

REELS: First showing Wednesday

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viewing. For A Center for the Arts in Fergus Falls, it was a perfect way to provide entertainment to the community.

On Wednesday, June 10 and Thursday, June 11, A Center for the Arts, the Fergus Falls Area Family YMCA, Otter Tail County Museum, Kaddatz Galleries and Visit Fergus Falls will be hosting "Reels on Wheels" in the YMCA parking lot (1164 Friberg Ave.). The group will show 2008's "Journey to the Center of the Earth," starring Brendan Fraser. The movie will begin at 9 p.m. or as soon as the sun allows, according to A Center For the Arts executive director Michael Burgraff, with admittance beginning at 8:30 p.m.

Cost of the event will be \$20 per vehicle. Tickets will not be sold onsite and can be purchased at fergusarts.org/. Although attendees are encouraged to follow COVID-19 safety guidelines, there is no limit to the amount of people in each car. There is a room for 60 cars to enjoy each night.

With Gov. Tim Walz loosening restrictions, moviegoers will be allowed to sit outside their car or in the bed of a truck. Guests are encouraged to bring insect repellent or create makeshift screens for windows as the sound will be broadcast through speakers around the parking lot.

Those in attendance are required to drive into the parking lot from Somerset Road. Here volunteers from the Otter Riser Kiwanis Club will be taking tickets or looking at phones for proof of purchase. Cars will then be directed on where to park

in the lot.

Burgraff also emphasized that there are no restrooms at the event. A vehicle may leave before the completion of the movie, but there will be no readmittance.

In regards to concessions, Burgraff recommends that those attending bring their own. "We encourage people to bring their own concessions, but remember, there are no restroom facilities," Burgraff added.

The movie will be projected on a 20-by-24 foot screen, bigger than the one used at Movies in the Park in recent years, and a "much brighter projector." "The viewing should be good," Burgraff laughed.

In regards to movies that could be at upcoming "Reels on Wheels," Burgraff said that they are looking at several options including Disney movies. The group uses Swank Motion Pictures, a movie and TV show licensing company for its purchases. "We buy the licenses and not everything is available. We do the best we can with the funds that are available. We want to do this for the community," Burgraff said.

Burgraff mentioned that volunteers will also be going around during the movie collecting donations for the nonprofits that helped put together the event. Previews for these organizations will run before the movie at each showing.

All pertinent rules will be posted in the lot.

"Everybody is excited about it. We have the ability to do more if it is popular," Burgraff said. "We think more and more will happen."

OPEN: Walz loosens restrictions on restaurants, bars

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home if you feel ill.

"We are not going back to normal," cautioned Steve Grove, commissioner of employment and economic development as he praised businesses for the sacrifices they've made in the COVID-19 era. "We're continuing to ask for personal responsibility in the next phase."

State Health Commissioner indicated the recent patterns of cases and hospitalizations in Minnesota are showing "a plateau with small waves within in," calling it an "encouragingly stable" situation.

"Statewide, we're in good shape for critical care capacity," she added.

She cautioned, though, that the protests over George Floyd's killing may have boosted the disease spread. It will take a few weeks to find out. But she expressed confidence that the state was positioned to handle the pandemic without it overwhelming the case system.



MATHEW HOLDING EAGLE | DAILY JOURNAL

GREAT OUTDOORS: Customers at Applebee's participate in outdoor seating Tuesday in Fergus Falls.

"We are likely dealing with high levels of COVID-19 transmission for months to come," she said.

Despite the looser restrictions, Republican legislative leaders said Walz, a DFLer, did not go far enough.

Earlier in the day, Sen-

ate Republicans released a statement from Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka, R-East Gull Lake, saying, "the pandemic fear must end" and Walz "should not get to decide who gets to go to a funeral, a wedding, or attend large gatherings, and others don't get to."

Asked about the comments, Walz the decisions were complex" and that if ended all restrictions and more people died because of it, it would be on him.

"It's easy," the governor said, "to coach from the seats on the side and not have to be there."

COMMENTS: 'Unfortunately there are not enough folks moving in that direction...'

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describe protestors in the Twin Cities and Minnesota's Democratic representatives. Community members screenshot his posts and spread them throughout social media, leading to a call to law enforcement and a cancellation of Huseth's snow-removal contract with the Underwood School District.

Although nothing he did was illegal, on Tuesday two sheriff's deputies spoke to Huseth on the phone to ask about his comments and the posts were taken down with Huseth saying he "made a poor decision." Afterward, he issued an apology on Facebook saying, "I am sorry for

my unacceptable actions and behavior last Saturday." He added that he was intoxicated and watching news coverage of the "riots and looting going on in the Twin Cities and was frustrated about how government officials were not able to control the situation," and that he is not a racist. "I was upset with the looters and rioters and they were both black and white, and I should never (have) used those words or even made posts."

He asked for people to not take it out on his employees.

