

Cloudy, foggy Memorial Day morning at Lakeview Cemetery in Pelican Rapids

Memorial Day reflections column, page 6



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THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING THE PELICAN RAPIDS PRESS

Advancing from adversity to awesome-ness



Presenting Pelican Rapids Class of 2020 diplomas—at arms length—was school board chairman Jon Karger, right. The May 22 commencement was held in the high school parking lot, students socially distanced to prevent the spread of COVID-19—and presentations were conducted with all the current health precautions.

PHOTO BY LOUIS HOGLUND

Fond farewell to Pelican students



Pelican Rapids school district staff, including Viking elementary school teacher Pam Bruhn, delivered a festive farewell to students at a special parking lot parade May 21. Two parades were hosted in Pelican Rapids that evening, including the Pelican Rapids Chamber of Commerce "Cruise Night" parade.

Pelican's COVID-19 Class of 2020 presented diplomas—at arm's length—at 'drive-in' commencement

By Louis Hoglund

"The world needs us...congrats to the COVID class!"

That was the closing comment from Maddie Guler, as she spoke to her Pelican Rapids Class of 2020 colleagues and families. Humanity awaits these young survivors of the COVID-19 era. Perhaps it is they who find the cure to cancer, or COVID, or some other threat facing the world.

"Comfort and prosperity have never enriched the world as much as adversity has," Evangelist Billy Graham said that. Facing adversity is something all 2020'ers share—especially Pelican's grads.

Only weeks after the coronavirus pandemic shuttered the schoolhouse, the students also lost their leader. School Superintendent Ed Richardson died unexpectedly April 9.

Losing the highly-admired superintendent was a second dose of adversity.

"We can't plan for days like these," said Guler, the class salutatorian and speaker. The adversity of disease and death thrust challenges before all of Pelican's students, but Guler said rather than "crumble under the circumstances...persist, persevere and overcome."

Mortality, locally and globally, has made "us stronger and better...And we realize

every day is a gift," said Guler.

Though the backstory of the Pelican Class of 2020 is solemn, the ceremony was not.

Weird...yes. Solemn...no.

With a Farmers Elevator flat-bed trailer as a commencement stage—and grain elevators looming over the proceedings. It was a graduation for the ages.

Families peered through their windshields to get a glimpse of the seniors receiving diplomas.

The "parking lot" ceremony, improvised to

COVID CLASS OF 2020 GRADUATES
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Surf's up for trash pick up...

Longboarders ready to roll about town, on the lookout for litter

By Louis Hoglund

"Boarders" with a spirit of community volunteering, will take the streets May 30—for a good cause.

Longboarders Mason Berube and Ray Elizondo will be leading a gang of skateboard enthusiasts on a mission. They're expecting at least a dozen local skateboarders to roll on a campaign to pick up litter around the Pelican Rapids community.

A longboard is like a skate board—only longer. The presence of long boards, as an environmentally-friendly mode of transportation, has become increasingly evident in the Pelican Rapids area.

"I was longboarding to school and back, and at the time, I feel like I was about the only one," said Berube, who graduated from Pelican Rapids High School in 2015. Nowadays, there are probably at least 20 youth and young adults who are regulars on the Pelican streetscape.

Elizondo got more active in boarding about four years ago. A 2013 Pelican graduate, he

DO-GOODER DUDES TO ROLL FOR LITTER
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Do gooder dudes, Ray Elizondo and Mason Berube are promoting a volunteer litter pick-up, throughout the community of Pelican Rapids May 30. They'll be moving fast—because the "Longboard Cruise and Clean-up" will be on skateboard, by a gang of volunteer 'boarders.'

PHOTO BY LOUIS HOGLUND

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- OTC Board of Adjustment Notice
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- Pelican Valley Hospital District Board Meeting Minutes

Obituaries

- Samuel Jones, 81, Dent
- Eleanor Peters, 81, formerly Pelican

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CAR LOT COMMENCEMENT

The school parking lot was full, and an audience scattered around the perimeter of the May 22 Pelican Rapids High School "drive-in" graduation commencement ceremony. Finding a comfortable viewing spot with her lawn chair, on the high ground overlooking the scene, was Pelican resident Bonnie Onnen, foreground.

PHOTOS BY LOUIS HOGLUND



Top, Valedictorian Brianna Colosky.

Above, Salutatorian Maddie Guler delivering her message.

Parking lot graduation ceremony was a reflection of COVID-19 era



Above right, capturing an image of senior Crystal Villagomez following the ceremony, on the grassy knoll behind the drive-in Pelican Rapids graduation, is Norbert Villagomez.

At right, wearing specially handcrafted masks for the COVID-19 Class of 2020 graduation were these two ushers, Daren Tollefson and Jim Christenson.

Far right, small audience gathered around the parking lot graduation, including this trio: Abdul Ahmad, himself a 2016 Pelican grad; Mad Ali, 2019 grad; and Khadr Ibrahim. Abdul's brother Issadin, was among the 2020 Pelican seniors



Below, a family photo, with Pelican Rapids High School graduate Farhiya Isak Aden.



At right, on the stage after receiving her diploma, Jenna Stetz, with Pelican Rapids school board chairman Jon Karger, left, and Principal Brian Korf at the podium. Note the pineapple theme decorating the stage, in honor of the late Superintendent Ed Richardson, who died less than two months before the end of the school year. The "Oh My Pineapple" award was a morale-boosting gesture Richardson presented to students and staff alike, in recognition of good deeds, acts of kindness, and good performance.

