



Wednesday, February 3, 2021  
[www.SteeleCountyTimes.com](http://www.SteeleCountyTimes.com)  
 Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Dan Peach and his girlfriend, Shelby White, are spreading love around the area through the Tunnel of Love located on Blooming Prairie's Main Street. The love display will be featured in the shed located next to B to Z Hardware daily through Valentine's Day. See Page B1 for more information about Peach's latest venture.

## Historical Society trying to preserve Jerry's mural

BY DEB FLEMMING  
 NEWS EDITOR

The Steele County Historical Society hopes to save the mural that hung in the dining room of Jerry's Supper Club in downtown Owatonna for 50 years. And at one point, the organization thought it had raised the money needed to do so.

Within 40 hours of launching its fundraiser on GoFundMe, the historical society surpassed its goal of \$4,000.

"I thought we would have a fair amount of community support, but what surprised me is how quickly the money came in and how enthusiastic people have been," said Kellen Hinrichsen, executive director of the organization.

However, on Friday, Hinrichsen received some unexpected and troubling news:

- Funds initially thought to be available to remove the mural and transport it to the History Center hadn't panned out;

- The cost of removing the mural increased because the wall it hangs on is load bearing and needs to be reinforced; and

- The cost of installing the 6-by-21 foot mural in the atrium of the History Center increased significantly because of the mural's weight.

After talking with the board, Hinrichsen increased the fundraising goal to \$18,000 on Monday.

SEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, A9



This is a section of the mural that graced the walls of Jerry's Supper Club in Owatonna for 50 years. Additional funds are needed to move and display the mural at the History Center in Owatonna.



FILE PHOTO

Fire destroyed The Bakery in downtown Blooming Prairie on Jan. 28, 2020. Firefighters fought the blaze for more than 14 hours. With water being sprayed on the building, a firefighter uses a tool to break out The Bakery's windows in an effort to bring the fire under control.

## Looking Back

Fire destroys building, but not community spirit

BY DEB FLEMMING  
 NEWS EDITOR

The Bakery building, constructed in the 1870s as a bank, is gone, but the flames and water used to fight the fire responsible couldn't douse the spirits of Blooming Prairie residents.

The day of the fire, nearby businesses opened their doors to firefighters needing respite or a place to warm up. People brought food and offered to help, said Blooming Prairie Fire Chief Dean Naatz.

The fire and water

damage displaced both the Bakery, owned by Gregg Fristedt, and the Sportstitch, a business owned and operated by Linda Klemmensen. The Bakery never responsible couldn't douse the spirits of Blooming Prairie residents.

The day of the fire, nearby businesses opened their doors to firefighters needing respite or a place to warm up. People brought food and offered to help, said Blooming Prairie Fire Chief Dean Naatz.

Community support didn't end when the firefighters left the scene.

A benefit soon followed, raising

SEE LOOKING BACK, A9

## Riess murder saga featured on Dateline NBC

BY RICK BUSSLER  
 PUBLISHER

It will likely go down as the most notorious criminal case ever in Blooming Prairie and Dodge County's history.

And now national TV has added even more notoriety to the

case involving killer Lois Riess, who murdered her husband inside their rural Blooming Prairie home in March 2018 and another woman a few weeks later in Fort Myers Beach.

Dateline NBC showcased the Riess murders in a new two-hour

special on Friday, Jan. 29. The special featured various law enforcement officers, prosecutors, friends of Riess and people affected by the tragic outcome of Riess' killing spree.

Most notably absent from the story were Minnesota law enforcement officials, including

investigators with the Dodge County Sheriff's Office and officers from the Blooming Prairie Police Department who initially discovered David Riess dead in his home. Sheriff Scott Rose said he has avoided the national media over this case out of respect to the family.

NBC interviewed Bernie Mathis, who Riess befriended in Texas just days after killing Pamela Hutchinson whom she also befriended in Florida. Mathis said she did not recognize Riess and was unaware she was wanted for two murders when they met. "We hit



Lois Riess

SEE RIESS MURDER SAGA, A9

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### AREA DEATHS

Lee Ulrich, 71, Oakland

Serving  
 Blooming Prairie  
 and Steele County  
 since 1893

### OUR VIEW

## Step up and save a community icon

The Steele County Historical Society is making a desperate plea to help save a community icon that has been a part of the fabric of the county for a half century.

Jerry's Supper Club in downtown Owatonna is being remodeled as part of the redevelopment project that will include construction of a 106-unit hotel in the 200 block of North Cedar Avenue.

With renovation underway, officials at the historical society are hoping to save an iconic mural inside the vacant building.

Jerry's had been in operation since 1960 before shutting its doors about 10 years ago. The downturn in the economy led to the restaurant's demise.

The society thought \$4,000 would get the job done, but it found out just Monday the cost will run more than four times what they originally figured. The current bid came in at \$18,000, which includes everything from the removal to transport and finally installation at the Steele County History Center.

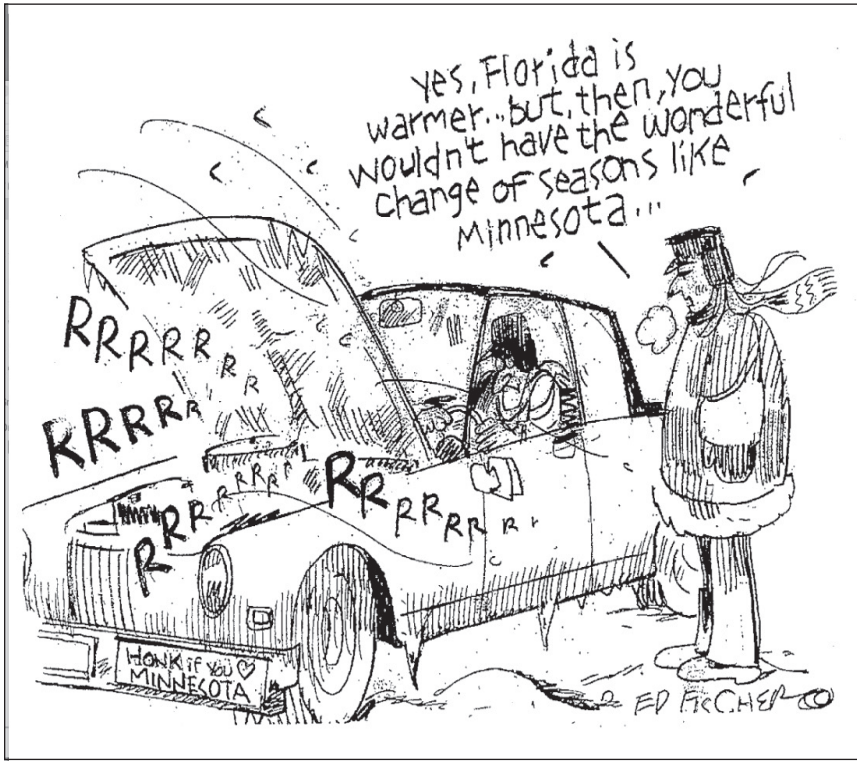
The costs of removing the mural increased because the wall it's on was found to be load bearing and needs to be reinforced. The original bid did not take certain structural concerns into account and now has to be hung from the ceiling in order to handle the mural's weight.

"I know this seems daunting, and you'd be right to think that this is a major change," acknowledged Kellen Hinrichsen, director of the history center. "I apologize for that, but sometimes life throws you a curveball."

Hinrichsen and his team are not giving up the fight to save this icon. They have already raised nearly \$8,000 and as of Monday need to come up with an additional \$10,000. But they are on a short time frame. They need the funds by the end of February.

We hope people will see the value of saving Jerry's Mural. History needs to be preserved. Only people can make that happen through their generous donations and commitment.

Nothing can replace Jerry's, but saving a piece of history will salvage memories for a lifetime.



### YOUR VIEW

## Thanks for helping us exceed our goals

To-the-Editor: The Salvation Army would like to thank Steele County for helping reach and exceed our goals for the 2020 Red Kettle season.

Thank you to all of our bell ringers and businesses that allowed us to have kettles in their stores. Thank you to all of our volunteers, KOWZ Radio, the Steele County Times and the Owa-

tonna People's Press. It is because of you we are able to assist individuals and families at their greatest point of need.

It is our continued mission to use the funds raised responsibly and help design creative solutions to positively transform lives by providing faith-based care and compassion paired with tangible support

to help meet human needs. Thank you for partnering with us in our ministry of service. God bless you Steele County.

For more information on the Steele County Salvation Army Social Services contact, Kathy Thielbar at 507-455-1444.

Steele County Salvation Army Owatonna

## Letters to the Editor

We encourage readers to share their views on issues of community interest. Letters must be signed, no longer than 275 words and typewritten or clearly printed. Writers must include their address and a daytime phone

number for verification. Phone numbers and street addresses will not be published; your name and city of residence will be published. Letters will be edited for clarity, grammar and length and may be published

in print and electronic forms. Submit a letter by email to [scletters@gmail.com](mailto:scletters@gmail.com); or by mail to the Steele County Times, attn. Letters to the Editor, P.O.Box 247, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917.

## Capturing the emotion and special moments

Included in last week's record number of awards given to the Steele County Times was one that the newspaper has never achieved before.

I was fortunate enough to win the press photographer's portfolio for a variety of photos taken throughout the year. This is an especially difficult award to win because it's open to photographers at all weekly newspapers in Minnesota. Circulation divides most of the other categories in the contest so you are competing with fewer entries.



**Hot Pursuit**  
RICK BUSSLER

The honor earned my photos getting displayed prominently on the cover of the Better Newspaper Contest, which highlights all the awards given out to journalists across the state.

Winning this award brings me back to my roots in community journalism. I began as a cub photographer in eighth grade for my hometown newspaper in Brownton. I was lucky enough to have a boss who allowed me to tinker around with the camera and take lots of photos of sporting events and eventually other community events.

I have always believed in the importance of photographs in the newspaper. The

SEE CAPTURING, A9

2019-2020 BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST

### Better Newspaper Contest

**Press Photographer's Portfolio**

**All Non-Dailies**  
First Place: Steele County Times, Blooming Prairie, Rick Bussler  
All of the photos in the portfolio were very good and captured the emotions and moments - drawing the viewer in.

**Second Place: Jackson County Pilot, Justin Lessman**  
My first thought after looking at Justin's photos were 'what a great community.' He really gave life to the things he covered.

**Third Place: Anoka County Union Herald, Jonathan Young**  
Jonathan captured all the emotions of the subjects he covered.

PORTFOLIO ALL DAILIES WINNERS ON BACK ▶

This is the cover of the Better Newspaper Contest published by the Minnesota Newspaper Association. The cover showcases Rick Bussler's photographs as part of the winning press photographer's portfolio for weekly newspapers in Minnesota.

### GUEST COLUMN

## A nation facing multiple crises

BY REV. RUSSELL RUDOLF

"Close scrutiny will show that most 'crisis situations' are opportunities to either advance, or stay where you are."

-- Maxwell Maltz

"Crises and deadlocks when they occur have at least this advantage, that they force us to think."

-- Jawaharlal Nehru

### CASCADING CRISIS

Near the end of his inaugural address, President Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. listed six items that require our immediate attention. The six items he mentioned were: the virus, climate change, growing inequality, racism, America's global standing and an attack on truth and democracy.

The president labeled the six items "Cascading crises." As I thought of his label, I visualized six earthen dikes. During the past four

years, these dikes had begun to crack. During the past four years, the existing administration did nothing to repair those dikes. Now, we are faced with dikes that are failing and the ramifications are beginning to pour down upon us.

It's my intention in what follows to define and describe as briefly and as best as I can each individual crisis. I'm doing this because the president's words appeared and disappeared so quickly.

In case you don't remember his words, President Biden said, "Any one of these will be enough to challenge us in profound ways, but the fact is we face them all at once. We will be judged - you and I - by how we resolve these cascading crisis of our era."

### THE VIRUS

President Biden's first Executive Order

was the requirement to wear masks in Federal Buildings. In addition he created a White House position with the hope of improving the government's response to the virus.

Beyond that he re-joined the World Health Organization saying "We have to coordinate with other countries."

Though he couldn't require the wearing of masks by all Americans in all stations, he politely asked all of us to wear masks for the next 100 days.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

President Biden signed two Executive orders: 1.) he re-committed us to the Paris Climate Agreement and 2.) he reversed the previous administration's hostility toward environmental regulations.

Let's face it and agree that reversing the previ-

SEE A NATION FACING, A9



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A state and national award winning weekly



**MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION**

2021-16 awards  
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)

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# COVID-19 efforts garner first-ever Spirit of Owatonna award

**BY DEB FLEMMING**  
NEWS EDITOR

Two local programs launched in response to COVID-19 – Shields of Steele and Jump Start Owatonna – received the new Spirit of Owatonna Award from the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism during its annual meeting Friday, Jan. 29.

The Spirit of Owatonna Award is expected to become an annual award to recognize the business community's work toward the greater good, said Brad Meier, president and chief executive officer of the Chamber.

Shields of Steele didn't exist a year ago. Formed at the onset of the pandemic, Shields of Steele provides free, personal protective equipment (PPE) to individuals, health care workers, senior living communities, businesses and schools in Steele County and beyond.

The idea originated with a group of employees of Federated and mushroomed to a community-wide effort.

With \$14,000 in seed money provided by Federated Insurance and its employees, the group's initial goal was to produce and distribute 400 face shields to

health care workers in Owatonna.

To date, Shields of Steele and its 117 volunteers have produced and distributed more than 6,000 face shields, 8,000 fabric masks, 6,000 ear savers and 100 gallons of disinfectant.

"More than 700 of our shields went to kids (who needed them because of illness or disabilities)," said Mike Beckman, who spearheaded the project.

He said he will always remember the mom in New York who needed three face shields for her kids. "I was going to say no ... but sent three shields to

New York."

Some were also sent to nurses in Wisconsin and New York. And 75 went to Hennepin County.

Among the litany of things he'll never forget, Beckman said he'll always remember the tireless work of all those who have volunteered to produce and distribute the masks. He specifically recognized who took over construction of the shields when his dad was diagnosed with cancer.

"They built and constructed the last 2,000 shields we made," said Beckman.

Owatonna has done something during the pandemic that few others are capable of, "Beckman said.

Tom Peterson, of Climate by Design International, would agree.

In accepting the Spirit of Owatonna Award on behalf of Jump Start Owatonna, Peterson said that coming together and helping each other meet the needs around us is what Owatonna does.

Jump Start Owatonna was an idea to help small, independently owned businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19 get back in

business, said Peterson, adding that Jump Start Owatonna's goal was to help them get back in business.

Jump Start Owatonna raised \$94,000 from 40 businesses and organizations to provide grants, in-kind services or both to 45 small businesses.

"As quickly as the funds flowed in, we decided to get it out."

Successful applicants were for-profit businesses with 20 or fewer employees located in Owatonna. These businesses were required demonstrate negative financial impacts due to COVID-19.

# County hits 1,000-mark in vaccinations

**BY RICK BUSSLER**  
PUBLISHER

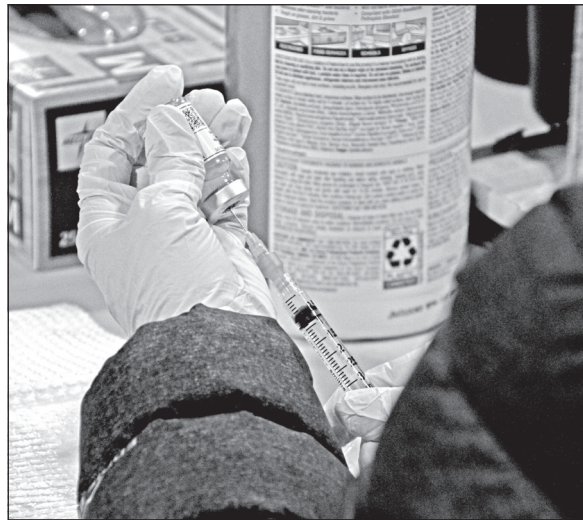
Public Health officials in Steele County have administered 1,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine over the past month, Public Health Director Amy Caron reported this week.

Of the 1,000 shots given, most of them have been for the first shot while a small amount has been for the second shot, according to Caron. As the county

finishes up the first phase of healthcare and EMS workers, it's now focusing on daycare providers and school personnel.

While the county has achieved the 1,000 mark in vaccinations, it's much lower than health officials would like to see, largely because they aren't receiving the amount of vaccine they would like, Caron said, noting the trouble continues to be a lack of vaccine coming into the state.

Steele County received 300 doses for this week, but it still is not enough to begin the next phase of 65 and older people. Caron expects to start with the second phase within the next two weeks. "It just depends on how the vaccine will be distributed," she said. "The



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

**A health care worker fills a syringe with the correct does of vaccine during a recent vaccine clinic.**

state decides from week to week how it will be distributed," she added.

The vaccine shortage has put the local Public Health department in a precarious situation. "There are so many

but rather we get very little vaccine each week. It's tough to turn people down."

COVID-19 numbers have been trending downward over the past few weeks. In Steele County, there were 63 new cases over the past week, bringing the county's total new case load to 2,859. There have been 10 deaths in the county.

Lower numbers have also been the trend in neighboring Dodge County, which saw 36 new cases over the past week. Dodge County has had 1,436 new cases and four deaths. Freeborn County has experienced 2,622 new cases and 23 deaths while Mower County has had 3,834

cases and 29 deaths.

New hospital admissions and ICU admissions have been going down statewide, Caron said.

But even with the vaccine rolling out and numbers going down, Caron warns people to not let their guard down. Some experts are predicting another spike in cases later this month and March.

"Just because we are trending in the right direction, we shouldn't forget all the precautions we have been taking all these months," said Caron, adding people need to continue wearing masks, social distance, wash hands and stay away from large groups.

## COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

Steele: 1,000 doses  
Dodge: 600 doses

Includes mixture of first and second shots as of Feb. 3.

Source: Steele County Public Health

# Owatonna schools begin offering vaccines to staff, continue testing

**BY MITCHELL BREUER**  
STAFF WRITER

Staff members at Owatonna Public Schools are beginning to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and continue to test for the virus through the district's saliva testing program.

Twelve district employees took part in the district's vaccine pilot when the first vaccines arrived from the Minnesota Department of Health two weeks ago. An additional 36 employees were chosen to be vaccinated this past week. More than 100 are expected to be vaccinated in the coming weeks with the help of Steele County Public Health.

"We are making progress, but we have a way to go with over 800 employees," said Superintendent Jeffery Elstad.

As far as who gets the vaccine, Elstad said the district prioritized those over the age of 65, anyone with underlying conditions, and those who work with the most vulnerable population – including staff members who work with students who have underlying health issues.

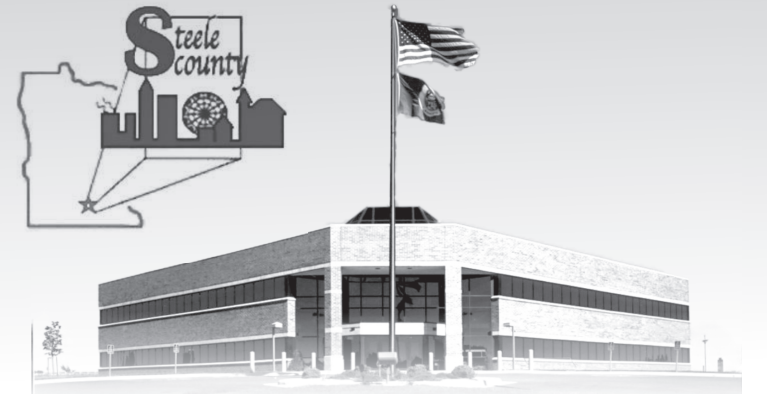
"We used that criteria to develop a prioritized list, and then as we were given a number of doses, we reached out to those individuals on that list and informed them of the opportunity and then, the employee

themselves had to go on to a different website and register for their vaccine and they received a vaccination number and that is what solidified their appointment," Elstad said.

The school was also able to allow 216 employees the option of getting a saliva test on Jan. 20, which Elstad said proved to be a quick and easy process. Results came back the following day, with no one testing positive. Elstad also said that the school will be receiving more saliva test this week.

The recent efforts come as students have returned to the classroom, with elementary

SEE OWATONNA SCHOOLS, A9



## Steele County Economic Relief Grant Program

### Steele County Businesses! (for-profit and nonprofit)

In response to the passage of the Economic Relief Package by the Minnesota Legislature, Steele County has created a grant program and allocated \$715,000 to support for-profit, private businesses and nonprofits impacted directly or indirectly by Executive Orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Grants are available**

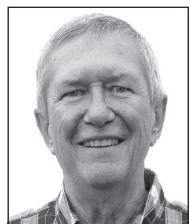
for all eligible Steele County for-profit and nonprofit businesses through the Economic Relief Grant Program

Businesses who have previously received financial assistance, from any level of government, are eligible for this program.

**Applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. February 12, 2021**

Program application and guidelines are available at [www.co.steele.mn.us](http://www.co.steele.mn.us).

Questions please email [CRFApplications@co.steele.mn.us](mailto:CRFApplications@co.steele.mn.us) or call Steele County Administration Center at **507-444-7400**.



**Reflections**  
HOWARD LESTRUD

We have been socially distanced for over 10 months now and it really hurts. This pandemic has crippled the world.

With a third coronavirus vaccine on the way, we can all hope and pray that we will be

# Take a coffee break during pandemic

seeing light at the end of the tunnel... meaning we will be hoping to soon get back to normal.

Will we ever get back to normal? Nobody knows that answer and the easiest way to answer that question is to say we will be seeing a new normal.

We are all hurting because general safety restrictions have been imposed, those creating barriers between families and friends. Our loved ones are hos-

pitalized and we can't even visit them in many cases.

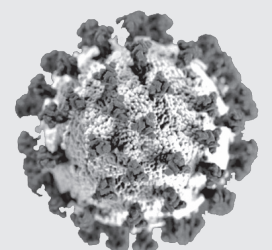
Many of us have been separated from our loved ones and from our friends.

We can't socialize with our families and friends as we once did.

Take a coffee break if you can and enjoy that social interaction that keeps our motors going.

Some people in the Blooming Prairie area

SEE COFFEE BREAK, A9



World.....	103,000,000
Deaths .....	2,240,000
Recovered.....	57,300,000
U.S. ....	26,911,000
Deaths .....	420,000
Recovered.....	16,630,000

## COVID-19 UPDATE

MN .....	463,000
Deaths .....	6,270
Recovered.....	447,420

Steele.....	2,859
Deaths .....	10
Recovered.....	1,835

Dodge .....	1,436
Deaths .....	4
Recovered.....	1,010

Freeborn.....	2,622
Deaths .....	23
Recovered.....	
Mower .....	3,834
Deaths .....	29
Recovered.....	

