

# BRainerd DISPATCH

Senior leads tenors in a caapella choir, Page 2

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## Nisswa Lions undertake childhood cancer service project

**By Nancy Vogt**  
 Echo Journal

NISSWA — The Nisswa Lions Club recently added childhood cancer to their service projects, and it's a topic that hits particularly close to home for Nisswa Lion George Olson.

"I had a son that was born with cancer — neuroblastoma," said Olson, committee chair of the childhood cancer project.

Five hours after son George was born, he was in an ambulance enroute to a Minneapolis hospi-

tal. The family lived in Spicer at the time with their daughter.

At 3 days old, George had surgery to remove a kidney and his tumor.

"And that started the whole process of numerous treatments and surgeries, biopsies and all the scans," Olson said.

George underwent a bone marrow transplant. For a stretch of time when he was 3, they were in the Twin Cities for three straight months, with Olson and his wife taking turns there.

Followup treatments continued, along with more biopsies and scans.

"There were a lot of long days over the years," Olson said.

In 2009, at age 12, George died from complications from all the different treatments and surgeries he'd had.

Olson was a Lions club member in Spicer, and when the family moved to Nisswa in 2016, he joined the Nisswa Lions Club.

Two years later, Lions International made

childhood cancer one of their five pillars, along with environment, hunger, diabetes and vision.

"When I heard that, and knowing that the Lions motto is 'we serve,' I remembered what we needed to plan for before each treatment and the help we got from family and friends when gone," Olson said.

"I put the two together and said, 'Why can't the Lions help out?' Not just by doing a fundraiser,



**Contributed / Nisswa Lions**  
 The Nisswa Lions hosted a fundraiser dinner in September 2022 catered by Qing for Communities to raise money to launch their childhood cancer service project.

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## ON A ROLL



**Kelly Humphrey / Brainerd Dispatch**

Chet Isaccson celebrates as Dave Weatherhead loses his footing in the log rolling competition, part of the Timberworks Lumberjack Show on Saturday during the Brainerd Lakes Home Show and Expo at the Essentia Health Sports Center in Brainerd.

## Costs and benefits

**Proposed Minnesota paid leave program comes with big startup costs, generous benefits**

**By Christopher Magan**  
 St. Paul Pioneer Press

ST. PAUL — Minnesota Democrats' ambitious two-year budget plan — with \$17.9 billion in new spending — includes the creation of

a paid family and medical leave program that has hefty startup costs.

The joint budget targets announced by Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party leaders include nearly \$670 million to kick-start the benefit program. But a fiscal analysis by the nonpartisan Legislative Budget Office found getting the program up and running could cost as much as \$1.7 billion.

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**Tim Speier / Brainerd Dispatch**

Community members listening to Brainerd Police Sgt. Derek Pallansch talk about the northside neighborhood.

## Girlfriend of man accused of Mille Lacs murder arrested for aiding the crime

**By Tim Speier**  
 Brainerd Dispatch

KATHIO TOWNSHIP — The girlfriend of Bradley Weyaus, who was charged with murder after human remains were found near Mille Lacs Lake, was herself arrested Thursday, March 23, for helping him commit the crime.

Alexis Marion Elling, 21, of Rochester, was charged with felony aiding an offender as an accomplice after the fact.

Weyaus was charged Thursday with second-degree murder, fleeing a peace officer in a motor vehicle, interference with a dead body or scene of death-con-

cealing a body and evidence after highway workers clearing an area on Twilight Road near Mille Lacs Lake found human remains in a plastic storage container with bungee cords and tape.

According to court documents, law enforcement made contact Thursday with Elling and spoke to her regarding the homicide. She admitted to being in a relationship with Weyaus and had been involved with the events around the victim, Rodney Pen-

degayosh Jr., 25, of Isle.

On Friday afternoon, Mille Lacs County Sheriff Kyle Burton announced the body found in the plastic storage container was officially identified as Pendegayosh.

Elling told investigators Weyaus had told her that he had killed Pendegayosh and Pendegayosh's body was in the storage container. However, she said she did not assist in placing the body in the container, which she said was already loaded and sealed when she was made aware of it. She did admit a fake fingernail found inside the storage container belonged to her.

Elling said she helped

remove the container from a residence on Main Street in Isle knowing Pendegayosh's body was inside, placing it in a vehicle and then driving it to a residence in Wahkon, where it was unloaded. She also said she took a long gun case with a shotgun inside, which was later sold for drugs, from the Isle residence.

Weyaus and Elling are scheduled to make their initial appearance in Mille Lacs County District Court on April 4.

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## Crime prevention on the minds of north Brainerd residents

**By Tim Speier**  
 Brainerd Dispatch

BRAINERD — Crime — specifically the prevention of it — is on the minds of residents in north Brainerd.

The Brainerd Northside Neighborhood Association met at the Brainerd Center Thursday, March 23, to discuss the issue with the Brainerd Police Department.

Krista Soukup, Brainerd Northside Neighborhood Association

president, said the group has been meeting for about 20 years and works to bring the community together as well as taking the needs of the community to the proper governing body.

"We're kind of an information hub," Soukup said. "And then we will go to city council meetings or committee meetings, write letters to the editor, talk to our elected officials about

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