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OTC

Otter Tail County

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY BECKY TIGHE
VINTAGE PHOTOS COURTESY OF JUDY MOELLER,
GLORIA BJERKEVEDT, MASON'S HISTORY OF OTTER TAIL
COUNTY, AND MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.
COVER PHOTO OF KOEP FIELD IN URBANK BY ED PAWLENTY

OTC

Otter Tail County

Summer 2020

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PHOTOS BY PAM & LARRY LARSON



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OTC
Otter Tail County
Magazine

Fall 2020
Volume 7—Issue 3

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OTC'S STATEMENT:

Sharing great stories about interesting people and events in Otter Tail County. Published three times a year with a readership of 25,000. Also distributed to area stores and resorts for our visitors to enjoy.

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Otter Tales

As you can see, Boomer is a hockey fan. Well, he sits by me sleeping while I catch a game now and then. He was being so good for this photo. The look on his face tells it all..."Really! You dressed me up like a goon." I think he wanted to bite me after all that. If you look over his right shoulder, you can also catch the first red leaves on the maple tree.

Boomer is ready for hunting season. He is all business on retrieves and constantly sniffing all things all the time. Now, I just have to have a few more successful hunts to get him some retrieves this year. Last year, he only learned how to make a face at me when I missed all my shots. I have to make up for that this year so lots of pressure on me. I'm looking forward the time spent in the field with him.

I'm sorry summer is closing up shop, but welcome to fall. Our fall issue has another round of good reads. So, start a fire in the fireplace and cozy up with OTC with a cup of hot chocolate. We start off with a history piece featuring Effington Township and the city of Urbank. A very interesting read on how this land and its residents came to be. A recipe for Spam patties reminds me of things long ago. I'm sure we all remember it, but who would think it was so popular in Hawaii. Next up is a unique farm crop that might turn some heads in conversation...Hemp. It is not a story about long haired hippies...it's a new wave of farming to produce products with many health benefits. We finish with a great photo journey of lighthouse vacations.

I hope you enjoy all these stories. They are just a sample of our rich fabric of Otter Tail County, which we all are proud of. Now I have to get Boomer out of his hockey gear before he goes from "Really?" to "You're going to pay for this" sets in...enjoy your fall everyone. — Ed Pawlenty, OTC Publisher

The current Covid19 situation we are in makes me think of the story about Rip Van Winkle...I really just want to fall asleep and wake up sometime next year when things are back to normal...hopefully. Although the pain of living through something like this will continue, I'm sure we will come out of it stronger and smarter...and I really hope all businesses can survive until we do. I really hope we use this as a trial run to get our plans wired for if and when this, or God forbid, something worse happens again in the future.

Well, we made it to fall. As I write this, I can see some red starting on one of my maple trees. I mentioned this before, but I really like fall. Don't get me wrong, I like all the other seasons, but if I have a favorite, it would be fall. The reasons are many: that first cold morning that slaps you when you go outside, all the colors, fall fishing and hunting, football, and this weird year, the World Series & Stanley Cup Hockey. For what seemed like an eternity without sports, it is like overload now.



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Spring 2021 issue of OTC.

Email or mail your photo to the
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Please include your name and a
caption.

*"My "patio tree" started life as a Christmas tree.
Now it changes with the seasons - next month
I'll add pumpkins, and in November turkeys will
roost in the branches next to the scarecrows. In
December it will revert back to its "true identity"
and the cycle starts all over again.
Submitted by Joy Minion*



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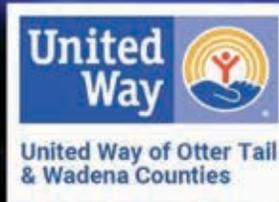
Lead Facilitator: Victoria McWane-Creek

Register at UWOTW.org - Cost \$10

Call United Way at 218-736-5147 with questions

Registered participants will receive a ZOOM link via email one day prior to the event. Limited space available.

Victoria is a Respectful Conversations Project lead facilitator with the Minnesota Council of Churches and is pursuing her doctorate at Concordia College.



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Effington Township

lakes, rolling vistas, brave homesteaders & town ball

BY BECKY TIGHE

Vintage Photos Courtesy of Judy Moeller, Gloria Bjerkevedt and Mason's *History of Otter Tail County*

1866: The first known white settler arrives

Young Peter Sieh became a sailor and explorer rather than run his father's farm in Schleswig-Holstein. As young men were fleeing Prussia to avoid being conscripted for three years military duty under Otto von Bismarck, Peter's brother and parents were willing to come to America if Peter could find good farm land. Seeking land north of Alexandria, he crossed into Otter Tail County in 1866 and built a "log shanty; the first habitation of a white man in the brush between Indiana (Prairie) and Parkers Prairie," and became "the father of Effington."

In the spring of 1867, Peter went to St. Cloud to meet his family. He found his mother, his brother Frank and three sisters awaiting him, along with Charles Peets and his wife. They were later joined by Paul Wuske and his brother Emil, who settled on the west side of the township. Peter Sieh Sr., and one daughter remained in Schleswig-Holstein to sell the land.

It was late March, 1867 when the newcomers reached Peter's winter home on the shores of little "Mumms Lake" on the line between sections 33 and 34. Frank was "charmed" by the land and Peter gave him first choice, then selected his own land. But Charles wanted that piece if he was to stay in this "Goll darned Siberian country." Peter surrendered it and took land in section 34. "The brothers broke fifteen acres of prairie on Peter's place — the only prairie in Effington ... (and) first cultivated field of the township. Soon after, they built a house on this claim from which they carried on their farming operations." (Quotations taken from John W. Mason's *History of Otter Tail County*.)

