

Foundation hits \$1M mark

Funds help students in BP school district

BY ALEX NUEHRING
NEWS WRITER

The Blooming Prairie Education Foundation's annual auction raised about \$60,000 Saturday, bringing the organization's total funds raised to \$1 million over the 18 years.

This year's silent auction raised about \$9,000, while the live auction raised approximately \$51,000.

Blooming Prairie Education Foundation President and Auction Chairperson Karen Fouarge said hitting the \$1M mark means a great deal.

"It shows how they can make a big difference in one small community," she said.

While hitting the \$1 million mark is great, Fouarge said the fact that it only took 18 years makes the community's accomplishment even more remarkable.

"Taking less than 20 years to hit a million dollars raised is pretty impressive for a small community," said Fouarge.

All items were donated, so all funds raised go back to the education foundation and are available to the school district.

"That's what we'll base our budget on. Any teacher from the Blooming Prairie schools can apply for that money," she said.

See FOUNDATION on A3 ▶



Karen Thoen and her granddaughter Bella Romeo smile as they look at the various auction items sold at the Blooming Prairie Education Foundation's silent auction.

STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING



A Steele County Deputy who was on duty and is trained as a spotter reported the first tornado that touched down in Steele County on May 19. The National Weather Service issued the tornado warning.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sirens sounded; tornadoes touchdown

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Sirens sounded in Owatonna last Wednesday when two tornadoes touched down just outside the city, Steele County Emergency Manager Mike Johnson said.

Johnson said that residents who were inside their houses and didn't hear the sirens shouldn't be surprised.

"We have had a couple of people call and say they can't hear the sirens, but the sirens aren't intended to be heard indoors," said Johnson, adding that if you are in a building, NOAA weather radio or warnings provided through cell phone applications are ways to learn of a warning.

"If you think it's threatening outside,

take shelter and check the weather," said Johnson, who confirmed that two funnel clouds were spotted and touched down in Steele County on May 19. One touched down in Meriden Township, the other in Deerfield Township.

No injuries and no property damage occurred, he said.

Johnson said anyone who was outside

and did not hear the sirens can call the fire department's non-emergency number (507-444-2454) and the sirens can be tested.

"The sirens haven't changed, but the insulation and building materials have changed," he said, adding that newer homes are constructed much more tightly than in the past.

AREA MEMORIAL DAY SERVICES AND EVENTS

Blooming Prairie
9:30 a.m. - Coffee and bars- BP Servicemen's Club
10:45 a.m. - Parade from Prairie Plumbing lot to City Cemetery
11 a.m. - Memorial Day program
12 p.m. - Lunch at BP Servicemen's Club
*In case of inclement weather, all events will be at BP Servicemen's Club

Ellendale Area
8:30 a.m. - Holy Trinity Cemetery- Litomysl
9:15 a.m. - St. Aden's Cemetery- Bath
10:15 a.m. - Geneva Community Cemetery
11:15 a.m. - First Lutheran Church- Ellendale

Owatonna
10:30 a.m. - Memorial Day program at Four Seasons Centre
12 p.m. - Program replayed on KRFO Radio

Waltham-Hayfield Area
8:05 a.m. - Trinity at Waltham
8:25 a.m. - St. Michaels at Waltham
8:50 a.m. - Greenwood Hwy. 56 south of Brownsdale
9:15 a.m. - Waltham Hwy. 56 south of Waltham
9:35 a.m. - St. Johns CR 20 south of Sargeant
10:10 a.m. - Evangel Lutheran Church south of Oslo
10:25 a.m. - West St. Olaf east of Oslo
11:10 a.m. - Fairview Hwy. 58- Hayfield
11:35 a.m. - Memorial Day Program at Veterans Memorial Park- Hayfield

For more information on Memorial Day programs, see pages A7 and A10.

Councilor loses battle with spine infection

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

The Owatonna community is mourning the loss of a man who touched the community in many ways. City Councilor Jeff Okerberg died Sunday at a Twin

Cities hospital after suffering complications from back surgery. He was 62. Before joining the city council, Okerberg served 30 years as a police officer in Owatonna where he finished his career as a sergeant.

"He dedicated his life to public service," said Mayor Thomas Kuntz. "He was an excellent police officer who cared about people."

Besides the council, Okerberg was also a coach for youth sports.

Okerberg underwent back surgery earlier this month and an infection got into his spine, Kuntz said. He was hospitalized at United Hospital in St. Paul, where he was taken off life support over the weekend.

See COUNCILOR on A3 ▶ Jeff Okerberg



Fire chief ready for retirement, family time

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

At this time next week, you might find Owatonna Fire Chief Mike Johnson fishing or spending time with his grandchildren, children or wife. You won't find him at the fire station.

Johnson, who also serves as Steele County Emergency manager, is retiring at the end of the week.

"After 37 years in fire service, it's a good time to turn the page," said Johnson. "The first thing I'm going to do is change

See FIRE on A3 ▶



Owatonna Fire Chief Mike Johnson is retiring after 20 years in Steele County.

STAFF PHOTO BY DEB FLEMMING

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AREA DEATHS

Jerome J. Kubat, 95, Claremont
Becky Lovgren, 89, Owatonna
Leonard Meger, 89, Fairbault
Freddie Lujan, 67, Blooming Prairie
Jeff Okerberg, 62, Owatonna

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Blooming Prairie
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OUR VIEW

We honor those who lost their lives

This Memorial Day, let's honor those the holiday is intended to honor – those who sacrificed their lives while fighting for our freedoms.

Seems simple, but too many Facebook posts and conversations in general collapse Memorial Day with Veterans Day – the day we honor all who have served our country in the military. They are distinct days of recognition.

Perhaps one of the greatest lessons that we can take away from Memorial Day is never to forget that freedom isn't free. Not in the past and not in the present.

More than 1,500 active-duty personnel have died on average each year over the past 15 years.

According to a recently released report by the Congressional Research Service, a total of 18,571 active-duty personnel died between 2006 and 2021 while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. Of those who died, 25% were killed while serving in Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) – primarily within the territory of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Freedom is fragile, as we all witnessed in January.

As Ronald Reagan, the 40th president of the United States, once said: "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We did not pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was like in the United States where men were free."

This Memorial Day, let's remember those who died to preserve our freedoms while reflecting on Reagan's warning of what will happen if we fail to fight for and protect them.

BP Ed Foundation cracks major milestone

Congratulations Blooming Prairie Education Foundation for reaching the \$1 million mark in raising funds for educational enhancements.

The Ed Foundation has been actively raising monies to improve the Blooming Prairie School District's curriculum over the past 18 years.

Last Saturday, the Ed Foundation again amazed many as it raised over \$60,000. Take that \$60,000 and put it on top of other funds raised over the last 18 years, and you get past the million-dollar mark.

School officials, led by Superintendent Chris Staloch, are very appreciative of the work invested in education by the community.

Funds have been used to implement science programs and robotics in the school, plus for field trips. Monies have also been used to buy white boards.

Staloch says the BP Ed Foundation has enhanced the educational opportunities for our kids and that's what it should come down to.

More than 300 items were featured in the auction held at the Cue Company last Saturday night. Residents of the Blooming Prairie area should be proud what they have accomplished over the past 18 years. The community's youth are the real winners in cracking this milestone.

YOUR VIEW

Special thanks to Eayrs for planting seed of hope

To-the-Editor:
First, thank you for highlighting the flag along Hwy. 218. That flag tells us much about the character and wisdom of the flyer, and perhaps his family. Sad.

Second, a special thanks is in order to Sonja Trom Eayrs. As the guest column (Times' May 19 edition) focuses on Dodge County but raises a much larger issue about corporate farming across our country. The abuses of soil and animals are well documented and the inability of government to stop or correct such abuses is also well documented.

I know some of the Dodge County farmers who participate and benefit from the corporate model of farming. Some are articulate in its defense. For some of these people I have served as their pastor and gone to

many meetings with some of them. They invest much in both dollars and sweat in land and animals. I hope none of them are supporting those who spew garbage, either of words or junk, on a neighbor's property or reputation. As the Apostle says, "You did not so learn Christ." It has fascinated me that some of these farmers who appear to be so religious can quote Leviticus (18:22) about those who may be different, but they are either willfully ignorant or of purposefully disobedient to the chapters which focus on the treatment of land and animals.

Mrs. Eayrs, continue the good work, planting the seed of hope even on very hard ground (hearts). One day, Lord willing, it will bear the fruit of justice.

Rev. Richard C. Hegal
Retired Pastor
Blooming Prairie

Recognizing a hard-working woman



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

I never ceases to amaze me about all the great people who make extraordinary contributions to worthy organizations throughout Steele County and elsewhere.

This week I came across one of those people once again. She is a quiet leader and one of the hardest working women I have ever seen.

Mary Schroeder of rural Owatonna was presented with a lifetime achievement award Saturday afternoon by the Steele County American Dairy Association.

Over the years, I have seen Schroeder at work she has been part of a growing phenomenon that has changed the landscape of America's farms with women having a growing presence in U.S. agriculture.

Schroeder, a 1984 graduate of Owatonna, actually left the area for

a few years to get her animal science degree at the University of Wisconsin River Falls. But as soon as she graduated, it was back home to the cow barn where she has been ever since.

A few years ago, during an interview, I found out just exactly how important dairy farming is for Schroeder. When asked about her greatest accomplishment, she responded with heavy emotion: "Having my kids involved with my lifestyle. I want them to know (begins crying and wipes tears away) how hard in life that my grandparents had to work. It's just emotional for me. There is so much pride in being a part of it."

What has always impressed me about Schroeder is her dedication and commitment to the dairy industry. It's not often you find women managing a dairy herd. For decades, men have dominated farming. But she has been part of a growing phenomenon that has changed the landscape of America's farms with women having a growing presence in U.S. agriculture.

Schroeder, a 1984 graduate of Owatonna, actually left the area for



Mary Schroeder of Owatonna has received a lifetime achievement award from the Steele County American Dairy Association for nearly 30 years of service to the organization.

from being able to physically handle the larger animals.

Within the past year, Schroeder has scaled back her operation for health reasons. In fact, she no longer milks cows but keeps a few steers on hand and raises some calves.

She is also leaving the ADA Board, which she served for almost 30 years with most of the time as its secretary. While on the board, she helped run the princess program, junior ambassadors, dukes and duchesses, Oreo the cow, petting zoo, parades,

family festivals, milking contests, Breakfast on the Farm and perhaps most notably, the milk stand. Basically, if there was any sort of dairy promotion going on in the county, Schroeder was involved somehow.

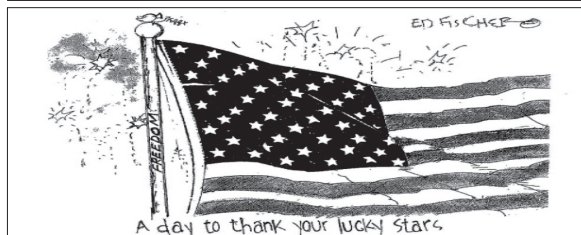
In giving her the board's lifetime achievement award Saturday, officials pointed out how she has spent her entire life in the dairy industry. She spent many years involved in 4-H, dairy club, DEHA and FFA. "She is a hard-working, behind-the-scenes person who will be greatly missed on the Steele County Dairy Board," the group said.

"She has given her time and talent to many areas of the dairy industry over the years."

"It made me emotional," said Schroeder, adding she shed a few tears while receiving the award.

A current board member shared with me how losing Schroeder on the board will create "some big shoes to fill."

While Schroeder has cut back on her involvement with dairy, one thing will always remain. She will always be in hot pursuit of re-membering and living out her passion for the dairy industry.



GUEST COLUMN

Thanks to our vets for their service

BY JAN MITTELSTADT
TIPPETT

There's a most important observance this coming week – Memorial Day, to be celebrated on Monday, May 31.

Besides, to many of us, it's the unofficial official start of summer, even when it is an unsupportable start as many Steele County citizens could easily recall. Remember those ceremonies on the courthouse steps with the cold wind and even colder noses after marching with the Boy or Girl Scouts or the annual parade? There may have been some nice days, but they don't spring to mind.

I've been told over the years that sometimes people confuse the purposes of Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Memorial Day – always called Decoration Day by my late mom – was and is set aside to remember and honor military personnel who died in the service of their country. Veterans Day, founded as Armistice Day in 1919, was

set aside to thank and honor all who served honorably in war or in peacetime. It was and is largely intended to thank the living for their service and to acknowledge their contributions to our lives and our liberties.

And that is a darn fine plan. American flags will be placed at cemeteries – local, state and national, some placed by graves of those who died in the service of our country and others by graves of those who served.

A couple of years ago, when traveling was part of life, I visited the American Cemetery overlooking Omaha beach at Normandy in France. It is for those who died in Europe during World War II. (There is one exception – Quentin Roosevelt, a son of Theodore Roosevelt who was killed in WWI was exhumed and buried next to his brother, Theodore Jr., a Medal of Honor recipient.)

After the war when it came time for permanent burial, families had a choice about leaving their loved ones

in France or having the remains brought back to the United States. It was a one-time choice. Today, 9,385 of our military dead rest there, most of whom died in the D-Day landings and subsequent actions.

Being at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery outside of Washington, D.C., is a stirring experience. Veterans or Memorial Day or not. The tomb houses the graves of three unknown Americans who found in World War I, World War II and the Korean War. There was a soldier from the Vietnam War who was buried in the tomb in 1984 when his remains stayed there until 1998 when DNA tests identified the soldier as Michael Blassie, a 24-year-old Air Force pilot shot down in May 1972. His body was reburied by his family in St. Louis.

Now, in another ceremony, a wreath is placed at the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial to honor those who died in Vietnam.

Two of my most unforgettable memories

were being in Washington for Veterans Day in 2001 when ground was broken for the World War II memorial and again in 2004 when it was dedicated on Memorial Day. My newspaper took a busload of veterans from central Pennsylvania – whose stories about the war we told in a month long series – to the events. It was goose-bump time to sit amid these men and women, and the men and women I worked with, along with my Korean War veteran husband, as all the veterans were honored in words, salutes and songs. I will never forget it.

From 1776 until today, a total of 42 million people have served in the United States Armed Forces. We owe all these men and women – alive or those who have joined the cloud of witnesses – a great deal.

Thank you for your service.

Jan Mittelstadt
Tippett is a retired newspaper publisher who lives in Owatonna. She can be reached at jtippett@midco.net.

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2017 – 6 state and 4 national awards	2012 – 2 state awards
2016 – 6 state and 3 national awards	2011 – 4 national awards

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

Fair to feature country music icon

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Most people will agree that there has been a drought of fun over the past year. But that dry spell is about to be over as officials with the Steele County Free Fair aim to bring back the fun this summer.

And they're doing it in a big way. Last week fair officials announced it has secured a major headline act by bringing country music icon Craig Morgan to the grandstand. He will perform Friday, Aug. 20 at 8 p.m.

Tickets for the show went on sale Saturday morning at www.scft.org. The tickets will range from \$25 to \$35, according to Scott Kozelka, fair manager.

Morgan is one of the country music's best-loved artists and has charted 25 songs on Billboard. He thrills

massive crowds with signature hits including "Bonfire," "Almost Home," "Redneck Yacht Club" and "That's What I Love About Sunday."

