

Author to visit library
Event set for May 5

A10



Loose moose
Dayton orders moose collaring stopped

A3



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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

After six years apart, Hoa Sobczynski and her family are reunited in 1981 with her father, who was missing after the end of the Vietnam War. Pictured left to right in the bottom row are Sobczynski; her mother, TuyVan Nguyen; her sister, VanPhi Truong; her deceased father, Liem Nguyen; and her twin sister, Truc Pham. The second row is her sister, Thuy Nguyen; and brother, Hai Nguyen.

40

years of memories

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

More than once, Hoa Sobczynski's mother would abruptly wake her in the middle of the night to take shelter in a dug-out beneath the family's home in Vietnam.

As Sobczynski and her siblings made their way to the space that measured about 10-feet wide and 10-feet long,

the sound of gunshots and exploding bombs echoed in the background.

"It happened all the time," Sobczynski said, shrugging her shoulders. "We just knew exactly what to do. I really got used to it."

The business manager at Backus Community Center was 11 years old when Vietnam was torn by war. Her memories of that time period vary. They come and go. Some are more vivid than others. But as Vietnam approaches its 40 years of socialism, Sobczynski is once

again flooded with images that make up her childhood.

"I was very young," she said. "I do remember some things, but back then, it didn't affect me much."

Now, however, whenever she recalls some of her early-life events, Sobczynski feels a deep appreciation for her life in the U.S.

"People take things for granted in this country," she said. "Looking back, I know I'm very blessed."

Memories to A7 >

KOOCHICHING COUNTY BOARD

Board moves to retain Bigfork River access

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The Koochiching County Board Tuesday got an update on a land purchase that would retain public access to a Bigfork River boat access.

Last September, the board authorized Land Commissioner Dennis Hummitzsch to seek grants and other government partnerships to purchase approximately 34 acres from Molpus Land Management, which would secure public access to the Reedy Flats Bigfork River boat access.

Tuesday, Hummitzsch told the board it had missed a deadline for one grant application due to a longer wait on the land appraisal, which came in at \$95,000. After some deliberation, Molpus agreed to sell the land at the appraised price.

Because of that missed deadline, Hummitzsch said he will instead focus on securing a Conservation Partners Legacy Grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to cover the cost of purchasing the land.

The CPL grant cycle opens in August, with final decisions on applications coming in November, Hummitzsch said. Funds are distributed in January, and require a 10 percent local match.

"It's pretty goshdarn reasonable," Hummitzsch said.

The boat ramp at the site may need some improvements, so the county will probably apply for more than the purchase price in order to cover those costs, Hummitzsch said.

"Might as well do it now while we can access some cooperative money," Hummitzsch said.

County to A7 >

Making a difference

Testimonials shine light on the impact Backus Community Center has on community

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

Every penny counts.

For Backus Community Center, a non-profit organization that means so much to so many people, that saying goes a long way.

For many years, grant dollars and donations have helped transform the building that was almost demolished 13 years ago into a flourishing community center that plays host to the Community Cafe, a dance studio, a trap shooting simulator and much more.

Ward Merrill, Backus executive director, said the Otto

Bremer Foundation stands out as one organization that has shaped and improved the historic building through different kinds of grant funding.

"I can't say enough about that foundation," Merrill said. "It's just amazing what they've help us do."

This year, based on all the activity happening at Backus, foundation representatives encouraged Merrill to apply for a general operating support grant. If awarded, the \$165,000 grant could be expended on a wide variety of areas and offer some flexibility to where the money goes.

Backus to A7 >



A Falls Elementary student, who is not yet old enough to take the MCA tests, still feeds her mind for the school day ahead Tuesday.

BRAIN FOOD

From practicing fractions to memorizing vocabulary, students feed their minds for months as they prepare for end-of-the-year tests, but too many forget about the importance of feeding their bodies as well. The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment tests, which began earlier this month, are demanding, and students need to prepare their bodies, especially in the morning, say school officials. Even for students who are not of testing age, breakfast is still considered the most important meal of the day.



Falls Elementary students stand in a line to receive breakfast Tuesday morning.