

## 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.

# I'll take the golden axe, but the real prize is my partner in plaid

A big golden axe attached to a wooden plaque has a special place in my office. For three years, it's been a striking fixture above my desk. Many people who come to visit me are immediately taken aback and have to ask.

Three years ago, Dr. Lee Jess called me with a proposition. In his always energetic and encouraging approach, Dr. Jess wanted to know if I could help him revive the Tall Timber Days Media Competition. He said it would be a relay and he hoped the Herald-Review could put together a team of two to compete. He told me he was going to get teams from the radio and TV stations, too.

I said, "Sure, sign up the newspaper!"

A few days before Tall Timber Days weekend, I went around the office looking for someone who might be willing to join me in the relay event which involves the buck-saw, log rolling and a log pile sprint. I had

absolutely NO takers. Everyone seemed to be quite busy that weekend. So, I went home to my husband.

"Would you wanna join me in this silly thing?" I asked him. In fact, I think I remember promising him dinner out if he were to say, "yes." But that didn't matter, he was on board at the get-go! This would be a piece of cake for the man who spends every fall filling our woodshed.

From the moment I hung up with Dr. Jess, the nerves set in. "What was I thinking?" Then, when no one from my office would step up, I thought, "what am I going to do now?" But, when my dear hubby said he'd be there with me, I knew everything was going to be OK.

## Britta Arendt



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Up on the Lumberjack Show stage in front of a crowd of familiar and unfamiliar faces is terrifying to start. Then they give you a very intimidating large, silver sharp saw and you're given 30 seconds of instructions before they blow a whistle.

We grasped those handles, looked at each other and worked that saw back and forth without many snags at all. The rest of the relay was a breeze, and before we knew it we were announced the winners.

Exhilarated and out of breath, the two of us felt on top of the world. It wasn't an Olympic race, or even a marathon or 5K we had completed. No, it was just silly lumberjack fun! But we earned that big, beautiful golden axe as well as a new apprecia-

tion for each other - and our team. It was cute to watch our kids sitting in the bleachers cheering and taking photos.

This weekend, my husband and I will attempt to defend our title and our trophy for the fourth consecutive year. As I look back on the years I've stood up on that stage, saw in hand, with him (as an auxiliary employee of the Herald-Review if only for the day), I'm super proud.

I'm definitely thrilled with our continued 'Jack n' Jill' success at cutting through that log. However, I'm most happy with the lengths we've come in our marriage to overcome the choppy times; to work back and forth between each other to pull things through.

If we happen to relinquish that impressive golden axe this year, I promise not to cry. Because I won the biggest prize 20 years ago when I married my partner in red plaid - my best friend, my sweetheart, my soulmate.

## LIBRARY VOICE

## Book sale and authors @ your library

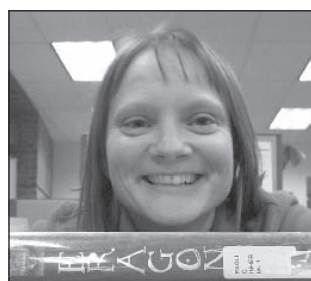
Sunday is the last day of the book sale! If you haven't stopped by the sale in the Central Square Mall, there is still time today. The sale runs from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. A great big thank you to all the volunteers who helped with the sale. Thank you, thank you, thank you! A major group of volunteers that help plan and execute the sale is the book sale committee. They met periodically throughout the year to work on the sale. Thank you, thank you, thank you for all your help!

The book sale is sponsored by the Friends of the Grand Rapids Area Library and the Grand Rapids Area Library Foundation. Both of these groups help support the library in a myriad of ways. The Friends paid for the new drinking fountain and the display shelving for new fiction and nonfiction titles. Saturday Story Time in the children's area would not be possible without financial support from the Foundation. The Foundation also supported the new teen area furniture. Thank you to these groups for the ongoing support of the library!

William Kent Krueger has a new novel coming this fall. It's titled "This Tender Land." I checked his website, www.williamkentkrueger.com, and see he will be touring bookstores and libraries throughout the country this fall. He has a lot of Minnesota stops; although he won't be coming to Grand Rapids. He will be in Nisswa, Duluth, Grand Marais and, of course, places in the Twin Cities.

A Minnesota (although now living in L.A.) author I have been reading is J. Ryan Stradal. I recently finished his first novel "Kitchens of the Great Midwest." I really enjoyed it because it was set mostly in Minnesota and even Buhl Water made an appearance! I recently heard Heidi Holtan at KAXE interview him about his new novel, "The Lager Queen of Minnesota."

You may want to mark your calendar for Tuesday, Oct. 1, 6 p.m. Minnesota author Allen Eskens will be visiting the library. He is the author of



By Amy Dettmer  
Assistant Library Director

several mystery novels. His program will focus on his path to becoming a writer as well as the content of his novels. This program is made possible in part or whole by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS @ THE LIBRARY:

#### Thursday, Aug. 8, 1 p.m.: Get Your Ducks in a Row: Estate Planning.

This annual series continues with topics to support adults as they age. Attorney Robert Dolan will explain probate, wills and trusts—the role of an executor, Power of Attorney, and provide insights about how one should list beneficiaries.

