

OUR VIEW

Goodbye and good riddance; acts of kindness now needed

For most, leaving 2020 in the past will be an easy task. COVID-19, racial tensions and one of the most contentious elections in recent history turned our world upside down, leaving many families and friends deeply divided as we head into the new year.

Too many have died. Too many have lost their jobs. Too many are feeling alone and isolated.

It's easy to look at the statistics, forgetting that behind every number, there is a human face – a human life – that's been impacted by the life-altering events of 2020.

No wonder, nearly nine in 10 Americans say 2020 was a bad year for the world, with more than half describing it as a very bad year, according to a recent Economist/YouGov poll. More than two-thirds of those polled say 2020 was a bad year for their families, as well.

Yes, 2020 left an indelible scar – one that will take time to heal.

Perhaps that's also the year's greatest gift to humankind. The scars left by 2020 can be healed if we take the time to reflect on what matters most – whether it be our passions, the people in your life or the principles that guide your day-to-day living.

Traditionally, at this time of year, many Americans are making New Year's resolutions. The most common ones are exercising more, saving money, eating healthier and losing weight.

For the most part those are “me” goals, but after this past year we ask: Are they the noblest of goals?

And, we respectfully submit, that it is the noblest of goals that are demanded if we hope to restore civility and reason to what's become a time of great uncertainty.

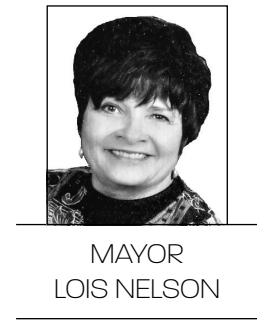
To rise above the circumstances and to heal the fear, isolation and divide of 2020 will require a society that truly values compassion, kindness, humility and patience.

The vaccine offers some much-needed hope. But treating ourselves and each other well affords all of us the brightest future.

For those who will be making a 2021 New Year's resolution, our request is quite simple: Place an act of kindness or two at the top of the list.



Outgoing mayor appreciates support from residents



Holiday greetings from all of us in Medford! 'Nestled in Our Beds' has taken on new meaning in this COVID world. Our holidays, although festive, have been downsized drastically as we are in the age group that can be most affected. The virus has interfered with many family plans right here and maybe, yours too.

Monday, Dec. 28, was our last council meeting of the year and mine also. Year-end always brings a little nostalgia and maybe there is a little more this year. We started our meeting

with Truth and Taxation where citizens were welcome – one at a time to ask questions. The city's preliminary budget sent to the county in September has us at a 2.4% tax increase. We have moved some numbers around, but this is still the proposed amount – approximately a \$10-\$100 increase for our residents. What has been a surprise is our home valuations, which have taken a jump. Twenty-five homes were sold through October – the most in the last five years at or above market rate valuation so this has meant an increase in the majority of our homes. Whether we could get this latest market value when selling is up for discussion – that topic is at the County Board of Review meeting in April.

The question has come up by many as

to what I'll be doing with at least 20 hours a week of free time! I am one that has to be around people – most of this year, this means settling for a zoom or other platform for meetings or catching up with the family – what we will be doing on Christmas Day.

Thankfully, I will continue serving on several boards. Do want to spend time with our Prairie River Trails organization – a grass roots non-profit organized over a year ago to build around our own trail map designations and work regionally to have the exempted Canadian Pacific (CP) Railroad that runs right north of Faribault, through downtown Medford and Owatonna to connecting trail systems. (The railroad did reconstruct the line south of Owatonna to Austin so a trail exten-

SEE OUTGOING MAYOR, A7

A gift that makes cleaning a breeze

I'm sure most people are busy checking out and playing with the new toys and gadgets they received for Christmas. I know I am.

One of the gifts that ended up under the Christmas tree with my name on it this year and intrigued me the most out of everything I received was a Robot Roomba, or in more plain terms a robot vacuum cleaner. I never thought I would find myself operating a robot in my own household, especially for cleaning chores. I quite honestly thought that's what you have kids for. Silly me!

Dreading the call for duty, my children, along with my parents, teamed up to give me a robot this year. Hmmm, I can already see how this started out with the kids thinking, “What can we get dad that will get us out of cleaning the house?” Smart thinking, I'll admit. And, I think I deserve a little credit for at least raising smart kids.

I first gave a robot to



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

my mother a few years back. She has fallen in love with it and makes it sound like cleaning is the most fun activity ever. Now she is partially responsible for returning the generosity. She thought it would be a time saver for me since I work on the newspaper at all hours of the day and night in my office at home.

Vacuuming is one of the most hated chores in existence. It is laborious, monotonous and boring. In today's fast-paced society, it's simply too time-consuming. For many people, getting a robot vacuum is a wonderful

way to clean up without devoting large amounts of time and energy.

The robot is dubbed as smart, simple and clean. There is a navigation system with a full suite of sensors enabling it to seamlessly navigate around obstacles, under furniture, and along wall edges, while avoiding stairs and other drop offs.

Roomba is equipped with a 3-stage cleaning system that uses dual, multi-surface brushes, a specially designed edge-sweeping brush and suction to attack everything from small particles to large debris on carpets and hard floors.

As I watch the robot zip around the house cleaning, I marvel at how innovations in technology have transformed how we live and work.

The robot vacuum can even clean when you're not home. Some robots can be programmed to automati-

SEE A GIFT THAT MAKES, A3

GUEST COLUMN

10 bright spots of 2020

BY TIM PENNY

With the new year upon us, I have been taking some time to reflect on this past year. While 2020 has been incredibly challenging, I have found myself focusing on the bright spots. It was a year filled with incredible stories of people doing amazing things to help those hit hardest by the pandemic. I am thankful that at Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), we were able to play a role, alongside many partners and collaborators, in moving this part of the state toward a more resilient future.

It is impossible to encapsulate everything that I was grateful for in 2020, but this top ten list is a start (in no particular order):

- **Early Childhood professionals.** They have continued to support the young children of our region under extremely difficult conditions. We were able to provide early childhood trainings and technical assistance, in addition to emergency grants, to support these professionals throughout the year.
- **Entrepreneurs.** So many businesses have been hit hard this year. I have been energized by the innovative spirit of entrepreneurs in the region who have adapted their business models during a period of rapid changes. We partnered with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to disperse more than \$10 million in Small Business Relief Grants directly to businesses in our region. We were also able to provide trainings and technical assistance to businesses.
- **Our 30 Community Foundations.** SMIF offered a matching grant to the community founda-

tions under our umbrella so they could provide relief funding directly to their communities. They were able to help their local food shelves purchase more food, keep essential community organizations afloat, provide critical tools for equitable distance learning and much more.

- **Local food producers.** This year holiday shoppers had the opportunity to shop online for foodie gifts that were produced by 40 vendors from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa. More than 400 unique items were available through the FEAST! Online Marketplace with products ranging from hazelnut oil and smoked salmon patties to maple syrup and jam.
- **The addition of a new Prosperity Initiative cohort.** This program offers business training and mentoring to new immigrant and minority entrepreneurs in our region. We were excited to welcome a new cohort of 13 clients this year and support the growth of their businesses during this difficult year.
- **Our AmeriCorps members.** AmeriCorps LEAP Initiative members serve in preschool classrooms and nonprofits focused on the social and emotional development of young children. VISTA members serve at nonprofits or local government agencies to help increase economic prosperity of diverse groups in our region. We also welcomed a VISTA member at SMIF who is focused on local foods initiatives, and a Lead for Minnesota Fellow who is focused on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- **Our grant recipients.** In addition to the DEED Grants and Emergency Child Care Grants that we have dispersed,

we also supported small towns with their COVID response efforts, provided free paint for community projects and launched both the Inclusive and Equitable Communities Grant program and the Early Care and Education Wrap Around Grant program. We also awarded a record 27,828 children's books to 66 organizations through our Early Literacy Grant program (and many more books through other programs). It is amazing to see how passionate our grant recipients are about serving their communities.

- **Our incredible donors and partners.** None of the work mentioned above would be possible without them. Thanks to our 309 donors – individuals, families, cities, counties, businesses and organizations – we have raised \$1.3 million to date in 2020. I am humbled by their generosity and their belief in the work we do, especially during this critical time.
- **The staff at SMIF.** They were able to quickly mobilize and shift operations to process and distribute hundreds of emergency grants and loans, while providing technical assistance and training to early childhood professionals and entrepreneurs in the region.
- **Last, but definitely not least, Southern Minnesotans.** You have proven to be resilient in the face of immense challenges. As I have said previously, we are stronger together, and we will get through this together.

Here's to a new year and a brighter future for southern Minnesota.

Tim Penny is president & chief executive officers of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation.

STEELE COUNTY Times

Founded in 1893
Bussler Publishing, Inc.
www.SteeleCountyTimes.com
Email: bptimes@frontiernet.net

USPS 058-340
Published weekly on Wednesdays
Postmaster: Send address changes to:

Steele County Times
P.O. Box 247
Blooming Prairie, MN 55917
Phone: 507-583-4431

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

PublisherRick Bussler
News Editor Deb Flemming
Office Manager Sherrie Pechan
Sports Editor.....Alex Nuehring
County Writer..... Chris Baldwin

DEADLINES
News: Noon Fridays.
Web: 11 p.m. (Daily)
Advertising: 4 p.m. Thursdays.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Steele, Dodge, Freeborn & Mower \$49
Elsewhere in State..... \$52
Out of state..... \$56

A state and national award winning weekly

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)

COVID shots begin in Steele County

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Recognizing some shots have a burn to them, Steele County Public Health Director Amy Caron said “I felt nothing” after receiving the Moderna vaccine shot Monday afternoon at her office in Owatonna.

Caron and 10 other staff members in the Public Health Department received shots Monday. “It definitely was an air of excitement that we got vaccinated,” she said. “It gives us hope that there will be an end date.”

Nobody in the Public Health Department reported any issues with the vaccination, according to Caron. “We are trying to show that the vaccination is okay,” she said. “We are trying to create a trust with the public that this is a safe vaccine.”



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

Steele County Public Health Director Amy Caron receives the Moderna vaccine from Amber Aaseth, assistant public health nurse, Monday afternoon in Owatonna. Ten other staff members joined Caron in getting the vaccination on Monday. Caron reported the vaccination against COVID-19 is 94% effective compared to 50% with a typical flu shot.

State, 3M partner to get rid of phony N95 masks



Working together, the State of Minnesota and 3M recently partnered to prevent 500,000 counterfeit N95 respirators from being distributed to Minnesota healthcare facilities. The counterfeit respirators, valued at \$2.1 million, will be turned over to 3M for destruction.

“Protecting the health and safety of frontline health care workers is our top priority,” said Administration Commissioner Alice Roberts-Davis. “Part of sourcing scarce personal protective equipment in an intensively competitive environment is ensuring authenticity and effectiveness before delivery to healthcare facilities. Our partnership with Minnesota’s leading businesses such as 3M has been instrumental in providing reliable products.”

Amid increasing reports of counterfeiting and fraud, 3M has been working with the State of Minnesota and other states across the country in verifying the authenticity of offers of what are claimed to be 3M respirators.

At the request of the State of Minnesota, 3M inspected the respirators and determined the products were not authentic. In a cease and desist letter, 3M requested the vendor to immediately surrender

the counterfeit masks for removal from circulation. Supply Link, Inc. has cooperated with the request.

“3M is proud to have worked with State of Minnesota to prevent the purchase and distribution of these counterfeit respirators. 3M is making more N95s than ever before and we will continue to take action against those exploiting the demand for these critical products,” said Denise Rutherford, 3M Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs.

Since the pandemic began, 3M has launched a global effort to fight fraud, counterfeiting and price-gouging. The company has worked with governments and law enforcement agencies around the world to seize more than 7 million counterfeit respirators.

To protect the safety of healthcare workers, the State’s Critical Care Supplies Work Group works closely with area healthcare facilities and businesses to vet products and potential vendors. The work group sends N95 respirator samples to local hospitals to ensure that they meet federal fit test and filtration standards before purchasing. Respirators purchased by the state have been primarily through 3M-authorized distributors.

BP School Board reduces credits needed for graduation

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

The Blooming Prairie School Board temporarily changed the number of credits necessary for graduation, confirmed its return to in-person learning and certified the 2021 tax ley at its monthly meeting on Monday, Dec. 21.

Due to the disruption caused by COVID-19, the school board decided to scale back the number credits required for graduation from 25 to 24 to make sure everyone who was planning on graduating can graduate on time. Students would still need to take all their core classes but would not have to take an extra elective.

Earlier, Superintendent Chris Staloch said the district’s learning plan is to bring students back into their school buildings on

Monday, January 11. All students in grades Pre-K-6 will return to in-person learning, while students in grades 7-12 will return to hybrid learning at the high school.

The motion to approve that learning plan was approved.

Following its regular school board meeting, the school board reconvened for its annual truth and taxation meeting.

Staloch reported that the proposed levy went up 20% compared to last year. Last year it went down 10% compared to the previous year.

One of the main reasons the levy percentage went up this year, Staloch said, is because more funds will go towards the district’s Long-Term Facility Maintenance (LTFM) because the student enrollment increased.

The LTFM is a 10-year plan on what

district’s facilities are going to be updated and when those updates will happen.

The district’s heating and cooling is in a pretty good place with no projects on the horizon, said Staloch, adding that the facilities’ parking lots are assessed about once a year to see if they need maintenance.

“We assess how many more years before we need to re-surface them. For now, nothing is imminent,” he said.

Staloch said that the next big project will be roofing, but it’s still a few years out.

Later, he provided an update on the building of a new Zumbro Education District facility in Kasson. Blooming Prairie Public Schools is one of the six school districts paying for the new facility.

“That’s another reason why the tax levy



Chris Staloch

would show an increase this year,” he said.

He said that construction will begin this summer with the goal of finishing construction by the end of summer in 2022.

The next school board meeting is scheduled for 4:45 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 19. The January and February meetings are being held on Tuesdays due to Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Presidents’ Day, respectively.

A GIFT THAT MAKES: *cleaning a breeze* FROM A2

cally start cleaning at specified times of the day. Aside from the initial set up, you are completely hands-off with the robots.

The real gift will come throughout the year as I enjoy all

this free time I’ll now have because of the robot. I can sit back and enjoy the life of leisure. Something tells me that’s probably far from the case, however.

With a robot taking

over in the house, I’m now left to dream about how something outdoors could revolutionize my life and trim hours off my weekly routine every summer.

Hey kids, Father’s

Day is coming up, how about checking into a robotic lawn mower?

For now, cleaning certainly will become a breeze as I go in hot pursuit of utilizing my robotic vacuum cleaner.

Wear a mask in public spaces.

Get tested if you have any symptoms.

Answer if your health department calls.

MINNESOTA

STAY SAFE MN

Medford seeking distance-learning support

Medford Public Schools need volunteers to support sixth-through eighth-grade students with their day-to-day distance learning.

Volunteers will provide on-site support to about 15 students Monday through Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. They will support students with getting logged on, reaching out to teachers for additional

support, and helping students stay engaged with their Distance Learning. Meals are provided to all students, so volunteers will be asked to help distribute meals and oversee the cleanup.

Anyone interested is asked to call, Annette Duncan, president of United Way of Steele County, at 507-455-1180 or email her at president@united-waysteelecounty.org.

County to distribute additional relief funds

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Steele County plans to distribute more than \$730,000 in state funds to local businesses and non-profits impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds were approved by the Legislature during its recent Special Session and must be distributed by March 15.

During last week’s regular session, the Steele County Board of Commissioners authorized County Administrator Scott Golberg to work with the county’s Coronavirus Relief Fund Committee to develop county grant guidelines and award the grants.

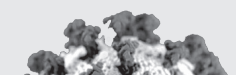
Commissioners also agreed to hold their 2021 salary and per-diem rates at the 2020 level. They also agreed to discuss commissioner salaries as part of the regular budget process in the future and said they will consider cost-of-living increases just as they do for county employees.

“None of us do this for the money,” said Commissioner Greg Krueger. “But it does cost some of us money.”

As part of the consent agenda the board authorized board chair Jim Abbe to sign the Cedar- Wapsipinicon sub-agreement. The Cedar- Wapsipinicon Watershed is beginning to implement strategies as outlined in its One Watershed One Plan Grant agreement. A small portion of the watershed lies within Steele County’s borders.

The Board also approved the county’s 2021 Fee Schedule, which cover fees from public health nursing visits to hazardous waste disposal and building permits.

“This gives a chance to consolidate all our fees in one place for transparency and for convenience for the public,” Golberg said.



World..... 81,100,000

Deaths 1,770,000

Recovered..... 45,900,000

U.S. 19,300,000

Deaths 334,000

Recovered..... 4,880,000

MN 410,000

Deaths 5,219

Recovered..... 342,000

Steele..... 2,479

Deaths 9

Recovered..... 1,482

Dodge 1,148

Deaths 4

Recovered..... 737

Freeborn..... 1,934

Deaths 17

Recovered.....

Mower..... 3,296

Deaths 24

Recovered.....

AS OF DEC. 28, 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE

BLOTTER
SPOTLIGHT

On Dec. 22, a Steele County Sheriff's deputy took a report of a fraud incident in the 200 block of 7th Ave. W. in Ellendale at 9:13 p.m.

Christmas crashes send 4 to the hospital with minor injuries

A pair of crashes in Steele County injured four people over the Christmas holiday.

The first crash took place on Christmas Eve around 10:08 a.m. on Interstate 35 at milepost 47 in Medford Township.

The State Patrol said a Ford F150 traveling southbound on I-35 left the roadway and struck the median cable barrier. Leticia Mora, 41, of Faribault was taken by ambulance to Owatonna Hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

According to the patrol, Mora was wearing her seat belt and no alcohol was involved. The patrol indicated the roads were snow and ice covered at the time of the crash.

The Steele County Sheriff's Office and Medford Fire and Rescue assisted at the crash.

A Christmas Day crash sent three people to the hospital. The crash happened on Hwy. 14 in Meriden Township, west of Owatonna around 8:34 p.m.

The patrol reported a Ford Taurus driven by Alan Greiner, 42, of Mankato collided with a Cadillac Escalade, which was stalled on the shoulder of the east-bound side of Hwy. 14. The stalled vehicle was occupied by Anthony Brown, 53, and Stacey Powell, 49, both of New Richland.

All three people were taken by ambulance to Owatonna hospital with non-life threatening injuries, the patrol said.

No alcohol was involved in the crash, and all occupants were wearing their seat belts, the patrol reported.

Steele County Sheriff's Office and Owatonna Police assisted the patrol at the scene.

CRIME BRIEF

Police warn about grandchild in jail scam

Owatonna Police are warning seniors about a well-known scam that continues hitting the area.

Within the past couple weeks, a patrol officers spoke to an elderly woman who reported she had been getting calls to bail her grandson out of jail. The woman did not send any money, but instead contacted police about the matter. The officer reaf-

firmed her suspicions about this being a scam and told her not to send any money.

Police said the woman did exactly as she should have done when confronted with the scam by not acting on impulse and verifying the information.

For more information on scams, go to the Federal Trade Commission at consumer.ftc.gov/features/scam-alerts.

COURT NEWS

Steele County

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

Casey A. Adams, 41, Austin, previously appeared and was convicted of felony violation of no contact order. He was sentenced to \$125, 90 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, no possession of firearms, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state, domestic abuse evaluation and 3 years of supervised probation.

Dominick G. Borich, 21, St. Paul, previously appeared and was convicted of felony aid and abet burglary. Borich was sentenced to \$131, 3 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, cognitive skill training, no possession of firearms and 3 years of supervised probation.

Mariah A. Sleenwenhoek, 23, Faribault, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of marijuana. The defendant was sentenced to \$200, 11 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, chemical dependency evaluation, psychological evaluation, no possession of firearms, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state and 3 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Dec. 14 – 20:

BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Erika E. Bergstad, 26, Hayfield, revoked license, expired tabs and no insurance, \$505; Simon D. Gaytan, 20, Northfield, possession of marijuana, \$125; Jared G. Larson, 41, St. Peter, revoked license, \$275; Victor M. Price, 53, Austin, no insurance, \$275; Alejandro Rosas Velazquez, 25, Faribault, suspended license, stay of adjudication, \$50 and 6 months of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Braden M. Schroeder, 19, Faribault, violation of order for protection, stay of adjudication, \$50, anger management, no contact with victim and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Nyapak T. Wuol, 39, Mankato, hands free violation, \$125.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Whitney M. Bartsh, 29, Claremont, speeding, \$115; Dustin R. Baumgard, 32, Waseca, speeding, \$135; Samee J. Chaudry, 21, Spirit Lake, IA, speeding, \$215; Tyler J. Childs, 16, Bondurant, IA, speeding, \$215; Roy H. Dehoff, 37, Claremont, speeding, \$125; Jaquan D. Edwards, 24, St. Paul, speeding, \$225; Johnathon P. Gardner, 31, Waseca, possession of marijuana, \$125; Nikita Gopathi, 26, Minnetonka, speeding, \$215; Renee L. Griep, 48, Minneapolis, speeding, \$115; Cruz S. Honsey, 26, Albert Lea, revoked license, \$275; Ku K. Htoo, 29, St. Paul, no child passenger restraint system, \$125; Dustin D. Hull, 49, Lansing, suspended license and speeding, \$315; Abdifatah M. Jama, 20, Owatonna, seat belt, \$100; Katie K. Jensen, 31, Ankeny, IA, speeding, \$125; Kayla M. Jordan, 32, Owatonna, permit violation, \$125; Sarah D. Kirkpatrick, 42, Duluth, speeding, \$125; Brittany L. Kleeberger, 28, Faribault, unsafe lane usage, \$115; Benjamin A. Klint, 30, Mankato, speeding, \$135; Kaden W. Lopez, 20, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Nicholas P. Lybarger, 29, Sac City, IA, speeding, \$115; Amber L. Martinosky, 23, Minneapolis, speeding, \$115; Lucinda L. Mitchell, 56, Ellendale, no insurance, \$275; Edith A. Mojica, 44, San Antonio, TX, speeding, \$115; Fernando A. Paz Carranza, 26, Houston, TX, no license, \$175; Dianne L. Rassman, 69, Inver Grove Heights, speeding, \$115; Richard B. Rice, 69, Waterville, seat belt, \$100; Vincent C. Sanchez-Myhre, 31, St. Paul, suspended license, \$275; Lyle F. Sellers, 39, Waseca, speeding, \$125; Kristi M. Smith, 25, Waseca, revoked license, \$275; Brandon R. Tobias, 28, Torrance, CA, speeding and no license, \$345; Jeffrey L. Wagner, 65, Elysian, seat belt, \$100; Ashleigh D. Wall, 33, St. Paul, speeding, \$115; Dafydd G. Williams, 70, Owatonna, speeding, \$215; Toua Yang, 33, St. Paul, child passenger restrain system violation, \$125.

