



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

It was a solemn ceremony as folks honored fallen veterans on Memorial Day. Daniel Nydegger, a junior at New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School, plays Taps at ceremonies performed by the Ellendale Honor Guard. Services around the area were either limited or canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both Ellendale and Blooming Prairie chose to hold smaller services than normal. See page A12 for a story and more photos on Memorial Day.

INMATES DOWN

The jail population at the Steele County Detention Center has dropped about half.

CHURCHES REOPEN

Some churches have reopened after being shut down for a few months.

JUMPSTART OWATONNA

Leaders are trying to jumpstart small business in Owatonna.

NO COUNTY FAIR

The Steele County Free Fair is canceled for 2020.

Virus shutter's state's largest county fair

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

While the Steele County Fair Board held on to the hope of hosting a fair for the 2020 year as long as they could, circumstances beyond their control have resulted in the necessary decision to cancel this year's event.

During a special meeting held May 27, the fair board and local leaders discussed the

options, and issues, as they relate to a possible 2020 fair. After hearing opinions and information from those in attendance, the board voted to cancel this year's fair in the hope of coming back stronger next year.

"When this whole situation began, I think it was our intention that come June and certainly by the Fourth of July everything was going to be back open and good to go," President

Dan Deml said in his opening remarks. "As time has gone on, it has become more painfully obvious that that probably wasn't going to be the situation."

As the days slowly wound down towards this decision, the board of directors tried to imagine how they might face difficulties such as meeting social distancing guidelines, and disinfecting surfaces. In the end, there were

too many problems at play, and the health and safety of the attendees was too big of an issue to push for this year's event.

Other fairs across the state have also been canceled, including the State Fair. "Before I walked over here, we've lost 42 fairs in the State of Minnesota," Fair Manager Scott Kozelka said as he introduced some of the local community and government

leaders in attendance.

"What I wanted to do by having this special meeting is get it out there, talk about it, let some of our leaders that are in the room talk about what's going on," he explained. "Right now, as you know, if it were today, we couldn't go with only 10 people allowed on the fairgrounds."

Owatonna Chamber President Brad Meier gave some input on the

economic aspects of the decision. "The fair's a big deal for our economy in the Owatonna area," he said. "It's our biggest tourism draw every year with over 300,000 people."

"The trend we've been seeing is that every event has been postponing or pushing out a year," Meier said. "It looks like under the

SEE VIRUS SHUTTERS, A17

Specialty beer in honor of a world hall of famer

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER



STAFF PHOTO BY SHERRIE PECHAN

World-renowned concertina player Luverne Wanous of Owatonna shows off a beer that has been crafted in his name at Mineral Springs Brewery in Owatonna.

In heaven there is no beer, that's why we drink it here.

And for a long-time Owatonna musician, he has a special reason to drink a little extra beer. World-renowned concertina player Luverne Wanous is celebrating his very own beer compliments of Mineral Springs Brewery of Owatonna.

MSB's first pilsner is crafted as a tribute to Luverne's legacy. The craft beer features several grains, including Pilsner, 2 row, Vienna and CaraPils, Lager yeast and Saaz hops. "We're confident it hits all the right notes," MSB says.

Wanous has entertained fans all over the world with his concertina since 1952. Last year, he was inducted into the World Concertina Congress Hall of Fame. He is the first inductee ever from Steele County. At 84 years old, he continues to entertain folks with his old-time music, though the coronavirus pandemic has slowed his performances over the past few months.

SEE SPECIALTY BEER, A17

COVID delays Riess murder case

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER



Lois Riess

The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the Minnesota court case involving a notorious killer from Blooming Prairie currently locked up in a Florida jail for another murder.

Lois Riess was scheduled to come back to Minnesota this spring to face first-degree murder charges for allegedly killing her husband in March 2018 inside their rural Blooming Prairie home. However, everything is currently on hold, according to Dodge County Sheriff Scott Rose.

"All the paperwork is signed to bring her back (to Minnesota)," Rose said. "It's just a matter of when we can do that in a safe manner."

Since the coronavirus outbreak began in mid-March, Minnesota courts have not been

holding in-person court proceedings, Rose said. "This is delayed until the courts decide we are going to have court again," he said.

Besides courts being on hold with in-person hearings, Rose said the other factor in not bringing Riess back to Minnesota has been transportation. "We don't want our staff flying to Florida in the COVID-19," he said.

Rose speculated it would be mid-June at the earliest before courts reopen for "limited court."

The sheriff said it's still unclear where Riess will be locked up and

SEE COVID DELAYS, A5

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AREA DEATHS

Shirley Kubat, 85, Owatonna
Ernest Betlach, 96, BP

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OUR VIEW

State leaders failed Minnesota

For days, Minnesotans watched in horror how the actions of a few police officers spiraled out of control into riots, protests and all-out mayhem on the streets of the Twin Cities as well as other parts of the country. The effect was even felt on the local level as at least one large retailer closed for the weekend in Owatonna.

Here's what happened for the historical record: A Minneapolis cop kneels on the neck of a prone, handcuffed suspect who pleads with officers, "Please, I can't breathe." The suspect dies. The event is captured on video and the city erupts into violence and civil unrest.

The actions of the Minneapolis Police officers involved in the death of George Floyd are indescribable and appear to be unjustified by all levels of humanity. This will play out in a courtroom at a later time.

But for now we need to focus on local and state leaders handled the chaos. The inability of leadership on both levels caused significant damage throughout Minnesota's largest city and elsewhere. The worst came late Thursday when protestors took over the city's Third Precinct headquarters as well as widespread looting and arson fires that set the city ablaze.

It's interesting how Gov. Tim Walz immediately faulted Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey for not requesting help from the state sooner. Walz called the city's response "abject failure."

We would like to know why the governor didn't step in sooner to lend his support to Minneapolis and take control of a situation that was clearly beyond control for a local municipality to handle on its own.

This was a systematic failure on both levels of government—first the city followed quickly by the state.

"Above all else, this is a failure in leadership, and that leadership rests on Gov. Walz's shoulders. The governor cannot blame the mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul," said GOP Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka. He said Walz should have called in the National Guard right away and a couple thousand guard members should have been activated, instead of hundreds.

Gazelka went on to say, "It was obvious that the Minneapolis mayor was in over his head. And I think that's where the governor needed to respond with emergency powers."

In the coming weeks and months, Minnesota lawmakers need to hold the governor accountable for his lack of leadership with the worst civil unrest to ever take place in the state. There is no doubt in our mind that a quicker and more calculated response would have spared the state from some of the destruction that has taken place.

We certainly expect more out of our elected officials than what they displayed at least in the early stages of the chaotic situation that unfolded last week. Fortunately, by Friday, nearly four days after the mayhem began, the governor and other state leaders showed signs of having things under control.

State leaders failed Minnesota. Minnesotans deserve better so that we can avoid similar events in the future. We hope to never see a week like last week ever again on Minnesota soil.

YOUR VIEW

Appreciative of story on 100-year-old mom

To-the-Editor:
I read Howard Lestrud's article about my mom, Eleanor Harms. The article is excellent.
When I called her she explained that they

quarantine everything that comes to Prairie Manor. She said that most people have seen it but not her. Still spunky at 100, she also said if she likes it, she will get a copy for each of us. If

she doesn't, we'll never see it. I'm sure she will love it.
Thanks so very much.
Dan Harms
Deer River

GUEST COLUMN

BPHS Class of 2020 demonstrates unity and togetherness

Editor's Note: Here is a complete text of Blooming Prairie Superintendent Chris Staloch's commencement speech given at graduation on Sunday.

BY CHRIS STALOCH

As Superintendent of Blooming Prairie Public Schools, it is my honor to stand in front of you today at the graduation of this wonderful group of young women and men.

Congratulations Class of 2020 you are at the end of your Pre-K-12 educational experience and what an end it has been.

As seniors you have lived through one of the most unique times in the history of the United States. Never before has any senior class experienced the ups and downs that you have in one year.

The 2019-2020 school year started off with the Awesome Blossom football team, led by Coach Gimbel (Chad), his staff,

and so many of you senior leaders bringing home the Class A state football championship.

All of Blooming Prairie was celebrating one of the greatest accomplishments in BP sports history, if not the greatest. Girls Basketball went to the section finals, Boy Basketball – section champs, state champs (maybe), who knows, we did win our last game, Colton Krell state wrestling champ, Dylan Nirk – 4th place, robotics had a top finish in their competition.

We couldn't be more proud of your success and your leadership in athletics and extra-curriculars.

That success didn't stop there, it was evident in the classroom and beyond. As a class your GPA was over 3.1. Your success as individuals and as a class are outstanding. You are truly Awesome Blossoms.

As seniors you experienced a world-wide pandemic. I don't need to tell you all the things

that you missed out on as seniors, you know all too well, but I hope that you understand that your sacrifices were for a bigger cause, you sacrificed many things for the health of others. This is another representation of your leadership and the legacy that you will leave behind.

One of the common messages during this pandemic has been a message of "Hope." Hope for our well-being, hope for a bright future, hope for a return to normalcy.

Through that message of "Hope" came a theme of Togetherness. As a class you have been demonstrating unity and togetherness for the past 13 years.

Through this unity and togetherness you have come out ahead on the other end of your Pre-K – 12 educational experience. Your accomplishments as a class speak loudly to that. I hope that you take this opportunity in time to recognize your unique

differences, to respect your differences, and use your differences to bring us together.

You are all "Awesome Blossoms", and you will be forever. Your time at BP Public Schools has brought you together as one class, one special class, the Class of 2020. You will forever be remembered together. You will be remembered as unique individuals who celebrated your differences through uniting to create success.

Graduates – Be passionate about the work that you do. Relationships and understanding the importance of caring about others will be important to remember along your journey.

You have the ability to do what you want to do, only you can hold you back. Your Pre-K through 12 educational experience at Blooming Prairie Public Schools, along with your hard work and determination, with the guidance of your parents, have prepared you for a bright future.

I have no doubt that each of you have the skills to be successful in whatever you choose to do. You will determine your success, no one but you.

Cindra Kamphoff, professor and certified mental performance consultant at MN State Mankato, has said: The World's Best are gritty. The World's Best are clear on their purpose. The World's Best dominate the controllables. The World's Best own the moment.

Steph Curry, three-time NBA Most Valuable Player said, "What I tell people is be the best version of yourself in anything that you do. You don't have to live anybody else's story."

Continue to be unique, continue to be you, forge your own path, and own the moment like you have all done so many times already. Our world needs you and your talents.

My hope for each of you is that you continue

to model unity and togetherness and that you look back on your time at BPHS fondly. And, that individually and collectively you have a positive impact on our world in your own unique way.

Never ever forget that being an Awesome Blossom is special. You have been a big part of highlighting just how special it is to be an Awesome Blossom. Your success as a class will never be forgotten, you have created a new standard for all future classes to live up to. As your superintendent I couldn't be more proud of the class of 2020.

Mrs. Worke, Ms. Mach, Mr. Worke and I certify that these members of the Class of 2020 have fulfilled all the requirements established by the State of Minnesota and the Blooming Prairie Board of Education and have earned the right to graduate.

We are extremely proud of the 118th graduating class of Blooming Prairie.

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MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

2020 – 9 state awards
2019 – 7 state awards
2018 – 6 state and 4 national awards
2017 – 2 state and 3 national awards
2016 – 8 state and 6 national awards

2015 – 7 state and 4 national awards
2014 – 3 state and 3 national awards
2013 – 7 state and 2 national awards
2012 – 2 state awards
2011 – 4 national awards

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

Invisible killer silences another great event



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

our great community festivals and events are falling victim to this silent killer. I feared this was going to happen ever since the early stages of the outbreak back in March. I held out hope, but it seemed next to impossible that a fair would be able to operate in a safe manner.

Being involved with the Steele County Fair has allowed me to engage with some great people. From the late Elmer Reseland to the late Jim Gleason and now more recently Scott Kozelka, it has been a pleasure working with these fair managers. I have always marveled at how they have put together a first-class fair. This fair is a purple ribbon fair and the best around.

I know there is a plan in the works to allow 4-H members to still show their projects in competition. Showing at the fair is the pinnacle of the 4-H year. Of course, it won't be the same as being out at the fair, but at least they

will have an opportunity to show. We will follow this in the coming weeks and let you know how that all plays out.

The Steele County Dairy Association is trying to come up with a way to promote the dairy industry. The association was forced to shutter its annual breakfast on the farm promotion, and it also operated a malt booth at the fair and Fourth of July celebration in Blooming Prairie, both of which have been nixed. I've heard some rumblings that something may be in the works for people to at least come out and enjoy some malts. We'll keep you updated when we find out more details.

No matter what comes along it won't be the same as having the fair in August. But let's hope this break in the action will allow officials to find a way to make next year's fair bigger and better than ever before. By then, we are all going to deserve something spectacular to ease our minds of enduring this on-going COVID-19 crisis.

In the meantime, there's no doubt I will be going through the fair withdrawals. I may need a dose of something strong to pull me through.

Someone needs to go in hot pursuit of silencing the invisible killer that is wreaking havoc on our great way of life.

Jail population cut in half by COVID-19

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Jail population in Steele County has been running about half of what it normally does since the COVID-19 crisis began in mid-March. The current number of inmates locked up at the Steele County Detention Center in Owatonna is averaging 45 to 50, down from the pre-COVID-19 average of 90, according to Anthony Buttera, jail administrator. Buttera estimates that the total number of arrests throughout the county has plummeted

by 75% since the start of the coronavirus. “It’s almost non-existent,” he said of new inmates coming into the jail. The downturn in new suspects being locked up is part of an overall plan to help the detention center survive the pandemic. Buttera worked with the Steele County Attorney’s Office and local law enforcement agencies to “set up a perimeter of what we’re taking into the jail.” Officers currently are not booking suspects like they have in the past. However, people committing “high level crimes that

pose an issue to the public” are still ending up in jail, he said. Some of those crimes are domestic violence, warrants and serious DWIs. Sheriff Lon Thiele said officers are making decisions on incarceration on a case-by-case basis. “We’re not looking the other way,” he said. “Criminals who think they are not going to be arrested are thinking wrong.” The jail even went as far as releasing non-violent criminals who had not yet completed their sentences, Buttera said. Five inmates on work release were allowed to

“check back in at a later date,” he said. “We want to keep it at a low number for a while to get through it,” Buttera said. He noted many jails across the state have implemented similar plans to keep the jail population low. The drop in inmates has caused the county to place three detention center employees on furlough, Buttera said. Currently on furlough are a nurse, records support and programs assistant. There are four other employees in other county departments that have been placed on furlough status since last

week. They are expected to be on furlough for up to 90 days. While Buttera is disappointed in having to furlough employees, he stands by the decision to keep the jail population low. “It is designed to keep the inmates safe. If you get one (COVID-19) case in here, you’re going to have 30,” he said, adding they want to keep a small thing from blowing up. And it seems to be working. Steele County has avoided any coronavirus cases from coming into the jail to this point. There have been a few scares where 10 in-

mates have been placed into quarantine for 14 days at different times because of suspected coronavirus, according to Buttera. However, they have all come back negative, he said. He added jail staff has been outfitted with personal protective equipment in dealing with all of those inmates. Everybody coming into the jail is screened by having temperatures taken, and they are asked if they are sick. Some of the jail’s programming has also been temporarily suspended to get through the pandemic, Thiele said.



Residents of the Prairie Manor Care Center and the Heather Haus were treated to a visit on Saturday by the Pittman family's Percheron horses.

Horse parade at Prairie Manor

STAFF PHOTOS BY HOWARD LESTRUD



The Pittman family brought two of their Percheron horses to Blooming prairie on Saturday, May 30. The horses paraded in front of the Prairie Manor Care Center and the Heather Haus. From left are: Roger Pitttman, Erin Pitttman, Emma Basness and daughters Maci, 5 and Myla, 10 months.

Spread of virus slows down in Steele

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

After steady increases with coronavirus cases over the past month, COVID-19 appears to be leveling off with fewer cases popping up in Steele County, Public Health Director Amy Caron said Monday afternoon. There are 162 confirmed cases and no deaths in Steele County, according to Caron. She said there had been as many as 10-13 new cases every day during the past couple weeks, but now it’s slowing down to four new cases daily.

that vulnerable population,” she said. She acknowledges how the tight restrictions at the long-term places have taken a toll on residents as well as family members and friends who can’t see loved ones. The facilities have been under lockdown since mid-March when the pandemic began. “It takes a toll on their mental health, but it’s keeping them alive right now,” Caron said. With some requirements loosening up this week, Caron said she expects to see more positive cases showing up in

“We are fighting something that’s literally invisible.”

