

DAYTON:

Dayton moves ahead with proposal for a Kwik Trip. **See page 3**

OSSEO:

Legion Auxiliary to host final steak fry until September. **See page 13**

MAPLE GROVE:

Maple Grove considers new fitness building in Grove area. **See page 3**



Champlin set to give trout pond fishing pier to DNR

By **SAM JOHNSON**
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The Trout Pond Fishing Pier is saying goodbye to Champlin. At the April 26 city council meeting, the council approved releasing the pier to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

In 2019, the DNR originally

provided Champlin with the pier for the trout pond with the understanding that the city would push for public pond access.

However, due to what the city calls “budget constraints,” Champlin has not yet initiated ADA-compliant parking or access for the fishing pier. Under that knowledge, the DNR is re-

questing the pier be returned.

The city’s trout pond is only used for fishing once a year. This year and last year in February, the city hosted the trout ice fishing tournament and assistant city engineer Todd Tuominen said the DNR is open to helping supply fish for exhibitions like that.

Members of the city council

also discussed the possibility of adding a second fishing event on the pond during the summer.

“Anytime you are exposing people to more fishing that is good,” Tuominen said. “The DNR is very supportive of the decisions we’ve made thus far.”

The pier, valued at \$50,000, is expected to be given to the city of Chaska at some point this

year. “It is a very good dock and the DNR would like it to go to good use,” Tuominen said.

While the pier might leave the city, for now, Tuominen said there is an understanding that if Champlin would need another dock in the future, the DNR would help try and make that happen.



Mau Family Produce will be at the opening day of the outdoor Maple Grove Farmers Market on Thursday, May 13, with all types of plants for sale. The market runs from 3 to 7 p.m. in the parking lot outside of the Maple Grove Community Center, 12951 Weaver Lake Road. (Photos courtesy of the Maple Grove Farmers Market)

Weekly farmers markets resume in Maple Grove starting May 13

The Maple Grove Farmers Market will move back to its home base at the Maple Grove Community Center beginning on Thursday, May 13. Look for the market outside in the parking lot. The Maple Grove Community Center is located at 12951 Weaver Lake Road.

Weekly outdoor markets celebrate local food and the farmers and food makers who present it. The market will be open every Thursday afternoon from 3 to 7 p.m. May 13 to Sept. 30. On Oct. 7, 14, and 21, market hours will be 3 to 6 p.m.

On opening day, shop-



Shoppers at the Maple Grove Farmers Market on May 13 can expect to find some fresh rhubarb to purchase.

pers can expect more than 40 vendors, growing to 50 vendors as the season progresses. May markets will feature a wide array of garden seedlings, includ-

ing heirloom tomatoes, pollinator-friendly plants, bedding plants, herbs, and hanging baskets.

Shoppers will also find:
• Seasonal produce in-

cluding asparagus, rhubarb, microgreens, lettuce, radishes, and mushrooms

- Locally-raised poultry, beef, pork, lamb, and farm-fresh eggs
- Farmstead products including maple syrup, honey, and wool products
- Breads and baked goods including artisan loaves, sandwich breads and buns, sweet rolls, croissant, tarts, cookies, scones, and more
- Beverages including fresh-pressed juices, smoothies, coffee, kombucha, and tea blends

MARKET... to page 5

Maple Grove crash leaves 3 people dead, 1 injured

By **ALICIA MILLER**
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An early-morning crash on May 8 in Maple Grove left three people dead and one person hospitalized.

According to Maple Grove police, at 6:54 a.m. on May 8, it received a report of a single-vehicle crash near the intersection of Dunkirk Lane and Lawndale Lane. There were four occupants in the vehicle.

“Upon arrival, officers found a 2006 Ford Focus with severe damage that was separated into two parts,” according to Maple Grove Police Commander Jon Weter-nach.

Officers and first responders provided medical care to the victims. One adult female and two children died.

A 23-year-old male, was taken to a local hospital. He is currently hospitalized with what appears to be non-life threatening injuries, Weter-nach said.

The Hennepin County Medical Examiner’s Officer has released the names of the victims Monday, May 10. Those who died in the crash include 25-year-old Kiara Jones, 3-year-old Lily Kendrick, and 2-year-old Joshua Kendrick, all of Minneapolis.

