

Maple Lake Lumber Company



By Brenda Erdahl

Kathy and Daryl Hennen, owners of Maple Lake Lumber Co. have never seen such trying times in the building business.

Sky-rocketing lumber prices combined with lack of product availability has made their jobs harder than ever. On the bright side, people are still building homes, Daryl said, and as long as the demand is there, so is the staff at Maple Lake Lumber.

Experts say the pandemic is the cause of much of the problem. When the pandemic hit, demand for lumber skyrocketed and at the same time, production stalled. According to the National Association of Home Builders, lumber prices increased by more than 300 percent since April of 2020, adding nearly \$36,000 to the price of a new single-family home.

"From April to the first of June, lumber was up 10 percent a week," Daryl said. "It's come down now, but it's still higher than normal."

The other big problem for lumber companies like Maple Lake Lumber is product availability.

"It's been tough. You order a Marvin window and it's six months out. You order house trusses today and you might get them in October," Daryl said. "It is difficult to plan any project with these long lead times. Thankfully our customers have been patient and understanding."

The difficulty is at the manufacturer. They haven't been able to catch up with demand and that just filters down, he said. Maple Lake Lumber salesmen have made a habit of call-

ing for product availability before the customer even leaves their office. If something, say the decking of their choice, is not available, they may need to make a different selection. It's a problem for virtually anything you put on a house, Daryl said. Costs in general also remain high.

Delivering special order products is also difficult because of the amount of backorders and product delays. The Maple Lake Lumber delivery crew is trying hard to get product out on time and without mistakes, but because some orders are received in several shipments for the same order it requires more than one delivery for the same order.

The good news is interest rates continue to be low which encourages building and Daryl reminds there is always value in improving your home. He has hope that the building environment will improve as manufacturers catch up.

Those who are looking to remodel or build new should look no further than Maple Lake Lumber. The Hennen family and their employees have loyally served the community for more than 56 years. Their experienced, construction specialists will help you plan, design, and estimate the cost of your project.

Daryl has been in the business 51 years, and no one knows the industry better. Next to Hennen when it comes to experience is Tom Neu. He joined the team 31 years ago and has built a solid reputation for himself. Jeff Reilley has been with Maple Lake Lumber for 28 years. He started as a truck

Trying times for building business



MAPLE LAKE LUMBER CO.

An essential part of the Maple Lake Lumber Co. crew are the fork truck drivers. They are pictured, from left, Mitch Winkels, Daniel Roetzler, Jacob Vinkemeier and Tim Henline.

driver and is now in sales.

Brad Hennen started building pole sheds for the family business in 1999 and now is the company's post frame building specialist and is taking over the management role.

Ed Vinkemeier joined the crew in 2001 and the newest salesman, Chad Shoberg in 2018.

"You know you are doing something right when your employees are staying for so long," Kathy said.

In addition to salesmen, Mike Lauer, Pete Piram, Travis Erger and Tim Henline man the front counter and are often the first people customers see when they walk in the door. Lauer has been with Maple Lake Lumber since 1971 and is also in charge

of receiving inventory. Erger is in charge of inventory and client orders.

A couple more men loading and unloading inventory and several experienced drivers make up the lumber yard's 20-member staff.

Maple Lake Lumber supplies materials for big and small projects, for do-it-yourself-types or as packages for contractors. They are proud of the fact that they work with some of the best contractors around.

"Some of our contractors have been with us for years. A few have been with us since we bought the business," Kathy said.

On their website maplelakelumber.com customers can look at a variety of building

products including doors, windows, moldings, stair parts, decking, siding and hardware. If you are more of a hands-on shopper, visit their showroom at their main building at 120 Oak Ave. South in Maple Lake to get a better look and feel.

The showroom offers a peek at what your future home could look like with different selections of interior and exterior siding with shiplap finishes, roofing, windows, patio doors, exterior doors, interior doors,

moldings, and decking.

Maple Lake Lumber also has a selection of overstock items that they are willing to sell at discounted prices.

Kathy and Daryl have owned Maple Lake Lumber since 1992. In 1995 they added 8,300 additional square feet to the lumber yard's main building. In 2005 they added the showroom. Today the lumber yard has 15 buildings, most of them on the south side of the railroad tracks in Maple Lake.

