



STEELE COUNTY TIMES



2016 Year in review 1B

\$1

www.steeledodgenews.com

Tuesday, January 3, 2017



Blooming on the Prairie for a century and a half!



HORSE LOVER MOURNS LOSS

Sheriff's posse loses faithful member



Archive photo

Steele County Sheriff's posse member Mary Delzer (left) and her Arabian horse partner, Desi, took part in search and rescue training exercise outside of Medford in October.

"There is a huge empty hole. She was one in a million."

Mary Delzer Sheriff's Posse Member

By RICK BUSSLER
Publisher

It was a Christmas present Mary Delzer never envisioned getting.

Her companion of nearly 20 years died in a pool of blood on the day after Christmas, leaving the Steele County Sheriff's posse member emotionally distraught and without a horse that had faithfully served three counties over the past several years.

Delzer had most recently utilized her Arabian horse, Desi, in a search and rescue training exercise outside of Medford in October. The pair also had performed with the rest of the sheriff's posse in the Fourth of July parade in Blooming Prairie.

"There is a huge empty hole," Delzer said with tears welling up in her eyes. "She was one in a million. Someone once told me they swore that horse would walk off the end of the earth for me."

On Dec. 26, Delzer discovered her horse had suf-

HORSE

Continued on page 3A

Times to mark 150th milestone

Special coverage planned throughout the year

Beginning with this week's edition, the Steele County Times kicks off a year-long tribute to the sesquicentennial of Blooming Prairie.

The township was organized in 1867, platted in 1868, taking the name of the surrounding Blooming Prairie Township. The city was incorporated by 1874.

Efforts are underway to plan a huge 150th anniversary later this year in conjunction with the city's annual Fourth of July celebration. A committee has been formed to make this year's fourth a spectacular event.

Just as community members are revving up for the big party, so, too, are members of the Times staff.

The Times is launching special cov-

erage that will be highlighted in each edition during 2017, Publisher Rick Bussler has announced. Staff members will be working extra on providing history and news clippings culled from the archives of the Times, which has been in existence for 124 of the community's 150 years. There have been more than 6,400 weekly editions published during those years.

Besides focusing on history, staff members will also be producing feature stories, photos, columns and editorials on some of the interesting folks who have been instrumental in making Blooming Prairie what it is today.

"We are devoting at least one page each week to stories relating to the 150th," Bussler said, noting there will

be other surprises throughout the year in the paper's coverage.

But, he emphasized, it can't all be done without the help of area residents. If you have story ideas relating to the community's history or know someone who would be dynamite to interview with knowledge of the city's past, good or bad, citizens are encouraged to contact the newspaper.

Bussler said the newspaper is also kicking off a reader contest called "My BP Recollections," in which readers are encouraged to submit their favorite memories of living, working, socializing and having fun in Blooming Prairie

MILESTONE

Continued on page 3A

Commissioners sworn in



Staff photo by Emily Schoenbeck

Three new county commissioners were sworn into office on Jan. 3. Commissioners Jim Abbe and Greg Krueger sign official oaths of office.

Our top 10 news stories of 2016



Archive photo

#10 Bunkies 70 years strong

Bunkies Grill and Lanes has been a staple of the Blooming Prairie community for almost 70 years.

Aaron, the current owner and operator of Bunkies, said that it originally opened in 1947 and was called Ressler Lanes when it was operated by Aaron's grandparents, George and Tilly.

With Ressler's Golf Academy joining the family business, Aaron said that his satisfaction of taking the reins for the family business has become real. "I love the small town. I couldn't be more excited. To carry on a family business that can go 70 years, especially a four lane bowling alley? That's good stuff," said Aaron.

#9 New slate of commissioners

Winds of change swept Steele County. All three county commissioner incumbents lost re-election to their challengers this November.

District three will now be represented by Rick Gnemi instead of Mark Schultz, district four by Jim Abbe instead of James Ebeling, and district five by Greg Krueger instead of Nina Huntington.

While the district three race was fairly close, both Abbe and Krueger won their districts on a 70-30% split.

With the ousting of two incumbents in the 2014 election, the residents of Steele County in two years have replaced all of the members of the county board.

TOP NEWS

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THE YEAR

7B PUBLIC SAFETY
11B..CLASSIFIEDS

Vol. 125, No. 27

Serving Blooming Prairie and Steele County since 1893

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Opinion

Our view

Standing strong

She has weathered snowfalls long before we were born and enjoyed long lazy afternoons in the tall grass on summer meadows.

She opened her arms and made room for first footprints to appear next to the evidence that animals had been there long before.

For hundreds of thousands of years, she has weathered the seasons with the brutal winds of winter, the falling of leaves in crisp Novembers, the melting heat of summer way before there was a Fourth of July and the scent of flowers blooming on the prairie.

Our town has long preceded us and will long outlive us. She has given a place for memories and a place to hang our hats... and a place where calling her "home," leaves a secure warmth deep down inside. It was as if she gave us a gift of celebration when the first men came and embraced her. And as they did, their eyes were miraculously opened to see all of her splendor.

They came into the heart of her beauty and decided to stay. Only the winds called her by name until that day a woman stepped off a railway platform into the warm sunshine and interpreted what the breezes had spoken for years.

She was a Blooming Prairie. She was... Blooming Prairie.

There have been more memories in her than volumes of books could hold. This year, we have a chance to celebrate our milestone with her. In the midst of time, there will be recorded a segment that has spanned 150 years. A small span in the grand scheme of time, but one that includes you and me if you are reading this. It is a tribute where we can remember back in time, a portion of the wonder, the laughter and the tears that moments bring.

From the tiny com seeds that grew into the largest yield to the beans of soy that border our gardens. From the railway that blows 8 to the bar as she comes whisking down 218 to the chimney blowing smoke from the school where many learned to read their first book of life. So many took their first breaths here and many more have left a final sigh.

Bravo to Blooming Prairie who has caused us to do more than exist. She has caused us to live. This wondrous place surely could have been in the mind of Thornton Wilder as his pen went to paper and he wrote, "Let's really look at one another! It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another. I didn't realize. So, all that was going on and we never noticed. Wait! One more look. Goodbye, goodbye world. Goodbye, Grover's Corners...Mama and Papa. Goodbye to clocks ticking...and Mama's sunflowers. And food and coffee. And new ironed dresses and hot baths.... and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you are too wonderful for anybody to realize you. Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it - every, every minute?"

Blooming Prairie, we are 150 years old this year. Let's take it all in and not take it for granted. Let's do it up right. Let's make every moment count - in both the ones we remember and the ones we are making.



HOT PURSUIT



RICK BUSSLER

Excitement is beginning to build, as something very special will be happening this year in Blooming Prairie.

This year marks the sesquicentennial of Blooming Prairie. And big plans are in the works to celebrate the milestone later this year during the community's annual Fourth of July celebration.

The Times has been around almost as long as the community has been in existence. The newspaper, which in more recent years has become a countywide paper, began cranking out local news pertaining specifically to BP 124 years ago. That makes us the most reliable source of information about the community dating back to 1893.

To say BP's special milestone will be an extraordinary part of our newspaper this year would be an understatement. We are planning a big splash each and every week throughout the entire year beginning with this edition.

Staff members have already been busy pulling information from old bound copies of our newspaper. We have had sev-

2017 marks a huge milestone for BP

eral staff meetings to discuss our coverage for the coming year.

As one may expect, there will be lots of history in our coverage as we find out how the community got its roots and the key players in making BP the thriving small town it has become.

I have always been impressed with BP ever since coming to town to take over the newspaper seven years ago. I grew up in a town about half the size of BP and sadly there is hardly anything left to it. I drove through it over the holidays and was left wondering what went wrong with the city that it has shriveled up.

The school is gone, the newspaper has ceased publishing, Main Street has dried up to basically a bar and a bank and community pride has been lost along the way. I hate to refer to it as a ghost town, but that isn't far from reality.

Not the case in BP at all. The school district is thriving with steady enrollment. The business community has a solid base with consumers able to buy all the bare essentials. BP is home to a national company that employs more than 100 and produces truck fenders. Community pride is off the charts with various organizations continually raising funds to support worthy causes.

BP may not have everything,

but it offers more than many communities are able to give their residents. Of course, there have been changes over the years, but BP remains strong in ways other towns could only hope to achieve.

Over the coming months, it's going to be our pleasure to look back at what allowed this community to achieve 150 years of success. There will be special pages devoted just to BP's anniversary and other surprises thrown in along the way.

The highlight will be the Fourth of July weekend with many special events and activities. But we hope residents will get excited long before the Fourth and perhaps even engage themselves in the planning and the orchestrating involved that it takes to pull off such a huge party.

One thing you can count on is that we're going to do our part in creating lots of excitement for the monumental mark in the history of the community. It's important that we all take part in this once-in-a-lifetime celebration.

Won't you go in hot pursuit of showing your community pride and spirit and helping to plan for a tribute that marks the roots of a special place many call home?

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REFLECTIONS... AND HOW



HOWARD LESTRUD

Pastor Charlie was a friend to all

The Rev. Charles Leonard, more commonly known as Pastor Charlie, was a friend to all.

The accolades are continuing to pour in from many First Lutheran Church congregation members in Blooming Prairie and from others as tributes to this man of the cloth.

Pastor Charlie and his wife Cindy were honored and thanked by the congregation on Sunday, Dec. 18 with a luncheon at the church. The Leonards are leaving Blooming Prairie for a ministry at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Rochester.

The Leonards have served First Lutheran for the past 7 1/2 years.

An announcement story of Pastor Charlie's pastoral call to Rochester and a feature have already appeared in The Times.

I would like to use this column to highlight some comments from Pastor Charlie and from his pastoral associate, The Rev. Heidi Heimgartner. These comments were made at the celebration program on Dec. 18.

Pastor Heidi was "right on" about Pastor Charlie's dedication and passion for the ministry.

She remarked: "Many times in the past few weeks I, Åöve heard stories about what a kind leader, and empathetic listener, Pastor Charlie is. I can tell you, but I think you have observed, how he is often the first one to roll up his own sleeves, and get to work, in both the congregation and community. Staff often found ourselves rolling up our sleeves too!"

"Pastor Charlie was often the first to come, and the last to leave, and the first to return the next day."

Pastor Heidi said Pastor Charlie expressed to her many times how privileged he felt to walk with others in faith. "I think that's a perspective and a gift that only one who has changed careers might understand," Pastor Heidi said. Pastor Charlie was previously involved in the implement business.

"I also felt privileged," Pastor Heidi commented, "as he and I shared many of those ministry times together, as we planned, taught, served, worshiped, and

rearranged, called, drove, or did any of the other things pastors do behind the scenes."

Pastor Heidi thanked Pastor Charlie for teaching her how to use text messaging when he first arrived in Blooming Prairie. "He really likes to check in regularly. It was a joy to have a colleague to lean on, and joke with. I promise to delete all your text messages, if you delete mine."

"Kidding aside, Pastor Charlie was, and is, especially sensitive to those outside of the regular circles, in getting to know them, hearing their stories, gently inviting them to trust Jesus, Åö love. He does it quietly, without pretense or expectation, an example for all to continue."

"Pastors serve knowing their tenure is always temporary; only God is eternal. So that, Åös the hard part, Åiwith the hello, comes a goodbye."

"Pastors also serve knowing that their work is always incomplete; there are always more needs than there are hours in the

day. So ministry is a never-ending responsibility in some ways, but mostly, a faithful trust. Trust that God will use whatever we have, to bless others, Åö lives, to give hope, to show Jesus, Åö inexhaustible love, until the call of God leads elsewhere."

Pastor Heidi recited a Bible verse Confirmation students chose to honor Pastor Charlie: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. So that you may abound in hope. By the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

Pastor Charlie also had the last word at the congregational gathering on Dec. 18. He shared an analogy of a musical conductor, having recently attended a Christmas concert at St. Olaf College in Northfield. He said this is a role assumed in the church by the pastor.

The church has conductors who are essential, the pastors, said Pastor Charlie. "But the life and ministry of God that pours out from this church comes from the talent, energy, desire and

hearts of all of you."

Paying tribute to Pastor Heidi, Pastor Charlie said First Lutheran will continue "with one of the most talented conductors ever to stand in a pulpit, a conductor who was called here by the same God, who through the same hearts and minds, called me."

Pastor Charlie traced his ministry at First Lutheran, saying he has baptized 167, participated in marrying 24 couples in love and lain to rest 133 saints of God's light.

"Together we, Åöve stepped forward boldly to support our children and family ministry in a time when the world out there said it no longer works; only to find perhaps the most amazing leadership right here in our own loving parents and friends, discovering a willingness to bring more and more children to Sunday School."

The music plays on.

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A STATE AND NATIONAL AWARD WINNING WEEKLY

2016

6 National Awards

8 State Awards

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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DEADLINE

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

TOP NEWS: from page 1A

#8 Feedlot Controversy

The Minnesota Court of Appeals has granted a request by a coalition of public health, animal welfare and environmental groups to join the Lowell Trom family in their suit against a large hog operation in Dodge County.

Trom and his wife, Evelyn, are appealing a Dodge County District Court ruling that upheld Dodge County's issuance of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to Masching Swine Farms, LLC, for a hog feedlot on property adjacent to the Troms in Westfield Township.

#7 \$80K raised for BP schools

The annual Blooming Prairie Education Foundation auction helps support the BP school district in many ways and with many needed expenses. This year was the 13th annual fundraising auction, held at the Pizza Cellar and Cue Co.

The biggest item of the night was a one week trip to Mexico, going for \$2600. The auctioning of the famed three middle tables for next year's auction was another big selling favorite. "In the past, these tables would top out at perhaps \$1,000," said Julie Noble, a BPEF board member. "But this year, one went for \$1600 and the other two for almost \$1500."



Staff photo by Emily Shoenbeck

Owatonna businesses were submerged at the intersection of Hoffman Drive and North St eet. Hoffman Drive itself was partially underwater and closed off to traffic.

#6 Ellendale Derailment

A 146-car Union Pacific train derailed about a half mile south of Ellendale near 158th Street at about 5:43 a.m. on Nov. 11. In the tangled mess of the derailment were two cars that contained hazardous materials, including propane and butane.

Laura Elvebak, administrator with Steele County, who acted as the county's public information officer throughout the disaster, said Ellendale was under a "forced evacuation" in which residents had no decision about staying in their homes.

No one was injured in the derailment or subsequent spill.

#5 Judge orders restitution to gay banker

A fired banker who claimed the bank ousted him because of his sexual orientation has been awarded \$3.5 million by a Steele County judge in what may be the largest judgment of its kind in state history.

In a 92-page ruling, District Court Judge Joseph Bueltel agreed that Stephen Habberstad, the former CEO of Country Bankers, Inc., was discriminated against and fired. Bueltel wrote, "The truth is: Stephen Habberstad was terminated because he is gay."

#4 Fatal car crash on 218

A head-on crash on U.S. Highway 218, just north of Blooming Prairie, took two lives this February.

According to the Minnesota State Patrol, the incident occurred just after 6:45 a.m. on Feb. 5. Two vehicles were involved in the crash.

The Minnesota State Patrol reported that a passenger car driven by Karl Erickson, 43, of Austin, crashed head-on with another vehicle, driven by Paul Ingvaldson, 79, of Blooming Prairie. Both Erickson and his son, his son Elijah, age 9, were killed in the crash.

#3 Area flooding

When it rains, it pours. In the last week of September, over five inches of rain fell in the Blooming Prairie area. To the west, in Waseca, there were reports of as much as 14 inches of rain.

The heavy rains caused flash flooding that temporarily closed a few business in Owatonna and Medford, as well as making several roads impassable.

The governor applied to have the flooded areas declared a disaster sites by FEMA. There were luckily no fatalities or homes destroyed.



Staff photo by Rick Bussler

The recent developments in the decades old mystery of Jacob Wetterling give Anderson a glimmer of hope that his daughter's case will be solved.

#2 Despair into hope in the shadow of Wetterling

Like Jerry and Patty Wetterling, Michael Anderson of Owatonna has experienced the anguish of having a child murdered. And similarly to the Wetterlings, Anderson has been waiting for answers for years, but not nearly as long.

The finding of Jacob's remains and the confession from his killer are giving Anderson renewed hope that his daughter's case will be solved. It's something he's been wanting for seven years.

Lacey Anderson, 19, went missing in Norfolk, Neb. in August 2009. Deer hunters found her body three months later in a remote wooded area. She was only identified through dental records and a shoe found at the scene.

#1 Meth related homicide

Utter disbelief. That's how family and friends reacted to the murder of Richard Jurgensen, 22, of Medford. His body was found June 26 on a gravel road in Havana Township, several miles northeast of Owatonna. The medical examiner ruled his death a homicide.

"I can't believe he is gone," Feodor Johnson, a lifelong friend of Jurgensen's from St. Paul, told the Times in an exclusive interview. "He had everything to live for. It is just a tragedy."

His death is the only meth-related murder ever in Steele County. His killers have since been brought to justice.

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Desi was a special kind of horse

HORSE: from page 1A

a major cut to her back leg on the family farm near Bixby. She doesn't know exactly what happened, but surmises that the horse slipped on a patch of ice on a cement slab in the barn. "There was blood everywhere squirting out of her back leg," she said.

Upon discovering her horse was in bad shape, Delzer watched in horror as Desi experienced a series of six seizures. "The last one I couldn't even watch," she said. "When she was dying, we looked at each other in the eye and said goodbye. That was one of the hardest goodbyes I've ever had to say."

Delzer purchased the unbroken 2-year-old mare from a horse breeder in Lake City 19 years ago. At the time, she recalls wanting to buy a different horse, but the breeder talked her out of it and she settled on Desi.

The couple served for four years with the sheriff's posse in Scott County and another five years in Dakota County before taking several years off. After she relocated to Steele County, she joined the local posse three years ago.

But her journey with Desi hasn't always been a pleasant one. In 2000, the horse bucked her off and she suffered a serious head injury after getting smashed into a pole. Delzer suffered a closed head injury and received multiple staples in the back of her head. She missed work for 45 days.

"I should be petrified of horses, but it's a passion," said Delzer.

She said it's difficult to put into words the kind of relationship she had with Desi. "She was so trusting," Delzer said. "We just connected. It was a partnership. I probably will never have a connection like that again in my lifetime."

The posse member described her relationship with Desi as something similar to what police officers experience with K-9 partners.

"It's very rare to connect the way we connected," she said. "It's the best horse I have ever had. A good horse will carry a person where most horses won't go" she added.

Delzer is proud of their service to the various communities over the years. She especially enjoyed riding in area parades and connecting with community members. "It is so wonderful to see the smiles she put on people's faces," she said, adding the experience was one of the most rewarding she has had in her life.

They also rode together in a friendship wagon train for a week crossing over 127 miles throughout southern Minnesota.

She has another horse, a 19-year-old Kentucky Mountain breed, but Delzer already knows it won't be the same as what she experienced with Desi. Delzer is uncertain whether she will continue with the sheriff's posse.

Whether she returns to the posse or not, Delzer said one thing is certain.

"I will not ever stop loving horses," she said, adding nothing will ever equal what Desi was for her.

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Readers can win prizes

MILESTONE: from page 1A

over the years. The recollections can be funny, humorous, serious, joyous or downright amusing.

Submissions should be no more than 300 words and must have a name and contact information to verify. Photos will also be accepted.

Each week the newspaper will publish the reader submissions and at the end of each month the Times staff will pick the best writing and award the author a pair of tickets to the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre.

"This will be a fun way to engage our readers in a once-in-a-lifetime celebration," Bussler said. "We want to create lots of excitement for the community."

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Ways to make sure getting old pays off

Dear Savvy Senior,
What types of discounts are available to baby boomers, at what age do they kick in, and what's the best way to go about finding them?

Almost 50

Dear Almost,
One of the great perks of growing older in America is the many discounts that are available to boomers and seniors.

There are literally thousands of discounts on a wide variety of products and services including restaurants, grocery stores, travel and lodging, entertainment, retail and apparel, health and beauty, automotive services and much more. These discounts – typically ranging between 5 and 25 percent off – can add up to save you hundreds of dollars each year.

So, if you don't mind admitting your age, here are some tips

and tools to help you find the discounts you may be eligible for.

Always Ask

The first thing to know is that most businesses don't advertise them, but many give senior discounts just for the asking, so don't be shy.

You also need to know that while some discounts are available as soon as you turn 50, many others may not kick in until you turn 55, 60, 62 or 65.

Search Online

Because senior discounts frequently change and can vary depending on where you live and the time of the year, the Internet is the easiest way to help you locate them.

To do a search, start by visiting SeniorDiscounts.com, which lists thousands of discounts that you can search for by city and state, and by the category you're interested in, for free.

You can also look for discounts at TheSeniorList.com, which provides a large list of national and regional business chains that offer them, or you can Google them individually. Just go to Google.com and type in the business or organization you're curious about, followed by "senior discount" or "senior discount tickets."

If you use a smartphone, another tool is the Sciddy app (see Sciddy.com) that lets you search for senior discounts and can send you alerts when you're at an establishment that offers them.

Join a Club

Another good avenue to senior discounts is through membership organizations like AARP, which offers its 50 and older members a wide variety of discounts through affiliate businesses (see AARPdiscounts.com).

If, however, you're not the AARP type, there are other alternative organizations you can join that also provide discounts such as The Seniors Coalition or the American Seniors Association. Or, for federal workers, there's the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association.

Types of Discounts

Here's an abbreviated run-down of some of the different types of discounts you can expect to find.

Restaurants: Senior discounts are common at restaurants and fast food establishments – like Burger King, Chick-fil-A, Subway, Wendy's, Applebee's and Golden Corral – ranging from free/discounted drinks, to discounts off your total order.

Retailers: Many thrift stores like Goodwill, and certain retailers like Banana Republic, Kohl's, Michaels and Ross



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stores offer a break to seniors on certain days of the week.

Supermarkets: Many locally owned grocery stores offer senior discount programs, as do some chains like Albertsons, Kroger, Publix and Fry's Supermarkets, which offer some discounts on certain days of the week but they vary by location.

Travel: Southwest Airlines provide the best senior fares in the U.S. to passengers 65 and older, while Amtrak offers a 15 percent discount and Greyhound offers 5 percent off to travelers over 62. Most car rental companies provide discounts to

customers who belong to organizations like AARP. Royal Caribbean, Celebrity and Carnival cruise lines offer discount rates to cruisers 55 and over. And, most hotels offer senior discounts, usually ranging from 10 to 30 percent.

Entertainment: Most movie theaters, museums, golf courses, ski slopes and other public entertainment venues provide reduced admission to seniors over 60 or 65. And the National Park Service offers a lifetime pass for those 62 and up for \$10 (see nps.gov/findapark/passes.htm).



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~ Rescheduled ~ Public Auction



Masonic Lodge of Blooming Prairie

is closing forever and assets are being disposed of at the Auction on:

**Saturday January 7th, 2017
beginning at 10:00 a.m.**

Auction will be held in the Lodge (Across from senior center). Net proceeds will be donated to Blooming Prairie Veterans Monument.