Morgan recently released his first new music in more than three years—the faith-filled tribute to his son Jerry, "The Father, My Son and the Holy Ghost." The song hit No. 1 on iTunes All Genres Top Songs Chart as Blake Sheldon led a viral campaign that gained support from the entertainment community.

Morgan received one of country music's highest honors when he was inducted as a member of the Grand Ole Opry in 2008.

He is a TV personality, celebrated outdoorsman and patriotic Army veteran. Before becoming a country music star, Morgan spent 17 years serving in the U.S. Army and the op-

portunity to look to see what else was available. Fair officials worked with a promoter who provided them with a list of 10 performers.

Kozelka said they were always drawn back to Morgan because of his background "as a military guy, family man and great faith person."

The sponsors of Morgan's act are Fastenal, Wenger's Corporation, Let's Ride, Cole Electric and Olympic Fire Protection. "They have all helped us bring in quality entertainment," Kozelka said.

"We are all excited to bring some excitement to the fair and allowing people to get out and have some fun," said Kozelka, adding the fair's theme this year is "Bringing Back the Fun in 2021."

The fair also announced Hairball will return for a 20th-anniversary show on Thursday, Aug. 19.



Country music icon Craig Morgan will perform at this year's Steele County Free Fair.

Concert series returning to Central Park

The popular 11 @ 7 concert series is returning to Central Park in Owatonna on Thursday, June 3.

Sponsored by Wenger and Metronet, the one-and-a-half-hour concerts will begin at 7 p.m.

Food trucks, beverages and craft vendors will also be at the park during the concerts and OwatonnaLive will be live streaming the concerts.

This summer's concert lineup includes: June 3 – Downtown Thursday Event (Main Street Committee) Mark Cameron

Band (blues)

June 10 – Sawyer's Dream (blend of Americana, pop, rock & soul)

June 17 – Benson Family Singers (gospel, bluegrass & barbershop)

June 24 – Owatonna Community Band 7 pm – 8 pm

July 1 – Downtown Thursday Event (Main Street Committee) Old Country Boys (vintage country)

July 8 – The Vintage Tones of Spielzeiten Und Pausen (50's, 60's & 70's)

July 15 – 5 in the Morning (alternative pop/rock originals from an Owatonna duo)

July 22 – Owatonna Community Band (7 pm - 8 pm)

July 29 – Led Penny Unleaded (acoustic rock & roll favorites)

Aug. 5 – Downtown Thursday Event (Main Street Committee) Street Talk (rock favorites)

Aug. 12 – Ringer Star and His All Star Band (Lost Faculties) (Ringo Starr Tribute Artist)

In case of inclement weather, the concerts will be held in Trinity Lutheran Fellowship Hall.

Downtown Thursday Events are sponsored by Metronet.



Music like this concert from June 2019 will be returning to Owatonna this summer. It will give folks of all ages a chance to socialize and enjoy life once again outdoors.

J & J vaccine will be available at the concert

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

A newly formed community group called Community Immunity Initiative is partnering with HyVee to host a vaccination clinic at the first summer concert

series scheduled for June 3 in Central Park.

Organizer of the group Kathy Mueller said HyVee will be on-site offering the Johnson and Johnson one-dose COVID-19 vaccinations beginning at 5 p.m.

"This is about creating opportunities to get vaccinated and protecting the community," said Mueller.

This clinic is expected to be the first of many the group hopes to help set up and promote. "Volunteers

have been pouring in," said Mueller. "We all believe this is a very important thing."

Like other vaccination clinics being held across the state, vaccines are free and no health insurance is needed.

Statewide, 2.5 million Minnesotans have completed the vaccination process. The milestone comes as 64% of Minnesotans 16+ have at least one dose and new COVID-19 cases, positivity rates, and hospitalizations continue to decline steadily.

According to a press release from the governor's office, a New York Times analysis found that new cases in Minnesota have dropped 49% in the last 14 days – faster than all but six other states.

Owatonna fire chief ready for retirement, family time

◀ **FIRE** from A1
the calendar to "every day is Saturday."

Johnson joined the Owatonna Fire Department as fire chief on May 21, 2001.

"When I came here, one of the things in place was a collaborative agreement with Steele County," said Johnson, explaining the dual role he has played for 20 years.

During that time, Johnson said the demands of both roles

have increased and the county and the city decided to separate the position. The county will employ a full-time emergency manager and the city will employ a full-time fire chief.

"It's been an honor to serve as fire chief," said Johnson. "I've appreciated the opportunity to serve."

Johnson began his fire service career in Faribault as a firefighter in 1984 after serving

as an army medic in Europe and earning his two-year paramedic degree at Mankato State.

He said he'd always admired firefighters because his dad had been a volunteer firefighter in the metro area.

But when paramedics saved his grandfather, who was having a heart attack, Johnson said he knew he wanted to help others too. "I thought he was

dead and the paramedics got him back," said Johnson.

Now, Johnson said, he's ready to give up a world that requires a constant state of readiness. Anyone who is a first responder, he said, sees a lot of tragic things.

"You start carrying that baggage from Day 1," he said, adding that there were more good days than bad. "But the job shouldn't define you."

Johnson said he is proud of the firefighters he's worked with over the years.

"Our mission is to save lives and property and we do that each and every day," said Johnson.

Fighting fires before they happen is a big part of the job, according to the retiring chief. And, he said, it's the reason city firefighters do so much code enforcement.

"It works. Codes are created to avoid injury and death in a fire," he said.

In addition to spending time with family and friends, Johnson said he is looking forward to traveling.

"Unlike vacations when you try to jam so much into a week and come back exhausted, I plan to take time to watch the sunset."

First on his list, he said, is the sunset over the Grand Canyon.

Councilor loses battle with spine infection

◀ **COUNCILOR** from A1
He had battled chronic pain for several years.

In 2014, Okerberg was elected to the city council as a member-at-large. He replaced Raymond Truelson, who died earlier in 2014 while serving on the

council. Okerberg was re-elected to the council in 2018.

During his short illness, Okerberg only missed the last council meeting on May 18. "He served until the end," Kuntz said.

Okerberg's dedication to the council,

Kuntz said, will be sorely missed. The mayor complimented Okerberg for the extensive research he put into issues. "He wasn't afraid to voice his opinion," Kuntz said.

Kuntz expects the council to appoint a replacement for Okerberg

in the near future. He said applications will likely be taken in June after the council meets. Funeral services for Okerberg will be Thursday at 2 p.m. at Bethel Church in Owatonna. The funeral will also be live-streamed at www.bethelowatonna.com.

BP Education Foundation hits \$1M mark

◀ **FOUNDATION** from A1
Helping provide for the Blooming Prairie students is why Fougere said she's passionate about being involved in the auction.

In addition to her own involvement, she was glad to see so many other community members back the school district by coming out to the silent auction and the live auction.

"It was great to see a big crowd come out and support the foundation and raise money for the students. I'm glad to see we have the community's support," said Fougere. "It was

everyone from the education foundations' board, its committee, community members, donors and bidders. I'm very appreciative of everyone who helped with that."

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STEELE COUNTY Times

BLOTTER
SPOTLIGHT

Fight: Blooming Prairie Officers responded to a fight in the 200 block of 4th St. NE on May 12 at 11:47 p.m. They took a subject into custody.

Extra patrols aim to reduce fatalities

Minnesota motorists are known for their high seat belt compliance rate, but a disturbing development is taking place on Minnesota roads.

Between Jan. 1 and April 22, preliminary reports show 31 unbelted motorists died this year, the highest number of year-to-date unbelted traffic fatalities since 2012 (33).

This loss of life comes after a deadly 2020 when 112 unbelted motorists died on Minnesota roads compared to 73 in 2019. The 112 unbelted motorist deaths in 2020 were also the highest since 2012 (116).

To remind motorists about the importance of buckling up, the Owatonna Police Department will join law enforcement agencies statewide in extra seat belt patrols, which began Monday and continues through June 6. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (DPS-OTS) coordinates the campaign and the funding provided by

the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Most Minnesotans are making the life-saving decision to buckle up. According to the 2019 Minnesota Observation Seat Belt Survey, 93.4% of front seat occupants are wearing their seat belts. The rest are gambling with their lives and the lives of others in the vehicle by riding unbelted.

Bad decisions
• In 2020, 112 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads.

• Adults must take the time to correctly use child restraints, teach children the value of buckling up and model seat belt use. From 2016-2020:

• 20 children (ages 0-7) were killed in motor vehicles.

• Eight of the victims were properly secured, eight were not properly restrained, and restraint use was unknown in four fatalities.

• Of the 87 children (ages 0-7) seriously injured in motor vehicles, 49 percent were known to be properly secured.

Good decisions

• In 1987, 4,176 vehicle occupants suffered severe injuries in traffic crashes. That number dropped to 1,056 in 2020.

• 2020 saw the highest number of unbelted fatalities (13) of 15-19-year-olds since 2011 (20).

• 2020 saw the highest number of unbelted fatalities (31) of 25-39-year-olds since 2012 (36).

• In 2020, 79 percent of the unbelted deaths occurred in Greater Minnesota (outside the seven-county metro area).

Minnesota law states that drivers and passengers in all seating positions must wear seat belts or be in the correct child restraint. Occupants must correctly wear seat belts low and snug across the hips, and they should never tuck straps under an arm or behind the back.

Protecting young lives

• In crashes from 2016-2020, of the 15,670 children ages 0-7 that were properly re-

strained, 88 percent were not injured while another 9 percent sustained only possible injuries.

• In Minnesota, all children must be in a child restraint until they are 4 feet 9 inches tall, or at least age 8, whichever comes first.

• Rear-facing seats – All infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car seat until they have reached the height and weight limits allowed by the car seat manufacturer.

• Forward-facing seats with harness – Toddlers and preschoolers who have reached the height and weight limits of the rear-facing car seat should use a forward-facing seat with harness until they reach the weight limit of the harness allowed by the car seat manufacturer.

• Booster seats – School-age children who have reached the height and weight limits of the forward-facing seat can sit on a booster seat. It must be used with a lap and shoulder belt.

CRIME BRIEF

Ex-boyfriend arrested in domestic

The ex-boyfriend of a woman faces a felony assault charge in connection with a domestic disturbance in Owatonna.



Raymond Scott

Raymond Scott, 42, of Owatonna has been charged with enhanced domestic assault because of two or more previously qualified domestic violence-related convictions. The most recent incident took place on May 14 when officers received a call of a domestic in the 200 block of E. Vine Street. A woman reported Scott, her

ex-boyfriend, awakened her and appeared to be under the influence of drugs, police said. She also told police that Scott threatened if she called the police that he would beat her up and that he would go down fighting and officers would have to kill him.

Police found Scott at the Super 8 Hotel where he was arrested without incident. Scott also had outstanding warrants from Scott County and the Minnesota Department of Corrections.

• Seat belts – Children 8 years old or have reached 4 feet 9 inches tall can buckle up with seat belts. Your child is ready for an adult seat belt when they can sit

with their back against the vehicle seat, knees bent comfortably and completely over the vehicle seat edge without slouching, and feet touching the floor.

COURT NEWS Steele County

The following cases were heard in Steele County District Court the week of May 10 with Judge Karen R. Duncan presiding: Joseph M. Davis Sr., 36, Faribault, previously appeared and was convicted of felony domestic assault and gross misdemeanor violation of no contact order. He was sentenced to \$255, 1 year in county jail and 16 months in St. Cloud State Prison. Michael J. McClatchey, 47, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony import controlled substance across state borders. McClatchey was sentenced to \$125, 254 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, mental health evaluation, no possession of firearms, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state and 5 years of supervised probation. Khadar G. Mohamed, 23, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony financial transaction card fraud, felony burglary and felony motor vehicle theft. The defendant was sentenced to \$10,139.33, 54 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter

liquor establishments, psychological evaluation, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state, no possession of firearms and 5 years of supervised probation. Luis M. Rocha, 36, Rochester, previously appeared and was convicted of felony violation of order for protection, Rocha was sentenced to \$125, 109 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, no possession of firearms, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state, domestic abuse evaluation and 3 years of supervised probation. The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of May 10 – 16:

BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE DEPARTMENT
Darnell D. Carpenter, 28, Minneapolis, child passenger restraint system violation and revoked license, \$525; Eduardo Cruz Sanchez, 41, Austin, speeding, \$125; Scott M. Hoffus, 51, Blooming Prairie, revoked license, expired tabs and no insurance, \$505; Clayton G. Johnson, 36, Blooming Prairie, fleeing a peace officer and obstruct legal process, \$1,081, 3

days in county jail, write letter of apology and 2 years of supervised probation; Bradley J. Meyer, 31, Blooming Prairie, possession of paraphernalia, \$125; Lisa M. Nelson, 46, Austin, suspended license, \$275; Nathan L. Petricka, 30, Faribault, expired tabs, \$105; Ivan Rodriguez, 37, Richfield, registration violation and revoked license, \$575; Ricky A. Severson, 69, Austin, violation of no contact order, \$75 and 180 days in county jail.

MINN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Devante M. Bornard, 24, St. Louis, MO, speeding and seat belt, \$125; Anthony J. Brown, 54, New Richmond, limited license violation, \$175; Jason J. Buck, 49, Owatonna, hands free driving, \$175; Keith A. Uhrmacher, 55, Lenexa, KS, speeding, \$135; Christopher R. Ullery, 41, Brooklyn Park, speeding, \$115; Nikolas B. Vlasaty, 38, Minneapolis, speeding, \$215.

Minnetonka, speeding, \$135; Alan Majumder, 46, Lakeville, speeding, \$215; Jack R. Martin, 22, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Alexis M. Martinez, 22, Sioux Falls, SD, no license and window tint violation, \$225; Fostyn E. Ndlovu, 20, Offutt AFB, NE, speeding, \$115; Robert L. Pate Jr., 47, Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$275; Mario Pina Jr., 22, Houston, TX, speeding, \$215; Tasha L. Schleicher, 44, Minneapolis, cancelled license, \$125 and 11 months of supervised probation; Lar D. Shar, 23, Omaha, NE, speeding, \$125; Abukar A. Sheikh Abdi, 23, Faribault, permit violation, \$125; Anamarie D. Starbeck, 21, Clear Lake, IA, speeding, \$125; Lexa C. Starbeck, 47, Clear Lake, IA, speeding, \$125; Nicholas P. Stoffel, 19, Markato, careless driving, \$175; Keith A. Uhrmacher, 55, Lenexa, KS, speeding, \$135; Christopher R. Ullery, 41, Brooklyn Park, speeding, \$115; Nikolas B. Vlasaty, 38, Minneapolis, speeding, \$215.