AS OF FEB. 1, 2021

**BLOTTER SPOTLIGHT** Personal Injury Crash: Paramedics and deputies responded to a motor vehicle crash with injuries in the 16300 block of 94th Avenue SE in Blooming Prairie Township at 11:59 a.m. on Jan. 22.

# Driver charged with felony in BP crash

**BY RICK BUSSLER**  
PUBLISHER

An Owatonna man is accused of operating a vehicle in a negligent manner while under the influence of alcohol after a personal injury crash in Blooming Prairie.

The Steele County Attorney's Office has charged Jordan Michael Wiuff, 30, with a felony count of criminal vehicular operation causing

substantial bodily harm while under the influence. The charge carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Wiuff was involved in a motor vehicle crash on Hwy. 218 near Center Avenue in Blooming Prairie around 4:19 p.m. on Jan. 5. Officer Dan Peach was sitting in a near-by parking lot in his squad car facing Hwy. 218 when he heard

a loud bang. He immediately went to the source of the bang when he discovered two vehicles had collided.

Peach discovered Norman Christianson was driving a 1987 Buick Century. Christianson told police he was traveling southbound on Hwy. 218 when the other vehicle driven by Wiuff had crossed into his lane of traffic and came at him

head-on. Christianson's vehicle was hit so hard that the impact spun his vehicle out. The two vehicles ended up about a block away from each other after the collision.

The driver side door of Christianson's vehicle would not open due to the impact. Blooming Prairie Fire responded to extricate Christianson out of the vehicle. He was later evaluated by EMTs at the scene.

Officer Peach made contact with Wiuff to determine what had happened. When Peach began talking to Wiuff, he noticed he was slightly slurring his words, according to the criminal complaint. Wiuff told police, "I kind of went over the center line and he (Christianson) overcorrected I think."

In talking to Wiuff, the officer smelled the odor of an alcoholic

beverage coming from his breath. After failing some field sobriety tests, Peach determined that Wiuff was impaired and placed him under arrest.

Police transported Wiuff to the Owatonna hospital where a search warrant for a blood sample was executed. The blood test has been sent to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension in St. Paul for analysis.

## Another sex offender moves within Owatonna

**BY RICK BUSSLER**  
PUBLISHER

Another sexual offender in Owatonna is on the move within the community.

Police said Benny Ledesma, 28, has taken up residency in the 300 block of McIndoe Street in Owatonna within the past month. He previously had been staying in the vicinity of Strand Drive and 25th Avenue NW.

Ledesma was initially released back into the community after serving his sentence in November 2016.

Authorities will not have a community notification meeting as required by state law because of concerns for COVID-19, according to Christian Berg, police



**Benny Ledesma**

approaching her in a public setting and grabbing her by the neck. He also robbed the victim.

While Ledesma has served his sentence, police are required to notify the public every time there is a change in living situation with Level 3 offenders. The notification is not intended to increase fear, but rather raise awareness, police said.

Police are not allowed to direct where sexual offenders can live, work or go to school.

Ledesma is one of eight Level 3 offenders currently living in Owatonna.

Anyone with questions about Ledesma's release can contact Owatonna Police at 507-444-3800.

### CRIME BRIEF

## Waseca man charged with pair of theft felonies

An alleged shoplifting incident turned into much more than a Waseca man was likely counting on.

On Jan. 18, police arrested Kenyetta Elwoods, 53, after receiving a report of him shoplifting at Walmart in Owatonna. But that was only the start of his troubles. He was also allegedly found with drug paraphernalia and keys to a stolen vehicle.

Walmart reported Elwoods leaving the store with items

he had not purchased, according to police. An officer spotted Elwoods and took him into custody. Walmart determined he had tried to shoplift more than \$1,000 in unpaid merchandise, police said.

When the officer searched Elwoods, he uncovered a pipe with methamphetamine residue, police said. As the officer was leaving the jail, another report came in alleging Elwoods had borrowed a car the day before and never

returned it. The owner had just reported it as stolen.

At the time of Elwoods' arrest, police found him to be in possession of the stolen vehicle's keys. Police recovered the stolen vehicle in the Walmart parking lot.

Woods faces two felony counts of theft for shoplifting and the stolen vehicle as well as fifth-degree possession of a controlled substance, which is a gross misdemeanor.

Police said Elwoods was also picked up last July for stealing another vehicle that was also recovered at Walmart.

### COURT NEWS

Steele County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Jan. 18 - 24:

#### BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mary A. Ahrens, 51, Medford, speeding and revoked license, \$315; Howard L. Cole, 21, Laurel, MS, hunting firearms violation, \$125; Mitchell J. Fiebigler, 18, Blooming Prairie, speeding, \$125; Brooke L. Gologowski, 21, Austin, possession of marijuana and expired registration, \$255; Christopher J. Johnson, 55, Albert Lea, public nuisance, \$175; Kevin D. Lee, 27, Austin, expired tabs, \$105; Joseph D. Meyer, 19, Owatonna, possession of marijuana, \$225; Nina A. Worrell, 38, Hayfield, careless driving, \$175.

#### MN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Keton C. Brown, 22, Owatonna, take fish without angling license, \$175; Contoni Giddings, 25, Mankato, take fish without angling license, \$175; Daniel E. Kerkvliet, 59, Anchorage, AK, migratory birds violation, stay of adjudication, \$100 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Rahn J. Kerkvliet, 64, migratory birds violation, stay of adjudication, \$100 and 1 year of unsupervised

monitoring without conviction; Khalid D. Marshall, 26, Rochester, take fish without angling license, \$175; Peter J. Michaletz, 59, Owatonna, migratory birds violation, stay of adjudication, \$100 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Jenna M. Pederson, 35, New Richland, parking violation, \$37.

#### MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Orietta Almeida Marrero, 43, St. Paul, speeding, \$125; Jason A. Artola, 25, Eagan, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$145 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Tiger Atrick, 50, Lemont, IL, speeding, \$115; Francisco Barrera, 47, Johnson, NY, speeding, \$125; Abel K. Belay, 23, Brooklyn Center, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$125; Kallie M. Bender, 20, Plymouth, speeding, \$115; Brent R. Bischof, 56, Bloomington, speeding, \$115; Emily A. Bryant, 23, Blaine, speeding, \$125; Victor A. Carrejo, 56, Faribault, DWI, \$200, 90 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments and 3 years of supervised probation; Kaylee C. Chavez, 26, Faribault, speeding, \$135; Jeffrey J. Cherne, 63, Duluth, speeding, \$115; Aaron A. Douglas, 39, Apple Valley, possession of marijuana, \$125; Eleni V. Fialo, 22, Eden Prairie, speeding,

\$115; Kevin J. Fountaine, 28, Oakdale, speeding, \$115; Stephan J. Fox II, 35, Fort Atkinson, WI, seat belt, \$100; Guadalupe B. Galeno Rodriguez, 19, Richfield, permit violation, \$125; Juan C. Garcia, 20, Arden Hills, seat belt, \$100; Floyd P. George, 36, Brooklyn Park, speeding, \$115; Antwon D. Glenn, 23, Robbinsdale, seat belt, \$100; Carlos A. Hernandez, 22, Minneapolis, seat belt, \$100; Dominique N. Hill, 32, Northwood, IA, speeding, \$115; Ricki L. Hunsinger, 23, Forest Lake, speeding, \$125; James B. Jacobson, 62, Ellendale, registration violation, \$175; James B. Jacobson, 62, Ellendale, registration violation, \$175; Stevenson J. Klotz, 19, Chanhassen, speeding, \$115; Quentin J. Kubista, 22, Blooming Prairie, speeding and no insurance, \$335; Nicole A. Lofton, 44, Rosemount, speeding, \$115; Ramiro Mancha-Pena, 41, Albuquerque, NM, speeding, \$135; Shawdria D. Mathis, 28, Burnsville, no license and no insurance, \$375; Owen T. Novotne, 21, Rochester, unsafe lane usage, \$125; Ojom C. Ojullu, 31, Austin, permit violation, \$125; Pinaki H. Patel, 30, Lakeville, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$145 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Matthew J. Pitoscia, 28, Cottage Grove, speeding, \$115; Samantha T. Praseutsack, 17, Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$135; Cherrice N. Risius, 21, Garner, IA, speeding, \$115; Bailey

A. Root, 25, Waseca, speeding, \$135; Todd Schaal, 53, Medford, NJ, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$145 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; David A. Schlaak, 29, Waseca, seat belt, \$100; Alyssa S. Smith, 23, Claremont, hands free violation and possession of marijuana, \$175; Oliver M. Sudue, 23, Brooklyn Park, possession of marijuana, \$125; Maria G. Virula Salazar, 26, Houston, TX, speeding and no license, \$215; Linda L. Weringa, 68, Lake Crystal, speeding, \$115; Melissa A. Westmore, 42, Plymouth, speeding, \$115.

#### OWATONNA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Brittany R. Barkhurst, 36, Owatonna, no insurance, \$275; Jesus Bautista-Arenas, 26, Medford, speeding, \$125; Douglas J. Benham, 34, New Richland, revoked license, \$275; Micayla E. Best, 26, Waseca, no insurance, \$275; Alexis E. Brose, 25, Savage, failure to stop for traffic control signal, stay of adjudication, \$145 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Yadiira Chagoya-Antonio, 40, Owatonna, invalid license and no insurance, \$375; Eleazar Contreras, 19, Owatonna, theft, \$125; Jade V. Cook, 31, St. Paul, seat belt, stay of adjudication, \$135 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Traci M. Dube, 51, Owatonna, theft, stay of adjudication, diversion

program and 2 years of unsupervised probation; Zachary J. Eisen, 27, Owatonna, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Jose Esquivel Jr., 19, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Ismael E. Estrada-Alvarez, 18, Owatonna, invalid license, \$175; Mohamed A. Fakrudin, 24, Owatonna, invalid license, \$175; Katherine A. Flicek, 68, Owatonna, inattentive driving, \$275, chemical assessment, attend MADD impact panel and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Joshua J. Fuller, 23, Owatonna, possession of marijuana, \$125; Stacy L. Hanson, 53, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$105; Noah A. Harazin, 33, Silver Lake, revoked license, \$275; Tyler M. Harris, 18, Owatonna, open bottle and possession of marijuana, \$225; Alonso Hernandez, 66, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Isabel P. Hernandez, 49, Owatonna, cancelled license, \$275; Marielle N. Jackson, 29, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Eden E. Kester, 22, Chatfield, open bottle, \$175; Jennifer M. Klukas, 36, Owatonna, stop sign, \$125; Edward T. Lawson, 41, Medford, suspended license, stay of adjudication, \$80 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Becky A. Lovgren, 39, Owatonna, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Jared R. Mosier, 34, Owatonna, hands free violation, \$125; Paul L. Oelkers, 56, Northfield, revoked

license, \$275; Abdirashid M. Osman, 37, Owatonna, failure to yield, stay of adjudication, \$145 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Dominic D. Panos, 21, Owatonna, windshield violation, \$125; Tanner C. Pehrson, 27, Waseca, failure to yield, \$125; Edward I. Persell, 55, Albert Lea, cancelled license, \$150 and 110 days in county jail; Casey E. Peterson, 36, Owatonna, abandoned vehicle, \$125; Marion A. Pirkil, 87, Owatonna, failure to yield, \$125; Scott L. Rasmussen, 43, Owatonna, animal running at large, \$125; Sonya L. Rodriguez, 22, Owatonna, assault, \$125, 3 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, psychological evaluation, domestic abuse evaluation, domestic violence inventory and 1 year of supervised probation; Tony A. Sage, 22, Minneapolis, possession of paraphernalia, \$125; Smith Leasing Inc., Worthington, parking violations, \$62; Geri L. Smith, 57, Owatonna, revoked registration, \$375; Rafael E. Villegas Curetty, 43, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275; Timothy A. Weis, 25, Mason City, IA, no insurance and speeding, \$315; Dawn A. Wocelka, 44, Owatonna, abandoned vehicle, \$125.

SEE BLOTTER, A12

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

- Matthew Metro – indecent exposure - \$1,000 bail
- Richard Miller Jr. – DANCO violation – no bail
- Wayne Miller – theft - \$2,000 bail
- Jesse Moe – registration violation – no bail
- Yasin Mohamed – check forgery - \$10,000 bail
- Imaan Moloo – criminal sexual conduct - \$10,000 bail
- Dayson Montanto – DWI - \$1,000 bail
- Michael Moore – violation of conditions of release – no bail
- Omar Moreno Jr. – damage to property - \$5,000 bail
- Rejakumar Munnangi Jr. – drugs - \$250 bail
- Guadalupe Munoz – false name - \$3,000 bail
- Deris Murillo-Benitez – DWI - \$12,000 bail
- Amanda Murphee – assault - \$500 bail
- Hailee Nagelstad – speeding, careless driving - \$200 bail
- Theodore Nelson – speeding - \$200 bail
- Dai Nguyen – drugs – no bail
- Harley Norberg – revoked license, no insurance - \$500 bail
- Robert Ohden – disorderly conduct - \$250 bail
- Axel Ortega – domestic assault - \$500 bail
- Sandy Pack – theft – no bail

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

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# How Much Do You Have to Make to File Income Taxes?



**THE SAVVY SENIOR**

Brought to you by:

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

Dear Savvy Senior,  
What are the IRS income tax filing requirements for retirees in 2020? My income dropped way down when I was forced into retirement last March due to COVID, so I'm wondering if I need to file a tax return this year.  
*Unexpected Retiree*

Dear Unexpected,  
Whether or not you are required to file a federal income tax return this year actually depends on several factors: How much you earned last year (in 2020), the source of that income, your age and your filing status.

Here's a rundown of this tax season's IRS tax filing requirement thresholds. For most people, this is pretty straightforward. If your 2020 gross income – which includes all taxable income, not counting your Social Security benefits, unless you are married and filing separately – was below the threshold for your filing status and age, you may not have to file. But if it's over, you will.

- **Single:** \$12,400 (\$14,050 if you're 65 or older by Jan. 1, 2021).
- **Married filing jointly:** \$24,800 (\$26,100 if you or your spouse is 65 or older; or \$27,400 if you're both over 65).
- **Married filing separately:** \$5 at any age.
- **Head of household:** \$18,650 (\$20,300 if age 65 or older).
- **Qualifying widow(er) with dependent child:** \$24,800 (\$26,100 if age 65 or older).

To get a detailed breakdown on federal filing requirements, along with information on taxable and nontaxable income, call the IRS at 800-829-3676 and ask them to mail you a free copy of the "1040 and 1040-SR Instructions for Tax Year 2020," or you can get it online at [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov).

**Check Here Too**  
There are, however, some other financial situations that can require you to file a tax return, even if your gross income falls below the IRS filing requirements. For example, if you earned more than \$400 from self-employment in 2020, owe any special taxes like an alternative minimum tax, or get premium tax credits because you, your spouse or a dependent is enrolled in a Health Insurance Marketplace (aka Obamacare) plan, you'll need to file.

You'll also need to file if you're receiving Social Security benefits, and one-half of your benefits plus your other gross income and any tax-exempt interest exceeds \$25,000, or \$32,000 if you're married and filing jointly.

To figure all this out, the IRS offers an interactive tax assistant tool on their website that asks a series of questions that will help you determine if you're required to file, or if you should file because you're due a refund. It takes less than 15 minutes to complete.

You can access this tool at [IRS.gov/Help/TTA](https://www.irs.gov/Help/TTA) – click on "Do I Need to File a Tax Return?" Or, you can get assistance over the phone by calling the IRS helpline at 800-829-1040.

**Check Your State**  
Even if you're not required to file a federal tax return this year, don't assume that you're also excused from filing state income taxes. The rules for your state might be very different. Check with your state tax agency before concluding that you're entirely in the clear. For links to state tax agencies see [Taxadmin.org/state-tax-agencies](https://www.taxadmin.org/state-tax-agencies).

**Tax Prep Assistance**  
If you find that you do need to file a tax return this year, you can free file through the IRS at [IRS.gov/FreeFile](https://www.irs.gov/FreeFile) if your 2020 adjusted gross income was below \$72,000.

Or, if you need some help, contact the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (or TCE) program. Sponsored by the IRS, TCE provides free tax preparation and counseling to middle and low-income taxpayers, age 60 and older. Call 800-906-9887 or visit [IRS.treasury.gov/freetaxprep](https://www.irs.gov/freetaxprep) to find out about services near you.

You can also get help through the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide service, a participant in the TCE program that provides free tax preparation in-person, online and by phone. To find out about service options in your area, call 888-227-7669 or visit [AARP.org/findtaxhelp](https://www.aarp.org/findtaxhelp). You don't have to be an AARP member to use this service.

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



STEELE COUNTY Times

Always local, all the time.

# Home at last



Three bus loads of Owatonna High School band members were escorted through town by local police on a Thursday evening in January 1991 as they arrived at the school around 7:15 p.m. The band members participated in the Fiesta Bowl festivities.

FILE PHOTO

## History from the News Archives

### 10 Years Ago

Feb. 1, 2011

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

The Blooming Prairie Education Foundation honored five incredible people for extraordinary things they have done. Distinguished Service award winners, Col. Roger Ingvalson (accepted by Gene Trom) and Kelly (Magnuson) Bruns. Distinguished Athlete Awards winners, Dick Anderson and Tom Walsh (Tom's son and daughter accepted on his behalf). Distinguished Award winner was Robert Ackerwold.

Local organizations benefit from donations given by J & H Liquors and the Claremont Chamber of Commerce. Donations totaling \$7,850 were given to Toys for Tots, Big Brother Big Sisters, BP Ambulance, BPRA, BP After Prom and the BP Cancer Group.

Mrs. Gale Leek also celebrating 25 year. Happy Anniversary to all.

Army Specialist Four Gary D. Ruhter, a 1965 graduate of Blooming Prairie, received the Bronze Star Medal while serving with the 1st Cavalry Division (air-mobile) in Vietnam. He received his medal for meritorious service against hostile forces in Vietnam while assigned as fire director. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer H. Ruhter.

### 75 Years Ago

Jan. 31, 1946

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

The last few days BPHS office has met some of the former faculty members who have spent from two to three and a half years serving in the Armed Forces. Those who have stopped by are Lloyd Kaldor, faculty member for a number of years and his last year here was as principal. Captain William McKinney, taught and served as assistant coach. A card was received from Otto Oswald and Donald Beavey, both enlisted in the Navy and are stationed in Salt Lake City, Utah, wishing best of luck to the basketball team. They included a small bag of salt from the great Salt Lake. Sgt. Edwin Spencer, another of our teachers and coaches, hopes to be home in time to watch the boys in action at tournament time. M E Barry, who served as principal for two years, is now making his home in Utica.

Owatonna Photo News –

### 31 Years Ago

Feb. 1, 1991

TOM SHEA, PUBLISHER

Jerry Dewald, general manager of Truth Division-SPX Corp. led the Chamber Ambassadors on a tour of the of Owatonna facilities plant and office expansion. Truth manufactures windows, patio doors and sky light hardware for distribution nationally and internationally. With the 14,000 square foot expansion, Truth has 2000,000 square feet in manufacturing and office space and employs 550 in Owatonna.

The Zumbrota Valley REACT (Radio Emergency Association Communications Teams) held its annual awards banquet. Plaques were presented to Bob Harriman as monitor of the Year with 5,296 hour logged in; Norva Harriman received plaque for being REACTer of the year for assuming the secretary position halfway through the year. Special recognition was given to Bailey's Caf? for opening the business to REACT meetings and to Barry for donating coffee for safety breaks.

### 20 Years Ago

Jan. 30, 2001

ELSIE SLINGER, EDITOR

Three new members elected to the Blooming Prairie Center Board of Directors at their annual meeting. New board members are Blooming Prairie school social worker, Renae Berg, Shirley Hinzman and Carol Holman. They will serve a two-year term. Members retiring from the board were Mary Kittelson, Elsa Soto and Marilyn Berntson. The board also lost Board Chair Jim Lennon who passed away in August. His position is yet to be filled.

For the second straight year the BPHS one-act play captured the Sub-section 5 drama title. The local entry "Insider" received two firsts and a second from the three judges. The cast included Kristi Beckman, Phil Iacovino, Sam Romeo, Amanda Herdina, Maggie Romeo, Theresa Donnelly and Jeff Isenor. Support staff had Even Boyd, Gary Tishima, Kathryn Johnson, James Trevino, Lindsey Krejci, Emily Butler and Jeff Butler. The play was directed by Frank Vorlicek.

### 50 Years Ago

Feb. 3, 1971

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

Notable wedding anniversaries being celebrated at open houses hosted by their children this week are Mr. and Mrs. William Lund, celebrating 55 years, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Veerkamp celebrating 50 years, Pastor and Mrs. Leland Evenson honored on their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Mr. and

## ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

HOME OF THE SHINING KNIGHTS

### Students of the Week



#### Anna 7TH GRADE

ANNA is an extremely bright and hard working student who always challenges herself in and out of the classroom. She comes to class prepared, puts forth her best effort and is always ready to learn something new. Her positive attitude and great work ethic are truly inspiring to other students. Her quiet form of leadership shows other students what it means to lead by example. Furthermore, she is always welcoming, polite and pleasant to everyone she meets. **Congratulations Anna!**

Parents are Brandon & Amy | Anna was nominated by Mrs. Slotsve

#### Josie 8TH GRADE



JOSIE is a ray of sunshine! Every time I see her she greets me with kind words and a bright smile. She always has positive and uplifting comments for her peers and teachers. I also love watching her with her little sister - she is such a great role model for her and the other younger students in our school. Josie ended the quarter strong in my Language Arts class as well, working hard on all assignments and adding valuable insights to class discussions. **Josie encompasses all of the core values of a true Shining Knight!**

Parents are Zechary & Melissa | Josie was nominated by Mrs. Nylund



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THIS FEATURE SPONSORED BY A PROUD ST. MARY'S ALUMNUS.



# OWATONNA PROUD

## Middle School Spotlight Student Awards

Each year, Owatonna Middle School teachers get one formal opportunity to recognize a student through Student of the Week in the newspaper or through the quarterly Spotlight Student Leadership award. Most OMS teachers see a minimum of 90 students with some seeing 180+ students. Out of all of these students, a teacher or team chose these 11 students for the Spotlight Student Leadership Award. We are so proud of these students! To stand out as a leader during these difficult times speaks highly about their character. Congratulations to the following students for achieving this award.