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- Oak library table
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- Wood Secretary's desk
- Wood writing desk
- Wood Rocking Chair
- Kitchenware, silverware, dishes, cups, etc
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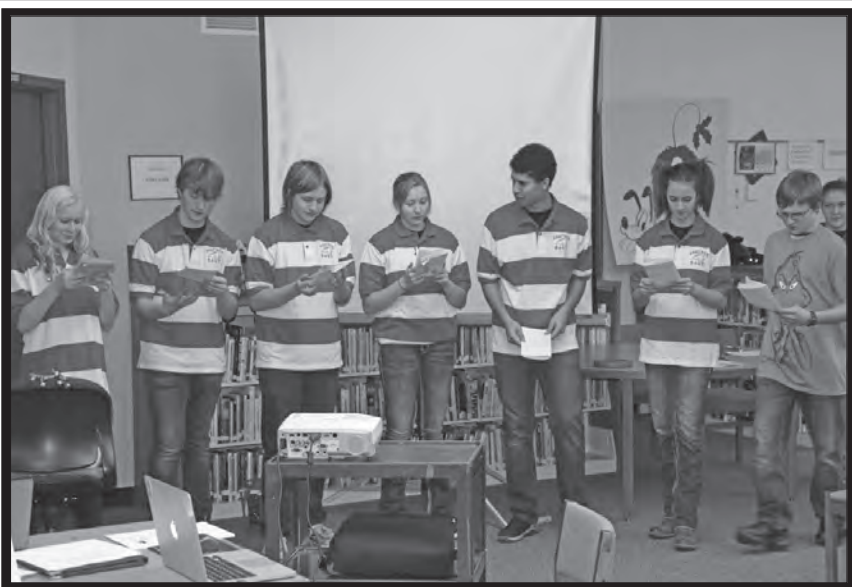
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HometownLiving Community Calendar

Event Spotlight: Scuba lessons

There will be upcoming scuba classes offered through the Owatonna Diving Club. On Feb. 1, discover scuba will be offered followed by regular scuba classes on Feb. 8. Persons interested can sign up through community education at 507-444-7900 or on-line at owatonnacommunityeducation.com. Scuba classes are also offered through Owatonna Community Education.

PHOTO MEMORY



LAST YEAR AROUND THIS TIME

Archived staff photo by Alan Van Ormer

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) Readers' Theatre performed a shortened version of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" during the NRHEG School Board meeting last year in the NRHEG Media Center. Pictured from left to right, Carma Pederson, Will Rudau, Justin Mortenson, Maci Surat, Dalton Kraay as the Grinch, Michaih VanSyckel, Grace Cummins and Aubrey Johnson.

FOR THE RECORD



HAPPENING NOW

Staff photo by Howard Lestrud

The annual Blooming Prairie High School holiday choir concert was held Monday, Dec. 12 at First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie. Here, Kari Bottin directs the senior high choir. The choir was accompanied by Amelia Harthan. Performing were the seventh and eighth grade choirs and the senior high choir.

AUSTIN/MOWER COUNTY

Jan. 4:
All day 1st Responders Meeting, Lyle
11:30am - 12:30pm SEMCAC Meal, Heritage House, Lyle
6:30pm - 8pm Adult Hockey, Riverside Arena, 501 2nd Ave NE, Austin,
Jan. 5:
3pm - 6pm Ski and Snowshoe Rental, Jay C Hormel Nature Center, 1304 21st St NE, Austin
3:30pm - 5pm Mower Co, Southland ISD: Open Gym, M/HS Gym
5pm - 7pm Movie Night at the Museum Where: SPAM@ Museum, 101 3rd Ave NE, Austin
6pm - 7pm Brownsdale PL Puzzle Night
7pm - 8:30pm Keepsake Quilter's Guild Meeting, St John's Lutheran Church, 1200 13th Ave NW, Austin
Jan. 6:
11:30am - 12:30pm SEMCAC Meal, Heritage House, Lyle
5:15pm - 7:15pm Bingo, Austin VFW
7:30pm - 9:30pm Christmas at Home, Historic Paramount Theatre, Austin
8:15pm - 9:30pm Public Skate, Packer Arena, 601 7th St NE, Austin
Jan. 7:
9am - 12pm Masonic Pancake Feed, Austin Masonic Lodge, 303A N Main Street
2pm - 4pm Christmas at Home, Historic Paramount Theatre, Austin
3:30pm - 5pm Public Skate, Packer Arena, 601 7th St NE, Austin
7:30pm - 9:30pm Christmas at Home, Historic Paramount Theatre, Austin
Jan. 8:
1pm - 3pm Grand Meadow Open Gym, Wrestling Room, Weight Room
1pm - 2:30pm Riverside Figure Skating Club - Basic Skills, Riverside Arena, 501 2nd Ave NE, Austin
2:30pm - 5pm Riverside Figure Skating Club - Power & Moves, Precision Line, Advanced Ice Time, Riverside Arena, 501 2nd Ave NE, Austin
Jan. 9:
All day American Legion & Auxiliary Meeting, Lyle
11:30am - 12:30pm SEMCAC Meal, Heritage House, Lyle
5:15pm - 7:15pm Bingo, Austin VFW
5:30pm - 8pm History Happy Hour - The Archeology of Bones, Hormel Historic Home, 208 4th Ave, Austin
Jan. 10:
All day Lyle Vol. Fire Dept Meeting
9am - 11am Open Dome Family Time, Packer Dome, Wescott Field
12pm - 1pm Tuesdays with Toastmasters, Hormel Foods Corporate Office
3:30pm - 5pm Mower Co, Southland ISD: Open Gym, M/HS Gym
6pm - 7pm Grand Meadow City Council Mtg

ALBERT LEA/FREEBORN Co

Jan. 4: (All day Family Reads, ALPL)
All day Winter Break, Albert Lea High School
All day District Days, Albert Lea
4am - 6:30am Soccer Skills & Games, Albert Lea Family Y
7:30am - 8:30am AL Port Authority Mtg, AL EDA
Jan. 5: (All day Family Reads, ALPL)
All day Begin Quarter 3/Semester 2, Albert Lea High School
10:30am - 11:30am ALPL Story time
5:30pm - 6:30pm AL Council Workshop, Council Chambers
5:30pm - 6:30pm Zumba, Lakeview Elementary School, 902 Abbott St, Albert Lea
6pm - 7pm Restorative Yoga, Essence of Yoga, 136 S Broadway Ave, Albert Lea
6:30pm - 8:30pm Rag Quilting, Brookside Education Center, 211 W Richway Dr, Albert Lea
Jan. 6: (All day Family Reads, ALPL)
6pm - 9pm Rock Climbing Open Gym, 211 W Richway Dr Albert Lea
Jan. 7: (All day library closed, ALPL)
2pm - 5pm Horse Canvas Painting, The Interchange Wine & Coffee Bistro, 211 S Broadway Ave, Albert Lea
6pm - 9pm Rock Climbing Open Gym, Albert Lea
Jan. 8: (All day Family Reads, ALPL)
Jan. 9: (All day Family Reads, ALPL)
10am - 11:15am Yoga For Beginners, Christ Episcopal Church, 204 Fountain St, Albert Lea
10:30am - 11:30am ALPL Story time
2pm - 3:30pm LEGO Time for Homeschoolers, Albert Lea Public Library
3:45pm - 5pm LEGO Time, Albert Lea Public Library
5:15pm - 6:15pm AL Human Rights Commission, City Council Chambers
5:15pm - 6:15pm Human Rights Commission, City Council Chambers, City Hall, 221 E. Clark St., Albert Lea
5:30pm - 6:30pm Zumba Toning, Lakeview Elementary School, 902 Abbott St, Albert Lea
6pm - 7:15pm Yoga For Beginners, Sibley Elementary School, 1501 W Front St, Albert Lea
7pm - 8pm AL City Council, Council Chambers
7pm - 8pm City Council, Council Chambers, City Hall, 221 E. Clark St., Albert Lea
Jan. 10: (All day Family Reads, ALPL)
8:30am - 9:30am Shell Rock Watershed Board Meeting, Albert Lea
5:15pm - 5:45pm Yoga Nidra for Children, Brookside Education Center, 211 W Richway Dr, Albert Lea
6pm - 9pm Rock Gym, 211 W Richway Dr Albert Lea
6:15pm - 7:30pm Yoga For Beginners, Christ Episcopal Church, 204 Fountain St, Albert Lea
6:30pm - 7:45pm Gentle Movement Yoga, Brookside Education Center, 211 W Richway Dr, Albert Lea

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OWATONNA/MEDFORD/HOPE

Jan. 4:
All day Hope Curbside Recycling N of 42nd Av
2pm - 2:30pm The Arthritis Foundation: Medford Senior Exercise Class, Whistle Stop Diner
Jan. 5:
6:30pm - 7:30pm OPL Family Story Time
Jan. 8
5pm - 6pm Medford EDA (2nd Wed odd months)
Jan. 9:
2pm - 2:30pm The Arthritis Foundation: Medford Senior Exercise Class, Whistle Stop Diner
4:30pm - 5:30pm Owatonna Park & Rec Brd, Council Chambers, Brooktree Golf Course or City Park
Jan. 10:
9:30am - 10:30am OPL It's TALE TIME!
7pm - 8pm Steele Co: Co Brd Mtg, Admin Center, BR
7pm - 8pm Veterans Open Roundtable, Good Shephard Lutheran Church, Owa

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-BLOOMING GRAPEVINE WINE CLUB
TUES. 7-8:30 P.M. @ J&H
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JAN. 24 FEB. 7 MARCH 14 APRIL 4
MAY 9: BOYS & GIRLS CLUB BENEFIT 7-9 P.M. @ J&H
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-STREET DANCE: JULY 3RD
-JULY 4TH; OPEN 10AM - CLOSE
-B.O.B. RIDE: "TOYS FOR TOTS" JULY 22
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ELLENDALE/GENEVA

Jan. 5:
5:30pm - 6:40pm NRHEG Yoga, DAPE Rm
7pm - 8pm NRHEG Yoga, DAPE Rm
Jan. 9:
6:20pm - 7:40pm NRHEG Yoga, Media Center Ellndl
7pm - 8:20pm NRHEG Karate, ES Gym North Ellndl

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BLOOMING PRAIRIE

Jan. 4:
10:30am - 11:30am BPBL Story time
Jan. 10:
All day BP Card Club & Luncheon
10:30am - 11:30am BPBL Storytime

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Community Living

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The following obituaries appeared in the 2016 edition of the Steele County Times:

December 2015
 Doris Jean Schildt, 84, formerly of Blooming Prairie
 Constance Jean Brainerd Partridge, 84, formerly of Blooming Prairie
 2016
 Thomas George David, 71, Owatonna
 Mary Agnes Sisler, 91, Owatonna
 Edwin S. Snider, 81, Blooming Prairie
 Jerry Paul Rysavy Sr., 99, Owatonna
 Winifred Mae Hansen, 90, Eden Prairie
 Eunice E. Seykora, 90, Owatonna
 Darrel LeMar Iverson, 80, Blooming Prairie
 Arlan L. Brase, 75, Owatonna
 Gregory W. Quick, 64, Dazey, North Dakota
 February
 Eleanor I. Solseth-Kittleson, 94, Blooming Prairie
 Donald Levern Wilker, 78, Owatonna
 Guillermo Memo Dominguez, 68, Blooming Prairie
 June F. Trom, 88, Blooming

Prairie
 Virginia Busho, 90, Ellendale
 Donna Jean Budig, 78, Owatonna
 Thomas L. O'Connor, 84, Blooming Prairie
 Merley Ruth Phiefer, 88, Owatonna
 Virginia Lois Johnson, 91, Austin
 Paul J. Ingvaldson, 79, Blooming Prairie
 Shirley L. Knutson, 93, Blooming Prairie
 Rev. Ruben C. Spinler, 87, Montgomery
 Sister Margaret Pirkel, 87, Rochester
 Kenneth Allen Trihus, 75, Blooming Prairie
 Father Paul F. Halloran, 89, formerly of Blooming Prairie
 William Allen Bailey, 72, Blooming Prairie
 Mary Elizabeth Reimann, 91, Brownsdale
 Jeanette C. Underwood, 84, Owatonna
 Dorothy F. Herron, 94, Bloomington
 Norbert Leo Schrom, 78, Owatonna
 Thomas Paulson, 51, Owatonna
 Michael Robert Muhlbauer Jr., 45, Windom

Danny Alan Winter, 44, Ellendale
 Lowell Robert Olson, 68, Dodge Center
 Lloyd L. Matthes, 85, Blooming Prairie
 Lorraine D. Jensen, 91, Blooming Prairie
 Phyllis L. (Helle) Jacobson, 85, Lyle
 Nancy Lynn Schwartz, 63, Blooming Prairie
 James A. Jensen, 83, Albert Lea
 Helen V. Campbell, 79, Blooming Prairie
 Arthur (Art) Lyle Knutson, 68, Mesa, Arizona
 Judy Drager, 71, New Richland
 Karen Spinler, 72, Austin
 Donald Alan Haberman, 74, Blooming Prairie
 Shirley Noble, 80, Blooming Prairie
 Alvin W. Volkmann, 82, Medford
 Virginia G. Burt, 81, Rochester
 Dorothy E. Buecksler, 88, Owatonna
 Cynthia A. Himle, 66, Blooming Prairie
 Dylan Johnson 23, Cannon Falls
 Jesus 'Jesse' Hernandez, 79,

Blooming Prairie
 Francis "Gene" Motl, 92, Blooming Prairie
 Sharon Rohwer, 75, Owatonna
 Jerome J. Herdina, 84, Blooming Prairie
 Gretchen A. Thoen, 75, Blooming Prairie
 Constance (Connie) McLaughlin Thomas, 68, Loganville, GA
 Margaret A. Williamson, 93, Blooming Prairie
 Rev. Lloyd C. Kallevig, 92, formerly of Red Oak Church
 Marvin 'Bigmarv' Kuiper, 66, formerly of Hollandale
 Roselyn Rysavy, 97, Owatonna
 Beulah May (Bond) Nelson, 98, Minneapolis
 Dorothy "Dot" Sloan, 86, Williston, North Dakota
 Ludwig Wencil, 91, Owatonna
 Benita Lora Esther Yentsch, 95, Blooming Prairie
 Cheryl L. Deppe, 54, New Richmond, Wisconsin
 David H. Symes, 82, Austin
 Elaine Harriet Klemmensen, 86, Blooming Prairie
 Carolyn Marie (Anderson) David, 69, formerly of Owatonna

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays:

3rd
 Vicki Johnson
 Eunice Doocy
 Doug Naatz
 Kaila Burkhart
 Kristi Miner
 Chelsey Symes
 Dan Trom
 McKinzie Wangen

4th
 Colby Johnson
 Lauren Koster
 Lindsey Carlson

5th
 Kassie Ann Lueth
 Deb Brown
 Lori Pirkel
 Quentin Weedman

6th
 Randi Johnson
 Andy Weiss
 Marv Amundson
 Kyle Williamson
 Adam Bumgarner

7th
 Christine Wencil
 Leah Jenzen

8th
 Dick Kruckeberg
 Rick DeYoung

9th
 Shawn Kadlee
 Chris Schaffer
 April Konz
 Kory Raffdal
 Kate Borchert
 Adeline Christianson

Anniversaries:
7th
 Mike & LaNell Sunde

8th
 Shannon & Hulio Rivera-Escandon

9th
 Phillip & Jennifer Milton

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Obituaries

Marian Jean Ingvaldson, Ellendale



Marian Jean Ingvaldson, age 85 of Ellendale, Minnesota, died peacefully Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016, at Field Crest Care Center in Hayfield. Marian was born Sept. 29, 1931, in Westfield Township, Dodge County, Minnesota, to John and Ida (Olstad) Hensrud. She attended Westfield Country School. Marian married her sweetheart Lawrence Ingvaldson Feb. 24, 1951. Together the couple had two sons. She farmed alongside her husband, and handled the books with great

detail. Marian loved to keep up with current news and events. She was a very generous and caring person, and overcame many health obstacles during her lifetime. Her love of the outdoors drew her to gardening, tending to her flowers and taking care of the lawn. Marian also loved birds, especially ducks and cardinals, not to mention her love of cats, and was an excellent cook. Her other hobbies included playing cards (500 and Hand & Foot), sewing, handiwork and taking

casino trips, where she especially enjoyed the slot machines and the buffet. Marian moved to Field Crest Care Center in November 2016.

Survivors include her husband of 65 years Lawrence of Ellendale; her sons Douglas (Darise) of Owatonna and Darrell (Diane) of Austin; 4 grandchildren Christina Ingvaldson and Patrick (Jenny) Ingvaldson, both of Owatonna, Nancy (Travis) Hamilton of Elkton, and Anne Ingvaldson of Duluth; 4 great-grandchildren;

brothers-in-law Ernie (Jean) Ingvaldson of Mesa, Arizona, Jerry (Karen) Ingvaldson of Dodge Center, LeRoy (Linda) Ingvaldson of Owatonna, sister-in-law Marian Hensrud of Austin; nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends. Marian was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers Palmer, Irvin, Clifford and one in infancy, her sister Olga and a sister in infancy. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2017, at First Lutheran Church in

Blooming Prairie with pastor Heidi Heimgartner officiating. Visitation will be held from 9:30-11 a.m. before the service at the church. Interment will be in First Lutheran Cemetery, Blooming Prairie. Memorials can be directed to the American Diabetes Association or recipient of donor's choice. Services prearranged and performed by Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

In Memory of: DESI



A long-time and faithful member of the Steele County Sheriff's Posse. The Arabian horse also served on the sheriff's posse in Dakota and Scott counties.

Desi died in her stall on Dec. 26 at the age of 21.

Sadly missed by her beloved owner Mary Delzer, also a member of the sheriff's posse.

Death Notice

Gail Larson, Claremont

Gail Jeanne Larson, age 66 of rural Claremont, Minnesota, died Friday morning, Dec. 30, 2016, at her home surrounded by her family. Visitation will be at the Arett

family farm from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. (7360 SE 81st st, Claremont) and at Aurora Luthern Church Friday from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Funeral services will be at the Church starting at 11 a.m.

SEMCAC senior menu

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| Jan. 4
Roast beef
mashed potatoes/
grvy
fresh squash
beet pickles, pears
in caramel | Jan.6
Meatballs in gravy
Stewed tomatoes
mashed potatoes
banana | Jan.10
Swiss steak/
tomato sauce
mashed potatoes
corn
Romaine mixed
salad
Flavored ice
cream |
| Jan.5
Chicken ala King
Peas and carrots
Fruit cup
Dutch Cookie | Jan.9
Chili Con Came
Crackers
Peach/Cottage
cheese
Corn Muffin
Moon Cake | |

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Moen shines for Huskies

Defending state champion's return highlights Clash XV

By JOSH ZIMMER
Sports Editor

Rochester – At the beginning of the season, Owatonna High School's co-head wrestling coach Scott Seykora stated one of the team's goal for the upcoming season was to return to the state tournament as a team. In the first competition back from the holiday break, the Huskies had to chance to see where they stood as a team at the 15th annual Clash National Duals at Rochester Community College.

The Clash is known for being one of the top dual tournaments in the country and this year was no exception. 32 high schools from 16 different states competed, the most diversity the tournament as had, according to officials with the Clash.

After finishing 2-1 on the first day of competition, the Huskies were placed in the Division 5 bracket, where defeated fellow Minnesota school Zumbrotta-Mazeppa 36-21 Saturday to finish 3-3 on the weekend and third in the bracket. Seykora said that it was a good chance to measure where they are as a team.

"It's good for them (the kids) to see what's at the next level. We're competing to get to that top level and get back to the state tournament and this tournament definitely makes our team one step closer," he said after the team's final dual.

Owatonna traded wins with

Zumbrotta-Mazeppa until the Huskies' lower weights were able to reel off four straight wins to stretch the lead. Landon Johnson at 113 pounds managed to escape with an 8-5 decision while Joe Fox (120) and Jerez Autridge (126) each won their bouts handily. Riley Becker (132) recorded the fall at the 2:16-mark of the match. Owatonna would lock in a win after Parker Westphal won by pin at 152 pounds.

The Huskies opening the tournament with a loss to Providence Catholic High School – one of the top teams in the state of Illinois – 46-25 after the Celtics lower weights were able to win the dual's final seven matches. Two-time defending state champion Peyton Robb, who kept his undefeated record intact, recorded the first win of the dual with pin over Cole Smith at the 3:30-mark of the match. After going a perfect 6-0 for the tournament, the junior was named to the Clash's All-Tournament team at 145 pounds.

The most anticipated match of the dual wasn't necessarily because of the team score, but rather who was wrestling. After missing the opening month of the season recovering from a severe knee injury, defending state champ Brandon Moen was finally back in the Huskies' lineup. His opponent, John Nowak, was 13-1 heading into the match.

Despite having to knock off some rust in the first pe-

riod, Moen started to get into a groove, leading 7-1 prior to pinning Nowak at the 3:30-mark in the match. Despite his first match in nearly nine months, Moen noted that he kept to his style.

"I knew he was going to be bigger than me, so I just kept heavy on the head and knew that after the first or second period he would wear down and he did; that's when I took advantage of what I had," he added.

Bumping between 182 and 195 pounds, the Eastern Michigan commit finished 6-0, to include a 3-2 decision in the battle for third with Class A's top-ranked Caden Steffen of ZM. He also registered three pins. Becoming an interchangeable piece with Moen's addition to the lineup, 195-pounder Griffin Thorn also was strong for Owatonna. In the first five duals for the Huskies', the senior won all of his matches by pin. He would lose his only match of the weekend in a 6-1 decision against Z-M after bumping up to 220.

Owatonna closed out the opening day of competition with a 36-34 win over Pierre High School (S.D.) and a 37-30 win over Georgia's Commerce High School. In the Division 5 bracket on day two, the Huskies dropped the first two duals prior to the final match against Zumbrotta-Mazeppa. The opening dual was a 37-33 loss to Corona Del Sol and a 43-22 loss to De La Salle,



Staff photo by Josh Zimmer

Owatonna senior and defending Class AAA state champion Brandon Moen looks to record the fall against John Nowak of Providence Catholic High school from Illinois in the second period of the Huskies 46-25 loss in the opening round of the Clash XV Friday at Rochester Community College. Moen won the match by pin and was a perfect 6-0 on the weekend after missing the first half of the season recovering from offseason knee surgery.

both considered the top teams in California in their respective classes.

With the Huskies shifting back to Big Nine Conference competition, Seykora noted that hopefully the lessons learned from their losses carry over to

the dual.

"I'm a big believer that you learn more from a loss than you do from wins. In that last match against Zumbrotta, every kid that stepped on the mat was ready to wrestle and hopefully they see that difference in the

type of mentality and hope it carries over into our dual," he added.

Owatonna will host Albert Lea on Jan. 5 at the OHS gymnasium. The dual is set to set at 7:00 p.m.

Huskies bite Knights

Kubista's 19 points spark 79-67 win



Staff photo by Josh Zimmer

By JOSH ZIMMER
Sports Editor

Prior to the short holiday break, the Owatonna High School boys basketball team cruised to a 83-46 thumping of Big Nine Conference foe Rochester Century on Dec. 22. In its first contest after the holidays, the Owatonna High School boys basketball team played host to non-conference foe St. Michael-Albertville and we looking to carry a winning streak into the new year before a matchup against Big Nine favorite Rochester John Marshall.

Despite the struggles in the first half, the Huskies (4-1) utilized three different scoring spurts throughout the game, to include a 16-3 run to start the second half to pull away from the Knights (3-3) 79-67 Thursday, Dec. 29 at the OHS gymnasium. Head coach Josh Williams noted afterward that he was pleased with the performance out of the holiday.

"I thought our guys did a great job of really staying the course and they really saw the benefits," he stated.

It was a tale of two halves for Owatonna. After falling into a small deficit early in the half, Williams called a timeout. What ensued was a 10-3 Huskies' run that created a 24-18 lead, forcing the Knights to call a timeout to regroup.

The lead prior to the timeout could have been far greater. However, Owatonna struggled on the offensive glass – something that was uncharacteristic in the early goings of the season – and were somewhat turnover happy. Out of 15 Owatonna turnovers, nine came from the first half alone.

Despite the struggles, Owatonna trailed just by three at the half. Then, the switch flipped and it was all Owatonna. An 18-9 run flipped a three-point deficit into a 52-46 lead in the early going of the second half. Williams noted that the difference from the gener-

ated turnovers in the first half to the second was pretty simple.

"Some of the turnovers we didn't maybe create in the first half we did in the second half, but the key was we converted. You can create turnovers, but not get any points, that's a lot of work with not a lot of reward," he added.

After failing to have a player in double figures in the first half, the Huskies saw four players reach the mark in the second half, with much of it coming from key players. Coming off the bench for much of the contest, sophomore Jason Williamson was the glue that held Owatonna together in the second half. In 26 minutes of play, the sophomore scored 16 points, while also dishing out five assists.

