regular Sunday Seminar, April 3rd, 2005. For schedule and topics of future seminars, readers may call 218-444-4472

In Focus



Below, Science Center guest Cheryl Horge-shimer, of Park Rapids, gets a feel for it.



BEMIDJI -- All ages will enjoy this summer's displays at Headwaters Science Center, 413 Beltrami Ave. Bemidji. For those who prefer things with legs, they can pet the tarantula, at right. This is actually a single guy's dream - long legs and lots of hair!

Below, Science Center guest Cheryl Horge-shimer, of Park Rapids, gets a feel for it.

Below, Bemidji Police Dept. Sgt. Les Plasschaert explains to reservists "Everyone has their own reason for living, and their own price for dying," and that every officer has to define both of those things before starting service. An 18-year veteran of the Dept., Plasschaert was promoted to



Sergeant 2 years ago. He is Director of the Reserve Unit, having created it in 2001. Sgt. Plasschaert said that the unit is the fulfillment of a promise he made to himself while in a foxhole in Vietnam; that if he got out of that alive, "If there was a possibility that I could help someone, I would do it." The Sergeant's tireless effort for four years to keep the program working is aided by his wife, Betty, who helps with computer and clerical work for the unit.



Above, graduating reservist Shannon Northbird, of Walker, now works as a Conservation Officer for the Leech Lake Band of Chippewa. He said that the Reserve is for people who are integrious, and want to "help people and make their communities a better and safer place to live."



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Editor's recommendation: The best cooking starts with the best ingredients. Where you buy your meats does make a difference. We have found Downtown Meats products to be fresh and more flavourful than most grocery store meats, with never a disappointment. But don't take our word for it - try a pound of your favourite and see if you don't agree!



The device above demonstrates the principles of inertia and momentum. When the subject changes the plane of the spinning wheel's rotation by turning the axle, the turntable below compensates by rotating the subject.



Fun House Mirrors demonstrate how optical distortion works.



The dish at right demonstrates principles of sound and acoustical amplification. No electricity, no batteries, no fooling! When the subject whispers into the dish, they can be heard and understood by a person sitting by a similar dish on the other side of the long exhibit hall.

Something for Everyone at Headwaters

BEMIDJI -- All ages will enjoy this summer's displays at Headwaters Science Center, 413 Beltrami Ave. Bemidji.

In addition to the exhibits shown here, visitors can enjoy the new kinetics and momentum machine, other animals, model hot air balloon (thermal dynamics), microscope, aquatics exhibit, hands-on tractor cab, robotics, fluid dynamics, electromagnetics, and many more; as well as the book store and gift shop (it's educational, but one doesn't have to learn anything if he doesn't want to).



And if one would rather handle something with only four legs, there's the leopard gecko, below.



The Science Center is open M-Sat., 9:30-5:30, Sun. 1-5 pm; general admission for non-members is \$4 adults/ \$3 age 11 and under; or \$15 for household. More info: www.hscbemidji.org



Above, forked lightning is created in the glass sphere, demonstrating principles of electrical attraction and discharge.

Science Center!

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Below, community attendees could inspect the National Drug & Safety League drug identification kit, enabling people to recognize drugs and contraband when they see it.



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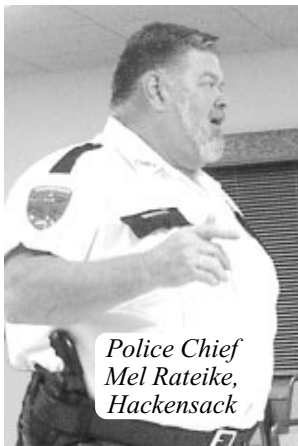
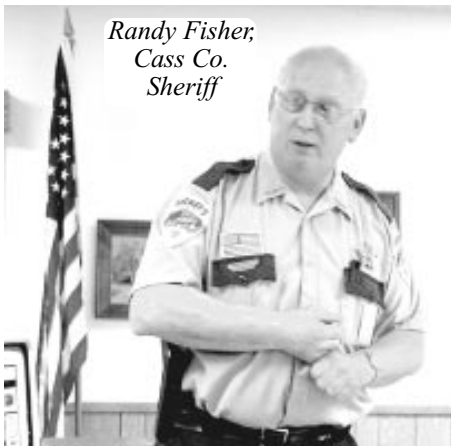
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Below, at left, Cass Co. Commissioner Jeff Peterson watches with interest at the community crime prevention meeting.



