

NORTHERN VIEW



CHUCK HAGA

An overdue honor for the great Buck O'Neil

In his 2008 book, "The Soul of Baseball: A Road Trip Through Buck O'Neil's America," Joe Posnanski quotes the great Ernie Banks: "I learned how to play the game from Buck O'Neil."

But Buck said no. "Ernie Banks knew how to play. But what he did learn was how to play the game with love."

From the moment I first heard O'Neil talk lovingly of his game in Ken Burns' 1994 documentary "Baseball," I've been a fan, so I cheered last week when the Kansas City Monarchs star was named — finally — to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Katie Humphrey cheered, too. She was 13 when she met O'Neil during an autograph signing at a sports memorabilia shop in Edina in 1995. She was with her father, Dick. I was there to watch and interview O'Neil.

"I was the girl whose history lessons included the Ken Burns 'Baseball' series, and my brother was there, too," Katie wrote to me this week. "My dad, who played and coached baseball for decades, shared his thoughts on O'Neil and the state of the major leagues. And, then, we were in a story on the front page of the Star Tribune! Wow!"

I remember her. I remember how Buck O'Neil treated Katie and the other children, black and white, who came to him holding a ball.

One boy stood before O'Neil, nervously grasping his baseball. O'Neil took it and began to sign his name, slowly, talking all the while with the boy in that gentle, courtly voice so familiar from the documentary.

"You play ball? Shortstop? Good! You got to have good hands and good brains to play shortstop."

"OK, you catch this ball for me. Step back. A little farther — you're a ballplayer! Hey, good catch!"

The boy walked back to the old man. "Nice to meet you, sir," he said. "Same here, lad."

For Katie, the Monarchs' legendary first baseman and manager was baseball at that moment. "You really listened to him," the youngster said then. "He got your attention and told you exactly how it was."

O'Neil took her ball and signed it. He motioned her to back away from the table and tossed her a high, hard one. Katie snagged it.

"That was a good catch!" O'Neil said. "You have quick hands."

Katie's father watched, a fan again.

"The way he plays with the kids is super," Dick Humphrey said. "That's what baseball needs — somebody who loves the game as much as he does."

Jim Holst, 38, brought a ball already signed and asked O'Neil to add his name. O'Neil turned it carefully to read the names, and he spoke the names with delight.

HAGA: Page A15

UMC holds discussion on murals

Meeting was respectful, but some reporters were limited in coverage

By Ingrid Harbo
Grand Forks Herald

CROOKSTON — A meeting held Thursday evening to discuss controversial murals at the University of Minnesota Crookston was calm and respectful, despite high emotions attached to the historic images.

But it wasn't without controversy. Although the meeting was held in a public facility and after an invitation was widely distributed prior to the event — including to the media — reporters were told there were restrictions on how they could cover the event.

The event, held in the Bede Ballroom at UMC, drew approximately 40 former and current students, staff, community members and representatives from nearby tribal nations. Some joined the discussion via the Internet to share their opinions on the controversial murals.

Reporters from the Herald and WDAY were limited in their coverage; when it was learned that a photo had been taken, the organizer admonished a reporter in front of the group.

MURALS: Page A14



Ingrid Harbo / Grand Forks Herald

Around 40 former and current students, faculty and staff, community members and representatives from nearby tribal nations joined a discussion on Thursday at the University of Minnesota Crookston to share their opinions on controversial murals at the university.

LOCAL ART PERSISTS » AMID SETBACKS, UNCERTAINTIES



Submitted photo

"A Magical Medora Christmas," cast members belt out a tune in this 2019 file photo.

Revised scheduling for 'Medora Christmas' epitomizes new normal

By Ingrid Harbo
Grand Forks Herald

The Northwood Performing Arts Center holds 409 people, and all but 14 of those seats would have been filled at the Dec. 13 performance of "A Magical Medora Christmas."

Now, on Dec. 13, the theater will be empty after the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation announced the cancellation of nine stops on the show's tour because of breakthrough COVID-19 cases in the production. That includes the tour's planned stop in Northwood, a town of 980 about 40 miles southwest of Grand Forks.