In fact, Williamson's five assists were in part of a 17-assist performance from Owatonna, a program best. Williams noted that it was great to see the young star to have a breakout performance.

"He was pretty good tonight, but that's just him being an athlete. He's so fast and explosive. It was great to see him knock down some of those shots. If you can consistently hit those shots and make guys come out and guard you, that just makes you that more explosive to the net," he added.

Senior Andrew Jackson and junior Dalton Kubista also had strong performances. Jackson finished with a double-double, scoring 18 points and grabbing 11 rebounds while Kubista scored a team-high 19 points.

Despite an 18-point Huskies' lead – their largest of the night – late in the contest, the Knights weren't going down without a fight. With just minutes left in the game, St. Michael-Albertville managed to reel off a 16-9 to finish the contest to pull the score to the final 79-67. The Knights were led by Cody Matteson's double-double (17 points, 10 rebounds).

Owatonna opened conference play Tuesday against Rochester John Marshall.

Panther round up



By JOSH ZIMMER
Sports Editor

Looking to keep its undefeated season intact, the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School boys basketball team needed to secure three straight wins in the Bethany Holiday tournament in Mankato.

After a blowout 76-52 win over Le Sueur-Henderson, the Panthers were able to escape an upset by St. Croix Lutheran, winning 52-47. Benji Lundberg was big for NRHEG, scoring a season-high 19 points in game one and combining with Chad Agrimson for 26 points in the semifinals.

In the finals, the Panthers faced

Maple River as they looked to secure their first Bethany Holiday title in seven years. NRHEG Forward Tyler Raimann saved his best for last. In the 55-50 win over Maple River, the senior recorded a double-double, scoring 15 points, grabbed 12 rebounds and blocked a career-high seven shots.

The win kept the Panthers at a perfect 8-0 and brought home the elusive tournament title.

**Editor's note: We apologize for not having any scores for the NRHEG girls basketball team at St. Olaf holiday tournament. Scores were not reported prior to The Steele County Times' deadline.*



Husky round up

By JOSH ZIMMER
Sports Editor

Taking the holiday to gear up for conference play, the Owatonna High School hockey team was t the Duluth Denfield tournament at the Heritage Sports Center.

On the first day of the tournament, the Huskies managed to compile a 1-1 record. In game one of the two day tournament, Owatonna was led by one of its seniors in Cameron Trout.

In the 4-1 win over Sheyboyan, the senior – who also is a standout soccer player – helped break a 1-1 tie midway through the second period by scoring the game's next three goals to register his first hat trick of the season.

Owatonna would fall in game

two against St. Louis Park 5-2. Nick Smith provided Owatonna with the early 1-0 lead before allowing five straight goals. Carter Broten also scored for the Huskies in the contest.

In the final game of the tournament, Owatonna was looking to revenge its 8-3 season-opening loss to Apple Valley. After Nate Smith tied the game at 1-1 midway through the third period, Eagles' forward Corey Zuelow netted the game winner just second later. Apple Valley would add an insurance goal late in the period.

**Editor's note: The Owatonna girls hockey team competed at the Schwan Cup in Blaine Dec. 26-28. To read the recap on the action, go to www.steeledodgenews.com*



Area Church Spotlight

St. Columbanus, Blooming Prairie, MN

Pastor's corner: Minnesota Nice vs. Minnesota Kindness

Minnesota "nice" is a phrase we like to use around our area to refer to the good encounters that we have with people from our state. People feel good when we smile and greet one another and genuinely show care and concern for one another. However, sometimes that Minnesota "nice" can turn into Minnesota "nasty." As one friend of mine said recently, why does it seem that sometimes people from around here seem so nice to your face and when your turn your back to walk away that is when the gos-

sp and the nasty comments begin? This is a point worth reflecting on for each of us in our area. How do I speak and act to those that I am with? And how do I speak and act toward those that are not in my presence? If we profess Jesus as Lord then we should find ourselves being consistent in our speech and conduct with the way He spoke and acted. During this holy season leading up to the birth of Our Savior Jesus Christ, we should find ourselves practicing Minnesota "kindness." That is, we should seek out oppor-

tunities to genuinely serve those around us in love and offer words of encouragement without seeking repayment. A generous heart is a kind heart. A deceitful heart is a nasty heart. St. Paul instructs us with these words, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again, rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near (Philippians 4:4-5)." As we draw near to the Lord during this sacred season let your love for Jesus be revealed in your kindness to all that you meet!



Peace,
Fr. Thomas M. Niehaus
St. Columbanus
Blooming Prairie, MN

Area Church Schedule

Lutheran

AURORA LUTHERAN
6329 SE 38th St., Owatonna
Pastor Stephanie Wood
(507) 676-5696
10:45 a.m. Sunday Worship Service
9:15 a.m. Sunday School

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
588 S.E. 118th St., Blooming Prairie
Pastor Stephanie Wood
(507) 676-5696
Sunday School 10:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH—ELCA
434 First St. SW., Blooming Prairie
Charles Leonard, Senior Pastor
Heidi Heimgartner, Associate Pastor
(507) 583-6621
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.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN—LCMS
2500 Seventh Ave. N.E., Owatonna
The Rev. Mark Rosenau,
the Rev. Gregory Schlicker
(507) 451-4125
www.goodshepherdowatonna.com
Services: 8 a.m., 9:15 a.m. &
10:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
9651 SW 75th Street Ellendale
(507)465-8366
Family Choir 9:00-9:15 a.m.
Sunday School/Adult Education
9:15 a.m. Sunday, Worship 10:15 a.m.

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.

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH—LCMS
1054 Truman Ave., Owatonna
Pastor Kirk Griebel
(507) 451-2720
www.redeemerowatonna.org
Service: 9 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH—LCMS
4532 S.E. 84th Ave., Claremont
The Rev. Alan Broadwell
(507) 528-2404
sjlcoffice@frontiernet.net
Weekly Church Services:
Saturday Evening at 6 p.m. with Holy
Communion, Sunday Morning at
10:30 a.m. with Holy Communion
offered during the 2nd and 4th Sunday
of each month. Sunday School 9:00
a.m. - 10:15 a.m. (Sept. - June)

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH—LCMS
28959 630th Ave., Sargeant
Pastor Collin Duling
Service: 10:15 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH—ELCA
104 First St. S.E., Hayfield
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
57403 300th St., Waltham
Pastor Jesse Krusemark
(507) 567-2272
Service: 10:15 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9 a.m.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN—LCMS
202 E. Park Ave., Hollandale
Pastor Jesse Krusemark
(507) 567-2272
Service: 8:00 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH—ELCA
106 Third St. S.E., Geneva
Pastor Kristen Venne
(507) 256-4288
Service: 9:30 a.m. Sunday

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH—ELCA
7126 SW 98th St., Ellendale
Pastor Patti Meyer
(507) 451-2165
Worship 8:30 AM



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH—LCMS
108 Third Ave S.W., Medford
Pastor Mark Biebighauser
(507) 451-0447
Service: 9 a.m. Sunday
Education hour: 10 a.m.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
2781 S.W. 92nd Ave., Meriden
Pastor Patti Meyer
(507) 451-2165
Worship 10:30 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH—ELCA
609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
Todd Buegler, Senior Pastor
Dean Smith, Associate Pastor
(507) 451-4520 www.tlcowatonna.org
Worship Services: Saturday: 5 p.m.
Sunday: 8:15 & 9:30 a.m.
Sunday: 10:45 a.m. Contemporary
Holy Communion served
All Saturdays & 1st/3rd Sundays
8:15 & 9:30 am Sunday School

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, AFLC
Ellendale, Minnesota
Pastor Richard Sliper
Saturday - 8 a.m. Men's
Bible Study Sunday - 9 a.m.
Worship: 10:10 Sunday School;
10:15 Coffee and Fellowship
Tuesday - 6 a.m. Call to Prayer, open
to all Churches; 7 p.m. Call to Prayer
Wednesday - 9:30 a.m. Bible Study;
6 p.m. Call to Prayer; 6:15 Hands
of Praise; 6:30 Confirmation;
6:30 p.m. Youth Group

MOLAND LUTHERAN CHURCH
7618 NE 84 Ave, Kenyon
Pastor Nancy Edwardson
(507) 789-6666
(Sept. - May) 10:45 a.m. Worship
(June - Aug.) 9:00 a.m. Worship
9:30 a.m. Sunday School

Catholic

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC
150 NE Second St. Hayfield
The Rev. Thomas Niehaus
(507) 477-2256
Sunday Mass: 8 a.m.
Reconciliation: Before Mass
Adoration: Thursdays 9 to noon

ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC PARISH
114 E. Main St., Blooming Prairie
The Rev. Thomas Niehaus
(507) 583-2784
stcolumbanuschurch.com
Sunday Mass: 10 a.m. Sunday.
Office hours: M-F, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS
307 First St. SW., New Richland
The Rev. Raul Silva, Pastor
The Rev. Adam McMillan,
Parochial Vicar
(507) 465-8217
Saturday Mass: 5:00 p.m.

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL
9946 SE 24th Ave., Owatonna
The Rev. John Sauer, Pastor
Fr. Jose Morales,
Parochial Vicar
(507) 451-1588
www.litomysl.webs.com
Sunday Mass: 9:30 a.m.
with Children's Church
Reconciliation: after Mass 1st Sunday
Family Faith Formation and Adult
Bible Study after Mass with noon
potluck; 2nd Sunday of month Faith
formation for Kindergarten thru
Confirmation: every Wednesday
evening 6:30 p.m.

Annual turkey bingo, Sunday, Nov. 20
7 p.m.

SACRED HEART PARISH
810 S. Cedar Ave., Owatonna
The Rev. John Sauer
The Rev. Jose Morales,
Parochial Vicar
(507) 451-1588

www.sacredheartowatonna.org
Sunday Mass: Vigil 5 p.m. Saturday,
8:30 a.m., & 10 a.m.
Spanish Mass: 11:45 a.m. Sunday
Daily Mass: 7:15 a.m.
Reconciliation: 4 p.m. Saturday
Adoration: Thursdays 9 a.m. - 10 p.m.

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH
512 S Elm, Owatonna • (507)451-4845
Fr. Kevin Connolly
Deacon Patrick Fagan
Sat. Mass: 4 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.
Reconciliation 3-3:30 p.m. Saturday
Daily Mass 8 a.m. Tues., Wed. & Fri
(Communion Service 8 a.m. Thursday)
Adoration Chapel avail Mon-Fri
7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. key fob
required after hrs or wknds

CHURCH OF CHRIST THE KING
205 NW Second Ave., Medford
(507) 451-6353
Fr. Kevin Connolly, Pastor
Deacon Patrick Fagan
Sunday Mass: 8:30 a.m.
Monday Mass: 9 a.m.

CHRISTIAN
Christ Community Covenant
Church
540 18th St. SE, Owatonna
Dr. V. Brent Carlson, Pastor
507-451-1032
Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.
Connections 10:15 a.m.

DESTINY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Owatonna Campus
422 W. North Street, Owatonna
Pastors Sam and Cheri Benson
507-254-8514 www.destinyc.org
Service: 10 a.m. Sunday

Mennonite
PRAIRIE MENNONITE CHURCH
13638 750th St., Blooming Prairie
Dennis Martin
(507) 583-2081 & (507) 477-3216
Services: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday
and 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

Mormon
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
404 31st St. N.W., Austin
Bishop Rick Bremner
(507) 433-9042
Service: 9 a.m.-10:10 a.m.

Presbyterian
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
109 E. Main St., Hayfield
Pastor Steven Robertson
(507) 477-2631
Service: 10 a.m. Sunday

Seventh-Day Adventist
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
2373 Seventh Ave. N.E., Owatonna
Pastor Robert Brauer
(507) 340-7143
Service: 11 a.m. Saturday
Sabbath School: 9:30 a.m. Saturday

UCC
CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
211 Main St. S., Medford
Pastor Louise Bender
(507) 451-4596
Confirmation: 9 a.m. Sunday
Service: 10 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 10 a.m. Sunday

Assembly of God
VIBRANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD
702 Third St. S., Ellendale
Pastor Patrick Stitt
(507) 684-3421
Service: 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9 a.m.
vibrantlifeag.com

Baptist
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
104 First Ave. N.E.,
Blooming Prairie
Pastor Matt Fennell
(507) 583-2673
Services: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday
and 10 a.m. & 11:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9 a.m. Sunday

Methodist
BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
43089 180th St., Medford
(7 miles west of Medford on CR 23)
Pastor Cindy Kennedy
(507) 835-8726
Service: 10:45 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m. Sunday

ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
200 Sixth St. N.W., Ellendale
Pastor Randy Cirksema
(507) 684-2731
www.ellendaleumc.org
Services: 9:30 a.m. Sunday
Free home style meal on the first
Sunday of the month through Dec.
2016. Worship is at 10:30 a.m.
followed by the free meal at
11:30 a.m. All are welcome.

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www.owatonnaumc.org

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YOUR OPINIONS MATTER

in the Steele County Times

46 of our readers contributed to our mailbag in 2016

Since 2013, the Times has had 185 readers respond



Here's a sampling of our reader opinions

Impressed with tribute to Vietnam Memorial

An introduction to the arrival of the "The Wall" that was featured in the Steele County Times on Sept. 6, served as a kick off of the replica of the Vietnam Memorial which is in Washington, D.C., as it came into our area.

Your staff reporter, Emily Schoenbeck, was on hand at the Steele County Fairgrounds on Aug. 31 as the motorcade assembled to escort the truck carrying the panels for The Wall to lie displayed the following day at the Rice County Fairgrounds in Faribault.

Nature provided a perfect day and the response was outstanding as the procession came through Medford. It was greeted by townspeople lining the street waving flags and cheering. It was a heartwarming experience. I actually counted 135 motorcycles along with all the cars and a representation of fire trucks and emergency vehicles.

On Sept. 1, volunteers gathered and assembled the complete display prior to the official opening ceremony.

As a spectator, I was moved by the patriotism that was so evident. Realizing that this prospect came into existence after 18 months of planning and dedication is a tribute to the committee. The response from the public had to be most gratifying to those who worked tirelessly to make this happen.

While I was there, I couldn't help but make a mental comparison of this event to when the county fair was in action—no loud music or tantalizing aroma from the food stands or signs posted throughout reminding the visitors of this is hallowed ground, no smoking, no eating

or drinking, no loud talking, no horse play and no cell phones.

Yes, indeed there was an air of respect and reverence which prevailed. Adding to the solemnity of it all during the opening program which included introducing committee people and gala-star families, a flock of geese circled overhead honking their own tribute to the occasion. The climax to the program came with the release of a dozen white doves. Very impressive.

**Luella Heim
Medford**

Happy days are here again

Dear Editor;

On Nov. 9, a new day dawned in this nation, state and county. On the national level, we elected a successful businessman instead of just another career politician. As Rush Limbaugh says, "Donald Trump is draining the swamp in Washington, D.C."

I can hardly believe our local election results. In Steele County, we drained the swamp of all the old county commissioners and it only took two election cycles or two years to do it. Thank you to the new guys for stepping up to accept our current mess made by the old commissioners. The old ones left us with a legacy of debt.

The new guys have a big job ahead of them and it will take time to unravel our present mess. It can't happen overnight so we need to be patient and supportive.

Everything that went so wrong has our past administrator and old commissioners' fingerprints all over it. The administrator couldn't have done the damage he did if he had not had the old commissioners in his hip pocket. We need to remember to give credit where credit is due. They were voted out because the residents of Steele County awakened and went to the polls in droves. Our voter turnout was an astounding 82.98 percent. They didn't just lose. They took a pummeling.

The system is designed so you are not supposed to be able to unload all the rot at one time. What just happened is unprecedented. A lesson to be learned is that you must respect your constituents' wishes or be voted out. Your loss was completely self-inflicted. The old administrator no longer has anyone to pull strings on.

Happy days are here again.

*Marlene Nelson
Owatonna*

Thank you to two incredible men

Dear Editor;

As a person goes through life you are lucky to meet outstanding individuals. In the past year I have been fortunate to meet two more that I would call men of unquestionable honesty and integrity.

A person is proud to have them call you a friend. The first is a ninety year old veteran of Iwo Jima named Ernie Benesh.

He is an unbelievable individual and has unbelievable war experiences that would convince anyone that war should only come as a last resort.

He is committed to honest and accountable government and will work hard to accomplish it.

The second man I met at our county fair when he joined our table at the diner.

That evening I mentioned to my wife that I had met Jim Abbe who was running for County commissioner. She asked what I thought of him and I told her was a very impressive individual.

Everything I've seen and heard since then, along with a few conversations only reinforced my opinion.

This is a man like Ernie who will work hard for Steele County. Many in his district must have agreed on with me as he soundly defeated a well known commissioner.

Congratulations Jim you deserved the win and Ernie I'm proud to call you a friend.

**David Nielson
Owatonna**

Character you can count on

Dear Editor;

I think we can all agree this election cycle has been a crazy one. We, as voters, are being forced to question the character of the presidential candidates like never before.

While I can't comment on the character of each presidential candidate, I can confidently endorse the character of Jim Abbe, a candidate for District 4 Steele

County Commissioner. Jim is my father and I am honored to share with you some of the qualities he is far too humble to share himself.

My dad has been my role model for as long as I can remember. He effortlessly strikes a balance between confidence and humility. He treats every person with utmost dignity and believes we are all good people at our core. He can always be counted on to follow through with a promise and would drive all night to help the ones he loves.

He sees a need and fills it without being asked. He builds his character, not his reputation.

He has a strong work ethic and embodies our family's favorite saying, "there isn't a lazy bone in his body!"

At the center of it all, my dad's mission is to help people. Whether through small interactions like the acts of kindness he performs on a daily basis or big ones like his pursuit to serve as a county commissioner, everything he does is done with love and for the benefit of others,

never for his own personal gain.

My dad, Jim Abbe, has all of the necessary attributes (and then some) to serve as an effective county commissioner. I don't how the election will end but I do know, without a shadow of a doubt, my dad's character will never waver.

Citizens of district 4, I wholeheartedly thank you for your consideration on Nov. 8.

**Elizabeth Abbe
St. Paul**

What really counts

To the Editor and reading public;

This is an open letter to the media and to all candidates for public office -- Local, State, and Federal -- Democrat, Republican, or Independent. I'm 81 years old and have lived through a lot of elections. The campaigning times are getting longer and more expensive. And, all of this, at a time when communication technologies have never been better. Our political process, especially during the past 20 years, is an insult to voting citizens. Just think of all the problems that could be solved with just 1/2 of the time and money spent on campaigning.

Enough is enough! To all candidates, I am not at all interested in how bad your opponent is. And I don't want to read about it every day, watch it on every TV news broadcast all week, nor be drawn into social media sites on the internet.

What I am interested in is, specifically, what you personally plan to do to:

1. Put the country or state on a sound economic track.
2. Stop the political gridlock the country and states have been in for far too long
3. Put country first and political party second.
4. Reverse our enormous debt overload.
5. Develop a realistic international presence and a positive

image.

6. Limit the amount of time and money spent on campaigning.

I'm also very interested in what kind of skills & experience you possess in:

1. Striving for consensus in a diverse group setting.
2. Developing effective public/private partnerships.
3. Collaborating with those who have different views from yours.

I'm nearing the end of my life's journey but I am very concerned about the future of my grandchildren and all the young people who have many years to live. This country is on an unsustainable course and we all know it. Please give us "real information" on which to make voting decisions.

**Jerry Monson
Owatonna**

Let our voices be heard

We the people are fed up with the lies and deceit of the greedy politicians who think more of themselves than the people they represent.

They are a group of self-righteous individuals who capitalize on every opportunity to benefit themselves. Our voice is

being heard loud and clear.

Politicians, you will mistreat us no more. We will elect a person who is not a politician and cannot be bought. One who is on a mission to take this country back and restore the greatness that it once had.

We will elect one Donald J. Trump. And so it shall be.

**George Devine
Kokomo, Indiana**

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USDA announces Conservation Reserve Program investments in Minnesota

More than 50,000 acres in Minnesota can begin enrollment to protect water quality and improve wildlife habitat

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Grant Herfindahl has announced that up to 50,000 acres can be enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in Minnesota for critical wildlife in addition to the 2,137 acres of CRP Grasslands announced earlier in the month.

“Over the past 30 years, CRP has helped farmers to offset the costs of restoring, enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and strengthen wildlife habitat,” said Herfindahl. “Given the national cap of 24 million acres, it is more important than ever to pursue multiple benefits on each acre of CRP such that many acres are providing erosion prevention, water conservation, recreation for sportsman, habitat for pollinators, and protection of grazing land.” Nationwide, farmers and ranchers now can enroll up to 1.1 million acres to restore high-priority wildlife habitat

through the CRP State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program, wetlands restoration, or pollinator habitat improvements. In Minnesota, up to 50,000 acres are now available to enroll in the CP38E Rare and Declining Habitat Tall Grass Prairie SAFE that improves pheasant habitat, in addition to soil erosion prevention and water quality improvements.

With the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), high-priority regional conservation goals are identified by local, state, or tribal governments or non-governmental organizations, after which the federal funds and resources of CRP are supplemented with the non-federal funds and resources to achieve those goals.

“In Minnesota, FSA is also in the final stages of partnering with the state to establish CREP that could protect up to 60,000 acres of a 54 county area to help protect water quality,” said Herfindahl. “Additional details are expected to be announced early next year.”

USDA recently accepted more than 504,000 acres into the CRP Grasslands program, bringing the total to more than 600,000 acres. In Minnesota, FSA accepted 2,137 acres in the program, providing participants with financial assistance for establishing approved



grasses, trees and shrubs on pasture and rangeland that can continue to be grazed. Nationally, over 70 percent of the acres are from beginning farmers, veterans and underserved producers. About two-thirds of the acres are in counties with the highest threat for

conversion. Additionally, nearly 60 percent of the acres are in wildlife priority areas and nearly three-fourths of the acres will have a wildlife-focused conservation plan as part of the operation.

The previous offer period for CRP Grasslands ended Dec. 16. New offers to participate in CRP Grasslands would be considered in the next ranking period, plus offers submitted from previous ranking periods. Acres are ranked according to current and future use, new and underserved producer involvement, maximum grassland preservation, vegetative cover, pollinator habitat and various other environmental factors. Also, small livestock operations with 100 or fewer head of grazing dairy cows (or the equivalent) can submit applications to enroll up to 200 acres of grasslands per farm.

Throughout the Obama Administration, USDA has generated thousands of critical partnerships to conserve and protect our natural resources on

working landscapes, while enrolling a record number of acres in conservation programs. Seventy-percent of the nation’s land is owned and tended to privately, and America’s farmers, ranchers and landowners have willingly stepped up to address the growing impacts of a changing climate. With USDA’s support, they work to implement voluntary practices that improve air and water quality, prevent soil erosion and create and protect wildlife habitat.

Since 2009, USDA has invested more than \$29 billion to help producers make conservation improvements, working with as many as 500,000 farmers, ranchers and landowners to protect land and water on over 400 million acres nationwide.

To learn more about FSA’s conservation programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov/>.

CFS, RRC and SCGE prepare for member vote on merger

The board of directors of Central Farm Service (CFS), Owatonna/Truman, Minn.; River Region Cooperative (RRC), Sleepy Eye, Minn.; and South Central Grain and Energy (SCGE), Fairfax, Minn. approved to bring the point of consolidation of the three companies to a member-vote.

“Agriculture continues to dramatically change. The global collapse of prices, volatility of markets, increased regulatory mandates, and overall increase in operating expenses have created an opportunity for three strong cooperatives to create a stronger supply partner for our members,” said Eric Schrader, Board Chairman, CFS.

The cooperatives entered a merger study in September 2016 hypothesizing that a consolidation of the three companies would create opportunities to grow member equity, improve access to capital, mitigate risk across a larger geography, and leverage economies of scale.

“Producers’ needs continue to change, and it is our job as our members’ agricultural cooperative to meet them. This merger will create new opportunities in services and innovations for our members, while providing advanced opportunities for our employee base,” added Bruce Kuelbs, Board President, RRC.