### Mia Bautista

Mia was nominated as a spotlight student from REACH for many reasons. One of Mia's best qualities is her ability to have an open mind towards new activities and ideas. She is always

willing to try new things and approaches them with a positive attitude. Her growth mindset mentality will get her very far in life! We couldn't be happier to have her in REACH this year! ~ Justina Bisch



### Dacey Heaton

Dacey was nominated as a spotlight student from REACH for many reasons. Dacey is a model student in REACH. Dacey always puts 110% into our classroom discussions and assignments. She not

only shares her thoughts and experiences, but she also has the ability to relate with her peers and show empathy towards others. Dacey has grown so much in the last couple of years and we're so happy she has been part of the REACH family! ~ Justina Bisch



### Elijah Black

What an outstanding, positive young-man Mr. Eli is! Not only is he hardworking, but he is tenacious and shows immense GRIT by always persevering through challenges, striving to go above and beyond normal classroom expectations. It is evident through Eli's joyous expression and optimism that he is passionate about school and, more importantly, about his learning. What we, as a 7th Grade Maverick Team, appreciate most about Eli is his ability to help others and lead by example. He collaborates so well with his peers, and he is eager to help out a classmate who is in need, no matter their gender, race, religion, learning ability, etc. He is also an avid participator, engaging in

every class activity and encouraging others to participate as well. Eli is an outstanding role model for his classmates, and his humble leadership and kindness does not go unnoticed. Eli is definitely a bright and shining star that deserves to be recognized as an exemplary student! Keep up the wonderful work, Mr. Eli — We are so very proud of you. ~ Mavericks Team



### Harper Shives

Harper Shives has stepped up this year and met the challenges of distance and hybrid learning. She has demonstrated communication skills on par with adults, asking questions

when she needs clarity, and helping explain materials to those who are struggling. She is a relator in the classroom, creating a safe space for discussion while being open to working with anyone. Many times throughout the year, Harper has kept the lesson vibrant by asking deeper questions or providing a new perspective. Harper is a student who deserves the spotlight. ~ Dragons Team



### Mubarak Hassan

We are happy to nominate Mubarak Hassan for the Student Spotlight award! Mubarak is always polite, with a positive attitude every day. Mubarak has continued to be an active participant in his virtual

learning, he participates in discussions and asks for help and clarification. Mubarak joins his classes prepared to learn, always has his work done and is a positive role model for those around him. Mubarak displays natural leadership ability and is willing to help others when participating in groups. We are looking forward to having Mubarak as an in-person student second semester! Thank you, Mubarak, for being such an outstanding student! ~ Dragons Team



### Anela Grubish

Anela goes above and beyond when it comes to our Foods 8 class. She always comes to class ready and prepared to learn. She knows exactly what to do with recipes/ instructions and she definitely knows

her way around the kitchen. Anela is a great kitchen member and works well with all group members. Anela also loves to cook and bake outside of class. She often shares things she has made but never brings me any samples. :( Even during distance learning, she made learning online a priority and took every effort to participate, so she would get the most out of our class. She is a very bright young lady with a great future ahead of her. Keep up the amazing work, Anela! ~ Hilary Birdsell



### Boldin Krause

Seventh grader Boldin Krause is an extraordinary young man. I get excited to see what creative solution he comes up with for each assignment! Each photo project is completed with technical excellence

and attention to detail; yet, he goes above and beyond by adding touches of humor and whimsy. I open his assignments always expecting to smile. Actually, smiles are a theme with Boldin. Every day on our Google Meets, he checks in with a smile and shares some off-beat piece of his life that makes me laugh out loud. His positive attitude is catchy and always is a bright spot in the classroom. Congratulations, Boldin! ~ Lisa Beschnett



### Luis Sanchez

Luis Sanchez is an awesome addition to any class. He is a quiet, yet constant champion of doing his best even when things are challenging. He accepts all challenges with a positive attitude

and approaches them with grit and perseverance. He advocates for himself and is willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done! He is a kind and gentle student who leads through example and accepts all students and their differences. ~ Shannon Prostrollo



### Kyra Teele

Kyra has earned a place in the spotlight by distinguishing herself among her peers. When it comes to checking the boxes of what makes students exceptional, Kyra checks them all. Brilliant, hard-

working, patient, helpful, and understanding are just some of the words that describe Kyra and how she navigates her schooling. Buckle up OMS because Kyra is going places in this world; her potential is unlimited. Mavericks stand out, and Kyra you stand out! We are proud to have you as a student on our team. Congratulations! ~ Mavericks Team



### Anna Mollenhauer

I am pleased to recognize Anna Mollenhauer for her hard work and positive attitude throughout this year, especially during distance learning. Anna was always the first to give feedback during the

online portion of our classes. She is a positive role model for other students, always has a smile on her face, consistently pushes herself, and seems genuinely excited to be active. Well done, Anna! ~ Tim Hunst



### Sydney Fritz

Sydney Fritz was an amazing student during Distance Learning. Her positive attitude brought joy and laughter to class every time we met. I hope she continues to make people smile and improve

the world with her outgoing personality. ~ Amanda Flohrs



Connor Ginskey



Ava Hess



Sydney Hunst



Lane Versteeg

## Board recognizes students for top awards

At the Jan. 25 meeting, Superintendent Jeff Elstad recognized Owatonna High School students Connor Ginskey and Ava Hess who are this year's ExCEL Award nominees. The ExCEL Award – Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership – is a unique recognition program designed exclusively for Minnesota high school juniors who are active in school activities, leaders in their schools, and who demonstrate a strong commitment to community service.

The superintendent also recognized students Sydney Hunst and Lane Versteeg who are Triple A

Award nominees. The Academics, Arts, and Athletics Award, commonly known as the Triple 'A' Award, honors high school seniors throughout the state who have a 3.0 or higher-grade point average and who participate in League-sponsored athletic and fine arts activities.

Each month at its regular meeting, the School Board of Owatonna Public Schools recognizes individual students and/or staff members who exemplify the district's mission of inspiring excellence – every learner, every day.

We are #OwatonnaProud of these students who inspire excellence, every day!

## Owatonna Students of the Week

### Middle School



#### Rylee Hilmer Seventh Grade Parents: Amanda & Korey Koziulek

Rylee is one of the nicest and most respectful students we have ever known! She always has something nice to say and shows genuine interest in what others have to say. She is also an extremely hard-working student. When she is in need of assistance, she advocates for herself and gets her work done. Rylee definitely has a bright future ahead of her.

### High School



#### Katelyn Bentz Sophomore Parents: Ryan and Kari Bentz

Katelyn has adjusted well to both the hybrid and distance learning models. She is a hard worker who is always prepared and comes to class with a positive attitude. Katelyn is polite and serves as an excellent leader in the classroom who is always willing to assist her fellow classmates in answering questions, whether it be in the classroom or over a Google Meet.

## It's time for virtual coffee and conversation

The community is invited to join Superintendent Jeff Elstad for a virtual "coffee and conversation" on Friday, Feb. 12 at 8:30 a.m. Hear an update on what's been happening within the school

district and bring any questions you have.

RSVP by emailing [shoffman@isd761.org](mailto:shoffman@isd761.org) by 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10 to receive the virtual meeting details. We hope you are able to participate!

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Glen



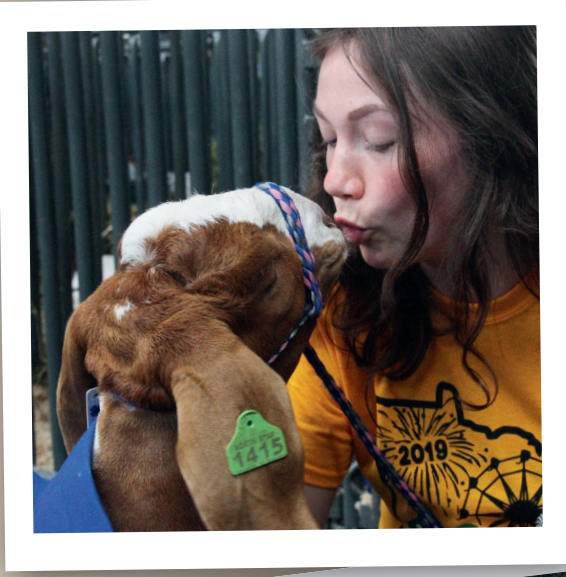
Mike



Brett

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## OH, THE FACES WE CAPTURE AND THE PEOPLE YOU'LL MEET!

Week after week, the Steele County Times is proud to introduce you to these and many more interesting neighbors and the stories that shape these communities we love to call home!

This photo collection earned the Times first place in the Minnesota Newspaper Association's Better Newspaper Contest for Press Photographer's Portfolio.

Judges commented:

*"All of the photos in the portfolio were very good and captured the emotions and moments - drawing the viewer in."*



Other MNA Awards:

### First Place

- Sports Reporting
- Local Breaking News
- Advertising Excellence

### Second Place

- Local Breaking News
- News Photo
- Typography & Design
- Editorial Page

### Third Place

- General Excellence
- News Photo
- Classified Ad Section
- Use of Photography
- Headline Writing
- Best Advertisement
- Sports Feature
- Arts & Entertainment



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STEELE COUNTY **Times**

# Open water pushes bird count to greater numbers

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

A record number of counters and open water on an area lake helped push Steele County's annual Christmas bird count to more than double the number of species over the previous year.

On Dec. 19, 117 bird counters recorded 7,777 individual birds, which is well above the average of 4,603 birds and more than double the count of 3,125 in 2019, according to Darryl Hill, coordinator of the event. Despite the huge influx of birds this year, it still was well below the record of 8,430 set back in 1998.

Hill reported 39 species of birds were found by the counters throughout the count, which featured a clear day with temperatures ranging between 24-29 degrees with light winds from the south. Adding to the large count was open water at Lake Kohlmer. The observers saw 4,658 Canada Geese and 282



The Canada Goose was identified most frequently during the 2020 Steele County Christmas Bird Count held on Dec. 19. The goose was counted 4,658 times throughout the one-day count.

Mallards at the lake. "The open lake makes a huge difference in the number of birds that we see during our count," said Hill, adding the only places they normally see waterfowl are at the Owatonna Power Plant and running water in the Straight River.

Of the 117 counters, 108 of them monitored

their feeders at home while nine people drove around or walked out of their homes, Hill said.

Besides the Canada Goose, the other top birds spotted during the count included the American Crow (575), House Sparrow (393) and Mallard (282).

Steele County's participation in the count began in 1972. The

counters concentrate on a 15-mile diameter circle with Havana as the center. This is a scientific project sponsored by the National Audubon Society.

Since the count began nearly 50 years ago, 107 different species of birds have been spotted. However, there were no new ones added to the list this year.

## 2020 STEELE COUNTY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Canada Goose	4,658
American Crow	575
House Sparrow	393
Mallard	282
Black-capped Chickadee	279
House Finch	247
Northern Cardinal	202
European Starling	184
Dark-eyed Junco	156
Blue Jay	114
Downy Woodpecker	107
White-breasted Nuthatch	82
American Goldfinch	81
Rock Pigeon	73
<b>TOTAL Species</b>	<b>7,777</b>
	<b>39</b>

Source: Darryl Hill, Steele County Christmas Bird Count

There were 24 first-time counters in Steele County this year. They included: John Boris, Dave and Laurie Burbank, Beverly Draeger, Dave Effertz, Robin Frette, Bill and Cheryl Green, Carol Hacmac, David, Elle and Emmy Iserman, Penny Jensen, Erynn Jenzen, Garrett Jirele, Nancy and Ray

Lacina, Leslie and Steve Partridge, Dann and Susan Rypka, Deb Schrader, Dennis Schwab and Tara Thiede.

Celebrating anniversaries this year were Cherry Schwartz (20 years), John Iserman (15 years) and Alice Hill, Jon Hilstad and Ken Torrey (10 years).

## Edward Jones<sup>®</sup> MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

### With Ultra-low Rates, Should You Still Invest in Bonds?

If you've been investing for many years and you've owned bonds, you've seen some pretty big changes on your financial statements. In 2000, the average yield on a 10-year U.S. Treasury security was about 6%; in 2010, it had dropped to slightly over 3%, and for most of 2020, it was less than 1%. That's an enormous difference, and it may lead you to this question: With yields so low on bonds, why should you even consider them?

Of course, while the 10-year Treasury note is an important benchmark, it doesn't represent the returns on any bonds you could purchase. Typically, longer-term bonds, such as those that mature in 20 or 30 years, pay higher rates to account for inflation and to reward you for locking up your money for many years. But the same downward trend can be seen in these longer-term bonds, too – in 2020, the average 30-year Treasury bond yield was only slightly above 1.5%.

Among other things, these numbers mean that investors of 10 or 20 years ago could have gotten some reasonably good income from investment-grade bonds. But today, the picture is different. (Higher-yield bonds, sometimes known as "junk" bonds, can offer more income but carry a higher risk of default.)

Nonetheless, while rates are low now, you may be able to employ a strategy that can help you in any interest-rate environment. You can build a bond "ladder" of individual bonds that mature on different dates. When market interest rates are low, you'll still have your longer-term bonds earning higher yields (and long-term yields, while fluctuating, are expected to rise in the future). When interest rates rise, your maturing bonds can be reinvested at these new, higher levels. Be sure you evaluate whether a bond ladder and the securities held within it are consistent with your investment objectives, risk tolerance and

financial circumstances. Furthermore, bonds can provide you with other benefits. For one thing, they can help diversify your portfolio, especially if it's heavily weighted toward stocks. Also, stock and bond prices often (although not always) move in opposite directions, so if the stock market goes through a down period, the value of your bonds may rise. And bonds are usually less volatile than stocks, so they can have a "calming" effect on your portfolio. Plus, if you hold your bonds until maturity, you will get your entire principal back (providing the bond issuer doesn't default, which is generally unlikely if you own investment-grade bonds), so bond ownership gives you a chance to preserve capital while still investing.

But if the primary reason you have owned bonds is because of the income they offer, you may have to look elsewhere during periods of ultra-low interest rates. For example, you could invest in dividend-paying stocks. Some stocks have long track records of increasing dividends, year after year, giving you a potential source of rising income. (Keep in mind, though, that dividends can be increased, decreased or eliminated at any time.) Be aware, though, that stocks are subject to greater risks and market movements than bonds.

Ultimately, while bonds may not provide the income they did a few years ago, they can have a place in a long-term investment strategy. Consider how they might fit into yours.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

Edward Jones,  
Member SIPC

Before investing in bonds, you should understand the risks involved, including credit risk and market risk. Bond investments are also subject to interest rate risk such that when interest rates rise, the prices of bonds can decrease, and the investor can lose principal value if the investment is sold prior to maturity.

To learn more, call today.



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## Steele Waseca Drug Court graduates 68th person

BY DEB FLEMMING  
NEWS EDITOR

The Steele Waseca Drug Court held its first graduation ceremony nearly five years ago and is inching its way toward its 70th graduation ceremony for an average of 12 people per year.

Last week, Stephanie Thompson became the 68th graduate to complete the program.

"The program is a wonderful program," said Thompson during a virtual graduation ceremony. "It works. It gives you the tools you need to get through your addiction and improve your life."

To others in the program, she said: "Take what they are offering and make use of it."

"If it weren't for the program, I probably wouldn't be alive."

Thompson entered the program in April of 2018 on charges of felony fifth-degree controlled substance/misdemeanor DWI and gross misdemeanor fifth-degree controlled substance. If she completes probation successfully, the felony conviction will be removed from her record.

Drug Court Coordinator Nicole Gram said Thompson overcame barriers with homelessness and employment while in the program.



Third District Judge Joseph A. Bueltel presides over the Steele Waseca Drug Court and its recent virtual graduation ceremony.

"If it weren't for the program, I probably wouldn't be alive."

Stephanie Thompson  
Drug Court Graduate

"She is now independent, supports her own living expenses and has a career."

Third District Court Judge Joseph A. Bueltel concurred. "Today, I see a very self-confident person and you are enjoying some success."

Since its inception in July 2014, Gram said the drug court program has served 208 participants with 101 of them either withdrawing – to serve their jail or prison time or transfer to another drug court – or being terminated because of new criminal behavior or rejection of services.

As an alternative to incarceration, drug courts throughout the country reduce the costs of repeatedly processing high-risk, high-need substance abusers

through the courts, jails, and prisons while providing offenders a pathway to recovery.

Participants are required to abstain from substance use, to be accountable for their behavior and to fulfill the legal responsibilities of the offenses they have committed.

There are currently 39 participants in the local drug court with three pending entries.

The court's five-phase program is rigorous and takes participants a minimum of 18 months to complete, according to Grams. Weekly, or monthly, court attendance is required depending on which phase of the program a participant is in. Recovery-related programming includes treatment, support meetings, mental health meetings, completion of a cognitive skills program that help to change behaviors and at least 3 hours of self-help recovery meetings each week.

In addition, all participants submit to a minimum of twice weekly random testing.

Other requirements for graduation from the program include completing treatment, making meaningful connections in the recovery community, obtaining a valid driver's license, GED/Diploma, employment and compliance with child support and payment of any fines, fees or restitution.

The combined total amount of sobriety of those now in the program is 10,388 days for an estimated average of 28.5 combined years. Average sobriety per participant is 267 days, ranging from five days to more than 1,000 days.

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STEELE COUNTY Times

Little Theatre of Owatonna

# Clue

On Stage

Sponsored By Alexander Lumber Co.

Performance Dates:  
**Feb 12, 13 & 19, 20 | 7:30pm**    **Feb 14 & 21 | 2:00pm**

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

Directed by Zackery Knaption and Tech Director Sandee Hardy-Hagen

Based on the screenplay by Jonathan Lynn • Written by Sandy Rustin  
Additional Material by Hunter Foster and Eric Price • Original Music by David Abbinanti  
Based on the Paramount Pictures Motion Picture • Based on the Hasbro board game CLUE

TICKETS

Online & Tri M Box office for members opens on January 23.  
Online general public ticket sales start January 30.  
In-house box office opens February 8- 21 (Mon-Weds 5-6:30  
Thurs- Sat 5:30-7:30 Sun 12:30-2)

[LittleTheatreofOwatonna.org](http://LittleTheatreofOwatonna.org)



## Go Get It



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Leah Schiefert, of Blooming Prairie, plays with her four-month-old yellow lab, Honey, by shoveling snow in the air so Honey could jump and catch it in her mouth.

## LOOKING BACK: FROM A1

\$25,000 – which was split evenly between Gregg Fristedt and Linda Klemmensen. The benefit, organized by the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group, featured 334 silent auction items. “Absolutely amazing,” said Fristedt of the community support. “The turnout for the benefit was unbelievable ... people stood shoulder-to-shoulder throughout the evening.”

The community standing shoulder-to-shoulder is what helped Fristedt survive what he de-

scribed as “the toughest year of my life.”

Today, Fristedt is employed as a baker for Bon Appetit, a boutique food and management dining services, at Federated in Owatonna.

“I just want to thank everybody for their support,” said Fristedt.

The lot where the Bakery once stood is now owned by Jeff Peach, who also owns B to Z Hardware. Peach’s son, Dan, has turned the lot into a community gathering spot that attracts hundreds on the holidays.

He transformed it into a pumpkin patch for Halloween, a Christmas Wonderland in December and is in the midst of creating a Tunnel of Love for Valentine’s Day.

“We have a great town and I want to show it off,” said Peach.

As for lessons learned, the fire chief said the fire reinforced his belief that the city needed a second thermal imaging camera.

“At one time, we had firefighters on all three floors of the old building,” said Naatz. “If you send someone in with the camera and something

happens, how do you find them?,” he asked.

In January, the Blooming Prairie Fire Department purchased a second camera with the help of a grant, a donation from the city and funds earned during the fire department’s Brat and Sweet corn Feed fundraiser.

Just one more example of the community coming together, Naatz said.

Helping firefighters from Blooming Prairie battle the blaze just a year ago, were firefighters from Ellendale, Claremont, Geneva, Hollandale, Hayfield and Owatonna.

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY: trying to preserve Jerry’s mural FROM A1

“We are not giving up,” said Hinrichsen. “I’m not going to let this piece of history get destroyed.”

Hinrichsen was introduced to the mural in early January. At the time, he described the mural as an iconic piece of local art and history.

This is so meaningful for so many people, said Hinrichsen.

Unfortunately, Hinrichsen said, the cost of moving and preserving the mural wasn’t planned and there are no funds in the budget to handle the project.

He’s asking for the community’s continued and expanded support.

“If you can donate more, we ask that you consider doing so. If not, please share this with others who may be interested in helping out,” said Hinrichsen. “If we rally behind this cause as

a community, there is nothing that we cannot do!”

The Claremont Area Chamber, through its charitable gaming funds, donated to the mural’s preservation fund soon after learned of the fundraiser.

“It’s a piece of history we thought should be saved,” said Dean Schuette, president of the Claremont Chamber. “It’s something that’s been a part of Owatonna and Steele County area a long time.”

Schuette said the Chamber did use Jerry’s for events when it was open. “We also have a lot of Chamber members who reside in Steele County.”

The Claremont Chamber also operates a charitable gaming site in Blooming Prairie and in the past has operated sites in Owatonna and Hope.

## CAPTURING: the emotion and special moments FROM A2

old saying, “A picture is worth more than a 1,000 words” certainly holds true, especially today when people’s attention is divided in so many ways. Many people don’t want to take time to read stories.

Photos have the ability to enhance a news story in an effort to make it more understandable to the reader. It would be hard to imagine our world today without pictures.

One thing I strive for in any of my photographs is to show human emotion. It’s important to focus on the faces of people, not on their backs or the backs of their heads. I generally like my photos to show people, emotion, action and something extraordinary or unusual. A 4-H member giving her pet goat a big smooch just before show time comes to mind as a photo that encompasses

all of those qualities.

Besides the kissing goat photo, my portfolio also included photos of the Blooming Prairie football team winning the state championship, the Bakery fire, a man decorating for the holidays and a young boy learning how to golf with the watchful eye of his father. There was a good mixture of news, sports, feature and portrait photos.

In commenting about

my winning portfolio, the judges said: “All of the photos in the portfolio were very good and captured the emotions and moments—drawing the viewer in.”

My passion for photography isn’t just professional. It carries over to home, as well. I’m always taking photos, sometimes to the point of driving my kids crazy.