OWATONNA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Zachary R. Allen, 20, Owatonna, burglary of government, religious, historic or school building, stay of adjudication, \$75, obtain permission to leave the state, 40 hours of community service and 2 years of supervised probation; Ian J. Baerman-Kuiper, 21, Rochester, parking violation, \$37; Jesse W. Baldus, 42,

Waseca, violation of order for protection, 90 days in county jail; Dominick G. Borich, 21, St. Paul, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$50, 3 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state, no possession of firearms and 3 years of supervised probation; Jace D. Bueckler, 23, Owatonna, theft, stay of adjudication, diversion program and indeterminate amount of supervised probation; Brianna M. Delsing, 30, Burnsville, disorderly conduct, \$106 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Gunnar O. Elstad, 26, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Kenyetta Elwoods, 53, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275; Paige L. Erslund, 26, Morristown, revoked license, \$275; Adam J. Holm, 23, Lino Lakes, give peace officer false name, \$125 and 212 days in county jail; Satera M. Kontz, 34, Albert Lea, theft, \$99.99; Lisa M. Lee, 33, Wells, invalid license, \$175; Jonathan M. Miller, 32, Waseca, revoked license, \$275; Angel G. Morales Torres, 28, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; William M. Robertson, 75, Albert Lea, failure to yield, \$125; Dustin G. Smitty, 20, Blooming Prairie, no insurance, \$275; Michael J. Suttlef, 28, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Edward W. Thorson, 27, Owatonna, theft, \$175; Erin N. Underdahl, 26, Owatonna, stop sign, \$125; Dion E. Wadley, 21, Owatonna, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$75, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, obtain permission to leave the state and 2 years of supervised probation; Myron W. Wunderlich, 33, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Mariah K. Allard, 28, Blooming Prairie, speeding, \$115; Mary E. Baker, 39, New Richland, speeding, \$115; Hunter R. Boe, 20, Shakopee, speeding, \$125; Jacqueline S. Brunner, 34, Owatonna, speeding, \$215; Tyler C. Collins, 17, Lakeville, speeding, \$125; Awadia M. Deng, 25, Des Moines, IA, speeding, invalid license and no license in possession, \$255; Kristine M. Eliseuson, 51, Ellendale, speeding, \$215; Mia S. Gargiulo, 19, Mankato, speeding, \$215; Carlos C. Gonzalez, 22, Faribault,

speeding, \$131 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Robert A. Gutierrez, 18, Blooming Prairie, invalid license, \$175; Brett C. Hagen, 29, New Richland, speeding, \$115; Tyler L. Halterman, 35, New Sharon, IA, speeding, \$115; Isabel P. Hernandez, 49, Owatonna, cancelled license, \$275; Jared J. Williams, 54, Milwaukee, WI, speeding, \$135; Sandra J. Kiese, 48, Elysian, speeding, \$215; Baylee A. Nelson, 28, West Concord, speeding, \$135; Marco A. Ramirez Saucedo, 54, Prescott, WI, invalid license, \$175; Andrew B. Reich, 18, New Richland, speeding, \$115; Nolan W. Robinson, 18, Owatonna, speeding and permit violation, \$165; Abdirahman J. Sheik-Yusuf, 38, Faribault, passing parked authorized vehicle and suspended license, \$325; Barbara J. Timlin, 59, Waseca, speeding, \$125; Tyler J. Worke, 33, Waseca, speeding, \$135.

POLICE BLOTTER

Steele County

BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE

Dec. 20
Crash: At 2:02 p.m., police responded to a motor vehicle accident resulting in property damage at Center Ave. S. and 1st St. SE. They issued a citation to one of the drivers.

OWATONNA POLICE

Dec. 19
Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 700 block of Willowbrook St. NE at 11 a.m.

Dec. 20
Theft: Police received a theft report from the 100 block of Rice St. E. at 4:06 p.m.

Dec. 21
Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 1000 block of 22nd St. NE at 8:32 a.m.

Dec. 22
Theft: Police took a theft report in the 700 block of Escalade Lane SE at 8:19 a.m.

Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest in the 200 block of Northview St. SW at 9:14 p.m.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

Dec. 18
Thefts: Deputies took theft reports in the 300 block of 3rd Ave. NW in Medford at 6:12 p.m. and the 7500 block of Crane Creek Road in Meriden Township at 6:24 p.m.

Dec. 19
Littering: At 1:16 a.m., deputies responded to an illegal dumping incident in

the 6300 block of 64th Ave. NE in Merton Township.

Theft: At 10:11 a.m., identity theft was reported in the 2600 block of 69th St. NE in Medford Township.

Crash: Paramedics and deputies responded to a motor vehicle crash with injuries in the 5400 block of Crane Creek Road in Meriden Township at 10:23 a.m.

Dec. 21
Shoplifting: At 1:23 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 6700 block of Frontage Road W. in Medford.

Theft: Deputy took a theft report in the 4100 block of 66th St. NW in Medford Township at 1:33 p.m.

Dec. 22
Fraud: Deputy took a report of a fraud incident in the 200 block of 7th Ave. W. in Ellendale at 9:13 p.m.

ARRESTS

Steele County

OWATONNA POLICE

Cody Allen Fonner, 26, arrested at 9:30 p.m. Dec. 22, warrant arrest, \$3,000 bail.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

David Alvarez, 30, arrested at 11:32 p.m. Dec. 22, warrant arrest, body only.

COURT NEWS

Dodge County

The following cases were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Dec. 13 with Judge Pamela King presiding:

Danielle E. Minea, 40, Rochester, previously appeared and was convicted of felony theft and felony possession of marijuana. Minea was sentenced to \$580, 26 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, no contact with victim, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, mental health evaluation, chemical dependency evaluation, 50 hours of community service and 3 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Dec. 13 – 20:

DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dylan A. Culbertson, 26, Owatonna, registration violation, \$110; Robert D. Hofer, 34, speeding, \$220; Dale R. Jensen, 58, Dodge Center, zoning violation, cooperate with Environmental Services

office and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Calvin D. Johnson, 20, Dodge Center, possession of marijuana, \$130; Allison M. Kettner, 27, Pine Island, speeding, \$120; Michael D. Madtson, 27, Dodge Center, possession of marijuana, \$130; Abdirahman A. Mohamed, 24, Rochester, speeding, \$130; Juan Ramirez Jr., 37, Winona, parking violation, \$32; Alexander J. Tschida, 25, Eagan, controlled substance crime, stay of adjudication, \$900, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments and 1 year of supervised probation.

KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Benjamin T. Braaten, 32, Kasson, suspended license, \$280; James M. Branson, 29, Rochester, speeding, \$140; Corey J. Keigher, 31, Rochester, cancelled license, stay of adjudication, 6 months of unsupervised probation; David T. Lammers, 34, Austin, hands free violation, \$130; Janeth Miranda, 29, Kasson, parking violation, \$32; Erin S. Murphy, 43, Chatfield, use fictitious information on license, \$380 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; John M. Raichert, 29, Egota, revoked license and registration violation, \$380; Nathan D. Register, 40, Kasson, seat belt, \$105; Randolph Scott, 50, Kasson, DWI, \$505, chemical dependency evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation; John R. Vandeneysel, 51, Dalton, revoked license, \$280; Curtis R. Warren, 26, St. Cloud, cancelled license and no insurance, 90 days in county jail.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Cesar Arevalo Jimenez, 65, Dodge Center, no license and speeding, \$220; Abdulqadir Areyo Robley, 44, Rochester, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$75 and 90 days of unsupervised probation; Bradley J. Broecher, 62, Austin, seat belt and hands free violation, \$155; Devon D. Davis, 30, Chicago, IL, possession of marijuana, \$230; Kenneth B. Jensen, 26, Rochester, speeding, \$130; David A. Jost, 36, Rochester, speeding, \$120; Carmona C. March, 43, Eagle Lake, speeding, \$220; Darren S. Maxson, 37, Kasson, seat belt, \$105; Jacob R. Spatenka, 22, Dodge Center, speeding, \$130; Ashley A. Swift, 25, Claremont, speeding, \$120.

WARRANTS: The following individuals have active warrants in Steele County. The Sheriff provides this information as a public service

1. Juan Gallegos – DWI - \$500 bail

2. Anthony Galloway – DWI – no bail

3. Ezequiel Garcia – failure to register as sex offender – no bail

4. Jose Garcia – revoked license - \$3,000 bail

5. Alfredo Garza Jr. – no insurance and cancelled license - \$9,500 bail

6. Domach Gatluak – DWI – no bail

7. Sahal Geede-Abdi – fail to stop - \$300 bail
8. Noah Geedes – theft – no bail

9. Zachary Gilliver – DWI – no bail

10. Conrad Ginter – DWI – no bail

11. Mark Gomez – assault - \$10,000 bail

12. Miguel Gomez – theft - \$1,000 bail

13. Hiran Gonzalez – dishonored checks – no bail

14. Sameria Graves – false name - \$500 bail
15. Steven Gustafson – warrant - \$2,000 bail

16. Jennifer Gutierrez – theft by check - \$500 bail

17. Ricio Guvrra – theft - \$300 bail

18. Shannon Guy – stalking – no bail

19. Mark Hage – indecent exposure - \$1,000 bail

20. Kenaniah Handlee-Davis, speeding - \$1,000 bail

Disclosing active warrants promotes public safety and aids in the identification and apprehension of wanted individuals

FEDERATED INSURANCE

It's Our Business to Protect Yours

Visit

federatedinsurance.com

for COVID-19 resources.



Senior Focus

Health & Fitness
Retirement
Money/Investment
Activities & Hobbies

GUEST COLUMN

Hobbies are one man's secret to living to 100

BY DON HEINZMAN

Glenn Pettit contends you can live longer if you have a hobby. He should know because he just celebrated his 100th birthday this past July and has had hobbies most of his life. His latest hobby is Scratchboarding. Simply stated he buys eight-by-10 inch framed ink black boards and with an Exacto knife scratches the dry ink

revealing the white drawings of his art. His Bloomington apartment walls are adorned with his black-on-white artwork he etched in the early 60s before turning his attention to the hobby of metallurgy, even building his own clock. After that his hobby was sculpting wood. Just two-and-a-half years ago he returned to etching on the scratchboard, and he figures he has

scratched 30 pictures. That's not all, he enjoys giving away some of his etchings to Oak Grove Presbyterian church in Bloomington for sale at \$100 each at its silent auctions. He has advice for those who wonder how he has lived for 100 years and has no health issues. "Don't worry about the little things and you'll have less stress," he says. His doctor advises having a bourbon and

Sprite chaser every day at 4 p.m. He does not walk with a cane. In fact, he can even skip! Pettit proudly displays his drivers license with his birthdate: July 18, 1920. He was born in St. Louis, Mich., went to high school and was an equipment repairman on B-29s during World War II. He and his wife, Phyllis, came to Bloomington to live 50 years ago. He was employed as an engineer for Rose-

mount Engineering, for 13 years, even though he was hired without an engineering degree. Phyllis died this past May after 77 years of married life. Now he is living in an apartment in Bloomington where every day he plays cribbage at 1 p.m. This week he plans on etching his latest impression of downtown Wayzata, continuing the hobbies that has enabled him to live 100 years and beyond.

Arriving at 100 has its moments. On July 19 returning from his birthday fishing trip, he stopped for a purchase and was told his credit card was not accepted. Later he stopped at his neighborhood supermarket where he was informed his credit card had failed. He investigated and learned that the computer turns off credit card holders with a third number in their age!



Cousins Stephanie Heim Carlson, Marie Heim and Jon Heim, from left to right, greet their 99-year-old grandmother, Luella Heim, through the window of her apartment at Medford Senior Care on Christmas Eve.

Families treat Medford Senior Care residents to some holiday cheer

Members of 99-year-old Luella Heim's immediate and extended families delivered some holiday cheer to Medford Senior Care residents on Christmas Eve – albeit from the outside looking in. The group walked around the assisted living community singing 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas' and knocked on windows, waved and threw kisses to of those inside. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, family members weren't able to gather inside. Sara Gaulrapp, daughter of Lois and David Nelson and Heim's granddaughter, organized the 'walk-around.' Earlier in the day, her uncle, Phil Heim, shoveled a path from the freshly fallen snow so the family could sing and greet residents on the cold, winter's Christmas Eve. After the walk-around, family members exchanged gifts and drank cider in the parking lot before heading back to the respective homes.



Santa led a group of about 25 Heim family members around the Medford Senior Care, an assisted living community in Medford, on Christmas Eve. Following Santa, from left, are cousins Jon Heim, Marie Heim and Sara Gaulrapp, who organized the family gathering. Santa was able to leave goodie bags for all the residents.

The Hormel Institute's cancer research is for you, for Minnesota, and beyond.

Every **community**, every **cancer**, every **person** matters.

100% of every dollar donated goes directly to cancer research.

 THE HORMEL INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
www.hi.umn.edu



WHERE FAMILY TAKES CARE OF FAMILY!

Premium Care Facilities located in Owatonna



"My sister was a resident at Traditions.... This was the best decision we could have made for her living arrangements. The staff there are incredible. The care, compassion, love and dignity they gave to her was amazing."

Kathy Kirkland

Both assisted living and memory care services available



TRADITIONS
OF OWATONNA
SENIOR COMMUNITY AND MEMORY CARE

Traditions I
195 24th PI NW
507-455-0700

Traditions II
150 24th St. NE
507-451-0433



Prairie Manor
Care Center

We are a skilled nursing and assisted living facility that offers:

- home health care
- rehabilitative services
- outpatient & inpatient therapy

CHECK US OUT FOR YOUR LIVING NEEDS!

220 3rd St NW • Blooming Prairie
583-4434



Life is a journey — and you are an experienced traveler. Retirement can be exciting... new friends and new endeavors. Wherever you go and whatever you do, you've got a lot to offer.

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

1850 Austin Road Ste 103 | Owatonna, MN 55060
Visit us Online at www.unitedwaysteelecounty.org



What Caregivers Should Know About Medicare

Dear Savvy Senior,
I am the caregiver for my 81-year-old mother, who recently fell and broke her hip, and have a lot of questions about how original Medicare works and what it covers. Where can I get some help understanding this program?
Overwhelmed Caregiver

Dear Caregiver,
Excellent question! Having a working knowledge of Medicare can help you take full advantage of the coverage and services it provides to ensure your mom receives the best care possible. Here's what you should know.

MEDICARE ASSISTANCE

A good starting point to get familiar

with Medicare is the official "Medicare & You" handbook that overviews the program. It's mailed to all beneficiaries every fall and provides an up-to-date description of all services and benefits. You can also see it online at [Medicare.gov/medicare-and-you](https://www.medicare.gov/medicare-and-you).

If you have a particular question, you can call and visit with a Medicare customer service representative at 800-633-4227. Medicare also works closely with State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIP) to provide free health insurance counseling. To find a SHIP counselor in your area visit [ShiptaCenter.org](https://www.shiptaCenter.org) or call 877-839-2675. Caregivers also

find Medicare's secure website – [MyMedicare.gov](https://www.Medicare.gov) – especially useful. After setting up a personal account for your mom, you can view the details of her coverage, track recent health care claims and keep up to date on the preventive services she qualifies for.

COMPARE TOOLS

Medicare can also help you locate the right health care providers for your mom. At [Medicare.gov/care-compare](https://www.Medicare.gov/care-compare) you can find and compare doctors, hospitals, home health agencies, dialysis facilities, inpatient rehab facilities, long-term care hospitals and nursing homes in your mom's area.

WHAT MEDICARE COVERS

Medicare can reduce many out-of-pocket medical expenses your mom incurs, but it doesn't cover everything. Understanding what Medicare does and doesn't cover can save you time and spare you frustration when navigating the caregiving maze. Here are some key points for caregivers:

Besides basic hospital and physician services (which includes telehealth services) and optional prescription drug benefits, Medicare covers home health care too. To qualify, your mom must be

homebound, under a physician's care and in need of part-time skilled nursing care or rehabilitative services like physical therapy.

Medicare also helps pay for oxygen, catheters and other medical supplies that a doctor prescribes for home use. The same is true for medically necessary equipment like oxygen machines, wheelchairs and walkers.

In addition, Medicare covers skilled care in a nursing home for limited periods – up to 100 days – following hospital stays. But it doesn't cover long-term stays. Patients who need custodial

care (room and board) must pay out of pocket unless they're eligible for Medicaid or have private long-term care insurance.

Medicare pays for hospice care too, for someone with a terminal illness whose doctor expects to live six months or less. The hospice benefit also includes brief periods of respite care at a hospice facility, hospital or nursing home to give the patient's caregivers an occasional rest.

Besides long-term nursing home stays, original Medicare typically doesn't cover

SEE WHAT CAREGIVERS, A8



THE SAVVY SENIOR

Brought to you by:



Prairie Manor Care Center & Heather Haus

220 3rd St. NW,
Bloomington, IL 61701
583-4434

2020 A YEAR LIKE: *no other* FROM A1

gathered in Owatonna to draw attention to racism in the community in early June. The Floyd death and subsequent rioting that took place in the Twin Cities brought local leaders together in an effort to combat racism. Police leaders hung a banner outside the Law Enforcement Center declaring, "We renounce racism – end it now."

Owatonna Mayor Thomas Kuntz said, "We don't need Owatonna to be labeled a St. Paul or Minneapolis. We all do the best we can to make sure all lives matter."

The civil unrest felt in the metro area also provided a catalyst for citizens throughout the rest of the state to show their appreciation and support for police. Signs began appearing throughout the communities expressing support for law enforcement.

No. 3- A TENSE ELECTION

Yet, a third life changing event was the 2020 election. The presidential election, which ended up seeing President Donald Trump ousted from office, proved to divide the country. It turned out to be an historic election all across America as well as close to home.

The political tensions also filtered down to the state and local levels. For the first time in 18 years, Minnesota Senate District 27 flipped from DFL to GOP with Republican newcomer Gene Dornink of Hayfield ousting veteran DFLer Dan Sparks of Austin.

In Medford, Mayor Lois Nelson was removed from office over on-going disagreements over a Main Street project. The road project stirred controversy throughout the community for much of the year.

No. 4- BAKERY GOES UP IN FLAMES

The Bakery in downtown Bloomington went up in flames on Jan. 28. Firefighters

from seven fire departments battled the blaze. Also lost in the fire was Sportstitch, which was located next to the Bakery.

"It's beyond words," said Gregg Fristedt, owner of the Bakery. He had operated the Bakery for the past 22 years, while Linda Klemmensen had just celebrated her 25th year in the embroidery business.

The community rallied by raising \$25,000 for the displaced businesses. Klemmensen has relocated the business to her residence while Fristedt decided not to reopen.



STAFF FILE PHOTO

With her head buried in her lap, Lois Riess left in a sheriff's transport vehicle Aug. 11 from Kasson-Mantorville High School where she pleaded guilty to killing her husband, David, in March 2018 outside of Bloomington. The judge ordered her to life in prison without the chance of parole.

No. 5- KILLER RIESS GETS LIFE

Murderer Lois Riess of Bloomington pleaded guilty in August to killing the second of two people she shot to death in 2018. On Aug. 11, Riess admitted to killing her husband, David Riess, in a Dodge County make-shift courtroom at Kasson-Mantorville High School, bringing an end to the nearly 27-year saga that began outside of Bloomington.

"What I did was an unpardonable crime. Solitude is forever. I feel I deserve this. I will have no reprieve," Riess said in court.

Judge Jodi Williamson immediately sentenced Riess to man-

datory life in prison without parole. Riess is serving her sentence at the women's prison in Shakopee.

Riess previously had pleaded guilty to killing a woman in Florida.

No. 6- OWATONNA HITS \$100M IN BUILDING

For the first time in the city's history, Owatonna topped the \$100 million mark in building permit valuations in 2020. The previous record high occurred in 2008 when the city issued permits valued at a little more than \$78 million.

The 2020 total is



Lois Riess

nearly double 2019 figures, thanks in large part to the development in Owatonna's industrial park.

Topping the list of projects is Costco at \$29,500,000, OPUS at \$10,850,000 and Minimizer at \$10,000,000. About half of the projects to make the city's Top 10 list were industrial with the other half residential or commercial construction.

No. 7- FORD DEALERSHIP CLOSES

After more than a century, Bloomington lost its Ford dealership in 2020. The Krejci family resigned the franchise in August. Ford had been associated with the Krejci family for 47 years.

The Krejcis planned on operating a service and repair business, but that also came to an end less than two weeks after they ceased connections with Ford. The business lost one of its key certified technicians who took a similar job in Albert Lea.

Krejci Ford dates back to 1973 when Vyrle Krejci owned and operated the dealership.

The family auctioned off the equipment in November and has put the building up for sale.

No. 8- HWY. 14 EXPANSION BEGINS

It took more than 30 years, but finally construction began on making Hwy. 14 four lanes between Owatonna and Dodge Center.

