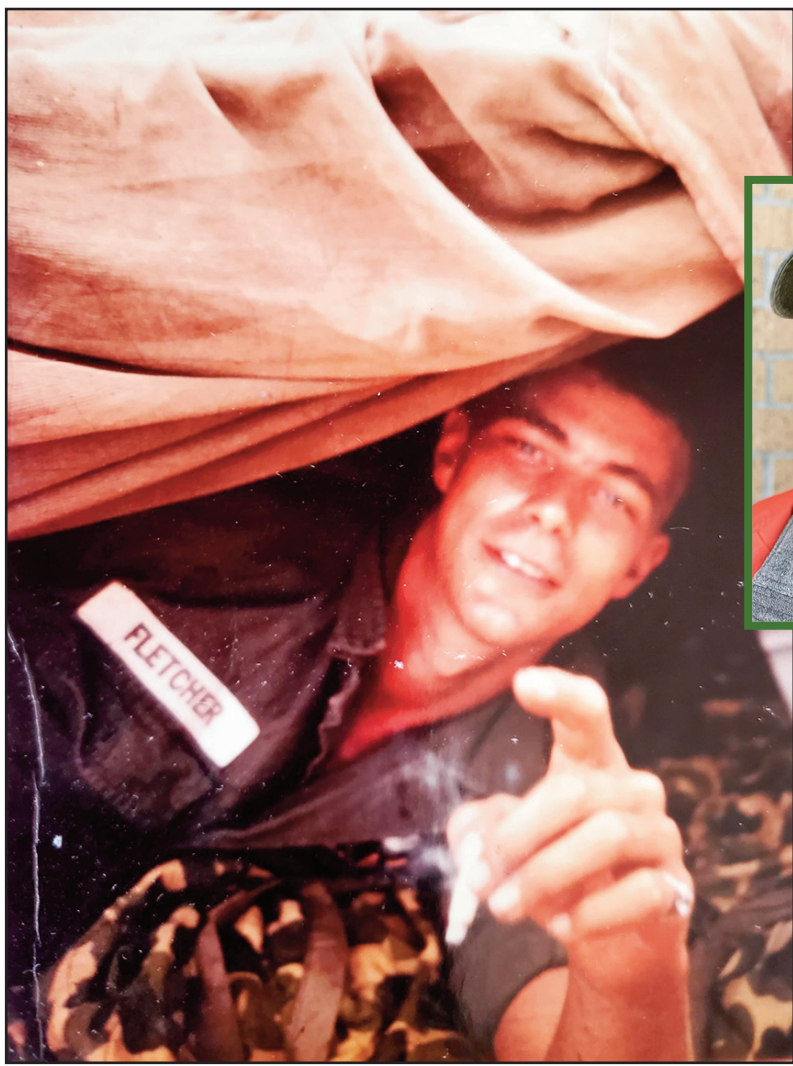


Delivering local news to the greater Pelican lakes area for over a century

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Artist Jim Fletcher today, but nearly 60 years ago, he was stationed in Vietnam during the earliest stages of the war—where he witnessed the horrors of war, and also contracted malaria, and was hospitalized for months.



Artist Jim Fletcher's body and range of work are remarkably vast—including his Vietnam memories, above, (101st Airborne Grunt and the Monsoon). His work and various shows have featured landscapes to wildflowers to Native Americans. In retirement, he has assembled a number of exhibits over the past decade, from the Pelican Library to a New York City museum. The Kaddatz Gallery in Fergus Falls will be showing a selection of his Vietnam-inspired pieces, as well as landscapes, through May.

Jim Fletcher, under a mosquito net in 1965, left, shortly after arriving in Vietnam. Fletcher taught high school art teacher in Pelican Rapids for 30 years. He and his wife Dee are retired in the Pelican area.