"We were very disappointed because we have put in a lot of hard work to make this a very much anticipated event for our community and their families, and actually the surrounding communities as well,"

said Judy Engen, Northwood Performing Arts Council president.

With the timing of the show around Christmas, there was no opportunity to reschedule in Northwood.

"We do wish the Medora cast and staff only the best, and I'm sure that they were very disappointed as well because we know that they had worked hard to get ready and were excited for this tour," said Engen.

Meanwhile, the production has revised its holiday schedule, and still will play several shows this season. The updated schedule has the show playing including in Wahpeton, Dec. 14; Jamestown, Dec. 15; Park Rapids, Minn., Dec. 16; Bloomington, Minn., Dec. 17-18; Grand Forks, Dec. 19; Fargo, Dec. 20; and Bismarck, Dec. 21-23.

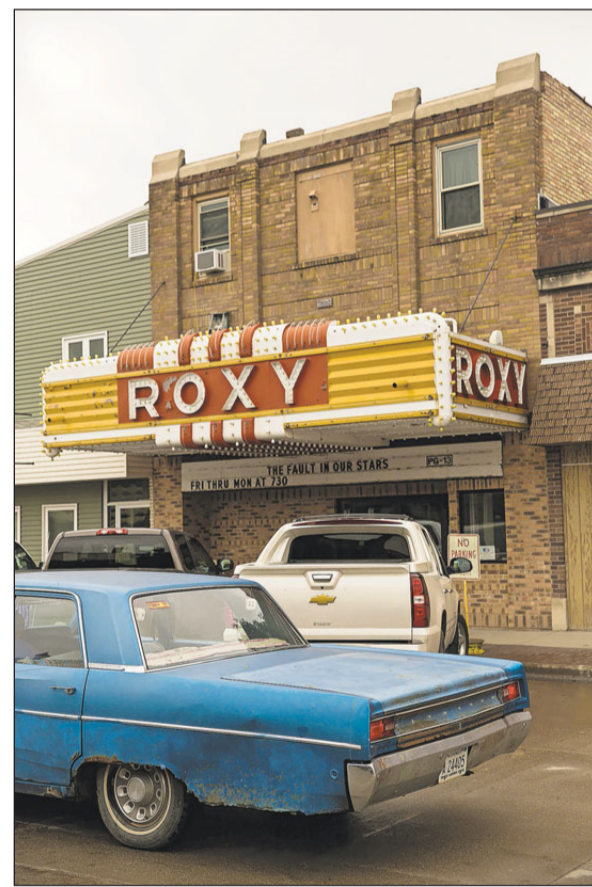
Between last-minute cancellations, COVID-

19 mitigation strategies to keep audiences and staff safe and uncertainty about when the pandemic will end, performance organizations and venues are facing new realities when it comes to putting on concerts, theater performances and other events.

Despite the challenges, 2021 brought a return to the stage for many in the region.

This year, the Northern Lights Arts Council, which organizes visual and performance art events and runs the Roxy Theatre in Langdon, found renewed support from the community. "The outpouring of donations and support we've received this year has been really outstanding," said Amber Benoit, executive director of marketing and programming.

EVENTS: Page A14



Kile Brewer / Grand Forks Herald

The Roxy Theatre marquee stands out on Main Street in Langdon, North Dakota. The small, one-screen theatre has been a favorite attraction of Langdon residents since it was built in 1936.

'Uncertainty' could shorten pipeline life

Climate, carbon regulations might be factors

By Jimmy Lovrien
Duluth News Tribune

DULUTH — Uncertainty fueled by the regulation of carbon emissions and other environmental actions could shorten the economic life of Enbridge's mainline pipeline system, the company disclosed in federal regulatory filings

earlier this year.

A study filed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in May examining the economic life of the Lakehead pipeline system — a system of pipelines that begin in Canada and pass through Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan — outlines ways in which the company believes the economic life of the system could be shortened.