More Information on Maple Lake Lumber Company

- Stop in at 120 Oak Ave. South, give them a call at 320-963-3612 or visit them on-line at Maplelakelumber.com.
- Like them on facebook to get current sales or information.
- Summer store hours: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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Walleyes love the spinning crawler appeal that comes with the "slow death" presentation.

"Slow Death" presentation works well

By Jerry Carlson

I was on Rainy Lake when I first had a chance to really test the merits of a fishing presentation that is called "slow death." Yes, it is a bit of an unusual name for a style of angling, but I wasn't the one that coined the terminology. However, I am one that believes in its fish catching ability.

The whole concept behind slow death is to present a bait that rotates as it moves through the water. A live bait presentation that spins is very foreign to many anglers as we were always taught to present live bait in a manner that does not spin.

In order to maximize the spinning presentation, a special bent hook is utilized. When half a crawler is threaded onto this bent hook, it will twirl in a very tantalizing manner. On Rainy Lake, the walleyes couldn't resist it.

The slow death hook can be enhanced by adding a blade in front of the hook. The "smile blade" in a variety of colors has been the most productive for me. At times, I have found that no blade at all is the best option. When tying my own leaders, I put together a variety of snells with 12 pound-test fluorocarbon. To avoid line twist, ball bearing swivels are essential.



This presentation is pulled behind a bottom bouncer at about 1 to 1.4 miles an hour. Although it is designed to be used with crawlers, I have found that leeches or small minnows can be utilized, as well.

When fishing in water where a multi-species option is available, I will usually thread on the back half of a plastic worm. I then add a chunk of crawler or leech for scent.

When using this plastic combination, I find I have less issues with sunfish or perch biting off the worm. I also find that bass and northern really prefer the appeal of the added plastic.

On a couple of the bass lakes I fish, the slow death presentation works wonders when trolled at the deep weedline. Most of the time,

bass will hit the plastic even when no extra scent enhancer is added.

It is a great system for people that have not fished very much as the strikes are quite aggressive. There is no finesse involved. When a fish hits, you hit back!

Because of the speed, it is possible to cover quite a bit of water to find active fish. Once fish are found, there are times when I will switch to a different presentation that is more efficient for schooled fish.

Slow death may sound like an unusual name for describing a fishing presentation, but don't be fooled by the name. It is a simple but effective method for catching a variety of fish. Although it was designed for walleyes, it is also a great multi-species option.

August Fishing Forecast

Low water levels and hot temps slow angler success

Brenda Erdahl
Staff Writer

Heat, low water levels and excessive algae growth has produced poor-at best-fishing on most area lakes according to local anglers. Warm water – 80 to 83-degree top water – has pushed fish deeper is what Shane at H&H Sports in Maple Lake is hearing.

"Good fishing spots that used to be 10 feet deep are now 6 feet deep," he said. The heat has also accelerated weed growth along the shorelines which according to Shawn at Lake Region Coop in Buffalo is a big problem for a lot of

area lakes.

Anglers are having some luck on Waverly Lake catching nice crappies in 20 feet of water, sunfish, bass and northern pike are biting in deep waters on Maple and Collinwood has produced some walleyes in 25 feet, Shawn said.

Water levels on the Crow River and Mississippi are particularly low, but a group of young anglers had luck on the Crow recently by walking a portion of the dried up-river bed and finding deep pockets where fish were trapped, Shane said.

An angler who was catching bass and northern on Maple reported using

medium size sucker minnows. Shane advised if you are using live minnows, do not keep them in a live-well in the lake as the warm water will kill them.

The weather seems to be better suited for water sports than fishing. The lakes are active with pontoons and ski boats pulling tubers, Shane said. On Lake Pulaskee, a lake that normally remains cold because it is spring fed, fast boats are keeping anglers away because they stir up the water too much, Shawn said.

The anglers that are having luck are generally using leaches, crawlers, and plastics.

