

# NORTH SHORE JOURNAL

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Christine Mallory, Editor

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## 36<sup>th</sup> Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon

By Kitty Mayo

The 36th Annual John Beargrease Sled Dog Race heads out of Duluth this year, with more than sixty mushers in all the various races: the 300, 120, and 40 mile runs take off on January 26<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am from Billy's Bar on Tischer Road.

The Beargrease Cub Run already happened, even in the midst of the storm, last Saturday at Silver Creek town hall where mushers younger than 14 competed and had fun.

Many of our hometown neighbors are competing on the 26<sup>th</sup>, giving us all a chance to root for them along the way. You can either go watch in person and track them at checkpoints, or keep tabs via the internet at: <https://beargrease.com/follow-the-race/>. Here you will be able to follow them by GPS tracking, watch a live stream, or get updated estimated arrivals to checkpoints in case you want to make an appearance to cheer them on.

Here's a list of who will be out there. Go Team North Shore!:

Blake Freking, returning 2019 champion (Finland), Jennifer Freking (Finland) Colleen Wallin (Two Harbors), Joanna Oberg (Grand Marais), Frank Moe (Hovland), Peter McClelland (Isabella), Andrea DeBoer (Grand Marais), Rita Wehseler (Tofte), Alice White (Ely), Ero Wallin (Two Harbors), Nick Turman (Two Harbors), Morgan McClelland (Ely).

The Beargrease website invites all comers to arrive as early as 7:30 am to Billy's Bar at 3502 W. Tischer Road on the 26<sup>th</sup>. If you do, you are welcome to purchase breakfast or coffee, and hang out for the "Meet the Mushers" starting at 9:00 am. If you are interested in lending a hand, go to the [Beargrease.com](http://Beargrease.com) website for volunteer opportunities.

If you do plan to hang out at the start line or any of the checkpoints, be sure to always ask the musher or handlers for permission to pet their dogs. Some dogs

will delight in the attention, while others prefer their space as they focus on the race. And remember, no pets are allowed at any of the race functions.

On Monday, January 27<sup>th</sup> the Trestle Inn in Finland will be a hotbed of excitement. Beargrease 120 finishers will start to come in during the wee hours, and from 6:00 am to 12:00 pm breakfast is free to mushers and volunteers, and a free will offering will be accepted for public attending. From 12:00 to 3:30 pm a soup and bread lunch will be served for \$8.00 at Trestle Inn, and at 1:00 pm the Beargrease 120 Awards Ceremony will be held.

The marathon will end at Grand Portage Lodge and Casino on Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, and the marathon awards and closing ceremonies will be held there on Wednesday, January 29<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am. Guests are welcome to join the event for a breakfast buffet with a suggested \$10 donation (excepting Grand Portage tribal members).

## House Seeks Public Feedback on Recreational Cannabis Legalization

By Kitty Mayo

In Hibbing last week state legislators held a community conversation on the topic of legalizing recreational marijuana, or cannabis.

Hosted by Rep. Julie Sandstede (D-Hibbing), the meeting was a chance for residents to ask questions and share their opinions on what is becoming an ever emerging issue across the country.

Eleven states have legalized recreational cannabis for adults, and South Dakota has recently made the move to put the topic to a vote on their November 2020 ballot. Medical marijuana use is already approved in Minnesota, for conditions such as glaucoma and multiple sclerosis.

Lake County commissioner Rich Sve, now the elected president of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) for 2020, has said that AMC has put the issue in their top ten list of priorities for the year. AMC has already begun to meet with officials for states with recreational cannabis to learn how to best deal with regulating and administering what AMC sees as a obvious eventuality.

Last Spring a bipartisan bill to legalize recreational marijuana was voted down in the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee hearing. Democrats pushed for a task force to study the matter and look at what other states were experiencing, but the Republican controlled Senate did not allow the task force to move forward.

The meeting in Hibbing, headed by House Majority Leader Rep. Ryan Winkler (D-Golden Valley), was the 13th out of 15 similar meetings around the state, encouraging Minnesotans to talk about how to legalize and regulate cannabis for adult use.

Winkler said that the overwhelming sentiment he has noted coming from the meetings is support for cannabis legalization, with similar concerns and hopes.

"People have consistently talked about the health benefits of cannabis for themselves and family members, and especially veterans. The medical program we have now is expensive and hard to use, and the freedom aspect of why we criminalize something that is safer than alcohol, and certainly safer than ciga-

rettes," said Winkler.

Issues that Winkler says need to be worked on include restricting access to minors, and how to train law enforcement to assess driving impairment under cannabis influence.

"It's not as simple as alcohol to check for impairment, but we are talking to law enforcement in Colorado and believe we could fund drug recognition training to recognize the symptoms," said Winkler, adding that according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration there is no clear data correlating cannabis use to increased car accidents in states where cannabis has been legalized.

Winkler plans to draft legislation based on community feedback and research for a bill proposal in February.

According to Winkler 600,000 Minnesotans try recreational cannabis every year, and 67 percent of the population nationwide. With more neighboring and nearby states moving to legalize, he is concerned that more cannabis will be moving into the state regardless of its legal status.

### FREE TAX HELP!

AARP Tax-Aide for taxpayers with low-and middle-income, with special attention to those age 60 and older

North Shore Area Partners and AARP are sponsoring a free tax help program provided by AARP.

North Shore Area Partners, in collaboration with AARP trained volunteers, will be helping people with their taxes for free. Individuals can make an appointment and have free assistance with their tax preparation, rent rebates, or determine whether or not they need to file. Individuals should bring all their tax related information to the appointment with them (identification, last year's tax forms, if available, etc.)

North Shore Area Partners volunteers have generously contributed their time to be trained to provide this service.

Tax preparers will be preparing taxes on Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. starting on February 4<sup>th</sup> through April 14<sup>th</sup> at the Lake County Service Center, Room 19, 99 Edison Blvd, Silver Bay.

To schedule an appointment, call North Shore Area Partners at 218-226-3635 or stop by their office at the Lake County Service Center, Rm 20, 99 Edison Blvd, Silver Bay.

"It already exists, so the real question is whether we are going to continue to use the criminal justice system to deal with it or legalize it? This is a shift from illegal to legal so that we can regulate it, know its potency, tax it appropriately and track it," said Winkler.

Rep. Sandstede says that the most important outcome of the meeting is hearing directly from her constituents.

"For me what I want know what this community is comfortable, and if we should do this incrementally? I already know my constituents have an appetite for expansion of medical marijuana," said Sandstede.

Bills relating to recreational cannabis have already been introduced but have not received a hearing in the Republican-controlled Senate. If senate control switches parties in November, the issue is likely to get hearings and public testimony.

An online survey is available for public comment at: <https://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/cannabis/>