Amy Caron
Public Health Director

Currently there is one person in Steele County hospitalized with the virus, but that patient is not requiring intensive care, Caron said. The age range with people infected with COVID-19 is 1 year to people in their 70s. About half of the 162 cases in the county are out of isolation and back to work, she said. In Dodge County, there are 53 confirmed cases and no deaths with 30 out of isolation, Caron said. No one from Dodge County is hospitalized with the virus at this time. The age range is under 1 year to people in their 80s. There have been 1,050 deaths in Minnesota with 25,000 confirmed cases. The state is currently testing about 8,000 people every day. Caron said there still have not been any major outbreaks at long-term care facilities. She noted 80% of the COVID-19 deaths in Minnesota have come from long-term care places. “We have done an excellent job in protecting

the coming weeks. “I wouldn’t be surprised if we spike up a little,” she said. Caron was complimentary about the larger businesses throughout the area who have been working to contain the spread of the virus. “Many of the larger employers are right on part with what they should be doing,” she said. Even with businesses taking all the protective measures, the virus is still spreading, Caron said. “We are fighting something that’s literally invisible. That’s what makes it difficult,” she said. “It seems to be fairly contagious.” Beginning Monday, restaurants and bars were allowed to open by serving up to 50 people, but it must be outside and by reservation only. Another change has been churches, which are allowed to have 25% capacity. Folks worshipping must maintain 6 feet of social distancing unless they are from within the same household.

Effort aims to jumpstart Owatonna small businesses

A new initiative is helping to jumpstart Owatonna after businesses have been shuttered for months by the coronavirus pandemic. Owatonna Chamber Director Brad Meier announced last week a new program, Jumpstart Owatonna. “Small business, vital to the Owatonna community, urgently needs our help,” Meier said. According to Meier, Jumpstart Owatonna is a small business support fund offering a unique opportunity to support local-based businesses that have incurred unexpected hardship as a result of COVID-19. “Small businesses are a crucial component to the economic backbone of our community,” Meier says. “It is essential, that collectively, we help to sustain their future – our future,” he said. Several businesses and organizations are stepping forward to answer the urgent call.

They include: the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce & Tourism, Amesbury Truth, Climate by Design International, Daikin Applied, Federated Insurance, Gandy Company, Life Fitness/Cybox, Mayo Clinic Health System-Owatonna, Owatonna Hospital-Allina Health, Owatonna Partners for Economic Development, and Viracon. Meier said they are responding to the urgent call to help sustain Owatonna’s small businesses as they fight for a way forward amidst the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. Working with the generosity of community partners and donors, the chamber has established the “Jumpstart Owatonna – Small Business Support Fund.” The goal is to expedite financial support for recovery and renewal – to assist local small businesses facing unexpected hardship due to COVID-19, Meier said. Grants up to \$1,000

or equivalent per business will be available to help meet one-time needs for the following expense categories, which may be amended:

- Cleaning and sanitation supplies
- Equipment repair and/or replacement
- Supplies that support business activity adjustments due to COVID-19
- Marketing, public relations, or other communications needs to address business activity adjustments due to COVID-19
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Grant applicants must be authorized representatives of a for-profit, small business defined as an enterprise between 20 full time equivalent or less employees, with a principal place of business in the City of Owatonna, and have demonstrated negative financial impact from COVID-19. Grant applicants DO NOT have to

be a member of the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce to apply. More information on the grant application process and deadlines can be found at www.owatonna.org/jump-start-owatonna-2. Meier encourages people to help small businesses fight for survival by making donations to Jumpstart Owatonna. “There is power in community, neighbor helping neighbor,” he said. “Together we have a real opportunity to protect and preserve the spirit of the Owatonna small business community,” he added. Donations may be made online at www.owatonna.org/jump-start-owatonna-2/ or send to Owatonna Chamber Foundation, 320 Hoffman Drive, Owatonna, MN 55060. If anyone wants further information, they can contact Meier at bmeier@owatonna.org or call 507-475-0687.

COVID-19 UPDATE

World.....	6,200,000	U.S.	1,830,000	MN.....	25,208	Steele.....	162	Dodge	53
Deaths	373,000	Deaths	106,000	Deaths	1,050	Deaths	0	Deaths	0
Recovered.....	2,600,000	Recovered.....	407,000	Recovered.....	19,441	Recovered.....	81	Recovered.....	30

AS OF JUNE 1, 2020

The COVID Class of 2020



Graduation speakers at Blooming Prairie's 118th commencement pose on a stage created for pre-commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 30. Shown from left are: (top) Riauna Bishop, co-salutatorian; Julia Worke, Valedictorian and Adam Larson, co-salutatorian. Bottom: Maya Lembke, opening and Virdiana Villarreal, closing.

BP honors grads with unique ceremony

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Because of the coronavirus, many high schools nationwide chose to honor their graduating seniors of 2020 with a special and unique commencement. Blooming Prairie did just that for its 118th graduation in the school's history. Sunday's graduation honoring 50 graduates was a virtual one. In fact, diploma covers were given to graduates at ceremonies on Saturday. The actual graduation saw graduates and their parents in cars parked socially distant in the school parking lots. They were listening to the graduation ceremonies on Kat

Kountry 104.9. Paul Shea, director of content for the Faribault and Owatonna markets, said the radio conglomerate did graduations for Blooming Prairie, Owatonna, Bethlehem Academy, Zumbrota-Mazeppa; Randolph; Kenyon-Wanamingo and Faribault. This year's graduations were very different from what we typically do, said Shea. "We did not put graduations in a box, every one was different, and we celebrated as a community," Shea added. The entire ceremony was pre-recorded for radio and was also video recorded by Caleb Ostrander. The commencement program started with

a fanfare and processional and singing of the National Anthem by Courtney Espe. Maya Lembke, Student Council representative, gave the opening. Principal John Worke introduced the speakers: Julia Worke, Valedictorian; Riauna Bishop and Adam Larson, co-Salutatorians and Viridiana Villarreal, Student Council President. Superintendent Chris Staloch presented the Class of 2020. Diplomas were presented by Staloch, Worke, Alison Mach, associate principal and Mary Worke, counselor. Fanfare and recessional ended the commencement. A parade throughout the city then followed.



Star athlete Gabe Hagen of Blooming Prairie graduated on May 31. He and his parents Joan and Dave Hagen rode in a special parade given for the Blooming Prairie graduates.



Seniors Jayde Wacek and Zach Archer happily accept a special graduation cake from Blooming Prairie realtor Jennifer Walsh, left. Seniors picked up their special cakes either before or after commencement on Sunday.



Blooming Prairie High School graduate of 2020, Riauna Bishop, does double duty with her cell phones by taking photos of some of her friends.

First Lutheran Church hosts Baccalaureate

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Four local churches on May 27 participated in a virtual Baccalaureate for Blooming Prairie's Class of 2020. The Class of 2020 in Blooming Prairie numbers 50. Churches participating in the Baccalaureate service included host church First Lutheran Church, First Baptist Church, Red Oak Grove Lutheran Church and St. Columbanus Catholic Church. Graduates and their immediate families were invited to a Zoom service. Pastor Mike Walerius of First Lutheran Church offered a welcome and invocation from his home.

Seniors Gracie Rudlong and Gabriel Hagen gave a special address to their classmates. Scripture readings were: Colossians 3:12-17, Father John Wilmot; Psalm 121, Marilyn Ullstad and John 15:8, Pastor Heidi Heimgartner. Heimgartner gave the sermon and said the 2020 graduates are part of God's classroom. "In God's classroom, there is no first bell and there is no final bell," she said. "In God's classroom, there is only one book. And the answers aren't in the back, but hidden inside, shown through prayer. "In God's classroom, tests are not announced ahead of time and successes not when you ached the work, but when

you helped someone else ace the work. "In God's classroom, greatness is always defined by service, and humility, and love. "In God's classroom, the whole group matters and each individual contributes. "In God's classroom, final grades mean well, not much; the experience is everything." Pastor Heimgartner spoke of a novel she remembers, The Three Musketeers. From this novel, she said she has never forgotten the motto, "All for one, and one for all." She said the novel is about unity and collaboration. Heimgartner challenged the Class of 2020 to remember that their lives are held in God's hands.

In conclusion, Heimgartner said, "When all the diplomas are given out and when this pandemic is finally behind us, and all the sports have been played and all the thank yous written... God's classroom is still in session." Special music for the evening was provided by Courtney Espe, singing "You'll Never Walk Alone." Pastor Matthew Fennell of the First Baptist Church offered prayers of the people. The Lord's Prayer was said in unison. A family blessing of the graduates was said by Pastor Walerius. Virtual printed programs were presented to all on the Zoom service.

An interesting historical perspective traced the history of Baccalaureate. What is Baccalaureate? The baccalaureate service derives from the medieval European custom of presenting the candidates for the degree of Bachelor (bacc) with laurels (lauri) of sermonic oration. The Baccalaureate Service is believed to have originated at Oxford University in 1432 when each bachelor was required to deliver a sermon in Latin as part of his academic requirements. Since the earliest universities in America were founded primarily to educate ministers, the British practice of

the Baccalaureate service was continued. Today, the Baccalaureate ceremony is a service of worship in celebration of and thanksgiving for lives dedicated to learning and wisdom. We continue to observe Baccalaureate services at most high schools across America as a celebration of worship and to connect the student's faith life with their academic life. At our Baccalaureate service here in Blooming Prairie, local pastors will lead this worship service, they will pray, read scripture, preach a short sermon and offer blessings. The people attending often sing hymns and participate in prayer.

How to Find Health Insurance After a Job Loss



THE SAVVY SENIOR

Brought to you by:

Prairie Manor Care Center & Heather Haus

220 3rd St. NW,
Blooming Prairie
583-4434

Dear Savvy Senior,
Because of the coronavirus pandemic, I just got laid off from my job of 22 years and need to find health insurance until I can get another job or enroll in Medicare at age 65. What are my options? Scared to Death

Dear Scared,
I'm very sorry about your job loss. It's estimated that as many as 45 million Americans could lose their health insurance as businesses continue to lay off workers due to repercussions of the coronavirus pandemic. Here's where you can find health insurance coverage while you're looking for new employment or waiting for Medicare.

The Affordable Care Act Marketplace
Your best option for getting affordable health insurance is through Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplaces, also known as Obamacare. Or, if your income is very low you may qualify for Medicaid.

Normally, enrollment in an ACA Marketplace is limited to the short window for Open Enrollment, which is between Nov. 1 and Dec. 15 each year. But there's an exception for people who've lost their jobs, known as the Special Enrollment Period, which allows you to apply because your layoff meant a loss of health insurance. To do so, you must enroll within 60 days of when your coverage stopped and prove that you lost your health insurance.

There is no limited enrollment period for Medicaid.

Eleven of the states with their own health insurance marketplaces (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington), plus the District of Columbia, are also offering special enrollment periods, allowing anyone who is eligible under the ACA rules to sign up.

ACA health insurance is major medical insurance that covers essential health benefits with no annual or lifetime coverage maximums. And they can't charge you more or deny you coverage because of a pre-existing health condition.

You also need to know that if your annual income will fall below the 400 percent poverty level, the ACA provides premium subsidies, which will reduce the amount you'll have to pay for a policy.

To qualify for subsidies your household's estimated income for 2020 must be under \$49,960 for an individual, \$67,640 for a couple, or \$103,000 for a family of four. The lower your income is under these limits the higher your subsidy will be. Unemployment benefits count toward income.

To see how much subsidy you may qualify for, use Kaiser Family Foundation health insurance marketplace calculator at [KFF.org/interactive/subsidy-calculator](https://www.kff.org/interactive/subsidy-calculator).

Or, if your income is very low – below the 138 percent poverty level – you may qualify for free, or low-cost health coverage through expanded Medicaid services, which is available in many states.

To apply for ACA Marketplace health plans or Medicaid, go to [HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov). Or, you can call their toll-free number at 800-318-2596 and get help over the phone.

COBRA
If you need health insurance coverage for less than 18 months, another option you may want to consider is COBRA, which allows you to remain on your former employer's group health plan, but not every employer plan is COBRA-eligible. Contact your employer benefits administrator to find out if yours is.

In most cases COBRA is expensive, requiring you to pay the full monthly premium yourself. But, if you've already met or nearly met your employer plan's deductible and/or out-of-pocket maximum for the year, and don't want to start over with a new plan; or if you find your employer's health plan to be better or more affordable than the marketplace options, it makes sense to keep your current coverage under COBRA.

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

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History from the News Archives

10 Years Ago

June 8, 2010

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

The Awesome Blossom Softball Team has captured the Section 1A Championship marking the best softball season ever in the 34-year history of the program in Blooming Prairie. No one is prouder than head coach Ali Mach, who is in her seventh year of coaching. She used one word to describe the excitement amongst the team "Awesome". "It is great to see them achieve something so special," said Mach. "It's their effort and attitudes that have been so important to their success this year," she said. The team is excited about this week and what could be ahead for the Blossoms. The community will throw their support towards the girls in their upcoming games.

A vision to bring back some life to Blooming Prairie Main Street is becoming a reality this week as the owner of southern Minnesota's largest shops marks a major milestone. TT Motorcycle Shop will be celebrating its grand opening Saturday. Owner Terry Trom is the man behind the vision. Over the past nine months has been busy renovating a huge vacant building and has revitalized a key section of downtown. Trom admits he considered moving his shop from his farm outside of town to a larger community. But the Blooming Prairie native felt an obligation of sorts to give something back to his community. "This corner of Main Street is the entrance to our town and I wanted to make something better of it," said Trom. He has invested more than \$600,000 in this project. Keeping the business here could prove to pay off big dividends, not only to Trom, but the city of Blooming Prairie.

College news: BPHS senior, Tim Boecker received the Outstanding High School Leadership Scholarship from the University of North Dakota for the 2010-2011 academic year. He is the son of Tom and Tiffany Boecker. This award is given to seniors demonstrating outstanding leadership in high school and perspective leadership potential at UND.

Mariesa Rossow graduated from RCTC and the Mayo School of Health Sciences. Rossow graduated Phi Theta Kappa with honors and received her AAS degree after completing the Surgical Technology Program. She will begin working as a surgical technologist at the Austin Medical Center. Her parents are Brian and Sue Rossow.

20 Years Ago

June 6, 2000

ELSIE SLINGER, PUBLISHER

St. Isidore, educating students in a faith centered environment, has announced its honor roll students. A-Honor Roll: Grade 3, 4, 5 – Ben Anderson, Travis Borchert, Donia Deetz, Sarah, Kubicek, Adam Kaplan, Matthew Misgen, Sean Robbins, Allan Trotman and Jenny Wencil. Grade 6, 7, 8 – Amanda Anderson, Kristin Anderson, Megan Borchert and Zach Nichols. B-Honor Roll: Grade 6, 7, 8 – Luke Kaplan, Karen Rysavy and Jill Trotman.

Rainy skies didn't dampen spirits as 75 Blooming Prairie Seniors received their diplomas. The gymnasium was packed full of family and friends who had hoped to be watching the first outdoor ceremony. The weather didn't cooperate, but the senior class proudly accepted accolades as final farewell wishes. The valedictorian was Jessica Wonderlich and co-salutatorians were Ryan Ashton and Luke Krebs. Congratulations to all the graduates.

Two local young ladies graduated from St. Mary's University in Winona on May 13. Lisa Zwiener, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Zweiner received her bachelor of arts degree. Jaclyn Knutson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Larry Knutson also received her bachelor of arts degree.

50 Years Ago

May 27, 1970

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

A picture of a Blooming Prairie youth stationed in Cambodia appears in the current issue of Life Magazine. Terry Christianson, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Christianson, Blooming Prairie is in the Army infantry. He entered the service September 1969 and was sent to Vietnam in March. The picture is part of a series of photographs on the Cambodia conflict. Christianson is pictured holding his rifle while in battle.

Leslie Hansen, a member of the Blooming Prairie Bombers 4-H Club and Ruth Schuelke, a member of the Owatonna Victory Boosters will be attending a Citizenship Short Course in the National 4-H Center in Washington, D.C. in June. Leslie is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Carlo Hansen and has been in the junior leadership project for 5 years. Ruth is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Glen Schuelke. They will be among a group of about forty club members from eleven counties in Minnesota. The courses are held to develop greater understanding and appreciation of the American heritage, basic function of the national government and international aspects of citizenship.

Approximately 1,500 people toured the new Prairie Manor Nursing Home facility in Blooming Prairie during the open house held last Sunday. A brief program was held in front of the structure, with W. E. Thiede as master of ceremonies. Mayor Magnusson cut the ribbon and then the public enter the building and were given guided tours. On Monday morning Chris Nelson entered as its first resident. Prairie Manor is without a doubt one of the finest facilities erected in Minnesota. In addition to being attractive, the structure has all the latest equipment and conveniences available for the residents. It provides Blooming Prairie with a 70-bed nursing home. This was a community-wide project and a huge thank you goes to all who had and part, big or small, in making this facility possible.

75 Years Ago

May 31, 1945

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

The local fire department was called to Gardner farm on the town line Thursday evening, tenanted by Henry Elsner, only to find the large barn completely afire with no chance of saving it. The hog house nearby was also afire from the intense heat, but this was extinguished although the side facing the barn was destroyed. The fire started when lightning stuck the barn and spread rapidly. No stock was in the barn except for two calves which Henry was able to get out along with his milking machine, but a new tractor cultivator, harness and farm tools were destroyed. Three tons of hay were in the barn as well as a quantity of baled straw.

T/5 Stanley Madsen and Pfc. Helmer H. Jacobson, both former Blooming Prairie men, were members of a crack trucking crew which rushed badly needed aviation gasoline to front line airfields in time to completely route the Germans. Both have been awarded the battle participation star for wear on their theater ribbon. Their attention to duty in dangerous battle zones was cited for their award. Madsen is now stationed at the air service headquarters in Europe. Both of these young men have been overseas for 30 months.