All died of multiple blunt force injuries sustained from the crash. Jones died at the scene. The children were taken to hospital, where they died from their injuries. Jones was also the mother of Joshua and Lily Kendrick.

The Maple Grove Police Department is investigating the circumstances surrounding the crash.

The preliminary investigation shows that the vehicle was traveling northbound on Dunkirk Lane north of Lawndale Lane. Weter-nach said a conservative estimate on the speed the vehicle was traveling at the time of the accident is approximately 80 mph. Further analysis of the evidence and crash reconstruction will provide a more accurate speed.

“The driver lost control and the vehicle crossed the median and struck a tree,” Weter-nach said.

This section of Dunkirk Lane has a posted speed limit of 45 mph. There are four lanes of traffic with a grass median and raised concrete curbs to separate the different traffic flows.

CRASH... to page 5

In sports and pottery, Osseo’s Vaughn Ruska embraces the work

By **SAM JOHNSON**
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Vaughn Ruska loves the process. For the three-sport senior athlete at Osseo Senior High, it is oftentimes more enjoyable than the achievement.

As a participant in cross country, nordic skiing, and track and field, Ruska is in the unique position of competing in individual sports where he has direct control of his outcome.

That may be why only two years ago, Ruska picked up a new passion that is also individual by nature, which became what he calls an addiction: pottery.

During the third trimester of

his sophomore year, Ruska took his first pottery course intending it to be simply an easy ‘A’ on his report card. It turned out to be something greater. The more he learned the basics of ceramics, the more he became enamored with the art. Sitting down at the pottery wheel and having total control and abstract freedom over whatever is made was something Ruska fell in love with.

“It is your choice to make whatever you want,” Ruska said. “I love the pride of saying, ‘I did it by myself.’”

Dan Prody teaches ceramics at Osseo High School and remembers meeting Ruska in an intro to ceramics course two years

ago. Just one year prior, Ruska had tried out for the high school hockey team but was eventually cut. Prody, who also serves as a hockey coach with Osseo, doesn’t recall the specific reason he was cut, only that Ruska didn’t let it stop him. With encouragement from his parents, Ruska began taking up nordic skiing, since the skates and skis were very similar for him.

It was at that point that he also began his career in pottery. Essentially, Ruska had reinvented himself. “The kid doesn’t stay down,” Prody said.

A LOVE OF POTTERY
Over time, Prody and Ruska began growing a close bond,

which only grew deeper in the past year due to the pandemic. Last spring, Ruska took his mom’s minivan and drove it to the high school to pick up a pottery wheel to use in his garage at home, which had morphed into a makeshift studio. Even in the dead of winter, Ruska would spend his sculpting hours tucked away in his garage with the comforts of a space heater. Then once a month, he took his artwork and dropped it off at the school for it to be fired, which is the process of bringing the clay and glazes up to a high temperature.

RUSKA... to page 12



Osseo Senior High’s Vaughn Ruska stands next to his sculpture ‘Obelisk,’ which was selected to be part of the 24th Annual National K-12 Ceramic Exhibition. Another piece of his, ‘Bound Autumn,’ was chosen as well. (Photo courtesy of Eric Ruska)

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Osseo 12th grader uses sports, pottery to push forward

RUSKA... from page 1

In Prody's 11 years of teaching pottery at Osseo, Ruska stands a cut above everyone else he has seen. "He is the most naturally gifted potter I've worked with," Prody said. "I don't think he knows how good he really is." Ruska's skills in spatial recognition and clay molding stood out immediately to Prody and were only the tips of the iceberg of his relatively newfound repertoire.

"This kid is the hardest worker I've met in my life," Prody said.

However, Ruska admitted his first sculpture was not A-plus, but with every object came more confidence. During his junior year, Ruska spent nearly two to three hours after each school day working in the pottery studio, perfecting his craft. By senior year, he devoted the same amount of hours he did to athletics and pottery. And just last month, Ruska was selected to participate in the 24th Annual National K-12 Ceramic Exhibition for his two pieces 'Bound Autumn' and 'Obelisk.'

When he found out he was to be honored at a national exhibition, Ruska was stunned. "I never thought my pieces were at that level," he said. "I was shocked that it happened."

