



Central Valley merging with Truman cooperative

By KAREN JORGENSEN
County Staff Writer

Central Valley Cooperative, headquartered in Owatonna, will be merging with Watonwan Farm Service (WFS), a cooperative based in Truman, the two cooperatives announced last week.

Voting members of both cooperatives have given their approval to the merger plan, said Gary Mohr, CEO of Central

Valley. Both memberships were overwhelmingly in favor of the unification and exceeded the state required two-thirds majority (67 percent) with 74.86 percent of the Central Valley ballots in favor and 75.86 percent of the WFS ballots in favor.

The merger will not go into effect until March 1, Mohr said. The new company will be named Central Farm Service, he said, and will maintain the

offices in both Owatonna and Truman.

Mohr said that he will become the chief administrative officer of the new cooperative while WFS CEO Todd Ludwig will become CEO of the merged company.

Cooperative members will see very little change in the day-to-day operations of the cooperative, Mohr said. The locations of Central Valley and WFS did not overlap, he said, and the new

cooperative will be offering the same services as the two did independently.

What will change, he said, is that the new organization will be larger and be able to operate more efficiently in areas such as purchasing.

The plan was first announced to the respective memberships of the coopera-

MERGER
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Father
charged in
infant son's
death

By RICK BUSSLER
Publisher



Stucky

A heavy day of drinking alcohol by the father is suspected in the death of an infant baby, according to charges filed in Steele County District Court.

Cory Neal Stucky, 30, of Blooming Prairie, has been charged with second-degree manslaughter and child endangerment, both felonies, in connection with his role in his son's death in July. He could face up to 15 years in prison if convicted on the charges.

Stucky appeared in court last week and was released on the conditions that he abstain from any use of alcohol or other controlled substances. He is due back in court Jan. 4.

Police responded to a medical emergency of a child not breathing at Stucky's residence in the 100 block of 2nd Street Northeast in Blooming Prairie around 7:20 a.m. on July 18. The almost 2-month-old baby was taken by ambulance to a hospital in Austin where he died a short time later.

Stucky told police at the time that he had fallen asleep with the baby on his chest and had woken up to his girlfriend screaming that the child was not breathing, according to court documents. Stucky took off for the hospital.

An investigator with the Mower County Coroner's Office interviewed the parents of the child. During that interview, Stucky said nobody, including the baby, was sick in the house. He told the investigator the last thing he remembered was being up until about 1:30 a.m. at which time he placed the child on his chest face down. When he was asked if he had been drinking, Stucky denied having anything to drink and that he was a heavy sleeper, court documents say.

The investigator also interviewed the boy's mother, who said she found the child lying face down by Stucky's right arm. When she noted the baby was cold to the touch and not breathing, she immediately began to cry and scream, called 911 and started CPR.

The baby's grandfather told investigators that Stucky went around the house picking up empty beer cans and placing them in a garbage bag, according to the complaint. The relative also said a friend took the bag away from the house to dispose of it.

A couple days after the death, the investigator once again inquired about Stucky's alcohol consumption. When asked why he didn't disclose that he had been drinking, Stucky responded that it was because he had never been asked. At that point, Stucky admitted to drinking 10 beers before laying down with the baby, court documents say.

During an interview with the mother, investigators learned that Stucky started drinking alcohol around 11 a.m. and he had at least 24 beers between 11 a.m. and 9 p.m. on the day prior to the child's death. The mother reported that he had gone to a local bar later in the

CHARGES
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Historic look preserved in KIK Graphics building in downtown Blooming Prairie

By HOWARD LESTRUD
Staff Writer

The "WOW" factor was evident Wednesday night, Dec. 23, as more than 200 visitors toured a restored downtown building in Blooming Prairie.

The building, which dates back to 1885, at 110 Highway Ave. North is now the home of KIK Graphics and Printing, operated by Tyler Kruckeberg. The graphics business was moved to its new location from 500 Minimizer Way.

Kruckeberg, 25, was a focus of attention at an open house on Wednesday night.

Tyler's father Craig, owner and chief visionary of Minimizer, was accepting congratulations, too, for spearheading the remodeling of the building on the corner of Highway 218 and Main Street. He chose to be in the background, however, saying this venture belonged to his son, Tyler. The building has been in the remodeling stage since June.

Lots of "oohs" and "ahs" were heard as guests looked



ABOVE: Tyler Kruckeberg, owner of KIK Graphics and Printing, cuts the ribbon during an official Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce ceremony at an open house for KIK on Wednesday night, Dec. 23. Chamber members Jeremy Wangen, far left, and Luke Swenson (President) hold the ribbon.
BOTTOM RIGHT: Tyler Kruckeberg is the head of operations at KiK Graphics, which just moved to a new location on Highway 218 and Main Street in Blooming Prairie.

Staff photos by Howard Lestrud

KIK GRAPHICS
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New digs for KIK Graphics in Blooming Prairie

By HOWARD LESTRUD
Staff Writer

What once was a home to an egg factory, to a public library, to an ambulance garage and to a real estate office is now the new home of KIK Graphics

of Blooming Prairie. The new inhabitant now carries the downtown address of 110 Highway Ave. North.

A public open house drew a large crowd on Wednesday, Dec. 23, with refreshments provided. A \$20 donation was asked to help support the Boys

and Girls Club of Blooming Prairie.

Members of the Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce led a special ribbon cutting on Wednesday with KIK Graphics owner Tyler Kruckeberg and Chamber President Luke Swenson sharing the scissors.

The old building located on the corner of Main Street and Highway 218 was fully refurbished by a large contingent of workers. KREH LLC con-

KIK RIBBON CUTTING
Continued on Page 6B

Our top 10 news stories of 2015

By ALAN VAN ORMER
Managing Editor

The year is ending and it was a busy one for the Steele County Times staff. In 2015 there were several

staff changes and a peculiar mix of types of stories that highlighted the year.

There was plenty of news to cover. As we head into 2016, the Steele County Times editorial staff take a look back at what happened in 2015 and put together

our top 10 list. It was a difficult task because there is so much happening in the communities of Blooming Prairie, Ellendale, Medford and Owatonna. Enjoy our top 10 list for 2015.

#10 Jostens sold for \$1.5 billion

Jostens has been sold for approximately \$1.5 billion in a definitive agreement to Jarden Corp., according to Jarden's announcement.

With operations in Eagan, Edina and Owatonna, Jostens totals approximately 800 employees in Minne-

sota. About 475 of those employees are full-time and seasonal workers in the Owatonna facility. There are 3,500 Jostens workers nationwide. Jostens is the main operating unit of Visant Holding Corp. Jarden Corp. is a leading global consumer products company with

a portfolio of over 120 authentic brands, such as Sunbeam kitchen appliances and Coleman outdoor gear.

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INSIDE **A:** 4APUBLIC SAFETY **B:** 4B.....LEGALS
8A ...CHRISTMAS CONCERTS 6B....NEW YEAR'S BABY **C:** 2C ..YEAR IN REVIEW
6C.....OWATONNA

D: 2D.....FARM LIVING
5D....EMPLOYMENT

Opinion

Our view

New year, new ideas

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) School Board is heading into 2016 with a bang. The school board members are contemplating a strategic plan that includes incorporating the five goals for the World’s Best Workforce with close to 30 different strategies to achieve those goals. Granted, several are currently being used, but there are many more that are new to the process. And that is what a new year is all about: finding new ways or strategies to move your company or business forward.

There are several reasons why this is important. First, as many know, technology plays a major part in the way business is conducted in this day and age. If you can’t keep up with the new changes in technology, then your company has a good chance of falling behind.

For example, NRHEG is placing all of this information on its website in order to keep people involved with what is happening. Another way the school district has kept up with the technology issues is providing the school board members school e-mail addresses and Chromebooks in order to do school district-related business.

A second reason why it is important to develop new strategies is that you don’t want to have your company going stale. A stale company means you are doing the same thing, the same way and that turns off both customers and employees.

Take, for example, the Steele County Times. Each year we try to come up with innovative ways to tell our stories and design our newspaper. We also try to add a new idea or two to make the newspaper more attractive.

One example was providing a specific page for each of our communities. We believe that has helped with our readership. Another example was our five-week series on domestic violence that ran toward the end of the year. This allowed our writers to provide more details about this issue and give our readers a more comprehensive view of a subject.

A third point is that is always important to include ideas from your employees as your company moves forward. You can never imagine what kind of creativity that these people have in your company. Sometimes they are not asked what they think. And that is a mistake!

Not only do they have great ideas, if they are left out of the equation, many employees feel they are not part of an organization and their morale does drop. That can’t happen if you want your company to move forward in 2016.

The most important thing is that a strong company also means a strong economy, which turns into strong communities, and that is what the thought should be heading into 2016.



The reason for the season at McNeilus

Deck the halls with balls of holly. And so there have been festive decorations galore all over the place.

One of the most striking holiday displays I have come across is prominently displayed along Highway 14 in Dodge Center. McNeilus Steel, a family-owned steel distributor in the upper Midwest and based in Dodge Center, has once again put forth what’s perhaps the largest display in at least Dodge County if not the entire region.

For roughly the past 10 years, owner Pat McNeilus has given motorists traveling past Dodge Center and others the gift of holiday lighting at its finest and most spectacular form. Mayor Bill Ketchum coordinates the display, which is designed by Red Nose Lighting in Rochester.

The display is fully funded by McNeilus at “a very significant cost,” according to Ketchum. Company officials did not want to release how much the display costs, but told me it is in excess of \$10,000.

Because of the high cost, McNeilus keeps the same display for two or three years before switching it out.

This year’s display is in its first year and takes on a strong religious undertone by featuring a nativity scene and the words noticeably proclaimed and displayed, “The reason for the season.”

“Pat is a real strong Christian,” said Mayor Ketchum. “The basic thing is he wants to keep Christmas what it is. It’s Christ’s birthday and he wants people to remember that,” he

HOT PURSUIT



RICK BUSSLER

added.

Folks can expect “Christmas” to always be displayed around McNeilus. “Everything we put up should have Christmas,” Ketchum said.

What a breath of fresh air. In this crazy world and with a culture shying away from religion, it’s refreshing to see one of the area’s largest employers making a bold statement.

At times I wonder if we have really lost the true meaning of Christmas. There are so many signs pointing in that regard. Christmas starts too early. It seems like as soon as Halloween is over, we go straight to Christmas.

Sadly, many people no longer believe in Christ. In a recent survey, less than three-quarters of children knew Christmas was to celebrate the birth of Jesus, with 11 percent believing it was the birthday of Father Christmas. This shows us that society sees Christmas as a shopping holiday and society is only too happy to keep this momentum going.

It’s also sad that many people have replaced “Merry

Christmas” greetings with “Happy Holidays.” It’s almost as if mentioning the word “Christmas” is taboo. How pathetic has our society really become?

Christmas is a celebration of Jesus. I hope folks will not forget that as they gather with their families and open presents this week. I’m thankful for people like McNeilus to help convey the important Christ message to thousands of people traveling across southern Minnesota. McNeilus is making a profound statement that many are afraid to touch now-a-days.

The mayor couldn’t agree more. “We’re trying to celebrate the birth of Christ,” he says. “It’s been lost. Our country is yielding too often to a small group of people.”

McNeilus’ Christmas holiday display will be featured until mid-January. But folks won’t have to wait until next Christmas to see another display. In May, McNeilus will put up a “God Bless America” exhibit, which will be featured throughout the summer months until Labor Day.

The holiday displays are just one small example of how McNeilus is a great supporter of the community, Dodge County and the rest of the region.

It bears repeating as families celebrate Christmas and New Year’s. Kudos to McNeilus for helping us all go in hot pursuit of finding the real reason for the season. Happy New Year!

A \$15,000 shocker

A GLIMPSE OF STEELE COUNTY



ALAN VAN ORMER

Not one, not two, but three people were in total shock on Dec. 22 when Cheri Krejci and Jennifer Milton, members of the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group, presented The Hormel Institute of the University of Minnesota a \$15,000 check to assist with breast cancer research.

What a gift!

The cancer group has been known to provide donations to The Hormel Institute and the Eagles Fifth District Cancer Telethon that will be occurring in January in Rochester, Minnesota. This is what the group is all about: finding ways to help find a cure for cancer.

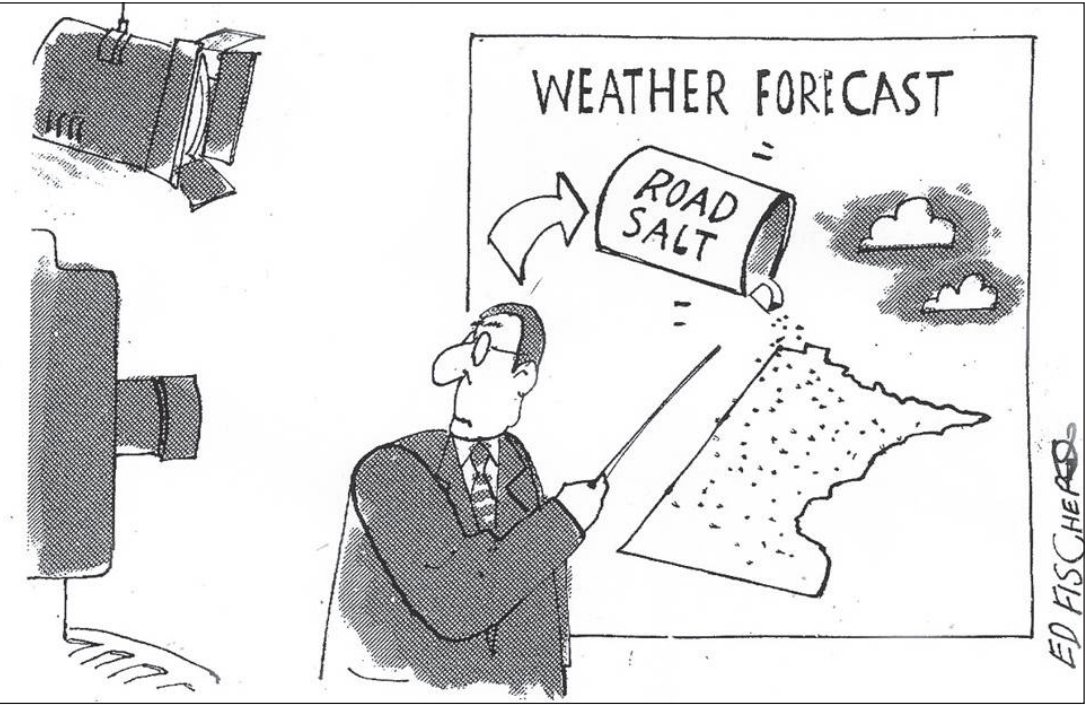
And with each donation by the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group and others, it continues to motivate the scientists that are trying to find a cure for the dreaded disease.

Take for example, Dr. Zigang Dong, executive director of The Hormel institute. He was more than shocked when the check was presented. A large smile materialized on his face, and he just reached over and gave Krejci a large hug to show his joy for the donation that was made.

What he had to say kind of sums up the way the researchers feel about these donations: “This is a surprising, really wonderful gift. I’m thrilled and touched. We will work hard to save people’s lives.”

Throughout the year donations are provided by groups and individuals. Each year there are several events that are put on in order to help raise money for cancer research. And each of those donations can be put toward a specific type of research.

Many are excited about the opportunity to provide donations to The Hormel Institute because it is a local organization they are giving money to. And, everyone feels much more comfortable when you know that your money is going to a location near to you and a cause that is dear to you.



Mailbag

Thank you from Steele County Toys for Tots Program

The Steele County Toys for Tots Program has wrapped up the 2015 toy drive. This year’s program served 530 families for a total of 1,306 children receiving gifts in Steele County.

Thank you to the donors who filled the 105 toy collection boxes in 89 locations throughout Steele County. And to those who selected an Angel from an Angel Tree site you helped made a child’s

Christmas morning brighter. Through toy and cash donations, every child received gifts, a book, and stocking stuffers.

Over three-hundred volunteers helped move, sort, stock and shop for toys during distribution at Trinity Lutheran Church of Owatonna. Thank you volunteers for your time and dedication to the Steele County Toys for Tots Program, we could not serve our communities without your help. And thank you to Trinity Lutheran Church for your staff and facility during the distribution of toys.

Several events hosted

in 2015 also contributed to the success of the Toys for Tots program, including the Bikers of Blooming Prairie Annual B.O.B. Motorcycle Ride, Breakfast with Santa at the Owatonna V.F.W., and the Owatonna American Legion Cookie Auction who took in funds and toys to support the program.

Although the Steele County Toys for Tots Program has wrapped up the 2015 season, businesses and individuals can make cash donations year-

MAILBAG

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STEELE COUNTY Times

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A STATE AND NATIONAL AWARD WINNING WEEKLY

2015
4 National Awards
7 State Awards

2014
3 National Awards
3 State Awards

2013
2 National Awards
7 State Awards

2012
2 State Awards

2011
4 National Awards

(Awards presented by Minnesota Newspaper Association and National Newspaper Association)



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DEADLINES

News: Noon Fridays.
Advertising: 4 p.m. Thursdays.

LETTERS POLICY

The opinions of our readers in the form of Letters to the Editor are a vital contribution to the healthy exchange of ideas on the Steele County Times opinion page. All letters must be signed by the writer/writers and include a telephone number for verification purposes. Letters are accepted through personal delivery, by mail or by email at bptimes@frontiernet.net.

Opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Steele County Times and the editor reserves the right to edit letters when necessary. Please limit opinions to no longer than 350 words.

The Steele County Times encourages readers to write letters to the editor as a means of communicating ideas and opinions with others, with a goal being to make the community better for all people.

ETHICS

The Steele County Times editorial staff strives to present the news in a fair and accurate manner. Please bring any grievances against the Steele County Times to the attention of the managing editor.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Steele, Dodge, Freeborn & Mower....\$38
Elsewhere in Minnesota.....\$40
Out of state \$42

News

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#9

St. Isidore shuts down

Dwindling enrollment forced a long-time education institution in Steele County to close its doors.

St. Isidore School in Litomysl closed at the end of the school year after providing Catholic education to students for nearly 60 years. The school closed on May 29. This year’s enrollment included 15 students in three classes, including preschool, kindergarten through second-grade and third-grade through fifth-grade.

The school started in 1958 with 90 students and once had as many as 100 during the early years

#8

Area turkey flock devastated

The massive bird flu outbreak that wiped out millions of turkeys across the state found its way into Steele County.

The USDA confirmed that H5N2 avian influenza struck a single turkey operation in Steele County. The detection caused the infected flock to go under quarantine and commercial flocks within a 10-kilometer control area were put under surveillance by state and federal officials.

An estimated four million turkeys were infected across the state including the one Steele County operation, as well as 72 farms and 19 counties.

#7

Shea calls it quits

Tom Shea stepped down as the Steele County Administrator in March. He had handled the position since 2011. He had been a county commissioner since 1991, before stepping into the county administrator position.

Shea had always been involved in government and public affairs, beginning as early as six years old spending an election party with his father and



File photo by Rick Bussler
In March, firefighters from four communities battled a house fire at the Jeff and Deb Schmidt home on Thompson Drive in Ellendale. It took the fire departments several hours to bring the blaze under control. Officials ruled the fire was accidental caused by a wood burning stove in the basement.

friends.

Achievements he was proud of included assisting with the transition from a coordinator to county administrator and establishing a strategic plan that has a service delivery organization structure that better aligns the variety of services the county delivers.

#6

Crime increasing in the county

Crimes were on the rise in Steele County. In 2015, the Steele County Attorney’s office said it had experienced a 25 percent increase in charges filed over the first six months compared to the previous year.

Some major crimes that occurred in 2015 include a stabbing incident. The victim – Andrew Patrick Zavala, 19 – was stabbed an estimated 109 times in a Steele County cornfield on July 10.

Four persons were charged with conspiracy to commit pre-meditated murder.

In addition, an undercover sex sting operation in Freeborn and Steele coun-

ties resulted in the arrests of 20 people ranging in ages 26 to 70.

The South Central Drug Investigation Unit made the arrests over a three-month period in response to human trafficking and related sex crimes.

#5

Several incidents rock Steele County

Blooming Prairie lost a high school student in April. As a result of the tragedy, Kristi and Jamie Jorgenson started a campaign to increase awareness of the mental illness disease, a disease that their son, Alex, battled for three years prior to ending his life a day before his 16th birthday.

In March, an Ellendale house was destroyed. Firefighters from four communities battled the house fire. James and Deb Schmidt were able to get some personal belongings out, but most everything had been destroyed.

Christopher Johnson, 65, survived being buried in corn for a brief time on his nephew’s farm north of Geneva. He

was sucked into an estimated 11 feet of corn in a 60,000-bushel bin. At least 50 people, including emergency rescue workers, helped with the rescue.

Heavy rain caused flooding in the southern portion of Steele County. Ellendale was one area that reported a heavy amount of rain. The community recorded 3.1 inches of rain on June 22. No accidents or public safety concerns arose from the flood event.

#4

Road construction and a new public works building

Blooming Prairie had a major reconstruction project on its Main Street that lasted from June to October. It was completed on Halloween, Oct. 31.

The reconstruction consisted of complete removal of the existing roadway and sidewalk; installation of a new water main, sanitary sewer and sewer services and storm sewer; replacement of new concrete curb and gutter; roadway pavement and sidewalks and installation of new street lighting.

#3

One bond passes, one bond fails

Owatonna School District voters approved a \$77.9 million bond referendum. An estimated 57.3 percent said yes, while an estimated 42.7 percent voted no.

The vote means the school district will receive \$77.9 million in bond funds

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MAILBAG
Continued from Page 2A

round. Donations can be made by sending checks to Steele County Toys for Tots at PO Box 199, Owatonna, MN

55060. Cash donations are used for purchasing gifts to fulfill toys for all age ranges the program serves.

Thank you again to all of the businesses, service clubs, churches, volunteers and individuals who helped make the 2015 Steele County Toys for Tots and Family to Family Program a success. We wish you a very happy New Year. For more information

about Steele County Toys for Tots visit their website <http://owatonna-mn.toysfortots.org> or “Like” Steele County Toys for Tots on Facebook.

*Toys for Tots of Steele County
Owatonna*

Correction

In last week’s edition of The Times, information was accidentally omitted from an article about Krejci Ford in Blooming Prairie. The article should have stated that Bruce, Roger and Rick Krejci are all co-owners of the business. The Times sincerely apologizes for the omission.

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Prairie Family & Sports Chiropractic, P.A. presents:
“HEALTH MATTERS”
With Dr. Chad

A black and white headshot of a man with short hair, wearing a dark polo shirt, smiling slightly.

Stress

Stress is the anxiety that one experiences everyday in reaction to events, both mentally and physically. It becomes a problem when one cannot relax after meeting those challenges. This stress can be hazardous to your health and well-being if not managed properly. Stress can increase symptoms of many diseases and postural difficulties as well as slow the healing process. Controlling your stress level is an important part of your health care that you can do yourself. Here are some tips for managing and reducing stress:

- Take a warm bath.
- Meditate for 15 minutes.
- Perform gentle static stretches for 15 minutes.
- Take breathing breaks. Do 4-6 deep cleansing breaths throughout the day.
- Close your eyes and daydream.
- Read a calming novel.
- Talk to a friend and unload your problems.
- Take a slow walk.
- Go see a soothing movie.
- Take up a relaxing hobby.
- Play with your pet.
- Participate in regular exercise workouts.
- Prepare for upcoming stressful situations.
- Eat more nutritious meals.
- Watch a comedy or read a funny book, and LAUGH!
- Take a stress management course or get a book on stress management
- Slow down, Say NO if you have to, and take time to enjoy the world and people around you.

Prairie Family and Sports Chiropractic, P.A., is committed to your health care needs. We offer a stress free chiropractic experience, and want to help you achieve your optimum health care status. Our office is located at 344 E. Main St., Downtown Blooming Prairie. You can call to schedule an appointment at 1-866-5Dr-Chad (toll free) or 583-2271, and our friendly staff will be more than happy to help you and answer any questions you may have. Check out our website at: www.drchad.org

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Regina Marie Williams

A black and white photograph of a woman with curly hair, wearing a black and white nun costume, standing with her arms outstretched in front of a large, ornate stained glass window.

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Public Safety

Blotter spotlight:

Deputy arrested a subject for driving while intoxicated at McKinley St. W. and Oak Ave. S. at 7:02 p.m. on Dec. 18 in Owatonna.

Icy roads cause fatality

James A. Weinhold, 61, Elk River, Minnesota, was killed as a result of an early morning accident on icy roads in Steele County.

According to the Minnesota State Patrol, Weinhold was driving a Ford Super Duty pickup

truck southbound on Interstate 35 at milepost 26 marker, when the truck lost control on icy roads, entered the west ditch and rolled.

