



## *2024 Newsletter*

### **Star Lake Township Annual Newsletter**

Volume 10

2024

It's been two years since our last newsletter. There have been many changes in those two years. Nearly all the restrictions of Covid have been lifted and while Covid may always be around, at least it appears to be under control. Our local township board has seen several changes in the past two years also. We are back to in-person meetings. Please come and join us on the second Tuesday of every month. Meetings start at 6:00 PM. Three former township members have retired since 2021: Lee Mindemann, Keith Aune and Jeff Michaelson.

Emily Riley, current chairperson, replaced Lee in 2021 and is up for reelection at the March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024, election.

Dale Lewis, supervisor, replaced Keith Aune in 2022 and Paulette Johnson, clerk, replaced Jeff Michaelson in 2022.

Tammy Zeigler is the township's other supervisor and has been on the board since 2017.

Ronola Richards, treasurer, has been on the board since 2016. Both the treasurer and clerk are appointed positions.

Let's meet our supervisors:

**Dale Lewis:** I was elected to the Star Lake Township board at the March 2022 election. I currently am acting road foreman, working with a great crew who takes care of the township roads year-round. This includes road grading, snow removal, ditch mowing, shrub, and tree trimming, and the upkeep of our township equipment. I enjoy working for the township to ensure the board is representing the best interests of the property owners of Star Lake Township, meeting new people living in our township, and making sure that peoples voices are heard and respected.

I am married to Yvette Lewis, who grew up on Star Lake. Her family has a long history in the area. We decided to move and retire on the lake and have made this our home for the past 6 years. Growing up in Texas, it took a few years to adjust to Minnesota winters, but I wouldn't trade them now for the Texas heat.

We own the Corner Store at CR 41 and Hwy 108 on Star Lake. I am a semi driver for Speedee Delivery in Fergus Falls. We have 6 children and 6 grandchildren who also enjoy our passion for the area and all seasons on the lake. In my spare time, I enjoy gardening and canning, taking care of our acreage and smoking meats including brisket, ribs, and chicken.

**Emily Riley:**

I am in my 3rd year with Star Lake Township. As current Chairperson, one of my biggest responsibilities is making sure that each meeting is planned effectively, conducted according to the law and that matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner. My regular supervisor duties include employee relations and supervision, township communications and road consultant. I have learned so much in my short time with the township and will continue to serve the residents of SLT to the best of my ability.

I'm a self-employed Massage Therapist and work out of Salon Tru & Day Spa in Fergus Falls. My husband, Tyler, and I live on the west arm of Star Lake with our two dogs. We were both fortunate to have family cabins from early childhood on Star and I still find it amazing that we call it home. I love to be outside. Minnesota winter can be so harsh yet incredibly beautiful if you can stay warm enough! In the non-frozen months, I enjoy being on/in the lake and gardening.

**Tammy Zeigler:**

I grew up in the country west of the cities in Hamel MN. During my years there my father and I belonged to the Hamel Trail Dusters gaming and barrel racing. Loved the country life.

I worked as a CNA during my school years and am a graduate from Wayzata high school, Tech school for Secretarial and Tech school for Dietary Manager.

I moved to Dent/Pelican Rapids in 1986 where I held the job of Dietary Manager/Administrative Assistant in the Dietary Dept. at Lake Region Hospital for ten years. At that time, Bruce Ziegler and I were raising six children between the two of us and I became a stay-at-home mom while he worked as an over the road truck driver. Years later I took a PT job as Promotions Coordinator/Natural Foods Aisle at More 4 until just before they closed. Our next adventure was an Antique Store in Barnesville for ten years. I was a First Responder for Dent and currently I belong to the Co-Op in Pelican Rapids, take care of a 155-acre hobby farm, sell antiques online and do shows and flea markets during the year.

I had the blessed opportunity to go across the Dakotas on a wagon train with my horse, which I sold to the train two years later. I spend summers gardening, lots of yard work and then lots of canning in the fall. Our home was on the garden tour two years ago out of Pelican Rapids. We are expecting our 18th grandchild in January of 2024.

