

HENDERSON INDEPENDENT

Wednesday, January 22, 2020 - VOL. 149 - NO. 4 • Henderson, MN 56044 (ISP 240020) • 16 pages in 1 section



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Henderson Mayor Paul Menne is urging local residents to provide input on district facilities to the school board.

Surviving the cold

Sometimes birds need a little help weathering the bitter cold Minnesota winters.
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Take a Kid Fishing Weekend

Young local anglers made some big catches over the weekend. P.16

One Act Play

LS-H to perform historical drama "Radium Girls"

By Rachel Miller
Editor

The 1920s were a booming time: Jazz was sweeping the nation, Charles Lindbergh became the first person to complete a trans-atlantic flight, and women received the right to vote.

It was also when radium erupted in popularity, as it was believed to cure cancer, was touted as a "cure-all" for multiple illnesses, and was a novelty for its glow in the dark appearance.

But it also had a very dark and deadly side, which Le Sueur-Henderson High School students will be portraying when they perform "Radium Girls" for this year's One Act Play subsection competition at Sibley East on Saturday, Jan. 25.

THE HISTORY OF RADIUM GIRLS

The U.S. Radium Corporation produced wristwatches that were painted with radium to give the watches a luminous glow-in-the-dark appearance. Female factory workers were tasked with painting radium dials on the watches, and were instructed to point the brushes with their lips in a "lip, dip, paint" routine.



PHOTO BY RACHEL MILLER

Jocelyn Machtemes, Megan Tolzmann and Gretchen Dwyer are playing the roles of Radium Girls Grace Fryer, Irene Rudolph and Kathryn Schaub, who were poisoned while painting watch dials with radium paint in the 1920s.

The Radium Girls would paint their teeth, nails and faces for fun with the radium paint. In time, many suffered from anemia, bone fractures, necrosis of the jaw, and

eventually death as radium poisoning took hold.

The U.S. Radium Corporation denied radium was causing the sicknesses, and blamed it on other

causes, like poor diet or dental care, and even syphilis. Five Ra-

ONE ACT PLAY

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Henderson City Council

Residents urged to provide input to school board

By Troy Koester
Independent Staff

Henderson Mayor Paul Menne has been an active participant on the Le Sueur-Henderson Facilities Task Force that will make a recommendation to the LS-H School Board regarding the facilities in the district.

"The school board will be making a decision without your input if Henderson people don't show," Menne said.

Menne said it more bluntly a second time: "Citizens of Henderson better show up, or we're going to lose our school."

The city pledged \$1 million in infrastructure around Hilltop Elementary at its Decem-

ber meeting, hoping to add housing and road improvements and infrastructure to the area in hopes that the district would consider putting a new elementary school at the Hilltop site.

Menne also shared some numbers that he presented to the task force. According to Menne, LS-H enrollment was 955 last year, with another 418 students who live in the district enrolling in a neighboring school district.

Menne also said that St. Peter added 126 new students in the first year of its new facility, and the next year every graduating class had a positive gain.

The Le Sueur-Henderson Facilities Task Force will be meeting one last time this coming Tuesday, Jan. 28 at 6:30 p.m. in the Mid-

dle/High School Media Center. The task force is expected to make a recommendation to the school board during the meeting.

PUSH FOR FLOOD MITIGATION

While the next session of the Minnesota State Legislature has not started yet, Menne told the council that Sen. Scott Newman has authored a bill on the Senate side for a flood mitigation project on Highway 93. The senate file is SF1728.

On the House side, Rep. Glenn Gruenhagen has also authored a bill.

Rep. Gruenhagen and Sen. Newman repre-

CITY COUNCIL

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LS-H reality check

LS-H students participated in the first Giant\$ Reality Challenge last Wednesday.
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Should Sibley County consent to refugee resettlement?

The Sibley County Board of Commissioners will make a decision this Tuesday.
P. 5

Treacherous driving

A semi truck jackknifed on Highway 169 just south of Belle Plaine due to icy road conditions.
P. 12

Bulldogs boys hockey

The Bulldogs boys hockey team may have started slow, but are quickly improving and earned two more wins last week.
P. 16



The Cast and Crew of "Radium Girls"

