

**From My
 VIEW POINT**

by Louis Hoglund,
 Managing Editor



Maria Jane Blaisdell, the "Minnesota Blizzard," one of famous figures buried at Pelican's historic Lakeview Cemetery, "up on the hill"

Minnesota legislators nicknamed her the "Minnesota Blizzard" because she lobbied them with brutal tenacity. Not only did Maria Jane Blaisdell "storm" the state capital in St. Paul, she took her issues all the way to Washington D.C.

Born in Ohio in 1840, Mary Jane married William Blaisdell. The couple had two sons. Like most of the men in her family, Maria Jane had served her country during the Civil War. While her father, brothers, and husband fought as soldiers, she had volunteered as a nurse at Fort Snelling. She believed that nurses deserved a military pension despite their volunteer status and unsuccessfully fought for this recognition until the end of her life in 1918.



Maria "The Blizzard" Blaisdell, one of the state's earliest woman activists, is buried in Lakeview Cemetery in Pelican Rapids.

She was such a terror for almost 20 years, that members of the Minnesota delegation, such as Knute Nelson, who was the state's governor from 1893-95, would often go into hiding when she was in town. The "Blizzard" continued to nag politicians and businessmen back at home to pay for her many trips to Washington. Once there, U.S. senators and representatives gave her small sums to return home after she made no headway for her cause.

Her lobbying became so annoying to politicians that in 1893, she was arrested, declared insane, and committed to the Fergus Falls State Hospital, according to Otter Tail County Historical Society accounts. She filed an unlawful imprisonment suit that when on to set a legal precedent. In Blaisdell vs. Billings, the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that all persons being hospitalized in a mental institution must have a hearing and the benefit of due process under the law. The ruling stands to this day.

Editor's note: We found conflicting records of Blaisdell's name and birthdate. The Pelican Rapids Lakeview Cemetery burial directory lists her as Marie J. Blaisdell, though other records show "Mary Jane" and Maria (spelled with an a) Jane.

Also, there is a discrepancy on birthdate, as Lakeview's directory shows 1838, while other records are 1840. We haven't taken time to ferret all this out, but despite the inconsistent public record, we are 99.99 percent certain that the "Minnesota Blizzard," one of the state's earliest female political activists, is, indeed, buried in Pelican Rapids.

Another interesting sidenote: Her maiden name was "Quiggle." Perhaps only coincidence, but there are 14 Quiggles buried at Pelican's Lakeview Cemetery. Most of the Quiggles at Lakeview date to the same—late 1800s. Did some of her Quiggle relatives follow her from Ohio to Pelican Rapids?

Maria Blaisdell's husband William is also buried at Lakeview. The Civil War veteran is listed as born Oct. 26, 1828, and died Aug. 26, 1895.

Visit to Pelican Rapids sports event helped restore his faith in America

The purpose of this letter is to share a story of a recent visit to Pelican and how the visit restored my faith in America. On Thursday, Jan. 13th, I was one of the officials for the Hawley boys' game. Your mayor was working the concession stand. My partners and I were greeted and escorted down to a private locker room in the beautiful Al Seigle auditorium.

Hawley at Pelican; two good teams; two good partners; HOL lead on the line; section seeding, and a cold Thursday.

This could be a great game.

A guy with the most famous assist in the last 30 years, Brian Korf, was just getting his coat after girls' basketball practice. His son McHale is a freshman at Concordia. The B game featured a sophomore point guard named Sjostrom. His mother, a Haugrud, the granddaughter of Marvin and Clarice, was in attendance with her husband Greg and their kids. The point guard's little brother watched the game and drew basketball plays on a coaching board. I spoke briefly with Glen Moerke. His wife, their daughter, and grand-

I saw plenty of good in a city that continues to have great pride in public education.

daughter were also in attendance. Glen took a chance on me after leaving West Fargo.

The Sjostrom point guard was being coached by Dave Rund, a teacher/coach from over 25 years ago. Pelican is lucky to have him. Between games, I talked with former students Stacey Tollerud, Brandon Tweeton, and his wife, Amanda Restad Tweeton.

The student body of Pelican Rapids determined the theme to be "jersey night" and was supportive and orderly. They didn't answer all of my questions, but they did pretty well.

The student body of the visiting team was supervised by Mitch VerDorn, a former Pelican Rapids player from the 1997 State Championship football team; his son played freshmen FB at Concordia. His younger brother tells me the bite has been good on lakes Prairie and Lizzie.