City, County Officials Address Drugs, Crime Prevention, at Hackensack

HACKENSACK -- In a "nuts 'n bolts" seminar, six top Hackensack City and Cass County law enforcement and community services personnel convened a community meeting at the Hackensack Senior Center April 21st, and invited Northland residents to learn more about how criminals, particularly drug manufacturers and dealers, operate; and how to protect one's property, family and neighborhood, and spot and report crime in the making. Primarily addressed were matters of drug crime, as well as the check fraud which is now mushrooming in Northern Minnesota, harshly affecting businesses in smaller vacation locales.

In addition to those shown above, another Paul Bunyan Drug Task Force (PBDTF) Special Agent, whose identity is withheld (we'll just call them "SA2"), spoke to the group, providing real and plain "horse's mouth" information from the field.

A tabletop of informational brochures and firearms safety equipment was also made available to attendees.

The concept of a drug task force is to amass a concentrated team of personnel, specially skilled in drug work, by drawing those specialists from local, county, and state law enforcement agencies within a region. That team then operates as the drug crime specialists across that region.

Opening the meeting, PBDTF Spec. Agent Mike Diekmann explained that the five-county PB Drug Task Force started in 1989 as the first in the state, which now has 22 active forces.

Diekmann said that one of the biggest problems, now, is methamphetamine, also known as crank, speed, crystal, and meth.

He explained how, in home labs (including those that, for concealment, may be located in vehicles, fishhouses, and other unlikely places), this poison is extracted from common components (meth precursors) including rubbing alcohol, brake cleaner, engine starting fluid (ether), drain cleaner, muriatic acid, lye, lithium (from batteries), anhydrous ammonia, Kitty Litter, HEET®, and cold tablets.

The over-the-counter cold tablets, (e.g. Sudafed®) containing the base drugs ephedrine or pseudoephedrine are

essential to the process. If a person has an unusual quantity of them, it is likely that he's manufacturing meth.

Diekmann pointed out the various dangers (other than the obvious one of insane drug-crazed loonies) that the drug poses to the community; he said that the labs, cooking these highly flammable and volatile chemicals, often start house fires [it is said that one in five labs is discovered because it explodes - Ed.], and that the process produces large quantities of toxic waste that pervade the premises. If meth is produced in rented quarters, the owner becomes responsible for the difficult clean up, and sometimes the house has

to be burned to get rid of the toxins.

He said that signs that a room has been used for a lab include a cat-urine smell, and

the tendency to watery eyes and a burning sensation in the nose.

Answering an audience question, Diekmann said that local meth convictions were down in 2004 because businesses are becoming more aware of, and are reporting, with license plate numbers, unusual purchases of meth-making supplies, e.g. "if

At far right, after speaking, Jim Schneider, Cass Co. Probation Dept., sits down with audience members for one-on-one discussions of community crime concerns.

Above, SA Diekmann reads meth precursor ingredients from a pamphlet that was available at the meeting.

If one woke up in an ambulance, he'd think he'd died and was seeing an angel. Above, Hackensack First Responder Bonnie Peterson



Top, Dale and Bev Farr and Marilyn Lodin stand by the old fire pumper. Center, Louella Ganz, Valedictorian of the class of '31, with Sharon Ganz Read, class of '66, who came from Montana for Old Timers' Days. Right, a former Miss Backus, Ashley Worcester, serves. On this occasion, pickle slices and chips.



someone buys 12 bottles of HEET in June." As a result, there are now fewer area meth labs.

SA2 spoke next, telling the group the signs that drug trade is going on. He said to watch for a lot of short stops at a home or location - a lot of people running in and out in 5 minutes or less, often leaving their car engine running.

He said that people using the poison appear very nervous and unpredictable, sometimes with a lot of itching and a lot of sores.

Meth use also precipitates acute paranoia and schizophrenia. The drug-crazed dope fiends can suddenly become violently dangerous to those (Cont'd, "The Straight Dope," p. 10)

AT BACKUS, THE HUB OF NORTH CENTRAL MINNESOTA

Backus Celebrates "Old Timers"

BACKUS -- It's like Capistrano and the swallows. Each year, on Memorial Day weekend, those who grew up here flock back to Backus for Old Timers' Days!

As of Saturday afternoon, May 28th, 2005, this year's event had drawn close to 200, who packed the Backus Fire Hall for the maiden voyage of a new event, the annual pig roast.

Said Mayor Cloie Smith, "It's been a great turnout ... It's gonna be a fun weekend." The weekend of activities included class pictures, the Saturday evening dance at the school, an awards ceremony on Sunday, and memorial services Monday.

