



# the Detroit Lakes Tribune

VOLUME 115, NO. 63 • SUNDAY, AUGUST 7, 2022 • DETROIT LAKES, MN NEWSSTAND \$2.00 • 2 SECTIONS

Barbie Porter / Detroit Lakes Tribune

The Sipe family began camping at WE Fest in the early 2000s with 3 campers. Now the group has 21 campers on-site for the country music festival. Pictured are (back, from left) Mike Sipe, his soon to be son-in-law Shane Simon and son Nick. (Front, from left) daughter Madisen, wife Betty and daughter-in-law Amber. Mike Sipe noted his oldest son, Brandon, was not able to make it this year because he and his wife, Jackie, had recently welcomed a new son to the world.

## LEGENDARY WE FEST CAMPERS

This longtime campsite even hosts mini-concerts

By Barbie Porter  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

There are many legendary people at campsites in the WE Fest grounds

during the three-day country music festival. Some are known for offering friendship and a refreshing beverage, some entertaining

games, and others go the distance in decorating their campsite.

The Midland Publishing campsite may be one of the most famous, as it offers the trifecta of the essence of WE Fest camping.

Mike and Betty Sipe, who own Midland Publishing of Milbank,

S.D., arrive well before the festival begins. Before any camping gear is brought on site, the area is mowed, weed-whacked and sprayed for bugs.

A few days later, the family returns with campers, tents, a bar, tables and a spectacular sound system in tow.

On Wednesday, several RVs were circled like a wagon train to provide a private party area. An entrance to the party area was located under a canopy strung with lights. Fake grass carpet led visitors to a central hub. In the center, tables with picture books of WE Fest lore from past

years invited walks down memory lane.

The Sipe's WE Fest journey began nearly 20 years ago. A friend had extra tickets to the county music festival — which started in 1983 with about 9,000 people attending.

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## Retirement bash to honor Larson's legacy

By Vicki Gerdes  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

For the first time in 34 years, Kathy Larson will not be teaching vocal music when classes at Detroit Lakes Public Schools start next month.

She also won't be directing the fall musical, something she had done for 28 straight years. In order to properly send her off into retirement — while honoring her musical legacy — some of Larson's former students and colleagues have been busy planning a two-day retirement celebration that will take place this coming weekend, Aug. 13-14.

"I had an inkling early on in the spring, before I came back for All City Choir (the choral music festival organized by Larson every year) that this was going to be her swan song," said Mark Potvin, a 1996 graduate of Detroit Lakes High School who was involved in both the fall musical and choir programs under Larson's direction.

Potvin was one of the guest conductors at this year's All



Contributed / Eric Hoplin

Eric Hoplin, left, and Mark Potvin recreated the promotional photo they took for the 1995 production of "The Music Man" when they went to see the Broadway production earlier this year.

City Choir Festival, along with three other DLHS alumni who had gone on to have careers in choral music.

**LARSON:** Page 13

## Don't forget to vote

Tuesday, Aug. 9 is Primary Election Day

By Nathan Bowe  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

DETROIT LAKES — It's summertime and the livin' is easy, but don't forget to vote on Tuesday — it's Primary Election Day in Minnesota, and Becker County residents will vote on candidates for the county board as well as the State Legislature.

Direct voting is now open at the Becker County Courthouse, which allows voters to feed their ballot directly into secure counting machines — just like at the polling places on election day.

By state law, direct voting is allowed seven days prior to an election, according to Becker County Election

Coordinator Kim Frederickson.

The courthouse will also be open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday for absentee voting at the Auditor-Treasurer's Office, and the courthouse will be open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday for absentee voting, Frederickson said.

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## City, school filing opens

By Michael Achterling  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

With three uncontested Detroit Lakes City Council seats up for grabs this November, all eyes are focused on the city clerk's office as municipal and school district candidate filing opened on Tuesday.

In total, five council seats will be on the November bal-

lot, with two council members, Matt Boeke, Ward 3, and Natalie Bly, at-large, indicating they will seek reelection to their respective seats. Council members Madalyn Sukke, Jamie Marks Erickson and Dan Wenner have all declined to run for reelection, which leaves three uncontested seats in Ward 1, Ward 2 and at-large. The local candidate fil-

ing period closes on Aug. 16 at 4:30 p.m. Any interested candidates should stop by city hall or visit the city's website.

"It's just a great way for if you want to make changes in your community; this is how you do it," said Kari Tyson, deputy clerk for Detroit Lakes.

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## Perham cop causes rude awakening

By Barbie Porter  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

A Perham police officer drove an intoxicated man about 10 miles outside of city limits, down a long gravel driveway and allowed him to enter a farmhouse. The problem was, he didn't live there.