OWATONNA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Kendra R. Adamiak, 25, Hoyt Lakes, possession of paraphernalia, \$125; Miguel A. Astacio Torruella, 45, Owatonna, invalid license, \$175; Abdreigh I. Bedel, 34, Owatonna, stop sign, \$125; Micayla E. Best, 26, Waseca, revoked license,

no insurance and suspended registration, \$775; Charles H. Cannon, 42, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Steven J. Davidson, 35, Owatonna, speeding and suspended license, \$415; Alexa G. Esplan, 16, Owatonna, stop sign, \$125; Jeremy S. Evenson, 38, Briceburg, trespassing, \$131 and 90 days in county jail; Hazel G. Gaxiola, 19, Owatonna, after hours in park, \$175; Donnie D. Jones, 41, Owatonna, possession of marijuana, \$125; Madison D. Kersey, 22, Northfield, no insurance, \$275; Marlyse E. Knopik, 75, Owatonna, speeding, \$215; Dana N. Kobika, 21, Owatonna, domestic assault and assault, stay of adjudication, \$75, diversion program and 2 years of supervised probation; Gregory J. Lussier, 56, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Anthony J. Moon, 35, Kenyon, revoked license, \$275; Kathryn M. Pena, 48, Owatonna, seat belt, \$100; Logan M. Pleschourt, 19, Medford, window tint violation, \$125; Chelys H. Reno, 17, Waseca, hands free violation, \$125; Carlos D. Rodriguez, 26, Owatonna, invalid license and window tint violation, \$225; Jamie M. Schnobrich, 35, St. Clair, suspended license and no insurance, \$475; Kathy J. Shilts, 46, Claremont, revoked license, \$275; Rebecca J. Simmons, 46, Shulerville, SC, theft, \$115; Christopher J. Sorvaag, 33, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$105; Jose E. Vielma Gonzalez, 51, Owatonna, invalid license, \$175; Carter J. Warner, 20, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$105; Watonga, stop sign, \$125; Alejandro Alejo, 22, Austin, revoked license, no insurance and speeding, \$525; Gregory G. Anderson, 35, Twin Lakes, DWI, \$200, 30 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, obtain permission to leave the state and 2 years of supervised probation;

Rex Andon, 25, Austin, speeding, \$115; Jacobson G. Carlson, 28, Owatonna, DWI, \$450, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments and 1 year of supervised probation; Shawn E. Clement, 36, Dodge Center, trespassing, \$175; Cecile M. Dokkistul, 40, Faribault, speeding, \$115; Michael A. Fatland, 51, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Brian S. Greer, 43, Shoreview, passing parked emergency vehicle, \$175; John H. Hoelscher, 19, Hartland, speeding, \$115; Ble A. Kouadi, 26, Mankato, speeding, \$115; Jason C. Long, 39, Lake St. Croix Beach, suspended license and speeding, \$355; Ryan M. Lynch, 29, Minneapolis, open bottle and speeding, \$225; Robert M. Menard, 39, Owatonna, cancelled license, \$175, 10 hours of community service and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Ibrahim A. Mohamed, 27, Faribault, speeding, \$115; Alexis A. Nijholm, 24, Duluth, expired tabs, \$105; Terriann Powell, 38, Waseca, child passenger restraint system violation and no insurance, \$300; Luis J. Dulones Rodriguez, 39, Faribault, revoked license, \$275; Pierre L. Rhodes, 21, Faribault, suspended license, \$275; Remigio Rodriguez-Valles, 63, Waseca, revoked license, \$275; Karter J. Runkler, 17, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Cody J. Salinas, 30, Lake Orion, MI, speeding, \$115; Caroline A. Scheffert, 27, Waseca, speeding, \$115; Shane M. Smith, 43, Waseca, invalid license, \$175; Charles G. Thayer, 36, Minneapolis, open bottle, \$175; Sheldon A. Thissen, 18, Waseca, speeding, \$115; Trevor W. Thorpe, 43, Waseca, speeding, \$125.

POLICE BLOTTER Steele County BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE

**May 18
DWI:** Officer made a DWI arrest at Highway Ave. N. and Center Ave. N. at 2:17 a.m.

See BLOTTER on A13 ►

BLOOMING PRAIRIE
Chamber of Commerce

BUSINESS of the WEEK

R&R Insurance Agency

R&R Insurance Agency has been in business and a Chamber Member since 1986. We appreciate Carl Peterson and Jill Lindeman for their continued support of the Chamber and the Blooming Prairie Area Community.

R & R Insurance Agency, LLC is located at 236 Main St. E., Blooming Prairie, and are celebrating 35 years in business this year. R&R Insurance is an independent agent and provides the choices for the best fit for coverages ranging from homeowners, auto, health, crop and more.

Give them a call today for all of your insurance needs at 507-583-7971.

Congratulations to R&R Insurance Agency for being recognized as the Chamber of Commerce Business of the Week!

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Two boys play soccer on one of the new fields at the Daikin Soccer Complex in Owatonna during the grand opening being filmed by a camera crew.

Community celebrates grand opening of soccer complex

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Aside from the rain, the scene on Thursday at the Daikin Soccer Complex on East Rice Lake Street in Owatonna told the story.

As dozens of community leaders gathered for the Daikin Soccer Complex grand opening, two boys could be seen playing soccer on one of the new soccer fields located within the complex.

The need for the fields was driven by area youth and Owatonna and the business community rose to the occasion, said Mike Keller, co-chair of fundraising for the Owatonna Soccer Association and chief financial officer of Federated Insurance.

"We outgrew the original fields," Keller said.

The new complex, located at East Rice Lake Street and Willow Avenue, includes five fields and parking for players and spectators. It will be used



Mike Keller, co-chair of fundraising for the Owatonna Soccer Association and chief financial officer of Federated Insurance, thanks dozens of community leaders who helped make the new soccer complex possible during Thursday's grand opening celebration.

by the soccer association, Owatonna Public Schools and the city's Parks and Recreation Department.

"This is a culmination of a lot of vision and a lot of effort," said Keller, adding that fundraising for the new fields began in 2019 and wrapped up just before the pandemic hit in 2020.

Donations from several area businesses, including Daikin Applied, Federated, Wenger, the Otto Bremmer Trust, Gopher Sports, the Mayo Foundation, Viracon and the Owatonna Foundation, made the project possible. The Nass family donated property to the city for the fields.

Recipe Corner Olive Garden Dressing & Salad

Dressing:
1/2 C mayonnaise
1/3 C white vinegar
1 tsp vegetable oil
2 T corn syrup
2 T parmesan cheese
2 T Romano cheese
1/4 tsp garlic salt
1/2 tsp Italian seasoning
1/2 tsp parsley flakes
1 T lemon juice

Combine all ingredients in a blender or processor until well blended. If this is a little too tart for your personal taste, add a little sugar.

1 bag American Blend Dole Salad Mix
1/2 C croutons
4 to 5 slices red onion
1 sm tomato, quartered
4 to 6 black olives
2 to 4 banana peppers

Combine all ingredients in a large salad bowl; stir to combine. Pour dressing over mixed salad.

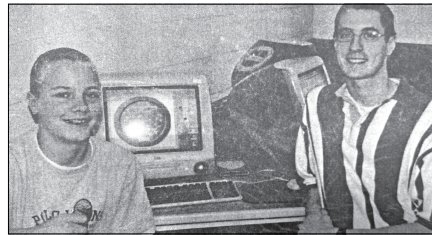
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STEELE COUNTY Times



History from the News Archives

Get ready for the Fourth



FILE PHOTO

Ready or not, it's time to think Fourth of July. The 2001 winner of the button contest was ninth grader Matt Hansen, son of Darrell and Cindy Hansen. He is shown with his art instructor, Nathan Piller. The winner was picked from eight students who submitted designs and picked by the Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce membership. This year's buttons will be \$2. Buying a button shows your support for the Chamber's biggest fundraiser of the year.

10 Years Ago

May 24, 2011

RICK L. BULLSLER,
PUBLISHER

The BP Elementary second graders recently participated in a five-week BP Chamber sponsored "Junior Entrepreneur" program. Linda Klemmensen was the Chamber volunteer teaching in the program in Matt Kittleson's class. As part of the program, the class was invited to Sportstitch for a tour. The kids were able to see all of the machines in full operation and were also treated to a free T-shirt. They enjoyed Main Street and locating the other businesses that were talked about during the 5-week program.

Stacy Fisher and Rachel Klemmensen were also other Chamber volunteers in the classroom.

Athletes of the week for the Blossoms were: Hannah Sunde, she won the long jump contest at the Gopher Conference Track Meet and has been a consistent performer for the girls; Luc Zellner, he pitched four-hit baseball and picked up an important win over NRHEC at New Richland last week.

20 Years Ago

May 22, 2001

ELSIE SLINGER, EDITOR

Wednesday night Ladies League held its annual Bowling Banquet on May 2 at the Pizza Cellar in Blooming Prairie. The first place team for 2000-2001 was Harriet's Dres-Wel. Team members are Jackie Smith, Harriet Dressler sponsor, Cindi Hanson, Kathi Peterson, Sharon Bailey, Melody Benson and Donna Weiss.

There is a new business in town and new chamber member, but this one will be run by teenagers! Due to a \$20,000 youth entrepreneurship grant through The Initiative Fund, Art Gust's accounting students officially opened its Gust's idea of giving kids a chance to learn the business world firsthand came to be this spring. There are many school items, sportswear items available and they hope to add more to their inventory. Students involved this semester are: Amanda Bush, Andrew Sayles, Pamela Beckman, Kathryn Johnson, Mark Vermilyea, Rebecca Naatz, Luke Millerr, Leah Heimerman, Jason Morgan and Matthew Madsen.

50 Years Ago

May 26, 1971

VICTOR, VERNON
& VRYLE KREJCI,
PUBLISHERS

Otto Jensen was elected president of the Blooming Prairie Jaycees Chapter at the annual meeting held last week. He succeeds Dr. T. E. Nealy as head of the Jaycees here. Other officers elected to serve were: Jim Fisher, Internal Vice-president, Ken Behnken, External Vice-president, Ji, Srsen, State Director, Larry Buntrock, Treasurer, Bob Noble, Secretary, Bill Noble, Roger Wrase and Gene Myre, Directors.

Honor students in this year's graduation were announced this week. Charles Halsten, son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Halsten, is the valedictorian of the 1971 class. Working toward a degree in pharmacy Charles is a class officer, member of National Honor Society, band, mixed chorus, speech and drama. His future plans are to attend Rochester State Junior College. John Becker, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Becker, is salutatorian. John is a member of National Honor Society, band, mixed chorus, drama, football, basketball, baseball and class officer. He plans to attend St. John's University.

75 Years Ago

May 23, 1946

FRANK KREJCI,
PUBLISHER

Mrs. E. J. Betlach, chairman of this year's poppy sales sponsored by local VFW post reported that the entire allotment of 1,500 poppies was readily disposed of on Saturday. Sum realized for the "red flowers" was made by disabled war veterans, honoring their fallen

buddies was \$172.70. On behalf of her volunteer workers and herself, Mrs. Betlach wishes to express her sincere thanks and appreciation to all the poppy buyers.

Some of the graduates of the class of 1946 make their wills and sharing a few today. Theresa Behne wills her "gift of gab" to Marian Hagna. Doris Hansen wills her natural curly hair to Juanita Clark. Albert Rysav wills his motorcycle and riding ability to the "daredevils" in the motordome at the Steele County Fair. Mildred Bach wills her ability to write to Beverly Robinson in order to have a Shakespeare in the class of '47. Eugene From wills his fishy blue plaid jacket to Adrian Simon. Edwin Meyer wills his manners to Dickie Seavey. Norma Christianson wills her shy manner to Betty Lou Motl. Janet Spinker wills her ability to handle first graders to Tille VanHal and Louella Jensen. Lloyd Krell wills his ability to understand motors to the physics class. Gene Staz wills his eyes and auburn hair to Charles Bartel.

Owatonna Photo News

31 Years Ago

May 24, 1990

TOM SHEA, PUBLISHER

Members of St. Mary's Mathematical Olympiad for Elementary Schools (MOES) were honored with T-shirts at the school this week, for having everyone on the team correctly solving one of the 25 items administered with the most scoring two or more. Fourth grade team members are Jimmy Bowar, Erin Carmody, Leah Claeys, Nikki Day, Michael Driessen, Julie Hanson, John Humuth, Melanie Kniefel, Matt Manimon, Adam Rudolph, Nathan Simon, Kim Waseck and Steve Warner. Fifth graders include Joe Claeys, Carolyn Grebe and Katherine Gunsorek. Representing the sixth grade are Christine Driessen, Heather Jen, Katie Sion, Stacey Skala, Kristy Waseck and Lydia Wilhelm.

A number of Owatonna area freestyle wrestlers qualified for the nationals during last weekend's Freestyle Wrestling Tournament at Mayo Civic Arena. Qualifiers for the National Tournament in Storm Lake, Iowa are: Greg Karsten, Danny Karsten, Gabe Vait, Nick Tancheff, Derek Johnson, Jason Schubert, Jeremy Schubert, Toby Eker, Rick Paquin, Lance Pettis, Mike Hollister, Jeff Kubat, Tony Hamer and Josh Sorenson. Last year the National Tournament hosted 2660 qualifiers.



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Exploring Nature



Ethan Hullopeter, front left, and Josie Mausbach examine what they've caught in their nets after putting their nets in the pond. Meanwhile, kindergarten teacher Amy Ostrander helps Grayson Spinler maintain his footing on what had become a muddy entrance to the pond due to the rain last Friday.

BP elementary students blow off some STEAM

BY ALEX NUEHRING
NEWS WRITER

Blooming Prairie Elementary School was abuzz with excitement for the third straight year as students learned about topics that revolved around STEAM, which stands for science, technology, engineering, art and math.

Second-grade teacher Kim Lea, who organized this special

activity day, said this year's focus was on ponds with Tim Rusek from Mower County Soil Conservation and a representative from Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center leading activities.

Lea said that teachers were able to incorporate more traditional subjects.

"The biggest goal is

for them to do hands-on learning. They don't really realize what they're learning, but they really are learning a lot. Every teacher had a hand in planning it and most of the teachers tried to link it directly to a science and math standard. A lot of teachers made it a project-based thing. So you'll see up in fifth grade, they made

pinball machines that incorporate many different subjects together into one activity," she said. "It really took their learning to a whole new level, made it hands-on and engaging and the kids greatly look forward to it."

Combine that anticipation for STEAM activities with the students' enthusiasm. See STUDENTS on A11 ▶

Graduation returns to near normal at Medford High

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

The first graduation involving seniors in Steele County will take place Friday night at Medford High School. Thanks to recent COVID-19 restrictions being lifted, the graduation ceremonies at area schools will take on a much different look than last year.

At Medford, the mask mandate will still be enforced for all guests, but for the most part, everything else will be "fairly normal," said Kevin Babcock, high school principal.

Before the recent changes, Medford had planned to limit the number of attendees and put the graduates and their immediate families in pods throughout the gymnasium, Babcock said. "Now we have lifted our mandated and we are letting everyone in," he said.

And that comes as welcome news for school officials.

"These families have worked hard with their students, and we want to be able to let every-

one in," Babcock said. "To allow them to share the memory of their graduation is pretty special."

The seniors chose Jeannie Ness, a retiring elementary teacher, to provide the keynote address at this year's graduation.

Babcock said he will also take the opportunity to share some of his thoughts with the graduating seniors.

"They have all overcome a huge obstacle," said Babcock, pointing to the barriers they faced because of the pandemic and the related distance-learning model. "These students are going to be stronger because of what they endured. They have shown you can overcome anything and be better people because of it."

Medford will be maintaining one tradition that was born out of last year's pandemic graduation. There will be a parade after the ceremony. Emergency vehicles will escort the graduates and their parents throughout the community.

The ceremony begins at 7 p.m.

The power of validation



Steele Talkin'
BOBBI MATHERN

People like to feel understood. They like to be heard. It helps them feel supported. It helps them make sense of their world and gain confidence in their ability to cope with a variety of situations. It helps them to trust themselves and their own judgement.

