St. Pauli News in Detail





Greeting and Ushering

May 7 Gary Iverson
May 14 Kari Iverson
May 21 Jim Kotz
May 28 Bruce Mathson

Altar Preparation: Virginia Anderson

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Cemetery Clean-Up Day

Saturday, May 20 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Come and help to make our cemetery look neat and tidy for Memorial Day. Bring your own tools. Cookies and coffee furnished.

May Milestones

Birthdays

May 3 Barb Smith
May 8 Inez Mathson
May 8 Shelley Mathson

May 13 Jodie Torkelson May 15 Tammy Haugen

May 21 Virginia Anderson

Anniversaries

May 7 Craig and Sally Torkelson



Stewardship

WELCA ladies kicked up their quilting sessions to five days this year and made 25 quilts! Thanks to the donations during Lent from the congregation, we assembled 19 Personal Care Kits. To top it off, we made 14 Baby Care Kits.

WELCA Special Program

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May 24 at 7:00 pm

WELCA will meet on May 24th at the church. Following our meeting, Allyson (Torstveit) Hopperstad will speak about the BIO-Girls program that has started here in Thief River Falls. Hostess: Cindy Cedergren

Thank You

Thank you to my St. Pauli Church family for keeping me in your thoughts and prayers, text messages, and cards. So grateful to live in an area with loving and caring people.

Kathy Alberg

PS: remember to get your shingles shots...





In Memorium

Beverly Lian

July 14, 1928 - April 22, 2023

Beverly Lian, 94, passed away on Saturday, April 22, 2023 at Greenleaf Assisted Living, Thief River Falls, MN.

Beverly Jane Lian was born on July 14, 1928 in Thief River Falls, MN daughter of the late Otto and Tessie (King) Netteland. She attended Cheerville Country School through the 8th grade and Lincoln High School in Thief River Falls. Bev was a real seamstress in 4-H and won a trip to the State Fair for the suit she made.

On February 6, 1945 she was united in marriage to Armond Lian when she was 16 years old. To this union 6 children were born in 7 ½ years: Dianne, Linda, Rosemary, Jerry, Susan, Nancy. Armond and Bev were avid dancers and danced

every weekend at the Eagles where they cleared the floor and people just watched.

Bev worked at Woolworths and Gambles with Jerry Hendrickson and Stan Pladson. She started her JC Penney career in Thief River Falls. They lived in Thief River Falls until 1965 when they moved to the Twin Cities. Bev worked for JC Penney for 25 years. She retired at 59 years old.

She and Armond spent their winters in Florida and their summers at Fritz's Resort in Pequot Lakes. In 1992 Armond and Bev moved back to Thief River Falls the year Bev's father passed away. They moved into his home. Armond passed away in 2001.

Bev met Marvin Groven at the senior dances she went to. They enjoyed each other's company and went to dances many times each week all around the area. Marvin passed away in 2022.

Bev lived alone in her home until December of 2021 when she moved into Greenleaf Assisted living.

Bev is survived by her children Dianne Matson of Thief River Falls, MN, Jerry Lian of Tampa, FL and Nancy Brett of Prior Lake, MN; 15 grandchildren 23 great-grandchildren and 11 great-great-grandchildren; brother Robert (Bonnie) Netteland of Urbandale, IA; sons-in-law Ronald Olson and Ron Micheal.

Bev is preceded in death by her husband Armond, friend Marvin, son-in-law Jim Matson; parents Otto and Tessie Netteland; children Linda Olson, Rosemary (Art) Massie, Susan Micheal; grandson John Matson.

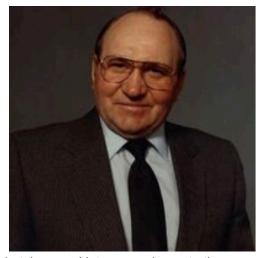
Memorial services were held on Tuesday, May 2, 2023 at 11:00 am at Johnson Funeral Service in Thief River Falls with Pastor Pete Lee officiating. Ae lunch followed the service. Burial will be held at a later date at St. Pauli Cemetery south of Thief River Falls. Visitation was held one hour prior to the service on Tuesday.