# Vietnam ... Revisited

## 'Nam: Sudden Recollections

A gunshot cracks in the nearby wilderness during hunting season; fireworks explode on the fourth of July; a car backfires down the street; an unseen helicopter pounds the air in the distant sky, its tremors thumping in the chest; a child stares at nothing with vacant eyes. These occurrences and others have triggered sudden recollections of stored Vietnam memories. Each artwork is a reaction jolted from memory. Most works were done quickly and spontaneously with little detail, while others were more refined as a memory persisted. Once fixed on paper or canvas, either in raw state or detailed, the memories and artworks were left behind.

—Jim Fletcher, artist and retired Pelican Rapids school art instructor

## Pelican artist's 'Nam images exhibited through May—plus many new pieces, some inspired by Maplewood Park

By Louis Hoglund

Vietnam, back in 1965, was just someplace, somewhere east of Afghanistan, and south of Japan...faraway in the minds of most Americans.

Somewhere else...over there. Young paratrooper Jim Fletcher was on a slow, overloaded boat to China, as far as he knew, in spring 1965. It was destination unknown for him and more than 5,000 others—in a

vessel with an official capacity of about 3,800

Finally, over the ship's intercom, the mission was revealed to the 101st Airborne: Vietnam.

A lifetime ago, Fletcher was among the very first enlisted men to land in Vietnam. The fun was just beginning in 1965-66, when Fletcher joined the jungle party—which continued for about a decade, at various levels of U.S. engagement and carnage.

A lifetime later, Fletcher's Vietnam-inspired art has been viewed around the nation. Among the showings, the State Capital Museum, Rockefeller Empire State, New York. Fletcher's "Nam: Now a Memory" also accompanied the traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall tribute when it was displayed in Fergus Falls.

An exhibit of both his Vietnam

FLETCHER REVISITS VIETNAM

Continued on Page 13

# Tee time on schedule at Birchwood

Volunteers to prep greens, fairways; friends plan benefit as golf course owner Sjostrom battles cancer



Terry Sjostrom, pictured last year at Birchwood Golf Course, which he purchased in 2018. He was recently diagnosed pancreatic cancer and friends have rallied to help open the golf course for the season—and plan a full-day benefit May 7.

By Louis Hoglund

Golfers can expect to tee off as usual at the popular Pelican Rapids Birchwood Golf Course, even as the course owner recovers from cancer treatments and surgery.

With a little help from friends, Birchwood will get by—and so will owner Terry Sjostrom.

A volunteer grounds crew will be working the Birchwood fairways as the final, white remnants of winter 2022 melt away. Meanwhile, a fundraiser to support Sjostrom's battle against pancreatic cancer is being planned by an extended—and ambitious—group of friends and family.

Golf will be one of the key ingredients of a mix of benefit activities May 7. As owner of Birchwood Golf Course, Sjostrom has hundreds of friends from the fairways and the clubhouse.

And, as a 1976 graduate of Pelican Rapids High School, he has lifelong, multi-generational connections to his hometown.

BIRCHWOOD GOLF COURSE OWNER BATTLES CANCER

Continued on Page 8

# 'Evening of Champions' Two Pelican alumni student-athletes on program for April 3 Fellowship event

After a couple of years off during the COVID pandemic, the Pelican Rapids chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes will be hosting the Evening of Champions.

It will be an evening with a distinctive hometown flavor, as two former Pelican Rapids High School athletes will be on the program: Reed Roisum and Taylor Huseby.

The event will be Sunday, April 3, at 7 p.m. at the Fine Arts Auditorium. The public is invited.

The two speakers are former pelican student-athletes, speaking about their testimony, experiences at Pelican High, college, and beyond—and how God has impacted their lives.

2006 graduate Taylor Huseby will not be able to be here in person, but is preparing a YouTube video.

Huseby was a part of an exceptional year in Pelican Rapids High School sports, 2006. He was a member of an All Conference champion Viking football team; and a boys basketball team that took third in the state high school tournament. Huseby also played on Pelican's sub-section title basketball team.

