



THE LAKELAND TIMES



TENNIS WINS TWO

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\$1.50

"THE VOICE OF THE NORTHWOODS SINCE 1891"

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Town of Fifield added six illegal buoys to Pike and Round lake channel last season

DNR never approved

By Trevor Greene
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

Last boating season, some Fifield residents who enjoy boating on the Pike Lake Chain were caught by surprise when they noticed six additional slow-no-wake buoys on the channel connecting Pike and Round lakes.

At least one resident didn't realize the additional buoys were enforceable by the Price County Sheriff's Office, and they weren't, but he received a \$232 citation on Aug. 16 anyways.

The six bunk buoys were added to 10 legal slow-no-wake buoys in that area.

Troy Tabbert, the resident who received a citation, alleges members of the town board and lake association never took proper procedure when placing them.

His allegations appear to be correct, because according to a *Lakeland Times* analysis of town board, county law enforcement and lake association meeting minutes, public officials failed to hold a public hearing — a requirement under state statute when a municipality looks to adopt a new ordinance or make any amendments if it

expects to enforce by way of fine.

Additionally, according to DNR guidelines for creating local boating ordinances and placing waterway markers, a local government must submit an application for DNR approval if it agrees to place control buoys on a lake within its boundaries.

DNR recreational officer Robin Miller, according to the town of Fifield's March 21 meeting minutes, flat out told the board the six additional buoys placed on the Pike Lake Chain were illegal.

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'Fight against Flight': Parents voice concerns of assigned reading to LUHS administration, board

District's English curriculum first to be reviewed this summer

By Trevor Greene
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

Lakeland Union High School's (LUHS) district administrator Bob Smudde confirmed with *The Lakeland Times* Monday multiple parents have contacted the district's administration and board to share concerns of a novel their children had been assigned recently.

One parent, who included the *Times* in a May 8 email to the nine-person board of education, said her son will not continue or complete the reading assignment of "Flight" by author Sherman Alexie — a book with the suggested age for readers 22 years or older.

She told board members she was "extremely upset and disappointed" about the book's content and the messages it contains.

The email's subject line declares a "Fight against Flight."

"I am NOT an advocate for banning



IMAGE COURTESY OF GOODREADS

"Flight" by Sherman Alexie.

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TREVOR GREENE/LAKELAND TIMES

'BEAUTIFUL VOICE'

The Bella Voce foursome, from left, Cindy Cyra, Laurie Timm, Jim Pekol and Tom Schroeter perform "Jada Jazz" by Bob Carlton, arranged by Donald Moore, during the Campanile Center for the Arts 2023 Spring Concert on Sunday, May 7, in Minocqua. See page 30 for more Spring Concert photographs.

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Lac du Flambeau town board cancels town meeting

Only choice to ask residents for authorization to levy more property tax would be a referendum

By Brian Jopek
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

The Lac du Flambeau town board, meeting in special session Monday, canceled a town meeting, a meeting of the electors, that was scheduled for Wednesday, May 10.

At that town meeting, town residents would decide whether or not extra property taxes would be

levied annually in order to raise \$1 million a year that would be paid to the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians as part of expired easement issues on four roads; Annie Sunn Lane, Center Sugarbush Lane, East Ross Allen Lake Lane and Elsie Lake Lane.

Shortly after the town

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Opening fishing weekend brings good results

By Beckie Gaskill
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

Opening weekend brought good action for walleye, according to reports coming in to Kurt's Island Sports in Minocqua. While there did not seem to be as many anglers on opening weekend as in other years, those that were out had good luck.

"Walleye action is great right now," said Nick Thiry from Kurt's. "We haven't heard of many people fishing for crappie or anything, mostly just walleye with some incidental catches of other fish."

A jig and minnow have

been working well for some. Others have had good action with stick baits, such as the rogue and husky jerk. Fish are already coming shallow to spawn in shallower lakes and flowages, he said. With the deeper, colder lakes, that movement is just beginning. Anglers may need to adapt their presentation and depth on an hour-to-hour basis right now, reports are showing. However, for those hitting the water this weekend, the general consensus is that fishing should be good.

