



STEELE COUNTY Times



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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2020

Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

Wind farm on hold

BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN
STAFF WRITER

Plans to build a wind farm of 68 turbines in Steele and Dodge counties have been put on hold because of interconnection costs.

Dodge County Wind began the permitting process for the project in 2018 and had submitted applications to the Minnesota Department of Commerce and the Public Utilities Commission for a certificate of need, site permit and route permit for the 170MW project.

The project would have begun with a substation in Steele County with the majority of the wind turbines located in Dodge County. A 21-plus mile 345 kilovolt high-voltage transmission line would have connected the turbines to a substation in Byron in Olmsted County.

In August 2019, Dodge County Wind, which is a subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources based in Florida, asked the Public Utilities Commission to allow it to withdraw the route permit application because of unexpectedly high costs at the original point of interconnection. Dodge County Wind also filed a motion with the alternative law judge handling the procedural issues to suspend the procedural schedule of all three applications.

The administrative law judge then certified the matter back to the PUC to make a decision on the withdrawal of the route permit.

Last month, the PUC agreed to Dodge County Wind's request to withdraw the high-voltage transmission line route application and also rejected the company's revised certificate of need application and revised site permit application and suspended the current proceedings.

The project has not moved through the approval process without controversy. In Dodge County, there was opposition to one of the original high voltage transmission line routes as it would have gone through residential portions of Dodge Center and Kasson.

Objections to the plan were also filed by the Laborers' International Union of America.

Dodge County Wind has indicated that the project is still under development and plans could be resubmitted if the financial issues are resolved.

If the project is restarted, Dodge County Wind will need to go back to the beginning of the process and refile comprehensive and complete applications for the certificate of need, site permit and route permit.

Blossom Brawl



American Wrestling Federation wrestler Koda Jacobs takes challenger Petey Brown to the ropes during their match as part of the Blossom Brawl on Saturday night, Jan. 11 in the Blooming Prairie High School gymnasium. See Sports Section on B5 for more photos and a story on the brawl.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Guard soldier from Owatonna dies at training

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

A Minnesota National Guard soldier from Owatonna in training at Fort Jackson has died. The circumstances surrounding his death remain unclear.

The National Guard identified the soldier as Pvt. Connor J. McGurran, 19. He was found unresponsive Jan. 8 following a training exercise at Fort Jackson, S.C.



Pvt. Connor J. McGurran

McGurran was born May 3, 2000 in Owatonna. He obtained a GED in the fall of 2019, enlisted in the Minnesota Army National Guard on Sept. 12 and began training with the Arden Hills Recruit Sustainment program. He reported to Army Basic Combat training at Fort Jackson in October.

According to the National Guard, McGurran was on track to become a Bradley fighting vehicle system maintainer.

"I extend my deepest sympathies and prayers to the family and loved ones of Pct. Connor McGurran," said Lt. Col. Eduardo Suarez, of the Minnesota National Guard. "He was a soldier with a promising future in our organization. We will provide every comfort to his family and the Recruiting and Retention Battalion, who are devastated by his untimely death. This is a tragic loss for the Minnesota National Guard."

The Fort Jackson Public Affairs Office said McGurran was immediately transported by EMS to Providence Hospital where he was pronounced dead. An investigation into the cause of his death continues.

State Representative John Petersburg offered his sympathy to McGurran's family. "It is always tragic when a member of the military passes away, and I join the residents of Owatonna who are mourning the loss of Pvt. McGurran," Petersburg said. "Our prayers are with his family and friends," he added.

The National Guard has more than 13,000 soldiers and airmen who serve 61 communities across Minnesota. The guard, which was organized in 1856, is based in St. Paul.

Long-time BP supporter dies

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

Nelson, 87, died Thursday, Jan. 9 in the Twin Cities.

Prior to coming to Blooming Prairie in 1957, Nelson was a standout athlete.

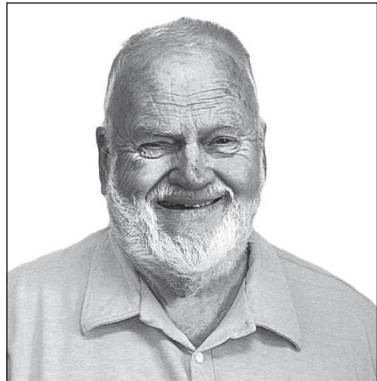
He grew up in the small town of Strandburg, S.D. In 1949, he helped his tiny team to the high school state basketball tournament, the only showing in Strandburg's history.

Nelson later attended what's now known as Dakota State University in Madison, S.D. where his nickname, "General" came from and stuck with him throughout his life. He played basketball in college scoring 1,004 points in his four year career. He set records for the most points in a single game both in conference and non-conference play and held those records for several years.

In 2006, he was inducted into the Dakota State University Athletic Hall of Fame. While at college, Nelson was the Student Body president, performed in theater productions and was editor of the yearbook and newspaper.

Nelson taught in the Blooming Prairie School system for 35 years. In addition to teaching English and writing classes, he was advisor for the BPHS yearbook and school paper for many years. He was also coach for the speech program, which produced several state participants and award winners over the years.

A short time after his "retirement" from education, Nelson took up his second career as a sports journalist with the Steele County Times, a position he held until his death last week. He enjoyed writing a weekly column, "Outside the Lines," and stories on sports and school events in Blooming Prairie.



LeMar Nelson

"His writing and passion for covering the community exemplified what a true community newspaper is all about," said Publisher Rick Bussler. "LeMar was a gentle giant who cared

SEE LONG-TIME BP, A3

An attitude of civic duty for BP's citizens of the year



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Blooming Prairie's outstanding citizens of the year, H and Jean Peterson will be honored and recognized at a special Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce banquet on Thursday Jan 16.

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Those who know the husband and wife tandem of H. (Harold) and Jean Peterson can readily attest that this couple has an attitude.

That attitude is focused at building the small community of Blooming Prairie into a successful berg of over 2,000 people. Both have professed a dedication to the objective of «putting Blooming Prairie on the map,» they say in unison.

The Petersons will officially be recognized and honored as 2019 Citizens of the Year at a Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce Banquet on Thursday, Jan. 16 at the BP Servicemen's Club.

H and Jean have been closely linked together since 1966 with their civic duty targeting Bloom-

"It's like a pat on the back for a job well done."

H Peterson
BP Citizen of the Year

ing Prairie. Known to most as «H,» Peterson built a strong legacy during his 18 years in the mayor's seat.

Wife Jean spent over 20 years as executive director of the BP Area Chamber of Commerce. She also served on the Blooming Prairie Economic Development Board, on the Steele County Extension Board and on the Allina Owatonna Hospital Board.

"It was an incredible learning experience to be on those entities,» remarks Jean.

Those leadership roles did not impede the Petersons from becoming very involved in many volunteer roles. H has been an active

member in the Blooming Prairie Lions Club, and he also sings in the First Lutheran Church choir.

He and Jean both gave of their time to the local Luther League.

Jean has been a member of the American Association of University Women for more than 50 years. She also has been involved with the Girl Scouts and helped coordinate release time for BP students.

Both H and Jean express humility in receiving this special recognition given them by the Chamber.

What does the recognition mean to the Petersons? «It's like a

SEE AN ATTITUDE OF CIVIC DUTY, A3

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AREA DEATHS

LeMar Nelson, 87, Blooming Prairie
James Allen, 85, Albert Lea
Gwen Christensen, 92, Blooming Prairie
Jerome Suchanek, 88, Red Wing
Lanny Callahan, 63, Blooming Prairie
DeAnn Kaplan, 81, Blooming Prairie

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Blooming Prairie
and Steele County
since 1893

OUR VIEW

Minnesota state surplus indicates over taxation

Are Minnesotans being overtaxed?

A recent analysis ranks U.S. states on how much they charge citizens to live there or buy stuff. The new report names the highest-taxed states in America. Minnesota is the eighth highest taxed state among the 50.

Here are the facts about Minnesota taxes: Income tax collections in Minnesota were the fifth highest in America at \$1,943, while taxes paid as a percentage of income were at 10.8%. Minnesota is 13th highest income per capita: \$545,359; 17th highest property tax collections per capita: \$1,534; 18th highest general sales tax collections per capita: \$1,011.

One might question why we're being overtaxed. Good question.

"Minnesota has a \$1.3 billion projected budget surplus heading into the 2020 legislative session, setting up a potential conflict between a divided Legislature and DFL Gov. Tim Walz over how to use the extra money," according to an MPR report.

One sure answer that would have many around the state agreeing is to cut our state's taxation levels across the board.

Our state income tax is the fifth highest in the nation. Let Minnesota workers keep more of what they earn. In doing so, they will obviously spend more, which will increase the states sales tax income.

However the state Legislature comes down on the surplus issue, it's time to agree that we're overtaxed. If Minnesota continues to raise taxes rather than offer tax relief there will be a flight from the state similar to that which is occurring in New York, New Jersey and California.

Allow Minnesotans to keep more of what they earn and the state will prosper. It's working on a national level, it'll work here in the Gopher state.



One big family gathers to support a badly injured officer

Folks from across the region found out last week just exactly how big the law enforcement family is.

Just days after Waseca officer Arik Matson, 32, was shot in the head by a suspect in a disturbance call, police officers, deputies, firefighters and others gathered for a candlelight vigil outside the Waseca Public Safety Building. Hundreds of people attended to stand in support of the injured officer.

Among those who attended the vigil was Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele along with numerous firefighters from Owatonna. A similar vigil was held at the same time just 30 miles down the road in Matson's hometown of Albert Lea. Thiele sent a couple deputies to that gathering.

Those in the crowd at Waseca, which included many children, held candles and flags as they heard from the city's mayor and Matson's pastor.

"It was tremendous community support," Thiele said. "To know people showed up who didn't even know him is amazing."

Peace officers belong to "a big family," Thiele said. "The law enforcement family is all over. It doesn't matter what color uniform you wear, we're all family," he said. He added he has never met Matson before.

Thiele says it's overwhelming to see the support for Matson coming from not only law enforcement, but the community as a whole. "People showed up that didn't even know him," the sheriff pointed



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

out. "Our thoughts and prayers are with Arik's family," he added.

In addition to the vigils, billboards have also begun popping up around the area, including Owatonna, Waseca and Faribault to show "Matson Strong" support from all over.

happened before in both Steele and Dodge counties over the years with even more tragic results. The police chief in Blooming Prairie was shot to death in 1956 while Dodge County has lost several officers, including Claremont police chief Gregory Lange in 1988.

The suspect in the Waseca shooting, Tyler R. Janovsky, 37, has been charged with three counts of first-degree attempted murder of a police officer and one count of possessing ammunition or a firearm after conviction of a crime of violence.

I encourage everyone to remember our police officers for their heroism



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele, in center with hat on, holds a candle along with firefighters from Owatonna surrounding him during a candlelight vigil in Waseca Thursday night for officer Arik Matson, who was gunned down during a disturbance call last week. Matson is recovering at a hospital in the Twin Cities.

When such a tragedy happens, Thiele said for police officers, "it heightens your alert when you go to any kind of call." Fortunately, such incidents like the one last week in Waseca, are rare across southern Minnesota. However, they have

in protecting our communities. They have an incredibly difficult job and need all the support we can offer.

Please join me in praying for Officer Matson as he goes in hot pursuit of recovering from a horrific incident.

LeMar Nelson leaves a legacy of love for BP

LeMar Nelson was the heart beat of Blooming Prairie for many years.

His heart stopped beating last week with his passing at age 87 but his impact on this small, southeastern community will be everlasting and has always been positive.

LeMar was one of the more recognizable old-timers in Blooming Prairie. He will be remembered as one of the most respected humanitarians in town.



Reflections
HOWARD LESTRUD

He had a radiant personality and a wide smile. He shuffled when he walked in his later years but the determination to be an active resident of Blooming Prairie was still there.

He will never be forgotten by his family and by his many friends.

I knew him well, even though I only knew him for about five years. It did not take one very long to get to know LeMar and see his strong attributes that built him into a loving friend to many.

Here was a man who deeply cared for his own family and for another family that consisted of people he served in education and in his journalistic career.

LeMar was a quality journalist for the Blooming Prairie Times and later Steele County Times for over 28 years. He wrote mainly stories about Blooming Prairie sports teams.

LeMar touched everyone he met by giving them a hardy smile and an infectious laugh. Look past his grizzled beard and into his eyes and you saw love. Yes, LeMar loved everyone, even if he only knew them for a short time.

Tributes have been many the past few days and they share the common thread emphasizing a caring affection for his community. He was a true Awesome Blossom, even though he was not a native of Blooming Prairie.

He spent most of his years in this southeastern Minnesota community, raising a family of three daughters with his wife Anne.

LeMar came to Blooming Prairie in 1958 from South Dakota. He taught 35 years in the Blooming Prairie school district.

He lived in the same house on Main Street until he departed in the fall of 2018 to be closer to his three daughters in the Twin Cities area. He lived in a high-rise apartment building in Richfield.

It was not LeMar's preference to move away from Blooming Prairie, but he knew that his family was right in saying he needed a closer link to them.

Since journalism has been my life line for over 50 years, it was to my delight that my career continued in retirement and during retirement, I met an experienced journalist named LeMar Nelson.

LeMar faced some major health issues the past five years. I was fortunate to be able to take him to many of his doctor appointments and to get to know him better.

I also was able to deliver bound volumes of old issues of the BP Times to his home when he was writing the history of Blooming Prairie for the past 25 years (in observance of Blooming Prairie's 150th anniversary.)

We shared a love for writing and a love for sports. LeMar, of course, was a loyal Blooming Prairie Blossom fan and he, with no apology necessary, let it show in his sports writing.

LeMar had many talents, writing being one, but there were many, many more. He was an outstanding teacher, getting to know his students personally. He also was a

strong administrator, one who didn't rule with an iron fist but with true, loving compassion.

Another of his many talents was his singing voice. He sang in the First Lutheran Church for many years. He often soloed.

Young people were important to LeMar. He loved to talk about his former students and to recall their memories of being a Blooming Prairie Blossom. He also was very active while serving on the board of directors of

the Blooming Prairie Boys & Girls Club.

I had the occasion to write about LeMar on a couple of occasions. I will share some of those words.

In an editorial about LeMar leaving Blooming Prairie, I wrote:

LeMar Nelson is indeed a Blooming Prairie iconic figure.

He is not a native of Blooming Prairie but has spent most of his years in this southeastern Minnesota community.

It is nice to say some beautiful words about someone when they are still alive. LeMar, 86, is still with us but just a little farther away. He moved to Richfield last weekend to be closer to his daughters in the Twin Cities.

LeMar says it will be just for three months and he hopes to return to Blooming Prairie next spring. His health issues have forced the move to the Twin Cities.

LeMar of course is known for his many years in education, most of them in Blooming Prairie as a teacher, principal and coach. He has also been very active in the community, writing for the Blooming Prairie Times/ Steele County Times for the past 27 years. His writing has been mostly aimed at sports.

This beautiful person is one of the most respected gentlemen his community has known. He has been a very important cog in shaping the lives of young people via the schools and through his involvement in the BP Boys and Girls Club.

LeMar is also known for his wonderful voice. He has been a fixture in the First Lutheran Church choir for many years.

We wish to thank LeMar for his civic mindedness and for his caring gestures to all who know him in Blooming Prairie.

This is not a goodbye but rather a "See you soon."

LeMar did return for a few visits since he moved northward. One of his last was last November to attend a 50th anniversary of musicals in Blooming Prairie. He wore his Blooming Prairie Blossom letter jacket.

I also wrote about LeMar's unbelievable record of attending 60 Blooming Prairie High School Football Homecoming games.

"It means quite a bit to me," Nelson said after sitting on the Awesome Blossoms players bench for the 60th consecutive time. "I almost got wiped out with a Goodhue player tackling one of our players right in front of me," Nelson laughed.

Nelson said he covered almost half of the 60 Homecoming games for the local newspaper.

In my piece on LeMar's Homecoming dedication, I wrote: "Ask LeMar any question about Blooming Prairie sports history, and about city history, and he will have an answer."

LeMar told me last fall that he was planning on slowing down. He continued to write sports stories and his entertaining and informational column, "Outside the Lines."

LeMar loved to write his column, covering a myriad of subjects. He laughingly said, "I'm a legend in my own mind."

LeMar's daughter Teri said she believes LeMar waited for the Blossoms football team to win the Class 1A state championship. He was then ready to meet his Lord, she said.

GUEST COLUMN

A tragic start to the new year

BY JOHN PETERSBURG

It has been a tragic start to the year in our communities, as awful events have been making headlines across the state and nation this week.

Days ago, Waseca Police Officer Arik Matson was shot in the head while responding to a call. He remains hospitalized.

We then learned that Owatonna native Pvt. Connor McGurran died while taking part in an Army National Guard training exercise in Fort Jackson, S.C.

It goes without saying that our thoughts are with their families and that we

continue to pray for Officer Matson's recovery.

But as I think about these two men, I am so incredibly thankful for their sacrifices – one who set out to put his country's interests ahead of his own, the other who puts the safety of the community he serves first.

Both of them making the decision that protecting us was going to be their Number 1 priority.

It takes brave and selfless men and women to join the military or the ranks of law enforcement. These are difficult and at times dangerous jobs that many of us could not do. These are people who always deserve our support,

and our thanks, for making the decision to protect us.

My deepest condolences to the McGurran family. Connor's commitment to our country will never be forgotten, and we are here to support you.

Our support will also continue for Officer Matson and his family, and I look forward to the day when I can thank him for his commitment to our community.

Please pray for these two heroes and their loved ones.

John Petersburg is the state representative for District 24A, which serves Steele and Waseca counties. He lives in Waseca.

Minnesota to hold first presidential primary in years

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

For the first time since 1992, Minnesota will be holding a presidential nomination primary election this year. The election is set for March 3, but absentee voting opens this week.

Absentee voting will be available beginning Friday and going up until the election on March 3, according to Laura Ihrke, Steele County auditor and chief election judge for the county. She said voters can come into the county auditor's office in Owatonna or call to have a ballot sent to them.

Part of what Ihrke expects pushback from voters with this election is that they have to choose which party they want before election officials can issue them a ballot. And once voters choose their party, the ballot becomes public to the political party, Ihrke said.

"That might deter people from going out to vote," Ihrke said of the stipulation of the ballot information being made public to the political parties.

President Trump will be the only candidate listed on the Republican ballot after a Supreme Court ruling late last week. The high court denied the request of Rogue "Rocky" De La Fuente to have his name added to the ballot.

Ihrke said there will be 18 candidates listed on the DFL ballot.

The purpose of the presidential primary is for voters who identify with a major political party to vote for a pres-

idential candidate who they wish for their party to nominate as the candidate on the November ballot. The nominating primary replaces the "presidential polls," also known as "straw polls," that were conducted at party caucus meetings in the past.