A township was petitioned and created as Arlington, its name changed to Effington at the request of Matthew Evans, an early settler, who chose it from a novel. Someone, who perhaps hadn't read it, misspelled it as Affington, then corrected the error. The settlers were almost all German immigrants. (Writer's note: "short e" and "short a" often sound the same to native German speakers, which may explain why Effington was written down with

an "A." English speakers misspelled "Sieh," in several creative ways: "Sea," "Seih" or "Siek.") It's amusing that Affe means "ape" in German; they may have thought it odd to name this pretty land for monkeys.

Some Germans wanted to name it "Annaheim" (home of Anna) Township after Anna Sieh, the first white woman settler. The assessor from Fergus Falls was the decider. Matt Evans was courting his sister. Apparently that settled the matter.

Courageous settler families of 1870s

Behnke Family, sections 14 & 23

Julius was single when he came to America in the mid-1870s. He met and married Wilhelmina Neurenberg. They established a farm in Section 14, receiving their "patent" on the homestead in 1883. Wilhelmina bore three children: August, Ella, and a child who died in infancy. After Julius' death in 1930, August farmed the land.



Julius Behnke

Brockopp Family, settles in section 10

August Brockopp, a shoemaker and farmer, and his wife Fredricke (Guderjahn), came to America in 1870. Four of their children had been born in Germany: Emil, Robert, Edna and Carl. Edna died in Germany; Carl died at sea. Settling in Cleveland, Ohio, they had Bertha and Clara. They moved to Effington Township in 1884, receiving a patent on their land in 1885. Martha and Frederick were born there. August was one of the original founders of Zion Lutheran Church of North Effington. When August retired, Fred took possession of the farm.





*Otto Quitmeyer family: Front l-r: August, Otto Dietrick, Ida, Mary, John.
Back l-r: Frieda, Elda, Otto Charles, William H., Henry F.*

Quitmeyer Family, settles in section 24

Otto Dietrich Quitmeyer of Essel in Hanover, Germany, came to America in 1867 at age 21. Sailing to New York, he went to Chicago, and worked there until the Chicago fire of 1872, then moved to New Orleans and worked on sugar plantations. In 1873 he returned to Chicago and met and married Maria Kuhlman from Eimke in Hanover. They had two sons, then moved in 1876 to section 24 of Effington, Minnesota. Otto became overseer of road district #1 in 1878. They homesteaded a farm in 1883, and had six more children. Otto served his community, helped found St. James Lutheran Church in South Effington, and Immanuel Lutheran in Parkers Prairie.

Effington Township Data

Location: TWP 136, Range 38

Elevation: 1522 feet

Commissioner District: 4

Founded: Creation petitioned on February 17, 1872 by 15 signers; Twp. created on March 21, 1872

Population 2018: 265

Area: 35 square miles
(2 sq. mi. water, 33 sq. mi. land)

Lakes: Arken, Block, Fish, Twin

Churches

St. James Lutheran Church

(also known as "South Lutheran")

St. James (in German, often Jakob) Lutheran Church began as a "preaching station." In 1874 "candidate Hertwig" became pastor to the Effington and Leaf Valley stations as well as the four he already served. There being no parsonage or church, he stayed with the Hermann Petermann family in their one-room log house. Services were held in members' homes. (Then) ...voters of Leaf Valley and Effington decided to immediately build a 14' x 16' parsonage/church ... Members paid \$4.25 per family to furnish it with: a cookstove, bedstead, 3 chairs, coffee grinder, 6 sets of table service, a broom, axe, water pail, quilt material and a strawtuck. The cost would be deducted from Hertwig's \$105 annual salary. A new parsonage was built in 1881, and a log church in 1875, replaced by the present church in 1891.



St. James Lutheran Church



St. James Lutheran Church, South Effington as it looks today

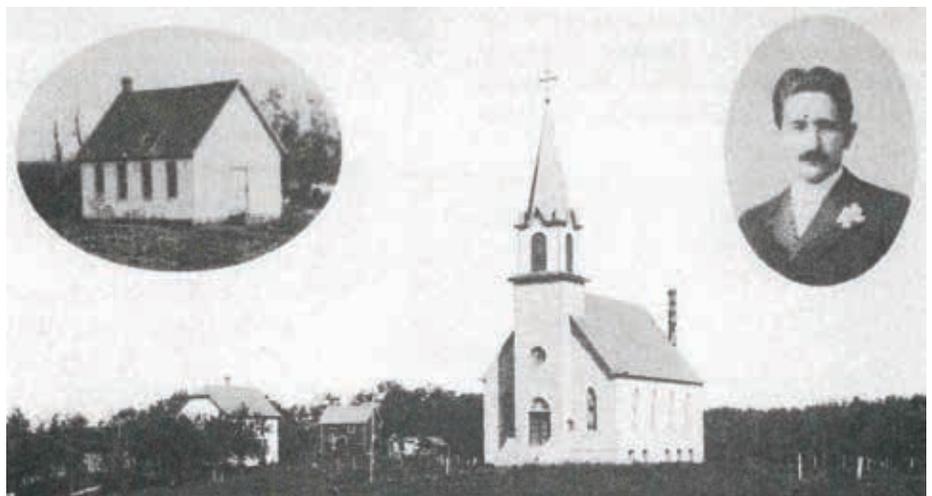


St. James Lutheran Christian Day School

Zion Lutheran Church

(also known as "North Lutheran")

"In the year of our Lord 1884, 18 families, members of, and living some distance from, St. James Lutheran Church of South Effington, deemed it advisable to found their own congregation." Zion's charter members included August and Emil Brockopp, and 11 others. The church built a horse barn with stalls for horses so the congregation's horses could be sheltered during services. Each family of the congregation was responsible for making 7 trips to bring the necessary foundation blocks from Millerville.