Baitshop Chatter

Clearwater Lake: Bass and northern pike are biting on minnows or crankbaits in 12 to 15 feet of water along the weedlines. Anglers are also having some luck with sunfish in 10 to 20 feet of water. A few walleyes are being caught in 15 to 18 feet of water on Jigs, minnows, spinners, and leaches.

Pleasant Lake: Sunfish were still biting mid-July, but activity has slowed since.

Waverly Lake: There are reports of nice walleye being caught in 20 feet of water on crappie minnows, night crawlers and leaches.

Sugar Lake: Bass and northern pike are biting on minnows or crankbaits in 12 to 15 feet of water along the weedlines. Anglers are also having some luck with sunfish in 10 to 20 feet of water. Walleyes have been biting sporadically in 15-18 feet of water on jigs and minnows, spinners and leaches.

Lake Augusta: Anglers have had some luck catching walleye in 12 to 15 feet of water. It is reported jigs and minnows, or spinners and leaches work the best.

Collinwood Lake: Walleye are biting in 25 feet of water in the early morning or late at night on leaches and crawlers.

Buffalo Lake: Some walleye have been caught at the 16 to 18 foot march using Lindy Rigs and leaches.

Lake Sylvia: Bass and northern pike are biting on minnows or crankbaits in 12 to 15 feet of water along the weedlines. Anglers are also having some luck with sunfish in 10 to 20 feet of water.

Maple Lake: Sunfish, bass and northern pike are biting on minnows or crankbaits in 12 to 15 feet of water along the weedlines.

French Lake: Bass and northern pike are biting on minnows or crankbaits in 12 to 15 feet of water along the weedlines.

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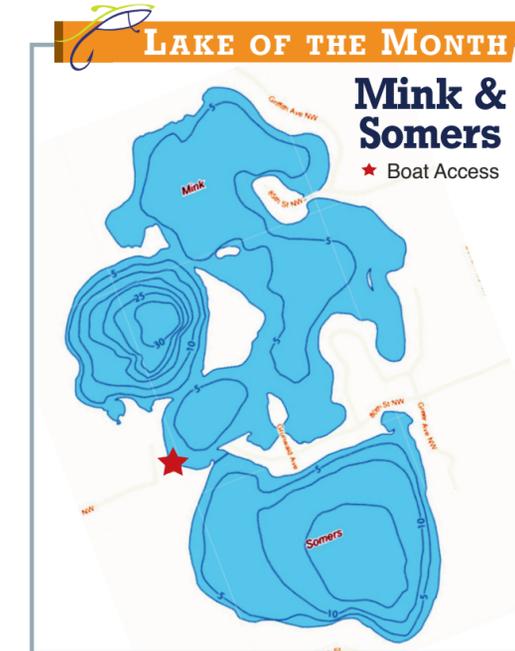
Special regulations in place on

Mink & Somers

By Joe Stewig
Area Fisheries Manager

The lakes have one (1) public access located on Mink Lake and are connected via a navigable channel. In 1994, the two lakes were reclaimed due to an over-abundance of Carp. Since the reclamation, an aeration system for each lake has been purchased and used as necessary during the winter. With the reclamation came a suite of special regulations to help protect the new fishery. Special regulations currently in place include possession limits of five (5) sunfish, five (5) crappie and three (3) Walleye. Walleye also have a 17 inch minimum size limit. Largemouth Bass are protected by a 12 – 20 inch protected slot limit with one (1) fish over 20 inches allowed in a possession limit of six (6). Northern Pike have a 24 – 36 inch protected slot with one (1) fish over 36 inches allowed in a possession limit of three (3). Also, the possession or use of live minnows on the lakes is prohibited.

Mink/Somers lakes are probably best known for their tremendous bass fishing which makes them a destination for bass enthusiasts. Largemouth Bass were sampled this spring as part of a routine lake survey. While the bass catch was down from previous surveys, the average size was similar. Bass sampled ranged in length from 6.8 to 19.5 inches with an average length and weight of 13 inches and 1 ½ pounds. Fifty-one percent of the bass sam-



pled were longer than 12 inches and 45% were longer than 15 inches. While we didn't sample any bass over 20 inches there are some in the lake and it is not surprising to catch one over 20 inches.