The vote on the proposed merger will be counted on February 21, 2017 with a potential effective date on or before August 1, 2017.

“It is essential our organizations grow to meet the changes and challenges of the future,” said Larry Dean, Board President, SCGE. “This merger allows us to control the change we want to see in our organization, rather than having to react to changes out of our control.”

About Central Farm Service

Central Farm Service was formed by the union of strong, successful, ag-focused cooperatives that shared deep commitments to servicing rural patron customers. CFS’ many locations span the south-central Minnesota and northern Iowa corridor, offering producer and commercial customers innovative products and services in grain, energy, agronomy, and feed.

About River Region Cooperative

River Region Cooperative, founded in 1890, is a full-service agricultural cooperative offering its customers access to grain, energy, agronomy, and feed services in the Sleepy Eye, Minn. region.

About South Central Grain and Energy

South Central Grain and Energy is a farmer-owned and farmer-focused cooperative headquartered in Fairfax, Minn. with locations in Buffalo Lake, Cosmos, Darwin, Fairfax, Gibbon, Hector, and Stewart. SCGE is a full-service cooperative, offering members services in grain, agronomy, energy, and feed.



Beef home study courses offered online



The University of Minnesota Beef Team is offering three online Home Study Courses in Winter 2017, titled “Introduction to Cow/Calf Nutrition”, “Health Management for the Cow/Calf Herd” and “Introduction to Cattle Feeding”. Courses focus on practical applications of topics.

Each lesson will include on-line activities designed to encourage participants to become familiar with electronic resources and an online forum gives participants the opportunity to connect with other producers.

Following completion, participants will receive a certificate of completion and the opportunity to highlight their continuing education through a LinkedIn Certificate Badge.

The first lessons will be available January 11, 2017 and the following lessons will be posted every 2 weeks. The fee for course registration is \$75 and can be accessed through www.extension.umn.edu/beef.

Registration is open through January 17, 2017. Internet access and Microsoft Office software are required.

Contact Nicole Kenney Rambo at nmkenney@umn.edu or 320.235.0726 ext 2009 with questions or visit www.extension.umn.edu/beef for further details and a list of lessons offered within each course.

MDA Value Added Grant application opens

\$1 million available for equipment purchases



The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for Value Added Grants. \$1 million is available for equipment purchases or physical improvements through the Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Program.

In previous Value Added AGRI Grant rounds, a variety of businesses have received funding, including meat processors, creameries, wineries, processing facilities, farm co-ops, and food and feed manufacturers.

Value Added AGRI Grants have had significant impact for businesses like Apple Jack Orchards. General manager Kit Dekarski used grant funds to purchase a commercial convection oven, hood, and exhaust system, which allows the orchard to make all of their apple bakery products on the farm.

“The Value Added Grant Program has been an important partner for us,” said Dekarski. “We have more than doubled our apple bakery sales since our participation in the program.”

This competitive grant process will fund projects that increase the sales, diversify the markets, or improve food safety of value-added Minnesota agricultural products. Producers and handlers that increase the value of agricultural products through processing or manufacturing may be eligible.

Minnesota’s agricultural and renewable energy industries. The AGRI Program focuses on creating jobs and profitable businesses in the areas of livestock investment, value-added business and market development, crop production and processing research, and renewable energy. For more information about the AGRI Program, visit www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/agri.

Applications for this round of funding are open now through March 6, 2017. For more information about the Value Added Grant Program and to apply online, visit www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/valueaddedgrant or contact Ann Kuzj at 651-201-6028 or ann.kuzj@state.mn.us.

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Regular honor roll

High Honor Roll

7th grade

Jacob Andrews
 Jake Barten
 Carter Blome
 Logan Bueksler
 Jordan Capello
 Payton Caron
 Emma Corbin
 Reed Cumberland
 Paige Davis
 Isabel DeLeon
 Jacob Ernste
 Evan Finley
 Nicole Harfmann
 Piper Hill
 Noah Honsey
 Nathan Johnson
 Mackenzie Kellen
 Clara Kniefel
 Samantha Meyer
 Julia Niles
 Jack Paulson
 Elizabeth Peterson
 Lainie Rahn
 Scott Scholljegerdes
 Nicole Schrot
 Hannah Schull
 Anna Sobrak
 Malachi Sutcliffe
 Amelia Thompson
 Ava Jae Westbrook
 Jared Zuniga
 Jeancarlo Zungia

Madison Jaster
 Brock Meritt
 Johanna Mlenek
 Mason Nagel
 Luz Peralta
 Lily Roehrick
 Keondric Spitzack
 Isabella Steffan
 Tyler Stursa
 Haley VonRuden
 Hanna VonRuden
 Miya Weber
 Jeffrey Westergaard
 Gunner White

Jacob Gasner
 Meredith Gillis
 Brett Johnson
 Taylore Keppers
 Anthony Manderfield
 Noah Pirkl
 Sophie Proehl

11th grade

Isabel Brady
 Morgan Cammock
 Alex Gengler
 Ian Gillis
 Amanda Honsey
 Nathan Meixner
 Sklyar Meyer
 Kristina Niner
 Dakota Panos
 Logan Rogotzke
 Benjamin Sutcliffe
 Jarvis VonRuden

12th grade

Rachel Bluhm
 Rebecca Edel
 Andrew Hunt
 Danielle Morgan
 Alison Ryan
 Joshua Schauer
 Christopher Zuniga

7th grade

Kavon Beasley
 Caydon Buddie
 Jessica Campos
 Emmit Culver
 Jazmyne Duncan
 Cheyenne Fedder
 Jesus Granados
 Henry Grayson
 Cody Haberman
 Jackson Hemann
 Johnathan Houston
 Isabelle Huizel
 Jordan Klecker
 Megan Klein
 Jacob Kucera
 Lynn Larson
 Desiray Limon
 George McCarthy
 Samantha Miller
 Andrew Murphy
 Logen Rink-Bermea
 Justin Ristau
 Nicolas Roberts
 Jason Silva
 Brielle Smith
 Jayme Stransky
 Rosie Tobar
 Jaden Wilson

8th grade

Emily Chadwick
 Kaden Dolney
 Cole Dusek
 Alissa Freelove
 Giovanni Gonzalez
 Christopher Gonzalez
 Jasive Guerrero
 Gavin Hermes
 Brennon Hoffman
 Mikayla Janke
 Malia Kircher
 Matthew Knutson
 Shea Lambert
 Ernesto Lazaro
 Jarrett Lisowski
 Sierra Lustig
 Alexander Oatway
 Leah Prusha

Brooke Purrier
 Peyton Seiler
 Kayla Tutt
 Chloe Van Ryn
 Alex Vandereide
 Layla Wenker
 Halli Zumbrunnen

9th grade

Natily Buck
 William Chester
 Emily Cloutier
 Kylie Cumberland
 Sviatlana Danilyuk
 Boden Devoe
 Taylor Fette
 Riley Hill
 Hailee Homeier
 Shawn Johnson
 Joshua O'Daffer
 Mackenzie Paulson
 Isabel Reuvers
 Kevin Robles
 Lillian Smith
 Dylan Stenzel
 Jeremiah Sutcliffe
 Abigail Tellijohn
 Michael Winslett

10th grade

Zackariah Andrews
 Tanner Barbeau
 Mary Braasch-Turi
 Camisga Chavis
 Jason Domstrand
 Ryan Hermanstorfer
 Cody Kosel
 Bryce Lisowski
 Rachael Luebbe
 Maria Mas
 Jade Pekarek
 Bailey Purrier
 Madison Schletty
 Austin VonRuden

11th grade

Carter Aldrich
 Madison DeMars

McKenzie Disher
 Jason Gedicke
 Thomas Gramse
 Brynn Hable
 Beth Ann Hanson
 Colton Havelka
 Rachel Ivance
 Cael Kavitz
 Logan Keilen
 Kaylee Kern
 Kelsey Kern
 Tristne Kern
 David Klapperich
 Madison Krenske
 Gregory Larson
 Nathan McCarty
 Kayla McGivney
 Alexica Mechura
 Johnathan Meyer
 Katla Michaelson
 Madelyn Neuhaus
 Aliee Romnes
 Ellie Romnes
 Sydney Stephens
 Nicolas Stivers
 Cole Volkmann
 Bradley Walsh
 Jacob Westergaard

12th grade

Haileigh Benton
 Brooke Crosby
 Kori Dodge
 Alicia Esch
 Ben Ficht-Babcock
 Ashley Gilbertson
 Matea Hobbs
 Brittany Larson
 Cassandra Larson
 Holly Larson
 Nathan Larson
 Ally Linse
 Callie Nagel
 Jonathon O'Daffer
 Spencer Peck
 Jacob Pleschourt
 Mikayla Spinler
 William Stransky
 Asberry Thoreson



8th grade

Braden Barbeau
 Braydon Beede
 Jenna Berg
 Kinsey Cronin
 Isaac Enzenauer
 Krista Esch
 Garrett Fitzgerald
 Lizbeth Gutierrez
 Kaelan Hermanstorfer



LOIS M. NELSON

Medford's year in review

Happy New Year from all of us in the City of Medford! The city has numerous challenges coming up, but it is always good to take a little time to review the past year.

Our council meets once a month, but members serve on other boards that mean more meetings or with all the work done this past year on the proposed municipal building project required additional meetings and study time were necessary.

Here is a quick recap of major events and activities that were accomplished or will continue to be in front of us this new year.

January

- UltraOutlets USA are new owners of the Medford Outlet Mall and have aggressive plans for updating physical site and expanded retail & restaurants
- Ag Star awards \$5,000 grant for some of the design fees for new municipal building

February

- Municipal Liquor Store establishes new hours of operation
- Senator Jensen visits regular council meeting with updates about proposed bonding bill, transportation bill and work with Local Government Aid (LGA) formula that has direct impact on city
- Council approves hiring Bruton Architects for preliminary design & cost estimates of discussed municipal building

March

- Action taken by Zoning & Planning Board for lot split, supported by Council, for Maas Restorations for townhome construction on corner of 2nd St NE & Co Rd 12 E
- New John Deere X758 lawn mower approved for purchase
- Replacement of service truck & purchase of 2008 Ford F450XL approved
- Presentation made to Rich Kucera in appreciation of his 11.5 years of service to the city and public works department
- Fernando Gonzales hired to public works following resignation of Ja-

son Biesterfeld

April

- Blandin Community Leadership Program graduation with eight participants from our area
- Casey's Grand Opening at new Medford location
- J Jewels Fashion & J & L Collision recognized for 10 years of operation and TES for twenty years - 5 years in Medford
- Scott Prestegard hired for public works department replacing Adam Jirak

May

- State Legislators adjourn without signing a bonding bill where Medford's Municipal Building had still been included in the project list
- EDA & Council move to support organization of County EDA to focus on workforce development, business retention and business recruitment
- Council supports and approves involvement in county-wide housing study (last done in 1998) at the budgeted shared cost of \$3,000
- Jed Peterson hired as Public Works Supervisor replacing Rich Kucera

June

- Pergola built at swimming pool with partial funding coming from Steele Co Park & Rec and Medford Area Recreational Committee (MARC)
- Swimming pool opens with three public works employees certified as

CPOs

- Dedication of Veterans Memorial June 17 with Mayor Nelson & John Hager as speakers
- Great weather weekend for Straight River Days Celebration
- MNDOT & city collaborate on a Community Partnership Landscape Grant with native plantings of west roundabout
- Amber Kniefel, City Clerk, resigns after ten years with transition during summer
- Brian Sontheimer & Luke Johnson approach Park Board & Council about possible Eagle Scout Project of designing and building walking trail north side of Woodfill Wildlife Center

July

- Special work session to narrow concept plan for municipal building with Council, Fire Department members and Facilities Committee
- Veteran's Committee with Council support moves to purchase last two large granite markers for Veterans Memorial
- Season's streeing seal coating project completed. Woodland Trail to be redone with dryer weather
- Elizabeth Jackson hired as new City Clerk

August

- Halloween Plus Store opens at Medford UltraOutlets
- Park Board discusses adding pickle ball striping as an addition to tennis courts

- Pool closes August 27 after a busy season. Well managed by city staff and part-time summer employees
- Viet Nam Memorial travels through Medford on August 31 for display at Rice Co Fairgrounds
- Preliminary tax levy of 2.8% adopted
- Resolution calling for election on \$3,950,000 general obligation bonds for municipal building project on November ballot initiated

September

- Council supports Zoning & Planning Board recommendation to opt out of MN Statute "Granny Residences" Section 462.3593
- Appreciation expressed to public works employees, area residents, fire department personnel, school district students & staff for sandbagging assistance following September 22 storm

October

- Andy Welti, City Administrator, appointed to new Steele Co EDA Board
- FEMA Report submitted for damages to public property following September storm
- Discussions with fire department on replacement of repaired 1973 truck. Council supports replacement up to \$70,000 from their truck & equipment fund. Storage space also discussed
- Three open houses for visiting Public Works Building, Fire Depart-

ment Building and City Hall scheduled for residents with information about proposed municipal building

- Jerome Foods/Turkey Store expand into offices on Main Street

November

- Incumbents Mayor Nelson and Councilor Sexton re-elected joined by new member, Matt Dempsey
- Proposed municipal building defeated by 463 - 206 votes
- Zoning & Planning initiate discussion about shore land ordinance
- Discussion of sealing Well #1 at Water Tower Park with outside funding sources to be explored
- Opening of Avon Holiday House at Medford UltraOutlets
- EDA recognized 15th Anniversary to Payless Shoes and 10th Anniversary to Maurices managers

December

- Council acknowledged appreciation to Paul & Jean Gillis for \$100,000 donation toward the fire department and municipal building project
- Council reviewed proposal for 2017+ street reconstruction projects for estimated \$770,000
- Set tax levy at 1.7% for 2017
- Look forward to 'visiting' with you throughout 2017!

(Lois M Nelson is starting her second term and fifth year of serving the city of Medford as Mayor.)

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Blooming on the Prairie for a century and a half!



The beginning of a legacy

Blooming Prairie Times begins publication in 1893

By **HOWARD LESTRUD**
Staff writer

Journalism was alive and well in Blooming Prairie as early as 1893 when the first issue of the Blooming Prairie Times was published.

We are thankful that the Times has continued over 123 years and is represented today by Bussler Publications' Steele County Times. The newspaper which has focused on Blooming Prairie news over history now has expanded to include coverage of events in the nearby cities of Ellendale, Medford and Owatonna.

Many community weekly newspapers have folded over the years but there has always been a strong journalistic heartbeat in the Blooming Prairie area. Community journalism is still strong in Minnesota and the Steele County Times is proud to be part of that continued tradition of providing the most comprehensive news possible for its readers.

We are going to step back into history and recapture the printed word as delivered in the Blooming Prairie Times Centennial edition of 1967.

In this first part of a series of articles on the Blooming Prairie Times, we will study the newspaper's evolution.

An introduction to the 1967 story was presented by the newspaper's publishers by the Krejci brothers.

The publishers wrote: "Nearly all the big newspapers have regularly devoted space to jests on the small country newspapers. Perhaps to city readers, it matters little whether Tom Jones visited Dave Smith and his wife last Sunday, or whether Tim Howe built a new barn, and perhaps Tim's barn is not as imposing as some of the big structures in the large metropolitan cities. Nevertheless, these little person-

al items do tell a story of vital interest to the community.

"These country newspapers must be true to country life, of which they are an important part, if they have to live and do work of immeasurable value.

"Their continued effort in behalf of community betterment is of more worth to the nation than all the efforts of larger papers that are devoted to building of great cities. Someone has said, 'God made this country, and man made the town' and if that be true, then God must certainly look kindly on the country papers which are devoted to the work of community improvement in these small towns."

Let's take a look at the early beginnings of the Blooming Prairie Times as reported in the Centennial publication of 1967.

Debut May 18, 1893

"The year was 1893. Business prospects were dimmed and exceedingly poor because of the severe and hectic depression that was occurring across the country. Unemployment was up, prices were down, and millions of people were without food and clothing.

"It was during this era that the Blooming Prairie Times was born. A fierce determination among village businessmen for a local newspaper was widely prevalent. Despite the depression, their city was growing in population and industry and in an effort to continue the advance, it was decided that a newspaper was of primary importance.

"Believing that a newspaper was a necessity, several Blooming Prairie merchants donated money from their own bank rolls and organized a stock company. They secured Will Dynes, a printer from Owatonna, as their editor and made several trips to the county seat to purchase equipment and machinery.

"The new Steele County newspaper, belonging solely to the people of Blooming Prairie, made its initial bow on May 18, 1893. It was a six-column, eight-page publication issued weekly. Four pages including the front page, were devoted to local news. The remaining consisted of patented material,

very few illustrations. Stories which demand a two-column headline today were buried among the local news items in the 1890s and again, after the turn of the 20th century. Over three columns of advertising was placed on the front page.

"Among the advertisers in this first issue were: J.C. Brainerd

nishing house in Steele County; H.R. Moore, Jr. of Owatonna, advertising an awful sacrifice on capes, jackets and wraps; McClintock & Lennon Cash Grocery of Owatonna and such national products as Dr. Price's Cream Baking Powder and Shilo's Cure.

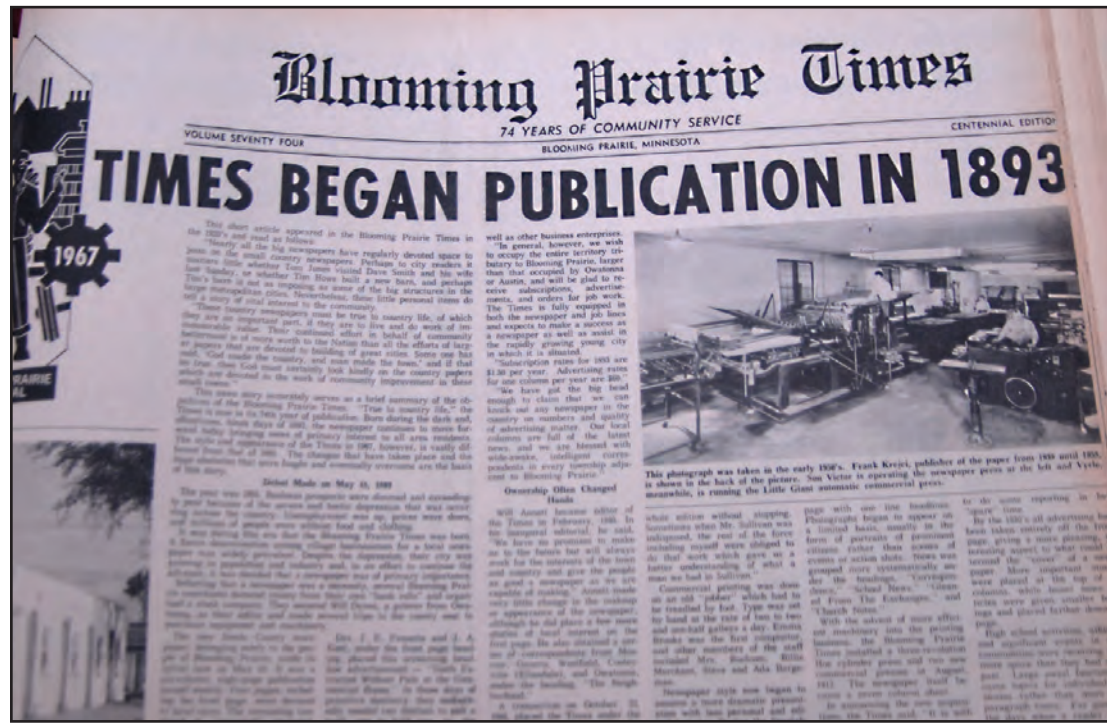
"Dr.s J.E. Frenete and J.A.

"Blooming Prairie was in a transition period during the 1890s when the newspaper was established. The three elevators which had handled the bumper wheat crops were beginning to slow down with the advent of many creameries in the trade area. The depression which had reached the rest of the country had not firmly set in around Blooming Prairie. The merchants who had customarily carried farmers on their accounts for as long as 9 to 12 months now began to enjoy the first 'flush' of the monthly creamery checks. As a result the town began to grow and Editor Dynes suggested that it has a 'better trade territory than either Owatonna and Austin and if everyone will boost the town, before long we will have a thriving city.'

"Dynes soon won for himself a warm spot in the hearts of many residents in the community. He began using headlines on such events as the Fourth of July celebration or a cyclonic storm. Boosting the town was his favorite goal, and he devoted considerable space each week to inciting action on behalf of the village residents to serve on various community projects.

"The announcement that the Times was beginning publication appeared in the first May 18 issue. It said: 'They say that it takes a new country newspaper a long time to receive a long and enthusiastic greeting by the public. In the case of the Times, however, the circumstances were different. The reception by the residents was overwhelmingly enthusiastic weeks before this first issue was printed'

"The Times now makes its bow as the creature and representative of the businessmen of Blooming Prairie who have contributed to its establishment and who will continue to guide its destiny in the future as majority stockholders. . . ."



Submitted photo

pages printed at an outside plant and containing national news stories, short humorous articles, patent medicine advertisements and brief features.

"Included in the first issue were stories of the 1893 convention of the Steele County Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Catholic Church strawberry and ice cream festival, shipments of butter from the local creamery, proceedings of the board of county commissioners and various personal items.

"Journalism in the 1880s was far removed from that of the present day. There were no large headlines, no photographs and

& Co., bankers; M.J. Keenan, dealer in hardware; A. Olson & Co., druggists and dealers in chemicals and wallpaper;; G.S. Brainerd, lots for sale and insurance; W.L. Rice, photographer; E.W. Jeffrey, painting and paper hanging; Hadley and Dynes of Owatonna, real estate and loan agents; F.J. Schisler, watches, pens, pianos and organs; Bell Bros., wines, liquors and cigars; Frank Malek's meat market offering highest prices for beef; Morton Hardware with farmers supplies; The Campbell Milling Company; A.S. Anderson, wagon merchant; Leuthold Bros. of Owatonna, the largest clothing and gentlemen's fur-

Kent, under the front page heading, placed this screaming headline advertisement -- 'Teeth extracted without pain at the Commercial House.' In these days of primitive dentistry, they undoubtedly needed two dentists to pull a tooth, one to hold you in the chair while the other did the 'painless' extraction.

"The personal element was an outstanding feature of the early stories. Oftentimes, the editor would become strongly involved over a local occurrence and would inject his opinion into the middle of the news story in no uncertain terms, sometimes introducing bits of clever, but biting satire.

CHAMBER SPOTLIGHT Medallion found



Submitted photo

Our family enjoys hunting for the medallion every year. Other places we looked were by the pool, the ice rink and the public library. We were surprised to find it in front of Kim Symes house as we stop there nearly every day to drop Nora off for daycare. It was hiding in plain sight all along! Pictured is: Gracelyn (Age 7), Olivia (Age 11), Nora (Age 3), and Tyler (Age 8)

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A new book for new year

Now that the holidays are past, what will we do to get through the long winter months? Let the Blooming Prairie Branch Library help you find ways to take a more positive attitude towards winter!

There are lots of creative ways to spend your time during these long months. Do

you like to cook? Whatever kind of baking or cooking you are interested in, we have books and magazines to give you ideas. Are you interested in sewing or quilting? We have many creative and colorful books to give you new ideas for your projects.

Even if you feel like you have to get away, we have travel books for local and exotic locations. Or maybe you want to learn a new winter sport, let us help you get the information you want.

We have a great selection of new books, both fiction and non-fiction, that were added at the end of the year. Come find books and audiobooks for all ages, as well as DVDs and BluRay movies for everyone in the family. Remember that your public library is free and supported with taxpayer money. Use the resources that are available right here in Blooming Prairie!

Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce
Invites you to the 2017 Banquet to Honor
"Citizens of the Year"
Alecia & Jake Peterson

Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club
Thursday, January 19th, 2017
6:00 pm Social Hour • 7:00 pm Dinner

\$25 per person
Serving: Haddock, Bar-B-Que Ribs, Potatoes, Glazed Carrots, Salad & Dessert

Reservations are required by calling the Chamber office at 583-4472, by January 9th.