One way to boost this self-efficacy is through validation. Validation is giving the message that you understand where another person is coming from; that what they think and feel makes sense given their experience. Invalidation, by contrast, is giving the message that the way a person thinks or feels is wrong.

Validation can help to improve relationships. It can increase self-esteem in yourself and others. It can

diffuse conflict. It can increase motivation and perseverance.

Some people are afraid to validate another because they think it will increase an undesired behavior in the other person (e.g. crying). While this can sometimes occur, more often it provides reassurance to the other person that they are not "going crazy" and can provide encouragement to continue efforts toward overcoming an obstacle.

Another reason people are afraid to validate others is that they don't want to agree with an opposing viewpoint. The truth is, even if you do not agree with someone, you can validate them. Simply saying "I can understand why you feel that way" can defuse an argument instantly. While you are not saying "I agree with you," you are letting the other person know how they feel is valid, which decreases the person's need to argue with you to get their point across. In turn, it allows the other person to actually hear your point of view as well.

See STEEL TALKIN' on A11 ▶



Seven young ladies will represent Steele County as dairy princesses for the coming year. The princesses include, from left: Samantha Fredin, Courtney Kath, Maggie Bruns, Katelyn Rysavy, Hailey Rysavy, Kylie Kruckeberg and Lilly Zollner.

Dairy group crowns new royalty

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

There will be no shortage of dairy royalty this summer in Steele County as seven young ladies have been crowned dairy princesses.

On Saturday, the Steele County American Dairy Association honored seven dairy princesses for the

year during its annual banquet at the Steele County Fairgrounds. They include: Samantha Fredin, Courtney Kath, Maggie Bruns, Katelyn Rysavy, Hailey Rysavy, Kylie Kruckeberg and Lilly Zollner.

The princesses will be involved with dairy promotions over the coming months. Some of the promotions

include Dairy Days in June, area parades, malt stand and the Steele County Free Fair.

In addition to being a local dairy princess, Zollner recently competed for the Princess Kay of the Milky Way competition on the state level.

Fourteen junior dairy ambassadors ranging in ages 9-17

also were honored during the banquet. They are Chase Balzer, Clairra Balzer, Ava Cox, Anna Cox, Chloe Garten, Lukas Halla, Madi Murphy, Afton Nelson, Andy Nelson, Kellen Nelson, Marcus Rysavy, Anton Schroeder, Weston Schrodt and Ali Slater.

Also honored were eight Dukes and Duchesses. See DAIRY on A11 ▶



Owatonna Teacher of the Year Mark Langlois teaches fifth graders and is head coach of the Owatonna golf team.

Owatonna's top educator credits his colleagues

BY LOLA SHAFFER
TIMES INTERN

Owatonna teachers recently named Mark Langlois, a fifth-grade teacher at McKinley Elementary School, to be the district's Teacher of the Year.

Langlois is also the head coach for the Owatonna golf team, a position combining the elements of teaching with those of the game he loves.

When asked what this honor means to him, Langlois paused, then said, "To be honest, that's a really hard

question because it's an honor. It's something that means a lot to me because my peers voted me to be that."

Langlois said that he is surrounded by colleagues who uplift and celebrate one another. "I feel like it's a team award because I feel like all the people I work with have made such an impact on my teaching career and have helped me be the person and teacher I am today," he said.

As a teacher, Langlois said he is committed to helping his students grow in their

education and creating an environment where his students feel safe, welcome, and happy to be in school. Above all, Langlois said he hopes his students know that "I care about them as a whole person."

Langlois said that he values getting to know his students and building relationships with each of them.

"The kids teach us," he said.

As a parent, Langlois said that he adds a different perspective to his role as a teacher. He said that he enjoys when his kids come

home from school, excited to tell him about their teachers and what they're learning, and he hopes that his students feel the same.

Langlois said that he incorporates his teaching experience into his coaching for the Owatonna Golf Team. According to Langlois, both teaching and golfing involve helping kids develop their strengths and work on their struggle areas.

With an experienced golfer for a dad, Langlois said that he stepped onto a green as See EDUCATOR on A18 ▶



Here is a list of deceased veterans (BPSC members) provided by the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club:

Neil Zwiener	Francis Marchwicki	Leslie Hoffman	John Ulland	Roland Dahl
Donald Peterson	Robert Dandeleit	Duane LaMaack	Donald Brown	Howard D. Underwood
Denis Sime	Gordon "Spencer" Lindquist	Gale Leek	Maurice Basness	Paul J. Ingvaldson
Otto T. Lund	Ralph Trom	Harris Peterson	Charlie Ressler	William "Bill" Bailey
M. John Christensen	Ralph Berg	Keith Colee	Roger Braaten Sr.	Bernard Coufal
Terry Wold	John Haubenschild	Ralph Stoen	John Ryan	Marvin Bennett
Rayfield Phillips	Lynwood Ditlevson	Donald "Red" Trom	Daniel Emanuel	John Dwan Todalen
Harold Hanson	Ray Bass	George Tonolli	Robert Grooters	Samuel Dandeleit
Manley Westing	Everett Carlsen	Arden Wold	James Pechacek	George O. Jacobson
Marlyn Dodge	Harrison Oswald Jr.	James Thorn	John Cashman	Gordon H. Diesch
Clair Johnson	Merlin Madsen	Al Jorde	Francis Jenö	Stanley Gronseth
Gordon Trom	Helmer Peterson	Milton Kaplan	David Sponheim	George Clunis
Marvin Pfeiffer	Raynold Knudtson	Dale Njos	Allen Michaelson	Edmund Wurst
Frank Betlach	Robert Hunter	Dean Johnson	Leo Coughlin	Joseph Wurst
Franklin Burke	Edward Habberstad	Lyle Jensen	Hubert Pelinka	Dale A. Hanson
Robert Oswald	Arnold Hanson	Richard Ilk	Darrel Trom	Maylon Heinz
Robert Rasmussen	Vyrle Krejci	Robert LeBeau	Robert Becker	Holger Robertson
Howard Lysne	Helen Lee (Gold Star Mother)	Raymond Wend	Floyd Sorenson	Lloyd Wobbrock
Richard Trom	Hubert Swenson	Lawrence Lysne	Robert Lenort	Herman Grunklee
Lowell Ingvalson	Kenneth Lea	Obert Christiansen	William Walsh	Eugene Kaplan
Ronald Underwood	Joseph Wacek Sr.	Harlan Kittelson	Milo Hoel	James W. Johns
John Smith	Rev. Ernest Johnson	George Davis	Roger P. Johnson	Donald Anderson
Carl Fiebigler	Donald Nordine	Arthur Helleck	Derwin Hillson	William Angell
Allen Peterson	Ronald Anderson	Benjamin Bishop	Raymond Seaton	Donald Bakke
Edgar Bock	Warren Iversen	Col. Roger Ingvalson	Willis (Bud) Miller	Ray Delgado
Harold Miller	Victor Jirele	James Maxfield Jr.	Gerth (Bud) Anderson	Lee Folkens
Orville Williamson	Harvey Ille	Burton Ingvalson	Ronald Malecha	George Ressler
Darrell Rasmussen	Edward Possin	John M. Christenson	Edward Lindquist	Willie Underwood
Richard Peterson	Donald Kaplan	Donald "Gus" Nordine	Loren Rasmussen	Chip Decker
Jerry Peterson	Lyle Walsh	Ronald Anderson	Vince Thoreson	Kenneth Anderson
Howard Butler	Roger "Nip" Peterson	Darrell "Pickle" Johnson	Marvin Jensen	Ernest Betlach
John Cashman	Edward Walsh	Henry Halstenson	Vernon Paulson	Tom Jelinek
Mark Coughlin	Lloyd Schoer	Ronald Reese	Kenneth Baumann	Charles Coughlin
Kenneth Lysne		Joanne VanWyck	Frank Thissen	
Nathan Christenson				

Special note: There will be no recorded member deaths after this year. If you would like a name added to this list for future years, please contact the Steele County Times.

This message sponsored by these supporters of veterans in our community:

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New technology aids residents, staff at Benedictine Living Community

BY ALEX NUEHRING
NEWS WRITER

New technology at Benedictine Living Community-Owatonna is helping patients who struggle with a swallowing disorder called dysphagia.

Speech-language pathologist Sara Schewe said the new technology, called Synchrony sEMG biofeedback, uses electrodes connected to the patients' swallowing muscles to relay information to a computer system.

She said the equipment benefits both the living community residents and the clinicians.

"It provides a way for the patient to tell if they're performing swallowing exercises correctly and effectively. Also, clinical studies have shown that biofeedback reduces the time necessary to complete therapy for dysphagia," she said. "As a clinician, it provides me with data

so I can prove whether the exercises have been beneficial and track a patient's progress over time."

Schewe also said the first step in the patient's rehabilitation is when the clinicians use an in-house instrumental swallow study or the patient goes to the hospital to figure what specific part of the swallow is disordered. Then, with this technology, clinicians can select exercises to target the disordered area(s).

Before starting the therapy session, which she said is painless and non-invasive, the electrodes go under the chin or around the lips, depending on what area of the swallow they're targeting.

When the patient swallows, she said that the electrodes read their muscle output. Through the computer system, the patients can use their muscle output to participate in activities to make



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sara Schewe, left, a speech-language pathologist at Benedictine Living Community-Owatonna, uses a new technology program called Synchrony sEMG bio-feedback to help patients. The technology gives the patient a way to tell if they're performing swallowing exercises correctly and effectively. Here, Schewe practices using the bio-feedback program with Benedictine Occupational therapist Lynnea Evans who role plays someone with swallowing disorder called dysphagia.

the exercises fun and engaging.

"Patient engagement in therapy has been generally outstanding with this device. Most residents think the games are fun and

enjoyable because they like to see their character(s) move based on what they're doing with their swallowing muscles," said Schewe.

For those who don't find the games as enjoy-

able, she said there are other ways to display the data and give them feedback that they're doing the exercises correctly.

"Without the machine, we would be

guessing if they're doing their exercises correctly or whether there's been an improvement in their strength," she said. "I feel it would be more difficult as a clinician to know when they are ready to discharge from therapy and when they are ready to upgrade their diet without the data that this device provides."

Schewe said some patients with dysphagia eat a specialized diet, such as ground-up foods and thickened liquids. With biofeedback, she said, they've seen a lot of success in getting people back on a more normalized diet.

The device is also a cost-saver for the facility, according to Schewe.

"It decreases the amount of time that patients need to spend in speech therapy. The facility also doesn't have to spend as much time preparing modified diets for patients who have special diets," she said.

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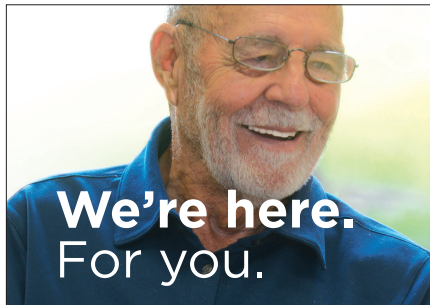
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Dear Savvy Senior,
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Former Smoker

Dear Still,
Lung cancer screen-

ing is used to detect the presence of lung cancer in otherwise healthy people with a high risk of lung cancer. Should you be screened? It depends on your age and your smoking history. Here's what you should know.

Should you be screened for lung cancer?

Screening Recommendations

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force – an independent panel of medical experts that advises the government on health policies – recently expanded their recommendations for lung cancer screenings. They are now recommending annual screenings for high-risk adults between the ages of 50 and 80 who have at least a 20-pack year history who currently smoke or who have quit within

the past 15 years. This is a change from the 2013 recommendation that referred to patients ages 55 to 80 with 30-year pack histories.

A 20-pack year history is the equivalent of smoking one pack a day for 20 years or two packs a day for 10 years. In 2020, lung cancer killed more than 135,000 Americans making it the deadliest of all possible cancers. In fact, more people die of lung cancer than of colon, breast and pros-

tate cancers combined.

Lung cancer also occurs predominantly in older adults. About two out of every three people diagnosed with lung cancer are 65 or older.

You'll also be happy to know that most health insurance plans cover lung cancer screenings to high-risk patients, as does Medicare up to age 77.

Screening Pros and Cons

Doctors use a low-dose computed tomography scan (also called

a low-dose CT scan, or LDCT) of the lungs to look for lung cancer. If lung cancer is detected at an early stage, it's more likely to be cured with treatment. But a LDCT isn't recommended for every high-risk patient.

LDCT scans have a high rate of false positives, which means that many will undergo additional (and unnecessary) screening or medical procedures, such as another scan three, six, or even 12 months later to check for changes in the shape or size of the suspicious area (an indication of tumor growth). For some patients, the anxiety or worry that goes along with waiting can be a real issue.

Or you may need a biopsy (removal of a small amount of lung tissue), which has risks, especially for those with underlying health conditions, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or emphysema. For example, in people with emphysema, there's a chance of a lung collapsing during the procedure.

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



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Owatonna Memorial Day 2021 Program

Monday, May 31 -
10:30 a.m.
Four Seasons Centre-
Owatonna

- Music provided by Owatonna High School Concert Band
- President of the Day- MC Dave Thul
- Invocation/Benediction- Military Chaplain Gene Kispert
- Roll Call of Veterans
- Speakers of the Day
 - Amanda Clubb, 8th Grader from St. Mary's School (Patriot Pen essay winner)
 - Lileigh Nguyen, Sophomore at Owatonna High School (Voice of Democracy winner)
- 21-Gun Salute
- Taps (Steele County Honor Guard)

Program will be recorded by KRFO Radio and replayed at noon on Memorial Day.

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This is the roll call of those veterans from Steele County who have departed us within the past year:

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PAUL J. IRWIN	TERRY L. HOWE	ROBERT E. HAMMER
ERNEST D. BETLACH	THOMAS R. HABERMAN	DENNIS J. HROMADKO
JERRY R. SHORE	DENNIS E. VANDEN BERG	NEIL O. THOMPSON
EDWARD "DICK" B. SANDERS	JAMES "JIM" P. GRUBISCH	MICHAEL W. PHILLIPS
DR. DEAN V. CLARK	JOHN L. NECHANICKY	TERRY L. SHIELDS
DONALD "DON" O. NOYCE	GENE T. MILLER	WILLIAM C. JUNGBLUTH
RICHARD "DICK" A. MOEN	ROBERT "BOB" W. MAXFIELD	ROBERT W. BLACK
BRUCE A. WAHL	ROBERT J. GINTER	JOHN R. OLMSTED SR.
WYMAN D. JENSEN	WAYNE E. MCCARTY	JOHN M. DODDS
HAROLD E. KAMPPF	MARVIN H. LEMKE	LOUIS PERRON
KENNETH W. CARROLL	GENEVIEVE (GEN) M. PETERSON	LOUIS P. ROLF
JAMES L. WANOUS	DANIEL R. JERPAK	GERALD ANDERSON
THOMAS J. WALSH	VERNON J. ALT	MARVIN R. CAMERER
TOMMY B. TOWLE	CORBY D. LANGEBERG	ROBERT H. BROSE
DONALD C. TEETERS	LANNY H. HUEMANN	CHARLES H. JONES
RICHARD L. SCHULTZ	RALPH E. BROWN	KORRINE K. KANNE
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CARL J. WAGAMAN	RICHARD E. DESSNER	THOMAS J. STEARNS
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SAMUEL "SAM" WOODS	PAUL H. SCHULTZ	WILLIAM A. ERNST
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BP City Council OKs food truck regulations and fees

BY ALEX NUEHRING
NEWS WRITER

Food truck owners' bottom line took a hit when the Blooming Prairie City Council approved new regulations and fees for mobile food units and food carts on a 4-1 vote on Monday, May 17.

