



Wednesday, December 9, 2020
www.SteelCountyTimes.com
Bloomington, Minnesota

Unfortunately, kids couldn't sit on Santa's lap this year, but he listened carefully to their Christmas wishes on Saturday from behind a plexiglass barrier at Bloomington's Merry Little Christmas on Main celebration. See Page B1 for more on the celebration.

Salvation Army needs an army this year

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

COVID-19 has impacted just about everyone in Steele County — from those in need to those who traditionally ring the bells for the Salvation Army's annual red kettles fundraiser.

Chairman of the Steele County Service Unit Linda Seljeseth said the agency has raised about \$9,000 of its \$60,000 goal. The funds raised go toward their back-to-school program, toys and food baskets at Christmas and the Salvation Army's service.

SEE SALVATION ARMY, A3



David Goodnature, of Owatonna, rings the bell for Salvation Army every December weekday afternoon from 3 to 5 p.m. in Owatonna. Despite COVID-19, he decided to ring bells because, 'There's more need this year than any other year.'

STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Owatonna surpasses \$100M in building permit valuations

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

For the first time in the city's history, Owatonna recently topped the \$100 million mark in building permit valuations. To date, the city has issued 1,758 building permits for residential, commercial and industrial construction.

The previous record high occurred in 2008, when the city issued permits valued at a little more than \$78 million to 1,796 applicants.

The 2020 total is nearly double 2019 figures, thanks in large part to the development in Owatonna's industrial park.

But as Ken Beck, a building official for the City of Owatonna, said it takes both the big jobs and lots of smaller jobs to hit the \$100 million mark. About half of the projects to make the city's Top 10 list in 2020 were industrial, with the other half coming from residential and commercial construction.

"We are very fortunate and lucky," said Owatonna Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke, adding that 2020 will go down as very successful year with a lot of good projects.

Over the past five years, Kruschke said, the city and its com-

SEE OWATONNA, A7

Peterson served as a nurse in WWII



Genevieve Peterson

One of the last World War II survivors in the Bloomington Prairie area has died.

Genevieve Peterson, a Prairie Manor Care Center resident in Bloomington and most recently Homestead Hospice House in Owatonna, died on Dec. 3. She was 104.

Peterson served in the U.S. Army during WWII as a nurse stationed at the Fort Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Denver. In her role, Peterson served returning soldiers at the hospital. She is believed to be one of the only women from the area to serve in WWII.

The only other survivor of WWII from the Bloomington Prairie area still alive is believed to be Merle McNutt, who resides at Heather Haus. McNutt turned 102 last month.

A celebration of Peterson's life will take place at a later time. See Page A8 for a complete obituary.

Barn goes up in flames, 2K hogs killed

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

While Anthony Garnes worked on one side of his large hog operation in Westfield Township, fire broke out on the opposite side. The fast moving blaze on Dec. 3 quickly consumed the barn along with the 2,000 hogs in it.

Garnes, who escaped from the burning barn without

any injury, reported the fire shortly after 8 a.m. Firefighters from Bloomington, Hayfield and Claremont spent several hours battling the blaze at the farm located at 14491 Hwy. 30.

Bloomington Fire Chief Dean Naatz said Garnes was working in the south half of the building when he discovered the north half was on

fire. "He was surprised as anybody when he found the fire," said Naatz, adding Garnes found the blaze upon opening a door to the north end.

By the time firefighters arrived on the scene, the entire north end was falling in and flames were coming out of the roof, Naatz said.

SEE BARN GOES UP, A7



COURTESY POST-BULLETIN-ROCHESTER

A Bloomington firefighter sprays water on a smoky blaze involving a hog barn at the Garnes Farm in Westfield Township east of Bloomington. The Dec. 3 fire destroyed the barn containing 2,000 pigs. The State Fire Marshal is investigating.

AREA DEATHS

Marlyn Schroeder, 86, Kasson
Harriet Strand, 85, Apple Valley
Gen Peterson, 104, Bloomington

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OUR VIEW

COVID-19's bad enough; don't drink and drive this holiday season

2020 has been a rough year. You're lucky if you can call COVID-19 merely a disruption to your daily life. Many of our family members, friends and neighbors have lost their jobs. Others have struggled with the illness itself or know of someone who has. And far too many have lost loved ones to this insidious virus.

As we await word on how decisions to celebrate Thanksgiving with family and friends ultimately impacted COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, health officials are bracing for the worst and are again asking that we refrain from large family Christmas gatherings. They warn that a happy holiday season next year hinges on family members staying healthy this year.

Law enforcement officials across the state are putting out a similar message. Their target: drunk drivers.

"We cannot have impaired driving further compromising our critical medical capabilities for those are truly in need," says Mike Hanson, director of the state's Office of Traffic Safety.

He's right.

Minnesota's hospitals are facing dangerous capacity shortages. Our doctors and nurses have been stretched beyond imagination. The same is true of first responders.

COVID-19 may have put an end to relaxing with friends at bars and restaurants and company parties this holiday season, but traffic fatalities are on the rise and impaired driving is part of the problem.

Nationwide, drunk driving is still the No. 1 cause of death on our roads. In Minnesota, nearly one in four traffic deaths are drunk-driving related. In the last five years alone, 413 people died in drunk driving-related traffic crashes in Minnesota, with 89 people killed in 2019 alone.

That's why law enforcement agencies across the state, including many in our area, are participating in this year's statewide DWI enforcement and awareness campaign running weekends through Dec. 31.

We welcome the increased law enforcement presence on our roads as the holidays approach. Families are facing enough pressure this holiday season without having to deal with a senseless tragedy caused by drunk driving.

The heartache being caused by the virus is bad enough. Please, don't drink and drive this holiday season. We know there are already too many empty chairs around the holiday table.



GUEST COLUMN

Don't believe untruths

BY JAN MITTELSTADT
TIPPETT

Grass is pink. Money grows on a tree at Camp Pendleton. If you eat the crusts on your toast, you will get a hairy chest. I believed these statements to be the absolute truth. I would have sworn on a stack of Bibles about their authenticity. Granted, I was gullible little girl of 4 or 5 when my oldest male cousins (aka big brothers), told me these things. You are supposed to be able to believe things that older people tell you, after all. (Later, as an editor I followed this advice: If your mom says she loves you, check it out.)

There was absolute proof about the money thing – coins would arrive at our house from the Marine base and I would divide it into 10 piles. One pile was mine to spend at the corner store, one pile went to the church and

eight piles would go into the savings container from Security Bank. My dad was big on the tithing thing, even for 5 year olds. Nobody really knew that I described grass as pink until I went to kindergarten when the teacher relayed that I was color blind. I knew all the colors except for green which I insisted was pink. As the story goes, this was upsetting to the parents until the big brother confessed he taught me that grass was pink, proving some sort of psychological experiment that children only know what they are taught.

True. Perhaps the tree yield (poker winnings, I learned 20 years later) was to make up for me having to relearn that grass is green, not pink. The crust declaration meant I didn't eat the toast crusts for years because those boys had black hairy chests and

I didn't want to have that. Goodness no. I cannot even imagine how those truisms could have been spread if the social media, the Internet and 24-hour news channels had been around to repeat those relatively innocent lies to say nothing about the bigger lies, lies, and more lies. The party line at my grandma's house was bad enough.

We are conditioned from our youth that there are people who you are supposed to be able to believe, including parents, ministers, elected officials, teachers, bosses, doctors and nurses, governors and presidents. These folks, dear readers, three, are supposed to have our best interest at heart and tell us the truth, promote good plans, comfort us when we need comforting, and lift up our spirits when they need lifting. Many do just

SEE DON'T BELIEVE, A10

Deck the house with a real tree

The holiday wouldn't be the same without a freshly cut Christmas tree.

I love the smell of having a fresh tree in the house and being able to touch something real. Artificial trees just have never quite had the same effect on me.

It has become a holiday tradition for our family to venture out to a pick-your-own tree farm to chop down the showcase piece of the Christmas season. As long as I can remember, our family has always decorated the house with a real tree. I have continued that tradition with my children.

Sometimes we wander around the tree farm aimlessly looking for that right tree. Other times, like this year, it just kind of jumped out at us shortly after we arrived. We have a rule that the tree needs to meet everyone's approval before we chop it down.

Christmas tree sales are reportedly stronger than ever this year as more people appear to be gravitating to fresh-cut evergreens, apparently in an effort to overshadow the deadly virus that has been plaguing America and bring a bright spot to the holidays amid the worsening toll of COVID cases.

It really should come as no surprise as to the reason why more Americans want a real piece of Christmas to brighten their spirits. More people will be staying home for the holidays this year because of COVID restrictions. I'm also guessing there are stir-crazy families out there looking for a safe way to create special memories.

According to industry research, many people who put up an



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER



The Bussler crew goes in hot pursuit of finding a real Christmas tree once again this holiday season. Included in the hunt are Kyrle, Calyn and Caleb Bussler. Of course, dad is taking the photo.

artificial tree last year plan to buy a real one this year. Most are citing the pandemic as the reason for heading up to the tree lots and farms.

This year's growing interest in real trees comes after the industry has struggled to attract new, younger customers in recent years as more Americans turned to fake trees.

Research claims that as many as 80% of Americans who have a Christmas tree now have a fake tree.

No one tracks annual sales of real trees because independent tree lots and farms are so scattered. However, those in the business estimate about 20 million trees are sold each year.

For our family, picking a tree has always been a special holiday moment and something that becomes much bigger than the tree itself. We usually make an afternoon of it and try to involve everyone in finding that special tree. As my children get older, it's harder to find time to spend together. Hunting down a tree is a real memory maker. In this time of fear and unknown with a pandemic in which we never know where it will strike next, I think it's even more important to gravitate to making family memories.

But it's not only finding the tree that adds to the holiday magic at our house. It's a project where the entire family gets involved in setting it up as well decorating it. And of course, we have the holiday music playing in the background.

While my family has always enjoyed a real tree, I think it will take on an even greater meaning this year. It will allow us to enjoy a happier way to close out a difficult year. And I believe that will be true for many families.

Having a real tree even meets the approval of the queen at our house. Our family's cat, Ginger, loves hanging out under the Christmas tree. During the holidays, she basically rotates from the tree to a near-by Christmas village where she perches herself in the back keeping guard over the village.

If you're yearning for something magical this holiday season, I urge you to go in hot pursuit of finding the real deal... a real Christmas tree. I assure you that it won't be something you'll regret.

A racial equity partnership

The following is an excerpt from the article "Minnesota State University, Mankato & Owatonna Public Schools: A Racial Equity Partnership" that first appeared in the MSU Partnership magazine, Spring 2020, reprinted with permission from MSU, Mankato.

District leadership from Owatonna Public Schools contacted Mankato State University, Mankato's Department of Educational Leadership in the spring of 2018 asking if we, Natalie Rasmussen, assistant professor, and Jinger Gustafson, assistant professor and department chair, might partner with them in order to provide professional development to their district around racial equity. Their request was very much aligned with our department's mission and vision.

At our initial meeting, Owatonna Superintendent, Jeff Elstad, shared his vision for what he wanted for the district in order to increase racial aware-



Owatonna Proud
JEFF ELSTAD

ness, address issues of bias and racism, and to provide the best educational experience for all of his students. We explained that usually the single-session professional development workshop where consultants "blow in, blow up, and blow out" were not nearly as effective as those that cultivated a relationship over time and catered to the particular learning needs of the community. They agreed and as a result, we devised a plan for the next school year to take Owatonna's building and district leadership through a year-long partnership

in which we created curriculum and learning activities crafted uniquely for them. Our goals were to bring awareness and knowledge about race and racism to the district leadership and to equip leaders with the tools necessary to address these issues.

In February of 2019, Owatonna High School experienced a racially motivated incident that made national news and was reported in the New York Times. Because of the actions of a few White students who posted racial slurs on social media, Black students responded, called them out, and wanted an explanation. This escalated to the point of locking down the high school and summoning police. This incident brought to light the fact that Owatonna Public Schools had a race problem. Superintendent Jeff Elstad realized that racial equity work cannot be solely the school district's responsibility. Last

SEE A RACIAL EQUITY, A10

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MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

2020-9 state awards	2015-7 state and 4 national awards
2019-7 state awards	2014-3 state and 1 national awards
2018-6 state and 4 national awards	2013-7 state and 2 national awards
2017-2 state and 3 national awards	2012-2 state awards
2016-8 state and 6 national awards	2011-4 national awards

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

Vaccine for COVID set to come by end of month

Another death reported in Steele, two in Dodge

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

While COVID-19 continues to rage through the area by causing yet another death in Steele County, Public Health Director Amy Caron delivered perhaps the best news in months on Monday.

Caron announced that the COVID-19 vaccine is expected to arrive in the area by the end of the month. However, it won't be getting to the general population until at least early spring.

The first priority for those receiving vaccine, Caron said, will be health care workers, long-term care facility workers, paramedics

and EMTs at ambulance services and Public Health workers. She expects the vaccine to "roll out quickly" to those workers. But, she added, it could take up to 10 weeks for them to get all of those workers vaccinated.

Not all details are known yet about the vaccine, but Caron said it looks like it will be a series of two shots 28 days apart.

"This is really encouraging that we are getting the first round of vaccine," said Caron. "Vaccine is our No. 1 priority right now."

Once the vaccine is available to the public, Caron expects her department to offer drive-thru clinics to get

everyone vaccinated. The clinics would be similar to what Public Health offered earlier this fall for flu shots.

"We had a lot of good comments about the drive-thru flu shot clinics," Caron said. "The elderly people especially liked them because they didn't have to get out of their vehicles and go into a building," she added.

Members of Caron's staff have made vaccine planning and distribution its top priority. She said her department will also continue doing trace investigations on new COVID cases that arise.

Caron said she hopes to release more details about vaccination with

in the next week so that people can start determining if it's something they want to do.

The battle against the killer virus continues throughout the area. Steele County suffered yet another COVID-related death within the past week. It's the sixth death in as many weeks. The county has experienced eight deaths since the pandemic began in March. The latest death was a man in his 60s, Caron said. Meanwhile, Dodge County experienced two deaths within the past week - the first ones in the past week.

Steele County's new cases were down this past week as 215 people tested positive. There have been 2,234 cases

in the county with 26 people currently hospitalized. Some of those requiring hospitalization are in intensive care, though Caron did not have an exact number.

In Dodge County, there have been 990 cases with 15 people currently hospitalized. Freeborn County added three more deaths this past week, bringing that county's total to nine deaths. There have been 1,692 cases in Freeborn County. Mower County has seen 2,886 cases with 23 deaths (no new ones in the past week).

One silver lining from the latest statistics this week is that Caron did not see any huge jumps in either Steele

or Dodge counties from the Thanksgiving holiday. "Knock on wood, we haven't seen a spike in cases. It's encouraging that we didn't have a spike due to Thanksgiving," Caron said. "Possibly people abided by the (governor's) executive order and didn't get together in groups of people," she added.