It probably comes as no surprise that I took special interest

in a book, “100 Photographs,” recently published by Time. It revealed what Time considered as the most influential images of all time and offered the stories behind the pictures. Some of the most powerful photos included in the book are Abraham Lincoln in 1860, a flag raising on Iwo Jima in 1946, a falling man from a skyscraper during 9/11 and a man on the moon in 1969.

Receiving awards is great, but my hope more than anything is the journalism, whether it’s stories or photos, that we provide each week connects with readers in a profound way. I want readers to trust us and rely on us for quality hometown news every week.

For now, I’m in hot pursuit of chasing down another photo or two to help readers understand their communities better.

## TAKE A COFFEE BREAK: during pandemic FROM A3

have chosen to remain home as much as possible. Others have followed pandemic restrictions and have gotten together with family and friends, following social distance and public safety regulations.

These have been tough times but we will overcome these challenges by relying on one another and knowing that we are in this together.

We are bonded by faith and that will bring us through these burdensome times.

Follow restrictions: 1.) Wear a mask; 2.) Keep social distance and 3.) Wash your hands often.

Again, this will not solve your problems created by COVID-19 but it may help you regain focus. Call a family member or close friend and have a coffee break while on the telephone or on the computer.

Coffee breaks allow us to take our minds off ourselves. By sharing concerns, we can gain

strength to help ourselves and others.

This pandemic will end and it’s because of all our faith in others. The vaccines are being made more readily available and this will cut down the dreadful disease.

We also should take time to thank our frontline medical people and our first responders. These people are the best insurance we could have.

Take a time out from stress by having a coffee break.

## OWATONNA SCHOOLS: begin offering vaccines to staff, continue testing FROM A3

full-time and, middle and high school under a hybrid model.

With students returning, all teachers are working inside of the building. Throughout all the recent developments, Elstad said, has received positive feedback from staff.

One person praising the school’s efforts is Washington elementary fifth grade teacher Teresa Melcher.

Melcher said that the staff has worked diligently on keeping everyone safe throughout the entire year.

“The leadership team in our school district and buildings have put in many hours to provide the best education for the kids, I can’t thank them enough for all their time they spend on COVID-19 protocols and safety measures for all,” Melcher said.

“Our goal is to provide the best education for all students and our district definitely makes that a priority.”

Melcher also said that the students deserve a lot of credit for the work they have put into the school year.

“I am so proud of the students for their commitment with these changes, they know it is helping keep each other safe,” Melcher said.

## A NATION FACING: multiple crises FROM A2

ous administration’s hostility toward the environment was significant; however, most scientists would agree that the world needs much more emphasis and action in curbing the use of greenhouse gases.

### GROWING INEQUALITY

In an article on this matter, the New York Times stated, “President Biden extended moratoriums on evictions and student-loan payments.”

### RACISM

He also ordered federal agencies to root out racially unequal policies. In the New York Times article, columnist Jim Tankersley wrote, “We have great evidence from economists that tearing down barriers to advancement for men of color and women of all races fueled huge amounts of growth in the United States in decades past.”

The president also attempted to eliminate several of Trump’s an-

ti-immigration policies. In doing so, I am confident this newly-elected president realized that some of these changes would require congressional legislation.

### AMERICAN’S GLOBAL STANDING

With the intent of improving the United States’ image around the world, President Biden repealed, immediately, the so-called Muslim travel ban. Once again passport holders from Iran,

Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen would be permitted to enter the United States.

### ATTACK ON TRUTH AND DEMOCRACY

In his inaugural address President Biden repeatedly stressed the importance of truth. He criticized the concept of “lies told for power and for profit.” Jen Psaki, Biden’s press secretary, at her first White House briefing said, “There will be moments when

we disagree ... But we have a common goal, which is sharing accurate information with the American people.”

### SIGNING OFF...

Journalist Jim Newell said of this inaugural address, “Biden is not likely to erase the country’s political divisions, but he has laid out an agenda with ‘tangible, deliverable items to make lives better.’”

Of this inaugural address Eric Levitz of New

York Magazine wrote, “He does not seek the unity all Americans, only that for ‘enough of us’ to drag the rest toward justice.”

It was Abraham Lincoln who wrote, “I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts.”

**Rev. Russell Rudolf is retired and lives in Owatonna.**

## RIESS MURDER SAGA: featured on Dateline NBC FROM A1

it off like we were going to be best friends,” Mathis said. Riess even spent the night at Mathis’ residence. Mathis shared how she talked extensively about an elaborate security system she had operating in her residence. It was suggested in the report that when Riess found out about the security system, she may not have followed through with any plans she may have had in harming Mathis.

After learning of

Riess’ arrest and how she befriended Hutchinson in the same way, Mathis was shocked. “My heart just went in my throat,” she told NBC. “I really just dodged the bullet.”

Tess Koster of Blooming Prairie shared her experience of seeing Riess at Koster’s vacation home in Fort Myers Beach shortly after the first murder. “That was a scary thought. The hair on the back of my neck would stand up and I

“I definitely could see the decline in who Lois was from when I met her until the end.”

### Jennifer Peterson

Riess Friend

Peterson indicated Lois suffered from mental health disorders. “I definitely could see the decline in who Lois was from when I met her until the end,” she said.

Peterson received a call from Riess when she was locked up in a Florida jail. Peterson

said, “She kept saying I’m sorry. And then she started hysterically balling. She just kept saying what happened, what happened Jennifer?”

Peterson wants to visit Riess, who is now locked up in the Shakopee prison. “I

have questions. I want to know what happened Lois,” Peterson said, who indicated she has had a hard time with the Riess tragedy. “I love them both very much. I lost Dave to death and Lois to murder. It doesn’t seem like real life to me at all.”

Riess is serving a life sentence without the chance of parole.

As the reporter ended his TV report, he related how the shock waves ripple to this day.

# SMIF seeking applications for early literacy grants

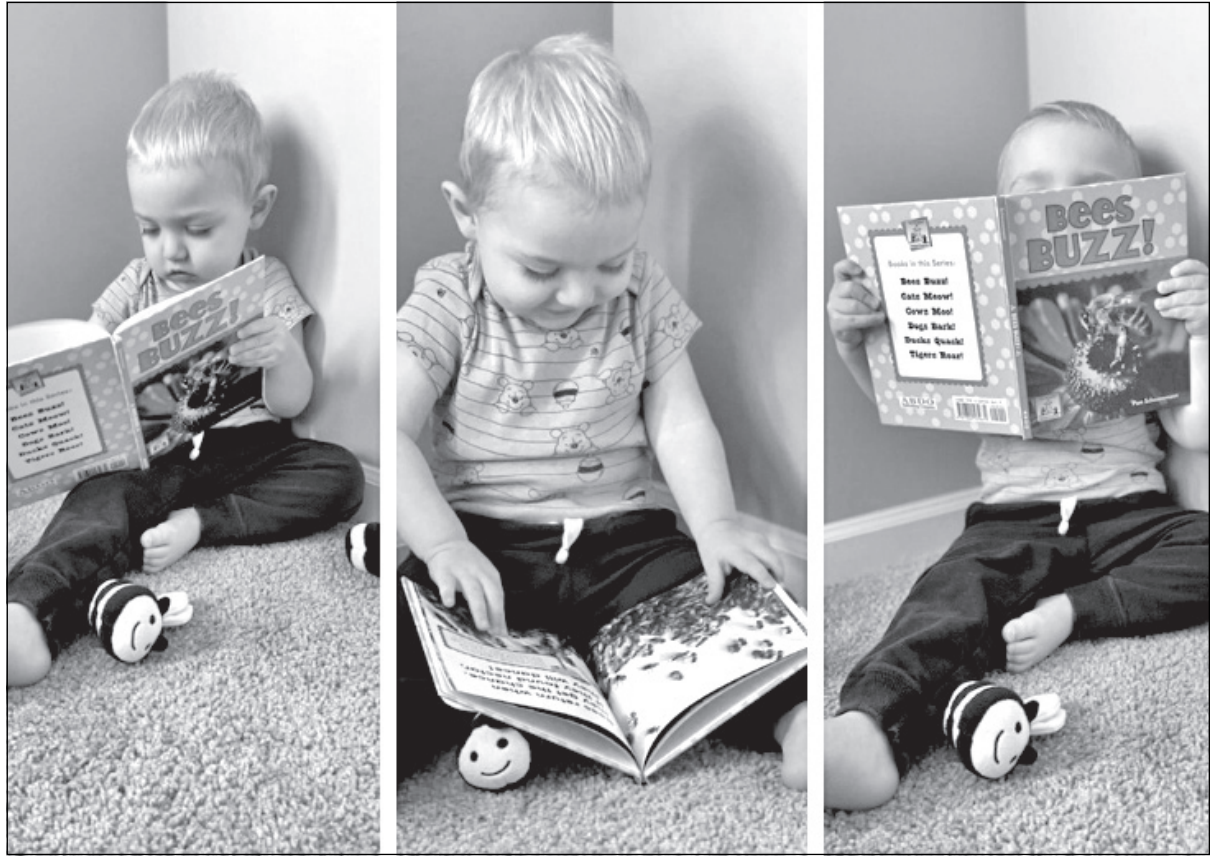
Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), in partnership with publishing companies Capstone and ABDO, is accepting applications for its Early Literacy Grant program. This grant is designed to support early literacy efforts that enhance school readiness for children birth to age five by providing children with books. Organizations working with these children in SMIF's 20-county region are encouraged to apply for books to be given to families to keep and read to their children.

In 2002, Capstone helped launch the BookStart program, working with SMIF to distribute thousands of books to children in the region over a period of fifteen years. In 2018, the Early Literacy Grant was formed as a new collaborative effort between SMIF and the two Mankato-based publishing companies to put even more books into the hands of children birth to age five. SMIF has also previously partnered with both Capstone and ABDO on collectively distributing more than one hundred thousand books across the region through grants and programming.

"Children's lives have been disrupted this past year, so it is even more critical to provide young children and their families with books during this difficult time," said Rae Jean Hansen, vice president of early childhood at SMIF. "We are grateful to Capstone and ABDO for their continued partnership in this program to provide parents and children in the region with the support they need for their development and future success."

"We are proud to continue our 19-year partnership with Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation to invest in our children through literacy," said Gail Beer, Capstone vice president of customer relations and operations. "Capstone believes in giving every child the building blocks for lifelong success and that starts with access to books. SMIF is doing important work to change the lives of children in our community and we're so honored to be a part of that."

"The Early Literacy Grant program's mission of getting books into the hands of young readers has become increasingly more important during this pandemic year," said DeMar Borth, Director of Marketing for ABDO.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**Nationally, about half of children between birth and five years (47.8%) are read to every day by their parents or other family members, according to the national Literacy Project. However, 61% of low-income families have no books at all in their homes for their children and 37% of children arrive at kindergarten without the skills necessary for lifetime learning.**

"ABDO Publishing is very excited to be donating books again this year."

Applications are due to SMIF by April 9. For more information or to apply, visit [www.smi-](http://www.smi-)

[foundation.org](http://foundation.org). For questions about what SMIF might fund contact Heidi Coulter, early childhood project manager, at 507-214-7016 or [heidic@smifoundation.org](mailto:heidic@smifoundation.org).

## BOOK NOOK



NANCY VAILLANCOURT

As we turn the calendar to February, we can breathe a bit easier. The days are getting longer and the sun is shining a little brighter. But if you have lived in Minnesota for more than one winter, you know that February and March

can have their own challenges. For those who are cold and ready for spring, we invite you to Warm Up With a Book!

Our adult winter reading program began on Monday, Feb. 1, and will continue until March 31. As organized by the Owatonna Public Library, you can go online to register at [owatonna.beanstack.org](http://owatonna.beanstack.org). Don't forget to choose Blooming Prairie Branch Library.

You can earn badges by doing any of the following:

- Reading for 60 minutes and logging it in Beanstack (up to 10 hours total)
- Completing the challenge by reading for 10 hours total and logging it in Beanstack (earns 1 badge/entry)
- Completing an activity and logging it in the "Activities" section. These are bonus activities that are not required in order to complete the

challenge... they are simply fun ways to earn extra entries! (1 activity completed = 1 badge/entry)

Each badge you earn gives you an entry into our grand prize drawing. The prizes will be gift certificates to local bookstores and an extra special grand prize. Stay tuned for details!

Warm Up With a Book is for those 18 and older. Sorry, kids, you will have to wait until June for your special reading program!

## Warm up with a book

## OBITUARIES

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### Lee Ulrich, 71, Oakland

Lee Allen Ulrich, age 71 of Oakland, Minn., passed away at Mayo Clinic Health System - Austin on Jan. 23, 2021.

Lee was born on May 13, 1949 to Gordon and Elsie (Casper) Ulrich in Albert Lea. He graduated from Albert Lea High School in 1967 and then from the auto-body course at Austin Vocational-Technical Institute.

Lee worked at Olson's Body Shop in Savage for a number of years and later started his own auto-body shop in Rosemount. In 1989, he moved his shop to rural Oakland.

Besides auto-body work, Lee farmed with his brother, Wayne, until his death. He was very mechanically inclined



Lee Ulrich

and was able to fix almost any engine. Lee enjoyed stock car racing, vintage cars, watching western movies, and visiting with friends. He had a great sense of humor and could change a serious conversation into a hilarious story. Lee was a lot of fun to be around and will be missed by his family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Gary and Warren.

Lee is survived by his brother Wayne (LeAnn) Ulrich of Blooming Prairie; nephews Dan Ulrich of Lexington, S.C., Jeff (Jennifer) Ulrich of Waconia, Tom (Brianna) Ulrich of Champlin, David (Landi) Ulrich of Muldrow, Okla.; nieces Michelle (Jason) Kujak of Woodbury, Cindy (Rocky) Lusti of Muldrow, Okla., and Kristin Lawson of Wenatchee, Wash.

Private family services will be held on Saturday, Feb. 6 at Clasen-Jordan Mortuary in Austin. The service will be available for viewing on Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at [www.clasenjordan.com](http://www.clasenjordan.com).

Interment is planned for 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 6 at Fairview Oakland Cemetery, and is open to the public. Memorials are preferred to Fairview Oakland Cemetery in Lee's memory.

## AAUW to feature public health director

Members of the American Association of University Women Owatonna invite interested guests and potential members to attend their meeting on Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Non-members interested in attending please contact AAUW at [aauwowatonna@gmail.com](mailto:aauwowatonna@gmail.com).

The evening's featured speaker is Amy Caron, public health director for Steele and Dodge counties.

Caron has been doing prevention work for more than 20 years and is a community health education graduate of the University of Minnesota. She will explain the Emergency Response role of Steele County Public Health to the COVID-19 pandemic and give an update on the overall status of services provided by Public Health.

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## Recipe Corner

### Double Chocolate Biscotti

Beat:  
1/2 C butter, softened  
1/3 C brown sugar  
1/3 C honey  
1/3 C cocoa  
2 tsp baking powder

Beat in:  
2 eggs  
1 tsp vanilla

Stir in:  
2-1/4 C flour  
1/2 C very finely chopped pecans or almonds, toasted  
1/2 C chocolate chips

Shape dough into two 9-inches long rolls. Place on cookie sheet. Flatten each roll to 2-inches wide. Bake 20 - 25 minutes at 375 degrees. Cool on cookie sheet for 1 hour. Transfer to a cutting board. Use a serrated knife to cut each roll diagonally into 1/2-inch slices. Place slices cut side down on 2 greased cookie sheets. Bake at 325 degrees for 8 minutes, turn each one over and bake for 7 minutes. Transfer to wire rack and cool. Place in airtight container for storage. Keeps at room temperature for 3 days or in freezer for up to 3 months.

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## BIRTHDAYS

Feb. 3  
Jay Iverson  
Sophie Thomas  
Natalie Winzenburg  
Emery Clayton  
Dan Miner  
Ryan Klemmensen

Feb. 4  
Justin Peterson  
Samantha Abbe  
Michael Thomas  
Andi Klemmensen  
Gabriella Salinas

Feb. 5  
Josh Johnson  
Melanie Winzenburg  
Christopher Anderson

Feb. 6  
Connie Trihus  
Tony Glynn  
Jena Lee

Feb. 7  
Pete Kittelson  
Derek Miner  
Lucas Swenson  
Gloria Trom  
Julie Horn

Feb. 8  
Jaxon LaMotte  
Rick Krejci

Feb. 9  
Luke Winsenburg  
Stacy Busho  
Gina Hendrickson  
Holli Naatz

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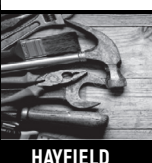
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## ANNIVERSARIES

Feb. 4: Allan & Melody Benson  
Feb. 6: Ryan & Jenny Heimerman  
Feb. 9: Mark & Karen Thoen



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## Encouragement to live out your faith



**Pastor Micheal Simmerman**

BETHEL CHURCH  
OWATONNA

*“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.”*

— Hebrews 11.1

I've been thinking a lot about the topic of faith in the last few weeks, and while the Bible gives us a number

of staggering things to think about in this realm; nothing has been more intriguing to me on this subject than Hebrews 11.1.

Maybe it's because of all the conspiracy theories that have abounded in the last few months (from government deep state activity to hidden COVID-19 agendas); but whatever the topic, people are quick to point to all the “evidence” (things you can see) to prove that there is something going on that you can't see. And

while the verdict is still out on “what's really going on” on a number of fronts in our world right now, what we can all agree on is this: *“the evidence” always leads you somewhere.*

For instance, maybe you've followed the evidence of candy wrappers from a cupboard in the kitchen into a kids bedroom before (who hasn't); which even though you couldn't see them eat the candy themselves, *the evidence* of what really happened is overwhelmingly clear.

Hebrews 11.1 says our faith (or things we do because of our belief IN God), is the evidence that a God we *can't see*, really does exist. Meaning, the things we do by faith (loving one another, sharing the gospel, not fearing the collapsing world around us, etc.) are like the line of candy wrappers on the floor, that are meant to lead others to the conclusion that a God they *cannot see* actually does exist.

This happened to me personally a few months

ago when I was talking to someone who had just been diagnosed with cancer. When visiting and praying with them, we talked about a lot of things, but the one thing had a greater impact on me was the way they talked about heaven. As they were reflecting on how much longer they likely had to live, they spoke of heaven as if it were as real as going to a friend's house, or vacation spot. And in hearing them speak with such certainty, my faith was strengthened

in the realness of such a place, just because of how they spoke.

This, of course, is the opportunity we (as Christ followers) have in the dark world we live in today. Every act of faith we display is another candy wrapper we lay down to show people that there is a God who loves them, forgives them, and provides hope beyond this broken world we're stuck in for just a short time longer.

Cheering for you to live out your faith this week!

### 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  
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 – LCMC**  
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 a.m. Sun.

**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 – LCMC**  
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 – LCMC**  
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 – LCMC**  
28959 630th Ave., Sargeant  
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 – LCMC**  
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/  
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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  
owatonnalive.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 – LCMC**  
108 Third Ave. SW., Medford  
Pastor Mark Biebighauser  
507-451-0447  
Worship: 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.  
Education Hour: 9 a.m.

**TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMC**  
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**  
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Owatonna  
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Pothereddy  
Parochial Vicar

507-451-1588  
www.sacredheartowatonna.org  
Masses: Saturday 5 p.m.  
Sunday 8 a.m., 10 a.m.,  
and Noon (Spanish)  
Daily Mass 7:15 a.m.  
Tuesday through Friday  
Reconciliation 4 p.m.  
Saturday  
Adoration – Thursdays 8  
a.m.-7 p.m.

**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)  
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Mon. – Fri. 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.  
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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 Cirksena  
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.destinyc.org  
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday  
6:30-7:30 p.m. 1st and 3rd  
Wednesday

**ELEVATION NORTH**  
2002 Austin Road,  
Owatonna  
Pastor Doug Jones  
507-363-3099  
www.elevationnorth.  
blogspot.com  
Worship (English):  
10 a.m. Sun.  
Sunday School: 10:30 a.m.  
Worship (Spanish):  
2 p.m. Sun.  
Bible Study: 6:30 p.m.  
Wednesday  
Spanish Evangelism &  
Prayer: 7 p.m. Friday

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

**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.

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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.

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**BLOTTER:** FROM A4

**STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Dixie Bailey, 19, Champlin, minor consumption, \$175; Arturo C. Becerra, 24, Faribault, speeding, \$115; Mack D. Brown, 22, Burnsville, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Sarah E. Cashin, 39, Owatonna, littering, \$175; Eh D. Chit, 29, St. Paul, suspended license, \$275; Abdinasir H. Dahir, 18, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Rocio A. Dealba, 35, Geneva, speeding, \$115; Sheldon J. Feller, 72, Waseca, no insurance, stay of adjudication, \$125 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Nicholas A. Grose, 21, Kenyon, speeding, \$215; Isabel M. Kuchera, 18, Austin, expired tabs, \$105; Hassan Y. Mohamed, 26, New Brighton, seat belt, \$100; Darren E. Morrison, 35, Austin, trespassing, \$175; Tyler D. Nagel, 19, Spring Valley, speeding, \$115; Kalid M. Osman, 22, Mankato, speeding, \$125; Bryce B. Reese, 20, Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$215; Joseph E. Rivers, 29, Owatonna, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Nikolai A. Schue, 19, Waseca, speeding, \$135; Madison G. Tummmons, 21, Rochester, speeding, \$215; Derek L. Vogel, 33, Cohasset, speeding, \$125; David D. Weber, 29, Kenyon, speeding, \$215; Bryana M. Weichman, 19, Burnsville, speeding, \$115; Tyler J. Worke, 33, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Elijah K. Zwiefel, 18, Dodge Center, speeding, \$225.

**Arrest:** Police assisted another agency with arresting a subject in the 300 block of Main St. E. at 1:34 p.m.  
**Shoplifting:** Officer made a shoplifting arrest in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 2:05 p.m.  
**Crash:** Paramedics and police responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries in the 100 block of Park Square W. at 3:42 p.m.  
**DWI:** Officer made a DWI arrest in the 300 block of Elm Ave. N. at 7:03 p.m.  
**Suspicion:** Police responded to suspicious activity in the 100 block of 12<sup>th</sup> Place NW at 10:47 p.m. They took a subject into custody.  
**Jan. 23**  
**DWI:** Officer made a DWI arrest in the 600 block of Bridge St. W. at 1:13 a.m.  
**Warrant:** Officer made a warrant arrest in the 400 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 8:02 a.m.  
**Identity Theft:** Police received a report of identity theft from the 2500 block of Lamada Place NE at 10:09 a.m.  
**Theft:** Officer took a theft report in the 500 block of Academy St. E. at 1:44 p.m.  
**Intoxication:** Police received a report of an intoxicated subject in the 100 block of Bridge St. W. at 9:48 p.m.  
**Jan. 24**  
**Criminal Sexual Conduct:** Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 1000 block of 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE at 10:14 a.m.  
**Jan. 25**  
**Fraud:** Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 800 block of Mosher Ave. SW at 11:47 a.m.  
**Juvenile:** Police received a juvenile complaint from the 500 block of 15<sup>th</sup> St. NE at 12:34 p.m.  
**Thefts:** Police took theft reports in the 100 block of Landmark Dr. NE at 2:05 p.m. and the 500 block of Young Dr. SW at 5:07 p.m.  
**Jan. 26**  
**Child Protection:** Police received a child protection report from the 200 block of Pearl St. E. at 1:55 a.m.  
**Theft:** Officer took a theft report in the 500 block of 5<sup>th</sup> St. NE at 9:05 a.m.