Recipe Corner

Rice Hamburger Hot Dish

1lb hamburger	1/2 c. quick rice
1 can cream of chicken soup	1 soup can of water
1 can cream of mushroom soup	1 sm onion, chopped
	1 tsp soy sauce
	1 can bean sprouts (opt)

Brown hamburger and mix all ingredients, except sprouts, and place in a casserole dish. Wash sprouts and place on top. Bake at 350° for 1 hour 15 minutes.

by Mrs. Stanley Johnson

RECIPES FROM THE FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH COOKBOOK 2006 ED.

Sponsored by:
KREJCI FORD
15TH PRESIDENT'S
AWARD WINNER
Blooming Prairie
583-2046

The 2016 Year in Review

Jan. 5

Sailor Renee Lea, six hours into the new year of 2016, officially joined the family of her parents, Colette and Tony Lea and brother Beckett, 6, of Blooming Prairie. Sailor thus became the First Baby of the Year in Blooming Prairie.

Jan. 12

It's a new year and the Boys & Girls Club of Blooming Prairie is ready to embrace the future. Part of that future includes new leadership, as Marcy (McCamy) Sundine will soon begin work as new unit director.

Each holiday season, the hunt is on for the elusive Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce medallion. This year, although the search took a little longer than usual, a mother-son duo found the medallion. Michelle Vigeland and her son, Kolby, spent a few hours each week looking for the medallion.

Jan. 19

Chatter at the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group's kickoff fundraiser breakfast on Sunday morning, Jan. 17, echoed pride about the group's presentation

of a \$73,000 check for cancer research. BP Cancer Group leaders Cheri Krejci and Jennifer Milton presented the huge check to Tom Overlie, news anchor on KTTC Television during a live broadcast of the Fifth District Eagles Cancer Telethon.

It was a bittersweet evening at Owatonna High School as the community paused to celebrate the life of Juan Villarreal Jr. During this "Coaches vs. Cancer" fundraiser, community members raised \$2,195 for the American Cancer Society.

Rick Kittelson celebrated his retirement after 42 years with the Blooming Prairie Public Utilities department. Although much as changed over the years, Kittelson said the experience was, overall, very enjoyable.

Jan. 26

There's a new face at Blooming Prairie Public Utilities department. New General Manager Jerry Mausbach just begun working in Blooming Prairie, but said he's truly enjoyed the experience thus far.

It was the love of family, friends and snowmobiles that brought over 100 people together for the Annual David Rysavy



For the love of snowmobiles

Archive photo

Over 100 people rode over 30 miles on their new and vintage snowmobiles in the annual David Rysavy Memorial Vintage Snowmobile Run on Saturday, Jan. 23, which took off from Finch's Pub in Hope.

Memorial Vintage Snowmobile Run. The ride honors David Rysavy who was riding a snowmobile near Blooming Prairie in 2010 when he was struck and killed by a truck as he was crossing the road.

A state grant has been awarded to a local law enforcement agency to help bring wandering loved ones home. The Steele County Sheriff's Office received a \$4,000 Project Lifesavers Grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

The Blooming Prairie School Board welcomed a new board member during last week's meeting. Steve Ille, now occupying a seat formerly held by Kathi Peterson, has just begun his first term on the board.

Feb. 2

The use of electronic cigarettes, or other delivery devices, in retail places, public areas and work environments is banned in Steele County, including the cities and townships. This decision was reached 4-0 by the Steele County Board of Commissioners after an active public hearing on Jan. 26.

Medford High School students participated in a One-Act Competition in Wells on Jan. 30 with their performance of "Booby Trap." Students placed second at that competition and

moved onto sections in Jordan.

Feb. 9

A head-on crash on U.S. Highway 218, just north of Blooming Prairie, took two lives on Friday morning. The Minnesota State Patrol reported that a passenger car driven by Karl Erickson, 43, of Austin, was southbound on 218. His vehicle crossed the center line and crashed head-on with another vehicle, driven by Paul Ingvaldson, 79, of Blooming Prairie. Both Erickson and his son, Elijah, 9, were killed in the crash.

The Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club was packed on Saturday night as community members attended the first Boys & Girls Club Benefit Bash to show their support for the organization.

For 54 years, the Owatonna Eagles Cancer Auction has brought the community of Owatonna together. This year, there was no shortage of generosity at the annual event. The auction featured 480 items.

Fireman Daniel Gould, of Geneva, was recently named "Selective Restricted Availability (SRA) Sailor of the Week." Gould said that he is honored to receive this distinction and that his time in the Navy has truly been life-changing.

Feb. 16

It was a special night for many as they took their sweethearts to the Second Annual Litomysl Women's Council Valentine Dinner Saturday night at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Litomysl. Organizer Carol Prokopec said 175 were fed a Windsor chop dinner.

Medford's FFA Wildlife team advanced to state after placing third at the Region 7 Wildlife Competition on Dec. 11. The team included Wyatt Volkmann, Cole Volkmann, Nick Meixner, Cierra "CJ" Duchene and Tyler Stenzel.

Feb. 23

The Owatonna Adapted Floor Hockey Team won its ninth consecutive game of the season on Thursday Feb. 18 at the Junior High School gym against the South Suburban Jets. The final score was 11 to 4. This game brought the team's record to a solid 9-0.

Jenny Flaherty is a new employee at the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club, but she's no stranger to the community. Flaherty has lived and worked in the area for about 11 years and said she's looking forward

YEAR IN REVIEW
Continued on page 2B

The Medford stone



"The sun came up bright and beautiful last Friday morning, and as she did, she found something new and different on her way through Medford. She stopped to admire the stone that had not been there at the previous dawn. She loved it so much, she decided to stop and stay for a moment before continuing her journey. And that's where I found her – resting atop the Medford Stone."

- Mark DeLap

Peace Officer of the Year happily surprised



Archive photo

Exchange Club of Steele County President Randy Sobrack congratulates Corporal Jacob Peterson of Blooming Prairie Police Department for being awarded "Peace Officer of the Year" at their

YEAR IN REVIEW: from page 1B

to her new position as kitchen manager.

March 1

There was a look of pure shock on the face of Corporal Jacob Peterson of the Blooming Prairie Police Department when Chief Greg Skillestad announced that he was being honored as "Peace Officer of the Year" at the Exchange Club of Steele County meeting on Feb. 26.

March 8

The Hometown Sampler Concert Series brought the community together to enjoy good music and show support for the Steele County Food Shelf. This series serves as the first fundraiser in March, the month of the Minnesota FoodShare campaign. It featured musical performances by Bad Tangerines, The Gogs, Hot 'n' Bothered and Mile 5 Band.

March 15

The Steele County Free Fair Board is trying something new and hosting a fish fry dinner on March 18 at Hy-Vee. Funds raised at the fish fry will go toward the Steele County Free Fair Building Fund.

When Daniel Dut, a second-grader at Medford Elementary School, was diagnosed with cancer, the community was extremely supportive. Months later, people - including complete strangers - continue to show their support for Daniel and his family. On March 8, Jack Ableman, of Bell Mortgage, presented a check to Daniel's parents in the amount of \$1,000.

March 22

The Four Seasons building and the surrounding area on the Steele County Fairground hosted 238 agriculture business vendors for the North American Farma and Power Show on March 17-19.

Crowds of loving family members and friends kept on coming to the Geneva Community Center on March 20 to show seven-year-old Connor Weckwerth and his family that they care. The benefit helped to defray the Weckwerth family's health expenses. Connor was diagnosed with brain cancer in June 2015.

Once again, Krejci Ford in Blooming Prairie has earned its 15th President's Award. This is the highest honor Ford gives to its dealers.

March 29

Steele County Attorney Dan McIntosh and Assistant County Attorney Christy Hormann were named Prosecutors of the Year by the Minnesota chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators on March 24. They were honored for their teamwork in the criminal trial of Mark Misgen of Ellendale, who was charged for intentionally burning his own family's house down in 2011 to cash in on an insurance policy.

April 5

Medford City Council members were reluctant to accept the resignation of Rich Kucera as the Public Works Director at the Medford City Council meeting. Kucera was honored with a plaque presented by Medford Mayor Lois Nelson.

Owatonna fourth grader Torrin Smith remembers his father by the activities that they shared together. Those memories inspired a gift to the community. On March 31, Torrin donated \$1,000 to the Owatonna Parks and Recreation Scholarship Fund in honor of his late father, Mark Smith.

The 13th Annual Blooming Prairie Education Foundation Auction was one of the most successful in the history of the event with funds raised totaling more than \$80,000.

April 12

Four young women will be sharing the title of Steele County Dairy Princess for 2016. The four, Kalya Naatz, Gabby Edel, Elizabeth Crawford and Taylor Jirousek, were crowned at the 83rd annual Steele County Dairy Banquet at the Owatonna VFW.

Darrell Hansen, a 44-year veteran in the communications industry of southeastern Minnesota, is calling it quits after leading one of three Frontier Communications regions in Minnesota as its general manager the past nine years.

April 19

"The Medford Stone" arrived into Medford as another completed puzzle piece for the Veterans Memorial. The entire project was a monumental task. It began in 2013 and now, with the placing of the stone, it is nearing completion.

April 26

Coming off of exit 48 from Highway 35 is a new and inviting addition to Medford. Casey's General Store is a flurry of activity as it opened its doors last week for the very first time.

May 3

Walsh Garbage, owned by Bill of Walsh of Blooming Prairie, has become part of Skjeveland Enterprises of rural Claremont. Since 1985, Walsh owned the business, which was started in 1965 by his father, Ed Walsh. Walsh and new owner Chris Skjeveland signed legal papers of an ownership change last Friday.

"...And the winners from Blooming Prairie are Allyson and Greg Skillestad." That was the announcement made April 30 at the Sixth Annual Dancing with Our Steele County Stars event held at Medford High School.

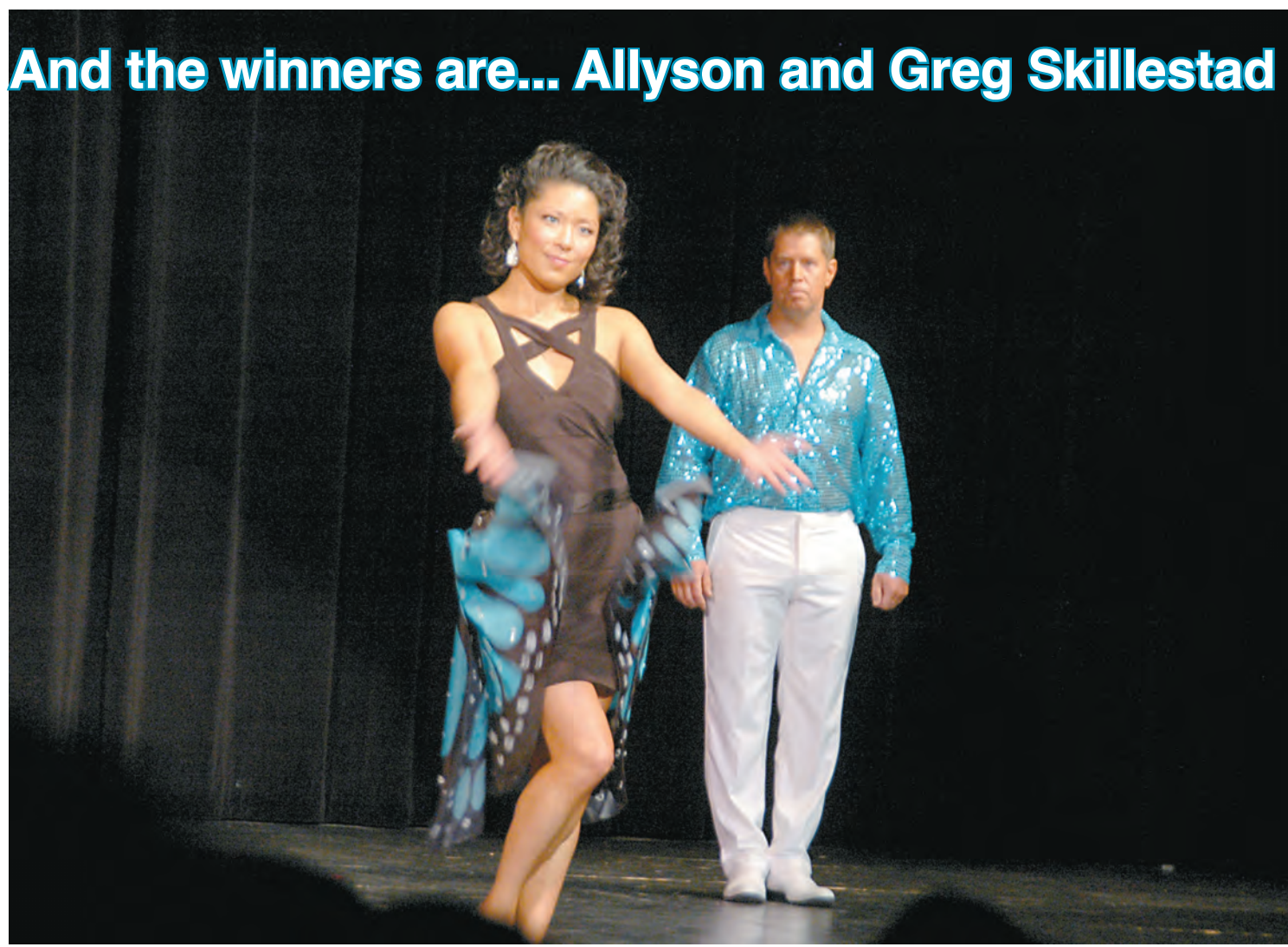
Karen Kasper of rural Owatonna was recently named Midwest Farm Mom of the Year and a finalist for national Farm Mom of the Year, sponsored by America's Farmers, a subdivision of multinational agribusiness Monsanto.

May 10

Blooming Prairie Mayor H. Peterson was elected president of the Minnesota Mayors Association at its annual conference April 30 in Bloomington. The Minnesota Mayors Association is an arm of the League of Minnesota Cities.

May 17

Gold Cross personnel showed off their new facility to the public at an open house on the same grounds of where the service has been housed for nearly 17 years near the downtown area of



Staff photo by Howard Lestrud

Sixth on the dance order, Allyson and Greg Skillestad of Blooming Prairie begin their dance routine, a Modern Hustle to "I'm Alive" by Celine Dion.

Owatonna.

The smile across Blooming Prairie Lions Club member Paul Dale's face has become wider and wider. Lion Paul and his wife Laura have a new family member that has returned freedom to the Dale household. Lion Paul recently returned from an 18-day stint at Leader Dogs for the Blind in Rochester Hills, Michigan. He brought home a 16-month-old Golden Retriever

Lake Kohlmeier in Owatonna Sunday afternoon. Mayo One airlifted the girl from the scene to a Rochester hospital.

Sgt. Gary Okins of the Steele County Sheriff's Office credited an unidentified citizen for saving the girl's life by performing CPR before rescuers got to the scene.

Numerous water main breaks in Blooming Prairie have necessitated some major projects

tary School participated in the first Steele County Times Journalism Excellence Contest. Mark DeLap, managing editor of the Times, organized the contest encouraging young writers to enter a story of their choosing. Lainie Rahn was given the first place award for her piece on social media.

June 14

Arkema Inc. of Blooming

June 28

A 32-year-old Austin man was killed and another man injured late Wednesday afternoon when an ATV they occupied went out of control and struck a tree near Worlein Funeral Home in Blooming Prairie. The man was identified as Nathan McFarland and said to be the loving husband and father of three. Steele County Deputies re-



Submitted photo

Riders wait to take off for the eighth annual Ride For Hope. The group of over 100 bikers raised money for five different causes.

named Summit.

May 24
A 10-year-old Owatonna girl is fighting for her life after being rescued from the beach at

since last Fall to replace the old main. One of the most significant projects this spring has been the project on Southwest Third Street. City Administrator Mike Jones says \$540,000 in utility revenue bonds will be sold to finance the project.

May 31

The Owatonna High School Robotics team placed 26th at the invite only Minnesota State High School League 2016 State Robotics tournament.

The Steele County Historical Society presented KIK Graphics owner Tyler Kruckeberg with a special preservation award. The award, an attractive plaque, was presented to KIK Graphics for its preservation efforts with an old building in Blooming Prairie.

June 7

Christian Bros. Cabinets in Owatonna built a 28 foot Viking bar that will be a part of The Founders Lounge at US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis. There were over 600 man hours into the project.

More than 100 students in grades 4-6 at Medford Elemen-

Prairie has been recognized for excellence in workplace safety and health at the Governor's Safety Awards luncheon on May 5. Arkema was one of 309 employers honored through the award program, coordinated by the Minnesota Safety Council.

Ben Witikko, a junior at NRHEG High School, finished seventh place in the nationwide InvestWrite student essay competition. Witikko completed the essay in LaDona Flowers' Internet Investing class at NRHEG High School, and each was awarded a \$100 gift card.

June 21

No injuries were caused when a hay fire escalated into a full barn fire at a rural Owatonna farm just a few miles northwest of Havana. The fire fully destroyed the barn, but other buildings, including a full cattle barn, were unharmed. Loren Krause owns the farm.

Gen Morales, a longtime Blooming Prairie resident, was selected as grand marshal for the Blooming Prairie Fourth of July celebration.

sponded to a 911 call of a dead person on a gravel road around 1 a.m. June 26 in northeast Owatonna. The deceased was later identified as Richard Jurgensen, 22, of Medford and his cause of death was determined as a homicide.

July 5

The Steele County Sheriff's Office has arrested two men in connection with the murder of a Medford man last week. Sheriff Lon Thiele announced late Tuesday the arrests of Cyrus Noel Trevino, 24, of Owatonna and Gerald William Blevins, no permanent address. They were arrested without incident about 11:45 a.m. Tuesday and are being held in the Steele County Jail on probable cause homicide.

Funeral homes aren't typically known as a place to celebrate, but on the Fourth of July all protocol went out the door - at least for one Owatonna funeral place. The Brick Meger Funeral Home turned its parking lot into a blues music celebration featuring the Scottie Miller Band. In addition



Archive photo

A head-on collision on U.S. Highway 218 resulted in the death of two people on Friday, Feb. 5. Above, emergency personnel and first responders are on the scene of the accident.

YEAR IN REVIEW: from page 2B

by stepped down from her position as President of the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce, a familiar face will be stepping in during the hiring process. The Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce announced that effective July 11, Rhonda Guthier will be serving as Interim President of the Chamber while the search process for a new president is taking place.

July 19

A long lost relative of Steely and Stella, who used to be a special operations decoy for the Texas Rangers, will be the new mascot for the Steele County Free Fair, according to mascot superintendent Richard Dalen. Dalen and the rest of the Steele County Fair Board approved the addition of a third mascot during their July 7 meeting. The exact name and appearance of the Texas Ranger themed mascot will not be revealed until the fair's opening ceremony on August 16.

July 26

It was just a year ago that the Mayor of Ellendale, Mark Skroch, proposed a plan that would cut the contract for extra patrol from the Steele County Sheriff's Department. That plan was rejected with a four to one vote. Now, the Mayor is proposing the idea for a second

will raise money for Jedrachowicz's daughter who is battling a complex genetic brain condition in Poland.

will raise money for Jedrachowicz's daughter who is battling a complex genetic brain condition in Poland.

Aug. 2

Another chapter in the life of Blooming Prairie Public Utilities icon Tom Swenson has begun, and he has a confession to make. "I haven't figured that out yet," says Swenson, a 38-year city employee, when reflecting on his retirement, which officially began on July 15.

It's back! Something exciting, scary and overwhelming is happening at the same time, and it revolves around the reopening of the Lansing Corners Supper Club located just west of Lansing at 27017 Highway 218. The supper club has new owners and Tammy and Ward Jenö hope to have their grand opening of the restaurant on Aug. 15.

Marek Jedrachowicz and Janusz Radgowski traveled through Blooming Prairie on July 26 as part of their "Pacific to Atlantic" event. The event

Maiden voyage as Norse ship sets sail



Staff photo by Mark DeLap

Dan Meier tends bar at Christian Bros. Closets in Owatonna, as patrons take a look at the Founders Lounge Ship heading to Minneapolis.

living around Beaver Lake outside of Ellendale after a raw sewage spill was discovered late Friday and closed down the popular recreational spot indefinitely.

For the citizens of Steele County, looking for informa-

A fired banker who claimed the bank ousted him because of his sexual orientation has been awarded \$3.5 million by a Steele County judge in what may be the largest judgment of its kind in state history. In a 92-page ruling handed down late last month, District Court Judge Jo-

around 5 p.m. at mile marker 27 near Ellendale. According to a report released by the state patrol, Sage lost control of the vehicle after one of her rear tires blew out.

The best days of summer have arrived in Steele County as Minnesota's best county fair kicks into action today (Tuesday) in Owatonna.

Aug. 23

Mother Nature's unrelentless lashing of heavy rains throughout much of the week caused the Steele County Fair to not "grow and sew" an all-time attendance figure into the record books this year. In fact, this year's attendance ended up being the worst in nearly a decade and the first time in six years that the attendance didn't crack the 300,000 mark. The estimated fair attendance was 279,737, which is down almost 10 percent from last year.

It will likely go down as one of the most sheepish acts to have happened at this year's Steele County Fair. Someone walked with a rabbit during the nighttime hours, leaving a Medford 4-H member without her prized possession for show. Marisa Wagaman, 18, came to the fair with seven rabbits, but left to go back home without one that earned her a special plaque for being "Supper Bunny."

Aug. 30

When the bell rings in a new school year this September, the students of St. Mary's will be walking into a newly renovated building. Structural integrity problems forced the school to close its doors last year. Since being forced to temporarily close, the school has installed both vertical beams and ceiling

joists to reinforce the existing floor.

Sept. 6

The small town of Blooming Prairie will be exploding with activities to promote cancer awareness on Sept. 9 and Sept. 10. Blooming Prairie began to display a pink tint to many neighborhoods last week with the placement of 250 flags on Highway 218 and Main Street. Two big nights of auctions are planned for Friday and Saturday under the Big Tent outside The Cue Company and Pizza Cellar in Blooming Prairie.

Sept. 13

While she sat in law school in 1989 as a child abduction case began unfolding and capturing the hearts of all Minnesotans, little did Blooming Prairie native Janelle Kendall know that she would be the one playing a pivotal role in ending the mystery decades later. Kendall, who is the top prosecutor for Stearns County, helped carve out the legal maneuvering needed to finally find Jacob Wetterling and get his killer to confess to the chilling crime that horrified and mystified Minnesotans for more than a quarter-century.

Charges against a father who had been accused of causing his infant son's death have been dismissed. Steele County Attorney Daniel McIntosh regrettably dropped charges in late August against Cory Neal Stucky, 30, formerly of Blooming Prairie. He had been charged with second-degree manslaughter and child endangerment in connection with his role in the death of his 2-month-old son in July 2015.

YEAR IN REVIEW
Continued on page 4B

DERAILED AND OUT



Staff photo by Rick Bussler

Officials with the Union Pacific Railroad survey the damage of a train derailment Friday afternoon south of Ellendale. About 20 cars of a 146 car train jumped the tracks and caused the entire community of Ellendale to be evacuated for about six hours.

time and the community is at a cross to the concert, music lovers got the chance to enjoy refreshments, food and, of course, fireworks.

July 12

A longtime public safety warrior in Steele County will always be remembered as a sheriff with one of the most infectious laughs. William "Bill" Hildebrandt of Claremont died July 5 at the age of 78. He served an unprecedented number of years as Steele County's sheriff from 1982 to his retirement in 2002.

Just a week after Jennifer Libby stepped down from her position as President of the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce, a familiar face will be stepping in during the hiring process. The Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce announced that effective July 11, Rhonda Guthier will be serving as Interim President of the Chamber while the search process for a new president is taking place.