My father Denis Jordan, known as "Big Red", was on the township board in the 70's. I have been a supervisor since 2017. My jobs include managing culverts, signage and weed control. When I came on-board in 2017, we knew the locations of very few culverts. Since then we have located, marked, and recorded 77 culverts. I know I am not popular come noxious weed time, but it is a necessity for our community, animals, and people to keep our community safe and looking beautiful.

It's a challenge to keep your tax dollars working in areas where it benefits everyone plus keeping up repairs on equipment and taking care of our roads and ditches.

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If you have any thoughts, concerns, or questions, please feel free to contact any of the board members or the clerk. Contact emails and phone numbers can be found at the conclusion of this newsletter and also on our website.

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## **TOWNSHIP MEETINGS:**

**Monthly SLT Board Meetings:** SLT board meetings are open to the public and are a good way for citizens to communicate their concerns, and to stay informed on local township issues. Monthly board meetings are held the SECOND TUESDAY of each month at 6:00 PM, unless otherwise noted. \*

**SLT Annual Town Meeting:** In accordance with state law, the Annual Town Meeting and Election are held on the second Tuesday in March each year. In the event of bad weather, the meeting may be postponed until the following Tuesday. Accordingly, this year's meeting and election will be conducted on **March 12th, 2024, at the Town Hall, 31303 380<sup>th</sup> Street.** The election polls will be open from 5PM to 8PM, and the annual meeting will begin at 8:15 PM.

In the election, township voters will cast their ballots for ONE three-year Supervisor position which is currently held by Emily Riley. Candidates running for this position this year are Emily Riley, and Dan Hanson.

Amongst other things, registered SLT voters in attendance at the meeting, will be asked to **approve the annual SLT tax levy for 2025.** Annual Town Meetings, unlike Monthly SLT Board meeting, provide registered voters the opportunity to vote on agenda items.

*Please mark this important date on your calendar now and plan to vote and attend.*

**MARCH 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2024—SLT ANNUAL ELECTION: VOTING 5 PM – 8 PM**

**ANNUAL MEETING 8:15 PM**

**31030 380<sup>TH</sup> ST**

**\*Because the annual meeting is held the second Tuesday of March, the monthly meeting for March will be held on Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM**

## **ELECTIONS 2024**

Not only will SLT have its annual township board position election this year, but there will also be 2, possibly 3, other elections. There will be the Presidential Nomination Primary on March 5<sup>th</sup>. There may be a MN State Primary Election in August. This won't be determined by the state until May. And the General National Election is on November 5<sup>th</sup>. Mark these dates on your calendar. **DO YOUR CIVIC DUTY – VOTE!**

Along with her township clerk responsibilities, Paulette Johnson is also an Election Head Judge and is responsible for recruiting election judges, scheduling training for judges and scheduling judges to work and assist the public at all elections, township, state and national.

An election judge is a paid position. Time spent training, whether at a training site, or on-line, and time spent working an election, is paid at the rate of \$20.00 per hour, plus all mileage to and from training or voting sites, is paid at the rate of \$0.625 per mile. Anyone interested in becoming an election judge, please contact Paulette at [clerk@starlaketownship.org](mailto:clerk@starlaketownship.org).

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**New Website: Coming soon!** We are working on giving our website a new look. We hope it will be easier to navigate and offer the information you need. Please check it out, once available, and let us know how you like it. STARLAKETOWNSHIP.ORG

Also, there is a location on our website for residents to enter their email. We encourage all to do so. Not only does it cut down on the cost of postage but will be used to keep everyone updated on activities and any immediate concerns in the township and to communicate future newsletters.

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### **MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIPS (MAT)**

What is MAT? MAT, is an acronym for Minnesota Association of Townships. SLT is a dues paying member of MAT. MAT is a valuable resource for us by 1). supporting township officials in their work through training and acting as a resource in questions of town law; 2). protecting townships, their assets, and their officers and employees by offering a range of insurance products specifically designed for townships; and 3). defending the prerogatives of township government and advocating for necessary resources in the state legislature.