Effective last Tuesday, a one to four-day permit to sell food out of a mobile food unit or food truck costs \$40, a five to 14-day permit costs \$100 and an annual permit costs \$500.

In response to the objections about the cost of the annual permit, City Administrator Andrew Langholz said the annual permit is a better deal than the five to 14-day permit because if the food truck owner

bought two of those 14-day permits, it would cost \$200 to sell food for about a month. In contrast, it costs just \$400 more to sell year-round.

He also said the EDA and the planning commission had recommended that the food truck motion be passed as presented.

Councilman Greg Johnson said he'd talked to some of the local restaurant owners and they do have concerns.

"The Pizza Cellar right now they're doing lunches. Now, they didn't do it last year due to COVID-19, but Collette's got to figure out a way to still make some money, so she's doing 40 to 50 lunches a day. Is it going to take some business away from her - sure, but not

all, of course not," he said.

"We all live in this town; they pay their taxes and have businesses in this town. The ones [people who own food trucks] who are coming here don't and they should have to pay something to be here," he said.

Council Bill Newman said he didn't object to a fee; he just thought it shouldn't be as much as \$500.

After some deliberation about the merits of the fee and its purpose, the council voted on the proposed city ordinance and the motion carried with a 4-1 majority, with Newman voting against it.

The city council's next meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Monday, June 14.

BP district projected to increase by 100-plus students

BY ALEX NUEHRING
NEWS WRITER

Enrollment in the Blooming Prairie School District is projected to increase over the next 10 years, according to a consultant hired by the district.

During last week's school board meeting, Hazel Reinhardt of Hazel Reinhardt Consulting Service said she expects K-6 enrollment to increase by 28 to 73 students over the next five years, while high school enrollment is projected to shrink. And, in 10 years, K-6 enrollment could be 106 students higher than today, while the high school enrollment projections range from eight fewer students to 21 more.

Overall, Reinhardt projected that district's enrollment to increase from this year's 798 level to 833 in five years to 924 in 10 years.

"For the elementary, everything says, unless something catastrophic happens, that the patterns that are in place,

even with low fertility, to produce an increase in elementary population," she said.

Reinhardt said one of the challenges that the Blooming Prairie community faces is its housing stock.

"I talked with your local realtors and they tell me that demand is great. People want to buy in this district and want to move to this district, and there simply aren't [enough] units," she said. "You need [more] single-family, detached units to realize the highest projections."

However, she still expects the school district's enrollment to grow because of its strong reputation, its proximity to Rochester and its ability to attract more students than it loses to open enrollment.

In other action:
• The board unanimously approved plans to replace bleachers for both the high school and the elementary

school for about \$70,000. The funding will come from the long-term facilities maintenance funds.

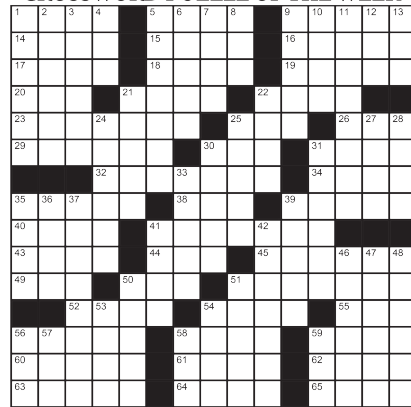
• Activities Director Allison Mach said that Blooming Prairie needs more basketball coaches at all levels for next winter and the school is also looking for a new robotics advisor(s).

• Superintendent Chris Staloch said the district is projecting a surplus of \$20,000 for this current fiscal year.

Friday, May 28, will be the last day of school for Blooming Prairie seniors, with graduation slated for 7 p.m. Friday, June 4, the last day of classes for all students. Baccalaureate will be held on Wednesday, June 2, at 7 p.m. at First Lutheran Church.

The next school board meeting will be held at 7:15 p.m. on Monday, June 12, in the High School Media Center. An open forum will begin at 7 p.m.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE OF THE WEEK

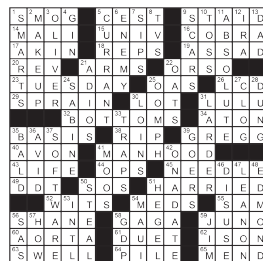


ACROSS

- 1 Urban air pollution problem
- 5 That's in Paris
- 9 Prim
- 14 Formerly French Sudan
- 15 E.g. Rice, Harvard (Abbr.)
- 16 Snake vulnerable to the mongoose
- 17 Not dissimilar
- 18 Salespeople
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- 29 Ankles injury
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- 31 Doobie
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- 34 2,000 lbs
- 35 Foundation
- 38 Tear
- 39 Shorthand inventor John Robert ---
- 40 --- calling!
- 41 Maturity
- 43 Stiff sentence

DOWN

- 44 Missions (Abbr.)
- 45 Goad
- 49 Banned insecticide
- 50 Distress message
- 51 Chivived
- 52 Comedians
- 54 Drugs (Abbr.)
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- 56 Alan Ladd gunfighter role
- 58 Loopy
- 59 D-Day beach
- 60 Main artery
- 61 Piece for two
- 62 "Time - My Side" (The Rolling Stones)
- 63 Awesome
- 64 Stack
- 65 Fix
- 1 Mental ability
- 2 Bury the hatchet
- 3 Director/producer --- Stone
- 4 Kind of rummy
- 5 Small seedless raisin
- 6 Foe
- 7 Drinks slowly
- 8 Corner consoles?
- 9 Operation mementos
- 10 Decide with a coin
- 11 Pure
- 12 Plan sponsored by Sen. William Roth
- 13 Family guy
- 21 Spanish farewell
- 22 Stable food
- 24 Californian pine
- 25 Viewpoint
- 27 Block
- 28 Ordure
- 30 Lower abdomen
- 31 Pantry
- 33 Ensnares
- 35 Hairless
- 36 Keen
- 37 Computer code
- 39 Attendees
- 41 Low sounds?
- 42 Out with a potential partner
- 46 Neglect
- 47 Presurize
- 48 Comet finder --- Halley
- 50 Bargain
- 51 German philosopher
- 53 Cosmopolitan (Abbr.)
- 54 Second-largest Hawaiian island
- 56 Mordic airline
- 57 By what means?
- 58 National economic indicator
- 59 Actor --- Carrey



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Mark your calendars for Golf Fun Day



Chamber Buzz
EMILY GLASER

The 27th annual Blooming Prairie Chamber GOLF FUN DAY is Wednesday, July

14 at the Blooming Prairie Country Club. This year's theme is "Hawaiian."

Registration letters have been mailed out and they look a bit different this year. If you didn't receive one, contact me to get one.

Upcoming Events
• May 26: Button Sales, door-to-door
• May 31: BP Memorial Day
• June 8: Red Oak

Strawberry Festival
• July 3-4: Fourth of July Celebration
• July 14: Hawaiian Golf Fun Day
• July 29: Flower Show & Luncheon
• Sept. 18: Fall Garage Sale

Emily Glaser is the executive director of the Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce. Her office is located in the City Center.

BP elementary students blow off some

4 BP STUDENTS from A6 for non-traditional, hands-on learning and Lea said the students get excited for STEAM Day.

"The biggest thing they take away is an excitement for learning. And that's what we want them to go away with really every day. I've had students not want to leave on vacation early because they didn't want to miss STEAM Day," she said.

In addition to inspiring students and giving them experiences within the field of STEAM, Elementary Principal Jacob Schwarz said he hopes these annual experiences improve the students' perceptions of STEAM-based activities.

"As we prepare to move them onto the high school, we want to give them those good experiences, so they realize the sciences and the math are fun too," he said.

Lea also hopes last Friday's activities foster the students' problem-solving skills.

"I want them to know that every problem can be tackled. So if they see a problem, not to be afraid of it and say, 'Oh, someone should see what that garbage would do to the river,' instead to take a more active part - go pick up the garbage, do something to help the environment or make it better," Lea said. "I

guess my ultimate goal is to make them more stewards of the environment and just empower them that they can do great things."

The empowerment of the students was made possible by the Blooming Prairie Education Foundation, which she said is the sole funder of STEAM Day.

"They were absolutely instrumental in days like this. Without them, we would not be able to have this," Lea said. "I feel like it's important that the community really knows how these kids are impacted and the learning and excitement for learning that happens because of their donation."

The power of validation

4 STEELE TALKIN' from A6

Self-validation is equally as important as validating another person. This is especially true when you don't get validation from others. To validate yourself, you could say "It makes sense that I feel this way, given what I have gone through," or "I feel upset, and that's okay." When you validate yourself, you are giving yourself permission to think and feel a certain way. It is the opposite of judging yourself for your thoughts and feelings. Sometimes people say to themselves, "I'm

stupid for feeling this way" or "I shouldn't think this way." These are examples of invalidation.

Remember, there is always more than one way to see every situation. There are no right or wrong ways to feel about anything. Validation can be a useful tool in defusing conflict, letting another person know you care, helping another person hear where you are coming from, and encouraging another person to keep trying. Self-validation can be helpful in reassuring yourself that it

is okay to feel the way you do. Validation is a non-confrontational way of communicating. It shows respect to yourself and others.

Bobbi Mathern is the clinical director of the South Central Human Relations Center in Owatonna. She is a licensed marriage and family therapist, specializing in Dialectical Behavior Therapy. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.

Dairy group crowns new royalty

4 DAIRY from A6
esses ranging in ages kindergarten through third grade. They include Eliza Balzer, Penelope Balzer, Isaac Demmer, Evan Halla,

Mackenzie Jacobsen, Olivia Jacobsen, Cali Nelson and August Schroth.

Mary Schroeder of Owatonna was given a lifetime award for near-

ly 30 years of dedication to the dairy group.

The banquet is typically held in March, but was pushed out this year because of COVID-19.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE

MAY 31 Club
11 a.m. - Memorial Day Service, City Cemetery
Noon - Memorial Day Lunch & Presentation, Servicemen's

JUNE 1 10:30 a.m. - Online Storytime, BP Library Facebook

ELLEDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

MAY 28 Geneva and First Lutheran - Ellendale) 11 a.m. - SEMCAC, Community Building

MAY 31 8:30 a.m. - Memorial Day Services (Litomysl, Bath, Community Building)

JUNE 2 11 a.m. - SEMCAC, Community Building

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

MAY 29 History Center 7 a.m. - Farmer's Market, Central Park

MAY 31 Memorial Day Service, Four Seasons Centre

JUNE 1 10 a.m. - Genealogy Club,

History Center 10:30 a.m. - Online Storytime, Owatonna Library Facebook

JUNE 3 5 p.m. - Downtown Thursdays, North Cedar Ave. 7 p.m. - 11@7 Concert Series, Central Park

1,200 boxes of food distributed to families in need

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Community Pathway volunteers distributed 1,200 food boxes Thursday to area residents during the last local Truck-to-Trunk food giveaway.

According to Nancy Ness, co-executive director of Community Pathways, cars lined up at the Steele County Fairgrounds well before the event's scheduled start time of 9 a.m.

The federal food distribution program ends nationwide on May 31.

Ness said the organization distributed food through the program seven times since last summer.

Last week's food boxes contained apples, potatoes, celery, yogurt, barbecue chicken, ham shredded cheese. Recipi-

ents also receive a gallon of milk with each box.

The federal program's end comes just as The Marketplace at Community Pathways returns to in-store shopping on June 1.

"We are so excited," said Ness, adding that families will be able to select the food they need. During the pandemic, those using The Marketplace weren't offered a choice of foods.

The Marketplace currently has 1,200 registered users.

As the Truck to Trunk, also known as the USDA's Farmers to Families program, ends, Ness said she couldn't thank the community enough.

She said she was extremely grateful for her organization's partnership with Scott Kozelka, manager of the



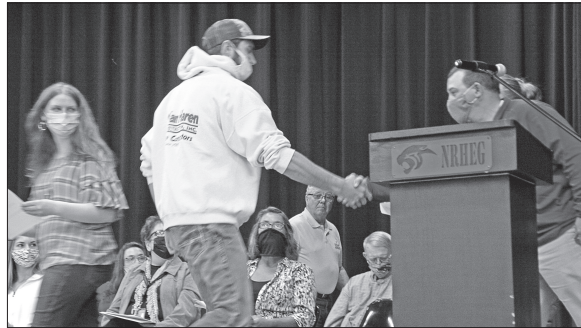
SUBMITTED PHOTO

Cars lined up in the rain last week to receive food distributed by Community Pathways through the USDA's Truck to Trunk program.

Steele County fairground, and Sgt. Tracy DuChene and his crew from the Owatonna Police Department. Both

organizations assisted with distribution events held at the fairgrounds. "It's hard to say thank you enough," said Ness.

NRHEG Awards Ceremony



STAFF PHOTO BY DEB FLEMMING

Shawn Larson of the Ellendale Fire Department Relief Association awards NRHEG seniors Charles Pittman, center, and Katie Lee each \$500 in scholarship funds at the school's 2021 Award Ceremony on May 19. Overall, nearly \$50,000 in scholarships were awarded by businesses and community groups to the seniors.

4 stops planned at Ellendale, Geneva cemeteries

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Four stops by military honor guard are planned at Ellendale and Geneva cemeteries on Memorial Day, May 31.

The honor guard will be represented by members of American Legion Post 296 of Ellen-

dale and by VFW Post 8941 of Geneva.

First stop will be at 8:30 a.m. at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church cemetery at Litomysl.

Second stop will be at 9:15 a.m. at St. Alden's Catholic Church Cemetery in Bath.

Next will be at the Geneva Community

Cemetery at 10:15 a.m. Coffee and baked goods will be available at the Geneva cemetery. A free will donation is asked.

Final stop will be at 11:15 a.m. at the First Lutheran Church of Ellendale.

Programs are planned at both the Geneva and Ellendale

cemeteries. Mary Hanson, Area 4 First District vice commander, will speak at both cemeteries.

Bethany Boswell of the American Legion Auxiliary will be emcee at the programs.

Memorial crosses will be placed for a veteran at each cemetery.

Auditions set for LTO's next production

Little Theatre of Owatonna (LTO) has announced auditions for its 2021 Summer production of Frumpled Fairy Tales by William Springer.

The auditions will take place on Saturday, June 5 from 1:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. and Sunday, June 6 from 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. at the Sharon Stark Audition at West Hills.

Sarah Friesen is the

director and Sandee Hardy-Hagen the technical director.

Puns and pitfalls abound in this fun, frumpled version of three Grimm fairy tales. And with the help of a narrator, the audience can cheer the heroes and boo the villains. In "Rumpelstiltskin," a greedy king, a miller's daughter and a comical chap named

Rumpelstiltskin all mix together in the story of gold spinning and name guessing. In "Rapunzel," a witch puts lovely Rapunzel in a tower where a handsome prince rescues her. But the standard happy ending is reached in anything but a standard way. In "Red Riding Hood," Little Red finally escapes the long-winded warnings of her mother only to meet up with a "cool" wolf.

LTO is looking to cast

16 young people ages 8 years to 16 years old.

Audition packets are now available at Tri M Graphics 625 E. Main Street and online at: <http://littletheatreofowatonna.org/upcoming-auditions/>

Performances will be at 7:30 p.m. July 16 and 23 with matinee performances at 2 p.m. July 17, 18, 24 and 25. Please note the time change on the Saturday performances, for this production they are matinees.