July 19

A long lost relative of Steely and Stella, who used to be a special operations decoy for the Texas Rangers, will be the new mascot for the Steele County Free Fair, according to mascot superintendent Richard Dalen. Dalen and the rest of the Steele County Fair Board approved the addition of a third mascot during their July 7 meeting. The exact name and appearance of the Texas Ranger themed mascot will not be revealed until the fair's opening ceremony on August 16.

July 26

It was just a year ago that the Mayor of Ellendale, Mark Skroch, proposed a plan that

will raise money for Jedrachowicz's daughter who is battling a complex genetic brain condition in Poland.

Aug. 9

"What a mess!" That sentiment expressed by Jan Sponberg Sunday afternoon described the feeling of most every resident

tion on the county website may not be as difficult as it's previously been thanks to a recently received upgrade. The Steele County website received an upgrade that Laura Elvebak, a county administrator, says was long overdue.

Aug. 16

seph Bueltel agreed that Stephen Habberstad, the former CEO of Country Bankers, Inc., was discriminated against and fired.

Late Wednesday evening, a lethal rollover claimed the life of Kassondra Sage, 19, of Delano, as she was making her way south down Interstate 35 in her PT Cruiser. The crash happened



Photo by Rick Bussler

Hannah Mundt, 14, from the Pratt Commandos 4-H club takes a well deserved break using her Brown Swiss cow, Hawaii, as her dream catcher

YEAR IN REVIEW: from page 3B

Medford under water



Staff photo by Kylie Rice

The road into Medford's Straight River park is closed due to obvious standing water. Many of the communities around the area were covered in inches, if not feet of rain or river water.

Sept. 20

The stretch of roadway that killed a 19-year-old woman last month near Ellendale is getting what is considered to be life-saving cable barriers over the next few weeks. MnDot began installing high tension cable median barriers last week on Interstate 35 from mile marker 21 north of Ellendale to mile marker 31 south of Geneva.

A relative of the key suspect in the June killing of a Medford man faces a felony charge for obstructing the murder investigation by tampering with a witness. The Steele County attorney has filed a single count of aid offender-obstruct investigation or prosecution against Marcus Anthony Trevino, 24.

Sept. 27

The Medford area was hit by a devastating surge of floodwaters this past week. After heavy rains struck Southern Minnesota, many of the communities around the area were covered in inches, if not feet of rain or river water. Sandbagging took place Thursday in Medford, with the Medford Fire Department leading the charge to stop the rising water from ruining homes and businesses.

It was the strongest showing ever for the Steele County Times on the national level as the local newspaper captured six national journalistic awards of excellence last week in Tennessee. The Times received the honors at a breakfast banquet for the National Newspaper Association Saturday morning in Franklin, Tenn. Publisher Rick Bussler accepted the awards on behalf of the local paper.

Oct. 4

Countywide recovery efforts are underway in the wake of recent flooding. Public infrastructure damage is currently totaled at \$1.9 million. \$260,000 of that is in debris clearance costs. Damage to roads and bridges was \$472,324 and damages to utilities equaled \$300,000. Another \$330,000 was found in damage to public buildings.

Jessica Kruckeberg, a BPHS graduate and daughter of local entrepreneur, Craig Kruckeberg, was recently awarded the Prestigious 2016 Pioneering Entrepreneur Award by the Colorado Counseling Association.

Mayor H. Peterson has released an official city proclamation declaring the week of Oct. 2 to Oct. 8, 2016 Minnesota Manufacturing Week in Blooming Prairie. Local manufacturers were honored at a luncheon.

Oct. 11

The Owatonna Fire Station has selected its Firefighter of the Year during fire prevention week. Matt Thurnau has been with the fire department for 12 and a half years and is being honored for his diligence to his duty.

Oct. 18

The embattled feedlot controversy involving Blooming Prairie area farmers is gaining more momentum as a coalition of the nation's leading environmental, public health and animal protection groups have joined the legal fight. Several groups have joined a lifelong family farmer's legal efforts to address what they allege are negative impacts associated with factory farms. Lowell and Evelyn Trom of rural Blooming Prairie initiated the legal action more than two years ago to protect their land, home, health, livelihoods and the future of their family on a generational farm where Trom was born 87 years ago.

Nov. 1

Sheriff's detectives continue their investigation into how a body ended up in a burned vehicle in rural Steele County. A

body was found inside a burning vehicle in a farm field west of Owatonna Oct. 23 around 6:30 p.m. in the 2000 block of Northwest 52nd Avenue.

Nov. 8

Owatonna, Blooming Prairie and Medford High Schools each premiered their fall play this weekend. Owatonna performed "Dracula," an adaptation of the popular vampire horror story. Blooming Prairie presented the fairytale mash-up "Into the Woods." Medford gave audiences a production of "The Twelve Dancing Princesses."

Richard Reinhardt was awarded the lifetime achievement award by President Dan Deml and Secretary Jim Gleason at the annual meeting of the Steele County Agricultural Society.

Nov. 15

Residents of Ellendale got an early morning wake-up call Fri-

day that proved to be anything but normal and took on the appearance of part terror and uncertainty. A 146-car Union Pacific train derailed about a half mile south of Ellendale near 158th Street at about 5:43 a.m. causing the town to be evacuated. In the tangled mess of the derailment were two cars that contained hazardous materials, including propane and butane.

The winds of change are sweeping Steele County. All three county commissioner incumbents lost re-election to their challengers. Come January, District Three will be represented by Rick Gne-mi instead of Mark Schultz, District Four by Jim Abbe instead of James Ebeling and District Five by Greg Krueger instead of Nina Huntington.

Nov. 22

One era ends and another begins as Greg Johnson of B to Z Hardware takes over the reins of

leadership of the Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce. The actual change in leadership took place at the Chamber's annual meeting at the Pizza Cellar on Nov. 16 with Luke Swenson completing his second year as Chamber president.

Nov. 29

It's 140 years of history. "Nothing is forever," says Ken Trom when reflecting on the closure of the Blooming Prairie Masonic Lodge, called Prairie Lodge No. 123 A.F. and A.M. A public auction is planned for Dec. 17 at the lodge located just east of the Blooming Prairie Senior Center. Proceeds from the auction will be donated to the Blooming Prairie Veterans Memorial to be constructed just east of the Servicemen's Club.

Dec. 6

The Rev. Charles Leonard of First Lutheran Church of Bloom-

ing Prairie has been called to serve as lead pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Rochester. Known professionally to many as Pastor Charlie, Rev. Leonard will leave First Lutheran on Dec. 18 and will begin his new calling in Rochester on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24.

Owatonna is a rising star in Minnesota. Five stars to be exact. This November, the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce won the five-star chamber award from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. This ranks Owatonna's Chamber of Commerce among not just the best in the state, but as part of the top 1 percent in the nation.

Dec. 13

At the annual tree lighting ceremony, the city of Ellendale announced the winner of its Winter Wonderland competition. Laura Krenke won first place with her dazzling display at 401 6th St. N.

Steele County is shining with its risk management and loss control efforts. On Dec. 5, the county received an award for outstanding performance in the Workers' Compensation Division during the 2016 Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust Annual Membership Meeting held in Minneapolis.

Dec. 20

For nearly two months it became suspicious as to how a man ended up being burned to death in a vehicle outside of Owatonna. And now prosecutors and investigators believe they have unraveled the mystery. What started as an afternoon of excessive drinking ended with Herman Hernandez, 64, of Albert Lea being killed in the vehicle fire in a soybean field along 52nd Avenue Northwest. Prosecutors are holding Peter Anthony Escobar, 24, responsible for Hernandez's tragic death.

A local entrepreneur who has made a name for himself nationally with truck fenders is now expanding into the aviation industry. Craig Kruckeberg, owner of Blooming Prairie's Minimizer, has entered into a management agreement with Stinar Corporation of St. Paul. The company is a supplier of ground support equipment for the aviation industry. Kruckeberg is also working on acquiring the business.

A blazing lesson in prevention



Staff photo by Rick Bussler

Blooming Prairie Firefighter Jeemy Wangen took a quick break from teaching a lesson in fire prevention last week to adjust a fire helmet on Jeffey Bruns, a kindergarten student from Blooming Prairie Elementary School. The kindergarten class toured the fire station in preparation for this week's Fire Prevention Week, which stresses the importance of fire safety, and showed that learning about fire prevention can never start too soon. Area fire departments will be going into the classrooms to teach fire safety throughout the week. See inside pages for additional fire prevention tips for all ages.

Top stories in Sports

#10 State bound

Being the proverbial giant killers all season long, the Owatonna boys soccer team had one more giant to drop before securing a berth to the state playoffs. After the game was forced to go to overtime on Mitchell Mayer's free kick, Huskies' senior Abukar Fakrudin nailed a put back shot just two minutes in to give Owatonna a 2-1 win in the Section title game.

#9 Going to State

For the first time in school history, the Blooming Prairie boys golf team advanced to the state tournament after winning the Section 1A golf championship on May 31. Tommy Braaten medaled for the Blossom boys after shooting 153 in two days of golf. Taylor Christenson earned a state berth for the girls' squad after finishing runner-up.

#8 Owatonna knocks off No.1 Mankato West

Despite seven losses on the season, the Owatonna high school softball team defeated top-ranked Mankato West 2-1 in the first of a doubleheader on May 12. Sophomore pitcher Tiana Blazek held the Scarlets to five hits and also delivered the game-winning RBI.

#7 Owatonna falls in state quarterfinals

After defeating Farmington High School in the Section finals 2-1 in overtime, the Owatonna Huskies had a match with one of the top teams in the state in Wayzata. Unable to match the speed and precision of the Trojans' offensive attack, the Huskies fell 2-0, eliminating any chance to playing for a state championship.

#6 Ille makes history

As for the Class A meet, for the second straight year, Alec Ille earned a chance to race for a state championship. He ran the course in 17:25.2, which was almost ten seconds faster than his time as a sophomore at the 2015 state championships.

As Blossoms head coach John Bruns remarked, "Alec ran a good race at the state meet this year. He was a lot more at ease knowing what to expect from the experience last year, and he improved on both his time and place from last year."

Ille will be returning for the Blossoms next season as a senior.

#5 "NRHEG's Schultz honored"

New Richland-hartland-Ellendale-Geneva senior offensive and defensive lineman Jack Schultz was selected to play in the 2016 Minnesota football showcase at U.S. Bank Stadium on Dec. 3.

The game, put on in part by a partnership with the Minnesota Vikings, featured the top seniors in all six classes in the state of Minnesota. It was also used as a chance for seniors to have another game for college scouts to watch in hopes of spiking their recruitment.



Staff photo by Josh Zimmer

NRHEG's Perry Peterson (22) attempts to break a pair of Knights tacklers On Monday, Oct. 31 in the Panthers 21-12 Section semifinal loss to Kenyon-anamingo.

#4 Krell takes home national title

Blooming Prairie eighth grader Colton Krell won the Corn Cob Nationals at 160 pounds in Des Moines, Iowa on Mar. 12. Krell rode a pair of pins to the finals where he won with a 7-2 decision over his opponent to win the 16-man bracket. The tournament featured over 1,200 wrestlers from 17 different states.

TOP SPORTS
Continued on page 6B



Staff photo by Josh Zimmer

Owatonna's Josie Sullivan (2) tries to stop before tripping up a Spartan attacker on Tuesday Section 1-AA quarterfinal match at the Owatonna Soccer Complex. The Huskies defeated Rochester Mayo 1-0 before falling to Lakeville North on Thursday 2-0.



Staff photo by Josh Zimmer

Medford's Amanda Honsey (15) points to the sky as she walks over to celebrate with her teammates after the Tigers scored late in the third set Thursday, Oct. 6. The Tigers battled back from two sets down to win the match in five sets.

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TOP SPORTS: from page 5B

#3

Panthers win Sub-Section Crown

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva girls basketball team won its fourth Section 2AA title in five years with a 55-52 thriller over Waterville-Elysian-Morristown at Bresnan arena in Mankato. Maddie Wagner led the Panthers in scoring with 13 points.

#2

Wrestler earns 100th win

Senior Cordell Peterson won his 100th career match by pin fall in the first period at a tournament in Lake Mills, Iowa on Jan. 16. The feat comes after missing a vast majority of his season last year due to a severe injury to his back. The injury was found by his chiropractor at a local checkup. Upon further evaluations, it was found that Peterson was missing 40 percent of his L2 vertebrae, a condition in which he was born with.

#1

“The Havelka Hail”

In Owatonna's 28-24 win over Apple Valley in the Class 5A State quarterfinals, junior quarterback Abe Havelka tossed two hail mary's that led the Huskies back to the state semifinals for the first time since 2013.

The first was a 61-yard bomb where receiver Jay Sullivan ripped the ball from the hands of the defensive back to raced to the touchdown. The second was with just 24 seconds on the clock and facing a long fourth down attempt. Owatonna would fall to top-ranked Elk River 19-7 in the state semifinals at U.S. Bank Stadium.

Editor's note: *In my first fall as sports editor for the Steele County Times, I was extremely impressed with not only the amount of athletes that fill the rosters of the four schools in the county, but the intensity in which the sports are played.*

There is a completely different level of competition the four schools competed at this season and it showed with the performances that were consistently measured.

I am excited to get back to work for the winter and spring seasons as we attempt to beat the cold weather that dons the area every season. Hope all of you had a joyous holiday and new year.



Staff photo by Josh Zimmer

Owatonna senior linebacker and captain Ben Staska (51) celebrates in front of the Huskies' student section after Abe Havelka's second Hail mary of the game lifted the Huskies to a 28-24 win over Apple Valley Saturday at Lakeville North in the Class 5A state quarterfinals. The Huskies defense led by Staska, forced a key stop late in the game that made the Eagles attempt a 33-yard field goal.

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Public Safety



Blotter spotlight: Drunken Driving. On Dec. 19 at 10:21 p.m., deputies received a report of a motor vehicle in the ditch at State Hwy. 56 and 595th St. in Dodge Center. The driver proceeded to get out of the vehicle and run into a field. Deputies located the driver and found he or she was intoxicated.

CRIME BRIEF

A warning from police about residential burglaries in Owatonna

A rash of burglaries or attempted burglaries at residences in Owatonna has sparked a warning from police.

Since Christmas Eve, police investigated four break-ins. They occurred in a line from Oakwood Lane NE to Crestview Lane NE to Creekside Drive NE. In all instances, entry was gained by forcing a door, according to Sgt. Andy Drenth.

The burglaries took place in unoccupied homes over the long holiday weekend. Police have not identified any suspects and believe they appear to be targeting jewelry.

Drenth said the cases remain unsolved and are currently under investigation. Anyone with information is asked to contact police at 507-774-7207.

Police have issued some prevention tips to avoid becoming a target:

- Be alert to suspicious activity and don't hesitate to call 911 right away. This includes strangers walking or loitering about in neighborhoods, apparent juveniles out past curfew and unrecognizable vehicles circling around the area.

- Record descriptions of suspicious people and vehicles and obtain license plate numbers when possible.

- Remember to lock all doors when away from your home and during the night time hours, including patios, overhead garage doors and access doors. Also remember to lock vehicles and remove keys and valuable property from inside the vehicle.

resulting in property damage occurred at 12th St. NE and 3rd Ave. NE at 11:07 p.m.

Dec. 20

Shoplifting. Officers responded to a shoplifting incident in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 5:48 p.m.

Theft. A vehicle was reported stolen from the 1500 block of St. Paul Rd. NE at 7:32 p.m.

Dec. 21

Suspicion. Police responded to suspicious activity at Wedgewood Dr. NE and Crestview Lane NE at 6:05 a.m. and in the 1000 block of 7th Ave. NE at 4:15 p.m.

Theft. Officer took theft report in the 2200 block of 26th St. NW at 1:35 p.m.

Hit and Run. A hit and run crash resulting in property damage occurred in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 6:23 p.m.

Arrest. At 10:32 p.m., officer arrested a motorist following a traffic stop at 21st Ave. NW and Hoffman Dr. NW.

Dec. 22

Vandalism. Property damage was reported in the 400 block of Sylvan St. NW at 8:31 a.m.

Fraud. A citizen reported being the victim of a fraud incident in the 1900 block of 4th Ave. SE at 1:54 p.m.

Theft. At 2:15 p.m., police received a theft report from the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S.

COURT NEWS

Steele County

The following case was heard in Steele County District Court the week of Dec. 12 with Judge Karen R. Duncan presiding:

Cody R. Ripka, 22, Ellendale, previously appeared and was convicted of felony assault. He was sentenced to \$7,539.69, 3 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, obtain permission to leave the state, no possession of firearms and 3 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Dec. 12 – 16:

Bloomington Police Department

Elizabeth Gonzalez-Diaz, 33, Bloomington, suspended license, \$281; Tyler J. Holm, 23, Austin, no license, \$181; Hope A. Weise, 42, Bloomington, ATV violation, \$131.

MN Dept. of Natural Resources

Joshua D. Beese, 21, Owatonna, take fish without angling license, \$181.

MN State Patrol Rochester

Bryant R. Anderson, 30, Minneapolis, speeding, \$121; James M. Campos Jr., 22, Lemoore, CA, speeding, \$131; Ignacio S. Coyote, 34, Des Moines, IA, no license, \$181; Robert R. Cremeans, 38, Bloomington, suspended license, \$281; Janelle N. Cross, 19, Minnetonka, speeding, \$121; Shapan Debnath, 29, Glendale, CA, speeding, \$221; Zachary B. Drumm-Bode, 28, Madison Lake, cancelled license, \$381, 5 days in county jail and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Jelisa L. Elmore, 26, Hopkins, speeding, \$121; Becky J. Evers-Gerdes, 41, Rochester, speeding, \$141;

Jason M. Fraker Reding, 22, Algona, IA, speeding, \$131; Samuel L. Frederick, 29, Pine Island, speeding, \$121; Randy P. Gelhaus, 64, Bremerton, WA, speeding, \$141; Haridass R. Haridass, 51, Manly, IA, speeding, \$131; Amar D. Karim, 25, St. Paul, speeding, \$221;

Ronald E. Kasel, 55, Kasson,

invalid license, \$131; Cody A. Knight, 22, Ankeny, IA, speeding, \$131; Megan E. McCabe, 22, Victoria, expired registration, \$111; Ernest W. Melcher Jr., 45, Medford, speeding, no license and no motorcycle endorsement, \$371; Amanda B. Merfeld, 21, Agoura Hills, CA, speeding, \$221; Kenneth D. Merritt, 43, Waldorf, seat belt, \$106; Bridgett D. Mitchell, 42, Owatonna, revoked license, \$281;

Bruno B. Paolillo, 22, Forest City, IA, speeding, \$121; Emily A. Peterson, 23, Mankato, revoked license, \$281; Ruben Rivera, 36, Waseca, speeding, \$141; Cameron J. Skiba, 19, Isanti, speeding, \$221; Cole J. Stanford, 19, Hazleton, IA, minor consumption, \$181;

Scott E. Tinnell, 44, West Concord, speeding, \$131; Rachel M. Underwood, 60, Wasilla, AK, speeding, \$131; Heather M. Walters, 40, Owatonna, revoked license, \$281; Bradley B. Wicks, 23, Urbandale, IA, speeding, \$121; Julian D. Wilkinson, 20, Garrison, ND, speeding, \$141; Timothy A. Youtzy, 25, Arden Hills, speeding, \$131;

Omar Zavaleta-Rios, 25, White Bear Lake, seat belt and window tint violation, \$156.

Owatonna Police Department

Jeffrey S. Bruce, 55, Owatonna, abandoned vehicle, \$131; Marissa A. Bush, 20, Owatonna, revoked license, \$281;

Eric R. Campbell, 34, Bloomington, no insurance, \$281; Michael J. Hambrick, 32, Owatonna, open bottle, \$131; Margarito Hernandez, 35, Owatonna, no license, \$181; Faithful R. Hill, 37, Owatonna, damage to property, \$131, 23 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, domestic abuse evaluation, no contact with victim and 1 year of supervised probation; Daniel A. Lopez, 22, Eagle Pass, TX, no insurance, \$281;

Cassandra L. Paulson, 29, Bloomington, DWI, \$381, Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory, attend MADD impact panel and 1 year of supervised probation; Haley M. Pusateri, 18, Owatonna, theft, \$81, diversion program and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Juan F. Rodriguez Tellez, 19, Owatonna, lights violation and possession of paraphernalia, \$181;

Cody H. Skow, 30, Owatonna, seat belt, \$106; Janet Y. Smith, 59, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$111; Randy L. Stull, 36, Owatonna, seat belt, \$106;

Austin E. Teele, 29, Owatonna, trespassing, \$131; Nicolle L. Walter, 44, Wells, revoked license, \$281; Shaketio A. Webster, 22,

St. Cloud, theft, \$131, 1 year in county jail.

Steele County Sheriff's Office

Yesenia Chavez, 19, Minneapolis, speeding, \$221; Melissa L. Cox, 18, Owatonna, speeding, \$141; Bridget E. Dickie, 25, Waseca, speeding, \$141; Anna N. Engelman, 21, Owatonna, speeding, \$131;

George D. Ide, 53, Dodge Center, speeding, \$121; Terry L. Johnson, 52, Ellendale, speeding, \$121; Nancy F. Keith, 64, Owatonna, DWI, \$81, 1 day in county jail, Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory, attend MADD impact panel, 30 hours of community service and 1 year of supervised probation; Brady L. Kliewer, 24, Waseca, speeding, \$141; Payton M. Laramy-Brookes, 20, Maple Grove, speeding, \$131;

Kenneth J. Maclin, 19, Rochester, possession of marijuana, \$181; Donald W. Majusiak, 74, LeCenter, speeding, \$121; Lori A. Miller-Beach, 46, Stewartville, speeding, \$121; Vicki J. Patraw, 59, New Richland, speeding, \$121; Daniel J. Schull, 38, Medford, speeding, \$121; Kyle D. Schulz, 18, Ellendale, speeding, \$141; Amanda K. Sunken, 26, Owatonna, no insurance, \$281; Todd M. Taylor, 38, Mapleton, speeding, \$121;

Angelica M. Torres, 41, Waseca, speeding, \$121; Gregory S. Wacek, 50, Owatonna, expired license, \$181; Terry L. Wytaske, 63, Austin, speeding, \$121.

POLICE BLOTTER

Dodge County

The Dodge County Sheriff's Office handled 188 complaints during the week of Dec. 14 - 20. Some of them include:

Dec. 15

Animal Neglect. Deputies received a complaint of a puppy left outside in the 900 block of 3rd Ave. SE in Hayfield at 5:58 p.m.

Suspicion. At 6:23 p.m., deputies found suspicious activity in the 59700 block of 120th Ave. in Claremont.

Dec. 16

Burglary. Deputies received information regarding a past action burglary in the 100 block of 1st Ave. NE in Hayfield at 11:40 a.m.

Fraud. At 3:09 p.m., a Dodge Center resident reported receiving a fraudulent call in the 65700 block of 160th Ave.

Snowmobile. Deputies responded to a snowmobile accident at 2nd St. NW and 2nd Ave. NW in Hayfield at 9 p.m.

Suspicion. Deputies responded to a report of a male yelling and sounding extremely upset at 2nd St. and Elm St. in Claremont at 10:52 p.m. However, they were unable to locate the subject.

Dec. 17

Suspicious Activity. At 2:18 a.m., deputies found someone walking with a blanket down the road at 2nd St. NW and 3rd Ave. NW in Dodge Center.

Animal Neglect. Deputies received an animal neglect complaint from the 16500 block of State Hwy. 30 in Hayfield at 11:08 a.m.

Dec. 18

Fire. Deputies, Dodge Center Fire, Kasson Fire and Dodge Center Ambulance responded to a fully engulfed two-car garage fire in the 19200 block of 630th St. in Dodge Center at 2:55 a.m.

Dec. 19

Animal. At 5:46 a.m., three horses were by the ball field at 1st St. W. and Eugene St. in West Concord.

Intoxication. Deputies responded to a report of an intoxicated subject on Hwy. St. E. in Dodge Center at 2:34 p.m.