1992 graduate Reed Roisum, a Pelican Rapids Viking basketball standout, will be speaking in person. Roisum played for the 1992 Pelican basketball

EVENING OF CHAMPIONS PROGRAM APRIL 3

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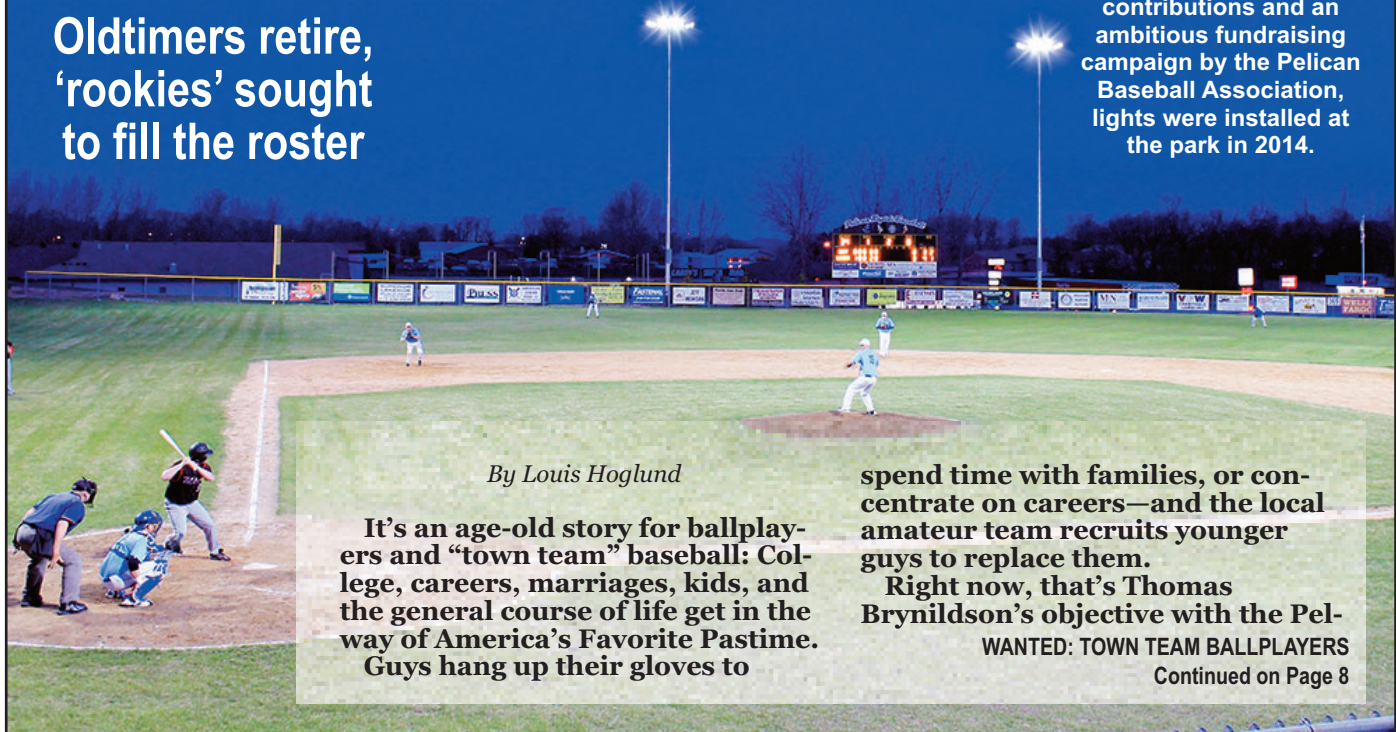
Taylor Huseby



Reed Roisum

# Say it ain't so, Joe ... Pelican town team may fold without more ballplayers

Oldtimers retire, 'rookies' sought to fill the roster



Thanks to generous contributions and an ambitious fundraising campaign by the Pelican Baseball Association, lights were installed at the park in 2014.

By Louis Hoglund

It's an age-old story for ballplayers and "town team" baseball: College, careers, marriages, kids, and the general course of life get in the way of America's Favorite Pastime. Guys hang up their gloves to

spend time with families, or concentrate on careers—and the local amateur team recruits younger guys to replace them.

Right now, that's Thomas Brynildson's objective with the Pelican Rapids team.

