



Crow Wing River spills into Morrison, Cass County homes last week

Community comes together to help flood victims

By Dawn Schimpp Timbs
World reporter

Although thousands of volunteers traveled to Fargo and Moorhead last week to help Red River flood victims, there were many others that lent a helping hand to homeowners living along the swollen Crow Wing.

"It's been amazing to see this community come together in a time of need," said Kerry Swenson, Emergency Management Director for the Cass County Sheriff's Department.

Without the help of so many volunteers, Swenson added, more Morrison and Cass County homes would have been damaged in last week's flooding of the Crow Wing River.

Swenson reported that in Becker Township, approximately four homes were hit hard by the overflowing river.

"Those basements each had at least two feet of water in them," Swenson said. "We finished pumping those out yesterday afternoon (March 29)," he added.

Swenson said he was amazed by the numbers of people who pitched in to help.

"I can't say enough about the Motley Fire Department, the Staples Fire Department; and so many other volunteers who stopped by to help with the sandbagging," Swenson said.

Thanks to their help, he added, a few homes were

saved and the damage to others was minimized.

For some homeowners, however, saving their house from flood waters "just wasn't in the cards," Swenson said.

Even a well-built dike and boat-loads of sandbags didn't keep the river from crashing through the basement of one home in Motley.

"The dike gave way Thursday night, I think," Swenson said. "There was nothing we could do."

Swenson praised the efforts of Phil Bjerga, Motley; and Hengel Construction of Pillager, who hauled sand wherever it was needed. "Those people were 'Johnny on the spot,'" Swenson said.

Now that the water levels are receding, the clean-up will begin, Swenson said.

"We've got clean-up kits from the Red Cross that we'll use. We'll start getting those distributed and then I think I'll call it a day," he added with a laugh.

Along County Road 28 in Morrison County, a few homes were also hit hard by the flooding Crow Wing, thanks to a massive ice-jam between Motley and Pillager.

"We usually sit about 60 feet from the river," said Arnold Olson, looking at the water that was now flowing just a few feet beneath his family's back deck last Thursday, March 26.

By Friday, Arnold said, the water was all around their house and detached



Staples World photo by Dawn Schimpp Timbs

Rescue crew

Neil Rudolph of Brainerd (on right) ventured by boat through high water on March 26, to retrieve some household items from his mother's house, which had succumbed to the flooding Crow Wing River. The house, located along Co. Rd. 28 between Motley and

garage.

"Luckily, the house is up high enough that only the basement got water in it," said Arnold's wife, Shirley.

This isn't the first time the Olsons have had to pump water out of their

Pillager, does not have a basement; and Rudolph said that fortunately the water began to recede before it could reach the main level. When he stepped out of the boat near the house, Rudolph said that the water was up to his chest.

"We've got it pumping every 17 seconds, trying to keep the water down," Arnold said. "I just hope it doesn't burn out."

The Olsons were able to stay in their home, which they were grateful for.

They've brought as many things from the basement as possible to the upstairs. Arnold also strapped down their propane tank outside, hoping it wouldn't float away.

See **FLOOD** on page 6b

Crow Wing Calendar

April 2, 9

FREE TAX HELP available at Sylvan Town Hall AARP Tax-Aide site, located approximately three miles east of Pillager on Hwy. 210 at 24th Ave., during tax season on Thursdays from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. To make an appt., call 218-746-3652. For more information, call Chad Converse at 218-352-6987.

GRANDPARENT'S DAY at Pillager School is Thursday, April 9. Grades 3 - 5, 10 a.m.; grades K - 2, 1:30 p.m. Questions? Call 218-746-3557.



Staples World archive photo by Dawn Schimpp Timbs

Pillager fiddler

Harold Hines, Pillager, took second place in his age group at the Fiddler's Contest in Pillager last year. Accompanied by Aitkin's Harry Wagoner on guitar, Hines played a beautiful rendition of "The Shannon Waltz." This year's contest is Saturday, April 4, in the Pillager High School gym.

Pillager fiddler's contest celebrates 25 years

Musicians of all ages will compete April 4

By Dawn Schimpp Timbs
World reporter

The 25th Annual Fiddler's Contest, sponsored by the Pillager Fairboard, will be held Saturday night, April 4, in the Pillager High School gym. Doors open at 5 p.m.

Although the contest doesn't kick off until 7 p.m., the Jeff LaSart Family from Deerwood will provide music beginning at 5 p.m.

"We're expecting a full house, so you'll want to be there early to get a good seat," said Arnie Cole, president of the Pillager Fairboard. "I think everyone's going to enjoy the LaSart's music."

It's hard to believe that a quarter of a century has passed since Pillager held its first fiddler's contest, Arnie reminisced. "We have to thank Archie Teigen from Brainerd for helping us get started," he

added.

"I was part of the fire department at the time and my wife, Connie was a volunteer, too," Arnie said. "Archie asked if the fire department would consider hosting a fiddler's contest here in Pillager."

Connie and Arnie both thought it was a great idea and agreed to help organize the event.