Within the next 10 days, Caron expects further direction from state leaders on what people should do for the Christmas and New Year's holidays. The current executive order restricting bars and restaurants expires on Dec. 18. Caron said she wouldn't be surprised to see that order extended out further.

COVID Detour: Cruisin' through downtown Owatonna

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

No, it was not the beloved Lighted Holiday Parade, but the Owatonna Business Partnership (OBP) made the most of a bad situation - COVID-19 - by hosting a Holiday Cruise in downtown Owatonna on Friday, Dec. 4.

The cruise consisted of hundreds of vehicles, some decorated with Christmas lights, wreaths or inflatable decorations, driving around Central Park and the surrounding area.

Downtown business also got in the action by opening their doors to customers and decorating their front windows.

OBP member Matt Gillard, co-owner of Remax Ventures with his wife Deb, said the lighted parade means so much to the city that they wanted to help organize a holiday event.

"Deb and I really care about the downtown and the community as a whole and so whatever we can [do] to bring traffic downtown,

not just for shops but just for a way of life, that's what we want to do," he said.

Even though the Holiday Cruise occurred downtown, Cindy Stelter, owner of Central Park Framing & Bind, said the cruise was "a great opportunity to get exposure to businesses throughout Owatonna,

not just downtown."

That exposure is especially important this year as all businesses, especially small ones, have been hit hard by having to either temporarily close, reduce their capacity and changes in their supply chain.

"Our community has been great supporting us and understanding

that it may take things longer to get here," Stelter said.

In addition to helping generate revenue for businesses throughout Owatonna, Lisa Cochran, manager of Owatonna Shes, said the Holiday Cruise gives the Owatonna community a way to celebrate the holidays safely.



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Deb and Matt Gillard, co-owners of Remax Venture in Owatonna, participated in the festivities of the Holiday Cruise by decorating their front window and wearing matching Christmas sweaters.

Word on the Street COVID-19 impacting holiday plans

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

With COVID-19 cases surging in Steele County, this Christmas season is truly unprecedented. To find out how Steele County residents are handling

their holiday celebrations in a COVID-19 world, the Steele County Times asked residents of Owatonna and Blooming Prairie that question to get the word on the street.

Staying closer to home

Patti Ivance, of Owatonna, said her family is going to scale back this holiday get-together.

"We're celebrating the same as we have before, just not in as large of numbers. We're also sticking closer to

home," she said.

In addition to less traveling, she said they're going to try to maintain social distancing to keep everyone healthy.

SEE WORD ON THE STREET, A7

SALVATION ARMY: needs an army this year FROM A1

office in the store which helps families in need with money for groceries, rent or even fixing their car so they can get back to work.

To help the Salvation Army reach its goal and help as many people as possible, she asked the community to consider donating at the standing kettles, which are located at HyVee, Cabela's, Cashwise, FleetFarm, Walmart and Walgreens in Owatonna, or the 13 counter kettles throughout Steele County.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 has made it more difficult to raise funds this year.

"It's been tough. Some of my bell ringers who have been ringing

for years aren't ringing because they're older and they don't want to take the chance," Seljeseth said.

Due to the reduced number of bell ringers, she said it's been difficult finding enough ringers to fill the two-hour shifts, which begin at 10 a.m. and last until 7 p.m. at each kettle.

"We're getting a few shifts filled each day, but we still need more," she said.

To help community members feel safe bell ringing and stay healthy, this year's bell ringers are all wearing a mask, wearing buttons instead of aprons, distancing themselves from the kettle and spraying disinfectant

on the kettle and bell at the end of their shift so it's clean for the next ringer.

Seljeseth said that community members can register to ring online at salvationarmy-north.org by creating an account and signing up for what's available each day or by calling the Steele County Service Unit at (507) 649-2703.

"If there's a location that doesn't have a bell-ringer, ring it until someone shows up or just ring as long as you can," she said.

As one of five children raised by a single mom, Seljeseth said, she knows firsthand how much the funds raised by the Salvation Army

helps local families.

"I appreciate the Salvation Army so much myself and I hear people tell me that all the time," she said. "There are people out there all the time who are so grateful for the community's support."

"Just know that this year is very tough and please donate with money or time," she said.

"We can also use help in the store, so there's something you can do all the time." Donations can be made by depositing cash or change in the kettle, sending cash or check to the store at 1810 S. Cedar in Owatonna or by donating online at salvationarmy-north.org.

GUEST COLUMN

Remember our funeral directors during COVID

BY DARLYNE ERICKSON

As the executive director of the Minnesota Funeral Directors Association, I have the privilege of working with funeral directors and understand, as much as a layperson can, what they encounter on a daily basis. We are currently receiving many inquiries about funeral service and the impact of COVID-19, and I want to take this opportunity to help everyone understand the current situation, and funeral service overall.

Funeral homes are very busy keeping the families they serve and funeral home staff safe. Their main goal is to assist families in a way that allows for dignity, respect, and the beginning of shared grief. This all takes time.

However, this is not new because of the pandemic; it is what funeral directors have done from the beginning of time. Funeral homes continue to use the protocols set by Governor Walz and the Minnesota Department of Health Mortuary Science Section in an effort to keep everyone safe. Currently, funeral homes do have the capacity to serve the number of deaths. Obviously, this could change as fatality numbers are increasing. For some perspective, in 2019 the total number of deaths in Minnesota were 45,386, which was an increase of 0.5% over 2018. For 2020, as of September 30, the total deaths statewide were 36,488. We do anticipate the numbers to be higher by the end of the year, but by a significant margin.

Funeral directors, as medical professionals, know they can reach out to other funeral directors for assistance when necessary. This professional community includes physicians, medical examiners, the Minnesota Department of Health Mortuary Science Section and Department of Vital Records.

We all hear about our many healthcare workers on the front lines of this pandemic, and we truly owe them a debt of gratitude. They are the first responders. But we also need to remember our last responders, our funeral directors and others working with grieving families right now. They are the final encounter many of these families will have after having gone through what is surely a tremendously difficult time with their loved one dying. Our funeral directors are among the most compassionate, kindest people you will ever meet, in a profession they love and take great pride in. They do this work because they care for the families they work with.

So, yes, they are busy. Yes, it is just as hard on them as on other medical professionals and other families who are working to keep their loved ones safe while continuing to provide essential services. I am so proud to be a small part of this industry and to call so many of these people friends.

Darlyne L. Erickson is the executive director of the Minnesota Funeral Directors Association.

COVID-19 UPDATE					
World.....	67,300,000	Deaths.....	1,540,000	Recovered.....	43,200,000
U.S.....	14,800,000	Deaths.....	282,000	Recovered.....	4,880,000
MN.....	351,000	Deaths.....	4,043	Recovered.....	94,416
Steele.....	2,234	Deaths.....	8	Recovered.....	1,170
Dodge.....	990	Deaths.....	2	Recovered.....	550
Freeborn.....	1,692	Deaths.....	9	Recovered.....	
Mower.....	2,886	Deaths.....	23	Recovered.....	
AS OF DEC. 7, 2020					

Blotter Spotlight: Domestic: Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 200 block of Spruce Ave. NE at 2:14 a.m. on Nov. 28. They arrested a subject at the scene.

FEDERATED INSURANCE
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Visit
federatedinsurance.com
for COVID-19 resources.

How to Write an Online Will



Dear Savvy Senior,
Writing a will has never been a high priority to me but this lingering coronavirus crisis has changed my thinking. Can you recommend some good do-it-yourself resources to help me write a simple will?
Getting Older

Dear Getting,
The coronavirus crisis has changed the way a lot of people look at things, including wills. Currently, fewer than half of American adults have prepared a will. But having a last will and testament is important because it ensures that your money and property will be distributed to the people you want to receive it after your death.

If you die without a will, your estate will be settled in accordance with state law. Details vary by state, but assets typically are distributed using a hierarchy of survivors. Assets go to first to a spouse, then to children, then your siblings, and so on.

You also need to be aware that certain accounts take precedence over a will. If you jointly own a home or a bank account, for example, the house, and the funds in the account, will go to the joint holder, even if your will directs otherwise. Similarly, retirement accounts and life insurance policies are distributed to the beneficiaries you designate, so it is important to keep them up to date too.

Online Will Makers
If you have a simple, straightforward estate and an uncomplicated family situation, writing your own will – with the help of a good online will making program – is a viable alternative to hiring an attorney and much cheaper. Like tax software, these online tools will guide you through a series of questions and will insert your answers into a will for you, and it usually takes less than 20 minutes from start to finish.

Three top-rated do-it-yourself options include the Quicken WillMaker & Trust 2021 downloadable software (available at nolo.com) that costs \$100 and works with Windows and Macs and is valid in every state except Louisiana; LegalZoom (legalzoom.com), which offers basic wills for \$89 or \$99 if you'd like

assistance from an independent attorney; and Trust & Will (trustandwill.com) which charges \$89 for a basic will.

If that's more than you're willing to pay, consider Free-Will (freewill.com), which is a completely free will making resource made possible with the support of nonprofit organizations.

When to Hire a Lawyer
If you have considerable financial assets or a complex family situation, like a blended family or child with special needs, it would be smart for you to seek professional advice. An experienced lawyer can make sure you cover all your bases, which can help avoid family confusion and squabbles after you're gone.

The National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (naela.org) and the National Association of Estate Planners & Counselors (naepc.org) websites are good resources that have directories to help you find someone in your area.

Costs will vary depending on your location and the complexity of your situation, but you can expect to pay somewhere between \$200 and \$1,000 to get your will made. To help you save, shop around and get price quotes from several different firms.

And before you meet with an attorney, make a detailed list of your assets and accounts to help make your visit more efficient.

Make it Valid
Be aware that to make your will valid, you must sign and date it and have it witnessed according to the laws of your state. Most states require two witnesses who are not listed as beneficiaries in your will to watch you sign it. Some states also require that a notary witness the signing as well. notarynotary.org can tell you if a notary is needed to legalize a will in your state, if remote notary services are available, and how to access such online services to execute your will if you are sheltering at home during the pandemic.

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

History from the News Archives

A moment in history



FILE PHOTO

This was all that remained after a fire claimed the farm home of Virginia and LuVerne Tovson in Steele County in December 1989. The farm site was seven miles southwest of Owatonna. This week the Times begins a new feature as part of the history section by showcasing a photo from past events that previously ran in the newspaper.

10 years ago

Dec. 14, 2010

RIK BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

Blooming Prairie has spoken and Joe Haberman is this year's Scrooge. Haberman's wife accepted the honor for the injured Joe, who broke his leg when he slipped on ice going to Bunkies for bowling, at this year's Holiday Dazzle celebration. Haberman is a life-long resident and owner of Joe's Repair. "I do feel I am the best suited to be Blooming Prairie's Scrooge," stated Joe.

BPHS senior, Nicole Hansen, was recently named the Rochester branch of the Boys and Girls Club "Youth of the Year." Said Hansen, "I am really overwhelmed." I am so grateful for the opportunity the Boys and Girls Club has brought me. "This award recognizes a club member who has shown service to the club, community and family, academic success and moral character. Nicole received \$6500 in scholarship monies.

20 years ago

Dec. 12, 2000

ELSIE SLINGER, PUBLISHER

It was a pretty good week for basketball at BPHS! The boys won a pair of non-conference games with balanced scoring by the Blossoms. The girls also used some stifling defense and a much better all-around game to get into the win column. They are gaining more confidence and experience.

The high school Academic Triathlon team finished their session on Nov 27th at West Concord. The team is a competition for highly creative and academically gifted students who compete in three areas: face off, mind sprint and party in a box. In two previous competitions the eighth graders used their creative minds and performed wonderful skits for the party in a box. The third team of 9-12 graders performed exemplary. Gary Tashima, Kristi Beckman, Theresa Donnelly and Maggie Romeo received an award for creativity and working well together. They placed fourth out of nine ZED teams.

50 years ago

Dec. 9, 1970

VICTOR, VERNON, VRYLE KREICI, PUBLISHERS

Michael McFarlin, Captain in the US Army, has been stationed at DaNang,

Vietnam, the past two months. He is Transportation Motor Pool Officer at DaNang. The Captain's wife and two children, Timothy and Tanny will spend Christmas at the Maurice McFarlin residence in Blooming Prairie.

The Blooming Prairie FFA Chapter donated four cases of fresh citrus fruit to the Prairie Manor Nursing Home this past week. Mrs. Edith Wassus, administrator, accepted the donation from Ed Butler, chapter president and Robert Farr, project chairman.

75 years ago

Dec. 13, 1945

FRANK KREICI, PUBLISHER

The honorable discharge from the armed forces of S/Sgt Raymond O. Anderson, Blooming Prairie, has been announced. Sgt. Anderson served the Army 27 months, seeing service in France, Holland, Belgium, Germany and Czechoslovakia. He holds the following decorations: Purple Heart with cluster, Silver Star, Combat Badge and good Conduct Medal. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ole Anderson.

The VFW Auxiliary met Thursday of last week for the Initiation held for Mrs. E. Olson, Mrs. Charles Upcraft, Mrs. Keith Wakefield, Mrs. Estella Walsh, Mrs. Henry Johnson and Misses Virginia Motl and Mildred Dahl. Mrs. Paul Lattin gave a tribute to the Gold Star mothers who were honored at the meeting. Corsages were presented to Mmes. Louis Rasmussen and WJ Motl, gold Star Mothers and those unable to attend, Mrs. Olaf Olstad, Mrs. Frank Zweimer and Mrs. T. Coughlin were sent corsages.

Owatonna Photo News

Nov. 30, 1989

TOM SHEA, PUBLISHER

A number of ex-Owatonna High School Athletes got together for an alumni basketball game prior to the regularly scheduled OHS varsity scrimmage here last week. Some of the participants were Doug Kradky, 1980; Brad Bulver, 1987; Jim Bohnhoff, 1989; Brad Fisher, KFO color commentator, 1980.

The 20th Anniversary of Wilson School was marked this week. A number of teachers and staff personnel that have been with the school for at least 13 years. Those honored were: Jan Benson, 17 years; Julie Nassa, 13 years; Bonnie Ronnfeldt, 18 years; Elaine Hofener, 14 years; Peggy Falcone, 13 years; Carol Levine, 15 years.

ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS By Shannon Nordstrom and Russ Evans Dear Motor Medics, I have been working on a project with my son for his first vehicle. We purchased a nice looking 2003 GMC 2500 truck with a 350 engine and 4-wheel drive and automatic transmission. We have done a lot of work over the past two years including brakes, tires, shocks, lift kit and a completely rebuilt engine. We opted for a Edelbrock intake manifold and mild cam and now we are questioning the exhaust. He wants something louder and we are thinking headers and no converters. Will this effect the way the engine runs? Is it illegal to take off the converters? George in Albion Nebraska Doing a father son project with a vehicle is a great way to bond with your kids. A truck like this lends itself to economical parts and upgrades with lots of choices. The upgrades you are doing inside the engine with the cam and the intake manifold outside will help it breathe and adding free flowing exhaust will also help. Removing the converters is not a good idea as it is not legal, and more states are starting to enforce missing emissions system parts by not allowing registration. There are emissions system legal headers available that will work with a free-flowing converter and you can get the exhaust sound you want. Once you have it running and ready to drive, a trip to a tuner shop with the specs for the cam for a custom tune can really wake it up. Take care, The Motor Medics	Schaeffer's SPECIALIZED LUBRICANTS Bruce Freerksen [507]273-9110 bruce@schaefferslube@gmail.com West Concord, MN Kaplays COLLISION CENTER Now using PPG Waterborne Paint STAY HAPPY www.kaplaysauto.com kappysauto@gmail.com STEVEN'S Steven's Collision Center 100 7th St. Circle SE, Kasson 561-6344 Mon-Fri: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. 24 hour towing Free Written Estimates All Work Guaranteed Complete Paint & Bodywork Auto Glass Repairs Vinyl Roof & Seat Repairs LET THESE SPONSORS KNOW YOU APPRECIATE THESE COLUMNS! FOR ENTERTAINMENT ONLY. ALWAYS CONSULT YOUR LOCAL SHOP AND FOLLOW ALL SAFETY PROCEDURES BEFORE REPAIRS. Come visit the Motor Medics online at underthehoodshow.com	L&D Recycling, Inc. Scrap Iron & Metals WE BUY ALL METALS! [507]927-2400 LDR Recycling.com 65570-57A1E1 HWY 55, West Concord, MN ALL Insurance AUTO • HOME • LIFE • BUSINESS INSURANCE Jacob Simons President 507.361.7556 jacob@allinsb.com 2518 Superior Dr NW Suite 101A Rochester, MN 55901 Boe Auto Center 115 Highway 56 N. West Concord 507-527-2241 www.boeautocenter.com Hoff's Auto Repair 704 7th St Circle Se • 634-4633
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STEELE-DODGE BUSINESS

Knowing what people want is key to bookstore's success

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Little Professor Book Store has been a fixture in downtown Owatonna the past 33 years.

Located across from Central Park on the corner of West Park Square and Bridge Street, John Meixner's independently owned bookstore has survived the chains, the big box stores and the internet.

An avid reader himself, Meixner said, he buys books that are interesting. "I kind of know what people want and get a little of everything."

"I just pick the store up," he said.

At quick glance, that's obvious. His shelves are filled with books, cards, puzzles, magazines, bookmarks, board games and books on tape. Bestsellers are prominently placed in

"I kind of know what people want and get a little of everything."

John Meixner
Book Store Owner

front of the counter and cash register. An Owatonna High School graduate, Meixner earned his master's degree in history from Kansas State. Not able to find a job in that field, he said, he returned to Owatonna and looked into starting an independent bookstore. The rest is history.

When he's not serving customers or stocking the shelves, Meixner said, he reads book reviews.

"Everything I have, I've ordered," said Meixner as he looked around the store.

Behind the counter are some 50 books

that customers have ordered. "I need to call them to tell them their book is in," he said.

Meixner said he is looking forward to the next few weeks. "Christmas is big business... each day is like a week's worth of business (the rest of the year)."

What about special events at the bookstore? Although the store doesn't have space to host a Storytime for children, Meixner said, he has local authors set up tables in front of the shop during the farmer's market in the summer.

What do Steele County residents like to read? John Sanford,



John Meixner's bookstore is filled with books, cards, puzzles, magazines, bookmarks, board games and books on tape.

Lee Child and Sandra Brown to name a few, said Meixner, adding that he carries all three authors in paperback and hardcover.

Has Owatonna and the rest of the county been good to you? "Yup," said Meixner, later adding that he has some very loyal

customers who are now bringing their children into the store. "So far, no one has said: Here's my grandchild...not yet anyway."

Coalition says businesses need relief from the state

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Brad Meier

Minnesota lawmakers appear poised to provide some financial relief to businesses hit by the four-week partial closure ordered by Gov. Tim Walz last month.

Walz and Senate Republican leaders are looking to use the projected \$641 million surplus in the current budget to craft a relief package.

"They need to get some cash to these businesses to keep them alive," said Brad Meier, president of the Owatonna Area Chamber & Tourism. "There's no way around it. The state shut them down and the state should support them."

Through the Minnesota Ready Coalition, both the Owatonna and Blooming Prairie chambers, last month called on Walz to convene a special session to provide immediate assistance.

"Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the business community has shared the responsibility of balancing the need for public health protections while absorbing the economic blows from the loss of customers and business activity," said Minnesota Ready Coalition in its letter to the governor.

"Small and mid-sized, Minnesota-based businesses, along with their employees have been

SEE COALITION, A10

Owatonna Chamber awarded tourism crisis grant

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Karen Pehrson

The Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism will be receiving a \$17,500 tourism crisis grant through Explore Minnesota, the state's tourism promotion office.

"We are truly grateful for the help from the state and are excited to welcome back visitors when they are ready," said Karen Pehrson, the Chamber's director of conventions and tourism.

Overall, more than \$1 million in tourism crisis grant funds will be awarded statewide. Grant amounts range from \$1,250 to \$17,500 and are based on the amount of money previously received from the state in tourism marketing grants.

The tourism crisis grant program, recently announced by Gov. Tim Walz, is designed to support nonprofit tourism promotion organizations, so they can continue to stimulate travel for the economic benefit of their communities.

"Now, more than ever we need to find ways to support the Minnesota tourism industry and crisis recovery efforts," said Explore Minnesota Director John Edman.

Travel plans disrupted by the pandemic cost the state tourism industry some \$5 billion over the summer, according to Explore Minnesota.

Explore Minnesota notified the Owatonna chamber of its grant award. Other qualifying organizations may request grant funding until March 15, 2021. Grant funds must be spent by Dec. 31, 2021. Tourism organizations can refer to the Phase II Crisis Tourism Marketing Grant guidelines for details.

The leisure and hospitality sector contributes \$14.4 billion in annual gross sales, supports nearly 260,000 full- and part-time jobs and generates \$930 million in state sales tax each year. A total of 11% of all private sector employment and nearly 17% of all state sales taxes is generated from this industry.

Mayo names Albright regional vice president

Robert Albright Jr., D.O., a Mayo Clinic nephrologist, has been named regional vice president, Southeast Minnesota Region,



Robert Albright Jr.

Mayo Clinic Health System. Dr. Albright will be the physician leader for Mayo Clinic's community practice in Southeast Minnesota, a region that includes hospitals and clinics in Albert Lea, Austin, Cannon Falls, Faribault, Lake City, Owatonna and Red Wing, Minnesota, and surrounding communities. He succeeds Bobbie Gostout, M.D., president of Mayo Clinic Health System, who will retire at the end of the year. Dr. Gostout has been serving in an interim capacity as regional vice president, Southeast Minnesota Region, Mayo Clinic Health System, since January.

Dr. Albright received his medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his residency in internal medicine and a fellowship in nephrology and critical care at Mayo Clinic. After joining Mayo

Clinic in 2001, Dr. Albright worked in Rochester and across Mayo Clinic Health System, serving as medical director of dialysis units and programs in Health System.

Albert Lea, La Crosse and Rochester. After more than six years of serving as chair of the Division of Nephrology and Hypertension at Mayo Clinic in Rochester he will be stepping away from this role to assume his new duties. He will continue to be clinically active regionally and in Rochester.

In his new role, Dr. Albright will lead the regional staff and be responsible for the clinical and financial performance of Southeast Minnesota operations. Dr. Albright will promote and expand Mayo Clinic Health System's goal of delivering excellent outcomes, affordable care, and convenient access to Mayo Clinic knowledge and expertise to patients when, where and how they need it. This will include balancing digital and virtual options with in-person care, while ensuring all services remain patient-focused.

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OWATONNA: surpasses \$100M in building permit valuations FROM A1

munity and business partners put a lot of effort into getting connected to brokers and developers in the industrial market.

Costco's decision to locate its new distribution center in Owatonna is a direct result of those efforts, according to Kruschke and Brad Meier, president of Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism.

"Costco had a need and was looking for a location in this region," said Meier. "We checked the boxes of what they were looking for - location, workforce and ease of distribution."

Costco's Distribution Center, which opened earlier this fall in the industrial park, topped the city's 2020 permit list, with a building permit valuation of \$29.5 million. That figure is the estimated cost of constructing the building, including labor and materials. Like all building permits, the figures do not include the cost of land or fixtures.



More than 200 trucks run in and out of the Costco's new Distribution Center in Owatonna each day, according to city officials.

Costco's 385,000-square-foot building sits on about 173 acres of land with easy access to I-35 and Hwy. 14. The depot will be serving 29 stores throughout the Upper Midwest, including those located in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and portions of Missouri, Wisconsin and Iowa, according to Meier. Officials said Costco added about 200 jobs to the local economy.

"That's the piece that has an immediate impact on the community," said Meier. "Additional jobs for people in this region is good."

In addition to the 200 jobs created by Costco, the 200-plus trucks that run in and out of Costco each day could bring more development. Because Costco is a big name, both Kruschke and Meier talked about the attention Owatonna has garnered from national developers

and brokers. And, that attention could help Owatonna land a truck stop in the future.

The city has been reaching out to developers about a truck stop since Hwy. 14 opened in 2013, Kruschke said. "We see the benefits of a truck stop (at the intersection of I-35 and Highway 14), but we don't have anything in the ground yet," said Kruschke. Costco declined to comment for this story.

WORD ON THE STREET: FROM A3

Austin resident but Blooming Prairie teacher Laura Hanson said one thing that would be different this year is their Christmas cookie family tradition.

Cookies take a hit
"Usually we do a big cookie-making day with our grandma and our aunt and we can't really do that. This year our grandma's in the nursing home so they won't let her out," she said.

Her mother, Sue VanPelt, said that they're just going to be hosting immediate family with no big gatherings.

She also mentioned that COVID-19 is affecting how they'll get their Christmas presents.

"We're doing a lot of shopping online rather than going to the store," she said.

"I don't work in the office anymore so just taking precautions wherever we can."

Plans uncertain

Kristin Sumner, of Owatonna, said her family isn't sure yet how their holiday plans will be different this year.

"We'll see how everybody's feeling and what everybody wants to do," she said.

She's fortunate she doesn't have to travel for the holidays and may not have anyone come from out of town.

"For our big gathering, which I'm not certain that we'll have, we only have a few people that live out of town. I'm not sure if they'll

come or not," she said.

Wait-and-see
Paula McCamy, who lives about 10 to 12 miles east of Blooming Prairie, said her advice for the holidays is, "Social distancing, be safe and be smart."

She said her family is taking a wait-and-see approach because they don't know the rest of the family's feelings about how they want to handle the holidays.

While that's still unknown, she knows that she won't be traveling very far this holiday season and won't have a problem distancing from large groups of people.

"We live on a little farm so for us it doesn't really affect us a lot and we're with our daughter here [in Blooming Prairie] a lot so we go back-and-forth," McCamy said. "We make do with what we've got."

Staying home

Pamela Virze, of Owatonna, said COVID-19 won't really affect her and her husband's holiday plans because they're not traveling nor hosting anyone from out of town.

"We suggest nobody travel. It's not worth the risk," she said.

She noted that they've visited her family for past holidays, but with the pandemic surging "I think it's just better to stay home and stay safe. It's the safest thing for everybody I think."

BARN GOES UP: in flames, 2K hogs killed FROM A1

The fire chief described the 2,000 hogs that perished as "smaller pigs" in a nursery. He estimated the size of the structure as 280 foot by 70 foot.

While the State Fire Marshal was called in

to investigate, Naatz said it may be hard to determine a cause of the fire given the age of the structure. It was built in the mid-1990s. "It's tough with older buildings. It could be a lot of things," he said.

"To find something real conclusive may not happen"

Naatz did not have an estimate of damage, though he said a replacement building would run at least \$750,000. The loss of the

pigs is believed to be at least \$60,000.

Firefighters protected themselves while battling last week's fire with Nomex hoods, just as they have throughout the COVID crisis. Nomex is a flame-resistant

meta-aramid material to protect firefighters from the nasty chemicals that cause cancer. During the pandemic, the Nomex hoods have also doubled as protection from COVID, Naatz said. He added his crews

have been wearing them instead of using smaller disposable masks or even handkerchiefs.

Fire crews remained on the scene until about 1:30 p.m.

No one was injured battling the blaze.

Owatonna

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OUR MISSION The city of Owatonna Parks and Recreation Department provides a diverse system of green spaces, trails, facilities, programs and services to enhance the quality of life for the community.	THANK YOU PARK BOARD MEMBERS! Greg Posch, Angie Malo, Greg Louis, Nicholas Elser, Jonathan Thiel, David Christianson, and Andi Arnold	Steele County DID YOU KNOW Owatonna parks and trails offer a variety of outdoor, winter activities that help beat boredom, are safe and offer social distancing and keep you active. Try ice skating, cross country skiing, ice fishing, fat tire biking, taking a walk on the paved trails or even building a snowman this winter and stay active and healthy this winter!
NEW REGISTRATION SYSTEM We are excited to announce our new software registration system, CivicRec, is now available at Owatonna Park & Rec! Our project team has been working for several months on the launch of this new registration system with the goal to better and more efficiently serve you, our customers. The CivicRec solution is designed to be intuitive to navigate and easy to use. It is mobile-friendly, allowing you to search for community activities and events, register, and remit payment even from a smartphone or tablet. Creating your new account: - Visit the Owatonna Park & Rec website: http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/parksrecreation - Click on the Register Now button - On desktop, select Log in/Create Account in the upper left corner, then select Create your OWMMPR Account - On a mobile device, select Account in the upper right corner and then select Sign Up - Fill in the required information. - To receive text alerts (i.e. activity cancellations, facility closings), indicate your mobile carrier next to your cell number. That's it! You're ready to register for our programs. Add additional members (spouse, children, etc.) at any time in your account settings. Keep your entire household on one account! When you've found a program, make sure to select the correct account member before adding it to your cart.	LETTERS TO SANTA - HE'LL WRITE BACK! Santa is accepting letters November 30th through December 11th and he will write back! His mailbox will be available outside the Park & Rec Office, 540 West Hills Circle, Owatonna, during office hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm). Simply drop your letter in his mailbox and he'll write you back. Don't forget to include your address with your letter! ELF IN THE PARK Timmy, the elf will be hiding in Owatonna Parks this month. We'll post a picture of where he was spotted, find the location, snap a picture of yourself (or kids) at the spot and be entered into a drawing for a prize! The more times you find the spot, the better your chance at winning. SOCCER BALL FROM SANTA Everyone who has created their account in CivicRec, our new online registration system, by 12/11 will be entered into a drawing. If you're one of 100 lucky winners, instructions, which will include date and time, to pick up your soccer ball directly from Santa himself (in a safe way) will be emailed to you. CANDY CANE HUNT Santa will hide candy canes in Owatonna parks every day December 20-23! We'll post where he hid the candy canes, find the spot and take a candy cane as a prize. OUTDOOR SKATING Ice rinks located in Morehouse Park are the only supervised skating rinks in Owatonna. Skating is available on the river (if ice is thick enough), on an in-line rink and two ponds. The Warsinski Chalet, a large warming house complete with cross country ski and skate rentals and food concessions is located at the west end of School Street. Rentals and food concessions are currently pending due to COVID regulations. Check the Owatonna Parks and Recreation website for Chalet hours and ice conditions.	CLOSINGS The following are our most current closings and cancellations. To stay updated on our closings and cancellations, and for program cancellations and/or postponements, visit the Cancellations & Closings page on our website (http://www.ci.owatonna.mn.us/291/CancellationsClosings) and like us on Facebook. Please note, this information is as of December 1, 2020. These are subject to change at any time and without notice. - Adult Activities: Water Aerobics are cancelled until at least December 21. - Youth Activities: - All Private and Group Swimming Lessons are cancelled. - Hockey is suspended until further notice. - West Hills Social Commons (formerly SeniorPlace): Closed until at least January 4, 2021. - Therapeutic Recreation Activities: In-person programming is suspended until further notice. - West Hills Tennis and Fitness Center: Closed until at least December 21. HOLIDAYS - Christmas Eve, 12/24 & Christmas Day, 12/25: Park & Rec Office, Tennis & Fitness Center and West Hills Social Commons closed. - New Year's Eve, 12/31: Tennis & Fitness Center closes at 11:00am. - New Year's Day, 1/1: Park & Rec Office, Tennis & Fitness Center and West Hills Social Commons closed.