At the regular meeting of the town council Monday night, V.F.W. Post was granted an "on sale" liquor license. The license will apply to club rooms the veterans will open in the former Johnson building on Main Street. Extensive remodeling plans have been underway on the second floor for some time and they will soon have in operation one of the finest and modern club rooms in this part of Minnesota. Also, granted a 3.2 malt license was granted to Royal Cafe, Pearl Cafe, Blue Hen Inn, Prairie Pool Hall and Cozy Inn.

Historical Society honors trivia contest winners

Five prizes were awarded contestants in the Steele County Historical Society Trivia Contest held on Facebook over a recent two-week period.

Contest winners were Tammy Ebeling, Judy Thimsen, Jamie Lynn, Janet Hartwig, and Shelley Thompson. Honorable mention went to Melissa Rose and Kimberly McGuire.

The contest included 10 questions, often with multiple choice answers, about Steele County.

Also since the COVID-19 guidelines closed the History Center March 18, the Society has maintained touch with the community on Facebook with the visual alphabet of items in the Village of Yesteryear, along with terminology

associated with SCHS current exhibits featuring Country Schools, the American Legion and its Genealogy Club.

Normally in May, the Village of Yesteryear is alive with elementary school children on tour, but with the restrictions of the school closings, the Society countered with a virtual tour on You Tube, filming in sev-

eral of the Village buildings, depicting "Then and Now," some things that have changed since the early 1900s. Through their teachers' connection, the students will have a mini-tour to spark class discussion how inventions change lives, and still capture part of the spring experience enjoyed at the Village of Yesteryear.

COVID DELAYS FROM A1

where she will appear in court once she comes back to Minnesota. The court case would typically be handled in Dodge County where the alleged murder took place. But, because the courtroom is small and with the COVID-19 restrictions, there is a

chance the case may have to go to another county, Rose said.

"It could be in a courthouse larger and better suited to facilitate the kind of attention her case has drawn," Rose said.

One option would be to have Riess' hearings in Olmsted County. If

the hearing would be in a Rochester courtroom, Riess would be detained in Olmsted County Jail. If the Dodge County courtroom is deemed to be suitable, she would be locked up in the Steele County Detention Center in Owatonna where Dodge County normally detains suspects. Dodge County does not have its own jail.

Rose said it's also unclear where Riess will eventually end up once the Minnesota hearings are completed. Riess could request to end up in Minnesota where her family members live. There would also have to be an agreement between the governors of both states, he noted. If she ends up in Minnesota, she would be locked

up at the women's state prison in Shakopee.

In December, Riess pleaded guilty to first-degree murder for killing a woman in Fort Myers Beach Florida in April 2018. She was sentenced to life in prison. As part of a plea deal, Florida withdrew the possibility of the death penalty. At the time, she waived extradition to face charges in Minnesota for allegedly killing her husband.

A Dodge County grand jury indicted Riess in May 2019 on two counts of murder in the shooting death of David Riess. She faces both first-degree and second-degree murder charges. The Minnesota Attorney General's Office is handling prosecution of the case.

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THE BOLD LOOK OF KOHLER

BLOTTER SPOTLIGHT

BLOTTER SPOTLIGHT: At 12:18 p.m., a hit and run accident resulting in property damage occurred in the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S.



Behind The Badge
SHERIFF SCOTT ROSE

On May 26, I watched the video from the Twin Cities with Minneapolis Police officers and George Floyd, a video that left me shocked, sad, frustrated, and angry. On the same night, I watched the 10 p.m. news reporting the riots and protesting in Minneapolis – it left me shocked, sad, frustrated, and angry.

Shocked that another officer didn't step in and stop it. Sad seeing Mr. Floyd begging the officer to stop, saying he couldn't breathe. Frustrated that any officer would think this was ok. Angry that Mr. Floyd lost his life because of this.

The actions of these officers do not reflect the majority of great men and women who chose to serve and protect our communities. Men and women who still believe in right and wrong. Men and women who will put their lives on the line for you and your family any

Actions of some do not reflect the rest

day of the week. Men and women who live and work in the communities they serve. Men and women who feel driven, who feel a calling to do their small part to help our community a safer place for us to live and raise our families. Men and women who sacrifice so much of their lives to help ours be a little better. Men and women who will always be there to help you regardless of race, gender, or political preference. Men and women whose families also make sacrifices every day for us.

Tragic incidents like this tear apart families and divide communities. That loss of trust makes our jobs as cops more dangerous and erodes the relationships and trust that the vast majority of men and women serving in law enforcement have worked so hard to develop in the communities we serve.

More details will come out when body cam video is released and reviewed. Unfortunately, that may lead to more questions than answers and won't bring Mr. Floyd back.

We don't have body cameras here in Dodge County – the large expense of purchasing and maintaining this equipment has prevented most small agencies like ours from being able to afford them. We do have squad cameras in all of our vehicles that record audio and video – audio and video that's available if a deputies behavior comes into question.

We provide de-escalation training. We provide Crisis Intervention Team training. We train on pressure control tactics – a knee on the neck is not part of any training we do with our staff. Please know we would never tolerate any tactics like this here in Dodge County, unless that officer absolutely felt his or her life was in jeopardy. That obviously doesn't appear to be the case with Mr. Floyd.

We do everything we can to make sure our staff has the equipment, support, and training necessary to keep themselves safe and keep the public safe – to prevent tragic incidents like the death of Mr. Floyd.

Please keep Mr. Floyd and his family in your thoughts and prayers. Please keep the citizens of Minneapolis in your thoughts and prayers. Please keep the good men and women serving in the Minneapolis Police Department and other law enforcement agencies throughout the state in your thoughts and prayers.

We are cops. We are also your neighbors, your friends, your co-workers, we are parents, our kids play together, we sit next to you at school events, we are co-workers, some of us are grandparents – we are a part of this community too. Together we need to stand strong as a community, continue to support our law enforcement and not judge all based on the actions of a few, always condemn behavior like this, and appropriately prosecute those at fault.

We are in this together. Your Sheriff, Scott

Scott Rose is in his second term as the Dodge County Sheriff. He writes a column for this newspaper regularly.

CRIME BRIEF

Drug raid lands 2 brothers in jail

Two brothers face felony charges after a drug bust in Owatonna.

Shawn Brown, 33, of Owatonna has been charged with fifth-degree possession of a controlled substance, unlawful possession of ammunition and possession of a firearm.

His brother, Darell Brown, 26, of Chicago faces fifth-degree possession of a controlled substance.

The charges stem from a drug raid on May 19 by the Cannon River Valley Drug and Violent Offender Task Force, the South Central Drug Investigation Unit and Owatonna Police. The raid took place in the 500 block of South Cedar Avenue.

During the search warrant, agents uncovered a felony amount of marijuana and indicia of occupancy of the persons living at the residence. In addition, Ecstasy pills,



Darell Brown



Shawn Brown

Fentanyl, a .45-caliber pistol, handgun magazines and ammunition were found in the home.

Court records show Shawn Brown was previously convicted of a crime of violence and is ineligible to possess a firearm or ammunition.

Shooting reported, but no victims come forward

Owatonna Police are asking for the public's help with a shooting incident that took place on May 28.

Police investigated a complaint of shots fired in the 800 block of Willowbrook Street NE at about 4:36 p.m.

According to police, a witness reported seeing a vehicle parked with three people standing around it. The witness reported

a man pulled out a black handgun and fired at another man and woman. The man and woman victims have not been

identified or reported the incident, police said. No injuries have been reported and no arrests have been made.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is encouraged to call Owatonna Police at 507-774-7207.

COURT NEWS
Steele County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of May 18 – 24:

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Erin Marie Adamek, 34, Owatonna, hands free violation, \$125; Benjamin M. Andrew, 45, Northfield, speeding, \$115; Michael J. Boss, 29, Burnsville, speeding, \$215; Christopher R. Byrne, 41, Tulsa, OK, speeding, \$115; Jason A. Dalbec, 42, Owatonna, speeding, stop sign and unsafe passing, \$215; Boniface S. Davay, 24, Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$115; Sampson N. Gangarmah, 34, Newtown, IA, speeding, \$275; Bud W. Haefs, 21, Kenyon, speeding, \$115; Bruce A. Hessler, 66, Cumberland, WI, seat belt, \$100; Carol V. Iversen, 82, Albert Lea, speeding, \$135; Allison H. Lee, 29, Wayzata, speeding, \$135; David M. Rodriguez, 58, Williams, CA, speeding, \$135; Samuel R. Snitker, 17, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Alexis N. Walstad, 21, Chanhassen, speeding, \$125.

OWATONNA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Nyak R. Gatluak, 33, Omaha, NE, DWI, \$400 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Marjorie A. Gruhlke, 69, Owatonna, failure to yield, \$125; Jennifer M. Johannsen, 38, Owatonna, no insurance, stay of adjudication, \$125 and 6

months of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Joshua S. Kimball, 21, Owatonna, DWI, \$150, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, substance abuse subtle screening inventory, attend MADD impact panel and 1 year of supervised probation; Harold A. Schoenfeld, 72, Owatonna, driving vehicle without ignition interlock, \$125, no alcohol or controlled substance use, comply with ignition interlock and 1 year of supervised probation; Kelsey J. Schultz, 29, Owatonna, DWI, \$400, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, substance abuse subtle screening inventory and 1 year of supervised probation.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Randall L. Anderson, 67, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Eva M. Balzer, 27, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Lynn M. Bethke, 25, New Richland, speeding, \$1,520 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Ryan R. Bruzek, 37, Montgomery, speeding, \$115; Sarthak Dabas, 26, Milwaukee, WI, speeding, \$125; Jason A. Dalbec, 42, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Pierce M. Dean Ames, 27, Altoona, IA, speeding, \$115; Jannah J. Jandt, 18, Owatonna, speeding, \$215; Brook M. Mueller, 25, Mankato, speeding, \$115; Gilberto O. Rodriguez, 21, Waseca, speeding, \$115; Trevor M. Shaw, 17, Mankato,

speeding, \$115; Isaiah J. Tetzloff, 17, Waseca, speeding, \$115; Michael D. Urch, 26, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; David J. Wayne, 61, Ellendale, DWI, \$406, no alcohol or controlled substance use, chemical testing and 1 year of supervised probation; Ian M. Wayne, 19, Blooming Prairie, speeding, \$135; Dylan J. Wedin, 21, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Paul M. Wencl, 66, Faribault, speeding, \$115; Jaden T. Wilson, 16, Owatonna, speeding, \$275.

POLICE BLOTTER
Steele County

OWATONNA POLICE

May 22

Thefts: Police took theft reports in the 200 block of Main St. E. at 10:39 a.m. and the 1200 block of 21st Ave. NW at 7:52 p.m.

Shoplifting: At 2:17 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W.

Shoplifting: Officer issued a shoplifting citation in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 6:07 p.m.

Intoxication: Police responded to an intoxicated subject at Pearl St. W. and Oak Ave. N. at 9:11 p.m.

Welfare: Officer conducted a welfare check in the 100 block of Riverside Ave. NW at 9:24 p.m.

DWI: Police arrested a motorist for driving while intoxicated in the 1200 block of Kohlmier Dr. SW at 10:35 p.m.

May 23

Domestic: Police responded to a domestic

disturbance in the 1800 block of Hemlock Ave. NE at 6:50 p.m.

Animal: At 7:07 p.m., an animal bite occurred in the 1100 block of Clover Lane SE.

May 24

Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 100 block of St. John Dr. NW at 8:52 p.m.

Fireworks: At 9:17 p.m., police received a fireworks complaint from the 800 block of 25th St. NE.

Trespassing: Officer issued a trespassing citation in the 100 block of St. John Dr. NW at 11:35 p.m.

May 25

Vandalism: Property damage was reported at the law enforcement center at 8:24 a.m.

Shoplifting: At 3:46 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W.

Criminal Sexual Conduct: Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 700 block of Truman Ave. SE at 8:34 p.m.

Threats: Police arrested a subject for making threats in the 700 block of 12th St. NE at 8:53 p.m.

May 26

Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 1500 block of Linn Ave. SW at 9:08 a.m.

Fraud: Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 500 block of Hazeltine Place NE at 4:07 p.m.

May 27

Suspicion: Police responded to suspicious activity in the 200 block of School St. W. at 5:50 a.m.

Theft: Officer took theft reports in the 600 block

of Truman Ave. SE at 8:13 a.m. and the 3900 block of Cabela Dr. NW at 3:03 p.m.

Fraud: Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 200 block of Pearl St. E. at 1:43 p.m.

May 28

Disturbance: Police responded to a disturbance in the 400 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 12:49 a.m.

Domestic: Police responded to domestic disturbances in the 100 block of 19th Place NE at 6:21 a.m. and the 500 block of Kim Lane SW at 9:52 p.m. They took subjects into custody.

Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 600 block of Florence Ave. NW at 9:31 a.m.

Weapons: Officers responded to a weapons-related incident in the 800 block of Willowbrook St. NE at 4:36 p.m.

Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 2700 block of 3rd Ave. NE at 7:01 p.m.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

May 22

Missing: Deputies assisted with a missing person from the 4100 block of 66th St. NW in Medford Township at 7:09 p.m.

May 23

Trespassing: At 9:55 p.m., a subject was trespassing in the 400 block of 4th St. SE in Medford.

May 24

Crash: Paramedics and deputies responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries at Interstate 35 and 69th St. NW in Medford Township at 5:41 a.m.

COURT NEWS
Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of May 17 – 24:

DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Joshua A. Calarco, 20, Rochester, speeding, \$220; Nicholas H. Greenwood, 38, Dodge Center, trespassing, 90 days in county jail; Nikolai M. Schneckloth, 23, Kasson, DWI, \$980, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, write letter of apology and 1 year of supervised probation; Robert A. Skaug, 47, Rochester, disorderly conduct, \$380, domestic abuse evaluation, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments and 1 year of supervised probation; Noah S. Sprunger, 18, Preston, seat belt, \$105.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Craig A. Fate, 30, Dodge Center, speeding, \$120; Steven C. Karlstad, 52, Kasson, revoked license, \$280; Patrick J. Murray, 30, Hubertus, WI, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$100 and 6 months of unsupervised monitoring without adjudication; Isaac L. Shadow, 18, Hayfield, speeding, \$140; Joshua A. Staver, 35, Rochester, following vehicle too closely, stay of adjudication, \$100 and 6 months of unsupervised monitoring without adjudication.

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Team Logan



Logan Pleschourt knows how to fight and survive. He pulled himself out of two bouts of cancer over the past three years and graduated Friday night from Medford High School. He plans to become a police officer.



One of Logan Pleschourt's favorite memories of high school was playing football. He took one last stroll on the gridiron last week in his cap and gown in preparation for graduation.

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

Miracle man graduates despite two cancer bouts

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY RICK BUSSLER

Not just once, but twice within the past 2½ years Logan Pleschourt has bounced back from a near death situation. Despite the daunting task of battling cancer, Pleschourt graduated from Medford High School Friday night.

Pleschourt, who has been diagnosed two different times with Stage 4B Hodgkin's lymphoma, the last time coming on his 16th birthday, has been a source of inspiration to everyone around him. He admits he was scared, but took some peace of mind knowing that the type of cancer he had is “one of the best cancers to have” and is easily treated.

The first diagnosis came in September 2017. An avid runner on the cross country team, Pleschourt started to notice his running times were getting worse and he would become “out of breath and winded easily.” One time after practice he started coughing uncontrollably and went in to the emergency room to get checked. At the time, he had a 105-degree fever and “didn’t even know it.”

He was given the all clear in February 2018, but just two months later he relapsed and was facing the battle of his life once again. During both battles, Pleschourt has undergone 17 rounds of chemotherapy, 37 radiation treatments and a stem cell transplant, all at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. After he successfully made it through the first couple rounds of chemotherapy, “I knew I was going to beat it,” he said.

The transplant was pretty rough as it kept him bedridden in the hospital for a month. The transplant took place during his second battle, which Pleschourt says was the worst of the two.

It was during the second battle that Pleschourt’s mental condition took a turn for the worse. “I got very depressed and suicidal,” he said. “I felt like I’d rather go out of it in a quicker way than suffer through it.” But, he added, he never followed through with any of his suicidal thoughts.

Asked what pulled him through, Pleschourt didn’t hesitate in saying, “Football.” He took refuge on the gridiron and eventually returned

“I knew I was going to beat it.”

Logan Pleschourt
Cancer Survivor

to Friday nights under the lights. The football field became a place of healing for him. As a wide receiver, he suited up for every varsity game and even had a play designed for him.

He said going to practices and staying out of the house as much as possible kept his mind off the cancer.

Though Pleschourt says he never had any doubts about graduating, completing high school was challenging at times because he missed so much school. Teachers worked out a plan for him where his assignments were cut in half and on tests he was allowed to use notes.

If battling cancer and missing class weren’t enough, Pleschourt expressed

disappointment in how his senior year ended in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. He especially feels bad that his class wasn’t able to have a traditional graduation ceremony. “I know they are doing what they can, but I still don’t feel like it’s enough,” he said if regards to graduation. “I wish we could have a bigger ceremony.”