Below, returning Backusites could pig out at the big pig roast at the fire hall, by the display of class photos from 1980 through 1994.



Q: What kind of soap do politicians use?
A: Lie soap, of course.

Johnson from page 1

official records and statements of Johnson and Littleghost, he arrived for work per usual on Nov. 15, 2004. His job involved emptying certain trash cans into the public recycling bins which were, at that time, on the Xpress Lube property. Upon emptying one of the trash cans, Littleghost noticed a used parts box (a sectioned PCV valve tote box, valued at about \$20) in it, and dumped it in the recycling compartment that he thought was for aluminum waste. Johnson had previously had him throw out items of value, even new parts inventory that wasn't moving, so Littleghost thought little of the parts box being in the trash can, and assumed it was to be discarded.

At trial, Littleghost's attorney, public defender Kristine Cannon, would argue to the Court that Johnson's previous acts, coupled with the parts box mysteriously being in the trash can "begs the question" of whether Johnson deliberately put the parts box in the trash can to create a premise to force Littleghost's resignation.

Shortly after Littleghost had left work for the day at noon, Johnson telephoned him at his residence and called him back in. Johnson claimed to have found the parts box in the recycling bin, and accused Littleghost of trying to steal it.

Said Littleghost, "I told him . . . that was already in the [trash can], I just dumped it all out, I didn't think nothin' of it," and that he had no need for the box and wouldn't be jeopardizing his job over such a petty item. "I love my job, and I kept telling him over and over," Littleghost said, but Johnson continued to accuse him and demand that he resign. "He told me, . . . 'I want you to sign resignation papers, . . . I'll be able to help you out, by telling the employers that you just got burned out, you got tired of working here, and that you moved on to something bigger 'n better.'"

Littleghost retorted, "I said, 'I don't know what you're talking about, . . . I don't know what you're up to,' I said, 'I did enjoy this. . . . You make it seem like changing oil and stuff, you know, people don't like it . . . I actually like it . . . I enjoy it,' I said, 'so there is no moving on to bigger and better things,' I said, 'this was it for me.'"

The ultimatum. Littleghost recalled, "I said, 'I'm not signing them papers, I'm not doing nothing,' [and Johnson said,] 'Well then, if you don't sign these papers, then I'm going to call the cops on you and say that you tried to steal that.'"

Later that afternoon, Johnson followed through by calling BPD Sgt. Lehmann and making the accusatory statement. Sgt. Lehmann misleadingly recorded in his report that **Littleghost had admitted to Johnson that he had taken the parts box**; but this actually referred only to Littleghost's statement to Johnson that, as was his job, he dumped the parts box, from the trash can, into the recycling bin - *not that he put it in the trash can to be dumped.* Lehmann's report concludes, "Johnson terminated Littleghost. Littleghost will be cited for theft . . ."

Littleghost received Lehmann's citation by mail on Nov. 17th. He contacted Sgt. Lehmann and insisted that he be allowed to make a police statement. Lehmann went to Littleghost's house, and per Littleghost, immediately told him, "First of all, you should know, Randy [Johnson] and me are good friends - we go way back." Littleghost said that, at that point, Lehmann didn't realize that Littleghost's wife was also present

and that she witnessed that statement by Lehmann.

Littleghost gave Lehmann an interview, and Lehmann taped Littleghost's statement. The court file, however, only contains the report of Lehmann's interview of Randy Johnson. Apparently, his interview with Littleghost was not submitted to the Court. And for reasons unknown, Sgt. Lehmann did not testify at trial.

The trial opened, at 2 p.m. May 4th, 2005, with prosecutor Burg calling Johnson to the stand. Johnson would be characterized in later testimony as a very meticulous "a place for everything and everything in it's place" type of person. Johnson testified that, on the morning of Nov. 15th, before Littleghost's shift, Johnson did a walk-through of the premises, and noticed the subject parts box in the break room near the trash can; and that this was not where it belonged (Johnson offered no testimony as to why he didn't at that time put it, or later have it put, in it's proper place, which would have been more true to his character and way of doing business). He reiterated, on the stand, that he later saw Littleghost empty the trash can, and that after Littleghost left for the day, Johnson went to examine what Littleghost had dumped, and "found" the parts box in the recycling bin. On cross-examination,

Cannon asked Johnson: "*Why did you look in the other [i.e. other than plastics, as for the oil containers which were usually dumped] recycling bin?*"

Johnson: "*I looked in both of them.*"

Cannon: "*Because you knew the box was in there?*"

Johnson: "*No.*"

[Editor's note: there were actually *many* different bins, but Johnson, apparently, only inspected two, stopping when he "found" the parts box, as if that was what he was looking for and he expected to find it.] Johnson testified that he called Littleghost back to the shop, and offered him the opportunity to resign. Basing its case only solely on Johnson's testimony, the prosecution rested.

