

Ladies Night Out

The event brought in 105 toys and \$395 for the Santa's Helpers of Sibley County program. P. 4

Street closure

Le Sueur's newly-reopened Main Street will be closed for the first time for a special event on Saturday. P. 4

State Cross Country

LS-H senior Hailey Juarez wrapped up a successful career at the state meet on Saturday. P. 9



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LS-H to perform SHREK!

By Rachel Miller
Editor

During adventure, a damsel in distress, an unlikely hero and his faithful donkey friend....Le Sueur-Henderson theatre students will take you on a thrilling and hilarious adventure when they bring "Shrek" to the stage on Nov. 19-20.

Le Sueur-Henderson senior Keegan Straub has been cast as Shrek, a gruff and misunderstood ogre who just wants to be left alone, but finds himself on a mission from King Farquaad to rescue Princess Fiona from her dragon-guarded tower.

Along the way, Shrek meets Donkey, played by Austin Kleinschmidt, who manages to break through Shrek's gruff exterior with his boundless optimism and hilarious punch lines.

As Shrek tells Donkey, "ogres are like onions, they have layers." One aspect Straub really loves is Shrek's transformation from someone who hates the world to someone who embraces it, and his fellow fairy tale creatures.

Along those same lines, Princess Fiona (played by Alexa Olson) is forced to confront her own inner dragons and embrace her true identity. But her insecurities don't stop her from steadfastly pursuing her dreams.

As Olson described Fiona, "she is very headstrong and resilient, and she knows

what she wants and is not afraid." After a year of changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Director Jennifer Weick said this year's cast is very excited to be back in front of a live audience, and without restrictions.

This year's production showcases a lot of experienced talent, as

SHREK

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PHOTO BY RACHEL MILLER

Austin Kleinschmidt, playing Lord Farquaad, sings "The Ballad of Farquaad."



PHOTO BY RACHEL MILLER

EMR students Caroline Tuck and Keegan Straub see what it is like riding inside the medical helicopter, while flight paramedic Keith Witte shows students the stretcher that just fits in the middle of the 'copter. Taller patients may have to bend their knees to fit, because as White put it, "we are built for speed, not comfort."

Making every second count EMR students visited by air ambulance

By Rachel Miller
Editor

Last Thursday, Le Sueur-Henderson students enrolled in the district's Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) class received a special, in-person visit from a North Air Care medical helicopter, which landed on the school's football field.

The visit was a real eye-opener for the 15 students taking Hovick's course. North Memorial Flight Paramedic Rob Pearson educated students about the medical helicopter's role in patient care while the helicopter was in-flight.

From a call coming in to the helicopter taking off is approximately seven minutes during the day, and 10 minutes at night. During this time is when helicopter staff are calculating fly time and checking the weather

not only in their area, but where they are responding to and where they will be transporting a patient.

For example, last Thursday, North Memorial Air Care staff checked the weather in Faribault (takeoff) and Le Sueur (where going). The helicopter averages 160 miles per hour, so it took roughly 15 minutes for the helicopter to arrive after departing.

Since it can take 20 or more minutes for a helicopter response, ambulance and paramedic response is still critical. In the interim, ambulance staff on the ground are still expected to stop external bleeding, secure any fractures, administer a sedative or narcotics for pain, if possible, and use extra tape to secure the patient for flight.

The medical ambulance is set up for speed, not comfort. There are two seats in the cockpit, and two seats in back, with just enough

room for a stretcher between the two medical personnel. Although there is space for the stretcher, a tall patient may need to bend their knees during flight.

Due to the small space in back, medical personnel must meet a weight limit to staff the 'copter, and are weighed every couple of months. Keeping their weight down allows them to transport a patient up to 400 pounds.

However, Pearson said that the pilot, flight paramedic and flight nurse all have a say in weather the helicopter flies. If any one of the three do not feel safe flying, the helicopter stays grounded.

EMR CLASS

LS-H's EMR class is in its second year, and the skills students are

EMR CLASS

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What next? School board mulls next steps for referendum

Six days after Le Sueur-Henderson residents soundly rejected a referendum that would have provided K-3 elementary school students with a new building, and addressed educational and deferred maintenance needs at Hilltop and the Middle/High School, members of the LS-H School Board began trying to piece together what another referendum request would look like.

The board canvassed the election results, which were as follows:

689 votes in support of the building referendum, vs. 965 votes against

482 votes in support of building a fieldhouse, vs. 1,153 against

In total, the election had a 36% voter turnout, with 1,654 residents casting a ballot, out of

4,598 registered voters.

With the failed referendum, the board now needs to see if they can find a more palatable option. Doing nothing is not really an option, as Park Elementary School has multiple

problems, including boilers that have failed multiple times in recent years, a leaking roof which also contains asbestos, and water issues that have impacted both the gymnasium floor and the kindergarten/pre-

school wing.