Zion Lutheran, North Effington

*Upper left inset: Zion's first church, 1884-1908
Upper right inset: Rev. H. Kelm, Pastor, 1907-1921*

Sacred Heart Catholic Church and Urbank share 118 years of history

“In the beginning was Millerville”

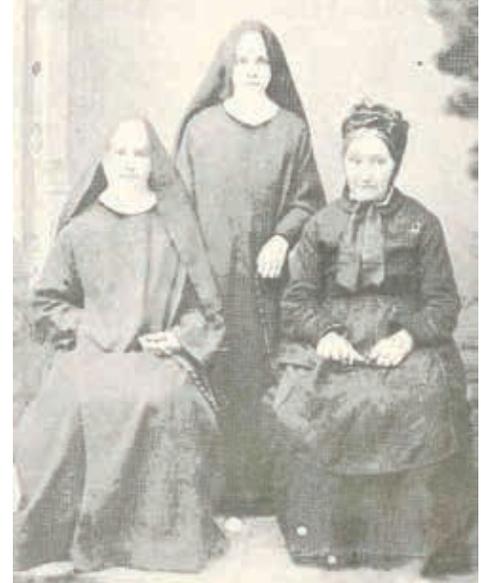
The Millerville Catholic parish was growing and Americanizing. Effington and Leaf Mountain Catholics were Germanic. They wanted, like many homesick immigrants, to worship in their mother tongue and traditional ways, and organized a parish the required seven miles from Millerville. Millerville Catholics sent Bishop Trobec 20 reasons why Effington shouldn't have a parish. The Effington/Leaf Mountain folk built a church with funds they'd raised for the Millerville church. Bishop Trobec instructed Fr. Raster to bless the church's steeple bell, and in 1902 a new parish and town were born.



Father Stephen Urbanke



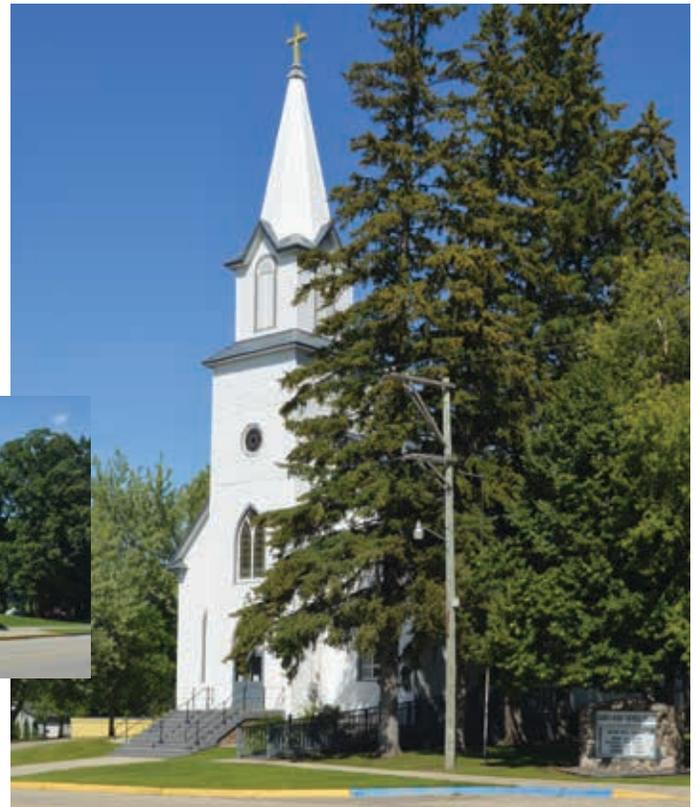
Valentine Thoennes and Thomas Koep, first trustees of the parish



Mother Koep with her two daughters as nuns: Sister Lucy Koep and Sister Bibiana Koep



Interior and exterior of original 1903 church building



School building and church (school closed in 1969, now used for church events)

(Writer's note: Sacred Heart parishioners, please forgive me if, in condensing this story, I have made errors.)

Historic photos from Sacred Heart Catholic Church's Diamond Jubilee history book



Visit Wendelin Koep Sr. Field in Urbank, MN: experience town ball with cowbells

“Urbank has a long history of town ball. Established in 1903, the Urbank Goldtimers have competed at the Senior Men’s Baseball level for almost 120 years. The first known team was formed after neighboring Millerville’s team experienced irreconcilable team division ... and several players hitched up their oxen and carved a new field of play out of the corn in Urbank. ...Urban teams visiting the Urbank field are often so intimidated by the close proximity of cows to the batting cages that they skip pre-game routines altogether, ... (and Urbank fans) act in concert to disrupt visiting teams with precision in volume and scale of cowbell usage.”

Note:
Above text excerpted from the *Alexandria Echo Press*, July 3, 2012, issue.



This beautiful ball field is the result of community fundraising financed a \$190,000 renovation, completed in 2012.