Past studies listed a 30-year life from the time the study was completed (a 2015 study predicted a 2045 "truncation"

date — the end of its useful life — and a 2005 study predicted 2035).

But the filing made in May 2021 with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission went through 2020 and only puts the system's economic life at 20 years ahead, to Dec. 31, 2040.

A pipeline company can charge the oil shippers using its pipelines additional money to ensure it can recover its investment in the pipeline before it becomes fully depreciated.

The new Line 3, which went into service Oct. 1 and is part of the mainline system, was not included in the report because it covered through 2020, when the pipeline was still under construction, Enbridge spokesperson Juli Kellner said in an emailed statement to the Duluth News Tribune.

Kellner said the new Line 3 had a depreciable life of 30 years. Additionally, pipelines can continue operating beyond that time frame.

PIPELINE: Page A14

Playing in a 'real life' Squid Game on YouTube

By Teri Cadeau
Duluth News Tribune

DULUTH — Dustin Godfrey got excited when he saw a notification from his favorite YouTube personality appear on his phone in late October. Jimmy Donaldson, better known by his online alias, "Mr. Beast," was streaming a video. An avid follower of Mr. Beast, Godfrey guessed it had something to do with the influencer's recent promise to "recreate Squid Game in real life."

"I got excited and got into it right away because he doesn't usually livestream unless he's up to something," said Godfrey, of Duluth. "He was selling T-shirts and said he'd pick 100 random T-shirt buyers to be flown out to be in his real-life version of 'Squid Game' and have a chance at winning \$456,000."

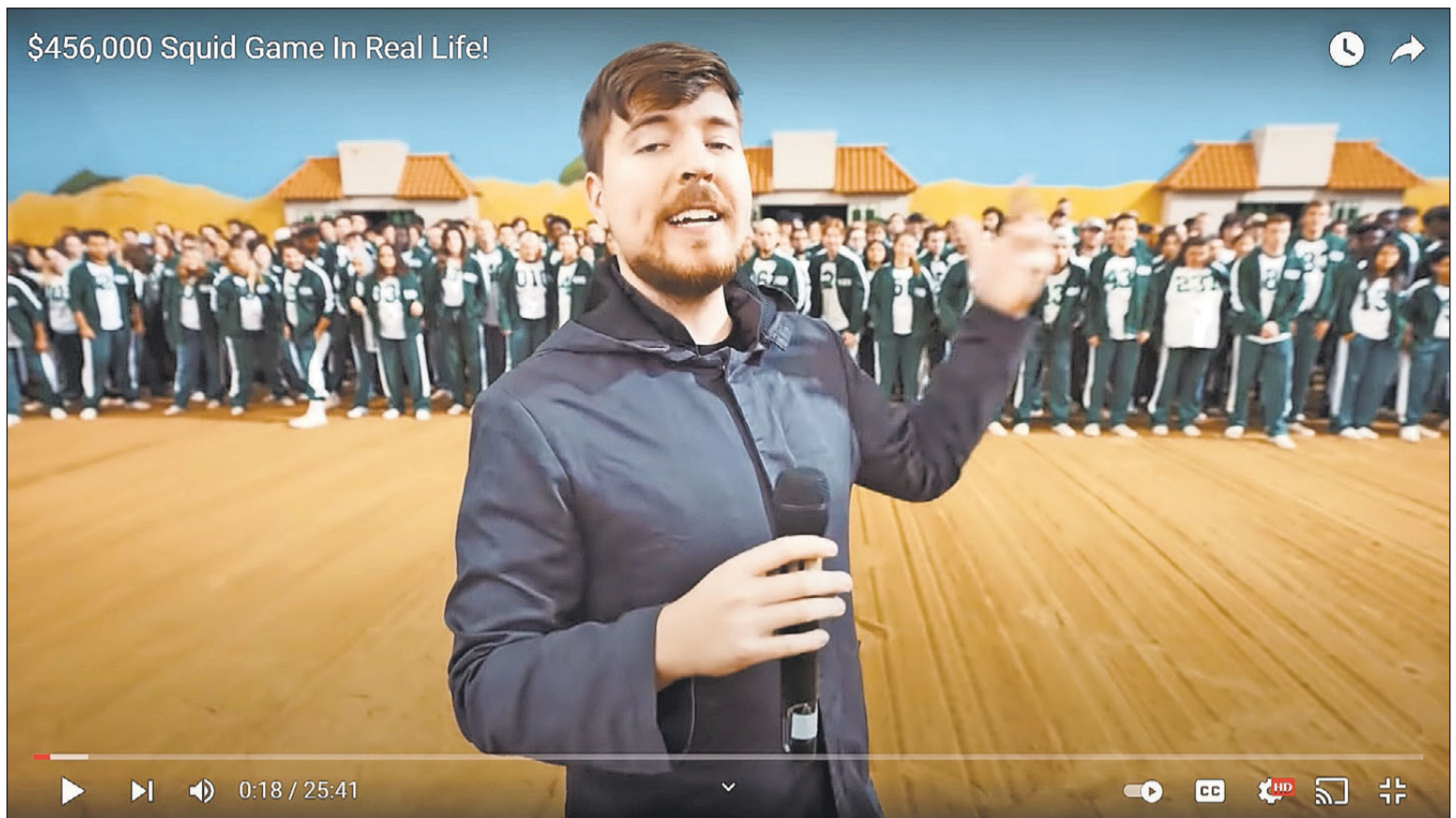
Godfrey bought the shirt right away, not expecting anything to result from his purchase other than a new shirt for his collection. Two days later, he received a call from Mr. Beast's people telling him he'd won a spot.