"Connie did most of the work that year," Arnie said.

That first year approximately 18 fiddlers participated in the contest, which was held in the school cafeteria.

"We didn't stay in the cafeteria long," Connie said, adding that over the years the contest has grown in popularity; and it's not unusual to have nearly 500 people show up to cheer on their favorite fiddlers.

After five or six years, Arnie said, the Pillager Fairboard took over spon-

soring the event; and the money raised goes to help maintain the fairgrounds.

Word about this contest in Pillager has spread over the years, attracting fiddlers of all ages, from all over the state.

"We get fiddlers from down in the Twin Cities area, as well as people from our own area," Arnie said.

"I think Gilmore Lee, from Maple Plain, has only missed a couple of years," he added.

Several new musicians have signed up to take the stage this year, Arnie said; and there's always room for more.

"Everyone's welcome," Connie said. "Just come and have fun; if you're a fiddler, don't be scared. Play like you do in your own living room," she added.

In addition to the great bluegrass music, Arnie

See **FIDDLER'S** on page 6b

'Heart and Hands Ministry' dependent on re-zoning

MCC unable to make decision at last mtg.

By Dawn Schimpp Timbs
World reporter

With two members of the council missing at their regular meeting March 24, the Motley City Council tabled making a decision on the proposed mixed use zoning ordinance.

A four-fifths vote was needed for this particular item, said council member Rob Sampson; and with both Nancy Nieken and Rena Underhill absent, that

wasn't possible.

Both Sampson and fellow council member Duane Solga expressed frustration that work wasn't being accomplished like it should be.

Sampson said that there had been good discussion at a recent public hearing about the proposed zoning. Although some concerns had been voiced about taxes, Sampson said he believed the atmosphere was "pretty congenial"

and that many people saw this as an opportunity for growth in Motley.

"I think it (proposed zoning) looks like what most towns would and should have for future growth," Solga added.

Mike Lorber of Motley was also concerned by the council's tabling the mixed-use ordinance.

Along with his wife, Sandy, Mike runs 'Heart

See **RE-ZONING** on page 6b

Sandbagging in Moorhead

Pillager students volunteer their services

By Dawn Schimpp Timbs
World reporter

Pillager High School students on March 26, had a chance to help Moorhead area flood victims in their fight against the rising Red River.

"The experience was great for our kids and the staff that went," said PHS principal Scott Doss. "I consider it a blessing for us

to be able to share with the Moorhead people in their misfortune and be able to have a part in helping them save their livelihoods."

Three buses left Pillager at 7 a.m., carrying 105 students, 12 faculty, six members of the community; and the bus drivers.

Dylan Badger, a sophomore; and Makaylin Parks, a freshman, were two of the students who volun-

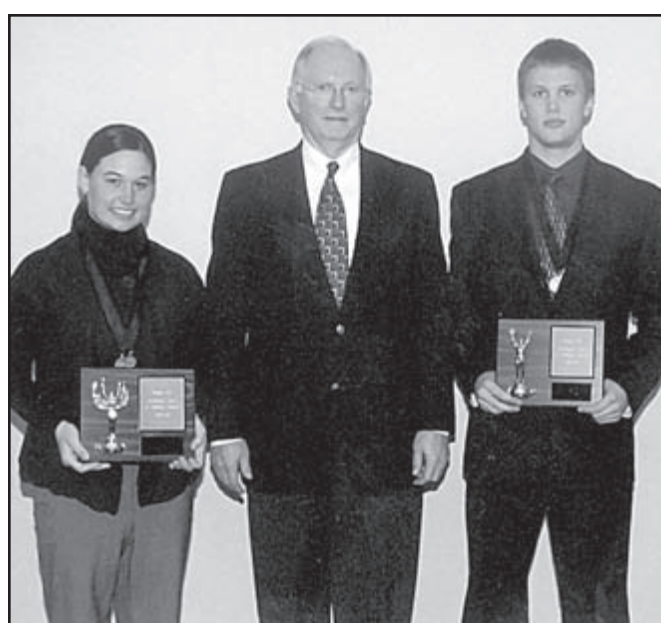
teered their time for this mission.

For Dylan, the trip to Moorhead was something he initially decided to do as part of a spring sports team building activity.

It ended up being more than that.

"Our entire baseball team went, except one guy,"

See **SANDBAGGING** on page 6b



Submitted photo

Award winner

Katie Hutchison (above left), Pillager High School senior, was recently named the 2008-09 AAA Girls Award Winner for Region 6A. She is pictured with Dave Stead, MSHSL Executive Director; and Sam Thielen, section winner from Wheaton.

Pillager senior receives MSHSL award

Katie Hutchison, Pillager High School senior, has been named the 2008-09 AAA Girls Award Winner for Region 6A; a program which recognizes excellence in arts, athletics and academics. She was previously named the Sub-Section 24 winner.

This award is sponsored by the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL).

Katie is the daughter of Jim and Ann Hutchison. During her high school career she has been active in a variety of activities.

In sports, she participated in cross country,

See **HUTCHISON** on page 6b