

STAFF VOICE

A column is one person's perspective on any given issue, published as a regular feature in the newspaper. A column does not necessarily reflect the views of the newspaper.

Make your calendar a friend, my dear

There's this thing on my desk that really bothers me. It causes me a lot of anxiety and stress. But I can't avoid it. It's a part of my life and always will be - it's stubborn like that. No matter how much I dress it up with color or tell myself I can control it, it's still scary and still in charge - this thing called my calendar.

Motivating my fight to hold back those pages of months and books of years are pictures of you. Look just beyond that flat, box-grid with 31 numbers and scribbled appointments, there you are tacked up next to my computer. Some of the photographs have been there for years, others are fairly new.

There's one of me and you hanging our feet off the dock. You're about two-years-old and wearing a cable knit sweater. It's August and we're holding a fishing pole together. Next to this photo is one of you at about 10 taken during a school sledding day. Your pink cheeks match your coat and hat and your curls are bouncing in the wind.

Right in front of my keyboard is my

favorite - taken on the Gunflint Trail. We were camping with friends and you were still an only child (if only for a few more months). I caught you looking up at me with a big, proud smile. Your eyes are sparkling and match the handful of blueberries in your bucket.

I also have one from our trip to the Boundary Waters. You were six and such a trooper when you and I paddled in wind, rain, sunshine and heat; portaged through thick mud and mean mosquitos; and slept on sticks and stones. Your face in this photo is incredible - wrinkled up nose, eyes closed, and a funny smirk - it says "what a ridiculous adventure, Mom, but I'm lovin' it!"

Of course, I have a school photo. I think it's the one from your sophomore year at GRHS. I know you say you "hate it," but I like it better than

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all the others. You were at that age just starting to become the beautiful, confident gal you are today. Middle school and all its awkwardness was behind you. You look happy about where you were in life - about your friends, your teachers, your activities, your new driver's license.

On my office wall hangs the collage you made in freshman art class. I think the assignment must have been to draw objects that reflect your personality, your likes and fears, and dreams for the future. You drew some things that are obvious like a tennis racket, strawberry, superhero symbols and blue Converse high-top. I can guess what the spider and the upside down piggy bank mean. The Spanish flag and the astronaut on the moon reflect fine aspirations but I'm glad you painted a bright blue silhouette of

Minnesota smack-dab in the middle. The Mr. Potato Head waving atop the Hollywood Hill with Scooby-Doo's van in the distance - these are puzzling yet remind me of your giggle.

Baby, it's been a joy to watch you grow into the caring, funny, friendly person you are today. You're a young adult with wisdom beyond your age. You could teach people decades older a lot about responsibility, reliability, understanding and compassion. You've come so far yet have so far to go.

While I wish I could curb the calendar, hold you back, keep you home, I know you need to spread your wings and fly to the moon (or Spain or Hollywood or wherever your heart takes you). This week, I gasped when I turned to the month of May. The days ahead will zoom toward graduation and soon you'll be leaving our nest. Ahead of you will be years of exciting new experiences. Mark those moments, my dear, to make your calendar a friend.

LIBRARY VOICE

Fishing @ your library

Carpe Diem does not mean "fish of the day."

Get ready to tackle fishing opener (May 11) with help from Grand Rapids Area Library! We have an assortment of materials to study before the opener:

- Boating and Fishing Safety DVD (363.123 BOAT)
- "The Compleat Angler" by Izaak Walton (824 WAL)
- "Fishing Tips & Tricks" by Greg Breining and Dick Sternberg (799.1 BRE)
- "Pro-Mo's Secrets to Finding and Catching Walleyes" by Gary Roach (799.1 ROA)
- "Walleye Fishing Today" by Tom Zenanko (799.177 ZEN)
- "Young Angler's Guide" by John Cheek (799.1 CHE)

Related magazines available at the library:

- Boating world
- Field and Stream
- Fur Fish Game
- Gray's Sporting Journal
- Minnesota Game and Fish
- Outdoor Life

In-Town Fishing Opportunities

- there are four fishing piers in Grand Rapids for easy access fishing.

- Crystal (Ice) Lake - East end of the lake with parking lot nearby.
- Forest Lake - South side of the lake west of Blandin Beach with on-street parking.
- Mississippi River - Sylvan Landing.
- Mississippi River - Behind the library with walking path from the parking lot.

Fishing equipment available @ your library:

- Six adult, two youth, and two child PFDs
- Eight rod and reel combos (six-foot)
- Six kids' short fishing rods with reels
- Small tackle boxes with a few items will be handed out with each rod.

Who can use the equipment?

- Kids who want to try fishing.
- Families who want to try fishing without making an investment in equipment.
- Out of town visitors who want to try fishing in the area.
- Residents who have visitors from out of town and don't have quite enough equipment to take everyone out fishing.

How long can it be checked out?

Equipment will be on loan for a maximum of three days and must be returned during hours the library is open.

Where can I use the equipment?

It can be used on the river near



By Will Richter
Director Library Services

the library, on any of the fishing piers in town, or taken to a nearby lake or river.

What is required?

We will ask for name, address and phone number. A library card is not required.

The borrower is responsible for obtaining a fishing license, if needed.