The school has the Valhalla room, where there are messages in runic-type script, and basketball tournaments name their divisions using terms from Viking culture. This should be the norm at all schools.

Every school should know the history behind the school's sports teams. That idea must be the brainchild of Doug Bruggeman.

The crowd was large and proud, and their team shot really well, always a good combination. The roar of a crowd when the home team hits a big bucket is pretty sweet. I got to witness first hand some very skilled athletes, in a highly competitive game.

In addition, I saw plenty of good in a city that continues to have great pride in public education.

My family and I spent six years in the Pelican District 25 years ago and have great memories from our time there.

On this cold night in Otter Tail county, my faith in America was restored.

Thanks, Pelican.
 Keep the faith,

Darrell Olson

Editor's note: Darrell Olson, former teacher, coach was in Pelican Rapids for six years, before moving on to Maple Grove. He and his wife moved back to Fargo in 2019. He is a referee at area high school basketball games.

Auditors prepare for 2022 election Critics still cite fraud, evidence still lacking

By Tom Hintgen
 Otter Tail County Correspondent

Even though 18 months have gone by since the November 2020 election, critics still point to election fraud in many states. Minnesota is not immune.

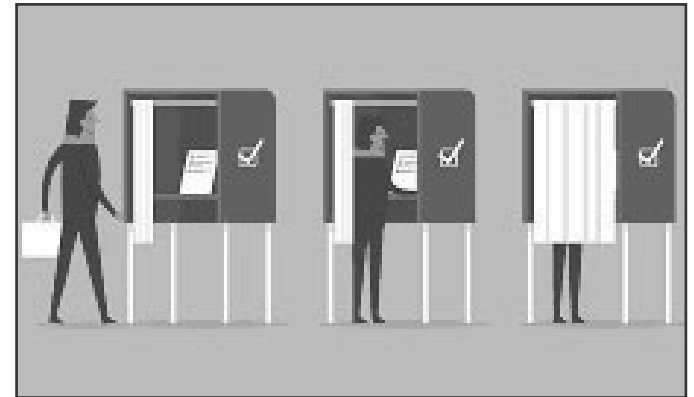
"The 2020 election in this country, including Minnesota, was fundamentally fair, accurate, honest and secure," says Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon. "And that's not just what I say. That's what Donald Trump's own attorney general William Barr said explicitly."

In addition, Simon said that the FBI director that Trump appointed, and who still runs the agency, also said explicitly, under oath, that there was no widespread election fraud in 2020.

After the 2020 election, Trump and his supporters lost at least 63 election lawsuits all across the nation. Nearly all were dismissed due to lack of evidence by judges, several of who were appointed by Trump himself.

"Even now, if someone has evidence of suspected voting misconduct or wrongdoing, they can go to law enforcement," Simon said. "The clock never runs out."

Well-trained voting judges, use of updated voting equipment, and accurate vote tabulations from 92 precincts made



for fair and safe elections in Otter Tail County in 2020. Otter Tail County Auditor-Treasurer Wayne Stein said he has worked with the Minnesota Secretary of State Office for many years and says they have always been focused on the fairness of elections. "People are well trained at the state level just like at the local level here in Otter Tail County, prior to primary and general elections," Stein said.

In 1947 dollars, Pelican's \$1,000 summer fishing contest was big investment in tourism promotion

100 years ago, May 4, 1922

• Quick Work

The Fire Dep't. Boys wished to try out the new fire truck to see how quick a job it was capable of doing, so last Thursday, a few of the boys went out by Putnam's bridge and made ready for a big fire of boxes and brush etc., saturated it with five gallons of kerosene. When everything was ready, Chief Hanson called up the boys in town to give the alarm, and when the bell rang, he started the fire. In less than 3 1/2 minutes, the fire engine was at the scene of the fire and ready for business. This was mighty rapid work and shows what can be done with an outfit of this kind.

• Opening Game Well Attended

The opening game of the season was played here last Sunday with Detroit. Many baseball fans from neighboring towns were in attendance which goes to prove that they are all interested in the sportsmanship of baseball. This was the first game of the season, and the boys did very well outside of a few errors, which do occur in all games. Detroit had a good bunch of players, and our boys were successful in holding them down to 2 to 0 in our favor until the 4th inning when Detroit ran in 3 scores. Detroit again scored one in the 7th inning, two in the 8th, and one in the 9th. Our local boys did not succeed in getting any more than the two scores, so the game resulted in 7 to 2 in favor of Detroit. Nevertheless, the game was nice and clean throughout.