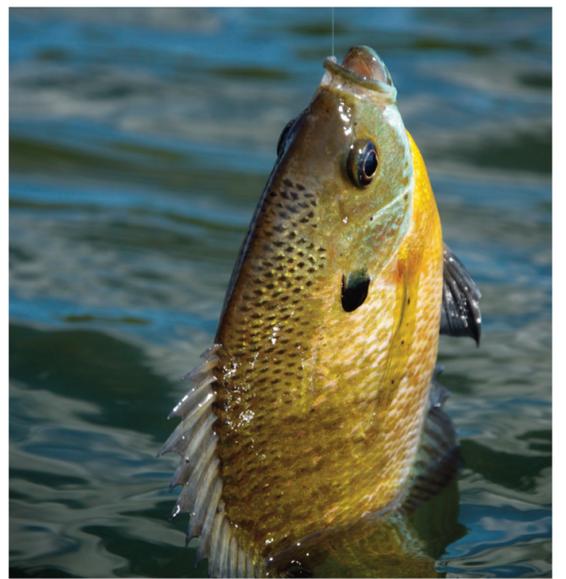
Black Crappie are also a highly sought after species in Mink/Somers lakes and at certain times can provide excellent fishing. Black Crappie abundance appears to be relatively high right now; however the average size is small. Black Crappies sampled in 2021 ranged in length from 3.7 to 12.4 inches with an average length of 5.1 inches. Only 8% of the crappies sampled were longer than eight (8) inches and 5% were

longer than ten (10) inches. While anglers can still scratch out a few nice crappies, it will probably be 2 – 3 years before all of these small crappies start reaching harvestable size. Growth of Black Crappie is average for the area taking four (4) years to reach eight (8) inches.

Bluegill abundance is high for the area; however the average size tends to be respectable. Fifty-two percent of the Bluegill caught during the trap net survey were six (6) inches or longer with 4% being eight (8) inches or longer. Bluegill growth in Mink/Somers lakes is slow, taking six (6) years to reach seven (7) inches.

While bass and panfish are a major draw to the lake the lake is also managed for Walleye. Walleye fingerlings were first stocked into the lake back in 1948; however since about 1996 they have been stocked every other year by the DNR. The lakes are scheduled to be sampled this summer (2021), but not until the end of August. Despite regular stocking Walleye numbers continue to decline, likely due to low Yellow Perch abundance and an increase in Northern Pike abundance. The most recent survey conducted in 2016 found low numbers of Walleye (1.4/gill net). Walleye caught ranged in length from 20.6 to 28 inches with an average size 24 inches and nearly five (5) pounds. Walleye growth is average for the area taking about four (4) years to reach 15 inches.

Northern Pike abundance is high although the average size is excellent. Northern Pike were never stocked after the reclamation; however they quickly became established by 2001. Similar to Walleye, Northern Pike are scheduled to be surveyed later this summer as well. Data from 2016 showed that pike ranged in length from 13.6 to 34.4 inches with an average length and weight of 26 inches and four (4) pounds. Anglers should encounter numerous pike over 21 inches (93% of the catch were longer than 21 inches), as well as plenty over



One thousand four hundred and thirty-three Bluegill were sampled during the trap net survey ranging in length from three to 10.2 inches with an average length of six inches.

Photo by Don Dittberner

26 inches (45% > 26 inches). There is also a good chance to catch a few fish over 30 inches as 9% of our catch were longer than 30 inches with reports of anglers catching pike up to 40 inches. Northern Pike growth is average for the area, taking six (6) years to reach 25 inches.

As mentioned previously the lake has a number of spe-

cial fishing regulations which are posted at the public access as well as in the fishing regulations booklet. The lakes are also infested with Eurasian milfoil so care should be taken not to spread this invasive species. Any questions or comments can be sent to joe.stewig@state.mn.us or by calling 320-223-7867.



DNR invites comment on proposed sunfish regulations

Second phase of lakes in Quality Sunfish Initiative would get lower sunfish bag limits

Contributed report

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources encourages to the public to weigh in on proposed special fishing regulations that would allow anglers to keep fewer sunfish from 50 lakes. The proposed regulations are part of the ongoing Quality Sunfish Initiative.

