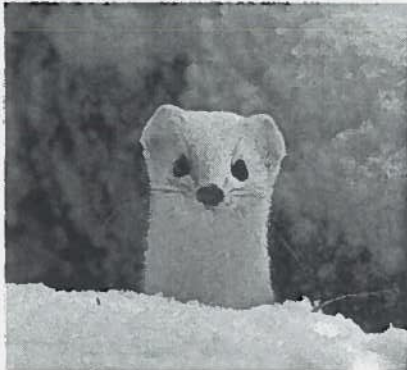


Letters from MRFY

March Madness

I came into work one morning and there were some strange tracks in the snow in our drive-through. Normally, it's a safe bet that the raccoons and deer will make foray into the outdoor recycling area during some evening hour, something akin to late-night college hijinks but with the island beasties. The snow was pushed up and errant beer cans were strewn about on the ground, leading me to believe that members of some local animal fraternity were having a bit of fun. I cleaned up the mess and proceeded with my morning, coffee in hand doing my usual routine; however, something left me a little uneasy...like...I was being watched. The wind died down. The crows stopped gawking and it was quiet...too quiet. In the summertime, when I'm walking through the woods, I can sometimes catch a glimpse of something out of the corner of my eye but, when I turn my head, it magically disappears. This was the same. Like, at any given



moment a rabid wolverine would leap out of a barrel of aluminum and that would be all she wrote for this ole boyo. I sat, coffee in hand and, after a moment or two, the stalker finally revealed itself.

Mustela erminea - stoat, ermine, short-tailed weasel - a quick-eyed piece of lightning; a savvy hunter with a mouth full of mouse. These were the two contestants in the great battle that ensued outside. It also answered the question as to why the mouse population has been in decline here at the MRF. Ernie the Ermine (as I have named him) peeled out of the corner and took off behind the electrical panel, its last tiny little tail flipping away into the darkness. But even then, there were signs of hope; his back half was speckled with brown, which means one thing; spring is coming.

The MRF is on the cusp of busy. These warm, sunny days cause the roofs to melt with little rivulets of winterwater flowing to the lake. I'm getting excited about the return of green grass and smiling faces. The process continues of planning a straw-bale garden behind our warehouse, to demonstrate a small-scale compost slurry program. Tomatoes, mostly, and maybe some snap peas. Soon, the autos will be demolished and packed off to the scrap yard, opening more space and more opportunity. Office work continues, with the DNR self-certification completed for another year, and seeing if the new pulp mill in Duluth wants our paper and cardboard. I'll be buying paint for the new MRF History display and have received a couple of nice pictures to start our journey through time (thank you, Jimmy Erickson!). Material prices are LOW LOW LOW so there may be a need to warehouse more bales until they can recover. All in all, the status quo of March Madness is intact. We are pressing onward with hiring a new transportation specialist in the next month. And then it's off to the races.

Have a MR Ftastic Day!

Martin A. Curry
Recycling Supervisor

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Initial: dg