In the spring of 2019, a cracked pipe in the outside wall of the northwest corner of the gym caused high moisture issues, which necessitated a change in the school day and

activities that would normally have involved the gym and auditorium.

The district ran floor fans and dehumidifiers to try and lower the moisture level, but in the meantime half of the gym

had to be closed down as the floor was bowing.

Then on Christmas Day, 2020, the Le Sueur Fire Department was called to the school after a sprinkler head broke and sent water cascading down into the kindergarten/preschool wing. Repairs cost more than \$21,000.

As for the boiler failures, the school's two boilers are not only decades past their life



PHOTO BY RACHEL MILLER

School board members Steve Cross, Brian Sorenson, Joe Roby, Kelsey Schwartz, Chair Brigid Tuck, Superintendent Jim Wagner and board member Matt Hathaway raise their hands as they swear to uphold the Constitution and faithfully carry out the duties of the canvassing board.



SHREK
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all four leads (Straub, Kleinschmidt, Olson and Joe Fixsen as King Farquaad) have been in middle or high school musicals.

Weick said she has wanted to produce "Shrek" for a long time, and as it turned out, it was the perfect fit for the cast that auditioned.

"I just love the humor in it and the characters are hilarious," Weick said. "Austin, our Donkey, said, 'You guys do such a good job of putting the right people in the right parts.' We said, 'No, the kids we choose rise to the challenge of being those characters and bringing them to life.' They are each defined in their own way, but yet their own personalities shine

through."

Weick said the strength of this year's cast lies in its flexibility. A few students, like Angel Calloway, Ian and Izak Nelson, Adrianna Ramirez and Ariel Ingles, are playing multiple roles. A few cast members dropped out early on, and Weick said some students wasted no time volunteering to pick up a part.

"You can be handed any character and run away with it and be that character, embrace it and bring that character to life."

—Keegan Straub, on the impact theatre has had in his life

"They have a great bond with one another. I really think that helps them do well on stage," Weick said.

Part of that bond is the freedom to be expressive with-

out fear of being criticized or made fun of.

"They are kids from all different walks of life, but they come in here and it is like you are one, and no one looks at anybody and judges them," Weick said. "They have the freedom to let loose and they do, and we laugh with them."

Olson shared Weick's sentiments, and said that the theatre "has always been this judgment-free zone, and we are able to express ourselves in ways we want to."

Although she is confident on stage as Princess Fiona, she was not always that way. Olson's love of musicals started as a young child, when her mother would play "Les Miserables" in the car. Olson was too scared to audition in sixth grade, but managed to

overcome those fears the following year, when she auditioned and landed a role as a fairy in "Peter Pan."

Her co-lead Straub also loved watching plays, singing and acting from a young age.

"My favorite part of theatre is you can be handed any character and run away with it

and be that character, embrace it and bring that character to life," Straub said. "I have always loved to be able to do that, to go from being me to someone else."

Le Sueur-Henderson students will perform three shows over two days. Opening night is Friday, Nov. 19 at 7 p.m.,

and then on Saturday, Nov. 20, there will be a 2 p.m. matinee and 7 p.m. closing show. Tickets can be purchased from any cast member, or at the school office. Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$4 for kids, and children 5 and younger are free if they are sitting on a lap. Activity passes will be honored.



PHOTOS BY RACHEL MILLER

The cast of Shrek will perform three shows, an opening evening show on Friday, Nov. 19 at 7 p.m., and a 2 p.m. matinee and 7 p.m. show on Saturday, Nov. 20.



Being in the hero business can be exhausting, especially if you have to flee and dodge a dragon hell bent on keeping you prisoner in her tower. Austin Kleinschmidt, playing Donkey, leaped to safety as he and Shrek (Keegan Straub, not pictured) raced to rescue Princess Fiona (right), played by Alexa Olson.

The Cast and Crew of "Shrek"

CAST

Shrek: Keegan Straub
Donkey: Austin Kleinschmidt
Princess Fiona: Alexa Olson
Lord Farquaad: Joe Fixsen
Young Fiona: Elena Thelemann
Teen Fiona: Muriel Hilgers
Little Shrek: Kortland Amela
Gingy: Brandy Wolf
Peter Pan, Pied Piper: Kaylee Smykalski
Fairy Godmother, Queen Lillian: Lauren Miller
Baby Bear, Sugar Plum Fairy: Angel Calloway
Big Bad Wolf, King Harold: Luke Grapentine
Papa Ogre, Little Pig, Bishop: Ian Nelson
Thelonious, Little Pig: Izak Nelson
Mama Bear: Sami Pollack
Rat: Grace Hardel
Pinocchio: Ariel Ingles
Humpty Dumpty, Duckling: Nicole Johnson
Little Pig: Sean Kulzer

Dragon, Mama Ogre: Adrianna Ramirez
Dragon, Witch, Greeter: Janorra Childress
White Rabbit, Performer: Johnna Maxwell
Happy Villager: Jemma Maxwell
Happy Villager: Narriah Childress
Happy Villager: Kiandra Straub

