

**WE HAVE MOVED**

Our New Office is

**BRUHN PLAZA**

1011 1ST ST E • STE 6

PARK RAPIDS, MN 56470

218-732-3364

# Park Rapids man creates pirate menace

## Halloween display includes fountains, animatronics

By Shannon Geisen  
Park Rapids Enterprise

**A**aarrgghh, matey! A cursed pirate ship has run aground at 613 Washington Avenue in Park Rapids.

It's a horrific scene. Swashbuckling, skeletal pirates duel with cutlasses, while others hoard stolen gold or feast upon their shipmates.

And it's the cleverly devilish handiwork of Chris Sandretzki, a landlubber and plumber by trade.

"Last year, I did a walk-through, and I had adults thanking me, you know with COVID, because I slid candy down a tube," Sandretzki said.

Lads and lassies are welcome to traverse the haunting spectacle this Halloween – if you dare.

With the help of a neighbor, Sandretzki spent two solid weeks building the ship, which broke in half when it hit the shoals. At night, red flames flicker from the 10-foot bow and 14-foot stern.

"It was on fire, hence the burning embers," he explained. "That guy is in the brig. This one is in the

treasure hole." All told, it's taken a month to compose the numerous vignettes in Sandretzki's front yard.

Historically, pirates didn't just steal gold and treasure, but they also took coffee, sugar, tobacco, tea, Sandretzki explains. A close examination shows these pirates following tradition.

In this baleful tale, the food runs out. "All they're left with is rum and coffee."

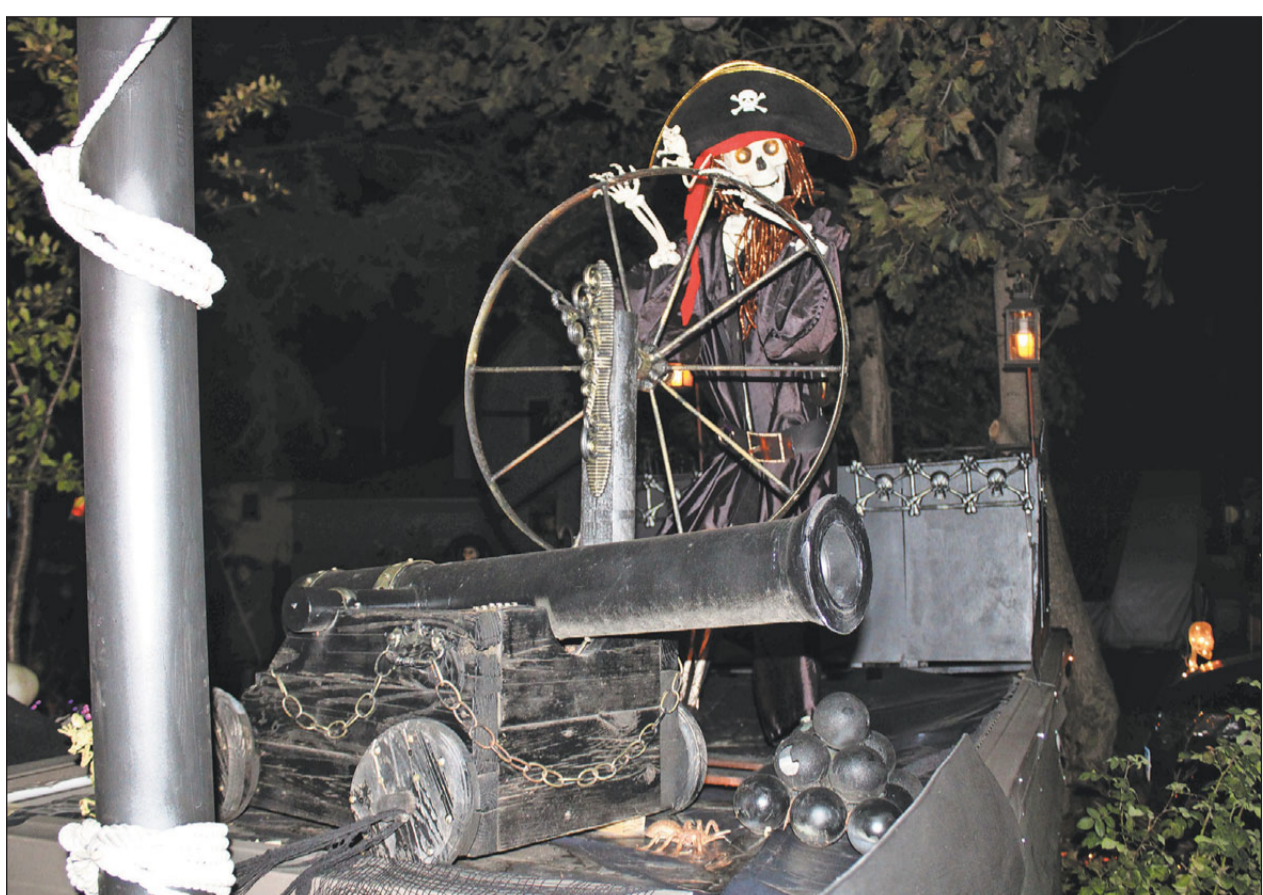
The ravenous pirates turn on each other, "so then they eat each other."