Even with the change to the presidential primary, Ihrke expects the same results as the last time Minnesota had it in 1992—low voter turnout. In 1992, Steele County had 10% voter turnout when 1,717 of the eligible 16,000 voters came to the polls, according to Ihrke. "That's not a very big turnout," she said.

But regardless of the turnout, it's still an election that Ihrke's office has to administer. "It's a new challenge for us," she said. "We're always up for new challenges."

Polls will be open for the presidential primary on Tuesday, March 3 from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Ihrke did not want voters to confuse this election with the Township elections, which will be held the following week on March 10.

The primary election is slated for Tuesday, Aug. 11 with the general election on Tuesday, Nov. 3.

"It will be a busy year for us," Ihrke said, noting her office is prepared to handle the additional workload this year with all the various elections. She added some of the temporary and overtime costs incurred by her office for the presidential primary are eligible for reimbursement.

LONG-TIME BP: supporter dies

FROM A1

for the Blooming Prairie community. It was such an honor to have him be a part of our newspaper for so many years."

Bussler said he has never had an employee as committed to his work as Nelson. "He did his work without any complaining," said Bussler, who worked with him for 10 of the 28 years he was at the newspaper. "He knew exactly what needed to be done and got it done in a timely manner with the readers always at the forefront of anything he did," he added.

Nelson received many honors and accolades over the years. In 1966, he was named to the honor roll of the Minnesota Teacher of the Year. He was the Minnesota High School Press Association Advisor of the Year in 1986.

Some of the local honors included Blooming Prairie Jaycees Lifetime Achievement in 2002, BP Education Foundation Outstanding Blossom in 2008, Blooming Prairie Chamber Citizen of the Year in 2013, Boys and Girls Club Awesome Advocate in 2016 and Blooming Prairie Youth Club Outstanding Service in 2018.

"LeMar's biggest achievement, however, was the impact he had on his family, students, friends, co-workers and community," said Teri Hendrickson, his daughter.

Funeral services are scheduled for Saturday at 11 a.m. at First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie. See inside pages for more on Nelson's life and commitment to the community.

Sheriff Rose: Riess will come back to Minnesota to face murder charges though no timeline set

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Ever since alleged killer Lois Riess pleaded guilty to murdering a look-alike woman in Florida to avoid the death penalty, the question back in Minnesota that keeps coming up is what happens with the murder case involving her husband.

On Dec. 17, Riess pleaded guilty to all four counts against her in the death of Pamela Hutchinson in Fort Myers Beach, Florida in April 2018. A judge immediately sentenced her to life in prison without the chance of parole.

Minnesota officials are still planning to bring Riess back to her home state to face murder charges for allegedly killing her husband, David Riess, in their rural Blooming Prairie home in March 2018.

"The Dodge County Sheriff's Office and other county officials have had a number of citizens questioning why it's necessary to have Lois Riess come back

"I can only imagine how incredibly difficult this case has been for the Riess family. We owe it to them to bring her back."

Sheriff Scott Rose
Dodge County

to Minnesota when she's already been convicted and sentenced to life in Florida," Sheriff Scott Rose said this week. Rose pointed out there are a few important reasons for this to happen.

Rose reminds citizens that with the justice system in Minnesota, suspects are innocent until proven guilty. "A guilty verdict in Florida doesn't equate to a guilty verdict here," he said. "You can't give her a pass here because she's already been convicted for the murder in Florida. She killed her husband here and she needs to answer to that crime."

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison has previously said, "Lois Riess should face justice in Minnesota for two reasons: first,

because her crime spree started in Minnesota with the murder of Mr. Riess; second and more importantly because the interests of justice demand it."

Ellison says the people of Blooming Prairie, Dodge County and all of Minnesota, and especially Mr. Riess's family deserve to see justice done and the chance to heal.

Sheriff Rose echoed the sentiments of the attorney general. "The Riess family deserves some closure and some answers here too," he said. "Because Lois was indicted by a secret grand jury, the family still doesn't know what happened other than the fact that David was shot. This family deserves to see justice served and to hear Lois explain what she

did and why she did it."

Family members, Rose said, deserve the opportunity to share their victim impact statements and confront her so they can all start the healing process.

"I can only imagine how incredibly difficult this case has been for the Riess family," Rose said. "We owe it to them to bring her back."

While Minnesota officials plan to bring Riess back home at least temporarily, no exact timeline has been established for her extradition to happen.

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

After Riess pleaded guilty in Florida last month, Florida officials withdrew the death penalty. The judge sentenced her to prison for the rest of her life without any chance of parole.

BP Spelling Bee involves 24 contestants

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Twenty-four Blooming Prairie students in grades 5-8 participated in the 29th Annual Blooming Prairie District Spelling Bee on Wednesday, Jan. 15 in the BP Elementary School gymnasium.

The Southeast Minnesota Service Cooperative of Rochester is sponsor of the Blooming Prairie spelling bee.

The district spelling bee began in all classrooms of those in grades 5-8 where students had spelldowns to qualify to be a contestant.

NOTE: Complete results will be printed in The Times issue of Wednesday Jan. 22.

Spelling bees have been popular worldwide, and Blooming Prairie has really embraced the contest with lots of participants, said local spelling bee coordinator Jeanette Hauschildt.

Students are all placed in one group with six participants from each grade, 5-8. Fourth graders sat in the audience since they will be eligible to participate next year.

Jaylee Schleicher, seventh grader (last school year), was last year's winner. She is the daughter of Megan and Brian Schleicher. Armada was her winning word last year in the 14th round of the 28th annual contest at the BP



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

These two excellent spellers represented Blooming Prairie in the Southeast Minnesota Spelling Bee regional competition last year in Rochester. Jaylee Schleicher, right, placed first and Abby Smith, left, finished second.

Elementary School.

The top three winners received gold, silver and bronze medals.

Winners of the BP Spelling Bee advance to the Region Spelling Bee in Rochester on Tuesday, Feb. 11. Winners of that contest advance to the Southeast Minnesota Spelling Bee Finals in Rochester on Feb. 25.

One winner emerges from the Southeast Minne-

sota contest and advances to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. next May.

Hauschildt, former elementary school secretary for 24 years, has coordinated the spelling bee in Blooming Prairie the past six years.

All students in grades 4-6 attended the contest with fourth graders eyeing a chance to enter the com-

AN ATTITUDE OF CIVIC DUTY: for BP's citizens of the year

FROM A1

pat on the back for a job well done," says H. «It's a special thank you that came as a surprise," says Jean.

«We are a tag team and you get two for the price of one," laughs H, a former art teacher for 37 years in the Blooming Prairie school system. He also coached football, wrestling and golf. «I really enjoyed coaching football," says H.

Mentioning football, H believes the «real citizens of the year» are the members of the 2019 state championship Blooming Prairie Awesome Blossom football team. Jean says she agrees with that assessment.

The football team's accomplishments represented another way Blooming Prairie has been put on the map, said the Petersons.

Let's take a time out from the Peterson's civic responsibilities to trace the Petersons' landing in Blooming Prairie.

Jean grew up in Roseville, graduating from Alexander Ramsey High

School in 1962. She then attended St. Olaf College, studying psychology and sociology. She graduated an Ole in 1966.

H was raised in the metropolitan community of Edina, graduating there in 1962. He also attended St. Olaf College, graduating as an art major in 1966.

College drew the Petersons together and they wed on July 16, 1966. «It was the hottest day of the year," remarked Jean. «It has been a hot relationship ever since," H chuckles.

His sense of humor and a seriousness to completing a project have served H well.

The Petersons came to Blooming Prairie in 1966 when H was offered a teaching job by then Superintendent Maurice McFarlin. «He was looking for a music teacher and at the same time asked the various colleges in the area if they had an art teacher wanting a job. Enter H. Peterson.

Peterson said he was interviewed by Principal

LeMar Nelson. «One of the first questions he asked me was 'can you sing?'" The answer of course was «yes," Peterson directed the high school choir for many years.

One of H Peterson's college professors told H that Blooming Prairie was a school system where teachers stayed, stayed and stayed. He was right. Jean also worked a couple of years in the high school office after coming to Blooming Prairie.

The Petersons then began raising a family. They have two children, Sonja Berry (Ray) and Kurt Peterson (Kate). The Berrys have two daughters, Siri and Ingrid and the Kurt Petersons have a daughter Lauren.

«We enjoy spending a lot of quality time with our granddaughters," H and Jean affirm.

H ended his teaching career with retirement in 2000. «I have not taught in this century," he frowned with a longevity statement.

Jean's civic involvement started with the Blooming Prairie Development Corporation. The development corporation had no employees, no office or not real direction or function when Jean was asked to help out.

The chamber was also being run out of the dental office by Dr. John Flor, DDS. Jean then officially became the Chamber director, a position she assumed for over 20 years.

The people make the town, H and Jean agree. «There are so many special and caring people in Blooming Prairie," H says. A small town is made successful by everybody, commented Jean. «A lot of focus is made on schools and on our faith community," she added.

The Petersons don't always agree on the issues but both believe that a strong faith commitment has been the lifeblood of the community.

H Peterson's first real civic assignment came as

a member of the planning commission. He was next appointed to city council when a vacancy existed.

Peterson was part of a movement to build a city hall and fire station in the city. There was no council majority for this effort until H Peterson came on board. «It was indeed controversial at times, but in the end everything has worked out," H says. The city center opened in 1992.

H served eight terms as mayor and says his defeat in the 2018 election came because he did not campaign and his opponent, current mayor Curt Esplan did.

During his mayoral service, H was president of the Minnesota Mayors Association. Looking at his time as major, H is most proud of being a part of the drive to build a new city hall, playing a key role in bringing a medical clinic to town, helping lead council involvement in restoring Main Street and working

to pass needed school bond issues.

At times, H and Jean double teamed efforts to improve Blooming Prairie, H as mayor and Jean with the local chamber.

This past year, the Petersons enjoyed spending more time at their family cabin on Lake O'Brien in the Cross Lake area. It is a four-hour drive from Blooming Prairie.

«This is home to us," the Petersons rightfully claim. They both feel pride in seeing more young people coming back to live in Blooming Prairie.

Some small towns are not growing but take a look at Blooming Prairie and see a strong industrial and retail base backed by a growing school district.

Much of Blooming Prairie's growth could lie at the throttle powered by H and Jean Peterson. Both remain active cheerleaders for Blooming Prairie's advancement as an influential small town.

BLOTTER SPOTLIGHT

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

Owatonna attorney among finalists for judge

The Commission on Judicial Selection has announced it is recommending three candidates, including an attorney from Owatonna, for the Governor's consideration to fill the current vacancy in Minnesota's Third Judicial District. The vacancy will occur upon the retirement of the Honorable John T. Cajacob and will be chambered at Faribault in Rice County.

Owatonna area attorney Joel Eaton has been named a finalist for the judge along with Karie M. Anderson and William Bradley Frago.

Anderson is a shareholder at Patton, Hoversten & Berg, P.A. practicing in the areas of Family Law, Criminal Defense, Real Estate, Bankruptcy and Civil litigation. In addition to her private law practice, she served as a Defense Counsel for the Steele-Waseca Drug Court since its start in 2014. She also serves as a referee for Waseca County conciliation court and is a faculty member for the National Center for DWI Courts. Anderson's community involvement includes serving as the president of the Fifth District Bar Association, serving as a board member of the Minnesota Valley Action Council and the Waseca Area Foundation, participating in the Janesville Rotary Club, and acting as a Waseca High School Mock Trial coach.

Eaton is an attorney in Owatonna, where he works as a sole practitioner primarily in the areas of criminal defense and family law. Prior to establishing his private practice in 2009, Eaton worked as a full-time public defender in Minnesota's Third Judicial District, and he has served as a part-time public defender since 2009. Eaton attended the University of Minnesota and graduated with high distinction from the University of Iowa College of Law. Prior to practicing law in Owatonna, Eaton was an active duty military attorney in the United States Air Force JAG Corps, where he served as both a prosecutor and defense attorney in proceedings under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Frago is a family law

attorney, mediator, and early neutral evaluator in Northfield. He graduated from Carleton College and the University of Minnesota Law School. Frago is the immediate past Chair of the Family Law Section of the Minnesota State Bar Association. Frago has resided in Rice County since 1995 and is actively involved in the community. He is an officer with the Civil Air Patrol Squadron based at the Stanton Airport and is active in the Northfield Rotary Club and North Star Youth Exchange.

Minnesota's Third Judicial District consists of Steele, Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Wabasha, Waseca and Winona counties.

CRIME BRIEF

Wanted fugitive picks up new charges

A man wanted by police is facing new charges in connection with an assault in Owatonna.

Brian Maestre-Revis has been charged with threats of violence and two counts of fifth-degree assault. In addition to the new charges, he was arrested on outstanding warrants out of Steele and Rice counties.

On Dec. 28, police responded to an assault in the 200 block of East Broadway. A dispute apparently took place between the resident



Brian Maestre-Revis

of an apartment and another guest that had been staying there. The dispute allegedly led to Maestre-Revis throwing the victim into a bedroom, bathroom and punching the victim in the gut.

Police said the victim told Maestre-Revis to leave and when he did so, Maestre-Revis came at the victim with something in hand as if to attack the victim. The victim fled the apartment, but not before Maestre-Revis allegedly threatened to kill him if he called the cops.

Sheriff's office investigates robbery at Medford store

The Steele County Sheriff's Office is investigating an armed robbery in Medford.

On Jan. 7 at about 7:15 p.m., deputies responded to the Naturalizer Store in the Medford Outlet Mall on a

report of a robbery that had just occurred. Naturalizer is a women's shoe store.

Sheriff Lon Thiele said the store clerk reported a black man wearing all black with a heavy coat and a scarf over his face attempted to rob the store. "He stated he had a gun, but did not display it," Thiele said.

According to Thiele, the suspect was unable to get any items from the store except for the store clerk's

personal cell phone. The suspect then took off out the store.

While the sheriff's office was investigating the robbery, deputies received information that a second robbery had just taken place at the JoAnn Fabrics Store in Faribault. Investigators are working to see if the two incidents are connected, Thiele said, adding the Steele County case remains under investigation.

Thiele admitted it was

unusual to have robberies at those types of stores. The most common robberies take place at banks or convenience stores.

Anyone with information should contact the sheriff's office.

COURT NEWS Steele County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Dec. 30 – Jan. 5:

BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Brandon A. Goff, 34, Blooming Prairie, speeding and no insurance, \$321 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Da S. Htoo, 27, Austin, permit violation and headlights violation, \$165.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Paul E. Allen, 20, Prior Lake, speeding, \$135; Mark H. Ammann, 35, Owatonna, seat belt, \$106; Roger A. Carlsen, 57, Kasson, speeding, \$115; Trevor J. Carlson, 24, West Hartford, CT, speeding, \$115; Andres Gallegos Catana, 29, Minneapolis, speeding, \$250; Bertha M. Jackson, 33, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275; Jessica L. Jarvis, 37, Forest Lake, speeding, \$135; Ethan D. Jimenez, 17, Lakeside, MT, speeding, \$115; Tanner L. Kadrlík, 26, Owatonna, DWI, \$606, chemical dependency evaluation, attend MADD impact panel, no alcohol or controlled substance use and 1 year of supervised probation; Lydia K. Mattix, 19, Indianola, IA, speeding, \$125; Krizianette Melendez Fugueroa, 21, Owatonna, careless driving, \$175; Danielle I. Mueller, 31, Ceylon, speeding, \$125; Carlos A. Poemape, 32, Ames, IA, no license, \$175; Jana B. Reeks, 48, Burnsville, speeding, \$115; Steven R. Reinhardt, 66, Owatonna, hands free violation, \$125; Daniel Rodriguez Cortes, 48, Blaine, no license, \$175; Shane A. Schueler, 34, Kandiyohi, speeding, \$115; Cassandra Steenberg, 30, Hudson, WI, speeding, \$135; Leng Vang, 36, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Allison J. Waters, 36, Dania Beach, FL, speeding, \$125; Sarah A. Williams, 20, Eagan, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$121 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without adjudication; Montrese J. Wilson, 39, Miramar, FL, speeding, \$135; Yiming Zhao, 24, Minneapolis, cancelled license, \$275.

OWATONNA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Joshua D. Brekke, 39, Owatonna, failure to signal,

\$125; Dakota R. Cisneros, 23, Claremont, obstruct legal process, \$175 and 20 days in county jail; Christina M. Cordova, 21, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Daryk R. Efta, 19, Le Center, minor consumption, \$175; Gabriel M. Graham, 19, Owatonna, domestic assault, \$131, 3 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, obtain permission to leave the state, do not enter liquor establishments, no possession of firearms, domestic abuse evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation; Dana M. Hachfeld, 29, Medford, suspended license, \$275; Lori A. Huberty, 53, Elko New Market, speeding, \$115; Ashley J. Hudson, 23, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$105; Eric J. Huisenga, 34, Owatonna, no insurance, \$125 and 1 year of supervised probation; Tahlon R. Joslyn, 26, Owatonna, bumper violation, \$125; Kent A. Kearney, 50, Mantorville, cancelled license, stay of adjudication, comply with Ignition Interlock and 2 years of unsupervised probation; Matthew L. Klingenberg, 37, Owatonna, provide alcohol to minor, \$100 and 1 year of supervised probation; Joanna G. Maldonado, 19, Austin, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Jill J. Moreno, 50, Owatonna, DWI, \$206, 2 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, attend MADD impact panel and 2 years of supervised probation; Kyle R. Schnobrich, 27, Renwick, IA, fleeing peace officer, \$81, 2 days in county jail and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Mariah A. Sleeuwenhoeck, 22, Owatonna, theft, \$125; Clarence L. Spight, 30, Faribault, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Jared M. Tappe, 28, Burnsville, failure to yield, \$125; Michael R. Wigton, 50, Oak Grove, stop sign, stay of adjudication, \$125 and 6 months of unsupervised monitoring without conviction.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Daqwon R. Brown, 20, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Joelle K. Butler, 34, Ellendale, seat belt, \$100; Anthony J. Cassen, 32, Medford, speeding,

\$215; Luis F. Cornejo, 20, Rochester, speeding, \$115; Ryan J. Crawford, 38, Minneapolis, speeding, \$125; Jonathan T. Ferris, 34, Faribault, revoked license, \$275; Andrew J. Frank, 17, Owatonna, speeding, \$275; Tyler J. Johnson, 19, Owatonna, minor consumption, \$175; loane Kariti, 26, Austin, no insurance, \$275; Obang O. Kwot, 32, Austin, speeding, \$125; Zachary R. Mensink, 20, Owatonna, minor consumption, \$175; Makayla A. Phillips-Tucke, 21, Dodge Center, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$50, 4 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, psychological evaluation, obtain permission to leave the state and 1 year of supervised probation; Marah S. Ryks, 29, Owatonna, speeding, \$121; Mariana Salinas, 45, Owatonna, invalid license, \$175; Alex D. Schatz, 30, Glendale, AB, speeding, \$115; Patrick D. Scheib, 23, Albert Lea, speeding, \$135; Andrew J. Schmidt, 31, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Daniel K. Strand, 57, Mapleton, speeding, \$115; Lane P. Thiesse, 21, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Denise Tonche, 36, Owatonna, stop sign, \$125; Anne C. Welch, 46, Minneapolis, speeding, \$141; Carlos Zarate Rojas, 35, Rose Creek, invalid license, \$175.