The accident occurred at approximately 5:39 a.m. According to reports, Weinhold died at approximately 6 a.m. He was wear-

ing his seat belt and there was no alcohol detected in his system.

Steele County Sheriff Office, Ellendale Fire and Ambulance and Minnesota Department of Transportation assisted with the incident.

POLICE BLOTTER Steele County

Blooming Prairie Police
Dec. 21
Crash. Officers responded to a motor vehicle accident with property damage at 6:50 a.m.

Owatonna Police
Dec. 18
Domestic. Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 300 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 1:36 a.m. They made an arrest at the scene.

Vandalism. At 11:35 a.m., property damage was reported in the 100 block of School St. E.

Shoplifting. A shoplifting incident occurred in the 200 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 2:43 p.m.

Liquor. Officers completed a liquor compliance check in the 500 block of State Ave. NW at 4:32 p.m.

Thefts. Police took theft reports in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 6:14 p.m. and at 6:36 p.m. and in the 300 block of School St. E. at 9:17 p.m.

Dec. 19
Stolen Vehicle. A vehicle was reported stolen from the 400 block of Cedardale Dr. SE at 12:14 a.m.

DWI. At 12:55 a.m., officer arrested a motorist for driving while intoxicated in the 200 block of Rose St. E.

Noise. Police issued a citation for loud music in the 100 block of St. John Dr. NW at 3:43 a.m.

Arrest. Officers made an arrest following a traffic stop at Clearview Place NW and Riverside Ave. NW at 8:09 p.m.

Warrant. At 8:12 p.m., police arrested a subject for an outstanding warrant in the 200 block of Pearl St. E.

Restraining Order. Police responded to a restraining order violation in the 200 block of 21st St. NW at 8:51 p.m.

Arrest. Officer arrested a motorist at Hoffman Dr. NW and Interstate 35 northbound at 10:34 p.m.

Dec. 20
Traffic. Police arrested motorists following traffic stops at Grove Ave. N. and Rose St. E. at 12:48 a.m. and at Hoffman Dr. NW and North St. W. at 5:31 p.m.

Warrant. At 12:44 p.m., officer made a warrant arrest at Grove Ave. N. and Pearl St. E.

Shoplifting. Police responded to a shoplifting incident in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 4:18 p.m.

Dec. 21
DWI. At 1:23 a.m., officer took a motorist into custody for drunken driving in the 100 block of Rice St. E.

Child Protection. Police received a child protection report from the 200 block of Pearl St. E. at 9:53 a.m.

Vulnerable Adult. Officer took a vulnerable adult report in the 200 block of Pearl St. E. at 9:57 a.m.

Hit and Run. A hit and run crash resulting in property damage occurred at Bridge St. W. and State Ave. NW at 12:48 p.m.

Warrant. Police made a warrant arrest in the 600 block of Florence Ave. NW at 2:45 p.m.

Domestic. At 5:24 p.m., officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 400 block of Cedardale Dr. SE.

Assault. An assault occurred in the 1200 block of 3rd Ave. NE at 8:47 p.m.

Crash. Paramedics and officers responded to a crash with injuries in the 1000 block of Truman Ave. SE at 11:12 p.m.

Dec. 22
Hit and Run. A hit and run crash resulting in property damage occurred in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 3:56 p.m.

Crash. At 5:18 p.m., a crash with injuries occurred at 21st St. NW and

Cedar Ave. N.

Vandalism. Officer took a property damage report in the 3600 block of County Rd. 45 N. at 6:05 p.m.

Shoplifting. At 9:24 p.m., police arrested a subject for shoplifting in the 1400 block of 21st Ave. NW.

Steele County Sheriff
Dec. 18
Drunken Driving. Deputies made DWI arrests in the 100 block of Main St. E. at 1:05 a.m. and in the 10000 block of 37th Ave. SW at 10:30 p.m.

Dec. 20
DWI. Deputy arrested a subject for driving while intoxicated at McKinley St. W. and Oak Ave. S. at 7:02 p.m.

Domestic. At 9:38 p.m., deputies responded to a domestic disturbance in the 4100 block of 66th St. NW. They took a subject into custody.

Dec. 21
Harassment. Deputy took a report of harassing communication in the 500 block of Central Ave. W.

Dec. 22
Crash. Deputies assisted the State Patrol with a personal injury crash on Interstate 35 northbound at 6:02 a.m.

Domestic. Deputies responded to a domestic disturbance in the 200 block of Pearl St. E. at 11:28 a.m.

Fraud. A citizen reported being the victim of a fraud incident in the 6700 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 4:26 p.m.

COURT NEWS Steele County

The following cases were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Dec. 14 with Judge Joseph A. Buel- tel presiding:

Randal D. Jones, 42, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of pistol/assault weapon. Jones was sentenced to \$381, 75 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, psychological evaluation and 10 years of supervised probation.

Jason A. Dalbec, 38, New Richland, previously appeared and was convicted of felony terroristic threats. He was sentenced to \$381, 120 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, cognitive skill training, no contact with victim, maintain employment, no possession of firearms, 100 hours of community service and 5 years of supervised probation.

The following cases were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Dec. 14 with Judge Karen R. Duncan presiding:

Sunday P. Puot, 19, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony burglary. The defendant was sentenced to \$1,081, 159 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, and 5 years of supervised probation.

Ryan J. Wilson, 26, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony terroristic threats. Wilson was sentenced to \$1,989.28, 106 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, chemical dependency evaluation, alcohol monitor, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, mental health screening, and 5 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Dec. 14 – 18:

MN Dept. of Natural Resources

Francis J. Schmidt, 63, Owatonna, take antlerless deer without permit, \$281.

MN State Patrol Rochester

Mohamed A. Ahmed, 30, Minneapolis, speeding, \$141; Hanna E. Albertson, 21, Deephaven, speeding, \$131; Blake N. Bender, 18, Waconia, speeding, \$131; Ashley M. Braxton, 28, Chicago, IL, speeding, \$221; Catherine M. Buck, 62, Owatonna, speeding, \$131; Jua Chang, 31, Minneapolis, speeding, \$141;

Corrin A. Christensen, 23, Faribault, no child passenger restraint system, \$131; Gabrielle B. Dobson, 20, Big Lake, revoked license, \$281; Shay L. Downey, 21, Eagan, speeding, \$121; Donnavon E. Eaker, 65, Ellendale, speeding, \$121; Syridio Habimana, 27, Cedar Rapids, IA, speeding, \$121;

Ryen D. Jacobson, 30, Rosemount, speeding, \$121; Xavier L. Jones, 25, Minneapolis, speeding, \$121; Justin S. Prondzinski, 33, Kenyon, window tint violation, \$131; Direasa M. Rassman, 23, Inver Grove Heights, speeding, \$121; Brendon O. Smith, 22, Minnetonka, seat belt, \$106; Joshua W. Snediker, 26, Waseca, speeding, \$121; Steve M. Sony, 30, St. Ann, MO, no registration, \$181;

Roger L. Stolt, 54, Albert Lea, revoked license, \$281; Danny A. Storlie, 67, Waseca, seat belt, \$106; Edward A. Walker Jr., 61, Rockford, IL, speeding, \$121.

Owatonna Police Department

Magdaline M. Abrams, 22, Owatonna, no insurance, \$181, 2 days in county jail, and 1 year of supervised probation; Kaitlin M. Bellefy, 20, Owatonna, speeding, \$100; Cherrelle D. Bennett, 27, Owatonna, suspended license, \$281; Rodrick S. Brown Hatten, 24, Hughes Springs, TX, possession of Paraphernalia, \$131; Alvin L. Chambers, 28, Claremont, no insurance, \$181 and 2 days in county jail;

David J. Currell, 62, Owatonna, DWI, \$381, 1 day in county jail, attend MADD impact panel, and 1 year of supervised probation; Joshua R. Dausey, 26, Owatonna, revoked license, \$181; Jessica J. Dominguez, 34, Owatonna, abandoned vehicle, \$81;

Angela M. Enderson, 40, Albert Lea, shoplifting, \$181; Shaun R. Feder, 38, Owatonna, receiving stolen property, \$300 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Antonio J. Gaalswyk, 21, Owatonna, seat belt, \$106; Caleb G. Geary, 21, Owatonna, suspended license, \$281; Christine M. Gonzalez, 31, Owatonna, disorderly conduct, \$381;

Tessa L. Heathman, 47, Owatonna, disorderly conduct, \$181, 1 day in county jail, and 1 year of supervised probation; Justin T. Hoag, 31, Austin, false name to peace officer, \$131 and 25 days in county jail; Dalton D. Hovland, 25, Owatonna, registration violation, \$111;

Collin J. Lewis, 23, Owatonna, disorderly conduct, \$281, 2 days in county jail, attend AA, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, domestic abuse evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation; Kellie J. Logan, 22, Owatonna, shoplifting, \$75, diversion program and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction;

Cory T. Moseley, 36, St. Paul, no MN license, \$181; Miguel A. Muniz, 27, Albert Lea, domestic assault, \$381, 3 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, and 1 year of supervised probation; Andrew D. Plummer, 21, Owatonna, stop sign and no insurance, \$331;

Ashley M. Snidow, 19, Racine, WI, no MN license and speeding, \$241; Jeffrey L. Springborg, 61, Owatonna, shoplifting, \$181;

Corey J. Tollefson, 46, Owatonna, domestic assault, \$581, 1 day in county jail, no contact with victim, domestic abuse evaluation, no violation of order for protection and 1 year of supervised probation; Paul A. Treganza, 53, Owatonna, assault, \$1,734.50, 6 days in county jail, domestic abuse

Owatonna woman injured in accident on icy roads

An Owatonna resident sustained non-life threatening injuries in a single-car accident last Wednesday evening.

According to the Minnesota State Patrol, Angela Vela, 26, was headed eastbound on U.S. Highway 14, just east of

Byron, at approximately 7:50 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 23.

The Minnesota State Patrol states that Vela lost control of the vehicle and hit the guard-rail and said road conditions were “icy” at the time of the accident. Vela was transported

to St. Mary’s in Rochester. No alcohol was detected in her system.

In addition to the Minnesota State Patrol, the Byron Fire Department and Gold Cross Ambulance also assisted at the scene.

evaluation, and 1 year of supervised probation;

Liban A. Yusuf, 19, Minneapolis, false name to police, \$381 and 41 days in county jail; Robert E. Zeise, 51, Owatonna, DWI, \$381, 2 days in county jail, attend MADD impact panel and 1 year of supervised probation.

Steele County Sheriff’s Office

Nicholas A. Adamek, 30, Owatonna, improper information on license, \$101; Arko Basu, 26, Ames, IA, speeding, \$131; Victoria G. Breshears, 27, Rochester, speeding, \$121; Suzanne M. Cory, 54, Blooming Prairie, stop sign, \$131;

Kara R. Delafosse, 40, New Richland, speeding, \$121; Ignacio L. Duran Lopez, 27, Austin, no child passenger restraint system and speeding, \$181; Camille Emma-Karnatz, 22, Chicago, IL, speeding, \$131; Ali Fatuma, 29, Sioux Falls, SD, seat belt, \$106;

Debra J. Fugleberg, 54, Byron, speeding, \$121; Christopher M. Gasner, 28, Owatonna, equipment violation, \$121; Allison D. Lardner, 30, Rochester, speeding, \$121; Ivan Lopez, 24, Medford, revoked license and speeding, \$331;

Jessica J. Masching, 26, Hayfield, speeding, \$121; Antonia Navarro, 66, Faribault, speeding, \$121; Adam N. Northrop, 32, Faribault, speeding, \$121; Brandon L. Roushar, 25, Owatonna, seat belt, \$106; Hailey M. Schroeder, 17, Blooming Prairie, speeding, \$141;

Isaac S. Smak, 25, St. Paul, no MN license and possession of Marijuana, \$181; Jordan J. Stradtman, 57, Brooklyn Park, speeding, \$221; Matthew S. Young, 23, New Richland, improper information on license, \$101.

POLICE BLOTTER Dodge County

Dec. 16
Search Warrant. Deputies executed a search warrant on 2nd Ave. NW in Dodge Center at 9:54 a.m.

Animal. At 2 p.m., a woman called deputies when she found a dead dog floating in the pool at the residence she was moving into on 2nd St. NW in Dodge Center.

Loud Noise. At 2:29 p.m., a man called deputies after he heard what sounded like a very loud explosion that shook his house in the 18600 block of State Hwy. 30 in Hayfield. Deputies and a MN State Trooper responded to the area and spoke with several residents. However, they were unable to locate an explosion.

Suspicion. Deputies responded to a suspicious activity report in the 75600 block of 135th Ave. in Blooming Prairie at 9:21 p.m.

Dec. 17
Fraud. A Hayfield citizen reported being the victim of a fraud incident in the 100 block of 1st Ave. NE at 8:50 a.m.

Dumping. Deputies received a report from a Dodge Center resident that a subject has been dumping garbage in a dumpster at a property she owns on 2nd St. SE at 10:21 a.m.

Narcotics. A student was caught with narcotics at Hayfield High School at 12:12 p.m.

Burglary. Deputies responded to a burglary in the 100 block of 4th Ave. NE in Dodge Center at 2:15 p.m.

Harassment. A Dodge Center woman reported that she was receiving harassing text messages at 5:47 p.m.

Dec. 18
Crash. Deputies responded to a fatal crash at 275th Ave. and 545th St. in Pine Island at 4:17 p.m.

Threats. At 9:44 p.m., deputy responded to a report of a subject making threats in the 500 block of 1st St. W. in West Concord.

Dec. 19
Noise. At 6:26 p.m., deputies responded to a report of a single gun shot heard in the 200 block of Julia St. in Claremont.

Suspicious Activity. At 8:53 p.m., deputies received a call from a juvenile female who was home alone with her brothers and sisters after she heard a knock at the door and was scared in the 800 block of Center Ave. S. in Hayfield.

Dec. 20
Suspicion. Deputies responded to a suspicious activity report in the 71000 block of 160th Ave. in Hayfield at 2:38 a.m.

Dec. 21
Harassment. At 2:10 p.m., deputies received information regarding a past action assault in the 500 block of Main St. E. in Dodge Center.

Disturbance. At 8:20 p.m., a male subject entered a home uninvited, made threats and then left in the 200 block of Front St. E. in Claremont.

Dec. 22
Larceny. At 6:31 p.m., deputies received a report that someone stole a UPS package in the 300 block of 3rd Ave. NE in Dodge Center.

COURT NEWS Dodge County

The following case was heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Dec. 14 with Judge Jodi L. Williamson presiding:

Jason E. Russ, 41, Austin, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of Marijuana. Russ was sentenced to \$1,075, 45 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, 100 hours of community service and 5 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Dec. 14 – 21:

Dodge County Sheriff’s Office

Ana R. Arias Mojica, 27, Kenyon, suspended license and no insurance, \$480; Tyler J. Becvar, 24, Hayfield, failure to yield right of way, \$130; Deborah D. Brandeland-Harrison, 60, Mantorville, failure to obey traffic control device, \$130; Drew V. Gustavson, 18, Minot, ND, speeding, \$220;

Matthew J. Hintz, 20, Byron, possession of Paraphernalia, \$130; Daniel R. Horn Jr., 44, Rochester, stop sign, \$130; Danver L. Johnson, 38, Dodge Center, invalid license and speeding, \$220; Rachel A. Kardashian, 21, Victoria, speeding, \$140;

Karlle A. Kasper, 21, Kasson, DWI, \$505, chemical assessment and 1 year of probation; Kimberly J. Poore, 31, Mantorville, DWI, \$505, chemical assessment, and 1 year of probation; Joshua J. Priegnitz, 27, Dexter, speeding, \$140; Ali K. Randolph, 41, Rochester, revoked license and no insurance, \$480; Idain Rodriguez Baranco, 26, Austin, speeding, \$120;

Kelly M. Roussel, 51, Dodge Center, DWI, \$505, chemical assessment, and 1 year supervised probation; Kelli J. Sandhurst, 36, Rochester, failure to yield right of way, \$130; Michael J. Vihnicka, 61, Rochester, disorderly conduct, \$180; Jaime L. Zuniga, 28, Rochester, speeding, \$120.

Kasson Police Department

Michael G. Frank, 20, Utica, minor consumption, \$180; Teresa M. Hein,

52, Owatonna, speeding, \$130; Trent K. Lueth, 24, Osakis, seat belt, \$105;

Chad M. Osgood, 36, Hayfield, revoked license, \$280; Christopher J. Schneider, 23, Mankato, seat belt, \$105; Makenna F. Siem, 16, West Concord, provisional license violation – using a cell phone, \$130; Andrew D. Stahl, 35, Kasson, speeding, \$130.

MN State Patrol Rochester

Donald D. Ackerman, 56, Owatonna, seat belt, \$105; William M. Buhl, 25, Rochester, revoked license and no insurance, \$480; Kathi F. Castle, 52, Bayside, WI, speeding, 6 months of unsupervised monitoring without conviction;

Wyatt C. Condon, 19, Kasson, speeding, \$220; Timothy A. Decker, 20, Waltham, speeding, \$130; Jesse A. Eggert, 30, Kasson, window tint violation, illegal operation and license plate violation, \$200; Kelvin K. Kleber, 20, Kasson, window tint violation, \$130;

Kirby B. Kough, 45, Rochester, speeding, \$130; Daniel A. Moreno, 36, Kasson, speeding and no MN license, \$240; Bradley D. Novacek, 33, Kasson, speeding, \$140; Jorge A. Torres, 41, Kasson, seat belt, \$105;

Abby L. Tripp, 34, Albert Lea, revoked license, registration violation and no insurance, 90 days in county jail; Jaden M. Wait, 19, Sleepy Eye, speeding, \$140; Wyatt A. Wirth, 16, Dodge Center, speeding, \$120.

West Concord Police Department

Thomas C. Hirsch, 31, Apple Valley, speeding, \$115.

Steele Arrests

Blooming Prairie Police

Cory Neal Stucky, 30, arrested at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 18, felony manslaughter and endangerment of a child, held for court.

Owatonna Police

Cody Darrin Krueger, 24, arrested at 1:08 a.m. Dec. 19, DWI-test refusal, held for court.

Douglas Wayne Seidel, 27, arrested at 8:12 p.m. Dec. 19, felony possession, possession of stolen property and false name, held for court.

Jonathan Edward Cozad, 40, arrested at 10:39 p.m. Dec. 19, cancelled license, held for court.

James Frederick Hawkins, 68, arrested at 5:46 p.m. Dec. 20, cancelled license, held for court.

John Arty Jones, 48, arrested on Dec. 21, DWI, held for court.

Alexander Jay Brown, 20, arrested at 9:58 p.m. Dec. 22, felony controlled substance, held for court.

Sean Michael Wolcelka, 36, arrested at 9:34 p.m. Dec. 23, felony controlled substance crime, held for court.

Steele County Sheriff

Han Nicholas Vorwerk, 34, arrested at 10:15 p.m. Dec. 20, felony domestic assault, held for court.

Han Nicholas Vorwerk, 34, arrested at 9:45 a.m. Dec. 23, felony Danco violation, held for court.

MN State Patrol

Travis Lee Johnston, 35, arrested at 8 p.m. Dec. 20, DWI-test refusal and B-card violation, held for court.

The following individuals as they have active warrants in Steele County.
The sheriff makes this information available as a public service.

Prudencio Rodriguez – traffic - \$2,000 bail
Jose Roman – DWI - \$6,000 bail
Justo Roman – DWI - \$12,000 bail
Jose Rosales – criminal sexual conduct – no bail
Dawn Rosinski – assault - \$500 bail
Anthony Rotundi – FTA-order to show cause - \$44,000 bail
Amber Rubitschung – theft - \$500 bail

James Russell – no insurance - \$1,000 bail
Anthony Russo – assault - \$10,000 bail
Richard Sahf – probation violation – no bail
Bashir Said – civil warrant - \$381.90 bail
Ramiro Salinas – DWI – no bail
Tara Saltou-Olson – drugs – no bail
Miguel Sambrano – DWI - \$2,000 bail
Gilberto Sanchez – DWI - \$12,000 bail

Jorge Sanchez – theft, shoplifting - \$100 bail
Maria Sanchez – theft - \$500 bail
Roberto Sanchez – criminal sexual conduct – no bail
Russell Sanchez – theft - \$200 bail
Julio Sanche-Beltran – no license, false information - \$500 bail

SHERIFF'S TIPLINE

866-878-7964



If you have information about any crimes in Steele County, call the sheriff's tipline. You may remain anonymous.

Disclosing active warrants promotes public safety and aids in the identification & apprehension of those individuals wanted on a warrant.

ACTIVE WARRANTS

How to write your own obituary

Dear Savvy Senior,
Can you provide any tips on how to write your own obituary? At age 80, I am in the process of preplanning my funeral and would also like to take a crack at writing my own newspaper obit too.
Still Alive

Dear Alive,
For many people, writing their own obituary can be a nice way to sum up their life, not to mention avoid any possible mistakes that sometimes occur when obituaries are hurriedly written at the time of death. Here's what you should know, along with some tips and tools to help you write one.

Obit tips
Before you start writing your obit, your first step is to check with the newspaper you want it to run in. Some newspapers have specific style guidelines or

restrictions on length, some only accept obituaries directly from funeral homes, and some only publish obituaries written by newspaper staff members.
If your newspaper accepts self-written obits, find out if they have a template to guide you, or check with your funeral provider. Most funeral homes provide forms for basic information, and will write the full obituary for you as part of the services they provide.
You also need to be aware that most newspapers charge by the word, line or column inch to publish an obituary, so your cost will vary depending on your newspaper's rate and length of your obit – most range between 200 and 500 words.

What to include
Depending on how detailed you want to be, the most basic information in an obituary usually includes your full name

(and nickname if relevant), age, date of birth, date of death, where you were living when you died, significant other (alive or dead), and details of the funeral service (public or private). If public, include the date, time, and location of service.
Other relevant information you may also want to include is: cause of death; place of birth and parents names; your other survivors including your children, other relatives, friends and pets and where they live; family members who preceded your death; high school and colleges you attended and degrees earned; your work history and military service; your hobbies, accomplishments and any awards you received; your church or religious affiliations; any clubs, civic and fraternal organizations you were members of; and any charities you feel strongly about that you would like people to donate to either in

addition to or in lieu of flowers or other gifts.
You'll also need to include a photo, and be sure to leave copies with your funeral director and/or immediate family members.
Need help?
If you need some help writing your obituary there are free online resources you can turn to like legacy.com, obituaryguide.com or caring.com/obituary, which offer tips, templates and sample obits.
Or, if you want your obit to be more memorable, purchase the ObitKit (obitkit.com). This is a \$20 workbook that helps you gather the details of your life so you can write an obituary that will reflect your personality and story.
Ethical will
If you're interested in writing your own obituary, you may also



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be interested in writing a legacy letter or ethical will.
A legacy letter is a heartfelt letter that you write to your loved ones sharing with them your feelings, wishes, regrets, gratitude and advice. And an ethical will (which is not a legal document), is like an extension of a legacy letter that many people use to express their feelings as well as explain the elements in their legal will, give information about the money and possessions they're passing on, and anything else they want to communicate.
For help in creating these,

there are lots of resources available like celebrationsoflife.net and personallegacyadvisors.com, which offers practical information, examples and materials you can purchase to help you put it together.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

History from the news archives

10 Years Ago
Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2006
Dan Evans, Publisher
When Josh Braaten was in first grade, he received his first acting part and hasn't looked back. Playing the part of "Linus" in "The Great Pumpkin Mystery" during Mrs. Renee Tollefson's class gave Braaten his first taste of acting. Braaten has become an up-and-coming actor. Starting to become well-known around the Hollywood community, he has built up a great resume of notable acting jobs. Braaten has been seen as "Chris" in "Married to the Kellys," "Charlie" in "Less Than Perfect," "Owen" in "That 80's Show" and "Carson" in "Spin City." If you missed those, you might have seen him in "Dumb and Dumber: When Harry Met Lloyd," "CSI: Miami," "Big Shot: Confessions of

a Campus Bookie" and "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." "It helps me realize how I loved growing up here and how much I love the people here," admits Braaten. "With the crazy shuffle of L.A. life, growing up in Bloomington Prairie has helped me take a step back and look before I approach things in life."
Lindsey Krejci, the latest addition to the writing staff at the Bloomington Prairie Times, is another Bloomington Prairie girl at heart. She is the daughter of Rick and Cheri Krejci and has lived in Bloomington Prairie all of her life. Lindsey is currently substitute teaching in the area and, just last week, experienced her first substitute teaching job. "I've always liked to write," she said. "When I saw the ad in the BP Times for a part-time writer, I thought it would be perfect

for me. The hours are flexible, which will allow me to keep substitute teaching."
20 Years Ago
Tuesday, Jan. 2, 1996
Elsie Slinger, Editor
Mark Nahlovsky, son of Robert and Joanne Nahlovsky of Bloomington Prairie, studied abroad as a participant in Gustavus Adolphus College's study abroad program for the fall semester of 1995. Nahlovsky, a senior majoring in management and political science, studied at the Institute of Higher European Studies in The Hague, Netherlands. Each year about 200 students participate in Gustavus Adolphus College's study abroad programs and approximately 35 percent of all graduating seniors have had study abroad experience.