The field is also home to the Urbank Bombers, a Class C team in the Resor

Urbank Data

Total Area: .73 square miles – .72 land and .01 water

Founded: By 1903, when the Post Office was established

Incorporated as a village:
August 16, 1947 by 15 signers;
Twp. created on March 21, 1872

Population 2018: 54

Location: in section 30 of Effington Township at junction of State Highway 235 and Otter Tail County Roads 38 & 59

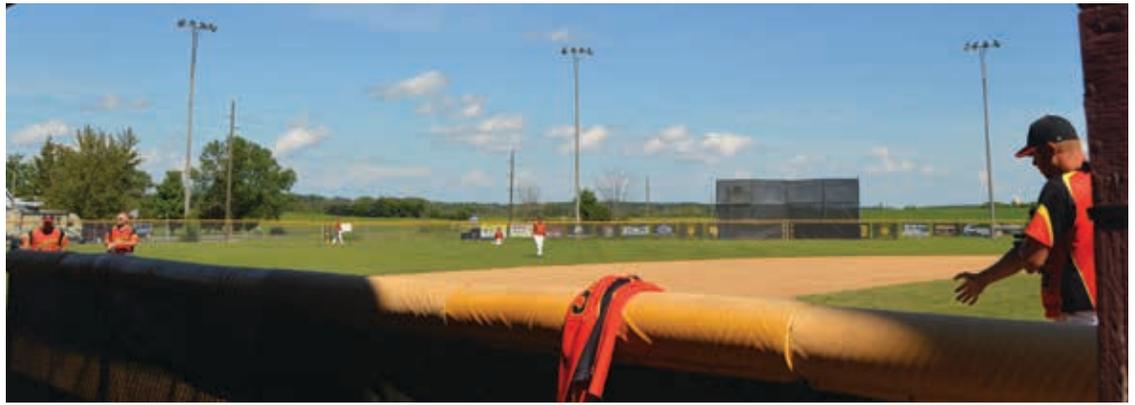
Coordinates:
46°7’26”N by 95°30’37”W

Elevation: 1480 feet



Acknowledgements

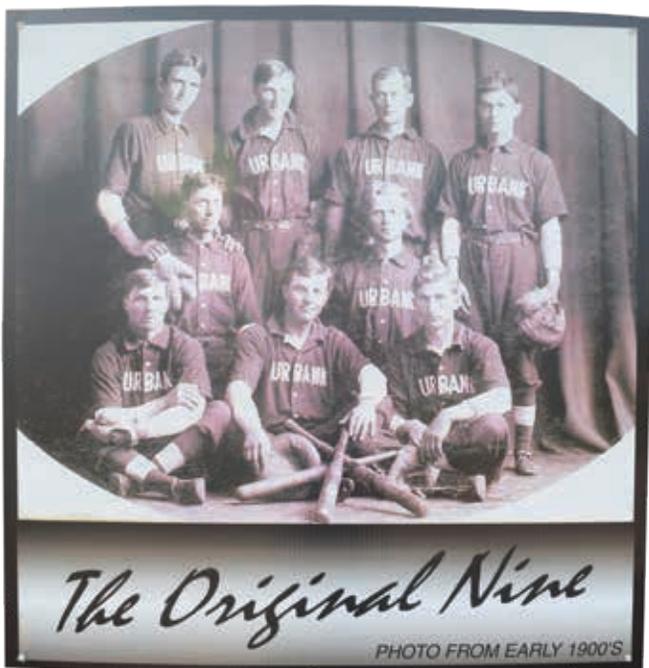
Seventy-eight fascinating pages of information about the founding and development of Effington can be found in the 1990 history **Effington Township Reunion**, available from Effington Township for \$10. Thanks, Judy Moeller for this resource! Thanks also to Gloria Bjerkevedt for loaning me histories of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Urbank.



Between the games at Koep Field



that
ter's League.



Interesting things to see in the Pavilion



OTC
MAGAZINE

I dedicate this article to Hal (Harold) Loge, (July 21, 1943-Sept. 12, 2020). You watched over me from baby stroller to Medicare. My protector, mentor, sounding board, encourager, and loving critic, you spoke the truth in love and cheered me on. We discussed everything from faith to family to politics. I miss you. See you in heaven, big brother.
1 Thes. 4:14





The Lakeside Gourmet

BY SANDRA THIMGAN
PHOTO BY DAN THIMGAN

The Meat that Made Minnesota Famous!

Yes, I am talking about SPAM®! I mean, really, who else has a museum dedicated to one little can of meat? In Austin, MN? For computer users, spam is a four-letter word for an annoying e-mail, but in Hawaii, SPAM® is a beloved comfort food. Millions of Hawaiians can't be wrong. According to the SPAM® website, the island's SPAM® love affair began in World War II when it was served to GIs because it required no refrigeration and had a long shelf life. Between 1941 and 1945, Hormel shipped over 100 million pounds overseas. It's time to give SPAM® a new twist, and this is just the recipe to make you rethink this magic little can of meat.

Spam Patties

Makes 6-8 patties

Patties:

- 1 - 12 oz can SPAM
(I use the lower sodium variety)
- 6 slices bacon, crisply cooked, chopped finely
- 1 egg
- 1 cup bread crumbs (Panko)
- 1 cup shredded cheese
(I used Pepper Jack, use your favorite)
- 2 T. chopped parsley

Crumb Coating:

- Mix together:
- 1/2 cup panko bread crumbs
 - 1/2 cup chopped pecans
 - 1 egg white,
beaten until frothy in separate bowl

In food processor, pulse SPAM to chop, not too fine. Remove to a separate bowl. Mix in rest of burger ingredients, form into 6-8 large balls, about 3 oz. each, cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Flatten balls into burger shape, dip in beaten egg white, then into crumb mixture. Refrigerate coated burgers for 15 minutes. Fry in butter or oil, about 4-5 minutes per side. Serve on a bun or over an Asian cabbage salad with sesame dressing.