POLICE BLOTTER Steele County

BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE

Jan. 4 Arrest: Police arrested a motorist during a traffic stop at Highway 218 and 138th St. SE in Blooming Prairie Township at 4:07 p.m.

Jan. 7 Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 200 block of Highway Ave. S. at 11:03 a.m.

OWATONNA POLICE

Jan. 3 Truancy: Police received a report of truancy from the 300 block of School St. E. at 8:33 a.m.

Fraud: Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 1000 block of Oak Ave. S. at 10:08 a.m.

Restraining Order: At 3:51 p.m., an officer arrested

a subject for a restraining order violation in the 300 block of 22nd St. SE.

Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest in the 600 block of 13th St. SE at 7:04 p.m.

Jan. 4 Disturbance: Police responded to a disturbance in the 700 block of State Ave. NW at 12:32 a.m. They arrested a subject at the scene.

Assault: Officers responded to an assault in the 300 block of Grove Ave. S. at 6:46 a.m.

Disturbance: At 9:25 a.m., a disturbance occurred in the 2200 block of 26th St. NW.

Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 200 block of McKinley St. SE at 3:40 p.m.

Shoplifting: Officer issued a shoplifting citation in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 4:38 p.m.

Jan. 5 Shoplifting: At 11:20 a.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 1400 block of 21st Ave. NW.

Domestic: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 200 block of Fremont St. E at 11:33 a.m.

Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 12:40 p.m.

Restraining Order: At 9:53 p.m., a restraining order violation occurred at Cedar Ave. N. and 22nd St. NW.

Jan. 6 Thefts: Police took theft reports in the 400 block of Clearview Place NW at 9:39 a.m. and the 100 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 4:03 p.m.

Trespassing: At 11:37 a.m., a subject was trespassing in the 200 block of School St. W.

Shoplifting: At 1:07 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W.

Drugs: Police responded to drug activity in the 1300 block of Bigelow Ave. NE at 3:36 p.m.

Jan. 7 Shoplifting: Shoplifting incidents occurred in the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 7:28 a.m. and the 400 block of North St. W. at 12:45 p.m.

Harassment: At 8:29 a.m., a harassment incident occurred on Oak Ave. S.

Arrest: Police arrested a motorist during a traffic stop at Interstate 35 and Bridge St. W. at 10:28 a.m.

Theft: Police received a theft report from the 600 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 10:39 a.m.

Threats: Police responded to a subject making threats in the 200 block of School St. W. at 11:59 a.m.

Domestic: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 500 block of Vine St. E. at 12:08 p.m. They took a subject into custody.

Crash: Police responded to a motor vehicle accident resulting in property damage in the 1200 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 5:30 p.m. They issued a citation to one of the rivers.

Assault: At 5:57 p.m., an assault occurred in the 600 block of Hilltop Ave. SW.

Jan. 8 Theft: Officers received a theft report from the 200 block of Hickory Lane NE at 8:16 a.m.

Theft: Police arrested a subject for a theft in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 12 p.m.

Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest in the 200 block of Oak Ave. N. at 2:44 p.m.

Predatory Offender: At 3:42 p.m., police arrested a predatory offender in the 2200 block of 26th St. NW.

Jan. 9 Thefts: Police took theft reports in the 2800 block of White Oak Lane NE at 8:29 a.m., the 200 block of 22nd St. NW at 2:58 p.m. and the 400 block of St. Paul Place NE at 3:09 p.m.

Shoplifting: Officer arrested a subject for shoplifting in the 400 block of North St. W. at 1:19 p.m.

Hit and Run: At 2:15 p.m., a hit and run accident occurred in the 1000 block of Frontage Rd. W.

Suspicion: Police responded to suspicious activity in the 200 block of Holly St. SW at 6:09 p.m.

Crash: Police responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries at Hoffman Dr. NW and North St. W. at 7:06 p.m. They issued a citation to one of the drivers.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

Jan. 3 Warrant: Deputy made a warrant arrest in the 100 block of Main St. E. in Owatonna at 10:09 a.m.

Crash: At 11 a.m., a motor vehicle accident resulting in property damage occurred at 62nd Ave. NW and 76th St. NW in Deerfield Township.

Jan. 4 Theft: Deputies received a theft report from the 2300 block of Austin Road in Owatonna Township at 8:53 a.m.

OWATONNA POLICE

Melanie Christine Rezac, 34, arrested at 4 p.m. Jan. 7, terroristic threats and assault, held for court.

Jose Hernandez Jr., 36, arrested at 3:32 p.m. Jan. 8, warrants arrest, held for court.

Brenda Jean Shockey, 31, arrested at 2:02 p.m. Jan. 8, obstruction of legal process and theft, held for court.

John Clements Eppel, 52, arrested at 7:06 p.m. Jan. 8, failure to register, held for court.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

Bobbie Jo Sandte, 34, arrested at 3:30 a.m. Jan. 9, DWI, held for court.

SEE BLOTTER, A5

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

1. Arnut Tungsununt – drugs - \$10,000 bail

2. Scott Tuomala – drugs – no bail

3. Marco Valdez – DWI, child endangerment - \$6,000 bail

4. Jeremy Vanderlugt – failure to appear - \$1,000 bail

5. Andres Vargas – criminal vehicular operation – no bail

6. Jose Vazquez – DWI - \$1,000 bail

7. Jose Villaandrade – DWI - \$6,000 bail
8. James Voracek – drugs – no bail

9. Adam Wacek – warrant – no bail

10. Alonzo Walker – conspiracy to commit - \$5,000 bail

11. Anthony Walker – controlled substance - \$35,000 bail

12. Deontavious Walker – domestic assault - \$5,500 bail

13. Dale Walters – possession of pornography - \$30,000 bail
14. Kevin Webster – disorderly conduct – no bail

15. Paul Wechtuor – stalking - \$3,000 bail

16. Jonathan Werstein – traffic - \$500 bail

17. Tisha Whitcomb – theft - \$15,000 bail

18. Calvin Whittens – theft - \$300 bail

19. Reginald Wilberton Jr. – assault - \$500 bail

20. Erika Williams – shoplifting - \$500 bail

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

Does Medicare Covers Counseling Services?



THE SAVVY SENIOR

Brought to you by:



Prairie Manor Care Center & Heather Haus

220 3rd St. NW,
Bloomington
583-4434

Dear Savvy Senior,
Does Medicare cover outpatient counseling services for its beneficiaries? Since the death of my sister last year, I've struggled with depression and anxiety and would like to get some help.
Sad Senior

Dear Sad,
I'm sorry for your loss. Yes, Medicare covers both outpatient and inpatient mental health services to help beneficiaries with depression, anxiety and many other needs. Here's what you should know.

OUTPATIENT COVERAGE

If you have original Medicare, your Part B coverage will pay 80 percent (after you've met your \$198 Part B deductible) for a variety of counseling and mental health care services that are provided outside a hospital, like individual or group therapy, family counseling and more. They also cover services for treatment of beneficiaries who struggle with alcohol and drug abuse.

You, or your supplemental insurance is responsible for the remaining 20 percent coinsurance.

Medicare also gives you the option of getting treatment through a variety of mental health professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers and clinical nurse specialists.

To get this coverage, you'll need to choose a "participating provider" that accepts Medicare assignment, which means they accept Medicare's approved amount as full payment for a service.

If you choose a "nonparticipating provider" who accepts Medicare but does not agree to Medicare's payment rate, you may have to pay more. And if you choose an "opt-out provider" that does not accept Medicare payments at all, you will be responsible for the entire cost.

To locate a mental health care professional in your area that accepts Medicare assignment, use Medicare's online Physician Compare tool. Go to *Medicare.gov/PhysicianCompare* and type in your ZIP code, or city and state, then type in the type of profession you want to locate, like "psychiatry" or "clinical psychologist" in the search box. You can also get this information by calling Medicare at 800-633-4227.

INPATIENT COVERAGE

If you need mental health services in either a general or psychiatric hospital, original Medicare Part A covers this too (after you've met your \$1,408 Part A deductible). Your doctor should determine which hospital setting you need. If you receive care in a psychiatric hospital, Medicare covers up to 190 days of inpatient care for your lifetime. And if you use your lifetime days but need additional care, Medicare may cover additional inpatient care at a general hospital.

ADDITIONAL COVERAGE

In addition to the outpatient and inpatient mental health services, Medicare also covers yearly depression screenings that must be done in a primary care doctor's office or clinic. Annual depression screenings are covered 100 percent.

And if you have a Medicare prescription drug plan, most medications used to treat mental health conditions are covered too.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

If you happen to get your Medicare benefits through a private Medicare Advantage plan, they must provide the same coverage as original Medicare does, but they may impose different rules and will likely require you to see an in-network provider. You'll need to contact your plan directly for details.

And for more information, call Medicare at 800-633-4227 and request a copy of publication #10184 "Medicare & Your Mental Health Benefits," or you can read it online at *Medicare.gov*.

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

STEELE COUNTY

Times

Always local,
all the time.



History from the News Archives

10 Years Ago Jan. 19, 2010

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

Bloomington's first baby of 2010 is Claudia Jean Miller. The lucky parents are Matt and Stephanie Miller of Bloomington. She was born at 4:49 a.m. on Jan. 7, 2010 at the Owatonna Hospital.

The three candidates vying for former state Sen. Dick Day's spot have been chosen and are looking ahead towards the special election on Jan. 26. Day resigned mid-way through his sixth term as a state senator. The Republican candidate is Waseca businessman Mike Parry. He beat out six other candidates to win the endorsement. The other candidates are Jason Engbrecht, DFL, and Roy Srp, Independent.

The Claremont Area Chamber of Commerce donated to three local organizations. Donations were made to the BPRA- \$1,000; Boys and Girls Club of Bloomington- \$1,000 and Steele County Toys for Tots- \$500.

The paraprofessionals at Bloomington School are being celebrated the week of Jan. 18-23 during Paraprofessional Recognition Week in Minnesota. BP's paraprofessionals are Peggy Tashima, Gloria Salinas, Karen Inwards, Sharon Anderson, Linda Ofstedahl and Sandra Basness.

20 Years Ago Jan. 18, 2000

ELSIE SLINGER, PUBLISHER

The Bloomington Jaycees start out a new millennium with four great choices for their annual distinguished awards program. This is the 30th year that the local Jaycees have honored local citizens for their accomplishments. This year's winners are Brian Nelson, Outstanding Young Farmer; Cherie Weringa, Outstanding Young Educator; Jim Fiebigler, Outstanding Young Minnesotan

and Pastor Richard Hegal, Lifetime Achievement Award.

Even though Alliance is the new kid on the block, the business has served the area for many years. Alliance Bank opened for business in early December and has been making final touches in its location on Main Street. The Bloomington Prairie bank is the third location for the bank, which was renamed when the venture started. Randy Schwake is president of the bank.

Joshua Gwilt was the winner of the Alliance Bank open house drawing for a \$100 savings bond. Bank president Randy Schwake was on hand to give Joshua his award.

50 Years Ago Jan. 14, 1970

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

Women personnel at the First National Bank in Bloomington are now attired in attractive new 2-piece blue suits with white blouses. A silver "First" emblem appears on the jacket. Some of the personnel at the bank are Sharon Christianson, Ruby Miller, Pat Wickler, Gerry Oswald and La-Von Madsen.

James L. Peterson, 88, of rural Bloomington is confined at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester after being struck by an automobile near his home on Jan. 7. Driver of the vehicle was Howard Johnson, 22, rural Austin. The mishap happened as Mr. Peterson was crossing the street.

Miss Sally J. Habberstad of Bloomington was recently presented her stewardess wings with Northwest Orient Airlines after completing five weeks of specialized training at the airline's training center. She is a graduate of Bloomington Prairie and is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward C. Habberstad of Bloomington.

Mrs. Richard Trom of Bloomington has been named one of the finalists in Pillsbury Company's Bake-Off 21. She is one of 100 participants

from around the nation who will compete for the "Best of Bake-Off" title and up to \$25,000 in prizes next March.

A report on the possibilities of the development of a vocational center in Bloomington Prairie was presented to members of the school board by Superintendent M. McFarlin on Jan. 5. A number of meetings among school administrators have been held, but no firm action has been taken yet.

75 Years Ago Jan. 18, 1945

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

Donald Schoenrock, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Schoenrock, who reside east of town, met instant death when his Model A Ford side-swiped a truck driven by Ben Schoon of Clarks Grove. The fatal accident happened four miles east of Bloomington on the Burke corner on the Hayfield road, not far from the golf course.

Gilbert Grunklee was able to return home Friday evening from the Owatonna Hospital where he had been a patient since Dec. 27, receiving treatment for his injured foot. While sawing wood at his farm, Gilbert slipped and the saw inflicted a bad cut in his left foot, which will take several more weeks to heal.

Bloomington ladies made a run Wednesday afternoon to the Christ Nelson farm house near the golf course where a spark from the chimney had ignited the roof. The alarm sounded during the worst part of the near-blizzard and our fire boys were really "cooled off" when they reached the Nelson home.

George Paulson and Frank Faltejssek of Bloomington were re-elected and Clarence Young of Owatonna was selected as a new member to serve on the board of directors of the Central Cooperative Oil Association as members held their annual meeting in Owatonna Monday. Approximately 800 people attended the afternoon's program at the State Theatre.

SCHOOL LUNCH MENU

BP Elementary

- Jan. 15- Stromboli, chicken bacon ranch melt, garden salad
- Jan. 16- Beefy nachos with homemade cheese sauce, tex mex bowl, refried beans
- Jan. 17- Roast turkey & gravy, turkey deli sandwich, mashed potatoes, rip stick breadstick
- Jan. 20- NO SCHOOL
- Jan. 21- Cheeseburger, beef hotdog, French fries

BP High School

- Jan. 15- Stromboli, garden salad, corn dog, turkey BLT salad, taco bar
- Jan. 16- Beefy nachos with homemade cheese sauce, refried beans, BBQ rib sandwich, pizza, Chicken Caesar salad, chicken bites
- Jan. 17- Home-style meatloaf, mashed potatoes, gravy, rip stick breadstick, chocolate chip cookie, crispy chicken nuggets, build your own sub
- Jan. 20- NO SCHOOL
- Jan. 21- Asian crispy chicken and rice, fortune cookie, cheeseburger, beef taco salad, crispy chicken salad, pizza

Now through Feb. 22, 2020!

MAMMA MIA!

"A **HUGE** hit...
Can't wait to return!"

- KARE 11

"MY, MY,
I can't
resist it!"

- WCCO TV



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BLOTTER: FROM A4

COURT NEWS

Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Dec. 29 - Jan. 5:

DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Travis T. Buracker, 27, Ripon, CA, speeding, \$220; Latonya D. McNeal, 42, Rochester, revoked license and no insurance, \$480; Rebecca A. Moechnig, 28, West Concord, speeding, \$130; Kody Rasmussen, 18, West Concord, speeding, \$120; Karen L. Rustin, 71, Mantorville, parking violation, \$32.

KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Daniel J. Dahl, 44, Kasson, speeding, \$130; Andrew T. Dengler, 19, West Concord, hands free violation, \$130; Tyler W. Remold, 31, Byron, hands free violation, \$130; Travis A. Sans, 29, Cannon Falls, speeding, \$140; Niclas L. Vanoort, 19, Mantorville, minor consumption, \$180.

MN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Chad R. Cordie, 38, Hayfield, suspended license and no insurance, \$480; Kody Rasmussen, 18, West Concord, discharge firearm on public highway and failure to register deer, \$380.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

James M. Finn, 48, Mantorville, seat belt, \$105; Taylor M. Johnson, 22, Mankato, speeding, \$140; Martin Rodriguez-Montes, 22, Kasson, permit violation, \$130; Danielle R. St. Andrew, 21, Dodge Center, speed ing, \$120.

OWATONNA FIRE

Jan. 6 Burns: Firefighters responded to an incident involving excessive heat and scorch burns with no ignition in the 2300 block of 43rd St. NW at 4 p.m.

Jan. 9 Crash: At 7:07 p.m., firefighters responded to a motor vehicle accident at Hoffman Dr. and North St.

Bloomington Cancer Group Cancer Corner It's breakfast time for BP Cancer Group

Sunday, Jan. 19 at the Pizza Cellar

By HOWARD LESTRUD
Staff Writer

The Bloomington Cancer Group has entered its 20th year, kicking off 2020 fundraising with the Coyotes "Fur" Cancer fundraiser on Jan. 4.

The second fundraiser of 2020 for the Cancer Group will be a delicious breakfast served at the Pizza Cellar from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 19.

At this breakfast, the amount of money given to the Eagles Telethon in Rochester on Saturday, Jan. 18 will be revealed. The BP Cancer Group donated \$110,000 last year, the largest amount ever donated by the local cancer group.

The Eagles Telethon designates money to the Mayo Cancer Center, the University of Minnesota Cancer Center and to the Hormel Institute. These monies go for research.

The breakfast menu on Jan. 19 will include eggs, pancakes, sausage, muffins, milk, juice and coffee.

About 30 silent auction items will be displayed. One

of the items will be a hand-made quilt by Mary Burr. Some other items include Cheri Krejci's snack mix, Judy Lestrud's chocolate chip cookies and Deb Lindquist's pasta bowl basket and popcorn basket. Signs by Kelly Simon will also be on the silent auction.

Purse bingo tickets will also be on sale at the breakfast. Two purse bingos are planned for Saturday, April 4, one at 11 a.m. and one at 5 p.m.

Some purses still need a sponsor. Contact Lindsey French at 507-438-8799.

Kids are encouraged to bring in their change for the BIG money jar. Last year, kids brought in monies totaling \$232.81.

Looking ahead, Ham Bingo is scheduled for Thursday, March 19. Cancer Group members will sell 50/50 tickets at the Deer Creek Speedway in early summer.

The annual giant-sized cancer auctions are set for Friday, Sept. 11 and Saturday, Sept. 12. Gun Bingo follows on Saturday, Sept. 18.

Support for the Bloomington Prairie Cancer Group fund-



Skyler Valek, 4, of Bloomington, helps pour orange juice at the Bloomington Prairie Cancer Group celebratory breakfast last year in the Pizza Cellar Party Room. The 2020 breakfast is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 19 at the Pizza Cellar. (Staff photo by Howard Lestrud)

raises "gets better" every year, says treasurer Cheri Krejci.

"Because of the generosity of our supporters, we are able to donate monies for our community fund and for cancer research," says Krejci.

"Sometimes, I feel like Santa Claus," Krejci said in accepting the many donations from the Cancer Group's supporters.