**Jan. 27**  
**Juvenile:** Police received a juvenile complaint from the 500 block of 15<sup>th</sup> St. NE at 8:14 a.m.  
**Mental Health:** Police responded to a mental health incident in the 500 block of 15<sup>th</sup> St. NE at 8:38 a.m.  
**Shoplifting:** At 5:24 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W.  
**Jan. 28**  
**Theft:** Officers received a theft report from the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 3:20 p.m.

**STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF**

**Jan. 22**  
**Crash:** Paramedics and deputies responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries in the 16300 block of 94<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE in Blooming Prairie Township at 11:59 a.m.  
**Domestic:** Deputies responded to a domestic disturbance in the 8600 block of 37<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW in Somerset Township at 12:20 p.m.  
**Jan. 24**  
**Trespassing:** Deputies responded to a subject trespassing in the 8900 block of 37<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW in Somerset Township at 10:18 a.m.  
**Probation:** Deputy arrested a subject for a probation violation in the 4100 block of 66<sup>th</sup> St. NW in Medford Township at 8:10 p.m.  
**Jan. 28**  
**Arrest:** Deputy arrested a subject during a jail incident at 4:09 a.m.

**ARRESTS Steele County**

**OWATONNA POLICE**  
 Patrick Keyoneau Powell, 24, arrested at 2:30 p.m. Jan. 22, felony probation violation, held for court.  
 Brandon Frank Simmons, 44, arrested at 7:27 p.m. Jan. 22, DWI, \$12,000 bail.  
 Andrew Avery Buzzard, 26, arrested at 12:01 p.m. Jan. 25, warrant arrest, held for court.  
 Yony Joel Zavala Garcia, 34, arrested at 10:41 p.m. Jan. 25, warrant arrest, \$12,000 bail.

**STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF**

Jon Robert Ghan, 29,

arrested at 4 a.m. Jan. 24, DWI, held for court.  
 Robert Dale Gosse, 61, arrested at 9:11 p.m. Jan. 24, probation violation, held for court.  
 Nathan Alan Frye, 35, arrested at 12:02 p.m. Jan. 28, probation violation, body only.

**COURT NEWS Dodge County**

The following case was heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Jan. 17 with Judge Jodi L. Williamson presiding: Joshua J. Kuehl, 30, West Concord, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of marijuana and gross misdemeanor cancelled license. He was sentenced to \$75, 64 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, cognitive skill training, mental health evaluation, no possession of firearms, 50 hours of community service and 5 years of supervised probation.



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## Be kind to yourself



**Steele Talkin'**  
ANDREA MARSHALL

Happy New Year! As many of us turn the page on the calendar to a new year, we consider what our hopes for ourselves are for the next year.

January brings a sense of new beginnings. And, as we examine the past year, most of us discover we are not caring for ourselves as we should be. As a result, we resolve to prioritize our health and wellbeing moving into the year ahead. Why is developing or changing habits, particularly related to self-care, so difficult, however?

Science has researched this topic and discovered that several key factors help people positively move towards the habits they wish to have. I was recently listening to an interview with experts, Katy Milkman and Wendy Wood, on MPR addressing the science of habits and what helps us succeed in developing or breaking habits. It can be found at [www.mprnews.org/episode/2021/01/15/did-the-pandemic-give-you-new-habits-you-want-to-break-or-keep](http://www.mprnews.org/episode/2021/01/15/did-the-pandemic-give-you-new-habits-you-want-to-break-or-keep).

I found it very interesting, relatable,

and insightful. I want to share it with you to inspire, educate and motivate you along your wellness journey.

One important point science has discovered when making changes in your life is the attitude you take during the process. Many of us, myself included, have felt a lot of shame, guilt, and self-loathing for not being able to make the changes we want. This attitude is self-defeating and only contributes to our likelihood that change will not last. Science suggests being self-compassionate, and using positive self-talk is the best approach. As a result, we are more likely to enjoy the process of change and stay motivated in the long run to continue the effort it takes to reach long-term goals.

Expert tips to help shape this mindset:

1. Accept yourself where you are at.
2. Be grateful for your body. You don't have to love everything about your body, but take the time to reflect on the many things our bodies allow us to do every day!
3. Speak to yourself like a friend. Show yourself the same love you would show a friend going through the same experience you are.
4. Use your past struggles to give you strength. You have overcome many challenges in your life and have learned that you are a strong, resilient

SEE **BE KIND, B3**



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Little Theater of Owatonna's production 'Clue: On Stage' opens next Friday (Feb. 12) in the Sharon Stark Auditorium at West Hills. Characters will don face shields throughout the performance and seating is limited to comply with COVID-19 restrictions. Pictured with their shields are Patrick McColley, who plays Wadsworth, and Raquel Hellman, who plays Miss Scarlett.

## 'Clue: On Stage' opening COVID-19 style

BY DEB FLEMMING  
NEWS EDITOR

Little Theater of Owatonna is doing everything it can to make sure the show goes on this time.

The cast of "Clue: On Stage" will wear face shields and the crew and audience members will wear face masks. LTO is also limiting seating

to 80 people per performance to ensure there is adequate space for distancing, said Zackery Knapton, the play's director.

Since March of last year, LTO's performances have been postponed or cancelled because of COVID-19.

So what can theatergoers expect?

It's a dark and stormy night, and the audience has 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 whodunit?

Based on the cult classic film and the

SEE **CLUE ON STAGE, B2**

## Lawsuit filed against Steele sheriff

BY DEB FLEMMING  
NEWS EDITOR

Two former inmates of the Steele County Detention Center have filed a class-action lawsuit against Sheriff Lon Thiele claiming the county's pay-to-stay policy violated their constitutional rights to due process and equal protection, as well as rights provided under state law.

Plaintiffs Isaiah Hayden Coffey and Ron Henry Lee Jaeger were jailed at Steele County Detention Center at various times between 2016 and 2019 and now are serving time at the Minnesota Correctional Center in Stillwater.

The two prisoners are seeking an injunction against attempts to collect, the return of all funds already collected and a judgment that current policy violates due process, equal protection and state law. The plaintiffs are also seeking reimbursement for their attorney fees and legal costs.

According to the lawsuit, Coffey and Jaeger claim Thiele – as the chief executive officer of the jail – is required waive the pay-to-stay fees if it is determined that an individual is unable to pay, that the institution is unlikely to be paid or that the pay-to-stay fee would create undue hardship for individual or family.

The plaintiffs further claim that had a determination been made it would have shown they

SEE **LAWSUIT, B4**

## Tunnel charms lovers for Valentine's Day

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

Are you looking for a little love?

The Tunnel of Love may be just what you need. It's a new display located in the greenhouse next to B to Z Hardware on

Main Street in Blooming Prairie. It will be featured daily through Valentine's Day.

The man behind the Tunnel of Love is no stranger to making things festive for area residents around special holidays. Dan Peach, whose family

owns B to Z and purchased the empty lot where the Bakery once stood, is at it again after successful runs with Halloween and Christmas displays.

Peach has decked out the Tunnel of Love with a kissing booth, sweetheart display, prison of

love, date night photo and a chain fence for wooden hearts to be connected. It's mostly geared to be a photo opportunity for lovers or family members to come and have their pictures taken as a way to express their love for each other. Candy and

gifts will be available in the store for children.

"I want to keep the holiday tradition alive," said Peach, who also serves the community as a police officer. "You never hear of anyone doing anything for Valentine's. It's small, but it's something," he added.

Peach doesn't expect anything like he experienced with Christmas when hundreds of people toured the lot in December for his spoof on National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation. However, he

SEE **TUNNEL CHARMS, B3**

## Piper House may be demolished

BY CHRIS BALDWIN  
STAFF WRITER

When settlers from New England began to crawl west across the continent, they brought with them their own culture, cuisine, and of course their distinct New England architecture.

The historic Daniel S. Piper House, which sits on County Road 45 on the southern edge of Medford, is the last remaining example of this New England settler style architecture in Minnesota. The building's condition and a proposal from a local property owner, could make it a thing of the past.

Brad Price with Right Size Storage



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

The historic Piper House sits on the southern edge of Medford. During last week's regular council meeting, a developer reached out to the city and asked them to annex the property and rezone it to commercial in order to demolish the aged house and build storage units on the lot.

floated his interest in purchasing the property to be annexed into the city and rezoned for commercial use. Price owns several storage units to the south of Medford and hopes to expand those.

"Storage does not bring jobs, but it does bring revenue," Price told the Medford coun-

cil during his pitch last week (Jan 21). "We would like to grow our business, we have need in the area and are fortunate that Medford is a nice little place to own a business."

According to Price, the purchase agreement he has entered into with the property owners for the 4.5-acre

parcel is dependent upon the council's decision. "Part of that is contingent upon whether I can get it annexed into the city of Medford and if I can get it zoned as commercial," he said.

The Piper House is a county property while Price's storage facilities rest on city land, hence

the reason for annexation. Price said that he hopes to add four, new storage units to the plot after demolishing the old home. The units will not require sewer or water.

While the new units would bring some tax dollars to

SEE **PIPER HOUSE, B3**

## Times captures record 16 state awards

Journalistic awards of excellence have made their way into the area as the Steele County Times captured 16 awards from the Minnesota Newspaper Association's annual Better Newspaper Contest. It's the most the newspaper has ever garnered in a single contest.

The awards were given out Thursday night during a virtual ceremony by MNA. The Times earned four first place awards, four second place and eight third place. Nine of the awards went to the newspaper while the others were awarded to staff members.

The Times picked up first place awards for sports reporting and advertising excellence while Publisher Rick Bussler received top awards for press photographer's portfolio and local breaking news coverage of

SEE **TIMES CAPTURES, B3**

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# A balanced budget is priority for Ellendale's new mayor

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
STAFF WRITER

After the outgoing mayor chose not to run, Ellendale needed someone to step up and after getting sworn in on Thursday, Jan. 14, the city's new mayor is Matt Bartsch.

His duties as mayor include being the spokesman and champion for the city, leading all public meetings and working with city committees to see how they can better Ellendale through them. "What I would like to see is a balanced budget, with that some kind of community beautification program and improve our image, but the budget is No. 1," he said. Bartsch said he also wants to work with the Economic Development Authority (EDA) board on some of the projects they have scoped out to increase Ellendale's tax base.

In addition to working with the EDA, the Geneva native and NRHEG graduate is looking forward to working with members of the Ellendale Parks



Matt Bartsch

and Trail's Committee to discuss new concepts they would like to see.

"We're still looking at the timeline. We don't know when we'll get our initial go-ahead," he said.

Another upcoming project is the re-pavement of Highway 30, which Bartsch said is scheduled for this summer.

"We're really excited to see Highway 30 get repaved as that's our main road through town so we want to see it get up to par," Bartsch said.

With so many projects and opportunities for growth, he said he's excited about Ellendale's future, but he's also aware of the challenges ahead.

"We'll continue to navigate COVID-19, monitor the budget and

manage it throughout the year," Bartsch said.

While there are some challenges, he said the previous mayor, Russell Goette, was a great leader.

"He's done an outstanding job for Ellendale. We were lucky to have him serve."

Bartsch said what motivated him to run for mayor was his passion for the city.

"I really enjoy this town and like to see the community spirit here. I wanted to serve this town and help that along and I think I have skillset to help see that through," he said.

By the end of his two-year term, he hopes the city has a balanced budget and the city's tax base increases by filling some of the vacant lots in town through economic development.

While there's a lot of work to do before Ellendale reaches that point, Bartsch said he is eager to take on that responsibility.

"I'm definitely excited to work with our council," he said. "I'm excited to be given the opportunity to serve the city of Ellendale."

## CLUE ON STAGE: opening COVID-19 style FROM B1

popular board game, "Clue: On Stage" is a madcap comedy that will keep you guessing until the final twist.

Knapton, who has worked on 11 consecutive LTO productions, said his experience in numerous capacities readied him for the director role.

"I understand some of the challenges the cast and crew are facing," said Knapton.

One thing Knapton said he didn't anticipate was all of the questions. "I was used to asking the questions, not being the one people came to for all the answers."

That said, Knapton said, he was confident the cast and crew would be ready for opening night.

"I've been amazed at how quickly the cast moved in memorizing their lines."

Raquel Hellman, who plays Miss Scarlett, said one of the biggest challenges she's had in preparing for the role is wearing the facemasks in rehearsal. "You can't see people's facial expressions," she said.

She said she expected that to change once dress rehearsals started and the cast began wearing their face shields.

"We are living in a weird time," said Hellman, adding that the facemasks and shields are a way that people can enjoy live theater.

When asked about playing the role of Wadsworth, Patrick McColley said: "It's fun." As Wadsworth, McColley said he gets to run around a lot.

"He's prim and proper, but as the show goes on it gets crazier...just like the movie," said McColley.

Other cast members include: Whitney Minton as Yvette, 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](http://www.LittleTheatreofOwatonna.org). LTO's remote Box Office at Tri M Graphics and LTO Box Office is also open for ticket sales.

Adult ticket price is \$17; student ticket price is \$14.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE OF THE WEEK

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### ACROSS

- 1 Feeble
- 5 Baghdad's --- City
- 9 Archie's wife
- 14 Spoken
- 15 U N nuclear watchdog
- 16 Reproduced sound
- 17 Thin coating
- 18 Theoretical birth of the Universe
- 20 In the offspring
- 22 Desperate
- 23 Yarn
- 24 Before this
- 29 Business disappointment
- 33 Yorba ---, R M H's birthplace
- 34 Saturated
- 36 Injure
- 37 Methodology
- 38 Once again
- 40 Exchange
- 42 Sepulcher
- 43 Congenital
- 45 Genuine
- 47 Chinese ultimate reality
- 48 Not entirely natural, if born in this
- 49 Beaten by the Continental Army
- 51 Gist
- 53 Flared dress type

### DOWN

- 1 Attics
- 2 Hilarious
- 3 Troublemakers, often
- 4 "Get Shorty" author --- Leonard
- 5 Place
- 6 Expression of relief
- 7 Property document
- 8 Hydrophobia
- 9 Enthusiastically
- 10 Name
- 11 Former name of Psiloritis, Cretan mountain
- 12 Can plating
- 13 Harley, often
- 19 Retirement arrangement
- 21 Legend
- 25 Itemize

- 26 A way to disappear
- 27 Watery swelling
- 28 Sly fighter?
- 30 Pear-shaped stringed instrument
- 31 Ice hockey player Bobby ---
- 32 Beatle married to Bach
- 34 Forego
- 35 Bill Cosby's late son
- 37 Candidate's aim
- 39 Merchandise
- 41 Agnus ---
- 44 Lymphatic tissues often removed after infection
- 46 "Taken" star --- Neeson
- 49 Strait west of Wales, AK
- 50 Slender
- 52 Stocky horse
- 54 "Lorenzo's Oil" actor Nick ---
- 55 Rub out
- 57 Implement
- 58 Arthur --- stadium, Queens, N Y C
- 59 Military nurses' group (Abbr.)
- 60 Besmirch
- 61 Pro bono TV ad
- 62 Crone
- 63 The Emirates

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### ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS

By Shannon Nordstrom and Russ Evans

Dear Motor Medics, There are so many new things on cars today. How do you keep up with them all? I just bought a new car to me; a 2011 Ford Focus and it has a ton of new stuff on it that I have never heard of being that I just got out of my 1996 Olds Ciera. This car has no gas cap on it. I mean it's not supposed to, but I have a message on the dash that says "Check gas cap" so now what?

Seth in Vandalia Missouri  
Dear Seth, Ok Seth, now were on question overload, but we can handle it. 1st, we don't know how we keep up with it all, we just do. That's our number one asked question on our radio show Under The Hood. We have great memories and see a lot of vehicles in our shop which helps. As for the new features, they are coming out of the woodwork for sure. Your car is one of those with the new no fuel cap feature. At least you can't lose the fuel cap. The filler tube now just has a valve and spring to seal the filler neck and if it gets dirty and damaged it can trip the light you have on now. It is particularly important to keep the area clean, we use a damp cloth, not soaking wet, to clean the area on a regular basis. Good luck with the new car.  
Take care, the Motor Medics

Dear Mark, I have a question about your radio show. You have helped me with car repairs on four different occasions and I was able to fix it myself 3 times and saved money and the 4th time you were talking about a recall I didn't even know existed and I was able to have my problem at no charge at my local dealership. I want to know how you know so much about cars and how you guys started doing the show and this column.

Mark in Inwood Iowa  
Dear Mark, We're happy to help and it gives us great pleasure to know we are helping others save money and keep their automotive stress levels down. Mark, we work on cars every day in our own repair shop doing everything you hear on the show and that is a great learning center for us. Russ also has a crazy memory that never lets anything go so he keeps all that knowledge and passes it on to our listeners. Neither Russ or Shannon use a computer to answer the questions on the air. We started the show back in 1990 as a half hour show never dreaming, we would have a worldwide audience 30 years later. At one point we were answering over 300 emails a day with many being similar, so we started this column to help multiple folks at once with one answer. We are blessed to have such great folks listening.  
Take care, the Motor Medics

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# Medford Main Street Project moves forward

BY CHRIS BALDWIN  
STAFF WRITER

During a special session held last week prior to its regular meeting, the Medford City council voted unanimously to approve plans to move forward with the Main Street reconstruction project. A matter of contention for some time, the project will improve the street and sewers while also adding a 6 ft sidewalk reduced down from the original 8 ft.

As is currently outlined, the project will stretch from Second Avenue Northwest to Fifth Avenue Southeast. A major reason for the project is to replace a 1950s era cast-iron water main which has had multiple breaks. Lane configurations and safety enhancements have also been considered including a center turn lane.

"The north section consists of two drive lanes, a center turn lane, and parking on both sides and we'd be redoing the walkway," City Engineer Joe Duncan told the council. The project will preserve existing curb and gutters other than when there are ADA improvements necessary or spot repairs required.

Moving forward the idea is to keep the



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

**Medford's Main Street. During a special session on Jan. 25, the Medford City Council decided to move forward with the Main Street project. There are still many additional steps along the way during which the council could opt out or alter the project.**

southern portion as is without adding a turn lane until determining it will be needed. "Lane configuration has been a subject of debate and the county's position is somewhat at conflict with what the city's been looking for," Duncan said. "At this point we're looking at two drive lanes, a center turn lane and parking along the west side."

"The city would be looking to keep it in place for the time being and look at future dates to see if that change is needed," Duncan said of the controversial turn lane. Part of the reason the city wants to wait is due to new development scheduled near the southern part of Main Street which might change traffic trends.

The new project is es-

timated to cost slightly more than \$2.1 million after being adjusted down from the initial proposal of around \$2.7 million. John Anhorn, owner of Anhorn's Gas & Tire on Main Street, has been vocal in his desire to see costs cut.

"We just need to make sure we're keeping the scope of this within affordability," Anhorn told the council. "I have a lot invested in Mainstreet and Medford and I want to make sure I can afford to continue that. Do what we need to do, maybe not necessarily what we want to do."

The motion left the center turn lane, pipe size, and lighting to be determined at a later date. "Turn lanes will be reviewed in five years," Mayor Danny Thomas

stipulated in the motion. The street will be striped as it currently is with two drive lanes and two parking lanes according to the motion.

From here the project moves forward with specifications for the project that will need to be approved by the council after getting county and State-aid approval. After that the project can be bid after which the council can decide whether or not they want to commit to the construction based on bids received.

"There's still a couple more steps to take," City Engineer Joe Duncan explained. "At the earliest you can consider awarding a bidder in May which would leave June through early-November construction for this project."

## BE KIND: to yourself FROM B1

person, capable of growing exponentially!

5. Meditate. You can train your brain into thinking positively. Try one of many guided meditation apps to help develop the ability to meditate!

So, stop shaming, guilt, and beating yourself up for struggling to make changes. Instead, practice self-compassion! Do things that are both healthy for you and that make you feel good. Make yourself a priority and know that you are worth the extra time, money, effort, and love that it takes to do what is best for yourself.

Another common

challenge I have had in the past, and I'm sure has been a challenge for many others, is feeling too depleted every day to reach our goals. We have a limited amount of time, money, and energy, and when you give it all away to your family, career, and other responsibilities, we often find we have none left for ourselves.

But remember, you only get one life and if you want to be happy, healthy, and able to give your best self, you must make yourself a priority on your list of things to do. If you don't, the consequence is often feeling

tired, crabby, unhealthy, and miserable. Seek balance any way that you can! It does not have to be them or you.

You can find balance if you spend your time and energy creatively. You may need to take more control of your environment and support systems to create this balance and set yourself up for success. For example, who are your support people? What do you need to do in your home to accommodate your long-term goals (set up a workspace, clean out the pantry, etc.) Can you spend time with your family while doing some physical activity or cook a healthy meal,

or go for a walk with a co-worker? It may take some extra thought to figure it out, but in the end, it's a win-win for you and those you are responsible for!

This year, be kind to yourself, love yourself more, and be as self-compassionate to yourself as you are to others. You deserve to enjoy the journey towards a happier YOU moving through 2021.

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

## TIMES CAPTURES: record 16 state awards FROM B1

the Lois Riess sentencing last August.

In awarding first place for advertising excellence, the judges commented, "Very well laid out with a good mix of advertisers and classified section. Good mix of edit, photos, graphics and advertisers. Here is my card business directory catches attention."

For the first place Lois Riess coverage, judges said: "This entry does a great job of covering a complex incident with a combination of solid writing, use of photos and layout. It hits on all of the contest's criteria."

Bussler's photo portfo-

lio earned this comment from judges, "All of the photos in the portfolio were very good and captured the emotions and moments drawing the viewer in." Photos included in the portfolio are featured in this week's edition on page A7.

Judges did not provide comments for the sports reporting category.