Progress may not be readily noticeable as most of the construction in 2020 took place about a mile south of the current route. Bridges have been built while approximately four miles were paved on the project, mostly south of Claremont.

The new road will feature an underground deer crossing aimed at reducing crashes. The crossing is an oversized culvert that goes from one side of the four-lane to the other. It's the first such crossing on any roadway in Minnesota.

The 12.5-mile route is expected to be completed in late 2021 or into 2022, depending on weather.

No. 9- MAN STABBED TO DEATH IN PARK

Violence broke out on a beautiful sunny afternoon in July at an Owatonna park where a man was found stabbed to death.

Mohamed Aweis Mohamed, 32, of Owatonna suffered a fatal stab wound to the chest in Darts Park. Hassan Nur Hassan, 28, has been charged with second-degree murder in connection with the killing. He was taken into custody in Minneapolis a day after the alleged murder.



STAFF FILE PHOTO

Owatonna Police Chief Keith Hiller listened to a protestor during a peaceful protest outside the Law Enforcement Center in Owatonna in early June. The protest came on the heels of the George Floyd killing in Minneapolis. As a result, local officials came out denouncing racism and vowing to do what they could to make all lives matter.

Authorities allege that an argument between Hassan and Mohamed had been brewing throughout the day.

The killing was the first murder in Owatonna in many years.

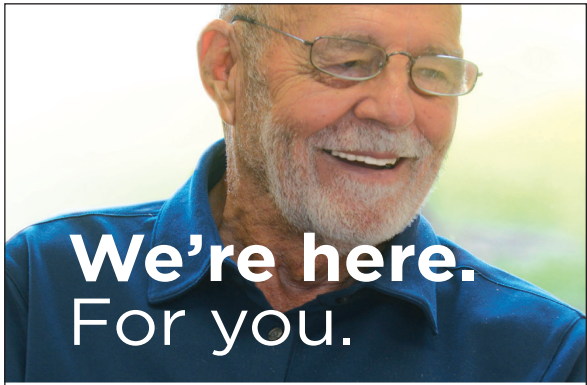
No. 10- CHIEF FIGHTS BAD REVIEW

Silence was finally broken in the on-going battle between the City of Bloomington and its police chief in October. The city gave Chief Greg Skillestad a written reprimand and Performance Improvement Plan. Skillestad objected to the reprimand.

mand appealed to the city council, which denied the appeal.

In the reprimand, city administrator Andrew Langholz claimed Skillestad is incompetent to be police chief. "...Many examples of insubordination, incompetence and conduct not suitable for holding the position of police chief," Langholz wrote in Skillestad's evaluation.

Skillestad has since filed an appeal to the Minnesota Department of Administration. It's unknown when the appeal will be looked at by the state.



We're here. For you.

Choosing Benedictine provides you with personalized care for your loved ones. Our approach to wellness takes into account the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of each person we serve.

Call us today for more information. (507) 444-4200



Benedictine
LIVING COMMUNITY | OWATONNA
2255 30th Street NW, 55060

Vibrant Living

• Downsize and simplify your life
• Enjoy an exciting community



REALIFE COOPERATIVE

- Full kitchens
- 1-2 Bedrooms
- Garages available
- Many more amenities

- Cable television
- WiFi Internet
- Guest room available

for individuals 55 and older at a reasonable price.

Call Jon Arnett at 455-3735 for a tour

235 22nd St. SE, Owatonna • www.realifeowatonna.com

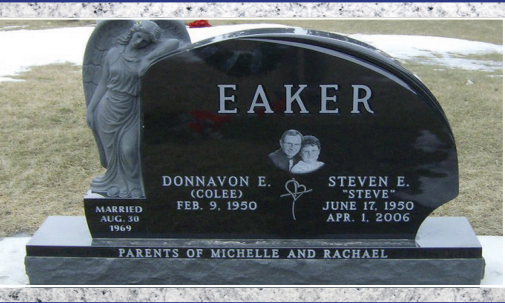


Owatonna GRANITE & MONUMENT
1180 Frontage Rd. E. Owatonna, MN
507-455-9551 • OwatonnaGranite.com
Making a difference in the lives that we touch.
Locally Owned by John & Barb Heerema



JENNIFER ANN
AUG. 9, 1966
MAR. 11, 2009

WILSON
BRUCE ALAN
SEPT. 29, 1959



EAKER

DONNAVON E. (COLE) FEB. 9, 1930
MARRIED AUG. 18, 1949

STEVEN E. "STEVE" JUNE 17, 1930
APR. 1, 2006

PARENTS OF MICHELLE AND RACHAEL

Radon testing kits available



Steele Talkin'
ANDREA MARSHALL

With all the focus on Coronavirus these days it can be hard to remember to take care of the other things in your life that need your attention. January is National Radon Action Month.

About two in five homes have dangerous levels of radon; every home should be tested. Steele County Public Health offers FREE Radon testing kits. To obtain a kit, simply stop by our office and call 507-444-7650 and request one. The kit is easy to understand and use, and SCPH is available if you have any questions. Why is Radon something people should test for? Radon is the leading environmental cause of cancer deaths in the United States and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. More than 21,000 lung cancer deaths are attributed to radon each year in the U.S.

Fortunately, the risk is largely preventable, by testing homes and fixing radon problems. State health officials say every home should be tested. To help residents get a more accurate picture of radon, the Minnesota Department of Health launched a radon data portal. The portal includes interactive maps that describe radon levels and disparities in testing and mitigation rates. The portal can be found on the MDH web site: <https://data.web.health.state.mn.us/web/mndata/radon>.

Radon is an odorless, colorless and tasteless radioactive gas that occurs naturally in Minnesota soils. It can enter buildings through cracks or openings in walls or foundations. Testing is the only way for residents to know if a home has elevated radon.

Testing takes 2-7 days. The best time to test is during the heating season, but testing can be done year-round. Tests should be done in the lowest level of the home that is frequently occupied. In addition to obtaining a test kit at Steele County Public Health, test kits can be found in hardware stores, or directly from radon testing laboratories. A list of participating health agencies and test kit vendors can be found on the MDH web site: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/air/radon/rncontacts.html>.

During the months of January and February 2021, the Minnesota Department of Health

is sponsoring TV, radio, billboard, and internet ads in the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota to encourage people to test their homes. In addition, MDH has partnered with local public health departments to make test kits available to local residents at low or no cost.

It is highly recommended to test during real-estate transactions, for example, as part of a home inspection. MDH licenses home inspectors and other professionals who test for radon. A list of currently licensed radon measurement professionals can be found on the MDH site: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/air/radon/findprof.html>. In homes found to have high radon levels, radon reduction typically involves installing a venting pipe and fan to pull the gas from under the home to the outside. This reduces the amount of radon in the home to low levels. Professionals conducting radon mitigation must be licensed by MDH, follow standards, and affix a MDH tag to the system. A list of currently licensed radon mitigation professionals can be found on the MDH site: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/air/radon/mitigation.html>.

All new homes built since 2009 must have passive radon resistant features. About one in five of these newer homes have radon above the recommended action level; this is an improvement over the levels found in the overall Minnesota housing stock where about two in five homes have elevated levels. MDH encourages builders to activate the passive radon resistant features through the addition of a radon fan. In addition, new home buyers can request the fan be added during construction. In these new homes with radon fans, MDH has found very low radon concentrations.

For more information on radon visit Steele County Public Health or www.health.state.mn.us/radon or call the Minnesota Department of Health Indoor Air Unit at 651-201-4601. To see how radon has affected the lives of cancer patients and their families visit www.CanSar.org.

Steele County Public Health wishes each of you a safe and healthy holiday season and a happy new year!

Andrea Marshall is a public health educator with Steele County. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.

History from the News Archives

10 Years Ago Dec. 28, 2010

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

As 2010 comes to a close, a few of the year's news – A top story is on the evening of June 17 multiple tornadoes touched down around the region, one person died in Freeborn County and one seriously injured in Blooming Prairie. During the worst of the storms, Sgt. Mark Lang and Officer Jake Peterson of the BPPD and Tony David of the Steele County Sheriff's Office saved Judith Kollar when she was buried in debris on her farm northwest of Blooming Prairie.

Mother Nature unleashed fury again in September when flood waters hit the county. Nearly eight inches of rain fell in Owatonna causing major flooding. The storm also caused street flooding in Blooming Prairie leaving about 30 homes with light to sever damage.

On a lighter note – A local businessman brought some life back to Blooming Prairie's Main Street when he renovated a huge vacant building. Terry Trom opened TT Motorcycle Shop on East Main Street. Trom invested more than \$600,000 in the new project.

20 Years Ago Dec. 28, 2000

ELSIE SLINGER, PUBLISHER

From LeMar Nelson's column:
Being the last column of this year, nostalgia certainly isn't out of line, and my previous items about the good old days have drawn comments from several readers. So let's close with another little trip back down memory lane. Close your eyes....and go back....before the internet or IMAC, before semi-automatics and crack; before chronic and chemo; before SEGA or Super Nintendo. Way back – I'm talking about hide and seek at dusk. Sittin' on the porch, hot bread and butter, "Red Light-Green Light", chocolate milk, lunch tickets, penny candy in a brown paper bag. I'm talking pinball, hopscotch, butterscotch, doubleditch, jacks, kickball, dodgeball and Mother May I?, Red Rover and Roly-Poly, hula hoops and sunflower seeds, banana splits, wax lips and mustaches, running through the sprinklers and the smell of the sun and lickin' salty lips. These are just a few of the things I remember. I wish all of you a very happy and prosperous New Year and hope we'll talk again!

50 Years Ago Dec. 30, 1970

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

Mrs. Ida Ingvalson, mother of one of seven Americans who are prisoners of the North Vietnamese, saw her son on network television Sunday night and said from her home in Blooming Prairie that "it was a wonderful way to start the New Year." She is the mother of Maj. Roger D. Invalson and she thought her son looked good, thinner than

she remembers but very alert. She said the prison "conditions" were not surprising which looked like what her son has described in letters. She received a tape recording of her son before Christmas and said, "It was definitely his voice." Mrs. Invalson is hopeful her son will be released soon. "It's getting to be a long time now; I just don't know." Maj. Invalson was captured May 29, 1968 after his plane was shot down.

75 Years Ago Dec. 30, 1945

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

Jimmy Robinson, nationally known outdoor writer, had this to say: Midget Ray Zweiner, Blooming Prairie farmer who led the nation's high average trap shooter last season, was the best all-around trapshot in Minnesota this year. He led Minnesota on 600 registered targets and doubles shooters. He also placed second to Art Finney, Mankato, on the 16-yard targets.

Fourteen or more inches of snow fell on Christmas Day. It was ushered in on stiff gales which piled up the beautiful white into mounds, from five to seven feet high. Many residents are still digging paths to sidewalks. A crew of 10 men are busy clearing off Main Street. The snow was so heavy that the village equipment proved inadequate. Motor traffic was practically at a stand-still. Varied modes of transportation were being used – tractors, horse-drawn sleds and horseback. Rural route carriers were unable to make their entire routes Wednesday. Older residents inform the Times that more snow fell Christmas night than has been recorded here in their memory.

Owatonna Photo News –

31 Years Ago Dec. 28, 1989

TOM SHEA, PUBLISHER

Eric Christianson, son of Dean and Lucille Christianson, is a senior at OHS and named McDonald's Student of the Week. He is a member of Intramural Soccer, IM basketball, Track & Field, Orchestra Dinner Ensemble and Math League. Eric's favorite subject is math, he says, "I understand mathematics better than any other subject." He is the Co-captain of the 1990-91 Math League Team. Outside of school activities, Eric participated in the Little Theater play "Foxfire." After graduation he is planning to attend college for engineering.

The specially painted van took off for the Fiesta Bowl in Arizona, where the Owatonna Band will be performing, carrying a good amount of the band's equipment. The Owatonna Bus Company donated the trailer and Jim Dombrowsky's facilities were used to paint it. The band took off for Arizona Tuesday and will return on Jan. 4th. Bill Cook, one of the drivers, said that approximately two dozen parents and others will be chaperones.

Hope you're having a great holiday season and 2021 will be filled with more love than hate, more health than illness and PLEASE always be kind to one another!

COVID SHOTS BEGIN: in Steele County FROM A3

Public health workers will receive their second dose of Moderna in 28 days.

The Moderna vaccination, Caron said, is reportedly 94% effective compared to 50% effectiveness for the typical flu shot.

Caron's department received 100 doses of Moderna on Dec. 23 and was set to receive another 200 doses on Tuesday, Dec. 29. Drive-thru clinics are taking place on Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 30 and 31 for EMS, police and firefighters to get vaccinated.

Based on what Caron has noticed so

far, it appears that they will get through the first phase of emergency workers quicker than originally anticipated. When they are finished, they will move on to the second phase.

Meanwhile, as vaccinations began in the county, the number of new cases has dropped significantly in the past week. Steele County had 50 new cases, bringing the county's total to 2,479 with nine deaths. "We haven't been that low since early October," said Caron, adding that there are currently 32 residents from the county hospitalized with COVID-19.

In Dodge County, another death was reported over the past week. A woman in her '90s living in a long-term care facility in the county died from complications of COVID-19, Caron said. There have been 21 new cases in the past week putting the county at 1,148. Eighteen Dodge County residents are currently hospitalized with COVID.

COVID has also slowed down in other neighboring counties. Freeborn County recorded 65 new cases over the past week while Mower County had 68 new cases. Mower also had one new

death, bringing the county's death toll to 23. Freeborn remains at 17 deaths.

Caron attributes the recent decline in COVID cases to the current restrictions in place for bars and restaurants. "It's helping to lower the numbers," she said. But she also said that bars and restaurants can't be closed for an extended period. "I realize the other side of it. There is more chance we will lose businesses permanently if we continue."

She said she is also optimistic that there will not be a surge in cases from the holidays.

OUTGOING MAYOR: appreciates support from residents FROM A2

sion would have to be incorporated – maybe with the 218 reconstruction – or something running parallel.) The MN Prairie Wildflower Trail designated back in 1992 by statute as an unfunded part of the state trail system needs attention. The railroad, exempted over ten years, so working with them and our area legislators to assist in the funding of a master plan is one of the goals. Anyone interested should just contact me as we had plans

to initiate in April, but coronavirus has delayed that too! Family genealogy has also been a longtime interest so the accumulation of records and work at the Steele County History Center – when that area reopens, will also occupy time. Tips from seasoned individuals are appreciated!

My husband is counting on the new year for my cleaning of the attic. There is a lot of accumulated history both for the family and Med-

ford as our Historical League members have stuff stored for the 2028 Demisemiseptcentennial (our 175th anniversary). Fun awaits!

Of course, now to spend time with extended family and busy grandchildren and great-grans can be done without thinking of a meeting. We also hope to get our European travel in post COVID to visit a number of our exchange students and their families.

I do appreciate the acknowledgment

of commitment and efforts by many of our area residents and businesses. For you reading this column about the people and events in Medford, thank you for your interest. It has been a pleasure to serve and now, retirement! May the new year bring new experiences and a healthier perspective to us all!

Lois M. Nelson is completing her second term as Medford Mayor and can be reached at: dlnelson1167@q.com.

OBITUARIES

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

Audrey Krupicka, 75,
Owatonna

Audrey Marie Krupicka, 75, of Owatonna, died peacefully Friday, Dec. 25, 2020 surrounded by her loving family.

She was born Jan. 31, 1945, in Blooming Prairie, the daughter of Orville and Helen (Dahl) Knutson. She grew up on a farm near Blooming Prairie. She graduated from Blooming Prairie High School, Class of 1963. She continued her education at Johnson Academy of Beauty Culture and graduated in 1964. She worked at Style Mor and La Petite in Owatonna.

On Aug. 18, 1968, she married Randy Krupicka at First Lutheran in Blooming Prairie. The couple lived on a farm in rural Austin where they raised their family. Audrey operated Christian Family Haircare out of her home for over 20 years along with farming with her husband on Sunnyhill Farm, rural Austin.



Audrey Krupicka

Audrey enjoyed spending time with people. Her children and grandchildren were her pride and joy. She also enjoyed time with her sisters, affectionately known as the Snoop Sisters (it included a few more than her sisters). After her children were on their own, she enjoyed trips with her siblings. She had an eye for crafts and could see potential in “finds” at the thrift stores and repurpose them. Hospitality was a gift that she shared with the people in her life. She also loved flower gardening. She was a life-long member of Red Oak Grove Lutheran Church and involved in Bible study.

She is survived by her children, Shawn (John) Gutowski of Blaine and Lonny (Carie) Krupicka of Northfield; grandchildren, Ella and Logan Krupicka; siblings, Bob (Sharon) Knutson of Owatonna, Janice (Larry) Johnson of St. Peter, Donna Herzog of Owatonna and Carol (Glenn) Kruckeberg of Claremont; many nieces and nephews and life-long high school friends and neighbors.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Orville and Helen; husband, Randy (1987); mother and father in-law, John and Annella (Thompson) Krupicka; siblings, Gary Knutson, Art Knutson, Arlen (Linda) Knutson; brothers-in-law, Duane Herzog and Richard Krupicka and sister-in-law, Mary Ann Krupicka

Funeral services were held on Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2020 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Owatonna. Interment was in the Red Oak Grove Cemetery rural Austin.

Livestream of the funeral service is available at: <https://wearelivetoday.com/audrey-krupicka>.

Ralph Diaz, 51, Ellendale

Ralph Diaz, age 51 of Ellendale, died on Sunday, Dec. 20, 2020.

Funeral services were held at Bayview/Freeborn Funeral Home in Albert Lea on Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2020 at 10:30 a.m. The Funeral Service will be livestream on the Bayview/Freeborn Funeral Home Facebook page. Burial took place at Saint Mary’s Cemetery in Newry Township.

Ralph, the son of Louis Diaz Sr. and Esperanza Diaz was born on July 17, 1969 in Albert Lea. He graduated from Ellendale High School.

He enjoyed running and participating in pool leagues, dart leagues, and spending time with friends. Ralph was a people person and made friends wherever he went. Ralph spent most of his life working in the restaurant industry. He was an amazing cook and loved making his famous prime rib. As a Minnesota Vikings fanatic, he proudly cheered for the Vikes every Sunday.

Ralph is survived by his sister, Rosemary (Diaz) Goedtel; brothers, Louis Diaz Jr., Dan Diaz, Albert Diaz; niece, Carey Gutierrez; and nephew, Sean (Jordan) Goedtel.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Louis Diaz Sr. and Esperanza (Avelar) Diaz and his brother, Leonard Diaz.

To send flowers to the family or plant a tree in memory of Ralph Diaz, please visit www.bayviewfuneral.com.



Ralph Diaz

WHAT CAREGIVERS:
FROM A6

regular dental care or dentures, regular eye exams or eyeglasses, and hearing exams and hearing aids. Likewise, it won’t pay for none-emergency ambulance trips unless a doctor certifies they’re medically necessary.

To find out what Medicare covers, visit Medicare.gov/coverage and type in the test, item or service you have questions about, or download the Medicare “What’s covered” app in either the App Store or Google Play.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

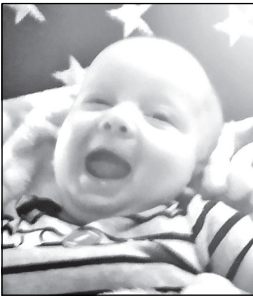
If your mom lives on a limited income, you should check whether she qualifies for help with prescription drug costs or with

other Medicare-related premiums, deductibles and copayments.

For help with drug costs, visit SSA.gov/prescriptionhelp or contact Social Security at 800-772-1213 and ask about the “Extra Help Program.” For help with other Medicare costs, go to Medicare.gov or call 800-633-4227 and ask about the “Medicare Savings Programs.”

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

Edward Olsen, 4 months,
Blooming Prairie



Edward Olsen

Edward James Olsen, age 4 months and 19 days, of Blooming Prairie passed away unexpectedly Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2020 at his grandma’s house.

He was born Aug. 3, 2020 in Rochester, Minnesota, infant son of Ron Olsen and Rachel Cowan. Edward loved his cuddle time, playing with his frog rattle, toy trumpet, and with his brother and sister.

Edward is survived by his parents, Ron Olsen of Blooming Prairie and Rachel Cowan of Blooming Prairie; brother, Walter Olsen of Blooming Prairie; sister, Zoey Olsen of Blooming Prairie; maternal grandparents, Valarie Cowan and Rex Solomon of Blooming Prairie, David Cowan of Blooming Prairie; paternal grandparents, Ron and Janet Cane of Lincoln, Nebraska; uncle, Jesse (Kaci Dalton) Cowan of Owatonna; aunt, Faith Cowan of Owatonna.

He was preceded in death by his great-grandmother, Arlene Tabor; great-grandfather, Roger Walls, maternal great-grandmother, Jane Koontz and maternal great-grandfather, Kenneth Onken.

A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2020 at Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home Chapel in Blooming Prairie. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the funeral home is limited to 30 people for the service. Visitation will take place for one hour prior to the service at the funeral home on Wednesday. Masks, social distancing, and all COVID-19 protocol will be enforced.

Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home in Blooming Prairie is assisting the family with arrangements. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

James Haubenschild, 56,
Blooming Prairie



James Haubenschild

James Arthur Haubenschild, age 56 of Blooming Prairie, passed away peacefully Saturday afternoon, Dec. 26, 2020 at Mayo Clinic Hospital Rochester, Methodist Campus, surrounded by his loving family.

James was born Feb. 20, 1964 in Circle, Montana, to Paul and Carolyn (Anderson) Haubenschild. He grew up in Blooming Prairie. In 1988, James started working as a service tech at Slidell in Owatonna. He then began school in Minneapolis, where he received his Programmable Logic Controllers Degree in 1995. In 2003, he started working at Evapco in Medford as an electrical designer until his passing.