Sponsored by Krejci Ford

STEELE-DODGE BUSINESS

Davidson's menu: Retirement a la carte

Owner of Ellendale Cafe says goodbye

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

«I'm old,» quipped Ellendale Cafe owner Judy Davidson when explaining why she was making retirement the next item on her personal menu.

Davidson sold the cafe to Ellendale Mayor Russell Goette and his friend Patti Carlson. The changing of the guard took place on Tuesday, Jan. 14, Davidson's last day on the job.

Davidson owned and operated the small-town cafe for nearly 26 years.

The wonderful aroma of home cooking daily drew customers to this small-town café, which has existed on Ellendale's Main Street for many years.

Many of her loyal customers and friends stopped by the cafe on Tuesday to say «thank you» to Davidson and to wish her well in her retirement. She served cake and coffee. «I don't make cakes so I ordered one for the final day,» she laughed.

It was the famous Judy Davidson home cooking that knocked the socks off her customers and lured them back on a regular basis. «I just like to cook and to bake,» remarked Davidson.

Some of Davidson's famous entrees included hot beef and hot pork platters. She also said her meat loaf and a variety of soups were customer favorites.

On the dessert side, she made cinnamon rolls and almost any kind of pie. Pecan and banana cream pies topped the list as pastry favorites.

Everything is home-made, and Davidson hopes that continues. She says she doesn't have any special recipes. «I just throw things together,» she confesses. «Of course, certain things go with certain things,» she clarified.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

After 26 years of owning the Ellendale Cafe on Main Street, Judy Davidson has sold the cafe and choosing to retire. "I'm old enough to retire," she laughs. Russell Goette and Patti Carlson are the new owners.

Davidson said she and Floyd, her husband of 51 years plan on «getting away to the south in the winter and north in the summer.» She said they don't know «for sure»

where they will land. They will keep residence in Ellendale, however.

She loves small towns and says the people of the small town of Ellendale will be missed by her the

most. «Everybody knows everybody and it's kind of nice to know what is going on and to know what they want to eat,» Davidson said.

The Ellendale Café, of course, has had its reg-

ulars during Davidson's time as captain of the ship. Coming in almost every day have been Amanda Beach, Jim Johnson, Russell Nelson, Jeff Wayne and Larry Otto.

The Davidsons have four daughters: Chris of Colorado, Michelle of Waseca, Kathy of Austin and Susie of Osseo. Judy and Floyd also have six grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Community Bank Owatonna promotes Cordes

Locally owned and operated Community Bank Owatonna and its Board of Directors are pleased to announce the promotion of Todd Cordes to senior vice president/operations and information technology.

Cordes is a Minneapolis native and lifelong Minnesota resident with nearly 25 years of banking experience, including the last two years at Community Bank Owatonna where he served as the vice president/operations and information technology. Cordes has 13 years of experience serving Minnesota bank customers in the Rochester and Kenyon markets. Prior to arriving at Community Bank Owatonna, he spent nine years as an assistant operations officer for United Bankers Bank in Bloomington, where he worked with hundreds of community banks by providing information technology and



Todd Cordes

bank operations services and support.

Cordes graduated from The University of Minnesota-Duluth, where he

earned bachelors' degrees in mathematics and political science. Throughout his career he has earned several professional designations, including National Check Professional (NCP) and Accredited ACH Professional (AAP).

He has two daughters and resides in Kenyon.

«Todd earned this promotion in a rather short time due to his significant contributions to the bank's information technology and operations functions,» stated Tim Kluender, the bank's president and chief executive officer. «His role going forward will not change, although he will be devoting more time working on several strategic initiatives that will benefit the bank's customers and shareholders.»

«I am pleased to be a part of the Community Bank Owatonna team and appreciate the confidence placed in me by the Board of Directors,» stated Cordes. «I look forward to continuing to serve the customers, staff, directors, and shareholders for many years to come.»

Owatonna featured in business magazine

The business development boom in Owatonna is attracting the attention of media outside the area.

The January edition of Twin Cities Business Magazine features several pages about Owatonna under the title, «Owatonna: The Southern Minnesota city is experiencing a business development boom. It's not by accident.»

Chamber CEO Brad Meier says Owatonna «is a very business-oriented community.» He points out that more than 40 industries in the city's industrial park, «where a lot of entrepreneurship has created a lot of opportunities. Thirty percent of our workforce is in manufacturing, which is more than double the state average.»

The story also talks about the departure of Minimizer from Blooming Prairie to Owatonna. Minimizer vice president Jim Richards said the company wanted a more unified facility and there isn't suitable land for one in Blooming Prairie.

Minimizer began looking elsewhere in the region and found what it was seeking just 20 miles away. Owatonna «was as close to Blooming Prairie as we could get,» Richards said. He cited Owatonna's «positive attitude toward business—specifically, manufacturing» as a factor in the move.

Richards called Owatonna the place where Minimizer needed to be.

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STEELE-DODGE BUSINESS

Susie’s Place provides home for Hayfield residents

BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN
STAFF WRITER

It was a lifelong desire to help other people that led Susan Westin to open Susie’s Place in Hayfield. Licensed as an adult foster care facility, Susie’s Place has been a home to older residents since it opened in 2006. Today, four women call the facility home.

Westin said she has lived in the Hayfield area for her entire life. She said she was born in a “maternity home” just blocks from where she now lives. Her early years were spent in Sargeant, she said, and the family moved to Hayfield when she was 7 years old.

After graduating from Hayfield High School, she said, she went right to work at the local nursing home and started her career in care giving. When her daughter was born, she said, she went to work for Dodge County doing home visits that included personal care, housekeeping and cooking.

She did go back to working at the nursing home and in 2006 she left again, this time to start her own facility.



Susan Westin has taken care of others for her entire adult life and now is the owner of Susie’s Place in Hayfield. Licensed as an adult foster care facility, she currently has four older women living in the home.

“I think you really have to enjoy it or you couldn’t do it.”

Susan Westin
Susie’s Place Owner

Westin and her two employees, Jen Bruce and Renea DeRaad, provide 24-hour care for the residents. The three take turns preparing meals for the residents who all eat together in the dining room. Westin, who also lives in the home, says she is the one primarily responsible for the overnight duties, although Bruce and DeRaad are both willing to stay overnight to give Westin time to visit her daughter and grandchildren in the Twin Cities. Her goal, she said, is get away one or two weekends a month.

The residents are all from the Hayfield area, she said, and she and her staff get to know their families as well.

“I enjoy it so much, I’ve met so many people,” she said.

But getting so close to the residents and their families can be hard. It makes it hard when the person dies, she said.

“It does get hard,” Westin said. “We all kind of grieve. We get pretty attached to them.

“I think you really have to enjoy it or you couldn’t do it.”

Tripp promoted at Home Federal



Samantha Tripp

A Home Federal Bank manager has received a promotion in the new year.

Beginning Jan. 1, Samantha Tripp, who had been branch manager, was promoted to market vice president, Kasson branch president Matt Bradford announced this week.

Tripp currently oversees the operational management of both Home Federal’s Kasson and Owatonna branches. She is a seasoned banker committed to Home Federal’s mission statement of “enhancing the financial well-being of our clients and community one relationship at a time.”

Bradford said, “Sam brings a professional and positive attitude to work each and every day. She has earned the confidence and trust of both her co-workers and clients.”

Home Federal is fortunate to have Tripp as a member of its team, Bradford said, adding everyone is welcomed to stop in at the Kasson branch to congratulate Tripp on her promotion.

Minnesota’s unemployment rate recorded at 3.3%

Minnesota’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rose a tenth of a percent during November to 3.3%, according to data released last week by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

The national seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November fell a tenth of a percent to 3.5%.

Minnesota gained 5,911 jobs from November 2018 to November 2019, a 0.2% increase.

The private sector average wage rate went up 18 cents in November for a 5.2% rise over the year.

“The fall and winter months tend to be unpredictable for job growth because of the seasonal effects of weather,” said DEED Commissioner Steve Grove. “Strong wage growth

and one of the highest labor force participation rates in the nation both suggest that the state continues to experience a tight labor market,” Grove continued.

The labor force participation rate held at 70.3%. The employment to population ratio also held at 68%.

Five supersectors gained jobs in November. The largest gain was in leisure and hospitality (up 3,800) followed by other services (up 900), professional and business services (up 800), financial activities (up 300), trade transportation and utilities (up 300) and government (up 100).

Supersectors losing jobs in November were; construction (down 4,900), manufacturing (down 2,600), education and health services (down 1,500), information (down 100) and mining and logging (down 100).

The Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was the only MSA to lose jobs in November (down 5,729).

Mankato MSA gained 1,518 jobs over the month, the largest gain of any Minnesota MSA. Next largest gains came from Rochester MSA (up 1,253), followed by St. Cloud MSA (1,016) and Duluth-Superior (up 12).

DEED is the state’s principal economic development agency, promoting business recruitment, expansion and retention, workforce development, international trade and community development.

For more information about the agency and its services visit the DEED website or follow DEED on Twitter.

Southern Minnesota Initiative seeks applications for Prosperity Initiative

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), in partnership with Region Nine Development Commission and Faribault Diversity Coalition, is recruiting minority-owned business owners for a new cohort of its Prosperity Initiative.

SMIF is seeking 15 businesses to participate in a 2020 Prosperity Initiative cohort. Past Prosperity Initiative graduates are also encouraged to apply to be part of this program again and take their business to a new level. The program provides directed, culturally sensitive programming, while also creating a unified and coordinated resource structure, informing partners of best practices and creating opportunities for minority populations to network and access the business community. All resources are free for participating businesses. Eligible participants include minorities, women, veterans, persons with disabilities and/or low-income business owners in SMIF’s 20-county region.

According to the US Census Bureau, 29% of Minnesota’s population in 2040 will be people of color, an increase from only 4% in 1980. In response to this rapid growth, the Prosperity Initiative was designed to provide education and business resources to minority business owners and educate resource partners on the barriers and opportunities these individuals encounter. Since 2016, the Prosperity Initiative program has provided 66 clients with one-on-one business coaching.

The Prosperity Initiative is made possible by generous funding from Wells Fargo and Dan and Angie Bastian.

Apply to the Prosperity Initiative 2020 cohort at www.smifoundation.org/prosperity by Jan. 29. Contact Pam Bishop, vice president of economic development at SMIF, at pamb@smifoundation.org or 507-214-7013 with questions.

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Gwen Christensen, 92,
Blooming Prairie



Gwen Christensen

Gwendolyn “Gwen” C. Christensen, age 92, of Blooming Prairie, passed away Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2020 at Prairie Manor Care Center in Blooming Prairie.

Gwendolyn Carvel Olson was born March 11, 1927, in Freeborn County, to Gilford and Virginia (Miller) Olson. She attended school in Freeborn and graduated in 1945. On Jan. 9, 1945, Gwen was united in marriage to John Christensen at her parents’ home. To this union three children were born.

After graduation and her marriage to John, Gwen moved to Chicago and worked in a defense plant while John served his country in the Navy during WWII. Upon John’s discharge, the couple moved to Hartland and in 1959 they moved to Blooming Prairie, where John worked for Lysne Construction and Gwen worked while in Blooming Prairie at Blooming Prairie Public Schools and Continental Phone Company.

She loved dancing, playing cards – especially bridge, she belonged to several bridge clubs. Gwen enjoyed golfing, hardanger, traveling, making lefsa, and was an avid reader, she liked to read the bible. She especially loved spending time with her family and had fond memories of her childhood like tobogganing down “potato hill.”

Survivors include her son, Jeffrey (Sonja) Christensen of Algona, Iowa; two daughters, Pamela Folkens of Blooming Prairie, Jennifer Milton of Blooming Prairie; eight grandchildren; 12 great grandchildren; brother, James (Sharon) Olson of Hartland; sister, Kathryn (Duane) Spooner of Hartland.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Gilford and Virginia Olson; husband, John Christensen in 2004; sons-in-law, Philip Milton and Lee Folkens; brothers, Leslie (Dolores) Olson, Stanley Olson in childhood.

A Memorial Service will be held at 11 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 20, 2020 at First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie. Visitation will be held from 9-11 a.m. prior to the service at the church. Interment will be in Hartland Cemetery, Hartland. Memorials are preferred to the First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie or the Hartland Cemetery. Services are prearranged and performed by Worlein Funeral Home in Blooming Prairie. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

James Allen, 85, Albert Lea



James Allen

A memorial service for James Francis Allen was held on Saturday, Jan. 11, 2020 at St. Theodore Catholic Church in Albert Lea with Father Kurt Farrell officiating. Burial will be in Calvary Cemetery in Rochester at a later date.

Jim passed away on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2020 at St. Mary’s Hospital in Rochester. Jim succumbed to respiratory complications brought on by pneumonia. He was surrounded by family at the time of his passing. He was 85 years old.

James Francis Allen was born on Feb. 5, 1934 in Owatonna to parents, Oren and Catherine (Herren) Allen. He was raised on the family farm between Geneva and Blooming Prairie. After his schooling, Jim joined the United States Army and served honorably from 1956–1958. He was called home early to take over the family farm after his father became ill. He would continue to operate that family farm until he retired at the age of 62.

Jim was united in marriage to Teresa (Gerads) Fakler on June 13, 1981 at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Newry Township. Jim was blessed to become a step-father to nine children, and he thought of Teresa’s family as his own. The couple would operate the family farm together until moving into Albert Lea in 2009.

As with most farmers, Jim didn’t consider farming as an occupation, but more of a way of life. He felt fortunate to care for the land and his animals, all while being able to provide for his family. Jim enjoyed traveling with Teresa in later years and enjoyed his coffee hours with the group of farmers. Spending time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren would always put a smile on his face!

He is preceded in death by both parents, Oren and Catherine Allen; step-son, Steve Fakler; step-daughter in-law, Sue Fakler; and his sister, Donna Ditlevson.

Jim is survived by his wife, Teresa Allen of Albert Lea; brother, Joe Allen of Kasson; sister, Mary Dahlke of Dassel; step-children including Jerry Fakler of Osage, Iowa; Betsy Pelzer of Rochester; Paul Fakler of Mallard, Iowa; Susie (Paul) Foxwell of Byron; Greg (Stefani) Fakler of Blythewood, S.C.; Tim Fakler of West Bend, Iowa; John (Theresa) Fakler of Phoenix; Ann (Byron) Todd of Minneapolis; 17 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and many loving extended relatives and friends.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the American Lung Association: 55 W. Wacker Dr., Suite 1150, Chicago, IL 60601.

Blessed be his memory.

BOOK NOOK

New year, new
signs at the
library

When you go to a new place, do you automatically search for signs to direct you? I find that most helpful in airports, sporting venues, and other public places. Well, I am pleased to announce that we have new signs at the Blooming Prairie Branch Library to help you find what you are looking for.



NANCY VAILLANCOURT

Need an audiobook? Can’t find which magazines can be checked out? Where are those romance novels? Those areas are now easier to find: just look up and see the categories on the signs. Local artist and all-around creative person Sandy Jones has made signs for the different collections in the library. I described what I hoped for and Sandy made that idea even better! (Mike Jones deserves recognition for climbing the stepladder, cutting the chains, and installing the signs.)

Thanks to the Friends of the Library for funding these new signs. The library receives wonderful support from so many in the community. Not every town of 2,000 people has a library! We are grateful for the foresight of leaders over 40 years ago, plus those who even before that emphasized the need for learning. Thanks to all who share, use, and encourage library use. See you at the library!

Sudoku Corner

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

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

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

Jan. 8 Dick Kruckeberg Rick DeYoung	Jan. 16 Jimmy Mans Lauren Hines
Jan. 9 Kory Rafdal April Konz	Jan. 17 Hailey Naatz Sailor Lea Kim Lea
Jan. 12 Jean Haubenschild Ernie Betlach	Jan. 18 Chelsie Hansen Paul Master Grady Strand
Jan. 13 Amelyah Hass Luke Nelson Mannon Rivera-Escandon Kim Erickson	Jan. 19 Carol Holman Bob Farr
Jan. 14 Jeremy Doerhoefer Brayden J. Greene	Jan. 20 Cameron Brown
Jan. 15 Dr. Chad Eischens Pam Hameister Brian Farr	Jan. 21 Kennedy Bishop Dale Borchert Laura Thomas

Anniversaries

Jan. 8 Shannon & Hullo Rivera-Escandon
Jan. 11 Karl & Tricia Steckelberg
Jan. 14 Jay & Jamie Klemmensen
Jan. 21 Mike & Katie Ingvalson

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Recipe Corner

Not Your Grandma's Pumpkin Pie

This is not your Grandma's pumpkin pie recipe, unless your grandmother is creative enough to bake pumpkin pie with milk chocolate chips. Save time by using a pre-made graham cracker crust.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (6 oz) packaged chocolate flavored crumb crust
- 1 egg yolk, slightly beaten
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1 can(15 oz.) pumpkin
- 1 can (14 oz.) sweetened condensed milk (not evaporated milk)
- 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 3/4 Cup milk chocolate chips. Divided.
- Whipped cream and additional milk chocolate chips for garnish

DIRECTIONS

- Heat oven to 350° F. Brush bottom and side of crust with egg yolk to seal crust. Place crust on baking sheet; bake 5 minutes.
- Blend remaining whole egg, pumpkin, sweetened condensed milk and pumpkin pie spice in large bowl. Stir in 1/2 cup milk chocolate chips; pour into crust.
- Place remaining 1/4 cup chips in small microwave-safe bowl. Microwave at MEDIUM (50%) 30 seconds; stir. If necessary, microwave at MEDIUM an additional 10 seconds at a time, stirring after each heating, until chips are melted and smooth when stirred. Drizzle melted chocolate over pie in decorative pattern.
- Bake on baking sheet 50 to 55 minutes or until wooden pick inserted into center of pie comes out clean. Cool 1 hour. Serve topped with whipped cream; garnish with additional milk chocolate chips, if desired. Cover; refrigerate leftover pie. Makes 8 servings.

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Worship & Faith

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Rev. Amanda Floy

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
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Last summer I got married and my husband and I were lucky enough to spend our honeymoon in Iceland, “The Land of Fire and Ice.” Iceland is known for it’s extreme geological contrasts. It is home to some of the largest glaciers in Europe, and some of the world’s most active volcanoes.

Our days were spent exploring Ring-Road along the southern coast. As we drove by some of the most beautiful vistas I have ever seen, we witnessed remnants of an old tradition that extends back to the 9th-century. When the Viking Settlers began exploring Iceland they carefully stacked stones to serve as landmarks on their expeditions. These stacks are called cairns.

These old stone cairns acted as beacons for people travelling in Iceland, a kind of a GPS system of the olden days. The cairns can be both big and small. The Viking explorers needed to be able to find their way back and to lead the way for others through the highlands and over heaths. Nowadays the creation of cairns are discouraged to maintain the integrity of natural spaces, and to promote a leave-no-trace ethic. However, these old cairns, from many years ago, are protected as a window to the past. You can see such cairns in different locations all around Iceland.