Pleschourt not only missed out much of two important years of high school, but he also missed a lot of important family events.

His mother, Heather Lique, found that life became completely different for their family during her son’s cancer battles. “Life stops and you’re focused on that kid,” she said referring to Logan. “It’s tough.”

Pointing out she has never experienced anything like this, Lique admits many tears have been shed over the past few years. “Sometimes you go to the bathroom and cry,” she said. The hardest part for her was seeing all the things he missed out as a kid.

Lique has developed a special bond with her son over the past few years. “There has been lots of talks and hanging out,” she said. She noted the talks often centered on how strong he is and that he can battle the cancer. “We have spent a lot of time together,” she added.

Battling cancer has undoubtedly taken away some of Pleschourt’s best years. One of his greatest struggles has been obtaining a driver’s license. He kept failing the permit test because he had trouble remembering. “I’m not able to be a normal teenager where I can get a job at 16 and live a normal adult life,” he says.

The last few years have given Pleschourt a perspective on life far beyond his years. Two times cancer attacked his body and both times he vigorously fought back and defeated it. “It has made me

stronger than what I would be if I didn’t go through it,” he said.

Cancer has forced Pleschourt to refocus his priorities in life. He has learned to not focus on the negative aspects of life. “Don’t think of the bad side. You need to have a positive attitude,” he said. He also encourages people to focus on family.

Pleschourt is excited to be graduated from high school and “finally move on and get on with life.” He plans to attend RCTC where he will major in law enforcement. His goal is to become a K-9 officer. He’s undecided at this time where he wants to eventually work.

For now, Pleschourt is focused on keeping cancer out of his body. He takes refuge in knowing that there is a very small chance it will come back a third time. Doctors have told Pleschourt nobody has ever had this type of cancer three times.

But he’s not taking any chances. He has to have a check-up every three months for the first year, every six months for the second year and every year for the rest of his life.

“I still get nervous and jittery when it comes to my next check-up,” Pleschourt said.



OBITUARIES

Obituaries Sponsor:
LEGACY MONUMENT SALES
Leon & Lori Bohlman 507-456-7864 or 507-456-3735
landlbo@gmail.com

Ernest Betlach, 96,
Blooming Prairie



Ernest Betlach

Ernest D. Betlach, age 96 of Blooming Prairie, passed away peacefully Friday evening, May 29, 2020, at Owatonna Hospital in Owatonna.

Ernie was born Jan. 12, 1924 in Blooming Prairie to Edward J. and Anna (Nymon) Betlach. He grew up in Blooming Prairie and graduated from Blooming Prairie High School in 1942.

Ernie, along with his brother, Frank, proudly served his country by joining the U.S. Navy in 1943. Ernie was a Specialist 3rd Class whose first tour in WWII was at Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands. Ernie and his crew assisted in building air strips throughout the South Pacific, serving on the SS Young America. He was honorably discharged in 1946.

Following the Navy, Ernie returned home and married Mary Ann Prokopec at Holy Trinity Church in Litomysl. At that time, he and his brother, Frank, took over ownership of their father's gas station. Ernie and Mary Ann had four children. After retiring from his own Mobil Oil business, Ernie enjoyed working at Jim's Standard for a number of years.

Ernie, along with several other Blooming Prairie families, committed to be Vikings season ticketholders before they were franchised. He loved tailgating at Met Stadium, which often included taking the kids along so they could experience the game with other BP families. He loved playing cards and was adept at it. Ernie could shoot the moon and leave you in the dust. He still read the Star Tribune, cover to cover daily. Polka music was an important part of his life –he loved it and listened to it daily. Ernie was a fan of the Minnesota Twins, Timberwolves, Lynx and NASCAR. We lovingly called him Tinker, Jellybean and Bucko.

Ernie was an active member in the Blooming Prairie V.F.W. Post 52, and American Legion Post 878. In honor of his service, Ernie was selected by the Captain of the Minnesota National Guard to raise the flag on Sept. 1, 2010, at the Minnesota Twins' new home, Target Field. He was a lifelong member of St. Columbanus Catholic Church, served on the St. Columbanus Cemetery Board, and was a member of the Knights of Columbanus. Ernie was a beloved member of his community and will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved him.

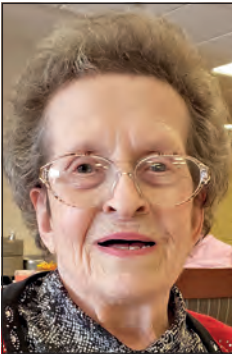
Survivors include his loving wife of 71 years, Mary Ann Betlach of Blooming Prairie; two sons, Donald (Linda Malecha) of Owatonna, and Bradley (Peter Carlson) of Minneapolis; two daughters, Kathryn (Joseph T.) Sturm of Madison Lake, and Debra (David) Cerny of Madelia; five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren; and many other relatives and friends.

Ernie was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Edward R. and Frank A. Betlach.

A private memorial service for immediate family will be held at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, June 3, 2020, at St. Columbanus Catholic Church in Blooming Prairie. There will be no visitation. Interment will be in St. Columbanus Catholic Cemetery with military rites performed by the American Legion and V.F.W. honor guard. A public celebration of Ernie's life will be held at a later date.

Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home of Blooming Prairie is assisting the family with arrangements. In lieu of flowers, memorials can be directed to St. Columbanus Catholic Church or the Blooming Prairie Serviceman's Club. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

Shirley Kubat, 85,
Owatonna



Shirley Kubat

Shirley Ann Kubat (Peterson), 85, of Owatonna passed away on May 29, 2020.

Shirley was born Jan. 20, 1935 to Charley and Mary (Dutton) Peterson. Mom left this world to be with Jesus on May 29, with family by her side, holding her hand. Shirley Graduated from Owatonna High School in June of 1953 and only days later was married to Leo Kubat on June 6, 1953. Together they raised seven children: Wayne (Marilyn) of Alaska, Anne Kubat (Bruce) of E. Bethel, Minn., Alan, Ryan (Pam) of Owatonna, Rhonda Prestegard (Dale) of Rochester, Jarl (Mary) of Arizona, and Jeff of Owatonna.

Mom was a devoted wife and mother and was as selfless and caring of a person as anyone you will ever meet. She made certain her children had a Christian upbringing. Getting seven kids ready for church on Sunday and fitting them all into a 1949 single cab Chevy pickup, was no small task, in addition to all of her other responsibilities.

She was also a devoted grandma to 10 grandchildren, 11 great grandchildren and 2 great great grandchildren; with two more great grandchildren on the way. Mom read her bible and prayed for her family every day that she was able, and her family is grateful for that. She will be greatly missed by all.

Shirley was a longtime and devoted member of Trinity Lutheran Church, where she volunteered regularly in her younger years. She enjoyed sewing circle and was an avid book reader. She and Leo loved square dancing, playing 500, and visiting with their children and grandchildren. Shirley volunteered at hospice and enjoyed spending time with her many friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Leo; brothers Jerry, Chuck, Stewart and Howie and her parents.

She is survived by her brother, Merle (Betty) Peterson of Rochester, and all of her children and their families.

Many thanks to all the caregivers of Fari-bault Senior Living, Brighton Hospice, and Alternative Resolutions for their tireless time and compassion in keeping her comfortable, safe and happy.

In lieu of flowers, donations preferred to Brighton Hospice, KLJY Radio, or Trinity Lutheran Church.

Due to the COVID-19 virus, all services at Michaelson Funeral Home and Owatonna Memorial Gardens will be private.

BOOK NOOK

Mobile hotspot
available at library



NANCY
VAILLANCOURT

As we are adjusting to the new normal of COVID-19, now more than ever, access to the internet is essential. The Blooming Prairie Branch Library is responding to the community's need for internet access by now providing a mobile hotspot for check out. These mobile hotspots were obtained through a grant from State Library Services CFDA 45.310.

The Blooming Prairie library is part of the SELCO (Southeastern Libraries Cooperating) regional public library system, which includes all 36 public libraries in the 11 counties of southeast Minnesota. SELCO received funds to purchase 20 hot spots to distribute to libraries throughout the region.

Krista Ross, Executive Director of SELCO states, "For some communities where there is

little internet connectivity, these hotspots have the potential to greatly impact the lives of people who are struggling with needs unique to the COVID-19 pandemic – such as applying for unemployment and accessing other resources."

If you are interested in checking out a mobile hotspot, please contact the library at 507-583-7750 or email us at bpbl@selco.info. It can be checked out for two weeks, with preference given to those with no internet access at their homes.

Finally, are you looking for something to do on those rainy days or boring evenings? We are pleased to announce that the Blooming Prairie Branch Library can help you with that, in more ways than just books and movies. We have received donations of several jigsaw puzzles. If you have been in stores recently, you will see that puzzles are difficult to find. We will put the puzzles in the entryway on the west side of the building. Take one, enjoy putting it together, and then bring it back or share it with others. If you have puzzles you no longer want, we can share those too!

STEELE COUNTY Times

Always local,
all the time.

Birthday wishes for Howard



STAFF PHOTO BY JUDY LESTRUD

Friends of Howard Lestrud, Times staffer, surprised him on his 75th birthday by putting out signs, encouraging passers by to honk and signal birthday greetings. Howard even wore a mask.

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Recipe Corner

Rhubarb Custard Cake

1 box yellow cake mix
4 cups rhubarb, sliced thin
1 cups sugar
1 pint heavy whipping cream

Prepare cake mix according to box directions. Pour into 9 x 13 baking pan. Cover batter with sliced rhubarb and sprinkle sugar over rhubarb. Pour over with cream. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 to 60 minutes or until cake springs back. Cool and refrigerate. Serve each piece with a dab of whip cream.

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15th President's Award Recipient
Blooming Prairie, 583-2046

HAVE A RECIPE TO SHARE?
Email to bptimes@frontiernet.net
OR Send to: P.O. Box 247, Blooming Prairie

Good bye in a time of pandemic



Father John Sauer

SACRED HEART
CATHOLIC CHURCH
OWATONNA

Twelve years ago I arrived in South Central Minnesota as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Owatonna and Holy Trinity Parish in Litomysl. I have grown to love this area of our state and have enjoyed my time here. In our Catholic Diocese we are assigned to parishes for a six-year term that can be renewed. After 12 years we expect to move to a new assignment. On July 1, I will become the pastor of Pax Christi Parish in Rochester and Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Mazeppa. Who would have thought that this would

happen when our ability to interact and say goodbye would be in the midst of a time of physical distancing and stay-at-home orders? It has certainly been a unique couple months as I begin the transition to my new parishes. It has been hard knowing that we will not be able to say farewell in the usual way. But we are nothing, if not creative. We will find a way to make it work. I have been blessed to spend these last years in Steele County. I have found a vibrant faith, an attitude of care for one another and a rooted-

ness to the land. Each of these elements has shaped the time I have spent here. The faith has deepened my own faith, and I have been the beneficiary of your witness. The attitude of care has inspired me to be more loving and generous to those around me. The attachment to the land helps me to appreciate the gift of creation that God has entrusted to us. All of those things have made me a better priest and person. I will miss many things about these communities: • I will miss your witness of the faith.

• I will miss the kindnesses and support I have received. • I will miss the wonderful working relationships with pastors of other faith traditions. • I will miss vibrant community life. • I will miss the beauty of this land. • I will miss the Holy Trinity Summer Festival. • I will miss the Steele County Fair. • I will miss many things but mostly the people that God has placed in my life. Thank you for the welcome all those years ago. Thank you

for the support and encouragement in the years since. Thank you for the kind words of farewell that have been expressed. Some years ago as I left my parishes in Austin and Brownsdale I was interviewed by a reporter for one of the local papers. As I reflected on my time I said, without really planning to, "I have had a wonderful life." That is as true today as it was back then. It has been a wonderful life. It has been a blessing from God. Let us give thanks to the Lord for He is good.

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN

AURORA LUTHERAN

6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna
Pastor Stephanie Wood
507-676-5696
Worship: Sunday at 9 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN – ELCA

106 Third St. SE., Geneva
Pastor Kristen Venne
507-256-4288
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.

FIRST LUTHERAN – AFLC

503 Radel Ct., Ellendale
Pastor Richard Sliper
507-684-2451
Men's Bible Study: 8 a.m. Saturday
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday
(Kids church- 9 a.m. and Confirmation- 10:15 a.m.)
Jesus and Me: 3:30-5 p.m.
Tuesday & Thursday
Call to Prayer: 7 p.m. Tuesday
Bible Study: 9:30 a.m. Wednesday
Wednesday School: 6:15-7 p.m.
followed by Youth Group- 7-9 p.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN – ELCA

434 First St. SW.,
Blooming Prairie
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Heidi Heimgartner
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mike Walerius
507-583-6621
firstlutheranbp.com
Worship Service- 9 a.m.
Sunday School- 10 a.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN – LCMS

8953 SW 37th Ave., Hope
Pastor Sandy Miller
507-451-3854
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School, Adult Ed:
10:15 a.m. Sun.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN – LCMS

2500 7th Ave. NE., Owatonna
Pastor Greg Schlicker
507-451-4125
goodshepherdowatonna.com
Worship: 8 a.m.,
9:15 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

MOLAND LUTHERAN – ELCA

7618 NE 84th Ave., Kenyon
Pastor Nancy Edwardson
507-789-6661
Worship: 10:45 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

PONTOPPIDAN

LUTHERAN – ELCA

9651 SW 75th St., Ellendale
507-465-8366
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9 a.m. Sun.

REDEEMER LUTHERAN – LCMS

1054 Truman Ave., Owatonna
Pastor Kirk Griebel
507-451-2720
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Education Hour: 10:15 a.m. Sun.

RED OAK GROVE LUTHERAN – ELCA

30456 Mower-Freeborn Road,
Austin
Rev. Suzanne Froelich,
Interim Pastor

507-583-2038 or 507-437-3000
www.roglutheran.org

Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School
(Sept. – May): 10:15 a.m.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN – LCMS

4532 SE 84th Ave., Claremont
Pastor Alan Broadwell
507-528-2404
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN – LCMS

28959 630th Ave., Sergeant
Pastor Collin Duling
507-251-5568
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9 a.m.

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN-ELCA

1301 Lincoln Ave. Owatonna
Pastors Dave Klawiter and Jacie
Richmond
507-451-7293
stjohnowatonna.org
Worship: 5 p.m.
Thursday & Saturday;
8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Summer Services:
8 a.m. & 9:30 a.m. Sunday

ST. MICHAEL'S

LUTHERAN – ELCA

30450 570th Ave., Waltham
Pastor Dwight DoBell
507-567-2474
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN – LCMS

202 E. Park Ave., Hollandale
Pastor Jesse Krusemark
507-567-2272
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN – ELCA

2781 SW 92nd Ave., Meriden
Pastor: Rev. Dean Smith
507-451-2165
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA

609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
507-451-4520
tlcowatonna.org
Senior Pastor: Rev. Todd Buegler
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Amanda Floy
Deacon: Kris Oppegard
Worship: 5 p.m. Saturday; 8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School:
8:15 a.m. & 9:30 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA

104 First St. SE., Hayfield
Pastor Paul Hauschild
507-477-2248
www.trinityhayfield.org
Worship: 8 a.m. &
10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMS

108 Third Ave. SW., Medford
Pastor Mark Biebighauser
507-451-0447
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday
Education Hour: 10:15 a.m.
Wednesday Worship: 6:30 p.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMS

57043 300th St., Waltham
Pastor Jesse Krusemark
507-567-2272
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

ZION LUTHERAN – ELCA

7126 SW 98th St., Ellendale
Pastor: Rev. Dean Smith
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN – ELCA

1909 St. Paul Road, Owatonna
Senior Pastor:
John Weisenburger
Associate Pastor: Lisa Carlson
507-451-4853
oursaviorsowatonna.com
Worship: 8:15 a.m. - Traditional,
9:30 a.m. - Sunday School/Adult
Education
10:45 a.m. - Contemporary

CATHOLIC

CHRIST THE KING

205 Second Ave. NW, Medford
507-451-6353
Father James Starasinich
Deacon Patrick Fagan
Mass: 5:30 p.m. Sat.
Mass: 9 a.m. Mon. & Fri.

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS

307 SW First St., New Richland
Father Antony Arokiyam
507-234-6244
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL

9946 SE 24th Ave. Owatonna
Father John Wilmot
507-583-2784
www.litomysl.webs.com
Sunday Mass at 8:30 a.m.
with Children's Church Sacrament
of Reconciliation Wednesdays at
6:30 p.m. Faith Formation classes
for K thru Confirmation
Second Sunday of month:
Family Faith Formation
Litomysl Finance Council:
2nd Thursday
Litomysl Pastoral Council:
2nd Thursday every other month

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC

150 NE Second St., Hayfield
Father John Wilmot
507-477-2256
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday
Reconciliation: 3:45 pm Saturday

SACRED HEART PARISH

810 S. Cedar Ave., Owatonna
Father John Sauer
Parochial Vicar
507-451-1588
www.sacredheartowatonna.org
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday;
8:30 a.m. & 10 a.m. Sun.
Spanish Mass: 11:45 a.m. Sun.
Daily Mass: 7:15 a.m.
Reconciliation: 4 p.m. Sat.
Adoration: 8 a.m. – 10 p.m. Thurs.

ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC

114 E. Main St., Blooming Prairie
Father John Wilmot
507-583-2784
www.stcolumbanuschurch.com

Mass: 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Reconciliation: 9 a.m.
First Friday & Saturday

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH

512 S. Elm Ave., Owatonna
Father James Starasinich
Deacon Patrick Fagan
507-451-4845
Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8 & 10 a.m.
Reconciliation: 3-3:30 p.m. Sat.
Daily Mass:
8 a.m. Tues., Wed. & Fri.
(Communion Service
8 a.m. Thursday)
Adoration Chapel available
Mon. – Fri. 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Key fob required after
hours or weekends

CHRISTIAN

CHRIST COMMUNITY COVENANT

540 SE 18th St., Owatonna
Dr. V. Brent Carlson, Pastor
507-451-1032
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Sunday Connections: 10:15 a.m.

PENTECOSTAL

FIRST UNITED PENTECOSTAL

230 Locust Ave., Owatonna
Pastor Eliazar Talamantes
507-363-2240
Worship: 10 a.m. Sunday;
6:30 p.m. Wednesday

METHODIST

BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST

43089 180th St., Medford
(Seven miles west of
Medford on CR 23)
Pastors JJ & Stefanie Morgan
507-835-8726
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST

200 Sixth St. NW., Ellendale
Pastor Randy Cirkse
507-684-2731
www.ellendaleumc.org
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

OWATONNA UNITED METHODIST

815 E. University, Owatonna
Rev. Scott Jakel
Linda Boorman, Associate Pastor
Joyce Parker, Associate Pastor
507-451-4734
www.owatonnaumc.org
Traditional Worship (Pathways):
9 a.m. Sunday

NON-DENOMINATIONAL

BRIDGES OF HOPE COMMUNITY

130 W. Bridge St., Owatonna
Pastor Keith Haskell
507-215-2249
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

Biblestudy: 9 a.m. Sun.
Reformers Unanimous Meetings:
7 p.m. Friday

CEDAR CREEK

30 E. Main St., Hayfield
Pastor Aaron de Neui
507-477-2255
www.cedarcreekchurch.org
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

DESTINY CHRISTIAN

2515 Harvest Lane NW, Owatonna
Pastors Rich and Amy Pettet
507-456-4775
www.destinyc.org
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday
6:30-7:30 p.m. 1st and 3rd
Wednesday

ELEVATION NORTH

2002 Austin Road, Owatonna
Pastor Doug Jones
507-363-3099

www.elevationnorth.blogspot.com
Worship (English): 10 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 10:30 a.m.
Worship (Spanish): 2 p.m. Sun.
Bible Study: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday
Spanish Evangelism & Prayer:
7 p.m. Friday

NEW BEGINNINGS

332 14th St. NE., Owatonna
Pastors Scott & Joan Peterson
507-413-0209
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

SIMPLE CHURCH

4515 NW 22nd Ave., Owatonna
(Country Goods building across
the freeway from Cabela's)
Pastor Todd Lundgren
507-451-5661
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.
Bible Study: 7 p.m. Wednesday

MENNONITE

PRAIRIE MENNONITE

13638 750th St., Blooming Prairie
Bishop Dennis Martin
507-583-7532
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Prayer Meeting: 7:30 p.m. Wed.

MORMON

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

404 31st St. NW, Austin
Bishop Rick Bremner
507-433-9042
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

PRESBYTERIAN

ASSOCIATED CHURCH

Presbyterian Church (USA) and
United Church of Christ
800 Havana Road, Owatonna
507-451-1546
www.associatedchurch.org
office@associatedchurch.org
Sunday Worship: 9 a.m.
(Fellowship, Church School, and
Adult Discussions follow)
Wednesday Activities: Sept – May
(see website for schedule)

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

109 E. Main St., Hayfield
Pastor Kirk Johnston
507-477-2631
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

P.O. Box 66, Claremont
507-528-2320
Pastor Douglas Walters
10 a.m. Worship

SEVENTH-DAY

ADVENTIST

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

2373 Seventh Ave. NE, Owatonna
Pastor Brian Beavers
651-955-4032
Worship: 11 a.m. Sat.
Bible Stud: 9:30 a.m. Sat.

UCC

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

211 Main St. S., Medford
Rev. Richard Waters
507-451-4596
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

VIBRANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD

702 Third St. S., Ellendale
Pastor Patrick Stitt
507-684-3421
www.vibrantlifeag.com
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Kids Church: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

BAPTIST

FIRST BAPTIST

104 First Ave. NE,
Blooming Prairie
Pastor Matt Fennell
507-583-2673
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.
& 6:30 p.m. Wednesday
Sunday School: 9 a.m.
Bible Study: 11:30 a.m. Sun.

FIRST BAPTIST (Owatonna's oldest church)

123 E. Main St., Owatonna
Pastor Carla Nelson
507-272-9834
www.firstbaptistowatonna.com
Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

BETHEL BAPTIST

1611 Hemlock Ave.
Owatonna
Pastor Michael Simmerman
507-451-8548
www.bethelowatonna.com
Worship: 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

VICTORY LIFE

105 2nd St NE
Geneva
Pastor Diane Butler
507-402-0960
Worship on Sundays
Prayer Service: 7:30 a.m.
Church Service: 9:30 a.m.
Children's Church: 9:45 a.m.

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Owatonna
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valleyviewofowatonna.com

Skala named top correctional officer

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

After spending 13 years in daycare, Linda Skala transitioned into being a correctional officer nearly five years ago. During that time she has been promoted and now is being honored as the top correctional officer in Steele County.

Last week Sheriff Lon Thiele presented Cpl. Skala with the Correctional Officer of the Year award for the Steele County Detention

Center. “She is a great example of what we have out there to represent SCDC,” Thiele said.

Skala works the night shift from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Her primary responsibilities are to assist the jail sergeant with daily tasks and perhaps most importantly keeping the inmates in a safe environment.

She is known to mingle with the inmates on a regular basis by sitting down with them in an effort to get to know their situations better

and possibly help them with long-term solutions to improving their lifestyles. “I hear their stories and try to figure out what triggered them,” Skala said. “I assist them in making better choices,” she added.

During her shift, Skala takes time to play cards with inmates to develop a better relationship. She tries to point them to programs and services available once they are released from jail. “They are nervous to get out because

they are structured here and not structured out there,” she says. “I enjoy helping inmates with structure to make them better before they leave.”

Skala knows she has succeeded with her job when she runs into inmates at the stores after being released from jail. She has had some come up to her and tell her how successful they have been since she helped them in jail.

SEE SKALA NAMED, A17



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele presents Cpl. Linda Skala with the Correctional Officer of the Year award. She has been employed at the Steele County Detention Center for the past 4½ years.



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

Medford Principal Kevin Babcock greets his graduating students as they exit cars and head towards the stage to receive their diploma.

Drive-In diplomas

Medford seniors celebrate graduation in the time of COVID-19

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Despite the current pandemic, Medford seniors, family, and friends gathered in their cars on a sunny spring Friday evening and celebrated their graduation. It was a celebration that they won't soon forget.

Principal Kevin Babcock stood at the podium and delivered his opening remarks to a sea of cars, pausing to allow a chorus of horns as he smiled at his students. “Let’s begin tonight by saying thank you to a lot of folks,” he said. “In a time when we all have to work together and stay strong together, many people have done just that to make tonight special.”

After doling out thanks to all those who helped to make this graduation a reality, Babcock turned his attention to the stars of the show. “After planning this ceremony numerous times, we are finally here to celebrate all of you,” he said.

“Go live your dreams and let nothing get in your way,” Bobcock told his soon-to-be former students. “I always say this and I always want you to remember, once you are a Tiger, you are always a Tiger.”

William VonRuden provided the student welcome address, receiving a flurry of horns as he took the stage. “Before I begin let me just acknowledge the fact that we are all not face to face, and I can’t see your emotions,” VonRuden said. “In order to let me know that you’re with me, feel free to let out horn honks whenever you feel it’s necessary.”

VonRuden thanked those who helped them along the way, while also recounting some of the memories they made together as the graduating class of 2020. “This school will always hold a huge place in all of our hearts,” he said. “What a place to grow up in, you guys have truly shown us all how to come together

as a whole and take on this thing we call life together.”

“We will carry on these precious moments we were able to share with you for the remainder of our life,” he said when speaking about the community. “Remember we will always be one team, one town, and one family.”

The commencement address was given by teacher Rebecca Mohr. “Your hometown has power and will always welcome you back,” she told her graduating students. “Even if you never return, remember the lessons you learned here.”

Once the commencement address was finished, Mackenzie Paulson took to the stage to deliver the student farewell address. “I can confidently say that the world out there is not ready for all that the class of 2020 has to offer,” she said to her fellow graduates.

“We have been faced with the greatest adversities and have

come out stronger every single time,” she said before mentioning her fellow senior Logan Pleschourt’s battle with cancer. “He showed cancer who’s boss not once, but twice.”

During her speech, Paulson singled out many of the obstacles their class has overcome. “There is nothing that our class can’t handle,” she said. “Even during the time of a pandemic, we are strong and have managed to remain positive despite the cards we have been dealt.”

When it was time to award diplomas, Principal Babcock stood besides the stage and beckoned each senior up from their revolving cars to take to the podium and pose for a picture with their diploma. With family and friends cheering on each student, horns signaling support, and the sun slowly heading towards the horizon, the class of 2020 took their first step as graduates towards their future.



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

Jordyn Stadler exits her truck while heading to pick up her diploma at Friday's drive-in graduation ceremony in Medford.



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

Senior Mackenzie Paulson delivers the student farewell address during last Friday's ceremony.

Seniors at NRHEG awarded scholarships

Graduating seniors at NRHEG High School have been awarded many scholarships.

The scholarship winners include:

\$25 Scholarships:
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution – Holly Stene.

\$200 Scholarships:
NRHEG Alumni – Holly Stene and Agro Gushwa.

\$250 Scholarships:
AG Education – Ethan Streng and Sydney Koziolk; State Bank of New Richland – Alexandra Combs, Jayna Domeier, Agro Gushwa, Emmablu Jameson, Summer Kath, Grace Kofstad, Marguerite Maloney, Paige Peterson, Annie Prigge and Holly Stene; Band Boosters – Jayna Domeier.

\$500 Scholarships:
New Richland Lions Club – Holly Stene; Ellendale Lions Club – Jayna Domeier; Darrol & Pauline Sponberg – Emmablu Jameson and Madison DenHerder; Waseca VFW – Annie Prigge; Preston Peterson Memorial – Grace Kofstad; Open Arms Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention – Paige Peterson, Emmablu Jameson and Grace Kofstad; S.W.C.E. – Mia Farr; Zola Mae Reese Memorial – Aracelis Sepulveda and Madison Kormann; Basketball Boosters – Jayna Domeier; AG Education – Tiara Malakowsky; Education MN-NRHEG – Annie Prigge, Aracelis Sepulveda, Holly Stene and Blake Ihrke; Community Foundation of Ellendale Trades Program – Ethan Streng; Harold & Boita/Myron & Caryn Wendt – Sydney Koziolk and Madison Kormann; Hartland Evangelical Lutheran Church – Holly Stene; Freeborn County Commissioners – Madison DenHerder; Ellendale Community Action Group – Annie Prigge; Freeborn County Farm Bureau – Tiara Malakowsky.

\$750 Scholarships:
Maple Island Park Association – Madison DenHerder, Holly Stene, Annie Prigge and Ethan Streng; LeSueur River Lutheran Church – Maggie Maloney and Ethan Streng.

\$1,000 Scholarships:
Federated Insurance – Blake Ihrke; Finley Budach Memorial – Annie Prigge, Agro Gushwa, Madison Kormann, Aracelis Sepulveda, Jayna Domeier, Mia Williams and Paige Peterson; Eddie Cochran Memorial-Low Bucks Schoarship – Jayna Domeier; Ingeborg Rugroden Memorial – Tiara Malakowsky; Mayo Healthcare-Albert Lea/Austin – Annie Prigge; Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce – Madison DenHerder; MCCA Honor Team – Maggie Maloney and Grace Kofstad; Luck of the Draw-Freeborn Mower Co-op Service – Tiara Malakowsky; Naeve Alumni & Nurses Club – Annie Prigge & Madison Kormann.

\$1,400 Scholarships:
Wayne Broecker Memorial – Alexandra Combs.

\$1,500 Scholarships:
E.F. Johnson Foundation – Agro Gushwa and Grace Kofstad; America's Farmers Grow Ag Leaders, Bayer – Tiara Malakowsky; Compeer Financial – Tiara Malakowsky.

\$1,800 Scholarships:
Lyle & Helen Wayne Memorial – Elizabeth Karl & Tiara Malakowsky.

Seniors matter



STEELE TALKIN'
HEATHER FAST

June is Elder Abuse month. As a public health nurse in the adult health division for Steele County, I occasionally see abuse of some of the people I serve. As a mandated reporter, I must always report. But healthcare workers are not the only

ones who can make a difference – you can too! As a matter of fact – you are an elderly person's best advocate because often you can see what is hidden from the healthcare worker.

What is elder abuse? Why does this demand our attention? How can you make a difference?

Definition: according to the World Health Organization “Elder abuse is ‘a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.’”

Prevalence: According to the Administration for Community Living report in 2019: “As many as 1 in 10 older Americans are abused or neglected

SEE SENIORS MATTER, A17

Congratulations

Blossom Honor Grads

Saluting the hard work of the Class of 2020 honor graduates from Blooming Prairie High School!



Valedictorian	Salutatorians	
Julia Worke	Riauna Bishop	Adam Larson

Distinguished Honor Students (3.8 GPA or higher) & MN Honor Society (GPA 3.5)

Maya Lembke	Luke Rennie	Grace Robins	Riauna Bishop	Parker Vaith	Zachary Weber
Kisha Aquino	Gemini Johnson	Jarrett Larson	Baylee Sorensen		

MN Honor Society (GPA 3.5)

Zachary Archer	Dondi Stender	Viridiana Villarreal	Jillian Wigham	Gabriel Hagen	Jayde Wacek

Honor Students (3.3 GPA)

Lila Ann Carlson	Hazel Michaud	Melanie Suchanek	Kaden Thomas
		no picture	
Matthew Pryor	Karson Vigeland	Alexis Olivo	

Way to shine in our community with academic excellence!

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507-583-9994 536 Highway 218 S. Blooming Prairie www.darrickspreferredauto.com	The Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce is proud of all your successes and wishes you many more as you move forward in this new chapter of your life. Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce 507-583-7573 • 138 Hwy Ave S	SEPTIC SYSTEMS • Design • Installation • Compliance Inspections State License # 1844 Serving the Area Over 22 Years 507 583-2999 Aggregates • Hauling • Washed Sand • Black Dirt • Fill • Gravel



Eleanor Harms had a special day on May 28, 2020, celebrating her 100th birthday with her family. Eleanor proudly poses with her family, left to right: Dennis Mooney, Tanya Mooney, Thad Harms, Kaidence Harms, Kristin Husby, Riley and Tara Harms, Jacob Harms, Ava Harms, Dean Harms, Beverly Harms, Carson Hjelman, Connie Hjelman, Claire Hjelman, Emily Hjelman, Derek Hjelman, Barbara Harms, Dan Harms, Juanita Ingvaldson, Dennis Ingvaldson, Jay Harms, Laura Harms and Zoe Harms.

100 reasons to love Eleanor Harms

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

There are a hundred reasons why everyone loves Eleanor Harms, a white-haired lady with a contagious smile. She wore a mask at times on Thursday, May 28, 2020, the date of her 100th birthday. The mask didn't bother her, but she would pull it down on occasion to smile for a family member, wishing a photograph. Harms is a resident at the Prairie Manor Care Center in Blooming Prairie. She was the shining star of Blooming Prairie on this particular day, which was shared with her by three of her four children and by many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Sons Daniel, Deer River and Dean, Inver Grove Heights and daughter Juanita Ingvaldson, Grand Rapids made the trip to Blooming Prairie to share the big day with their mother. Another daughter, Darla Hjelman, Gulf Shores, Ala., did not make the trek to BP. Staff of Prairie Manor was magnificent in making her special day especially special. Prairie Manor is under lock down because of the coronavirus, but the staff followed social distancing in bringing Eleanor outdoors to share her special day with her special family.



Eleanor Harms waves to family and friends at her 100th birthday party at the Prairie Manor Care Center in Blooming Prairie. Activity director Claire Cullen holds the magic number, 100 balloons.