“These new regulations would continue our response to angler concerns about the declining sizes of some of our state’s most prized and frequently caught fish,” said Dave Weitzel, Grand Rapids area fisheries supervisor. “We’re aiming to protect and improve sunfish sizes on select lakes with the biological potential to produce large sunfish.”

The proposed lower bag limits on 50 lakes would go into effect in March 2022. Under the proposal, sunfish daily bag limits would be reduced from the statewide limit of 20 sunfish to five sunfish on some lakes and 10 sunfish on others. Some lakes also have similar proposals for lower crappie daily bag limits.

Comments on the proposed regulation changes may be submitted multiple ways, including through an online survey that is open

through Sunday, Oct. 31, by contacting an area fisheries office, or by attending an in-person meeting this fall. Details about the meetings will be posted and publicized later this summer. More information about comment options, including a link to the survey, is available on the DNR website.

Through the Quality Sunfish Initiative, nearly 100 lakes received bag limit reductions in March of 2021. In total, the DNR plans to increase the number of lakes with reduced bag limits to approximately 210 by 2023, up from 60 before the initiative began.

Although anglers have told the DNR they are satisfied with sunfish numbers, they have voiced increasing concerns about sunfish size quality. They also have voiced concern about the added pressure on fisheries as a result of electronic fish finders and other technological advancements, including rapid social media communication between anglers when fish are biting.

“Sunfish grow only about an inch per year, so a large sunfish can be more than a decade old. It’s critical to protect these large fish from

excessive harvest because they aren’t easily replaced,” Weitzel said.

In addition to the 50 lakes where the DNR is proposing new special sunfish and crappie regulations, the DNR also is proposing minor changes to 63 lakes that already have special reduced possession limits. Under these changes, the reduced possession limit will change to a reduced daily limit, which will allow an angler to take a daily limit from a lake multiple days in a row until reaching their statewide possession limit (20 sunfish, 10 crappie). The change will create consistency with the newly implemented Quality Sunfish Initiative regulations and is not projected to have additional biological impacts.

Minnesota fishing regulations use sunfish as the generic name for bluegill, pumpkinseed, green sunfish, orange-spotted sunfish, longear, warmouth and their hybrids. More about sunfish biology, the Quality Sunfish Initiative, and lists of lakes proposed for special sunfish regulations can be found on the DNR website.

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Habitat work across Minnesota benefits wildlife and pollinators

Contributed report

Restoring, managing, and enhancing grassland habitat is year-round work for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

“We tend to get very specific questions about what we’re doing for grasslands in each season, and we like to take a step back and describe how the various kinds of restoration and enhancement projects we do fit into our overall strategy,” said Greg Hoch, DNR prairie habitat supervisor.

In the winter months, contractors remove trees that can reduce the value of prairies for grassland birds. In the spring, DNR staff conduct prescribed fires. In the fall, contractors help DNR staff harvest seed for next spring’s restoration projects. Two important tools for grassland management in the middle of the summer are haying and grazing.

“Haying and grazing both simulate the herds of bison and elk that historically grazed the prairie. They can increase plant diversity and insect abundance. The shorter grasses create habitats where it is easy for young pheasants and other birds to forage for



Grasslands provide wildlife and pollinator habitat, sequester and store carbon, capture potential floodwater, filter water, and improve groundwater recharge. They also support many types of close-to-home recreation.

Contributed Photo

grasshoppers and other insects,” Hoch said.

Only a small part of a WMA is hayed in any year. This creates brood-rearing habitat but still leaves plenty of fall and winter cover.

“Haying can also help create firebreaks for next spring’s prescribed fire season. When ranchers hay these areas, it

saves the DNR staff time and funds,” Hoch said.

If local livestock producers are interested in forage, they can contact DNR area wildlife managers. These managers will determine if any wildlife management areas (WMAs) in their area would benefit from haying or grazing. If there is a WMA that would benefit, managers will identify

acres within WMAs and the timing of the haying. Livestock producers can find area wildlife managers’ contact information on the Conservation Grazing Map at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture website.