The homeowner, Kristen Brown, said around 1 a.m. Monday, July 25, her husband woke to noise coming from the main level of their house. He sprang from his bed, which was upstairs. The sheer force of his swiftness woke his wife from her slumber.



Barbie Porter / Perham Focus

The driveway to the rural home about 10 miles outside of Perham, where a city police officer brought an intoxicated man who incorrectly identified where his mother lived. The man went inside the house, alarming the homeowners.

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that on September 7, 2022, at 1:15 pm, a hearing will be held in this Court at Minnesota, on the petition. 913 Lake A venue, Becker County Courthouse Detroit Lakes...

this Notice and Order as provided by law and by: Mailing a copy of this Notice and Order to each interested person by United States mail at least 14 days before the time set for the hearing...

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Fast feet thumped down the stairs and her husband's terse voice followed. He was demanding to know who the man on their couch was, and why he was there.

"My childrens bedrooms are also upstairs," Brown said. "My son is 6 and my daughter is 1 1/2. I went to check on them."

When she opened the door to her son's bedroom, the family's two powerful dogs burst through, and unfriendly growls followed. Brown was able to hold them back at where the staircase made an L-turn to the dining room.

"The lights were off, but I could see because the moonlight was shining in," she said. "Then I saw a flash-light coming from the kitchen."

She said her husband saw the flashlight out of the corner of his eyes, as well. While the man behind the flashlight reportedly did not declare he was a police officer, Brown said her husband saw the Perham Police patrol car from the screen door.

Her husband "asked who they were and why they were in our house," Brown recalled.

At that point, she said, the officer admitted he had dropped off the man there, believing it was the man's mother's house.

On Tuesday, Aug. 2, Perham Police Chief James Gritz confirmed that Officer Emmanuel Reyes, who has been with the department less than a year, was told the residence belonged to the mother of the intoxicated man.

Brown said the officer then told the intoxicated man to get up off the couch, and when the man didn't comply, the officer talked about tasting him, which motivated the man to his feet. She said the officer then brought the man to his patrol car and her husband followed them outside.

"Then the officer ran my husband's license plate number to make sure he lived here," Brown said. "Then, he left."

Some details differed between the Browns' version and what Gritz was told. Gritz said the license plate of the vehicle parked at the residence was run while the intoxicated man was making his way inside the house. He said that after the officer saw the plate owner's name didn't match the intoxicated man's name, the officer walked to the door, knocked and announced himself. From the door, the officer observed a man come down the stairs and confront the stranger on his couch.

Gritz filled in missing details of how the evening began. A Perham establishment contacted the police department and notified them there was an intoxicated customer that needed a safe ride home.

ment and notified them there was an intoxicated customer that needed a safe ride home.

"We don't do it terribly often," Gritz said. "There was no taxi service running that night."

Gritz said the intoxicated man had lost his phone and Officer Reyes agreed to provide a public service.

Gritz said after Reyes made contact with the man, Reyes checked the man's driver's license, as well the license plate on the vehicle he drove to the establishment. The problem was, the man had not updated his license information from a previous address.

Gritz said the man was brought to an old address, at which time the man informed the officer that he no longer lived there. Instead, the man led the officer to Brown's farmstead.

"He was adamant that he was at his mother's place," Gritz was told.

Brown noted the doors at their home are normally locked at their residence.

"I don't know if we forgot or if the door didn't fully close," she said. "But, this could've been a very different situation."

After all, what if the dogs had attacked the intoxicated man or the police officer? What if a gun had been drawn? What if the officer had left and the man found his way upstairs to one of their children's rooms? Their son has also been troubled by what he heard and saw, she said, noting sleep doesn't come easy for him lately.

Brown emphasized the family supports police and recognizes they are vital to the community and do many great things. Brown said her hope is that the incident provides awareness that more training is needed in such situations, and perhaps a better policy.

Gritz said the Perham Police Department does not have a policy in place for safe rides home.

Gritz said "there will be training from here on," adding that another good lesson learned from this experience was the importance of updating a license and plate license information promptly after moving to a new residence.

The department has seven full-time officers, including the chief, and one civilian assistant. "We were trying to perform a public service and help someone get home," Gritz said. "This was an unfortunate incident and thankfully no one got hurt."

It should be noted that Perham does not have a holding cell, and unless someone is under arrest or detained, they wouldn't be transported to the jail in Fergus Falls or detox center in Moorhead.

"This person wasn't causing problems, the establishment just didn't want him driving home," Gritz said.

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