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Marlyn Schroeder, 86, Kasson



Marlyn Schroeder

Marlyn Ann Schroeder (nee Peterson), 86, of Kasson, died Nov. 28, 2020 of Alzheimer's disease.

A graveside service was held for immediate family on Friday, Dec. 4 at Holden Lutheran Church, Kenyon, with Pastor Nirmala Reinschmidt of St. John's Lutheran Church, Kasson, officiating. Funeral arrangements were handled by Dibble Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Kasson.

Marlyn was born in Mower County, on Dec. 7, 1933 to Melvin and Iva (nee Miller) Peterson. Marlyn graduated from Austin High School, continued at Austin Community College and then transferred to the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities where she received a Bachelor's Degree in Early Education in 1956. Marlyn was married to Rev. Clifford H. Schroeder on June 23, 1957. Cliff was her loving partner for 46 years.

Marlyn worked as a teacher for multiple schools including Kenyon and Blooming Prairie. Music was a central component of Marlyn's life from a young age and she thoroughly enjoyed her role in the Austin (Minnesota) Symphony Orchestra for many years. She also taught Suzuki method violin for many years, including instruction of her grandchildren. Marlyn was actively involved in many churches, and she served alongside Cliff at Holden & Dale Lutheran Churches (Kenyon/Wanamingo), First Lutheran Blooming Prairie and Zwingli United Church of Christ in Berne. Marlyn also participated in the Kasson-Mantorville community with St. John's Lutheran Church, the Mantorville Senior Citizens Center, the Mantorville Restoration House and Theater Company.

Marlyn loved the outdoors and gardening and embraced all things perennial and annual. Her yard was always a beautiful place; second only to the excellence of her homemade brownies and baked goods. When she and Cliff moved to Mantorville, she eagerly participated in Olde Tyne Days, Marigold Days, Berne Swiss Fest and thoroughly enjoyed these annual celebrations. Marlyn served as Marigold Days Grand Marshall in 2007. She also held coordinating and leadership roles at the Mantorville Restoration Association and Senior Citizens.

Marlyn is survived by her sister Clarice (Keith) Anderson; sons Steven (Laura) of Mantorville, Clark (Summer Seldenkranz) of Stillwater, and Eric (Kim Harbinson) of St. Paul, several grandchildren, and one great-grandchild along with many other family and friends.

Marlyn was preceded in death by her parents Melvin and Iva and her husband Cliff.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given to Holden Lutheran Church Park (Kenyon, MN), Good Earth Village (Spring Valley, MN), Luther Seminary (St. Paul, MN) or the memorial of your choice.

The family of Marlyn & Cliff Schroeder wishes to thank the church communities of Holden, Dale, First Lutheran Blooming Prairie and Berne Zwingli for their long-standing support of Marlyn and her family. Marlyn's family sincerely thanks and sends gratitude for the loving and compassionate staff at Prairie Meadows Senior Living Facility and St. Croix Hospice where Marlyn received excellent personal care.

Harriet Strand, 85, Apple Valley

Harriet L. Strand, age 85, of Apple Valley, formerly of Blooming Prairie, passed away peacefully on Dec. 2, 2020 after a long struggle with Alzheimer's.

Proceeded in death by her parents O'Clair and Clara Strand, brother-in-law David Hanson, and great nephew Connor Harris.

Harriet is survived by sister Dallas Hanson, brothers Roger (Carol) Strand and Dale (LaVonne) Strand and 16 nieces and nephews (and their spouses and children).

A private service will be held in the Spring 2021.



Harriet Strand

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Gen Peterson, 104, Blooming Prairie



Gen Peterson

Genevieve (Gen) M. Peterson, age 104 of Blooming Prairie, passed away Thursday, Dec. 3, 2020 at Homestead Hospice House in Owatonna.

Genevieve Mildred Hanson, the daughter of Otto and Evalina (Bassess) Hanson was born on August 1, 1916 in Lansing. She attended Blooming Prairie High School.

From 1945 to 1946, Genevieve served in the Women's Army Corps during WWII as a nurse serving retreating soldiers at Fort Fitzsimons Hospital in Denver.

On April 7, 1953, she was united in marriage to Roger "Nip" Peterson at the St. Columbanus Catholic Church in Blooming Prairie. Many may remember her from her time as clubhouse manager at the BP Country Club and BP Gun Club during the 1970s.

Survivors include her son, Carl (Kathi) Peterson of Blooming Prairie; daughter, Loral (David) Priest of San Diego, Calif.; five grandchildren, Anders Priest, Brita Lisa Priest, Eric Priest, Soren Peterson, and Victor Peterson. She was also a favorite aunt to many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, and siblings, Bob Hanson, Clint Hanson, and Orene Lickteig.

Arrangements are being made through Worlein Funeral Home in Blooming Prairie.

A Celebration of Genevieve's life will be held at a future date. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

Memorials should be directed to: Owatonna Homestead Hospice House or Blooming Prairie Education Foundation.

Owatonna Foundation awards scholarships

The Owatonna Foundation awards Traditional and Nontraditional Scholarships. During spring semester 2021, two individuals will use Nontraditional Scholarships. The Nontraditional Scholarships are awarded to individuals who are returning to college or continuing their education after high school graduation. Recipients attend technical programs at

technical or community colleges.

This year's non-traditional scholarship winners are:

- Jason Spatenka, Riverland Community College, Construction Electrician, \$3,000, parent Teresa Spatenka
 - Alex Tryhus, Riverland Community College, Construction Electrician, \$3,000, Christy and Neil Tryhus
- Since 1995 the

Owatonna Foundation has awarded over 460 scholarships, totaling more than \$630,000, for individuals preparing for technical careers. Traditional additional scholarships are available to 2021 high school graduates who attend technical or community

colleges and are due April 10. Applications are available at the Foundation's office at 108 West Park Square, Owatonna; <http://www.owatonnafoundation.org>. Grants/Scholarships, and Apply for a Scholarship, or from Jill Holmes at 455-3059.

Large Moving Estate Sale

133 3rd St SE, Blooming Prairie
Friday, Dec 11th - 9 am - 4 pm
Saturday, Dec 12th - 9 am - 4 pm

Passing out numbers 1 hour before the sale.

Must wear a mask and follow COVID Guidelines.

Nordic Track Tread Mill, Nordic track exercise bicycle, Occasional chairs, couch, very nice Curio, end tables, Humidifier, Electric juke like new fireplace, wicker love seat with matching chairs, nice couch with matching love seat, lamps, Fanon, Red Wing Chicken feeder, Red Wing vases, Bakers rack, lots of pictures, Cassette tapes, lots of beautiful Christmas Decorations, three Ceramic Christmas trees, crock pots, knife sharpener, large Nesco Electric roaster, pots and pans, lots of shovels and garden tools, leaf blower, shop vacs, battery charger, large vise, large assortment of hand tools, Mikata Sawzall, Craftsman rolling tool box, roof snow shovel, two pellet guns, just like new patio table and chairs, several shepherd hooks, Weber grill, fire pit, firewood holder, lots of outdoor plant containers, large Rubbermaid storage chest, four foot fiber glass ladder, Antique pantry cupboard, dresser, matching china size bed, matching armchair, beautiful dining room table and four chairs with leaves and matching china hutch, comes with table protectors, small new toaster oven, VHS movies, very nice small drop leaf table with two chairs, very nice flat screen TV stand, glassware, Vintage Schwinn, lots and lots of misc. See you at the sale.

www.estatesales.net

JOY'S Estate Sales
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 507-373-9810 or 507-391-1821

AAUW offers scholarship

The Owatonna branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) is offering the AAUW Owatonna Dorothy Meyerling Scholarship for the 2021-22 academic year. The amount of the scholarship is \$1,200. The recipient must be a female resident of Steele County or a female graduate of a Steele County School District, must have graduated from high school in the year 2020 or before at the time of application and completed at least 12 credits of post high school

education. The application is open to all fields of study.

Application deadline for the scholarship is March 15 with the award recipient notified by July 1. Application forms are available on-line at <http://owatonna-mn.aaupw.net/> under the scholarship tab. Two letters of recommendation and an official transcript must accompany the application.

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

BIRTHDAYS

Dec. 9
 Kevin Johnson
 Courtney Vermilyea
 Steve Ile
 James Kuejt
 Kinley Emanuel

Dec. 10
 Leanne Hanson
 Lucas Wallace
 Bill Schabert
 Keely Rose Winn
 Gabriel Thompson
 Cory Hendrickson
 Glen Valek
 Anneliese Keening

Dec. 11
 Susan Thorson
 Harlan Hinemann
 Maurice Lemke
 Mike Jones

Dec. 12
 Kristine Smith
 Joshua Jones
 John Fougare
 James Konz
 Rick Bussler

Dec. 13
 Bob Arett
 Tony Schiller
 Erica Toquam
 Chloe Weber

Dec. 14
 Harvey R. Farr
 Joan McDonald
 Katie Jo Alderete
 Jake Ressler
 Nikki Ryks
 Tiffany Valerius

Dec. 15
 Rick Hocking
 Ian-Thomas Campbell
 Darrell Erickson
 Isiah Toquam
 Gregg Frisfield

ANNIVERSARIES

Dec. 10
 Robert & Mary Olson
Dec. 11
 Mike & Melissa Trithus

Dec. 12
 Tom & Barbie Johnson
 Gwen & Gale Klinger

Dec. 13
 Todd & Erica Nelson

This weekly feature sponsored by:
Dornink & Sons Carpentry
 Gene Dornink
 507.206.8449

Library selling Usborne books



NANCY VAILLANCOURT

First, the Blooming Prairie Branch Library is still open for computer use and browsing the shelves! We continue to require masks, offer hand sanitizer, quarantine and clean returned items, and encourage social distancing. Just a reminder that we have reduced hours; we are open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Over the last many years, the Friends of the Library have sponsored a Christmas Tree Project for the library. Donors purchased suggested books, DVDs, and music CDs for the library. Thank you to all who were such loyal supporters of the library.

Since the number of people visiting the library has decreased significantly from past years, the Christmas Tree Project will not be held this year. Instead, we will have a selection of Usborne books available for the public to purchase. If you are not familiar with Usborne books, they are high quality children's books, many with international roots. Our local Usborne Book representative is Stephanie Bruggeman. So, if you always give books as gifts, especially for children, stop in at the library from now until Dec. 18. The Friends of the Library will receive free books for the library based on the number of books sold.

Finally, it was with sadness that we learned of the passing of Lloyd Mans. Lloyd served as president of the Friends of the Library group for 16 years. He was committed to reading and to the library. Thanks for your service, Lloyd!



New Richland • Hartland • Ellendale • Geneva

PANTHER OF THE WEEK



DEVON MATTSO

DEVON MATTSO is this week's Panther of the Week. Devon is the son of Heidi and Jason Mattson and they reside in New Richland. He is in Mr. Fischer's fifth grade class.

Devon has been working very hard and has been showing Panther Pride. Devon never gives up, and always perseveres with a positive mindset. Devon comes to school ready to learn and is his positive attitude is infectious! Devon is an uncle and he loves dinosaurs. **Keep up the great work Devon!**



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Caught off guard



Pastor Micheal Simmerman

BETHEL CHURCH
OWATONNA

As we turn the corner into December and into the Christmas season (although confession – the Christmas tree has been up in our house since mid-November), often the first picture that pops into our minds is the classic nativity scene with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. And normally I'm pretty unphased by the familiarity of this scene, but this year the fact the God came in the form of a baby has been particularly shocking to me as I've thought it through again.

Call me a doomsday prepper – but the year of 2020 has caused me to

spend a lot more time in the book of Revelation than I normally would. And the more I read about Jesus THERE, the more I can't help but notice the difference between Jesus there, and Jesus at Christmas. It might surprise you that the Jesus in Revelation 1 has eyes that are full of fire, feet are like bronze furnaces, and a voice that's like thunder. Even crazier is that the same disciple (John) who a few years early felt comfortable enough around Jesus to lean back on him during one of their suppers together, "falls down as though dead" just by looking at the same

Jesus in Revelation.

Which has to make you ask: what does it say when a God who is THAT GREAT, comes at Christmas in such a humble way? It's head scratching!

Of course seeing this change between Christmas and Revelation (or we might say Jesus' first coming and his second) makes one thing unmistakably clear: he means to remind us at Christmas that he's accessible. It's almost like how a dad who's a CEO by day, gets home and immediately gets down on the floor and lets his 3-year-old daughter put hair clips in his hair, or

picks up a crayon to color pictures with his kids after work. He may be the most powerful CEO of his company every other minute of the day – but what he means to communicate when he walks in the door to kids who've been waiting for him is: "I want to be with you – and it doesn't take anything impressive on your part to be with me." This is the message that's so loud and clear at Christmas. A powerful God gets head-scratchingly low to make sure we see his heart for us: "I want to be with you" he says simply by coming.

Do you know? I hope you do. If not I

want to encourage you to spend some time this Christmas season reading through the book of John. You'll see there even as an adult he continuously invites the lowly, the sinful, and the outcasts to come into a relationship with him. In one of my favorite verses in that book (chapter 14, v6) he says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me." Cheering for you this Christmas season to find your way to Jesus, who so hopes you see his heart for you as you reflect on how he came into our world.

