

ARTS & CULTURE

Lakes Area Arts

Little Crow Photography

WILLMAR – The Little Crow Photography Club will meet 7 to 9 p.m. on Monday, Nov 25 at the Kandiyohi County Historical Society in Willmar. The topic is “Black and White photography.” The photo contest for paid members is “Trees or Leaves” and photos must have been taken in the last 12 months. Any age or level of experience is welcome to attend meetings for free. Annual dues are just \$10 for members who join now.

Rialto Revisted

NEW LONDON – Nov. 24 1 p.m.: A Fire Among Us (selected shorts). A series of short films and animations contemplating the combustible power of fire, including Charlie Chaplin, Fleischer Studio’s “Red Hot Mama” and Red Skelton & Harpo Marx in “the Silent Spot.”

Nov. 24 3 p.m. “Steamboat Bill Jr.” (1928, Buster Keaton) and selected shorts. Description: “Steamboat Bill Jr.” is a silent film comedy where Buster Keaton fights against the elements. The film’s most famous scene is of the house falling around Keaton in a cyclone storm. Uncredited as director and writer, this is the last movie where Keaton had complete artistic control.

This is a free event; suggested donation of \$5/person. Concessions will be available for sale.

New exhibit at Ridgewater

HUTCHINSON – November through December 20, Rochester artist Simon Huelsbeck presents at Ridgewater College his exhibit titled “Swimmers.” The gallery becomes alive with a multitude of 4 foot by 4 foot portraits arranged in a grid, and painted in an expressive yet realistic fashion. Huelsbeck presents a level of theatricality in his paintings created with the method Rembrandt and Caravaggio made famous: using “tenebrism,” which means “night effects,” where the subject is almost spotlight and the background fades to darkness. The result is a foregrounding of Huelsbeck’s wonderful mastery of saturated color: hot pinks, blues and teals. Simon will be visiting the Hutchinson campus for a gallery talk at 12 p.m., Wednesday, December 4. The exhibit will move to the Willmar campus January 6 to February 7, 2020.



Jon Noeldner at work downstairs in “The Rat Lab.” In his hands: The dissected remains of his childhood telephone – the countless conversations with parents, plans made with friends, first dates, soon to be dismantled, repurposed and reborn as a downstairs lamp in the Noeldner household. Over his left shoulder: An Ampelmännchen (translation: “little traffic light man”) which was a traffic signal found throughout Eastern Germany prior to the country’s reunification in 1989.

Let there be light!

FROM ROTARY PHONES TO BYGONE “BLENDORS”, NO ARTIFACT TOO ANCIENT FOR NEW LONDON TINKERER JON NOELDNER

By Brett Blocker
Editor

As a photojournalist, there is a particular feeling one gets when presented with the burden of choice; that is, when faced with a buffet of photoworthy content, deciding which images to print and

which to forever consign to the prison of the recycling bin.

Though not the first time, and certainly not the last for this writer, that sensation was nevertheless present during a recent visit to the Noeldner household in New London, where at every turn and seem-

ingly on every coffee table, counter, nook and cranny, lay some sort of mechanical oddity worthy of at least one double take.

Here, in this rustic three-story lakeside home, nothing is quite as it seems...

By day, a cozy upstairs living room enjoys natural lighting from a set of bay windows overlooking Long Lake. By dusk, however, the space “springs to light” from the most unlikely of sources – be it an otherwise unassuming rotary telephone perched on an end table, or an old ceramic blender from the 1930s; all these the efforts of one gear-headed local.

A tinkerer by hobby and commercial pilot by trade, Jon Noeldner has, in the last six months, embraced his alter ego, “The Eclectic Handyman,” creating, over the last six months, no less than 25 of these hardware hybrids for gifts to friends and decorations around the house.

When not flying twin engine airbuses for United Airlines or helping out with the NL-S Robotics Team, Noeldner can often be found in his downstairs workshop (“The Rat Lab”), wrist-deep in the guts of a Depression-era appliance. There, in this Frankenstein laboratory, he works to breathe new life into antiquated machinery, fusing lightbulbs to steam irons, and lampshades to film projectors.

“Basically, I like to tinker,” he explains. “To find things that are broken and try to make something different

out of them.”

Noeldner said he was inspired to take on the series after a neighbor down the road, having noticed his skill in woodworking, requested his help in crafting a table from a set of moose antlers.

The project was a first for Noeldner, but the novelty of the item got his creative juices stirring.

Working with students on the NL-S Robotics Team only served to further his interest in the mechanical arts. “I’ve been active in NL-S robotics since my oldest son was in there, so I’ve been with the club for somewhere between six to eight years. And those

kids are inspiring, so it kind of just took off from there.”

The Handyman’s first project: Turning an old Waring “Blendor” (blender) into a lamp.

Explains Noeldner: “I think I saw a picture of a blender lamp somewhere and thought ‘that’d be kind of cool to make.’ And I always like to take things a little further, so I put a ring on the bottom, put a little microprocessor in there, and wrote a program so it can change colors.”

The end result now sits on his kitchen counter. During Vikings games, a flick of the switch changes the color of an underside bulb to purple; during Packers games, he toggles it to green.

For lighting throughout the basement, Noeldner has recruited a variety of dated film equipment including a Bell and Howell “Two Fifty Two” handheld film recorder,

Tinkerer

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A “bulb phone” in the upstairs living room, which sits atop an end table constructed from the porthole window of an old boat.

AN
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Prairie Winds Concert Band - J. Brock Duncan, Conductor

Sunday November 24th - 2:00pm

Willmar Area Community Arts Foundation
Supports the
Arts Community

Willmar Area Community Arts Foundation
Willmar, MN
Tickets at the door -
Adults \$8, Students & Veterans FREE

This activity is made possible in part by the state of Minnesota through a grant from the 2019 Minnesota Arts Council. Thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

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