As family gathered to wish mom, grandma, great-grandma and friend all rolled into one person, Eleanor Harms, sirens were blaring in the background. Sirens grew louder as they neared the care center. The sirens were for Eleanor and they were being sounded by Chief Greg Skillestad of the Blooming Prairie Police Department and by Dave Wradislavsky of the BP Fire Department. As Chief Skillestad stopped his squad car in front of the Prairie Manor Care Center, he

asked the crowd: "Is there someone here who just turned 100?" Harms graciously waved and said it was her. Asked how she felt on her birthday, Harms flashed that wide smile and said, "I feel a little better than I usually do." She said she had received over 50 birthday cards prior to her actual birthday. "I don't see the cards right away because they have to put them in quarantine," remarked Eleanor. She also received 12 red roses from her immediate family. Three helium balloons

signifying 100 years were placed behind Harms for photo ops. "The staff here at Prairie Manor has been outrageously great," commented son Daniel. "It will be hard when they all go home; I can't even make a cup of coffee for them," she said lovingly. "I never thought I would make it to 100," Harms confessed. She was told that an Owatonna woman just turned 107 and her response was: "Oh my goodness!" Harms has nine grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. "You used to be a little girl," Eleanor said to her great granddaughter Kaidence Harms. Eleanor and husband Doede lived in Blooming Prairie over 79 years. They lived on Pine Street (now called Center) for 72 years. Two of Eleanor's neighbors, Harold and Vivian Ulrich, stopped by Prairie Manor to say Happy Birthday to their friend Eleanor. To what does Eleanor attribute her long life. She quickly responds that it is her faith that has shaped her long life. Son Dean said, "Did she tell you that she has had 17 surgeries during her life?" Fondly, saying goodbye to her company, Eleanor confessed, "I never thought I would get to be 100."



Clete Glynn of the Blooming Prairie Honor Guard participated in a rifle squad 21-gun salute at the Blooming Prairie City Cemetery on Memorial Day.

In the shadow of COVID, tribute still for fallen

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Under the veil of COVID-19, area service men and women still managed to pay due respects to our fallen soldiers and to our family members and friends who have passed. Because of the guidelines requiring social distancing, most service entities dialed back on their ceremonies. Maybe, the ceremonies were brief, but they were still impactful as uniformed honor guards in Ellendale and Blooming Prairie paid military honor to their fallen comrades. Roger Shaunce of VFW Post 8941 was in charge of the ceremonies performed at six area churches: Holy Trinity Catholic Church cemetery of Litomysl; St. Ansgar's Cemetery on Highway 30; the Geneva Community Cemetery; St. Aiden's Catholic Cemetery of Bath; Ellendale Lutheran Church Cemetery and the Berlin Cemetery of Ellendale. These Ellendale memorial stops counted six cemeteries from 8:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. The Ellendale honor guard consisting of members of American Legion Post 296 and members of VFW Post 8941 numbered 13 including a rifle squad who

fired a 21-gun salute. A high school junior from New Richland Hartland Ellendale Geneva (NRHEG), Daniel Nydegger, played an inspirational TAPS. Legionnaire Larry Otto offered a brief prayer. At the Blooming Prairie City Cemetery, an Honor Guard of American Legion Post 52 and VFW Post 878 numbering 19 participated in an impressive display of colors and in firing a 21-gun salute. Bruce Kubicek, commander of Legion Post 52 welcomed attendees who practiced social distancing at the BP cemetery. He also said a brief prayer in honor of our loved ones who passed before us. Carol Prokopec, wife of Blooming Prairie Honor Guard member Bob Prokopec, was busy the night before, making patriotic masks for Honor Guard members and others helping with the abbreviated Memorial Day service. The masks contained red, white and blue on a flag background. Attendance at both Ellendale and Blooming Prairie sponsored services was definitely far below normal attendance. "We had maybe one-fourth of what we usually have for our Memorial Day services," said Kubicek.



Karl Luiken of American Legion Post 52 plays TAPS on an electronic device at the Blooming Prairie City Cemetery.



Members of American Legion Post 296 and VFW Post 8941 of Ellendale presented the colors at an abbreviated Memorial Day ceremony at the St. Ansgar Cemetery on Highway 30.

Hagedorn: 'I'm feeling great and working hard'

U.S. Congressman Jim Hagedorn of Blue Earth reports that his treatment for advanced kidney cancer is going well. Hagedorn said, "Last week, I attended one of my regularly scheduled checkup appointments at the Mayo Clinic. I am pleased to report that my response to treatment continues to go exceedingly well. The immunotherapy is boosting my body's immune system and enabling it to identify and kill the cancer cells. "I'm feeling great and working hard. Rest assured, I will keep fighting cancer

and fighting for America and the people of southern Minnesota. "On behalf of my wife, Jennifer Carnahan, and myself, thanks to all who have offered their prayers, support and encouragement. We are especially grateful for the care of my talented physician, Dr. Lance Pagliaro, and all the wonderful and devoted professionals at the Mayo Clinic." Hagedorn was diagnosed with stage four kidney cancer on Feb. 15, 2019, during a routine health examination. He had no symptoms and the cancer was detected accidentally. Hagedorn

has received medical care and treatment at the Mayo Clinic for the past 15 months. Since being sworn into office in January 2019, Hagedorn has held 26 Town Hall meetings (including an in-person event in each of the First District's 21 counties), made 44 roundtrips to and from Washington, D.C. and has not missed a single vote due to illness. Rep. Hagedorn, an outspoken advocate for preventative medical screenings, has vocally encouraged Governor Tim Walz to safely and promptly reopen Minnesota's hospitals and medical clinics so

residents can again receive routine consultations and preventative screenings. Since the advent of the coronavirus pandemic, Hagedorn has warned that tens of thousands of Americans, many completely unaware of illness and in need of immediate life-saving treatment, will likely die or incur lasting health problems due to postponed diagnosis and treatment. Hagedorn uses his case as an example, explaining that he likely would not be alive today had his cancer diagnosis and treatment been delayed for even one or two months.

Saluting Panther Brain Power

Congratulations to the honor graduates from the Class of 2020 at NRHEG High School!

Valedictorians



Jayna Domeier



Alexandra Combs

Salutatorian



Holly Stene

Top-Tier Graduates (3.75 GPA or higher)



Margueritte Maloney



Grace Kofstad



Annie Prigge



Paige Peterson



Summer Kath



Emmablu Jameson



Agro Gushwa



Evan Fell



Aracelis Sepulveda

Honor Graduates (3.0 GPA or higher)



Elizabeth Karl



Addison Deyle



Naomi Retallick



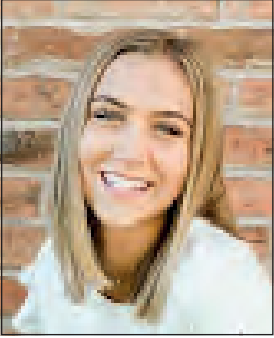
Tiara Malakowsky



Mason Ferber



Mia Williams



Madison Kormann



Katie Cliff



Madison DenHerder



Cherysh Marcks



Paige Knudson



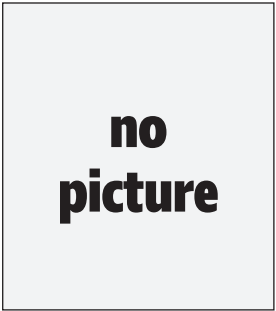
Blake Ihrke



Jenna Nelson



Mikayla Adams



Madelyn Broton-Anderson

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ELLENDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

JUNE 5

10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

JUNE 8

10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

7 p.m. – Berlin Township Meeting

JUNE 10

10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

JUNE 4

10:30 a.m. – Storytime Online with Darla, Facebook Live

JUNE 5

7 p.m. – Celebrate the Class of 2020 Cruise, Main Street, Owatonna

JUNE 6

7 a.m. – Farmers Market, Central Park

JUNE 8

4:30 p.m. – Owatonna Park Board Meeting

JUNE 9

10:30 a.m. – Storytime Online with Darla, Facebook Live

5 p.m. – Steele County Board Meeting

5:30 p.m. – Owatonna Human Rights Commission Meeting

JUNE 10

5:30 p.m. – Medford EDA Meeting

Swinging into summer



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Temperatures are warming and summer seems to be close-by. Having fun on Victory Field's swing set are Weston Valek, Skylar Valek, Lake LaMotte and Jaxon Meier. Parks are now open in Blooming Prairie.

Gus' Station Car Show moved to September

With the uncertainty of community gatherings in view of present COVID-19 guidelines, the Steele County Historical Society has chosen to move two mid-summer activities into September.

The sixth annual Gus' Station Car Show and Fundraiser will be Saturday, Sept. 19 with car registration at 8 a.m. and show running from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

The SCHS Extravaganza, a day of music, food, old time demonstrations, and a Rendezvous encampment, will be Sunday, Sept. 20, running from noon to 4 p.m.

Both of these events serve as festive community activities as well as fundraisers for the Historical Society. Please mark your calendars. For questions or information, contact the Society at 507-451-1420 or event coordinator at maryanne.higgins@steelehistory-museum.org.

Little Theatre announces new lineup

Little Theatre of Owatonna (LTO) is pleased to announce its 2020-2021 Season with these entertaining performances!

More details of these productions, as well as audition information, will be available on www.LittleTheatre-ofOwatonna.org as it becomes available.

2020-2021 Season

• Fall 2020: Cat's Cradle by Leslie Sands

Directed by Jon Terrill

Tech Directed by Mary Butler Fraser

Presented by special arrangement Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York

Oct 9-11 & 16-18

• Holiday 2020: Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Lyrics by Tim Rice and Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber

Directed by Bev Cashman

Tech Directed by Kathy Purdie

Presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of The Really Useful Group www.concordtheatricals.com

Dec. 3-6 & 10-13

• Winter 2021: Clue: On Stage

Based on the screenplay by Jonathan Lynn. Written by Sandy Rustin. Additional

Material by Hunter Foster and Eric Price. Based on the Paramount Pictures Motion Picture. Based on the Hasbro board game CLUE. Original Music by David Abbinanti

Directed by Zackery Knapton

Tech Directed by Sandee Hardy Hagen

Presented by special arrangement with TheAraca Group, Work Light Productions, and Michael Barra/Lively McCabe Entertainment

Feb. 12-14 & 19-21

• Spring 2021: Something Rotten!

Book by Karey Kirkpatrick & John O'Farrell. Music and Lyrics by Karey Kirkpatrick and Wayne Kirkpatrick

Directed by Jeffrey Jackson

Tech Director by Kathy Purdie

Presented by special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.MTIShows.com

Dates: April 22-25 & 29-May 2

• Summer 2021: Frumpled Fairy Tales by William Springer

Directed by Sarah Friesen

Presented by special arrangement with Eldridge Plays and Musicals.

July 16-18 & 23-25

NRHEG honors students with awards

Staff members at NRHEG High School recently presented various awards during a ceremony.

Students presented with awards included:

Student of the Month Triple A: Jayna Domeier and Mason Ferber.

Senior Class Officers/Student Council Representatives: President Maggie Maloney, Vice President Grace Kofstad, Secretary Annie Prigge, Treasurer Jayna Domeier, Representative Aracelis Sepulveda, Representative Paige Peterson.

Junior Class Officers/Student Council Representatives: Kendall Johnson, Caden Riewer, Grace Tufte, Hanna Crabtree, Ashton Johnson, Cambria Nissen and Amy Tasker.

Sophomore Class Officers/Student Council Representatives: Brenlee Knudson, Journey Utpadel, Porter Peterson, Tyrone Wilson, Cassie Kormann and Elsa Gushwa.

Freshman Class Officers/Student Council Representatives: Alexis Chambers, Tatum Smith Vulcan, Ethan Thompson, Eva Wayne, Grace Wilkenson and Anton Domeier.

High School Ambassadors: Holly Stene, Natalie Gaona, Madison Johannsen, Jordan Horesji, Naomi Retallik, Dylan Loken, Miranda LaCanne, Autumn Combs, Caden Riewer, Anna Peterson, Cora Harpel and Dana Standke.

Perfect Attendance: 6th Grade – Owen Wayne; 7th Grade – Alden Dobberstein and Brady Koopal; 8th Grade – Madison Murray, Clay Routh and Tayler Schmidt; 10th Grade – Alex Dobberstein; 11th Grade – Gavin Anderson and Kendall Johnson.

Music: Louie Armstrong Jazz – Jayne Domeier; John Phillip Sousa – Maggie Maloney; Outstanding Senior Award – Lonnie Wilson; Senior Honorable Mention – Paige Peterson; National Choral Award – Alexandra Combs; Marching Band Panther of the Year – Jayna Domeier.

Knowledge Bowl: Olivia Kofstad, Gavin Anderson, Maggie Maloney, Nathan Vanek, Hannah Huismann, Riley Schultz, Mason Ferber, Alexandra Combs, Cloie Arndt,

Emmablu Jameson, Dylan Loken, Nataly Gaona, Anton Domeier, Aracelis Sepulveda, Holly Stene, Jayna Domeier, Addison Deyle, Annie Prigge, Grace Kofstad, Evan Fell, Kendall Johnson, Cora Harpel and Hope VanWilgen.

Panther Press Writers: Editor – Jordan Horejsi; Contributors – Alexandra Combs, Elizabeth Karl, Naomi Retallick, Jade Mely, Holly Stene and Brittyn Anderson.

Speech Team Awards: Alexandra Combs, Kayliegh Wilkie, Ashton Cords, Mia Williams, Jonah Stafford and Luisa Gaona.

Reader's Theatre Performers: Riley Chicos, Alexandra Combs, Ashton Cords, John Hoelscher, Elizabeth Karl, Paige Knudson, Sydney Koziolk, Dylan Loken, Margueritte Maloney, Caden Riewer, Naomi Retallick, Micaela Vaale, Kayliegh Wilkie and Mia Williams.

One Act Play Letter Winners: John Hoelscher, Madison DenHerder, Brittney Rocha, Olivia Kofstad, Ashton Cords, Aaliyah Weston, Cora Harpel, Kayliegh Wilkie, Hope VanWilgen, Riley Chicos, Alexandra Combs, Brittyn Anderson, Mia Williams, Sydney Koziolk, Eden Eads, Emily Pater, Addison Loken, Amy Tasker, Torri Vaale, Elizabeth Karl, Luisa Gaona, Brittney Rocha, Grace Williams and Samuel Christianson.

President's Education (A Honor Roll 1st, 2nd, 3rd quarters with a Cum GPA of 3.8 or higher): Seniors – Alexandra Combs, Jayna Domeier, Grace Kofstad, Margueritte Maloney, Annie Prigge and Holly Stene; Juniors – Elli Baker; Anna Jacobson, Kendall Johnson, Madison Knudson, Cassidy Martin, Cambria Nissen, Caden Riewer and Grace Tufte; Sophomores – Alex Dobberstein, Elisabeth Gushwa, Jordan Horejsi, Cora Harpel, Cassie Kormann, Brenlee Knudson, Ava Kylo, Kylee Kruger, Matthew Mueller, Rhys Martin, Anna Peterson, Cameron Nicholson, Journey Utpadel and Sophie Stork; Freshman – Anton Domeier, Bree Ihrke, Erin Jacobson, Mayla Soulisak and Eva Wayne.

BIRTHDAYS

JUNE 4

Paul Stender
Brenda Salinas
Lance Ingvaldson
Stephane Bruggeman
Pam Schwarz

JUNE 5

Lantry Houillion
Doug Johnson
Kara Trotman
Zach Prouty
Nor Klemmensen

JUNE 6

Greg Snider
Maren Forystek
Bailee Klemmensen

JUNE 7

Loretta Ingvalson
Leigh Yentsch
Veronica Brown
Monica Lea
Kevin Tocko
Doris Lea
Tyler Bluedorn

JUNE 8

Ella Klemmensen

JUNE 9

Clarence Boyd
Cheryl Coughlin
Bob Nahlovsky
Kari Ann Lueth
Julie Peterson
Becky Braaten
Dave Hoffman
Allen Vandal
Laura Dale

JUNE 10

Wyatt Hemann
Billy Lindquist
Christian Gardner
Thomas Rogers
David Trihus
Morgan Snider

ANNIVERSARIES

JUNE 1

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Olson
Bill & Jennifer Walsh

JUNE 3

Jeff & Sue Zwiener
Andrew & Emily Savaria

JUNE 4

Mike & Alyssa Ressler

JUNE 5

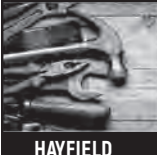
Brian & Christine Wencil
Gloria & Vern Dennis

JUNE 8

Cletus & Sharon Glynn

JUNE 9

Heidi & Brett Zimmerman

HAYFIELD

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Sudoku Corner

4		9	6	1		7		5
3		5			9		2	
2		7	5			4		9
				2			5	7
		1			6	2	9	8
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1	2	3	8	6	7	4	9	5
4	8	6	9	9	3	2	1	7
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9	7	8	6	1	4	9	1	3
5	3	1	2	1	9	6	8	4

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• Must be 21 to be in patio area.

• Customers may enter into the bar only to use the restrooms or purchase a beverage or pizza. Please follow signage when you enter / exit the bar to "return to the patio area."

• State of Minnesota strongly encourages customers to wear a mask and practice social distancing while in public.

Sale

OFF-SALE HOURS:
Monday - Friday 10am-10pm
Saturday 9am-10pm
Sunday closed

Future events will depend on the State of Minnesota COVID-19 guide Lines.

CANCELLED: 8.O.B. ride and the July 3rd street dance. Bingo until further notice.

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Congratulations, Class of 2020

Don't be afraid to fail

"Who are you going to be?" That's a question Julia Worke, valedictorian at Blooming Prairie High School, asked in her commencement speech.

"The answer is simple," Worke said. "You can be anything you want to be if you are able to set your mind to it," she believes.