Kris Cannon called to the stand Mr. Scott Brein, a former foreman at Xpress Lube. Brein testified that while he was foreman, he worked with Littleghost and "he [Littleghost] was a hard worker."

Brein intimated that Johnson had paranoid tendencies; that he frequently accused employees of stealing, and "he [Johnson] said he couldn't trust Craig [Littleghost], being Native and stuff." Brein testified that when he spoke to Johnson favorably about Littleghost, Johnson punished him [Brein] by no longer letting him handle ordering, and demoting him to lower bay technician. As to used and empty PCV valve boxes, Brein testified that, prior to this incident, Johnson had routinely directed Brein to throw away many of them - they'd be dumped in the recycling bins.

Brein further testified, "Randy [Johnson] got upset and started yelling at me" about Littleghost's request to be part-time, and that Johnson said Littleghost would be "let go" first chance he got. Brein testified that, at the time, Johnson made racial comments, but said that Littleghost wouldn't be fired immediately because of legal liability.

Over time, as happens with many of the Xpress Lube employees, and possibly because of his speaking well of Littleghost, Brein fell out of Johnson's favour. He testified that at the end of July, 2004, Johnson demanded that he resign, and threatened to file a criminal charge against him if he

didn't. Johnson told him, "He'd make sure that I'd end up in jail, and he can do it because Debbie is an officer," Brein testified.

Under cross-examination, Burg asked Brein what Johnson threatened to falsely accuse him of; Brein answered, "He didn't say - he just said he'd find a way."

Cannon called Craig Littleghost to the stand. Littleghost testified that, on 11/15/04, the day of the alleged incident, "Randy [Johnson] asked me to look in the break room [where Johnson had earlier testified the PCV valve box was] ... make sure the trashes were empty ... take out the recycling;" and that later that morning, after the second customer had come and gone, Johnson again asked him if he'd emptied the trash can. Littleghost testified that when he later emptied it, "I noticed the PCV box" and that he dumped it into what he thought was the recycling bin for aluminum.

Littleghost further testified that when he had gone for the day at noon, and Johnson called him back, "I noticed that, behind the door, he had a PCV box," and that Johnson asked Littleghost if he had put it into the recycling bin. Littleghost said, "Yes, I did," whereupon Johnson told him, "It looks like a theft to me" and showed Littleghost a resignation form he'd prepared, and told Littleghost to sign it or be charged with theft. Littleghost refused to sign the resignation.

Littleghost testified that Johnson then told him, "Do you think anybody's going to believe you? I'm a well-respected businessman - you're a nobody."

Littleghost testified as to his change of hours, that per his caseworker's direction, he'd asked for part-time, but then he had another consultation with his caseworker and found out that he'd make more money [than the benefits] if he worked more, so he asked Johnson for more hours, but didn't get them. After telling Johnson of the disability, "He talked to me like I was stupid," Littleghost testified, and Johnson would, on occasion, ask Littleghost if he'd found another job yet.

Littleghost corroborated Brein's earlier testimony that Johnson was kind of nutty and paranoid about employee theft - that he'd "jumped on" Littleghost when he opened the till to change a dollar. Littleghost testified that because Johnson accused him of stealing socket wrenches, Littleghost bought his own set to use at work.

Littleghost testified that, at one time, Johnson told him, "He wanted his non-Native employees to be upstairs [where the customers were] and he wanted his Native employees downstairs."

Still, Littleghost testified, "This job I had at Lakeside Xpress Lube was just right for me . . . I never would have done something that would jeopardize my job."

Burg began his cross-examination clarifying Littleghost's requests as to his hours, and then the alleged incident; and with the case obviously going against him, began to slip up in his details, referring to Littleghost's car as a "pick-up".

Under cross-examination, Littleghost explained that it wasn't unusual for Johnson to throw away items of value; that the week before, Johnson had Littleghost throw out a lot of air filters and other new supplies because they were overstocked and Johnson didn't think they would move.

About the previous theft accusations, and why he bought his own wrenches, Littleghost said, "He [Johnson] always makes it out you're trying to do something wrong to him when you're not."

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Clutching now at straws, Burg intimated that the sectioned PCV box would have had use for Littleghost to store the socket set he bought.