Beverly was confirmed at St. Pauli by Rev. Skibsrud on September 6, 1942.

Back row: Beverly Netteland, Esther Hanson, Rev. Skibsrud, Rosemary Hauge, Mabel Torkelson.

Front row: *unknown* Urdahl, Marion Torkelson, Kermit Finstad, Leslie Snetting.



In Memorium

Harvey Hanson

January 29, 1934 - April 28, 2023

Harvey Hanson, 89, of Thief River Falls, MN, passed away on Friday, April 28, 2023 at Sanford Medical Center, Fargo, ND.

Harvey Allen Hanson was born January 29, 1934 at Grygla, MN, the son of Manuel and Anna (Arne) Hanson. He was raised near Grygla and attended school there.

Harvey was employed by area farmers and worked in the woods. Harvey was 18 years old when he started his employment at Land O' Lakes turkey

hatchery and later moved over to the processing plant where he continued his employment until his retirement after 43 years.

On January 8, 1956 he was united in marriage to Marlene Ann Iverson. To this union three children were born: Randy, Debbie and Sandy. The couple lived near Hazel, MN and in 1964 purchased a home in Thief River Falls.

Harvey enjoyed fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, bowling, playing softball. He liked to be in charge and tell people what to do. He was a good people person and always got along with everyone. He had a lot of stories to tell and could make people laugh.

Harvey is survived by his children Randy (Julie) Hanson of Thief River Falls, MN; Debbie Conger of Oak Grove, MN; and Sandy Haffner of Grey Eagle, MN; grandchildren: Wayne Hanson, Richard Nord, Amy (Michael) Rowley, Megan Hanson, Erica (Marty) Johnson, Brittany (Dustin Christianson) Conger, Ryan (Katie Hanson) Boyland, Melanie (Brian Preusser) Cruz, Heather (Sean) Elias; great-grandchildren: Carly, Avery, Natalya, Oliver, Millie, Whitney and Zoe; special friend Maxine Olson; siblings: Duwayne Hanson, Roger Hanson, Lyle Hanson, Richard Hanson; along with several nieces and nephews.

Harvey is preceded in death by his parents, ex-wife Marlene Hanson, sons-in-law Jeffrey Conger and Dale Haffner; siblings Harry Hanson, Dennis Hanson, Dale Hanson, Margie Adamson; sisters-in-law Gwen Hanson, Shirley Hanson, Ruth Hanson; brother-in-law Glenn Adamson.

Funeral services for Harvey were held at 11:00 am on Saturday, May 6, 2023 at Zion Lutheran Church in Thief River Falls with Reverend Kristin Ostercamp officiating. Burial was held at Valle Cemetery rural Grygla, MN. Visitation was held on Friday from 5–7 pm with a 7:00 pm prayer service at Johnson Funeral Service in Thief River Falls and also one hour prior to the service on Saturday.



When someone you love becomes a memory...

That memory becomes a treasure.

May God bless the memories of Beverly Lian and Harvey Hanson

Minutes of the Church Council

Church Council April meeting was cancelled due to snowstorm.

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WELCA Minutes

February 15, 2023

The St. Pauli Women of the ELCA met at the church on Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 4:00 pm with six members present following a day of quilting.

President Kathy opened with devotions titled "The Greatest Getaway" based on John 14:27.

Secretary's Report: Accepted as read via email.

<u>Treasurer's Report:</u> Checking balance as of 2/09/2023: \$2,574.65. Balances as of 12/31/2022: Savings \$575.47, CD \$6.258.88.

<u>Stewardship:</u> Virginia secured a \$250 Thrivent card and purchased quilt backing and fabric at Oklee Quilting for graduation quilts. There is still a balance of \$45-\$47 on the card. The ladies made 9 quilts this week to add to the 8 quilts made in January.

<u>Council Report:</u> In Cindy's absence, Faye gave a synopsis of the Call Committee's report made to the Council. The first meeting with Synod staff is scheduled for Monday, February 20, at 5:00 pm.