WANTED: TOWN TEAM BALLPLAYERS

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## INSIDE this week Inserts

- Menards
- Larry's Supermarket

### Public Notices

- City of Pelican Rapids Notice
- Maplewood Township Notice
- Pelican Rapids School Board Meeting
- Scambler Township Notice
- Summons - Aaberg
- Trondjhem Township Notice

### Obituaries

- Betty Bonewell, 88, formerly of Pelican Rapids

# Vietnam ... Revisited



Fear of Giving - Oil Painting

## PELICAN ARTIST FLETCHER FEATURED IN NEW EXHIBIT

Continued from page 1

work and impressionistic landscapes will be on display through May 28 at the Kaddatz Gallery in Fergus Falls. An artist reception and talk will be hosted March 31, 5-7 p.m.

Lifetimes of Pelican Rapids students were influenced by Fletcher, a retired high school art teacher. From his boyhood in Connecticut to the Army to college, he landed permanently in the Pelican area.

A Vietnam veteran, Fletcher created more than a hundred works depicting his memories of Vietnam and compiled some of them in several shows in recent years. Most of them date to the early 1980s and were largely collecting dust for three decades, but he began assembling them around the period of the 50th anniversary of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, which was 2015.

"The Vietnam work had been sealed up for 30 years," said Fletcher, who had declined a number of invitations to revive the work. "I had moved past that dark chapter, and I'm still reluctant to revisit it."

He notes that his images are intended neither to "criticize nor dramatize the American involvement in Vietnam. There is no political statement, chronological succession, or plot." He hopes that his work will open eyes to the realities, hardships, and horrors of war and remove the "false facade of glory."

His 'Nam work isn't light fare, though there are a few gentler glimpses of life in southeast Asia.

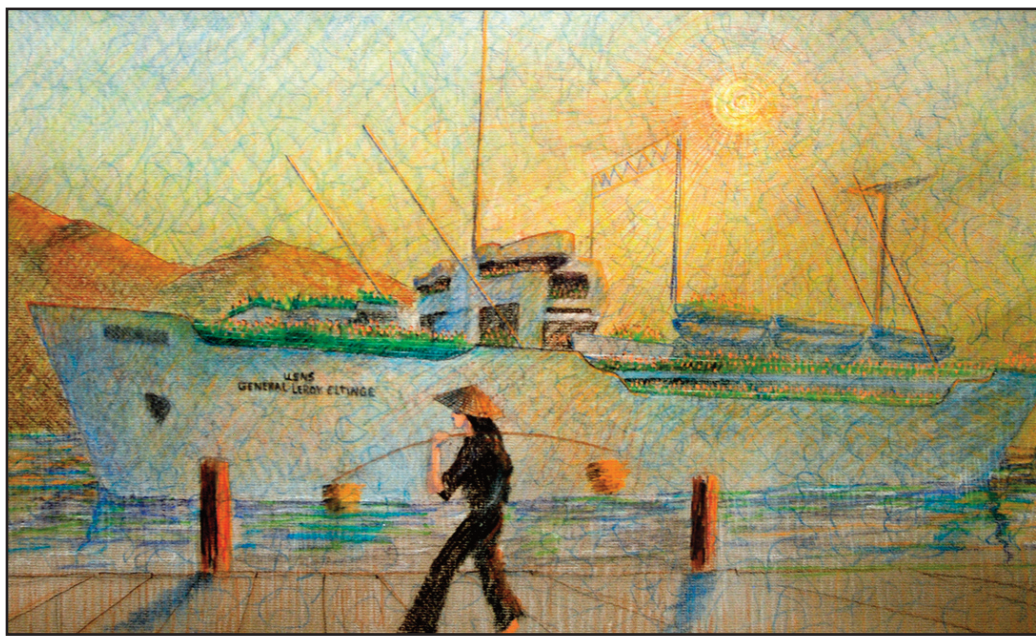
The grim reality depicted in Fletcher's Vietnam selections—some of them surreal—is, for the most part, heavy stuff.