ENSEMBLES

Guards: Angel Calloway, Izak Nelson, Ian Nelson, Adrianna Ramirez and Kaylee Smykalski
Knights: Angel Calloway, Ariel Ingles and Ian Nelson
Rats: Grace Hardel, Sami Pollack
Three Blind Mice: Angel Calloway, Brandy Wolf
Duloc Dancers: Adrianna Ramirez, Angel Calloway, Ariel Ingles, Ian Nelson, Izak Nelson, Johnna Maxwell, Kaylee Smykalski, Lauren Miller, Luke Grapentine, Nicole Johnson, Sami Pollack and Sean Kulzer

SCHOOL BOARD
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

expectancy, but undersized for the current load. If just one boiler were to fail to the point it could no longer be repaired, the replacement cost would eat up the district's fund balance.

Those are just some of the facilities maintenance issues that Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Todd Vrklan has to contend with.

Compounding the issue is that the cost of renovating Park Elementary School exceeds 60 percent of the cost of new construction, which makes it highly unlikely that the Minnesota Department of Education would grant approval of a renovation.

Monday's preliminary discussions focused on the timing of a new referendum, and what it could potentially look like. Although the board previously talked about another vote in February 2022, Gary Benson, the director of project planning and development for Kraus-Anderson Construction, stated that would be a rush.

Benson pointed out the dis-

trict would need to submit the referendum proposal to MDE 90 days before the election for the Review and Comment, and the district would need to be submitting that this week.

Since the state is redistricting next year, April and May elections are not an option, which would make the August primary the next option for the school district.

Board member Joe Roby raised the issue that the board had previously discussed a quick turnaround for a February 2022 election that would put the one-building option at the Middle/High School site. This option would close both Hilltop and Park elementary schools and send all students to a single building in Le Sueur.

Roby cautioned that if the district backed away from the single building option, after publicizing it as a viable fallback, it could affect community confidence in the board.

School Board Chair Brigid Tuck, however, expressed concerns about the price point of the one-building option. At \$48 million, the district would only save \$2 million over the failed

two-school referendum. Tuck added that she thought a \$38 million price point would pass.

Tuck said they need to talk with taxpayers about the cost and feasibility of renovating Park. Even if they could get approval and put \$20 million into fixing the school, it would come with tradeoffs and sacrifices.

"People need to be able to see real numbers on what it means to renovate Park, and what is the realistic use of the building," Tuck said.

More discussions will be needed, and the board talked about discussing the issue further at its upcoming work session on Monday, Nov. 15, at the media center in the high school.

ENROLLMENT ON THE RISE

In a piece of good news, the district shared that enrollment is up for the second month in a row. After starting the year with 919 students, enrollment jumped to 927 in October, and most recently, 943 in November.

Although there were a few grades that dropped or gained 1-3 students, the high school saw a big jump.

In an ironic twist, both 9th and 10th grade increased by their grade number. The freshman class added nine students, going from 81 to 90 enrollment, while the sophomore class increased from 80 to 90 students.

COVID CASES

In other news, Superinten-

dent Jim Wagner shared that new COVID-19 cases are on the rise, with eight students testing positive for the disease this week, along with two staff members, one at Park Elementary and one at Hilltop.

"We can't let our guard down at this point for the sake of safety and taking care of people," Wagner said. "It is real, people are getting sick, so we have to be respectful of that and make sure we are as safe as possible."

Along the same lines, Wagner said he wanted to pursue hiring a second registered nurse, using COVID funding.

GRANTS AND DONATIONS

The board approved \$740 in grants and donations, which in-

cluded:

- \$500 from the Le Sueur Rotary Club for the 7 Mindsets curriculum and professional development;
- \$200 from the Le Sueur Rotary Club for the Literacy in the Community program; and
- \$40 from Brian and Kristan Pfarr to sponsor a student for the snack cart.

NEW HIRES

The board approved three new hires on Monday. They include:

- Sandra Hartmann as a long-term second-grade substitute teacher;
- Luke Wilson as the new wrestling coach; and
- Roma Pokibro as the new middle school girls basketball coach.

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GIBBON

El martes 16 de noviembre del 2021

De 2:30 - 5:00 pm

En el Gibbon Community Center
985 First Ave.

GREEN ISLE

El miércoles 17 de noviembre del 2021

De 9:30 - 11:30 am

En el Green Isle Community Room
390 Parnell St.

ARLINGTON

El jueves 18 de noviembre del 2021

De 2:30 - 5:00 pm

En el Arlington Community Center
204 Shamrock Dr.

Para más información: 507-237-4037

Condado de Sibley, Salud Pública y Servicios Humanos

Se recomienda preinscribirse para ahorrar tiempo en la clínica de vacunación de la influenza. Se requieren máscaras faciales. Use ropa en la que la parte superior del brazo sea fácilmente accesible.



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We are CLOSED for **Veterans Day** Thursday, Nov. 11

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