James loved horses, attending rodeos, and team penning. He enjoyed keeping busy working around the farm, doing yard work, and washing and waxing his vehicles. He was known to wake up very early to enjoy his coffee and read the Owatonna, Albert Lea and Blooming Prairie newspapers and work on his word searches in peace and quiet. James loved Christmas and spending time with his family. He will be dearly missed by all his family and friends.

Survivors include his father, Paul Haubenschild of Blooming Prairie; son, Brandon (Jenny Haugen) Haubenschild of Ellendale; daughter, Rebecca (Ron Kalstabakken) Haubenschild of Dodge Center; significant other, Kim Stollard of Blooming Prairie; stepson, Trevin Stollard of Blooming Prairie; brother, Michael Haubenschild of Ellendale; sister, Carol (Cecil Boyd) Simon of Hope; and many nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Carol Haubenschild in 2019, and his grandparents. A memorial service will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021 at Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home Chapel in Blooming Prairie. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the funeral home is limited to 30 people for the service. Visitation will take place from 4-7 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2021 at Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home in Blooming Prairie. Masks, social distancing, and all COVID-19 protocol will be enforced. Interment will be at Union Cemetery, rural Blooming Prairie.

Memorials are preferred to the family. Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home in Blooming Prairie is assisting the family with arrangements. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

DEATH NOTICE

Beverly Wardal, 80,
Owatonna

Beverly Maxine Wardal, 80, of Owatonna passed away on Saturday, Dec. 19, 2020.

Funeral services are still pending.

Brick Meger Funeral Home in

Owatonna is handling the arrangements. For more information or to leave a condolence message, go to www.megercares.com.

A full obituary will appear in a future edition of the Times.

Happy New Year!



NANCY
VAILLANCOURT

At the end of this momentous year, we would like to thank the City of Blooming Prairie for its support of the library. While other cities chose to reduce library staffing, City Administrator Andrew Langholz and the city council kept library service as a priority. Although we were totally closed for five weeks, we were then able to offer curbside deliveries. At the end of July, the library began its current schedule of being open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. While we still have restrictions (children under 16 must be with an adult; visits are limited to about 30 minutes), our avid library users daily express their gratitude that they have access to library services.

We have also been supported by the staff at the Owatonna Public Library. They have advised us on reopening procedures, newly acquired technology, and safe social distancing practices. In addition, the Owatonna Public Library Foundation has provided funding

for online databases and programs that have become more necessary this year. The use of eBooks and eAudiobooks reached record highs this year.

Special thanks to those who support the library year after year. This includes our amazing Friends of the Library group who provide financial support for the extras we need and who volunteer their time. Thanks to so many generous donors who see a need and help the library as they are able. I am also grateful for Becky Noble; she provides publicity for the library on the radio and through the Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce, plus she has been filming our weekly Facebook Live storytimes. Thank you all!

Finally, a thoughtful patron brought in a thought I would like to share:

Everything I Need to Know I Learned from a Book

1. Things usually turn out okay in the end. If not, there's probably a sequel.
2. It's good to be different. Be weird. Be complex. Be anything but trite.
3. All the best characters are flawed. You are NOT a failure.
4. When things go wrong, hang in there. It's just a plot twist.

With those thoughts, we at the Blooming Prairie Branch Library wish you a very Happy New Year!

Recipe Corner

Fruit Diet Cookies

3 ripe bananas, mashed

1/3 cup vegetable oil

1 tsp vanilla

1-1/2 cup quick oatmeal

1/2 cup dry oat bran (the kind you cook)

1-1/2 cup dried fruits

1/2 cup chopped nuts (unsalted sunflower, etc.)

Mix all. Drop by spoonful onto greased cookie sheet. Bake 20 minutes at 350 degrees. Makes 2 dozen.

Sponsored by

STEELE COUNTY Times

BIRTHDAYS

January 1

Jeremy Simon
Elijah Skillestad
Misty Hemann
Rae Ann Konz

January 2

Connie Lembke
Trista Motl
Joan Severtson
Brayann
Cremeans

January 3

Zach Weber
Doug Naatz

January 3

Vicki Johnson
Kristi Miner
Eunice Doocy
Dan Trom
Makinzie Wangen

January 4

Colby Johnson

January 5

Lori Pirk
Kassie Ann Lueth
Deb Brown

ANNIVERSARY

January 2

Bill & Margaret Noble

This weekly feature sponsored by:

Dornink & Sons Carpentry

Gene Dornink

507.206.8449

HAYFIELD

Worship & Faith

STEELE COUNTY TIMES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2020

A9

We can be cautiously hopeful



Pastor Leandrea Anderson

RED OAK GROVE
LUTHERAN
AUSTIN

Each New Year we stay home, ringing the next year in a cozy way, watching the ball drop in New York. I remember feeling excited and hopeful at the prospects of 2020 almost a year ago at this time. We would be finding out what part of the country we would be moving to in my first church as a pastor. We would be setting out on a new adventure; after all, we love exploring new places. Then, the year turned less exciting.

2020 became harder than any year, yet we keep on going. What choice is there, really?

I find myself again this year being cautiously hopeful about 2021. There are glimmers of hope on the horizon for 2021, but we know that it may not be an easy path to even the summer. I find a lot of hope intertwined in the stories of the people of the Hebrew texts. Time and time again we see people who are given an extreme challenge and through

loss and pain the people, through their faith, with the help of God, are able to come back stronger than before.

Just recently, we walked through the story of Moses with my confirmation kids. This is a story many of us may know well. The epic tale of a child floating down stream, murder, a burning bush, plagues, escape, sea-parting, and a life in the wilderness holds the attention. The people of Israel witnessed a lot

and were sent through many trials along the way, especially during their 40 years in the wilderness. Those years in the wilderness the people of Israel had many challenges, but at the end of it all, they were led into the promised land. Maybe this coming year our promised land looks like two doses of a vaccine and then slowly seeing each other again. But, there is hope for this future.

This is a new year that will bring a mix

of feelings. A new year brings new beginnings. This is true. A new year also brings the shadow of the past year right along with it. While we carry the pains of 2020 with us into the new year, we can be cautiously hopeful. Cautiously hopeful that help is on the way, that maybe we have learned something while living in the wilderness that was 2020, and that we have friends and family around us. Happy New Year, everyone!

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN

AURORA LUTHERAN

6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna
Interim Pastor:
Rev. Dale Svendsen
507-451-2819
office@
auroralutheranchurch.org
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: 8:30 a.m.
Sunday

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 Valerius
507-583-6621
firstlutheranbp.com
Worship Service- 9 a.m.
Sunday School- 10 a.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN – LCMC

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
Indoor Worship: Sundays 9
a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Online Worship: Sundays 9
a.m. or anytime on website

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
Leandra Anderson, Pastor
507-583-2038 or 507-437-3000
www.roglutheran.org
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

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
Sunday Worship Indoor: 10 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 Oppgaard
Sundays 9:30 a.m. - online at
facebook.com/tlcowatonna
and tlcowatonna.org/
worshiplive
Watch the video of our
full service on Spectrum
(channel 181) and Jaguar TV
(channel 900) (Tuesday-4:30
p.m.; Wednesday-6 p.m.;
Sunday-11 a.m.) and at
owatonnaalive.com.

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 Bibbighauser
507-451-0447
Worship: 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.
Education Hour: 9 a.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
Sunday Worship Indoor:
8:30 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
507-451-4845
Father James Starasinich
Mass: 5:30 p.m. Sat.
Mass: 9 a.m. Mon. & Fri.

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS

307 SW First St.,
New Richland
Father Brian Mulligan
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 8:15 a.m.
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 Swaminatha
Pothireddy
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
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. Lisa J. Vick Pastor
507-451-4734
www.owatonnaumc.org

Traditional Worship
(Pathways):
9 a.m. Sunday

NON-DENOMINATIONAL

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.destinycc.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.

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
Interim Pastor Wendell
Anderson
507-684-3421
www.vibrantlifeag.com
Worship: 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday
Kids Church: 9 a.m.

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.

Monuments
LEGACY MONUMENT SALES

Leon's Cell 507-456-7864
Lori's Cell 507-456-3735
landlbo@gmail.com

Call for a catalog to view in the comfort
of your home. We are here to help you
create your monument by email or phone.

LEON & LORI BOHLMAN

LERBERG'S
FITNESS
CENTER
& CAR WASH

118 5th Ave.
Ellendale
507-684-2471

Dr. Deborah
Lien
DDS, MBS
Building
Healthy
Smiles!

132 2nd Ave NE
Blooming Prairie
507.583.6613
FREE
CONSULTATION

CLAREMONT
SERVICE CENTER

Service Center:
507-528-2233
After Hours Towing:
507-456-4158
111 Front Street
P.O. Box 282
Claremont, MN

Johnson, Doerhoefer
& Miner P.A.
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

314 E. Main St.
Blooming Prairie
507-583-7528
685 W. Bridge St.
Owatonna
507-451-9136
133 N. Broadway
New Richland
507-465-3810

Vandal's
FAMILY MARKET

Locally Owned & Operated

237 Hwy. Ave. S.
Blooming Prairie
507-583-6671

Owatonna
GRANITE & MONUMENT

"Creating Your Story in Stone"
1180 Frontage Rd E • Owatonna
507-455-9551
www.owatonnagranite.com

FLOOR
TECH

322 East Main St.
Blooming Prairie
507-583-2276

FARMERS
INSURANCE

Mike Bishman
121 W. Broadway St.
Owatonna
507-451-0193

REAL LIFE
COOPERATIVE

Vibrant Living For
Individuals 55 & Older
at a Reasonable Price

Call Jon Arnett @
455-3735 for a tour
236 22nd St. SE • Owatonna

VALLEY VIEW OF OWATONNA
ESTABLISHED 1970

1212 W Frontage Rd Owatonna, MN
507-451-0722
valleyviewofowatonna.com

Pair of mainstays retire from BP City Council

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

With nearly a quarter-century of combined service to the Blooming Prairie City Council, Mary Kittelson and Tara Gimbel completed their final terms as council members when the meeting on Monday, Dec. 14, adjourned. Neither sought re-election to their posts.

Kittelson is retiring after serving on the council for 14 years.

Back in the mid-2000s, she joined the city council because she had a general interest in how the city operates because she'd lived in Blooming Prairie all her life.

"It was, and still is, a great place to be. I was raising a family at that time and it was a good thing to get involved in," she said.

Her goals when she joined the council were to learn about the city and help Blooming Prairie residents who would approach her with a problem or concern by looking at the options to fix their problem and then, with the help of the council, find a way to resolve the problem or concern.

In addition to concerns from community members, some of the biggest projects Kittelson worked on as a council member was addressing infrastructure, city water problems, areas that would flood after heavy rain and repairing the streets.

Despite all of those projects, she said the council always tried to keep a balanced budget.

Even though it was a lot of work, she said she savored her time on the council.

"I can honestly say, I enjoyed every minute of it," she said. "We didn't always agree but we always worked on finding common ground by always keeping in mind what's best for Blooming Prairie as a whole. Hope-

fully, I was able to help the city find its path into the future."

Kittelson said she is excited about the city's future because of the quality of people who ran for her and Gimbel's spots on the city council.

"I'm thrilled there were other people who wanted to step up and run for the council. I know they will do good things," she said.

Even though she's retiring from the city council, she will continue to live in Blooming Prairie and is willing to support the city's future endeavors.

"I'm certainly available to help, but in a more relaxed way," Kittelson said.

Tara Gimbel is also retiring after serving on the city council the past nine years.

"When I first joined the council, Mayor Herald asked me to bring a perspective on how to improve the town for young families," she said.

She was able to bring that perspective because she was the matriarch of a young family.

"All of my children were under 12 [years old] and we had four kids in the school district," she said. "I'm also a teacher in town so I saw the needs of the elementary school and my husband is a teacher at the high school so we had that connection in the community."

Gimbel said that the most fulfilling part of being a city council member was when someone reached out to her

with a concern, and she brought it to the council to work on finding a solution.

For example, she lived on the east side of town so she knew some community members would bike across Highway 218, but there was no crosswalk there so she brought it up to the city council. Later, thanks to her civic engagement, the council decided to paint lines in two different places so cars would know there's a crosswalk there.

"It doesn't have to be a big project; those little things help families and improve the city and the community," she said.

However, she was also involved in big projects like the two recent street projects and the day-to-day business of the council such as what it approves to keep the city running.

Even though she's retiring from the city council, Gimbel said she takes comfort in knowing it's in good hands.

"I think the city is well run. The mayor and Andrew [Langholz, the city administrator,] work well together and the two new council members are already very involved community members so I think I'm leaving them in a good position," she said.

Like Kittelson, she enjoyed being a city council member and working with the rest of the council.

"It's been a pleasure getting to know the other council members and their passion for the city," she said. "I [also] want to thank the community for their support and trust in me to be their council member for the past nine years."

Her future plans include continuing to work at the elementary school as a reading specialist for students in grades K-6, raising her family and joining the Blooming Prairie Fire Commission in January.

340 E Main Street Blooming Prairie, MN
57-583-7557
Owners: Harvey & Nancy Farr

J & H LIQUORS

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YOU & YOUR FAMILY! HAPPY 2021!

Stock up for the Holidays
Wine - Beer - Liquor
MN Lottery Tickets
Gift Certificates Available

OFF SALE HOURS
Mon. - Fri. 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Sat. 9 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Sun. CLOSED

BAR will be closed until the State of Minnesota allows bars to reopen

ALC gifts families holiday meal boxes

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Teachers and staff at the Owatonna Alternative Learning Center (ALC) pooled their resources with donations to provide local families with meal boxes for the holidays.

"It started with a group of friends hanging out and talking about how they could help people in need for the holidays and ended up with 170 lbs. of meat being donated to the ALC," said Kim Penning, a science teacher at the ALC.

Penning and fellow ALC staff members and teachers Jess Klein, Dena Lobb, Missy Walters, Liz Morsching were involved in creating and handing out the holiday meal boxes to ALC families. "This group of friends contacted a staff member and asked about donating the meat to families at the school," Penning said. "That giving spread to other donations like a \$500 check, food and pantry items from churches, and donations from ALC staff."

"The boxes were filled with all the goodies you would need for a holiday feast and more," said ALC Administrative Assistant Missy Walter who helped

Medford city administrator resigns post

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Medford will begin the new year without a city administrator.

On Monday night, the Medford City Council accepted the resignation of Andy Welti, who has been with the city for the past six years.

Mayor Lois Nelson said Welti gave two-weeks notice on Dec. 23. His last day with the city will be Jan. 4.

"He brought us stability because we previously had four administrators in five years," said Nelson, who ends her reign as mayor on Thursday. She was ousted from office during the November election. Former mayor Danny Thomas will take office replacing Nelson in January.

Added Nelson about Welti's resignation, "The timing is pretty poor for the city. It's going to be a big hole to fill."

Nelson said it will be up to the new council to find Welti's replacement.

Welti has a new job lined up, but it's unknown what it is.

HERE'S MY CARD

ACCOUNTING

Johnson, Doerhoefer & Miner P.A.

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

ACCOUNTING AND TAX SERVICES FOR SMALL BUSINESS AND INDIVIDUALS

314 East Main St., Blooming Prairie | 507-583-7528 | Fax: 507-583-2389

AUTOMOBILE

507-455-0388
Fax: 507-455-0486

870 32nd Ave. NW
Owatonna, MN 55060

Mike Hartle
Owner

All tire sizes, sales and service for ag and truck!
After Hours: 507-455-0483

CLEANING

BIZZY BEE CLEANING LLC

MONICA VARELA
507-977-5582
bizzybeecleaning2018@yahoo.com

- RESIDENTIAL
- WEEKLY
- ONE TIME
- COMMERCIAL
- BI-WEEKLY
- SEASONAL
- GET-READY'S
- MONTHLY
- SPECIAL
- OCCASION

10% OFF FIRST VISIT
YOU SIT AND RELAX!! LET ME CLEAN!

TFNBD

COLLISION

THE ONLY AREA SHOP certified to work on the 2015 Ford Aluminum F150

CSI: Collision Specialists Inc
www.csiaustinmn.com 507.437.2837

CONSTRUCTION

J.A. Gwilt Siders, Inc.

Siding, Windows, Gutters, Roofing & Decks

Call 507-456-1504 for your FREE estimates!

Serving Steele County for 20 years.

Known for our exceptional quality of material and labor.

CONSTRUCTION

Johnson Construction & Tree Service

Tree & Stump Removal • Trimming & Topping • Tree Moving
Lot Clearing • Backhoe/Skidloader • Hauling General Construction
24 Hr. Emergency Services • Year Round Work • Licensed & Insured

KYLE JOHNSON • 507-583-7592
AUSTIN & BLOOMING PRAIRIE

EXCAVATING

SEPTIC SYSTEMS • Design • Installation • Compliance Inspections

State License # 1844

Serving the Area Over 12 Years

BISHOP BE EXCAVATING, INC.

- EXCAVATION
- BASEMENTS
- DEMOLITION
- DOZER WORK

Commercial & Residential Sitework

507 583-2999

Aggregates • Hauling • Washed Sand • Black Dirt • Fill • Gravel

GARBAGE SERVICE

SKJEVELAND ENTERPRISES

YOU CAN COUNT ON US! Sanitation & Recycling Services
Pride in service since 2007

RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL • INDUSTRIAL

- Sanitation & Recycling Services
- Roll-Offs & Dumpsters
- Rubbish & Garbage Removal

Contact Skjeveland Enterprises today!

507-528-9900

GRANITE & MONUMENT

Owatonna GRANITE & MONUMENT

"Creating Your STORY in STONE"

1180 Frontage Rd E • Owatonna
507-455-9551
www.owatonnagranite.com

ORTHODONTIC SPECIALIST

Dr. Deborah J. Lien, DDS, MBS

ORTHODONTIC SPECIALIST

Building Healthy Smiles!

drdeborahlienorthodontics.com 507.583.6613

PETS

Bennett's PET HAVEN CEMETERY, INC.

"Professional Cremation and Burial Services for your loving pet"

Larry & Donna Bennett
4151 N. City Rd. 45
Owatonna, MN 55060
(507) 451-2203

Shorty & Sue Schroht
857 Mosher Ave.
Owatonna, MN 55060
(507) 455-3204

PREPLANNING

A Simple, Thoughtful Act of Caring

PREARRANGEMENT AND PREFUNDING

507.583.7561
www.worlein.com

Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home
418 Highway Ave S • Blooming Prairie MN

IN
REVIEW



As 2020 comes to a close, the Steele County Times looks back at the past year with excerpts taken from news stories that were published throughout the year.

JAN. 8

Heads were shaking in disbelief as word got out that the third annual Coyotes for Cancer fundraiser on Jan. 4 raised \$28,000 with the beneficiary being the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group. The \$28,000 total eclipses last year's record amount of \$25,000. The first year of the hunt brought in \$18,000.

JAN. 15

For more than 60 years, LeMar Nelson prided himself on being a community activist, educator and journalist in his adopted hometown of Blooming Prairie. He touched many people's lives through teaching, coaching, singing, writing and general community activism. Nelson, 87, died Thursday, Jan. 9 in the Twin Cities.

Those who know the husband and wife tandem of H. (Harold) and Jean Peterson can readily attest that this couple has an attitude. That attitude is focused at building the small community of Blooming Prairie into a successful berg of over 2,000 people. Both have professed a dedication the objective of "putting Blooming Prairie on the map," they say in unison. The Petersons will officially be recognized and honored as 2019 Citizens of the Year at a Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce Banquet on Jan. 16.

A Minnesota National Guard soldier from Owatonna in training at Fort Jackson has died. The circumstances surrounding his death remain unclear. The National Guard identified the soldier as Pvt. Connor J. McGurran, 19. He was found unresponsive Jan. 8 following a training exercise at Fort Jackson, S.C.

JAN. 22

Rhonda Toquam of rural Blooming Prairie became the first female chair of the Dodge County Board. She took over the gavel from outgoing board chair John Allen.

It only took eight rounds before a champion was crowned in the 29th annual Blooming Prairie District Spelling Bee at the Blooming Prairie Elementary School on Jan. 15. Seventh grader Caitlyn Stangl won the competition in the eighth round by correctly spelling 'multiplication.' She is the daughter of Aaron and Heidi Stangl of Blooming Prairie.

JAN. 29

For those who were skeptical of Hwy. 14 ever being expanded through Steele and Dodge counties, doubt no more. Last week, the first stages of construction began near Claremont with the clearing of brush and trees. According to the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the work will prepare the new route for construction, which is slated to begin this spring.

An Owatonna elementary school teacher is a finalist for the Minnesota Teacher of the Year award. Dustin Thorson, a physical education teacher at Lincoln Elementary, is one of 134 teachers across Minnesota in competition for the top honor.

"It is a dream come true," says Ellendale Mayor Russ Goette about his newest adventure, that of owning the Ellendale Cafe. "We didn't want to see it go away," says Goette's life partner and business partner, Patti Carlson. Goette and Carlson purchased the cafe from Judy Davidson who has owned the cafe for the past 26 years.

Austin. He was killed instantly in the crash at 5:40 a.m. on U.S. Highway 218 about a mile south of Blooming Prairie in Dodge County.

FEB. 19

This year's Super Bowl not only produced exceptional football on the field, but it also ventured into new heights for an Owatonna company. With millions of people watching, RibbonLift gained super notoriety with a product manufactured in the garage at the Owatonna home of Paul Buttera, one of the company's owners. The company produces RibbonLifts, which are innovative electric-powered lifting



With a big smile and wave, Marge Oxley of the Heather Haus in Blooming Prairie said hello to parade participants going by her window in May. It became one of the ways people stayed connected during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020.

FEB. 5

Firefighters from seven local fire departments fought an early morning fire at The Bakery in Blooming Prairie on Jan. 28. Bakery owner Gregg Fristedt said he and two other bakery store employees were in the building when the fire broke out. It is speculated that the fire started in the northwest part of the basement of The Bakery, located in an old bank building. Fire Chief Dean Naatz said the cause of the fire appeared to be electrical.