Note:

You can freeze the burgers raw without the coating. Thaw and coat before frying.



OTC
The Lakeside Gourmet

"Sharing recipes is part of our culture, enriching each one of us and binding us together."

Sandra Thimgan lives on Silver Lake with her husband/photographer/taster, Daniel.



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Should My Child Have a Sports Physical This Year — Even Though MSHSL Doesn't Require It?

BY DR. CHRIS ROTT

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAKE REGION HEALTHCARE

As an orthopedic surgeon and sports medicine physician, this is the time of year we typically gear up for the fall high school and college sports season. Normally our athletic trainers, primary care providers and pediatricians would be busy with appointments and events geared toward providing the Minnesota State High School League's required exams and clearing athletes for a new season of safe play.

Yet, as with so many other things, COVID has thrown us off course. We don't know yet if

the fall sports season will happen, or how it might unfold. We do know that the MSHSL is waiving the sports physical requirement. We're concerned that parents might be inclined to skip wellness exams for their kids altogether due to this change, which has prompted me to write this message. From my perspective as both a doctor and a parent, there are several reasons why your teenager should still have an exam.



1. To ensure your teen is developing healthfully, inside and out

Just like well-child checkups did when your child was younger, the physical exams and assessments during a teen's wellness visit help ensure they are developing healthily. It also gives the provider an opportunity to have important discussions with your teen about nutrition, exercise, good health habits and how to avoid risky behaviors.

2. To prevent potential health problems

There's a reason these check-ups are often called "preventive" visits. A physical exam can help spot potential health problems early, often before your teen looks or feels sick. When caught early, the provider can recommend further screening or intervention, allowing your child to be treated before symptoms become problematic.

3. To help guide teens through common emotional & physical health concerns

Adolescence is often a confusing time, complicated by hormones, growth spurts and puberty. Regular wellness exams can help build a trusted relationship with a health advocate they can look to for guidance through these changes.

4. To encourage teens to take responsibility for their own health

Providers will offer the option for teens to speak individually, one-on-one about any personal or private health-related questions and concerns. When they do this, teens become more invested in their own health and gain further understanding of how their decision making impacts their well-being.

5. To offer specific & personalized medical advice to balance against social media and online research

In today's day and age, it is very easy to find medical information and advice online and to fall prey to the temptation to self-prescribe. Whether you're the culprit, or your teen is, it's important to remember that each of us has our own unique medical history and one size does not fit all. By developing a relationship with a trusted medical provider, you can be assured of the best care and tailored recommendations for your teen's specific needs.



Dr. Chris Rott

What Should You Expect at a Teen Wellness Exam?

In addition to standard health checks, age-specific discussions about health and well-being are included in a thorough wellness visit:

- A full physical examination
- Growth and development assessment
- Immunization review and updates as needed
- Conversations about risky behaviors, healthy habits and good decision making
- Time for a chat between the teen and provider to discuss concerns

When it's all said and done, both you and your teen will be better informed and you'll be developing an important partnership with a medical provider who is a knowledgeable partner in tackling the challenges and transitions of adolescence. There's some peace of mind that comes with this, something we could all use in the chaos of our current unknowns.

For an appointment with your child's primary care provider, pediatrician or sports medicine team please *give us a call to schedule at your local Lake Region Healthcare or Prairie Ridge Healthcare clinic.*



HUSTAD'S Century Farms & LAKES COUNTRY WELLNESS:

Grass Roots Otter Tail Hemp



STORY & PHOTOS BY JERRY BEGLEY

Agnar Hustad would be surprised to learn what his grandson is raising on the Hustad Century Farm near Battle Lake. Arlyn and Gail Hustad, as part owners of **Lakes Country Wellness**, are growing chemical-free hemp to derive Cannabidiol (CBD) oil, which is the core product of their business. In the second year of production, which has involved experimentation and adaptation, 2,500 hemp plants are scheduled for harvest this fall. Introducing hemp to their farming operation came as a result of falling prices for traditional farm commodities such as corn and soybeans.

Legal production of hemp was made possible by the 2018 Farm Bill, which removed hemp from the Federal Controlled Substance List.

Minnesota's Department of Agriculture assumed responsibility for regulating hemp production, granting permits for growers and processors, and inspecting the final product, strictly enforcing the level of Tetrahydrocannabinol, also known as THC to below the .3% allowed by law. Higher levels in the crop could result in destruction of the entire field. One variety of this year's crop has been inspected and permission has been granted to harvest. Other varieties will be tested as they mature.

Raising, nurturing and harvesting hemp is a labor-intensive process. Arlyn and Gail, along with partners Jon Anderson, Izack Bailey and Anthony Manderud, start seeds to produce seedlings. The seedlings then are hand-planted in trenches created by a 1940s-era two-bottom plow. Plantings are staggered early in the season to provide comfortable harvest intervals. Different hemp varieties are separated on the farm by clover buffer zones.

Partners Arlyn & Gail Hustad and Jon Anderson with season's first planting



Gail with seedling (above as of July 7th) and mature plant (below as of September 4th)





Innovative rainwater collection system

Hemp plants receive only water during the growing season, with other nutrients coming from the soil to maintain their organic status. The manual watering process starts with a collection system that captures rainfall from the roof of the Hustad farm home. The water then goes from a large storage tank to a portable tank wagon, towed by an ATV. Each individual seedling is watered by hand. Even with above average rainfall this summer, supplemental watering has been required over 30 times. The growth results have been phenomenal for the 60-day growing period, as evident in the before and after pictures, with some varieties reaching over seven feet in height.