Both the clerk and the treasurer participated in in-person training classes conducted by MAT trainers as well as used their resources multiple times throughout the year. MAT provides on-line training to clerks and treasurers as well as supervisors which is free of charge to the employees and supervisors. MAT also provides access to in-house lawyers for any technical questions or issues a township may have.

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### **Recycling: Do your part.**

Have you ever heard “Keep America Beautiful”? You for sure have if you are over the age of 60. Keep America Beautiful was founded in December 1953. It was founded by a group of American corporations and conducted many public service announcement campaigns in its early history. Some reports contribute the coining of the term “litterbug” to one of these early campaigns.

In 1971 the Earth Day campaign was launched with the theme, “People start pollution. People can stop it.”

Since these first campaigns in the 50’s, recycling has become a way of life for most. And for those who still are not recycling, Otter Tail County makes it easy. There are many recycling bins located in towns, and various parking lots across the county which accept plastic, glass, cans, cardboard, magazines, etc. as well as the larger facilities located in Pelican Rapides, Fergus Falls, and New York Mills.

Have larger items and don’t know what to do with them? There are several recycling companies in the area. One of which is Wadena Hide and Fur. They are not only interested in hides and fur, but will also

**buy** scrap iron, pop cans, auto and marine batteries, and other various metals such as copper, aluminum, brass, and cars! Who knew cleaning up our homes and yards could put a few extra dollars in our pockets along with making our section of America Beautiful!

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## **ROAD RIGHT OF WAY (ROW) ISSUE**

This is a topic that has been addressed in nearly every single issue of SLT's past newsletters and yet it continues to be an issue.

ROW laws are very prescriptive with ample legal precedent and are rarely overturned. They are tough laws because they need to be. The road right of way provides for effective maintenance operations, the accommodation of public utilities and the safety of the general traveling public. The MN Statute that covers state, county, township, and municipal roadways is MN Statute 160.

Here are the basics of the Statute:

1. *Do not plant, place, or build "anything" but grass and a legal mailbox with the road right of way.*
2. *Do not push or dump snow onto a roadway or within its ROW.*
3. *Do not cultivate/farm the ROW or its ditch.*
4. *Trees do not become "trees" until they are 6" in diameter at a point 24" above ground—less than that, they are legally considered "brush" and can be legally removed by the road authority at its discretion.*

Note: Township Officers do NOT write these laws but are legally sworn to insure they are complied with and the SLT Board is committed to addressing any and all of these violations.

Violations will be addressed as follows:

1. ROW violations that present a clear and present danger to the public will be addressed immediately and depending upon circumstances may be corrected without prior notice.
  2. ROW violations that have a negative impact on employee safety, roadway stability, or drainage will be the next priority. Property owners will be advised of the violation and requested to take corrective action.
  3. "New" ROW violations will be addressed next to avoid "growing" more problems. Property owners will be advised of the violation and requested to take corrective action.
  4. SLT will continue with its tree trimming operations which essentially includes the trimming of branches over-hanging the ROW at an elevation of less than 14 feet. Removal of trees will only be done with the owner's permission.
  5. An increased use of legal counsel to address specific SLT ROW issues to ensure property owners and township rights are properly respected.
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## **NOXIOUS WEEDS**

Per MN State Law, townships are required to conduct annual inspections for noxious weeds and report findings back to their local Soil & Water Conservation District each spring.

What is a noxious weed? Visit this State of Minnesota site for a list: [www.mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects/minnesota-noxious-weed-list](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects/minnesota-noxious-weed-list)

Things to know about noxious weeds:

1. Prohibited: This means all plant parts are to be destroyed by means of an herbicide, dug up and burned, or bagged and put in the county dumpster. Some of these weeds include *Giant hogweed*, *Common Teasel*, *Yellow Star Thistle*, *Dalmatian toad flax* and *Meadow Knapweed*.
2. Controlled: This means the use of herbicides or mowed prior to going to seed. Some of these weeds include, *Galic Mustard*, *Plumless Thistle*, *Leafy Spurge*, *Narrow leaf Bittercress*, *Canada Thistle*, *Purple Loose Strife*, *Leary Spurge* & *Wild Parsnip*, and *Common Tansey*,
3. Restricted: *Glossy Buckthorn* and *Common Buckthorn* are detrimental to humans and animal health.
4. *Specially Regulated*: Measures must be taken to minimize potential harm caused by these plants such as *Poison Ivy*.

