



THE VOICE OF THE CHAIN OF LAKES

The Misquah Pilot-Independent

“Where the coffee’s hot, the lakes are cold, and all the children are above average.” — Serving the Chain since 1897.

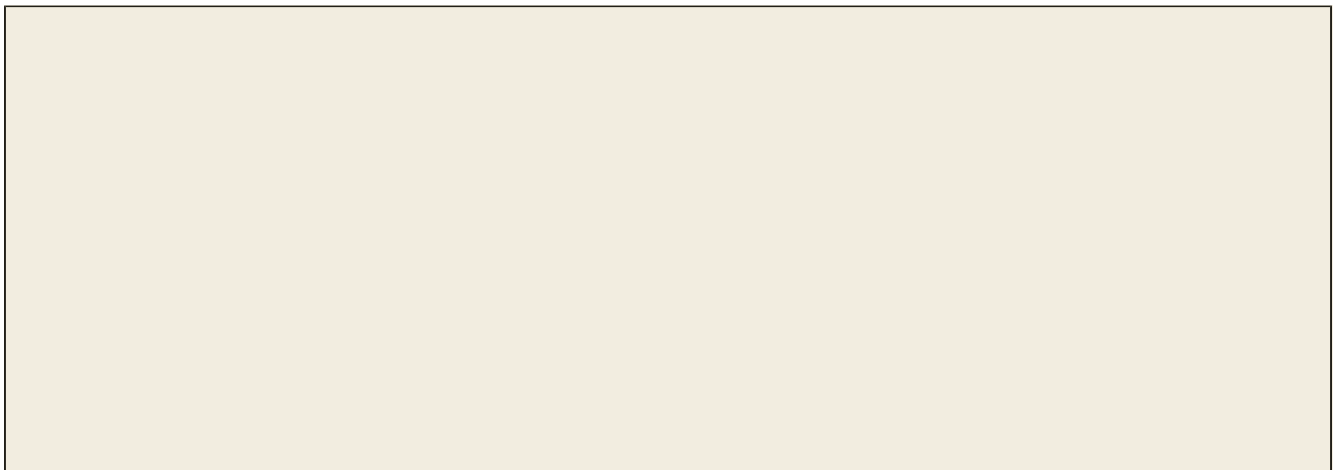
FROM THE ARCHIVE You are reading No. 31, August 4, 2026. Return to this week’s edition →

FORTY YEARS

The Store Closed Early, and the Town Was Already Inside

Walt and Carol Sorensen marked forty years married Saturday with the second official early close in the hardware store’s history — same reason as the first — and discovered that half the town had bought a card, hidden it badly, and believed itself the only one.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON, EDITOR & CHIEF TYPESETTER • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026





TWO O'CLOCK SATURDAY, BEFORE THE SIGN TURNED: FORTY YEARS, AND A COUNTER THAT COULD NOT HOLD THE MAIL. — PILOT-INDEPENDENT PHOTO

The sign went up in the window of Sorensen Hardware at noon on Saturday — hand-lettered, taped at the corners, reading CLOSING AT 2 TODAY, FAMILY MATTER, BACK MONDAY, SORRY AND NOT SORRY — and by quarter past, the aisles were fuller than they have been for any sale in store history. The town had come, ostensibly, for last-minute hardware. It had actually come, cards in jackets and cards in purses

and one card in a toolbox, for Walt and Carol.

The occasion, as the whole Chain knew and pretended it didn't, was forty years: the Sorensens married August 1, 1986, at First Lutheran, and Walt closed the store early that day too — the only other official early close on record. The distinction matters and the record is careful about it. The store has closed early plenty of Saturdays in the fishing sense, unofficially, with Walt

allegedly back by three. It has closed early on purpose, with a sign, exactly twice, and for the same reason both times, which is Carol.

The cards were the day's revelation. For two weeks, by this newspaper's reckoning, half the town had bought one, hidden it in a kitchen drawer, and carried the private conviction that it alone had thought of it.

Saturday they all surfaced at once. They arrived tucked into shirt pockets and pressed flat in Bibles, handed over with elaborate casualness or left on the counter while Walt's back was turned. Walt maintained throughout that he was not counting them. "He counted," Carol said. "Twice. He used the receipt spike."

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IN BRIEF · ELSEWHERE IN NO. 31

Second Avenue. August 15, two o'clock: the taps open and the canvas comes off, "or when the knot gives." →

The bear. Inspected the brewery Thursday night; found the latch culture has spread; moved on with nothing but its reputation. →

Big Pelican. The second juvenile flew Sunday — farther, straighter, and landed better, which the first has not been told. →

County fair. 412 entries, a record barn, and the dates at last: August 19–23, weigh-in the final Saturday at ten. →

The air. Returned Wednesday on schedule. Windows opened in unison; nine boats drifted out at dusk, unlabeled, on purpose. →

Loon Ridge. The smoke-week nines count in full, asterisked in pencil. The asterisk will be reviewed in September. →

"Nine pounds, for those keeping notebooks of their own, is a figure with a birthday coming."