“Managed haying and grazing can improve habitat quality for wildlife and demonstrate the value of grasslands to the agricultural economy and local communities,” said Dave Olfelt, DNR Fish and Wildlife Division di-

rector. “We know we can help local livestock producers and increase support for conservation. At the same time, they can help us improve grassland habitat for wildlife and pollinators. In the right place and at the right time, haying and grazing benefits both wildlife and agriculture.”

Grasslands are important for a number of reasons in Minnesota’s farmland region. They provide wildlife and pollinator habitat. They also sequester and store carbon,

capture potential floodwater, filter water and improve groundwater recharge. And they support many types of close-to-home recreation.

DNR area wildlife managers work across the entire state to help manage game populations, maintain, and improve habitat and oversee more than 1,400 WMAs. Anyone can find out more about the work of DNR wildlife staff in their area on the DNR website.

Control options for apple maggots

By Katie Drewitz
University of MN Extension

As the apples on your trees continue to grow there are numerous factors that we need to consider. The apple maggot (*Rhagoletis pomonella*) is the most important insect pest to Minnesota grown apples and typically starts to become active in July. Heavily infested apples are distorted, inedible and will have limited use. There are control options available for all sizes of growers and hobbyists.



Apple growers should beware of the threat of apple maggots now through September. Heavily infested apples are distorted, inedible and have limited use.

To understand control options and infestation we must first understand the life cycle of the apple maggot. Adult apple maggots begin to emerge from the soil starting around July first and will continue through September. Adult flies leave to feed in bushy areas, then return to lay their eggs under the skin of the apples. Once the eggs hatch, the larvae feed on the apple for three to four weeks. The dropping of the apple to the ground signifies the larvae to leave the apple for the soil where they will pupate and overwinter.

Harvesting apples before they fall to the ground and keeping apples picked up from the ground can help to reduce next year’s apple maggot population. Apples infested with apple maggots will be pitted and misshapen.

Each time a female fly lays eggs a dimple forms in the skin of the fruit. The pulp breaks down, discolors and starts to rot as a result of the larvae tunneling through and eating the flesh.

Using an apple maggot sticky trap will help you to know if you have a presence of apple maggots in your trees. This will help you to assess what, if anything, to do for control options. There are a few control options available and which one to use depends on your desired outcome. Bagging is a method in which each apple is enclosed in a bag which remains there until harvest. This process is time and labor intensive. Kaolin clay is a second method and can be applied to all parts of the tree including the fruit. The apple maggots are attracted to the red color of the fruit. The gray that the clay provides makes the fruit less attractive to the insect. The clay can be washed off in the rain which gives it limited long term effectiveness without reapplication. Pesticides can also be an option. However, pesticides only work when the adult apple maggots are present, so you must use traps to help you decide when to apply. When using a pesticide, the label must always be read and followed.

More information about the life cycle, prevention and treatment of apple maggots can be found at www.extension.umn.edu. Some information in this article was gathered from Jeffrey Hahn, Extension entomologist; Michelle Grabowski, Extension educator; and Jill MacKenzie.

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The Office Coordinator is responsible for a variety of duties, which include but is not limited to editorial copyediting, proofreading, looking over ads, etc. It also includes taking care of subscriptions, typing up weekly meetings, menus, uploading news onto the website/ Facebook, entering payments, and being involved in the production of numerous special projects throughout the year. This job is a part-time position, however, during busy times, the hours may fluctuate to accommodate the workflow. The hours could range anywhere from 15-30 hours a week between both locations. If you’re looking for a job with some flexibility, a variety of work, and a great team to work with, this may be the position for you!

REQUIREMENTS

- High school graduate or above or H.S. Senior looking for internship
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- Prior editorial proofing work experience helpful-strong attention to detail.
- PC skills including MS Office (QuickBooks a plus, but not required)
- Knowledge of basic bookkeeping principles and office systems and procedures
- Excellent communication, interpersonal skills, patience and professionalism
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TEACHER of the MONTH

Support Staff Edition



MIKE CLOUTHIER

By Tom Westman
Staff Writer

Earlier this month, the Annandale community voted online for the Annandale School District's support staff (custodian or food service) for the month of August. The results are in and Annandale Elementary custodian Mike Clouthier finished with the most votes.