Here's the full text of Julia Worke's commencement address:

Good morning everyone! My name is Julia Worke.

I never thought that I would be talking over the radio at graduation, but hey, you gotta do what you gotta do.

Not all that long ago, I remember coming into the high school as a scared seventh grader. I wasn't afraid of how difficult the classes would be or that I would be shoved in a locker. My biggest concern was that I wouldn't make it to my classes on time. Honestly, that was my biggest concern.

As a senior, you'd think that I'd have that issue covered, but ironically, I still couldn't get my locker open on my first day of school this year.

In the grand scheme of things however I learned that it wasn't a big deal. These worries were minor compared to the problems we experience now.

Now, my concerns are, forgetting to study for a test, wondering if I will have a date to prom (although that isn't happening anymore), and what I am going to write in this speech. Thankfully, I figured out that last one.

First of all, I have a question for everybody. Who are you going to be? Do you want to be a nurse? A football star? An engineer?

The answer is simple. You can be anything you want to be if you are able to set your mind to it. Follow your passions and interests. Believe that you can accomplish great things because once you do that, you can do anything.

I think sometimes people believe that success or happiness happens overnight and that is simply not true. Real success happens by working hard, putting yourself out there and logging in the time.

It's tempting to want to see results right away, but that isn't feasible for the accomplishments that really matter in life. We need to give ourselves time and have patience in order to succeed.

I believe that all of us can succeed in whatever we want to do. Do you want to know why? Because of confidence. Confidence is a huge factor in putting your mind to something.

I believe in us, our teachers believe in us, and our

parents believe in us. The only way we can succeed is to have self-confidence and believe in ourselves.

Sadly, sometimes we hold ourselves back due to fear. Sometimes fear can lead to failure or by fearing failure, we sometimes give up before we even begin.

Some of us have fear of spiders, some clowns, perhaps public speaking, but most of all, we fear the unknown.

We are closing a chapter in our lives and trying to write a new one, but we have to be willing to move forward in order to succeed.

Sometimes we are too afraid to move forward and we want to stay back in our high school days where it feels safe and familiar. But I have something to tell you, don't be afraid to let go.

Every new adventure begins with the ending of another. We need to choose to move forward and excel at our next chapter in our lives. Whether it be college, the work force, or the military, do it because you love it, not because you have to.

Be willing to still your mind and listen to your heart. Set goals, write them down, and live up to them. Don't be afraid to fail. Don't be afraid to take calculated risks. Risks are what help us live our lives to the fullest. There's a risk involved in putting your true self out there, but there are more risks in hiding yourself and your gifts from the world.

I was watching Good Morning America one morning and I saw Matthew McConaughey on TV, giving a speech to the class of 2020. He, of course, gave a fantastic speech and there was one thing that he said that stuck in my mind. He said, "Just keep living, that is your job."

I started thinking, he's right. If we can't do anything during this pandemic, we can just live. Just be and live your life to the best of your ability. You do you.

I found this quote from T. Whitmore. He is an author and I feel that he is speaking to us, the class of 2020.

He states, "Truth be told, you will never really know just how strong and adamant you are unless adversity strikes. Then you learn courage, you build resilience, you learn to persevere, and you build character." Class of 2020 we made history. We are special. We are survivors. We are the change we hope to see.

Thank you to all of our teachers and staff. To our parents and families. To the seniors before us and the seniors to follow. We, the class of 2020, will never be forgotten. Thank you.



Try to be yourself and make the best of it



Blooming Prairie High School Salutatorian Riauna Bishop offers this advice to everyone: "My advice to you, is during this dark time where it feels like nothing will ever be normal again, be the light."

She said, "In life, you do not expect to run into inconveniences, whether it is a flat tire or a pandemic. It helps to have the resources you need in case something bad were to happen though..."

Here is the full text of Riauna's Salutatorian speech:

Hello, my name is Riauna Bishop. I am happy to speak to you all today and represent the class of 2020.

Each and every one of you have made an impact on our class and we appreciate all you have done to support us. Now, let's look back on the last four years of memories that our class has shared together.

When I think of our class, I think of all the success we have had in athletics. Our class has always been dedicated to the things we love the most, especially sports.

Ever since we were in elementary school, playing soccer at recess, playing little league ball and doing camps, we have always had the goal of succeeding.

As we grew older, our class was brought up a level or two in almost every sport because of low numbers. Because we were playing against much older, stronger, faster people, we would not do very well and we would lose confidence.

For example, in junior high, our girls basketball team would painfully lose almost every game. Instead of quitting and getting down on ourselves, our class worked even harder in the off season and became so much more than a successful class. We left a legacy.

Our class was part of making history in boys basketball, wrestling, and

SEE TRY TO BE YOURSELF, A20

Keeping a positive attitude is important

Blooming Prairie Salutatorian Adam Larson believes in reason.

"Develop your ability to reason. Giving reason up to a vague faith in something or a false hope is like throwing away a life vest because a mystifying person told you that water doesn't drown people."

He emphasizes that life means only so much as the meaning you give it.

Here is the full text of Salutatorian Adam Larson's commencement speech:

Well everyone, we did it!

What a wild ride these past few months have been for us all.

One thing I have always wanted to have is a story to tell.

With these past few years in mind, I can confidently say that I now have one worth telling.

It starts with joining cross country on the first day of my ninth-grade year.

Then in the winter of that same year I joined the Robotics Club and, man, was that a wonderful experience.

To finish out that year I joined Track and Field to continue to have the bragging rights to running long distances.

This is extraordinary to me because I was the quiet kid, the socially awkward kid, the kid who avoided social interaction at all cost because it terrified me.

To this day, I shamelessly consider myself the best an introvert can be.

I owe my new found confidence to being involved in the activities this school provides.

I'm sure this is probably my fourth or fifth time saying this, but I truly believe becoming involved in something, anything helps tremendously with getting through high school and beyond.

Whether it's football (State champs

whew!) or the yearly play the school puts on, get involved in it.

Keep in mind though, if you join something with a negative mindset you'll probably have a

bad time.

This is why keeping a positive attitude is so important.

Because it affects how much enjoyment you'll get out of the things you do.

In short a bad mood means a bad time.

Obviously you'll have bad days, terrible even, what matters is how you conduct yourself during those bad days.

The best way to deal with difficult times is to remain calm, much like a stoic, and think through the problem rationally.

This is something else I cannot stress enough, continually develop your ability to reason.

Giving reason up to a vague faith in something or a false hope is like throwing away a life vest because a mystifying person told you that water doesn't drown people.

Lastly I'll talk about life and how precious and wonderful it is.

Right now it may seem hopeless and that trying to do anything is pointless as it will just be cancelled due to fears of what could happen.

What I found truly comforting and freeing was that that feeling of hopelessness and despair could easily be replaced with my own defined meaning specific to me.

The fact that life means only so much as the meaning you give it is why you should enjoy every moment of life and make the most of everything you can.

I'll end with this: Love life because it's yours alone, the only one you'll have in fact, and no one can take that from you.

To quote my favorite author, Terry Goodkind, "Your life is yours and yours alone. Rise up and live it!"



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First grade teachers visit students



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

First grade teacher Emily Henslin stopped by Isaac Westphal's house last week with a gift and to tell him that his teacher misses him.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

First grade teacher Heather Schiller brought a bag of treats to one of her students, Alexa Miner, 7. "I just wish I could hug you," Mrs. Schiller told Alexa who was wearing a shirt saying, "I can change the world."

Church Reopens



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Two churches in Blooming Prairie re-opened on Sunday, May 31. Under special guidelines, the Blooming Prairie First Baptist Church and St. Columbanus Catholic Church re-opened after being closed for nearly two months. Two of the church goers were Brittany Hierlmaier and son Joe.

SKALA NAMED FROM A10

Jail administrator Anthony Buttera says the work style displayed by Skala is effective in communicating with inmates. "You can take care of things by using the correct and respectful communication," Buttera said. "By just listening to them you build rapport and you can deescalate situations." Correctional work has evolved since the early 1990s into helping people instead of the "rough and tumble" image many people associate with correctional officers, according to Buttera. "What we do is not sensationalistic," he said. "We do social work." Skala is thankful for receiving the top correctional award, but

quickly points out, "I don't come to work to get awards. I come to work for work." The correctional officer has adopted the 110% work model in doing her job. "I don't go home until I know I have given 110%," Skala says. "I come with a positive attitude and try to rub off on others," she said. In choosing Skala for the top honor, Buttera says she has been nominated for the past three years since the inception of the award. "She puts her all in for 12 hours," Buttera said. "She is a good role model for other officers. She is trusted." Buttera said the award was started as

"I don't go home until I know I have given 110%."

Cpl. Linda Skala
Correctional Officer of the Year

a way to honor valued employees. "It's just to recognize a job that is unrecognized by the public," he said. "Just a little recognition is a good thing," he added. Skala and her husband Kevin have three children and live in Owatonna. She is a 1998 graduate of Blooming Prairie. She has no intentions of leaving the jail any time soon. "I love this job," Skala says. "I'm going to be here for another 28 years."

SENIORS MATTER FROM A10

each year and only 1 in 14 cases of elder abuse ever comes to the attention of authorities." Signs: there are several "types" of abuse. Below is a list of some of the potential ways that you may see abuse. The list is not exhausting, but you can get a basic idea of what abuse is. • Neglect/self-neglect: Lack of adequate food or water. Lack of appropriate hygiene or home sanitation resulting in or potentially resulting in illness. Lack of medical assistance or medication. • Financial abuse: Unmet basic needs. Unpaid bills. Unexplained new credit cards or increase in

bank withdrawals. Unusual purchases by caregiver(s). • Physical abuse: bruises, black eyes, welts, broken bones, cuts, or sprains. Sudden change in behavior. Caregiver(s) refusal to leave the elder alone. • Mental abuse: threatening physical harm, derogatory/inappropriate names, insults, profanity, belittling comments, harassment, intimidation or humiliation. • Sexual abuse: Unexplained bruising on thighs or chest. Unexplained sexually transmitted illness. Unexplained stains on clothing or bedding. Withdrawal

from social settings/interactions. Declining mental health. Advocate!!!: Call or visit an elder – either a family, friend, or volunteer to be a visitor. Report to local adult protective services 1-844-880-1574 or long-term care ombudsman 800-657-3591. Call 9-1-1 immediately if the person is in immediate, life-threatening danger.

Heather Fast is a registered nurse with Steele County Public Health in Owatonna. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.

VIRUS SHUTTERS: state's largest county fair FROM A1

current circumstance, it's a tough decision for everybody. We're all struggling with this right now, for sure." Owatonna Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director Mike Johnson spoke about some of the health and safety concerns at play. "There's a lot of unknowns with this virus," he said. "We're still seeing the numbers rising, we don't have control as far as community spread and everything appears to be escalating at this point."

"It's going to be difficult to try and stop this," Johnson continued. "In our community we have a great reputation for this fair, it's the best fair that I've ever been to, and I enjoy coming. I know there's an expectation for people who come to the fair to have a safe and a good time at the fair." While none of those in attendance wished to nudge the consensus one way or the other, it was important to give context to the eventual decision. "You want to keep that reputation of being a safe

place to bring your family," Johnson said. "If you can't guarantee that it's going to be safe for the people that come here then I think you have to consider postponing the fair." Sheriff Lon Thiele also touched upon the safety issues they would face. "I always enjoyed going to the fair, and it's sad to see the businesses that are suffering," he said. "I'm going to support whatever the fair board decides to do, but it's just a matter of how far are we going to push the envelope."

"If you're bringing in 300,000 people, that's 300,000 what ifs," Sheriff Thiele further explained. "We simply do not have the resources to enforce the social distancing." Speaking to the board, state Senator John Jasinski noted that there were many local businesses and nonprofits which benefit from the annual celebration. "There's 30 nonprofit organizations that get something out of our fair," Fair Manager Scott Kozelka confirmed.

"Unfortunately, we've not been able to identify a plan that would allow us to move forward with our fair."

Scott Kozelka
Steele County Fair Manager

After hearing everyone's remarks, and discussing the decision as a board, a motion was officially put forth to cancel this year's fair. "I've been up here since I was a little kid," Director Mike Hamilton said. "If we can't do this, and do it right and try to keep people apart, then I'm not in favor of

that one bit." All those on the board mentioned the difficulty of such a decision but touched upon the necessity of their choice. With heavy hearts the board of directors opted to postpone the fun until 2021. The 2021 Steele County Free Fair is scheduled for Aug. 17-22.

SPECIALTY BEER: in honor of a world hall of famer FROM A1

With his concertina in hand, Wanous performed during an open house celebrating his beer at MSB a few weekends ago. MSB initially had a spot roped off for him to play to keep social distancing. People brought lawn chairs to join in on the fun. However, a short time after he began playing, MSB informed him he had to quit because "you're attracting too many people." As many as 75 people had congregated to hear Wanous play his favorite polkas. Most of his selections were what else, but beer songs. Some of them included In Heaven There is No Beer, Beer Barrel Polka, Blue Skirt Waltz and Apples, Peaches, Pumpkin Pie. When MSB owner Mark Sebring contacted him about naming a beer after him, Wanous

said, "I was dumbfounded." He added he initially thought it was a scam. Naming a beer after Wanous is part of an effort by MSB to offer beers representing longevity in Owatonna and Steele County. MSB is featuring 11 other beers. Asked if he enjoyed his special beer, Wanous responded, "Hell ya, what do you think this is Sesame Street?" He actually stocked up with about \$400 of Luverne's Concertina beer so he could give some away to family members, including his grandchildren. While playing at thousands of performances over the years, Wanous has enjoyed tipping back some brews. "I drank a lot of beer over the years," he admits. At one point he switched to brandy, but

now he has gone back to beer again. Wanous was just 8 years old when he began playing for his first paid job. His first gig was at the Steele Center Town Hall in 1944 when a neighbor took him to perform at the Farmer's Union meeting. He received 75 cents for playing. In the early 1960s, he formed a seven-piece band that was popular for more than 20 years. In most recent years, he has cut back to a one-piece band averaging more than 100 shows a year, mostly at nursing homes, senior citizen dances, anniversaries and birthdays. "I'm just so blessed and thankful," Wanous said. Through it all, Wanous has developed a fondness for making people happy. One of his

greatest thrills is watching people tap their legs and arms as he performs music. "You don't buy those memories," he says. "It's in the heart." Since the COVID-19 crisis hit, Wanous has missed opportunities to entertain as many of his venues are off limits. Over the years he has been through other health and economic scares, but nothing quite like this. "It hasn't been this bad where they have shut down everything," he said. With most entertainment venues at a standstill, Wanous says it's all the more reason to store up on some extra beer. "Have a beer on me," he said. After all Wanous reminds us as he sings one of his favorites: "In Heaven there is no beer, that's why we drink it here."

MINERAL SPRINGS BREWERY SPECIALTY BEERS

Cinder Hill Cream Ale named after Cinder Hill, a steep 60-foot hill on Linn Avenue overlooking downtown Owatonna
Kaplan's Kolsch named after the Kaplan family, which has been synonymous with success in Owatonna for more than 150 years
Litomysl Lager named after renowned home of Holy Trinity Church in Steele County
Beer Garden Golden Ale named after beer garden sales, which are a key figure in the Steele County Free Fair's attendance calculation
Monterey IPA named after the Monterey Ballroom, which has been a special gathering place for Steele Countians since 1938
Thunderbolt IPA named after Herb Joesting who became known as the Owatonna Thunderbolt when he was an all-American fullback at the U of M
Straight River IPA named after the heading water of Owatonna's Mineral Springs
Franklin Steele Scotch Ale named after the founder of Steele County
Somerset Wheat named after Somerset Township located southwest of Owatonna
Morehouse Hazy IPA named after the historic Morehouse Dam
North Star Pale Ale named in recognition of homage to Minnesota

NOTICE

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

Date: May 13, 2020
YOU ARE NOTIFIED THAT:

1. Default has occurred in the conditions of that certain Mortgage and Security Agreement and Fixture Financing Statement dated June 26, 2007, executed by Owatonna Hospitality LLC, a Minnesota limited liability company, to Minnwest Bank, M.V., a Minnesota banking corporation, now known as Minnwest Bank, and filed for record on July 12, 2007, as Document No. A000350967, in the Office of the County Recorder of Steele County, Minnesota, and as thereafter modified.

2. The original principal amount secured by the Mortgage was \$6,000,000.00.

3. No action or proceeding at law is now pending to recover the debt secured by the Mortgage, or any part thereof.

4. The holder of the Mortgage has complied with all conditions precedent to acceleration of the debt secured by the Mortgage and foreclosure of the Mortgage, and all notice and other

requirements of applicable statutes.

5. At the date of this notice the amount due on the Mortgage, and taxes, if any, paid by the holder of the Mortgage is the following sum: \$2,936,327.41.

6. Pursuant to the power of sale in the Mortgage, the Mortgage will be foreclosed, on the land described as follows:

Lot 2, Block 1, Three Corners Addition No. 2, Steele County, Minnesota.