A skull rests in a cooking fire. "This is very simple. You're looking at cardboard. You tape on orange and red lights, spray foam and a little bit of black paint here and there. That's all you do, and you have burning embers," Sandretzki said.

Sandretzki constructed animatronics – the pirate captain steering the helm, for example – with discarded items, like a microwave oven motor that normally turns a plate.

"You'll maybe see

**DISPLAY:** Page 3



**Above:** Chris Sandretzki built this accursed, 25-foot pirate ship with recycled materials, like vinyl siding and pallets. **Far left:** Pirates clash swords in this Halloween scene. **Left:** This pirate swigs a fountain of "rum." **Photos by Shannon Geisen / Enterprise**

# Nevis robotics team heading to conference championship



**Contributed / Kay Netteberg.** Mentor Dustin Wroolie is pictured with robotics team members Eli Peterson, MacKenzie Harris and Rayna Wood during an event at Muskie Days in Nevis this summer. Wood is helping a girl learn to drive the robot.

Lorie Skarpness  
Park Rapids Enterprise

The Nevis robotics team will be participating in the fourth annual Northern Minnesota Robotics Conference (NMRC) Championship on Friday, Oct 29, in Upsala.

"I think there will be 18 of the 30 teams in our conference participating," robotics mentor Olaf Netteberg said. "This event is about generating excitement and getting kids fired up for the upcoming season. It's our pre-season game. Both our robot and our chairman's team will be competing with a presentation about our program."

In addition to the

championship, there will be a second day of competition on Saturday. This event is open to additional high school robotics teams in Minnesota not affiliated with the NMRC conference.

"There are still teams out there that haven't had a live event of any sort since the spring of 2019 and some haven't attended a live event since the spring of 2018," he said.

"Because of the proximity to the Metro area, the second day is open to any team to come. This will give us an opportunity to play some different teams with the same game and same

**ROBOTICS:** Page 3

# Menahga city administrator is suspended indefinitely

By Shannon Geisen  
Park Rapids Enterprise

Menahga City Administrator Curt Kreklau is suspended, with pay, for an undetermined amount of time.

The Menahga City Council held a closed meeting on Oct. 20 "for preliminary consideration of allegations or charges against an individual subject to its authority," per Minnesota Statute.

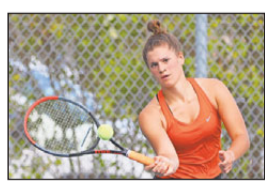
The council held an emergency meeting on Oct. 22 to define and

assign duties in the "temporary absence" of Kreklau "until the issue is resolved."

