

**Village Life**  
 Find out how affordable it is to advertise with us. We offer significant discounts when you combine two or more publications!  
**THE KERKHOVEN Banner** LAKES AREA REVIEW  
 HERALD WESTERN PEACH  
 Call 264-3071, 847-3130 or 354-2945 today!

# THE KERKHOVEN Banner

*A free press is the light that shines on a free People*

Proud to serve the communities of Kerkhoven, Murdock, Sunburg and Pennock • Established in 1896

Volume 125, Issue 2

## One nuisance property to be abated; two others get temporary reprieve

by Kari Jo Almen

For a few minutes it appeared as though the public hearing to determine whether a public nuisance exists on private property, the first non-regular agenda item of the July 11 Kerkhoven city council meeting, would be little more than a formality, with no members of the public in attendance to argue against the city.

Scott Lamecker was in attendance, but not to argue against the city council's push to tidy things up. Lamecker was there because his backyard abuts the northside trailer park, the owner of which was the recipient of a letter from the city saying that if he didn't clean up the property the city would, at his expense. City maintenance man Kevin Sulier, who passes by the property daily on his way to the sewer plant, noted that the condition of the property hadn't changed and city clerk Kim Harkema said that she hadn't heard from the owner. Lamecker mentioned a boat on the property as well as garbage, which was starting to attract rodents. "Something has to be done," he said. He also told the council that the property was a safety concern for neighborhood kids and that he had chased kids off the trailer park.

As the discussion on the trailer park was drawing to a close Rick Kidrowski entered the meeting room. Kidrowski received two letters from the city about two properties he owns which the city would like cleaned up, or he, too, would face the expense of the city cleaning them for him. Kidrowski lives in a house on the north side of the city, the

(Continued on page 6)



This trailer in the north side park in particular shows why the Kerkhoven City Council wants the property cleaned up. "Something has to be done," neighboring property owner Scott Lamecker told the council at last Monday's meeting. He said the property was a safety concern for neighborhood kids and that he had chased kids

off the trailer park.

The council voted to move ahead with abating the nuisance concerns and assessing it to the property owner. The owner of two other properties will have until August 8 to show progress on addressing the conditions.

## Maintenance man Sulier asks: "Who is my supervisor?"

by Kari Jo Almen

City maintenance man Kevin Sulier came to the Kerkhoven city council meeting last week Monday with a question, "Who is my supervisor?"

Sulier said that ordering chemicals was a supervisor's role. He was asked if he had the numbers to order the chemicals and he said that he did, the implication being that since he was not being paid as a supervisor and ordering chemicals was on the supervisor's job description, and not a

part of his current job description, he would not be ordering chemicals.

Councilman Bob Kappes, who at the June 13 meeting had agreed to be Sulier's contact with the council, asked, "Are we not raising him up to be supervisor?"

Sulier reminded the council, "I'm doing a lot for the city."

"I think there's a lack of communication between Kevin and the city, said city clerk Kim Harkema. "We had discussion, but did anyone talk to Kevin?"

Sulier reminded the council how busy he was during and after spring storms. "I stayed up 27 hours watching pumps so no one got sewage in their basements."

Harkema explained that Sulier had been bumped up a step on the pay equity scales at the June 13 council meeting so that he had gotten a raise, that he had the role without the title.

Mayor Kordell Van Heuveln explained to Sulier, "Pay-wise, you are supervisor because you are ahead." The city's plan is that in September,

when Sulier has reached his one-year anniversary with the city and he gets his Class C water license, he will officially be named supervisor.

Sulier summarized his feelings on the situation, "You treat me right, I treat you right."

### In other business the council:

•Agreed to pay \$3000 for a modification to repairs planned at the sewer plant. Former maintenance supervisor Woody Nelson was in attendance to say that Wids-

eth, Smith and Nolting, the engineering firm on the project, had contacted him and told him that they had to add \$12,000 to the bid. After talking with Nelson they came back with the \$3000 proposal. Nelson recommended the city agree to the lower cost option saying, "I think the \$3000 is cheap insurance."

•Agreed to a contract with Nelson for part-time work. Said Nelson, "Social Security says I need a contract with you guys to be legal." Nelson retired as of June 1 and a re-

(Continued on page 6)



A woman harvested seeds from plants on the prairie in the Lake Johanna Hills area north of Sunburg. --photo by Angela Miner

## Hills north of Sunburg preserve some of the last Minnesota prairie biome

by Cormac Dodd

Some 250,000 acres remain of the legendary biome in Minnesota, less than one percent of what once existed in the state's southwestern corridor before European settlement.

And yet, despite the general vanishing of the oak savannas, the shadowy disappearance of grasslands, long stretches of native prairie, in unalloyed form, can still be found just a few miles north of Sunburg. The mesmerizing landscape just over the Pope County line represents some of the best prairie around, according to Angela Miner, prairie recovery specialist.

The combined 2,182 acres of scattered territory shared amongst three preserves have become popular stops for sightseers local and not to southwest Minnesota.

Some highlights: peat wetlands amongst pocketed rolling hills, home to rare calcareous fens can be found in the Sheepberry Fen Preserve. That preserve spans 720 acres, owned by the Nature Conservancy, a child of the Minnesota Prairie Project.

And nearby, Lake Johanna Esker Preserve is just as impressive, that crystalline example of a remnant glacial esker formation. Such ancient dilemmas on earth's surface shaped the serpentine ridge of sand and gravel that climbs to a commanding overlook of 70 feet.

In sight from this vantage is the mileslong Ordway-Glacial Lakes

landscape, including its basswood burr forest.

The Nature Conservancy purchased these now-protected prairies, wetlands, and savannas beginning 30 years ago. Restoration and preservation are major points of emphasis for these sites, and all three, the third being the Ordway Prairie, may be accessed by the public for hiking purposes.

Ordway Prairie provides travelers of the Glacial Ridge Scenic Bypass an opportunity to stop at a breathtaking overlook for first-rate picnicking. This site is undisturbed for now, but the expansion of towns and mounting agricultural pressure, coupled with the ever-warming climate, have escalated the need to make the protection of this preservation a priority according to the Nature Conservancy's Minnesota Prairie Project.

"In Minnesota, and specifically in this region, our priorities include protecting our grasslands and water for people and nature, providing food and water sustainability and tackling climate change," Miner said.

"Every year we hire seasonal employees who will join our local communities in areas like Kerkhoven and work on our preserves as well as on nearby public land in collaboration with partners. It takes a lot of work to keep conservation lands in great shape for all the diversity of plants and animals that live there," Miner said.

(Continued on page 6)



There's nothing 'fair' about it...  
**OUR PIZZA IS BLUE RIBBON GOOD!**

HOT, FRESH & DELICIOUS IN 20 MINUTES... CALL 264-1246



KERKHOVEN