Dec. 20

Fire. At 12:17 a.m., a chimney fire with visible flames occurred in the 17900 block of County Hwy. 24 in West Concord. Deputies, West Concord Police, West Concord Fire, Dodge Center Fire and West Concord Ambulance responded to the scene.

Gas Leak. An evacuation for a gas leak occurred on 9th St. SW in Hayfield at 3:24 a.m.

COURT NEWS

Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Dec. 12 – 19:

Dodge County Sheriff's Office

Duane R. Bartel, 56, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Michael A. Britt, 29, Durand, WI, parking violation, \$32; Hector L. Gutierrez, 46, Hayfield, parking violation, \$32; Darrin N. Himle, 48, Hayfield, parking violation, \$32; Ana L. Ibarra, 30, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; James C. Johnson, 52, Wanamingo, parking violation, \$32;

Jesse E. Larrison, 28, West Concord, speeding, \$220; Matthew D. Narveson, 33, Hayfield, speeding, \$280;

Man accused in car fire death appears in court

By RICK BUSSLER
Publisher

The Albert Lea man accused of causing the death of another man in an unusual car fire outside of Owatonna has made his first court appearance.

Peter Anthony Escobar, 24, appeared in Steele County District Court Thursday on two felonies of second-degree manslaughter and criminal vehicular homicide. He was released on his own recognizance.

Prosecutors allege Escobar was drunk when he drove a vehicle into a soybean field west of Owatonna Oct. 23. The vehicle caught on fire and Escobar took

off from the scene. After firefighters extinguished the blaze, authorities found a man burned to death in the passenger's seat.

Herman Hernandez, 64, also of Albert Lea, died in the fire. Authorities determined he died of smoke inhalation and thermal injuries.

Investigators determined both Escobar and Hernandez had been drinking throughout the afternoon at the Nasty Habit Bar in Albert Lea prior to driving to Owatonna.

Escobar faces 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine on both felonies.

He is due back into court on Feb. 2.

POLICE BLOTTER

Steele County

Owatonna Police

Dec. 16

Arrest. Police assisted another agency with arresting a subject in the 100 block of Bridge St. W. at 6:23 a.m.

Theft. Officer took theft reports in the 500 block of Adams Ave. NW at 9:06 a.m. and in the 400 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 9:17 p.m.

Vulnerable Adult. Police responded to a report of a vulnerable adult in the 200 block of Pearl St. E. at 9:18 a.m.

Shoplifting. Shoplifting incidents occurred in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 11:30 a.m. and at 12:36 p.m.

Dec. 17

Disturbance. At 1:09 a.m., officers responded to a disturbance in the 600 block of Bridge St. W. They took a subject into custody.

Welfare. Police completed a welfare check in the 200 block of Chestnut Ave. NE at 1:21 a.m.

Domestic. Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 7:44 p.m. They arrested a subject at the scene.

Hit and Run. Hit and run accidents resulting in property damage occurred in the 300 block of School St. E. at 5:20 p.m. and the 400 block of Allan Ave. SW at

8:10 p.m.

Dec. 18

Domestic. At 11:11 a.m., police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 200 block of Oak Ave. N. They took a subject into custody.

Warrant. Officer made a warrant arrest in the 500 block of Grove Ave. N. at 3:26 p.m.

Shoplifting. At 7:31 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W.

Dec. 19

Warrants. Police made warrant arrests in the 200 block of Pearl St. E. at 5:54 a.m., the 100 block of Landmark Dr. NE at 12:22 p.m. and the 2200 block of 26th St. NW at 1:15 p.m.

Vehicle Theft. Officers took reports of stolen vehicles in the 300 block of Vine St. E. at 10:52 a.m. and in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 4:58 p.m.

Thefts. Thefts occurred in the 2800 block of Bridge St. W. at 9:18 a.m. and 3:54 p.m., the 400 block of Hillsdale St. NW at 1:14 p.m., the 100 block of Vine St. E. at 1:47 p.m.

Crash. At 6:40 p.m., officers responded to a motor vehicle accident resulting in property damage at Oak Ave. S. and McKinley St. W. They issued a citation to one of the drivers.

Suicidal Threats. Police responded to suicidal threats in the 300 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 10:35 p.m. They arrested a subject at the scene.

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

- Josefina Solis – child neglect - \$3,000 bail
- Dale Sorgatz – DWI – no bail
- Jose Sosa – DWI – no bail
- Shane Spencer – traffic - \$1,000 ba
- Brandon Stevermer – controlled substance – no bail
- Alex Stewart – theft - \$1,000 bail
- Bashir Sudi – theft by check - \$10,000 bail
- Pablo Tagle – theft by swindle - \$1,000 bail
- Samuel Tanner – theft - \$1,000 bail
- Brandon Tate – domestic assault - \$2,000 bail

- Alvin Taylor – DWI - \$3,000 bail
- John Tedd – domestic assault – no bail
- Allen Telschow – DWI – no bail
- Ramiro Terrones – DWI – \$500 bail
- Norma Thibodeau – dishonored check - \$1,000 bail
- James Thomas – theft – no bail
- Carla Thompkins – stalking - \$35,000 bail
- Larry Thompson – obstruction - \$3,000 bail
- Timothy Tillman – assault - \$20,000 bail
- Jyl Todd – controlled substance - \$10,000 bail

ACTIVE WARRANTS

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

PUBLIC SAFETY: from page 7B

Sherril M. Rainone, 54, Owatonna, invalid license, no insurance and speeding, \$440; Hussein O. Rashid, 27, Rochester, revoked license, \$280; Jason J. White, 34, Owatonna, speeding, \$220.

Kasson Police Department
Angela M. Goins, 38, Kasson, parking violation, \$32; Rhonda R. Kinney, 56, Dodge Center, seat belt, \$105; Kody M. Mayer, 28, Kasson, possession of Marijuana and Paraphernalia, \$180; Andrew R. Neseth, 34, Mantorville, possession of Marijuana and Paraphernalia, \$180; Roberto A. Reynolds, 43, Kasson, possession of Marijuana, \$130; Jolene K. Schultz, 32, Kasson, seat belt, \$105; David A. Smith Jr., 26,

Northwood, IA, seat belt, \$105.

MN State Patrol Rochester
Robert S. Pence, 27, Republic MO, speeding, \$120; Alan J. Peterson, 58, Mankato, speeding, \$130; Jerry A. Reis, 58, Sergeant, speeding, \$120; Dakota A. Taylor, 23, Wanamingo, suspended license, \$280.

Owatonna Police
Matthew David Swenson, 34, arrested at 7:15 a.m. Dec. 16, felony probation apprehension and detention order, held for court.

Cornell Carter, 32, arrested at 8:22 p.m. Dec. 17, domestic assault, held for court.

Lorenzo Markey Cook, 25, arrested at 11:28 a.m. Dec. 18, felony probation warrant arrest, held for court.

Erika Denise DeGollado, 22, arrested at 3:31 p.m. Dec. 18, warrant arrest, held for court.

Tyler Lee Lockman, 28, arrested at 7:10 p.m. Dec. 18, no insurance and revoked license, held for court.

Jessica Ann Dahle, 39, arrested at 12:35 p.m. Dec. 19, felony probation violation apprehension and detention arrest, held for court.

Nicole Bernal Torres, 21, arrested at 10:51 p.m. Dec. 19, warrants arrest, \$1,000 bail.

Aaron Robert Naleid, 44, arrested at 10:22 a.m. Dec. 21,

felony solicitation of a minor and distribution of pornography, held for court.

Percy Lee Lacey, 53, arrested at 10:38 p.m. Dec. 21, cancelled license, held for court.

Steele County Sheriff
Lawrence Lynn Hager, 44, arrested at 5:27 p.m. Dec. 18, probation warrant arrest, held for court.

Levi Jeffrey Westling, 24, arrested at 12:50 a.m. Dec. 19, violation of conditions of release and harassment restraining order violation, held for court.

Travis Wayne Jackson, 37, arrested at 10:58 a.m. Dec. 19, felony complaint warrant, \$10,000 bail.

Chris Joseph Oberle, 42, arrested at 4:57 p.m. Dec. 20, DWI, held for court.

Julie Ann Holmes, 34, arrested at 9:47 p.m. Dec. 21, warrant arrest, \$30,000 bail.

OWATONNA FIRE

Dec. 16
Camper Fire. At 11:03 a.m., fire fighters responded to a camper or recreational vehicle fire in the 2400 block of Austin Rd. SE.

Carbon Monoxide. A carbon monoxide incident occurred in the 2000 block of St. Paul Rd. NE at 4:12 p.m.

Dec. 17
Medical. Fire rescue assisted with a medical emergency in the 600 block of 24th St. NE at 8:30 p.m.

Dec. 18
Carbon Monoxide. Fire personnel responded to a carbon monoxide incident in the 2000 block of Diablo Dr. SE at 7 p.m.

Dec. 19
Public Service. Fire fighters assisted with a public service matter in the 600 block of Ashley Lane SE at 4:52 p.m.

Dec. 20
Leak. At 4:04 a.m., fire fighters responded to a water of steam leak in the 700 block of Vine St. NE.

Crash. Fire rescue responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries on Hoffman Dr. at 9:24 a.m.

Health jeopardized, Drew DeMars chooses life

By HOWARD LESTRUD
Staff Writer

With his physical health jeopardized, 53-year-old Drew DeMars of Medford shed his addiction to alcohol and framed a better future for himself and his family.

"Things were quite bleak two years ago; he almost died," said a tearful Brenda DeMars, Drew's wife, who appeared in Steele Waseca Drug Court (SWDC) on Wednesday, Dec. 28 to celebrate her husband's graduation from the Drug Court.

"You chose life and stuck with the program," remarked Dave Wright, director of the Dual Recovery Program and a SWDC mental health representative.

DeMars is the 14th graduate of the Steele Waseca Drug Court since it was implemented on July 1, 2014.

"I've met a lot of great people in this program; let's keep it up," DeMars said, pointing his remarks to the others in the program.

On Friday, Jan. 6, DeMars and his family will celebrate another milestone, two years of his sobriety.

DeMars' graduation was the highlight of the Drug Court session on this day at the Steele County Courthouse in Owatonna.

Third District Judge Joseph Bueltel presided over the day in court, emphasizing that the graduation was the "fun part"

of the day. Saluting DeMars' graduation, Judge Bueltel asked why he wasn't wearing a graduate's robe. Nicole Grams, coordinator of the Steele Waseca Drug Court, confessed that the robe was left in Waseca.

"We have to get you a robe," affirmed Judge Bueltel as he left the court room for his chambers. He soon returned with a judicial robe to be worn by DeMars.

Earlier, he had counseled 14 participants of the program. Judge Bueltel questioned each participant as to their progress in the program.

Planning for the Waseca Steele Drug Court began in 2013. The program is a response to a growing need in these two counties to work effectively with high risk and high needs adult offenders with optimal results.

Candidates for the program cannot have a disqualifying crime of violence. They must reside in Steele or Waseca counties and their addiction must be a contributor to their criminal behavior, explained coordinator Grams.

The Steele Waseca Drug Court has served a total of 88 participants with 31 choosing either to withdraw from the program or choosing to sit their time. They may also have been terminated from the program because of new criminal behavior or a rejection of services Grams told those in attendance at Wednesday's

court session.

The Steele Waseca Drug Court had its first graduation in April of 2016. Today, the program has 45 participants.

Grams outlined the program's structure, saying it is rigorous and contains four phases, a minimum of 18 months committed time.

The Drug Court requires court attendance ranging from weekly to monthly, contingent on each phase. Recovery hours include treatment, support meetings, mental health meetings, completion of cognitive skills programs that help change thinking, which in turn changes behaviors and recovery events ranging from nine hours weekly to three hours weekly.

Participants submit to a minimum of twice weekly random drug testing. All must complete treatment, make meaningful connections in the recovery community, obtain a valid driver's license, gain a GED/diploma, gain employment and be in compliance with child support and with payment of fines, fees and restitution prior to graduation.

"Drew is a testament that Drug Courts work," said Grams. "Drug Courts reduce crime, restore citizenship and save lives."

The combined total amount of sobriety among the group present Wednesday was 15,411 days, an estimated average of 42 years. Average

sobriety per participant is 342 days.

DeMars started the program on Jan. 7, 2015 and was in the program for 722 days. He was at risk of serving 365 days in jail and his health was in jeopardy, said Judge Bueltel.

During the duration of the program, DeMars attended 56 court hearings, totaled 482 recovery hours (exceeded) and took 192 tests (exceeded). He logged 722 sobriety days.

DeMars gained the benefit of the Drug Court and was able to maintain his employment. DeMars' employer, Joe Barna of Bio Wood Processing of Faribault was in the courtroom for DeMars' graduation. "He achieved an amazing feat, sticking with the program," Barna told the court. "I have seen him grow," he continued.

"Give a big shout-out too, for the employers because they help keep the participant clean and sober," said Judge Bueltel.

In an interview before the court graduation, both Drew and Brenda DeMars saluted Dave Wulf, former court services officer performing case management for the Drug Court. During the graduation, Wulf challenged DeMars to "keep up the good work and don't fall backwards."

"You had many challenges and you stand here saying, you can do it," commented Wright.

"I'm glad this program was here for you," stated

Steele County Attorney Dan McIntosh who says he has attended all of the graduations involving Steele County participants.

"You have helped us hopefully help other people into the future," McIntosh said.

Drug courts provide a different method of dealing with addiction, McIntosh commented.

SWDC participants appear before Judge Bueltel and develop a different kind of rapport with him, McIntosh said. Each participant keeps a journal of their rehabilitation and shares it with the judge.

Judge Bueltel presented DeMars with a plaque and a coin recognizing DeMars' accomplishment. The plaque reads: "Congratulations on your completion of the Steele Waseca Drug Court."

It also holds an engraving from former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis (served 1916-39) "Most of the things that were worth doing in the world were declared impossible before they were done."

Former Hennepin County Attorney, U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, DFL-Minnesota, sent a note of congratulations to DeMars.

"As a graduate of this Drug Court, you are the beneficiary of a community that has been willing to wrap its arms around you to help you succeed. You have had the support of

the judges, attorneys, law enforcement, treatment staff, court staff, probation officers, and of course your family and friends. Above all, however, today's graduation is about what you have accomplished on a personal level. It is a great thing, truly worth celebrating, when people succeed in altering their future by defeating their addictions and reclaiming their lives."

Drew's daughter Megan attended her father's graduation and said she was "very proud of him." He had entered liver failure and only had a few months left to live, Megan revealed. "His sobriety made him well and also made for a healthy family," she believes.

The Drug Court program serves Steele and Waseca counties and is funded by an annual State of Minnesota grant of \$70,000 and by a three-year Federal Bureau of Justice grant of \$360,000 or \$120,000 a year.

The first drug court in the United States took shape in Miami-Dade County, Florida in 1989 as a response to the growing crack cocaine problem plaguing the city. The court was designed for nonviolent offenders to receive treatment.

Judge Bueltel recognized the Blooming Prairie AAUW for donating to the program.

"ASK A TROOPER"

By SGT. CHRISTIANSON
MN State Patrol Sergeant

Question: Are people allowed to push their leftover snow out onto the highway for the snowplow to move it?

Answer: According to Minnesota State Statute 160.2715, "It shall be unlawful to obstruct any highway or deposit snow or ice thereon." This law prohibits the plowing, blowing, shoveling or otherwise placing of snow on to public roads, including the ditch and right-of-way along the roadway. Violations are considered misdemeanors, but civil penalties may also apply if the placement of snow creates a hazard, such as a slippery area or frozen rut or bump, that contributes to a motor vehicle or pedestrian crash. The civil liability may extend to both the property owner and the person who placed the snow.

You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and of course, drive sober. Help us drive Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths.

If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson — Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester, MN 55901-5848. (Or reach him at, Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us)

Sheriff's deputy, police officer read to the kids



Staff photo by Howard Lestrud

Dodge County Deputy Anna Peterson and Blooming Prairie Police Officer Dan Peach read two books on law enforcement to first graders at the Blooming Prairie Elementary School. Deputy Peterson read a book about Rita the police officer.

By HOWARD LESTRUD
Staff Writer

"Do you have time for another book?" Dodge County Deputy Sheriff Anna Peterson asked three classes of Blooming Prairie Elementary School first graders.

"Yes we do, we were just coloring," answered a first grader.

Students of Mrs. Natalie Sorensen, Mrs. Rachel Harberts and Mrs. Heather Schiller, graciously greeted two law enforcement officers to their classrooms to help in

reading them some books on law enforcement work.

Representing law enforcement were two former college law enforcement colleagues at Minnesota State University, Dan Peach and Anna Peterson. Peach is a police officer for the Blooming Prairie Police Department and Peterson is a sheriff's deputy in Dodge County.

Peach and Peterson met with 15 pre-schoolers, 60 first graders and 52 second graders.

In addition to learning more about police work through the textbook and through

the appearance of two police officers, the kids received pencils, erasers, rulers and candy canes.

"We are very fortunate to have law enforcement nearby at all times," said Chris Staloch, BP Elementary principal.

Peach said the elementary students positively welcomed him and Deputy Peterson to their school. "The kids had some good questions about our police belts and what we carry in them," said Peach.

Deputy Peterson also had

the opportunity to connect with her nephew, Eli Johnson, a first grader.

"We saw lots of smiles and the kids listened really well," Peach said with satisfaction following the visit with the youngsters. "Our aim is to keep the kids safe," Peach said.

Both Peach and Peterson said their bosses (BP Police Chief Greg Skillestad and Dodge County Sheriff Scott Rose) are very supportive of the police and sheriff's department talking public

safety with younger kids.

The student were particularly interested in the tasers the two officers carried on their belts. "We use it only to keep people safe," Peach said.

Peach and Peterson fielded many thoughtful questions from the students, for example, a student asked how many days in jail someone would get if caught taking something in a store. "They see a judge," Deputy Peterson said.



Submitted photo by Howard Lestrud

First graders at Blooming Prairie Elementary School take time to pose for a group photo with their teachers and with law enforcement representatives, Deputy Anna Peterson of Dodge County and Dan Peach of the Blooming Prairie Police Department.

Legal Notices

Foreclosure

16-105134
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 27, 2010
 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$167,638.00
 MORTGAGOR(S): John C. Ress, an unmarried man
 MORTGAGEE: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc.

TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc.

MIN#: 100039032239395920
 LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON THE MORTGAGE: Quicken Loans, Inc.

SERVICER: Nationstar Mortgage LLC

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot 4, Block 1, Radel's Francis Addition

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1030 Hemlock Ln, Owatonna, MN 55060

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 17-437-0104
 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele

THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$155,321.59

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 10, 2017, 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 August 10, 2017, or the next business day if August 10, 2017 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 15, 2016

Nationstar Mortgage LLC
 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,
 Suite 200
 Burnsville, MN 55337
 (952) 831-4060

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR

12/20,12/27,1/3
 1/10,1/17,1/24

Karen Duncan
 12-27-2016

JUDGE OF DISTRICT COURT
 DATED

Jason J. Iacovino
 P O Box 818; 415 E. Main Street
 Blooming Prairie MN 55917
 Telephone Number: 507-583-6663
 Attorney Registration Number:
 0386770

1/3, 1/10

Assumed Name

OFFICE OF THE MINNESOTA SECRETARY OF STATE

ASSUMED NAME I CERTIFICATE OF ASSUMED NAME

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333

The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable consumers to be able to identify the true owner of a business.

ASSUMED NAME:
All-Season Storage of Owatonna

PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS:
353 Pearl Street Owatonna MN 55060 USA

NAMEHOLDER(S):

Name:
JD Mini Storage of Owatonna, LLC

Address:
343 Pearl Street Owatonna MINNESOTA (MN) 55060 USA

If you submit an attachment, it will be incorporated into this document. If the attachment conflicts with the information specifically set forth in this document, this document supercedes the data referenced in the attachment.

By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

SIGNED BY: **James A. Atkinson**

MAILING ADDRESS:
None Provided

EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES:
jimatkinson58@gmail.com

12/27,1/3, 1/10

Probate

STATE OF MINNESOTA

DISTRICT COURT
 THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
 PROBATE COURT DIVISION

COUNTY OF STEELE

Court File No. 74-PR-16-2570

ORDER AND NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR ADJUDICATION OF INTESTACY DETERMINATION OF HEIRSHIP AND APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE IN UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate of
Irma Wradislavsky, Decedent

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND CREDITORS:

It is Ordered and Notice is hereby given that on the 23rd day of January, 2017.

At 10:45 a.m., a hearing will be held in the above named Court at Owatonna, Minnesota, for the adjudication of intestacy and determination of heirship and for the appointment of David V. Wradislavsky whose address is 14579 89th Ave. SE, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917 as personal representative of the estate of the above named decedent in unsupervised administration, and any objection thereto must be filed with the Court. That, if proper, and no objections are filed, said personal representative will be appointed to administer the estate, to collect all assets, pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, and sell real and personal property, and do all necessary acts for the estate. Upon completion of the administration, the representative shall file a statement to close the estate and shall distribute the estate to the persons thereunto entitled as ordered by the Court.

Notice is further given that ALL CREDITORS having claims against said estate are required to present the same to said personal representative or to the Court Administrator within four months after the date of this notice or said claims will be barred.

Karen Duncan
 12-27-2016

JUDGE OF DISTRICT COURT
 DATED

Jason J. Iacovino
 P O Box 818; 415 E. Main Street
 Blooming Prairie MN 55917
 Telephone Number: 507-583-6663
 Attorney Registration Number:
 0386770

1/3, 1/10

Steele County

Steele County Commissioner's Synopsis for 12/13/2016
 Complete minutes can be viewed on the Steele County Website.

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

- Huntington/Brady to approve the agenda. Ayes all.
- Huntington/Schultz to approve the consent agenda items. Ayes all.

- Approve the Minutes of November 29, 2016.
- Approve the Listing of Bills.
- Approve Personnel Report.
- Approve a one-year renewal of Pictometry Connect subscription in the amount of \$1,500.
- Approve 2017 Contract with Roger Krause to provide GED services to inmates at Detention Center.
- Approve Child Support IV-D Contract with MNPrairie/Steele County Offices of Human Services, County Sheriff and County Attorney.
- Approve 2-year renewal contract with Interstate PowerSystems for generator inspections, maintenance and scheduled battery replacement on emergency generator.
- Approve authorization to advertise for Highway Department seasonal materials of aggregate and plant mixed bituminous materials and set the bid opening date for January 27, 2017 at 11:30 in the County Boardroom.
- Approve 2017 Highway Equipment Investments for a Chassis for two Tandem axle plow trucks in the amount of \$195,979.17 from Nuss Truck & Equipment and the purchase of box and snow equipment for two Tandem axle plow trucks in the amount of \$222,392.04 from Crysteel Truck Equipment.
- Accept Traffic Signal Agreement Update.
- Accept Public Works Building Summary.
- Accept Public Safety Committee Minutes.
- Accept the Land Use and Records Minutes.
- Accept Internal Central Services Minutes.
- Accept Probation Dashboard.