50 Years Ago
Thursday, Dec. 30, 1965
Victor, Vernon and Vyrle Krejci, Editors
"Someone who has it in for youngsters has delayed the opening of the ice skating pond in Bloomington Prairie," Street Commissioner Glenn Dennis informed the Times Tuesday morning. Last week, the area was flooded but the ground was not frozen solid enough to hold water. With the arrival of colder weather, the rink was again flooded Monday afternoon and it was expected to open for use shortly thereafter. However, sometime Monday night, a car was driven over the area and it was torn all to pieces. Commissioner Dennis stated that, if nothing else happens to the surface, the pond should open sometime this weekend and

youngsters who received ice skates from Santa will be able to display their skill on the ice.
The Red Cross Bloodmobile's visit to Bloomington Prairie Monday of this week brought surprisingly good results, as 73 persons reported to the center to donate blood. Of the 73 persons, 31 were walk-ins and added greatly to the number of pints collected. Only four rejects were recorded, to list the number of pints of blood received at 69. Mrs. Richard Moonier is credited with the telephone campaign for signing up donors and the Explorer Scouts assisted in setting up and taking down the equipment. The Minnesota Telephone Co. installed a telephone in the community building for the day.

75 Years Ago
Thursday, Jan. 2, 1941
Frank Krejci, Publisher
Washing out overalls in gasoline proved disastrous Wednesday night for Pete Nelson, operator of Nelson's Service Station in the northwest section of town. The fire department answered a call to the station when the gasoline Pete was cleaning with exploded. No damage was done to the station, but Pete suffered severe burns to his hands.
Postmaster George Carroll announced this morning that stamp sales in the local office this past year were the largest in the history of the office. The increase over 1939 was \$204.69, Mr. Carroll said, and this increase was due directly to the exceptionally heavy volume of Christmas business.

Steele County Times Professional Directory

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Johnson, Doerhoefer & Miner P.A.

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Certified Public Accountant **Tamzen R. Johnson**

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Area Church Spotlight



Prairie Mennonite Church, Blooming Prairie

Pastor's corner

Christmas is still here



I went into a store last week, needing to find some last minute gifts and supplies for the holiday.

I walked past an aisle, stopped and had to look twice – there were Easter eggs on the shelves, along with other Easter decorations and Valentine's Day candy!

All of their Christmas supplies and décor were already on clearance. And this was a week before the 25th. I couldn't believe it!

We are sometimes so quick to move from one thing to the next. Here's what I think: I think you

should wait. Don't take your Christmas tree down yet. Don't put away the ornaments or the glittering lights. Christmas is still here! It will continue for twelve days, through Epiphany and the wise ones' arrival to meet baby Jesus.

Though the consumer-side of society is quick to move on, let us pause. Breathe. Spend these days of Christmas journeying with the wise ones,

following the star to the manger where Jesus lay. Keep turning on the lights on your tree. Keep pondering the story in your heart. Christmas is still here! May the magic and wonder and love of this season continue in your homes and in your lives.

*Pastor Lindsay Stolen
Red Oak Grove
Lutheran Church Austin*

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Lutheran

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6329 SE 38th St., Owatonna
Pastor Stephanie Wood
(507) 676-5696
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10 a.m. Sunday Worship Service

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Interim Pastor David Hurtt
(507) 633-9331
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Heidi Heimgartner, Associate Pastor
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firstlutheranbp.com
Worship: 8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
8953 S.W. 37th Ave., Hope
Pastor Sandy Miller
(507) 451-3854
Services: 9 a.m. Sunday School,
Adult Ed: 10:15 a.m.

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the Rev. Gregory Schlicker
(507) 451-4125
www.goodshepherdowatonna.com
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10:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

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9651 SW 75th Street Ellendale
(507) 465-8366
Family Choir 9:00-9:15 a.m.
Sunday School/Adult Education
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ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN—ELCA
30450 570th Ave., Waltham
Minister Dwight DoBell
(507) 567-2474
Service: 8:30 a.m. Sunday Sunday
School: 9:45 a.m.

RED OAK GROVE LUTHERAN—ELCA
30456 Mower-Freeborn Road, Austin
Pastor Lindsay Stolen
(507) 583-2038 or (507) 437-3000
www.roglutheran.org
Service: 9 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School (Sept-May): 10:15 a.m.

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Pastor Kirk Griebel
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Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.

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The Rev. Alan Broadwell
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www.peaceclaremont.otsnot.org
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month. Sunday School - starts
September 20th at 9 a.m. to 10:15
a.m.

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Service: 10:15 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9 a.m.
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The Rev. Paul Hauschild
(507) 477-2248
www.trinityhayfield.org
Services: 8 & 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN—LCMS
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Service: 10:15 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9 a.m.

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Pastor Jesse Krusemark
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Service: 8:00 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

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Sunday School 9:30 AM

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Pastor Mark Biebighauser
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Education hour: 10 a.m.

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Worship 10:30 AM

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Wednesday - 9:30 a.m. Bible Study;
6 p.m. Call to Prayer; 6:15 Hands
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Sunday of month, and fourth Sunday of
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Preschool-fifth grade:
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UCC

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The Owatonna High School Concert Choir directed by Chris Harris performed songs from around the globe. They also sang Christmas tunes at the music department's holiday concert on Dec. 17. Photo by Anna Segner



Blooming Prairie junior high band members play Anne McGinty's "The Mohawk Trail" on Dec. 14 in Blooming Prairie. Photo by Laura Berndt



Blooming Prairie Senior High Choir members sing together during their Holiday Concert, held in Blooming Prairie on Monday, Dec. 7. Photo by Laura Berndt



Members of the Medford High School Choir perform together during the Christmas Concert last week. Photo by Laura Berndt



Blooming Prairie High School band members Raynee Fawver, Katerina Yanes and Grace Magnuson perform during the concert's intermission on Monday, Dec. 14. Photo by Laura Berndt



Members of the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) high school band and choir helped their audience get in the holiday spirit during their Christmas Concert on Dec. 14. Submitted photo



Krista Esch plays "Oh Come, All Ye Faithful" during the Medford High School Christmas Concert, held on Tuesday, Dec. 22. Photo by Laura Berndt

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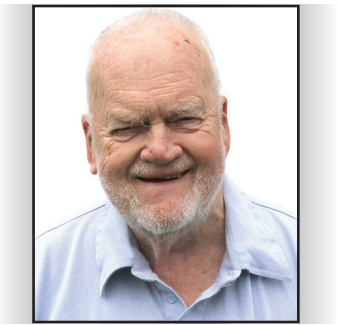
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OUTSIDE THE LINES



LEMAR NELSON

Another memorable time

I admit that a lot of people look on Christmas and the holiday season simply as a time for celebration. But for myself, I can't imagine the occasion without attending a church service. There's nothing that denotes Christmas more than attending a service, especially when it is early evening with candles lighting the sidewalks leading into the building.

Inside, a retelling of the Christmas story and a candle lighting ceremony, complete with singing carols, greeting friends and family members returning for an annual family gathering and watching in silence as hundreds of candles are lit symbolize the true meaning of Christmas. I will never tire of the happening each year, and it certainly makes Christmas more meaningful to me.

A family gathering at Christmas takes on more and more meaning to me with my advancing age. The opportunity to have family around at this special time of the year take on deeper meaning with each year that passes. I am so grateful that my family had this time to celebrate together and to give thanks for another year without major problems. Who can ask for anything more?

On the way back

My three elves left my grand-

OUTSIDE THE LINES
Continued on Page 3B

BLOOMING PRAIRIE - NRHEG GIRLS BASKETBALL



Staff photos by Alan Van Ormer
ABOVE: Bloomington girls basketball team slowly fought back and eventually took complete control in a 45-31 defeat of visiting New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG).
RIGHT: Sam Wurst gets off a shot for Bloomington while being surrounded by three New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva defenders in girls basketball action at Bloomington High School last week.

BP girls earn big win over NRHEG

By LEMAR NELSON
Staff Sports Writer

Down 6-0 early, the Bloomington girls basketball team slowly fought back and eventually took complete control in a 45-31 defeat of visiting New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG).

A big first half gave BP a 27-13 edge at the break, and the defense stayed strong in the second half to preserve the win. The win improved the BP record to 7-2, and tied the Panthers in the conference at 2-1.

The steady comeback tied the game at 10 on McKenna Hein's layup basket, and Sam Wurst gave the Blossoms their first lead on a rebound two-pointer. BP outscored the visitors 21-2 from the eight-minute mark to the half. For the game the winners held a good Panther scoring team to just 17 percent shooting on 10-of-54 attempts. The Blossoms made 38 percent on 18-of-47 tries.

"This was a really big win for us," remarked Coach John Bruns. "We got behind early, but we were able to keep battling, and the girls played an outstanding defense over the last eight minutes of the first half to enable us to get the big lead."

Senior Lauren Larkoski had a career night for the Blossoms, leading the team with 14 points, including 6-of-10 from the free throw line. BP also got nine points from Sam Wurst, eight from Kalyn Naatz and six from McKenna Hein. Maddie Wagner led the Panther scoring with 16 points, and Marnie Wagner chipped in with nine, but only two other girls gathered points in the game.

"We stayed very solid defensively," concluded Bruns. "Our balanced scoring and a rebounding advantage made a big difference. A lot of credit goes to the assistant coaches, who devised the 1-3-1 defensive strategy that got us back in the game early on."



Rebounds did favor the winners 46-25, with Naatz and Hannah Ahrens both clearing the boards for 10. Wurst, Hein and Marissa Larson chipped in with eight, six and five, respectively. Ahrens added four assists and a steal, and Hein had four steals to help the local cause.

Coach Onika Peterson said, "After a tough loss last night, we really struggled tonight against the Blossoms. They played very well, rebounded very well and defensively played very strong the whole game. Their height really hurt us tonight."

The junior varsity and C teams split the prelims, as the JV won 36-33, while the freshmen dropped their seventh straight game 46-9 to the visitors. The JV team played two consistent halves of basketball, limiting the turnovers and passing the ball with authority.

The second half defense, especially, impressed Coach Cory Hendrickson. Rachael Oswald led the scoring with 16 points,

but Julia Worke contributed 10 points, and Sam Wurst had eight. The team is now 6-3 for the season.

NRHEG played really well in the freshman game and moved faster on both ends of the floor. The locals struggled to keep up. Maya Lembke had three points for the Blossoms

Panthers lose first

St. Peter made some big outside shots and handed NRHEG its first loss of the season 49-39 on Monday, Dec. 21. The Panthers played well defensively and really plugged up the lane, but the offense sputtered.

The Saints made the outside shots, while the Panthers had a tough night shooting. Rachel Collins had 12 points for the losers, and Kayley Camerer and Marnie Wagner added nine and eight to drop the team to 5-1 for the season.

The JV team also lost 34-21.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Panthers rout Blossoms

By LEMAR NELSON
Staff Sports Writer

New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) Coach Pat Churchill probably summed it up best when he commented, "I thought we came out and played as hard as we had all season."

That effort resulted in an easy 79-52 victory over visiting Bloomington Tuesday, Dec. 22, in boys basketball action. It marked the third straight loss for the Blossoms and dropped them to a 4-7 record, 1-3 in conference play. NRHEG is 6-3 overall and 3-1 in the conference.

The winners jumped to a 10-2 early lead and steadily built a double-digit margin on some good defensive stops and good shooting. The defense limited BP to very few shots and points in the paint. Tyler Raiman led four Panthers in double figure scoring, getting 12 of his team-leading 18 points in the first half.

NRHEG led 36-23 at the half and upped the lead to 20 points just into the second half. After Raiman's 18 points, John Cole had 16, Chad Agrimson 14 and Oakley Baker 10. Anthony Nelson counted 21 points for the losers and Jake Ressler added 10, but no other Blossom could score more than five points.

BP shot 40 percent for the game, but managed only 52 attempts. NRHEG had an edge in rebounding 34-26, with Ressler pulling down seven boards, and Nelson getting five for the locals. BP had 13 turnovers in the contest.

Kaden Thomas made a three-pointer at the buzzer to send the game into overtime, and the BP junior varsity team found a way to earn a 65-57 victory over NRHEG in the prelim. The Blossoms outscored the Panthers 12-4 in the overtime period. Max Romeo scored 16 points, Cameron Kubista had 12 and Gabe Hagen 10 to lead the team, but five other players counted at least four points, and Cory Wagaman made two big free throws in the closing seconds of regulation.

2015: Steele County sports year in review

Jan. 20

After a 15-year drought, Spencer Tollefson became the latest New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva basketball player to score 1,000 points. The milestone doesn't come as a shock to players or teammates, as Tollefson has spent the last three years turning heads with his improvement, work ethic and leadership.

A shooting percentage from the floor doesn't earn many victories, but in the Gopher Conference game with visiting New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva, it didn't make any difference. A very solid defense and enough offense earned the Bloomington girls basketball team a 42-21 victory and kept its undefeated conference record intact.

Jan. 27

After the tough non-conference loss to Goodhue earlier in the week, the BP girls upped their conference record to 8-0 with a tough 47-40 win over WEM on the home court Friday, Jan. 23. The team also raised the overall record to 14-2.

High-shooting percentage led Rochester Mayo to a 69-59 victory over the Owatonna Huskies Thursday night. After falling to a sizable early deficit, the Huskies came back within four in the game, but a four to 12 run by Rochester Mayo to end the half hurt the Huskies, and they were never quite able to get back in the game.

Feb. 3

To reach any desired goal often means hard work, sacrifice and great determination. Meet Zach Nirk, a BPHS senior who reached such a goal when he notched his 100th career dual wrestling victory last week. "This is a goal I have had since I started wrestling," exclaimed Nirk, "and to finally reach it is still almost unbelievable."

Jumping off to a 14-0 lead made the night's work fairly easy for the Awesome Blossom girls, as they defeated United South Central 52-36 at Wells Friday, Jan. 30. The win ensured the Blossoms of at



File photo
Bloomington girls basketball player Taylor Hagen gets up a shot.

least a tie for the Gopher conference title, and they could win it outright with one win in their last two conference contests.

Feb. 10

On Wednesday, Feb. 4, Rumpza signed a letter of intent to play football with Winona State last Wednesday, and in the same week, Rumpza received a AAA award. The scholarship is awarded to two students from each district who display excellence throughout their high school years academically, athletically and in the arts.

In an exceptionally short wrestling match at Bloomington, the Panthers defeated the Blossoms 44-6, stealing the Gopher Conference title from Maple River.

The Owatonna A Squirt team took first place at the Albert Lea A Squirt Tournament last weekend. There were eight teams in the tournament, including: Albert Lea, Windom, Delano, Omaha, Owatonna, Inver Grove Heights, Sioux Falls and KC Stars. Friday and Saturday consisted of tournament play, with placement games taking place on Sunday, Feb. 8. Owatonna defeated Omaha to take home the championship.

Feb. 17

Trap shooting is the fastest growing high school sport in the state of Minnesota. What started out with 340 students has turned into over 8,000 students from 75 high schools in just five years. The sport gained enough steam last year that the league hosted its first ever Minnesota State High School tournament.

It didn't come easy, but the Awesome Blossoms girls notched win No. 20 with a 68-59 non-conference win over visiting Hayfield on the home court Tuesday, Feb. 10. The Vikings trailed by a single point several times in the second half and had jumped to an early lead in the opening half as well.

The Owatonna Huskies had a trip to the championship within their grasp but fell just shy of the incredible upset in a 34-30 defeat.

This week brought several milestones to the high school sport's scene. Senior John Rumpza reached a significant plateau when he scored the 2,000th point of his career. That is a goal that not too many high school basketball players achieve, and that is really a mark for which to take pride.

Feb. 24

Fourteen wrestlers from Steele County will compete at state this weekend, representing New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva, Bloomington, Owatonna and Medford high schools.

The Bloomington boys' basketball team finished the regular season with a win last week,

defeating the St. Clair Cyclones 69-53. The girls split games last week, winning 70-48 against the Bethlehem Academy Cardinals, but falling to Southland, 57-62.

March 3

Standing, flexing his biceps and pointing to his home crowd, Peyton Robb claimed his place among Minnesota state champions. In the Section 1AAA tournament, Victor Gliva defeated Robb in a 5-2 decision. In the state championship round, the two faced each other again, but Robb made it clear that this time would be different.

Coming off a 2014 state wrestling tournament with no placements, seven Steele County wrestlers came home with seven medals last week. These included athletes from Medford, Owatonna and New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG), and they collectively gathered every medal except for second place.

March 10

Bloomington had its title hopes dashed by Goodhue 38-33 in sub-section semi-final girls basketball on Tuesday, March 3. The game at Rochester featured some frantic defense by both teams, as the Wildcats took their second win of the season over the locals.

The Panthers were down by one. There were seven seconds left - no timeouts. Schwierjohnann passed the half court line, crossed over left and drove through the lane. Fans held their breath as he leapt for the basket, but the ball was knocked out, sailing out of bounds. Eagles ball. Senior Spencer Tollefson could only stand next to a referee, making sure the right call had been made. There was no reversal. The scoreboard read Eagles 64 - Panthers 63. The Panthers season was over.

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva

YEAR IN REVIEW
Continued on Page 2B

Sports

YEAR IN REVIEW

Continued from Page 1B

girls came into Thursday’s section game with a potent game plan to put down the Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Buccaneers. The only problem is that the Bucs came with the antidote. While the 60-48 final score emulated the general feel of the game, the Panthers managed to pull within five several times in the final minutes, the lead only slipping to double-digits when the game turned into a foul-fest.

March 17
Races return to the Chateau Raceway on April 10, but the track will have new owners at the helm. Craig Shaw, owner of CBR Drilling in Dexter purchased the track from Darin Toot, and with the help of his coworker and business partner, Jesse Antiporek, the two hope to see the raceway flourish in years to come.

Longevity in any career is admired. In sports longevity is a rather rare attribute. Imagine then two Blooming Prairie senior girls who have not only fashioned a remarkable 105 game career, but have done it without missing even one contest. Taylor Hagen and Madison Worke have accomplished that amazing statistic, having been starters on the basketball team all four years of high school.

March 24
Senior John Rumpza will play for the green team in games, the first on Friday, March 27, at St. Cloud State University and the second at Macalester College in St. Paul on Saturday, March 28. Meanwhile, two Awesome Blossom girls, Taylor Hagen and Madison Worke, also were selected to play in the girls All-Star contest game, which will be held Saturday, April 11, at Carleton College in Northfield. Madison Worke, Taylor Hagen and John Rumpza will all have the honor of attending this year’s Minnesota Basketball Coach Association’s All Star games thanks, in part, to the Blooming Prairie Lions Club.

March 31
To some, running is simply the rotation of one leg passing the other while the sound of huffing and puffing exits the lungs. To Kenzie Schroeder and her family, running is so much more.

Tears of love for her coach were turned into a fundraising project for Blooming Prairie seventh grade volleyball player Riauna Bishop. Riauna came home from school one day and couldn’t hold back her tears, telling her parents, Benji and Nicole Bishop, that her junior high school volleyball coach, Lisa Poe, was having a life battle with colon cancer. She informed them that she wished to help the family.

April 7
The Blooming Prairie boys team played error-free baseball against Bethlehem Academy Thursday, April 2, and the team won the season opener 5-1 on the home diamond.

Over 100 golfers enjoyed the improved Brooktree Golf Course in Owatonna Thursday, as it opened for the season at 12 p.m.

Four Blooming Prairie youth wrestlers recently qualified for the state youth wrestling tournament at Rochester. The meet went from Thursday, March 26, through Sunday, March 29, and included literally hundreds of young athletes from around the state.

April 14
When Owatonna lacrosse Coach Scott Seykora came to teach at his alma mater in 2003, he had no intention of heading up the fastest growing sport Owatonna had seen in years.

Entering the baseball season in his first year at New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva, Coach Drew Paukert is excited with the talent on his team, singling out three individuals as players to watch this season - Dakota Thiele, Matt Jensen and Trevor Tracy.

April 21
The Medford Tigers have played six games so far this season. They have won all of them.



File photo
The Owatonna boys and girls lacrosse teams ended their seasons in early June. The boys were eliminated by top seed, Lakeville North, while the girls fell in the second round to Lakeville South.

Last year, the Tigers won three of their first six. The season before, they won two. Three years ago, they had a single win at this point. The Tigers have outscored opponents 56-17, and opponents are averaging less than three points a game to the Tigers’ nine.

Medford’s AJ Chappuis signed his letter of intent to play baseball for the University of Sioux Falls on Wednesday, April 15.

April 28
Nick and Jarvis VonRuden have been playing baseball together for a long time. For years it’s been their dream to play on the same varsity team. This year, that dream came true.

Blooming Prairie’s Taylor Christianson earned medalist honors at the five-team invitational at Prairie Ridge golf course at Janesville, while Tommy Braaten led three local golfers into the top 15 in the 5-team USC invitational at Oak View course in Alden.

May 5
A seven-run third inning dashed the Blooming Prairies girls softball hopes, as Maple River routed BP 14-1 in five innings at Mapleton Thursday, April 30. The loss dropped the Blossoms below .500 at 4-5 for the season.

Eight track teams battled in a True-Team Invitational at Blooming Prairie Tuesday, April 28.

Owatonna youth hockey players now have a new place to work on their skills year-round, as the Dryland Training Facility in Owatonna was recently completed.

May 12
This summer, John Worke will drop his title of athletic director and girls basketball coach and assume the high school principal position.

The month of May has not been kind to the three Steele County teams in the Gopher Conference. New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva, Blooming Prairie and Medford are a collective 2-11 in May baseball. Both of those two wins belong to Medford.

BPHS golfer Taylor Christianson ran away from the pack at the BP invitational meet Friday, May 8, to earn medalist

honors at the five-team meet.

May 19
The Owatonna lacrosse boys have played some close games throughout the season, but one thing always seemed to elude them. A win. Now, after 10 straight losses, the boys have finally wiped the zero from the wins column.

Blooming Prairie’s golfer Tommy Braaten finished sixth at a conference match at Blue Earth Area on Tuesday, May 12.

May 26
After losing a 5-0 shutout to Hayfield for the subsection championship, the Blossom girls bounced back to defeat Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Friday, May 22, for second place and advance to the section 1A tournament. Hayfield held the Blossoms to just five hits in the opening loss to the Vikings.

A number of Blooming Prairie tracksters will advance to the section meet, after results from Sub-Section 2A competition at Grand Meadow High school on Tuesday, May 19.

Minimizer semi-truck racers Trevor Kruckeberg and Brad Klommensen travelled to Willows, California, to take on other drivers from around the country at Thunderhill Raceway last weekend.

June 2
A 4-1 loss to Tri-City United ended the Panthers’ sub-section runs on Thursday, May 28, ending a season of ups and downs

for the Panthers and their new coach, Drew Paukert.

Senior Taylor Hagen became the second Blooming Prairie athlete to earn a trip to state competition. She placed second in the shot put at the Section 1A meet Thursday, May 28

The Owatonna boys and girls lacrosse teams both ended their seasons this week in section play. The boys were eliminated early in a 15-1 loss to top-seed Lakeville North. The girls managed to secure a first round 13-6 victory against Rochester Century, but fell 15-2 against Lakeville South to end their playoff run.

June 9
Blooming Prairie’s Taylor Hagen finished her career as an Awesome Blossom last weekend with a fourth-place finish in shot put.

A beautiful night greeted a large crowd for Fan Appreciation Night at Chateau Raceway that featured free admission to the grandstand. Several new faces graced victory lane this week and the USRA Modifieds put on a show that will be talked about for quite some time.

June 16
Owatonna’s Peter Jones placed second at the state golf tournament. He finished with a 144 over the two-day meet.

Blooming Prairie sophomore Taylor Christianson wound up 12th with a score of 173 at the State 1A Golf Tournament.