#### Saturday, Aug. 10: Saturday Story Time!

At 10:15 and 11:15 a.m., it's time for Saturday Story Time! Join ECFE teachers in the Story Circle for books and songs, then move to the Community Room for a snack, a craft, and a time to play and visit. Families may earn one Baby Steps coupon for attending this Story Time.

#### Saturday, Aug. 10, 12 p.m.: Reif Dance Performance: Fairy Time.

Join special guests from Reif Dance for a brief performance and dance instruction. Perfect for little ones who want to discover the magic of dancing. Feel free to bring a picnic lunch and explore the lawn and trails as part of this enchanting event.

#### Tuesday, Aug. 13, 6 p.m.: Brave Girls & Wise Women with Rose Arrowsmith DeCoux.

Daring heroines reclaim fairytales as fierce, funny, and feminine in this storytelling adventure. Recommended for kids ages seven and up, teens, and adults. This program was funded in part or in whole with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

## SCIENCE VOICE

## One set of rules or three

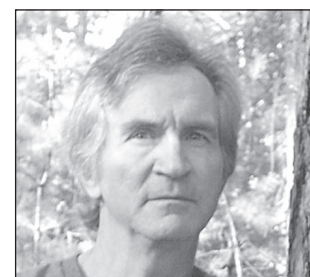
Thanks to Isaac Newton and other insightful thinkers, science has developed two general ways of viewing "reality." One deals with big things we can see around us. Newton, Kepler and others used mathematics to predict the interactions of these "macro-objects." These ideas,

reduced to mathematical formulas, explain why planets revolve around the sun, why we fall down instead of up, and developed an understanding of natural forces. These "laws" and the scientific application of them are so accurate the New Horizons spacecraft made it to the planet Pluto after a trip of nine and a half years, arriving precisely where the formulas said it would. Essentially, everything that happens on Earth does so according to these "Classical" laws. Since the time of Newton, scientists were convinced they had all the basics figured out.

But then along came Albert Einstein and said wait a minute. Newton's laws are close, but not perfect. Newton's laws didn't quite match certain observations including the orbit of Mercury around the sun. Einstein's famous Theory of Relativity corrected that error. But an odd discovery sprang from Einstein's equations so bizarre even he could not accept it.

Welcome to the quantum world. At the level of the very small atomic quantum scale, Nature appears to have created an entirely different set of rules. The rules that govern the world of the big (our world) do not work at the level of the very small, and the rules that work at the very small don't work at the macro-level. For instance, if the rules at the quantum scale worked at our level, we could be in two places at the same time. Our existence would not be based on anything tangible or solid, but rather a set of probabilities and bits of almost nothing and tiny immortal particles that have no mass whatsoever.

Shouldn't there be one set of rules that work at every level? After all, we and everything around us are made up of the tiny particles of the sub-atomic world. Scientists have no definitive answer, and many have been actively searching for a way (tentatively called the Grand Unification Theory) to link the two for nearly the last hundred years.



By Terry Mejdrieh  
Freelance writer & former science teacher

So we have accurate ways to measure, observe and predict what happens at the tiniest atomic levels and also at our level. These methods don't agree with each other but they work in their own domain. But there is also a third level that is lumped in with us

that perhaps shouldn't be. That is when the size of things reach that of galaxies and then groups of galaxies and billions of galaxies that band together to form incomprehensibly long "strings." If we could view this vastness from the outside, the visible Universe would look like a vast web with these strings of galaxies and vast voids where nothing at all exists.

And here's the thing. The rules that govern motion at our level do not work at the galactic level either. The most common picture of a galaxy is something that looks like a pinwheel with arms of stars radiating out from the center.

Our own galaxy probably looks like that. (Hard to be absolutely sure about that because we are inside looking out, but evidence supports this view.) If the Classical laws we are used to on Earth are applied to the galaxy, it would fly apart. For stars, the farther planets are from them, the slower they move. This is a hard and fast rule. But at the level of a galaxy, the farther out an object is from the center, the faster it moves.

The galaxy should fly apart but it doesn't. There are some ideas but no one knows why. Currently, this apparent contradiction is explained by the presence of "dark matter," a mysterious invisible substance that exerts the force necessary to speed up the rotation of objects away from the galactic center and hold it all together. Several ingenious experiments are underway to find this elusive material, yet none have succeeded. Dark matter may in fact exist, but it might also be more akin to what is sometimes referred to as the "fudge factor," a quantity thrown into the mix to make theory match observation until the actual explanation can be determined. But it all adds up to the realization that the true nature of reality remains a tantalizing mystery.

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