PANTHERS
New Richland • Hartland • Ellendale • Geneva
PANTHER OF THE WEEK

AVA LISOWSKI
Ava Lisowski. Ava lives outside of Ellendale and her parents are Amanda and Josh. Ava is in Mrs. Lassahn's second grade class at NRHEG.

She is extremely responsible and works very hard in school. Ava is a very kind friend and always has a positive attitude. She is the prime example of "Panther Pride!"

She loves to be outside in the sunshine, as well as going on picnics with her mom. Her favorite food is spaghetti and her favorite book is "Cat in the Hat." Keep up the great work Ava, we are proud of you!

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

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

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Tuesday - Thursday 10 AM - close
Saturday 9 AM to close
Sunday Closed

Bar: 1 AM Closing
Off-Sale: 10 PM Closing
Bar Bingo: Monday at 6:30 PM (Must be 21 to play)
Wine Club: Tuesday 7 - 8:30 PM
May 18th and June 8th
(Masks & Covid protocol will be followed - Reservations required)
JULY 3RD: Street Dance
"Red Dirt Road"
8 PM - Midnight
\$5 cover charge - 21 and over
July 4th: Off-Sale open 11 AM - 6 PM
=Bar - Closed
July 24th: B. O. B. Ride "Toys for Tots" - Details Later

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PUBLIC SAFETY

◀ BLOTTER from A4

May 19 Assault: At 3:05 p.m., an assault occurred in the 200 block of 4th Ave. NW.

OWATONNA POLICE

May 12 Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 400 block of North St. W. at 3:47 p.m.

Burglary: Police began a burglary investigation in the 200 block of School St. W. at 5:18 p.m.

May 13 Criminal Sexual Conduct: Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 1000 block of Mineral Springs Road NE at 8:30 a.m.

Fraud: Officer took a fraud report in the 1500 block of Gray Fox Dr. NE at 12:44 p.m.

May 14 Warrants: Police made warrant arrests in the 2200 block of 48th St. NW at 1:07 a.m., the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 7:02 a.m. and the 400 block of Hoffman Dr. NW at 10:09 p.m.

Shoplifting: At 5:49 a.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 300 block of Mineral Springs Road NE. **Domestic:** Police arrested a subject following a domestic disturbance in the 200 block of Vine St. E. at 7:42 a.m.

Thefts: Police received theft reports from the 2300 block of 43rd St. NW at 10:16 a.m., the 1900 block of Pheasant Run Dr. NE at 11:50 a.m., the 1500 block of Country Creek Lane NE at 2:05 p.m., and the 200 block of Oak Ave. N. at 7:54 p.m.

Crash: Paramedics and officers responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries at Pearl St. E. and Maple Ave. NE at 4:09 p.m.

May 15 Shoplifting: Officer made a shoplifting arrest in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 10:53 a.m.

Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 100 block of Hickory Lane NE at 3:23 p.m.

Fraud: Police received a fraud report from the 700 block of Cardinal Dr. SE at 5:05 p.m.

May 16 Theft: At 10:34 a.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 900 block of Vine St. E.

May 17 Shoplifting: At 12:34 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W.

Mental Health: Officers responded to a mental health incident in the 500 block of 15th St. NE at 3:18 p.m.

Sexual Assault: Police responded to a report of indecent exposure in the 600 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 4:01 p.m.

Drugs: At 8:41 p.m., drug activity was reported in the 300 block of School St. E.

May 18 Juvenile: Police received a juvenile complaint from the 1000 block of 22nd St. NE at 11:50 a.m.

Assault: Officers responded to an assault in the 1200 block of Kohlmier Dr. SW at 10:03 p.m. They issued a citation.

May 19 Fraud: Officer took a fraud report in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 8:31 a.m.

Threats: Police responded to a subject making threats in the 500 block of Strand Dr. NW at 8:42 a.m.

Thefts: Officers received theft reports from the 600 block of El Dorado St. SE at 3:04 p.m. and the 400 block of 16th St. NE at 3:16 p.m.

Crash: Paramedics and officers responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries in the 2500 block of 7th Ave. NE at 8:49 p.m.

May 20 Child Protection: Police received a child protection report from the 1400 block of Autumn Dr. SE at 9:11 a.m.

Restraining Order: At 11:29 a.m., a restraining order violation occurred in the 100 block of Bridge St. W.

Mental Health: Police responded to a mental health incident in the 500 block of Adams Ave. NW at 3:15 p.m.

Theft: Officers took theft reports in the 2300 block of 43rd St. NW at 3:56 p.m. and the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 4:19 p.m.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

May 13 Warrants: Deputies made warrant arrests at the detention center at 6:34 a.m. and the 100 block of Main St. E. in Owatonna at 8:37 a.m.

Arrest: Deputy arrested a motorist during a traffic stop at 4th St. SW and 1st Ave. SW in Medford at 1:57 p.m.

May 14 Vulnerable Adult: Deputies received a vulnerable adult report from the 900 block of Colverly Court in Ellendale at 1:46 p.m.

Assault: Deputies responded to an assault in the 1800 block of 24th Ave. SW in Owatonna Township at 8:58 p.m. They arrested a subject at the scene.

May 15 Domestic: Deputies responded to a domestic disturbance in the 8500 block of 40th St. NW in Deerfield Township at 4:01 p.m.

Assault: Deputies responded to an assault in the 300 block of Main St. S. in Medford at 7:21 p.m.

May 16 Thefts: Deputies took theft reports in the 4500 block of Runway Road in Clinton Falls Township at 8:36 a.m. and 1:18 p.m.

May 17 Warrant: Deputy made a warrant arrest in the 200 block of Central Ave. E. in Medford at 7:29 a.m.

Restraining Order: At 1:48 p.m., a restraining order violation occurred in the 4100 block of 66th St. NW in Medford Township.

May 18 Criminal Sexual Conduct: Deputies began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 12600 block of 84th Ave. SE in Blooming Prairie Township at 12:11 p.m.

May 19 DWI: Deputies made a DWI arrest in the 5000 block of Frontage Rd. W. in Clinton Falls Township at 9:55 p.m.

May 20 Criminal Sexual Conduct: Deputies responded to a criminal sexual conduct incident in the 4100 block of 66th St. NW in Medford Township at 2:27 p.m.

ARRESTS Steele County

OWATONNA POLICE
Raymond Keith Scott, 42, arrested at 8:08 a.m. May 14, felony domestic assault, held for court. Jamie Anthony Deshawn Jeffries, 26, arrested at 10:15 p.m. May 14, warrant arrest and order for protection violation, body only.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

Ahmed Olad Mohamud, 24, arrested at 11:24 a.m. May 15, probation violation warrant arrest, body only. Travis John Delaney, 39, arrested at 10:27 p.m. May 15, domestic assault, held for court. Ariet Othow Obach, 21, arrested at 6:58 p.m. May 16, warrant arrest, body only. Leighton Hunter Slagel, 23, arrested at 9:30 p.m. May 20, probation violation warrant arrest, body only.

MN STATE POLICE

Terri Ann Cleasby, 52, arrested at 12:08 a.m. May 21, felony DWI, held for court.

COURT NEWS Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of May 9 - 16:

DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Shavonne V. Alexander, 27, Edina, no insurance, \$280; Byron A. Collier, 62, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Erin M. Lawler, 45, Chesterton, IN, speeding, \$140; Alberto A. Melendez, 47, Byron, parking violation, \$32; Bridgett N. Mickelson, 29, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Brett E. Oleson, 50, Austin, parking violation, \$32; Carl J. Schutz, 17, Pine Island, speeding, \$140; Tanner R. Swarthout, 20, Pine Island, speeding, \$130; John T. Thorndore, 41, Stewartville, cancelled license, \$280; Scott R. Thorpe, 41, Hagfield, revoked license, \$280.

KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Autumn K. McKee, 19, Dodge Center, suspended license, \$280; Daniel N. Wiebold, 41, Pine Island, hands free violation, \$130.

MN STATE POLICE ROCHESTER

Dillon K. Askre, 20, Byron, revoked license, \$280; McIntire J. Borneke, 29, Waseca, stop sign, \$130; Joel A. David, 33, Pine Island, speeding, \$130; Aaron T. Jenkins, 24, Rochester, speeding, \$130; Javonte D. Johnson, 28, Mankato, revoked license, \$280; Jesus U. Maldonado Osis, 23, Owatonna, speeding, \$140.

WEST CONCORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

Darlan M. Bohman-Reyna, 28, Owatonna, tampering with motor vehicle, 59 days in county jail; Eric B. Clay, 50, St. Paul, speeding, \$220.

OWATONNA FIRE

May 14 Crash: At 4:10 p.m., a motor vehicle accident occurred at Pearl St. E. and Maple Dr.

May 16 Fire: Firefighters responded to a building fire in the 16200 block of 368th Ave. at 10:17 p.m.

May 19 Gas Leak: At 9:43 p.m., a gas leak occurred in the 500 block of 18th St. SE.

May 20 Vehicle Fire: Firefighters responded to a transport vehicle fire on interstate 35 at 7:38 p.m.

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL HOME OF THE SHINING KNIGHTS

Students of the Week



Carley 8TH GRADE

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

PARENTS: Jed & Shannon

CARLEY WAS NOMINATED BY MRS. SLOTSVE

Mason 7TH GRADE

Mason demonstrates all of the qualities of a Shining Knight: he is faith-filled, respectful to his teachers and his classmates, responsible, and hardworking. Even though he is busy with activities outside of school, he always puts his schoolwork first and gives 100% in every task he does. One of the qualities I enjoy the most about Mason is his sense of humor. Even in the midst of working hard, he knows how to laugh, and it is obvious that he enjoys life and the people he is with. Because of this, he gets along with everyone and is a joy to be around!



PARENTS: Troy & Brandi

MASON WAS NOMINATED BY MRS. NYLUND



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Jeff Okerberg, 62, Owatonna



Jeff Okerberg

Owatonna City Councilor Jeff Okerberg died Sunday night in Neuro ICU at United Hospital in St. Paul.

Okerberg suffered with chronic pain for a number of years, and had recently been diagnosed with an infection in the spine following a previous surgery. An additional surgery resulted in further catastrophic complications. On May 23, 2021, Jeff was set free from his broken body for eternity.

Jeff was born in Shakopee on Aug. 10, 1958 to Alfred and Mary (Knutson) Okerberg and has three brothers.

Jeff attended Bloomington Jefferson High School and graduated in 1976. Jeff excelled in his studies and also played football, wrestling and golf and worked various positions for Country Club grocery stores. He then pursued education for law enforcement from Normandale Community College.

Jeff married Elizabeth Hollinger in 1985 and this union created two daughters.

Jeff moved to Owatonna in the winter of 1981 after being hired by the city to work as a patrolman for the Owatonna Police Department under the supervision of Chief Nissen. He was later promoted to the rank of sergeant until his retirement in 2011. Jeff

served for over 30 years. During his career with the OPD, Jeff also served with the regional SWAT team as a gas munitions officer and team leader.

He was also involved as the Teamsters Union Steward for Patrolmen, Union Steward for Sergeants, AED/CPR instructor for OPD, SWAT team member, National Night Out chairperson, former Owatonna Junior High School football and wrestling coach, former member of the OBA and OWA, and former member of the Salvation Army Board.

Following his retirement, Jeff worked briefly in the gun department at Cabela's, a job which he thoroughly enjoyed. Jeff then went on to file to run for the City Council at Large position and was first elected to the Owatonna City Council in 2014 and was re-elected in 2018. Jeff served on the Economic Development Authority as well as the Joint Powers board.

Okerberg is known as a champion of fiscal responsibility and the growth of Owatonna in terms of infrastructure and attracting new businesses. He has been also been a firm believer in the revitalization of the city's downtown district. At the time of his death he had been quite involved in the redevelopment of downtown Owatonna and his relationships with the store owners city-wide allowed them to be cognizant of impending changes and improvements.

Jeff's biggest hobbies were fishing and woodworking. He

loved nothing more than to head north to Lake of the Woods in Canada and the Rainey River in Minnesota to drop a line. Jeff was devoted to the raising of his daughters and attended many of their sporting events. He was the sideline parent always encouraging the team, rain or shine and encouraged both to follow their dreams in their chosen careers.

Jeff is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, daughters Hannah (and Justin) Rinken, Clarkesville, Iowa; Ali (and Tony) Gaffney, Brooklyn Park. Brothers John David, Hibbing, Minn. He is also survived by grandson Weston Rinken and baby granddaughter expected in September of 2021.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

A Funeral Service is set for Thursday, May 27 at 2 p.m. at Bethel Church in Owatonna (1611 Hemlock Ave. Owatonna). Burial at the Bohemian National Cemetery. Visitation is scheduled for 4-7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 26 at the Brick-Meger Funeral Home in Owatonna as well as from 1-2 p.m. at the church on Thursday. A live stream of the funeral will be available at www.bethelowatonna.com/event-stream. For more information or to leave a condolence message go to www.megercare.com.

BRICK-MEGER & MEDFORD
 FUNERAL HOME

Becky Lovgren, 39, Owatonna



Becky Lovgren

Loving mother, sister and friend. Becky Ann Lovgren born Dec. 11, 1981 in Bismarck, N.D. to Robert and Julie Lovgren

(Koch), passed away on May 22, 2021. At the age of 39, Becky gained her purple angel wings at the Owatonna Homestead Hospice House after a courageous battle with cancer.

Becky is someone you will never forget. She always left a lasting impression and became friends with anyone she met! She was always someone you could rely on for literally anything! Becky was so laid back, go with the flow and always up for a good time—especially if it was going to be crazy! Her zest for

life is immeasurable. We are all better people for having known her.

Becky worked many different jobs in Owatonna over the years and became friends with so many people! Many people remember Becky's humor, passion and conversation from her time worked at Budget Mart, Target, Caribou Coffee, Fleet Farm and Jenni-o Turkey Store. Her vibrant, outstanding fun-loving personality was contagious to everyone she met! Becky will be remembered for her beautiful smile!

Becky loved spending every moment possible with her two children: Dalton and Briella. She is so proud of them; she will watch over them and her memory will live on through them. Becky loved spending time with family, going out with friends, clubbing and spending many

vacations on the lake with her North Dakota family.

Becky is survived by her two children, Dalton and Briella Ament, her father Bob Lovgren, her mother Julie Lovgren and her brother, Brad (Amanda Barnett) and two children: Abigail and Evelyn Lovgren.

A Celebration of Life service will be held on Friday, June 4, 2021 from 1-3 p.m. at the Medford Funeral Home in Medford. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the GoFundMe page that has been set up for Becky and child.

For more information or to leave an online condolence message go to www.megercare.com.

BRICK-MEGER & MEDFORD
 FUNERAL HOME

Leonard Meger, 89, Faribault



Leonard Meger

Leonard A. Meger passed away May 8, 2021 at his home in Faribault.

Leonard Anthony Meger was born Oct. 2, 1931 the son of John D. and Veronica (Schippert) Meger. Leonard attended country school in Derrynane Township rural Le Sueur County and attended New Prague High School.

On August 26, 1953, he was united in marriage to Theresa Wagner at Saint Nicholas Catholic Church in New Market. Leonard was a member of the Knights of Columbus and Elks Lodge.