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN

AURORA LUTHERAN
6529 SE 28th St., Owatonna
Interim Pastor:
Rev. Dale Svendsen
507-451-2819
office@auroralutheranchurch.org
Worship: Sunday at 9 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.

COMMUNITY

LUTHERAN – ELCA
106 Third St. SE., Geneva
Pastor Kristen Venne
507-256-4288
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sunday

FIRST LUTHERAN – ALC

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

FIRST LUTHERAN – ELCA

434 First St. SW.,
Bloomington
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Heidi Heimgartner
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mike Valerius
507-585-6821
firstlutheranbp.com
Worship Service - 9 a.m.
Sunday School - 10 a.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN – LCMC

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

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN – LCMC

2500 7th Ave. NE.,
Owatonna
Pastor Greg Schlicker
507-451-4125
goodshepherdowatonna.com
Indoor Worship: Sundays 9
a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Online Worship: Sundays 9
a.m. or anytime on website

MOLAND LUTHERAN – ELCA

7618 NE 84th Ave., Kenyon
Pastor Nancy Edwardsen
507-789-6961
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 – LCMC

1054 Truman Ave.,
Owatonna

Pastor Kirk Griebel
507-451-2720
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Education Hour: 10:15 a.m. Sun.

RED OAK GROVE LUTHERAN – ELCA

30456 Mower-Freedom
Road, Austin
507-451-0447
Leandra Anderson, Pastor
507-583-2038 or 507-437-3000
www.rogulutheran.org
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN – LCMC

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

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN – LCMC

28959 630th Ave., Sargeant
Pastor Collin Duling
507-261-5568
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9 a.m.

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN – ELCA

1301 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
Pastors Dave Klaviter 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 Deibel
507-567-2474
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN – LCMC

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

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN – ELCA

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

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA

609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
507-451-4520
tricityowatonna.org
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Todd Buegler
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Amanda Floy
Deacon: Kris Oppgaard
Sundays 9:30 a.m. - online at
facebook.com/tlcowatonna
and tlcowatonna.org/
worshiplive
Watch the video of our
full service on Spectrum
(channel 181) and Jaguar TV
(channel 900) (Tuesday-4:30
p.m.; Wednesday-6 p.m.;
Sunday-11 a.m.) and at
owatonalive.com.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA

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

www.trinityhayfield.org
Worship: 8 a.m. &
10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMC

106 Third Ave. SW., Medford
Pastor Mark Biebighauser
507-451-0447
Worship: 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.
Education Hour: 9 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMC

57043 3500th St., Waltham
Pastor Jesse Krusemark
507-567-2272
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

ZION LUTHERAN – ELCA

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

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN – ELCA

1009 St. Paul Road,
Owatonna
Senior Pastor:
John Weisenburger
Associate Pastor: Lisa Carlson
507-451-4853
oursaviorsowatonna.org
Worship: 8:15 a.m.
Tuesday-Thursday, 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School/Adult
Education
10:45 a.m. - Contemporary

CATHOLIC

CHRIST THE KING

205 Second Ave. NW,
Medford
507-451-4845
Father James Starasich
Mass: 5:30 p.m. Sat.
Mass: 9 a.m. Mon. & Fri.

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS

307 SW First St.,
New Richmond
Father Brian Mulligan
507-234-6244
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL

9948 SE 24th Ave.
Owatonna
Father John Wilmut
507-583-2784
www.litomyslwebs.com
Sunday Mass at 8:30 a.m.
Litomysl Finance Council:
2nd Thursday
Litomysl Pastoral Council:
2nd Thursday every other
month

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC

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

SACRED HEART PARISH

810 S. Cedar Ave.,
Owatonna
Father Swaminatha
Pothreddy
Parochial Vicar

ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST

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

OWATONNA UNITED METHODIST

815 E. University, Owatonna
Rev. Lisa J. Vick Pastor
507-451-4734
www.owatonnaumc.org

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1213 W. Frontage Rd. Owatonna, MN
valleyviewofowatonna.com

507-451-1588
www.sacredheartowatonna.org
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday,
8:30 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.,
Bloomington
Father John Wilmut
507-583-2784
www.stcolumbanuschurch.com
Mass: 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Reconciliation: 9 a.m.
First Friday 5 Saturday

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH

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

CHRISTIAN

CHRIST COMMUNITY COVENANT

540 SE 18th St., Owatonna
Dr. V. Brent Carlson, Pastor
507-451-1039
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Sunday Connections:
10:15 a.m.

PENTECOSTAL

FIRST UNITED PENTECOSTAL

230 Locust Ave., Owatonna
Pastor Eliazar Talamantes
507-583-2240
Worship: 10 a.m. Sunday;
6:30 p.m. Wednesday

METHODIST

BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST

43089 180th St., Medford
(Seven miles west of
Medford on OR 23)
Pastors JJ & Stefanie
Morgan
507-335-8726
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST

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

OWATONNA UNITED METHODIST

815 E. University, Owatonna
Rev. Lisa J. Vick Pastor
507-451-4734
www.owatonnaumc.org

CLAREMONT PRESBYTERIAN CENTER

Service Center:
507-528-2233
After Hours Towing:
507-456-4158
111 Front Street
P.O. Box 285
Claremont, MN

ASSOCIATED CHURCH

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

NON-DENOMINATIONAL

CEDAR CREEK

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

DESTINY CHRISTIAN

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

ELEVATION NORTH

2002 Austin Road,
Owatonna
Pastor Doug Jones
507-583-3099
www.elevationnorth.
blogspot.com
Worship (English):
10 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 10:30 a.m.
Worship (Spanish):
2 p.m. Sun.
Bible Study: 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday
Spanish Evangelism &
Prayer: 7 p.m. Friday

NEW BEGINNINGS

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

MENNONITE

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

MORMON

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF FLATTER DAY SAINTS

404 33rd St. NW, Austin
Bishop Rick Bremner
507-433-9042
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

PRESBYTERIAN

ASSOCIATED CHURCH

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

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

Pastor Kirk Johnston
507-477-2631
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

2375 Seventh Ave. NE,
Owatonna
Pastor Brian Beavers
651-953-4032
Worship: 11 a.m. Sat.
Bible Study: 9:30 a.m. Sat.

UCC

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

211 Main St. S., Medford
Rev. Richard Waters
507-451-4586
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

VIBRANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD

702 Third St. S., Ellendale
Interim Pastor Wendell
Anderson
507-684-3421
www.vibrantlifeag.com
Worship: 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday
Kids Church: 9 a.m.

BAPTIST

FIRST BAPTIST

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

FIRST BAPTIST (OWATONNA'S OLDEST CHURCH)

123 E. Main St., Owatonna
Pastor Carla Nelson
507-272-9934
www.firstbaptistowatonna.com
Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

BETHEL BAPTIST

1811 Hemlock Ave.,
Owatonna
Pastor Michael Simmerman
507-451-8549
www.bethelowatonna.com
Worship: 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

VICTORY LIFE

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

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VALLEYVIEW OF OWATONNA
1213 W. Frontage Rd. Owatonna, MN
valleyviewofowatonna.com

COALITION: FROM A6

severely impacted. Following the limits placed on operations and capacity since March of this year and now with the new pause in operations until Dec. 18, their economic future is more precarious than ever before."

Walz is required by state law to call a special session by Dec. 14 as a condition of extending the state's peacetime emergency, which gives him the authority to issue executive orders to respond to the pandemic. It will be the seventh special session this year.

Meier said he's certain the governor and Senate Republicans want to do something, but he isn't certain about what the package will include. "What is going to come down to is where they can compromise."

In its letter to Walz, the Minnesota Ready Coalition called for immediate, targeted assistance most directly affected by the recent closure.

The coalition cited 10 provisions needed to

support the businesses and their employees most at risk of closure:

- Replenish the Small Business Grant Relief Program passed in June during the first Special Session and increase the available grant amounts as the need has greatly surpassed the initial allocation. Impacted businesses simply cannot take on more debt and cash for operations is urgently needed.
- Provide a quick refund request option for businesses that have overpaid estimated taxes in Minnesota. This is currently allowed at the federal level (Federal Form 4466).
- Allow for a six-month extension of the sales tax remittance.
- Provide property tax relief through an abatement process for property taxes paid in 2020.
- Provide an automatic extension of estimated income tax payments with waiver of penalties and interest for business taxpayers until April 15, 2021.
- Create a temporary

state tax credit for food donations for those businesses that have donated inventory that cannot be used due to shutdowns.

- Waive or delay other state-imposed fees such as general business or industry-specific annual licensing fees until spring 2021.
- Temporarily allow unused Workforce Development Fund dollars to be repurposed to provide relief directly to impacted businesses (the fund currently has a \$30 million balance).
- Continue to ensure that unemployment insurance claims made related to the COVID-19 pandemic are not counted against employers' experience rating.
- Return a proportional amount of the state Renewable Development Account for Xcel customers to impacted businesses in the form of a bill credit that is equivalent to the amount which the business paid in. Suspend Renewable Development Account assessments for these businesses for a minimum of six months beginning January 1, 2021.

that unemployment insurance claims made related to the COVID-19 pandemic are not counted against employers' experience rating.

Return a proportional amount of the state Renewable Development Account for Xcel customers to impacted businesses in the form of a bill credit that is equivalent to the amount which the business paid in. Suspend Renewable Development Account assessments for these businesses for a minimum of six months beginning January 1, 2021.

A RACIAL EQUITY: partnership FROM A2

year's incident highlighted the fact that even though a racially charged issue was made public because of the actions of a few students, the genesis of and response to this issue came from school, families, and community. Superintendent Elstad's response was that all stakeholders of Owatonna needed to be made aware of the root cause and join in the heavy lifting of racial equity rather than place the work at the feet of the district and then perhaps have it discounted, or worse,

counteracted by the greater community. As a result, we were invited once again to partner with the district during the 2019-2020 school year in order to include separate and ongoing sessions for Owatonna Courageous Educators. This training was geared to anyone having contact with students. Additionally, we were asked to work concurrently with several leaders of Owatonna and Steele County in a similar format called Owatonna Courageous Community

equity work that is focused more on issues of racial awareness as they pertain to social justice. Our vision is that through partnerships with the various stakeholders of the Owatonna community, that people will begin to have a shared vision, language, and perceived course of action for how best to confront issues of race and systemic racism. We are proud to be a part of the Owatonna School District and Community's racial equity journey and look forward to continuing this urgent work.

DON'T BELIEVE: untruths FROM A2

that. Others, not so much.

We are in a pattern today where outrageous things are said loud enough and often enough and spread altogether too far, that these untruths without basis are believed and then spread around some more. Opinions are polarized. Reason flies out the door.

Much is hateful and much bears little or no relation to reality. Last

week, so-called news about Gov. Tim Walz traveling to Florida over Thanksgiving instead of heading his own pleas to stay home and stay safe, spread like wild fire. He was widely criticized. (It wasn't true. He hasn't left Minnesota since March.) Election officials, secretaries of state, and others have received death and mayhem threats for reporting results that

aren't what some people want to believe.

Not wanting to believe provable truths isn't wise or right. Be kind. Be nice. Wear your mask.

Jan Mittelstadt Tippett is a retired newspaper editor and publisher who returned to the area five years ago. She can be reached at jtippett@midco.net No death threats, please.

Let's Get Lit!
1st Annual
Front Yard Christmas Tree Decorating Contest!
Hosted by the Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce

This contest is to encourage the community spirit and to keep Blooming Prairie on the map as the best little community in Minnesota!

Categories and prizes:

- **Most Creative • \$200 Prize**
Sponsored by: Home Sellers of Minnesota, Inc.
- **Best Use of a Theme • \$200 Prize**
Sponsored by: C.J. Home Inspections
- **Best of the Best • \$200 Prize**
Sponsored by: Kruckeberg Industries

Trees must be ready by December 9th for judging. Judging will take place in the evening after this date so judges can scout out the trees and lights! Trees must be in the Blooming Prairie city limits at individual residences. All entries must include lights/illumination and be in good taste and family-oriented.

Fill BP with holiday cheer!
Register online at bloomingprairiechamber.com or by calling the Chamber Office at 507-585-4472.

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HERE'S MY CARD

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Rep. Bennett re-elected to leadership post



Peggy Bennett

State Representative Peggy Bennett (R-Albert Lea) was elected to a second consecutive term as an assistant minority leader for the Minnesota House Republicans during the 2021-2022 biennium.

"I feel honored to have gained this trust by my colleagues and am looking forward to continue serving the residents of our district and our state through this leadership position," Bennett said.

As an Assistant Leader, Bennett helps develop legislative policy for House Republicans as well as assist in crafting political vision.

Bennett is a retired teacher who lives in Albert Lea. She is completing her third term in the Minnesota House of Representatives and was re-elected to her fourth term in November.

Something for everyone with 4-H

The 4-H program is still here and gearing up for winter 4-H programming and let me tell you 4-H has something for everyone this winter!

Even with staff working remotely into next summer, programs and events will continue to take place safely in-person or virtually from the comfort of your home. If you are looking for hands-on learning activities for your youth in grades Kindergarten through high school – check Steele County 4-H out!

Growing YOU Leadership series has been underway this fall and will continue through January. This is a virtual opportunity for teens to meet with other youth across the state. Interactive sessions help bring leadership to you right in your own living room – find out "What Do You Stand For?" or "What is your Style?" and how to "Become a Change Agent." When you join us, youth will receive resources, guidance, information, and tips to help grow YOU. Hosted by staff from Freeborn, Rice, Steele & Waseca Counties, these one-hour workshops are open to all Minnesota 4-Hers.

Let's get outside! 4-H is going to have you moving and enjoying the great Minnesota winter! Families and all ages should plan to join us at 4-H Winter Camp in January over the Martin Luther King holiday. We will be holding in-person opening and closing ceremonies for your family to play games and explore nature. During your time at home, you will receive self-guided activities that you can do on your own. If you are not able to join us for Winter Camp, there will be

SEE SOMETHING, 88

Here's another clue for the Medallion hunt

Blooming Prairie's Medallion hunt is in full swing as it heads into its second week.

Becky Noble at the BP Chamber of Commerce has revealed the second clue to bring area residents closer to finding the hidden treasure.

This week's clue:

*As you hunt it will become clear
A medallion is very near
Open your minds and wherever you go
Don't forget to look high & low*

The first clue:

*It's that time of year
The colors of Christmas now appear
The Medallion Hunt will give you cheer*

The Chamber sponsors the annual hunt. The person who finds the winning medallion can bring it to the Steele County Times office to retrieve the prizes of \$50 in BP Bucks and a subscription to the newspaper.

Good luck as you search for the holiday prize.