For years the Steele County Food Shelf and the Steele County Clothesline have been serving folks from across the county. They have provided citizens who are in need with clothes, household items, food and other resources. While each organization operated on its own, they were always closely tied and even shared the same building. This year, the duo decided to merge into Community Pathways of Steele County, a nonprofit organization that will continue the great work that the Food Shelf and the Clothesline began.

FEB. 12

It will go down in the record books as an all-time collection high to date. The Geneva Cancer Auction totals for 2020 reached \$120,645, the best ever, said Barbara Kuchenbecker, secretary-treasurer of the Geneva Cancer Group. The grand total for the 37th annual cancer auction includes \$26,000 earned at the Geneva Wild Game Feed, she said.

One person was killed in a fiery crash outside of Blooming Prairie early Friday morning. The State Patrol identified the victim as Keith Prescott Crape, 27, of

devices used to accurately position payloads both upright and inverted. The RibbonLift carried halftime performers J-Lo and Shakira to new heights during the Super Bowl.

It was indeed a crowning moment for coaches and players of the state championship Blooming Prairie Awesome Blossoms football team Feb. 12 when they received their championship rings. The common area of Blooming Prairie High School had a touch of Christmas as players and coaches sat at dining tables, waiting to open tiny boxes that contained their championship rings as minted by Jostens, Inc. of Owatonna.

FEB. 26

It all started with five guys who liked beer. "We're just five guys who like beer and felt like we wanted to do something with it," Bill Cronin of Mineral Springs Brewery said. Cronin and his fellow brew masters were named as the Entrepreneurs of the Year by the Owatonna Area Business Development Center last Friday.

MARCH 11

A Blooming Prairie man wanted in connection with a murder in Las Vegas has been captured in Rice County. Sheriff's deputies arrested Mark Doocy, 60, at the Flying J Truck Stop along Interstate 35 outside of Northfield March 4. According to Rice County Sheriff Troy Dunn, a deputy spotted Doocy when he searched his vehicle's registration and learned the vehicle's owner was wanted in connection a Las Vegas homicide that occurred Feb. 28.

There are some new hometown faces being added to a well-established accounting firm

serving southern Minnesota. Johnson, Doerhoefer & Miner PA headquartered in Blooming Prairie has added two new partners while one of the founding members of the firm is phasing out of ownership. Allison Andrist, CPA, of Owatonna and Lori Arndt, CPA, of Blooming Prairie have joined Amy Doerhoefer and Daniel Miner in the long-time firm. Meanwhile, veteran owner Tamzen Johnson is retiring from ownership, but she will remain on the firm's payroll as an accountant. The name of the company will remain as it has been for now.

It was a dream come true for Kelly Jean

Public Health Director Amy Caron said there are no cases in Steele or Dodge counties at this time. But, she was quick to add she's not very optimistic that it will stay that way.

A veteran senior vice president at Federated Insurance has been named Owatonna's Woman of Achievement for 2020. Lisa Hyland received the top honor Friday night during the annual Woman of Achievement Scholarship Awards and Fundraiser at the Owatonna Country Club. Hyland serves as the director of human resources at Federated where she has been employed for the past 25 years.

Two juveniles ages 8 and 10 are suspected of causing substantial damage after lighting a storage shed on fire at the Chuck Fuller Field in Owatonna's Dartt's Park. It took firefighters from Owatonna only about three minutes and 1,000 gallons of water to extinguish the blaze, but by then the damage had already been done. Fire commander Todd Ulrich said damage was still being tallied, but he believes it will be at least \$300,000.

MARCH 25

During an emergency meeting held last Wednesday, March 18, the Steele County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution declaring a state of emergency within the county. "Conditions were right to declare a state of emergency," emergency management head and Owatonna Fire Chief Mike Johnson explained. "What this does is it authorizes us to implement the emergency plan and take the appropriate actions that we need to do in order to manage this until it passes." The board also enacted paid leave for county employees being affected by the coronavirus in addition to closing county facilities

LaMotte. Her Blooming Prairie boutique opened in living color last Saturday on Main Street next to Bunkie's. "I had a vision, and we made it happen," LaMotte said, crediting her family and others for making a dream real. Her boutique is named the Blossom Belle Boutique.

MARCH 18

The world outbreak of the coronavirus has folks across the region bracing for the worst as cases continue to mount in Minnesota and elsewhere. As of Monday afternoon,



The Chellin sisters chalk a bright and colorful inspirational message of hope on their driveway in Owatonna. The artists included, from left: Mia, Lorelei and Eva. They won \$50 in Chamber bucks for their efforts.

there are 54 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Minnesota and about 3,800 in the U.S. with about 65 deaths. Of the Minnesota total, there are three cases in southeastern Minnesota, including Waseca and Olmsted counties. Blue Earth County also reported a case on Monday. Steele County

to the public through Friday, April 17

Just days after county officials declared a peacetime emergency for the coronavirus pandemic, three confirmed cases of COVID-19 have surfaced in Steele County. On Saturday morning, Public Health Director Amy Caron confirmed the first two cases of COVID-19

in Steele County. She said those affected are a person in their 40s and a person in their 50s with apparent transmission traveling to other states in both cases.

What's this world coming to? Now, pizza places are delivering toilet paper. With the demand for toilet paper intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pizza Cellar of Blooming Prairie thought they would give a roll of toilet paper to anyone who ordered a pizza to go Tuesday of last week. Pizza Cellar owners Collette and Tony Lea were forced to close their establishments, the Pizza Cellar and the Cue Company, because of an order by Gov. Tim Walz. The Pizza Cellar could not cater to in-restaurant dining and had to provide the product only by curb service. Hence, the thought of a toilet paper promotion.

Blooming Prairie Superintendent of Schools Chris Staloch has informed the Times that BP schools will start distance learning for their students on Monday, March 30. Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz announced on Sunday, March 15 that all Minnesota schools would close on Wednesday, March 18 and would re-open on March 30 after eight days of closure. Blooming Prairie schools actually closed on Monday, March 16, two days ahead of the state mandated closing. Now, it appears Blooming Prairie students will be doing their studies at home, beginning March 30.

APRIL 1

Response to the coronavirus pandemic took a dramatic turn last week as Gov. Tim Walz issued an executive order directing Minnesotans to stay at home for the next two weeks. The "Stay at Home" order took effect at 11:59 p.m. Friday and continues until 5 p.m. April 10. The current restaurant and bar closure will be

2020: The Year in Review

FROM B1

APRIL 8

Only emergency cases are being accepted by the five ofces of Main Street Dental in southern Minnesota, including Blooming Prairie and Owatonna. Other Main Street dental ofces are located in Mankato, Rochester and New Richland. All Main Street ofces are keeping small stafs on duty. Other staff members have been asked to “shelter in place.” When restrictions are lifted, dental office employees will be called back

The peak of the coronavirus in southeastern Minnesota is still weeks away, Public Health Director Amy Caron said Monday. Caron had previously announced last week that she did not anticipate the peak for Steele and Dodge counties as well as surrounding counties until mid-May. “I still stand behind it,” she said Monday afternoon.

Distance learning for Blooming Prairie Elementary and High School students appears to be off to a good start. It also appears very likely that Gov. Tim Walz will order distance learning be implemented for the rest of the school year. “For the most part, results have been very positive,” says High School Principal John Worke. “Anytime you deal with technology for the delivery of instruction you are at the mercy of the platform we are using,” he remarked. “Overall, I think we are off to as good a start as we could expect,” commented BP Elementary Principal Jacob Schwarz.



Mickey Nelson of Clarks Grove celebrated 100 years of his life in June by walking 100 miles before the end of summer in an effort to raise money for charity.

APRIL 15

It started out as a simple email request as the coronavirus began unfolding. And now it has turned into a community wide effort that puts face shields into the hands of front-line workers to fight the deadly disease. Michael Beckman, system developer at Federated Insurance, received an email from Federated’s Community Relations Department asking employees to reach out to partner organizations to see what help they needed with the pandemic. Beckman reached out to Ryan Seykora at Owatonna Fire Department to learn that masks and disinfectant were at the top of the list of what first responders needed. “I reached out to my network of peers, and Seth Madole from Viracon sent me a link for a design for a 3D printed mask that had been released for free to the world in response to the pandemic,” Beckman said. “I knew that several of my co-workers at Federated had 3D printers so I posted a message out on our bulletin board asking for help printing the 3D mask.” It didn’t take long for six people to step forward with 3D printers and a willingness to help. Beckman soon learned that

Shaun Robbins at Owatonna Middle School had 3D printers. Robbins had seven printers in his classroom and volunteered to use them to create whatever was needed for the effort.

“It is something I can do to help,” explains Blooming Prairie woman Nancy Peterson, telling why she has made nearly 200 sanitary masks. She strongly supports keeping people safe and protected. Some of those masks have gone to Prairie Manor Care Center in Blooming Prairie, and others have gone to Dallas, Texas; to the Mayo Clinic; to South Carolina; to West Des Moines, Iowa and to Park City, Utah. Nancy and husband Tom were two of the first ones to wear a variety of masks in the Blooming Prairie community.

APRIL 22

The response to one tragedy has turned into a goodwill response effort to another tragedy that has crippled the entire country. Sport-stitch owner Linda Klemmensen, who lost her Blooming Prairie business in a fire in late January, has now turned her focus to doing something to help area businesses fighting for survival in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Klemmensen has launched a T-Shirt fundraising campaign called “Shop Local, Shop Loyal” as a way to support local businesses shuttered by the COVID-19 outbreak and the resulting stay-at-home orders that have basically shut down commerce.

Most people stay clear of trouble, but for a Blooming Prairie area nurse, she’s running right into it, by choice. Dori Hagen, a registered nurse with Mayo Clinic for decades, left Sunday morning for New York City, the epicenter of the U.S. coronavirus since the outbreak began last month. Joining her on the mission will be her sister, DeeAnn Sutter of Mesa, Ariz. They joined a travel nurse agency and will be lending their nursing services for the next 13 weeks to care for COVID-19 patients.

In these tumultuous days because of the COVID virus, retailers have found creative ways to sell their products. Highway 218 Liquors, owned by Miran-da and Tom Camery, has become creative by adding a homemade drive-up window to the establishment on Hwy. 218.

While the Medford Civic Club is used to putting on big summer festivals like Straight River Days, it also finds itself tackling smaller events, especially during trying times like the coronavirus crisis. On April 11, the club hosted a Bunny Parade with the Easter Bunny perched on top of a Medford fire truck. The bunny made a path through town as well as the Lazy U Community.

APRIL 29

A major breakthrough has developed in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz announced on April 22 a statewide strategy for widespread testing. The mitigation strategy will allow for every symptomatic person to be tested for coronavirus with capacity for as many as 20,000 people every day. The effort is coming together through a partnership between the Mayo Clinic, University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Health. It will in part be funded by the \$36 million in a Minnesota response fund established by the legislature.

With the lockdown of long-term care centers, it has been challenging for loved ones to communicate with their family members now isolated to their rooms. Last Wednesday, the residents of Prairie Manor were treated to an outdoor parade around the parameter of the building. “To say that the residents enjoyed this immensely is a huge understatement,” said Amy Trotman.” It made me wonder if we could do this more often until the quarantine is over,” she said. Trotman is inviting individuals or any groups that would like to continue doing this, to contact her. Youth groups, church groups and neighborhoods could schedule a parade maybe at about 5:30 or 6 p.m. on a Wednesday. Bring signs, balloons, hearts, costumes, pets, whatever, said Connie Trom, a helper.

Area manufacturers are getting in the spirit of helping with the coronavirus pandemic. The Life Fitness/Cybox manufacturing plant in Owatonna recently began hand-sewing non-surgical cloth masks to donate to local healthcare providers. The effort has since been expanded to the Life Fitness plant in Ramsey and across Life Fitness’ global manufacturing footprint in Falmouth, Ky., and Kiskörös, Hungary. This initiative started in Owatonna on March 30 with the help of two Life Fitness employees. Lisa Boyd, safety and documentation coordinator, and Kris Morgan, human resources coordinator volunteered to sew masks on their own.

MAY 6

After low numbers for several weeks, COVID-19 cases in Steele County jumped sharply over the past week. Public Health Director Amy Caron reported 10 new cases in Steele County over the past week, bringing to total of 24 confirmed cases since the outbreak began in mid-March. For the first time in weeks, Steele surpassed Dodge County in the number of cases. Currently, Dodge has 22 positive cases and no deaths.

As the demand for ethanol for fuel has dropped because of the COVID-19 pandemic, ethanol plants throughout the Midwest have seen their markets contract. Al-Corn Clean Fuel in Claremont has joined those in the industry who have made the decision to add a new product to its business – ethanol for hand sanitizer.

MAY 13

It has perhaps been the most unsettling news Steele County has seen since the pandemic outbreak came to light in March. Over the past week, confirmed cases have nearly tripled to



Distance learning took on different paths throughout 2020. Here, Eli Peterson's kindergarten teacher, Lisa Bruns, did not forget him by bringing him a May basket and reading a book to him. Bruns teaches in the Blooming Prairie School District.

65, according to Public Health Director Amy Caron. Just in one day on May 6, the total number of cases increased by 10, the highest jump since the outbreak began in March.

MAY 27

Minnesotans will have to wait for another year to enjoy Minnesota’s “great get together.” On Friday, the Minnesota State Fair voted to cancel the 2020 fair due to the coronavirus pandemic. It is the sixth time in history that pre-dates the U.S. Civil War in which the fair has been called off. The last time was in 1946 because of the polio epidemic.

The fourth worst workplace outbreak of the coronavirus in Minnesota involves a Steele County glass manufacturer. Viracon of Owatonna has reported “at least 81 cases” of the virus as of May 22, according to Public Health Director Amy Caron. She has been working with the glass factory for the past two weeks in dealing with the cases. The worst outbreak has been at JBS Meatpacking plant in Worthington where they have experienced 630 cases.

The coronavirus pandemic isn’t stopping Elrose Milverstedt from celebrating her birthday. And mind you, this isn’t just any ordinary birthday. Milverstedt turned 107 years old on Sunday, May 24. “I’m an old burger,” she said, playing off the fact that she and her husband owned a small town cafe in Claremont for 13 years. She was born in 1913. Though she is not the oldest person in Minnesota, she is believed to be the eldest in Steele County. Erna Zahn of New Ulm celebrated her 112th birthday last month.

Seven workers have been placed on furlough status after action taken May 20 by the Steele County Board. County Administrator Scott Golberg said the seven workers were furloughed as of Saturday, May 23. The furloughs are expected to last 90 days, though they could be shorter if need arises for the workers to come back to work, he said.

The Diocese of Winona-Rochester has reassigned a long-time priest serving Steele County. Father John Sauer of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Owatonna will begin a new pastorate in Rochester on July 1.

JUNE 3

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.

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.

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.

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.

JUNE 10

What a difference a week makes. After a somewhat contentious protest in Owatonna on Sunday, May 30 in response to on-going racial tensions over the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, the same group came back on Saturday afternoon shifting from a demonstration mode to open dialogue with city leaders.

Steele County is focused on reopening its county facilities safely after being shut down for the past couple months from the coronavirus pandemic. The county went into unrestricted access beginning June 1 meaning residents are able to access county services like they had prior to the crisis with a few safety changes, according to Scott Golberg, county administrator.

He said the county has added a hand sanitizer station, along with access to cloth masks, for the public to utilize upon entering the administration center located on Florence Avenue.

JUNE 17

Just when you thought you may be out of luck getting a dairy malt this summer, the Steele County American Dairy Association has come up with a way to satisfy your craving for the popular treat. The association is sponsoring Drive-in Dairy Days at the Steele County Fairgrounds in Owatonna on Saturday and Sunday, June 27 and 28. But malts won’t be the only snack available. There will also be 8 to 10 other food vendors from the Steele County Free Fair available with fair food. Since the county fair has been canceled this year due to the COVID-19 crisis, this may be the only opportunity to enjoy fair foods.

A community effort led by employees of Federated Insurance continues its fight against the coronavirus. As of early May, volunteers had manufactured 700 face shields. Another 200 were made during May to bring the total to 900. Over the last three months, the volunteer group from Federated has donated nearly 2,000 shields, 500 fabric masks and over 5,000 ear savers.

JUNE 24

The superintendent of Owatonna Public Schools has been selected to join a group of superintendents to help make decisions affecting education in Minnesota in light of the challenges with COVID-19. Jef Elstad will join six other superintendents on a work group appointed by Gov. Tim Walz to discuss and advise him on school issues facing Minnesota educators. The group’s recommendations will go to the Commissioner of Education, Catherine Ricker. The initiative is called, “Back to Better.”

Being deployed overseas is becoming old hat for Sgt. Jonathan Kohn of Owatonna. He will be heading to Africa on his third deployment with the Minnesota National Guard this month. Joining him on this latest mission will be his girlfriend, Shannon Randall. Previously, Kohn has served deployments in Kosovo and Kuwait, both for 10 months each. It will be Randall’s first deployment. They both serve in the Austin unit.

Mickey Nelson of Clarks Grove could be called a perfect human specimen. Mickey has exhibited perfect health

2020: The Year in Review FROM B2

for most of his years leading to his 100th birthday, which he will celebrate on Saturday, June 27. “I have been using my good health as an opportunity to help others,” Mickey says with determination. This soon-to-be 100-year-old has spent all of his days in Clarks Grove. Mickey is becoming a celebrity of sorts after his two daughters, Michelle of Faribault and Kathy of Clarks Grove, convinced him to walk 100 miles before the summer ends, doing it to raise money for charity. His two daughters challenged him to complete miles, emulating a British soldier’s goal of walking around his garden.

JULY 8

After more than two years of being away, accused killer Lois Riess of rural Blooming Prairie is back in Minnesota facing first-degree murder charges in the death of her husband. On Friday, deputies from the Dodge County Sheriff’s Office brought Riess to the Steele County Detention Center in Owatonna where she was booked on warrants of first-degree and second-degree murder and theft, according to Sheriff Scott Rose. He said deputies flew Riess back to Minnesota before booking her into Steele County, which typically holds Dodge County prisoners because Dodge does not have a jail.

The coronavirus has claimed its first victim in Steele County. On July 2, Public Health Director Amy Caron reported the first death hit the county since the pandemic outbreak began in March. Caron identified the victim as a man in his 80s living in a long-term care facility in the county. The man’s death follows a statewide trend of COVID-19 deaths in which 85% of the deaths have been people in the vulnerable population, Caron said.

It was a battle to the finish in the annual Minnesota State High School League Nickname Challenge. Combatants in the championship of the MSHSL contest were the Awesome Blossoms of Blooming Prairie and the Spuds of Moorhead. Voting ended on June 29 with the Spuds winning the challenge of having the best nickname. With 6,782 votes cast, the results were: Spuds 50.4% to the Awesome Blossoms’ 49.6%.

JULY 15

A beautiful sunny afternoon turned deadly for a man in an Owatonna park Sunday. Late Monday, authorities identified the victim as Mohamed Aweis Mohamed, 32, of Owatonna. The Southern Minnesota Regional Medical Examiner’s Office has ruled he died of homicide due to a stab wound to the chest. Police responded to a 911 call of a stabbing at Dartts Park, 600 Cherry St. NE, around 5:17 p.m. Sunday. Upon arrival, officers found Mohamed unconscious on the ground with what appeared to be stab wounds. With roots in Steele County dating back more than a half century ago, the Spindler family of rural Owatonna has been named the 2020 Farm Family of the Year by the University of Minnesota Extension. “It’s an honor,” said Dale Spindler, who currently manages the farm. “I enjoy farming, and although I don’t necessarily care for the limelight, it’s definitely an honor.”

JULY 22

While COVID-19 has shuttered nearly every county fair and even the state fair in Minnesota for this year, Steele County isn’t about to go without anything to satisfy at least some fair goers who have a hankering for fair food. The Steele County Fair plans to hold “Fair Fest” on four of the days when the fair would normally be operating in August, according to Scott Kozelka, fair manager. Fair Fest will run Thursday-Sunday, Aug. 20-23 on the Steele County Fairgrounds in Owatonna.

AUG. 5

For the second Thursday afternoon in a row, a person has died in a motor vehicle crash in Steele County. The latest crash claimed the life of a motorcyclist. Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele has identified the victim as Chuck Thomas Considine, 49, of New Richland. Deputies responded to a crash between a motorcycle and a cement truck in the 3600 block of 52nd Avenue NW located about five miles northwest of Owatonna around 2:20 p.m. July 30. The roadway is also known as County Road 17, which is

county’s voter turnout was 13.47%, which she considers average for a primary. Of the 2,992 votes cast, 1,308 were done by absentee voting, according to Ihrke. She said the absentee voting was definitely higher than normal, which has been widely expected because of COVID-19. During last week’s regular county board meeting, Steele County Commissioners opted to approve allocation of COVID-19 relief funds. The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act established the Coronavirus Relief Fund, which appropriated \$150 billion in funding to

Reuvers and Walker quickly organized the sew-a-thon, held last Saturday in Straight River Park in Medford. “I’m a founder of a face mask group called Prayer Mask Makers,” Reuvers explained. “I started that group because in March I ended up having COVID myself and so I knew that I could either be worried about COVID or I could do something.” The masks made by Reuvers’ group carry their own signature: a small heart emblem on the inside. “Our group has sewn about 7,000 masks that have been donated to places such as a children’s hospital, Park Nicollet, and first responders.”

for drunken driving just weeks before the election. Senator John Jasinski, was cited with fourth-degree DWI and DWI with a blood alcohol content of .08% or more early Saturday in Rice County. Both are misdemeanor charges. Jasinski, 54, lives in Faribault. One of the things that intrigues Kellen Hinrichsen most about the Steele County Historical Society as he takes over as its director is the Village of Yesteryear. He specifically points to the historical structures being moved on sight in their original form at the village next to the History Center in Owatonna. “It’s an incredible great



Officers and firefighters from 39 agencies across southern Minnesota lined the tarmac at Degner Regional Airport in Owatonna as police officer Arik Matson arrived back home from Nebraska in a small jet. Matson was shot in the head in January while responding to a prowler call in Waseca.