Gopher Conference Standings

Girls Basketball

	Conf.	Overall
NRHEG	2-0-0	5-0-0
Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	2-0-0	3-2-0
Blooming Prairie	1-1-0	6-2-0
United South Central	1-1-0	5-2-0
Bethlehem Academy	0-1-0	3-3-0
Maple River	0-1-0	0-5-0
Medford	0-2-0	0-5-0

Boys Basketball

	Conf.	Overall
Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	3-0-0	7-1-0
Maple River	2-0-0	6-1-0
NRHEG	2-1-0	5-3-0
United South Central	1-1-0	5-2-0
Blooming Prairie	1-2-0	4-6-0
Bethlehem Academy	0-2-0	3-6-0
Medford	0-3-0	1-8-0

Wrestling

	Conf.	Overall
United South Central	3-0-0	4-0-0
Maple River	2-1-0	3-3-0
WEM/JWP	1-1-0	2-6-0
New Richland-H-E-G H.S.	1-1-0	2-4-0
Blooming Prairie	1-3-0	1-7-0
Medford	0-0-0	1-3-0

Big 9 Conference Standings

Girls Basketball

	Conf.	Overall
Rochester John Marshall	5-1-0	6-2-0
Winona	5-1-0	6-1-0
Rochester Century	5-1-0	6-2-0
Rochester Mayo	4-1-0	6-1-0
Red Wing	4-2-0	4-4-0
Austin	3-3-0	3-3-0
Owatonna	2-2-0	3-2-0
Northfield H.S.	3-4-0	3-4-0
Faribault	1-4-0	2-4-0
Mankato West	1-4-0	2-4-0
Mankato East	1-5-0	2-6-0
Albert Lea	0-6-0	0-6-0

Boys Basketball

	Conf.	Overall
Red Wing	7-0-0	9-0-0
Rochester John Marshall	7-0-0	7-1-0
Austin	4-2-0	5-2-0
Mankato East	4-2-0	4-3-0
Owatonna	4-3-0	4-4-0
Mankato West	4-3-0	4-4-0
Faribault	4-3-0	4-4-0
Northfield H.S.	4-4-0	6-4-0
Rochester Mayo	2-6-0	2-7-0
Winona	1-6-0	1-7-0
Rochester Century	1-6-0	1-8-0
Albert Lea	0-7-0	0-8-0

Wrestling

	Conf.	Overall
Rochester John Marshall	4-0-0	8-3-0
Albert Lea Area	3-0-0	14-0-0
Owatonna	3-1-0	4-1-0
Northfield	3-1-0	3-1-0
Faribault	2-1-0	4-2-0
Rochester Mayo	2-3-0	5-5-0
Winona/Winona Cotter	1-2-0	1-5-0
Mankato West	1-3-0	1-3-0
Austin	0-2-0	2-4-0
Mankato East	0-3-0	3-8-0
Rochester Century	0-4-0	0-5-0

Source: Minnesota Scores website

ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

Lauren Larkoski

One of the few senior captains on the basketball team, Lauren Larkoski has been a quiet, but capable leader on the team. Although not ordinarily a prolific scorer, she had a career game in the win over NRHEG last week, when she counted 14 points, including 6-of-10 free throws. Larkoski also shone as an outside hitter on the volleyball team last fall.

Mitchell Oswald

One of the sophomores on the team, Mitchell Oswald has developed into one of the best wrestlers on the wrestling team. In a recent tourney at Kenyon-Wanamingo, Oswald won three of four bouts and finished third in his weight class of 195 in the tough 10-team event. Besides his emergence as a topnotch wrestler, with just three losses on the season, Oswald had a major role on the Blossom football team as a lineman who played on both sides of the ball.

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Sports

Youngsters learn about basketball at Owatonna camp

By **ALAN VAN ORMER**
Managing Editor

Willow Creek Intermediate School was packed with youngsters eager to learn more about basketball. And members of the Owatonna High School girls and boys basketball team, along with team coaches and those involved with the Owatonna Parks and Recreation Department, provided some insight on basketball skills on Saturday.

Owatonna High School Girls Basketball Coach Tricia Hoffman said it was about getting the little girls excited about basketball and introducing them to basketball. “I remember those camps,” she said. “You always wanted to see those role models – high school players because that is what you want to be someday.”

Throughout the morning girls and boys, kindergarten through second-grade, learned basic fundamentals of basketball including ball handling, passing skills, shooting skills and agility skills.

Hoffman said these types of camps do help the school’s basketball program because the camps provide some of the same offensive and defensive strategies and use the same terminology so that when the kids get to the high school level, it doesn’t have to be retaught.

“I’m only fourth year as head coach. I know building a program takes several years. It doesn’t happen overnight,”



LEFT: Dustin Quam teaches defensive drills.

RIGHT: Rachel Williamson works with a youngster on a shooting drill. A basketball camp for youngsters, ages kindergarten through second-grade was held earlier this month at Willow Creek Intermediate School. The program involved Owatonna team coaches and others involved with the Owatonna Parks and Recreation Department.



Staff photos by Alan Van Ormer

Hoffman said. “But I definitely have seen some improvement from year to year.”

Boys Assistant Basketball Coach Pat Webb said the camp gets the youth involved with

some of the older boys. “It helps some of the older guys, as well with leadership ability,” he said. “The older kids like it. The younger kids look up to them like they’re superstars and NBA

players. They get a kick out of it.”

Senior Jake Borchert said it feels good to give back. “I remember being here when I was little,” he said. “It feels good be-

ing here helping out those little kids doing stuff I was doing when I was younger.”

Another senior, Rachel Williamson said the kids like being around them and really look up

to them. “It is really cool to see how much they love you and how much fun they have,” she said.

Junior high is busy

By **LEMAR NELSON**
Staff Sports Writer

Seventh-graders

Bloomington’s seventh-grade left school for the Christmas holidays with a victory over New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG), 30-20 on Tuesday, Dec. 22, to up the record to 8-4. The Panthers won a close eighth-grade game, 44-40.

BP held the Panthers to just eight second half points in the win. Megan Oswald scored 16 points to lead the scoring and Maggie Bruns chipped in seven.

A NRHEG press in the first half of the seventh-grade put the locals down 24-18 at the break, but Coach Emily Henslin’s team played better defense and picked up the intensity in the second half. A press of their own late in the game gave the

Blossoms life, but the rally fell just short. Oswald again led the scoring with 16 points and Alison Krohnberg added nine.

Girls win two

The seventh-grade defeated USC, 27-7, as a full-court press bothered the Rebels a lot.

As Coach Emily Henslin commented, “The press led to some easy baskets, and the defense had some great stops in the second half, holding USC to just two points.” Megan Oswald led the scoring with 10 points and Maren Forystek contributed six.

The eighth-grade also defeated the Rebels, 33-19, after a good second half comeback. Oswald rattled in 15 points in the victory.

Girls split two

On Thursday, Dec. 17, the seventh-grade beat WEM, 32-

28, despite a spirited rebound for the Bucs. They trailed at the half 20-11. Oswald had 18 points in the game and Taylor Wurst added eighth. The eighth-grade lost to Waterville-Elysian-Morristown (WEM) big 41-9, as the Bucs had three tall players who dominated the game.

Southland edged the seventh-grade, 30-28 on Tuesday, Dec. 15, while the eighth-grade won a close 29-25 contest over the Rebels. The seventh-grade trailed 20-14 at the half, and could never quite catch up. Alison Krohnberg had eight points, but Megan Oswald led the way with 16 points in the game.

The eighth-grade game played out in intense fashion, and the defense played really well in gaining the two-point victory. Oswald had 10 points in this game and Maren Forystek chipped in seven.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE WRESTLING

Five place at K-W Invite

By **LEMAR NELSON**
Staff Sports Writer

Five Bloomington wrestlers placed at the annual Kenyon-Wanamingo (KW) Invitational tournament Saturday, Dec. 19, led by Ethan Arett’s second place finish. Colton Krell and Mitchell Oswald both placed third in the meet, and Seth Peterson claimed fifth.

The team placed eighth out of 10 teams, behind Kenyon-Wanamingo and Dover-Eyota in the top two spots.

Arett earned the runner-up spot at 106 by winning two bouts and losing the finals. Jerron Matson pinned Arett at 1:07 of the final bout, after the Blossom had used just 26 seconds to pin Klayton Hawkings of Wabasha-Kellogg in his first bout and then pinned Taylor DeFrang of Dover-Eyota in the semifinals.

Krell took third at 160, when he pinned Shaffer Denno (Spring Lake Park) in 1:26 of the first period. He began his day with third period pin of Cole

Johnson (K-W) in the third period, and then lost to Kane Lembke (Dover Eyota), late in the second period. He came back to take a major 17-8 major decision over Jonathan Norgrant (W-K), and then claimed his third place.

At 195 Oswald pinned Martinie Chhin (Burnsville) in 40 seconds, lost a close 7-4 decision to Collin Schmoker (WK), and then rebounded for a first period pin of Raghde Flores (Spring Lake Park) and a 9-3 verdict over Riley Donkers (KW).

Seth Peterson and Dylan Nirk both placed fifth in the tournament. Peterson took fifth at 145 by an injury default in his sixth bout of the day, and, Nirk pinned Josh Oveido of Spring Lake Park in the first period at 170. Payton Simon and Jon Hansen did not place, although Simon did win one of his three bouts.

As Coach Chad Gimbel, remarked, “To have five wrestlers place of the seven we entered is a pretty good percentage.”

The team is idle now until Jan. 7.



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Legals

Foreclosure

15-101570
**NOTICE OF MORTGAGE
[FORECLOSURE SALE]**

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: December 21, 2006 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$116,000.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Joseph L. Erler and Barbara R. Erler, Husband and Wife; Jeremy J. Erler and Brittany L. Erler, Husband and Wife and Jeff T. Evans, a single person MORTGAGEE: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. MIN#: 100021278104668400 LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON THE MORTGAGE: Rochester Mortgage Company SERVICER: JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Filed December 22, 2006, Steele County Recorder, as Document Number A000346604, thereafter re-recorded March 28, 2007 as document number A000348663 to add additional mortgagors

ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association; Dated: July 27, 2015 filed: August 3, 2015, recorded as document number A000403434 LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot 9 and the East 6 feet of Lot 8 in Block 23 of the Original Town (now City) of Owatonna, Minnesota; Excepting the South 55 feet to the above described premises. PROPERTY ADDRESS: 404 Elm Ave S, Owatonna, MN 55060 PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 17-100-2310 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$107,927.01 THAT all pre-foreclosure requirements have been complied with; that no action or proceeding has been instituted at law or otherwise to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: January 12, 2016, 10:00am PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff's Main Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN 55060 to pay the debt secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any, on said premises and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys fees allowed by law, subject to redemption within 6 months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s) the personal representatives or assigns. TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the real estate is an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling, unless otherwise provided by law, the date on or before which the mortgagor(s) must vacate the property, if the mortgage is not reinstated under section 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under section 580.23, is 11:59 p.m. on July 12, 2016, or the next business day if July 12, 2016 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. "THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 582.032 DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN 5 UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: November 17, 2015

JPMorgan Chase Bank,
National Association
Assignee of Mortgagee

SHAPIRO & ZIELKE, LLP

BY

Lawrence P. Zielke - 152559
Diane F. Mach - 273788
Melissa L. B. Porter - 0337778
Randolph W. Dawdy - 2160X
Gary J. Evers - 0134764
Tracy J. Halliday - 034610X
Attorneys for Mortgagee
12550 West Frontage Road,
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Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 831-4060

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11/24, 12/1, 12/8,
12/15, 12/22, 12/29

Foreclosure

**NOTICE OF MORTGAGE
FORECLOSURE SALE
THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF
THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF
THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR
WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY
LAW IS NOT AFFECTED
BY THIS ACTION.**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That Default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: 09/23/2004 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$100,700.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Dale L. Louks and Bonjonette Louks, Husband and Wife; and Lanny R. Louks MORTGAGEE: -Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Heartland Home Finance, Inc. DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: 10/12/2004 as Document Number A000326422 in the Office of the County Recorder, Steele County, Minnesota ASSIGNMENT OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to Ventures Trust 2013-I-H-R by MCM Capital Partners, LLC its Trustee TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: 03/05/2015 as Document Number A000401080 in the Office of the County Recorder, Steele County, Minnesota TAX PARCEL I.D. NO.: 17-016-1153 LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Commencing Ten (10) rods West of the Southeast corner of Lot Four (4) of Lot Eighteen (18) in the Northeast Quarter (1/4) of Section Sixteen (16) in Township One Hundred and Seven (107) North of Range Twenty (20) West, running thence North Ten (10) rods, thence West Four and one-half (4 1/2) rods, thence South Ten (10) rods, thence East Four and one-half (4 1/2) rods to the place of beginning. A B S T R A C T STREET ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 240 Northview, Owatonna, MN 55060 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR: Heartland Home Finance, Inc. RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE SERVICER: BSI Financial Services Inc. TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. TRANSACTION AGENT'S MORTGAGE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER ON MORTGAGE: 1 0 0 3 1 1 0 1 0 0 0 0 1 1 0 4 1 2 THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE AS OF THE DATE OF THIS NOTICE: \$103,796.01

THAT no action or proceeding has been instituted at law to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; that there has been compliance with all pre-foreclosure notice and acceleration requirements of said mortgage, and/or applicable statutes. Pursuant to the power of sale contained in said Mortgage, the Mortgage will be foreclosed, and the mortgaged premises will be sold by the Sheriff of Steele County, Minnesota at public auction as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: 01/19/2016 at 10:00AM PLACE OF SALE: Steele County Sheriff's Office, 204 E. Pearl, Owatonna, MN 55060 to pay the debt then secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any actually paid by the mortgagee, on the premises and the costs and disbursements allowed by law. The time allowed by law for redemption by said Mortgagor(s) or Mortgagor's personal representatives or assigns is six months from the date of sale. TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the mortgage is not reinstated under Minn. Stat. §580.30 or redeemed under Minn. Stat. §580.23, the mortgagor must vacate the mortgaged property by 11:59 p.m. on 07/19/2016, or the next business day if 07/19/2016 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

MORTGAGOR(S) RELEASED FROM FINANCIAL OBLIGATION ON MORTGAGE: None

THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 582.032, DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS THAT MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: 11/24/2015 Ventures Trust 2013-I-H-R by MCM Capital Partners, LLC its Trustee, Mortgagee/Mortgage Assignee Klatt, Odekirk, Augustine, Sayer, Treinen & Rastede, P.C., By Brian G. Sayer, Attorney for Mortgagee/Mortgage Assignee 925 E 4th St., Waterloo, IA 50703

**THIS IS A COMMUNICATION
FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR
ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT
A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION
OBTAINED WILL BE USED
FOR THAT PURPOSE.**

11/24, 12/1, 12/8,
12/15, 12/22, 12/29

Foreclosure

15-101819
**NOTICE OF MORTGAGE
FORECLOSURE SALE**

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: April 21, 2008 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$159,101.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Lee Mullerleile and Christy Mullerleile, husband and wife MORTGAGEE: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. MIN#: 100249120000143128

LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON THE MORTGAGE: Marketplace Home Mortgage, LLC SERVICER: CitiMortgage, Inc. DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Filed April 25, 2008, Steele County Recorder, as Document Number A000356812 ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: CitiMortgage, Inc. LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot 8, Block 6, Re-Plat of Highland Park Addition to the City of Owatonna, together with the North Half of the vacated alley lying directly South of said Lot. PROPERTY ADDRESS: 627 E Academy St, Owatonna, MN 55060 PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 17-136-0608 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$159,226.97 THAT all pre-foreclosure requirements have been complied with; that no action or proceeding has been instituted at law or otherwise to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: January 12, 2016, 10:00am PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff's Main Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN 55060 to pay the debt secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any, on said premises and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys fees allowed by law, subject to redemption within 6 months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s) the personal representatives or assigns.

TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the real estate is an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling, unless otherwise provided by law, the date on or before which the mortgagor(s) must vacate the property, if the mortgage is not reinstated under section 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under section 580.23, is 11:59 p.m. on July 12, 2016, or the next business day if July 12, 2016 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

"THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 582.032 DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN 5 UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: November 20, 2015

CitiMortgage, Inc.
Assignee of Mortgagee

SHAPIRO & ZIELKE, LLP

BY

Lawrence P. Zielke - 152559
Diane F. Mach - 273788
Melissa L. B. Porter - 0337778
Randolph W. Dawdy - 2160X
Gary J. Evers - 0134764
Tracy J. Halliday - 034610X
Attorneys for Mortgagee
12550 West Frontage Road, Ste. 200
Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 831-4060

**THIS IS A COMMUNICATION
FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR**

11/24, 12/1, 12/8,
12/15, 12/22, 12/29

Foreclosure

15-101690

**NOTICE OF MORTGAGE
FORECLOSURE SALE**

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: November 21, 2005 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT

OF MORTGAGE: \$229,050.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Amado Mendez Solis and Lorna E. Mendez, husband and wife MORTGAGEE: Town and Country Credit Corp. LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON THE MORTGAGE: Town and Country Credit Corp. SERVICER: Specialized Loan Servicing LLC DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Filed December 7, 2005, Steele County Recorder, as Document Number A000337562 ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: Ameriquet Mortgage Company; Dated: December 2, 2005 filed: December 26, 2007, recorded as document number A000354323; thereafter assigned to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. dated December 2, 2005 recorded December 26, 2007 as document number A000354324. Thereafter assigned to U.S. Bank National Association, as Trustee, successor in interest to Bank of America, National Association, as successor by merger to LaSalle Bank National Association, as Trustee for Certificateholders of Bear Stearns Asset Backed Securities I LLC, Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2006-HE2 dated March 19, 2012 recorded April 9, 2012 as document number A000383927. LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot6,Block3,Radel'sFrancisAddition PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1283 BellflowerLane,Owatonna,MN55060 PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 17-437-0306 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$372,214.97 THAT all pre-foreclosure requirements have been complied with; that no action or proceeding has been instituted at law or otherwise to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: January 12, 2016, 10:00am PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff's Main Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN 55060 to pay the debt secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any, on said premises and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys fees allowed by law, subject to redemption within 6 months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s) the personal representatives or assigns. TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the real estate is an owner-occupied, single-family

dwelling, unless otherwise provided by law, the date on or before which the mortgagor(s) must vacate the property, if the mortgage is not reinstated under section 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under section 580.23, is 11:59 p.m. on July 12, 2016, or the next business day if July 12, 2016 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. "THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 582.032 DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN 5 UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: November 20, 2015

U.S. Bank National Association, as Trustee, successor in interest to Bank of America, National Association, as Trustee, successor by merger to LaSalle Bank National Association, as Trustee for Bear Stearns Asset Backed Securities I Trust 2006-HE2, Asset Backed-Certificates, Series 2006-HE2 Assignee of Mortgagee

SHAPIRO & ZIELKE, LLP

BY

Lawrence P. Zielke - 152559
Diane F. Mach - 273788
Melissa L. B. Porter - 0337778
Randolph W. Dawdy - 2160X
Gary J. Evers - 0134764
Tracy J. Halliday - 034610X
Attorneys for Mortgagee
12550 West Frontage Road, Ste. 200
Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 831-4060

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FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR**

11/24, 12/1, 12/8,
12/15, 12/22, 12/29



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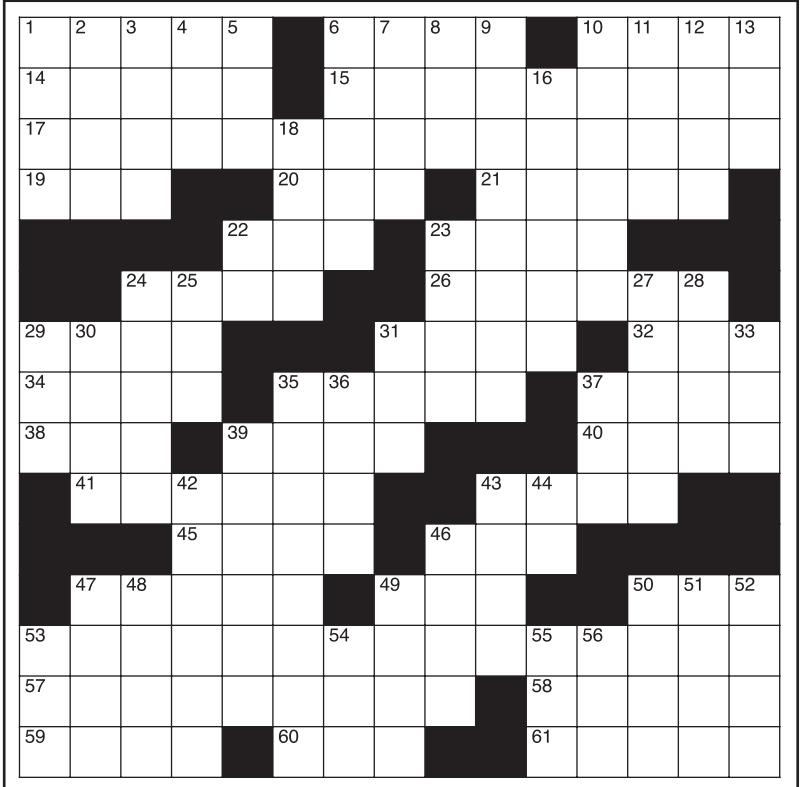
WEEKLY CROSSWORD

Answers on Page 7C

CLUES ACROSS

- Elephant's name
- Support
- Mures River city
- Bastard wing
- One was named Desire
- PGA Tournament prize
- A way to leave unchanged
- Unchangeable computer memory
- Harangues
- 6th Hebrew letter
- Well informed
- Turfs
- In a way, obeyed
- Lawyers group
- Increases motor speed
- Political action committee
- Light pokes
- Struck down
- Central Philippine

- Island
- Japanese sash
 - Afresh
 - Bluish green
 - Inspire with love
 - Without (French)
 - Counterbalance
 - container to obtain net weight
 - Express pleasure
 - Cheap wine (Br.)
 - Signing
 - ___ compilation, compiling computer language
 - Have surgery
 - Being trompe-l'oeil
 - Extremely mad
 - Day
 - Small coin (French)
 - Snatched



CLUES DOWN

- Cry
- Wings
- Baseball play
- Flower petals
- Drive against
- Velikaya River city
- A single unit in a collection
- Stray
- Bring back
- Repented
- Receipt (abbr.)

- Expresses pleasure
- Not wet
- In a way, takes off
- Macaws genus
- "Fast Five" star's initials
- Sharpen a knife
- Oral polio vaccine developer
- Former CIA
- Fencing swords
- Aba ___ Honeymoon
- Bustle

- Minor
- Propel a boat
- Passage with access only at one end
- Underwater airways
- Small, slight
- Box (abbr.)
- ___Blake, actress
- Repents
- Merchandising
- Exclamation of surprise
- With fireplace residue

- A small lake
- Bait
- Tip of Aleutian Islands
- K___: watercraft (alt. sp.)
- Norse variant of "often"
- Adolescent
- Visual metaphor (Computers)
- River in Spanish
- Cowboy Carson
- Powerful gun lobby

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Jay Braaten,
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Legals

Foreclosure

15-100715 NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: February 7, 2008 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$116,400.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Mark A. Boehme and Amanda D. Wacek, each a single person MORTGAGEE: Midwest Minnesota Community Development Corporation LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON THE MORTGAGE: Midwest Minnesota Community Development Corporation SERVICER: JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Filed February 8, 2008, Steele County Recorder, as Document Number A000355253 ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.; Dated: February 7, 2008 filed: February 8, 2008, recorded as document number A000355254 LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot Ten (10), in Olson's Addition to the Village of Blooming Prairie PROPERTY ADDRESS: 250 2nd St SE, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917 PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 14-105-0110 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$105,944.15 THAT all pre-foreclosure requirements have been complied with; that no action or proceeding has been instituted at law or otherwise to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: January 28, 2016, 10:00am PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff's Main Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN 55060 to pay the debt secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any, on said premises and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys fees allowed by law, subject to redemption within 6 months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s) the personal representatives or assigns. TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the real estate is an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling, unless otherwise provided by law, the date on or before which the mortgagor(s) must vacate the property, if the mortgage is not reinstated under section 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under section 580.23, is 11:59 p.m. on July 28, 2016, or the next business day if July 28, 2016 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

"THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 582.032 DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN 5 UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: December 4, 2015

JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association Assignee of Mortgagee

SHAPIRO & ZIELKE, LLP

BY

Lawrence P. Zielke - 152559
Diane F. Mach - 273788
Melissa L. B. Porter - 0337778
Randolph W. Dawdy - 2160X
Gary J. Evers - 0134764
Tracy J. Halliday - 034610X
Attorneys for Mortgagee
12550 West Frontage Road, Ste. 200
Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 831-4060

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR

12/8, 12/15, 12/22
12/29, 1/5, 1/12



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Foreclosure

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: December 8, 2006 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE:\$76,500.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Joseph L. Erler, Married and Jeremy J. Erler and Brittany L. Erler, Husband and Wife MORTGAGEE: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Rochester Mortgage Company TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. MIN#:100021278104656389 SERVICER: U.S. Bank National Association LENDER: Rochester Mortgage Company DATE AND PLACE OFFILING: Steele County Minnesota,Recorder , on December 12,2006, as Document No. A000346321.ASSIGNED TO: U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION Dated: July 14, 2015 , and recorded July 15,2015 by Document No. A000403064.LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot Ten (10), in Block One (1), in Pettit's Addition to Town(now City) of Owatonna, Minnesota.PROPERTY ADDRESS: 144 E Rose Street, Owatonna, MN 55060PROPERTY I.D: 17-104-0110 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: Seventy-Three Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety-Seven and 44/100 (\$73,897.44) THAT no action or proceeding has been instituted at law to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; that there has been compliance with all pre-foreclosure notice and acceleration requirements of said mortgage, and/or applicable statutes;PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: 10:00 AM on January 29, 2016 PLACE OF SALE: Steele County Sheriff's Office,in the Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna,Minnesota 55060 to pay the debt then secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any actually paid by the mortgagee, on the premises and the costs and disbursements allowed by law. The time allowed by law for redemption by said mortgagor(s), their personal representatives or assigns is 6.00 months from the date of sale. If Mortgage is not reinstated under Minn.Stat. Section 580.30 or the property isnot redeemed under Minn. Stat. Section 580.23, the Mortgagor must vacate the property on or before 11:59p.m. on July 30, 2016, or the next business day if July 30, 2016 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday."THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS,MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 582.032,DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION,AND ARE ABANDONED." Dated: December 15, 2015 U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION Randall S. Miller and Associates, PLLC Attorneys for Assignee of Mortgage/Mortgagee Canadian Pacific Plaza, 120 South Sixth Street, Suite2050 Minneapolis, MN 55402 Phone:952-232-0052 Our File No.15MN00585-1 THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. A-4553824

Dated: December 12/15, 12/22, 12/29
1/5, 1/12, 1/19

Foreclosure

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: June 15, 2005 MORTGAGOR: Curtis M. Christianson and Patricia Y. Christianson, husband and wife MORTGAGEE: Farmers and MerchantsStateBankofBloomingPrairie DATE AND PLACE OF RECORDING: Recorded June 24, 2005 Steele County Recorder, Document No. A000333009. ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: Merchants Bank, National Association. Dated June 15, 2005 Recorded June 24, 2005, as Document No. A000333010.