Visitors may find some respite in a separate display of Fletcher's landscapes at the Kaddatz Gallery. But even

This pastel sketch is the ship USNS General Leroy Eltinge, the troop carrier that transported the 1st Brigade 101st Airborne Division to Vietnam.

Jim Fletcher was a young enlisted man aboard the vessel, for the twenty-day sailing journey. The destination was unknown to the paratroopers until after they left port. Once at sea, the orders were finally read over the ship's intercom.

On July 29, 1965, the Screaming Eagles disembarked and set foot on the sands of Cam Ranh Bay, where they were met by U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, Maxwell D. Taylor, and General W.C. Westmorland.



those beautifully stark images, many generated from Maplewood State Park, have an overcast, somber ambience. As if peering through a weary soldier's eyes during a quiet, early evening ceasefire...near the Mekong Delta, 1966... or Normandy in 1944...or Flanders Field in 1918...or Gettysburg in 1864.

Fletcher creates not only with visual art, but also with words. He is the author of four novels.

In the 1980s, Jim snuck into Maplewood State Park near Pelican Rapids, and began hiding artworks in the forest. His students helped him create a miniature village, made of stoneware clay, which they also hid in the woods. He created and concealed innumerable artworks throughout the forest. These artworks are integrated with

his fantasy, mystery, adventure trilogy of books, "The Lore Adventure."

It was while painting isolated scenes in Maplewood Jim began painting his abstractions of wildflowers.

In May 1990, Jim, accompanied by artist and former student Paul Albright, attended his first powwow at Cass Lake, MN. Intrigued by the dances, both artists began recording the experience with paintings and sketches. At the time, Jim was researching the history of the Mandan Indians for a novel he was writing, "The Last Race," published in 2004. His research for the novel led him to Fort Berthold, ND, home of the Three Affiliated Tribes: Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nations (MHAN).

At Fort Berthold, Jim and his wife, Dee, attended the three-day "Little Shell Powwow" celebration. It was there Jim met Edwin Benson, believed to be the last person who fluently spoke the Mandan language. Edwin graciously helped Jim interpret the Mandan language for "The Last Race."

Fletcher's colorful Pow Wow and flower pieces are mostly in storage, for now. But Vietnam, through eyewitness Fletcher's eyes, and his new, soft-focus landscapes are in circulation, at Kaddatz Gallery, through May.

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But Vietnam, through eyewitness Fletcher's eyes, and his new, soft-focus landscapes are in circulation, at Kaddatz Gallery, through May.



Flash Back A Sudden Memory of the Real World - Pastel



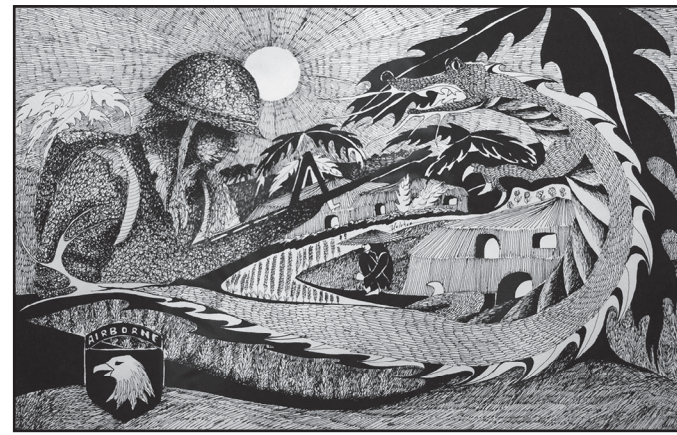
Chopper Sweep and RTO - Ink

## Fletcher served with 'Nomads of Vietnam'

"Nomadic Warriors" is how the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, has been described in Vietnam history.

Nicknamed the "Screaming Eagles," unlike other U.S. fighting units, they would sweep across the length and breadth of Vietnam in the early period of U.S. involvement. More typical in Vietnam were units that established a semi-permanent operational base almost immediately upon arrival.

This roaming unit of soldiers gave birth to the nickname "Nomadic Warriors," or "Nomads of Vietnam," which followed the 101st throughout their entire year's tour in Vietnam 1965-66.