Not sure what these weeds look like? There are several plant identification apps for cell phones. One of the more reliable apps is "Picture This".

If you are unsure and need help identifying a noxious weed, contact SLT's local weed inspector, Tammy Zeigler at [sup3@starlaketownship.org](mailto:sup3@starlaketownship.org).

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## WINTER OPTIONS

A couple brief reminders on snow operations:

1. When cleaning out your drive, DO NOT deposit snow upon the roadway or its ROW. This applies to all public roads, and it is state law.
  2. Please do not park anything on the roadway in advance of, or during a snow event. Many of our roads are narrow and we cannot afford to have a plow truck get stuck trying to get around a parked vehicle.
  3. Property owners- if possible, please do not park seasonal use items such as watercraft, trailers, docks/lifts, or any type of vehicle within the ROW or close to it. This is especially critical for those areas prone to severe drifting during the winter. This greatly complicates/inhibits our snow plowing ability. **Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!**
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## DUST CONTROL

Individuals interested in requesting seasonal dust control are reminded that applications for such are due May 1<sup>st</sup>, along with full payment. Applications and the current rate can be found online on our

website or by contacting the clerk at [clerk@starlaketownship.org](mailto:clerk@starlaketownship.org). Applications and payment should be submitted to Star Lake Township, PO Box 61, Dent MN 56528.

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## **EMPLOYMENT**

The township is always looking for interested people to share their skills and talents with the township, whether it be as an elected official (you must be a resident of Star Lake Township to qualify), or a member of the maintenance team or as an election judge. If interested in options SLT has to offer, please contact Emily at [sup2@starlaketownship.org](mailto:sup2@starlaketownship.org) or Paulette at [clerk@starlaketownship.org](mailto:clerk@starlaketownship.org).

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## **MISC:**

The township had a safe year with no incidents to report.

A canopy was built to shield the gas pumps from the elements.

SLT switched propane and gas/diesel provider to Ashby Equity earlier this year. Ashby replaced one of the gas pumps this fall. The other pump will need to be replaced in the near future.

The garage which holds the Caterpillar grader, was insulated and a heater was added. This will keep the machine in much better condition and make starting it in the cold winter months easier.

SLT purchased the grader 3 years ago. The original loan amount was \$176,000. The payoff balance on the loan as of December 2023 is \$123,361.18.

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## **STAR LAKE TOWNSHIP STAFF**

Terry Johnson	General maintenance, mowing and primary operator of snow grader.
Mike Sundblad	Summer motor grader operator and alternate for winter operations.
Jim Piper	Primary snowplow driver
Doug Kugler	Tree trimming, beaver trapping and other general maintenance

Thanks to each of our staff for the excellent work in 2023.

## **SUPERVISOR CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Emily Riley	218-205-1574	<a href="mailto:sup2@starlaketownship.org">sup2@starlaketownship.org</a>
Dale Lewis	903-815-9867	<a href="mailto:sup1@starlaketownship.org">sup1@starlaketownship.org</a>
Tammy Zeigler	701-367-7164	<a href="mailto:sup3@starlaketownship.org">sup3@starlaketownship.org</a>

**TREASURER CONTACT INFORMATION**

Ronola Richards 218-205-7616 [treas@starlaketownship.org](mailto:treas@starlaketownship.org)

**CLERK CONTACT INFORMATION**

Paulette Johnson 763-412-0377 [clerk@starlaketownship.org](mailto:clerk@starlaketownship.org)

[Newsletter compiled and written by Paulette Johnson](#)