TRANSACTION AGENT: NONE TRANSACTION AGENT'S MORTGAGE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER ON MORTGAGE: NONE LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON MORTGAGE: Farmers and Merchants State Bank of Blooming Prairie RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE SERVICER: Merchants Bank, N.A. MORTGAGED PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1143rd Street Northeast, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917 TAX PARCEL I.D. #: 14.101.0109 LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot 8, Block 1, in Feeney's Addition to the Village of Blooming Prairie, Steele County, Minnesota COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$100,000.00 AMOUNT DUE AND CLAIMED TO BE DUE AS OF DATE OF NOTICE, INCLUDING TAXES, IF ANY, PAID BY MORTGAGEE: \$ 8 6 , 1 1 4 . 0 3 That prior to the commencement of this mortgage foreclosure proceeding Mortgagee/Assignee of Mortgagee complied with all notice requirements as required by statute; That no action or proceeding has been instituted at law or otherwise to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; PURSUANT to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: February 23, 2016 at 10:00 AM PLACE OF SALE: Steele County Sheriff's Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN to pay the debt then secured by said Mortgage, and taxes, if any, on said premises, and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys' fees allowed by law subject to redemption within six (6) months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s), their personal representatives or assigns unless reduced to Five (5) weeks under MN Stat. §580.07.

TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the real estate is an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling, unless otherwise provided by law, the date on or before which the mortgagor(s) must vacate the property if the mortgage is not reinstated under section 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under section 580.23 is 11:59 p.m. on August 23, 2016, unless that date falls on a weekend or legal holiday, in which case it is the next weekday, and unless the redemption period is reduced to 5 weeks under MN Stat. Secs. 580.07 or 582.032.

MORTGAGOR(S) RELEASED FROM FINANCIAL OBLIGATION ON MORTGAGE: None "THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 582.032, DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED."

Dated: December 21, 2015

Merchants Bank, National Association Mortgagee/Assignee of Mortgagee

USSET, WEINGARDEN AND LIEBO, P.L.L.P. Attorneys for Mortgagee/Assignee of Mortgagee
4500 Park Glen Road #300
Minneapolis, MN 55416
(952) 925-6888
94-15-009995 FC

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR.

12/29, 1/5, 1/12
1/19, 1/26, 2/2

Foreclosure

15-101130 NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: May 5, 2006 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$68,600.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Steven T. Gilman and Becky E. Hohenstein, both single MORTGAGEE: Aames Funding Corporation DBA Aames Home Loan LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON THE MORTGAGE: Aames Funding Corporation DBA Aames Home Loan SERVICER: New Penn Financial, LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Filed May 10, 2006, Steele County Recorder, as Document Number A000341133 ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: Countrywide Home Loans, Inc.; thereafter assigned to BAC Home Loans Servicing, LP. Thereafter assigned to The Bank of New York Mellon FKA The Bank of New York, as Trustee for the benefit of the Certificateholders of the CWABS, Inc., Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2006-SD4. LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: That part of the Southwest Quarter of Southeast Quarter of Section 25, Township 105 North, Range 19 West, described as: Commencing at a point on the South line of 5th Street of Village of Blooming Prairie, 475.6 feet West of the point of intersection of West line of Oak Street with South line of 5th Street, thence due West along the South line of 5th Street, 60 feet, due South 170 feet, due East 60 feet, due North 170 feet to point of beginning. PROPERTY ADDRESS: 2391st Street SE, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917 PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 14-025-2022 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$72,750.08 THAT all pre-foreclosure requirements have been complied with; that no action or proceeding has been instituted at law or otherwise to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: February 16, 2016, 10:00am PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff's Main Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN 55060 to pay the debt secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any, on said premises and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys fees allowed by law, subject to redemption within 6 months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s) the personal representatives or assigns.

Dated: December 12/29, 1/5, 1/12
1/19, 1/26, 2/2

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12/29, 1/5, 1/12
1/19, 1/26, 2/2

TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the real estate is an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling, unless otherwise provided by law, the date on or before which the mortgagor(s) must vacate the property, if the mortgage is not reinstated under section 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under section 580.23, is 11:59 p.m. on August 16, 2016, or the next business day if August 16, 2016 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

"THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 582.032 DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN 5 UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: December 23, 2015

The Bank of New York Mellon FKA The Bank of New York, as Trustee for the benefit of the Certificateholders of the CWABS, Inc., Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2006-SD4 Assignee of Mortgagee

SHAPIRO & ZIELKE, LLP

BY

Lawrence P. Zielke - 152559
Diane F. Mach - 273788
Melissa L. B. Porter - 0337778
Randolph W. Dawdy - 2160X
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Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 831-4060

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR

12/29, 1/5, 1/12
1/19, 1/26, 2/2

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STEELE COUNTY Times
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Serving Blooming Prairie and Four-County Area

Blooming Prairie Township Election Notice

Filings for Office of Clerk - 2 year term
Filings for Office of Supervisor – 3 year term. Will be open to file for office December 29th through January 12th. Applications for Candidacy can be picked up and returned to the Clerks Office along with a \$2 filing fee.

*Missy Anderson
Blooming Prairie Township Clerk*

12/22, 12/29

Look who's now reading Steele County Times RECENT NEW SUBSCRIBERS:



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Summons

STATE OF MINNESOTA

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT
FAMILY DIVISION

COUNTY OF STEELE

District Court File No.: 74-FA-15-2578

SUMMONS AND NOTICE

In Re the Marriage of:
Sherice Monique Marshall and
Dereck Marshall

TO: Dereck Marshall

A Summons and Petition for Dissolution was filed with this Court on December 18, 2015. A copy of said Summons and Petition is on file with the District Court, Steele County Courthouse, 111 East Main Street, Owatonna, Minnesota 55060 and is available for inspection.

Dated: 2015.12.21

Karen R Duncan
Judge of District Court

12/29, 1/5, 1/12

CHARGES Continued from Page 1A

evening. When he came back home, he was leaning in the doorway and fell over when his daughter went to hug him, the complaint alleges.

At about 1 a.m., the baby started crying and the mother held him. At one point, Stucky got up and took the child aggressively stating that it was his weekend to get up with him.

According to the complaint, the mother told investigators that after she got home from the hospital, Stucky was cleaning up beer bottles. She expressed concern about his drinking in the past, court records show.

A neighbor also provided a statement to investigators. One neighbor described Stucky's intoxication level as "tanked" during the course of the day.

An autopsy revealed that there were findings consistent with asphyxia made as to the immediate cause of death. There were no other causes of death indicated in the autopsy.

The charges against Stucky allege he caused the death of another by culpable negligence in which he created an unreasonable risk and consciously took chances of causing death or great bodily harm to another.

KIK Graphics was formerly located at 500 Minimizer Way where the main manufacturing plant of Minimizer is located.

Tyler started his graphics interest six years ago at age 19

Tyler has been very successful in the graphics business, thanks to his own adventurous business

KIK Graphics has an Epson GS 6000 large format printer that can print wraps for semi-

Tyler works closely with Minimizer marketing director Steve Hansen in creating images for flyers, banners and decals that are sent to Minimizer dealers.

Tyler said his business sees lots of competition and he welcomes it. "A good customer base is essential," he said.



Expecting a special delivery on or around January 1, 2016?

If so, you and your new arrival could be the lucky recipients of great gifts in our First Baby of the Year Contest. The first baby to be born in Blooming Prairie in 2016 will be showered with the following gifts from these generous contest sponsors:

Vandal's Family Market 237 Hwy Ave S., Blooming Prairie 507-583-6671 We will give a coupon good for \$10 in baby products.	Farmers & Merchants 245 E. Main Blooming Prairie 507-583-6688 We will open a new account for baby and provide the first \$25!	Haberman's Gallery 208 Mineral Springs Rd, Owatonna 507-451-6565 We will give the parents a \$25 gift certificate.
Sportstitch 341 E. Main St. Blooming Prairie 507-583-7001 Gift certificate for a free personalized baby blanket.	Dr. Debora Lien 132 2nd Ave NE, Blooming Prairie 507-583-6613 We will give a free dental care kit for newborn-toddler!	Steele County Times 411 E. Main, Blooming Prairie 570-583-4431 We will give a free one-year subscription!
Holman Insurance 421 E Main St #100, Blooming Prairie 507-583-7294 We will give the lucky parents \$25 in BP Bucks.	The Cutting Edge 128 3rd St SW, Blooming Prairie 507-583-2304 Gift certificate for Baby's First Haircut.	Dairy Queen 317 Hwy 218 S, Blooming Prairie 507-583-2296 Gift certificate for a free ice cream cake.
Timberlodge Steakhouse 4455 W Frontage Rd., Owatonna 507-444-0303 We will give a \$10 gift certificate.	The Bakery 345 Main St W, Blooming Prairie 507-583-4433 We will make baby's First Birthday cake!	Kernel Restuarant 1011 Hoffman Dr NW, Owatonna 507-451-2585 We will give a \$25 gift certificate.

First Baby of the Year Contest Rules

1. Baby must be born after 12 a.m. January 1, 2016 or after.
2. Parents must live within the Blooming Prairie Independent School District area.
3. Baby's birth must be reported to the Steele County Times within three business days.

The Times will announce the winning family.

Donations encouraged for Boys and Girls Club of Blooming Prairie Benefit Bash Feb. 6

By **HOWARD LESTRUD**
Staff Writer

Interested in two airline tickets to anywhere in the continental United States?

Or, are you attracted to two Minnesota Vikings football tickets for a game in the new US Bank Stadium in 2016?

If the answer is yes to those two questions, be sure to mark down Saturday, Feb. 6 as a date not to forget. That will be the date of the Boys and Girls Club of Blooming Prairie Benefit Bash.

Proceeds from a silent auction and a live auction at the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club will benefit the Boys and Girls Club of Blooming Prairie. The airline tickets and Viking tickets are just two of the many items to be auctioned at the Bash.

This event was formerly called the Boys and Girls Club Gala and now is a special event for school-aged children at the Boys and Girls Club and for adults at the Servicemen's Club, said event chairs Lianna Doocy and Cheri Krejci.

The event at the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club starts at 5 p.m. School aged children will be transported to the Boys and Girls Club for a special party featuring games and activities. Adult supervision will be provided. The kids' party is new this year. Parents are asked to pick up their children at the Boys and Girls Club when the adult activities are concluded at the Servicemen's Club.

Many donations of auction items have already been re-



Cheri Krejci, left, and Lianna Doocy, right, are co-chairs for the Boys and Girls Club of Blooming Prairie Benefit Bash planned for Saturday, Feb. 6, 2016, at the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club. Krejci and Doocy show off a special flyer promoting the event.

ceived but more are encouraged and are welcome, report chairs Doocy and Krejci.

"Donations can be special items or even services," said Doocy, a Boys and Girls Club

advisory board member." An example of a service could be kids doing yard work for a lucky bidder, Doocy explained. Admission to the Benefit Bash is free with opportunities

available to purchase special sponsorship benefits. Letters have already been sent to local businesses regarding sponsorships.

A \$1,000 Gold Sponsor will

receive four complimentary bidding numbers with reserved

BENEFIT BASH
Continued on Page 3C

STEELE TALKIN'



CAROLYN WHEELER

Overcoming the holiday blues

For many people, the holidays can be the most stressful time of year, filled with emotional highs and lows.

This time of year also can bring about feelings of, loneliness, melancholy and intense grief related to the loss of loved ones and feelings of inadequacy for not having the "It's a Wonderful Life" kind of holiday. These holiday blues can trigger a more serious depression or a relapse for those recovering from drug or alcohol addiction. Fortunately, with some planning, many of these emotions can be kept in check, and those with addiction can prevent relapse.

But, with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would.

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotion-

STEELE TALKIN'
Continued on Page 2C

The 2015 Year in Review

Jan. 6

In an attempt to reduce fatal car crashes among teens, the state has passed legislation that requires teens to have more supervised time behind the wheel. As of Jan. 1 (2015), the number of practice hours with a licensed adult rose from 30 to 40. Each driver is required to turn in a log sheet that documents the dates, the amount of time and what skills were practiced.

Judge Joseph A. Buelte, Third District Judge for Steele County, administered the oath of office to newly elected Steele County Board of Commissioners James Brady and John Glynn during an oath of office ceremony on Monday, Jan. 5 (2015), in the Steele County Annex.



Staff file photo by Alan Van Ormer
NRHEG junior SaraJo Stewart paints on her mural in the New Richland high school hallway. At least two students are painting or have painted murals in a hallway in the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva high school.

Jan. 13

It might have seemed like January 2014 all over again as bitterly cold temperatures moved into southern Minnesota last week. By Wednesday, wind chills were approaching the minus 30 degree range causing many schools in the area to close.

Current Waseca County Administrator Laura Elvebak has been selected as the next Steele County Administrator. The Steele County Board voted unanimously to choose Elvebak after a second round of interviews.

The Steele County Board has elected Nina Huntington as the chairperson for 2015 and selected James "Corky" Ebeling to serve as vice chairperson during its organizational meeting

on Jan. 6 in the Steele County Annex.

Jan. 20

As a Steele County family rebuilds from a devastating fire, they are left wondering if the damage from the blaze could have been less severe with a different fire response. At the time of the Nov. 23 (2014) fire, Jacob Standke questioned why it took firefighters so long to respond to his blazing house near Litomysl.

The entire Blooming Prairie community was saddened last week when one of the respected pillars of the community, Willis "Bus" Miller, died at the age of 89.

Jan. 27

Over 100 people arrived at Walser Auto in Owatonna last Wednesday to see members of the Minnesota Twins and Fox Sports North. Among the guests were pitchers Brian Duensing and Phil Hughes, second baseman Brian Dozier and Fox Sports North voices Jack Morris and Dick Bremer.

A vehicle belonging to a Steele County homeowner ended up being involved in the getaway of a pair of jail escapees as they eluded police through three counties before finally being captured again. The drama began unfolding around 1:05 a.m. Jan. 21 (2015) when two inmates broke out of the Rice County Jail Annex.

Feb. 3

An estimated 175 hardy souls were on hand at Lake Kohlmeier in Owatonna on Satur-



Staff file photo by Howard Lestrud
Ellingson Companies of West Concord last week started some directional drilling on the Main Street reconstruction project in Blooming Prairie. The drilling was done to place utilities underground. Initial street construction across 218, east to 5th Ave. included removal of pavement and curbing.

day, Jan. 31 (2015), to take the "Polar Plunge" into the icy water to benefit Special Olympics athletes. (Maybe a good photo here)

Laura Isenor joined the Steele County Attorney's Office as an assistant prosecutor on Jan. 5 (2015). She will be one of six attorney's handling most of the criminal matters and will include misdemeanors and all juvenile delinquency cases from misdemeanors to felonies.

Last Monday, on Jan. 26 (2015), the Medford City Council welcomed a new face to the table, Linda Dusek. In Novem-

ber, Dusek won the council seat with 258 votes over Richard Quiring's 164 votes.

Feb. 10

A leadership change has taken place at one of the county's largest non-profit organizations, but it's someone who is no stranger to the agency. Kim Schaufenbuel has moved up from assistant director to executive director of the United Way of Steele County.

After a lot of discussion the Medford City Council made the decision to offer Interim City

Administrator Andy Welti a permanent full-time position as city administrator at its special meeting on Thursday, Feb. 5 (2015).

Feb. 17

Carnival rides, fair food and entertainment may not be the only thing greeting fairgoers at their year's Steele County Free Fair. A smoking ban may be added to the list if one group gets its way. Steele County Pub-

YEAR IN REVIEW
Continued on Page 2C

YEAR IN REVIEW

Continued from Page 1C

lic Health is requesting to butt out smoking at the fairgrounds beginning this year.

As of Tuesday, Feb. 10 (2015), both patients and outpatients of Owatonna Hospital will be able to receive integrated health services such as acupuncture and medical massage therapy at the Penny George Institute for Health and Healing.

Last week, six individuals got to try scuba diving for the first time in a free Discover Scuba course offered through Owatonna Community Education and the Owatonna Diving Club.

Feb. 24

Dwindling enrollment is forcing a long-time education institution in Steele County to close its doors. St. Isidore School in Litomysl will be shutting down at the end of the school year after providing Catholic education to students for nearly 60 years, church officials announced last week.

Owatonna Senior High School has taken action to punish multiple students on the boys’ basketball team who were involved in making racist remarks on social media against a Red Wing player after the game on Feb. 17 (2015).

John Rumpza and Madison Worke, along with their parents, received Triple A awards in a short ceremony before a boys’ basketball game Feb. 10 (2015). The two seniors were selected as the BPHS recipients of the coveted honors.

March 3

The attorney for the Blooming Prairie man who accused police of roughing him up says body cams on officers would have helped bring a clearer understanding of what took place. Mark Stephenson, a Rochester

attorney who represented Valanchie and Ashley Garcia, said body cams would have helped sort out the details much sooner in the process.

Owatonna has preserved another piece of its history, as the Owatonna Commercial Historic District is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

A special New Richland-Heartland-Ellendale-Geneva School Board Meeting is slated for March 9 to discuss a referendum for school district improvement projects and to approve a new Bridges kindergarten program.

March 10

Owatonna High School teacher Wendy Stephani has been chosen as one of the 30 semifinalists for this year’s Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

Although Steele County has offered its employees a wellness program for many years, this year’s program is different in that it targets obesity and metal health issues.

Last week, Rep. Peggy Bennett, R-Albert Lea, introduced two bills, one that would reduce the number of state-mandated tests for Minnesota students and one that would address teacher shortages in a number of disciplines.

March 17

Supporters from a four county area gathered at the Steele County Historical Society Friday night for “an evening for Kids’ Sake” to raise money for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Minnesota and to honor the 2015 Bigs of the year.

Steele County Administrator Tom Shea has sent a letter to the Governor’s Office asking for support in including \$6.1 mil-

lion for the county in a bonding bill to assist with replacing the public works building in Owatonna.

Science appeared to be anything but a stuffy subject for Blooming Prairie elementary-schoolers Monday evening in the school’s gymnasium. At the school’s science fair, fifth-graders waiting for ribbon announcements eagerly discussed what surprised them most as they researched their projects.

March 24

An early spring snowstorm made its way through South Central and Southeastern Minnesota on Sunday afternoon and evening, leaving widely varying levels in its wake. Some areas reported in excess of 6 inches, while others received an inch or two.

Tobacco is no longer allowed on the majority of Steele County property. The exception is designated smoking areas in county parks and on the Steele County Free Fairgrounds. The Steele County Board of Commissioners adopted the policy during its regular meeting on March 17.

The Blooming Prairie School Board approved a new principal contract and OK’d creating a position titled Pre-K12 associate principal /activities director during its meeting Monday, March 13.

March 31

A man who groomed himself for government and public affairs at a young age is stepping down, believing he has left Steele County’s government in a good place. Tom Shea, who since 2011 has been handling the Steele County Administrator position, had his official last day on Friday.



Staff file photo by Alan Van Ormer
Students in Sheila Sawyer’s third through fifth-grade class at St. Isidore School feed the fish in the classroom. Pictured are Levi Kubicek, Ethan Ehlers, Laura Deml, Olivia Anderson and Sawyer. The school closed on May 29.

Five new Steele County Dairy Princesses were given their crowns and sashes at the Dairy Banquet on Saturday, March 28. Dairy Princesses are Leah Rieck, Katelyn Rypka, Deanna Kanne, Kendra Shroeder and Makaila Klejeski.

April 7

Steele County businesses are now required to collect a new sales-and-use tax. The 10-year 0.5 percent Steele County tax took effect April 1. It’s in addition to the 6.875 percent state sales tax and is aimed at funding road improvements.

Three juniors from New Richland-Heartland-Ellendale-Geneva—Abby Christianson, Eli Lutgens and Torrie Stenel—captured the gold during the 13th annual TrigStar competition.

Michelle Krell of Blooming Prairie has accepted the principal job at Kasson-Mantorville Middle School, effective for July 1. For the past five years, she has been principal at K-M’s elementary school.

April 14

Several road projects will be completed this year including along I-35 and Highway 14, as well as the rest of the Medford project. In addition, construction season will include a major Blooming Prairie Main Street project that starts in July.

Ellendale will maintain its contract for daily coverage with the Steele County Sheriff’s Office, and the City Council’s vote wasn’t close. Mayor Mark Skroh voted Thursday night in favor of his own proposal to cancel the 35-year-old pact for 2.7 hours of dedicated coverage a day, which cost the city \$41,000 last year. The other four council members voted against Skroh’s proposal.

April 21

In response to growing concerns across the country regarding courthouse security, the Steele County Sheriff is requesting more man power. Sheriff Lon Thiele is making a pitch to add two deputies to his department beginning as early as this summer.

About 25 people showed up at last Monday night’s Blooming Prairie City Council meeting as two new part-time police officers were sworn in. The two new police officers sworn in were Jacob Miller and Craig Helgeson.

April 28

The number of clogged sewer lines is on the rise in Steele County, potentially costing untold thousands of dollars in pump and other repairs. The culprit? Sanitary wipes that should never be thrown in the toilet, even though the manufacturers label them “flushable.”

New textbooks are to be introduced to New Richland-Heartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) students next year. The NRHEG School Board approved purchasing a series of textbooks for \$70,380.04 plus shipping and handling at its April board meeting in the New Richland Media Center.

May 5

A hero’s tribute was given at the Blooming Prairie Serviceman’s Club on Wednesday, April 29, to those who served during the Vietnam era. A free ham supper was served to the veterans and their spouses, families and friends.

The massive bird flu outbreak that has wiped out millions of turkeys across the state has found its way into Steele County, the first county in Southeast-

ern Minnesota to end up with the deadly virus. Last Wednesday, the USDA confirmed that H5N2 avian influenza struck a single turkey operation in Steele County.

May 12

Owatonna High School’s newspaper, The Magnet, is one of the 14 newspapers in the nation to be recognized as a Distinguished Site out of the 1,656 schools that use School Newspapers Online (SNO).

The Owatonna Care Center is one of two nursing homes now under control of the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). According to a press release, the MDH assumed control of the Owatonna Care Center and Faribault Care Center to protect residents’ health and safety and ensure continued care as out-of-state operators face financial difficulties.