He pounded: "*It's kind of handy to keep them in separate compartments, isn't it?*"

But Littleghost just calmly and honestly answered Burg: "*Not really,*" and said that there are boxes specially made for socket sets. [*They usually come with the set. -- Ed.*]

In closing, Burg argued to the Court that Littleghost "became angry" that Johnson wouldn't custom-tailor his hours at Littleghost's requests.

But this was unsupported by the evidence - no witness testified that Littleghost was angry at any time - quite to the contrary, testimony had shown that it was Johnson who frequently lost his temper. Even under cross examination, when Burg tried to put words into Littleghost's mouth; while testifying about the demanded resignation Littleghost repeatedly corrected Burg and said not that he was angry, but rather that he was "hurt and offended" by Johnson's accusation and demand.

Cannon wrapped up telling the Court that Johnson was "obsessive" about people stealing things, so Littleghost brought his own tools to work so Johnson wouldn't be worried. She said, "*My client does as he's told ... so he took out the recycling ... Mr. Johnson has had him throw out stacks of [new] stuff in the past. ... Mr. Brein didn't want to resign ... he was coerced out of fear*"

The testimony had shown that there were various entrances, exits and garage doors that could have been used to empty the trash; but Littleghost took it out the front way; and to conserve energy and not needlessly open the garage door, he took it through the lobby, and the lobby door.

Cannon continued that if Littleghost was doing something illegal, why would he have emptied the trash can walking right through the lobby door, "right in front of Mr. Johnson."

"Mr. Littleghost did not commit this crime," Cannon concluded.

The Honourable Judge Benschhof took the matter under advisement to consider all of the lengthy evidence, rendering the Not Guilty verdict eight days later, May 12th.

Judge Benschhof is known for fully and diligently considering his cases. In this matter, his detailed Memorandum of findings stated, in part, and as regards Littleghost's charge of trying to steal a \$20 parts box by dumping a trash can containing same, as he was directed by Johnson to do, "I have decided that criminal intent was **not** proved beyond a reasonable doubt." [Emphasis added.]

In going over the inconsistencies in the evidence, and with his usual judicial wisdom, Judge Benschhof cited an obscure and passing, but very important item that came up in Randy Johnson's testimony: "... Mr. Johnson admitted that the metal PCV box was sitting near the ... [trash can] ... when he got to work that morning, and he was there one-half hour before the Defendant was. He admitted that was not the box's normal location. So who put it there and why?"

After the verdict, Craig Littleghost said, "It was good - I was not guilty of anything from the get-go; I just had to prove it - I am happy." And Littleghost, who is now studying at NTC for an ASE mechanic's certification, said that he's moving forward on his civil suit, through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, against Johnson; and expects to be able to use, in that suit, the information derived in disclosure during the criminal proceedings.

Johnson's Lakeside Havoline Xpress Lube closed and was sold in January, 2005, less than 3 weeks after Northern Herald's exclusive publication of the initial breaking story on this, "Havoline Xpress Lube Tries To Frame Native Employee" (available at northernherald.com). It's hard for a newspaper to take credit for things that just seem to happen, but we are told that, in this matter, this was not a coincidence; and it further corroborates Johnson's culpability. The former Havoline store is now a Valvoline location.

-- Ed.

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The Straight Dope fr p. 8

nearby. "When we raid a house, there's almost always guns," he said. Hackensack Police Chief Mel Rateike added that meth producers often buy an unusually large amount of purified water. He spoke of a lab they recently took down in the Hackensack area, and that the cleanup of toxic waste there cost \$30,000, and the property still can't

be sold because the hazardous waste seeped into the ground, which has not yet been cleaned.

SA2 said "Sometimes the cleanup costs can be as much as 3 times what the property is worth." Another sign of meth production is that the grass and plants die because of the chemicals being dumped.

Hackensack First Responder and EMT Bonnie Peterson said that (Cont'd, "The Straight Dope," p. 11)



MINNESOTA REAL

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REAL ESTATE

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Cass Lake. **BUILDING & 4 LOTS**, on corner, in Cass Lake. Suitable for laundramat - was Cass Lake's only, with large clientele. 1800 sq. ft. Completely remodeled in '98. \$76,000. Visible from 371. 218-766-7983



Hackensack Area. **HOUSE & 5 ACRES ON DEEP PORTAGE RD.** 4 car garage. 3 bd., 1 ba., on beautifully wooded home site with 5 acres. A steal at \$149,000. By owner, will consider terms with reasonable down. 218-675-5816, 218-252-2832



Hackensack. **HOUSE IN HACKENSACK** with big barn-style double garage with unfinished living quarters in garage loft. House is 2 1/2 bedroom, 1 bath, with large kitchen, on city wooded lot with big trees. Bordering Paul Bunyan Trail. New carpet in bedrooms. 331 1st St. S., Hackensack. \$60,000. 719-469-0129

Iraq from page 1

Victory sign and that kind of thing, it was pretty impressive."