Second place awards were given for typography and design and editorial page as a whole. In the individual categories, Bussler and Howard Lestrud earned second for their local breaking news coverage of the Bakery fire in

Blooming Prairie last February and Bussler for a news photo, also of the Bakery fire.

In the typography division, judges related, "I appreciate the variety of design offered, Nice to see the mix of Photoshop cutouts, wraps and colors. Very aesthetically pleasing."

For the editorial page category, the judges commented, "Editorials show variety while the page includes mix of local and national issues."

Judges offered this assessment of Lestrud and Bussler's Bakery fire coverage: "It's a very thorough piece that's easy to read. I

liked the focus on local importance in terms of what was lost in the fire and, at the same time, how the community responded."

The judge offered this comment regarding Bussler's photo of a firefighter battling the Bakery fire: "A great shot by the photographer. I love how the pole held by the fireman and the shot of water from the hose frames the firefighter. Combine that with the broken glass and icicles, it all makes for a good photo of an unfortunate incident."

The newspaper won a variety of third place awards for classified ad section, use of photogra-

## HISTORIC PIPER HOUSE:

may become a thing of the past FROM B1

the city, some on the council were hesitant due to the historic nature of the house and the possible impact on neighboring properties. "I'm not going to be in favor of it," Council Member Chad Merritt told Price. "I don't think it's going to do my property any value being a short distance away."

"It's just too nice a property inside Medford with 4.5 acres for some homes or some other type of business," Merritt said. "I'd like to see it stay residential, that's just my feeling." Both Merritt and Council Member Amanda Mueller also asked whether more storage units would bring crime.

Price said an increase in crime would be unlikely.

"I light my units up nice and that makes a difference, if you have something that's not lit and doesn't look good, you're going to have crime," he said.

Saving the property would be difficult due to the barn sinking down into the soil. "From what I understand, the house is passed the point of saving," Medford Mayor Danny Thomas said. "I want to think about it a little more though and I think we should talk to some of the neighbors."

Price will need to present his proposal for annexation and rezoning to the Medford Planning and Zoning Board for its recommendation. However, Price said he could still move forward while keeping the property within the county.

## TUNNEL CHARMS:

lovers for Valentine's FROM B1

is kind of curious to see how many people will check out the love shack.

He was pleasantly surprised to learn a woman traveled about one hour last week to check out the Tunnel of Love. She had seen the display featured on Facebook. "It's something fun to do during the pandemic," said Peach. He encourages people to bring someone they love down, but it doesn't have to be people in a relationship. He would like to see families of grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins check out the display. "It's for all ages, let's have some fun," he added.

The tunnel will be featured in a special business promotion Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Some downtown businesses will be open during those hours.

Coming up with new ideas and concepts to showcase the community in a positive light has be-

come Peach's passion over the past year. "You just can't be stale or you will never grow," he said, adding he would like to see the downtown more active.

Peach was also recently captured in the Tunnel of Love sharing a moment behind the sweetheart display with his girlfriend of the past year and a half, Shelby White. Local artist Sandy Jones painted the sweetheart sign as well as the outdoor heart sign for Peach.

After Valentine's, Peach will turn his focus to spring. He is already planning something special for spring flowers in April and May.

And he's already eyeing next fall when he can turn the corner into a pumpkin patch once again.

"I like staying busy," Peach confesses. "It has been a fun hobby before work. I'm just trying to spread love."

phy as a whole, headline writing and general excellence. Other third places were awarded to Lestrud for news photo and Bussler for arts and entertainment story, best advertisement and sports feature story.

For most of the categories, the Times competed against the non-dailies 1,501-3,000 circulation. However, Bussler competed against all weekly photographers in the state for the press photographer's portfolio award.

"It has been an incredibly difficult year on so many fronts, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic impacting our news gathering methods," said Bussler. "Despite

the adversity so many of us faced throughout the past year, it's gratifying to see that we were still able to be recognized for quality journalism."

Bussler is quick to point out that the awards don't just belong to the newspaper. "Without the incredible support that we receive from advertisers and readers in the communities of Steele County and surrounding area, we wouldn't be able to offer any of this," he said. "There wouldn't be a newspaper without that support."

Since the Times began competing in the contest in 2012, the Times has collected 67 state awards. In addition, the newspaper has also achieved 26 national awards.

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**BLOOMING PRAIRIE**

- FEB. 8**  
7 p.m. – Public Hearing & City Council Meeting
- FEB. 9**  
10:30 a.m. – Online Storytime, BP Library Facebook  
2:30 p.m. – Public Utilities Commission Meeting  
4:30 p.m. – Fire Commission Meeting
- FEB. 10**  
4:30 p.m. – Economic Development Authority Meeting
- FEB. 16**  
5 p.m. – Ambulance Commission Meeting
- FEB. 17**  
4 p.m. – Police Advisory Commission Meeting

**ELLENDALE/HOPE/GENEVA**

- FEB. 5**  
10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building
- FEB. 8**  
10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building  
8 p.m. – Berlin Township Meeting, Community Building
- FEB. 10**  
10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building
- FEB. 11**  
8:30 p.m. – Ellendale City Council Meeting, Community Building

**OWATONNA/MEDFORD**

- FEB. 5**  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Bloodmobile, Associated Church, 800 Havana Road
- FEB. 8**  
4:30 p.m. – Owatonna Park Board Meeting, City Hall
- FEB. 9**  
10:30 a.m. – Online Storytime, Owatonna Library Facebook  
5 p.m. – Steele County Board Meeting, County Admin Building  
5:30 p.m. –
- Owatonna Human Rights Commission Meeting, City Hall  
5:30 p.m. – Owatonna Planning Commission Meeting, City Hall
- FEB. 11**  
5 p.m. – Airport Commission Meeting, Airport Lounge
- FEB. 12**  
7:30 p.m. – Clue: On Stage, Little Theater of Owatonna, Sharon Stark Auditorium on West Hills campus.

# Grocery & Gourmet



Ambassadors from the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism visit with Owatonna Grocery & Gourmet, 114 W. Broadway Street, in Owatonna, to welcome them as a new member. Abdulkadir Abdulle is the owner. Owatonna Grocery & Gourmet has a grocery store and restaurant and is open 7 days a week.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

## Red Cross urges blood donation to maintain supply amid pandemic

The American Red Cross typically has a tough time keeping the blood supply strong during the winter months when inclement weather and seasonal illnesses can impact donors. This year the pandemic adds in another challenge in keeping the blood supply strong. The Red Cross is urging healthy individuals to make an appointment

to give blood or platelets this month. As a thank-you for helping ensure a stable blood supply, those who come to give this February will receive a \$5 Amazon.com Gift Card via email, courtesy of Amazon. (Restrictions apply. Additional information and details are available at [www.RedCrossBlood.org/Together](http://www.RedCrossBlood.org/Together).)

Make your appointment to give blood, platelets or plasma with the Red Cross by downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org), calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device. Upcoming blood donation opportunities through Feb. 15 include:

- Dodge County**  
Kasson  
2/10/2021: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m., The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 901 Parkview Ave. NW
- Steele County**  
Owatonna  
2/5/2021: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Associated Church, 800 Havana Road

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Tues. & Thurs.: 10 a.m.-10 p.m.  
Sat: 9 a.m.-10 p.m.  
Sun: Closed  
\* Last Call at 9:30 p.m.

- **BARBINGO**  
- Starts Again Jan. 25  
- Mondays at 6:30 p.m.  
- Must be 21 to play
- **TUNNEL OF LOVE**  
- Saturday, Feb. 6  
- 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Valentine gifts featured at many local businesses
- **OFF-SALE SPECIALS**  
- Sample Seltzers & Wines  
- "Sweetheart of a Wine Sale"  
- Lottery Promo

**FREELANCE WRITER WANTED**  
The STEELE COUNTY TIMES is seeking a freelance writer & photographer to cover Blooming Prairie & Ellendale area news. Perfect opportunity for a retiree who loves to write & attend community events.  
If interested, please email [Rick Bussler at bprick@frontier.com](mailto:Rick.Bussler@bprick.com).

### LAWSUIT: filed against Steele sheriff

were unable to pay and fee should have been waived. Steele County charges \$25 for each day jailed. When transferred to prison, Coffey and Jaeger allege that Steele County kept the money in their prisoner accounts and put it toward their pay-to-stay fees, rather than transferring the balances to a revenue recapture fund. The class action lawsuit was filed on behalf of all persons confined at the Steele County Detention Center since pay-to-stay policy enacted and for whom Steele

County levied fees for confinement. And while the exact number of inmates is unknown, the lawsuit said the class would involve no more than 100 people. Thiele said he is unable to comment on the pending litigation at this time. The Steele County Detention Center is operated by a jail administrator with the sheriff overseeing the entire operation. Thiele said he expects additional details to become public at the next county board meeting.

## Sudoku Corner

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

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

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**PANTHER OF THE WEEK**

**JOVANNY HEURTA**

This week's panther of the week is JOVANNY HEURTA. Jovanny lives outside of Clarks Grove with his mom Heather and siblings Hailly, Lilly, and Domingo.

Jovanny is in Mrs. Lassahn's second grade class at NRHEG. He has the sweetest heart and works very hard in school. Jovanny is kind to everyone and extremely respectful to his teachers and classmates. He is a wonderful friend and we can always count on him! Jovanny loves to help out wherever needed and is a great role model for others!

Jovanny enjoys playing outside and sledding down his big hill. His favorite food is chicken and he loves animals. *Keep up the great work Jovanny!*

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## Malchow joins RE/MAX Venture

Matt Gillard, broker/owner of RE/MAX Venture is pleased to announce Meghan Malchow as the newest agent to join the Owatonna RE/MAX office. "I am looking forward to all of the opportunities that my career in real estate will offer – building



rapport and relationships with clients as I help guide them through the excitement and challenges of the home selling or buying process," said Malchow.

"I am upfront and positive with my clients, and I am persistent when representing them and their interests. I will be drawing on my years in banking and retail, including loan servicing, to provide an exceptional customer experience." "I have known Meghan for a long time and have watched her grow and develop in her career," said Gillard. "She is the type of learning-based person we look for in our agents and staff. She is a perfect fit for our growing team at RE/MAX Venture."

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

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# Hometown Sports

STEELE COUNTY TIMES

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2021

B5

## Blossom girls stay undefeated

### BP rallies past Vikings, grounds Eagles to move to 5-0

**BY ALEX NUEHRING**  
SPORTS WRITER

The Blooming Prairie girls basketball team not only haven't lost a game yet, they haven't won by fewer than 10 points after beating Hayfield 53-43 on Tuesday, Jan. 26, and Maple River 58-41 on Friday, Jan. 29.

Before the Blossoms' game against the Vikings started, the two teams shared a special moment when both wore pink shirts as a tribute to Hayfield sophomore Macy Holtan who passed away in a car crash on her way to school on Wednesday, Jan. 20.

The Blossoms also presented each Viking with flowers and a gift and paid their respects to Holtan's family who were in attendance.

Once the game started, Hayfield started the game on a 15-4 run thanks in part to its press defense, which forced seven early Blooming Prairie turnovers.

However, once the Blossoms adjusted to the Vikings' defense, their experience and assertiveness helped them claw their way back and eventually take a 32-28 lead into halftime.

In the second half, Hayfield once again got off to a fast start. The Vikings scored the first four points to tie the game at 32.

Then, after an 8-0 run by Blooming Prairie, Hayfield scored back-to-back buckets to trim the Blossoms' lead to 40-36.

However, after that, Blooming Prairie took over, going on a 12-0 run



PHOTO COURTESY MARY NELSON

Each Blooming Prairie girls basketball player presented a Hayfield player with a gift in memory of classmate Macy Holtan who tragically died last week.

over a seven-minute stretch to seal its fourth straight win.

Overall, the Blossoms showed some good signs, such as rallying from an 11-point deficit and shooting 17 free throws, but also will want to work on limiting the number of

turnovers they commit after turning the ball over 22 times against Hayfield.

Bobbie Brunns led the Blossoms with 19 points, nine rebounds and eight steals, while Megan Oswald finished with 15 points, seven rebounds and five steals.

**BP team scoring:**  
Bobbie Brunns 19, Oswald 15, Allison Krohnberg 7, Anna Pauly 6, Maggie Brunns 4 and Emily Miller 2.

**Blossoms 58, Maple River 41**

Against Maple River, the two teams traded baskets until

Maggie Brunns sank a three-pointer to give the Blossoms an 11-8 lead.

That basket ended up being the start of a 12-3 run by Blooming Prairie, which gave them a 20-11 lead with just under

SEE BLOSSOM GIRLS, B6



PHOTO COURTESY MARY NELSON

Awesome Blossoms' guard Bobbie Brunns shoots a pull-up jumper. Blooming Prairie leaned on its experience to beat a Hayfield team that plays three freshman big minutes 53-43.



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Blooming Prairie senior forward Allison Krohnberg penetrates and looks for a teammate to pass the ball to during the opening minutes of the Awesome Blossoms' 58-41 win on Friday, Jan. 29.

## Owatonna's Johnson achieves 100 pins

**BY MITCHELL BREUER**  
SPORTS WRITER

Landen Johnson reached a major milestone Friday night, as he grabbed his 100th pin of his career.

The highlight proved to be the capping point of a successful week for Johnson, who scored four pins in four matches during the week.

"It was something that he had from last season knowing that he was pretty close to that huge landmark and he was keeping track of it, and it was just awesome to see that moment for him, seeing all that hard work and dedication pay off," Coach Adam Woitalla said.

Unlike Johnson, the Owatonna wrestling team was not able to capture a win in all their appearances, losing to Northfield 41-34 on Friday.

The team escaped the week with more wins than losses though, squeaking past Albert Lea 35-32 and scoring two wins at home on Thursday against Mankato East 56-20 and Lakeville North 40-29.

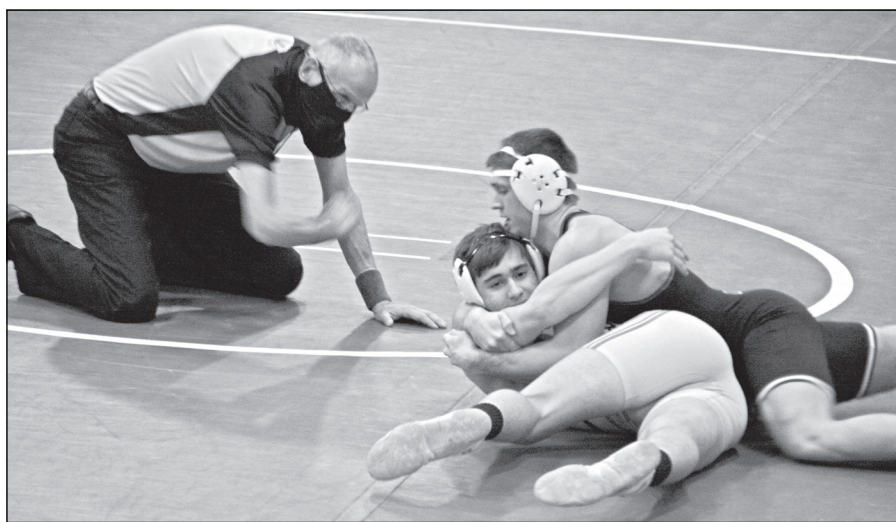
The team put on quite the show for its home audience against

Mankato East, as after the starting the night off with two wins via forfeit they tallied four-in-a-row by pinfall, eventually ending the match with six.

"It is always good winning at home. We have great fans here in Owatonna, we love their support, so it is

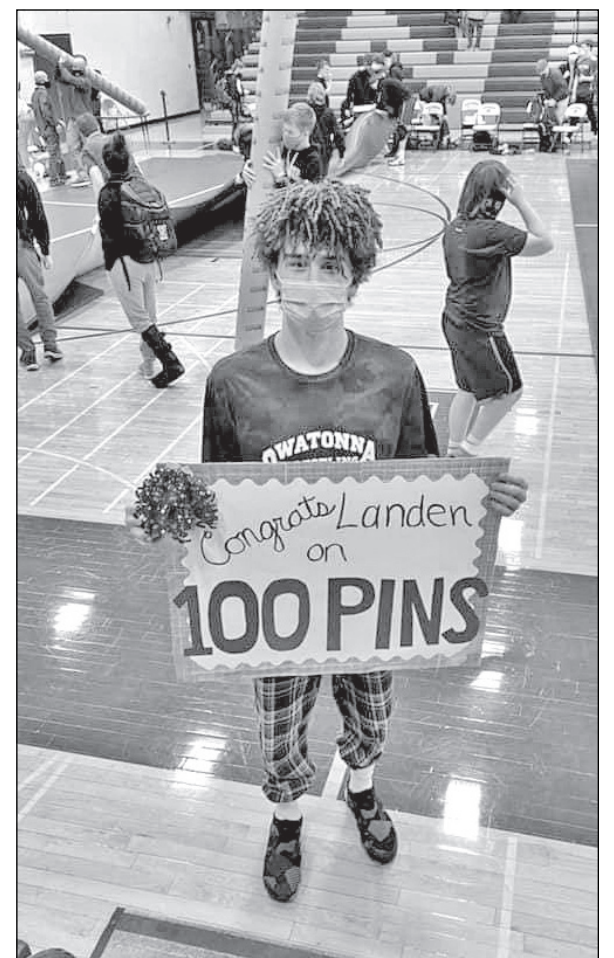
good to go and compete in front of them and get two solid wins," Woitalla said.

Looking ahead, the team will travel to Smiley High School on Thursday, for another triangular, this time against Smiley and Prior Lake, hoping for continued improvement.



STAFF PHOTO BY MITCHELL BREUER

Kaden Nelson attempts to get a pin during Thursday's match against Mankato East.



COURTESY OWATONNA WRESTLING

Landen Johnson poses after scoring his 100th pin Friday in Northfield.



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Several of the Owatonna's boys hockey team celebrate after a goal during Thursday's win against Northfield.

STAFF PHOTO BY MITCHELL BREUER

## Big win for Huskies boys hockey

BY MITCHELL BREUER  
SPORTS WRITER

The Owatonna boys hockey team earned its biggest win of the season, defeating the Northfield, 4-3 on Thursday night.

The night proved to be a back-and-forth matchup, with the Huskies grabbing the advantage early thanks to an early goal by junior, Taylor Bogen.

However, as would prove to be a trend throughout the night,

Northfield responded big, scoring two goals in the second period to take the lead.

Owatonna would need a big final period and that is what they would get. The team's seniors started the third with a bang, as Aaron Bangs tied the game up, and Joey Dub grabbed the lead shortly thereafter.

The two goals were still not enough to put away Northfield though, with under three minutes left,

they tied the game back up.

It was Owatonna who put things away though, as senior Wyatt Oldenfendt scored what would be the game-winning goal for the Huskies with 1:43 left in the game handing Northfield its first loss of the season.

With the momentum earned against Northfield, Owatonna carried it over to Saturday where they shutout Rochester John Marshall, winning 7-0. In the game, the Huskies

saw six different players scoring goals, with Bogen leading the team with two.

Exiting the week, the team sits in a three-way tie for second place in the Big Nine with Mankato East and Northfield, each with four wins and one loss. Mankato West leads the way with five wins and zero losses.

Next week, the Huskies will host Red Wing for a game on Thursday night with puck drop at 7 p.m.



Huskies senior Wyatt Oldenfendt stares down a Northfield player shortly after he was penalized during Thursday's win.

STAFF PHOTO BY MITCHELL BREUER



Junior Casey Pederson skates during Owatonna's win Thursday against Northfield.

STAFF PHOTO BY MITCHELL BREUER

## Blossoms girls start season with wins

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
SPORTS EDITOR

After winning their first two games of the season at home, the Blooming Prairie girls basketball team went on the road for the first time this season. Their opponent, United South Central (USC), probably wishes they'd just stayed home because the Awesome Blossoms beat them convincingly 64-35 on Friday, Jan. 22.

Head Coach John Bruns said one of the keys to Blooming Prairie's success was its fast start.

"We came out very strong in the first six minutes," he said.

After that first six minutes, the Awesome Blossoms kept their pedal to metal and built a 20+ point lead in the first half.

At halftime, Blooming Prairie led 37-14.

"We did a nice job moving the ball

and finding gaps in the USC defense in the second half and we were able to play everyone on the roster quite a bit," Bruns said.

In addition to moving the ball and finding gaps in USC's defense, Blooming Prairie made five three-pointers compared to just two for USC.

One area where the girls can improve is their free throw shooting. They made just three of their nine free throws.

Blooming Prairie stats: Maggie Bruns 6 points, 6 assists, 5 steals, 2 3-PT; Bobbie Bruns 15 points, 8 assists, 6 steals, 3 3-PT; Maren Forystek 2 points; Emily Miller 2 points; Lauren Schammel 6 points; Allison Krohnberg 4 points; Anna Pauly 5 points; Megan Oswald 19 points, 11 rebounds, 4 steals; Shawntee Snyder 5 points.

## BLOSSOM GIRLS: stay undefeated

FROM B5

eight minutes left in the first half.

The Eagles responded with a 10-0 run to take a one-point lead with just over two minutes left in the first half.

Head Coach John Bruns said his team struggled throughout the first half due to some missed opportunities, defensive breakdowns and some rebounding problems, but got just enough offense to take a 25-23 lead into halftime.

"Maggie Bruns carried us offensively with three three-pointers in the first half and without those we would have been in trouble," he said.

He noted that the girls played better defense in the second half, which led to more scoring opportunities.

"The second half we tightened up some

things defensively and got our transition game going," he said.

In fact, Bruns said the transition feeds from Bobbie Bruns and Maren Forystek are one of the main reasons Megan Oswald scored 13 points in the second half.

The Blossoms' (5-0 overall, 4-0 in Gopher Conference) next game is a road contest against Medford at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 5. Blooming Prairie's next home game is against NRHEG at 7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 9.

**BP team scoring:** Megan Oswald 17 points and 11 rebounds, Maggie Bruns 14 points, Bobbie Bruns 11 points and seven assists, Anna Pauly six points and eight rebounds, Allison Krohnberg five points, Maren Forystek three points and Ashleigh Alwes two points.

# Mask up or no mask?

## New normal for hoops players

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
STAFF WRITER

Before COVID-19, when Blooming Prairie seniors Alex Miller, Allison Krohnberg, Megan Oswald and Maggie Bruns envisioned their senior season, it definitely didn't include wearing a mask while they played, but that's the new normal they and basketball players around the state face.

When the season began, Miller didn't know what to expect, but quickly found out that playing with a mask on was much more difficult.