CAST

Grace Fryer: Jocelyn Machtemes

Arthur Roeder: Tim Kulzer

Kathryn Schaub: Gretchen Dwyer

Tom Kreider/The Court Judge: Tanner Tellijohn

Charlie Lee/Edward Markley: Xerxes Machtemes

Katherine Wiley: Rachelle Boelter

Daniel Lehman/Raymond Berry: Aidan Gulbranson

Harriet Roeder/Irene Rudolph/Photographer: Megan Tolzmann

Dr. Von Sochocky/Frederick Flinn: Austin Kleinschmidt

Mrs. Macneil: Aerial Ingles

Diane Roeder: Miranda Geer

Mrs. Fryer: Gail Warner

Sob Sister: Alexa Olson

Clerk/Customer: Sophia Davig

Reporter: Janorra Childress

Shopgirl: Gabby Davidson

CREW

Melanie Smykalski: lights

Hattie Tuck: sound



PHOTO COURTESY WWW.UNDARK.ORG

Some of the real Radium Girls. By the early 1900s, radium was being consumed in pills, creams, ointments, toothpaste and lipstick, and was touted as a cure-all....until the "Radium Girls," female factory workers who painted watch faces with the glowing paint, began falling sick due to radium poisoning and died.



Mrs. Fryer (Gail Warner) and Katherine Wiley (Rachelle Boelter) of the Consumers League comfort Radium Girl Grace Fryer (Jocelyn Machtemes) after her court case is pushed back for months.



PHOTOS BY RACHEL MILLER

Katherine Wiley (Rachelle Boelter) of the Consumers League isn't going to be pushed around. Wiley lets Edward Markley (Xerxes Machtemes), lawyer for the U.S. Radium Corporation, know that the Radium Girls are fighting to win the lawsuit, while the Radium Girls' lawyer, Raymond Berry (Aidan Gulbranson) sits quietly at his desk.

ONE ACT PLAY

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dium Girls banded together to sue U.S. Radium Corporation for their injuries.

Court proceedings started in January of 1928, and were helped when the creator of the radium paint, Dr. Sabin A. Von Sochocky, died in November of that year from radium in his hands. The U.S. Radium Company settled out of court that fall and awarded each of the Radium Girls \$10,000, plus a \$600 per year annuity, \$12 per week for as long as each woman lived, and covered all medical and legal expenses.

Although radium paint was still used in dials as late as the 1960s, the lawsuit resulted in major occupational changes, including instruction in proper safety precautions, being provided with protective gear, and no longer shaping brushes with the lips.

LS-H PRODUCTION

This year's historical drama is a significant change for LS-H, as it has primarily performed comedies, said Director Emily Barnard. But even though it is set in the 1920s, Barnard believes it has ties to modern day issues, as previously believed safe things like Roundup have been linked to serious and fatal health issues, like cancer.

"Comedies are fun, for sure, but I was really drawn to this story and wanted to select something with a his-

torical element to it," Barnard said.

The show begins as Tim Kulzer, playing Arthur Roeder who is in charge of the radium watch factory, reflects back on the radium poisoning deaths to his daughter. As the story is recalled, a glowing green clock marks the time the girls have left, slowly lowering on the wall until time finally runs out.

Jocelyn Machtemes has been cast as Grace Fryer and Gretchen Dwyer as Kathryn Schaub, two of the five Radium Girls who sued the U.S. Radium Corporation. In the play, Fryer watches as a number of her friends die, and she suspects it is from the radium.

"The character realizes that is not what it is and she needs to fight back," Machtemes said.

Fryer is aided in her quest for justice by Katherine Wiley with the Consumers League, and she helps Fryer build a case against the company.

"She is ultimately the catalyst that brings Grace to go to court and make this the bigger thing that it was," Barnard said of Wiley's character.

Students have 35 minutes to perform, and exceeding the time limit leads to disqualification, which Barnard said is stressful, but so far the cast is coming in under the time limit in rehearsal.

"Performance days are really fun because then you get to see friends

from another school. You have a bunch of theater kids in one place and it is amazing," Boelter said.

"You meet people that share our interests. Right here is our clique, but when you go there (One Act Play competitions), you take those weird groups and put us all together and we nerd out together and compete to try to destroy each other," Machtemes added.

LS-H was scheduled to participate in a One Act Play festival at Mayer Lutheran this past Saturday, which serves as a rehearsal for subsections, but it was canceled due to the severe weather.

The team has hopes of placing third at subsections to advance to the section meet, and Barnard said her cast has a fighting chance of accomplishing that goal.

"Our big competition is Belle Plaine, they win every year," Barnard said.

Right: Grace Fryer (Jocelyn Machtemes) is skeptical when Dr. Frederick Flinn (Austin Kleinschmidt), a doctor for the U.S. Radium Corporation, tells her that dental hygiene and diet, not radium, is causing her health problems.