"**There's huge lines** in order to be recruited for the Iraqi Police and the Iraqi National Guard, and just talking with the some of the fellas at the police station, they really do care about the community because that's where they live," Whipps added.

Teach a man how to fish . . . Whipps continued, "It's getting to the point now where there's actually a transition going on where the Iraqi police are in the forefront and we're just there to back them up when they need it. . . . They're taking a lot of the responsibilities over of cleaning up their own streets, which is awesome - when we first arrived there [Iraqi efforts] were almost nonexistent . . . with the Iraqi Police, once they start taking pride in themselves, which is happening tenfold from when we first arrived there, they show that pride and that commitment to the community in making it a safe place; the community's gonna respond to them, in turn, and help . . . identify those bad guys that are running around."

The insurgency may not be as common as some would lead to believe, but a U.S. soldier there still has to watch his back. Said Sgt. Whipps, "It's our job to worry. There are . . . so many cars on the road . . . and so you have to be aware of just about everything around you at all times . . . you don't want to be complacent, 'cause the

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behind her husband, "110 %," she said, "I think the job needs to get done. I don't know how 'comfortable' I am with it; but, yes, **I support him until the job is done. We cannot pull out until the job is done.**"

And Northern Herald adds: Complacency undermines not only the effort abroad, but sometimes here too. It's easy when no one's blowing you up right now. Now that the threat to U.S. shores is no longer imminent, there are those that say we shouldn't try to police Iraq and that we shouldn't have gone to the middle east to begin with. It's a small world, though. The middle east is just hours away for a terrorist, less for a missile.

We note though, that, as it is with mosquitoes when we throw out the tub of stagnant water where they breed, since we destroyed the training camps in Afghanistan and the places where terrorism could breed in Iraq, world terrorism seems to have subsided considerably and there have been no incidents here since 9/11. We don't think that's a coincidence. For all his domestic policy faults, George W. has been a good wartime President and our dedicated troops have done, and continue to do, a fine job.

Thanks to the efforts of Sgt. Whipps in seeing that they reach the spread out Northern Minnesota troops, with this issue, Northern Herald will begin sending stacks of papers to our fine men in Iraq so that Northern Minnesotans stationed there can keep up on our own brand of corruption and terror in Bemidji; and to bolster the new sanitary system, in case they run short of bath tissue. -- Ed.

minute that you're complacent, that's when something's gonna happen." [As it is with attitudes toward our global anti-terror effort, here in the U.S. -- Ed.]

Whipps said, "You see it [insurgent terrorism] once in a great while," and that one of their gunners was injured by a car bomb about a month ago. " . . . it's the poorer people that seem to be involved in that sort of thing because they're easier to recruit," Whipps said, adding that some of the insurgent leadership has money to spend and "the poorer people of rural communities are used as a recruiting tool."

On leave now, Sgt. Whipps looks forward to the completion of his tour this year. In the service from 1988 through 1998, in tours of duty that included Bosnia, and, in 2003, reenlisting, for a year, with a unit at Marshall, Minn.; after discharge Sgt. Whipps will resume working, at North Hennepin Community College, toward his law enforcement degree. He has worked with the Ramsey Co. Sheriff's Dept. and, after graduation, looks forward to getting hired as a deputy there.

Scheduled to be out in Nov., 2004, Sgt. Whipps's tour of duty was extended by the President's "stop-loss" policy. "We landed in Kuwait Dec. 5th, [2004] and we were in Baghdad Dec. 7th," he said. He expects to be done by the end of 2005, but there's no guarantee. As an American peacekeeper, Whipps is devoted to his important job and, despite his family life and career goals here, understands the need for the stop-loss policy, saying, "it's part of the Army. It's been part of the Army forever; it's a volunteer force and when they need people they can't just cut contracts up and they can't just ship you home because your contract's up; if they need you, they need you. . . . I'd say it's my wife, she's got the hard job. She's here with two kids, she works full time; I've got the easy end of it . . ."

Sgt. Whipps's wife, Annette, is

NORTHERN PERSONALS

Marriage: It's what you do when you've grown tired of searching for happiness, and have decided, instead, to just have some of it.

