

Agate Girl's Hoops Prove they Belong

By John Sandstrom

The Agate girl's basketball record stands at 3-3 entering this week following a 70-47 loss to Section 7 power, the Esko Eskimos. The three losses have come against three of the strongest teams in the area, including Duluth Marshall, Proctor and the aforementioned Esko squad.

"We have hung with everyone and I think that is an accomplishment. These are top teams," says Coach Dan Lillegaard. The Agates also had a convincing win against a talented Ely squad. Lillegaard continued, "Next week we go to Cherry, which is no small challenge. Year after year, they are consistently a quality team."

Against Esko, Karly Holm led the Agates with thirty-one points, including eight three-pointers. Holm reached the thousand point mark a week ago which is a key threshold of success. "I wasn't that worried about it and didn't

think I would reach it that night. I'm just happy that we are improving every night we get to play. It is great to prove to ourselves that we can play with any of these top teams."

Junior Ava Fosness loves her two hours of focus during basketball practice and games. "I think our team can have a special year. We are coming together well and we balance each other's strengths and weaknesses very well. Practice is a time of my day where I can escape all the bad stuff we hear in the media and are exposed to and just focus on something positive with my teammates. I think we have a special group."

Following the Cherry game, the Agates play in Silver Bay Thursday, January 5th against the Mariners and followup with a trip to Aitkin to face the Gobblers on Saturday, January 7, 2023.

Star of Wonder, Lead Us to Peace



Family friendly Christmas Eve Service
Special Music - Children's Message
Candles and Carols

4 p.m., December 24, 2022
Baptism River
Community Church

NO SERVICES WILL BE HELD ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

Join us New Year's Day

Sunday, January 1, 2023 at 10 a.m.

As we ring in the new year, gathering with friends and neighbors over fresh caramel rolls, and the singing of Christmas Carols led by Robin Sunquiet.

All are invited.



Baptism River Community Church, ELCA
Highway 1, Finland, MN

Grand Marais Library Relaunches Friday Night Reels Winter film series is back



Grand Marais Public Library.
(submitted photo)

Grand Marais, MN, December 16, 2022
Grand Marais Public Library announces the return of Friday Night Reels, a community favorite film series program that takes place at the library each Friday night at 6 PM starting January 6th and lasting until March 10th.

The films are thoughtfully selected by a committee to inspire discussion, and light snacks are provided by the library's sponsor and community partner, the Library Friends of Cook County.

This year's first film is Winter Flies by Slovenian director Olmo Omerzu. Described as a "road movie drama," the film follows two mischievous boys, who drive through the countryside in search of adventure.

No sign-up is required to attend, but seating is limited. The films selected for this series are intended to appeal to adult audiences and may not be suitable for young viewers. Subtitles are displayed. For a full list of films, please visit grandmaraislibrary.org. Cancellations due to severe weather will be listed on the library's website as well.

Grand Marais Public Library thanks the Library Friends of Cook County for their generous and continued support in providing this program. The Grand Marais Public Library increases knowledge, inspires creativity, removes barriers, and builds community across Cook County. For information about getting a library card, call 218-387-1140.

The Long Way Home

By Steve Fernlund

Well, it's that time of year again. The sun rises at a quarter to eight and disappears less than nine hours later.

With the weather we've been getting, the clouds have made the depressing lack of sunlight, short as it is, even worse.

And the snow. Enough already.

On a happier note, the sun is moving towards us again since Wednesday and longer days are coming. The Winter Solstice, a cause for festivals and celebrations for millennia, has led to many of the holiday traditions in modern times.

Ancient cultures viewed this time as one of death and rebirth. Christians adopted it as the time of the birth of their savior. Seinfeld adopted it as the birth of Festivus. And so it went.

Yule, the predecessor to today's Christmas, began as an ancient pagan winter solstice festival. People celebrated with a 12-day feast and burned a Yule Log that stayed lit for all 12 nights. Can you sing the 12 Days of Christmas?

We Swedish people began a festival of lights, called St. Lucy's Day, which honors a Christian martyr from the 3rd century who was killed by the Romans because she brought food to persecuted Christians. Political jokes set aside.

No matter the tradition, or religion, this time of year gives off a feeling of good will to others and near miracles for children.

In my younger days, that time in the 60s filled with dread over communists taking over, our family traditionally celebrated Christmas at home in Richfield. Christmas Eve was not a holiday for most working people.

Dad would start the morning giving a shot or two to the milkman--the two standing just inside the kitchen door and toasting to good health before downing the shots. Knowing how my dad would be later in the day, I won-



dered how the milkman ever completed his route.

Dad would head out in the morning to see customers and vendors and would get home somewhere around dinner time, filled to the brim with Christmas spirit(s).

Our Christmas Eve tradition included pasties for dinner (fast clean up, and Mom made the best pasties) followed immediately by exchange of gifts. Often friends and neighbors would drop by later. And then it was off to Richfield Lutheran Church (RLC) for midnight services.

By the time I'd been disabused of the notion that Santa was a jolly old elf, I was an acolyte at church. We had to arrive early so I could don my robes and light the advent candles.

RLC was a big church in south Minneapolis and it filled to the rafters for Christmas Eve services.

When I'd gotten a bit older I was promoted from acolyte to sound and lights guy.

Sitting at the top of the balcony, looking over the Christmas Eve crowd below and hearing them singing Silent Night, it was easy to believe in the miracle of Christmas. Until you missed a cue to change the lights or activate Pastor Rasmussen's microphone. It's amazing how clearly he could make his displeasure known to me from such a long distance without alerting the congregants to the errors of my ways.

So, we've passed the solstice.

Last Monday was the first day of Chanukah, a Jewish festival of light that ends on Boxing Day this year, December 26.

Kwanzaa is an annual celebration of African-American culture from December 26 to January 1.

Festivus, a secular holiday celebrated on December 23 and made popular on the Seinfeld show includes a Festivus dinner, an unadorned Festivus pole, practices such as the "airing of grievances" and "feats of strength", and the labeling of easily explainable events as "Festivus miracles"

Whatever holidays you celebrate this time of year, or if you celebrate none at all, Merry Christmas to you...everyone.

*Steve Fernlund is a retired business owner, living in Cook County.
He was publisher and editor of the Cook County News Herald in the 90's.
Got a good Cook County story for him? Let us know.
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