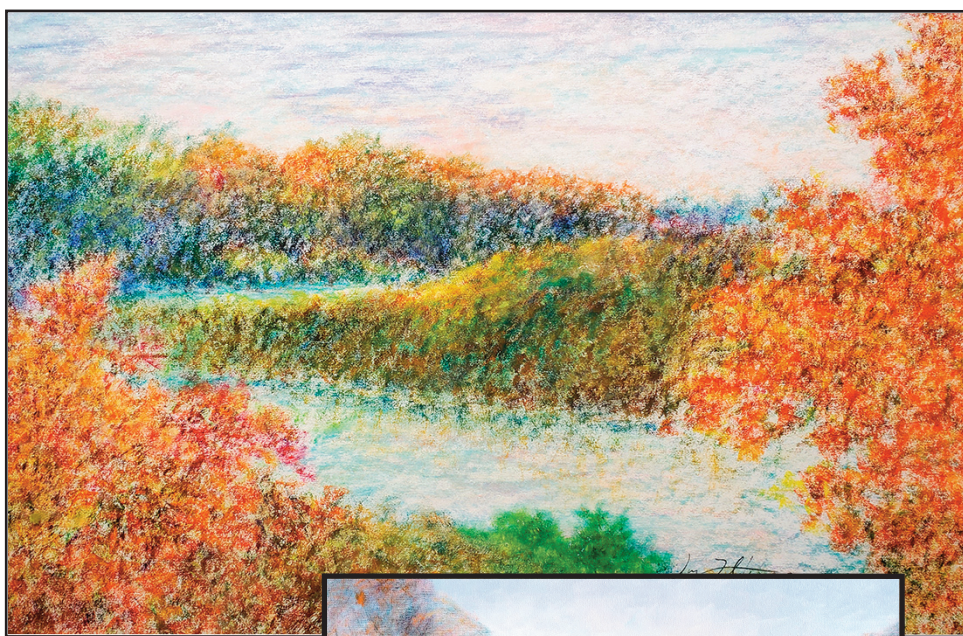
Dragon Slayer - Ink

## Origins of Vietnam war focus of Historical Society program March 29

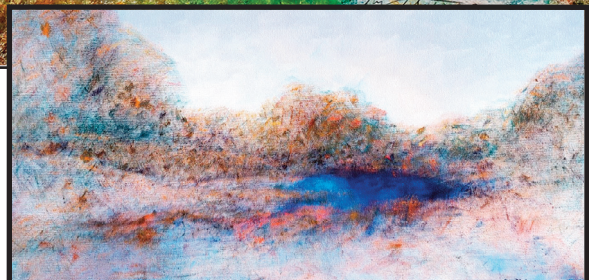
What were the origins of the Vietnam War? How did the United States get involved?

Find out more about the history of Vietnam by watching Episode 1 of the dynamic documentary "The Vietnam War" by Ken Burns and Lynn Novice on March 29, 6 p.m. at the Fergus Falls Public Library.

Afterward, Missy Hermes from the Otter Tail County Historical Society will lead discussion of local memories of military service in Vietnam and families on the home front.



Maplewood Autumn



Early Colors



Swampy Area Maplewood

## Landscape series features new Maplewood inspired works by Pelican artist Fletcher

If Jim Fletcher's images of Vietnam get a little too heavy on the heart—or eyeballs—his new landscape series is also featured through May, at the Kaddatz Gallery in Fergus Falls.

While "NAM: Now a Memory" is shown in the Kaddatz Main Gallery, the next door Studio K will feature "Landscapes & Other Works," an exhibit of more recent works by Fletcher—many inspired by his visits to Maplewood State Park.

Fletcher is a graduate of Fergus Falls "Junior College," Minneapolis Institute of Art, and earned his teaching certificate at Bemidji State.

Fletcher has participated in many one-person shows and group exhibitions and has received numerous awards and recognition for his art.

He continues to be active with young students interested in art and writing. He travels and presents at young artists/writers conferences throughout Minnesota.