After inspection, testing and approval by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, harvesting can begin. No combines are allowed. Each plant is pulled from the ground by hand and transported to the temperature-and-humidity-controlled hemp drying building, where they are hung on wires for about two weeks.



Mature plant ready to be harvested

As with other traditional farm products, the oil comes only from the flower portion of the plant, with the stalk and leaves discarded. A "bucker" is used to strip away the bulk, leaving only the flower for further processing.

When this preliminary process is complete, the product is shipped to Colorado for processing into various CBD oil products. The finished products are returned to their Lakes Country Wellness retail location at 814 Washington Avenue, Detroit Lakes. They have a wide variety of products available to provide the safest, certified CBD products at a price everyone can afford. All products and purchase alternatives are described on their website:

lakescountrywellness.com

CBD oil has been studied for its potential role in easing symptoms of many common health issues, including anxiety, depression and heart disease, and may even provide a natural alternative for pain relief.

The owners all reside in Otter Tail County and are proud to deliver locally grown products to their customers. A portion of the profits from their "SPHINX" line will be given to the Masonic and Shriner philanthropic programs.

Hemp processing for CBD oil is new to Otter Tail County, but hemp processing for rope, cloth and cordage is not. The Philippines islands had been the principal source of fiber for rope manufacture; however with the Japanese invasion this source was jeopardized. In 1942, the "Hemp For Victory" project was sanctioned by the United States Department of Agriculture to encourage farmers to grow hemp to support the war effort. Forty-two hemp mill districts were created in 14 midwestern states to provide the "Patriotic Crop" and 3,700 Minnesota farmers were licensed to produce hemp. Wartime uses included uniforms, rope, cloth parachute shroud lines and paratrooper harness. With the U.S. Pacific island victories, production was scaled back in 1944 and ended in 1945.

Growers investigated peacetime market opportunities, but nothing materialized until CBD oil was legalized and brought hemp production back to Otter Tail County after a 75-year absence.



Owners truly "outstanding in their field" (September 4th)

*Start to finish:
seedling ready to be planted
and finished product*

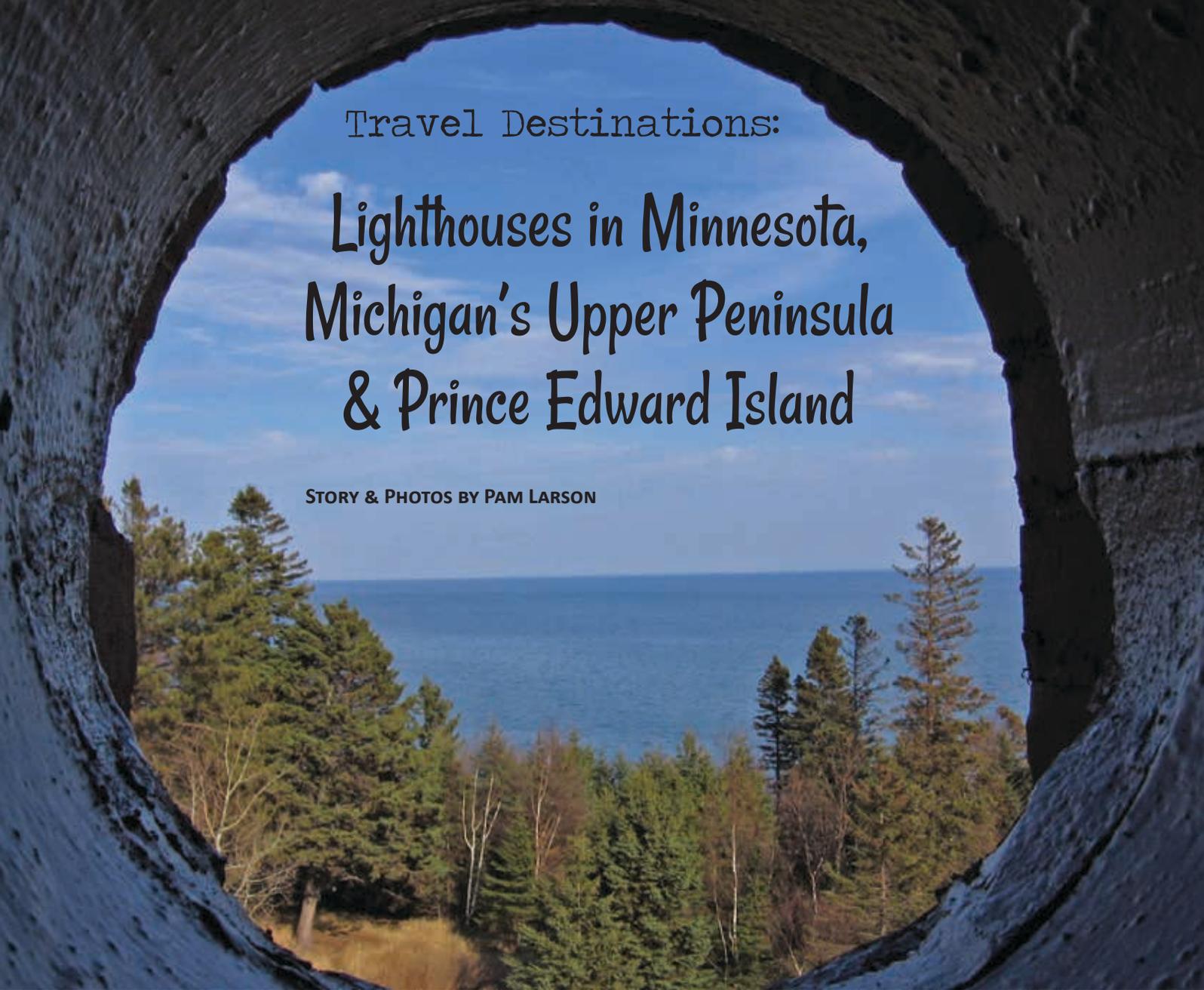


*"SPHINX" Line
makes donations to
Mason and Shrine
projects possible*



Jerry Begley is a retired Regional Director for a telecommunications company. He resides with his wife Diane on Stalker Lake and enjoys all outdoor activities.