"I saw the call was from North Carolina and I didn't think anything of it, but I answered it and she said, 'Hi, I'm calling on behalf of Mr. Beast,'" Godfrey said. "And I just went 'What?' and started recording for my own purposes. I figured if it was legit, it was insane. And if it was a scammer, it'd still be good to have it recorded."

It wasn't a scammer. Godfrey was one of 456 players invited to participate in a series of children's games to win money inspired by a South Korean survival drama made popular by Netflix. After the immense popularity of the show in the fall, Mr. Beast recreated the games featured in the series, albeit with less deadly consequences.

Once he got the invite, Godfrey called work to explain the situation. But he'd also been instructed to keep his involvement in the video private until after it came out.

"So I had to kind of indirectly explain what I was doing because I wasn't allowed to just say it," Godfrey said. "I was like, 'Hey, I'm going to a competition thing in North Carolina.' Eventually I just said, 'Do you know who Mr.



Dustyn Godfrey can be seen just over Mr. Beast's right shoulder during the introduction sequence of the "456,000 Squid Game in Real Life!" video produced by the YouTube creator.

Beast is? Do you know what Squid Game is?" And they understood and let me take it off."

Godfrey said the reality of the situation didn't hit him until he was riding down the escalator at the airport in Raleigh, North Carolina. There, he joined his fellow contestants on a bus to a hotel. The Mr. Beast crew paid for the flights, hotel and food for the 100 fly-in participants.

The next morning, all the contestants got fitted out in the iconic green jumpsuits inspired by the show as well as a squib pack (a small explosive charge that detonates to create gunshot effects). The first game they played was a brutal game of "Red Light, Green Light." Whenever the announcer said "green light," participants could take steps forward toward a white line at the end of the playing field. But players had to stop moving whenever they heard "red light" and freeze in place. If they moved, their squib pack would explode and they'd be kicked out of the game.

"It was rather intimidating at first when you were being hooked up," Godfrey said.

"There's this thing on your chest that stands between you and nearly half a million dollars. Once it goes off, that was it. You're done. No second chances, no 'Oh, it was an accident.' You were out."

Godfrey went in with a strategy. He planned to take three steps each time. He figured he could make it across the floor if he just kept counting to three in his head.

"I knew that if you were to get greedy and take more steps, you're probably going to get out. That's enough steps to get caught in a red light," Godfrey said. "And unfortunately, that's what happened to me."