Street Address: 2365 Northwest 43rd Street, Owatonna, MN 55060
PIN 17-509-0102

together with all fixtures, equipment, machinery, and personal property of any kind which is located at or necessary to the use of the foregoing real estate;

all of which real estate and personal property will be sold by the Sheriff of Steele County, Minnesota, at public auction on July 15, 2020, at 10:00 o'clock a.m. at the Steele County Sheriff's Office, 204 Pearl Street, Owatonna, Minnesota 55060.

7. The time allowed by law for redemption by the Mortgagor, or the Mortgagor's personal representatives or assigns, is twelve (12)

months after the date of sale.

Mortgagee:
By Scott T. Larison
Attorney for Mortgagee
Lathrop GPM LLP
1010 West St. Germain, Suite 500
St. Cloud, MN 56301
(320) 252-4414
5/20T6

NOTICE

Proposed City of Blooming Prairie City Council Meeting Agenda June 8, 2020 7:00P.M.

Meeting Closed to the Public – Will be Live Streamed on Facebook – City of Blooming Prairie

Call to Order
Pledge of Allegiance
Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of Minutes of May 11, 2020 – Regular City Council Meeting
3. Approval of Minutes of May 11, 2020 – Public Hearing – Interim Use Permit
4. Approve Facade Improvement Program Reimbursement – Nick's Cafe
5. Approve Facade Improvement Program Application – Prairie Home Floral
6. Approve Facade Improvement Program

Reimbursement – Prairie Home Floral

7. Approve Liquor Licenses and Fees

Financial Report
Committee/Commission Reports

1. B.P. Public Utilities

Business

1. 2019 Audit Presentation & Approval
2. COVID-19 Updates – Events – Parks – Businesses
3. Sale of Industrial Lot Parcel to BPPU
4. BPPD Permanent Part-time Police Officer Hire – After Closed Session

City Administrator's Report

1. Pine Spring Pool Platform Replacement
2. Hwy 218 Crosswalk Paintings
City Attorney's Report
Council Members' Reports

Closed Session: Personnel Discussion
Adjourn

This Agenda is subject to change

NOTICE

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #756 BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA 55917 MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2020

HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER PROPOSED TENTATIVE AGENDA

6:00 a.m. Thursday, June 11, 2020 *Regular School Board Work Session – High School Media Center 7:00 p.m. Monday, June 15, 2020 *Open Public Forum – High School Media Center 7:15 p.m. Monday, June 15, 2020 *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

A. Consent Agenda Minutes
Bills
Treasurer's Report
Resignation
Donations

B. Employment

C. Reassignments

D. Principals' Contract 2020-22

E. Custodial Contract 2020-22

F. Noncertified Salaries 2020-22

G. Resolution Establishing Dates for Filing Affidavits of Candidacy

VII. ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND/OR DISCUSSION ONLY

A. Committee Reports

B. Enrollment Data

C. Dates to Note

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

IX. ADJOURNMENT

*Agenda may be subject to changes

Virtual dairy conference planned

The virtual 2020 4 State Dairy Nutrition and Management Conference is fast approaching on June 10. All presentations will be recorded and available to participants for 60 days after the conference.

Adisseo's pre-conference symposium will focus on how amino acid balancing will improve cow performance. Dr. Johan Osorio, South Dakota State University, will cover amino acid balancing in transition cows. Dr. Mark Hanigan, Virginia Tech. will talk about important amino acids beyond just lysine and methionine. Dr. Milo Wiltbank, University of Wisconsin, will be discussing the present reality and future prospects of functional

amino acids, especially in reproduction.

The first Four State session will focus on factors to improve animal health and performance. Dr. Nigel Cook, University of Wisconsin discuss practical steps to prevent lameness. Dr. Kevin Harvatine, Penn State University, will examine how daily and seasonal rhythms impact cow performance and Dr. Mike Steele, University of Guelph, will talk about nutritional regulation of gut health and development by colostrum and milk in calves.

The second session will focus on maximizing profit from bull calves. Dr. Dan Schaefer, University of Wisconsin will teach

participants how to realize the full value of Holstein and Holstein cross steers. Bill Munns, JBS USA will discuss the science behind purebred Holstein beef and Chip Kemp, ASA, will cover how to use data to select profit focused beef bulls for a crossbreeding in Holstein herds.

Select breakout topics include:

- Barn design for Automatic milking systems
- Maximizing milk fat yield
- Nutritional regulation of gut health and development, weaning and beyond
- How to apply body condition score during transition to improve reproductive efficiency

- Using MUN to manage protein feeding
- Does feeding rumen protected amino acids during stress help?
- Clean feed: optimizing health and nutrition
- Lessons learned from the 2019 growing season
- Optimizing fertility using sexed semen

For details and to register, visit <http://fourstatedairy.org/> or contact Jim Salfer at salfe001@umn.edu or 320-203-6093. The conference registration fee this year is \$75. This conference is a collaborative effort of Iowa State University Extension, University of Illinois Extension, University of Minnesota Extension and University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Cancer Corner

Blooming Prairie Cancer Group





STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

The Blooming Prairie Cancer Group has cancelled its annual auctions for Sept. 11-12 but it will still put up its pink flags which signal painting Blooming Prairie pink in support for a fight against cancer.

By HOWARD LESTRUD

Staff Writer

The 2020 Blooming Cancer Group's annual fall auctions have been cancelled. The auctions were scheduled for Friday and Saturday, Sept. 11-12.

With the auctions just over three months away, a decision by the Cancer Group was made on May 20 and that decision was to abandon the auctions for 2020 and plan for a bigger and better production for Sept. 10-11, 2021.

Cheri Krejci, treasurer of the BP Cancer Group, said the decision to cancel was a tough one and was made because of a concern for social distancing and the economic impact on the community during this time of a COVID-19 pandemic.

"We just would not be comfortable asking for donations during a time when the economy has been adversely affected," said Krejci. "We don't want to be a burden on our supporters," she added.

Krejci did say, however, that donations will still be accepted and can be made to Krejci or to any other BP Cancer Group member. They also can be sent to BP Cancer Group, Box 817, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917.

With the cancer auctions called off for 2020, a couple of activities closely tied with the auctions will still be held. Krejci said the Field of Flags (Paint Blooming Prairie Pink) will be put up in late August. Connie Trom will also continue her annual mum sale.

Two other major BP Cancer Group events include Purse Bingo and Gun Bingo. Two Purse Bingo events were scheduled for Saturday, April 4 but were cancelled because of the coronavirus.

Purse Bingo has been rescheduled for Saturday, April 10, 2021 with two sessions, one at 11 a.m. and one at 5 p.m. Krejci said ticket holders can hold onto their tickets and use them for the 2021 events.

Ten games will be played. The purses have already been purchased. A mystery raffle will be sold at each of the events.

If someone wants their money refunded, they should contact Krejci. If they don't wish to keep their tickets, they can make a contribution, Krejci said.

The second annual gun bingo event was scheduled for the week after the September 11-12 auctions. The 2020 event "is still in limbo," Krejci remarked. The BP Cancer Group also hopes to hold a Turkey Bingo event this coming November.

The Ham Bingo event planned for last March 19 was cancelled because of COVID-19 and will not be rescheduled. The next Ham Bingo will be held in 2021 on a date yet to be determined.

In spite of these BP Cancer Group events being cancelled, Krejci said the Cancer Group's Community Fund is strong and is being used by local people affected by cancer.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Warm-blooded vertebrates
8. Semitic peoples
13. Supervise
14. Historical German territory
15. Sweat
19. The Wolverine State
20. China
21. Violent disturbances
22. A way to commemorate the dead
23. Midway between east and southeast

24. Bird genus
25. Trim
26. Disparaged
30. More coherent
31. Abnormal rattling sounds
32. Healthy appetizers
33. Partner to "shocked"
34. French pianist Pascal
35. Jokes
38. Marks to omit print
39. Tall

40. Coverage
44. "A Death in the Family" author
45. Role of highlights
46. Fixed-radio access
47. Partly digested food
48. "Lamb Chop" puppeteer Lewis
49. In support of
50. Aluminum
51. Reduction in value over time
55. Running events
57. Portuguese region
58. Slowly women
59. Strongly criticized

CLUES DOWN

1. Wiped up
2. Opposed to
3. Macon, GA, university
4. Wife
5. Small viper
6. Polynesia garland of flowers
7. Saw-like
8. Maltese-Italian composer
9. Moved faster than walking
10. Commercial
11. Covered with mud
12. Marksman
16. Buenos ____
17. Tailless amphibian
18. Belonging to a thing
22. Mars crater
25. Most fair
27. Citrus fruit
28. Awkward
29. Brews

30. Beloved late broadcaster Craig
32. All alone
34. Copies
35. Poster
36. Symmetrical
37. Grew older
38. Makes tractors
40. Not the front
41. State as fact
42. Long, narrow cut
43. Worked hard for
45. Indicates position in a box score
48. Tax
51. "Lookout Weekend" singer
52. Unhealthy
53. Imam name ____ Khan
54. A woolen cap of Scottish origin (abbr.)
56. The Golden State

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TRY TO BE YOURSELF: and make the best of it

FROM A15

of course football. We also left a lasting impression in other sports as well.

We did not get lucky by getting these chances at state and winning state in two sports. The boys deserved every minute of the state championship and Colton and Dylan as well in wrestling.

Luck is usually a one-time thing and you don't continuously get lucky. Our class was part of making history because we worked for it. We put in the extra effort and time and we had amazing fans and coaches that supported us through it all.

Although COVID-19 took away our last opportunity to make history in other sports, we have been optimistic and accepting of the fact that we will never be able to perform our last game or at our last meet.

Our class usually looks for the light during dark times. We as a class have been through a lot of adversity, but we are strong enough to get through it all.

Not only do we look for the light, we are the light. Our class has always been supportive of everyone within the school and within the community.

We have all volunteered our time to help those in need and we go out of our way to make people's day better.

My advice to you, is during this dark time where it feels like nothing will ever be normal again, be the light. You may not be able to do certain things during this pandemic, but you can

always choose to love. You can choose to be the light and make the best out of a dark situation.

In life, you do not expect to run into inconveniences, whether it is a flat tire or a pandemic. It helps to have the resources you need in case something bad were to happen though.

Our class's hard work and dedication is our resource that we are using to get through this. We did not expect or even think that a pandemic would take away so many great memories.

We did not think that it would be an issue and that we would never walk the halls again. We were prepared though. We had to just accept the facts and make the best of the worst situation.

I advise all of you that are listening today to do the same. Although, you did not plan for this pandemic, use your resources that you have acquired your whole life.

Work hard, be dedicated, love one another, be happy, volunteer your time, and more. Try to be yourself and make the best of it.

Right now, things are not normal. It is as if an uninvited guest has crept into all of our lives and is trying to displace us and make things fall apart.

It is our job as the class of 2020 not to put the pieces back together, but it is our job to create a new normal. It's a world where beauty, kindness, and love are the new normal.

Oprah Winfrey spoke about the class of 2020 and she said "You are indeed the

chosen class. The united class. The pandemic class." Never has a class been called into the future with more purpose than us. It is now our job to go out, follow our dreams, and accomplish our goals.

During these last four years of high school, I have learned many things. The most important thing I learned is to never take time, people, and memories for granted.

I would give anything to play volleyball and softball one more time. I would give anything to cheer on the boys at one last football game. I would give anything to stay out late and go to TP people's houses.

I would give anything to go to a school dance just one last time. I would give anything to walk the halls with my classmates and make memories with them. You will never get this time back, so make it count.

Although, the remaining part of our senior year, our senior prom, a normal graduation, a senior season of a sport, and more got taken away from us unexpectedly, nothing will be able to take away the memories and fun times we have already shared together.

Thank you to all the teachers and our families for helping us to get to where we are today. We truly could not have done it without you.

Thank you to our coaches who also put in countless hours of extra time and effort into us. I love you all and I am going to miss you. Here is to US. We did it!

A golden time with Sponge Bob



It was Levi Skillestad's Golden (9th) Birthday recently, and he was visited by a special guest, Sponge Bob Square Pants. Levi is the son of Greg and Allyson Skillestad of Blooming Prairie.

I-29 Moo University launches new dairy podcast

Dairy farmers and professionals in the Midwest can receive new way via a podcast launched by the I-29 Moo University dairy consortium. Extension dairy specialists from each state help to develop the topics for the bi-weekly podcast.

The podcast focuses on current issues faced by dairy producers ranging from economics and animal health, to forage, labor and farm programs

The first podcast, released on May 26

features Kim Clark, University of Nebraska, Jim Salfer, University of Minnesota and Fred Hall, Iowa State discussing information for dairy producers concerning the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP).

Podcasts will be released every two weeks, and feature commentary by I-29 Moo University Extension dairy specialists in conversation with other dairy industry experts.

The podcast is available on the I-29

Moo University website (<https://feeds.captivate.fm/i-29-moo-u/>), as well as on each state's dairy Extension website. Producers can also subscribe to the "I-29 Moo U Dairy Podcast" on iTunes and Spotify. Past episodes are archived, so listeners can tune in whenever they choose.

For more information, contact Kim Clark at kimclark@unl.edu or 402-472-6065; Jim Salfer at salfe001@umn.edu or 612-360-4506; or Fred M. Hall at fredhall@iastate.edu or 712-737-4230.

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- **Cruising Main:** Friday, June 5- 7-10 p.m. in downtown Owatonna
- **Photos and Breakfast:** Sunday, June 7- 9 a.m.- 12 p.m. at Foundation Building
- **Business Salute:** Area businesses to honor seniors throughout day
- **Light the Night:** Sunday, June 7- 9:30 p.m. at high school

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2020



Fardowsa Abbas



Abukar Abdi



Kaine Baldus



Hunter Barrie



Macy Barrington



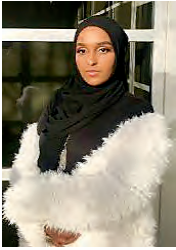
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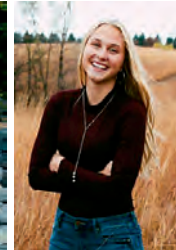
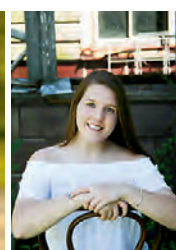
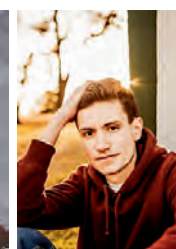
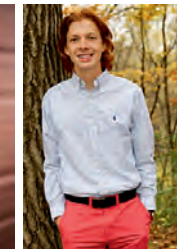
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 Alondra Hernandez-Montero	 Ethan Hettinga	 Khadija Hilowle	 Isaiah Hinrichs	 Lydia Hoffman	 Muhumed Ismail	 Charity Jackson	 Tyliana Jackson	 Karla Jacobo Zavaleta	 Fahima Jama
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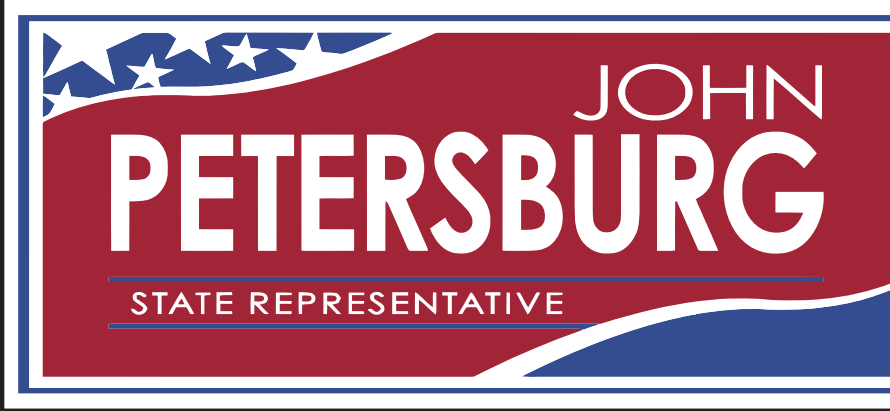
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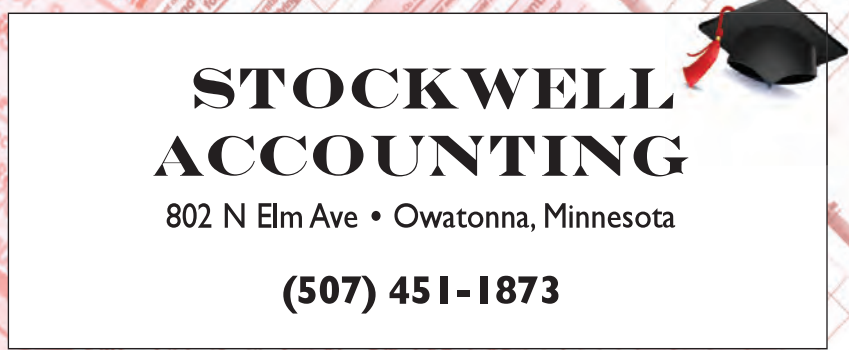
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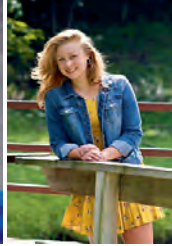
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- Rachel Benson
- Asia Buryska
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- Dallas Carlson
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- Julia Dallenbach
- Brooke DeLeeuw
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- Ethan Engel
- Kaleb Enter
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