Most of the cairns were used as navigation guides through the heaths and wilderness, but you will

see other cairns in Iceland which were erected to show boundaries, watch towers, some were stacked on top of burial mounds, and others were erected in remembrance of people or incidences.

Paul and I marveled at the various sizes, and their abundance. But we didn’t need the cairns for directional aid. We had mile markers on the road to guide us, detailed maps, and GPS when we really needed it. We also had plenty of landmarks, guest houses, gas stations to stop at where we could ask for assistance if we needed it.

Navigating the roads of Iceland proved to be pretty simple. In fact, in present days we have so much technology that, even though

I may have taken some wrong turns, or gotten a little disorientated, I can’t remember the last time I truly got lost on any of my travels. But that doesn’t mean that I have not felt lost before.

Life can drop us in moments or experiences that leave us feeling like we are truly lost and don’t know which direction to go first. Left with that sinking feeling of despair in our stomach we find that there is no road map, or electronic voice telling us to turn right at the next mile marker. So what do we do when heartbreak leaves us feeling lost and alone? When doubts set in and our faith feels lost? When we are lost on the journey of finding purpose or meaning? What

solid ground can we hold onto? What or who in our midst can point us back to the path we are meant to be on? Most likely it won’t be stacked stones, or a map, or a voice from a box repeating “Reroute...” Rather it can come from the community you are in. This is what I think is so beautiful about Christian community.

We are like cairns for one another; stones of all shapes and sizes, big and small who coax each other through our doubts, our heartbreak, our pain, to the next step and the next place of assurance.

We are like cairns for one another; a few humble rocks, reaching upward and standing firm on a path that points us back to God’s love.

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN

AURORA LUTHERAN

6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna
Pastor Stephanie Wood
507-676-5696

Worship: Sunday at 9 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN – ELCA

106 Third St. SE., Geneva
Pastor Kristen Venne
507-256-4288

Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.

FIRST LUTHERAN – AFLC

503 Radel Ct., Ellendale
Pastor Richard Sliper
507-684-2451

Men’s Bible Study: 8 a.m.

Saturday

Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday

(Kids church- 9 a.m. and

Confirmation- 10:15 a.m.)

Jesus and Me: 3:30-5 p.m.

Tuesday & Thursday

Call to Prayer: 7 p.m. Tuesday

Bible Study: 9:30 a.m. Wednesday

Wednesday School: 6:15-7 p.m.

followed by Youth Group- 7-9 p.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN – ELCA

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Rev. Heidi Heimgartner

Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mike Walerius

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firstlutheranbp.com

Worship Service- 9 a.m.

Sunday School- 10 a.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN – LCMC

8953 SW 37th Ave., Hope
Pastor Sandy Miller

507-451-3854

Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

Sunday School, Adult Ed:

10:15 a.m. Sun.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN – LCMS

2500 7th Ave. NE., Owatonna
Pastor Greg Schlicker
Pastor Mark Neumann

507-451-4125

goodshepherdowatonna.com

Worship: 8 a.m., 9:15 a.m. & 10:30

a.m.

Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

MOLAND LUTHERAN – ELCA

7618 NE 84th Ave., Kenyon
Pastor Nancy Edwardson
507-789-6661

Worship: 10:45 a.m. Sun.

Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN – ELCA

9651 SW 75th St., Ellendale
507-465-8366

Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.

Sunday School: 9 a.m. Sun.

REDEEMER LUTHERAN – LCMS

1054 Truman Ave., Owatonna
Pastor Kirk Griebel
507-451-2720

Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

Education Hour: 10:15 a.m. Sun.

RED OAK GROVE LUTHERAN – ELCA

30456 Mower-Freeborn Road,
Austin

Rev. Suzanne Froelich,

Interim Pastor

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www.rog Lutheran.org

Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

Sunday School

(Sept. – May): 10:15 a.m.

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4532 SE 84th Ave., Claremont
Pastor Alan Broadwell
507-528-2404

Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

ST. JOHN’S LUTHERAN – LCMS

28959 630th Ave., Sergeant
Pastor Collin Duling
507-251-5568

Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.

Sunday School: 9 a.m.

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN- ELCA

1301 Lincoln Ave. Owatonna
Pastors Dave Klawiter and Jacie
Richmond

507-451-7293

stjohnowatonna.org

Worship: 5 p.m. Thursday &

Saturday; 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Sunday

Summer Services: 8 a.m. & 9:30

a.m. Sunday

ST. MICHAEL’S LUTHERAN – ELCA

30450 570th Ave., Waltham
Pastor Dwight DoBell
507-567-2474

Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.

ST. PAUL’S LUTHERAN – LCMS

202 E. Park Ave., Hollandale
Pastor Jesse Krusemark
507-567-2272

Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.

Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

ST. PAUL’S LUTHERAN – ELCA

2781 SW 92nd Ave., Meriden
Pastor: Rev. Dean Smith
507-451-2165

Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sunday

Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA

609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
507-451-4520

tlcowatonna.org

Senior Pastor: Rev. Todd Buegler

Associate Pastor:

Rev. Amanda Floy

Deacon: Kris Oppgaard

Worship: 5 p.m. Saturday; 8:15

a.m., 9:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday

Sunday School: 8:15 a.m.

& 9:30 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA

104 First St. SE., Hayfield
Pastor Paul Hauschild
507-477-2248

www.trinityhayfield.org

Worship: 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sun.

Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMS

108 Third Ave. SW., Medford
Pastor Mark Biebighauser

507-451-0447

Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday

Education Hour: 10:15 a.m.

Wednesday Worship: 6:30 p.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMS

57043 300th St., Waltham
Pastor Jesse Krusemark
507-567-2272

Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

ZION LUTHERAN – ELCA

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

Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

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Father Peter Schuster, Parochial
Administrator

507-477-2256

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8:30 am Thursday

Reconciliation: 3:45 pm Saturday

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Father John Sauer
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507-451-1588

www.sacredhearttowatonna.org

Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday;

8:30 a.m. & 10 a.m. Sun.

Spanish Mass: 11:45 a.m. Sun.

Daily Mass: 7:15 a.m.

Reconciliation: 4 p.m. Sat.

Adoration:

8 a.m. – 10 p.m. Thurs.

ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC

114 E. Main St., Blooming Prairie
Father Peter Schuster, Parochial

Administrator

507-583-2784

www.stcolumbanuschurch.com

Mass: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

& 8:30 a.m. Friday

Reconciliation: 9 a.m.

First Friday & Saturday

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH

512 S. Elm Ave., Owatonna
Father James Starasinich
Deacon Patrick Fagan

507-451-4845

Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.

Sunday Mass: 8 & 10 a.m.

Reconciliation: 3-3:30 p.m. Sat.

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507-684-2731

www.ellendaleumc.org

Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

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815 E. University, Owatonna
Rev. Scott Jakel

Linda Boorman, Associate Pastor

Joyce Parker, Associate Pastor

507-451-4734

www.owatonnaumc.org

Traditional Worship (Pathways):

9 a.m. Sunday

NON-DENOMINATIONAL

Hard work pays off for dancers

BP's Just for Kix winter show set for Jan. 19

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

There's no substitute for hard work, believes Blooming Prairie's Just for Kix dance troupe director Elizabeth (Bizzy) Thompson.

Known to her dancers and friends as Bizzy (a name attached to her by a family member), Thompson said hours and hours of hard work paid off for 10 Blooming Prairie Just for Kix dancers who performed in Tampa, Fla. recently at the 31st Annual Outback Bowl.

The team's performance represented the third time Thompson had taken Just for Kix dancers to the Outback Bowl.

This year's appearance in New Year's Day, Jan. 1, was special because the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers were appearing in the Outback Bowl for the first time ever.

It's now history, the Minnesota Gophers defeated the Auburn Tigers,

31-24. The game was played at Raymond James Stadium, the home of the Tampa Bay Bucs National Football League team.

If you didn't see a snippet of ESPN's coverage of the halftime show, you will be able to see the Blooming Prairie Just for Kix dancers perform their pre-game show at the Blooming Prairie Just for Kix Winter Showcase.

Two performances are scheduled at 4:30 and 6 p.m. in the Blooming Prairie High School gymnasium. All 115 Blooming Prairie Just for Kix dancers will perform at the winter show.

Director Thompson is assisted by assistant and head instructor Alyxxa Abrego and by Wyatt Voss.

The Outback Bowl Tour spanned one week from Dec. 27 to Jan. 3. Following their rigorous practices and performance at the Outback



SUBMITTED PHOTO

It was an impressive site, dancers, flag lines and a 150-piece marching band at the 31st Annual Outback Bowl in Tampa. Florida on New Year's Day, Jan. 1.



BIZZY THOMPSON

Bowl, the dancers had a chance to either go to Universal Studios or to Disney World.

Blooming Prairie dancers ranged from fourth graders to juniors.

The local group was part of a pre-game performance and halftime show on New Year's Day. Private studios, high school dance teams and college dance teams were also part of the two performances.

Local dancers included Brianna Hensrud, Wyatt Voss, Emily Kubicek, Natalie Schumacher, Kaydance VerHey-Schumacher, Hailey Schumacher, Maveda Warner, Caitlyn Stangl, Jamie Reinke and Elizabeth Dohrmann.

Chaperones included Thompson, Heidi Stangl, Tiffany Peterson, Kim and Kurt Jones, Sara Reinke, Amada and Nate Schumacher. Justin Schumacher also made the trip with his parents.

A 1,500-piece marching band and flag lines also performed at halftime of the Outback Bowl.

«It's so cool,» exclaimed a happy Thompson, who still is celebrating the dance team's accomplishments.

Songs danced by the Just for Kix «kiddos» as Bizzy refers to them, included «Don't Stop Believin'» «Eye of the Tiger,» and «Final Countdown.»

An Armed Forces Salute was also part of the Outback Bowl halftime show.

«We have such a giving community by the support shown our dancers,» remarked Thompson. The dance experience gives the dancers life lessons, she says.

The local dance group, she said, is hopeful to return to the Outback Bowl on Jan. 1, 2022.

Just for Kix is a Minnesota-based company located in Brainerd. The dance company was started in 1981 and is now prevalent in 14 states. «We have 21,000 students nationwide and it's growing,» said Thompson.

Thompson, who started dancing in eighth grade, says Just for Kix dancers can start as young as age 3 and they can keep dancing through their senior year of high school.

She said the local dancers have brought recognition to Blooming Prairie on a national level. «Something like this brings the dancers, parents and business community closer together,» she believes.

Blooming Prairie High School does not have a dance line, but Kix dancers consider themselves a staple of the community. «We're actually a dance team in Blooming Prairie,» Thompson said.

The most recent group of Blooming Prairie dancers now owns a lifetime of memories.

«They are my babies, all my kiddos,» says Thompson. «We are very blessed to be part of a community that shares its dancers with everyone,» she added.

OBITUARIES

Lanny Callahan, 63, Blooming Prairie

Lanny Michael Callahan, age 63 of Blooming Prairie, passed away peacefully surrounded by family, on Saturday, Jan. 11, 2020 at Methodist Hospital in Rochester, after suffering complications from a liver transplant in August.

He was born on Dec. 21, 1956 in Austin, to Walter and Mary (Shatek) Callahan. He was born and raised in Austin and made his home in Blooming Prairie. Lanny was united in marriage to Tammy Shawback (Mugridge) on Aug. 23, 1975. To this union two daughters were born, Stacy and Jessica. Lanny and Tammy recently celebrated their 44th wedding anniversary. Lanny finished his career at Bosch, in Owatonna. He had previously worked at DMF, Mustang and OTC.

He was a member of the KC Club and Moose Lodge in Austin. He enjoyed hunting and fishing, but most of all, Lanny enjoyed spending time with his family. His grandchildren were the light of his life and he enjoyed their family trips to Disney World. He will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved him.

Survivors include his wife, Tammy Callahan of Blooming Prairie; daughters, Stacy (Michael Jaramillo) Callahan, and Jessica (Brandon) Johnson; grandchildren, Sophia Johnson, Aubrey Johnson, and Logan Johnson; brother, Larry (Debbie) Callahan; sisters, Laurie (Richard) Sylvester and Lois Callahan; mother-in-law, Catherine Shawback; brother-in-laws, J.R. (Pam) Shawback and Donald Shawback; sister-in-laws, Mary Jo (Charlie) Wallace and Amelia (Lonell) Lim; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Walter and Mary Callahan; sister, Linda Butler; father-in-law's, Leslie Shawback, and Ronald Mugridge.

A Memorial Service will be held at 11 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020 at St. Columbanus in Blooming Prairie, with visitation one hour prior to service. Visitation will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020 at Worlein Funeral Home in Blooming Prairie.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred to Blooming Prairie Cancer Group. Services are being performed by Worlein Funeral Home in Blooming Prairie, Minnesota. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.



Lanny Callahan

DeAnn Kaplan, 81, Blooming Prairie

DeAnn L. Kaplan, age 81, of Blooming Prairie, passed away Sunday, Jan. 12, 2020.

Friends may greet the family 4-7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020 at the Brick Meger Funeral Home, Owatonna and one hour prior to the funeral at the church. A family reflection will start at 10:20 a.m. followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10:30 a.m. Friday, Jan. 17, 2020 at Holy Trinity Catholic Church at Litomysl. A Parish rosary will be recited at 3:45 p.m. on Thursday before the visitation at the funeral home.

DeAnn was born Sept. 29, 1938 in Owatonna, the daughter of John and Bonita (Hondl) Resler. She attended school in Owatonna. She was united in marriage to Eugene Kaplan on June 16, 1955 at Holy Trinity Catholic Church at Litomysl.

She worked alongside her husband on the farm in rural Steele County and then worked at Jostens for a time. DeAnn started working at Steele Waseca Co-operative Electric in 1984 as a customer service representative and later worked as an administrative assistant until she retired in 2001.

DeAnn was a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church at Litomysl and the rural Homemakers Club. She also taught religion class for many years. Life interests include reading and traveling to Japan, Australia, Spain, Germany and France. She enjoyed time with her family.

DeAnn will be missed by her children: Shelby (Ed) O'Brien of Lakeville, Sherrie (Steve) Meixner of Moorhead, Jerry (Barb) Kaplan of Blooming Prairie, Gary (Linda) Kaplan of LaGrange, GA and Grant (Cathy) Kaplan of Medford. Grandchildren Beth (Josh Jerney) O'Brien, Erin (Nate Mink) O'Brien, Kari (Adam) Wilson, Brad Meixner, Mandy (Paul) Booth, Nicole (Derek Storey) Kaplan, Josh Kaplan, Chris Kaplan, Jeremy (Leah) Kaplan, Jake (Dana) Kaplan and 16 Great-grandchildren.

DeAnn is preceded in death by her parents, husband Eugene, two grandsons Eric Kaplan and Jonny Kaplan, sister Dorothy, brothers Clem and Lloyd.

For more information or to leave a condolence go to www.brick-megerfuneral-home.com.



DeAnn Kaplan

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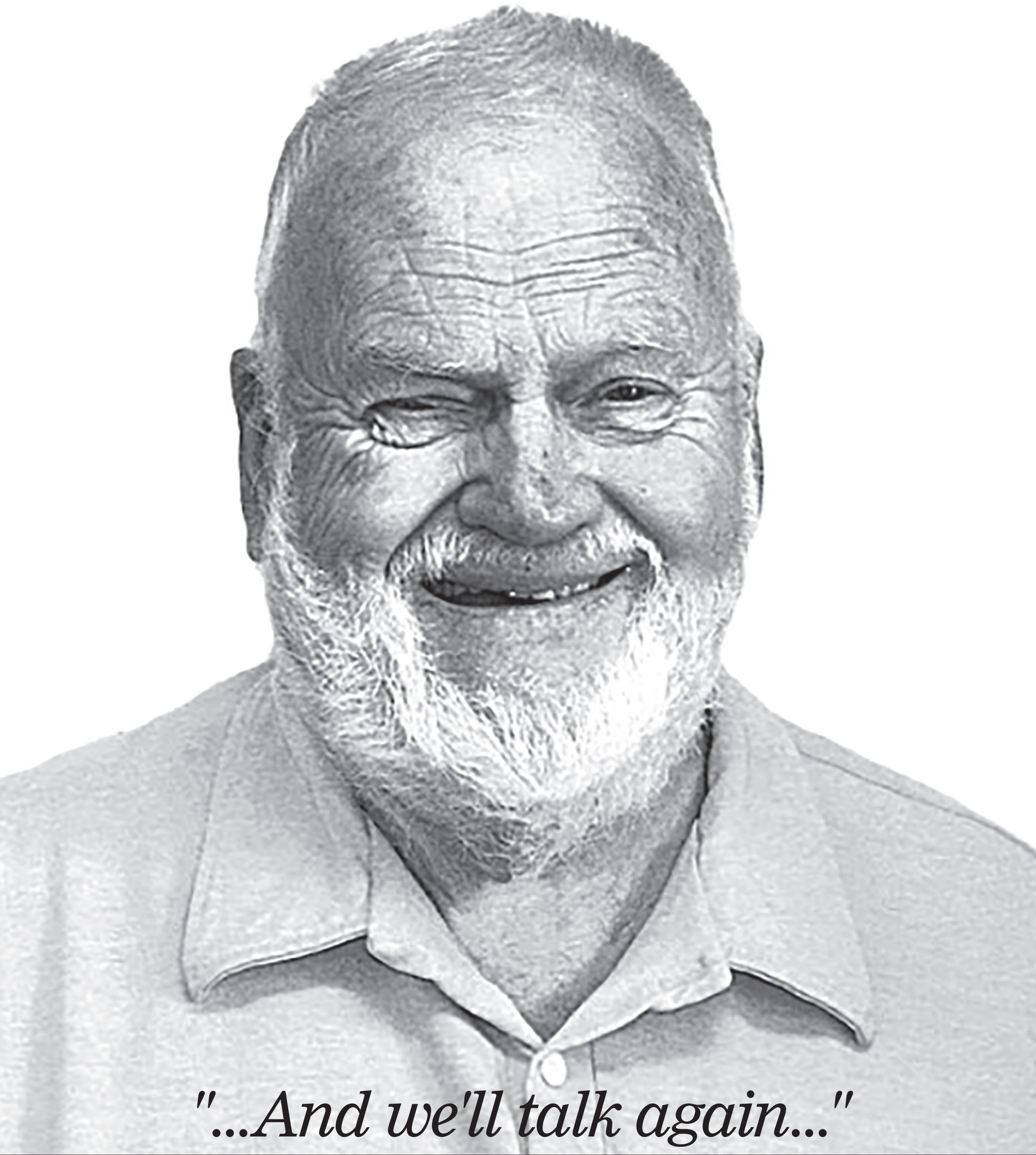
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LeMar Nelson

1932-2020

LeMar Arden Nelson, age 87 of Blooming Prairie, passed away Thursday, Jan. 9, 2020 at Masonic Homes in Bloomington. LeMar was born Nov. 19, 1932 in Watertown, S.D. to Arthur and Esther (Carlson) Nelson. He graduated from Strandburg, S.D. High School in 1950. He attended General Beadle State Teachers College in Madison, S.D. (thus the nickname

“General”). He began teaching in Chester, S.D. in 1954 and began teaching in Blooming Prairie in 1957 where he taught, coached, and was principal for 35 years until his retirement in 1992. On Aug. 10, 1959, he was united in marriage to Anne Barkley. They enjoyed camping, traveling, and reading. He was an avid sports fan, and enjoyed theater, especially musicals. He loved singing and was a member of the First

Lutheran Choir for 60 years. After retiring from teaching, he wrote for the Steele County Times (formerly Blooming Prairie Times) until his death, covering sports and writing a personal column. He was preceded in death by his parents and wife, Anne. Survivors include: his daughters, Anne (Vern) Benson of Edina; Teri (Rich) Hendrickson of Richfield; Renee (James) Orrell of New Hope. Grandchildren

Trista (Jay) Hansen; Jesse (Lisa) Benson; Rebecca Hendrickson. Great grandchildren Tyler Hansen; Anna Benson; Sophia Benson. Sister Dorothy (Norman) Bennett; brothers Randy (Joy) Nelson; Paul (Sharon) Nelson. Numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins. A Memorial Service will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020 at First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie with Pastor Hei-

di Heimgartner officiating. A visitation will be held from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday at the church. Interment will take place at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family would like all donations to go to a LeMar Nelson scholarship fund to be set up in the near future. Services are performed by Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.