After many years of corporate life, Troy Garris is ready to channel his energies into his own business in Steele County. Garris purchased Hometown Motors in Owatonna from Daryl Kubicek in late May, closed the facility down for a month to make renovations and opened as Honest-1 Auto Care. Unlike Hometown Motors, Honest-1 will be solely focused on auto repair and not selling used vehicles.

A 28-year-old man has been captured and charged in connection with the murder of a man in an Owatonna park July 19. The Steele County Attorney’s Office has charged Hassan Nur Hassan of Owatonna with two felony counts of second-degree murder, felony assault and felony theft in connection with the death of Mohamed Aweis Mohamed. Police took Hassan into custody in Minneapolis during the late hours of July 20, the day after the murder at Dartt’s Park in Owatonna. Hassan was eventually brought back to the Steele County Detention Center in Owatonna where he will remain during the duration of the case.

JULY 29

Minnesotans are under a statewide mask order in which they are now required to wear a face covering in indoor businesses and indoor public settings in an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19. The governor’s mask order went into effect Saturday, July 25. A 35-year-old man was killed in a head-on crash between a pair of dump trucks in Steele County July 23. The Steele County Coroner’s Office has identified the victim as Dania Wayne Severson of Owatonna. According to the Steele County Sheriff’s Office, Severson was driving one of the dump trucks involved in the crash in the 3600 block of Lemond Road, which is located south of Hwy. 14 and west of I-35. The crash was reported at 2:55 p.m.

blacktopped. According to Thiele, a Cemstone cement truck was traveling northbound on County 17 making a turn into a drive way when the motorcycle going in the same direction ran into the back end of the truck.

The long awaited decision of Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz of how to reopen public schools has been unveiled. The Blooming Prairie school district will likely be sending students back to the classroom on the elementary level and the high school may see a hybrid level of return to the classroom and partial implementation of online learning.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has named Dave Olson of Owatonna as the 2019 firearms safety instructor of the year. A firearms safety instructor since 1966, Olson has helped more than 1,200 people earn their firearms safety certification.

AUG. 12

The COVID-19 virus has claimed another life in Steele County, making it the second death since the pandemic broke out in March. Public Health Director Amy Caron reported a woman in her 80s, whom she described as being in the “vulnerable population for COVID” died within the past week from the coronavirus. Caron said the woman had been hospitalized for quite some time and was not in a long-term care facility.

AUG. 19

It certainly will go down as one for the history books. Election judges navigated through their first ever COVID-19 primary election on Aug. 11. Steele County Auditor Laura Ihrke, who serves as the county’s chief election judge, said everything went well at all the precincts and there were no major issues for the primary. She said most people came to vote wearing their own masks. For those who didn’t, masks were provided by the election judges. Ihrke reported the

states and local governments. Steele County’s portion of the fund was \$4,479,147 as determined by the state.

AUG. 26

Even though she was forced to wear a mask during the 4-H Dairy Show, Kylie Kruckeberg of Owatonna is glad the show still went on. The livestock shows took on an entirely different look last week at the Steele County Fairgrounds as 4-Hers paraded their animals while wearing face masks to help reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The shows were closed to the public and absent of the usual hustle and bustle of the fair going on in the background.

With an American bald eagle statue poised ahead, family of Burnett Blume of rural Blooming Prairie watched as Burnett received a Quilt of Valor from the local Quilt of Valor group. Chris Butler, the originator of the local Quilt of Valor program, presented the quilt to Blume on Saturday, Aug. 22 at the Blooming Prairie Veterans Memorial site. His wife Marilyn was at his side.

SEPT. 2

It all started with a simple request on Facebook from fifth grade teacher Jill Walker. “I wanted to make sure that all my kids would be able to have more than one mask, especially since we will be at the school five days a week,” Walker explained. “From there, it kind of took on a life of its own.” “A parent of two of my former students tagged Terri Reuvers on the post and she contacted me asking if her prayer group could make them for my class,” Walker said. “Shortly after that, she contacted me again and asked if they could make them for the entire school and I was overwhelmed!” Reuvers’ prayer group has been sewing masks for months and providing it to local organizations and residents in the area. After hearing the school’s need for masks,

SEPT. 9

A new council member is serving Ellendale residents. Jackie Froman took the oath of office on Aug. 27 after the Ellendale City Council appointed her to take the vacant seat created by the resignation of Steve Engle. Engle has joined city staff as deputy clerk.

SEPT. 16

Mixed with a little bit of chaos, the first day of school in Blooming Prairie on Tuesday, Sept. 8 went quite well, according to school administrators. Students and staffs at the Blooming Prairie High School and at the Blooming Prairie Elementary School came with new attire this year. They were all wearing masks. There were many smiles behind the masks, said BP Elementary School Principal Jacob Schwarz.

SEPT. 23

There was apparently no valid basis for the Blooming Prairie City Council to meet in a closed session on Monday, Sept. 14, according to the attorney for the Minnesota Newspaper Association (MNA). The council did meet to discuss discipline already levied against Police Chief Greg Skillestad. The council claimed the closed meeting was to discuss a personnel matter. However, Attorney Mark Anfinson told The Times there are only two personnel related reasons government entities can meet in closed session: 1) Routine performance evaluation 2) Preliminary consideration of charges and complaints against an employee (NOTE: This was already done.) Adjourning its regular meeting at 7:25 p.m., City Administrator Andrew Langholz said the council would meet in a closed session to handle a personnel matter. Anfinson said this is where the council erred.

OCT. 7

A state senator representing several area counties, including Steele, has been busted

resource,” Hinrichsen says. “The fact that they are the original structures is amazing,” he said, noting that having such a set up is unusual for history centers around the country.

The medical clinic serving Blooming Prairie appears to the latest victim of the COVID-19 pandemic. On Thursday, Mayo Clinic Health System announced that it will not renew lease agreements with the facilities in Blooming Prairie and Kenyon at the end of the year. In making the announcement, Mayo called it a “difficult decision.”

OCT. 14

Medford Mayor Lois Nelson is ready to rebuild the city’s main drag, but residents have been attempting to put the brakes on the project that they say is too costly for the city to absorb. The project on a five-block stretch of the downtown area has been kicked around for five years. It initially started at \$2.7 million, but has been modified several times with the current proposal scaled back to \$2.1 million. Steele County would pick up 75% of the total cost as the roadway is a county highway while Medford would be responsible for the remaining 25%.

OCT. 21

With less than two weeks until Election Day, absentee voting has already exceeded a record for Steele County. Steele County Auditor Laura Ihrke, who is the county’s chief election judge, said her office has been “extremely busy” since absentee voting began in mid-September. As of late last week, Ihrke’s office has processed 6,350 ballots, which is more than double the record of 3,000 absentee votes in last year’s Owatonna School election. Crown Cork & Seal, a company that makes packaging products, has agreed to pay a \$60,173 civil penalty to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for air quality violations at its

Seven Tigers named to all-district team

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

The Medford football team had its most successful season since 2013 by going 6-2 and winning the Section 2AA third place game and now thanks to its contribution to the team's success 10 Tigers have been selected to the Mid-Southeast White All-District Team or All-District Honorable Mention.

The seven Tigers who made the all-district team are: offensive lineman/linebacker Brayden Beede, wide receiver/linebacker Josiah Hedensten, offensive and defensive lineman Gavin Hermes, offensive lineman/linebacker Tate Hermes, offensive and defensive lineman Brennon Hoffman, wide receiver/defensive back Ernie Lazaro and running back/defensive back Jack Paulson.

Beede totaled 41 total tackles, five pass deflections, one interception and one sack. Hedensten ran the ball 95 times for 779 yards and 12 touchdowns; he also caught 16 passes for 220 yards and one touchdown. On defense, he recorded 109 total tackles, one pass deflections, one forced fumble and one interception. Gavin Hermes tallied 25 total tackles, two pass deflections,

one forced fumble, two sacks and one tackle for loss. Tate Hermes registered 68 total tackles, one interception, two and a half sacks and one tackle for loss.

Hoffman recorded 41 total tackles, one and a half sacks and one tackle for loss. Lazaro caught two passes for 36 yards and returned two kickoffs for a combined four yards. Defensively, he tallied 18 total tackles, four pass deflections and two interceptions. Paulson led the Tigers in rushing attempts and rushing yards with 149 and 949, respectively, and 12 touchdowns; he also caught two passes for three yards. On defense, he compiled 30 total tackles, one pass deflection and one fumble recovery.

Thanks to his 949 rushing yards and 12 touchdowns, Paulson was named Offensive Player of the Year for the Mid-Southeast District.

Additionally, three Tigers earned all-district honorable mention. Those players are offensive and defensive lineman Dylan Heiderscheidt, tight end/defensive lineman Kael Hermanstorfer and quarterback/defensive back Justin Ristau.

Heiderscheidt recorded 33 total tackles, two fumble recoveries, five sacks and one tackle for loss. Hermanstorfer caught five passes for 123



PHOTO COURTESY SKYE DEVOE

Medford running back Jack Paulson tries to escape the grasp of Blooming Prairie linebacker Tyler Archer during the second half of the Tigers' 26-15 loss to the Awesome Blossoms. Paulson and nine of his teammates were selected to the Mid-Southeast White All-District Team or All-District Honorable Mention. In addition to making the all-district team, Paulson was also named this year's Offensive Player of the Year for the Mid-Southeast District.

yards, returned eight punts for a total of 75 yards and tallied 18 total tackles, four pass deflections and one and a half sacks. Ristau completed 25 of his 61 pass attempts for 382 yards and one touchdown and ran the ball 48 times for 293 yards and two touchdowns. On defense, he made 16 total tackles, two pass deflections and one interception.

Medford Head Coach Jerome Johannes said there two main reasons why each of the

honorees were selected.

"It really comes down to stats and the importance of each player to a team. Offensive linemen do not get the opportunity to accumulate stats, so we look at the role they play," he said.

The role that each of the honorees played, he noted, helped the team be successful.

"Each of them had a role and they carried [out] their role for the betterment of the team. Each of them probably

has a few moments that stand out and separates them as an individual player," he said.

Given how many individual players separated themselves, Johannes said Medford could have had even more honorees.

"This year was a great year, and we had a lot of worthy individuals that certainly could have been All-District. When it comes to the voting on these players, it is tough because so many of them played a huge and impactful role to the success we have had this year," he said.

A couple reasons so many Tigers played an impactful role is due to the time and effort they invested in becoming better players.

"We had incredibly talented and hardworking players," mentioned Johannes.

The senior's hard work is one of the things that makes this group of seniors special.

"Their hard work, dedication, countless hours in camps, weight room – you name it. This might have been the most dedicated senior group I have had. But not only that, they were extremely talented. They all put their team above their individual stats. This was a fun team," he said. "These seniors will be missed, and the underclassmen know that they have large shoes to fill."

BP's own is one of the state's best student-athletes

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

For most people 2020 was a dud of a year, but senior offensive lineman and linebacker Luke Larkoski's year is going out with a bang because he was recently named Academic All-State by the Minnesota Football Coaches Association.

When he was found out he'd received this honor, he was thrilled.

"My reaction was just being overly excited, because I know how prestigious this award was and how only a few players get this award," he said.

He mentioned that this award means a lot to him because it shows that his hard work hasn't gone unnoticed.

"Knowing that my coaches and my school want to recognize me for my hard work on the field and in the classroom means everything to me," Larkoski said.

Athletically, he's competing in four sports, cross country, football, basketball and baseball, this year and

was recently named to the Mid-Southeast All-District team.

Meanwhile, academically, he's earned a 4.084 grade point average and is taking three college-level classes.

Given his hard work on the field and in the classroom, Coach Chad Gimbel said Larkoski is a consummate student-athlete.

"He is a student first, understanding the importance of education and putting forth the time on that. But academic all-state is not just selected on their academics, they also have to be very good football players as well, which he is. He has been a two-year starter and a huge part of our success these last two years because of his play on the field," he said.

He added that Larkoski has been a huge part of Blooming Prairie's success and a good offensive lineman and linebacker because he's smart, aggressive, loves to compete, plays within the system, cares about getting his job done and works hard.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

It's been quite the senior season for Luke Larkoski (60), holding the trophy. In addition to his team winning the Section 1A championship, he's been named an Academic All-State honoree. He's surrounded by his senior teammates (from l to r): Mitchell Fiebiger, Charlie Heimerman, Alex Piller, Cole Christianson and Levi Ryks.

Larkoski deflected some of the praise, saying the Awesome Blossoms' coaching staff also deserve credit for his and the team's success.

"The keys are to have a great coaching staff around you. I was very blessed to have the best coaches in football," he said. "I also believe having great focus on the field will bring you great success when playing a game."

He believes his focus has also been one of the

keys to his academic success.

"My ability to focus on school when it's time to focus. As a student, I like to have fun whenever I can, but when it is time to learn I can always focus and make sure I can learn what I am being taught," he said.

Gimbel said the fact that Larkoski can do so well academically and athletically is very impressive.

"It says he's a hard worker, he takes a lot of

pride in what he does, he doesn't take shortcuts and he pursues excellence," he said.

He noted that Larkoski's commitment and dedication to doing his best makes him a good role model to other students.

"He [gives maximum] effort in everything he does and does everything to the best of his ability," he said. "It's great to have goals, but what is important is working to attain those goals."

While the work to achieve Academic All-State was an individual undertaking, Larkoski said his support system inspired him to do his best athletically and academically.

"My friends and family are my biggest motivators in sports and in the classroom. They motivate me by knowing that I cannot let them down and that I need to do my best for them," he said.

He said one person in particular deserves thanks for helping him achieve this honor.

"I would like to thank my father, Mark Larkoski. He has been there for me throughout sports and school and he is the one who keeps me the most motivated to do my best. I would not be as successful in sports or in the classroom if it wasn't for him," he said.

He's still going through numerous college applications, but his top choice is Carleton College. Wherever he lands, he'd like to study pre-medicine with the goal of becoming a doctor.



Connor Ginskey



Ava Hess

Pair of Huskies nominated for ExCEL Award

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

Each high school in Minnesota can nominate one junior boy and girl for the Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership (ExCEL) Award for the 2020-2021 school year, and this year's nominees from Owatonna High School are Connor Ginskey and Ava Hess.

The ExCEL Award recognizes high school juniors who are active in fine arts and/or athletic activities, who demonstrate leadership qualities and who are model citizens in

their community. The award is sponsored by the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL).

Ginskey said he was excited and a bit surprised when he found out he'd been nominated for this award.

"I have a lot of classmates and peers who are great leaders and very involved as well," he said. "I was very honored to be selected. It meant a lot to me."

He more than qualifies for this award because he's very involved in athletics and fine arts, school activities and community service.

For athletics and fine arts, he's a member of the cross country, basketball and track and field teams as well as active in band, choir, solo/ensemble and pep band.

Even though being that involved in athletics and fine arts is a large time commitment, Ginskey mentioned that he really enjoys participating in those activities.

"Sports have always been a big part of my life, and I like to compete and make myself better," he said. "I also really enjoy music. Both sports and music

mean a lot to me, and I have awesome teachers, coaches, teammates and classmates who make them worthwhile."

Meanwhile, he serves the community by being a bible camp leader, altar server, Lenten soup supper volunteer, youth basketball camp leader, youth retreat leader, church volunteer and going on a catholic workcamp mission trip.

He was inspired to be involved in the community by witnessing others do their part.

"Seeing so many others make a difference in your community really inspires you to step up

and do what you can to help. I try to do what I can to contribute to our community," he said.

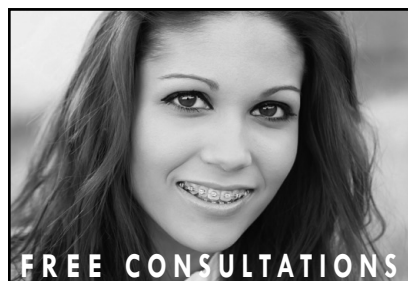
Award winners will be announced on the MSHSL website.

If he were to win the ExCEL award, Ginskey anticipates he would be thrilled and very honored.

"It would be exciting, but I'm just thankful that I was nominated," he said.

Hess said she was also shocked when she found out she'd been nominated for this award.

SEE PAIR OF HUSKIES, B7



Dr. Deborah J. Lien
DDS, MBS
ORTHODONTIC SPECIALIST

www.drdeborahlienorthodontics.com

583.6613
132 2nd Ave NE
Blooming Prairie

FREE CONSULTATIONS

Happy New Year 2021



Sponsored by these
local businesses.

**Johnson, Doerhoefer
& Miner P.A.**
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS
314 E. Main St.
Bloomington
507-583-7528
685 W. Bridge St.
Owatonna
507-451-9136
133 N. Broadway
New Richland
507-465-3810

**Hope
CREAMERY**
TRY HOPE
BUTTER FOR
YOUR BAKING!
507-684-2019

SALINAS AUTO REPAIR INC.
656 3rd St. NE • Bloomington, MN
Robert Salinas
Family-Owned
507-583-6620

**FLOOR
TECH**

322 East Main St.
Bloomington
507-583-2276

Your ad could be here!

STEELE
COUNTY **Times**

Vandal's
FAMILY MARKET

237 Hwy Ave. S • Bloomington 583-6671



Minimizer

www.minimizer.com

800-248-3855

Bloomington



**LARGE SELECTIONS
LOW PRICES**

495 West N. ST.
Owatonna
507-451-7220



Dr. Deborah Lien
ORTHODONTIC SPECIALIST DDS, MBS
Building
Healthy
Smiles!
132 2nd Ave NE • Bloomington
507.583.6613 * FREE CONSULTATION

**Mike's
REPAIR**
Ag & Truck Tire
870 32 Ave. NW, Owatonna
Emergency or on the farm repair
507-455-0388
(After hours 507-455-0483)

Sorenson's
Appliances & TV

GE, Frigidaire, Direct TV, Danby, Crosley, Broan,
Jenn-Air, KitchenAid, Maytag, Panasonic, RCA,
Samsung, Toshiba, Whirlpool

Geneva, Mn
507-256-7258

misgen
auto parts

507-684-2100
12880 SW 72nd Ave, Ellendale

BLOOMING PRAIRIE

JAN. 5
10:30 a.m. – Online Storytime, BP Library
Facebook

ELLENDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

JAN. 1
10 a.m. – SEMCAC,
Community Building

Fire Department
Meeting, Community
Building

JAN. 4
10 a.m. – SEMCAC,
Community Building
6 p.m. – Ellendale

JAN. 6
10 a.m. – SEMCAC,
Community Building

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

JAN. 5
10 a.m. – Genealogy Club, History Center
5 p.m. – Steele County Board Meeting, County
Admin Building

LTO announces cast for ‘Clue: On Stage’

Little Theatre of Owatonna has announced the cast for its winter production of “Clue: On Stage” based on the Paramount Pictures Motion Picture and the Hasbro board game CLUE with additional material by Hunter Foster and Eric Prince and original music by David Abbinanti.

It’s a dark and stormy night, and you’ve been invited to a very unusual dinner party. Each of the guests has an alias, the butler offers a variety of weapons, and the host is, well... dead. So whodunnit? Join the iconic oddballs known as Scarlet, Plum, White, Green, Peacock, and Mustard as they race to find the murderer in Boddy Manor before the body count stacks up. Based on the cult classic film and the popular board game, Clue is a madcap comedy that will keep you guessing until the final twist.

Zackery Knapton is the director with Sand-

ee Hardy Hagen as the technical director.

The cast includes Patrick McColley as Wadsworth, Whitney Minton as Yvette, Raquel Hellman as Miss Scarlett, Gail Zollner as Mrs. Peacock, Theresa Scheidt as Mrs. White, Curt Jorgensen as Colonel Mustard, Ron Hager as Professor Plum, Jason Domstrand as Mr. Green, Tyler Mielke as Mr. Boddy, Hank Bell as The Motorist, David Phillips as Broken Down Car Cop, and Emily Winn as Cook/Singing Telegram Girl.

Performances will be at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 12,13,19 and 20 with matinee performances at 2 p.m. on Feb. 14 and 21.

Online tickets will be available at www.LittleTheatreOfOwatonna.org for the public on Jan. 30. Our Remote Box Office at Tri M Graphics will be open Jan. 23 for members and January 30 for the public. The LTO Box Office opens February 8. Adult ticket price is \$17; student ticket price is \$14.

Sudoku Corner

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

Sponsored by:

**VALLEYVIEW ASSISTED LIVING**
1212 W Frontage Rd Owatonna, MN
507-451-0722 • valleyviewofowatonna.com

- Newly Remodeled
- County Assistance Accepted
- Pet Friendly



Make new friends.

Answers

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

Drive-thru holiday light show supports animals in need

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Havana Lights, a drive-thru Christmas light show in Owatonna that runs through New Year’s Day, supports the Steele County community in two ways: by giving community members and visitors a way to get into the holiday spirit and by raising funds for a local nonprofit that rescues local animals.

Kathy and Duane Knutson have decorated their yard at 2048 Havana Road for the past 15 years, but they turned it into a fundraiser for Helping Paws of Southern Minnesota when the animal rescue organization was founded about three years ago.

The last day to contribute to this year’s fundraiser is Sunday, Jan. 3.

This year’s display features about 10,000 lights and 100 decorations, but it had a humble and melancholy beginning.

“My mom passed in March 2017, and so that winter I had one angel and that’s all I did in memory of her. And I would have people asking me and one lady even come to the door, ‘Why didn’t you decorate this year?’ I explained I was doing it in memory of my mom and she said ‘Oh, okay. Well, we really miss the decorations. You really need to start decorating again.’ So, I thought if I’m going to do it, I’m going to do it for a cause and then Helping Paws [was founded] and I’m

to her with this fundraising idea.