It even surprised those closest to Ruska. Eric Ruska wears many hats at Osseo High School. Along with being a science teacher, he is the head coach for girls tennis and softball. Oh, and all the while being Vaughn's father. During Vaughn's adolescent years, Eric noticed him being captivated with math and sports, which is why Eric and Alecia, Vaughn's mother, were a little surprised when Vaughn dove head-first into the pottery world. "He has always surprised us with something," Eric Ruska said. "I think he surprised himself with ceramics too."

For Ruska, seeing his work from the standpoint of the maker elicits tough criticism. When



Vaughn Ruska competes during a Nordic Ski meet last season for Osseo Senior High School. He was a state qualifier this year, which he calls the proudest athletic accomplishment of his career. (Photo courtesy of Eric Ruska)

others see perfection, he sees the flaws. The one sculpture in his portfolio that he critiques the least, however, is 'Bound Autumn.' "It is a complete piece," Ruska said about the artwork he spent 12 hours at the pottery wheel with. "The form is beautiful and traditional, while the design brings in the entire piece and makes it whole."

'HE DOESN'T TAKE SHORTCUTS'

Just like his running and skiing, time at the wheel requires patience and trust. If you ask Ruska, however, he wouldn't call himself a patient person (if patience means sitting outside for hours watching birds). But skills that serve him well in exercising for long periods of time crossover to the pottery studio. You can't skip a step in the process otherwise the artwork won't be complete. "Pottery is a huge mental battle," Ruska said.

In a way, pottery serves as an outlet from the high-intensity

athletic training Ruska puts in for his three sports. Different requirements of skills, but the same opportunity for a challenge. "Pottery is a completely different challenge," he said. "I don't have to think about being super competitive. It has allowed me to challenge myself in different ways."

On the surface, there may not seem like many similarities between ceramics and athletics. But Osseo Cross Country and Track and Field head coach John Rundquist has seen firsthand through Ruska how skills in one arena translate to the other.

"Vaughn doesn't take shortcuts," Rundquist said. "He understands there are steps along the way."

For the past six years, Rundquist has had a front-row seat to Ruska's athletic career, coaching him in 12 different seasons. Over that time, Rundquist has seen the senior's character shine through trials and tri-

umphs.

One day last summer, Rundquist was painting his house when he got a text from Ruska that forced him to drop his paintbrush. He opened his phone and saw a photo of an x-ray, which showed a broken tibia. Recently, Ruska had been playing capture the flag with some friends when he tried to jump over the top of someone but ended up snapping his leg. The result: Ruska would be forced to miss his senior year of cross country.

Immediately, Rundquist felt numb and sick to his stomach. Just two years prior, Ruska suffered a stress fracture at the end of the cross country season, and now another injury. This, however, is only just some of the physical challenges Ruska has had to overcome in his high school career. From these two leg fractures, one of which a compound fracture, he battled mono in the spring of his sophomore year, and more recently,

COVID-19.

But instead of sulking and complaining about what he couldn't do, Ruska battled each challenge head-on. "It never seemed to bother him outwardly," Eric Ruska said. "I think he realized good things can still come from what is bad on the surface." After his leg fracture last summer, Ruska showed up to every cross country practice and meet, serving as an advocate and mentor for the rest of the team. Rundquist even said he was like another assistant coach. "The kids respect Vaughn and listen to him," Rundquist said. "That is something earned over time."

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

By not pushing his body and trusting the healing process, Ruska returned from injury last winter to compete in his final Nordic ski season, where he became a state qualifier, the proudest athletic achievement of his life.

"He is a once-in-a-career kind of kid," Rundquist said.

With one more track and field season left in his lengthy high school athletic career, Ruska has his eyes set on his future. He plans on attending the University of Minnesota in the fall to pursue degrees in ceramics and engineering, with hopes of one day selling some of his pottery and possibly making a shop.

Rundquist sees Ruska's potential sky-high in whatever arena of life he chooses, one of which could be coaching. "I see him taking something that does not exist and bringing it into being," Rundquist said.

Whatever his future holds, Ruska will always lean on the work. The process. The everyday grind to be better today than he was yesterday. It may not be what most people look forward to, but Ruska's insatiable drive for continued improvement keeps him moving onward.

"I enjoy the process."

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