Travel Destinations:
**Lighthouses in Minnesota,
Michigan's Upper Peninsula
& Prince Edward Island**

STORY & PHOTOS BY PAM LARSON

Minnesota

For a lighthouse enthusiast, it is a delight to actually visit a lighthouse and even better to be able to climb the tower. But to stay overnight in a lighthouse is an experience like no other. The location is always overlooking some spectacular shoreline, usually in a wonderful setting. We have had the privilege to spend time in several lighthouses, all unique and all great adventures.

Two Harbors Light Station, the schoolhouse-style lighthouse in Two Harbors, Minnesota, is perched on a rocky point between Agate and Burlington Bays and has been guiding ships since 1892. Minnesota's first commercial iron mine began rail and shipping operations in 1884. Shipping through Agate Bay increased rapidly, prompting the need for an aid to navigation. The U.S. Congress authorized \$10,000 for a facility

Lake Superior view from tower window of Two Harbors Light Station

including a light station, fog signal and keepers' quarters. Starting in July 1891, 600 tons of rock were blasted out of bedrock to begin the foundation of the new light station.

The lighthouse and keepers' quarters were connected but separate structures. The keepers' quarters were two bricks thick while the lower tower was three bricks thick, which was a safety measure in case of a fire or explosion. There were five head keepers at the beacon until the Coast Guard assumed duties at the light station. In 1981, the Coast Guard fully automated the light station eliminating the need for a keeper in residence. The Two Harbors Light Station is the oldest continuously operating lighthouse on Minnesota's North Shore and remains a privately owned aid to navigation. Through an act of Congress in 1999, the Light Station was

given to the Lake County Historical Society. The Society operates the **Lighthouse Bed & Breakfast** as a means to generate funds to maintain the facility, which is done by a group of volunteer Light Keepers. Guests can also be lighthouse keepers during their stay by raising and lowering the American flag, feeding the resident deer and birds, timing the beacon, and recording in the logbook which ships enter and leave the harbor.

Guests can choose from three rooms on the second floor of the lighthouse or a separate cottage, the Skiff House, on the grounds with a view of the ore docks and break wall. We stayed two different times, once in the keeper's room and once in the Skiff House. It was amazing that huge ore boats slipped in and out of the harbor at night without us noticing!

Upon our arrival at the lighthouse, we were given a tour of the quarters by the host. There is no resident host, so guests have the place to themselves. She showed us a television kept in a closet, just in case someone really wants to watch something, but we were happy to spend our evenings doing needlework and reading in the parlor and listening to a Twins baseball game on the radio. A hearty breakfast was provided, including their traditional fruit soup. A refrigerator, microwave and range are there for guests to use.

The décor of the space is from the period of the lighthouse keepers, so it is sort of like living in a museum. The promotional literature mentioned the great view from the bathroom and they were right – it was an expansive scene of Lake Superior! We were welcome to climb the tower stairs to look out the windows, but were not allowed in the lantern room or catwalk. When finished, we had to be sure to turn off the stairwell lights and lock the door. One amusing memory is when a fellow guest shared at breakfast that she had trouble sleeping because of the flash of light off the trees all night. Her sister had to remind her that this was an active lighthouse and that was the beacon.



Two Harbors Light Station

right: Larry lowering the flag

below: Trunk & bed in Keeper's Room; parlor & dining room



Upper Peninsula, Michigan



Split Rock Lighthouse

In addition to the lighthouse and grounds, there are many great places to visit in the area. We would most definitely recommend stopping at **Split Rock Lighthouse** and **Gooseberry Falls State Park**. A visit to the North Shore would be incomplete for me if I didn't spend a little time sitting on a beach looking for a Lake Superior Agate, our state gemstone.



Gooseberry Falls

Rocks on Lake Superior Shore



Moving east along Lake Superior, we found **Big Bay Point Lighthouse Station** on the 'South Shore'. As with many places in the Upper Peninsula (UP) of Michigan, this station is literally at the end of the road. When following the coordinates, our GPS warned us that if it took us onto a two-track road through the woods, turn back to the paved road. We were happy that we were navigating in the daylight!

In 1882, the U.S. Lighthouse Board recommended a new lighthouse be built on Lake Superior between **Granite Island Lighthouse** and **Huron Island Lighthouse**, located on the northwest side of the Upper Peninsula in Michigan about 25 miles north of Marquette. The proposal was made due to the high number of shipwrecked vessels in the vicinity caused by the unlighted distance between the existing stations. The 18-room lighthouse at Big Bay Point, Michigan, was finished and put into operation in 1896. It is a two-story brick duplex building with a 60-foot high square tower.

The history of the lighthouse keepers at Big Bay is somewhat tragic. The head keeper had a series of inept assistant keepers. He was eventually able to hire his own son, who was a good worker, but suffered a serious fall on the tower steps requiring a lengthy hospital stay and subsequent death from septicemia due to a compound fracture of his femur. Devastated by his son's death, the head keeper was last seen heading into the woods with a gun and cyanide poison. A year and half later a hunter came across the skeletal remains of a man hanging from a tree. The remains were dressed in the clothing of the former lighthouse keeper. Such a sad ending. As is common in lighthouse lore, this lighthouse is reported to be haunted, but we neither saw nor heard any evidence of that!