- Brady/Huntington to authorize the Chairman to sign bills on December 23, 2016. Ayes all.
- Schultz/Glynn to approve the Body Art Establishment licenses for Thee Dragons Lair and Kats Tats. Ayes all.
- Huntington/Glynn to approve the Law Library fees for the period of July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 as set by the Law Library Board of Trustees. Ayes all.
- Huntington/Glynn offered a Resolution to authorize appropriated 2017 Petty Cash Funds to various Departments as custodians of these funds. Upon the vote being taken, 5 Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.
- Huntington/Brady to approve the recruitment of a financial analyst position in the Finance Department. Ayes all.
- Brady/Schultz to approve filling the vacant Arena/Park & Recreation Maintenance position in the Four Seasons Department. Ayes all.
- Huntington/Glynn to approve the recruitment of an additional full-time Human Resource Assistant position in the Human Resources Department. Ayes all.
- Glynn/Schultz to approve the recruitment of an Assistant Director position in the Probation Services Department. Ayes all.
- Brady/Glynn to approve the recruitment of a Case Manager position in the Public Health Nursing Department. Ayes all.
- Brady/Glynn to approve increasing the work hours from three-quarter time to full-time for a Juvenile Agent and an Adult Probation Agent in the Probation Services Department. Ayes all.
- Schultz/Huntington to approve the request to fill the Training & Compliance Officer position and a Jail Program Coordinator position at the Detention Center. Ayes all.
- Brady/Glynn offered a Resolution to set Commissioner salaries at \$21,886 per year and per diem payments at \$70 per day effective 2017. Upon the vote being taken, 4 Commissioners voted in favor thereof, Commissioner Schultz voting against. A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.
- Huntington/Brady to Adopt the 2016-2017 Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan. Ayes all.
- Glynn/Schultz to approve the purchase of Zuercher Civil Process Technologies software for the Sheriff's Department in the amount of \$13,185 which includes maintenance and support for one year and \$1,500 maintenance and support fee for the 2nd year. Ayes all.
- Glynn/Schultz to direct staff to begin the process for potential acquisition of property from Ivan and Rosemary Snorek located at 2805 County Road 45 South. Ayes all.
- Brady/Glynn to approve the replacement of the furnace and water heater at the Hope School House with the low estimate of \$1,002.56 from Stoykes Plumbing for the water heater and KSW Roofing and Heating estimate of \$1,975 for the furnace. Ayes all.
- Schultz/Glynn to approve reimbursement of the total storm water management fees for the Fairgrounds property to the Agricultural Society for 2016 only. Ayes all.
- Glynn/Huntington approve the Commercial Lease for the storage of vehicles and equipment and authorize the County Administrator to sign the bi-annual lease between the Sheriff's Office and Edwin Strohschein. The lease shall commence on January 1, 2017 and terminate on December 31, 2018. Ayes all.
- Huntington/Brady to adopt the Procurement and Contracting Standards policy subject to approval from Steele County's outside auditors. Ayes all.
- Glynn/Brady to approve the request from Veteran Services to carry over van donations in the amount of \$2,340 into the 2017 Budget year. Ayes all.
- Glynn/Schultz to approve the six-month extension to make a decision on the SCLL forbearance Agreement. Ayes all.
- Public Hearing and Presentation of the 2017 Budget and Tax Levy was called to order at 6:00 p.m.
- County Treasurer, Cathy Piepho and Administrator, Laura Elvabak reviewed and presented the 2017 Budget and Tax Levy.
- The hearing was then open to questions from those in attendance.
- Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Brady to close the hearing at 6:25 p.m. Ayes all.
- Huntington/Brady offered a Resolution to approve the 2017 tax levy totaling \$22,908,881. Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.

Approval of Minutes of December Regular City Council Meeting

Financial Report

Committee/Commission Reports
 B.P. Public Utilities

- E.D.A.
- B.P. Planning & Zoning
- B.P. Fire Commission
- B.P. Ambulance Commission
- B.P. Police Commission

Business

- Official Appointments, Official Depository and Official Newspaper
- Review Expense Reimbursement and Mileage Rate
- Review Fee Schedules
- Summary of Closed Session
- Accept Donation – Claremont Area Chamber of Commerce
- Mayor & Council Members Workers Compensation Insurance Coverage
- Pay Equity Compliance Report
- 2017 Board of Appeal & Equalization Meeting Date

City Administrator's Report

- Possible Transfer of Streets
- Three-year Revenue Average
- Ice Rink
- Building Purchase & Demolition

City Attorney's Report

Council Members' Reports

Adjourn

This Agenda is Subject to Change

1/3

BP City

Proposed
 City of Blooming Prairie
 City Council Meeting Agenda
 January 9, 2017
 7:00 P.M.

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes of December Regular City Council Meeting

Financial Report

Committee/Commission Reports
 B.P. Public Utilities

- E.D.A.
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BP School

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
 INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
 DISTRICT #756
 BLOOMING PRAIRIE,
 MINNESOTA 55917

MONDAY, JANUARY 17, 2017
 HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER

PROPOSED TENTATIVE AGENDA

6:00 a.m.
 Thursday, January 12, 2017
 Regular School Board Work Session-High School Board Room

5:00 p.m.
 Tuesday, January 17, 2017
 Open Public Forum-High School Media Center

5:15 p.m.
 Tuesday, January 17, 2017
 Regular School Board Meeting-High School Media Center

Any person may raise a question to the School Board. The Board will not act on any item presented to them, which is not on the agenda, until the following Board meeting. Also, the Board would like persons to limit themselves to five minutes, with a maximum of 15 minutes per topic. These limitations are needed for us to run a timely and orderly Board meeting. Persons are requested to identify themselves prior to speaking.

I. CALL TO ORDER – CHAIRPERSON

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL – CLERK

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

V. PRINCIPAL REPORTS

VI. ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTION IS REQUESTED

- Rotation of School Board Officers
- School Board Committee Assignments
- Consent Agenda

LISTING OF BILLS
 12/13/2016

30th Place LLC	17,776.53
A'viands, LLC	8,670.95
AMCON	5,415.50
CDW Government Inc	2,030.36
Computer Professionals Unlimited Inc	4,469.72
Crop Production Services Inc	9,725.11
Davidson Septic Service LLC.	2,336.50
Election Systems & Software Inc	7,441.19
Erosion Control Inc	2,078.50
Four Seasons Centre	3,918.75
Hosfield/John C	3,204.00
ntegra Telecom	2,965.38
Kronos Inc	4,680.00
Owatonna Eagles	2,053.09
Owatonna Public Utilities	15,468.99
R&K Electric Inc	7,424.98
Riverland Comm College Austin	2,000.00
Rochester Sand & Gravel	2,788.75
Rocon Inc	6,561.00
Seating & Athletic Facility Enterprise	203,059.00
SHI International Corp	53,414.00
Steele County Central Service	3,410.43
Steele County Revenue	7,551.83
Vanguard Appraisals Inc	16,910.00
182 Warrants under \$2,000	67,596.64

Total: \$462,951.20

Huntington, seconded by Commissioner Glynn to adjourn to the Call of the Chair at 6:34 p.m. Ayes all.

1/3

BP City

Proposed
 City of Blooming Prairie
 City Council Meeting Agenda
 January 9, 2017
 7:00 P.M.

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes of December Regular City Council Meeting

Financial Report

Committee/Commission Reports
 B.P. Public Utilities

- E.D.A.
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- B.P. Police Commission

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City Administrator's Report

- Possible Transfer of Streets
- Three-year Revenue Average
- Ice Rink
- Building Purchase & Demolition

City Attorney's Report

Council Members' Reports

Adjourn

This Agenda is Subject to Change

1/3

BP School

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
 INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
 DISTRICT #756
 BLOOMING PRAIRIE,
 MINNESOTA 55917

MONDAY, JANUARY 17, 2017
 HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER

PROPOSED TENTATIVE AGENDA

6:00 a.m.
 Thursday, January 12, 2017
 Regular School Board Work Session-High School Board Room

5:00 p.m.
 Tuesday, January 17, 2017
 Open Public Forum-High School Media Center

5:15 p.m.
 Tuesday, January 17, 2017
 Regular School Board Meeting-High School Media Center

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I. CALL TO ORDER – CHAIRPERSON

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL – CLERK

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

V. PRINCIPAL REPORTS

VI. ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTION IS REQUESTED

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Crop Production Services Inc	9,725.11
Davidson Septic Service LLC.	2,336.50
Election Systems & Software Inc	7,441.19
Erosion Control Inc	2,078.50
Four Seasons Centre	3,918.75
Hosfield/John C	3,204.00
ntegra Telecom	2,965.38
Kronos Inc	4,680.00
Owatonna Eagles	2,053.09
Owatonna Public Utilities	15,468.99
R&K Electric Inc	7,424.98
Riverland Comm College Austin	2,000.00
Rochester Sand & Gravel	2,788.75
Rocon Inc	6,561.00
Seating & Athletic Facility Enterprise	203,059.0

It could only happen to me

LITTLE THOUGHTS ON THE PRAIRIE



MARK DELAP

Continuing on with the further adventures of my life here in Minnesota, I have a very humorous story to share as this year comes to a close. If I don't tell it, I know my wife would, so I may as well expose myself.

It has been a wonderful week here in my hometown, and I am thanking God again because He takes care of fools and preacher's kids. My dad wasn't in the ministry, so that kind of narrows the category.

My wife and I are kind of health conscious and between us, we take many vitamins and supplements. There are also a few prescribed medicines in our cabinet. It is a regular morning ritual for us to stand around the water cooler discussing the plan o' the day and pop down a few hundred pills.

Everything from cinnamon to lecithin. Stumbling out of bed in the morning can sometimes find us in a less than 100 percent conscious state. On a good day, all the

pills are ingested, but at times, I seem to miss my mouth and one stray falls to the floor and the search in the morning Minnesota darkness begins.

Sometimes I find it. Sometimes I find it days later and wonder which one it was. A few weeks back, on a Saturday, I had a full day planned. A million things to do and only a day to do it. I planned on eating one of my wife's delicious omelets before heading to Wal-Mart for supplies.

In a rush, and with many things on my mind, I went to our closet stash of health and vitality. It came to my attention that there in the corner on the floor of the closet was a little round white pill. I assumed it was a probiotic. Perhaps I had dropped it a day before. Perhaps it fell under the "five-day rule" and I could not waste a perfectly good pill.

Editor's note: These pills are about a half a penny a piece, I thought I learned my lesson about assuming, and I fear that I am transgressing to the mentality of a 2-year-old who sees things on the floor and puts them in his mouth. I'm just sayin'.

Anyway, I ate my delicious Saturday breakfast, jumped in the car and headed to the Wal-Mart. Yeah, I call it "the" Wal-Mart after spending too much time in the south. About halfway there I realized that the temperature in the car was a bit warm and I was growing very sleepy. I felt like the lion on his way to Oz and fell prey to the Poppies.

All of a sudden, it hit me. I was rational enough to be screaming at myself that "the pill" was not a probiotic, but perhaps was one of my wife's prescription sleeping pills. Kind of prescription. It is more like tryptophan on steroids or equal to eating ten turkeys. I rolled the windows down to no avail and suddenly I felt very much like David Chong in the movie "Up in Smoke."

I pushed through. How bad could it be? I got to the Wal-Mart safely and got out of my car and immediately had the euphoric sense that I was going to fall. I got back in my car and sat there for a while, slapping my face and talking to myself.

It must have been a sight for people observing the behavior. I finally pulled up my boot straps and pressed on. I put water softening salt into my cart, and then realized that I was too weak to push the cart with that much weight, so I left it in the pharmacy where I was supposed to get some 24-hour Claritin-D for allergies.

I went and got light bulbs, bread, VELCRO, six or seven family size boxes of Oreos due to an all-too-sudden horrendous munchie attack, a flashlight, a few other sundries and meandered back to the cart. I was getting a bit agitated with people and it seemed like they were all staring at me. Perhaps it was because I bought the VELCRO for no apparent reason, or it could have been the buying in bulk of Oreo cookies.

So. Here I was, pretty

much drugged out, slurring my words and getting more nauseous with each step. Steps that felt like my shoestrings were tied together and I was shuffling. I stood at the pharmacy and of course with this type of medication, you need to present a photo ID. My driver's license was punched full of holes rendering it null and void since I was still awaiting my permanent Minnesota license.

I stood there pulling out credit cards, my temporary license, my astronaut application, my receipt from the previous night's dinner when the pharmacist rescued me and told me the license would be fine. Now, I know my speech was impaired, my pupils were dilated, and I was leaning hard on the counter.

Remember I told you how this certain medication needs ID due to the meth-abusers? I must have been a sight and probably a suspect. Halfway through the transaction and just before me sliding my credit card, I informed the woman that I had to sit down. I left her holding the box of Claritin and went to the metal Wal-Mart bench where I sat down and then curled up in the fetal position trying to talk myself out of needing a barf bag.

About 10 minutes later, I felt a small wave of strength, jumped on and surfed up to the counter. I finished my transaction and went back to my cart which I suddenly realized was going to stay there and I wasn't going to

Crossword solution

			R	A	B	I		A	P	P	L	E			
S	C	O	P	E	S			S	E	E	I	N	G		
T	H	E	O	L	O	G	I	C	A	L		R	O		
B	A	I				B	A	D		K	A	R	A	T	
A	B	C			T	A	B	E	S		C	E	D	I	
G	S	A			S	I	R		S	A	T		G	A	O
			G	E	A	N				C	O	M	E	T	S
A	C	O	R	N						R	A	N	E	E	
S	A	C	R	A	L					S	A	T	E		
T	H	U		A	A	R			R	A	H		R	A	D
H	O	B	S		C	A	S	E	D				A	C	E
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				B	I	S	E	S			S	F	A	X	

make it through a line in a checkout.

I went to the car and dialed the phone three times before connecting successfully with my wife. The conversation went something like this... "Honey did you drop one of your sleeping pills on the floor last night cause I think I found it on the floor, and may have in fact picked it up and swallowed it thinking it was a probiotic and I can't see to drive or stay awake and can you come pick me up and I am in the car in the parking lot near the exit no wait I am in the isle between the "m" and the "a" on the Wal-Mart sign."

I guess from my wife's account it was somewhat different from what I remember and came out something like, "COME GET ME." Which was accompanied by great

angst and perhaps tears.

So, it was Seth and Robin to the rescue and I slept most of the way home and most of the afternoon. My million things didn't get done and I ruined a perfectly good Saturday because I couldn't let a perfectly good pill in the corner of the perfectly good closet floor go to waste.

What have I learned other than the fact that I may, in fact, be a qualified candidate for assisted living? Upon further reflection, I give thanks for a God who does indeed take care of fools and preacher's kids, for an understanding (although mocking) wife and son and I mustn't eat things off the floor.

It could only happen to me. Thank you all for a great year and for supporting me and my family here in Minnesota. As always, be careful out there.

"We are representing Blooming Prairie"

By HOWARD LESTRUD
Staff Writer

Once a month, Diane Pfeiffer takes her second grade class to the Prairie Manor Care Center to read to residents and share other activities with them.

On a recent Wednesday afternoon, Mrs. Pfeiffer's students walked the two blocks from the school to the health care center.

The kids' mission is to commit random acts of kindness and build their community, says Mrs. Pfeiffer, an elementary

teacher for 27 years.

Mrs. Pfeiffer has been bringing her students to Prairie Manor the past six years.

"Recently, the kids couldn't come to Prairie Manor because of the frigid weather and they were sure disappointed," said Pfeiffer.

In addition to reading to the residents, the students plan to decorate cookies in February for Valentine's Day. Next March, the kids will play Bingo with the residents. It's back to reading in April and in May the residents come to

the elementary school to see the kids act out a play.

"Our teacher says we are representing Blooming Prairie," says Evan Westphal, 7 1/2. "The older people listen much better than do the younger kids," chimed in Jasper Doocy, 8.

Jasper read "The Elf on the Shelf -- A Christmas Tradition. "Once, the elf stayed at my house for a full year," Jasper said.

Evan read "Muddy Paws First Christmas."

Following their readings to the residents, the students displayed

some of their artwork which also contained poems on the back. On this day, the students did an ABC about Christmas.

Jasper wrote: "D is for Dancer. Dancer Reindeer dances in the sky on christmas Day, he dances on by."

Lacy Haberman wrote: "L is for lights. The lights in the tree bring great joy but be careful as they are not a toy."

Blooming Prairie robotics team sets aim on new season

By HOWARD LESTRUD
Staff Writer

Setting sights on a new season of robotics competition, the Blooming Prairie High School robotics team is organizing a fundraising campaign.

The BPHS robotics team is newly named The Wrench Warmers

"We are eager to fundraise in order to build our robot for this year's competition," said team coach Sarah Oelkers, life science teacher at BPHS.

The fundraising campaign will also enable the BPHS team to compete in annual regional competition in Duluth and it also will help sustain the robotics program for future years.

There are many ways in which the public can help the local robotics program, says Oelkers. "Any donation, large or small, will help contribute to the success and experiences the students can have.

FIRST Robotics is a program that challenges high school students to design, build and program a robot in six weeks each year to overcome a new game challenge. Oelkers says having a new game each year forces students to use their creativity and innovative skills to overcome new challenges.

This year's build season begins on Jan. 7, 2017.

Robotics also allows students to learn real-world skills in engineering, programming, mechanics, graphic design, business leadership and much more. Oelkers says the experience students gain from FIRST Robotics "is priceless because

we are creating the future citizens of our communities."

Visit the FIRST inspires website to learn how the program impacts students to become successful adults.

As a rookie team last year, the BPHS robotics squad ranked 27 in a field of 63 teams at the Lake Superior Regional Competition in Duluth, MN and 69th of 208 teams in the state. "We are looking forward to continuing our success to make our small town proud, but we need help in doing so," Oelkers said.

How can someone help? Donations can be made in many ways: financial donations, in-kind donations or a donation of time and skills. "We are always looking for adults to show our students STEM skills," Oelkers said.

Funds will be used in the following ways:
1) Buying parts to make this year's robot
2) Purchasing team uniforms
3) Travel costs to regional competition in Duluth (food, hotel and busing for three-night stay)
4) Tools and organizational equipment
5) Financially sustaining the program for future years
6) Potential travel costs to world competition

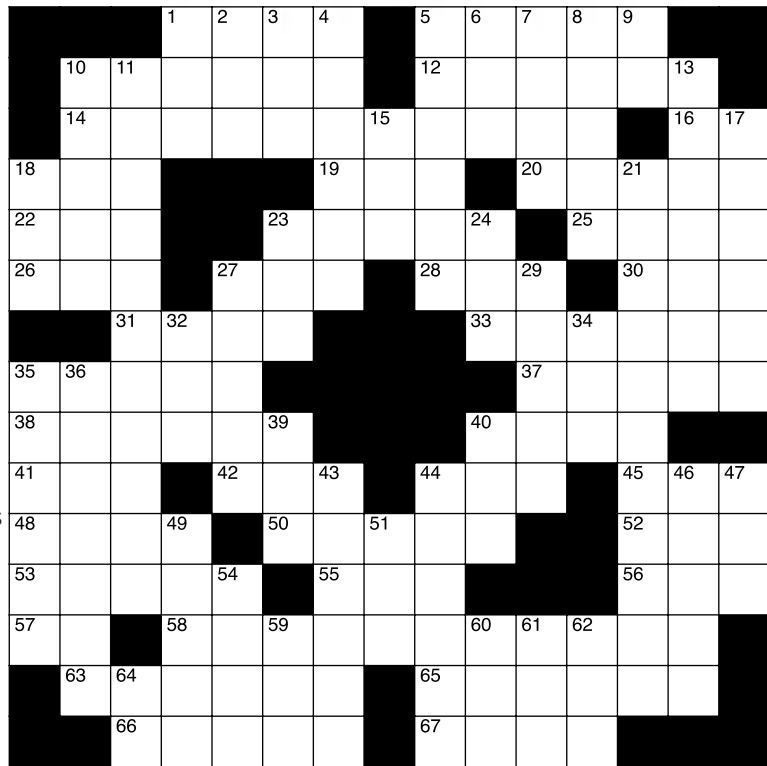
Donations can be made in many different monetary categories, starting at \$2 for nuts and bolts and advancing to \$400 for toolbox/cart. Any donation above \$500 gets the donor's name on the team t-shirts.

For more information, or to make a donation, contact Sarah Oelkers at 507-583-4426, ext. 439

WEEKLY CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

- Isodor __, American Nobel physicist
- One a day keeps the doctor away
- Extents
- Noticing
- Scriptural
- Star Trek character Laren
- "The Crow" actress __ Ling
- Not good
- Measures gold
- TV network
- Wasting
- Money in Ghana
- Young girls' association
- Title of respect
- High schoolers take this test
- Crunches federal numbers
- Wild or sweet cherry
- Celestial bodies
- Fruit of the oak tree
- Royal Navy ship during WWII
- Of cherished symbols
- Satisfy
- 5th. day (abbr.)
- Swiss river
- Royal Albert Hall (abbr.)
- Cool!
- Flat metal shelves
- Enclosed
- A way to pass
- City in Iraq



- Printing speed measurement
- Twitch
- Indicates position
- Made lawful
- Took down
- A way to travel on skis
- North winds
- Tunisian metropolis

CLUES DOWN

- Seafood
- Incan god of mountains
- Ritz LA neighborhood
- Air
- Line that connect points of equal pressure
- Audience-only remarks

- Chest muscle (slang)
- Pointed top
- Lavender
- Linear unit
- Knives
- 2016 World Series champs
- A way to arrange
- Talk
- Serving no purpose
- Container
- Breathes new life into
- Beloved dog Rin Tin __
- A bag-like structure in a plant or animal
- Yemen capital
- Sacred book of Judaism
- Make a mistake
- Wrestlers wrestle here
- Respiratory issue
- In league
- Resinous insect secretion
- Unhappy
- Turbulent area of a river
- Neglectful
- Sours
- Calendar month (abbr.)
- Grooves
- Sony Pictures Television
- Monetary units
- Command right
- 1,000 cubic feet
- Expression of triumph
- Dinner jacket
- The first two

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Keys found in front of 121 W Main St. Kasson Call 634-7503 to identify. 52tfc

MISCELLANEOUS

My heartfelt thanks to all who braved the frigid temperatures and all who sent cards for my 90th birthday. Thanks for all the beautiful cards, etc. It was a memorable day for me. Thanks also to my children and families for hosting the occasion. God's belessings to all of you. Elsie Abel 3p

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PANTHER OF THE WEEK



Brooks Gilliland is NRHEG's Panther of the Week. He is the son of Aaron and Lisa Gilliland of Hartland. Brooks was chosen as the student of the week by his 2nd grade teacher, Mr. Beynon, because he is very responsible and respectful! He shows great curiosity and participation during class. He is very friendly to all his classmates, and constantly displays a positive attitude even when things don't go his way. Mostly though, his teacher is impressed with his dedication and never give up attitude. Brooks loves RTI math and the Vikings. His favorite kinds of books are football books, his favorite movie is The Sandlot, and his favorite food is a steak burrito. Great job Brooks, keep up the good work.

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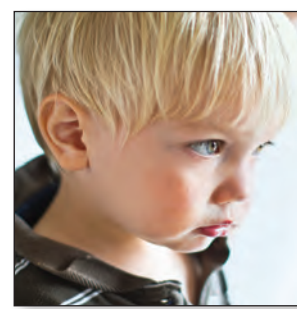
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Sometimes children don't seem to care. It's not uncommon for some children, especially those under age 5 to show



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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Cancer Corner
Support the fighters Admire the survivors, Honor the taken.

Talk therapy can help

Receiving a cancer diagnosis can be a profound experience that often changes the course of people's lives. Individuals react to cancer diagnoses in various ways, with some retreating into themselves and others sharing their stories to garner as much strength as they can muster. A strong support system can help men and women navigate the ups and downs of a cancer diagnosis and subsequent treatments. While many people lean on friends and family members for support, therapists also can help patients as they battle cancer. Licensed therapists can help treat many of the mental side effects that often accompany a cancer diagnosis. Japanese researchers who reviewed the results of six studies that included 517 patients with incurable cancer and depression found that talk therapy was shown to help treat depression symptoms nearly as well as antidepressant medications. Depression is not the only reason a cancer patient may want to speak with a therapist. Cancer also can bring rise to many issues that may be better addressed in a private, judgement-free zone. According to the American Cancer Society, some additional reasons to seek professional support can include:

- trouble adjusting to the illness
- feelings of social or familial isolation
- family conflicts
- concerns about quality of life
- changes in perceptions of body image
- feelings of grief
- trouble communicating

In addition to addressing these issues, which are commonly referred to as psychosocial problems, therapists can work with individuals and families in other areas. Therapists can help their patients find community resources where they can connect with others experiencing similar situations. And therapists can help patients learn about the various ways they can educate themselves about their disease. Some therapists may specialize in offering support, while others may focus on cognitive-behavioral therapy in relation to cancer-induced anxieties. Cancer patients have many options when the time comes to choose a counselor. Ask your cancer team to provide references or use the American Psychosocial Oncology Society (www.apos-society.org).

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