<u>Communications:</u> Thank you letters received from Northland Rescue Mission and TRF Area Community Fund. Joan Nelson sent us a gift certificate to Honkers Flats for flowers for the church gardens.

<u>Old Business:</u> Council is looking into parties who may be interested in cleaning the church twice yearly.

We made 17 food packages on Valentine's Day for our neighbors – 4 doubles and 13 singles – making four delivery routes. The packages contained chicken dumpling soup, garlic bread, 2 cookies and a cupcake, plus a wonderful valentine handmade by our Sunday School students.

New Business: We are sending a get-well card to Barb Smith.

Discussed whether the altar vases should be replated. They are beginning to show rust in a few places. We also discussed whether or not to fund the Feed My Hungry Children program. February 9th was Giving Hearts Day; perhaps we should schedule our gifts around this opportunity. No decision on either discussion.

March 11th is National Quilting Day and we will quilt again both Friday and Saturday, March 10 and 11. Quilters should bring a bag lunch for Friday. Lydia Circle meets on March 11 from 9:30 – 10:00 am, so Cindy will serve lunch on Saturday. No WELCA meeting in March due to Lent services.

Thank you to Sharon for serving today and thank you to Kathy for making bean soup for us yesterday. Communion prep for February is Tammy Haugen.

Offering was taken, prayer partners shared, and the Lord's Prayer prayed.

Faye Auchenpaugh, Secretary

Addition: Pastor Terri Cuppett has given \$100 for WELCA projects in memory of Eunice Grove, Edna Rondorf, Ivette Garrett, and Deone Cerny.

* * * * *

Sunday School Kids Preparing to Wave Palm Branches for Worship Service Processional

Aksel Haugen, Eli Torkelson, Lydia Torkelson, Elsa Haugen, Ella



Rondorf, Kyland Rondorf



Lutheran Social Services Jody Horntvedt

On behalf of LSS, Jody Horntvedt thanked the St. Pauli Congregation for their outreach efforts and being chosen as the church from the Northwest Synod to receive the 2022 Servant of Christ award.

We have ordered an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) for the church. We received a small grant to pay for a portion of it, but that left a balance of over \$1,350. Shirley Johnson's family – Susanne, Paul and Jana – read about this in the minutes published in the newsletter and are going to donate the balance of those funds in honor of Shirley.

Dear St. Pauli Family,

We are excited to be a part of the effort to bring an AED machine to St. Pauli Lutheran Church. If this can save the life of a loved one, we support it.

The reason we want to honor our aunt, Shirley Johnson, by installing an AED machine at the church is because Shirley was a steady fixture at St. Pauli Lutheran Church. She dedicated her life to serving others - both in her profession and in her vocation. Shirley heard God's calling for her and saw serving others as her way to serve Him. The Greatest Commandment stated by Jesus in many books of the Bible, including Matthew, Mark and Luke, all state to "Love God and love your neighbor as yourself."

Shirley described her choice to go into the medical field as one that was attainable, honorable, and a profession she could be involved in while living in a rural area. After finishing her degree at the University of Minnesota, Shirley worked in Fargo and Grand Forks, but found herself coming home to the farm near St. Pauli because her mom, Clara Johnson, had become ill. Moving back to Thief River Falls made the most sense as she made a career out of her lab technician degree.

She was asked to start the first lab at the Falls Starkow Clinic in Thief River Falls and later moved to Dakota Clinic as the two clinics merged. We've had many people tell us that they always looked forward to seeing Shirley if they needed to have bloodwork done. We know as kids, Shirley took good care of us, trying to poke and prod us as little as possible. She often talked about her repeat kids who were suffering from one malady or another. She looked forward to seeing those children and kept up with them, often throughout their lifetimes.

Shirley would reminisce about the days of old when they knew what solutions needed to be put together to test blood and other body fluids. She would talk about how much of each solution and how long it would take for the various test results. She knew so much and could test in-house for most everything. That was in the days before a person just had to push a button to run a machine or send it out to run the test.

Shirley didn't like the spotlight and was often found behind the scenes. Shirley was a prepared and ambitious person, who was responsible and valued consistency. Having an AED machine at the church is a responsible and prepared effort. These are the reasons why we think dedicating the AED machine at St. Pauli Lutheran Church in honor of our aunt Shirley Johnson is so appropriate.