May 19

One year after Tanya Paley took over as the Director of Strategic Operations for the United Way, the Strategic Initiative is in full swing. The goal of the initiative is to create a long-term plan to address the barriers that community members face in the core areas of income, health and education by partnering with agencies and individuals in the community.

Cry foul if you want, but there will be no fowl at summer events in Minnesota. The Minnesota State Fair last week cancelled its poultry show for the 2015 fair, and the Minnesota Board of Animal Health took it one step further by canceling all bird exhibitions at county fairs, the state fair and other events.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Continued on Page 3C



Staff file photo by Shannon Granholm
Mason Thein and his date Rachel Williamson stop at one of the many stations set up for photos along the grand march path at the Owatonna High School Prom held this May.

STEELE TALKIN’

Continued from Page 1C

nal toll on you in the past.

The holidays should be about making good memories, not about making things perfect. Some ideas for getting through the seasonal stress follow:

Do think about what’s important. Happiness and fulfillment lie in the balance between self-care and caring for others.

Do socialize. If you’re feeling lonely, find a church or community center where you can be with other people.

Do practice meditation and mindfulness techniques. These can be simple to learn and can be practiced throughout the day. The web is full of great resources to get started.

Do exercise every day. That’s especially important when you’re eating more. It’s hard to be sad if you’re physically fit.

Don’t watch TV. Most programs are not designed to make you a better person, or even feel better.

Don’t spend so much. You

don’t have to buy electronic entertainment equipment that far exceeds the human sensory capability to detect the difference.

Do set aside differences. Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don’t live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they’re feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.

Do learn to say no. Saying “yes” when you should say “no” can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can’t participate in every project or activity. If it’s not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time. Gift yourself and carry this habit into the New Year.

What if you experience a series of symptoms that involve changes in sleep, energy, concentration, appetite? One does not need to have a reason to develop a depression, though if there is a particular event that may have precipitated it (e.g., a loss, a separation), that may be a factor in vulnerability to depression. Not everybody who has a loss or stressful event occur develops a depression, so the thinking is that someone either is or isn’t biologically vulnerable to developing depression.

Depression is very real and is an illness that impacts us mentally and physically. Our brain activity is different when we are depressed.

Depression is different from normal grief or sadness. Grief or sadness related to an event does not involve disruptions of sleep and appetite or thoughts of suicide. In fact, normal grief can become complicated by a depression, which in turn can in-

terfere with the resolution of the grief; so, in other words, depression is a syndrome involving many components, and whatever causes it (we don’t really know), it should get treated. When the syndrome involves strong physical symptoms (sleep, energy, concentration, not functioning, thoughts of suicide), medicines are especially likely to be helpful.

If you or a loved one needs help, South Central Human Relations Center, located in Owatonna, Waseca and Kasson can help. Established more than 50 years ago, SCHRC is a non-profit agency that specializes in the treatment of mental health and substance use disorders. SCHRC offers many comprehensive programs and services to address, prevent and overcome the devastating effects of mental illness and substance use disorders and, ultimately, provides hope, builds recovery and fosters wellness within its com-

munities. For more information, visit schrc.com or call 507-451-2630.

If you or a loved one are experiencing a mental health emergency, you can receive immediate assistance with a call to 844-272-7472 or (844) Crisis2, Crisis Response for Southeast Minnesota.

When a call comes to (844) Crisis2 call center, trained staff will gather information and determine what steps to recommend. The call center is nationally certified by the American Association of Suicidology. Recommendations may include going to the ER, encouraging next day appointments with current providers, accessing non-crisis services through health plans, EAPs or other local providers, calling 911, dispatching our mobile Crisis Response teams, phone counseling and a next day follow up. If a mobile Crisis Response team is dispatched for assist an adult,

child or family, there would be a face to face, short-term intensive mental health service. The service may help cope with immediate stressors, identify and use available resources and personal strengths, develop action plans, avoid unnecessary hospitalizations and loss of independent living, and to help people return to their baseline of functioning. Mobile teams are made up of two mental health practitioners who will be supported by a mental health professional on the phone. For more information, visit www.crisis2southwestmn.com.

Steele Talkin’ is a weekly column featuring officials representing various organizations throughout Steele County. Carolyn Wheeler is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker, and Executive Director at South Central Human Relations Center.

May 27

With corn surrounding him and up to his neck for more than two hours, Christopher Johnson of Owatonna kept saying prayers because he didn’t think he would survive. When Johnson, 65, initially became totally buried in corn for a brief time and trapped for an additional two hours last week on his nephew’s farm just north of Geneva, history was against his survival.

Washington Elementary School’s special education teacher Lori Holm was chosen as the Teacher of the Year earlier this month at the Owatonna Educators Awards and Recognition Banquet.

June 2

Less than two months after their teenage son died by suicide, a Blooming Prairie couple is hoping to turn the tragedy into something positive. Kristi and Jamie Jorgenson want to increase awareness of mental illness, a disease that their son, Alex, battled for three years prior to ending his life a day before his 16th birthday at the family’s home on April 13.

On Thursday, May 28, Zachary Schumaker was awarded the honor of “Police Officer of the Year.” Moonlighter’s Exchange Club of Owatonna sponsored this recognition banquet, which was held at the VFW in Owatonna.

June 9

The governor’s bonding bill has included \$4 million for the Steele County public works building. Steele County chairperson Nina Huntington said what this means is that if they get the money, the debt service to local tax payers will be decreased.

Students at McKinley Elementary School in Owatonna

now have the opportunity to learn the curriculum in an outdoor classroom setting centered in the middle of a prairie garden that was designed and built by them.

The agriculture community will see a savings of 5 cents per kilowatt-hour by going solar, according to Steele-Waseca Co-operative Electric General Manager Syd Briggs.

June 16

The Owatonna Care Center located on SW 18th Street will soon be closed permanently. Since May 7, the Minnesota Department of Health has assumed control of both the Owatonna Care Center and Faribault Care Center under a receivership order.

Voters in the New Richland-Heartland-Ellendale-Geneva School District overwhelmingly said ‘No’ to a \$14.5 million project that would have improved facilities at Ellendale and New Richland.

For 37 years, residents of Owatonna and surrounding communities knew exactly where to go if they needed a shoe fixed, a zipper repaired or even a dog collar fixed. However, Paul Gangelhoff, owner of Paul’s Shoe Repair in Owatonna, officially called it quits Saturday, June 13.

June 23

Monday morning brought rain and thunderstorms into Steele County and surrounding counties. Although the majority of Steele County did not see any flooding, the southern portion of the county had some problems arise. Owatonna fire chief Mike Johnson said the heaviest rainfall was in the New Richland area, however there were also isolated flood spots in Ellendale.

For the most part, with the exception of some heavy showers

at mid-week, the weather has cooperated with the beginning of work on the reconstruction of Main Street in Blooming Prairie.

June 30

Crime is on the rise in Steele County. Midway through the year, the Steele County Attorney’s Office is experiencing a 25 percent increase in charges filed over last year. And, in fact, the office is on pace to place the highest number of cases in nearly a decade.

July marks the completion of the first year of the Steele-Waseca Drug Court. And during the last June Steele County Board of Commissioners meeting, Drug Court Coordinator Nicole Grahms provided an update on drug court.

July 7

Each year, the Blooming Prairie community welcomes guests from near and far to enjoy the Fourth of July Celebration, and this year was no exception. This year’s festivities began on the afternoon of Friday, July 3, with events for the whole family, including contests, races and shows of all kinds. Saturday, July 4, also offered a full schedule of things to see and do.

After more than a half a century of family ownership, the Dodge County Independent based in Kasson has a new owner. Beginning July 1, Rick Bussler (owner of Steele County Times) took over operations of the DCI newspaper and shopper from Randy and Lisa Carlson.

July 14

A long-standing dispute between several people resulted in a man being seriously injured in a violent stabbing in a cornfield in rural Steele County July 10. Despite is wounds, the victim, Andrew Patrick Zavala, 19, of

Owatonna, is expected to survive.

United Way of Steele County has received the Health Equity in Action Grant, which consists of \$50,000 for the first year and \$75,000 the next year. This grant is from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation, and the ultimate goal is to address the root cause of poverty.

The old house that served as the facility for Gold Cross Ambulance on South Cedar in Owatonna is in the process of being torn down to make room for a new facility that meets the needs of the crew.

July 21

Despite some harsh weather and late night storms, this year’s Steele County Relay for Life was a success yet again. Thus far, the event has raised more than \$101,000 for the American Cancer Society.

Educational experience was key in the hiring of Dr. Dale Carlson as the interim school superintendent for the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva School District.

July 28

On Monday, July 20, agriculture businesses, organizations, farmers, community members and local legislative leaders gathered for the Southern Minnesota Land Use Expo. The expo took place northwest of Blooming Prairie on a field right off of U.S. Highway 218.

Vandal’s Family Market has a lot to celebrate, and the owners are inviting the public to come celebrate with them at the store in Blooming Prairie. The building has been a grocery store since 1986, and the business has been owned by the Vandal family since 1992, when Allen Vandal purchased the building.

Aug. 4

The Owatonna School Board reached the conclusion to carry forward with \$77.9 million referendum. On Nov. 3, 2015, citizens will be asked for the



Staff file photo by Rick Bussler
Grand Marshall Frank Henefeld waves to the crowd during the 41st annual Fourth of July parade in Blooming Prairie.

funding to address the school district’s facilities’ needs.

Blooming Prairie Fire Chief Dean Naatz hopes that the department won’t have to respond to any calls for a grain bin rescue. But, if the need does arise, they’ll be ready. Every month, the Blooming Prairie Fire Department hosts training exercises to help crewmembers learn about different situations and rescue techniques.

Aug. 11

Each fall, some students return to school lacking the supplies they need to succeed. Salvation Army is trying to change that. Last week, a Salvation Army truck filled with backpacks made stops in Blooming Prairie, Medford and Owatonna. Local youth in need were encouraged to visit the designated locations, where they could pick up a free back pack filled with supplies they’ll need for the coming school year.

Each year, communities across the county celebrate National Night Out. This summer for the first time, the community of Ellendale also joined in the festivities with an event of their own at the city park.

Aug. 18

Less than three weeks before the new school year, plans to open in the same building that has been home for decades have hit a major snag for one area parochial school, forcing a temporary closing and relocation. St. Mary’s in Owatonna is on the hunt for a different building to have classes after learning that the flooring in its building on South Cedar Street could collapse.

After a few growing pains, the Owatonna Arts Center is stretching out. Construction for the addition has begun to the south of the current Arts Center. The new addition will essentially be a handicapped-accessible entrance, which will allow for a bit more gallery space.

As area schools prepare for the upcoming school year, school officials and faculty have analyzed the 2015 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment scores and plan to utilize the data to continue growth and address areas of concern.

Aug. 25

The numbers don’t lie. And,

YEAR IN REVIEW

Continued on Page 6C



Staff file photo by Shannon Granholm
Olivia Mccaului, 4, of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, enjoys the helicopter ride at the Steele County Free Fair on Wednesday, Aug. 19.

BENEFIT BASH

Continued from Page 1C

seating for up to eight people at a premium table. Gold Sponsors will also receive recognition on all events materials prior to the event and following the event.

A \$500 Silver Sponsor will receive two complimentary bidding numbers with reserved seating for up to four people at a premium table. Silver Sponsors will also receive recognition on all events materials including advertising, programs, bidding cards, bidding sheets and press releases.

A \$250 Bronze Sponsor will receive one complimentary bidding number with reserved seating for up to two people at a premium table. Bronze Sponsors will also receive recognition in the events program.

A \$100 Star Sponsor receives one complimentary bidding number and recognition in the events program.

To become a Benefit Bash sponsor, request a registration form from either Cheri Krejci at 507-438-6895 or Lianna Doocy at 507-583-7096. Additional information can also be obtained by e-mailing Cheri Krejci at krejci86@hotmail.com.

Doocy and Krejci said the Boys and Girls Club has an ambitious goal of raising as much as \$30,000 from the Benefit Bash. All proceeds will be channeled directly to the operating budget of the Boys and Girls Club of Blooming Prairie, said Doocy and Krejci. “These young people are the future of our community,” Doocy said.

Food basket specials will be available for purchase at the Servicemen’s Club during the event.

In addition to the many attractive auction items, chances to win two grand prizes through a raffle with tickets available after Jan. 1, 2016. The grand prizes will be a 50-inch flat screen television and cash. Raffle tickets will cost \$5 each.

Other headline items for the auctions will include:

- Seven-night stay at St. James Club, Morgan Bay, St. Lucia
- Hotel packages
- Half-hogs
- Homemade cupola for a roof of an outside building
- Minnesota Twins items
- St. Paul Saints baseball tickets

- Chanhassen Dinner Theatre tickets

- Water Park package at Wisconsin Dells

Donations of items can be dropped off at the Boys and Girls Club or at Krejci Ford, emphasize Doocy and Krejci.

Two special awards of recognition will be given during the Benefit Bash to two key supporters who have been helpful to the Boys and Girls Club cause, said Doocy and Krejci.

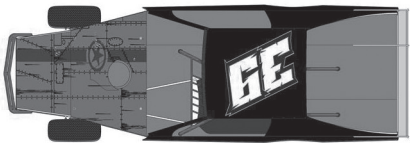
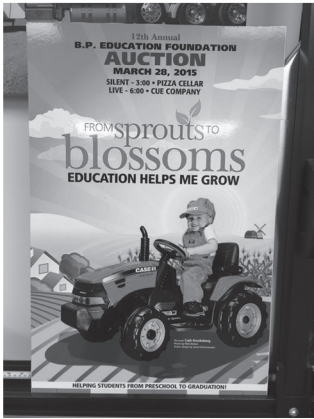
“It’s just amazing what this community will raise in funds to support worthy causes,” Doocy said. “Some members of our Blooming Prairie Cancer Group recently gave a \$15,000 check to the Hormel Institute for research,” remarked Krejci.

Anyone who wishes to help in any way is encouraged to contact Doocy or Krejci. Questions can also be directed to advisory board members LeMar Nelson, Lianna Doocy, Nolan Christianson, Angie Carlson, Becky Josephson, Orlo Toquam, Kay Toquam, Craig Kruckeberg, Robyn Kruckeberg, Tamzen Johnson and the Rev. Charlie Leonard.

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Blooming PrairieLiving

Blooming Prairie Public Utilities customers will see water, electricity rate increases in 2016

By **LAURA BERNDT**
News Editor

This January, Blooming Prairie Public Utilities (BPPU) customers will see an increase in their electric and water rates. Beginning with January electric bills, the fixed charge for residential customers will rise from \$10 to \$12 per month. The rate for residential electrical service will be a .005 kWh

increase. For commercial and industrial customers, the fixed customer charge will rise from \$17 to \$19 per month. The rate for commercial electrical service will be a .0025 kWh increase. The increased rates are the result of a 6 percent wholesale electric cost, which Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA) announced this October. This increase

marks the first increase in six years, and SMMPA representatives explain that the increase is due to changing wholesale market conditions, increased debt service, diversification of SMMPA's generation mix, increased regional transmission costs and escalating business costs. "We've made every attempt to control costs to avoid rate increases to our members over the past six years, which has been

helpful to our member communities during a critical period of economic recovery," said David Geschwind, SMMPA Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer. "The decision to increase rates is difficult but necessary in order to maintain the agency's long-term financial integrity and allow SMMPA to continue to provide the reliable and affordable wholesale electricity our members have come

to expect." BPPU customers will also have an increased cost for water services. While the rate for water service itself remains unchanged, the fixed customer charge is increasing from \$9 to \$11 per month for all customer classes. This increase, according to members of the BPPU Commission, is a result of necessary maintenance and infrastructure replacement.

It's estimated that an average customer uses about 700 kWh in electricity, and a customer using this amount would have an increase of about \$5.50 per month. The net effect for water services will be about \$2. Combined, BPPU estimates that the average customer will have an approximate increase of \$7.50, beginning in January.

Couple celebrates 60th anniversary

By **LAURA BERNDT**
News Editor

Robert and Mary Jane Olson, of Blooming Prairie, have been married for 60 years. The couple enjoys life together and Mary Jane said she hopes they will spend many more years together. Mary Jane said that a friend introduced her to Robert. The young couple went on dates together, going to the movies or going dancing. (Mary Jane, however, admits "she wasn't much of a dancer".)

"I fell in love, and so did he," said Mary Jane. Together, the Olsons have three children, six grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. Although they've lived in multiple locations around the area, the couple has always lived in close proximity to Blooming Prairie. "It's a pretty nice little town," Mary Jane said. "I like it better than I would a big city." She adds that it is a good place to raise a family, and that the town is home to lots of good people. For many years, Robert worked at Lysne Construction. Mary Jane also worked at Owatonna Tool Company (OTC) for 18 years.

Family is important the Olsons, and they enjoy attending family gatherings. They also used to travel and go camping often. Although they don't travel far these days, Mary Jane said that the two still enjoy one another's company. They also enjoy being with the family they raised. "I'm grateful for my three kids," said Mary Jane. "They're so helpful."



Submitted photo
Robert and Mary Jane Olson recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. The couple has lived in the Blooming Prairie area for the duration of their married life.

What is their secret to a long, happy marriage? "I apply a little makeup," jokes Mary Jane. After a moment of consideration, she adds, "You should never go to bed angry. And, everything should be 50/50. It always worked that way." Looking back on their past

together, and looking forward to the future, Mary Jane said she is happy and hopes that she and Robert will be able to enjoy more anniversaries – and shared years – together. "I hope many more years," she said. For their 60th anniversary, the Olsons went out for dinner.

School board thanks exiting member for her service

By **LAURA BERNDT**
News Editor

During its last meeting, the Blooming Prairie School Board sent off exiting school board member Kathi Peterson, who had served on the board for 12 years. Board member Jenny Thurnau shared a few words about Peterson's service. "I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize Kathi for her 12 years of service on the Blooming Prairie School Board," Thurnau said to Peterson. "The dedication that's given through these years of service of the highs, the lows, early morning meetings, meetings back-to-back and yes, some sleepless nights. The gratitude of knowing we are giving our students and staff and the administration the best opportunities to grow further here. So, for this, I thank you for your dedication, your expertise and the opportunity to serve with you."

Earlier this year, school superintendent Barry Olson also shared positive remarks about Peterson's time on the board. "Kathi has been a great board member," said Blooming Prairie Superintendent Barry Olson. "She is very positive about education and we'll miss her. She was a very good school board member." "It's been a pleasure," Peterson said, after the meeting. Peterson said that her experience has been both fun and "very enlightening." "People really should consider doing it, even if it's just one term, because many people complain about things that are done at the school, but there are so many restrictions, state and federal mandates that are in place; there's a lot of things the school has no option on." Peterson adds that she is grateful to be a member of the Blooming Prairie community because she believes the school district is dedicated to

providing the students, staff and administration with a high-quality educational experience and environment. "I think we have a fantastic administration that cares about the kids and our teaching staff cares about the kids. I think that is what's made serving on this board a pleasure." This January, newly elected board member Steve Ille will fill Peterson's former seat. "I'm excited to see Mr. Ille step up," Peterson said. "We'll have a new face, a new voice and new ideas."



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Blooming Prairie School Board certifies 2016 levy; reviews ZED proceedings

By **LAURA BERNDT**
News Editor

Last week, the Blooming Prairie School Board held its last meeting of the year. The board began some preparations for 2016 as it reviewed the budget and certified the final levy limitation for 2015, payable in 2016.

After the meeting, superintendent Barry Olson explained that the board made a switch to the Local Option Revenue (LOR), which means that the school board can levy operating dollars on the Referendum Market Value tax base up to \$424 per pupil. The option, explained Olson, will actually save the district (and its taxpayers) about \$29,505. "That's why we did it; to save the taxpayers money," he said.

Another change in the budget and levy involved a shifting of categories, as mandated by the state. The long-term facility management revenue has replaced health and safety revenue, along with deferred maintenance revenue. "That increased our levy by almost \$149,000 in that area," said Olson. "Over half our levy increase was because of legislative mandates." The levy also increased due to the upcoming elementary project. Earlier this year, the school sold bonds to help pay for building upgrades, including a new HVAC system. This accounts for about \$117,577 of the levy increase.

Debt services and other levy categories also went up marginally, but Olson said that the LOR, long-term facility management and the elementary bond sale resulted in the most significant portion of the levy increase. Overall, the levy increased by about 14 percent. Olson also provided additional information regarding tax rates over the past few years, including the new 2015 figures. In 2013 (payable in

2014), the school's portion of taxes for a \$150,000 residential home was \$553. Then, in 2014 (payable in 2015), the number for a \$150,000 residential home dropped to approximately \$507. This year, the amount for a \$150,000 home will be about \$548.

"Even with our raise this year, we're still below what we were in 2013," Olson said. "We are watching and we are concerned about our people's taxes."

The board also discussed a resolution concerning the Zumbro Education District (ZED)'s work to pursue a new facility.

ZED is a collaborative partnership between seven area schools (Blooming Prairie, Byron, Hayfield, Kasson-Mantorville, Pine Island, Stewartville and Triton). ZED provides learning opportunities for students who face challenges such as physical or learning disabilities, or who have struggled in a traditional classroom setting and are in search of a program that better suits their educational needs. Currently, ZED's Area Learning Center (ALC) and some other programs are located in Byron High School but, according to Olson, the space will soon be renovated and the Byron School District believes there will no longer be room to house the program in the new facility.

During their recent meeting, the Blooming Prairie School Board members reviewed a proposed resolution in support of the financing process for the new facility. Olson provided background information about ZED's work thus far, and added that the process to approve a new location for ALC and other ZED programs has been in the works for a few years. "What we're doing now is just making a resolution of how we are going to finance the facility up to \$13.1 million," Olson said. "The actual site and design for the ALC are still to be determined, but we need all

seven districts on board before we proceed."

Olson added that the tax impact would be "fairly minimal." For a \$150,000 home, he estimated the impact would be roughly \$15 or \$16 throughout the year. Olson also outlined how the project would be funded. The funding mechanism is based on the schools' membership (or size), which accounts for 50 percent of the funds and 25 percent based on the schools' frequency of use. The remaining 25 percent would be shared evenly among the seven school districts.

Olson reiterated that the board would have the chance to pass or deny further resolutions concerning the site's location and other aspects of the project, and that this resolution strictly approved ZED to move forward with the project's funding. "All we are doing is moving forward so they can plan," said Olson. "We are approving the funding mechanism, but not the site."

Board member Jon Sunde inquired if passing this resolution would mean that the district was "locked in."

Olson again stated that, when more plans concerning the building's design and location were available, they would again need the approval of all seven districts.

Following discussion, the Blooming Prairie School Board passed the resolution in support of the facility's funding mechanism. ZED, however, can only move forward with the process if the other six schools also pass the resolution.

On Monday, Jan. 11, at 5:30 p.m. the school board will hold an informational meeting about the school's World's Best Workforce plan in the Blooming Prairie High School (BPHS) Media Center.

The board's next regularly scheduled meeting is slated for Tuesday, Jan. 14, at 5:15 p.m. in the BPHS Media Center.

RECIPE CORNER

Grandpa Ernie's Dumplings

- 2 eggs
- 1 c. milk
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 2 c. flour

By **Donna Maixer**

Mix together and drop by spoonfuls into boiling water or soup. Cook until done, about 10 minutes. Great added to homemade chicken soup.

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EllendaleLiving

NRHEG High School band performing in Orlando

By **ALAN VAN ORMER**
Managing Editor

If you have your television on during the Russell Athletic Bowl football game pitting North Carolina against Baylor on Dec. 29, the halftime entertainment will also include members of the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) band.

The Panther band will be performing as part of a mass band during the event and then on Jan. 1 will be performing at the Macy's Holiday Parade at Universal Studios in Orlando. The NRHEG band will consist of 41 students and four chaperones.

"I believe it has a tremendous impact on the students because they are able to travel across the country and perform thousands of people," said NRHEG Band Director Jacob Bender. "They also get to work with other high school marching bands as they prepare and rehearse for the halftime show."