"I love my job and I love the staff and students at AES," Clouthier said.

Connects with staff and students

Mike adds a lot to the AES staff and community," said AES Principal Jon Klippenes. "He takes pride in doing a great job in tasks he takes on, and his work is done with excellence.

"But his greatest quality is how well he connects with the staff and students at AES. Our students enjoy seeing Mike during the day and the positivity he brings to our school."

Family culture at AES

Mike has been such a great custodian for Annandale Elementary," said second grade teacher Joey Miller. "He works hard, helps you with anything you need, and is genuinely everyone's friend.

"He contributes to the 'family culture' that has been established at AES with his positivity and friendliness, and he made me feel a part of the family from day one since I started teaching here.

"Mike is very deserving of Custodian of the Month.

Funny and hardworking

"Mike is an awesome guy," said second grade teacher Riley Bates. "Comments about him will be easy."

Bates describes Clouthier as a kind, respectful, funny and hard-working guy.

"When I got hired a few years ago, Mike was one of the first staff members at AES that I developed a relationship with," Bates said. "He was very welcoming, helpful and kind which made me know I was in the right place to teach and work.

Not only does he show these attributes to adults, but to the students as well. On any given school day, Mike positively interacts with the students, making them feel as welcome and appreciated as the adults. "The students are very fond of Mike and his interacting with them means the world to them and trust me, they come back to my classroom telling me all about it. "All in all, Mike is a great representation of Annandale Elementary and I'm lucky to be able to work alongside him."

A positive presence

"Mike is an incredibly positive presence at our school," said AES second grade teacher Cass Statz. "He's energetic and enthusiastic with everyone, especially the kids.

"He loves making personal connections with students, all the while keeping the school safe and clean. We love having him at AES."

About Michael Clouthier

Clouthier was born in 1976 in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, in the town of Houghton. Mike and his family moved to Annandale when he was in the fifth grade. The Clouthier family lived in the Eastview Mobile Home Park.

He graduated from Annandale High School in 1994. He played basketball for Annandale.

"I spent most of my time on the bench," Clouthier said. "But it kept me busy and out of trouble."



He has two children, both AHS grads, Ben 19 and Hayley 22, both now living in North Carolina.

When Clouthier is not working at AES, he loves to golf, bowl and play fantasy football.

Not a born in Minnesota guy, he is a Michigan Wolverine and Atlanta Braves fan.

"I was heartsick when the Twins defeated the Braves in the 1991 World Series," Clouthier said.

AES custodian, seven years

Clouthier was hired in 2014 by Rick Walberg and AES Principal Allyson Kuehn and has worked in the AES building ever since. Prior to coming to District 876, he worked for 12 years at Dura Supreme in Howard Lake.

Clouthier works primarily the day shift at AES. During 2020 and COVID-19 the custodians spend a great deal of time cleaning.

"We were cleaning bathrooms and wiping doorknobs over and over again, all day long," Clouthier said. "Everything had to be disinfected to keep everyone safe."



BRAD NEUTZ

By Brenda Erdahl
Staff Writer

Brad Neutz, head district custodian at Maple Lake Schools literally keeps the schools running on a day-to-day basis, which is why he was voted winner of the Teacher of the Month-Support Staff edition online competition.

The public cast their votes via the Maple Lake Messenger website in July in favor of Neutz who they called "hard working," "respectful," "awesome," "man of many talents," "resourceful," "talented," and "can fix most anything on his own."

"Brad is always looking for ways to improve the building at Maple Lake Public Schools and make them better for our students and staff," said Maple Lake School District Superintendent Mike Rowe. "During the last school year, Brad and his crew were put to the test and rose to the challenge with flying colors. Like all of our support staff, we are proud of Brad and what he has accomplished at Maple Lake Public Schools."

Neutz has been with Maple Lake Schools since 2013. He went to school for banking, receiving a BA in Finance from St. Cloud State University and immediately went to work for Zapp Bank in St. Cloud in the lending department, then moved to bookkeeping for the First National Bank in Cokato. He left the banking business to stay home with his and wife Michelle's children. He also began renovating and renting houses. In 2001 he needed a new challenge so decided to take on some additional work as a nighttime custodian for Delano schools. In 2003 he was offered a full-time position. He worked in

Delano for almost 11 years before accepting the head custodian position in Maple Lake.