At the directive of the city attorney, the council decided to change all locks on all city buildings, remove Kreklau from the bank signature card, plus suspend all passwords and access to all city accounts. The motion passed 3-2, with council members Art Huebner and Robyn Keranen opposed.

**SUSPENDED:** Page 3

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER FOR HUBBARD COUNTY



**SPORTS**  
**Mission met:** Morris qualifies for state girls tennis tournament. – Page 7



**LIFE**  
**'Once on This Island':** Fall musical begins this Thursday. – Page 12

**ONLINE**

**Now playing:** Click on "Marketplace" for videos, special deals and a local business directory.

OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS  
**\$2.00**



Get the newspaper format you love EVERY DAY.



Available even on days your print paper is not delivered!

# Minimum wage set to increase 2.5% as labor shortages continue

By Matthew Liedke  
The Bemidji Pioneer

BEMIDJI, Minn. — Minnesota employers paying the minimum wage will increase salaries per state law next year.

On Jan. 1, 2022, the minimum wage rates for large employers will increase from \$10.08 to \$10.33. For smaller employers, meanwhile, the increase will be from \$8.21 to \$8.42. Both rates are increasing by 2.5%.

"They're set to go up each year," said David Berry, research analyst for the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. "The state law has a minimum wage for larger and smaller employers, and both are set to increase annually. The increases are based on an implicit price deflator, which is like a consumer price index."

According to Berry, large employers are

**INCREASE:** Page 5

# MAHUBE-OTWA applying for homeless services grant

**By Shannon Geisen**  
Park Rapids Enterprise

Since 2006, Hubbard County and the MAHUBE-OTWA Community Action Partnership have teamed up to tackle homelessness. Together, they are applying for a Long-Term Homeless Supportive Services Grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services. They are seeking \$1,882,985 for a two-year period to serve 318 long-term homeless households across 23 counties. The grant period begins Jan. 1, 2022. Hubbard County is grantee and contracts

with MAHUBE-OTWA to coordinate service delivery in north-central and northwestern Minnesota, explained MAHUBE-OTWA Executive Director Liz Kuoppala to the county board at their Oct. 19 meeting. "We have approximately 18 people, at any given time, in Hubbard County who are long-term homeless that we're working with," Kuoppala said. Long-term homelessness is defined as those who have been homeless for a year or more or four times in the past three years, she said. "The idea is it takes a lot of collabora-

tion between housing authorities and landlords and county services. That's what this grant is for," Kuoppala said. "The county doesn't pay anything." County Social Services Director Brian Ophus told the county board, if awarded, the grant "does really help out the county budget as well because we're able to refer for services for this grant specifically that otherwise takes up some costs to the county." MAHUBE-OTWA would be paid \$71,679 to administer the grant, award 10 subcontracts, monitor and evaluate subgrantees, and provide

financial and programmatic reports to Hubbard County. The grant calls for multi-disciplinary (housing, human services, corrections, etc), multi-sector (government, business, non-profit) and multi-jurisdictional (federal, state, and local) strategies to address long-term homelessness. The grant pays primarily for case management services provided by nonprofit partners to connect long-term homeless households with services, housing and income to maintain their stability.

A key strategy is the "housing first model," which places a priority on providing housing first without excessive preconditions such as sobriety, good credit, clean rental history records or lack of criminal history. Part of the "magic" of this multi-county collaborative is that homeless people can be sent to shelters in partnering counties, Kuoppala said. MAHUBE-OTWA's approach is five-pronged. Housing is an immediate need, followed by getting the person connected to public and private services. The next phase

involves coaching, goal setting, financial literacy, addressing recurring obstacles to success and building up assets, like savings accounts, but also connections to friends, family and faith communities. "The more they can have built up supports around them, the more we can pull back our services and they'll be good to stand on their own. Every person is different, but a core part of this is we're trying to get every person employed and as self-sufficient as possible," Kuoppala said. Shannon Geisen can be reached at [sgeisen@parkrapidsenterprise.com](mailto:sgeisen@parkrapidsenterprise.com).