For the halftime show, NRHEG will be performing "Shout It Out Loud," "Mustang

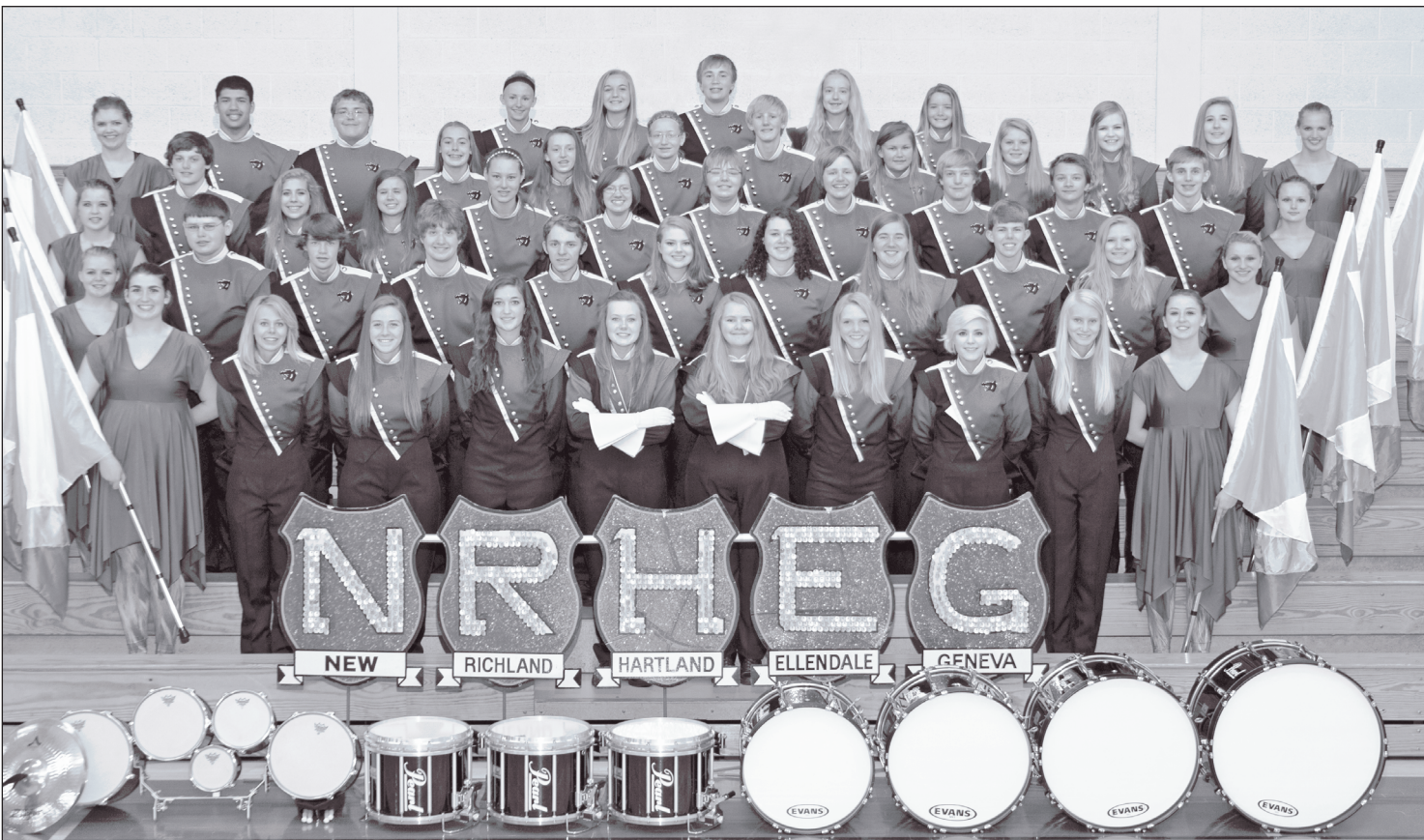
Sally" and "Killer Joe." During the parade the band will be doing its standard drum cadences and "Eye of the Tiger."

Bender said the trip will provide the school district national recognition. "During the parade we will be wearing our marching band uniforms, which showcase our school colors and we will be announced as performers during the halftime show," Bender said.

During the week, the students will be participating in a mixture of activities and relaxation. There will be a couple of days when the band is rehearsing for the bowl game and preparing for the parade. The students will also spend time at Universal Studios and attend a Blue Man group concert.

Bender said he and the students are looking forward to the entire trip. "Not many high school bands get the opportunity to travel like we do so I will be soaking it all in."

As for the students, Bender said they are definitely excited to spend some time in the Orlando sun.



Above are the 2015 New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) Marching Band members. The band had the opportunity to perform during the halftime show at the Russell Athletic Bowl.

Photo courtesy of Brant Hemingway

NRHEG students participate in food drive



Submitted photo

New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) High School students recently participated in a food drive, collecting donations to benefit area food shelves. The National Honor Society (NHS) members challenged each class at NRHEG to take part in a food drive contest, and the class that brought in the most money and food won a root beer float party, compliments of the NHS members. The junior class won the contest, bringing in 383 pounds of food and the sophomores finished in second place with 306 pounds. Pictured above are four members of the NRHEG junior class along with just some of the money and 1,500 pounds of food that was raised for the area food shelves. From left to right are Grace Johns, Jack Schultz, Rachel Collins and Kallie Spooner.

MERGER

Continued from Page 1A

tives in a letter on Oct. 14. That letter also included a list of anticipated questions and answers.

Following harvest, informational meetings were held for members of both cooperatives and ballots, along with additional information, were mailed to voting members on Dec. 2.

"With this positive vote, our members have created a long-term, viable local cooperative that will thrive in the decades ahead," said WFS Board Chairman Charlie Johnson. "While we projected \$5 to \$7 million in tangible benefits to our members in our proposal, I think the intangible benefits may be even greater."

Intangible benefits included employee retention, geographic diversity and maintaining member control.

"Growth is a large component of success," said Eric Schrader, chairman of the CVC board. "We believe that the unified cooperative will be a survivor, and we feel fortunate to have the opportunity to bring these two strong cooperatives together."

Mohr agreed with those assessments.

"As we enter into a period where the agricultural econo-

my is getting tougher," Mohr said, "we will likely see more mergers." For the more than 400 cooperative employees, he said, there will also be more opportunities for advancement and career development.

The new cooperative, Mohr said, will have an east-west service area of Hayfield to Welcome, Minnesota, and from Randolph in the north into northern Iowa.

Equity held by both memberships will transfer dollar for dollar and all existing equity is intended to be retired under the current practices of each co-op, officials said. Equity earned in the new co-op

will be retired on years earned. There will also be equal representation from each of the former co-ops with six directors from each board on the new board.

The projected annual sales of the combined cooperative are expected to exceed \$600 million with a diversified product and service line that includes grain marketing and merchandising, crop production, seed and precision agriculture, bagged feed and bulk feed manufacturing, bulk energy delivery and storage and producer financing.

GRIEF RELIEF



Sometimes children don't seem to care. It's not uncommon for some children, especially those under age 5 to show

little feeling when told of the death of a relative. And while it may seem a child should feel sad, the child may have little understanding of the meaning of death. The child may not have been particularly close to the deceased or realized that death is permanent. Allow and accept the child's honest expression and don't make the child feel guilty or pressured.

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Beginner Dance- Monday 4:15-4:45:
Calling all boys and girls age 3-7 that love to dance. This is an introduction to dance. Students will learn Ballet, Jazz, and Tap and have a little routine to show at the end of the session. No experience necessary and wear clothes that are easy to move in. Ballet and Tap shoes are needed. Contact Britta Manges if you need shoes 715-977-0226.

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Owatonna Living

Bridges of Hope to purchase church in Lansing

By ANNA SEGNER
County Staff Writer

After a few months of the Bridges of Hope Community Church congregating in the upstairs area of Owatonna Fit Lab (303 N Cedar), the church has decided to purchase another space to join together.

Bridges of Hope is in the process of purchasing the former United Methodist Church in Lansing at 26875 539th Avenue. According to the Rev. Keith Haskell, they want to have two meeting spaces—one area in downtown Owatonna and the Lansing location.

Many might have celebrated their holiday around a Christmas tree from the Bridges of Hope tree lot fundraiser located at the old Wal-Mart parking lot in Owatonna.

“We have outgrown our current area, and we are looking for an area downtown because we like to reach the homeless, addicted, the unchurched or those that have turned away from church for whatever reason,” said Haskell. “We are a non-denominational church.”

The former United Methodist Church in Lansing will also serve as an area to congregate. It is a historical building as Haskell believed it to be built in the mid-1800s. The church has almost always served as a Methodist church, though it celebrated its last service in early February.

Haskell laughed that they found it on Craig’s List, and it fit their needs, and the historical beauty charmed them.

The Bridges of Hope Church plans to celebrate and even restore the historical pieces of the

‘We have outgrown our current area, and we are looking for an area downtown because we like to reach the homeless, addicted, the unchurched or those that have turned away from church for whatever reason.’

— Rev. Keith Haskell

church.

“What drew us in was first, it has that old country church charm... and secondly, it is like the only church in Lansing, so we think it is important to keep churches alive in rural America,” said Haskell. “I realized that we are one generation away from no churches. We are already so close to families not sitting down and eating together, so we are trying to preserve that.

“Kids need to have a place to get guidance without the preaching arrogance. The young people don’t warm up to the old rituals of church,” said Haskell. “Unfortunately, a lot of churches have pastors that talk down to youth, but we need to convey love and respect to the youth.”

Bridges of Hope Church is unique in that it is not only welcoming to the homeless, addicted and incarcerated, but the church offers a faith-based addictions program called Reformers Unanimous.

Haskell is credited with the implementing and facilitating of Reformers Unanimous in the Dakota County Jail in Hastings in 2007, since he had a lifelong career in public safety. More recently, he decided to follow his

love for helping through the role of a pastor.

Reformers Unanimous is a program that has been successful all across the country. “It is kind of unique because we don’t sit around and tell old war stories, because we believe that is negative reinforcement,” remarked Haskell.

He explained that the meetings are centered on “talk, talk, talk,” meaning that there is a time in the meeting to talk to God, talk to each other and then for God to talk to them (meaning a led discussion by pastor).

The Bridges of Hope church has been meeting since September. “So many people are living in poverty. A lot of people started with nothing and because of it, they don’t even feel like a real human being. Depression recycles,” said Haskell.

By touching the hearts of individuals that feel down and out, Bridges of Hope is able to give a community to someone feeling like they have nothing. With their emphasis on addiction, they have already touched many.

Cory Christensen was an individual that suffered with abusing alcohol and marijuana for decades. Through his involvement

with the church, he was able to leave that life behind. Haskell called Christensen the “poster child” for the church’s mission. After being sober for months, Christensen passed away unexpectedly during his sleep from sleep apnea.

Haskell said that it was a tough blow for the congregation, since Christensen became a big part of the church, but they celebrate that he “found God” and was “freed from his addiction” for the last months of his life.

“He was genuinely saved. He was saved from doing harmful and detrimental things to his body, so we use his story to reach other people,” said Haskell. “His family are a part of the church and they ask ‘why don’t other churches get it?’ We just want to accept everyone.”

Reaching out to those suffering is what led to the name “bridges of hope.”

“People have asked me why I would want to reach out to someone who was in jail, and to me it is obvious. Eighty percent of those people in the Steele County jail are from Steele County... where do you think they will go when they get out? 80 percent come back to the community,” he said. “They shop where we shop, eat where we eat and their kids play on the same playgrounds with our kids... why would we not want to lift them

up to a solid foundation socially and economically?”

The church currently meets on Sundays from 10 to 11 at the upstairs of Fit Lab. The Reformer’s Unanimous sessions are in process of scheduling, but Haskell

said they will likely be on Friday nights.

To celebrate the purchase of the Lansing church, Bridges of Hope Community Church hosted a Christmas Eve candlelight service at its additional location

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YEAR IN REVIEW

Continued from Page 3C

although Fair Manager Jim Gleason said that the attendance was down about 9.5 percent, the days with more pleasant weather saw excellent crowds.

One of the top highlights of every Steele County Free Fair in Owatonna is the announcement of the top male and female senior citizen volunteers of the year. Earning that honor this year were Eunice Meixner and Tom Bonacci, both of Owatonna.

Honking, clucking and cackling were noticeably missing from the Steele County Free Fair this year. In May, the Minnesota Board of Animal Health canceled to live bird exhibitions at all county fairs and this week’s Minnesota State Fair to control the spread of the virus that has affected millions of turkeys.

Sept. 15

As it turns out, most international buyers of soy from Southern Minnesota have never stepped foot on a farm, let alone a Minnesota farm that is producing the product they purchased. On Sept. 12, 200 international soy buyers gathered in Southern Minnesota to learn more about the origins of the product at the root of the industry.

After 15 years of serving the Steele County Free Fair Board, Ron Van Nurdan verbally announced his resignation at the Sept. 8 meeting. In fact, he submitted his letter of resignation to fair secretary and manager, Jim Gleason, that Thursday morning.

Sept. 1

After years of discussion on how to and what to build for the public works building, the County Board of Commissioners has decided to move forward with Option 2, the \$12.6 million public works building. The building will replace the old highway maintenance operations complex on Hoffman Drive that was damaged from flooding in 2010.

The Church of St. John’s was established 150 years ago. To commemorate the occasion, the church is hosting events on Saturday, Sept. 12, and Sunday, Sept. 13. Today the church has around 275 members.

Sept. 9

World War II was a dark period in the world’s history that brought much hardship and sorrow. Last week, local veterans organizations recognized the 70th anniversary of the war’s end, and honored the people who lived through it.

The Field of Flags is flying once again, and Blooming Prairie businesses and homes are decorated once more. The community is looking forward to the 15th annual Cancer benefit scheduled for Sept. 11 and 12.

Sept. 22

Visitors to the Steele County Fairgrounds were encouraged to swing their partners and tap their toes on Saturday during the Old-Time Barn Dance fundraiser. Proceeds benefit the Steele County Free Fair Building Fund.

On Friday morning, a high speed chase ended just outside of Blooming Prairie Elementary School. The incident began around 7:30 a.m. with a traffic stop for a seat belt violation on Interstate 90 and Highway 16, near Elkton.

Sept. 29

Police officers of Owatonna and Blooming Prairie Police Departments and the Steele County Sheriff’s Department had the unusual task of helping local kids pick out school clothes as part of Salvation Army’s Shop with a Cop event. Eleven police officers and 11 local kids participated in the event that took place at Wal-Mart on Sept. 23.

Domestic Violence is a problem everywhere, even in Steele and Dodge counties. “We see it as a problem,” Steele County Attorney Dan McIntosh said. “Domestic violence is pervasive, even as other crimes have

decreased. And that is why the two counties have joined together to organize the first Promoting Peace Conference,” said McIntosh.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Continued on Page 5D

PROPOSALS WANTED

The City of Owatonna Parks and Recreation Department owns and operates Brooktree Golf Course. The City wishes to receive proposals to operate the Clubhouse Grill, which is located within the clubhouse facility. Specifically, the City is seeking an operator to provide food and beverage services with the owner/operator leasing space from the city.

Proposals are Due
to the City of Owatonna
by 1 p.m. on January 19, 2016.

For more information, the RFP and draft lease are available on the Parks & Recreation website www.ci.owatonna.mn.us/parksrecreation or by calling 507-444-4321.



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MedfordLiving

Sweet companionship for fifth-grades in Medford School

By ANNA SEGNER
County Staff Writer

Malia Norton's fifth-grade classroom at Medford School was full of holiday energy fueled in part by frosting, gum drops, M&Ms and other candies as the preschoolers created gingerbread houses with their fifth-grade buddies on Dec. 21.

The fifth-graders and preschoolers are paired up throughout the whole year for reading and activities.

According to ECFE Coordinator and Preschool Teacher Angie Bierlen, the preschoolers see their fifth-grade buddies at least once a month.

The fifth-grade buddy program began in the fall of last

year. Malia Norton and Jill Walker's fifth-grade classes are each paired with one of the 4-plus preschool classrooms.

"Because preschoolers are not here every day—some are here for four days or half days—so this helps to make them feel more a part of the school," said Bierlen.

Bierlen and Social and Emotional AmeriCorps member Katie Larson created the program last year. The Smith Foundation donates six books per year to each preschooler. Larson thought that introducing each book to the preschooler would be more effective from a peer or role model instead of their teacher.

Each book is read to a preschooler by a fifth-grader, and

then the fifth-graders pair a lesson or activity with the book. For example, one of the books rhymed, so the fifth-graders made a PowerPoint presentation on the iPads about rhyming.

The preschoolers then get to keep the book, and they will have the activity to remind them of what they did or learned.

"We try to imbue as many state standards as possible, but this helps with the preschoolers' social skills," said Bierlen. "This can help them learn to play and share toys appropriately and learn to work with other ages."

"This is just really good exposure for the preschoolers to reading and their future in schooling," said Bierlen.

The fifth-graders learn a lot too, as Bierlen and Norton agreed that the fifth-graders take on a more "nurturing" role.

Bierlen said that parents have commented positively about the program and have tried to get their fifth-grader in a classroom that participates in the buddy program.

"I have really seen that this builds the fifth graders' self-esteem and confidence," said Norton. Plus, she humorously said that fifth-graders are like "big kindergarteners" because they liked making gingerbread houses as much as the preschoolers did.

Larson said that the preschoolers adore time with their fifth-grade buddies. "They love



Staff photo by Anna Segner
Fifth-grader buddy to Kael Neumann enjoys working with preschooler Kaylee Franco on the gingerbread house project.

it," said Larson. "They are always asking me when we will be seeing their buddies!"

The fifth-graders and preschoolers collaborate on other projects as well. They did a Thanksgiving activity and they usually sing a song in concerts together as well.

Medford school menus

Medford School Breakfast Menu

Dec. 29 – Jan. 1: No School
Jan. 4: Breakfast Pizza OR Choice of WG Cereal, Graham Crackers, Vegetable Selection, Canned Fruit, Milk

Jan. 5: Cinnamon Roll OR Choice of Cereal, Graham Crackers, Vegetable Selection, Apple Juice, Milk

Jan. 6: Blueberry Loaf OR Choice of Cereal, Graham Crackers, Vegetable Selection, Fresh Fruit, Milk

Medford School Lunch Menu

Dec. 29 – Jan. 1: No School
Jan. 4: Cheeseburger on WG Bun, Crinkle Cut Fries, Turkey BLT Wrap, Chef Salad, Celery Sticks, Cauliflower, Seasonal Fruit

Jan. 5: Pizza Parlor Pizza, Mixed Vegetables, Fruited Gelatin, Pretzel Bites w/Cheese, Deli Sub, Romaine Lettuce, Baby Carrots, Beets, Seasonal Fruit

Jan. 6: Hotdog on WG Bun, Mexican Rice, Chicken Caesar Salad, Combo Sliders, Black Beans, Celery Sticks, Seasonal Fruit



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Weekly crossword on Page 4B

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L	E	T				R	O	M		R	A	N	T	S
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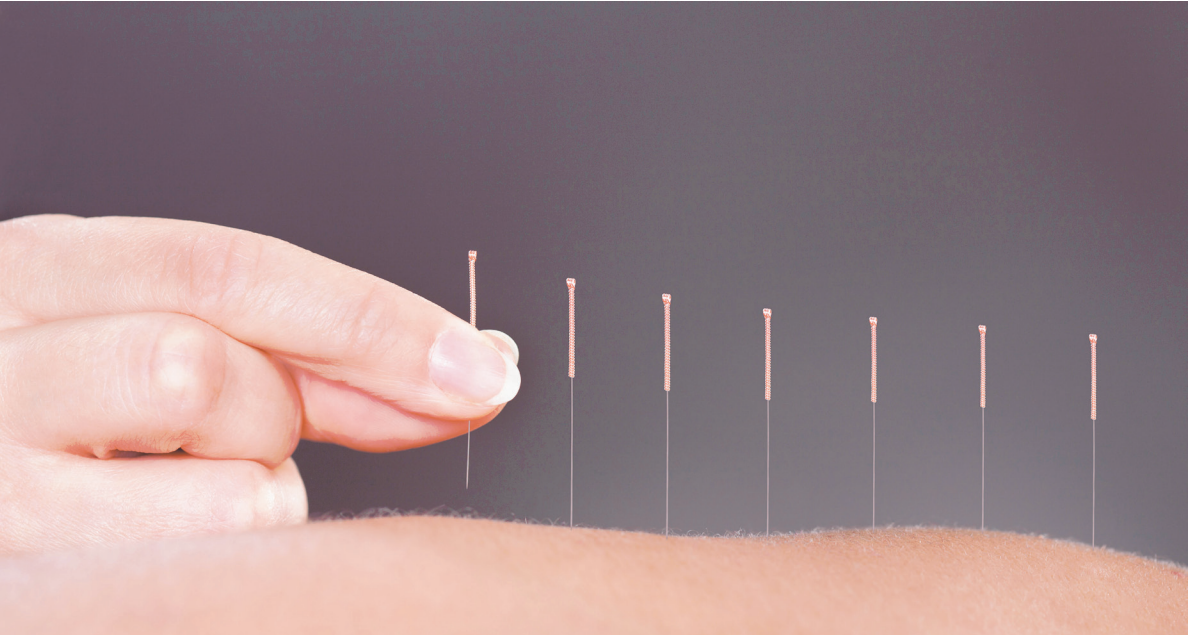
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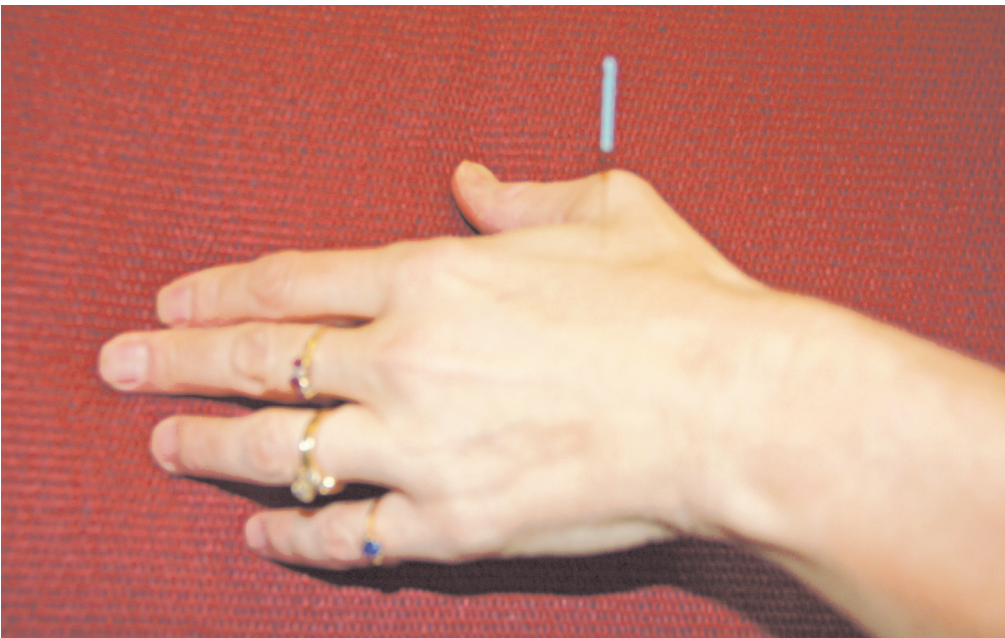




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Submitted photo



The art of acupuncture

Despite common conception in the community, acupuncture is available from multiple practitioners and has been available in Steele County for multiple decades.

Acupuncture is a method of restoring energy balance (Qi) to promote healing and functioning though the insertion of tiny needles at precise points on the body. The practice of acupuncture has roots in early Chinese medicine, dating back to over 2,000 years ago.

Dr. Lori Cole of Cole Chiropractic and Dr. Nick McGregor of McGregor Chiropractic (both in Owatonna) offer acupuncture. Both Cole and McGregor graduated from Northwestern Chiropractic College.

Cole said that a yin and yang symbol can be used to think of the overall balance of one’s health. In traditional Chinese medicine, illness is believed to be caused by the imbalance of yin and yang in the body. Acupuncture is used to restore that energy balance and promote natural healing.

The body has energy channels called meridians that run throughout the body to nurture the bodies’ tissues. An obstruction in the path of these channels blocks the movement of energy much like a dam blocks the flow of a river.

Acupuncture needles in precise points can unclog the “dams” in the body to re-establish the healthy flow through meridians. It is commonly used for pain, stress and tension.

Acupuncture points run throughout the body. These points are located along the 14 meridians navigating through the head, arms, legs and trunk. There are also many points in the ear.

Essentially, acupuncture can positively influence health and wellness, treatment of various medical conditions and prevention of illness.

Some medical conditions

that have been acknowledged by acupuncture treatment are respiratory ailments, digestive disorders, muscular maladies and urinary, menstrual and reproductive problems.

According to McGregor, acupuncture has helped digestive disorders such as gastritis, spastic colon, constipation and diarrhea. Respiratory disorders that might be influenced by treatment are sinusitis, sore throat, bronchitis, asthma, and recurrent chest infections.

Neurological and muscular disorders are common reasons

kink,” she said. “Acupuncture opens the channel to help the body heal itself.”

She treats patients of all ages, the youngest being an eight-year-old that experienced migraines. That eight-year-old is now in college and no longer experiences migraines.

Despite all the success of acupuncture, Cole said that many people still have hesitations about the needles.