Whitey Hagen and his granddaughter Brenna Hagen used some balancing techniques to raise some money last Friday night at the Geneva Cancer Auction held at the Geneva Bar & Grill.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

‘It’s for a good cause’ *Auction benefits cancer in Geneva*

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Why would someone pay \$950 for a canoe paddle?
Why would someone pay \$950 for a wooden model dump truck?
The answer is the same to both questions.
«It’s for a good cause,» said Josh Raimann of Wells. He bought the canoe paddle initially for \$325 and then turned it over to Geneva Cancer Group volunteers.
The paddle came up for auction again the same night, the first night of the auction at the Geneva Bar & Grill last Friday night. During the second bidding, he paid \$625 for the paddle.
The paddle shows a sketch of Whitey and LaJune. Whitey is holding a chicken and LaJune is holding the money.
The paddle reads: «From handmade to homemade; with many a helping hand; we ask our friends and neighbors to join us in the stand to find a cure for cancer; it is the only thing we ask and working all together, we can accomplish this mighty task.»
Whitey Hagen, 87, one of the originators of the



David Bagley of Albert Lea was the successful bidder for this homemade wooden dump truck auctioned off at Friday’s auction in Geneva. He was the successful bidder at \$950.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

37th annual auction, took the paddle home and likely would be introducing it as an auction item again sometime.
The wooden model dump truck carrying the Geneva, MN monogram on the door

was purchased by David Bagley of Albert Lea. «I buy wood trucks,» remarked Bagley. He said he has bought two other wood trucks to also benefit drives to fight cancer.
The crowd on opening night was «outstanding,» said Hagen, who started the evening’s activities by taking the auctioneer’s chair and auctioning off some items before giving the microphone to auctioneers Jim Magnes and Tracy Holland.
Hagen then persuaded granddaughter Brenna Hagen to go with him on a crusade to collect money by putting bar trays on their heads. They waded through the shoulder-to-shoulder crowd by collecting \$148.
«I am just thrilled to be part of this,» Hagen said with emotion.
Hagen, his wife LaJune and former Geneva Bar & Grill owner Hank Thompson and his wife Judy (since passed from cancer) sat down one afternoon in 1984 and decided something should be done to fight cancer.
Whitey’s brother Richard died from cancer at age 47 in 1983. «Hank told me, why don’t you have an auction in memory of your brother,» Whitey recalls. Hagen had previously worked with a fundraising auction in Albert Lea at Eddy’s Bar, thus he knew some of the tricks to make such an event successful.
The 2020 auction is split into two weekends, last Friday and Saturday and

next Friday and Saturday, Jan. 17 and 18.
Hagen was pleased with the first night’s auction results. We’ve had a lot of fun over the years and it’s the best thing I got involved in,» said Hagen.
It was also announced that some other Geneva Cancer Group fundraisers have done quite well. Barb Kuchenbecker, former Geneva Bar & Grill owner, announced that the wild game feed had brought in \$26,000 and the purse bingo event had netted \$5,150.
It’s all about believing in a cause, many of the auction guests said.
Hagen said the auction is now run by his three sons, Keith, Greg and James. The eldest Hagen still is nearby to lend his support.
The auction definitely energizes Hagen and anyone who associates with him. His wife of 63 years, LaJune Hagen, is also near his side to help in any way she can.
Both Whitey and his wife LaJune are cancer survivors. While on the microphone, Hagen pointed to Blooming Prairie Cancer Group board members, Cheri Krejci and Jennifer Milton, and saluted the Blooming Prairie state championship football team.
«God Bless all of you,» said Hagen as he sat down to be a spectator.
After next weekend’s events, the funds go to the Eagles Cancer Telethon in Rochester, to the University of Minnesota and to the Hormel Institute.



This paddle earned \$950 at the Geneva Cancer Auction. The paddle has a cartoon likeness of auction organizers Whitey and LaJune Hagen.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Music Boosters raise funds for Owatonna musicians, pick 2020 Hall of Fame class

BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN
DCI COUNTY WRITER

Owatonna music lovers turned out in force Saturday night for the 10th annual Music Boosters of Owatonna fundraising concert.
More than a dozen musicians and musical groups were on stage at the Owatonna High School auditorium for nearly two hours of music.
The evening began with members of the Lincoln Elementary Choir and World Percussion group showing off their talents and continued with a variety of performers, mostly Owatonna students, and wrapping up with several selections by the OHS Jazz Ensemble. Performers included a flute quartet, a mixed woodwind duet, a cello duet, seventh grade strings, a vocal quartet, the OHS Concert Band Percussion group, the OHS Dinner Ensemble and Owatonna Middle School French horn quartet as well as a number of soloists.
The Owatonna Community Chorale also sang several selections.
Owatonna Superintendent Jeff Elstad and his daughter, Kaia, emceed the event with Elstad joining the Jazz Ensemble to close out the evening with a performance of Heartache Tonight.
Including a silent auction, the event raised over \$8,000 for the MBO.
The MBO was formed to support and advocate for music and music education as essential to the lifelong learning of students and the community.
The group annually provides scholarships for high school All-State students to defray the costs of participation, helps with middle and high school solo and ensemble contest accompanist fees and middle school solo and ensemble contest entry fees. The MBO has also purchased instruments and other

items for the district.
The concert also included the announcement of the second group to be inducted into the Owatonna Music Hall of Fame.
Named to the Hall of Fame for 2020 will be Carol Jensen, Ray Lacina, the Meisel family and Laurie Meister.
Jensen is a 1963 graduate of Owatonna High School who was active in band, orchestra, choir and carolers during her school years. She has played with the Women’s Army Corps Band, the Rochester Symphony and numerous groups in the Twin Cities as well as being the music director and conductor of the St. Anthony Civic Orchestra.
Lacina has been an educator in Owatonna schools for 30 years and is involved in a variety of community events including the Arts Center and Little Theatre. He also plays taps at veterans’ funerals.
The Meisel family came to America from Germany and Lothar and his father, Kurt, begin their violin making business in Owatonna in 1957, working closely with the Owatonna schools in repairing and supplying violins to students.
Pat Meisel began teaching violin students in 1964 and was the only string teacher at that time. She is still actively playing her viola in several groups in the area.
Meister played piano, violin and harp, graduating in 1992. Since then she has served on the faculties of several prestigious organizations and played her harp with symphonies all over the U.S. She is currently a free-lance musician performing with several symphonies and giving lessons in piano and harp.
The new members of the Hall of Fame will be recognized at the May Pops Concert with a special reception preceding the concert.

2020 MUSIC HALL OF FAME OWATONNA MUSIC BOOSTERS

- Carol Jensen
- Ray Lacina
- The Meisel Family
- Laurie Meister

Owatonna Curling Club debuts new renovation

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Prior to last week’s fair board meeting, the Owatonna Curling Club invited board members and directors to take a tour of its revamped facilities.
The club did all of the fundraising for the revitalization project with support from the board.

In all, the club raised a total of \$29,000 through a GoFundMe, combined with donations as well as a grant from the Owatonna Foundation topping \$9,000.
Some of the new additions include a remodeled entryway, a new kitchen, and new wall paneling within the rink. The

SEE CURLING CLUB, B3



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

The newly remodeled interior of the Owatonna Curling Club. The club recently showcased some of the improvements made during its 2019 revitalization project for the Steele County Fair Board.



Steele Talkin'
ANDREA MARSHALL

“The days are getting longer!” While that statement is true enough, for many people, it is of little comfort knowing long, sunny days still feel months and months away.

With that thought consuming my mind, I clicked “submit” on my amazon account today. The big purchase you ask? A product called, happy light (Verilux brand). I know it sounds kind of strange, but for myself and the many other people who struggle with the “Winter Blues,” I’m hoping it will give me some relief.

What exactly is this affliction? The medical term is Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and it is a specific type of depression that comes and goes with the seasons, typically starting in the fall and early winter and going away in the spring/summer. Since feeling the urge to hibernate on cold January days seems to be a norm for many Minnesotans, how does one know when they are struggling with more than just the “winter blues?” Seasonal Affective Disorder is a real thing and affects millions of people.

What are some common symptoms? SAD symptoms are the same criteria you’d need for a diagnosis of major

depression. These might include a depressed mood, feelings of hopelessness, a lack of energy, difficulty concentrating, changes in sleep and appetite, a loss of pleasure in activities you once loved, and even thoughts of death or suicide. Persons with the winter version of SAD might also notice the following unique symptoms:

- Heaviness in arms and legs
- Frequent oversleeping/fatigue
- Cravings for carbohydrates/weight gain
- Relationship problems

What causes SAD? Researchers have yet to uncover the specific cause for SAD. We do know, however, that several factors are at play. The reduction in sunlight in winter can throw your biological clock out of whack and reduce levels of serotonin (a brain chemical that regulates your mood) and melatonin (a chemical that regulates sleep and mood). Many depression sufferers also have Vitamin D deficiencies as well.

SAD can happen to anyone, however, those individuals at increased risk are young adults, females, and people who live farther from the equator or have a family history of depression.

What are the treatments and therapies? There are four major types of treatment for SAD: medication; light therapy; psychotherapy; vitamin D. These may be used alone or in combination. As with any mental health problem, there is no one-size-fits-all treatment.

Here are a few options to explore with your doctor.

• **Medication** – Antidepressants have proven to be effective for people with SAD, especially those with intense symptoms. Medication requires patience because it can take several weeks before you begin to feel the effects. It’s also important not to stop taking the medication if you feel better. Consult with your doctor before you change your dosage and let him or her know if you experience any side effects.

• **Psychotherapy** – Talk therapy can be an invaluable option for those with SAD. A psychotherapist can help you identify patterns in negative thinking and behavior that impact depression, learn positive ways of coping with symptoms, and institute relaxation techniques that can help you restore lost energy.

• **Light therapy** – Phototherapy involves exposing oneself to light via a special box or lamp. This device produces similar effects to natural light, triggering chemicals in your brain that help regulate your mood. This treatment has proven effective especially for those who experience the winter version of SAD.

• At present, **vitamin D supplementation** by itself is not regarded as an effective SAD treatment. The reason behind its use is that low blood levels of vitamin D were found in people with SAD. The low levels are

usually due to insufficient dietary intake or insufficient exposure to sunlight. While the evidence for its use had been mixed, some studies show that its as effective as light therapy.

So, what can you do today? In addition to seeking help from your doctor, there are lifestyle changes that can improve symptoms and lift your mood. You might try going outside more often, getting plenty of sunlight, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting plenty of sleep, and practicing relaxation exercises.

Planning a healthier lifestyle is never a bad idea. But don’t beat yourself up if your symptoms don’t improve right away. Don’t brush them off as the January blues and simply hunker down until spring. Asking for help is a sign of strength and movement towards a better version of yourself. Consider how you can start managing seasonal affective disorder today and live a healthier life in every season. I hope that by sharing my struggles, it will help reduce the stigma associated with any mental health issue and inspire people to follow professional medical advice and/or seek any necessary help they need to live their best life!

Andrea Marshall is a health education specialist with Steele County Public Health in Owatonna. Steele Talkin’ is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Outgoing president of the Kiwanis Club of Owatonna Dean Kirchner, left, and treasurer Jerry Ganfield accept recognition as an Eliminate Project Model Club. The local club is one of the few clubs in Minnesota to be recognized for this particular milestone.

Kiwanis Club exceeds local fundraising goal for International’s Eliminate Project

With the concluding 2019 fiscal year, the Kiwanis Club of Owatonna has been recognized by Kiwanis International for surpassing its fundraising contribution to the Eliminate Project, an international effort to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus infections that kill thousands of children and their mothers in multiple underdeveloped countries. Since the project’s inception in 2010, Kiwanis Clubs across the globe have raised more than \$110 million and eliminated the disease in 47 countries, the raised funds administered in each country by UNICEF.

The Kiwanis Club of Owatonna was honored as a model club, one of only four of the 37 clubs in Minnesota’s Division 6 that matched or exceeded the International goal of \$750 per member. The club, which meets at SpareTime Entertainment noon Wednesdays, contributed \$10,093 to the project or more than \$917 per member. The funds were raised over the years through three principal fundraising efforts including peanut sales, flower sales and waffle

breakfasts. Funds from these projects also underwrite books for kids’ Read Around the World campaign, local non-profit organizations, such as Crisis Resource Center, Food Shelf, Clothesline, Boy and Girl Scouts, Public Health Nursing, Art Center and Park & Rec scholarships as well as scholarships for high school seniors.

While the Eliminate Project is still ongoing, since maternal and neonatal tetanus continues as a deadly disease still in 12 additional countries, Kiwanis International continues to contribute to its elimination.

Outgoing president Dean Kirchner and treasurer Jerry Ganfield accepted recognition as an Eliminate Project Model Club at the end of the year.

Kiwanis Club welcomes men and women into its membership who particularly wish to focus on needs of young children and youth. Current officers are Gege Abraham, president; Twylah Ottman, vice president; Cindy Barta, secretary and Jerry Ganfield, treasurer.

Three Steele County Commissioners up for re-election this fall

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

At the tail end of their first term as county commissioners, Rick Gnemi of District 3, Jim Abbe of District 4, and Greg Krueger of District 5 will look to decide whether or not they wish to file for re-election come this May.

All three commissioners were elected in 2016, with Krueger most recently serving as board chair for 2019. “As my year as chairman comes to an end, I am proud of the accomplishments Steele County made in 2019,” Krueger said during the meeting.

“A new public works complex –nine years in the making once a final design was agreed upon –one which made common sense and was an affordable alternative and one that was built on time and on budget,” Krueger said.

He also mentioned several other accomplishments for the past year. “The sale of Park Place and Cedarview properties to Bradford Holdings to create a senior campus of cooperative, assisted living and long-term care living for seniors in Steele County,” Krueger added. “The completion of our courthouse renovation, now with a new roof, it will

serve Steele County for decades to come.”

After singling out many of this year’s accomplishments, Krueger also had a few words for the board. “All of these accomplishments plus many, many more were only made possible by a commission that understands how important each and every county employee is to a tax payer funded operation,” he said proudly. “All of this was accomplished with a less than 4 percent levy increase.”

At the end of his remarks Krueger thanked all of the county employees, his fellow commissioners, and the tax payers of Steele

County. “What a great team,” the commissioner concluded.

With Krueger’s tenure as board chair over, it was time for the board to consider his replacement. Krueger nominated Commissioner Jim Abbe to be board chair for 2020 while his fellow Commissioner James Brady will serve as vice chair.

During the routine organizational meeting, the board also determined the schedule for this year’s meetings and named citizen appointments to advisory committees and boards as well as board appointments for the 2020 year.

OWATONNA CURLING CLUB: debuts new renovation FROM B2

club also features a new television, which will be used to broadcast curling competitions.

“We added about 30 feet of space to sit and socialize,” Curling Club President Ryan Claussen explained. “It’s made hosting tournaments much better.” The Owatonna Curling Club hosts three tournaments a year and is home to league and youth matches.

As one of the few curling facilities within the surrounding area, the Owatonna Curling Club sees a bevy of activity throughout the season. “We have 140 people in our club,” Claussen said. “We’ve had people here from all over, including Minneapolis, New Jersey, and even Scotland.” The additions to the clubhouse will also be beneficial come fair time, when the facility is used to house exhibits. “During the fair it will be much more spacious,” Claussen said before adding that there is still some more work to be done. “We have much more things planned.”

The Owatonna Curling Club was founded in 1968 after a group of nine individuals came together to discuss forming a curling organization. Some of their earliest years were spent in the Four Seasons Centre, which was able to provide ice and climate control.

In the fall of 1978, the club relocated from the Four Seasons Centre to the old “pony barn” next door. Since that time, it has

become a staple of the fair grounds during the winter season, playing host to a passionate group of curlers, both old and young.

People from around the region are involved in the club, including Claussen who hails from Rochester, and several individuals from Blooming Prairie, Owatonna, and the surrounding area.

During the tour, the fair board members were impressed by the new addi-

tions and the club’s determination to acquire its own funds for the project. “The Curling Club did all the fundraising on their own,” Fair Board President Dan Deml remarked as he looked over the new entryway.

With over a century of history, the Owatonna Curling Club will continue to attract fans and members well into the future as they seek to improve the legacy of this great Owatonna amenity. The club

boasts two sheets dedicated to the sport of curling, and a newly remodeled space for spectators.

The Owatonna Curling Club is located at 1440 S Elm Ave, on the Steele County Fairgrounds in Owatonna. For those interested in learning more about curling, or looking to take a peek at some of the new additions to the rink, the club will be hosting an open house for the public on Saturday, Feb. 8 from 5 to 7 p.m.

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of the Week

Owen Schlaak

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This week’s Panther of the Week is Owen Schlaak. He is the son of Tony and Cassie Schlaak and they reside in New Richland. Owen is in Mr. Beynon’s third grade class.

Owen shows great Panther Pride in school. He’s dedicated, respectful, and gives his max effort. His hard work has had him move up multiple reading levels. He’s also a quiet leader who leads by example.

Owen enjoys playing outside, playing football, and playing Fortnite. Keep up the great work Owen!