"The first practice I got winded extremely fast and somewhat towards the end of practice I felt like I was going to faint," he said.

Krohnberg had a different problem when she first practiced with a mask on.

"On my first day of practice I showed up



Blooming Prairie senior guard Alex Miller, like all high school student-athletes in Minnesota, has to wear a mask while playing basketball. He said it felt like conditioning was two times the amount of work, but he's still happy that he and his teammates get to play together this season.

STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

wearing a cloth mask and just within the first five minutes of our warm-up I was struggling. It was very hot, and those masks suck in when you're breathing heavy, so then I switched to a disposable one and it was much more breathable," she said. "It was quite uncomfortable at first, but after a while it wasn't too bad."

Oswald agreed that it's gotten easier to wear

a mask but said wearing it isn't enjoyable so she's hoping something changes.

Bruns said getting used to wearing a mask while playing basketball was an adjustment even though she trained with a mask on.

"During the off-season I would wear a mask while I was working out and running

SEE NEW NORMAL, B9

## Why don't wrestlers wear masks on the mat?

BY MITCHELL BREUER  
SPORTS WRITER

While the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in different environments for high school sporting events throughout Minnesota, one sport that has not seen as much of a difference in appearance is wrestling.

The team is to remain masked and social distanced on the side of the mat. But, during competition, wrestlers are not required to wear a mask. This is a noticeable difference from basketball where players are required to always wear a mask.

The reason given from the Minnesota High School League was that the masks could become a choking hazard during competition.

Despite the lack of masks mandate, Owatonna's wrestling head coach, Adam Woitalla, noted that his team is still remaining safe as possible.

"I think it is important to realize that we are wearing masks at all times except when we are competing," Woitalla said. "When we are warming up, when we are sitting on the bench, when we are talking in practice, we are wearing are masks."

A big portion of this is in part to the health standards that were already apart of the structure of wrestling

before the pandemic even began.

"A lot of people do not realize that in wrestling, we already do a lot of the protocol that they recommend of cleaning the mats and disinfecting the headgear and extra cleaning that is already done in the sport," Woitalla said. "So really, it's just the same as we have done in the past years, but just being very diligent about it," he added.



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Wrestlers as shown by Westfield's Tyler Archer are not required to wear masks on the mat. This is Archer gaining the advantage over Medford's Dylan Heidescheid in which Archer won the match by fall in the first period to trim the Razorbacks' deficit to 48-15 in January.

# Panthers split, Razorbacks' struggles persist

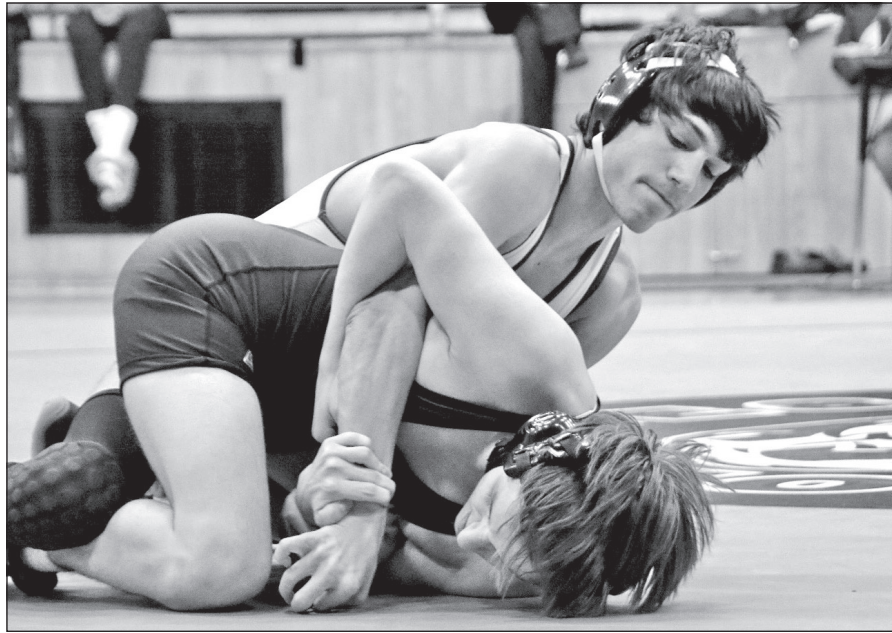
BY ALEX NUEHRING  
SPORTS WRITER

The Westfield wrestling team was looking for its first win of the season and came so close to getting it against the NRHEG Panthers, but after 14 matches the score was tied so it was decided by criteria (tiebreaker) and the Panthers were deemed the winners 40-39 by winning the sixth criteria. After that match, both teams lost to the Lake City Tigers.

The Razorbacks got off to a good start against when Kevin Hodge defeated NRHEG's Seth Staloch by fall to give Westfield a 6-0 lead.

The Panthers' Parker Bunn followed with a win by decision 11-6 to trim the Razorbacks' lead to three, but Westfield's Bo Zweiner won by fall to increase the Razorbacks' lead to 12-3.

At 128 pounds, Westfield's Lane Lembke



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Westfield's Lane Lembke tries to control the hands of Lake City's Ashton Singleton. Lembke won by technical fall 19-4, but Lake City won the dual 56-14.

won by fall to tack on six more points to the Razorbacks' lead, but NRHEG got back-to-back forfeits to get right back in the match.

With its lead shrunk to 18-15, Westfield needed an answer and got it

when Keegan Bronson won by fall and Sam Skillestad won by decision 8-5 to increase the Razorbacks' lead back up to double digits, 27-15.

However, NRHEG's George Roesler's won by fall. His win was

bookended by two Westfield forfeits and those 18 points gave the Panthers a 33-27 lead.

At 195 pounds, Westfield's Tyler Archer won by fall and Dylan Ehmke followed with another win by fall to give the

Razorbacks a six-point lead, but NRHEG won the heavyweight match by forfeit so the scored was tied 39-39 after the 14 matches.

The officials and coaches then looked at the rule book and the teams' statistics to figure out which team would win on criteria. Eventually, it came down to the sixth criteria, and NRHEG was ruled the victor 40-39.

The second match of the triangular pitted NRHEG against the Lake City Tigers.

The Tigers came into the night's matches undefeated and they showed why their record is unblemished by racing out to a 55-0 lead and eventually won 65-9.

The nightcap of the triangular was a match between Westfield and Lake City.

Hunter Simonson got the Razorbacks off to a good start by defeating the Tigers' Cristofer Ramirez by decision 9-5,

but Lake City won the next two matches by fall and forfeit, respectively, to take a 12-3 lead.

Lembke won by technical fall to trim the Tigers' lead to 12-8.

However, after that, Lake City won the next seven matches to boost its lead to 50-8.

At 195 pounds, Tyler Archer stopped the bleeding by winning by fall to make the score 50-14 in favor of the Tigers.

Lake City got those six points back by winning the next match by fall and both teams forfeited the heavyweight match, so the Tigers won the dual 56-14.

Westfield's next contest is a road dual against Medford at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 4. Their next home contest is a triangular in Hayfield at 5 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 8.

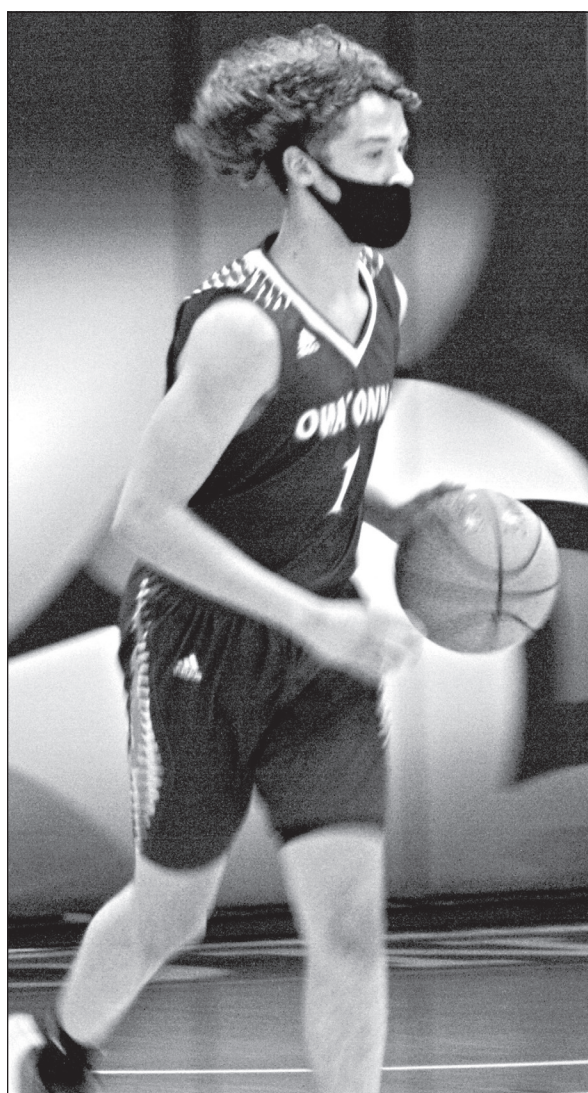
NRHEG's next contest is a home dual against United South Central at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 4.



STAFF PHOTO BY MITCHELL BREUER

Intensity is the name of the game as Huskies junior Brayden Williams looks to bring the ball in during Owatonna's win over Albert Lea.

## Lopsided win for Huskie boys



STAFF PHOTO BY MITCHELL BREUER

Junior Ty Creger dribbles the ball down the court during Owatonna's win over Albert Lea. The Huskies dominated the game and came out on top 72-28.

BY MITCHELL BREUER  
SPORTS WRITER

Friday night was a dominant night at home for the Owatonna boys basketball team, as they cruised to a 72-28 victory over Albert Lea.

To put their dominance in perspective, junior Brayden Williams scored only four points less than the visiting team during his 22 minutes of play.

The Huskies had the pedal to the metal from the get-go, outscoring Albert Lea 52-13 in the first half. While the scoring was good, head coach Joshua Williams gave a lot of credit to the team's defensive play and the performance from their bench players.

"Defensively, I thought we were really good again, we have made really good strides this year," Williams said. "The other thing I thought was a positive for us has been the bench play. We had two starters out with injuries (Nolan Buremeister and Payton Beyer), so we had a couple guys step into starting roles (Jack Titchenal and

Blake Buremeister) and just our bench in general has really contributed great minutes for us to allow us to do the things that we still need to do to be successful."

The bench would see an increased workload throughout the game thanks to the big lead, with the entire varsity roster playing over eight minutes during the contest.

"It gave us an opportunity to get more guys on the floor and develop some confidence and a comfort level with being in a varsity-level game and doing their things well, so that they feel confident when they get the opportunity in future games. It helps us become an even deeper team down the road," Williams said.

With the victory, the team is now on a three-game winning streak and successfully completed a week sweep, as they scored an 89-69 win over Rochester Mayo on Jan. 26.

On Friday, the team will look to continue its momentum as they host Red Wing. Tip-off will be at 7:30 p.m.

## 'You knew he could do special things'

BP football coach recounts coaching against Super Bowl LV participant

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
SPORTS WRITER

It takes a special type of athlete to go from playing at the Class A-level in high school to playing professional football. What makes his rise even more impressive is he'll play in this weekend's Super Bowl as just a rookie.

That player, Tampa Bay Buccaneers' receiver Tyler Johnson, competed against the Blossoms in the 2014 state tournament.

Blooming Prairie Head Coach Chad Gimbel said Johnson, who was a dual-threat quarterback and free safety for the Minneapolis North Polars, didn't kill the Blossoms so much with his arm as he did with his legs.

In fact, most of the damage he caused running the ball came on one play.

"He dropped back to pass, broke loose and near the 5-yard line he dropped the ball but it bounced right back up into his hands," he said.

The fortuitous bounce helped Johnson score a 91-yard touchdown run, which gave the Polars a 14-6 lead, a lead they would not relinquish.

Going into the game Gimbel knew Johnson and the Polars would be a bad matchup for the Blossoms.

"Throughout the season, we had been the faster team, but

they had four or five guys who were faster than us," he said.

However, the Minneapolis North player who they were most amazed by was Johnson.

"I remember watching film with our kids and we were really impressed with his athleticism. Based on his pure athleticism, you knew he could do special things," he said.

Another consequence of his rare athleticism, Gimbel said, was that it was difficult for Blooming Prairie to prepare for.

"He was an athlete that we had never seen before and you can't practice for the type of speed and athleticism he had in practice if you don't have anyone with that same athleticism," Gimbel said.

He noted that it took the Awesome Blossoms about a quarter to a quarter and a half to adjust to it.

"It was such fine line between being too aggressive and not aggressive enough," said Gimbel. "At first, we were too passive, and he had too much time to throw the ball and we couldn't cover their receivers for that long. Once we got more aggressive, we were able to control their passing game and the rest of the game was a defensive battle."

SEE YOU KNEW, B9



FILE PHOTO

Blossoms Coach Chad Gimbel has celebrated his own success when his team captured the state football championship in 2019.



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Blooming Prairie senior Chris Naatz drives around Hayfield guard Isaac Matti during the opening minutes of the first half. The Awesome Blossoms trailed by just three points with less than a minute left in the first half, but Hayfield scored six more points before halftime and kept their pedal to the metal in the second half and won 81-43.

## Tough week for BP boys as they drop 2

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
SPORTS WRITER

The Blooming Prairie boys basketball team kept its game against Hayfield close throughout the first half, but

in the second half the Vikings showed why they have a 3-1 record in the Gopher Conference by outscoring the Blossoms by nearly 30 points en route to winning 81-43 on Tuesday,

Jan. 26. A few days later Blooming Prairie had another shot at getting their first win, but lost to Maple River 62-29. Against Hayfield, the Blossoms and the

Vikings traded baskets, before Blooming Prairie took a 10-7 lead with just over 12 minutes left in the first half.

The Vikings re-

SEE TOUGH WEEK, B9

## Bogen's hat trick leads Huskies over Century

BY MITCHELL BREUER  
SPORTS WRITER

Huskies freshman Samantha Bogen turned in a dazzling hat trick performance of three goals to lead the Owatonna girls hockey team to a dominant 7-1 victory over Rochester Century Saturday.

Bogen's magic on the ice helped the Huskies go undefeated for the week with back-to-back wins over Century and Mankato East. Saturday's quick turnaround proved to be no problem for the Huskies as they were able to continue their momentum edging out Mankato East 5-3.

The area where the team was able to excel at the best will not show up in the stat sheet though. As it was the team's ability to handle last minute changes to its schedule that proved to be impressive. Originally the team was scheduled to play Thursday at home against Roch-

ester Mayo, and then travel to play Mankato East. However, due to COVID concerns with Rochester Mayo, the game was postponed forcing Owatonna to think quick on its feet. "What happened was we got an update from Rochester

SEE BOGEN'S HAT TRICK, B9

## Medford prevails in inter-county matchup

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
SPORTS WRITER

In a battle of two Steele County teams still looking for their first win, it was the Medford boys basketball team that picked up

the win, edging NRHEG 54-48 on Friday, Jan. 22. The following week, the Panthers lost to United South Central 55-43 on Tuesday, Jan. 26, but earned its first win by beating Waterville-Elysian-Morristown 65-46

on Friday, Jan. 29. Medford's (1-2) next game is a road contest against Blooming Prairie at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 5. Their next home game is against Hayfield at 7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 9.

NRHEG's (1-3) next game is also a road contest, but against Bethlehem Academy at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 5. Their next home game is against Blooming Prairie at 7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 9.

## Hand-to-hand combat



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

NRHEG's Clay Stenzel tries to control the head of Lake City's Joe Kozlowski with his left hand, while Kozlowski works on Stenzel's right arm. Unfortunately for NRHEG, Kozlowski won to increase the Tigers' lead to 45-0.

## SCOREBOOK

### Big Nine Standings Boys Hockey

Mankato West	5-0
Mankato East	4-1
Northfield	4-1
Owatonna	4-1
Albert Lea	3-2

### Owatonna Boys Hockey Results

Jan. 28 – vs. Northfield	4-3
Jan. 30 – vs. Rochester John Marshall	7-0
Feb. 2 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Rochester Century	
Feb. 4 – 7 p.m. – vs. Red Wing	
Feb. 9 – 7 p.m. – vs. Mankato West	
Feb. 11 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Winona	

### Big Nine Standings Girls Hockey

Northfield	5-0
Austin	4-0
Albert Lea	4-1
Owatonna	4-1
Mankato East	3-2

### Owatonna Girls Hockey

Jan. 26 – vs. Red Wing	11-1
Jan. 28 – vs. Northfield	2-3
Feb. 2 – 7 p.m. – vs. Rochester Century	
Feb. 4 – 7 p.m. – vs. Red Wing	
Feb. 9 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Mankato West	
Feb. 11 – 7 p.m. – vs. Winona	

### Big Nine Standings Boys Basketball

Mankato East	5-0
Austin	4-1
Mankato West	4-1
Owatonna	4-1
Rochester Century	4-1

### Owatonna Boys Basketball

Jan. 26 – vs. Rochester Mayo	89-69
Jan. 29 – vs. Albert Lea	72-28
Feb. 1 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Faribault	
Feb. 5 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Red Wing	
Feb. 8 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Austin	
Feb. 12 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Winona	

### Big Nine Standings Girls Basketball

Mankato West	5-0
Rochester Mayo	5-0
Mankato East	4-1
Austin	3-1
Rochester JM	3-2

### Owatonna Girls Basketball

Jan. 26 – vs. Rochester Mayo	60-76
Jan. 29 – vs. Albert Lea	40-48
Feb. 1 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Faribault	
Feb. 5 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Red Wing	
Feb. 8 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Austin	
Feb. 12 – 7:30 p.m. – vs. Winona	

### Gopher Standings Boys Basketball

Maple River	5-0
United South Central	3-1
Hayfield	3-1
Medford	1-1
NRHEG	1-3
Blooming Prairie	0-3

### Blooming Prairie Boys Basketball

Jan. 26 – vs. Hayfield	46-59
Jan. 29 – vs. Maple River	29-62
Feb. 1 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Kingsland	
Feb. 5 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Medford	
Feb. 9 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. New Richland-Hartland-Ellendal	
Feb. 12 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	

### NRHEG Boys Basketball

Jan. 26 – vs. United South Central	43-55
Jan. 29 – vs. Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	65-46
Feb. 5 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Bethlehem Academy	
Feb. 9 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Blooming Prairie	
Feb. 12 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Hayfield	

### Medford Boys Basketball

Jan. 22 – vs. New Richland-Hartland-Ellendal	54-48
Feb. 5 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Blooming Prairie	
Feb. 9 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Hayfield	
Feb. 12 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Mankato Loyola	

### Gopher Standings Girls Basketball

Blooming Prairie	4-0
Waterville-Elysian	3-0
Medford	3-1
Hayfield	3-1
Maple River	3-3

### Blooming Prairie Girls Basketball

Jan. 26 – vs. Hayfield	53-43
Jan. 29 – vs. Maple River	58-41
Feb. 1 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Chatfield	
Feb. 5 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Medford	
Feb. 9 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. NRHEG	
Feb. 12 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. WEM	

### NRHEG Girls Basketball

Jan. 26 – vs. United South Central	68-21
Jan. 29 – vs. Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	27-70
Feb. 2 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Fairmont	
Feb. 5 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Bethlehem Academy	
Feb. 9 – 7:15 p.m. – vs. Blooming Prairie	
Feb. 12 – 7:15 p.m. vs. Hayfield	

## Owatonna girls drop 2 contests

It proved to be a tough week on the road for the Owatonna girls basketball team, as they lost both of their matchups this past week.

On Tuesday, Jan. 26, the team was defeated by Rochester Mayo, 60-76. In the game, Lexi Mendenhall and Sarah Kingland led the team in scoring with 13 points a piece.

Friday the team traveled to Albert Lea, which proved to be a closer game, with

the Huskies losing, 40-48. Statistically, the Huskies were able to hold their own, even outrebounding Albert Lea 34-29.

The area that Owatonna struggled the most though was three pointing shooting, only making 7% of their shots from downtown, compared to Albert Lea's 30.

The girls will remain on the road this week, as they travel to Red Wing on Friday. Tip-off will be at 7:30 p.m.

## TOUGH WEEK: for BP boys as they drop 2 FROM B8

sponded with a 10-3 run so they held a 17-13 lead with about eight minutes left.

The Blossoms trailed by two, 19-21, with five minutes left, but the Vikings went on a 7-0 run to increase their lead to nine.

Blooming Prairie then went on a 8-2 run to make it a one-possession game, 27-30, with less than a minute left in the first half.

However, Hayfield sank two three-pointers in the final minute to take a 36-27 lead into halftime.

The Vikings started the second half with a 15-2 run to take a 51-29 lead.

After the Blossoms scored another basket, Hayfield tacked on an 8-0 run for good mea-

sure. Eventually, the Vikings won 81-43.

Blossoms Coach Nate Piller said Hayfield's second-half success was the result of increased effort, especially on defense.

"Hayfield picked up the intensity significantly in the second half. Relying on full-court press to build a commanding lead," he said.

On Friday, Jan. 29, the Awesome Blossoms had another shot at picking up their first win, but the undefeated Maple River Eagles had other plans.

Again, Blooming Prairie kept it close in the first half and only trailed by seven points, 21-28, at halftime.

However, like their

game against Hayfield, the second half was a different story. The Eagles outscored the Awesome Blossoms 34-8 in the second half to come away with a 62-29 win.

Piller said one of the reasons his team has struggled is foul trouble.

"We've got to rebound and defend without fouling," he said.

On the bright side, he said last Thursday, Jan. 28, was the first time in two weeks that the Awesome Blossoms had practice with 10 varsity players.

Blooming Prairie's (0-3 overall, 0-3 in the Gopher Conference) next game is a home contest against Medford at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 5.

## BOGEN'S HAT TRICK: leads Huskies over Century FROM B8

Mayo's AD about the situation with their team and obviously with COVID and everything this year it is a bit up in the air every day, making sure everybody is healthy, making sure everybody is getting their health checks in," Coach Tony Cloud said.

This is where the phone calls began getting made in an effort to fill the void left open.

"We were fortunate enough to contact Rochester Century, who we were scheduled to play later in the year and see if we could move up a game to Friday," Cloud said. "That happened throughout the day on Thursday, our athletic

director contacted their (Century) athletic director and they contacted me. Instead of playing a game on Thursday, we end up having a practice scheduled."

All of this made for a unique game planning session for Cloud. The good news though? With the schedule change, it opened the opportunity for one last practice session on Thursday to assist in the preparation process.