## ROBOTICS

From Page 1

scenario, since our field is already set up. Some of the teams from the Metro have fewer members than we do. We get a lot of people coming to ask us how in the world we do it, how Nevis gets so many members and so much support. Of the 18 schools at the championship, we'll be in the top three teams for how long we've been doing this. I think this is our 14th season." Returning robotics mentors include Kay Netteberg and Dustin Woolie. Nevis teacher Aubrey Capecci is a new mentor, replacing McKenzie Harris, who was unable to continue due to scheduling issues.

**History of the event**  
Netteberg said the conference championship event started to give students in rural Minnesota the same opportunities Metro teams have. "Those schools historically had hubs of schools that were near each other," he said. "It might be half a dozen schools that would get together, share resources, build a robotics community. We started looking at ways to promote that up here when robotics was just getting started.

"Robotics has developed using a sports model, and we decided to build on that and make a conference because it's a concept everyone understands. When we started out there were just eight teams in the conference, and it has grown to 30 teams sponsored by the state High School League." Netteberg said robotics team alumni have gone on to become mechanical engineers, robotics technicians and more. This year, the robotics team hopes to bring the robotics experience to younger students. "Our team has been instrumental in creating a robotics curriculum all the way down to our elementary," Netteberg said. "We couldn't do it last year, due to not being able to mix age groups due to COVID, but it's all set and ready to go. Our students are looking forward to going into classrooms to teach these STEM sessions to students in K-6 in one-to-three-day sessions." Mentor Kay Netteberg is the one who has been in charge of that project.

**Eager to be back**  
After most robotics events were cancelled last year due to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines, Netteberg said students were eager to get back to robotics the way it used to be. "We have a few core kids who were on the



Nevis robotics team members Simon Huderlik and Gabby Cairns examine their robot with mentor Dustin Woolie.

2019 team we went to Detroit with," he said. "They've seen the big show, competed at Worlds. Those are mostly eighth and ninth graders who were mainly just spectators at the time. Other than that, no one on the team has seen an event, except last year when our conference had the first event in North America since COVID up at the Sanford Center in Bemidji." The team will be bringing the robot that was built in the spring of 2021 with some improvements that have been added this

fall. "We did some little tweaks and adjustments to make it a little better here and there," he said. Because of all the other fall activities team members are involved in at school, Netteberg said participation is somewhat limited but expected to pick up during the winter. "We haven't all been able to get together at the same time up until now," he said. Rayna Wood is a senior who attends Walker-Hackensack-Akeley High School. "She has been on our team since ninth grade," Netteberg said. Wood said she is look-

ing forward to a normal season and traveling to competitions. "I'm also looking forward to all of the kids that did it last year to

experience the competition this year because it is very different and a lot of fun," she said. I guess I'm excited to see how much each person on my robotics team will enjoy and fall in love with robotics like I did when I first started." **Ticket and viewing information**  
Both of these robotics events are free and open to the public. Live streaming will also be available on Twitch through FIRST Updates Now at [www.twitch.tv/firstupdatesnow](http://www.twitch.tv/firstupdatesnow). COVID-19 protocols will be set by Upsala Schools and are subject to change based on evolving policies. Contact Upsala High School for the most up to date information if planning to attend. For more information, visit [NMRconference.org](http://NMRconference.org). Lorie Skarpness can be reached at [lskarpness@parkrapidsenterprise.com](mailto:lskarpness@parkrapidsenterprise.com).

## DISPLAY

From Page 1

an idea on YouTube or whatever, and you say, 'Well, I can do that, but I'm going to do it this

way," Sandretzki said. A computer power supply and a car windshield wiper motor animate the fighting scallywags. He started this pirate adventure in 2011, around the time

that "Pirates of the Caribbean" movies hit the silver screen. "It just kind of exploded from there," he said. Originally from Washington state, Sandretzki said he can relate the salty

spray and freedom of the open ocean. "My grandfather was a commercial fisherman, so I had a lot of time on the sea when I was just little," he recalled. Shannon Geisen can be reached at [sgeisen@parkrapidsenterprise.com](mailto:sgeisen@parkrapidsenterprise.com).