When The Daily Journal contacted Huseth Friday morning by phone, Huseth did not want to comment further.

"I don't really want to comment on it, it's kind of on the other side of the court, really what I do doesn't really matter now. I can't comment on it right now," he said.

Underwood School District was made aware of the comments on Wednesday morning, calling them "inappropriate, racist."

Superintendent Dave Kuehne said the posts go against the core mission and values of the school district and they do not support, condone or agree with the content.

"After the district was made aware of these posts, the district no longer has any contractual or business relationships with this individual or his businesses. The only contractual relationship was a small contract to provide snow removal services for the district. That contractual relationship has been severed. The district had other informal business relationships with him, such as purchase of fuel for district vehicles and purchase of food for district events, and those informal business relationships have been severed," Kuehne said. "After the district was made aware of the racist social media posts, the district immediately moved to end any contractual or business relationships with this individual and his businesses. In response, he voluntarily withdrew from his snow removal contract."

Abby Kocher, chair of the Fergus Falls Human Rights Commission (FFHRC), said, "I'm happy to see he's no longer going to be associated with Underwood School District because children are our future, and the children in our small communities here don't always get the messages about race. I'm happy to see they did publicly say they weren't going to be working with him any longer."

The purpose of the FFHRC is to field concerns and complaints from the community regarding issues of diversity

and equality. Members are chosen through an open application process every September, and then members are selected by the City Council.

"Unfortunately, we don't hear a lot from the community. I think part of that is because a lot of members, community members, don't necessarily even know that we exist," Kocher says.

The commission has recently set up a page on the city of Fergus Falls website (ci.fergus-falls.mn.us) that allows for people to submit issues, thoughts, comments and complaints with the hope that it will make it more convenient for people to get involved. Previously, people had to attend the FFHRC meetings, held the second Tuesday of every month at 12:30 p.m. in City Hall, to have their voices heard.

While Kocher believes that Huseth's actions deserve social consequences, she said the practice of online naming and shaming address underlying issues that Huseth's words are pointing to.

"The public callout culture essentially is a way for people to performatively speak out against racism while there is still the vast majority of the underlying work to be done," she says. "I think our community is really beautiful in a lot of ways, I also think we have a long way to go in a lot of ways."

Kandace Creel Falcón agrees that there are more valuable ways people could be using their time other than insulting Huseth, and encouraging people to recognize that racism is not solely an urban issue. She is an Erhard-based writer and artist, and an alumnus of Blandin Foundation's Leadership in Ethnically Diverse Communities.

In a post they published on Medium titled "Love thy neighbor: Why urban rebellions matter to rural Minnesota," Falcón wrote, "It's extremely easy to take Bruce to task for his racist comments, but I want to encourage us all to think about how do we shift from the individual to the systemic?"

Falcón points out that the Midwest Minnesota Community Development Group helped to facilitate a fixed-interest loan for Huseth to expand his convenience store and had lauded Huseth's success on its site in a post titled "A Taste of Success" that has since been taken down.

"We would do well to ask the economic development agencies in our communities how they are serving rural people of color," they say. "Are staff and boards reflecting diverse perspectives, are folks advocating for

reimagining how we do the work we do that puts equity at the center of every conversation?"

Asking questions like these and acting on them in daily life is more valuable than simply calling individuals out on social media. "Yelling at Bruce in the comments is the easiest path to take," Falcón says. "This moment in our rural communities demands more from you. If you are committed to doing better by BIPOC, we need more."

Victoria McWane-Creek, director of campus housing and residential life at M State Fergus Falls and member of FFHRC, lived in Underwood for a little over 10 years and sent her two children to Underwood School District. McWane-Creek, who is African-American, says Huseth's comments point to a deeper problem in the community regarding racism and an expectation of assimilation, something she deals with everyday trying to help students of color at M State along with her own experiences in the community.

"Beyond Bruce, it is challenging to be black, or indigenous, or gay, or anything not white, straight, Christian, in and around Otter Tail County. It's been challenging," she said. "I have been speaking and thumping this drum for my entire lived experience in Otter Tail County since we moved there in 2006," she said.

Big systemic and cultural changes like that aren't easy, McWane-Creek acknowledges.

"How do we have that conversation about access and who has had it, who has been blocked from getting it, and then how do we start over? Because I really do think that's the only thing that is going to get all of us where we want to be, which is a community that thrives."

McWane-Creek has seen people trying to do the work of effecting change, saying, "I think some folks are very much aware of them and are attempting to do the tough work both individually and in their spheres of influence to improve the climate, the anti-blackness specifically." However, while people speaking out against Huseth is an indication that there's some awareness of and mobilization against the issues, she worries people aren't seeing or acting on the social root of the problem.

"Unfortunately there are not enough folks moving in that direction to turn and face the historical, systemic issues and the racism, and particularly anti-blackness, that permeates all over," she said.



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