Leonard is survived by his four children, Bruce (Carol) Meger of Webster, Gary Meger (Friend Lori) of Winnebago, Monica (Mike) Duley of Slinger, Wis., and Leon (Rachel) Meger of Webster; 10 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren.

Leonard is preceded in death by his wife Theresa, son Kevin Meger and grandson Eric Meger. He was the last of his siblings and is preceded in death by his brothers, John, Sylvester, Raymond, Joseph, Andrew and Ambrose; and sisters, Marcella, Rosella, Veronika, and Mary Ann.

BRICK-MEGER & MEDFORD
 FUNERAL HOME

Jerome J. Kubat, 95, Claremont



Jerome Kubat

Jerome Joseph Kubat, 95, of Claremont, died Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester.

He was born Sept. 13, 1925, on the Houdek family farm in Lemond Township, Steele County, the son of Victor and Anne (Houdek) Kubat. Sr. He grew up on a farm and attended country school through the eighth grade. He then worked as a farmhand before joining the United States Army, serving in the Philippines and Japan during WW II.

He was united in marriage to

Mildred Standke on Sept. 1, 1951 at St. John Lutheran Church in Owatonna. The couple lived on the Polache farm where Jerome worked. They later moved to Ellendale. He purchased a farm near Claremont and he worked as a farmer along with working at Layne Construction. He retired from farming in 2014.

Even though Jerome's life mainly revolved around working, he enjoyed the occasional hunting and fishing trip.

He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Mildred Kubat of Claremont; children, Sharon Meneff of Ellendale, Stuart (Gala) Kubat of Clarks Grove and Spencer (Barbara) Kubat of Webster; grandchild-

dren Angie Meneff, Grant (Mae) Meneff, Jessica (Jay) Eidem and Mitch (Rachel) Kubat; step-grandchildren, Stacy (Nathan) Tempel, Nikki (Mark) Caldron and Eric Seath and four great-grandchildren, Henry Eidem, William Eidem, Millie Meneff and Mabel Meneff. He was preceded in death by his parents, Victor and Anne; and siblings, Victor (Irene) Kubat, Jr., Dorothy Kubat, Rosella (Howard) Moe and Leo (Shirley) Kubat.

A private interment will be held at Steele Center Cemetery with military honors by the Countywide Funeral Detail. Michaelson Funeral Homes of Owatonna is handling the funeral arrangements.

BOOK NOOK

Summer plans For the library



NANCY VAILLANCOURT

Questions have been raised about what this summer will look like at the Blooming Prairie Branch Library.

While we are expecting our plans to change as the pandemic recedes and vaccinations increase, here is what's planned for the summer:

Storytime on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 a.m.: Weather permitting, this will be held at Central Park with children present. We have found over the past year that some families who cannot attend storytime during the day like to watch it in the evenings as part of their bedtime routine.

All storytimes will still be posted on Facebook; on rainy days, that will be the only way to see them.

Virtual Programs: We have four programs that will be available on Facebook. The first will be

held on Monday, June 7 at 11:30 a.m. The fabulous ZooMan will be showing us his amazing animals.

Reading Log: Elementary and preschool children will be receiving their reading logs at school before the end of the year. They need to mark off each day when they have read 20 minutes per day. As we did last year, kids can also register online in our BeanStack app. In August we will have a gigantic book fair. Each month that children read at least 10 days, they can choose a free book!

StoryWalks®: Our wonderful downtown store owners will again display the pages of a children's book in their windows. Take your family to read the book and maybe drop in and visit our great retailers. There will be three stories, each changing at the beginning of the month. In addition, on Thursday, June 17, we will have an in-person Story-Walk in Central Park. Details will follow shortly.

We are hoping that possibly some of the virtual programs will be able to shift to in person. Stay tuned!

FREELANCE WRITER WANTED

The STEELE COUNTY TIMES is seeking a freelance writer & photographer to cover Blooming Prairie & Ellendale area news. Perfect opportunity for a retiree who loves to write & attend community events.

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May 26 Alyssa Ressler Sean Ingvalson Connie Williamson Josh Dahl Justin Kormann	May 29 Brian Kerrigan Deb Farr Grayson Spinler Ella Salinas
May 27 Darrick Schewe Mary Malherek Amy Simon Jenny Haugen	May 30 Gene Myre Ragna Thompson
May 28 Jill Lindeman Kristin Lueck Koenig Isaac Ille Jennifer Wondra	May 31 Judy Esplan Brienne Wanger Nathan Peterson Grant Johnson
	June 1 Bev Hoyland Virginia Lindquist Julie Cochlin Owen Gimbel Ryder Smith

ANNIVERSARIES

May 26 Steve & Nellie Wollenburg Sarah & Adam Bumgarner	May 30 Michael & Kathleen Iversen
May 28 Mr. & Mrs. Doug Krell	May 31 Keith & Carol Holman
	June 1 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Olson Bill & Jennifer Walsh

This weekly feature sponsored by:
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DEATH NOTICE

Freddie Lujan, age 67 of Blooming Prairie, passed away Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at his home. Services are pending with Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

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How would God describe your life?



Pastor Micheal Simmerman
BETHEL CHURCH
OWATONNA

Though not normally a "read the bible in a year" kind of guy, this year I decided to go

through a plan with my father-in-law (talk about accountability). As I've read the Old Testament so far, THE THING that has stood out to me is how *brutally honest* the Bible is when it describes the accounts of other people's lives. Some things are incredible (people have babies at ages 90 and 100); some things are fascinating (Samson killed 1,000 enemies with a donkey's jawbone); and some things are sobering (like the way people who saw God part the Red Sea for them, can turn around, *complain*, and wish they were slaves in Egypt again).

After reading more and more of these accounts each week, I now feel two very distinct things.

Number 1: I'm really glad my life's events are NOT recorded in the Bible! Sometimes I imagine: "If someone could see everything I did – how might they describe my life?" And I've never come up with a description that didn't make me at least a little bit nervous. Truth has an illuminating effect that gets scary when we have things in our lives we'd rather others not see.

Number 2: I also wonder how different

my narrative of my life would be, from what *God actually* sees. See, when I tell stories about me (to myself and to others), I often skim the bad, and emphasize the good. Interestingly though, in the Bible God doesn't describe things like that. For instance, it doesn't give us all the details of WHY the Israelites were complaining (maybe they had good reasons!) it just tells us that they were, and that THAT was a big deal to God.

Just today I read 1 Samuel 2:3, which says: "Do not keep talking so proudly or let your

mouth speak such arrogance, for the LORD is a God who knows, and by his deeds are weighed."

THAT'S what I've been feeling in every book I've read so far: that GOD (not me or others) gets to "weigh the rightness" of what we do and how we live. And interestingly, that immediately leads to fear and guilt (because I would never want to let *anyone* have full access to my thoughts, words, and deeds).

That is why it is such good news that Jesus Christ (God himself) did not stay in heaven where he could rightly

judge and condemn us all. But instead, he came to earth, lived the life we should have lived, and then died in our place, so that through faith in him we could be forgiven and have a personal relationship with him starting now, and lasting forever.

How would you describe your life? (More importantly) How would God? Good news – no matter how ugly a description that might be; Jesus loves you, forgives you, and is waiting for you to make the decision to surrender your life to him. I hope you will.

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN
AURORA LUTHERAN
6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna
Interim Pastor:
Rev. Dale Svendsen
507-451-2819
office@auroralutheranchurch.org
Worship: Sunday at 9 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.

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

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

FIRST LUTHERAN – ELCA
434 First St. SW,
Blooming Prairie
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Heidi Hemgartner
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mike Waterloo
507-583-6821
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 a.m.
Online Worship: Sundays 9
a.m. or anytime on website

MOLAND LUTHERAN – ELCA
7618 NE 84th Ave., Kenyon
Pastor Nancy Edwardsen
507-789-6861
Worship: 10:45 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

PONTOPPIDAN
LUTHERAN – ELCA
9651 SW 75th St., Ellendale
507-465-6389
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-Freeman
Road, Owatonna
Leandra Anderson, Pastor
507-583-2038 or 507-437-3000
www.rglutheran.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 Dune
507-251-5568
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9 a.m.

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN – ELCA
1301 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
Pastors Dave Klaviter and
Jesse 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
Vicar Jackie Short
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
Interim Deacon Billie Jo Wicks
507-451-2185
Sunday worship: 10 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA
609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
507-451-4520
tclowatonna.org
Senior Pastor: Rev. Todd
Buegler, Associate Pastor:
Rev. Amanda Flay
Deacon: Kris Oppgaard
Worship: 8:15 a.m. & 9:30
a.m. – Sanctuary and 10:45
a.m. – Fellowship Hall

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA
181, Jaguar TV (Ch. 900) and
owatonnaalive.com
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9 a.m. Sun.

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 Dale Beschtauser
507-451-0447
Worship: 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.
Education Hour: 9 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMC
57043 350th 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
Interim Deacon Billie Jo Wicks
Sunday worship: 8:30 a.m.

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

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

CHURCH OF ALL
SAINTS
307 SW First St.,
New Richland
Father Brian Mulligan
507-254-6244
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday

HOLY TRINITY
CATHOLIC CHURCH OF
LITOMYSL
9946 SE 24th Ave Owatonna
Father John Wilmut
507-583-2784
www.litomyslwebs.com
Sunday Mass at 8:15 a.m.
Litomysl Finance Council:
2nd Thursday
Litomysl Pastoral Council:
2nd Thursday every other
month

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

SACRED HEART
PARISH
810 S. Cedar Ave., Owatonna
Father Swaminatha
Potheeddy Parochial Vicar
507-451-1588
www.sacredheartowatonna.org
Masses: Saturday 5 p.m.
Sunday 8 a.m., 10 a.m.,
and Noon (Spanish)
Daily Mass 7:15 a.m.
Tuesday through Friday
Reconciliation 4 p.m. Saturday
Adoration – Thursdays 8
a.m.-7 p.m.

ST. COLUMBANUS
CATHOLIC
114 E. Main St.,
Blooming Prairie
Father John Wilmut
507-583-2784
www.stolumbanuschurch.com
Masses: 8:30 a.m. Sunday
Reconciliation: 9 a.m.
First Friday & Saturday

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC
PARISH
512 S. Elm Ave., Owatonna
Father James Starasich
507-451-4845
Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 9 & 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 job required after hours
or weekends

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

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

METHODIST
BLOOMING GROVE
UNITED METHODIST
40369 180th St., Medford
(Seven miles west of
Medford on CR 23)
Pastors J. & Stefanie Morgan
507-835-8726
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

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

OWATONNA UNITED
METHODIST
815 E. University, Owatonna
Rev. Lisa J. Vick Pastor
507-451-4734
www.owatonnaumc.org
Traditional Worship
(Pathways):
9 a.m. Sunday

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

SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
2373 Seventh Ave. NE,
Owatonna

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ADVENTIST
2373 Seventh Ave. NE,
Owatonna

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

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

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

MENNONITE
PRAIRIE MENNONITE
13638 750th St.,
Blooming Prairie
Bishop Dennis Martin
507-585-7532
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Prayer Meeting: 7:30 p.m. Wed.

MORMON
THE CHURCH OF JESUS
CHRIST OF LATTER-
DAY SAINTS
404 31st St. NW, Austin
Bishop Rick Bremner
507-433-9042
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

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

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

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

FREE CHURCH
CORNERSTONE
EVANGELICAL FREE
CHURCH
1500 18th St. SE, Owatonna
Pastors Scott Sheets and
David Shaw
507-446-5850
www.cornerstoneowatonna.
com
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 10:30 a.m.

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685 W. Bridge St.
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507-465-3810

Pastor Brian Beavers
651-955-4032
Worship: 11 a.m. Sat.
Bible Stud: 9 a.m. Sat.

UCC
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF
CHRIST
211 Main St. S., Medford
Rev. Richard Waters
507-451-4596
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

ASSEMBLY OF GOD
VIBRANT LIFE
ASSEMBLY OF GOD
702 Third St. S., Ellendale
Pastor David Modder
507-684-3421
www.vibrantlifeag.com
Worship: 10 a.m. Sunday
Kids Church: 10 a.m. Sunday

VICTORY LIFE
105 2nd St NE Geneva
Pastor Diane Butler
507-402-0980
Worship on Sundays
Prayer Service: 7:30 a.m.
Church Service: 9:30 a.m.
Children's Church: 9:45 a.m.

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

FIRST BAPTIST
(OWATONNA'S OLDEST
CHURCH)
123 E. Main St., Owatonna
Pastor Carrie Nelson
507-272-9834
www.firstbaptistowatonna.
com
Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

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

FREE CHURCH
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1500 18th St. SE, Owatonna
Pastors Scott Sheets and
David Shaw
507-446-5850
www.cornerstoneowatonna.
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Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 10:30 a.m.

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During Ellendale Annual Clean-up Day, resident Jo Moore speaks to officials about an old refrigerator, which Councilman Derek Bartness volunteered to transport from her house to the city's maintenance building for disposal. The location of the fridge prevented that from happening. Pictured from the left are: Clerk/Treasurer Kim Zimprich, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Steve Engle, Mayor Matt Bartsch, Bartness and Moore.

Ellendale cleans up the city

BY LOLA SHAFFER
TIMES INTERN

Ellendale filled five, 20-yard dumpsters with trash Saturday during the city's Annual Spring Clean-up Day.

According to Kim Zimprich, the city's clerk/treasurer, about 20 people came through within the first hour of the event and by 10 a.m., three dumpsters had already been filled.

At one point, there was a "city block jam-

packed with cars," said Steve Engel, the city's deputy clerk/treasurer.

The annual event was created to encourage residents to clean up their properties. Most trash could be dumped at no cost, officials said, adding that residents dropping off appliances, tires and selected items were charged a small fee to cover disposal costs.

For this event, Misgen Auto Parts brought one dumpster for scrap

metal, which they pick up and recycle afterward for free, said Zimprich. As for those headed to the landfill, Engel said it costs the city about \$120 per dumpster.

CITY OF BLOOMING PRAIRIE Public Notice Ordinance Publication Summary Ordinance 114: Regulations and Fees for Mobile Food Units and Food Carts

The City Council has authority to regulate city municipal code. Following a public hearing and discussion at a city council meeting, the City Council of the City of Blooming Prairie adopted Ordinance 114: Regulations and Fees for Mobile Food Units and Food Carts and this summary of the ordinance for publication on May 17, 2021.

In summary, Ordinance 114: Regulations and Fees for Mobile Food Units and Food Carts authorizes the City of Blooming Prairie to regulate the operation of mobile food units and food carts. Specific sections in the ordinance include, license requirements, fees, operational standards, inspections, insurance requirements, revocation of license, exemptions, and penalties.

The amendment was presented to the City Council on March 8, 2021. A Public Hearing was held on April 12, 2021 and was adopted by the City Council on May 17, 2021. A copy of the entire text of the ordinance is available for inspection during office hours at City Hall.

Andrew Langholz / City Administrator

5/26

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CITY OF BLOOMING PRAIRIE PUBLIC NOTICE ORDINANCE PUBLICATION SUMMARY ORDINANCE 50: GARBAGE AND REFUSE; DUMPSTERS

The City Council has authority to regulate city municipal code. Following a public hearing and discussion at a city council meeting, the City Council of the City of Blooming Prairie adopted an update to Ordinance 50: Garbage and Refuse; Dumpsters and this summary of the ordinance for publication on May 17, 2021.