— C. Bjornstad, on the letters page, letting the scale mind itself

NEWS IN THIS EDITION





The Store Closed Early, and the Town Was Already Inside

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COUNTY FAIR

Noon Meant Noon: Entries Close at 412, a Record Barn, and a Pickle Field of Unusual Depth

The window shut Saturday on the largest open-class field in years. The fair itself runs Wednesday, August 19, through Sunday, August 23 — midway from Thursday, giant-pumpkin weigh-in the final Saturday at 10 a.m., on the scale about which nothing further will be printed here.

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THE OLD CO-OP CREAMERY

August 15, Two O’Clock: The Brewery Names Its Day, and the Canvas Comes Off With It

The Holts set the opening for a Saturday afternoon, confirm the sign is revealed “at two sharp, or when the knot gives,” and decline, with visible enjoyment, to say anything further about the name.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON, EDITOR & CHIEF TYPESETTER • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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AFTER THE SMOKE

The Wind Turned on Schedule, and the Town Opened Its Windows in Unison

Wednesday delivered the promised air. The Daybreak cracked its front windows at noon, ceremonially; the porch furniture came back on inspection; Harold Aas was returned to his bench under escort he



called “unnecessary and appreciated”; and at dusk, without anyone organizing it, boats drifted out.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON, EDITOR & CHIEF TYPESETTER • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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THE BEAR

The Bear Inspects the Brewery, Finds the Latch Culture Has Spread, and Moves On

Thursday night the season’s most discerning visitor followed the bread smell to Second Avenue, examined the grain bins, the loading door, and its own reflection, and departed with nothing. The Holts had installed a self-closing latch “out of respect.”

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON, EDITOR & CHIEF TYPESETTER • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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THE HAGEN PASTURE

Thirty-Eight Comments and Climbing: The Hagen File Approaches Its Deadline, and Its Third Drawer

Written comment closes Tuesday, August 18. Clerk Skoglund reports the essays are getting longer, the margins are getting fuller, and the file is one folder from requiring new furniture.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON, EDITOR & CHIEF TYPESETTER • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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AFTER THE SMOKE



What the Smoke Left: An Ink Rung, a Traveled Chair, and Three Photographs Named July

The haze is gone; the inventory remains. A short accounting of what nine borrowed days deposited around town, now that the sky has been returned to its owners.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON, EDITOR & CHIEF TYPESETTER • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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LAKES & OUTDOORS IN THIS EDITION



THE FISHING REPORT

The Lake Gave the Shores Back: August Patterns Arrive, Clarity Suspicious but Welcome

Tim Brevik on the first clear week: walleye sliding toward the deep August program, panfish generous, one unexplained rise near Bass Lake, and a word about fishing a lake you can suddenly see all of.

BY TIM BREVIK, FISHING & WEATHER • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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THE LOONS OF BIG PELICAN

