



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.

NEWS

MUD LAKE BREWING CO.

The canvas came off the sign on Second Avenue at four minutes past two Saturday afternoon — after the knot declined to give and a pocketknife was produced by the hardware store — and the Chain’s first taproom turned out to be named for the one lake nobody defends but two people.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON • AUGUST 18, 2026

MISQUAH — The knot did not give. Jonas Holt, who tied it himself from the inside in July and who has spent three weeks being asked about it by strangers, pulled twice at two o’clock Saturday from the top of a stepladder while something over three hundred people stood in the street and watched a man fail to untie his own rope. On the second

pull, the crowd made a sound. On the third, Walt Sorensen came through the front of it holding a pocketknife, handle first, and said the only thing that needed saying, which was: “Told you. Most days.” At four minutes past two the canvas came down in one piece, and the sign underneath said, in plain black letters on cream, MUD LAKE

BREWING CO. There was a beat of silence — the specific silence of three hundred people rearranging an expectation — and then, from somewhere near the back, a single voice that everyone present identified immediately as Dorothy Knutson, president of the Mud Lake Association, saying, “Well,” in a tone this newspaper is not equipped to transcribe. What followed was the largest sustained noise heard on Second Avenue since the Fourth, and it went on long enough that Annika Holt, standing in the doorway of her own business, had to wait to be heard. “We knew it would either land or it wouldn’t,” she said, later, when the room had thinned to a comfortable seventy and the taps

had been going for two hours. “It landed.” The flagship, poured for the first time at 2:20 p.m. to a line that reached past the alley, is Mud Lake Amber — copper, medium-bodied, faintly sweet, and, in the assessment of the retired postmaster who has been evaluating things at length since 1994, “better than the lake it’s named for, which is not an insult to either one.” It is joined by Second Creamery Pale and by Year Fourteen Stout, whose name required no explanation to anybody in the building and from which the Holts have committed a dollar a pint to the First Lutheran basement roof fund, in perpetuity or until the roof is finished, “whichever the congregation would like to bet on.”

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NEWS IN THIS EDITION



NEWS

Four Were Right, and Everyone Knew Which Four Before It Was Opened

The Klatch’s sealed list of sixty-one guesses traveled four blocks Saturday and was read aloud at the bar. The Mud Lake faction — four people who have been laughed at in this town for a decade — went four for four.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON • AUGUST 18, 2026



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NEWS

“The War,” Described at Last: How the Worst Lake on the Chain Got Its Name on a Building

For a year the Holts have referred to the argument over the name and refused to describe it. With the sign up, they finally did — and it turns out it was one argument, conducted over eleven months, that Annika Holt won with a single observation about how people around here count.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON • AUGUST 18, 2026

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NEWS

The Neighbor, Named at Last: The Truck Was in the Alley by Noon

The food “by arrangement with a neighbor” that the Holts declined to identify for a month turned out to be exactly who the whole town had already decided it was. Mateo and Sofia Martinez sold out at 5:40 and stayed until eight.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON • AUGUST 18, 2026

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NEWS

Fifty-Two Minutes on the Lawn, and Then Ninety People Took Their Chairs to the Water

Band camp closed Thursday with a program Director Moe held to under an hour, one number conducted by a man who has been retired



eleven years, and a migration afterward to the public landing that nobody organized and everybody joined.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON • AUGUST 18, 2026

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NEWS

Sixty-Three at Press Time: The Comment Window Closes This Afternoon at 4:30

The file that began in July with a handful of letters and grew into two drawers takes its last additions today. The planning board meets a week from tonight; the clerk has been at the window since eight.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON • AUGUST 18, 2026

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NEWS

The Halls Are Filling Tonight: 412 Entries Arrive, and the Barn Smells Like August Again

The county fair opens tomorrow morning with judging in the exhibit halls. Quilts arrived Thursday, jars have been arriving since Sunday, and by dark tonight the tables will be full and the fair board will go home to sleep badly.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON • AUGUST 18, 2026

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NEWS

A Dollar a Pint and a Coffee Can on the Bar: The Third Light Tower Gets Its First Real Money in Years

The Holts put a can on the bar for the Legion's light-tower fund on opening day and emptied it twice. With the pledge from Year Fourteen Stout, the fund has moved more in one weekend than in the previous two summers combined.



BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON • AUGUST 18, 2026

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LAKES & OUTDOORS IN THIS EDITION



LAKES & OUTDOORS

Cooler Mornings, Deeper Fish, and the First Honest Talk of Fall

Tim Brevik on the turn: water temps easing, walleye stacking on the deep structure, the panfish worth the trouble again, and a fourth entry in a file he did not intend to keep.

BY TIM BREVIK • AUGUST 18, 2026

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LAKES & OUTDOORS

The Adults Have Started Gathering at the North End

It begins the way it always begins: not with a departure, but with a habit. The Chain's adult loons have started rafting up in the mornings, and the log on Big Pelican has its first entry under the page marked LEAVING.

BY TIM BREVIK • AUGUST 18, 2026

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LAKES & OUTDOORS

Full, and Then Not: The Resort Books Its Last Big Weekend of the Year

Loon Ridge is full through Sunday and then falls off a cliff, as it does every August. Renée Fontaine on the four-week ebb, the guests who



rebook before they leave, and the locals' rate she remains happy to think about.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON • AUGUST 18, 2026

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SPORTS IN THIS EDITION



SPORTS

Four Seniors, One Last Home Game, and a Telephone Held Up at the Fence

Post 162 closed its home season Friday with a 7–4 win over Braham, a night the four departing players will not forget, and a moment in the sixth inning that this page will do its best to describe without embarrassing anyone.

BY CURT “SONNY” HALVORSEN • AUGUST 18, 2026

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SPORTS

Sixteen and Eleven, One Light Tower, and a Summer That Was Better Than the Record

Post 162 finished 16–11 with a section berth and plays Thursday at Cambridge. Sonny declines, one final time, to do arithmetic in print, and offers instead an accounting of what the summer actually contained.

BY CURT “SONNY” HALVORSEN • AUGUST 18, 2026

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SPORTS



Pads Went On Wednesday, and the Grass Is Already Losing

Week one of two-a-days finished with twenty-nine still out, no serious injuries, and a field that looked immaculate Monday morning and considerably less so by Friday afternoon.

BY CURT “SONNY” HALVORSEN • AUGUST 18, 2026

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OPINION IN THIS EDITION



OPINION

Our View: In Praise of the Canvas

For twenty-six days a piece of cloth over a sign gave this town something to be wrong about together. We would like to enter a word on behalf of the practice before we all forget how it felt.

BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD • AUGUST 18, 2026

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OPINION

Letter: On the Eve of the Scale

C. Bjornstad of rural Misquah writes for the last time before Saturday.

BY C. BJORNSTAD, RURAL MISQUAH • AUGUST 18, 2026

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OPINION

Letter: A Perfectly Good Lake

Dorothy Knutson, president of the Mud Lake Association, writes on the occasion of a sign.

BY DOROTHY KNUTSON, PRESIDENT, MUD LAKE ASSOCIATION • AUGUST 18, 2026

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THE KLATCH & LIVING

I Was Standing in the Street When It Came Down, and I Am Going to Tell You About the Sound

Eunice on Saturday afternoon from inside the crowd: the two failed pulls, the pocketknife, the pause, the noise, a nine-year-old on a bar, and the observation that this town cannot keep a secret and just kept one for twenty-six days.

BY EUNICE DAHLQUIST • AUGUST 18, 2026

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THE KLATCH & LIVING

The Klatch Considers a Second Location, Then Reconsiders, Then Splits the Difference

For two days after the opening, the town's oldest institution flirted with relocating four blocks. It has settled instead on an arrangement it insists is not a schism.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON • AUGUST 18, 2026

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SCHOOLS IN THIS EDITION



SCHOOLS

Doris's Lists Come Out of the Drawer: The Spelldown Has Its Words

Six manila folders of Friday spelling lists, kept at the district office since 2011, were opened last week by the committee organizing the



bee that bears her name. The pronouncer has begun practicing, which surprises nobody.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON • AUGUST 18, 2026

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SCHOOLS

Ten Days, and the Blank Panel Is Still Blank

The summer reading finale is Friday the 28th. The ice cream is ordered, the certificates are lettered, forty-one names are on the list, and the space above the eagle tier is waiting for the only person who is allowed to fill it.

BY MARVELLA TOLLEFSON • AUGUST 18, 2026

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