Cloudy, foggy **Memorial Day** morning at Lakeview Cemetery in May 25 in **Pelican Rapids** 

Memorial Day reflections column, page 6



Year 124, No. 22 **Otter Tail County** 

Single Copy \$1.25

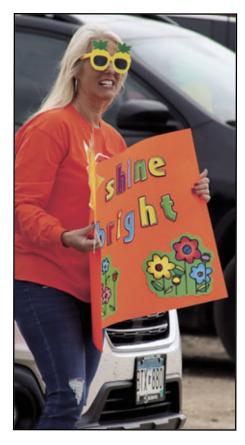
FOR **CHOOSING** THE **PELICAN** RAPIDS PRESS

THANK YOU

### Advancing from adversity to awesome-ness



#### 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.

#### **INSIDE** *this week* Inserts

Larry's Supermarket

- **Public Notices** OTC Board of Adjustment Notice
- OTC Planning Commission Notice Pelican Valley Hospital District **Board Meeting Minutes**

#### Obituaries

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

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

By Louis Hoglund

"The world needs us...congrats to the

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 en-

riched 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...ves. 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** 

Continued on Page 4

## 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

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

> **DO-GOODER DUDES TO ROLL FOR LITTER** Continued on Page 4



# Congratulations from our booster page sponsors!

Larry's Super Market • Grefsrud Farms • Ballard Sanitation Shada Seed • Minnesota National Bank • Lake Region Electric Coop Heart O' Lakes Meats • Super Septic, Inc. • Bell Bank • Pelican Drug Southtown AmStar • Pelican Rapids Press • Park Region Co-op • OK Tire Seifert Real Estate & Auction Company • Coldwell Banker Preferred Partners



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.

Parkling 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 decording who died less than two

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.