One Man One Woman
One Lifetime

GUYS SEEKING GALS

Bemidji Area. SWM. 50s, 6'1", 225 lbs., seeking S/D WF for LTR. Looking forward to talking to you and progressing to meeting for lunch. #10148

Park Rapids Area. SWM, age 60, financially secure, looking for female - any race - one who is petite or slender, age 21 to 65. One who wants a long-term relationship and one who wants a 50-50 relationship, and one who wants to relocate. For more information, please write, send phone no., address, and photo. #10149

Brainerd Area. DWM, young 65, 6', 195 lbs., XLT health. Wants slender, attractive 50ish woman who enjoys indoor and outdoor sports, biking, canoeing, and a man's companionship. #10147

Northern Minn. Mature, sharp-looking gentleman seeks young, beautiful, long-haired virgin, who hasn't done things the wrong way and wants to live her life the right way; for lifetime marriage, to share the good life, at peace with Providence, nature, and man; and eventually become a wealthy widow. Lots of dancing, outdoor fun and (married) romance will hasten the process. Should be skilled in the domestic arts, dancing & smoking, but if not can always learn to smoke. She should know CPR, but frankly, will get rich sooner if she doesn't. #10144

Park Rapids Area. Outdoorsman with multi-interests and good communication skills. Have been single eight years. N/S, 5' 10", active at 175 lbs. Like to hike, bike, and read. Seeking honest Christian lady, preferably a Minnesota native, with homesteading skills, class, and culture. The door is open for LTR. #10145

GALS SEEKING GUYS

Northern Minn. SWF, young-hearted-60, trim, NS, health conscious, sense of humor, open-minded, sentimental, country-spirited, honest, blue jeans, 4x4, respectful, enjoys blues, blue grass, small-town activities, compassion for animals, nature, country and old-time rock 'n roll, the Northwoods beauty, plows, news, life, some weeds, some frogs, ducks, cows, goats, sheep, "goose, if alone"! No football-spectator sports. Seeking soulmate, trim, with 4x4, that appreciates most of the same interests, a one-on-one kind of person, who is honest and open-minded, can laugh at times, 56-66, likes home-life, is caring, kind, down-to-earth, and not a religious fanatic; enjoys quiet times too. #10146

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Prepare your letter to the person. Place the letter in an envelope, with your return address (optional), but leave the recipient's

address area on the envelope blank. Write the recipient's five digit code number in the lower left corner of the front of the envelope, then stamp and seal each envelope. Place all of the envelopes you are sending in a larger envelope and send, with \$5 for each letter to NORTHERN HERALD, P.O. Box 1535, Bemidji, MN 56619. Letters will usually be forwarded within two business days.

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The first 30 words are free, words over 30 are 25¢ each. You can call 218-759-1162 to place your ad, or send it with proper remittance, if any, to Northern Herald, P.O. Box 1535, Bemidji, MN 56619. Be sure to indicate whether you're a guy seeking gal or a gal seeking guy - it isn't always obvious from names, or, for that matter, hair styles - Include your general location as the first words of the ad. Include your name, address and phone. We don't print these, but must have them for verification, and to forward your mail. Photos may run for \$5 extra, if you want everyone to know who you are. Ads run for 4 issues (about 6 mos.) unless renewed. Ads may also be e-mailed to: editor@northernherald.com (include your name & mailing address for mail forwarding, and phone for verification). You may put your e-mail address in your ad.

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS (FOR UNCOMMON PEOPLE): S: Single/Separated M: Married D: Divorced W: Widowed W: White B: Black A: Asian I: Indian H: Hispanic C: Catholic J: Jewish P: Protestant M: Male F: Female N: Non-L: Light-S: Smoker D: Drinker D/D free: Drug & Disease free ISO: In Search Of CT: Casual Tramping CT: "Serial Monogamy" (same thing) LTR: Long Term Tramping M: Marriage Nm: New merchandise Uab: Used a bit Pa: Passed around

valuables, even where the items turned up in another state. SA2 recommended that with guns and valuables having a serial number, the numbers be written down and kept in a safe deposit box. He said that these things really do show up, and can be traced and returned if one knows the serial number.

Chief Rateike advised that businesses should be sure to have tape in their video security equipment, and have enough to be able to save the tapes at least a month before reusing them; for checks, to insist on identification, and write the driver's license number on the check; and to have clerks be aware of suspicious transactions, such as a person from Bemidji renting a video tape player in Hackensack. On these, he said, it's reasonable to ask for a second ID.