Thank you,

Susanne Hinrichs, Paul Johnson and Jana Johnson

Around the Neighborhood

Chad Torstveit Coaches 4-Hers took first place at 4-H Regional Project Bowl

The Times, April 5, 2023

On Saturday, March 18, 4-H members from Pennington and Red Lake Counties competed in the 4-H Regional Project Bowl in Bemidji.

The Pennington County/Red Lake County 4-H Junior and Senior Poultry Project Bowl teams placed first in the competition and will move on to state competition in April.

In the photo, the junior team (front row) includes Ryder Olsonawski, Owen Shaw and Niah Rupprecht. The senior team (back row) includes Brianne Ellison, Hailey Hanson, Briley Olsonawski and Rylan Torstveit. The teams are coached by Chad Torstveit (center back).



The 4-H Regional Project Bowl challenges teams of three to six youths to test their knowledge on a variety of animal science and agriculture topics, including dairy, dog, general livestock, horse, llama, poultry, and rabbit.

Hundreds of youth teams participate in regional competitions held throughout the state in March with top teams qualifying to compete in the state bowl. Each competition includes junior and senior divisions. Teams are quizzed in one-on-one and open rounds. The firs participant with the current answer earns points for their team. 4-H State Project Bowl winners in dairy, general livestock, horse, and poultry go on to national Project Bowl competitions.

"Through the 4-H Project Bowl program, youth have the opportunity to partner with other youth and learn about different animal science areas. Participants also work on improving their communication skills and building meaningful relationships with their peers, which can contribute to their future success," said Sharon David, 4-H animal science director.

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"I asked an elderly woman once what it was like to be old and to know that the majority of her life was now behind her.

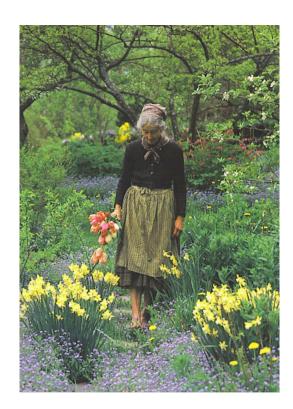
She told me that she has been the same age her entire life. She said the voice inside of her head had never aged. She has always just been the same girl. Her mother's daughter. She had always wondered when she would grow up and be an old woman.

She said she watched her body age and her faculties dull but the person she is inside never got tired. She never aged. She never changed.

Remember, our spirits are eternal. Our souls are forever. The next time you encounter an elderly person, look at them and know they are still a child, just as you are still a child and children will always need love, attention and purpose."

Author Unknown

Photograph is Tasha Tudor





Saturday, May 13

• **Uff Da Day:** 11am - 4 pm, Pioneer Village. \$3 per person. Viking reenactments, Lefse demonstration, Norwegian foods, and more.

Monday, May 15

• Concert -- Justin Spenner and his Near Norse Band from Mpls: 7 pm at the Northland College Auditorium. Justin is the winner of the Advanced Artist Division of the 2022 quadrennial voice competition of the Edvard Grieg Society of Minnesota.

Tuesday, May 16

• Speaker at the TRF Library: "Norwegian Immigration to Thief River Falls" 7 pm by Debbie Miller, retired librarian at the Minnesota History Center and current board member of the Norwegian-American Historical Association.

Wednesday, May 17

• Syttende Mai Smorgasbord torsk and pork chop buffet dinner: \$15. Serving 6-7 pm at the Eagles Hall. Reservations REQUIRED by May 12 to 218-686-0733. 200 tickets only.

Thursday, May 18

• Movie: "The Lutefisk Wars": 7 pm at the Northland College Auditorium. This comedy looks into troubles that recently escalated in Newford, N.D., a small town with a large population of Norwegian descendants. Karl Larsen, a Schwan's deliveryman, says it all started when an odd and agitated old man knocked on his door.

Friday, May 19

• Dance at the Eagles Hall: Honky Tonk Troubadours (classic country) 7-11 pm. \$7.50 with lunch served.