Merry Little Christmas



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

William Butler, 5, makes a donation to the Blooming Prairie Police Department in the "We Shine Together" fundraiser that debuted Saturday during the Merry Little Christmas on Main celebration. Each dollar represented a vote and the tree that receives the most votes will be awarded \$250, second place wins \$150 and third place takes home \$100.

Local non-profits compete for funds

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

Non-profit organizations in Blooming Prairie are hoping for a Merry Little Christmas.

The Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce's "We Shine Together" fundraiser debuted just in time for the community's Merry Little Christmas on Main celebration on Saturday.

The fundraiser pits eight local organizations or groups against each other in a Christmas tree decorating contest.

The decorated trees can be viewed from now through Christmas Day in the empty lot where the bakery once stood.

Non-profit organizations participating in the contest include the Blooming Prairie Police Department, the BP Legion and VFW Auxiliaries, the BP High School FCCLA Club, the BP Chamber of Commerce, Friends of the BP Public Library and the BP Cancer Group.

The public can vote on which tree(s) they liked best by donating money into a mailbox-like receptacle next to each tree. Each dollar donated is equivalent to one vote. Voting also can take place in the businesses in Blooming Prairie from now

SEE LOCAL NON-PROFITS, 88



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

There was a long line to see Santa and to experience a horse-drawn carriage during Saturday's community celebration in Blooming Prairie.

BP's Christmas spirit on full display

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

COVID-19 may have canceled Blooming Prairie's annual Holiday Dazzle, but it couldn't cancel the community's holiday spirit, which was on full display this past Saturday.

The celebration, called a Merry Little Christmas on Main, attracted hundreds of people to the empty lot where The Bakery once stood.

The main attraction was kids getting to tell Santa their Christmas wishes from a safe distance away.

Another line formed in front of B to Z Hardware to climb aboard a horse-drawn carriage. The free rides were donated by Pittman Percherones.

There were also plenty of photo opportunities for kids and families, including in front of Clark Griswold's station wagon and Cousin Eddie's RV from

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation. For young children, there were wooden vehicles for kids to play on.

There was also a wide variety of holiday inflatable characters and a life-size Elf on the Shelf.

Multiple businesses along East Main Street got involved in the festivities by opening their doors and giving people who came from nearby towns a chance to look at what they had for sale.

Driver flees from police after hitting tree



COURTESY OWATONNA POLICE

Carr Brazelton, shown in this photo taken by a police dash camera, is accused of fleeing police in a motor vehicle before hitting a tree and taking off running from police on foot. He was captured a short time later in the Pillsbury campus in Owatonna. He faces a felony fleeing police charge.

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

A man has been charged in connection with an incident where he crashed into a tree and ran from officers.

The Steele County Attorney's Office has charged Carr Brazelton, 36, of Owatonna with fleeing a peace officer in a motor vehicle, which is a felony. If convicted of the charge, he could face three years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

On Nov. 29 at about 1:50 a.m., an Owatonna police officer was performing stationary speed enforcement on Bridge Street and

Riverside Avenue. The officer clocked a vehicle traveling at 44 in a 30 mph zone.

As the officer turned on his emergency lights to stop the vehicle, it accelerated rapidly in what appeared to be an attempt to evade police, the criminal complaint said. The vehicle accelerated rapidly and was going in excess of 60 mph going east on Main Street. At the intersection of Main Street and Grove Avenue, the vehicle allegedly went through a red light.

The vehicle attempted to turn north onto

SEE DRIVER FLEES, 88

More elected officials consider move to virtual meetings

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

As the Steele County Board mulls moving to virtual meetings, many other bodies within the county have already done so.

Citing an uptick in COVID cases around the county, as well as the governor's recent suggestions, Steele County commissioners recently said it might be best to move to virtual meetings for the safety of county staff. The county is also combining and consolidating policy meetings.

"I, as a commissioner, think that would be the right thing to do right now, at least until the next month," said Commissioner Greg Krueger.

Under the plan, the public would still be able to view meetings online and send in comments via email.

While the board planned to hold this week's meeting in-person because of the annual public meeting on the budget, the plan is to begin sliding toward virtual public participation after that. "I think it's best that we move in that direction," Commissioner Jim Abbe said.

Throughout the county, other bodies also have changed how they operate. Both the Medford School Board and the Owatonna School Board have been

conducting meetings virtually. "There may be exceptions for a few members," Medford Superintendent Mark Ristau said. "We have been virtual and plan to continue to do so."

Some meetings have utilized a hybrid approach including the Owatonna City Council.

"At this time, the city is doing a combination meeting," Owatonna City Administrator Kris Busse said. "We have some members attend virtually and some in person. All members in person follow strict social distance guidelines. We will closely monitor the situation and adjust if necessary."

Both Medford and Bloomington have been conducting their council meetings in-person. For Medford meetings, the council has utilized the large space of the Fire Hall in order to social distance.

Bloomington has decided not to move to virtual meetings yet but have installed audio-visual equipment that would allow them to move to virtual meetings if needed.

"We are in the process of testing it out," said Bloomington Prairie City Administrator Andrew Langholz, who added that the city is likely to move to streaming its council meetings early next year.

I-35 rest area re-opened after construction

The southbound Interstate 35 Straight River Rest Area south of Owatonna has re-opened after construction was finished, according to the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

The Straight River Rest Area has been closed since mid-August. Project work included:

- Repaving existing parking lots and access ramps
- Reconstructing sidewalks along rest area parking lots
- Upgrading and expanding parking lot lighting systems

Ulland Brothers was the contractor for the \$2 million project. It was part of projects that improved rest areas on northbound

I-35 at Heath Creek, as well as Interstate 90 rest areas at Oakland Woods (westbound) and Hayward (eastbound), which are east of Albert Lea.

To find a rest area in Minnesota, use MnDOT's website search tool to learn about services and access at each site: www.mndot.gov/restareas.

Look for more information at the MnDOT project website. Follow MnDOT Southeast Minnesota Facebook group and on Twitter at: [@mndotsoutheast](https://twitter.com/mndotsoutheast).

Crews are following guidance of state and federal health officials to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Minnesota Autism Center opens in Medford

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

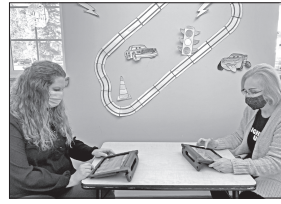
The Minnesota Autism Center (MAC) is up and running in Medford. The Medford center is the organization's 12th in Minnesota, and Tony Thomann, MAC's director of strategy and innovation, said the organization is looking to expand to other areas of the state where children with autism are underserved.

"There is a lot of need," said Thomann. In Minnesota, he said, one child in 42 is diagnosed with autism, compared to one in 59 nationwide. "We have wait list."

Before the Medford center opened, area residents had to drive to Mankato, Rochester or the Twin Cities for MAC services.

"We were serving some people in Wadena and Owatonna and had been looking for a location midway between Mankato and Rochester," said Thomann.

With that initial group, three of whom were receiving some in-home service, Thomann said, MAC was ready to open a new center as soon as



STAFF PHOTO BY DEB FLEMMING

Southeast Regional Director of the Minnesota Autism Center Jen Grant and behavioral therapist Dawn Liversed discuss programming for students at the new center in Medford.

a location was found. MAC is leasing space at 118 South Main St. from Dan and Mona Kaiser.

MAC provides a broad range of programs, including early intervention, life skills development, group learning and school readiness opportunities to children and adolescents between the ages of 18-months to 21 years who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The Medford center can serve 15-18 clients at a time.

At the end of November, there were five students, ranging in age from 3 to 12, attending

the Medford center. Southeast Regional Director of the MAC Jen Grant said they are expecting another five students yet this month.

The therapy is intensive, with each student working one-on-one with a behavioral therapist.

The amount of time a child spends in the center's programs varies. Thomann has seen it range from one year up to 15 years in the program. It depends on what the family's needs and what the center can do for the child, he said.

"Many autistic children are bright, brilliant

kids...but they haven't learned how to talk."

"If they come to us when they are little, say 4 years old, they could be with us for a couple of years," said Thomann. "Those who are older may be with the center for longer."

"Early intervention is the best way for kids to move forward in life," said Thomann. As a parent of two children diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder, Thomann said he knows it can be scary when a child is diagnosed.

But knowing, allowed him to take action and he encouraged others to do the same.

For more specifics about MAC or to inquire about service, call 952-767-4200 or visit mn.autism.org to get started. MAC's team of licensed mental health professionals can provide comprehensive evidence-based autism assessments and diagnosis, in addition to ongoing assessments and evaluations.

Founded in 1996, MAC employs 450 statewide and serves between 370-400 children and adolescents at any one time.

BP, Medford and NRHEG extend distance learning

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

Days after Owatonna Schools extended its distance learning period, the other three school districts in Steele County followed suit, moving their anticipated return to in-person learning to January 2021.

After originally planning on just one week of distance learning, Bloomington Prairie School District Superintendent Chris Staloch announced last week that the district will continue its current model through Jan. 7, with the hope of returning to in-person learning the following Monday.

He said the move was necessary because of elevated COVID-19 cases in the county, in the Bloomington Prairie community and in their schools.

"We've been impacted by it quite a bit," he said, adding that he doesn't want any more students or staff to be put unnecessarily in harm's way.

"We always want our kids here in school, but we have to put the health and safety of our kids and staff first," said Staloch.

The data that drove the move is Steele County's case rate, which was at 151.97 infections per 10,000 residents – triple the 50 infections per 10,000 residents benchmark recommended for making the move to distance learning for both elementary and middle/high school students, according to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

In addition to the county case rate, Staloch said, that quarantining and contact tracing were making it difficult to have adequate staffing levels to teach in person.

Staloch also asked parents to contact the school if anybody in their family gets COVID-19.



Chris Staloch

"It will help us as we move forward because the more accurate our county and community numbers are, the easier it will be for us to plan our next step," he said.

Medford Public Schools extended its current distance learning to Friday, Jan. 8, with the goal of also having students on-site on January 11th, contingent on COVID-19 numbers decreasing.

Superintendent Mark Ristau said the district came to the decision after consulting with Steele County health officials and monitoring county and in-house positive COVID-19 numbers.

"I think the writing was on the wall that it would be difficult to continue [in-person learning] in our current environment," he said. "We know how difficult this is for students, staff and parents, but we're doing what's in their best interest."

"I want my own kids in the building too, but the data right now says it's not safe," said Ristau.

Local health experts are recommending distance learning because Steele County currently has a 14-day positive case rate of approximately 166 per 10,000 residents.

That positive case rate is even more alarming when compared to 50 positive cases per 10,000 residents benchmark for moving to distance learning set by state back in August.



Mark Ristau

"We still use that as a tool, but we're also encouraged to look at our in-house numbers [because] things happening on the southern end [of the county] don't really impact what's going on in the northern end... we have to take everything with a grain of salt," he said.

In addition to the data, he and other Medford school leaders will cooperate with local health experts.

"We're going to continue to meet with local county health officials and work together through the end of December," he said. "Hopefully, we see a real strong downward trend and we're able to make a pretty clean transition [to in-person learning] based on the data available."

Ristau said he's also asking families with children in the Medford School District to contact the school if anyone in their family contracts COVID-19.

"We in turn start a contact tracing document and put together a timeline with all potential contacts," he said. "We then work with county and/or MDH officials to make sure they have all the contact information for all the people on that list."

NRHEG Meanwhile, the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) elementary school began distance learning last week.

According to a memo on the district's website, NRHEG Superintendent Dale Carlson said the elementary school and secondary school will remain in distance learning until the holiday break, which begins Thursday, Dec. 24. The tentative date to return all grade levels to hybrid learning is Monday, Jan. 4.

Carlson cited

staffing levels as one of the major reasons for the move to distance learning.

"With the increase in COVID-19 cases, and the need for ill staff to test, it has become extremely difficult to appropriately staff our classrooms and building. Our substitute pool is very limited and our ability to reassign staff to an unfilled position has automatically declined as staff are ill or are required to quarantine."

"Staff absences have occurred in all areas of the elementary school, which include: classrooms, paraprofessionals, cafeteria, transportation and our custodial department. Principal Doug Anderson and I recommended to the school board chair an immediate move to distance learning for the elementary school was necessary due to [these] challenges in staffing," Carlson said in the memo.

He also cited the recent increase in positive COVID-19 cases in the area.

"When looking at our COVID-19 Dashboard that was updated [two weeks ago], you will see that the 14-day county-wide case rates continue to be extremely high. The positivity rates for all three counties continue to increase and all exceed 5%. The number of positive cases within our four zip codes from the past week significantly jumped as well," he wrote.

Carlson added that the distance learning period for the elementary school, the secondary school or both could be extended if the number of cases within the school district, communities and counties remains the same or continues to escalate.

Like Staloch and Ristau, Carlson urged families with a member who has tested positive to quarantine all members of their family and contact their child's school even during the distance learning period.

"Having an accurate record of isolations and quarantines will be an important factor in determining when one or both schools will be able to return to hybrid learning."

Recipe Corner

Chocolate Snowballs

Sift together:
2 cups sifted flour
1/2 teaspoon salt – set aside

Blend:
3/4 cup butter
1/2 cup sugar
2 teaspoon vanilla

Beat in 1 egg. Stir in flour mixture, 1 cup chopped nuts and 1 cup chocolate chips. Shape into 1-inch balls. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 – 20 minutes. Cool slightly. Roll in powdered sugar. Makes approx. 6 dozen cookies.

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To thin the herd, Rice Lake State Park holds special deer hunt

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Visitors to Rice Lake State Park this past weekend may have noticed a few signs up notifying them of a special hunt underway, while hunters had free reign over portions of the park in order to control the local deer population. The special hunt was deemed necessary by the Minnesota DNR and allowed up to 20 hunters to register to take down two deer. The hunters were limited to using muzzleloaders, a throwback rifle.

"It used to be even years until last year when we had a second year in a row and now this year, we have a third year in a row," Area Parks Supervisor Joel Wagar said of the growing frequency of hunts like the one held this past weekend. "It all comes back to what our wildlife manager thinks concerning the impact our deer population might have on wildlife resources."

While an uptick of deer might seem like a good sign at first glance, an over population can cause problems when it comes to maintaining a natural balance in the park. "If there's too many deer per square mile, they have a drastic impact on young trees and flora," said

Wagar. "If you get too many deer in one area, it's also easier to spread disease."

One major factor for an increased deer population is the weather. "We had a really nice spring for fawning," Wagar said. "However, I would not expect us to have another hunt next year. I think we'll be back into every other year cycles."

"In years past, they used to have aerial flights in the winter-time that would give us a good number of how many deer were in the area," Wagar said. "Now it still comes down to assessing the population and the impact that they have."

A dramatic increase in deer population isn't just a nuisance for those trying to manage the park's wildlife, they can also spill out into the surrounding countryside. "Back in 2018, we had at least 10 deer hit cars," Wagar said. "This year, it started to pick up again."

