

## New author in town

Myrna Mannausau has her first book published

A9



## Celebrating Seuss

Community recognizes famous children's author

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## Play appears well-received by community

BY EMILY GEDDE  
Staff Writer

The performance of “The Mill” at Backus Community Center Friday night provided such a lifelike depiction of events in 1989 International Falls an audience member said he felt his blood pressure rising.

“I’m (mad) all over again,” he said in an after-play discussion with members of the production’s crew.

The play, written by International Falls native Jeannine Coulombe and produced by Workhaus Collective of Minneapolis, came to International Falls Friday and Saturday as part of the Backus Concert Series.

The production, directed by Matt Sciple, followed events leading up to and following a labor riot sparked by the hiring of the non-union BE&K to construct a half-billion dollar expansion at the Boise paper mill.

The play told the story through the activities and emotions of a fictional family, pulled in several direction by the conflict.

Actor Eric Webster, who played “Case,” said it’s rare actors do a historical piece and perform it in the community that inspired the events.

“I’ll be honest with you, we wondered ‘What are they going to do? What are they going to say to us?’ he told the audience following the Friday night production in International Falls. “We’ve been really curious to see what your reaction was to this.”

On Saturday, the actors told the audience they had toured the paper mill and got a better understanding of the community and its people.

An audience member said Saturday the production hit home and shared her experience of her husband working in the mill the day the riot broke out.

“It all came back to me,” she said of watching the play. “It was very, very real and very, very scary.”

Another audience member said he didn’t move to the area until after the 1989 events, but said the play brought a few tears to his eyes.

“You just blew me away,” he said. “You captured my neighbors and my friends...You nailed it.”

Actor Terry Hempleman who played “Marty,” said coming to International Falls and driving by Boise gave him chills.

“It made it all very real to us,” he said.

The actors agreed experiencing the local crowd’s reactions to certain parts of the play was very different than they received in the Twin Cities.

“When we did the play in the Twin Cities, people didn’t get the local references like they did here,” Webster said. “Backstage, we heard reactions here about things we didn’t get in the Twin Cities. It was hugely different.”

Sciple said he was proud to sit among the audience and take in the production with



STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

Actress Angela Timberman who played “Beth,” runs through a dress rehearsal of “The Mill” Thursday at Backus Community Center.

people who may have been on opposite sides of the issue.

“To hear you hearing yourselves — if we’ve done our jobs right — represented, we feel very humbled to have this opportunity,” he said.

Prior to taking their seats, many in the audiences viewed newspaper accounts of the events before and after the labor riot posted on the walls outside the theater. Some looked for their names or photos, while others were prompted by the articles to recalled their own stories of that time.

### WORTH THE TRIP

Ward Merrill, executive director at Backus, said it appeared the about 700 people who attended the play enjoyed it.

“People talked about how all sides of the issue were presented fairly well,” he said. “For some people, they didn’t know what to expect and they were surprised at how the whole incident was presented.”

Merrill was instrumental in bringing the performance to International Falls, but said it wasn’t an easy task.

“We’d love to bring more plays like this to the community...the only holdup is the cost,” he said.

After seeing “The Mill” in 2012 in Minneapolis, Merrill said he knew the community that inspired the production should have a chance to experience it.

Merrill sought and gained a \$50,000 Minnesota State

Mill to A7 ➤



Terry Hempleman who plays “Marty,” works on the gazebo, of which much of the play was centered. Playwright and Falls native Jeannine Coulombe said the building of the gazebo during the performance represented something being built up while something else was being torn down. It was also inspired by childhood memories of having a gazebo in her family’s backyard — complete with a light and a fridge.

## Report: VNP visitors spent \$16 million in 2012

NPS report shows 214,841 visitors to VNP in 2012

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

A new National Park Service report shows 214,841 visitors to Voyageurs National Park in 2012 spent more than \$16 million in communities near the park.

That spending supported 225 jobs in the local area, according to the report.

“This growth over the last few years means that for every \$1 spent by tax payers to run Voyageurs National Park, \$4 is returned to the gateway communities” VNP Superintendent Mike Ward said.

The report shows \$14.7 billion of direct spending by 283 million park visitors in communities within 60 miles of a national park in the U.S. This spending supported 243,000 jobs nationally, with 201,000 jobs found in these gateway communities, and had a cumulative benefit to the U.S. economy of \$26.75 billion. The peer-reviewed visitor spending analysis was conducted by U.S.

VNP to A7 ➤

## Falls to be a part of Fort dragon boat races

Council welcomes new administrator

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

International Falls City Council is expected to face off in another friendly competition with its sister city Fort Frances.

Jenny Greenlaugh met with the council Monday to tell the council about dragon boat racing and to encourage them to participate in the Fort Frances Canada Day competition July 1.

Last year marked the second time for the Fort Frances event, nearly doubling the number of spectators and participants from the 2012 event, Greenlaugh said. She estimated 1,500 people watched the 2013 event which featured 14 teams of 185 paddlers.

Council to A7 ➤