

INSIDE

This week in Carlton County's only independent, locally owned newspaper.



Art classes hit Carlton Page 3



Get your winter on Page 11



Finding a home at last Page 20

INDEX

- Weather 2
- News 3
- Opinion 6-7
- Obituaries 8
- Community 9
- Puzzles 9
- Extra 11-14
- Education 16-17
- Classifieds 19-20
- Lands 20
- Sports 22



The Wood City Lights & Hardware building has been sold and the business will fold this spring. The everything-hardware store has been an institution in Cloquet for nearly 50 years. Photos by Jana Peterson / Pine Knot News

A coda for classic hardware store

Downtown Cloquet shop will close this spring; building sold

Jana Peterson
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It was the mid-1970s when the Erickson family moved their Coast to Coast Hardware store from the middle of the block to the former Raiter Hospital building at the corner of Ninth and Cloquet Avenue.

Although the names have changed — next it was Ace, then Erickson's and now Wood City Lights and Hardware — since then, the building has remained a hardware store for nearly 50 years. But not anymore. On April 30, Wood City owners Julie and John Haverkamp will hand over the keys to the building's new owners, North Star Community Services.

The store has been Julie's baby for the past seven years, since they moved her lighting store from Scanlon to downtown Cloquet and combined it with the hardware store.

"I'm sad. I'd stay here, but all the little guys (small hardware stores) are gone," Julie said.

Continued on back page



Wood City Lights and Hardware owner Julie Haverkamp (left) and Linda Erickson talk about the old days while they ring up items at the downtown store, which was sold and will close at the end of April.

SHINING A LIGHT ON SEX CRIMES

Inaction can't be the rule on suspected abuse

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When the news broke last year that former Carlton basketball coach Robert Pioro was being charged with sexually abusing one of his players nearly 20 years ago, there were people who immediately identified his victim. They'd seen the red flags or wondered about the relationship, but never knew for sure.

That's the nature of sexual abuse. It doesn't usually occur in the open. It's hidden between abuser and victim, specifically so people don't see it. So when there are red flags, people need to pay attention to those niggling worries and red flags. Especially those — including teachers, coaches, medical professionals and ministers — who are mandated reporters. But really anyone who's suspicious should take the time to

make the call, Carlton County attorney Lauri Ketola said.

In most cases, someone else does know, Ketola said. It may be a best friend pinky-sworn to secrecy, or an older family member — even a mother, afraid to lose her own relationship with the abuser — or someone else close to the family or the abuser.

During Pioro's sentencing on Feb. 5, prosecuting attorney Jeffrey

Boucher said there was a community failure in that case from the early 2000s.

"The state was struck by person after person saying something is suspicious, that they're not surprised to find out something was going on. But then nobody did anything." That's a failure of the community, he said.

Continued on Page 21

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