Beckie Gaskill may be reached via email at bgaskill@lakeland-times.com.

Wall That Heals at Nicolet College

Exhibit honors the 58,000 U.S. military personnel lost in the Vietnam War

The Wall That Heals, honoring the nearly 60,000 members of the United States military who were lost during the Vietnam War, will be on display at Nicolet College's Nicolet Field May 18 through May 21, starting with a processional to campus May 16 with the exhibit open to the public.

The Wall That Heals, a replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., bears the names of the 58,281 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam.

In a press release issued by Nicolet College, Casey Lehmann, Nicolet Financial Aid advisor and site coordinator, said Nicolet College "is honored to have been selected to host The Wall That Heals."

"We are excited to share this won-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOGRAPH

The Wall That Heals, honoring the nearly 60,000 members of the United States military who were lost during the Vietnam War, will be on display at Nicolet College's Nicolet Field May 18 through May 21.

derful event with the entire Nicolet College community and all Northwoods residents," she said.

Lehmann submitted Nicolet's application to host the exhibit and is one of 31 out of 100 sites chosen for

2023.

Vietnam War veteran Jim Sprague, with Wisconsin Post 11 of the American Legion Riders, told *The Lakeland Times* he and other bikers will stage at the Northwoods

Golf Course in Rhinelander on May 16 at noon to escort the exhibit to Nicolet College.

He said the procession is for mo-

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Book

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books; I believe there are other options available to teach the same concept," the parent said, also asking for her son to be offered an alternative reading assignment.

Smudde said there was an alternative offered to the sophomore English students, which was "The Old Man and the Sea" by Ernest Hemingway.

"Flight" is written in first-person and follows a 15-year-old Native American boy whose parents are out of the picture. The story evolves into a sequence of time-travels, where at some points in the plot the boy finds himself as an FBI agent in the 70s and an Indian boy at the Battle of Little BigHorn.

The concerns parents have of the book come from explicit language and certain scenes involving the main character being forced to have sex and, also, him shooting up a bank before being shot dead himself.

Another parent told the *Times* she's in the middle of listening to the audiobook after she took notice of her son also reading it for school.

"It is super bazaar," she said. "And if you have a child that's impressionable with some of this, it's just a little too much. Listening to it, it's actually difficult to listen to."

The parent said she's not in favor of banning any books, but at the same time, she said she doesn't think the book should be taught in classes or available in the high school's library.

"I don't think it's a high school appropriate book," she said. "I really don't. You rely on your educators to do the best they can for your children and you trust they have the kids' best interest at heart ... (for my son's) high school, I shouldn't have to look at his books and double check what he's reading to see if it's something that is appropriate. And this is, it's nuts."

The parent said she thinks

if a student needs a permission slip signed to watch a movie they should need a permission slip to read a book like "Flight." She said signing a permission slip for her children to watch a movie was something she had to do in the past.

Smudde said the book has been part of the district's "board-approved curriculum for the past 10 years." He noted, too, that he read the book recently and indicated he understood where parents are coming from.

"It does share explicit language, it does share explicit violence, and, in general, it is a book that needs to be reviewed," he said.

Right now, Smudde said the district doesn't have a process in terms of reviewing individual books.

That's set to change, however, as Katie Rein was hired as the district's first ever director of teaching and learning this past year. In her position, Rein is charged with a number of responsibilities, including keeping tabs on teaching material.

Smudde said the English curriculum is "first on the agenda" come summer time when administrators and the board plan to review the entirety of the district's curriculum.

"I don't know if ('Flight') will get through (the process) or not, I just know it needs to get through a review at this point," he said. "We have to review it because it's come up. We should have reviewed it before now. 10 years is a long time to let a book sit ... and this kind of book has raised controversy, not that all controversy is bad and not all language in context is bad, but it should be reviewed for appropriateness."