“She wanted to do this and we always have a need for funding to get cats vetted. We do a TNR (trap, neuter and release) program where we go out and trap cats that are wild, but we also have people in the community who have a cat and maybe it’s sick and needs emergency care and maybe we can help out with that,” she said.

“We get a lot of kittens

**Kathy Knutson**

**Debb Broad**

a member of them and believe in what we do there – trying to raise money and awareness [of neglected animals],” said Kathy Knutson.

Debb Broad, president of Helping Paws, said she was overjoyed when Knutson came

SEE DRIVE-THRU HOLIDAY, B8

The Havana Lights’ display, synced with holiday music, features about 10,000 lights and 100 decorations is open to the public every day of the week from dusk to 10 p.m. through New Year’s Day.



Jensen

Heating, A/C,
& Plumbing

256-4712
Geneva
Registered Showroom

- Quality plumbing & heating products for your remodeling or new home construction.
- Serving our area for over 40 years.
- We'll treat your home as if it were our own.

THE BOLD LOOK OF **KOHLER**

Loken Excavation & Drainage

YOUR DRAINAGE PROJECT PARTNER

WE CAN HELP YOU WITH:
Aggregate Products • Waterway Cleaning
All Excavation Projects • Hauling & Septic

Call **DALLAS** for your **DRAINAGE** needs!

507-451-2873



Excavation & Drainage Inc.

3695 Hoffman Drive NW • Owatonna
loken@qwestoffice.net | Toll-free 855-298-2568



2021 New Year's Resolution!

Get Adjusted
for Better Health!

Try Chiropractic! Get Healthy!

**You don't have
to live with pain.**

CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT TODAY!

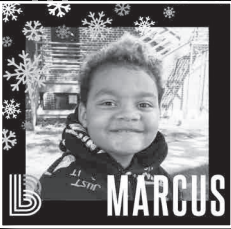
Established to serve your healthcare needs.

Prairie Family & Sports Chiropractic

583-2271 or 1-866-5DR-CHAD

Chad M. Eischens, D.C.
344 East Main Street • Blooming Prairie, MN
www.drchad.org
Massage Therapy Available

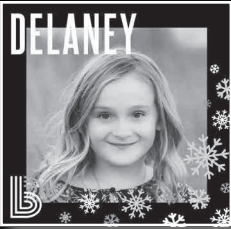
12 KIDS OF CHRISTMAS!



MARCUS

Markus has been waiting for a Big for 3 months. He is a sweet and quiet kid working on building more self-esteem and social skills. Markus enjoys fishing, drawing, swimming and learning about science. If he could be anything when he grows up, he would like to be an engineer, a Navy Seal or work for NASA. Markus lacks a positive male role model in his life and is looking for a friend who can help him learn the importance of responsibility and building self-esteem.

Help end the wait for Markus. YOU could be the Big who ignites his potential. Become a Big today.



DELANEY

Delaney has been waiting for a Big for 2 years. Delaney is known as a social butterfly who loves expressing her creativity through arts and crafts and making new friends. Some of her favorite activities include swimming, cheerleading, coloring, and singing. The best Big for Delaney would be someone who is outgoing, engaging and a good listener.

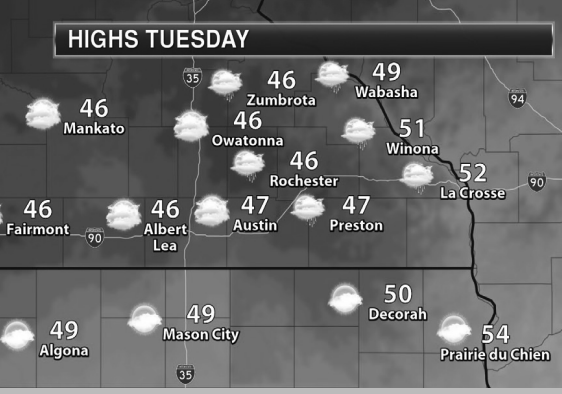
Help end the wait for Delaney. YOU could be the Big who ignites her potential. Become a Big today.



Big Brothers Big Sisters
OF SOUTHERN MINNESOTA

For more information about **MARCUS** or **DELANEY**, call Megan at 507-414-0308 or visit www.bbbsofsouthernmn.org/beabig.

HIGHS TUESDAY



46 Mankato, 46 Owatonna, 46 Rochester, 47 Austin, 47 Preston, 49 Wabasha, 51 Winona, 52 La Crosse, 49 Albert Lea, 49 Fairmont, 49 Algonia, 49 Mason City, 50 Decorah, 54 Prairie du Chien

Weekday Weather Forecast

7am • Noon • 6pm • 9pm

KSMQ TV
The Better Choice

2020: The Year in Review FROM B3

manufacturing facility in Owatonna. Crown Cork's air permit limits its emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs, a class of commonly regulated air pollutants) to 100 tons a year, but the company disclosed that it exceeded that limit, in its required reporting to the MPCA in March. In 2019, the facility exceeded its emissions limits by 2.9 tons in October, 1.7 tons in November, and 1 ton in December.

The effort to put a school resource officer in Medford Schools is one step closer to reality. Last week the Steele County Board unanimously voted to approve a SRO for the Steele County Sheriff's Office. The position would be funded through a \$125,000 Community Oriented Policing Services or COPS grant.

OCT. 28

A Steele County sailor serving in the U.S. Navy has died. Hunter Alexander Frank, a Naval Aircrewman Operator Third Class, assigned to Patrol Squadron 26, was found deceased in his residence in Comalapa, El Salvador, according to Cmdr. Jennifer Cragg, public affairs officer with the U.S. Navy. She said "it is with a heavy heart" that the Navy confirms Frank's death.

Owatonna will be getting a major boost for its downtown. Hamilton Real Estate Group announced last week that a new Marriott Courtyard Hotel will be constructed in downtown Owatonna beginning as early as next summer. The hotel will take up half of the 200 block of

North Cedar and wrap around Pearl Street. Plans also include a new restaurant in the former Jerry's location and a spot for Old Town Bagels in or near their current location. The target for opening the complex is June 2022.

NOV. 11

Sharp criticism over the Main Street project in Medford appears to have spilled over into the voting polls as voters have ousted the city's long-time mayor and a council member. Former mayor Danny Robert Thomas unseated current mayor Lois Nelson by a landslide in last week's general election. Thomas gained 508 votes or 74% compared to Nelson's 175 votes or 25%. Medford voters also removed Matt Dempsey from office. Voters elected Mandy Mueller with 302 votes and Chad Merritt with 272 votes. Dempsey had 240 votes.

Unlike the 2016 election, there were no surprises in this year's commissioner races for Steele County Board. Incumbents Rick Gnemi and Jim Abbe, both of Owatonna, easily were re-elected to their positions by defeating the former commissioners whom they unseated in 2016.

Josiah Hedensten got the best birthday gift he could have wished for on his 18th birthday Friday. The Medford senior football player received a visit from a hero who has been a lifelong role model of his. Injured Waseca police officer Arik Matson made a special appearance at Hedensten's game. And Josiah made sure he wasn't disap-

pointed with what he saw. Hedensten scored five touchdowns in the game against Randolph.

NOV. 18

Several area schools are shifting back to distance learning after COVID-19 cases have skyrocketed in Steele County over the past two weeks. Both Owatonna and Medford schools are moving to distance learning within the next week while Blooming Prairie is also taking similar action at the end of the month.

NOV. 25

For the first time in more than a century Christmas is coming to Souba Greenhouse in Owatonna. The family-owned retail and wholesale operation on the western edge of Owatonna has been in existence since 1892. But until this year, Soubas had not offered Christmas. It took cousins Jody Hugley and Jon DeMars, who took the operation over earlier this year from Hugley's parents, Bill and Debi Souba, to bring in the festive flair for the holiday season. "We decided we didn't have enough to do," said DeMars. "We thought we could open up for Christmas."

DEC. 2

This month, Santa and his reindeer won't be the only things coming to town. They'll be joined by an electric car charging station, which should be activated in the next week or two, according to BP Public Utilities General Manager Jerry Mausbach. The self-service charging station will be the first of its kind in Blooming



The Steele County Sheriff's Office introduced a new crime fighting duo in 2020: deputy Caleb Buck and his K-9 partner, Willow. The two finished training in fall and are now serving residents of Steele County. This is the first sheriff's K-9 team in about six years.

Prairie. It's located in the parking area on the west side of city hall.

DEC. 9

One of the last World War II survivors in the Blooming Prairie area has died. Genevieve Peterson, a Prairie Manor Care Center resident in Blooming Prairie and most recently Homestead Hospice House in Owatonna, died on Dec. 3. She was 104. Peterson served in the U.S. Army during WWII as a nurse stationed at the Fort Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Denver. In her role, Peterson served returning soldiers at the hospital.

While Anthony Garness worked on one side of his large hog operation in Westfield Township, fire broke out on the opposite side. The fast moving blaze on Dec. 3 quickly consumed the barn along with the 2,000 hogs in it. Garness, who escaped from the burning barn without any injury, reported the fire shortly after 8 a.m. Firefighters

from Blooming Prairie, Hayfield and Claremont spent several hours battling the blaze at the farm located at 14491 Hwy. 30.

DEC. 16

After months of waiting and people dying from COVID-19, the first shipments of vaccination are expected to arrive in southeast Minnesota this week. But don't expect to get vaccinated any time soon unless you work in healthcare or live in a long-term care facility. Public Health Director Amy Caron said the first shipment of vaccination to arrive in Steele County will be used to protect healthcare workers at Owatonna Hospital.

An elderly man has died from injuries sustained after being hit by a vehicle while walking in Owatonna. Police have identified the victim as Lanny Huemann, 79, of Owatonna. He died Wednesday, Dec. 9, at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester.

COVID-19 has shuttered many things this past year, but love is one thing that the virus has been unable to stop, at least for one Steele County couple. This week Irwin Sr. and Donna Arndt are celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary, a milestone that most couples never come close to achieving for various reasons. On top of that, Irwin turned 92 the day before their anniversary.

DEC. 23

Ralph Diaz of Ellendale died Dec. 20 in Pittsburgh while awaiting a double lung transplant. Diaz, 51, was the manager at RJ's on 5th Ave. Bar and Grill in Ellendale. He grew up in Blooming Prairie.

Donnavon Eaker, long-time owner of Steve's Meat Market in Ellendale, is battling non-small lung cancer. She was diagnosed with the cancer in November. She has operated the award-winning meat market for the past 47 years.

PAIR OF HUSKIES: nominated for ExCEL Award FROM B4

"I was completely surprised! There are so many amazing people in our class, so I thought I didn't stand a chance," she said. "I am very honored and so thankful for this wonderful nomination."

"Being nominated for this award is very special to me because I have looked up to so many of the students who have been nominated in the past. It is very humbling to know that I may give a similar impression to

others," she said.

Like Ginskey, Hess is involved in numerous athletic and fine arts activities. She's a member of the soccer team, band, pep band, marching band, solo/ensemble and the Minnesota Band Director Association honor band.

She's involved in so many activities because she loves participating in them.

"Being around my classmates outside of school has helped me make new friends,

for which I am very grateful. If I didn't love the activities I'm in, I wouldn't make the time to do them. Finding what you enjoy doing is very important, especially when trying to figure out who you are as a person," she said.

Additionally, she's also a member of National Honor Society, Student Council, Honor Roll, Student Health Occupations Club, Link Crew, elementary tutor and student representative with superintendent.

Hess checks off the community service requirement by participating in the Adopt A Highway program and volunteering for Steele County Relay for Life, Boo for Food, From the Heart Music Boosters, carnival fundraiser and her church.

Being involved in the community is very important to her.

"I want to give back because of all the things the community does for me and for all of the other families in

Owatonna. The caring community of Owatonna is my biggest motivation when it comes to volunteering in the community," she said.

She's also noticed herself grow as a leader.

"During my freshman year in high school I held back and didn't speak out as much as I do now, mostly because I was afraid of what others thought of me," said Hess. "I have grown into being a stronger leader during high

school by being myself and knowing that that is enough."

She mentioned that winning the award would be amazing, but she's happy just being nominated.

"If I were to win the award, I would be 100 times more surprised than I was when Mr. Achterkirch called me about the nomination," she said. "Either way, I am proud to represent Owatonna through this award and am grateful for the opportunity."

STEELE COUNTY Times

*Always local,
all the time.*

TURN OFF the television...

Encourage your children to make reading the newspaper a part of their everyday routine for lifelong learning.

TURN ON THEIR MINDS!

STEELE COUNTY Times
Always local, all the time.

Times To Join, Call (507) 583-4431

Out-of-Town

Business Directory

ELLIS BODY SHOP

1231 BRADY BLVD. NW • OWATONNA, MN

507-451-0845
(800) 310-0845
FAX (507) 451-0540

JACK & TRACY ELLIS
Family Owned Since 1978

FARMERS INSURANCE

Michael Bishman
121 West Broadway St.
Owatonna, MN 55060
Phone: (507) 451-0193 • Fax: (507) 451-6640

Sorenson's APPLIANCE & TV

101 North Central Ave • Geneva, MN

Open Monday & Thursday till 8 p.m.
Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday till 5 p.m.
Saturday till 3 p.m.

507-256-7258

www.sorensonsappliance.com

Times Visit all of these advertisers from their ads on our website: www.steeledodgenews.com

Owatonna GRANITE & MONUMENT

1180 Frontage Rd. E,
Owatonna, MN

507-455-9551
OwatonnaGranite.com

Blooming Prairie Public Utilities

(507) 583-6683
Blooming Prairie, MN

You Know You Should,
PREPLANNING

Why Not Today?

Personalized Pre-arrangement
Secure & Flexible Prefunding

Purple Cross Plans

SECURE FLEXIBLE PEACE OF MIND

Worlein FUNERAL HOME
1801 4th Street NW
Austin, MN
www.worlein.com

Call Mary Kittelson
NFDA Certified
Preplanning
Consultant
433-5000

NFPA NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION
Pursuit of Excellence
AWARD RECIPIENT 2018

Welcoming a new member



Ambassadors from the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism visit with American Family Insurance Mazariego Agency at 122 South Oak, in Owatonna, to welcome them as a new member. Oscar Mazariego is the owner. As an American Family Insurance agent, the Mazariego Agency can offer dependable auto, home, business, health and life insurance as well as other insurance products.

DRIVE-THRU HOLIDAY: *light show* FROM B6

so we get them in, we get them stabilized and then we send them to rescues in the Cities that maybe have more funding for vetting so there's a lot of different avenues that we've used."

She said that Helping Paws of Southern Minnesota has helped 177 cats so far this year.

They're able to help so many cats thanks in part to the funds they receive from community members or visitors who enjoy Havana Lights and give a free-will donation.

Knutson said Havana Lights raised \$1,500 last year.

Broad reported that

those funds only cover about 10% of the costs to help that many cats because vetting can cost \$100 to \$200 per cat.

"We're trying to use other resources that are cheaper, but you have to travel so there's travel expenses, so we help cats in whatever way we can," she said.

Last year, Knutson tried to supplement the funds raised through Havana Lights through craft sales, but the pandemic cancelled craft fairs and dealt a blow to Helping Paws' fundraising efforts.

"Our fundraising efforts are way down because we can't because

of COVID-19. It's been very hard to make money so this is a good way for donations to help raise money," she said.

This year, she wanted to raise more money and invite the public into her driveway rather than having cars sitting out on the street and potentially get hurt or block traffic, so she added a second dancing lights show in her backyard.

"People can come and watch the lights as long as they want and there's people who stay out there 10 to 15 minutes," Knutson said. "I've gotten a lot of positive feedback."

NOTICE

STATE OF MINNESOTA
STEELE COUNTY

DISTRICT COURT
JUDICIAL DISTRICT:
THIRD
COURT FILE NUMBER:
74-JV-20-1817
CASE TYPE:
JUVENILE

Summons and Notice
Child in Need of Protection or Services Matter

In the Matter of the Welfare of the Child(ren) of:
Angelica Felipa Montemayer, Parent

NOTICE TO:
Christopher Ramirez,

1. A Child In Need of Protection or Services Petition has been filed in the Office of the Clerk of Juvenile Court located at **1111 East Main Street, Owatonna, Minnesota**, alleging that the child(ren) of the above-named parent(s) or legal custodian(s) is/are in need of protection or services.
 2. **Notice is hereby given** that the matter of said Child In Need of Protection or Services Petition will be called for hearing before the Juvenile Court located at **1111 East Main Street, Owatonna, Minnesota**, on March 10, 2021 at 10:15 AM or as soon after as the Matter can be heard.
 3. **YOU ARE ORDERED** to appear before the Juvenile Court at the scheduled time and date.
 4. You have a right to be represented by counsel.
 5. If you fail to appear at the hearing, the Court may still conduct the hearing and grant appropriate relief, including taking permanent custody of the child/ren named in the Petition.
- WITNESS**, the Honorable Karen Duncan Judge of District Court
- BY: Robin Hoesley
Court Administrator
12/30

833-314-1217

BOGO 40% OFF

Renewal by Andersen
WINDOW REPLACEMENT an Andersen Company
The Better Way to a Better Window

Small Ads

BIG RESULTS

THE MINNESOTA DISPLAY AD NETWORK

Choose the entire state or a combination of zones that cover your target audience.

Ask your newspaper representative for complete details.

The 2x4 Network is a program of the MNA, phone 800-279-2979

Looking for a rewarding career?

One where you can make a difference every day?

Zumbro Valley Health Center is currently recruiting RN's/LPN's to provide medical oversight in a client-centered, withdrawal management setting with independent, medically stable clients.

Full-time or part-time; all shifts available, shift differential for evenings and overnights. We offer a full benefits package at 20 hrs/week, including health, 401k w/match, and Paid Time Off.

LPN's starting between \$21.60 & \$25.00/hr
RN's starting between \$25.65 & \$31.00/hr

ZUMBRO VALLEY HEALTH CENTER

Integrity • Teamwork • A passion for helping others

That's what embodies our work to provide care for people living with mental illness and substance use disorders.

Join us today to start your rewarding career, apply online at www.zvhc.org

FREE DATE CHANGES ON 2021 TOURS*

FROM \$1,749* \$1,499*

CRIMSON CANYONS & MESAS NATIONAL PARKS TOUR

10 days, departs June - September 2021

Las Vegas • Grand Canyon • Bryce Canyon • Zion • Capitol Reef • Arches & Canyonlands • and more —

Experience the red rocks of these 6 iconic national parks. Travel through deserts, forests, mountains, and to the very edge of the Grand Canyon in this tour.

promo code N7017
1-877-375-2291

YMT vacations

*Free date changes anytime up to 45 days prior to departure for land tours. Deposits and final payments remain non-refundable. Prices are per person based on double occupancy plus up to \$199 in taxes & fees. Single supplement and second charges may apply. Add-on airfare available. Offers apply to new bookings only, made by 3/31/21. Other terms & conditions may apply. Ask your Travel Consultant for details.

Jen Teichroew joins RE/MAX Venture

Matt Gillard, broker and owner of RE/MAX Venture is pleased to announce Jennifer Teichroew as the newest agent to join the Owatonna RE/MAX office.

"I have been working in the real estate industry for over 2 years; during this time, I gained a respect for the relationships that develop between agents and their clients," said Teichroew.

"I became a licensed Realtor a little over a year ago and recently decided to join the team at RE/MAX Venture. I was drawn to their culture — one of positivity, with an emphasis on guidance

& mentorship, and giving back in the community. And with 2 young children, it was also important for me to grow my business surrounded by a close-knit team of supportive people with strong family values."

Teichroew also said, "Prior to my career change into real estate, I've been helping people in the community for more than 15 years. I draw upon that experience to advise and counsel my real estate clients through the process of selling or buying a home."

"I've seen how Jen works with her clients and I've been very impressed with her



Jen Teichroew

no-nonsense, direct approach in serving their needs," said Gillard. "She also fits in perfectly with our office culture; we are happy to have her join our growing team here at RE/MAX Venture."

Located at 118 N Cedar Avenue in Owatonna, RE/MAX Venture serves Steele County and the surrounding areas, specializing in residential, small acreage, investment and commercial properties.

Crossword Puzzle of the Week

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14				15						16				
17				18						19				
20				21			22			23				
24					25			26						
		27					28					29	30	31
32	33						34				35			
36							37				38			
39							40				41			
42					43						44			
				45					46				47	48
49	50	51					52			53				
54							55			56			57	
58							59						60	
61							62						63	

ACROSS

1 Limerick's second word, usually
4 Delicate
9 Eat greedily
14 Medical insurer
15 Delayed
16 Radio receiver
17 Australian running bird
18 Univision news anchor Jorge ---
19 Make amends
20 Open grassland
22 Preserved
24 Funded
26 Biblical weed
27 Hilltop
28 Not that
29 --- for Charlie
32 Expatriate
34 Rowboat lever
35 The Pope
36 Confined
37 Demand
38 Face protection
39 Affirmative votes
40 Obtain
41 Battle Born State
42 Short numbers
43 Elapse
44 High-hat

45 Cheap sensational magazine
46 Perturbed
49 N Y C's --- Park
53 Lexicographer's interest
54 Whiffs
55 Enjoy to the full
57 U S capital once and briefly
58 Pal of Kukla and Fran
59 Dodge
60 Accountant's letters
61 Senses
62 Works
63 Agency which initiated the Waco siege

DOWN

1 Location question
2 Capital of Jordan
3 Speech snippets
4 Book opener
5 Genetic component of some viruses
6 Pointed
7 Religious painting
8 <
9 Brenda and Ringo
10 Adorable child
11 Author unknown
12 Mathematician --- Descartes

45 Adele's dancing brother
21 Pigs out
23 Locks or strands
25 Ram's dam
28 Tip sellers
29 Largest Moroccan city
30 Portable player
31 "Two Mules for Sister ---": Eastwood/MacLaine film
32 Pulitzer winner Jennifer ---
33 Salad sauce
35 Fulcrums
37 Loathed
38 Enterprises
40 Young ladies
41 Intelligence agency
43 Prize monies
45 Hazard
46 Nightclub show
47 Pyramid place
48 Kickless coffee
49 Upper limit
50 Indolent
51 Short-tailed rodent
52 Valley
56 Weird64 Sudden
66 Employ

Let's get you movin'!