She explained that the size of the needles used is so small, and the pain is next to none. The needles rarely even leave a spot

“It is like a garden hose. Once there are kinks, the flow stops at the kink. Acupuncture opens the channel to help the body heal itself.”

-Dr. Lori Cole,
Cole Chiropractic

for acupuncture, as it might help heal headaches, neck pain, facial tics, rib neuritis, frozen shoulder, tennis elbow, various forms of tendinitis, low back pain, sciatica and osteoarthritis.

Acupuncture might also be used to curve the appetite of an individual seeking weight loss. It might also be used in the process of quitting smoking.

Cole said that many people that travel use acupuncture stickers during travel to ease flight sickness or sea sickness.

Cole said that she had a patient who was experiencing cold and numbness in the feet. After three acupuncture treatments, Cole was happy to hear the patient say that they felt like they were 20 years old again. She said it worked by way of “pulling energy to areas not getting any circulation.”

“It is like a garden hose. Once there are kinks, the flow stops at the

of blood on the body. The body may feel a sense of tingling after the needles have been inserted.

Cole uses only one size of needle, and McGregor uses different lengths, shapes and sizes of needles depending on the person and access point. Even the largest of acupuncture needles are small.

McGregor described the practice of medical acupuncture as an art. “It is not a pure science; there is a lot of art involved, and the practitioner is the artist,” said McGregor. “It is deductive reasoning and problem solving.”

McGregor admits that he has not seen a 100 percent success rate, but he has seen many patients benefit from treatments.

“You cannot say that you have tried everything if you haven’t tried acupuncture,” said McGregor. “It isn’t likely to cause harm and it is relatively inexpensive. Risk is low, and I have never seen side effects.”



The average price for an acupuncture treatment is around \$30, and Cole typically suggests three treatments. McGregor laughed that it is about the same price as a dinner out.

Like any healing practice, McGregor encourages a positive attitude towards wellness, which may reinforce the effects of the treatment. “Your own psyche affects the physical chemistry of your body,” he said. However, acupuncture treatments have been proven successful on animals, who are not even cognizant of the process.

Acupuncture is being practiced widely in Asia, the Soviet Union and in Europe. Over the past century, America has started to

practice more acupuncture, as it can be used alongside of most other western practices of medicine.

Cole and McGregor offer acupuncture treatment along with their other chiropractic services. Other chiropractors in the community might offer acupuncture, and the Penny George Institute for Health and Healing outpatient clinic, located at the Owatonna Hospital, offers acupuncture and medical massage therapy.

“I encourage people to try acupuncture!” said Cole. “It doesn’t hurt, and most will be surprised at the relief they might get.”

Story & photos by Anna Segner



Submitted photo



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ON THE FARM



Karen Anderson

A couple of weeks ago, I attended the Winter Dairy Series featuring Brant Groen, who discussed practical things that can be done to maximize profits during low milk prices.

Suggestions of improving cow comfort, lighting and feed-bunk management were at the top of the list. However, another topic that was brought up was the need for adequate space and availability of clean water. Simple, right? Everyone and everything needs water!

Water is one of the most essential, but often forgotten, nutrients. As with humans and livestock, water helps regulate body temperature, aids in digestion, removes waste and helps absorb vital nutrients. Livestock have unique ways of telling us when they need something, such as loud animal calls! Other signs of dehydration include a decrease in appetite, tightening of skin, weight loss and drying of mucous around the eyes.

The daily requirement for livestock varies significantly among animal species, age, health, milk production requirements and weather. An evaluation should be done of your watering systems to assess its availability

Karen Anderson is the Agriculture Extension Educator with the University of Minnesota Extension in Rice and Steele Counties. She can be reached at 507-444-7685.

to all livestock in the pen. One story that was mentioned at the workshop told of a boss-cow that was hogging the water in the dry cow pen, limiting the time that more timid cows could drink water. This scenario resulted in the timid cows producing less milk during the following lactation. This is an excellent point, that even though water may be available to the livestock on your farm, another factor may be limiting the performance of your animals.

Both water quality and quantity can affect feed consumption and overall animal health. In terms of quality, livestock are most commonly affected by high salinity or high concentration of minerals. Other factors that can affect water quality are nitrates, sulfates, alkalinity and toxic elements. The best way to determine the quality of your water is to send in a sample for analysis.

Quality is always directly linked to the care that is taken to maintain the watering system, buckets and other watering equipment. Waterers should be cleaned at the very least on a bi-weekly basis. Remember if the water looks dirty, and you don't want to drink it, then it needs to be cleaned! Also, keep in mind that this time of year brings frozen water. It is important to check your watering system daily to avoid water freezing, making it unavailable for livestock.

Water is an essential but often overlooked nutrient for all livestock. Daily checks and bi-weekly cleanings of watering systems are worth the time to ensure peak health and optimum performance of your livestock.

Al-Corn Clean Fuel to go ahead with expansion plans



By KAREN JORGENSEN
County Staff Writer

Al-Corn Clean Fuel in Claremont will go ahead with its expansion and modernization plans in 2016, company officials announced last week.

The Board of Directors made the decision earlier this month after talking to members of the co-op who had narrowly defeated a proposal to sell new shares that would bring in additional bushels of corn to ensure that the co-op could meet the plant's new capacity, said CEO Randall Doyal.

Doyal said they talked to the members after the vote and found that nearly all of the co-op members were in favor of expansion and modernization but they didn't want additional shares because then they would have to supply more corn. Co-op rules require that a member must supply a bushel of corn for each share they own.

"They still wanted the expansion," Doyal said. "We talked to the members and they said 'we get it, we need to modernize and expand. But we don't want

to buy more shares and deliver more corn.'"

Doyal said the co-op has the financial ability to complete the project due to cash and the ability to borrow money. They know they will need the capacity in a couple of years, he said, and the project is necessary to keep the company competitive.

"The most important thing is to focus on the modernization and expansion," Doyal said. They will work out the details of delivery of corn later, he said.

The project will make Al-Corn more profitable for members and allow the cooperative to modernize its grain facility, add rail capacity, lower its greenhouse gas score and drive down the cost of production, Doyal said.

Area business and government leaders expressed approval of the project.

"This is a huge project for our area and we are excited to see the growth and economic impact it will have," said Jennifer Libby, president and CEO of the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce. "We are excited for our member company, Al-Corn

stay competitive in the value added agricultural market ethanol has been to Minnesota."

Sen. Davie Senjem added that, "I am excited to learn of Al-Corn's decision to expand and become one of Minnesota's largest ethanol producers. Expansion means more jobs, more markets and more economic vitality for or area of the state."

Doyal said that company officials hope that construction can begin in 2016 and be completed by late 2017.

"The biggest piece is how long it takes to get permitting," Doyal said. An air quality permit has to be obtained from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Doyal said. That permit has to be issued before the co-op can get the necessary construction permits.

Once the permit from the MPCA is issued, he said, there should be no problem obtaining the needed permits from Dodge County as the county understands the co-op's economic benefit to the area, he said.



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In the 20th century, the demand increased for certain traits in crops. Many people around the world became concerned about the growing use of chemicals and inputs needed to improve yields and wanted to reduce the impact of agriculture on the environment. Hand-in-hand with this concern was the growing need to feed more people as the world's population grew exponentially. Many people worried about a coming environmental disaster. In response, academia and scientists at companies began intense research to use genetic engineering to produce crops with specific traits to answer these concerns. The result has been seeds that yield more crops, have less impact on the environment and require fewer inputs.

AgPower ENTERPRISES

HometownLiving

Community Calendar



Submitted photo

Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric Board President Gary Wilson presented John Bowe and Joe Schwering with the Steele County Sheriff's Posse \$1,000 on Dec. 17, on behalf of CoBank's "Sharing Success" program. The program provides matching contributions to their cooperative customers who donate to a nonprofit organization of their choice. CoBank, headquartered near Denver, Colorado, is a national cooperative bank providing loans and other financial services to rural power, water and communications providers along with agribusinesses in the U.S.

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BLOOMING PRAIRIE

Dec. 29:
 No School
Dec. 30:
 No School
 10:30 a.m. BPBL Story time
Dec. 31:
 No School
Jan. 1:
 No School
 BPBL Closed
Jan. 4:
 7 p.m. BPWT General Mtg, Lutheran Church
 Jan. 5:
 6:30 p.m. Beginner Yoga, BP Community Education, BPHS Media Center

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Dec. 29:
 No School
 7 p.m. NRHEG Karate, ES Gym North Ellndl
Dec. 30:
 No School
Dec. 31:
 No School
 5:30 p.m. NRHEG Yoga, DAPE Rm
 7 p.m. NRHEG Yoga, DAPE Rm
 7 p.m. NRHEG Zumba, DAPE Rm
Jan. 1:
 No School
Jan. 3:
 Free Meal Sunday's at Ellendale United Methodist Church, Ellendale
Jan. 4:
 1 p.m. Red Cross Blood Drive, Ellendale Cmty Cntr
 6:20 p.m. NRHEG Yoga, Media Center Ellndl
Jan. 5:
 7 p.m. NRHEG Karate, ES Gym North Ellndl



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Dec. 29:
 12:15 p.m. Four Seasons Public Skate, Owa
 6:30 p.m. Nat'l Alliance on Mental Illness Peer Support Group, Owatonna Hospital
Dec. 30:
 12:15 p.m. Four Seasons Public Skate, Owa
 6 p.m. Four Seasons Public Skate, Owa
Dec. 31:
 No School
 12:15 p.m. Four Seasons Public Skate, Owa
 2 p.m. OPL Independent & World Films
 6:30 p.m. OPL Family Story Time
Jan. 1:
 OPL closed
 Owatonna PS No School
Jan. 4:
 12 p.m. Owatonna Noon Rotary Club, Country Club
 1 p.m. Owatonna, Woman's Club bridge group, SeniorPlace
 6:30 p.m. Owatonna PS No School Brd Organizational Mtg
Jan. 5:
 5 p.m. Owatonna Human Rights Commission, 2nd Flr Conference Rm, City Hall
 7 p.m. Owatonna City Council, Council Chambers, City Hall
 7 p.m. Hope City Council Mtg, Hope City Hall, Council Chambers
Jan. 6:
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Dec. 29 - 30:
 No School
Dec. 31:
 No School
 2 p.m. The Arthritis Foundation: Medford Senior Exercise Class, Whistle Stop Diner
Jan. 1:
 No School
Jan. 4:
 2 p.m. The Arthritis Foundation: Medford Senior Exercise Class, Whistle Stop Diner

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SPOT LIGHT

Music Boosters of Owatonna to host Benefit Concert and Silent Auction

Music Boosters of Owatonna is having its sixth annual Benefit Concert and Silent Auction on Jan. 9, 2016, at the Owatonna High School. The silent auction starts at 6 p.m. and the concert starts at 7 p.m.

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Freeborn

Dec. 29:

AL No School
 10:30 a.m. ALPL Story time
 6 p.m. Rock Gym, Albert Lea

Dec. 30:

AL No School

Dec. 31:

AL No School
 9 a.m. Red Cross Blood Donation, Mayo Clinic, AL
 10:30 a.m. ALPL Story time
 5:30 p.m. AL Council Workshop, City Council Chambers
 6 p.m. ALPL Night-Time Story time

Jan. 1:

AL No School
 ALPL Closed
 New Year's Day, City Offices and Library Closed, Albert Lea
 6 p.m. Rock Climbing Open Gym, Albert Lea

Jan. 2:

ALPL Closed
 6 p.m. Rock Climbing Open Gym, Albert Lea

Jan. 4:

10:30 a.m. ALPL Story time
 12 p.m. Red Cross Blood Drive, Alden Conger HS
 3:45 p.m. ALPL Book Pals (Gr 5 & 6)

Jan. 5:

10:30 a.m. ALPL Story time
 5:30 p.m. Planning Commission, City Hall, Albert Lea

6 p.m. Rock Gym, Albert Lea

Jan. 6:

7:30 a.m. Port Authority Meeting, Albert Lea Economic Development Agency
 3 p.m. Intro to Facebook, ALPL Computer Classes

Mower

Dec. 29:

Austin PS No School
 Lyle No School
 LeRoy No School
 10 a.m. All Members Gallery Show, Austin Art-Works Center

11 a.m. Red Cross Blood Donation, St Edwards Catholic Church, Aust

3:30 p.m. Mower Co, Southland ISD: Open Gym, M/HS Gym

6:15 p.m. Public Skate, Packer Arena

Dec. 30:

Austin PS No School
 Lyle No School
 LeRoy No School

10 a.m. All Members Gallery Show, Austin Art-Works Center

11:30 a.m. SEMCAC Meal, Heritage House, Lyle

12 p.m. Red Cross Blood Donation, Cmty Cntr, Le-Roy

6:30 p.m. Adult Hockey, Riverside Arena

Dec. 31:

Austin PS No School
 Lyle No School
 LeRoy Winter Break

10 a.m. All Members Gallery Show, Austin Art-Works Center

3 p.m. Public Skate, Packer Arena

3:30 p.m. Mower Co, Southland ISD: Open Gym, M/HS Gym

5:30 p.m. Dinner/Ventura Highway Concert, Austin VFW Post 1216

6 p.m. Brownsdale PL Puzzle Night (subject to change)

8 p.m. Milo Savage's New Year's Eve Bash, Austin Eagles Aerie

Jan. 1:

Alden-Conger PS no school

Austin PS No School

Lyle No School

12 a.m. Milo Savage's New Year's Eve Bash, Austin Eagles Aerie

10 a.m. All Members Gallery Show, Austin Art-Works Center

11:30 a.m. SEMCAC Meal, Heritage House, Lyle

2:30 p.m. Public Skate, Packer Arena

Jan. 2:

9 a.m. Masonic Pancake Feed, Austin Masonic Lodge

10 a.m. All Members Gallery Show, Austin Art-Works Center

1 p.m. Brownsdale Farmers Market

5:30 p.m. Public Skate, Packer Arena

Jan. 3:

1 p.m. Grand Meadow Open Gym, Wrestling Room, Weight Room



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Position will be at least 25 hours per week and may grow into full-time. If interested please send resume and letter of interest to Publisher Rick Bussler at bprick@frontier.com

DODGE COUNTY INDEPENDENT

Oct. 6

While temporarily displaced from its school on Cedar Street, St. Mary’s School is making the best of its relocation to Pillsbury Campus.

Though Darin Brown is not one to enjoy the spotlight, he was deeply honored when he found out that he was deemed Fire Fighter of the Year through the National Exchange Club’s Firefighter of the Year program.

Blooming Prairie Public Utilities manager Rick Kittelson has received an Honorary Lifetime Membership Award from the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association.

Oct. 13

Large yields are expected during this harvest season, but the crop prices could hinder the

farmer’s good fortune. According to the latest USDA crop report, corn production is forecast at 13.6 billion bushels.

Oct. 20

Jostens has been sold for approximately \$1.5 billion in a definitive purchase agreement to Jarden Corporation, according to Jarden’s announcement posted on Wednesday morning.

Business and community leaders from Blooming Prairie, Ellendale and Medford are participating in a five-day residential retreat this week in Grand Rapids as part of the Blandin Community Leadership Program.

Oct. 27

The Blooming Prairie Public Utilities Department received word on Monday that the city’s water has passed recent tests and

that no total coliform bacteria has been detected in the system. At this time, no further chlorination is planned.

After refunding bonds for a second time on the referendum for the physical school building, the Medford School District is saving tax payers a total of \$17.6 million by lowering the interest rate to 2.5608 percent.

Nov. 3

It was quite a trick and even a treat that the massive County State Aid Highway 42 reconstruction project on Main Street in Blooming Prairie was completed on Halloween, Saturday, Oct. 31. The reconstruction has included complete removal of the existing roadway and sidewalks; installation of a new water main, sanitary sewer, water and sewer services and storm sewer; placement of new concrete curb and gutter; roadway pavement and sidewalks and installation of new street lighting.

Nov. 10

After 10:30 p.m. at the Steele County Administration Building, there were cheers for news that voters approved the K-8 bond referendum. Owatonna School District voters approved the \$77.9 bond referendum 57.3 percent yes to 42.7 percent no.

Nov. 17

More than 350 sixth-grade students fell silent while listening to two special guest veterans at Willow Creek’s 23rd annual Veteran’s Day Program on Nov. 11.

Longtime entertainer of U.S. military troops, comedian Bob Hope paid a visit to the Blooming Prairie Servicemen’s Club on Veterans Day evening last

Wednesday, Nov. 11. Hope, also known as Doug Johnson, was master of ceremonies for a special Veteran’s Day evening program designed to pay tribute to local military veterans.

Nov. 24

For 15 years, Transitional Housing of Steele County has been working to eliminate homelessness in Steele County. Last week, nearly 400 people gathered over two days to celebrate the success and raise funds to continue the work.

Dec. 1

When sheriff’s deputies converged on the First National Bank in Hope Nov. 25, Marie Dobberstein got a little unsettled feeling, especially with what had taken place nearly a year prior. On Dec. 19, a man allegedly stuck a gun in Dob-

berstein’s face and robbed the bank. This time, though, it was still related to the bank robbery, but officers came back to honor Dobberstein for her fast action in helping them catch the suspected robber.

Dec. 8

A recommendation to add footings and foundation to phase one of the \$12.6 million public works project was a motion approved by the county commissioners at their meeting on Nov. 24.

Dec. 15

Christmas is a time to celebrate faith, family and love. For countless children across the world, however, Christmas is just another day. That’s why several local people have teamed up to support Operation Christmas Child.



Steele County

employment

connection



Make the most of your entry-level job

Many top level business executives, including some CEOs, began their careers in entry-level positions. Such positions may not fulfill a post-grad’s dream, but they are often great opportunities for freshly minted graduates to learn about a given industry.

Like many opportunities, entry-level jobs are often only as valuable as employees want them to be. Those who approach entry-level opportunities with a good attitude and a strong desire to learn are the ones who are most likely to someday consider their experiences as entry-level employees

as invaluable. With that in mind, the following are a few ways entry-level workers can make the most of their opportunity.

Maintain a good attitude. Chances are your first few months as an entry-level employee will be spent performing tedious tasks that may have little to do with your long-term career goals. Approaching such tasks with enthusiasm may be difficult, but do your best to maintain a positive attitude. Your coworkers and bosses will observe how you respond to your workload, and that response can dictate your future with the company. In addition, those who are above you on the company food chain no doubt performed some menial entry-level work when

they began their careers, and a poor attitude that suggests you are above such work will only harbor resentment among those who have already paid their dues.

Be ready to chip in. A willingness to cooperate and work a few extra hours when help is needed is a great way for entry-level employees to get noticed. But while helping coworkers is great, make sure your own responsibilities aren’t suffering because you’re too quick to lend a helping hand. Once you have cleared your plate, you can then approach your boss and express your willingness to help. Such gestures will be appreciated and will help you get noticed for all the right reasons.

Learn the lay of the land. Companies vary with regard to culture at the office, so while a casual environment might have prevailed at a past internship that does not necessarily mean your new employer fosters the same environment. When starting an

entry-level job, pay attention to how the staff interacts with one another, including how decisions are made. Such information can help you as you look to advance your career and build relationships within the company.

Develop your skills. No one expects you to be fully satisfied with an entry level position for your entire career, so don’t be afraid to seek opportunities to further develop your skills. Such opportunities may present themselves within the company via an interesting project or outside the company via a class at the local college. Take advantage of any chance to develop your skills, and don’t feel guilty about pursuing opportunities that have little to do with your current position so long as you’re still doing your job to the best of your abilities.

A good company will be impressed by your desire to learn and grow your skill set, so don’t hesitate to seek such opportunities.

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Cancer Corner

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Blooming Prairie Cancer Group

Cancer Group provides significant donation

By **ALAN VAN ORMER**
Managing Editor

The Blooming Prairie Cancer Group presented a \$15,000 check to The Hormel Institute, University of Minnesota on Dec. 22.

The money will be used for breast cancer research.

“This is a surprising, really wonderful gift,” said Dr. Zigang Dong, executive director of The Hormel Institute. “I’m thrilled and touched. We will work hard to save people’s lives.”

Gail Dennison, director of Development and Public Relations for The Hormel Institute, added that the organization was humbled with the work that the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group has done. “All these generous people are so incredible,” she said.

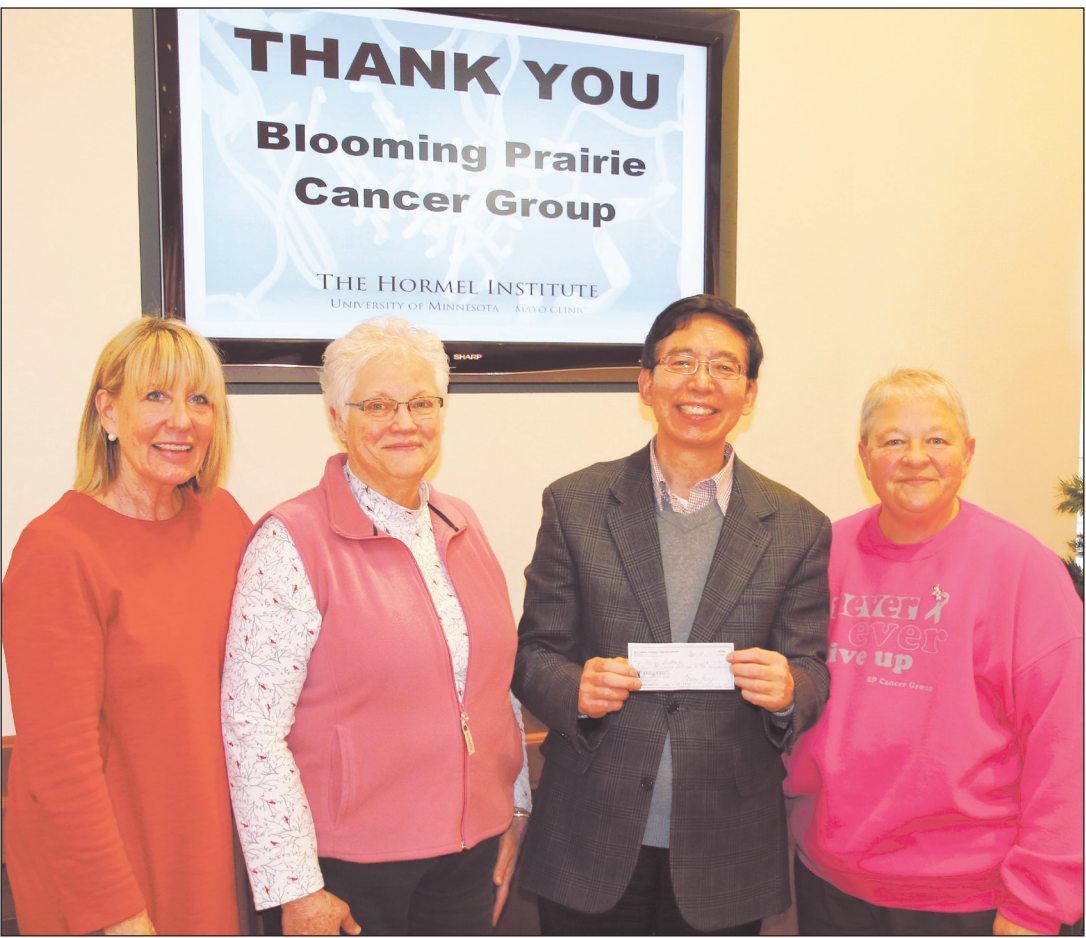
Cheri Krejci and Jennifer Milton delivered the donation on behalf of the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group. The gift will go 100 percent

into cutting-edge breast cancer research at The Hormel Institute and count toward the \$200,000 fundraising goal set for the sixth annual Paint the Town Pink initiative that will run from Jan. 30 to Feb. 14 in Austin but has events throughout the year in numerous communities in the area.

Blooming Prairie now joins Adams and Brownsdale as communities outside of Austin that each raise more than \$10,000 annually for the Paint the Town Pink initiative.

A majority of the group’s annual fundraising goes to the Fifth District Eagles Cancer Telethon that provides research funding to The Hormel Institute, Mayo Clinic Cancer Center and the Masonic Cancer Center, University of Minnesota.

Krejci said that the money goes directly to The Hormel Institute. “They are very appreciative of the work we do,” she said. “They’re local. They do a good job and we support them.”



Staff photo by Alan Van Ormer

The Blooming Prairie Cancer Group presented a \$15,000 check on Dec. 22 to The Hormel Institute, University of Minnesota for breast cancer research. Pictured are Gail Dennison, director of Development and Public Relations for The Hormel Institute, Jennifer Milton, Dr. Zigang Dong, executive director of The Hormel Institute, and Cheri Krejci.

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