However, Cloud admitted that the lack of more practice did show early on during both of the games.

"We had a quick turnaround, to figure out what our game plan was going to be for Friday night,

which I think led to our slow start and not being ready for what we were going to be doing and kind of getting the girls focused in that regard too," Cloud said.

The strong performances in the second half of each game were something Cloud was proud of, as the team would go on to win both of contests by more than two goals in each.

"Having to jump back and having to collect ourselves was a bit of a test, but it was a good thing that we were able to do it, and nice to see were able to get our two wins and kind of lean into this next week, which is another important week for us," Cloud said.

## NEW NORMAL: for hoops players FROM B6

to help me be at least a little bit more prepared. It was still a lot different playing basketball in a mask," she said.

Miller explained that one of the differences this year that's the most difficult is the conditioning.

"This year, the conditioning is definitely more difficult, but the coaches understand that, which is nice. It feels like conditioning is two times the amount of work," he said.

He also noted that the lack of oxygen and sucking the mask into his mouth makes it really hard to play for an extended period.

Bruns noted that wearing a mask while playing basketball can also be mentally taxing.

"The hardest part for me is just being able to mentally get through when I am tired because wearing a mask makes you get tired a lot easier. It is a lot harder to play with a mask on, but it is something we just have to get through if we want to play basketball," she said.

In addition to conditioning and being mentally taxing, Krohnberg said communicating with her teammates has also become more difficult.

"They [the masks] really muffle your voice, so we have to talk extra loud," she said.

Despite that and other consequences of wearing a mask, she's never been more excited to be playing basketball. Getting to play

basketball, Oswald said, masks having to wear a mask worthwhile.

"I am beyond grateful. Basketball is my favorite sport and it's my senior year, so I am happy we get to play even if it is with a mask on," she said.

In fact, getting to play with their friends is what all four seniors agreed was the best part of getting to play basketball this season.

"I love playing basketball no matter the circumstances, but being able to play with my best friends for our last year together has to be the best part," Bruns said. "It is kind of bittersweet to think that this is our last year together, but at least we are getting the chance to play."

## CONTINUING A FARM LEGACY The Finches and Jireles

A brother and sister have teamed up to run a family farm featuring cows and calves located south of Owatonna.

Cindy Finch and her brother, Mike Jirele, are co-operators of the farm, which has been in their family for 60 years. Besides having 25 cows and calves, they also raise around 100 feeder to finish steers and run 1,000 acres of corn and soybeans.

"We grew up on our family's dairy farm and took it over after our father passed away," Finch said. "The farm has changed over the years but our love for the farm and the work ethic that our father taught us has not."

Finch says the greatest joy she gets out of farming is the love of working with animals. She also enjoys being her own boss, working outdoors and continuing the family farm legacy.



In addition to farming, Finch is also involved in the community. She has served on the Steele County American Dairy Association Board and township board for more than 15 years.

*Cindy Finch teams up with her brother, Mike Jirele, to operate the family farm south of Owatonna. The farm features a cow and calf operation and has been in the family for about 60 years.*

## YOU KNEW: he could do special things FROM B7

Thanks to their defense, Gimbel said the Blossoms gave themselves a chance to force overtime.

Blooming Prairie was trailing 14-6 but got the ball down inside the 5-yard line with under a minute to go but threw an interception to seal its fate.

Overall, Gimbel was very happy with how his team, especially the defense, played against Johnson and the Polars.

"It was a tough task for us, but I thought our defense played extremely well against their offense," Gimbel said.

On the other side of the ball, Gimbel said Johnson didn't make a lot of plays on defense, but his speed at free safety made it difficult for the Blossoms to get their

passing game going.

"We really liked to get some vertical pass plays and we wanted to run some double moves, but he had the ability to affect us because he could cover so much ground from the free safety position and you have to respect that athletic ability," Gimbel said.

To counter that athleticism, Gimbel said Blooming Prairie had to throw the ball and keep it flatter so it got to the receiver before Johnson was able to get over the top. Despite having coached against Johnson, he's not rooting for the Buccaneers nor the Chiefs.

"I'm a fan of the sport so I just want to see a good, close game that comes down to the fourth quarter," Gimbel said.

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NOTICE

State of Minnesota
Steele County
District Court
Third District
Court File Number:
74-CV-21-45
Case Type: Harassment
Ex Parte Order
Granting Petition for
Harassment
Restraining Order
(Minn. Stat. § 609.748)

Tomeka Johnson
vs Rakeem Jones

Based upon Petitioner's
Affidavit and Petition for
a Harassment Restraining
Order and other information
provided to the Court, THE COURT
FINDS:

There is an immediate
and present danger of harassment
to justify temporary relief.

1. There are reasonable
grounds to believe that Respondent
has engaged in harassment which
has or is intended to have a
substantial adverse effect on safety,
security or privacy of Petitioner or
minor children or ward(s) of
Petitioner by committing the

following acts:

- Followed, monitored, or pursued the Petitioner;
Made harassing phone calls or sent harassing text messages to the Petitioner;
Made threats to the Petitioner;
Frightened Petitioner with threatening behavior;
Used social media to harass Petitioner.

IT IS ORDERED:
The request for temporary relief is granted and:

- Respondent shall not harass Petitioner
Respondent shall have no direct or indirect contact with Petitioner
The relief granted does not extend to the Petitioner's minor children or ward(s). The relief requested for the Petitioner's minor children or ward(s) is denied because the harassment is not directed against the Petitioner's Minor children or ward(s).
Respondent is prohibited from being within 10 feet of Petitioner's home at 1512 St. Paul Road, #B1

2. This Restraining Order is in effect until 1-11-2023 unless changed by a later court order. Respondent can ask the court to change or vacate the Restraining Order by filing a Request for Hearing within 20 days of the date of service of the petition.

NOTICE

If a hearing is scheduled and Respondent does not attend the hearing, a Harassment Restraining Order may be granted. Failure of Respondent to appear WILL NOT be a defense to criminal charges against Respondent for violation of any part of this Order. If Petitioner does not attend the hearing this case may be dismissed.

Any conduct by the Respondent in violation of the specific provisions provided in Section 1 above constitutes a violation of this Harassment Restraining Order. A police officer shall arrest Respondent without warrant and take her/him to jail if a police officer believes that Respondent has violated this Restraining Order, and shall hold Respondent in jail for at least 36 hours, excluding the day of arrest, Sundays, and legal holidays, unless the Respondent is released earlier by a judge or judicial officer.

Violation of this Harassment Restraining Order may be treated as a misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, or felony. A misdemeanor violation may result in a sentence of up to 90 days in jail and/or a \$1000.00 fine. A person who engages in a

pattern of harassing conduct is guilty of a felony and may be sentenced to imprisonment for up to ten years and/or a fine of \$20,000.00.

Federal law may prohibit shipping, transporting, possessing or receiving firearms or ammunition while this order is in effect. 18 U.S.C. § 992(g)(8).

Dated: 01/11/2021
/s/ Joseph A. Bueltel
Judge of District Court
2/3

NOTICE

1/28/21
SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT
#756
BLOOMING PRAIRIE,
MINNESOTA 55917
TUESDAY,
FEBRUARY 16, 2021
HIGH SCHOOL
MEDIA CENTER

PROPOSED
TENTATIVE AGENDA

6:00 a.m. Thursday,
February 11, 2021
\*Regular School Board
Work Session - High
School Media Center

5:00 p.m. Tuesday,
February 16, 2021
\*Open Public Forum
High School Media
Center

5:15 p.m. Tuesday,
February 16, 2021
\*Regular School Board
Meeting - High School
Media Center

Any person may raise a question to the School Board. The Board will not act on any item presented to them, which is not

on the agenda, until the following Board meeting. Also, the Board would like persons to limit themselves to five minutes, with a maximum of 15 minutes per topic. These limitations are needed for us to run a timely and orderly Board meeting. Persons are requested to identify themselves prior to speaking.

I. CALL TO ORDER – CHAIRPERSON

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL – CLERK

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

V. PRINCIPAL REPORTS

VI. ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTION IS REQUESTED

- A. Consent Agenda
Minutes
Bills
Treasurer's Report
Resignation
Donations
B. Employment
C. Volunteer Coaches

D. Final Seniority List for Teachers

E. Staff Prep Time

F. Resolution Discontinuing and Reducing Education Programs and Positions

VII. ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND/OR DISCUSSION ONLY

- A. Class Sizes/Sections
B. Childcare
C. Learning Models
D. Strategic Planning
E. Committee Reports
F. Enrollment Data
G. Dates to Note

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

IX. ADJOURNMENT

\*Agenda may be subject to changes 2/3

NOTICE

Office of the Minnesota
Secretary of State
Certificate of Assumed Name
Minnesota Statutes,
Chapter 333

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

ASSUMED NAME: Benedictine Living Community, Owatonna.
PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: 2255 30th Street NW Owatonna MN 55060 USA
NAMEHOLDER(S): Koda Living Community
Address: 6499 University Ave NE Suite 300 Minneapolis MN 55432 USA

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

SIGNED BY: Janel Paulson
MAILING ADDRESS: 6499 University Ave NE Suite 300 Minneapolis MN 55432 USA

EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES: janel.paulson@bhshealth.org

WORK ITEM 1184452500022
ORIGINAL FILE NUMBER 1184452500022
STATE OF MINNESOTA
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FILED
10/07/2020 11:59 PM
/s/ Steve Simon
Secretary of State

1/27, 2/3

AUCTION NOTICE

Steele County Self Storage, 1010 Hoffman Drive NW. Suite C, Owatonna, MN 55060 will sell the following storage units to satisfy rent and Storage Lien using our online public auction at www.Bid13.com at 10 a.m., Saturday, February 06, 2021.

Units may contain household goods, unknown treasures, boxes, tools, and other miscellaneous contents stored by the following person(s) and last known address of:

Unit 130: Jesse Nappin, Owatonna, MN 55060

Unit 010: Alissa Hall, Albert Lea, MN 56007

Unit 127: Crystal Barnes, Faribault, MN 55021

STEELE COUNTY SELF STORAGE

MINNESOTA PHEASANTS of STEELE COUNTY

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING & ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2021

Election of officers and annual members meeting will be held on Monday, February 8th at 7 p.m. Social hour is at 6 p.m. at the KC Hall, Owatonna, MN. Please bring any concerns or comments for the board.

Dennis Thompson, Treasurer

1/27, 2/3

Steele County Board of Commissioners • Synopsis Board Minutes • January 5, 2021

Steele County Commissioner's Synopsis for 1/5/2021

Complete minutes can be viewed on the Steele County Website.

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

- 1. Glynn/Krueger to approve the agenda. Ayes all.
2. Glynn/Gnemi to approve the minutes of December 22, 2020. Ayes all.
3. Krueger/Brady to adjourn Sine Die at 5:04 p.m. Ayes all.
4. The Board was called to Order by the County Auditor who called for nominations for Chairman for 2021.
5. Krueger/Gnemi to nominate Commissioner James Brady as Chairman for 2021. Upon the vote being taken Commissioner Brady was unanimously elected Chairman for 2021. Commissioner Brady then took the Chair.
6. Krueger/Gnemi to nominate Commissioner John Glynn as Vice Chairman for 2021. Upon the vote being taken Commissioner Glynn was unanimously elected Vice Chairman for 2021.
7. Gnemi/Glynn to move consent agenda Item 15 to 33B.
8. Abbe/Krueger to adopt the Rules of Order for 2021. Ayes all.
9. Abbe/Gnemi to approve the following Consent Agenda items. Ayes all.
A. Approve the Listing of the Bills.
B. Approve the Per-

- sonnel Report.
C. Approve travel & training for officers and employees of Steele County within the State of Minnesota and the approved budget as per Steele County Personnel Rules & Policies.
D. Approve the expense reimbursement for registration, travel lodging & meal expense for Commissioners and staff to attend AMC & NACO meetings.
E. Approve the 2021 Board Meeting schedule.
F. Approve the Resolution designating the official website of Steele County and Transportation Project Bids www.co.steele.mn.us.
G. Approve the five Commissioners, County Administrator, County Auditor and County Treasurer as the AMC Delegates for 2021. Ayes all.
H. Approve the 2021 AMC Policy Committee appointments as follows: Commissioner Glynn-Environmental & Natural Resources, Commissioner Abbe-General Government, Commissioner Krueger-Health & Human Services, Com-

- missioner Gnemi-Public Safety and Commissioner Brady-Transportation & Infrastructure.
I. Approve the Resolution that the Steele County Board of Commissioners authorizes the Steele County Auditor and Finance Director or designee to approve the payment of the County payroll, including approved Commissioner salary and per diem payments made pursuant to Minnesota law and the annual resolution approving certain meetings for per diem payments for the year of 2021.
J. Set the mileage rate for 2021 per the IRS guidelines.
K. Approve the Resolution that the County Auditor & County Treasurer are hereby authorized to process payments by Auditor's Warrants, for which the precise amount is fixed by law.
L. Approve the Resolution that the annual salary for 2021 to be paid the elected official for the term next following be set at Step 1 of the Comparable Rating and Wage Scale System used by

- Steele County.
M. Approve the Resolution to Accept a cash donation of \$257 from Nagel Sod for the Extension Master Gardner Program.
N. Approve a Resolution for the Nine Month Extension of the Current Agreement for Delivery of Human Resources Services Between Minnesota Prairie County Alliance and Steele County.
O. Approve the Resolution that all transfers of funds or investment securities to and from any Steele County accounts on behalf or Steele County as directed to UBS Financial Services LLC may only be made to another depository or account of Steele County in the name of Steele County.
P. Set the date for the Board of Equalization on June 15, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
Q. Approve the following Resolution where Steele County will electronically transfer funds and establish appropriate internal controls to ensure compliance with Minnesota law.
10. Kruger/Gnemi to approve the 2021 Board Committee

- Appointments. Ayes all.
11. Glynn/Abbe offered the following Resolution to set the per diem amount to be \$55 when members are attending a meeting on behalf of the Steele County Board of Commissioners and may receive a mileage reimbursement equivalent to that adopted by the Steele County Board of Commissioners. Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.
12. Gnemi/Glynn to award the publication of the Financial Statement for 2020, Commissioner proceedings for 2021, Delinquent Tax List for 2020 and all other publications to the Blooming Prairie Times. Ayes all.
13. Glynn/Gnemi to award the 2nd Publication of the 2020 Financial Statement to another paper located in the County to the Owatonna People's Press. Ayes all.
R. Approve the Resolution that the Steele County Board of Commissioners hereby certify that all parcels of land on the attached list have been viewed and comply with the provisions of Minnesota Statutes 85.012, 92.461, 282.01, Subd. 8 and 282.018, and other statutes that require the withholding of tax-forfeited lands from sale.

- S. Approve the following Resolution that the Steele County Board of Commissioners approves the proposed labor agreement effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022 between Steele County and the Law Enforcement Labor Services, Sheriff's Department - Licensed Sergeant's Unit.
T. Approve the following Resolution that the Steele County Board of Commissioners approves the proposed labor agreement effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022 between Steele County and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees AFL-CIO, Council 65, Local 147 - Courthouse Unit.

LISTING OF BILLS 01/05/2021

- Advanced Correctional Healthcare Inc ... 9,226.83
Honeywell Inc .... 4,099.98
Owatonna Heating & Cooling Inc..... 9,800.00
Zeise Plastering & Construction ..... 2,000.00

25 Payments less than 2,000..... 10,218.53

TOTALS: ..... \$35,345.34

- 14. Gnemi/Abbe to adjourn to the Call of the Chair at 5:52 p.m. Ayes all.

2/3

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**FOR SALE:** Ammo: .45 acp; .300 Win. Mag.; 22.250. Hard to find ammo readily available. Private party. 763-226-9775. 11/12TFNpd

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- Part-Time



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A service of DFO Community Corrections  
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**KASSON FIRE DEPARTMENT**

is seeking enthusiastic professionals to add to their firefighter/first responder roster.

KFD is recruiting applicants who have a desire and dedication to serve their community. Applicants should have the ability to perform strenuous physical work and have sound judgment skills. Applicants should possess the ability to establish working relationships with other members, associated agencies, and the general public.

**OBTAIN AN APPLICATION PACKAGE AT:**

Kasson Police Department  
19 E. Main Street • Kasson, MN 55944  
Online at [www.cityofkasson.com](http://www.cityofkasson.com) under employment

**APPLICATIONS ARE DUE APRIL 5, 2021**

Return completed applications to Kasson Police Department.

For more information contact Krista at: [krista.weigel@kassonpolice.com](mailto:krista.weigel@kassonpolice.com) or 507-634-3881 ext. 2

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Are you friendly and have excellent customer service skills?

**Rolling Hills Transit is looking for a Full time Dispatcher (35 hrs/wk) for the Dispatch Center in Kasson.**

**Position requirements include:**

- Excellent computer skills, including experience with Microsoft Excel and Word.
- Ability to multi-task in a very fast-paced environment.
- Must be a team player with a positive attitude.

**More information & application available at [www.semccac.org](http://www.semccac.org) or contact Barb Thompson at [barb.thompson@semccac.org](mailto:barb.thompson@semccac.org) or 507-864-8202.**

Applications must be received by **Feb 20, 2021.** E.O.E. 2/4T3

**NATALIE WEBB FAMILY AQUATIC CENTER**  
• 2021 EMPLOYMENT •

The **CITY OF DODGE CENTER** will be accepting applications for aquatic center employment until **Friday, March 26, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.** The following positions are being offered:

- Assistant Managers,
- Lifeguards & Water Safety Instructors
- Food Court Staff, Crossing Guards and Bathhouse/Front Desk Attendants (Rotation).

Applicants must be available to work days, nights, and weekends. Copies of all Lifeguard, WSI and CPR certifications must accompany the application. Competitive wages! Reimbursement for training!

Applications are available at Dodge Center City Hall or on the City's website at [www.ci.dodgecenter.mn.us](http://www.ci.dodgecenter.mn.us) 2/4 3/11/2021 3/25

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1. Federated Insurance
2. Viracon
3. Wenger Corp
4. Mayo Clinic Health System - Owatonna
5. US Bank - Owatonna
6. Owatonna Hospital
7. Jostens
8. AmesburyTruth
9. ISD 761 - Owatonna Public Schools
10. CliftonLarsonAllen - Owatonna
11. Napa Distribution Center
12. United Parcel Service (UPS)
13. Owatonna Public Utilities
14. Gopher Sport
15. West Bank - Owatonna
16. ERA Gillespie Real Estate
17. Steele County Employees
18. City of Owatonna Employees
19. Cash Wise Foods
20. Profinium - Owatonna

**2020 MOST GENEROUS SMALL BUSINESS GIFTS**

1. Owatonna Bus Company
2. Rush Creek Lumber
3. Climate by Design, Inc.
4. Owatonna Shoe
5. Prairie Ridge Orthodontics
6. Holland Dental/Berkshire Hathaway
7. Darrick's Preferred Auto
7. Flemke Agency
7. Gandy Company
7. Michaelson Funeral Home
7. Modern Metal Products
7. Monson Eyecare Center
13. Dresser Family Dentistry
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14. Premier Bank, Owatonna
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 Kayle Moen  
 Beth Moore  
 Will & Rebecca Moore  
 Anthony Moore  
 Jan Nash  
 Lloyd Nelson  
 David & Lois Nelson  
 Danielle Norrid  
 Kara Oien  
 Marc Oien  
 Kevin Oja  
 Loren Olson  
 Travis Olson  
 Scott Overland  
 Jessie Padron  
 Joyce Pelzel  
 Dawn Peterson  
 Erin Pittman  
 Scott & Heidi Pitzenberger  
 Mark & Lisa Place  
 Erik Plantenberg  
 Joley Podein  
 Dan Powers  
 Lucas Praeluner  
 Anita Priebe  
 Monica Raney  
 Jerry & Michelle Redman  
 Ryan Reimers

- Alan Reiser  
 Richard Reseland  
 Melissa Reuter  
 Tamera Reuvers  
 Scott Rew  
 Bryant Reyes O'Connor  
 William & Sue Ricker  
 Stacie Rions  
 James Roberts  
 Shelly Rockman  
 Cory Roesch  
 Mike & Sarah Roesner  
 Steve & Jeanne Roslansky  
 Jerrel Rud  
 Doug & Connie Ruth  
 Justo Saenz Mairena  
 Tom & Angela Sager  
 Shane & Tanya Sattler  
 Jeremy Saufferer  
 Brian Savage  
 Todd Schelling  
 Aaron Schmitz  
 Zack Schroeder  
 Jeff Schuster  
 Cameron & Christine Scripture  
 Elijah Scripture  
 Bill & Kara Seiler  
 Matt Sennott  
 Warren & Sue Simons  
 Troy Skalicky  
 Anne Skonieczny  
 Tressa Smallbrock  
 Kari Smith  
 Troy & Jennifer Sorensen  
 Tom Soukup  
 Trevor Soupir  
 Mestor Spafford  
 Sean Splittergerber  
 Ashley Stahowik  
 Chris & Amy Staloch  
 Whitney Stanke  
 Denise Staska  
 Sara Steele  
 Tracy Steinberg  
 Michael Stermer  
 Julie Stiernagle  
 Rebecca Strange  
 Hau Suantak  
 Curt & Cheryl Summer  
 Dawn Sutherland  
 Jeff Sweet  
 David Swenson  
 David Syzmanski  
 Nollynn Tabor  
 Robert Tabor  
 Dawn Teele  
 Bill & Sara Theis  
 Arlan & Marcia Thompson  
 Matt Thon  
 Thomas Tippel  
 John Titus  
 William & Nichole Tjon  
 Jeff & Michelle Trager  
 Tim & Elaine Truelson  
 Jannell Tufte  
 Tom & Sue Tuma  
 Tim & Stacy Van Englenhoven  
 Terry Vanderhorst  
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 Cindy Warren  
 Casey Washena  
 Todd Wasieleski  
 Paul & Jennifer Wayne  
 Sara Weber  
 Charissa Weber  
 Melissa Wencil  
 Amy Wencil  
 Chelsea Wendel  
 Jack West  
 Stacey West  
 Matt & Megan Whalen  
 Curt & Sherri Wigham  
 Jesse Wilker  
 Ryan & Michelle Williams  
 Andrew Winkels  
 Whitney Winkels  
 Sherlene Wisler  
 Tricia Wolcott  
 Amber Wolters  
 Christina Worden  
 Jeanette Worden  
 William Wright  
 Steve Yuler  
 Nicolas Yule  
 Stacey Zabel