Godfrey recognized one of Mr. Beast's friends Karl in one of the pink guard costumes. Karl and the rest of the crew kept walking past people when they were frozen and trying to psych them out.

"I kept telling Karl to stay away from me, so he got up real close and stared at me and we both started laughing and it threw me off my game," Godfrey said. "The next time, I took more steps during the green light and stopped too late. My squib popped and I



Duluthian Dustyn Godfrey holds up his "Mr. Beast Game" T-shirt that won him a chance to participate in the Squid Game inspired competition in fall 2021. Contributed / Dustyn Godfrey

was out." In the video version of the games, Godfrey can be spotted sitting out within the first few minutes. He didn't make it very far into the 25 minute video, but said he wasn't too disappointed.

"In the end, I walked away having had an incredibly fun experience," Godfrey said. "I'm a part of YouTube history now and I ended up walking away with \$2,000 just for participating and having made some really cool friends and getting to meet some of my heroes, so I'm pretty happy."

His one regret was not being able to see how the following games were filmed, as he was later impressed by the set production involved. Back in Duluth, Godfrey waited patiently for the video to be released, and then quickly made his own reaction and narrative videos on his experiences for his YouTube channel. He plans to take what he learned from his experience and apply it to his future videos as he continues to build his channel. In the meantime, he'll keep on watching Mr. Beast.

HAGA

From Page A13

"You got Lester Lockett, and there's Leon Day, and you got Double Duty Radcliffe, and Bobby Robinson. You've got a good ball here."

When the National League was formed in 1876, it included no players of color. Although a few Black players intermittently played organized professional baseball in the late 1870s and 1880s, a color barrier, maintained by unspoken "gentlemen's agreements" by club owners, lasted until

Jackie Robinson broke it in 1947 when he joined the Brooklyn Dodgers.

There were black ballplayers, though, competing in the Negro National League, the Eastern Colored League, the Southern Negro League. Josh Gibson, of the Homestead Grays, was known as the Babe Ruth of the Negro Leagues. Those circuits faded once Major League Baseball was integrated. But its younger stars played on: Willie Mays from the Birmingham Black Barons, Hank Aaron from the Indianapolis Clowns.

Buck O'Neil became a scout and later coach for the Chicago Cubs, but

he never got to play in the majors. I asked him about that, if he was bitter.

"A writer once said to me, 'Buck, I know it must bother you that you weren't able to play with and against the best ballplayers in the country.'"

He smiled. "Who is to say I wasn't playing with and against the best ballplayers in the country?"

Brenda Fuller took time off work that day to give her 12-year-old son, Michael, a history lesson. They stood in line, Michael wearing the jersey of the Birmingham Black Barons. O'Neil greeted

Michael as if he was the first boy to ever seek his autograph on a baseball.

"It makes me proud," Brenda Fuller said a moment later, as the old ballplayer eased into a chair and took up a pen. "And it makes me angry."

But there was no anger in Buck's face as another boy stood before him, ball in hand.

"Hello, son. That your ball? You a ballplayer? You are? Good for you!"

I'd like to report that Katie Humphrey grew up to be a professional baseball player. No, but almost as good, in my eyes: She became a reporter and editor at the Star Tribune. And

she remembers with fondness the day she met and played catch with Buck O'Neil.

O'Neil died at age 94 in 2006. An award bearing his name goes annually to the person "whose extraordinary efforts enhanced baseball's positive

impact on society, broadened the game's appeal, and whose character, integrity and dignity are comparable to the qualities exhibited by O'Neil."

Chuck Haga had a long career at the Grand Forks Herald and the Minneapolis Star Tribune before retiring in 2013. He can be contacted at crhaga@gmail.com.

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Congratulations to Michele Aubol Grand Forks!

Michele is the Herald Holiday Boutique Bucks WINNER! She has won a total of \$500 in gift cards to these boutiques.

Thanks to everyone who entered!

Grand Forks Herald Holiday Boutique Bucks Giveaway



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