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BLOOMING PRAIRIE

JAN. 16
6 p.m. – Chamber Annual Banquet, Servicemen's Club
6:30 p.m. – Family Fun Night, BP Library

JAN. 22
10:30 a.m. – Storytime, BP Library

JAN. 19
BP Cancer Group Annual Breakfast, Pizza Cellar Just for Kix Winter Show

JAN. 27
6:30 p.m. – Fire Relief Association Meeting

JAN. 21
10:30 a.m. – Storytime, BP Library

5 p.m. – Ambulance Commission Meeting

ELLENDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

JAN. 17
10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

JAN. 22
10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

JAN. 20
10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

JAN. 16
6:30 p.m. – Family Storytime, Owatonna Library

JAN. 18
5 p.m. – Rice Lake Candlelight Event, Rice Lake State Park

JAN. 21
9:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

– Preschool Storytime, Owatonna Library
4:30 p.m. – Library Board Meeting, Owatonna Library
7 p.m. – Owatonna City Council Meeting, City Admin Building

JAN. 22
Bold & Cold Winter Celebration

Critical need for blood and platelet donors after the holidays

The American Red Cross currently has a critical need for blood and platelet donors of all blood types – especially type O – to make an appointment now to give and help replenish the blood supply after the holiday weeks. Right now, the Red Cross has less than a three-day supply of type O blood.

During the weeks of Christmas and New Year's, about 500 fewer blood drives were hosted by volunteer sponsor groups than required to meet patient needs. Many groups postpone blood drives during the winter holidays when travel and holiday activities may make it challenging for many donors to give. In fact, AAA estimated that a record 115.6 million Americans traveled during the holiday period of Dec. 21 through Jan. 1.

"Lifesaving medical treatments and emergencies never take a holiday," said Paul Sullivan, senior vice president, Red Cross Biomedical Services. "Declines in donations can affect patient care. That's why the Red Cross is encouraging eligible donors to make an appointment to give now and help those sidelined by illness and trauma."

Donors are urged to make an appointment to give now using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting 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 Jan. 15-31:

Freeborn
Albert Lea
Jan. 24: 3 p.m. - 7 p.m., St. Theodore Catholic Church, 308 E. Fountain St.

Mower
Austin
Jan. 21: 1 p.m. - 7 p.m., St. Augustine Catholic Church, 405 4th St. NW
Jan. 22: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Mower County Senior Citizens Center, 400 3rd Ave. NE
Jan. 27: 1 p.m. - 7 p.m., Holiday Inn, 1701 4th St. NW
Jan. 28: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m., Holiday Inn, 1701 4th St. NW
Jan. 28: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m., Austin Eagles Lookout Arie 703, 107 11st NE

Steele
Owatonna
Jan. 31: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m., Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2500 7th Ave. NE



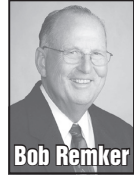
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Bob Remker

Snowshoe, hike or ski by candlelight at Rice Lake State Park Saturday

The Department of Natural Resources will host more than 30 candlelight events at Minnesota state parks and trails this winter, including one at Rice Lake State Park on Saturday, Jan. 18. Drop by any time between 5 and 8 p.m. for skiing, snowshoeing or hiking as stars twinkle overhead and candles flicker in the snow.

"Few things transform a winter evening like soft light on snow," said Erika Rivers, director of the DNR's Parks and Trails Division. "Candles and lanterns help to create a magical experience, especially when coupled with light from the moon and a starry sky."

The 1/2-mile and mile trails start at the boat ramp parking lot and are suitable for beginner-level skiers, snowshoers, or hikers of all ages.

Take a s'mores break in the warming shelter or by the crackling bonfire, and

then enjoy hot beverages and treats at the park office.

A vehicle permit is required to enter Minnesota state parks. Although permits are available at the park, you can save time by getting one in advance. Visit mndnr.gov/reservations to buy a one-day (\$7) or year-round (\$35) permit.

In the event of severe weather, call 507-414-6191 for updates or check the visitor alert online at mndnr.gov/ricelake.

Other candlelight events will take place throughout the state in January and February, offering a variety of terrain and scenery. For the complete schedule—including dates, times and other details—visit mndnr.gov/candlelight.

For more information, contact the DNR Information Center at info.dnr@state.mn.us or 888-646-6367 (8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8-4:30 p.m. Saturday).

Metro collage exhibit opens in Austin

The ArtWorks Center, 300 N. Main St., Austin, is opening a new exhibit featuring Emily Lavalier, Cora Feist and Cynder Higgins. The show opened on Jan. 10 and closes Friday, March 27. Admission is free.

Emily Lavalier is a self-taught collage artist residing in Minneapolis. Her high-density collage style begins with a hand drawn sketch covered by layers of paper from recycled magazines, thrift store children's books, and found objects. Each original is uniquely three-dimensional and takes anywhere from 200 to 500 hours to complete. Lavalier earned a degree in communications from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and works as an employment consultant for Hammer Residences, helping adults with disabilities find gainful employment. Lavalier exhibited at the 2019 Austin ArtWorks Festival where she won a Visual Artists Committee Award.

Cora Feist is a ninth grader at Austin High School. Feist says that oil painting is her favorite medium and "I love starting new paintings and discovering where they will go." Feist won an award at the student exhibit at the Austin ArtWorks Festival in 2019. In addition to her talents in a variety of visual art mediums, Feist was a finalist for the 2018 Richard Eberhart Poetry Contest.

Cynder Higgins is a senior at Austin High School. She is also enrolled in Post-Secondary classes at Riverland Community College. Higgins won awards in the student exhibit at Austin ArtWorks Festival in 2018 and 2019. She will be exhibiting a variety of media including photography, water color, ceramic and mixed media. Higgins says, "My art often represents the perpetual history a subject has and how it exists within its environment."

Ladies Night Out to benefit Habitat for Humanity

Ladies, we know how hard you work every day. Whether it's dealing with work, or taking care of the family, cooking, cleaning and balancing the check book; you need a break. Two Rivers Habitat for Humanity and the ReStore want to invite every woman in the area to a night of restoration.

On Feb. 27, Two Rivers is partnering with Williams Health Center to host a "Ladies Night Out" event that's free to attend at the Cambria Gallery in Rochester from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Pamper yourself with featured vendors for hair, nails, clothing, beauty, weight loss, nutrition and other health needs. This is all about you and taking time to enjoy some time for yourself.

Two Rivers would like to thank Williams Health Center for choosing to partner with Habitat for Humanity as its chosen charity for the evening. Call 507-281-4878 for more information and reservations.

Two Rivers has been serving families throughout Steele, Dodge, Waseca, Olmsted and Wabasha counties since 1990.

Brewers wanted for upcoming promotion

Hops for Habitat is looking for local brewers to help its cause through an upcoming benefit.

Two Rivers Habitat for Humanity will be offering a Hops for Habitat Brew Crew on Saturday, April 4. Two Rivers wants breweries to assist in the benefit to support Habitat for Humanity.

The benefit, which will be held at the Four Seasons Centre in Owatonna, offers a beer tasting experience that allows Two Rivers to showcase great craft beer and breweries from around Minnesota and beyond.

As part of the promotion, Two Rivers will offer breweries marketing to post as well as social media promotion. A special write-up will be provided on Two Rivers' Facebook event page. The breweries involved will also get special recognition at the Hops for Habitat event. There is no cost for breweries to be involved.

The assistance of the breweries will allow Habitat to build and repair more safe and healthy homes to help local families throughout the region.

For additional information, contact Ken Quattrin at kquattrin@tworivershabitat.org.

Workshop to help farmers and landowners counter floods, fish kills on Jan. 25

Farmers, landowners, and anglers can learn how to buck the damage caused by extreme weather to soil and water during a program on Saturday, Jan. 25, being hosted by the Izaak Walton League's (Ikes) Owatonna chapter and the Upper Mississippi River Initiative (UMRI).

The workshop begins with registration at 9 a.m. at the Albert F. Reding Environmental Education Center, 1546 58th St. SW, Owatonna and runs until 1:30 p.m. Please RSVP for lunch to Gary Schwartz, presike1@live.com. A \$5 donation will help offset the cost of the meal.

Confirmed speakers include Minnesota cover crop farmer-experts Tom Cotter and Myron Sylling, and George Boody of the Land Stewardship Project (LSP), also a co-sponsor.

"This whole thing is about improving soil and cutting back on erosion," said Randy Schroht, an Ikes member and area farmer. Speakers will address why no-till fields need cover crops to battle erosion, how to strike a better deal for conservation in rental agreements, the role of livestock, 260-bushel corn, and how soil health pays the bills.

Additional co-sponsors include University of Minnesota Extension, League of Women Voters/Upper Mississippi River Region Inter-league Organization, and the Cannon River Watershed Partnership.

For more information on the UMRI, please see <http://umrinitiative.org/about/>.

Bold & Cold coming to Owatonna next week

Bold & Cold, Owatonna's annual Winter Festival, is coming up at the end of January.

A snow sculpture competition is set for Jan. 22-26 at Central Park in downtown Owatonna. Sculpting is open to the public to watch teams carve their sculptures.

Sculptures will be completed by 12 p.m. on Jan. 26. They will be available for viewing until they melt. Prizes will be given away for first and second places.

Winter Weekend Out is set for Jan. 24-26. Organizers have a fun-filled, snow fun weekend planned.

On Jan. 24, there will be free admission to West Hills Fitness Center from 5-7 p.m. Gym, walking track, cardio room and weight room are all available for free use. Family open swim takes place from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Owatonna Middle School.

Activities on Jan. 25 include: adult snow volleyball tournament at Lava Burgers at 11 a.m.; fat bike/hok ski demo at Kaplan's Woods from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.; 2020 iGames from 2-4 p.m. at West Hills Social Commons; free tennis at West Hills Tennis Center from 4:30-6 p.m. and rock on ice at Morehouse from 6-8 p.m.

The weekend will be capped off with family ice fishing at Lake Kohlmer on Jan. 26 from 2:30-4:30 p.m. This is a free event for anyone to attend. The backup date will be Feb. 9.

Sons of Norway to meet Monday

The Nortonna Lodge 1-638 of the Sons of Norway will meet on Monday, Jan. 20. Supper will be served at 6 p.m. for a cost of \$8 at the Owatonna Elks Lodge, 126 East Vine Street.

The January program will be "A Saga About a Town Called Norway," the story of eight Norwegian immigrant families leaving Rock County, Wisconsin, in 1856. They traveled to what eventually would be called New Richland Township in Steele County. Learn about their early years in a virtual wilderness, revealing their challenges, difficulties, and perseverance.

If you would like more information on the Nortonna Lodge of the Sons of Norway, contact Paul Hokanson at 507-451-9301.

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July 4: Open - 9 am to close (Bar & Off Sale)
July 18: B.O.B. Ride - Toys for Tots. Registration: 9 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. @ J & H. Fee: 10 per rider. Ride: Leaves @10:30a.m. MEAL: 5 p.m. @J&H. (2019 Donation was \$17,500)

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Young Sterling Bond, challenger to AWF heavyweight champion JDX tries to control him during their championship match, part of the Blossom Brawl at the Blooming Prairie High School Saturday night, Jan. 11.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

BLOSSOM BRAWL

Small crowd watches AWF wrestling action

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

A small crowd of only about 200 wrestling fans was in the house at the Blooming Prairie High School as the BP Lions hosted the Blossom Brawl on Saturday night, Jan. 11. Professional wrestling moments were provided by wrestlers from the American Wrestling Federation (AWF). Chris Staloch, president of the Blooming Prairie Lions, said he was disappointed with the sparse crowd but said he believed many who attended were entertained. The AWF plans on bringing its wrestlers to Blooming Prairie once again next summer. The Blooming Prairie Service-men's Club is planning to host an AWF wrestling card on Saturday, June 27. Local businesses helped sponsor the professional card on Saturday. Sponsors included Krejci Ford, Vandal's Family Market, Joe's Repair

Service, Miner's Outdoor & Rec., Bunkies Golf Academy Grille & Lanes, Dairy Queen, Sportstitch, Darrick's Preferred Auto, Bishop Excavating, Pizza Cellar/Cue Company and Prairie Plumbing & Heating. The younger fans got into the rhythm of chanting for the good guys and booing the bad guys. The evening's event was preceded by the playing of the U.S. National Anthem. First match of the meeting featured Nick Nelson vs. Patient X. Nelson was the victor. Four more matches followed with the finale headlining AWF heavyweight champion JDX defending his title against newcomer Sterling Bond. It's no coincidence that Bond resembled a young Cassius Clay, aka Muhammad Ali. He was accompanied by a female acquaintance who also was a part of the final match action. Grabbing a microphone, Bond told wres-

tlng fans that they were about to see history. «I am going to beat JDX,» he yelled, mimicking the actions of Clay/Ali. JDX, known as Justin outside of the wrestling ring, successfully defended his title. He said his meeting with Bond was their first encounter. During their match, two referees were knocked unconscious. One regained consciousness to declare JDX the winner. During intermission, JDX, wearing a t-shirt proclaiming «Black Wrestlers Matter,» posed for photos and signed autographs. Hailing from Chicago, Justin said he is a two-time champ. He trained with Ken Anderson of the Wrestling Academy to become a pro wrestler. How does a pro wrestler stay in shape? «You hit the gym at least four times a week and eat healthy foods,» JDX said. Petey Brown, a native of Canon Falls, was one of the fan favorites. His

autograph lines were the longest. Brown defeated Koda Jacobs in the third match of the evening. Jacobs entered the ring, carrying a political lawn sign. He was running for something but nobody seemed to know what it was. Brown said he began training five years ago and then joined the AWF. «I have a passion for it and it's chasing a dream,» Brown said. He acknowledged that pro wrestling can be a dangerous sport. He said he has suffered broken ribs and a fractured ankle. Another Minnesota wrestler, Levy Cruise, 22, wrestled in a tag team event. He is from Buffalo where he wrestled in high school. Cruise is known as a «high flyer» style of wrestler. Other wrestlers in the ring Saturday night were: Crixus, The System and Rylie Jackson. Concessions were provided by the Blooming Prairie High School Spanish Club.



Wyatt Hemann of Blooming Prairie cheers on his favorite wrestlers during the Blossom Brawl in the high school gym last Saturday night.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD



American Wrestling Federation (AWF) heavyweight champion JDX shows two little fans, Derek Miner, 9, and Maverick Miner, 4, how heavy his championship belt is. He won his championship match Saturday night in Blooming Prairie.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

'We'll talk again' no more

We are saddened to report that Outside the Lines will no longer be running after a 28-year run in the Blooming Prairie Times and most recently the Steele County Times. Last week columnist LeMar Nelson passed away in the Twin Cities. He was 87. By our count, Nelson wrote more than 1,400 columns on the news and sports pages for this newspaper during that time. On average, he wrote 1,000 words in each column, which translates into 1.4 million words over the nearly three decades of his column writing. The average word count for a typical novel is 70,000 words. By those standards, Nelson wrote 20 novels during his stint with this newspaper. In addition to his column, Nelson also wrote

countless sports and news stories every week mostly focused on Blooming Prairie sports and the high school. We are forever grateful to him for the years of his service to this newspaper and the greater community of Blooming Prairie. Please take a moment of silence to remember Nelson and his family as they mourn his loss. As LeMar would so affectionately end his column each week with "and we'll talk again," the talk has sadly ended and readers will just have memories of his talks through the newspaper columns. May Nelson rest in peace forever knowing he made life a little easier for us to enjoy by sharing his thoughts every week on these pages.

BP girls drop second game of season

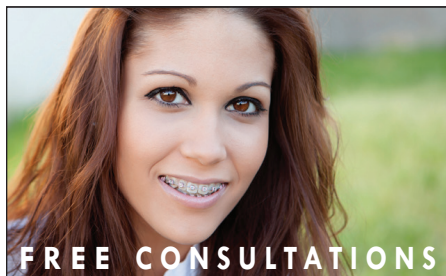
A battle of the ranked teams ended up with the lower ranked team, Waterville-Elysian-Morristown, snatching a victory from the higher ranked team, the Awesome Blossoms, in girls basketball action Friday night. WEM came into the game ranked ninth while Blooming Prairie was ranked fifth. WEM defeated the Blossoms 59-51. WEM remains unbeaten at 14-0 on the season while the Blossoms fall to 10-2. "It was a very competitive game throughout with WEM leading by 4-8 points most of the time," said John Bruns, Blossoms coach. "We battled hard against their length and athleticism, but we just could not string together enough stops and baskets to get back into the lead." Julia Worke and Megan Oswald led the way with 19 points each for the Blossoms. Oswald also had 14 rebounds in the game.

Waterville-Elysian-Morristown 59, Blooming Prairie 51
BLOOMING PRAIRIE (51) Maggie Bruns 4 P, 1 3-PT; Bobbie Bruns 7 P; Maya Lembke 2 P; Julia Worke 19 P, 3 3-PT; Megan Oswald 19 P, 1 3-PT.
WATERVILLE-ELYSIAN-MORRISTOWN (59) Brielle Bartelt 18 P, 3 3-PT; Toryn Richards 15 P, 2 3-PT; Ellie Ready 9 P, 2 3-PT; Lindsay Condon 3 P; Payten Polzin 2 P; Trista Hering 6 P; Kylie Pittman 6 P, 1 3-PT.
Halftime: WEM 26, BP 21.
Free throws: BP 10-17, 9-14.
Three-point goals: BP 5, WEM 8.
Earlier in the week, the Blossoms pounded Southland 55-30 on Jan. 7. It was BP's first home game since Dec. 5.
The Blossom girls built a big halftime advantage behind great defense and rebounding holding Southland to 8 first half points. "We were able to do a great job contesting their shooters

and limiting their possessions to one shot and done," Bruns said.
Megan Oswald led the way with 13 first half points.
In the second half, BP was able to maintain and even build on the lead at times. "Southland is a very dangerous team that has a balanced scoring attack, and we know that they never quit so it was great to see us continue to play hard and compete the entire 36 minutes," said Coach Bruns.
Worke and Allison Krohnberg did an outstanding job rebounding on both ends and that was huge for the Blossoms as well, Bruns said..
Blooming Prairie 55, Southland 30

SOUTHLAND (30) Kelsey Mensink 4 P; Hattie Wiste 5 P; Kayla Nelson 10 P; Bailey Johnson 0 P; Larissa Goslee 2 P; Lexi Smith 7 P; Katie Popenhagen 2 P.
BLOOMING PRAIRIE (55) Maggie Bruns 2 P; Bobbie Bruns 15 P; Maren Forystek 3 P, 1 3-PT; Maya Lembke 2 P; Melanie Winzenburg 2 P; Julia Worke 6 P, 8 R; Allison Krohnberg 4 P, 7 R; Anna Pauly 4 P; Megan Oswald 17 P.
Halftime: BP 29, SOUTH 8.
Free throws: SOUTH 2-6, BP 4-5.
Three-point goals: SOUTH 0, BP 1.
After getting off to a bit of a slow start in the first half, the Blossoms were able to open the game up in the second half and take control of the game Thursday against Lyle-Pacelli. BP dominated the game coming out on top 69-40.
It was back and forth much of the first half with Olivia Christianson and Kearah Schafer scoring 11 and 8 points respectively.
"We rebounded the ball very well throughout the game, but struggled to put the ball in the hoop in the first half," Bruns said. "However, in the second half, we got our transition game going and we were

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WEM breaks BP's unbeaten season



Senior forward Gabe Hagen looks to pass the ball with a couple of WEM defenders surrounding him Friday night. The Blossoms lost their first game of the season against WEM 64-60.