The Other One Decided

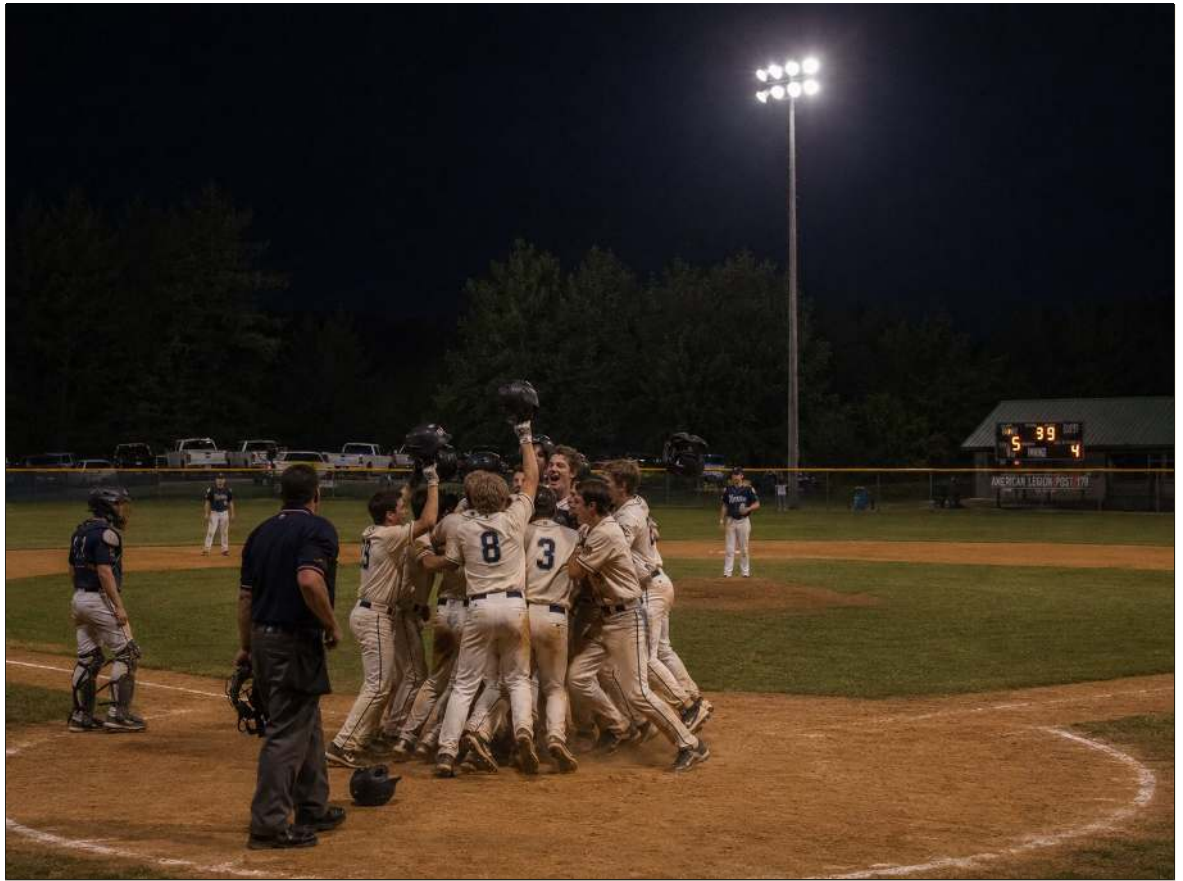
Sunday morning, clear air, no audience to speak of: the second juvenile flew — farther than the first, straighter than the first, and landed better than the first, a fact the first has not been told. The log has closed the chapter.

BY TIM BREVIK, FISHING & WEATHER • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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SPORTS IN THIS EDITION





POST 162 LEGION BASEBALL

Ten Innings, Clear Air, and Ben Aune at the End of It: Post 162 Walks Off Sandstone 4–3

The first game after the smoke went long under the one working tower, and the Legion's reliable source of runs batted in delivered the last of them. Two home dates remain in the season.

BY CURT "SONNY" HALVORSEN, SPORTS • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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LOON RIDGE MEN'S LEAGUE

The Committee Has Reviewed: Smoke-Week Nines Count in Full, Asterisked in Pencil

Head pro Greg Mattson delivers the ruling the league has awaited with unequal enthusiasm. The asterisk will itself be reviewed in September, by the committee, which remains Mattson.



BY CURT “SONNY” HALVORSEN, SPORTS • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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OPINION COLUMNS & EDITORIALS



OUR VIEW

Our View: On Keeping Store

Forty years of “open most days” is a love story, and also a piece of infrastructure. A word about the kind of institution that doesn’t look like one.

BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Letter: On Bird Lists, and the Reading of Other People's Water

C. Bjornstad of rural Misquah responds to recent correspondence concerning binoculars, notebooks, and gates.

BY C. BJORNSTAD, RURAL MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter: The Ordinary Sunset, as Promised

J. Sandvik reports back from the landing.

BY J. SANDVIK, MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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LIVING FEATURES





THE KLATCH • FROM EUNICE

Two Hundred Fourteen Cards, One Receipt Spike, and the Canning Fever Arrives on Schedule

Eunice on the week the drawers gave up their secrets: the anniversary from the inside, the great card confession, the Klatch's return to open windows, and the first symptoms of fair canning, which is not a hobby but a season.

BY EUNICE DAHLQUIST, THE KLATCH & LIVING • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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THE LANDING

The Line Reached the Boat Trailers: The Taco Truck's Best Weekend Yet, Measured the Local Way

Smoke week was hard on a business that depends on people standing outside on purpose. The clear air paid it back with interest — and the salsa recipe remains, as ever, a kindly refusal.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON, EDITOR & CHIEF TYPESETTER • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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SCHOOLS



SCHOOLS • FALL SPORTS

Forms, Fee, Toes: Physicals Are Wednesday, and the Practice Times Go Up With Them

The fall seasons begin the way they always do — in a line at the Lakeside gym with paperwork and socks. Denny Dahl posts practice schedules the same week, and the first whistle of autumn is officially in sight.



BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON, EDITOR & CHIEF TYPESETTER • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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THE LIBRARY

The Summer Reading Finale Is Set: August 28, With Ice Cream, Certificates, and — Doctors Permitting — Mrs. Aune

The record class of forty-one gets its send-off on the last Friday of the month. Ruth Aune intends to hand out the top-tier certificates personally, an intention her doctors have been advised to accommodate.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON, EDITOR & CHIEF TYPESETTER • MISQUAH • AUGUST 4, 2026

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