



Ag teacher honored FLASD's Mike Miron given Minnesota Ag Teacher award Page 8



Fishing for champs Boys win econd straight tournament title Page 12



Gene Baland named grand marshal of the 150th Linwood Days

Former Linwood Elementary principal named for contributions to community

Natalie Ryder Community Editor

Gene Baland, a beloved former principal of Linwood Elementary, who started the Linwood Community Park and School Forest, is set to be the grand marshal of the parade at the 150th Linwood Days celebration. The festivities will commence on Tuesday, Sept. 7, and conclude on Saturday, Sept. 11.

Born and raised in Victoria, Minnesota, Gene Baland currently lives in White Bear Lake, but raised his kids in Forest Lake while he was the principal of Linwood Elementary for 31 years.

Diane Selz, treasurer of the Linwood Community Park and School Forest Committee, called Baland about a month marshal position for the upcoming annual parade.



ago to offer him the grand Gene Baland at his apartment overlooking White Bear Lake, his current residence after selling his home on Lake Vermilion. Even though he is in the age group to move into a senior living apartment, he said it keeps him young to live in a place with young working professionals.

Selz was on the first parade that will have event. Baland said, "It'll be joked. interesting to see if I "What a nice honor," recognize them, and if I the fun times of being Baland said about being don't I hope they come up the principal, like getting and introduce themselves dropped in the freez-

"So many of my for- school carnival, which and held that position for mid-1990s. The park is school forest commit- about 17 participants. It mer students contact me he never did again, the 31 years. At the time he still being overseen by a tee when Baland started has been about 20 years on Facebook, and I look rewards of seeing former started, there were only committee of teachers, it in the mid-1990s. She since he has seen former at their pictures and go, students enroll their chil- seven classrooms and parents and town board highlighted his contribu- students of Linwood El- 'Wow, is that that little dren at the school, and when he left there were members, as intended at tions to the community ementary and their par- sixth grader I used to teaching in general: to see four classrooms for each its origin. by starting the school ents at a big community chase around because the "light bulb turn on in grade level and about 650 "I got a note, a letter, he wasn't behaving?" he a kid's head." Legacy in Baland remembers Linwood ing dunk tank during a wood Elementary in 1968 ementary school in the

kids enrolled. Baland additionally County. And it said there established the 170-acre is 170 acres that's tax for-Linwood Baland was hired to Park and School Forest was a mistake that I got it be the principal of Lin- during his time at the el-

in the mail from Anoka Community feit. ... I don't know if it

forest and its lasting legacy, which is still present today.

the grand marshal.

He's excited for the again.

Baland see page 2

The pandemic's reach into the car industry

How car shortages are affecting local dealers and consumers

Natalie Ryder

Community Editor

It has been over a year since the coronavirus pandemic hit the United States in March 2020, affecting industries across the country when the economy took a downturn. The car industry was affected at that time and continues to impact consumers today.

Some members in the industry predict that the car market won't rebound to its pre-pandemic normalcy for at least another 6-12 months, although they say it is difficult to forecast. However for the time being, customers should expect waiting longer for their desired vehicle, elevated prices on used and new cars,

along with good tradein deals for used vehicles and low interest rates.

The consensus among dealership owners to car salesmen is that they have never experienced anything like this right now.

"It cuts across every brand, make and model. ... It does not discriminate," said Scott Lambert, president of the Minnesota Auto Dealers Association.

Steve Whitaker, president of Whitaker Buick GMC in Forest Lake, said his dealership would typically have 100 new and 100 used vehicles on display on their lot prior to the pandemic. His current inventory is 16 new and 50 used vehicles. His dealership tries to accommodate customers' vehicle needs by searching other dealerships' inventory and making "dealer trades" with them. However, the process takes more time





A fly-in took place at the Forest Lake airport, and the new business Hanger 97, on Saturday, Aug. 21.

Cars see page 3

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<u>Sports</u>

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Two of a kind: Friends win fishing title

NLA junior part of second straight tourney victory

John Wagner Sports Editor

The friendship of Charlie Weiss and Erik Panyan is a credit to Charlie's mother.

"A few years ago, me and my brother were setting up a badminton net at McKinley Park Campground," Panyan said. "And suddenly his mom dragged him over to us and said, 'This is Charlie, I want you to be friends.' I guess she was tired of him just sitting around."

Weiss confirmed the story, adding: "My mom basically dragged me up the hill and made me play with Erik, who now is my good friend. We were shy at first, but we had a lot of things in common.

"Since that time, we've always camped together, gone fishing and gone biking. Now I'm glad that we met."

The friendship has led to success at the Minnesota High



Erik Panyan, left, and Forest Lake native Charlie Weiss pose with the 42-inch muskie that helped the pair win the Minnesota High School Muskie Tournament for the second year in a row.

School Muskie Tournament, the back-to-back titles is that icent creatures." which for the past two years has Weiss admits he was not interestbeen held in mid-August at Lake ed in fishing for muskie early in released the winning fish, which Vermilion. Last year Weiss, who his life. will be a junior at North Lakes Academy, and Panyan, soon to first, because it was hard to reel a little different, because of be a freshman at Virginia High in a 40-inch muskie when you're School, won the tournament.