Local agricultural producers will also tip the DNR off if they notice that their crops are being affected by a growing deer population. "If the herd gets too big it just wants to eat everybody out of house and home," said Wagar.

The special hunt held last Saturday and Sunday targeted does



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

Dan Williams shows off the two deer he harvested during last weekend's special deer hunt in Rice Lake State Park. Williams was the first hunter to bring back his haul, finding some good luck early in the day.

in order to stymie breeding and taper the population. "The easiest way and the best way to reduce the population is to take out the breeding does, if you take a buck out another buck

can breed those does," said Wagar.

While the perfect December weekend warranted an increase in traffic to the park during the hunt, the trails were closed.

"Unfortunately, we have to close the trails, otherwise it would not be safe having them allowed to be open," Wagar said. Some areas of the park did remain open to visitors.

The hunting started just before sunrise and extended to just after sunset, with most hunters spending the entire day out in the park waiting to get their deer. Once the deer are harvested, they're brought back to the park office and registered.

Dan Williams of Waseca was the first hunter to bring his haul back. Williams said he had done some muzzleloader hunting earlier this year in Kentucky and was ready to go, bagging a deer early in the day before getting one later in the afternoon.

"I think they're a little more people friendly, so they're not spooked as easily as if you're hunting someplace else," he said of the deer in the park. "Although they're not stupid, once the shooting starts, they seem to know something's up."

Steele County's first truck farm THE SOUBAS

Starting back in the early 1890s, the Soubas became Steele County's first truck farm, which means vegetables in quantity. More than 130 years later, the farm is still operating as a wholesale and retail greenhouse known as Soubas Greenhouse. At the center of the operation for the past 40 years have been Bill and Debi Souba.

The greenhouse was a natural for the farm as it was needed to start early plants to set out in the field and also to sell to the public for their gardens, said Bill Souba, whose farm officially became a century farm in 1987.

The Soubas had a dairy operation for many years. Around 1971, Bill's father was ready to phase out of dairy and devote full time to potatoes with sons Larry and Tom. Bill started buying heifer calves as a FFA project. In spring 1972, grandpa Henry, who was not even 75 years old, had a serious car accident that put the greenhouse operation in limbo, according to Bill.

Henry's brother, Tom, kept the greenhouse going for another year. Rather than see it disappear under the snow and freeze all the pipes, Bill being a not so confident 17 year old decided "it was now or never." After hundreds of hours of repairing, hauling peat and dirt home and many other tasks in between taking care of the cows, things were ready. Bill also relied on the help and knowledge of Jim Betlock and his grandpa that winter to get growing.

Dairy was the main livestock on the farm until 2002. Sheep, goats and beef took over the dairy farm. Currently, the main crop is wholesale and retail greenhouse grown flower and vegetable plants in the spring, fresh veggies in the summer and fall and new this year are fall decorative plants, Christmas trees and poinsettias. Hay is available year round.

Bill has been a part of the farm since he was a child. He recalls, "falling asleep with dad on his favorite John Deere 60 with seat arms that would safely trap two little kids sideways." In addition, Bill enjoyed helping milk cows and grading and sacking potatoes and onions. He also has memories of moving flats of plants in the greenhouse. "Sometimes just getting in the way or in trouble," he added.

"Farming is the most noble of occupations," Bill says. "You can plant a seed, raise a small animal up or turn a piece of iron into something useful. It's like making something from nothing. This can be passed on to your children and grandchildren knowing there is hope for the future."

Bill believes farmers are the backbone of the world. "Being a steward of the soil, caring for the plants and animals is a noble calling," he said. "A farm is the best place to raise a family with unlimited opportunities to build, explore and learn."

Besides farming, the Soubas have also been committed to volunteering. Bill has made more than 100 bus trips and thousands of miles driving youth on mission trips and other church events. He was in the Big Brother Big Sisters program for more than 10 years. Debi has been in the Red Cross for years and was one of the first to arrive to work at Hurricane Katrina to spend several weeks. Many foreign students have learned English and farming and have taken those skills back to their home countries.

Bill and Debi have been joined by daughter Jody and nephew Jon DeMars with the greenhouse enterprise this past year. "They have brought much new energy and endless fresh ideas that are receiving a warm welcome by the community," Bill said. He added, "It looks like the farm will be in good hands for at least another generation."



Debi and Bill Souba operate a century farm on the west edge of Owatonna. The farm goes back in the family to the early 1890s.

This week's farm family is brought to you by:

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JOHN DEERE



MSHSL approves plan for winter activities

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

With Governor Walz's executive order, which paused winter activities for four weeks, set to expire on Friday, Dec. 18, the Minnesota State High School League's (MSHSL) Board of Directors approved a three-model plan for the restart of activities on Thursday, Dec. 3.

The League's Return to Participation Task Force explained that the three models give the league flexibility whether Walz lifts or extends the executive order.

In a press release sent out by the MSHSL, Executive Director Erich Martens said, "With the dynamic nature of COVID-19, flexibility is going to be critical for our programs. We need to remain flexible in the start of seasons and in carrying them to conclusion."

The first model starts the winter sports season on Monday, Dec. 21, teams would hold two weeks of practice and games could begin the week of Monday, Jan. 4.

Martens noted that if the restart gets pushed back, there could be shorter seasons and fewer games.

The second model allows high school to start practicing on Monday, Jan. 4, with games for most sports beginning the following week.

The third model starts practices on Monday, Jan. 18, with competitions again beginning the following week.

All three models include open weeks to allow flexibility for illness, scheduling issues, weeks designated for section play and if the Minnesota Department of Health allows, the possibility for state tournament competitions.

In addition to focusing on providing students with the opportunity to participate in each of the league's activities and sports, the press release stated, "health and safety, recommendations from state organizations and agencies, and the unique aspects of each sport were a part of the planning."

Since the winter sports season overlaps with spring sports, the MSHSL board of directors discussed the spring season, but left it unchanged due to the unpredictability of Minnesota's COVID-19 positive case rate.

The league said spring sports would end no later than June 19, 2021.

Lastly, the board of directors unanimously approved a virtual state debate tournament and a virtual one act play festival following guidelines currently approved for section competition.



Dr. Deborah J. Lien
DDS, MBS
ORTHODONTIC SPECIALIST

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FREE CONSULTATIONS



A distance learning family



★ 2nd Grade Distance Learning Family ★ Mrs. Armstrong ★
Goal REACHED ★ Pajama Day Celebration! ★ 11/24/20

These hard working and compassionate students in Mrs. Armstrong's second grade reached their goal and earned a celebration last week. Though they aren't together in person, they are a family of learners and distance won't stop them from exceeding expectations. Watch out world, they have incredible tech skills! #OwatonnaProud

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Truth in Taxation set for Dec. 14

On Monday, Dec. 14, the school board meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. and the annual Truth in Taxation hearing will begin at 6 p.m.

Due to the current federal and state emergency declarations and guidance about limiting person-to-person contact due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, all meetings of the Owatonna Public Schools (ISD 761) school board are conducted in accordance with Minnesota Statute 13D.021 - Meetings by Telephone or Other Electronic Means - until further notice.

In accordance with Minnesota Statute 13D.021, members of the public are not permitted to attend meetings due to the current health pandemic. Persons may monitor meetings from a remote location by viewing the live-stream video found on the school district website: <https://www.isd761.org/our-district/school-board/meeting-dates>.

If anyone would like to make a public comment at the regular Board meeting, please email your comment to school-board@isd761.org by 3 p.m. the day of the regular meeting, and include your name, address, and phone number as per our normal public comment procedure, and your comment will be read during the meeting.

Likewise, questions during the Truth in Taxation presentation on Dec. 14 at 6 p.m. may be emailed to levy@isd761.org.

Help available through Children's Remedial Fund

The Children's Remedial Fund of Steele County provides financial support to eligible families who have children with medical, dental, vision, hearing, school supplies, and winter clothing needs.

Eligibility is based on:

- Any child age 0-18;
- Residency in Steele County
- Income guidelines consistent with the free and reduced school lunch program
- Service of current needs only (can not assist with old debts)

Coverage: 80% of charges with payment directly to the provider; the remaining 20% is the responsibility of the applicant. If interested, request an application from your community school nurse or school social worker.

Owatonna Students of the Week

Elementary



Maddy Montanye
Third Grade
Parents: Shannon Montanye and Keri Montanye

Maddy has been such an amazing leader in our class this year! She is always prepared, willing to try hard things and has a way of putting a smile on everyone's face. During challenging times, she is very quick to problem solve and always has everyone's best interest at heart.



Callie Cook
Fifth Grade
Parents: Karla & Brian Cook

What a joy it is to see Callie Cook in action every day! She is a taskmaster with a great ability to focus, persist, perform, and engage. Other students recognize this and emulate her actions and can-do attitude. She also finds and brings joy each and every day! Keep on, Callie!



Trevor Hiatt
Sophomore
Parents: Travis and Kristi Hiatt

Trevor Hiatt is an exemplary student who demonstrates high energy and hard work. No matter what the activity is or the academic work that has been assigned, his work ethic is evident. He also demonstrates leadership through his ability to include and encourage his classmates.



Devon Porter
Senior
Parents: Crystal Alonzo & Luis Reyes

Devon Porter is an incredibly respectful student who works hard in class everyday. He stays on top of his work - both during his in-class time as well as his virtual learning time. He is an exceptional leader at the ALC and is a member of our MAAP Stars program



Kellie Lawless is a fourth grade teacher at Washington Elementary School in Owatonna.

Lawless loves being around great educators

This week's "Teacher Feature" is Kellie Lawless, a fourth grade teacher at Washington Elementary School. This is her second year of teaching, and Owatonna Public Schools is pleased to have her as part of our team!

Kellie completed her student teaching in Lakeville and graduated from Bethel University in May 2019. There are five people in her family and she is the oldest of two siblings. Also in their family are two dogs, Madden and Aspen.

In the summer, Kellie runs a photography business and plays volleyball. She also loves to read, paint, sing and spend time with her family and friends.

Some fun facts about Kellie are that she sang on the WCCO Morning Show a couple of years ago. Before she decided to become a teacher, she wanted to work at a publishing company and be a book editor. Last year, she went to Europe and visited six different countries and 14 different cities.

Kellie loves working at Owatonna Public

Schools because of the commitment to reaching every student every day. She sees how committed all staff members are to the overall well-being of their students and how they strive towards success in every aspect of their lives. Kellie stated that "it is wonderful to be surrounded by great educators who support and cheer each other on!"

Owatonna Public Schools is lucky to have Kellie on our #OwatonnaProud team!

It's time for virtual coffee and conversation

The community is invited to join Superintendent Jeff Elstad for a virtual "coffee and conversation" on Friday, Dec. 11 at 8:30 a.m.

Elstad will provide an update on what's been happening within the

school district. He will also entertain any questions you may have.

RSVP by emailing shoffman@isd761.org to receive the virtual meeting details. We hope you are able to participate!



THANK YOU
RICK
GNEMI
Steele County District 3 Commissioner

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

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

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

Prepared and Paid for by Rick Gnemi for County Commissioner



DESPITE COVID, YOU DID IT!

*Congratulations to the honor students for first quarter at
Blooming Prairie High School! Awesomely done!*

A Honor Roll

Grade 7

Allison Bruggeman
Regan Donnelly
Jonathan Heimgartner
Brady Johnson

Grade 8

Mia Johnson
Madilynn Madsen

Grade 9

Doocy
Annaka Forsberg
Tyler Forystek
Derek Kubicek
Jamie Reinke
Benjamin Riley
Molly Robins
Jaylee Schleicher
Hailey Schumacher
Aidan Slowinski
Kolby Vigeland
Rachel Winzenburg

Grade 10

Abigail Hefling
Chloe McCarthy
Madeline Stoen

Grade 11

Bobbie Bruns
Asha Lighthizer
Piper Lund
Alivia Schneider
Bradley Simon
Carson Wacek
Melanie Winzenburg

Grade 12

Adrianna Bermea
Maggie Bruns
Maren Forystek
Charlie Heimerman
Dylan Johnson
Shyane Jorgenson
Allison Krohnberg
Emily Kubicek
Luke Larkoski
Alexander Miller
Megan Oswald
Joseph Pirkel
Jessica Ressler
Rachael Riley
Halle Strunk
Rachel Thompson
Micalyn Trihus
Wyatt Voss
Taylor Wurst

A- Honor Roll

Grade 7

Tyler Anderson
Allison Blume
Layla Coleman
Natalee Devries
Noah Graves
Madelyn Harvey
Samantha Hefling
Carsten Ingvalson
Drew Reinke
Cannon Wacek
Chloe Weber

Grade 8

Catelyn Bartlett
Isabel Dickel
Braden Farr
Abby Jordison
Brady Kittelson
Jacob Pauly
Ella Smith
Grady Steckelberg
Bo Zwiener

Grade 9

Claire Foster
Anna Haberman
Shanna Halverson
Jaxon Harberts
Luke Heimgartner
Layla Lembke
Macy Lembke
Grant Magnuson
Khara Peters
Lily Schammel
Mason Simon
Ava Smith

Grade 10

Olivia Anderson
Morgan Camery
Jesse Cardenas
Haven Carlson
Levi Denherder
Micah Donnelly
Ava Krejci
Sierra Larson
Madison Lea
Ethan Marzolf
Tyler Miller
Samuel Pirkel
Anna Reese
Clare Rennie
Joie Ruhter
Lucas Schammel
Alexis Steckelberg
Anika Sunde

Grade 11

Abigail Aldrich
Lindsey Baltazar
Carson Brennecke

Tyler Iverson
Colin Jordison
David Kartes
Parker Kubicek
Xavier Rennie
Lauren Schammel

Grade 12

Abby Braaten
Cole Graves
Brianna Hensrud
Brian Jimenez
Anna Kittelson
Rose Michaud
Christopher Naatz
Jacob Naatz

B+ Honor Roll

Grade 7

Miley Fulton
Addison Haugland
Colby Johnson
Lance Lembke
Ambriella Miller
Claire Schwarz

Grade 8

Cooper Cooke
Scott Johnson
Jeremiah Jones
Alex Lea
Addison Lyman
Kohan Miller
Sophia Schiller
Elijah Skillestad
Maveda Warner

Grade 9

Cameron Blume
Cale Braaten
Elizabeth Dohrmann
Kadynce Hansen
Logan Marzolf
Elizabeth Miner
Maxmar Ogren
Shawntee Snyder
Justin Stork
Karson Strand
Sophie Thomas

Grade 10

Hosea Baker
Lilyanna Bakken
Cade Christianson
Brittany Johnson
Jenna Johnson
Anna Pauly
Alexander Riley
Susan Smith
Madison Thurnau

Grade 11

Emily Anderson
Jaydon Brown

Ethan Ehlers
Payton Fristedt
Isabella Heiber
Josie Hoffman
Drew Kittelson
Emily Miller
Brennan Tapp
Melanie Wigham