STAFF PHOTO BY TINA TROUT

After rolling to an unbeaten 7-0 record, the Blooming Prairie Awesome Blossoms basketball team came away with its first loss of the season Friday night.

Waterville-Elysian-Morristown defeated the Blossoms 64-60 on the home court.

Earlier in the week, the Blossoms pulled off two victories, though they were both tough games, Coach Nate Pillar said.

After beating Southland 72-63, Pillar said, "We survived a tough one. It was a very physical contest with Southland shooting the ball extremely well."

Pillar noted the Blossoms were a little short handed during the game due to an injury. But he praised Southland for the way they played. "They came to win. We got down by a handful in the first half and certainly is fair to say nothing came easy," he said.

Despite the win, Pillar wasn't please with his team's performance. "We struggled shooting in all aspects, our defense was awful and we didn't rebound well," he said. "We did play with some grit and gutted that one out, but it's not a recipe for sustainable success," he admitted.

Gabe Hagen led the Blossoms in scoring with 22 points followed by Kaden Thomas with 19 and Parker Vaith with 12.

The Blossoms came back on Thursday to snag their seventh victory of the season with a razor-thin win over Grand Meadow 54-53. Coach Pillar described the game as "another tough section matchup" against the Superlarks.

Once again Hagen led BP's scoring with 15 points. Thomas and Karson Vigeland added 11 points each.

"Shooting was a struggle again and we turned the ball over too easily, but we again escaped with a win," said Pillar. "We didn't manage the clock really well at the end and we were fortunate enough to have the lead that we did. We'll take the win and count our blessings."

Pillar described the game as similar to Tuesday night's contest against Southland. He said it was good to have Vigeland back in the lineup as Vigeland, Thomas and Hagen "really carried us tonight."

The Blossoms (7-1) have a busy schedule this week. After playing Medford Tuesday night, BP travels to Triton Thursday, USC Friday and the Blossoms close out the week by taking on Goodhue at Target Center in Minneapolis Saturday afternoon.



Hunter Simonson manipulates the arm of his opponent during his 106-pound match, which he won by fall.

PHOTO COURTESY MARY NELSON



Westfield's Tyler Archer tries to control the lower body of his opponent during a recent match. Archer won by fall.

PHOTO COURTESY MARY NELSON

Westfield goes 1-2 at quad meet in Maple River

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

The Westfield Razorback's up-and-down season continued as they lost to Maple River 27-39 and Tri-City United 29-34 but beat St. Claire-Mankato Loyola (SC-ML) 48-24 on Tuesday, Jan. 7.

Against Maple River, Westfield's Bo Zweiner and Lane Lembke both won by fall at 113 and 120 pounds, respectively.

Bradley Simon won by a 7-1 decision at 152 pounds. Following a double forfeit at 195 pounds, Colton Krell won by fall at 220 pounds and Dylan Nirk won by forfeit at 285 pounds.

While the Razorbacks won at their lower and higher weights, they only won three points between 126 pounds and 195 pounds.

Against Tri-City United (TCU), Zweiner lost by fall, but Lembke once

again won by fall to tie the match 6-6.

Keegan Bronson broke the tie by winning via a 10-7 decision at 126 pounds. However, TCU won three of the next four matches to take a 24-14 lead.

At 160 pounds, Tyler Archer won by major decision 10-1.

Later, Krell won by technical fall 19-3 and Nirk won by fall, but after losses at 170 and 182 pounds it was too little, too late and

the Razorbacks lost by five points.

Head Coach Shane Masching said Maple River and Tri-City United were both worthy opponents. "Those two teams were very well coached," he said.

However, he thinks the Razorbacks could have done more to beat them. "We are doing a good job riding our opponent, but we could have scored a few more takedowns to win some of the close matches,"

he said. "We need a couple more of our close matches to go our way."

Against SC-ML, Lembke, Keegan Bronson, Cade Christianson, and Ty Bronson all won by forfeit.

Archer and Dylan Ehmke both won by fall at 170 and 182 pounds, respectively.

Lastly, Krell and Nirk both won by forfeit to close out the win.

When SC-ML had wrestlers to compete against

Westfield, Masching said his team, "Did a great job getting our pins where we needed them."

The Razorbacks will try to keep that momentum going when they take on United South Central in a home dual, at Blooming Prairie High School, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 16.

Then, just two days after that, Westfield hosts a varsity invitational at Hayfield High School starting at 8 a.m.

BP GIRLS DROP: second game of season

FROM B5

able to gain a nice lead," he added.

Megan Oswald had a career high 28 points. Many of them came off of fensive rebounds and some nice feeds from Bobbie Bruns who had 6 assists.

Blooming Prairie 69, Lyle-Pacelli 40
LYLE-PACELLI (40) Olivia Heard 1 P; Olivia Christianson 22 P, 2 3-PT; Kearah Schafer 11 P, 3 3-PT; Rachel Nelsen 2 P; Avari Drennan 2 P;

Kirsten Koopal 2 P.
BLOOMING PRAIRIE (69) Maggie Bruns 8 P, 2 3-PT; Bobbie Bruns 8 P, 6 Assists; Anna Kittelson 2 P; Maren Forystek 2 P; Maya Lembke 4 P; Baylee Sorensen 4 P; Julia Worke 5 P, 1 3-PT, 10 R; Allison Krohnberg 4 P; Anna Pauly 4 P; Megan Oswald 28 P, 11 R.
Halftime: BP 29, LP 22.
Free throws: LP 7-8, BP 2-4.
Three-point goals: LP 5, BP 3.



Junior Maggie Bruns scans for a player to throw the ball in during Thursday's contest against Lyle-Pacellia. The Blossoms walked all over L-P 69-40.

STAFF PHOTO BY TINA TROUT



Blossoms' forward Megan Oswald goes up for a shot against Lyle-Pacelli Thursday night. In the game, Oswald had 28 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Blossoms in both categories.

STAFF PHOTO BY TINA TROUT

A Blooming Prairie Icon

Friends of LeMar Nelson lovingly remember him

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

LeMar Nelson was an iconic figure in the small town of Blooming Prairie he has always called home.

LeMar passed away at age 87 Thursday, Jan. 9 at the Masonic Homes in Bloomington after fighting some medical complications.

LeMar Nelson was well known to many in this small community, known for his education background and also for his writing abilities, having written for the Blooming Prairie Times and Steele County Times for over 28 years.

LeMar came to Blooming Prairie as a teacher in 1958. He taught, coached and served in administrative capacities during his tenure in Blooming Prairie.

Howard Lestrud, staff writer for The Times, contacted many of LeMar's acquaintances to put together some fitting tributes to this icon of Blooming Prairie history. His positive impact on the Blooming Prairie community will last forever.

In no certain order, here's what some of our community residents thought about LeMar:

TRIBUTES TO LEMAR NELSON

JOHN WORKE
BP High School Principal
LeMar was a gentle soul who loved Blooming Prairie. Not only was he a historian for the school but he knew a lot about our community.

Obviously, writing/journalism was a love of his, but sports was a big part of his life. He attended many sporting events at Blooming Prairie High School over the years and it was always nice to listen to his perspective afterwards.

He was always searching for information to make his newspaper articles the best they could be.

When LeMar was an educator, he took pride in teaching his students. He loved English – writing and journalism. He enjoyed putting together the BP Schooner each year as well as kicking out the weekly Black and White Chronicle.

I also think my memories would not be complete until I mentioned his dedication to the First Lutheran Church. He was involved with many committees and was a member of the choir where he would individually perform on any given Sunday.

LeMar was a great man who had a positive effect on many. Losing his wife, Anne, back in the day, was hard on him. He has now been given the opportunity to join her. R.I.P General, you will be missed by many.

CHRIS STALOCH
BP Schools Superintendent
LeMar is a Blooming Prairie icon. He was a wonderful man who cared about Blooming Prairie as a whole, but most importantly he cared about the people of Blooming Prairie.

LeMar wrote for the local newspaper and loved covering the Blossoms. As a former head baseball coach, it was always fun handing over the score book to LeMar, knowing that no matter the outcome of the game he would put his positive spin on his beloved Blossoms.

LeMar was very involved in our community. He was kind, and he cared. I had the privilege of knowing LeMar through school and sports. The Blooming Prairie Public School system was fortunate to have LeMar teach and coach here for so many years.

The school system and students were also fortunate to have him cover

many events over the years as a writer. I am thankful for all his work, and most thankful for the opportunity to know him. He will forever be remembered by those who knew him as a great man.

ALISON MACH
BP Associate Principal and Activities Director
LeMar was a true Awesome Blossom. He had a passion and love for our school and community that was incomparable. He rarely missed a game, event, and opportunity to showcase the many talents of our students and athletes through the years.

LeMar had a contagious smile and a kind heart. He made a positive impact on every person he met.

Even after moving away, he stayed invested in our schools successes and he continued to write with pride about our school. LeMar is the Awesome in the Blossom.

NATE PILLER
BP Boys Basketball Coach
LeMar was one of the kindest persons I've ever met and a great representation of Blooming Prairie.

He was such a well-rounded human being, a person our community could take pride in just as he took pride in our community.

He could MC Afternoon of the Arts, sing in the church choir, and write for the paper with equal authority.

Of course, he was retired from education before I moved to Blooming Prairie in 2000, but he was admired greatly by his cohorts. I've never heard a harsh word from him nor about him.

BARRY OLSON
Former BP Superintendent
I knew LeMar for over 36 years. I knew him as a teacher colleague, as an active writer for the BP Times, and as an active member of First Lutheran Church.

I would consider LeMar a true «Awesome» Blossom.

As a teacher he was involved in many activities: Speech, The Musical, Annual, the School Newspaper, etc. He always cared about the students first and had the respect of the staff and community.

When I was an administrator for BP Schools, I could always count on LeMar to write accurate and quality articles about our students and staff.

He always kept connected to current and former Blossoms and was willing to write and talk about them whenever. He was at every possible game he could get to, and loved being a part of it all.

As a member of First Lutheran he was a rock. You could always count on him to do whatever and he was a fixture in the choir. His faith was amazing.

He will be missed by many!!!

CHAD GIMBEL
BP Business Teacher
Varsity Football Coach of state championship team
Varsity Wrestling Coach
When I think of LeMar the first thing I think of he was a “Blossom” through and through.

Obviously, I got to know LeMar the most through sports and his writing of Blooming Prairie sports. He was passionate about Blooming Prairie Schools, and the kids inside the school. He wanted to make sure every student, athlete got the recognition they deserved.

When it came to sports writing, he cared about all sports at all levels, and wanted to make sure they all got their space and recognition in the newspaper. He cared so much about the

sports teams and the kids who played those sports.

I could tell after the games he felt all the same emotions that I was feeling, whether it was jubilation, disappointment or frustration. I could see the same emotions in his eyes that I was feeling.

If I truly had to select one word to describe LeMar it would be devoted. He was devoted to his family, friends, church, the town, the school, and especially the kids.

He was a pillar for our community.

KARI BOTTIN
Choir Director at BPHS
Choir member at First Lutheran Church
LeMar was an amazing man. He was kind and dedicated to everything he did.

I got to know LeMar through church first as a rock solid dedicated member of the choir for over 60 years!! He was always there holding down the back row and leading the way on the bass part or singing one if his fantastic solos.

LeMar was a giving person who gave his life to promoting the arts and ath-

letics in Blooming Prairie. He would chase me down for articles on the musical or the choirs because he understood how important these things are to our community and our students and he wrote so beautifully about these events.

He was always checking in to make sure he was up to date on what was going on and he came to everything. I always admired LeMar's dedication to serve our community in this way.

When I moved into his neighborhood, he welcomed me with two wooden singing angel ornaments because he knew how much I loved Christmas and loved to sing.

Those ornaments sit on my shelf and every time I look at them I am reminded of him, his smile, and his gentle heart. LeMar will be greatly missed in this community.

BECKY NOBLE
Executive Director
BP Area Chamber of Commerce
I am sure by now everyone has heard about our dear friend LeMar Nelson. LeMar passed away around midnight Wednesday. He had been living in an apartment complex in the Twin Cities close to his family. He had some medical issues lately.

I know there are people in this community who did not know LeMar, and I feel for them. The people who did not know him missed out on a wonderful teacher, writer, historian, and friend.

He would stop in my office 2-3 times a week to find out what was going on, fill me in on the Blossoms, share a story or just share kindness.

Sometimes he would just stop in for a piece of

chocolate and a rest before venturing on to his next stop. He loved to read and would share what book he was reading.

And, just like his books we did not share the same interest in television programs.

However, his love for his family, church, community, plays and music always gave us plenty to talk about.

He was an honest, hard working man who truly loved being a Blossom! He will be missed!

TAMZEN JOHNSON
Blooming Prairie High School Play director
I first met LeMar after we had moved here in 1990. I was the senior choir director at First Lutheran and he was the foundation of the bass section. He had a strong and rich voice and sang «Birthday of a King,” which touched and inspired many hearts.

This is what LeMar did....touch and inspire. His life was irrevocably connected with children, education and Blooming Prairie.

Whenever I asked LeMar for help he never

hesitated. When I directed the children's choir he sang «All Gods «Creatures Got a Place in the choir «with my elementary students, surrounded by stuffed animals and kids, smiling and singing.

He was our number one supporter of the high school musical. At our 50th Anniversary celebration last November, he attended and we all reminisced and thanked him for his contributions.

In the 1980s, he played Daddy Warbucks in «Annie» for Renae Burns and in 2009 he played the General in «White Christmas» for Kari Bottin and me.

He amazed our cast showing up to practice with all of his lines down and songs memorized the first day!

Lastly, I served with him on the board of the Blooming Prairie Boys and Girls Club. He attended every gala and gave generously of his time and financially. He inspired young people his entire life.

I will miss his ready smile, charming wit and strength and support.

REV. HEIDI HEIMGARTNER
Senior Pastor
First Lutheran Church
To be in LeMar Nelson's presence was to be blessed. LeMar was a special combination of reverent and good-humored, easily able to relate to all age groups, with many curiosities; an excellent conversationalist.

As much as LeMar loved sports, he also loved the arts. As much as he loved the community at large, he also loved his family, and his Lord -- serving others every day, with an open heart. Illness or injury rarely prevented LeMar from fulfilling his duties.

Some of the ways LeMar served First Lutheran over the decades include various leadership roles large and small, with at least two pastoral call committees.

But LeMar shined most brightly as a member of the First Lutheran Church Senior Choir. For many years he sang special music on Palm Sunday, «The Holy City,» and a father-daughter Christmas Day duet, «Sweet Little Jesus Boy.»

LeMar's strong voice can be enjoyed forever on the First Lutheran Choir CD, especially «Built on a Rock.» Inspired by Jesus' words in Matthew 7, Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.

LeMar was, above all, a man of faithful action. Assured in every loss by Jesus' power, we trust LeMar is singing in the heavenly choir. The congregation of First Lutheran gives thanks to God.

PER KVALSTEN
Close personal friend
Thank you so much for reaching out.

LeMar was a man that everyone could learn from. He put other people's needs in front of his own. He was a passionate supporter of the youth in Blooming Prairie. He meant a lot to me, and I will miss him.

JARRETT LARSON
Captain of 2019 Blooming Prairie state championship football team (he was one of five captains, the others being Gabe Hagen, Zach Weber, Matt Pryor and Karson Vigeland)
I did not know him well, but I did know he did a great job of covering our football team. He always did a good job in his write-ups and I believe one of the reasons we had so many fans at all of the games was because of his writing.

He was very dedicated to covering Blooming Prairie sports.

JOHN BRUNS
BPHS Girls Basketball Coach
For the past 60+ years, Blooming Prairie athletics has had a truly Awesome Blossom covering its teams for the local paper, supporting every team in every season, and coaching dozens of teams.

I have sometimes wondered how many games and how many athletes LeMar Nelson has watched over the years. I am sure the numbers are staggering. He has shared in many great victories and heart-breaking defeats.

He knew every athlete and every athlete knew him for over 60 years. It is truly unbelievable the impact that LeMar has had in just this part of his life.

In addition to athletics and his sports reporting, he was also an active church

member, community servant, and lifelong educator. Our community lost a great one, but we will always remember LeMar and all that he has done for our school and community.

BETTY INGVALDSON
Organist for more than 60 years at First Lutheran Church
He was one of the best. LeMar will be missed a lot. He was always ready to do solos in choir and many other tasks. He will always be remembered as Daddy Warbucks in the play, «Annie.»

CHRISTINE BUTLER
First Lutheran Church Music Department
What a fine man! He was «Mr. Nelson» when he was our English teacher in ninth grade. He was the Grammar Guru, straightening out language tangles with infinite patience.

We grew up watching him sing bass in the First Lutheran Church Choir, sports and journalism. He was kind, very committed to any project in which he was involved.

There are so many happy memories of him singing sacred music, favorites such as «The Holy City,» «Built on a Rock,» «Sweet Little Jesus Boy» and «Lead Me Gently Home.

He loved to sing rousing spirituals. He is now inspiring the Heavenly Choir.

H PETERSON
Former Blooming Prairie teacher and former mayor
One of my great memories of being with LeMar was when I first came to Blooming Prairie. There was a group of men who sang together called the Moonlighters, and they asked me to join in. It was kind of a folk singing group, which fit the times of the late 60s. We sort of practiced once a week at somebody's house and would get gigs all over mostly singing for our supper. LeMar liked to sing and eat so this was a good program. LeMar would sing bass. H would sing tenor and Bill Fritze would join right in singing songs of days long gone by. Others in the group were Milo Hoel on string bass and Dave Hagfelt.

LeMar and Anne could be a lot of fun and when they hosted a party it was a blast, the party would usually have a theme. Memorable ones were the “MacArthur Park Party” and the “going to the moon party.”

CHERI KREJCI
Krejci Ford and BP Cancer Group
LeMar was a Gentle Giant. Those are the words I would use to describe LeMar. He was a soft spoken, kind and gentle man. He loved this town, his church, and his friends.

He had a giant spot in his heart for the BP Youth Club. He was always a promoter of the club, we worked together on the “kitchen renovation.” He would never give up until that project was complete.

LeMar dubbed our motorhome the “Blooming Prairie Booster Bus.” We would take LeMar to football games with us and a group of friends, talking about the game, and whatever else may come up. A lot of laughs were had on that bus.

LeMar rode with us on the Cancer Group Survivor float at the Fourth of July parade a couple years ago. He was excited to ride with us, but we were worried about him overheating. He did fine, I was the one who overheated!! These are some of the great memories that we have of LeMar. He was truly Awesome Blossom.