

LOCALNEWS

Good vibes abound at expo

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

Just as there’s more than one way to skin a cat, there’s more than one way to heal. A regional group will showcase some alternative healing methods at an upcoming fair.

The holistic healing and psychic fair is Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the AmericInn. The event is sponsored by BodyLabUSA, an alternative healing center in Shell Lake, Wis., and requires a \$5 admission fee.

Tami Muska-Flach founded BodyLabUSA in Oct 2006 after she found alternative healing methods from a chiropractor in Cozumel, Mexico, helped her with a slipped disc in her back, she said. When she came back to the United States, she continued with alternative healing meth-

ods, and decided to open BodyLabUSA.

With a background as a teacher, she said her first goal was to educate people on the benefits of alternative healing methods.

“I’m trying to keep expanding and educate people,” she said. “We’re trying to break stereotypes by teaching others about choices and the gifts they may have.”

The event will feature four speakers discussing the wide range of methods of alternative healing. It will have vendors and practitioners discussing things like healing therapists, intuitive consultants, aura photos, health professionals, psychics, crystals, stones, and more.

Bringing in a wide variety of methods allows people to pick and choose what works for them, Muska-Flach said.

“I tell people it’s like a buffet,” she said. “We bring in a little bit of everything so people can start learning. That’s why we have free lectures.”

One of the speakers, Dean McMurray, is a psychic/medium, who was born and raised in International Falls. McMurray’s connection to the area is one of the reasons they chose to come here, Muska-Flach said.

A major misconception about alternative healing methods involves the taboo attitude towards psychics and mystics, Muska-Flach said. However, there’s nothing dark about them, and “they’re similar to Biblical prophets,” she said.

“In our world, we’ve seen prophets in churches,” she said. “This is no different, it’s just a label. We’re trying to take away

those labels, and use their gifts for the highest good.”

Psychics and mediums use communication with spirits to help guide people, McMurray said. Spirits are often deceased loved ones who want to push us in the right direction, McMurray said.

“They’re people who give us a gentle nudge or voice in our heads,” he said. “They give us that feeling in our gut.”

McMurray recently retired from the Army after 24 years of service, he said, and when he started working on his connection with spirits, his co-workers and superiors were open to him.

“Some people weren’t so sure about it, and the interested ones let me do my thing,” he said. “It never came back as backlash, and I didn’t press it on people.”

VNP conducts buoy removal

VNP STAFF REPORT

Voyageurs National Park staff began the process of removing all hazard markers and regulatory buoys within the park’s boundaries this week.

The effort will continue, as weather conditions allow, until the process is complete, according to a news release from VNP Ranger Karl Spilde.

In addition, the release reminds people hunting and trapping of any type or manner is prohibited on Voyageurs National Park lands and all waters within the boundary of the park. Taking any animal within the boundaries of the park is prohibited.

This prohibition includes taking any animal that has entered the park boundary after being shot outside the park. Park rangers enforce the hunt-

ing and trapping prohibition under federal regulations, which carry a maximum penalty up to \$10,000 and/or six months in jail for misdemeanor violations and \$20,000 and/or five years in jail with forfeiture of hunting equipment for felony violations.

Although most park boundaries are not posted, it is the responsibility of the hunter or trapper to know their location. Maps depicting the park boundary and area information are available on visitor center bulletin boards, at park headquarters (218-283-6600), or through the Rainy Lake District ranger at 286-5259 and the Namakan District ranger at 875-2117.

Questions should be directed to a park ranger in advance of any planned hunting activities near Voyageurs National Park.

Customers can seek protection under the Cold Weather Rule

Low-income Minnesotans can apply for heating assistance

DOC STAFF REPORT

With cold weather just around the corner, the Minnesota Department of Commerce and the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission encourages Minnesotans to contact their utilities now to learn more about the Cold Weather Rule protection to keep homes heated all winter long.

Minnesota’s Cold Weather Rule took effect Tuesday and protects residential utility customers from having their heat shut off through April 15, 2014. But to prevent heating disconnection, customers must contact their utility to establish and maintain a monthly payment plan.

LIHEAP

To help pay home heating costs, Minnesota offers the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, known as LIHEAP or the Energy Assistance Program. The Minnesota Department of Commerce administers LIHEAP in partnership with 32 local service providers throughout the state. LIHEAP is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The program helps renters and homeowners earning less than 50 percent of the state’s median income (\$43,642 for a family of four) obtain grant money to help pay their heating bills.

The average annual grant per household last year was \$500. Households with seniors, people with disabili-

ties, veterans, and children are especially encouraged to apply. Applications were recently sent to households that qualified for energy assistance last year; others who may qualify are encouraged to apply. To apply, contact the local service provider in your county by calling 1-800-657-3710 or visit the Energy Assistance Program section on the Division of Energy Resources website <http://mn.gov/commerce/energy>.

“Many Minnesota families struggle financially with heating costs each winter,” said Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman. “Our Energy Assistance Program serves as a safety net offering financial assistance to low-income Minnesotans, particularly households with

seniors, children, disabled persons, and veterans. Having a warm home is a basic necessity, and no Minnesotan should be left out in the cold.”

The Minnesota Department of Commerce also administers the Weatherization Assistance Program, a companion program of EAP. The program provides cost-effective energy conservation measures to reduce energy costs for low-income households. Minnesotans who meet the income guidelines for weatherization may receive weatherization services; they may also receive additional assistance from the utilities. Both homeowners and renters may apply for weatherization.

Other forms of assistance may be available through county social service programs, community-based organizations and nonprofit

agencies. For a list of resources, visit the Stay Warm Minnesota website.

COLD WEATHER RULE

The Cold Weather Rule helps customers who heat their homes with natural gas or electricity to avoid shut-off during the winter months. To be eligible, customers must contact their utility to work out a payment plan and must make the payments. Customers who have a combined household income at or below 50 percent of the state median income are not required to pay more than ten percent of household income; others are also eligible to negotiate a payment plan. Households that need to re-connect for winter should contact their utility now to take advantage of the payments options.

More information on the Cold Weather Rule is avail-

able at the PUC website or by calling 651-296-0406 or 800-657-3782.

“The Cold Weather Rule is a safeguard for the most vulnerable Minnesotans during our frigid winters,” said PUC Chair Beverly Jones Heydinger. “It ensures that households in need are safe, warm, and healthy. By working out a payment plan with their utility, Minnesota families can keep the heat on while they face financial challenges.”

Minnesota consumers using delivered fuels such as fuel oil, propane, or wood to heat their homes are not covered by the Cold Weather Rule. However, they are also encouraged to contact the companies that serve them to discuss payment options if they are concerned about their ability to pay for fuel.

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