Grade 12

Boone Carlson
Thomas Donnelly
Mitchell Fiebigler
Gavin Halverson
Sydney McCarthy
Erin O'Brien
Kiya Thompson

B Honor Roll

Grade 7

Cody Braaten
Aden Doocy
Sadie Jensen
Ayden Jones
Ella Salinas
Kaydance Verhey-Schumacher
Kloe Wacek

Grade 8

Colton Braaten
Lauren Brown
Jack Bruns
Cleopatra Carlson
Audrey Fort
Callie Iverson
Cole Wangen

Grade 9

Holly Davis
Sienna Fyksen
Gabriel Hein
Zachary Hein

Grade 10

Heidi Judy
Samuel Michaud
Dakota Mueller
Jayden Schewe
Leah Thorsen
Jacob Weinberger

Grade 11

Tyler Archer
Yembi Espinoza
Garret Farr
Samuel Skillestad
Adam Walsh
Drake Zilm

Grade 12

Kolyn Alwes
Lane Lembke
Alexander Piller

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BLOOMING PRAIRIE

DEC. 14
7 p.m. – City Council Meeting

DEC. 15
10:30 a.m. – Online Storytime, BP Library
2:30 p.m. – BPPU Meeting

DEC. 16
4:30 p.m. – Fire Commission Meeting
5 p.m. – Ambulance Commission Meeting

DEC. 16
4 p.m. – Police Advisory Commission Meeting

ELLENDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

DEC. 11
10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

DEC. 14
10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

DEC. 16
7 p.m. – Berlin Township Meeting, Community Building

DEC. 16
10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

DEC. 11
8:30 a.m. – Virtual Coffee and Conversation with Superintendent Elstad

DEC. 12
5 p.m. – Holiday Train at Home, Facebook Live

DEC. 14
4:30 p.m. – Owatonna Park & Rec Board Meeting, City Hall

DEC. 15
10:30 a.m. – Storytime Online with

Darla, Facebook Live
4:30 p.m. – Library Board Meeting, Library
7 p.m. – Owatonna City Council Meeting, City Hall

DEC. 16
4 p.m. – Owatonna EDA Meeting, City Hall

DEC. 17
10:30 a.m. – Storytime Online with Darla, Facebook Live
5 p.m. – Airport Commission Meeting, Airport Lounge

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

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Answers

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8	7	9	2	1	9	6	8	
2	9	6	8	8	7	1	9	
1	2	1	8	9	7	9	6	
9	8	7	9	2	6	1	1	8
6	8	9	1	7	1	9	8	2
1	9	2	6	9	8	8	7	1
9	1	8	7	9	2	6	8	1
7	6	8	1	1	8	2	9	9



STAFF FILE PHOTO

During last year's Christmas Bird Count, a bird enthusiast came prepared with a bucket of cracked corn to feed the ducks at Morehouse Park in Owatonna. This year's bird count will take place on Saturday, Dec. 19.

For The Birds

Annual bird count comes to Steele County

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Bird enthusiasts are being called into action once again for the 49th annual Christmas Bird Count in Steele County. The bird count will take place on Saturday, Dec. 19 at various parks, rural areas and backyards around a 15-mile diameter with Havana as the center point. The City of Owatonna is included in the count area so anyone within the city limits is eligible to count birds at their

home feeders. The area also includes Claremont, Clinton Falls and Steele Center.

"You don't have to be an expert bird watcher to be part of this annual event," said Darryl Hill, organizer of the count. But, he added, people should know most of birds in the field.

The National Audubon Society sponsors the count. Hill said they are trying to recruit more people to help count birds at their home feeders. He is hoping to have more than

100 counters involved this year.

Hill said the counts are useful in determining the extent of great movements of birds, the changes in the wintering ranges of birds and the expansion of newly introduced species. The counts also document overall population increases and decreases of the various birds.

During last year's count, the weather was cold so Lake Kohlmeier had frozen over resulting in a low bird count. There were 3,125

birds counted last year, well below the average of 4,537.

"It's fun, it's interesting and it's helpful to the scientific bird community," Hill said. "We hope you will join us as we count birds in the field or by counting them at your feeders in the comfort of your home."

There are no fees for participating in the count. Anyone interested in joining the count is asked to contact Hill at 507-451-5073 or hills@charter.net.

Area church collects gifts for Operation Christmas Child

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Owatonna area residents recently donated 496 shoe boxes filled with small gifts to Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child.

Volunteers at the Cornerstone Evangelical Free Church in Owatonna collected the boxes and packed them for shipment to a regional warehouse in Chicago. From there, the gifts will be sent and distributed to needy children overseas.

"The goal is to share the gospel message with children around the world," said Southeast Minnesota Operation Christmas Child Area Coordinator Molly Buchtman. Cornerstone Evangelical Free Church of Owatonna has participated in the program for

nine years, said Georgia Minard of Owatonna.

Each shoebox is filled with personal items like toothbrushes or a bar of soap, pencils and erasers and a WOW toy. "We also try to put a card in each one from the person who donated the shoe box," said Minard.

She added that some people donate boxes already filled with the items and others donate money to purchase materials for the shoeboxes.

The southeast region of Minnesota Operation Christmas Child, which includes Steele and Dodge counties, donated 8,091 shoeboxes to this year's drive. The gifts are shipped to more than 100 countries and distributed to churches and orphanages.

To donate a shoebox online, visit www.samaritanspurse.org.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Nearly 500 shoeboxes filled with personal care and school items, small toys and personal notes, were collected at Cornerstone Evangelical Free Owatonna. Pictured with the boxes prepared for shipment overseas through Operation Christmas Child are Southeast Minnesota Operation Christmas Child Area Coordinator Molly Buchtman, left, and local Coordinator Georgia Minard of Owatonna.

12 KIDS OF CHRISTMAS!



Anthony has been waiting for a Big for 5 months and is known for being smart, thoughtful and imaginative. When asked what he would like to be when he grows up, he could not decide between a lawyer, engineer or construction worker. Anthony is hoping to find a Big who shares his love for crafts and building things and thinks it would be fun to visit a park or museum with him.

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



Aria has been waiting for a Big for 1 year. She is a nice, humble, kind, caring and funny young girl who loves to help others. Some of her favorite activities include doing the monkey bars, cooking, biking and doing arts and crafts.

If Aria could learn anything, she would like to learn to write in cursive and how to become a chef someday. Help end the wait for Aria. YOU could be the Big who ignites her potential. Become a Big today.

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

HIGHS TUESDAY

46	46	49
46	46	51
46	46	52
46	47	50
49	49	54

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The Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce decorated their tree with traditionally festive colors and ornaments.



From the Cat in the Hat topper to book covers all over the tree, Friends of the Blooming Prairie Library looks great, but don't judge a tree by its (book) covers.

STAFF PHOTOS BY ALEX NIEHRING

LOCAL NON-PROFITS: compete for funds FROM B1

through Christmas Day. The non-profit whose tree receives the most votes will receive \$250, second place receives \$150 and third place receives \$100. All three prizes are sponsored by Farmers and Merchants State Bank. Winners will be announced on New Year's Day.

Thankfully, there will be no organization going home empty-handed because they get to keep the "vote money" that has been cast for their group and

use it to their discretion. Another contest being held in Blooming Prairie this December is the first annual Front Yard Christmas Tree Decorating Contest, which is also hosted by the BP Chamber of Commerce.

A flyer for the contest says, "This contest is [being held] to encourage the community spirit and to keep Blooming Prairie on the map as the best little community in Minnesota."

The categories that the trees will be judged on are most creative, sponsored by Minnesota Home Sellers, best use of a theme, sponsored by CJ Home Inspections, and best of the best, sponsored by Kruckeberg Industries. Thanks to those sponsors, the winner of each category receives \$200.

Trees must be ready for judging by Friday, Dec. 11. Judging will take place in the evening after this date so

judges can scout out the trees and lights.

The two requirements for entry in the contest are trees must be in the Blooming Prairie city limits at individual residences and all entries must include lights/illumination and be in good taste and family-oriented.

Those who are interested in participating in the contest can register online at bloomingprairiechamber.com or by calling the chamber office at 507-583-4472.

DRIVER FLEES: from police after hitting tree FROM B1

Lincoln Avenue when it lost control and struck a tree, according to the complaint. The driver was seen getting out of the vehicle and ran across Main Street and onto Lincoln Avenue.

A police officer yelled at the driver, "Police Stop." At that point, the

man fell down and ran to the back fence of a residence and climbed over. The officer lost sight of the man and waited for the K-9 unit to arrive.

Once the K-9 arrived, the scent trail led officers onto the Pillsbury campus.

While officers were searching the area, a man matching the description stepped out of the east dormitory of the campus with his hands up. He was taken into custody without further incident. Police noticed he had some scrapes on his hands

that were consistent with the fall he experienced.

Officers transported Brazelton to the Steele County Detention Center. A woman confirmed that he was her boyfriend and that he had been allowed to drive her vehicle.

SOMETHING: for everyone with 4-H FROM B1

other ways you can join 4-H and get outdoors. Winter backpack series will be available for families to enjoy wildlife, nature and to explore winter science together.

Cloverbuds are for those 4-Hers that are in Kindergarten through second grade and have plenty of winter fun planned! From reindeer games to hands on projects, these youth will be busy. Cloverbud Adventures will be held bi-monthly on Sunday afternoons.

Are you looking for ways to keep busy in the kitchen? Youth will have the opportunity to learn hands-on baking, meal planning, and even what

are all the gadgets you can use in the kitchen. Like this past summer, 4-Hers will join via Zoom to create their projects right along with the speaker about baking and/or cooking.

If you have an animal lover in your family, you will want to tune into our barn tours and animal project learning opportunities. You can learn about animals and not even have to worry about getting your shoes dirty. How? With volunteers and older youth taking you virtually on a tour of their own barns. Sessions will help you learn more about animals - how to care for them, what to look for when selecting the right one for you, and much more. Learning will take place both virtually and in-person throughout the winter and into the spring.

As you can see, winter is a great time to begin working on your 4-H projects or checking out new projects. The opportunities for youth to explore and enhance their project learning will be right at their fingertips. These are

just a few highlights of programming happening right here in Steele County 4-H this winter. Let us know what you are exploring, and we will help you connect you to the right project! Tune into Steele County 4-H to learn more! You can find us on Facebook, Minnesota 4-H App, and at Steele County Extension.

For more information, contact us at the Steele County Extension Office at 507-444-7685.

Missy Koch is a program coordinator for Steele County 4-H. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.

PROPOSED City of Blooming Prairie City Council Meeting Agenda December 14, 2020 • 7:00 P.M.

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Hearing – Truth & Taxation

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of Minutes of November 9, 2020 – Regular City Council Meeting
3. Approval of Minutes of November 9, 2020 – Public Hearing – Conditional Use Permit
4. Approval of Minutes of November 12, 2020 – Special City Council Meeting
5. Approve Façade Improvement Program Reimbursement – Dairy Queen
6. Approve Façade Improvement Program Reimbursement – Bunkies Grille & Lanes
7. Approve Resolution to Designate the Polling Place for 2021
8. Approve Cigarette License Renewals
9. Approve 2021 Rate Adjustments

Financial Report

Committee/Commission Reports

1. B.P. Public Utilities
2. B.P. Economic Development Authority
3. B.P. Planning & Zoning
4. B.P. Fire Commission
5. B.P. Police Commission
6. B.P. Ambulance Commission

Business

1. Approval of the 2021 General Governmental Funds Budget
2. Approval of the 2021 Enterprise Funds Budgets
3. Certify 2021 Tax Levy
4. Designated Fund Balance
5. COVID-19 Updates

City Administrator's Report

City Attorney's Report

Council Members' Reports

Closed Session: MN Statute: 13D.05 Subd. 3(a) – Performance Evaluations:
Andrew Langholz, David Johnson, Pat Wehner, David Hoffman, Mark Lang, Dan Peach, Brad Busho, Laura Larson

Adjourn

This Agenda is Subject to Change

12/9

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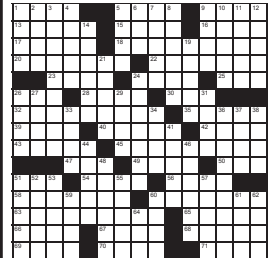
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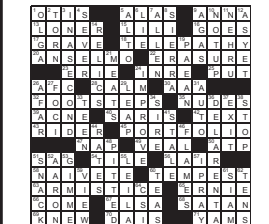
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Crossword Puzzle of the Week



- ACROSS**
- 1 Maker whose cars go up and down
 - 5 Unfortunately
 - 9 Old Indian coin
 - 13 Individualist
 - 15 – Marlene
 - 16 Turns
 - 17 Weighty
 - 18 Thought transference
 - 20 San – California
 - 22 Correction
 - 23 4th largest Great Lake
 - 24 With regard to
 - 25 Place
 - 26 Contains Jets and Texans
 - 28 Composure
 - 30 Small cell
 - 32 Paces
 - 35 Common subjects in life classes
 - 39 Zits
 - 40 Delhi wraps?
 - 42 S M S
 - 43 Additional clause
 - 45 Financial holdings
 - 47 Doze
 - 49 Calf meat
 - 50 Tennis player's org.
 - 51 Drop in value
 - 54 Small pool lining slab
 - 56 Burrow
 - 58 Unworldliness
 - 60 Storm
 - 63 Truce
 - 65 Ace golfer – Els
 - 66 Amount
 - 67 "Born Free" lioness
 - 68 Lucifer
 - 69 Was completely certain
 - 70 Raised platform
 - 71 Thanksgiving dish
- DOWN**
- 1 "Quantum of Solace" actress – Kurylenko
 - 2 Ripped
 - 3 Very soon
 - 4 Cut
 - 5 Either a male or a female voice
 - 6 Recline
 - 7 Filmmaker Woody –
 - 8 Jagged mountain range
 - 9 Turkish rulers
 - 10 Asleep
 - 11 Long narrow jacket with a high collar
 - 12 So far
 - 14 Ancient artifacts
 - 19 Song of praise
 - 21 E.g. venison, beef, pork etc.
 - 24 Better
 - 26 A long way off
 - 27 An ellipse has two
 - 29 Spring
 - 31 Not manual (Abbr.)
 - 33 Person between 12 and 20
 - 34 Father
 - 36 Dominican-American fashion designer Oscar –
 - 37 Way out
 - 38 Cease
 - 41 Not fresh
 - 44 Assesses
 - 46 Online attacks
 - 48 Puckmarked
 - 51 Nibble
 - 52 Moses' brother
 - 53 Easy putt
 - 55 Boxer's priestess in "The Pearl Fishers"
 - 57 Start of a divine appeal
 - 59 Perspective
 - 60 E.g. Dolong, Darjeeling
 - 61 New Thailand
 - 62 Sawbucks
 - 64 Long-running Ted Danson show



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