Detroit was renamed Detroit Lakes in 1926 to avoid confusion with Detroit, Michigan.

75 years ago, May 1, 1947

• \$1,000 Fishing Contest Being Sposored By Jr. Commerce Group

The Pelican Rapids Junior Chamber of Commerce this week launched its 1947 \$1,000 Fishing Contest. The contest provides over \$1,000 in cash and merchandise prizes for the largest Walleye Pike, Northern Pike, Black Bass, and Smallmouth Bass caught in the Pelican Rapids area during the period from May 15 to August 23, 1947.

A grand prize of \$300 in cash will be given for the largest Walleye Pike or Bass entered in the contest during the season, and 14 weekly prizes of a \$25 War Bond will be awarded for the largest fish entered each week. In addition,

first prizes of \$50, second prizes of \$20 each, and numerous valuable merchandise prizes will be given for the largest fish caught in the four classifications of Walleye Pike, Northern Pike, Black Bass, and Smallmouth Bass.

The contest is being put on for the first time this year for the primary purpose of increasing resort trade in this area. It is being sponsored by the Junior Chamber of Commerce with the financial co-operation and assistance of practically all of the businessmen of Pelican Rapids and of the resorts and boat landings in the Pelican Rapids area.

50 years ago, May 4, 1972

• Brown Dispels Hospital Rumors

Art Brown, administrator of the Pelican Valley Health Center, dispelled some of the rumors about the hospital in a report to the Rotary Club on Tuesday.

Brown, who took over as head of the hospital last fall, said that he has heard rumors that the hospital is 'going downhill, is operating in the red and might have to close.' He pointed out that the hospital showed a net profit of over \$35,000 last year, and the nursing home had a profit of over \$8,000.

One problem that he did point out is that obligations for the redemption of notes and mortgages currently require more than \$8,000 each month. 'But these don't continue forever,' he noted.

Each month, a certain amount of money is transferred to the Trustee Fund for bond and interest payments, which are met on time.

Brown implied that the hospital was not operating at full potential. He cited the fact that the hospital employs 101 persons with an annual payroll of about \$285,000. In addition, about \$50,000 is spent locally each year on hospital supplies. 'Turn the coin over,' he said. All local people should be encouraged to use local medical facilities, Rotarians were told.

(The Pelican Valley Health Center closed the hospital in 1993.)

25 years ago, May 7, 1997

• Winter's Snow Total Falls Short of 100 Inches

Would you believe 99 3/4 inches? The 5 1/4 inches of snow received in April brought the

Looking BACK

by Paul Gubrud,
 Columnist



season's total to just short of the 100-inch mark for the Pelican Rapids area, according to records maintained by the city's utilities department.

That total far surpasses the 60 1/2 inches of the previous winter or the 44 1/4 inches recorded two winters ago.

The April precipitation total was 3.06 inches and included a major winter storm during the first weekend of the month that brought about five inches of snow. The last snow of the month was seen last Wednesday but was only a trace.

Year-to-date precipitation is 6.25 inches as of Monday. This compares to 4.36 inches by the same date last year and 4.53 inches two years ago.

• Fire Destroys Home, Garage

A fire Thursday afternoon destroyed a mobile home and double garage.

Firemen were called to the Alden Reich home, located about 1 1/2 miles north of Highway 34 on County Road 23.

According to firemen at the scene, Reich's son was home alone at the time and was burning garbage when the fire got away from him.

Volunteer firemen were also called out late Saturday afternoon to control a chimney fire at the Al Siegle residence in Pelican Rapids.

• East Grand Forks Man Dies in One-vehicle Accident

An East Grand Forks man died Monday afternoon when his pick up left Highway 59 and struck an approach.

The accident was reported at 12:55 p.m., about 1 1/2 miles north of Dunvilla.

Killed was Thomas H. Rutherford, 32, of East Grand Forks.

Investigating officers said Rutherford's northbound pickup veered off the road and hit an approach. Rutherford, who was not wearing a seat belt, was ejected through the windshield, and the vehicle landed on top of him.

He was alone in the truck.

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