The lighthouse went on to serve the area well, being automated by the Coast Guard in 1941. For a brief time in 1951 and 1952, the U.S. Army leased the buildings and land. Soldiers were stationed at the lighthouse and would camp out in the fields surrounding the station for two-week periods of anti-aircraft artillery training. An incident from this period caused one more tragic story. In a jealous rage, a soldier stationed at the lighthouse went to Lumberjack Tavern in the town of Big Bay where he committed murder. The movie *Anatomy of a Murder*, was based on this unfortunate incident. The lighthouse was abandoned for a time and was sold to a private owner who refurbished the buildings. He sold it in 1979, and eventually Big Bay Lighthouse became a bed and breakfast.

The lighthouse offers a variety of views: fields of wildflowers, the Huron Mountains, pine forests, and the beautiful waters of Lake Superior. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The rooms are decorated with lighthouse themes and there is a cozy fireplace in the living room. The breakfast was tasty and filling. Lovely trails cover the grounds for serene strolls along the cliff above the lake. Guests are free to use the tower and one evening we climbed up to watch the sun set on the lake from 120 feet above the water.

While in the area, we took the opportunity to visit **Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore** on a boat cruise. The bold Pictured Rock cliffs tower 50-100 feet above the lake and stretch along the shore for about 15 miles. The name comes from colorful streaks of mineral stain that drip down the weather-sculpted sandstone. Many of the formations are named, such as the **Flower Vase** and **Miner's Castle**. A fitting end to our time in the UP was a meal of meat *pasties* (pronounced *pass-tees*) – traditional Welsh hand-held meat pies that the miners used to heat up with the lanterns on their hardhats. We got our delicious meal at **Muldoons Pasties & Gifts** in Munising – voted the #1 pasty in the UP (at that time anyway).



Big Bay Lighthouse

Pam at top of tower waiting for sunset



Sunset through window at top of tower



Guest room & breakfast room



Miner's Castle Overlook & Flower Vase formation, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore



Big Bay Point Lighthouse Station viewed from cliffside trail



The 8-mile Confederation Bridge from New Brunswick to PEI

Prince Edward Island, Canada

Another scenic lighthouse destination took us across the country and to Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada! We flew into Halifax, Nova Scotia, drove through New Brunswick and took **The Confederation Bridge** across to the island. The eight-mile structure is Canada's longest bridge and the world's longest bridge that goes over ice-covered water.

The **West Point Lighthouse** is PEI's tallest at 69 feet. It stands out because of its unique tapered square shape and black-and-white striped paint. It had originally been painted with broad red horizontal stripes, which were changed to black because it was more fade resistant and had more visibility as a daymark. This is the only island lighthouse that had a dumb waiter, which transported oil from the first floor to the fourth floor lightroom.

It was amazing to learn that over the period from 1876 to 1963, the lighthouse had only two official head lightkeepers. After having helped build it, Keeper William MacDonald served at West Point Lighthouse for 50 years, earning him the nickname of "Lighthouse Willie". It is reported that Keeper MacDonald didn't miss a single night at the lighthouse during his lengthy career. After Keeper MacDonald's retirement in 1925, Benjamin MacIsaac, who had served in

England, France and Belgium in World War I before being wounded, answered the ad for a replacement. Keeper MacIsaac manned the light until electricity was brought to the point in 1963 and he retired after 38 years. The tower stood empty for 20 years, at which time a development corporation took it over with plans for an inn, dining room, museum and craft shop.

We were able to stay in a room right in the tower. When the lighthouse was first built, there were no hotels in the area and it was important to have a "spare room" for guests, which usually had the best furniture and bedding the family owned. A rich merchant regularly boarded at the lighthouse and stayed in the same room. The ceiling was very high and the walls sloped inward as they went up, just like the light tower.

The Lighthouse Inn had a restaurant where they served fresh local seafood and vegetables, so Larry enjoyed a lobster dinner. Prince Edward Island was a beautiful place with colorful lobster traps floating in the water and lovely little farms, some with flowers planted in the ditches next to the fields. We hunted down many other lighthouses, following red dirt tracks along green fields to little white light towers near blue sky and ocean. Things got a little exciting when the navigation said to go off-road, but we were never disappointed.



Mariah MacDonald's Organ in the parlor

In 1876, the MacDonalds placed a pump organ in the parlor of the West Point Lighthouse, where Mariah and her daughters would often entertain visitors. That organ is still at the lighthouse. Many evenings ended with everyone gathered around the organ singing the hymn, *Let the Lower Lights be Burning*, whose chorus provided a reminder of a lightkeeper's important calling:

Let the lower lights be burning!

Send a gleam across the wave!

Some poor fainting, struggling seaman

You may rescue, you may save.



West Point Lighthouse and Inn



Pam & Larry in top of tower

below: View from guest room in tower



Lobster supper!





Cape Tryon Lighthouse,
North Prince Edward Island



Cavendish, PEI, is the setting for the Anne of Green Gables books, and I was delighted to visit the Green Gables farm where the author Lucy Maud Montgomery lived.



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Sunset at West Point Lighthouse

OTC

Pam Larson, a retired school librarian, lives in Fergus Falls with her husband Larry. They enjoy road trip adventures to interesting places and trying local foods such as meat pasties at Muldoons in Munising, MI.



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