Don't get skunked because you don't have a library card in your tackle box. A library card is free to Itasca County residents with photo ID.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS @ YOUR LIBRARY

How To Home School Tuesday, May 7, 6:30 p.m. (Community Room)

There are a variety of reasons why families choose to homeschool their children. A panel of local parents will share their insight for how to establish a homeschool, and the resources available to others interested in this education option.

Luffarslojd Tuesday, May 14, 6 p.m. (Community room)

Artist Faith Clover teaches attendees about the traditional Scandinavian art of wire-working, called Luffarslöjd. Learn its history and make a basic hook or two to take home! Ages 14 and up—please register at the Reference Desk. This project was funded in part or in whole with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Explore Nature Thursday, May 16, 3:30 p.m. and Saturday, May 18, 10:30 a.m. (Community Room)

We are closing the book on Rapids Reads 2019 with outdoor fun for the whole family! Dress for the weather and enjoy activity stations sure to get everyone excited about nature.

A special thank you to the Grand Rapids Area Library Foundation for supporting Rapids Reads!

Wednesday Writing Group Wednesday, May 15, 5 p.m. (Big Riverview Room)

Summer events and attractions Thursday, May 30, 6 p.m. (Community Room)

Learn about all the big events and attractions happening in our community this summer. Residents and visitors alike will discover local traditions and activities sure to meet their interests. Plus—Chad's Meat Wagon will be here!

SCIENCE VOICE

A major health menace

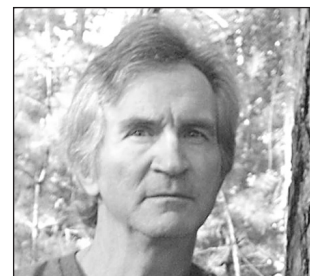
Several news outlets have recently had articles about a major threat that exists for those who venture into the great outdoors in Minnesota. This is the blacklegged tick, or deer tick and the now several different diseases they can transmit to humans and pets.

The May-June issue of Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine has a good article about this health issue and what precautions you can take to protect yourself from deer ticks.

Up until about 1980, the only prevalent ticks in Northern Minnesota were common dog ticks. For the most part, they were little more than a nuisance. Bites rarely caused any adverse reaction with minor infections the most common, and those usually from poor care of contact points. But starting in the 1980s a new tick was discovered encroaching into Minnesota from Wisconsin. And it was carrying something called Lyme disease. Not to worry, we were told. The winters were too severe here for the ticks to survive.

Fast forward to today and several extraordinarily mild winters later. Deer ticks are thriving, and have spread throughout the region. Cass, Aitkin, and Itasca counties have some of the highest per capita infection rates in the nation, along with surrounding counties. Why? This area has some of the most favorable characteristics for deer tick survivability. There are lots of whitetail deer and mice, the prime feeding grounds for the ticks. There is lots of dead grass and leaf litter in the swamps, fields, vacant lots, and woods. If the winters are too cold, no one bothered to tell the ticks.

Lyme Disease came into Minnesota with the deer ticks. But now they have been found to also carry anaplasmosis, babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, Powassan virus, Borrelia mayonii, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and Tularemia. (Not all ticks are carriers, but in one study 40 percent of adult deer ticks and 20 percent of deer tick nymphs were found to carry Lyme disease.) The symptoms are similar and may include headache, muscle ache, neck and joint pain and stiffness, fever and chills, nausea and diarrhea, and chronic fatigue. Left untreated, these diseases can lead to organ damage and death. And these pathogens are now moving into the dog tick population as well. And while there used to be a fairly predictable "tick season" in May and June in Minnesota, deer ticks have now been discovered in every month except January.



By Terry Mejdrich
Freelance writer & former science teacher

"He" is an active outdoor enthusiast and sprays his pant legs and hiking boots with strong repellent and chemicals that kill ticks. Yet he has been treated for Lyme disease three times in the last five years. Currently, he is nearing the end of a round of antibiotics for anaplasmosis, another tick-borne

illness. The majority of his rural neighbors have undergone treatment for a tick-borne illness as well. The number of infections in humans is likely to reach into the thousands this year in Minnesota alone. Imagine if this infection rate was occurring in something like the measles outbreak that has been in the news lately.

Perhaps the Minnesota legislature should look at the economic impact of tick-borne illnesses. Besides the serious health issues, consider the potential loss of revenue to outdoor recreation and tourism, which is a major pillar of the Minnesota economy. Consider all the areas where ticks are present. Hiking trails, boat landings, parks, private and public campgrounds, picnic areas, school forests, public gardens and nature preserves. How about small game and deer hunters who spend considerable time hiking the woods and then come in contact with animals that may be carrying deer ticks. How about forest rangers, loggers, and timber cruisers and others whose job takes them into the woods. Or balsam bough cutters and wreath makers during October and November that are handling branches and walking in the woods where deer ticks may be present. Or farmers out in the hayfield crawling under machinery for repair or maintenance or the neighbor kid who's stacking hay bales on the wagon. Or someone just heading out to the garden for some weed-pulling therapy.

Some articles downplay the seriousness of tick-borne illnesses, where one even said it was "easy" to prevent tick bites, possibly to not panic the public and drive away tourist business. There are preventative measures that can and should be taken, but they are no guarantee. And as the tick menace becomes more widely realized, Minnesota's tourism economy will be increasingly adversely affected unless we recognize ticks as much more than a mere nuisance, and create a comprehensive plan to deal with them.

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