**DELICIOUS DINING 7 DAYS A WEEK**  
Fall Hours Mon-Thurs 8 to 5, Fri-Sun 11:30 to 8

Dine with us after a round of golf!

**Blueberry PINES**  
- Take Out Also Available -  
[WWW.BLUEBERRYPINES.COM](http://WWW.BLUEBERRYPINES.COM)  
We are following the most current safety guidelines!  
39161 US Hwy 71, Menahga, MN 56464 | 218-564-4653

## SUSPENDED

From Page 1

Krekla's emails are to be redirected to Jensine Kurtti, the temporary administrative support technician, for review and assignment. Kurtti was also assigned the following duties in Krekla's absence:  
► develop, review and provide information to the city council  
► serve as liaison with various external organizations and agencies  
► attend public meetings and make presentations  
► evaluate potential economic development

and other projects, programs and services to determine feasibility and community impact  
► make recommendations to the city council  
► serve as the city's zoning administrator and secretary of the planning commission  
► issue building permits  
► participate in work sessions and specials. This motion passed, with Huebner and Keranen opposed. Finally, the council suspended the use of GoToMeeting for all future meetings. Huebner and Keranen held a bizarre, two-hour "public forum" on GoToMeeting at 3 p.m. Oct.

20. They announced that Mayor Liz Olson and council member Durwin Tomperi were unable to attend due to prior commitments. Council member Dan Warmbold, still at work, was also unable to appear. Lack of a quorum meant it couldn't be a legal city council meeting. But that didn't prevent Huebner from spewing various allegations, like "ridiculous witch hunts," "frivolous audits" and "astronomical public data requests" that he claimed were designed to keep city staff "busy so they couldn't do their jobs." The closed meeting

was officially scheduled and held at 5 p.m. Shannon Geisen can be reached at [sgeisen@parkrapidsenterprise.com](mailto:sgeisen@parkrapidsenterprise.com).

**Consign your vehicle with us!**  
Call Alan For Details

**Thielen Motors**  
CHEVROLET BUICK

732-3347  
800-457-2438  
[www.thielenmotors.com](http://www.thielenmotors.com)  
Hwy. 34 E., Park Rapids

**FIBER ARTS WORKSHOPS**  
\$5 per participant | \$10 Family Max for the entire series  
All workshops located in the Menahga High School FACS room. Enter door #10.

 <b>Intro to Crochet SCARF</b> Tue. Oct. 26 • 6 PM - 8 PM Ages 13 to Adult	 <b>Weave a Rug TOOTHBRUSH TECHNIQUE</b> Tue. Dec. 14 • 6 PM - 8 PM & Thu. Dec. 16 • 6 PM - 8 PM Ages 12 to Adult
 <b>Intro to Flat Needle Felting</b> Tue. Nov. 9 • 6 PM - 8:30 PM & Wed. Nov. 10 • 6 PM - 8:30 PM All ages welcome. Under 10 need a guardian with them.	 <b>Scrappy Improv Blocks</b> Tue. Jan. 11 • 6 PM - 9 PM Ages 14 to Adult
 <b>Intro to Basket Weaving</b> Tue. Nov. 23 • 6 PM - 9 PM Ages 14 to Adult	 <b>Intro to Hand Embroidery</b> Tue. Jan. 25 • 6 PM - 9 PM Ages 8 to Adult
 <b>Scandinavian Snowflake</b> Tue. Nov. 30 • 6 PM - 8 PM Ages 14 to Adult	 <b>Intro to Sewing PILLOWCASE</b> Tue. Feb. 8 • 6 PM - 8:30 PM Ages 10 to Adult

Sign up and get more information at [MenahgaCommunityEd.com](http://MenahgaCommunityEd.com)  
Or call Elena (218) 564-4141 ext. 4

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Five Wings Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

**FIVE WINGS ARTS COUNCIL**