Licensed in Minnesota
Serving Serving Steele, Dodge, Mower and Freeborn counties, including Rochester, Byron, Kasson and Owatonna.

Jennifer Walsh
507-438-6676
email: jenwalsh@kw.com
web: jenwalsh.kw.com

DEALS ON WHEELS

Sell your car, bike, RV, trailer, and anything on wheels today!!

Over 25,000 in households

CLASSIFIEDS

Serving Steele, Mower, Freeborn, Dodge, and Olmsted Counties

BARGAIN FINDER

Sell your items for \$50 or less. Run it for four weeks. ONLY \$5!

www.steeledodge.com

TO PLACE AN AD

Steele County Times

507-583-4431

bptimes@frontiernet.net

411 E. Main St., Blooming Prairie, MN 55917

3-WEEK SPECIAL: \$32

**BUY TWO WEEKS,
GET THE THIRD FREE**

UP TO 20 WORDS; 10¢ FOR EACH WORD AFTER

TO PLACE AN AD

Dodge County Independent

Dodge County Advantage

507-634-7503 • dci@kmtel.com

121 W. Main St., Kasson, MN 55944

FOR SALE

FOR SALE: Large old plat books and world atlas books. 1912 Freeborn plat book, 1928 Olmsted plat book, 1929 Faribault plat book, 1887 World Atlas, 1911 World Atlas, and 1940 World Atlas. Good condition. Asking \$50 OBO. 507-450-5395. 12/10T4pd

AGED HORSE MANURE for the garden connoisseur. Courtesy of Lady Maggie. Call Madeline to place your spring order. \$4 for 5-gallon bucket or \$9 for a 13-gallon bag. Customers must provide bucket or bags. Cal 507-634-6293. TFN/NC

FOR SALE: Ammo: .45 acp; .300 Win. Mag.; 22.250. Hard to find ammo readily available. Private party. 763-226-9775. 11/2TFNpd

FOR RENT

BLOOMING PRAIRIE RENTALS Smoke free 1 bd apt for 62+ or disabled persons. Rent based on income, all utilities included! 507-438-7935 or 507-451-8524 or www.lifestyleinc.net tdd 507-451-0704 Equal Housing Opportunity 12/24T2

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

CALEB'S PET SITTING, Cats and Dogs, please call me at 507-634-7907. 33Tfc

COINS

NEED CASH? I give free appraisals of your older coins from 1964 and older. I am also looking to buy older coins such as silver dollars, halves, quarters, dimes, wheat and Indianhead cents. Please call Ron from Hayfield at 507-477-2427 or 507-259-6460. 12/3T6pd

HELP WANTED

ROCHESTER TOOL & CUTTER GRINDING: Immediate opening. Looking for full-time (4 10-hour

days) part-time employee (20-30 hours) to sharpen machine shop tooling. Can lead to CNC equipment. Mechanical knowl-

edge preferred, but will train. Students – adults. For more information call Jack at shop. 507-634-7184 12/10T3

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Resident Assistant

- FT 6 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- FT & PT 2 p.m. – 10 p.m.
- FT & PT 10 p.m. – 6 a.m.

Registered Nurse

- Part-Time
- Full-Time

Prairie Meadows
SENIOR LIVING

**Apply on Indeed or
800 5th Ave. NW,
Kasson, MN - EOE**



VICTIM SERVICES

A service of DFO
Community Corrections

Sexual Assault Program

& Victim Witness

Assistance Program

Advocacy, information and assistance for victim/survivors of sexual assault and other crimes. Community and professional education and consultation. All services free and confidential. Located in Courthouse, Mantorville

Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

635-6266

or call collect 24 hours

289-0636

QUALITY PORK PROCESSORS

Starting at **\$16⁰⁰**

**1st and 2nd processing positions
available now!**

QUALITY PORK PROCESSORS

A Great Place to Work

**Looking for full time work?
Benefits? Paid Holidays? 401K?
Apply online www.qppinc.net**

CITY OF KASSON WATER/WASTEWATER OPERATOR

GRADE 8: starts at 23.77 per hour

GENERAL DUTIES: Performs semi-skilled technical work operating and maintaining the water and wastewater systems. Assists in providing a continuous supply of safe drinking water and maintaining a safe discharge effluent wastewater within local, State and Federal regulations.

REQUIREMENTS: Must have general knowledge of hydraulic, chemical and mechanical principles pertinent to water treatment plant operations, general knowledge of water and wastewater operating characteristics and maintenance of water and wastewater systems, hold a Class D Water and Class D Wastewater license within 2 years of hire, be able to obtain and maintain a valid MN Class B Driver's license. Desired qualifications: some training and/or experience in a municipal water or wastewater treatment plant. Pay Grade 8.

APPLY: City Administrator, 401 5th St. SE, Kasson, MN 55944. Call 507-634-7071 or email cityhall@cityofkasson.com to request an application. First review of applications on January 11, 2021; position open until filled.

WATER/WASTEWATER OPERATOR II

GRADE 9: range \$25.40-\$28.87 per hour

GENERAL DUTIES: Performs semi-skilled technical work operating and maintaining the water and wastewater systems. Assists in providing a continuous supply of safe drinking water and maintaining a safe discharge effluent wastewater within local, State and Federal regulations.

REQUIREMENTS: Must have general knowledge of hydraulic, chemical and mechanical principles pertinent to water treatment plant operations, general knowledge of water and wastewater operating characteristics and maintenance of water and wastewater systems, hold a Class D Water and Class C Wastewater license, be able to obtain and maintain a valid MN Class B Driver's license. Desired qualifications: some training and/or experience in a municipal water or wastewater treatment plant. Pay Grade 9.

APPLY: City Administrator, 401 5th St. SE, Kasson, MN 55944. Call 507-634-7071 or email cityhall@cityofkasson.com to request an application. First review of applications on January 11, 2021; position open until filled.

12/31T2

GOT NEWS? // EDITORDCI@KMTel.COM



mcan

Minnesota Classified Advertising Network

**EMPLOYMENT****LONG TERM SUBS**

New London-Spicer Schools. MN licensure required. For more information, see www.nls.k12.mn.us/employment

WANTED TO BUY**WANTED:****ALL 1970S MOTORCYCLES**

Running or not. Titled or not. Cash in exchange. Sell now while prices are high! Call Dan at 612/720-2142

SAVE MONEY!

**Call your local newspaper
or MNA 800-279-2979
to find out how you can save
money by placing your
advertisement here!**

MISCELLANEOUS**TIMESHARE****CANCELLATION EXPERTS**

Over \$50,000,000 in timeshare debt and fees cancelled in 2019. Get free informational package and learn how to get rid of your timeshare! Free consultations. Over 450 positive reviews. Call 833/619-1117

AT&T WIRELESS

Two great new offers! Ask how to get the new iPhone 11 or Next Generation Samsung Galaxy S10e on us with AT&T's Buy one, Give One offer. While supplies last! Call 855/332-0464

DONATE YOUR CAR

truck or boat to Heritage For The Blind. Free 3-day vacation, tax deductible, free towing, all paperwork taken care of 844/220-9501

MISCELLANEOUS**DIRECTV**

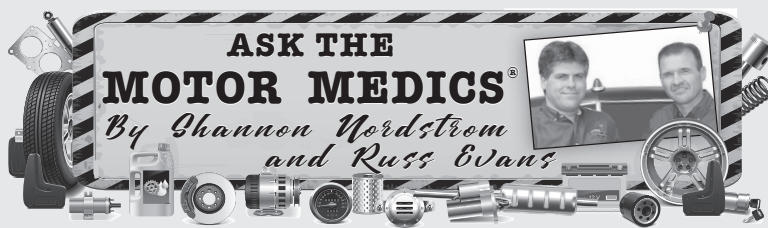
Every live football game, every Sunday - anywhere - on your favorite device. Restrictions apply. Call IVS 877/350-0094

DISH NETWORK \$59.99

for 190 Channels! Blazing fast internet \$19.99/mo. (where available.) Switch & get a free \$100 Visa gift card. Free voice remote. Free HD DVR. Free streaming on all devices. Call today! 855/562-4309

**ENJOY 100%
GUARANTEED**

delivered to-the-door Omaha Steaks! Get 4 free Pork Chops and 4 free chicken breasts. Order the Omaha Steaks Classic - only \$129.99. Call 844/331-1614 and use code 6676CCP or visit www.omahasteaks.com/dinner96



ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS®

*By Shannon Nordstrom
and Russ Evans*

Dear Motor Medics, I have a 2002 Volkswagen Beetle. I got it new as a school car when I was 16 and I drove it through high school and college. After college I got married and we only drove it randomly for the next ten years and now because its in good shape we are thinking about getting it ready for our kids to drive in a few years when they are old enough. The car is a diesel and gets amazing mileage and we have never done anything to it as far as repairs and because it's a diesel we were told it never needs a tune up. Is there anything we should do to get it back on the road and safe for kids?

Lori in Hibbing Minnesota

Owning a diesel and therefore not needing any tune up items is far from the truth. While these are particularly good cars, the diesel engines do take a good amount of care to avoid major problems. Timing belts must be replaced on a regular basis or the engines will fail catastrophically when the belt breaks. With the belt, the water pump and rollers get done at the same time. Fuel filters also need to be changed regularly. Have these items checked along with a full brake, steering and suspension check over and have your shop give it a general inspection. You may find that it doesn't need much, and the kids will enjoy.

Take care, The Motor Medics

Dear Motor Medics, I have a 2006 Ford Taurus with a rust problem. It started below the fuel door and has progressed to the rear quarter panels above the wheels. The rest of the car has zero rust on it. I have had my shop look it over and they say they cannot see any rust on any other part of the car. This car only has 35k miles on it, which is extremely low, but I know its not worth spending thousands of dollars to repair. Could I just have the rust cut out above the wheels and patch it in to get by another ten years. We are driving the car full time now and will be adding probably 30k miles a year to it until its worn out.

Carry in Sheldon Iowa

That is a super low amount of miles for that year and if the car is a nice as most with those miles making repairs is a little easier to take but they will not be cheap no matter how you do it. If you expect a rust repair to last you must completely remove it. Rust is a cancer and if not completely removed it will come back quickly. The panels could be cut out and patched but most people who try this end up with rust within a short period of time so most body shops will want to completely replace the panels and that can cost several thousand dollars.

Take care, The Motor Medics

12/31

Schaeffer's
SPECIALIZED LUBRICANTS

Bruce Freerksen
(507)273-9110
brucewithschaefferoil@gmail.com
West Concord, MN

Kappy's
COLLISION CENTER
OWATONNA'S COLLISION SPECIALIST

Now using PPG Waterborne Paint
STAY KAPPY
www.kappysauto.com
kappysauto@gmail.com

SEE KAPPY
Charlie & Al Kaplan
507-451-8989

STEVENS
STEVEN'S COLLISION CENTER

700 7th St. Circle SE, Kasson
507-634-6444
Mon-Fri. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

- 24 hour towing
- Free Written Estimates
- All Work Guaranteed
- Complete Paint & Bodywork
- Auto Glass Repairs
- Vinyl Roof & Seat Repairs

**LET THESE SPONSORS KNOW
YOU APPRECIATE THESE
COLUMNS!**

**FOR ENTERTAINMENT ONLY.
ALWAYS CONSULT YOUR LOCAL
SHOP AND FOLLOW ALL SAFETY
PROCEDURES BEFORE REPAIRS.**

**Come visit the
Motor Medic® online at
underthehoodshow.com**

LAD
Recycling, Inc. LAD Recycling, Inc.
Scrap Iron & Metals

WE BUY ALL METALS!
507-527-2408 • LDRecycling.com
55976 STATE HWY 56, West Concord, MN

ALL Insurance
AUTO • HOME • LIFE • BUSINESS INSURANCE

Jacob Simons
President
507.361.7556
jacob@allinsb.com
2518 Superior Dr NW Suite 101A
Rochester, MN 55901

Boe Auto Center

115 Highway 56 N. West Concord
507-527-2241
www.boeautocenter.com

Hoff's
Auto Repair

704 7th St Circle Se • 634-4633



OWATONNA PROUD

B10 | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2020

OWATONNA SCHOOLS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

COVID edition holiday group requires carolers to get crafty

BY SOPHIE MUIR
OHS MAGNET WRITER

This year in many ways has been unlike any other, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected almost every aspect of our lives, including the agenda of the OHS Carolers, a holiday singing group that has been around for over 80 years.

Every year the Owatonna Carolers spread the Christmas spirit through traditional songs such as 'The First Noel' and 'Jolly Old St Nicholas'. Beginning with practices in the fall to be prepared for a winter season with around a hundred performances.

This year, however, OHS Choir director Mr. Chris Harris and the Carolers had to get

crafty, going about their rehearsals and events. While the 2020 season did start around the same time as it has in the past, it was cut short, lasting until late November rather than ending before Christmas break in December. The only performance that could be managed was a streamed recording by Scott Limberg of the Carolers on Owatonna Live. A typical year would consist of going out in the community and performing many times over the span of a few weeks in businesses, nursing homes, grocery stores, churches, daycares, schools, events and more around town.

There were also major differences in the conduction of rehearsals. A typical season

would have in-person auditions, whereas this year, auditions were recorded and submitted individually. Fewer rehearsals were held, about half the songs were practiced, students wore masks and were distanced apart for the entirety of rehearsals. The OHS Carolers faced many obstacles in preparing for their season in the midst of COVID. Mr. Harris said, "Trying to plan for the unknown and having to constantly change plans—how to give the community and the kids a Carolers experience, but ultimately being relegated to not performing in the community at all."

As with everyone else this year, the OHS Carolers did what they could



PHOTO BY SOPHIE MUIR

OHS seniors in their third and final year as Owatonna Carolers pose together in their robes before their recorded performance.

to make the best of their season, but of course, many people, especially students involved, are disheartened with this year's outcome.

OHS senior and caroler Laura Gebur said, "There were a lot of things I missed. Not getting to travel anywhere

or see anybody at all was sad. I'd thought that we would at least get to perform live with masks or outside since fall sports still happened. I also missed not getting to sing all our songs. I hope that we were still able to spread holiday cheer with our video. Especial-

ly in our current circumstances, people need joy more than ever." That is exactly the purpose of Carolers; to spread joy for the holidays.

The video of the 2020 Carolers performance can be found at: <https://www.owatonnalive.com/special-events>.

Donut kits help students in need



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Staff at Owatonna High School found a unique way to raise money for students in need. Staff members sold donut kits to their colleagues. The high school's counseling department and school social worker raised more than \$1,000 during the fundraiser.

Free meals offered for children ages 1-18

Owatonna Public Schools Nutrition Services staff will miss seeing all our families over Winter Break, but they will be back, serving meals on January 4th, 5th, and 7th.

Meal pick-up will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at these locations:

- Lincoln Elementary – 747 Havana – Main Entrance / Door #1
- McKinley Elementary – 1050 22nd St. NE – Main Entrance / Door #1
- Wilson Elementary – 325 Meadow Lane – Main Entrance / Door #1
- Owatonna Middle School – 500 15th St. NE – Main Entrance / Door #1
- Owatonna High School – 333 E School St. – Door #16

Questions? Please call 507-444-8616

or email Nutrition Services at nutritionservices@isd761.org.

Visit our website for more information: isd761.org/district-services/nutrition-services.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

This is a sampling of the Meal Bundles offered by Owatonna Schools Nutrition Services.

Winter sports set to start-up Jan. 4

BY EVAN DUSHEK
OHS MAGNET WRITER

On Wednesday, Dec.16, Gov. Tim Walz gave a press conference regarding the "pause" preventing high school sports from beginning at the initial start date. Although the state is coming off a surge of COVID-19 cases and totals are rising to about 4,500 deaths, Walz concluded that youth and adult sports practices may begin on Jan.4.

This Jan.4 start date was one of many dates proposed by the Minnesota State High School League, among them were Dec.21 and Jan.18. Gov. Walz's decision on youth and adult sports beginning on the 4th was based on one major factor, that most vaccinations are set to begin distribution the week of Dec.21 as Walz has developed a plan for vaccine distribution starting with health-care professionals and the most clinically at risk that started Tuesday, Dec.16.

Additionally, with practices starting on Jan. 4 games are scheduled to begin for most sports as early as Jan. 14, but this date is still pending approval from Governor Walz and the Minnesota Department of Health. If that Jan. 14 date is not approved, games are likely to start after Jan. 18. That Jan.14 date applies for girls and boys hockey, boys and girls basketball and wrestling's first competition is scheduled for Jan. 15. The activities department has been rescheduling competitions. Updates can be found at the link below for the Owatonna winter sports schedule.

The winter sports season will be far from normal as coaches and schools are given strict safe-

ty protocols in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. OHS Basketball Head Coach Josh Williams and OHS Athletic Director Marc Achterkirch, elaborated on what those protocols may look like. Protocols will consist of masks worn by coaches at all times but optional by kids when actively participating, all equipment and personnel will need to be sanitized often throughout practice, practice social distancing as much as possible to limit numbers per team/pod.

Mr. Achterkirch stated, "Pod sizes are limited to 25, and for some sports like wrestling they are as low as 10 while social distancing in partners." In a game setting Coach Williams said, "Chairs and bench will need to be distanced. There will be a limited amount of tickets. So crowds and fans will be significantly less than most years. And masks on for those not involved in the game." As with fall sports, there will be two passes given out per participant and they can be used at all conference competitions. Limited entrance and exit points for games and practice. No locker rooms and no shared equipment are also among the protocols set in place.

During the "pause" period teams and athletes have done what they can to stay prepared as their season was nothing but question marks. One example would be our OHS girls gymnastics team does conditioning drills over zoom in order to stay physically prepared when the time arises. Other athletes like OHS junior, boys basketball player Tyrel Creger have stayed prepared on their own. Creger said, "I have been working out and rehabbing some injuries

and as far as mentally being prepared I have been watching more film and learning more about basketball." Athletes who participate in all winter sports are in a similar situation and are finding ways to stay prepared.

After an extended period of time with close to no answers on what will happen in regards to the winter sports season. There is much excitement and anticipation among athletes and coaches. Mr. Achterkirch said, "I am very excited to get things going, and as long as we follow protocol and everyone buys into being safe and making good choices, it should be a successful season." Excitement is a common theme for winter sports coaches. Coach Williams said, "It's a unique year. Truly glad there is hope on the horizon for a season and the chance to compete for our kids." OHS gymnastics captain Lindsey Bangs also added, "I think this season will be a little odd but hopefully we can still make the best out of it. I think I am just excited to have a senior season."

This season will no doubt be a new experience for all but with optimism and determination it won't be forgotten. Players and Coaches will have to work together to stay safe and be smart in order to keep COVID numbers at zero. Ultimately, Gov. Walz, the Minnesota State High School League, Athletic directors and coaches throughout the state are prepared to make this winter sports season happen in a safe and effective manner beginning Jan.4. This is a developing story and may change depending on the Minnesota and Steele County COVID-19 numbers.

Find the winter sports schedule at www.big9conference.org.

Owatonna Students of the Week

Middle School



Olivia Chandler
Eighth Grade
Parents: Amy and Robert Chandler

Olivia always comes to class with a smile and an attitude of gratitude! She is kind, thoughtful and appreciative of any help she gets. Olivia has really stepped it up with Distant Learning by being proactive with her assignments by reaching out to teachers for help, being on time and staying engaged during class as well as working on her assignments everyday. Olivia, you are a ROCKSTAR student!

High School

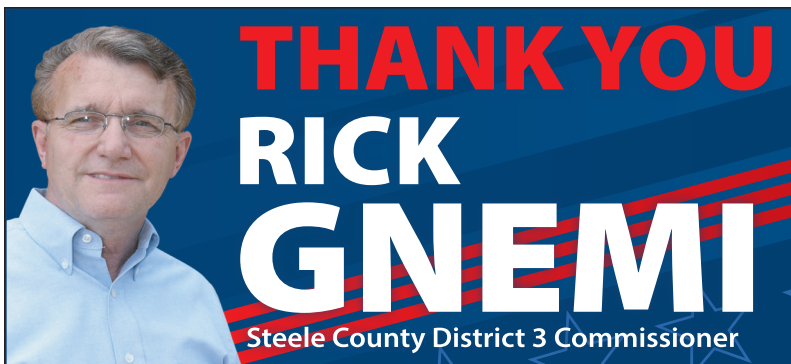


Joe Earl
Senior
Parents: Joyce and Michael Earl

Joe has done a great job of not only working through Distance Learning, but he also has put a lot of effort into his project in Machining class. Joe works hard to do quality work in this class. He is a great source of knowledge and assistance to other students in the class. He has demonstrated initiative in all that he has done. Keep up the great work, Joe!

Virtual Coffee and Conversation with Superintendent Elstad

The community is invited to join Jeff Elstad, superintendent of Owatonna Public Schools, for a virtual "coffee and conversation" on Friday, Jan. 8 at 8:30 a.m. Hear an update on what's been happening within the school district and bring any questions you have. RSVP to shoffman@isd761.org by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 6 to receive the virtual meeting details.



I would personally like to thank you for your support and encouragement these past four years. I look forward to serving all the citizens of Steele County. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Home telephone: 507-451-3813
Steele County phone: 507- 444-7427
Email: rick.gnemi@co.steele.mn.us

I look forward to fighting for YOU and Steele County to protect your tax dollars and to build unity within the county.

Prepared and Paid for by Rick Gnemi for County Commissioner