Several of the officers spoke of how justice is sometimes slow, due to procedure. So if a person makes

Voyage Into Heck fr p. 5

date the school, under threat of suit, held a meeting with Mr. and Mrs. X, with an advocate for the charter schools present. Although the Xs wanted us there, at the last minute Den Hartog informed us that the press would be barred from the meeting. The *Northern Herald* reporter gave Mrs. X the tape recorder so she could record the meeting proceedings, and waited outside.

Happy students? *Northern Herald* was only on the campus briefly, waiting for the meeting to conclude. While we were waiting, in the hall of Voyageurs's administration building in the German Village on the Concordia campus, another student, an attractive, and seemingly personable, competent, and friendly 9th grade girl, walked into the building visibly distressed, in tears. She had also been promised the New York/Washington trip, had deposited the necessary funds, and then had been bumped from it.

At the meeting, the school

a report, just because they don't see something happening, that doesn't mean it isn't. And sometimes, on an initial report, officers need to put the suspect under surveillance and develop enough evidence so that when they make the raid, the charge will stick.

Persons observing the suspicious activity described here are advised to contact the Cass County Sheriff's Dept. at 800-450-2677, or if in Hackensack, Chief Rateike at 218-675-5050

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officials admitted that their actions had been inappropriate in several respects. Den Hartog agreed to reinstate Student X for the trip, if he still wanted to go.

Lying one's way out of it. Den Hartog also acknowledged that the IEP should have been implemented (prior to the meeting, per Mrs. X, Den Hartog had told her that he was not notified of an IEP, although a charter schools Director had informed Den Hartog that it was specified on the student's initial enrollment papers, "So, in fact, we did notify him; they, for whatever reason, didn't follow through," Mrs. X said), and Voyageurs offered to provide compensatory education (in summer school) for the failure to implement the IEP and for the class time that Student X had missed as a result of being improperly not allowed to attend. "His summer's ruined - because now he has to go to summer school just to make up for his ... lost time," said Mrs. X, after the meeting, adding, "[in] his first semester, he got good grades; and his second semester he failed [a class] because he wasn't allowed to attend school."

Following the meeting, Mr. X said, "On the positive side, ... they've gotten rid of all those excuses for [Student X] not going on the trip and opened that door again. ... Now, everything is going to be on paper in black and white. ... If they're not gonna send him on a trip for one reason or other, we're gonna be notified of that and what the reasons were...."

Editor's Note: *Voyageurs* displays, on the campus, their motto, "Because One Size Fits Nobody", indicating, we suppose, a certain latitude of individual flexibility in education. Under the circumstances, the motto is laughable. After reporting this incident, including their failure to implement the required Individual Education Plan, we can see that there might be a lot of kids for whom, if similarly treated, the Voyageurs experience might not be beneficial; and we honestly wonder if *Voyageurs's* size fits anybody.

The Straight Dope fr p. 10

where people are having respiratory problems, they look around to see if it may be due to drugs or drug manufacture in the area.

Cass Co. Sheriff Randy Fisher told the audience that the locations of busted meth labs are reported to the Minnesota Health Dept., and that, before buying property, a person might want to check with them, as well as with local law enforcement, to be aware of potential residual toxic waste, for the cleanup of which they could become responsible.

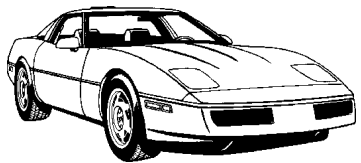
Fisher said that states where drug stores keep ephedrine-containing compounds behind the counter have experienced a lower number of meth labs.

Addressing the increasing area

problem of bad checks, Fisher told business owners that if they get a bad check, they may call Co. Atty. Earl Maus (218-547-7255) for the bad check information packet, so to know what to do to make the crime chargeable.

On neighbourhood security and theft, Fisher said that Neighbourhood Watches, established in 1972 by the National Sheriffs' Assn., have "proven to be effective," and that the Neighbourhood Watch signs, which may then be posted, "really act as a deterrent." He also recommended *Operation ID* engraving of valuables, and said that his office will help with this and has an engraving tool which may be borrowed (800-450-2677). SA Diekmann added that Operation ID has worked to return

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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DUMP TRUCK, 1988 GMC 1-TON with 10ft box, rear Tommy-Lift, low miles. Excellent condition, no rust. \$8,900. Walker, MN 218-547-4997.

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CUSTOM HARLEY, must see. \$7,000. 218-828-5117

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