As head custodian, Neutz has a variety of duties. He works with the budgetary process, manages projects with contractors, oversees six custodians, is the chief boiler operator, services and troubleshoots the HVAC system, performs Health and Safety oversight, manages the supply inventory, does various repairs, oversees the grounds including lawn mowing and snow removal and generally helps any student or teacher with whatever they might need.

In addition to his degree in finance, Neutz carries a chief boiler's license, weed spraying license, and a few certifications (MN Association for School Maintenance Supervisor (MASMS), Plant Operator Certification, Asbestos Management).

He said he is most proud of the projects he and his crew have done over the years that have substantially reduced utility costs for the district.

"Getting the little 90 HP boiler up and running allowed us to drop our gas usage pretty significantly, and the solar panels are a huge long-term savings to the district. I won't see the full benefit of the savings until the lease is paid off, but I'm sure the next person in line will appreciate it," he said.

Neutz grew up in Sauk Rapids, met his wife in high school and married her in July of 1997. After living in Dassel for five years, the couple moved to the family farm just south of Maple Lake and built a house. After Neutz's grandparents passed away, they bought the re-



mainder of the farm and have been there for 18 years. The couple has four children: Sam is 21 and is finishing an accounting degree from SMSU in Marshal, Daniel is 18 and a 2021 MLHS graduate. He will be attending MN State in Wadena to be an electrical lineman. Sarah is 16, will be a junior at MLHS this fall and is a "sandwich artist" at Maple Lake Subway, and Joe, 14, helps around the farm taking care of critters.

Neutz is also the head trap coach for MLHS. He coaches archery for 4H, is a volunteer for the program and is always willing to lend a hand where someone might need some help.

"I really enjoy the people here (at MLHS). The kids are great. Overall, a really great group of young men and women. I've gotten to know many of them through the years and there's something really neat about watching them grow up and develop. I have a great group of people working for me. They are willing to do anything I ask them to do. They are the ones that make me look good," he said.

GO ONLINE TO VOTE FOR THE SEPTEMBER TEACHER OF THE MONTH!

The poll will open shortly for The September poll featuring coaches. Head online and put in your vote before August 15!

VOTE

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LAKE Country Calendar

August



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	• Annandale City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., City Hall	• National Night Out • Silver Creek Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Corinna Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • South Haven City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., City Hall	• Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce Meeting, 12 p.m.	• Legion Riders Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Legion Club		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
● August New Moon		• Chatham Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • American Legion Meeting, 7:30 p.m. • Maple Lake City Council Meeting, 7 p.m. • Pioneer Park Potluck Supper, 6:30 p.m.	• Hasty Silver Creek Sportsmen's Club Meeting, 8 p.m. at the Sportsmen's Club • Annandale Chamber Meeting, 11:30 a.m.	• Sons of the American Legion Meet 8 p.m. at the Church of St. Timothy • Lions Club Meeting at the V by HH 7 pm	• Bear Baiting Start Date	• Annandale Petfest, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Annandale Middle School
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
		• Albion Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Corinna Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Maple Lake Township Meeting, 7 p.m.		• Wright Saddle Club Meeting, 7:30 p.m. • Maple Lake Legion Auxiliary Meeting, 7pm	• Youth Deer Hunt Application Deadline	• Gear-Head Get Together in Maple Lake
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
○ August Full Moon - Sturgeon Moon			• Wine Tasting & Silent Auction Fundraiser for Maple Lake Fire Department at Maple Lake Legion 7p.m.	• Knights of Columbus Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Church of St. Timothy • MN State Fair Begins		September Calendar Published
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
	• Wright County Snowmobile Association Meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Legion Club		• Bear Season Begins			

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Perseid Meteor Shower over Lakes Country

Keep an eye out for this annual meteor shower, which goes from late July to late August. The meteors will reach their maximum in the hours just before dawn (while it's still dark) between August 11 and 13! The Moon will be in its New phase on August 8 allowing the dark sky to highlight this meteor shower.

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