Gary Smith has been on the board of education for roughly 20 years. To his knowledge, the board hasn't encountered a situation of

this nature since he's been a member.

"The correct process for addressing this issue is to contact the teacher first to voice your thoughts," Smith wrote, advising the parent

who emailed the board of proper procedure. "If you are not satisfied with the teacher's decision you can then contact the Administration."

Smith also listed a district policy "which addresses this concern." Board policy 5250, he said, "allows a student the opportunity to request an alternate assignment."

When asked why he thought concerns from parents just started to surface though the book has been board-approved the last 10 years, Smudde simply said "there weren't no parent complaints until now, I mean really, that's basically what it comes down to."

Teachers, he said, teach board-approved material they feel meets state standards.

"There will be (a process) moving forward," he said. "A lot of this stuff ... with the changeover in administration, there's just been a lot to process in general. And we need to get back on that train so we can continue to avoid these kinds of situations so we have high quality material for kids that are up to date and meet the standards."

Smudde said he believes there are things the district could have done differently in the past to avoid this situation. There are alternative texts he said he thinks could have met the same standards in place of "Flight."

Smudde's advice to the board

In an email from Smudde to board members, he said "Flight" does contain sexual and violent language that is inappropriate, "and other content that would be very much in question."

He continued to list four

aspects he wanted every board member to understand with regard to "curricular challenges."

When parents contact board members, he said they should always advise them to contact administrators and teachers first.

"If that step is skipped, don't have teachers or administrators," he said.

Smudde reminded the board the district should stick to a process in reviewing all curriculum, "rather than just to react to outside influences."

Smudde also referred to policy 5250, which allows students a choice of an alternative assignment, before saying there is a reason the district hired Rein.

"There is too much to handle if we are going to jump every time this happens," he said. "We need a PROCESS. Teachers should not be stand alone in making choices on what to teach, nor should the board, nor should administration. It should be a process that vets the curricula. Especially since there are special interests that are getting involved that couldn't care less about anything else but their agenda, on either side of the political spectrum."

Rein, Smudde said, has started working with the sophomore English teachers to create a letter explicitly allowing students different options. He again reminded the board to advise people with concerns to staff first, "and not fan the flames by allowing them to subvert both administrative and our process for curriculum review."

Nothing new for Alexie

Alexie is a highly regarded Native American novelist from Seattle, Wash. He's known most for his novel "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian," which has been taught widely in schools around the country and won a National Book Award in 2007.

According to the American Library Association (ALA), the 2007 novel is one of the most challenged books of all time.

"This book was banned

and challenged for profanity, sexual references, and allegations of sexual misconduct by the author," an ALA report says. "One of the more recent challenges took place in Wichita, Kansas, this past year. The book was challenged by the grandparent of a ninth-grade student. A 12-member committee reviewed the challenge and decided as of March 2022 to no longer allow teachers to use a set of the novels approved for classrooms. The district also removed the novel from the library at Derby North Middle School. The committee recommended adding a 'mature' label to copies at the high school library."

Action from the legislature?

In the 2021-22 session of the state legislature, assembly bill 1193 was introduced to protect "pupil or minor access to harmful material in public libraries and public schools."

The bill, which was introduced by a handful of Republican representatives and cosponsored by Sen. André Jacque (R-DePere), failed as part of a joint resolution in the senate.

According to a May 31, 2022 report by the Wisconsin Examiner, the proposed bill was triggered by emails elected officials received from concerned parents with regard to reading material they thought was inappropriate.

Sen. Jesse James (R-Altoona) was one legislator at the time, the report says, that received emails from concerned parents. One email to James included a list of books by more than 50 authors — Alexie being one of them.

Though the bill would likely be vetoed if it made it to Democratic Gov. Tony Evers's desk, a spokesperson with Jacque's office told the *Times* there are still plans to reintroduce the bill with Rep. Scott Allen (R-Waukesha) this session to protect students from "harmful material in public libraries and public schools."

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