This year the pair repeated as champions of the tournament, Cities Chapter of Muskies, Inc.

"I wasn't excited about it at little," Weiss said. "But over the years, I've come to enjoy it. I love fish – it was pretty exciting.' the thrill of reeling in the fish. It's which is sponsored by the Twin exciting, especially when you get released the winner, which meathat giant monster into the boat. sured 42 inches, despite having a What is most surprising about It's a thrill to catch these magnif- bumpy start to the tournament.

Last year Weiss caught and measured at 49.5 inches.

"Last year's tournament was COVID-19," Weiss said. "But we were happy when I caught the

This year Panyan caught and

"We forgot to put the drain plug in," Panyan said. "So the boat took on a little water, but we got the bilge pump going. I had a big fish up to the boat once – a 45-pound fish, we thought – but it fell off my hook.

"Eventually I got a 42-pounder, and we kept watching the app to see if anyone got a bigger fish. A 42 is a good fish, but you can beat it. So we were pumped when the deadline came and no one had a bigger fish."

While the back-to-back titles are nice, the best part of fishing for both Weiss and Panyan is the opportunity to spent time together.

"We joke around, talk about life and lots of different things," Weiss said. "It's fun when you get to share the time with someone vou've known for a long time."

Panyan agreed, adding: 'Charlie is a joker who likes to make a lot of puns, and he's a lot of fun. For example, after we caught the muskie a year ago our hands were slimy, and Charlie kept asking me if I wanted a 'fish slime sandwich.'

"I declined the offer."

Ranger girls swimmers achieve early goals in win at C-I



Sophomore Bella Pope, second from the left, and the Forest Lake girls swim team got off to a great start to the season by defeating Cambridge-Isanti 104-74 on Monday, Aug. 30.

Forest Lake sweeps every event in 104-74

when we were supposed prised them. But we to," she said with a laugh. didn't have any precon-McKenzie was kid- ceived notions; we just winning with a 1:05.14 ding, of course. But she went off what they had clocking. certainly was pleased that done in practice, and in her Rangers did much some events that worked junior Sophia Niznik more than just show up out really well."

And those victories set the tone for the entire won the 100 back with a girls who did really well meet as Forest Lake won time of 1:08.05 had she in some events," McKevery event until it had not swam exhibition, and enzie said of the meet. secured the victory and True would have won the "Grace True's time in started swimming strictly 100 breast with a time of the 100 breaststroke was exhibition races.

Izzy Maloney went 1-3 in Lake's 400 free relay of 100 free because she's a the 200 IM, with Chatwin juniors Ally LaBelle and good 100 swimmer, but winning with a 2:32.97 clocking, and Pope and omore Alex Ready and strong. It's going to be in the 50 free, with Pope's touch the wall with a time that event." time of 27.89 winning of 4:25.42 that also was that event.

Sophomores Delaney Dubuque went 1-2 in diving, with Nickles winning with a 237.85 score, and Pope and Bent took 1-2 in the 100 fly, with Pope

Malonev and fellow

Chatwin would have es, and there were some 1:15.37 had she not swam just amazing, and Avery Chatwin and junior exhibition. And Forest Fallon I nearly put in the Leah Henderson, soph- her 500 time was really an exhibition.

Nickles and Brooke er-than-expected surpris- Sept. 2.

Bent combined to go 1-2 Niznik were the first to hard to take her out of The Rangers will return to action with a meet "There were some fast- at Roseville on Thursday,



victorv

John Wagner Sports Editor

New coach Rochelle McKenzie did not set high goals for the Forest Lake girls swim team in its season-opening dual meet at Cambridge-Isanti on Monday, Aug. 30.

"I wanted to make sure everybody showed up to their events on time, and we all got in the pool in a 104-74 thrashing of

home pool.

seen this season. were in events that sur- time of 2:11.38.

