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Thursday, August 1, 2019 • \$1.00

Up close and personal



Travis Grimler / Echo Journal

Zachary Wipper gets up close and personal with a turtle from the Minnesota Zoomobile on Saturday, July 27, during Summerfest events in Pine River. See more Summerfest photos on page A12.

LOCAL WOMEN'S **FRIENDSHIP** IS A MIRACLE

By Travis Grimler Staff Writer

ammy Skaro is a Pine River woman who Ramirez has a cleaning service. Before April 1, they had never met. A near AMBER RAMIREZ tragedy that morning gave them a friendship like few others.

Skaro has limited memory of that day, but she remembers starting it like any other. She welcomed the children to her daycare. She locked the door after the last family arrived, and she thought about craft time. She doesn't remember what came next. She doesn't even remember feeling sick.

"It was a pretty regular day," Skaro said. "My husband called me. He said thought were severe flu about 8 o'clock and said

I got out and asked if runs a daycare. Amber everything was OK. He said, 'No, she's dying.'

there were no symptoms. I sounded normal and acted normal. I didn't complain about any symptoms."

Skaro's father, Butch Oberfell, is one of a small group of people Skaro has depended on since then to fill in the blanks. When she was getting ready for her day of work, Oberfell was at home drinking coffee and watching the

Apparently, that was about the time Skaro started feeling what she symptoms. After calling



Submitted photo

A miracle guided Amber Ramirez, left, on a path that led her to help save Tammy Skaro's life on April 1. That event also led to an unexpected friendship.

a health clinic, she called her parents. She wanted her mother to fill in for her while she was gone, and she wanted her father **SKARO:** Page A6

to drive her.

"She wasn't feeling real well. She wanted me to

Drive the speed limit in left lane, but not over it

By Travis Grimler Staff Writer

After years of frustration, drivers could see less of a particular pet peeve on Minnesota highways starting today
- Thursday, Aug. 1 - with the enactment of a new law modernizes existing

language that's already in place for people traveling in the left lane below the posted speed limit and impeding traffic," said State Patrol Public Information Officer Neil Dickenson. "The new law's language is going to basically say a vehicle in that left lane must move over and let faster vehicles pass. We want to make sure we are letting everyone know the speed limit is the speed limit. We want everyone at that or below the speed limit. If you are under the posted speed limit and impeding traffic, the new law says you must move to the right and let those vehicles pass."

To be clear, the new law does not give drivers permission to drive above the speed limit just because they are in the fast lane. In this case, "fast" is

equal to the speed limit.

Though many saw slow drivers in the left lane as just an impediment to them quickly getting where they were going, Dickenson said the law is about safety.

"The biggest thing is keeping the flow of traffic at a safe pace," Dickenson said. "If you have someone traveling well below the posted speed limit, you're going to have traffic back up. You could possibly create rear-end collisions. If we could have everyone traveling at the posted speed limit at a good, steady rate, I think that will def-initely reduce the number of crashes we're seeing."

Drivers in the right lane can continue being courteous to other drivers seeking to merge or pull onto the highway. While nobody in the right lane is required to move over to make room for a new motorist joining the flow of traffic, they are still encouraged to do so when possible, in the interest of keeping traffic flow smooth.

Dickenson said troopers will immediately begin incorporating the left lane law into violations they are already monitoring.

"We are looking for all types of violations while we are on patrol," Dickenson said. "If we see someone traveling below the posted speed limit in the left lane, we are going to make a traffic stop. We call it educating the driver, to make them aware of the new law. That's our goal, to educate out

Paddling event raises funds for suicide awareness organization

By Brainerd Dispatch

A group of about 100 paddlers participated in the second annual Paddle to the Moon (and Back) fundraiser Friday, July 26, on Cross Lake to raise funds to 'Save the Hearts' of people for suicide prevention.

The kayakers and paddleboarders launched from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers campground in Crosslake, paddling to Moonlite Bay Family Restaurant on the northern tip of the understanding what happened. local charities. lake. There, participants ate a meal and watched a short pre-Saving Hearts for Suicide Pre-

the loss of a family member, Shane Heyn.

"Saving Hearts was formed never give up hope."

"Banding together with othfeatured for this year's event, and working together for preits way back to where it started. and healing from these tragic run is scheduled for Oct. 26.

Saving Hearts was founded in losses. It should not be some-2014 after the founders suffered thing that is swept under the rug and hidden from others. Help is out there and we should

The paddling event marked who believe their lives aren't the second year for Paddle to worth living and think suicide is the answer," the group's Face-book page states. "We also want Wheels and Water owner Jim to 'Save the Hearts' of people Bergquist. Bergquist started the like us who are left behind not event in hopes to raise funds for

According to Saving Hearts, Paddle to the Moon (and Back) sentation on the organization ers that have suffered losses raised \$4,030. The group annually hosts a 5K run/walk vention has been such a help in at Cuyuna Range Elementary vention. The group then made the process of understanding School. This year's charitable



Kelly Humphrey / Brainerd Dispatch

Paddlers take off from the Army Corps of Engineers campground in Crosslake Friday, July 26, during the second annual Paddle to the Moon and Back fundraiser. Proceeds from the event will go to Saving Hearts for Suicide Prevention.

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