PLAY BALL!

George Will's 2023 Opening Day Quiz

"A Pirates coach once managed a team 'that was so bad we considered a 2-0 count on the batter a rally.' You can be better than that at identifying the answers to the following questions." (Answers on next page)

1. The only pitcher since 1960 to average more than 20 wins over a 10-year span.

Bob Gibson Juan Marichal Roger Clemens Greg Maddux

2. Who holds the Reds' career home run record.

Johnny Bench Eric Davis Frank Robinson Ted Kluszewski

3. Who holds the Reds' single-season home run record.

Ken Griffey Jr. Tony Perez Joey Votto George Foster

4. The pitcher who started five games with his team facing postseason elimination and whose team won all five.

Whitey Ford John Smotz Curt Schilling Andy Pettitte

The only player to lead his league in hits five consecutive years.

Nap Lajoie Tris Speaker Nellie Fox Ichiro Suzuki

The MVP pitcher who won 16 games, all in relief, for the 1950 Phillies.

Jim Konstanty Blix Donnelly Bubba Church Milo Candini

7. The first Canadian-born MVP.

Ferguson Jenkins Larry Walker Eric Gagne George Selkirk

8. The Hall of Fame pitcher who holds the record for the worst single-season ERA (minimum 50 innings pitched).

Roy Halladay Rube Marquard Catfish Hunter

9. The player who had the most career hits without winning a batting title.

Carl Yastrzemski Cap Anson Paul Waner Derek Jeter

The hitter with the most home runs in a season against one team.

> Albert Pujois (12) against the Chicago Cubs in 2006 Jimmie Foxx (10) against the New York Yankees in 1929 Lou Gehrig (14) against the Cleveland Indians in 1936 Hank Aaron (15) against the Houston Colt .45s in 1962

11. The pitcher who reached 500 strikeouts in the fewest innings.

Aroldis Chapman Nolan Ryan Tom Seaver Walter Johnson

12. The only pitcher since 1920 with at least 100 postseason innings and an ERA under 1.00.

Jon Lester Mariano Rivera
Dave Stewart Jim Palmer

Who was caught just 13 times while stealing 104 bases in a season.

Maury Wills Lou Brock
Rickey Henderson Vince Coleman

14. The three two-time MVPs who are not in the Hall of Fame.

Zoilo Versalles, Thurman Munson, Vida Blue Elston Howard, Dick Groat, Jackie Jensen Dolph Camilli, Mort Cooper, Lou Boudreau Dale Murphy, Roger Maris, Juan Gonzalez 15. The Hall of Famer who hit more than 500 home runs but never 40 in a season.

Harmon Killebrew Jim Thome
Eddie Murray Chipper Jones

16. Who reached base in 84 consecutive games.

Ted Williams Joe DiMaggio

Ted Williams Joe DiMaggio Stan Musial Willie Keeler

17. The two future Hall of Famers traded for one another.

Vladimir Guerrero, Tony Gwynn Gabby Hartnett, Kiki Cuyler Tony Lazzeri, Luke Appling Orlando Cepeda, Joe Torre

 The only team to twice win the World Series after being behind three games to one.

> Philadelphia Athletics New York Yankees Los Angeles Dodgers Pittsburgh Pirates

 The first National League player to win consecutive MVP awards.

> Rogers Hornsby Ernie Banks Carl Hubbell Willie Mays

20. Who hit the most career home runs in a single park.

Mel Ott, Polo Grounds Sammy Sosa, Wrigley Field Babe Ruth, Yankee Stadium Mike Schmidt, Veterans Stadium

21. The two players who got 200 hits in a season 10 times.

Rod Carew/Derek Jeter Al Simmons, Bill Terry Pete Rose, Ichiro Suzuki Wade Boggs, Ty Cobb

The player who went the longest (11 years) between MVP awards.