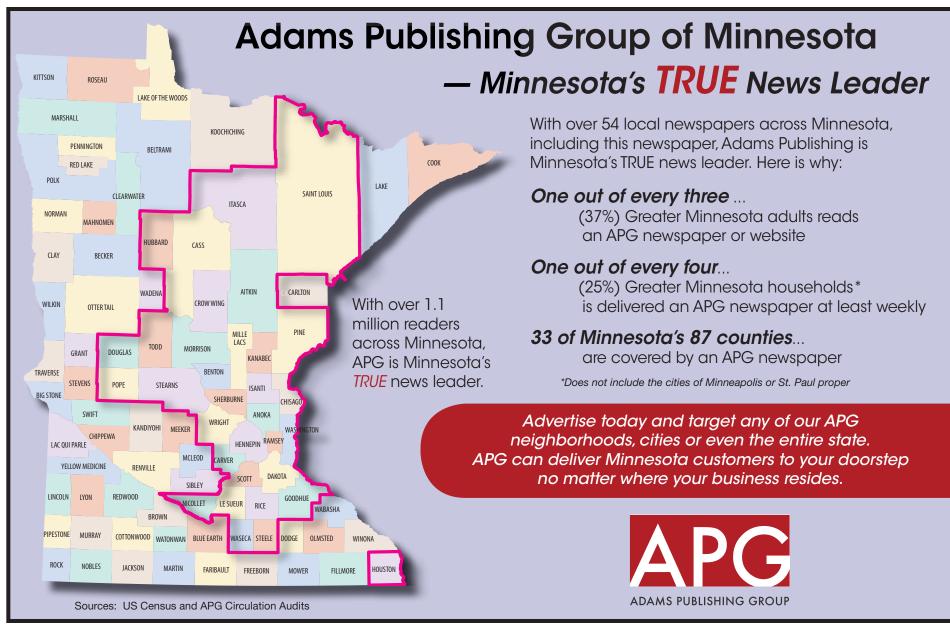
The Rangers burst out the Bluejackets in their of the gates to a big early lead thanks to a 1-2 finish "We just wanted to see in the 200 medley relay where everyone was at - the quartet of sophomore and we were pleasantly Grace Chatwin, freshsurprised in a lot of the man Grace True, sophoraces," she said. "[When more Bella Pope and juwe set the lineup] we went nior Haley Bent won with based on what we have a time of 2:03.33 - and a 1-2-3 finish in the 200 "Some of the girls free led by True's winning

went 1-2 in the 100 free, with Maloney's time of 1:03.08 good for first, while freshman Avery Fallon led a 1-3-4 finish in the 500 free with her winning 6:14.86 clocking. When Forest Lake's

200 free relay of Chatwin, Pope, Bent and True won that event with a time of 1:49.56, the Rangers swam strictly exhibition events the rest of the way.

Photo by John Wagner

The Forest Lake football team competed in a four-school scrimmage at White Bear Lake on Saturday, Aug. 28 in preparation for its season-opening contest at St. Michael-Albertville on Thursday, Sept. 2. Kickoff against the Knights is set for 7 p.m.







Rangers ride roller-coaster to 5-set victory over NB



Photo by John Wagner

It took five sets, but eventually the Forest Lake volleyball team was able to celebrate a victory over North Branch in the Rangers' season opener, which took place on Thursday, Aug. 26.

John Wagner Sports Editor

leyball team opened "Overall, it's good to set, only to watch the Viits season with a roll- win. North Branch is kings rally late and steal er-coaster five-set victo- competitive, and they're the set. ry over North Branch at tough to play. But things home on Thursday, Aug. like miscommunications, Rangers roared to an 26.

ri Alm was happy with

was achieved

The Forest Lake vol- er-coasters," she said. advantage in the second and playing balls that are early 17-3 advantage and And while coach Sher- going out, need to end."

Forest Lake got off the win, she was not to a shaky start early, stepped up to play after particularly pleased with but righted itself and we dug ourselves a hole how the 25-23, 23-25, 25- eventually won the first [in the second set]." Alm 8, 23-25, 15-11 outcome set. That seemed to lead said. "It was the little

to some confidence that "We don't like roll- gave the Rangers an early

> In the third set the were never challenged.

"I was pleased they



things: connections here an emphatic kill by soph- Rangers with 18 kills, and there, making bet- omore Maddie Muellner, while junior Kaysie Bakter decisions, putting the to regain a lead it held to ke had 15 and junior ball in better spots, and the finish. hitters seeing the floor a little better.

net.'

unable to carry that mo- ing point. mentum into the fourth won.

Rangers straight points, including claim a 9-8 advantage.

ed by scoring the next responded well." three points, including

Mueller had another kills and 18 digs kill while teaming with "We swung more ag- sophomore Lillian Des- who were on the varsity gressively, and I thought rosier on a block, while floor for the first time, we did a better job at the senior Emily McPhee and I thought they did added two late kills, in- well," Alm said. "And But Forest Lake was cluding the game-clinch- they were playing in front

While the reaction to set, which the Vikings the second-set loss was that. good, the reaction head-In the fifth set the ing into the fifth set was found out we have some scored six more impressive.

"The second set was back-to-back service aces disheartening, but we Elk River on Tuesday, by senior Ava Neuruer, came out like gang- Aug. 31, in a match that to lead 7-3, only to watch busters and took care of was not completed at North Branch rally with business in the third set, press time. The Rangers five straight points to and I liked that," Alm will not play again unsaid. "But in the fifth set, til they host Anoka on Forest Lake respond- I thought the girls really Thursday, Sept. 9, start-

Muellner the Bethany Weiss added 11

"We had several girls of a large crowd, and we were super-excited about

"But we certainly things to practice."

Forest Lake hosted ing at 7 p.m.

acrosse season celebration



Submitted photo

The Forest Lake girls lacrosse team hosted a summer season celebration at Fenway Park on Tuesday, Aug. 24. At the event, which was sponsored by Forest Lake Youth Lacrosse, the Rangers hosted skills stations where they helped newcomers learn the basics of the sport. The association also provided hot dogs, treats and prizes for those who attended.



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