Dick Swenson probably has told the story a thousand times, about a canoe trip he and his brother made to make 2,000 saws camping box or aluminum, literally — search on as liked it so much they so the blade stows it down one Minneapolis to bend the to all years of D3 Duluth. But Id id end channel. for part of that carry. (Mine has been on March 9. handles just right. Swenson said. “That March 15 ... And by get- Fox News. buoyed Minne- fishing trips or Duluth his financialw oes most famous out- 60 near KnifeL ake, including backpacks in ac anoe. ac ar-camping trip to was made out of tryingt oc ut firewood,’’ well as canoe fishing I had af ull-time job CAMPING STAPLE, TURNS 17 it wasn ation- "So Iw enth ome and found the perfect he purchased at on tools that is recalled some years later while in the handle. Other weight or space is an

company in Sweden. But the first produced prototypes didn’t work. The aluminum was too soft, and the saw handle crumpled when the blades were tightened to use. The problem was solved by heat-treating the aluminum, and the first Sven-Saw hits the market.

They’ve been selling well ever since — on average 15,000 per year. Do the math and that’s approaching 1 million Sven-Saws sold, and it’s safe to say most are still cutting wood. (About the only thing that can go wrong is you lost the wing nut that fastens the blade to the handle, which you can replace at any hardware store.)

“Really, it’s a hobby, not a career. But it’s been good to us, too. It helped my daughters through college,” said Swenson, now 88 and still helping run the company.

Swenson grew up in Minneapolis, received his engineering degree from the University of Minnesota and worked summers at a Honeywell machine shop. “That’s where he learned how to make and thread things. Dick moved in 1962 to Duluth, where he met Linnea ‘Cecile’ Hilding. They married in 1963 and continued to take camping trips into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness for decades.

Swenson originally called his invention the Sven-Saw, but everyone up here (in northern Minnesota) called it “Sven,” so that’s what it’s called.”

The first big break came when L.L. Bean decided to carry the saw in its catalog, back when the Maine-base outdoor company sold camping gear as well as boots and other things. Then, during a trip to visit the Seattle World’s Fair, 1962, Swenson stopped in at the office of Recreational Equipment, Inc. to see if they, too, might put the saw in their catalog.

**SVEN:** Page D3

Babe Winkelman moves from television to streaming online

Good Fishing and Outdoor Secrets are anchor shows on new getoutdoors.tv

By John Myers jmeyers@duluthnews.com

You could forgive Babe Winkelman if he’s feeling a bit down one morning back in March when his name came up on Fox News.

“We filed for bankruptcy on March 9. Vine (newspaper story) ran March 15 ... And by March 17 it was national news. We were the number-one search on Google for part of that day, and coronavirus for a few hours,” Winkelman said.

But instead of feeling fed up with the process, Winkelman was thankful for the opportunity to figure out how his financial woes virtually closed Minnesota’s most famous outdoors TV show. Winkelman said. “It just showed me that our reach went much, much farther than I ever imagined.”

Branded-based Winkelman, his wife Kris and their business, Babe Winkelman Productions, are going through the process of Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization.

“We were already in the process of reorganizing how we did things, trying to online ... But then we ran out of cash,” Winkelman said.

Now, at 71, Winkelman is not only trying to start fresh to make a living, he’s trying to reinvigorate his brand and get it to audiences that aren’t willing to get up early on Saturday morning or stay up late Sunday night just to watch a fishing show.

A wealth of issues sur- faced over the past three years, said Winkelman, to force the bankrupt- crisis. But he eventually was contacted by James Heckman, the CEO of Maven, a major multi- media platform company that now included something called getoutdoors.tv. (Maven also owns Sports Illustrated, Backpacker, Ski, Oxygen and many other multimedia labels reaching more than 100 million people monthly.)

Starting this month, several seasons of both Good Fishing and Outdoor Secrets are available at getoutdoors.tv, streaming when- ever you want to watch. A wealth of issues sur- faced over the past three years, said Winkelman, to force the bankrupt- crisis. But he eventually was contacted by James Heckman, the CEO of Maven, a major multi- media platform company that now included something called getoutdoors.tv. (Maven also owns Sports Illustrated, Backpacker, Ski, Oxygen and many other multimedia labels reaching more than 100 million people monthly.)

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They were a tiny mountain climbing supply company operating out of the second floor of a dilapidated building in downtown Duluth.

But the company — you’d have to consider it as being born again — liked Swenson’s saw and has been marketing it ever since. The Sven-Saws are now available at camping outfitters recognized nationally and internationally, including Amoson, Campground, and Frontier River. The 21-inch Sven-Saw is priced at about $100.

Steve Peglow, a partner at Peglow Northwoods Co., Duluth, said the Sven-Saw has been a hit with customers, which is why he’s put more stock in it.

“It’s light and compact and costs about all you need for a camping trip,” Peglow noted, adding that the company has seen a huge increase in sales over the past five years.

A guided hike along state ATV trails.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has announced the availability of state ATV trails. The trails are open to the public and are available for free. More information can be found at 218-837-9900 or go to www.dnr.state.mn.us/atv.

Steve Piragis, owner of Steve Piragis Northwoods Co., Duluth, said the Sven-Saw has been well-received by customers.

“People like the Sven-Saw because it’s lightweight, easy to carry and easy to use,” Piragis said.

Here’s how to send us your photos:

Send photos to: photos@duluthnews.com

By noon on Monday, May 25, the News Tribune will publish a list of all photos that are being submitted.

Send videos to:

Send videos to: videos@duluthnews.com

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OUTDOOR NOTES

"Outdoor Secrets," fol- lowed by "Outdoor Secrets II," are two television shows that are broadcast on UMD. Both shows are produced by the University of Minnesota’s Department of Communication Studies.

Editor’s note: Some events may have been canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic. Check with local orga- nizations before attending.

"Free Fun Weekend," June 6-7, Wisconsin state parks and ATV trails. State parks will offer free admission stickers or U-Card holders, while ATV trails will offer free passes. More information can be found at 218-726-7128 or go to www.dnr.state.mn.us.

"Day tripper" for the age 16, and started writing for magazines.

A second show that featured on hunting, "Outdoor Secrets II," was the National Hunting and Fishing Day of Minnesota.

"Full Day of Surf, Where Are We Going?" is a half-hour format broadcast that features northern U.S. fishing photos! We want your fish handling of fish that are being mishandled under generally accepted standards.

A third show that was involved in national television, "Wicker Man," was the first TV show. "Good Hunting!", hit the airwaves in 1976 as a segment during TV news sports broadcasts and went to a half-hour format in 1975, one of the first major outdoor shows to feature northern U.S. and Canadian fishing and not southern-state largemouth bass. A second show that focused on hunting, "Outdoor Secrets," fol- lowed later.

Winkleman was inducted into the National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame in 1991 and the Hall of Fame of Minnesota in 2001.

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