> Nolan Ryan Cap Ripken, Jr. Yogi Berra Willie Mays

23. The teammates who each had 159 RBIs in 155 games in 1949.

Vic Wertz, Hoot Evers Ted Williams, Vern Stephens Jackie Robinson, Gil Hodges Bobby Thomson, Johnny Mize

24. The only player with at least 40 home runs, 30 stolen bases, 30 doubles and 100 walks in the same season.

Jeff Bagwell Dick Allen Roberto Clemente Roy Campanella

25. The pitcher with the most wins in the 1940s.

Dizzy Trout

Spud Chandler

Hal Newhouser

Bob Feller

26. The first player to hit 30 or more home runs in a season with five different teams.

Fred McGriff Jose Canseco Alfonso Soriano Gary Sheffield

 The team that took the longest time (until its 97th season) to win a World Series.

Boston Red Sox Philadelphia PhilliesPittsburgh

Pirates Detroit Tigers

28. The Dodgers pitcher with the most wins since the team moved to Los Angeles in 1958.

> Fernando Valenzuela Clayton Kershaw

Orel Hershiser Don Sutton

29. The first pitcher after 1900 to strike out at least 300 in a season.

> Rube Waddell Cy Young

Noodles Hahn Christy Mathewson

30. The first pitcher to reach the Hall of Fame without ever starting a game.

> Sparky Lyle Dan Quisenberry

Bruce Sutter Lee Smith

31. Who holds the Pirates' career home run record.

Ralph Kiner **Barry Bonds** Dave Parker Willie Stargell

32. Who holds the Pirates' single-season home run record.

Ralph Kiner **Barry Bonds** Dave Parker Willie Stargell

33. The three who won the pitchers' Triple Crown (leading the league in wins, ERA and strikeouts) three times.

> Walter Johnson, Grover Alexander, Sandy Koufax Lefty Grove, Bob Feller, Roger Clemens Hippo Vaughn, Dazzy Vance, Steve Carlton

> Dwight Gooden, Randy Johnson, Justin Verlander

34. The expansion team that in its third season played in the postseason.

Arizona Diamondbacks

Colorado Rockies

Seattle Mariners

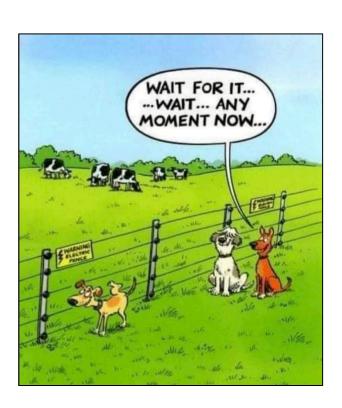
Toronto Blue Jays

35. Who hit 10 home runs in one week in the 'year of the pitcher,' 1968.

> Boog Powell Willie McCovey Reggie Jackson Frank Howard

36. Bonus question: Who said, "In 10 years, Ed Kranepool has a chance to be a star. In 10 years, Greg Goossen has a chance to be 30."

> Mary Throneberry Choo-Choo Coleman Pumpsie Green Casey Stengel



37. Second bonus question: Who said, "I couldn't have done it without the players."

> Connie Mack Leo Durocher Sparky Anderson Casey Stengel

On April 22, 1876, the Athletic Club of Philadelphia played the Boston Red Caps in the inaugural game of the National League, which is often considered to be the beginning of Major League Baseball.

37. Casey Stengel

36. Casey Stengel

35. Frank Howard

34. Colorado Rockies

33. Walter Johnson, Grover Alexander, Sandy Koufax

32. Ralph Kiner

31. Willie Stargell

30. Bruce Suffer

29. Rube Waddell

28. Don Sutton 27. Philadelphia Phillies

26. Fred McGriff

25. Hal Newhouser

24. Jeff Bagwell

23. Ted Williams, Vern Stephens

22. Willie Mays

21. Pete Rose, Ichiro Suzuki

20. Mel Ott, Polo Grounds

19. Ernie Banks

18. Pittsburgh Pirates

17. Orlando Cepeda, Joe Torre

16. Ted Williams

15. Eddie Murray

14. Dale Murphy, Roger Maris, Juan Gonzalez

13. Maury Wills

12. Mariano Rivera

11. Aroldis Chapman

10. Lou Gehrig (14) against the Cleveland Indians in 1936

9. Derek Jeter

8. Roy Halladay

7. Larry Walker

6. Jim Konstanty

5. Ichiro Suzuki

4. Curt Schilling

3. George Foster

2. Johnny Bench

1. Juan Marichal

ANSWERS

Closing Sermon Words

A preacher was completing a temperance sermon: with great expression he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." With even greater emphasis he said, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river."

And then finally, he said, "And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river."

He sat down. The song leader then stood very cautiously and announced with a smile, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn # 365: "Shall We Gather at the River."

The Back Page

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME

By Chip Gaines, Magnolia Journal, Spring 2023

Where the crowd rises at the crack of the bat. Where the wave makes it one more time around the stadium. Where the hot dog man locks eyes with you from afar and nods because he's got you. Give me all of it.

The hope for a chance to catch a foul ball. "Sweet Caroline" in the middle of the seventh, *bom bom bom*. The echo of the announcer's voice calling out the name of a

favorite player who just might make history today. Take me right there, and I'm a happy man.

I love the game of baseball. I always have and always will. From tee ball to the big leagues, from a player on the field to a fan in the stands. I like the smell of leather conditioner rubbed into a brand-new glove and the buzz of stadium lights. I like spitting sunflower seeds and

sliding headfirst with slim chances. And in what may be a contrarian position these days, I also like the pace of play.

Baseball is a slow game. It's true. In a society that's been speeding up at every turn, blurring the lines in a hunt for the thrill of what's next, baseball isn't in a hurry to keep up. The game stands still, stubborn in the best kind of way.

Baseball forces you to wait. They even call it America's pastime, which speaks to a sort of casualness that's inherent to the game.

You wait for your turn in the batting order. You wait in the on-deck circle. You wait in the field for the ball to be hit your way. You wait for the new pitcher to warm up. You wait between innings. You wait for *everything*. But when the action does come your way, you'd better be ready. That's the sharp edge of the slowness. It's slow until it's

not. Then lightning strikes. It's slow until the pitcher grooves your pitch down the middle of the plate, and you swing that bat with as much power as you can muster in the .25 seconds it takes to make a decision. Even now, I can hear the crack of the bat sending a screaming line drive down the center.

I'll admit, I get a little nostalgic about baseball. I grew up

playing, and a good deal of my memories as a kid come from being on the field. I remember my dad teaching me how to hit. He'd hand me the bat and set my feet in the right place, then take a few steps back and lob a ball my way. If I reached awkwardly or swung at a pitch at my feet, he'd say the same line: "Wait for your pitch."

There's a life lesson in there that isn't lost on me. These

days, it's me up in the stands watching my boys step into the batter's box and stare that pitcher down. Like my dad before me, I taught them how to hit. Maybe more importantly, I taught them how to wait. Because when that right pitch finally does come, they're ready to smack it.

I love the game. Not in spite of all the waiting, but because of it. This time of year, as kids break out their gloves and start tossing the ball around again, I'm reminded of the defiant slowness of nine innings. The modern winds of hurry aren't strong enough to knock baseball off course. That thread just keeps on weaving from one generation to the next at its own leisurely pace.

And when our time comes to step up to the plate with everything on the line, all that's left to do is wait for the right pitch.

NOTE: On a nice, slow, spring or summer evening in Thief River Falls, go to the MEC east of Northland College on Hwy 1 East and take in a couple of ballgames. The complex has 7 softball fields and 1 baseball field along with a concession stand and restroom facility. It is the home of high school boys' baseball and girls' fast pitch softball; Babe Ruth, Legion and VFW baseball; Little League baseball; men's and women's slow pitch softball.

If you've never been to a fastpitch game, it's worth your while. It is the most competitive form of softball and differs in several aspects. Fast-pitch pitchers usually throw the ball using a "windmill" type of movement that begins with the arm at the hip with ball speeds up to 77 mph for girls. Players can steal and bunt, but there is no "leading off." A baserunner can only leave the base when the pitcher releases the ball. There is also the "dropped third strike" rule, which allows the batter to attempt an advance to first base when the catcher fails to catch the third strike.