In summary, the update to Ordinance 50: Garbage and Refuse; Dumpsters was adopted for the purpose of authorizing the City of Blooming Prairie to set regulations regarding the permitting and use of dumpsters and regulations pertaining to the size, placement, and upkeep of refuse containers to ensure healthy and sanitary conditions for residents and property owners in Blooming Prairie.

The amendment was presented to the City Council on April 12, 2021. A Public Hearing was held on May 17, 2021 and was adopted by the City Council on May 17, 2021. A copy of the entire text of the ordinance is available for inspection during office hours at City Hall.

Andrew Langholz / City Administrator

5/26

Edward Jones

MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

529 plans: More versatile than ever

If you have children or grandchildren, you may already be somewhat familiar with the 529 plan, a popular education savings vehicle. But you may not have kept up with some recent changes in the plan's capabilities and in the educational environment in which the plan might be used.

Let's start with the learning environment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, colleges and universities switched to online classes, or at least to a hybrid of in-person and online. And even before the pandemic, many schools offered remote classes, though obviously not to the same extent. But after COVID-19 subsides, it's likely that the online component will remain an important part of higher education. What does this "new world" mean for you, when you're saving for college? Will a 529 plan still be relevant?

In a word, yes. First of all, a 529 plan can offer tax advantages. Earnings in a 529 plan are federally tax-free, provided the money is used for qualified educational expenses. And if you invest in your own state's 529 plan, your contributions may be tax deductible. (Withdrawals used for expenses other than qualified education expenses may be subject to federal and state taxes as well as a 10% penalty.) Because tax issues for 529 plans can be complex, you'll want to consult with your tax advisor before investing.

Online learning costs are eligible for a 529 plan's tax benefits just as much as those incurred from in-person classes. Tuition, textbooks, supplies, computers and services – all of these should qualify, assuming the school meets certain criteria. Also, students enrolled half-time or more don't have to live in a dorm for room and board expenses to be covered by a 529 plan – they can live in off-campus housing. However, these room-and-board costs typically must equal the cost of living on campus. Some schools identify a specific cost for "commuters" or "at-home students," so you will need to contact the college directly to determine qualified room-and-board costs.

Now, let's take a quick look at what some changes in the rules governing 529 plans over the past few years might mean for you. Eligible expenses from your 529 plan include the following:

K-12 expenses – Parents can withdraw up to \$10,000 per student, per year, from their 529 plan to pay for tuition expenses at elementary and secondary schools. So, if you intend to send your children to a private school, this use of a 529 plan might interest you.

Apprenticeships – 529 plans can be used to pay for fees, textbooks, equipment and other supplies connected to apprenticeship programs registered with the Department of Labor. These programs, typically offered at a community college, combine classroom instruction with on-the-job training.

Student loans – Families can withdraw funds from a 529 plan to repay the principal and interest for qualified education loans, including federal and most private student loans. There's a lifetime limit of \$10,000 for student loan repayments per each 529 plan beneficiary and another \$10,000 for each of the beneficiary's siblings.

All of these newer uses of 529 plans may contain additional guidelines and exceptions, and state tax treatment varies, so you'll want to consult with your tax advisor before taking money from your account. But it's valuable for you to know the different ways you can put a 529 plan to work.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones financial advisor.

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STEELE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That on Monday, June 7th, 2021 starting at 7:00 pm., the Steele County Planning Commission will meet via conference call as allowed under MN Stat. 13D.021 to consider the following requests:

Conditional Use Permit #425 allowing Northstar Recreation LLC to sell and service fish house / RV units and accessories on property located in the S 1/4, NW 1/4, NW 1/4, Section 33, Clinton Falls Township. The property address is 3419 County Road 45 North. The review of Conditional Use Permit #209 allowing David Spiller Construction to mine sand and gravel on property located in the S 1/4 of the NW 1/4, the N 1/4 of the SW 1/4, and the SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4, Section 27 Aurora Township.

Interim Use Permit #2021-06 allowing Pivot Energy Minnesota Solar 1 LLC to construct a 1 MW solar energy system on property owned by Thomas Judd located in the SE 1/4, SW 1/4, Section 30, Clinton Falls Township. The property address is 3763 Runway Road.

Due to the Governor's Emergency Executive Order, the meeting will be closed to the public for in-person attendance, but the public is encouraged to submit comments by email or email and interested parties may receive packet material and/or a link by which they can monitor the meeting by contacting the Steele County Planning and Zoning Office.

Dale Oolman
Steele County Zoning Director
630 Florence Ave. P.O. Box 890
Owatonna, MN 55060
PZ.Director@co.steele.mn.us
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A High School Diploma or GED equivalence and a valid Driver's License is required. The wage is \$20.00 per hour.

To view the job posting and apply, go to Steele County's Website at <https://www.co.steele.mn.us/> and click on Employment Opportunities. Applications will be accepted until positions are filled. Equal Opportunity Employer.

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Educator

◀ **EDUCATOR** from A6 early as age 4. Throughout his childhood, Langlois said he continued to play golf, among several other sports. He also played golf in college at the University of Minnesota.

After graduating from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Science in teaching elementary-aged students and a Master's degree, Langlois spent his first eight years teaching at public and charter schools in Colorado. That's where he said he honed his skills as a teacher.

Langlois said that the shared goal of providing a high-quality education and friendly colleagues made the transition from Colorado to Owatonna's School District an easy one.

GARDENING TIP OF THE WEEK

May's Garden To-Do Checklist

- Prune Spring blooming shrubs when the blooms are done (think lilacs) by early June. Next spring you will be rewarded with a more vigorous bloom!
- Add organic matter and fertilizer into your planting beds, then rake it into the soil.
- Monitor your garden for pests and treat appropriately now before they can take over.
- Pull weeds as soon as you can! It can avoid more work next year.

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READY TO SOAR



Shown during a recent volleyball game, Medford graduate Kinsey Cronin, left, plans to play volleyball at Smith College in Massachusetts, while on a pre-med track. Classmate Isabella Steffen, right, will head to the U of M in the fall and plans to go on to medical school. Steffen's been involved in 4-H for years, and is shown here barrel racing on Cash, a horse she leases from a neighbor.

Top Medford grads set sights on medical school

BY KAY FATE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

If everything goes as planned, the 2021 graduating class from Medford High School will produce at least two doctors – a convincing argument that bigger is not always better.

Kinsey Cronin and Isabella Steffen, who are ranked first and second, respectively, in their graduating class of 64, both have aspirations of medical school. Both young women also said the teachers and coaches they've had during their 13 years in Medford schools are driving forces of their success.

The keyword, they said, is opportunity.

"If I decided to participate in something, I could," said Cronin. "I could do every part of the school life; I could be in National Honor Society, student council, basketball, track ... It didn't matter."

She wasn't kidding. Cronin was a member of the volleyball, track and basketball teams, is the president of the school's National Honor Society, on the student council and was president of her class for three years.

Steffen also is fully involved, serving as president of the student council for the past two years, playing basketball, and is a member of the National Honor Society, FFA, 4-H and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

And while COVID-19 changed



Kinsey Cronin

many parts of life, both Cronin and Steffen said they embraced distance learning, even after classes resumed earlier this spring.

It fit their busy schedules much better, they said.

"I chose to do distance learning. I worked better, having more free time during the day," said Cronin, an admitted night owl. "Being busy all the time helped me focus on school and get things done. It helped me to not procrastinate, because I might not have time to do it" later, she said.

Steffen agreed.

"It helped to create my own schedule and to allot the time needed for classes," she said, "and helped allow me to work when I



Isabella Steffen

needed time to do the extra-curricular activities."

Still, they realize how important their social lives are, after missing out on face-to-face interactions for more than a year.

"I honestly think it impacted our ability to talk to others, to communicate not through a screen. It was hard for me, personally," Steffen said. "I missed being with my friends. I tried to get to any school events I could. One of the big things in people's lives that gives them joy is being able to communicate with others, having that closeness with others."

She's heading to the University of Minnesota in the fall, AA degree from Riverland College already in

hand. That should take about a year off her undergraduate studies in Health Sciences. Steffen said she hopes to eventually become a radiologist.

Cronin is off to Smith College in Northampton, Mass., where she'll also play volleyball. While she is on the pre-med track, she said she's undecided about which field.

But it all comes back to Medford, both students said, being well-rounded and setting goals.

"I learned at a young age the importance of hard work and education," Steffen said, "so I set personal goals to do well in school. But I've realized as I've gone through school that no one is perfect; nothing is perfect, so I've learned to set personal goals in more places in my life. Family is super-important to me. Friends are super-important to me."

So is their hometown.

"I just want to say how thankful I am to have grown up in Medford," Cronin said. "It is definitely one of the reasons I've been able to do what I've done. I've always had a community that supported me and my teams, and a school that always pushed me to grow, and teachers that wanted students to do well and who are willing to help. I'm just very thankful that I lived here."

Medford's commencement exercises will be held at 7 p.m. Friday in the high school gym.

Congrats Grads! Best of luck on your future plans.

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Plans: Gap Year



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Parents: Elizabeth and Jeffrey Bartosch
Plans: Enter the Workforce



Brayden Beede

Parents: Jeff and Nicole Beede
Plans: University of Wisconsin - La Crosse



Jenna Berg

Parents: Cary and Jackie Berg
Plans: College of Saint Benedict



Adam Cammock

Parents: Daniel and Melinda Cammock
Plans: Undecided



Emily Chadwick

Parents: Dawn Caron and Todd Chadwick
Plans: Columbia College



Kinsey Cronin

Parents: Mary and Stacy Cronin
Plans: Smith College



Kaden Dolney

Parents: Andrew and Tracy Dolney
Plans: Enter the Workforce



Roberta Domstrand

Parents: Dawn and Randy Domstrand
Plans: University of Wisconsin - River Falls



Cole Dusek

Parents: Jason and Linda Dusek
Plans: Gap Year



Isaac Enzenauer

Parents: Ike and Michelle Enzenauer
Plans: St. Cloud Technical and Community College



Krista Esch

Parents: Charlene and Jon Esch
Plans: Bethel University



Garrett Fitzgerald

Parents: Aaron Fitzgerald and Roberta Fitzgerald
Plans: Gap Year



Alissa FreeLove

Parents: Melissa FreeLove
Plans: Entering workforce



Nathan Galvan

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Plans: Enter the Workforce



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Plans: Enter the Workforce



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Parents: Jennifer and Robert Geyer
Plans: Enter the Workforce



Giovanni Gonzales

Parents: Minerva and Rogelio Gonzales
Plans: Gap Year



Yara Granados

Parents: Dyanira Espeleta
Plans: Gap Year



Johanna Grant

Parents: Patricia Grant
Plans: United States Navy



Jasive Guerrero

Parents: Crispin and Susana Guerrero
Plans: University of Wisconsin - River Falls



Lizbeth Gutierrez

Parents: Jose Gutierrez and Veronica Morales
Plans: Riverland Community College



Josiah Hedensten

Parents: Jason Hedensten
Plans: Southwest Minnesota State University



Congratulations Medford Graduates Class of 2021
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Plans: St. Mary's University of Minnesota



Gavin Hermes

Parents: Alicia and Chris Hermes
Plans: Apprenticeship



Catrina Herr

Parents: Jarrod Herr
Plans: Riverland Community College



Brennon Hoffman

Parents: Beth Hoffman and Jeremy Hoffman
Plans: Iowa State University



Mikayla Janke

Parents: Allison and Michael Janke
Plans: South Dakota State University



Madison Jaster

Parents: Allison and Steve Jaster
Plans: Riverland/University of Wisconsin - River Falls



Malia Kircher

Parents: Caren and Dana Kircher
Plans: Enter the Workforce



Matthew Knutson

Parents: Timothy Knutson and Kerstin Singleton
Plans: Bradley University



Shea Lambert

Parents: Brian and Lisa Lambert
Plans: Gap Year



Blake Lawson

Parents: Jonathan Lawson and Audra Rayman
Plans: Enter the Workforce



Ernesto Lazaro

Parents: Ernesto Lazaro and Francisca Machorro
Plans: Saint John's University



Angela Lippert

Parents: Jane and John Lippert
Plans: Enter the Workforce



Jarrett Lisowski

Parents: Albert Lisowski and Angela Lisowski
Plans: Undecided



Xena Lopez Bermudez

Parents: Maribel Bermudez
Plans: Riverland Community College



Devin Luckey

Parents: Timothy and Trista Luckey
Plans: Gap Year



Sierra Lustig

Parents: Kyle Lustig and Rebecca Lustig
Plans: Wartburg College



Brock Merritt

Parents: Amy and Chad Merritt
Plans: University of Minnesota - Rochester



Mason Nagel

Parents: James and Kristin Nagel
Plans: South Dakota State University



Alexander Oatway

Parents: Stephen and Vicki Oatway
Plans: United States Army



Antonio Ortiz

Parents: Antonio and Maria Ortiz
Plans: Enter the Workforce/Attend College



Luz Peralta

Parents: Maribel Gonzalez
Plans: South Central College



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Peyton Seiler

Parents: Kara and William Seiler
Plans: University of Wisconsin - La Crosse



Braxton Skalicky

Parents: Krista Gillen and Matthew Skalicky
Plans: Enter the Workforce



Nevaeh Smith

Parents: Alejandra Rios and Joseph Smith
Plans: Cosmetology School



Keondric Spitzack

Parents: Tami and Troy Spitzack
Plans: Gap Year



Isabella Steffen

Parents: Dagan and Dawn Steffen
Plans: University of Minnesota - Twin Cities



Tyler Stursa

Parents: Chad and Melissa Stursa
Plans: Gustavus Adolphus College



Chloe Van Ryn

Parents: Joan Van Ryn
Plans: Minnesota State University, Mankato



Alex Vandereide

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Haley VonRuden

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Plans: University of Minnesota - Twin Cities



Hanna VonRuden

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Plans: Minnesota State University, Mankato



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Plans: University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire



Gunner White

Parents: Stacey White
Plans: Minnesota State University, Mankato



Halli Zumbunnen

Parents: Robyn Carroll
Plans: Minnesota State University, Mankato

Medford Graduation Ceremony

Friday, May 28
7 p.m.
Medford High School

Senior parade through Medford follows ceremony with police and fire escort.

Student Speakers: Gavin Hermes and Lily Roehrick

Keynote Speaker: Jeannie Ness

Class Flower: White Rose with Red Tips

Colors: Maroon and gold

Motto: Success is not a matter of chance, it's a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved.

Song: Good Times by All Time Low



Congratulations Medford Seniors!



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Clean sweep for Blossom golfers

Both boys and girls teams win Gopher Conference

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

Leading the conference standings handily, the Blooming Prairie girls golf team was expected to win the conference but with three boys teams in contention to win the conference title it all came down to the conference final tournament on Thursday, May 20.

Fortunately, the Blooming Prairie boys team did just enough to win by two strokes, which give the Blossoms a clean sweep in the Gopher Conference.

The Blooming Prairie boys team was led by Garret Farr who shot a 41 at the conference final tournament last Thursday. With each team's best four scores making up their team score, the Awesome Blossoms' team score was rounded out by Colin Jordison, David Kartes and Kaiden Alwes who all shot a 44.

Coach Carl Peterson said the strengths of the Blossoms' team are its six pretty consistent players and the golfers' work ethic.

"Practice ends at 5:30 but many days almost all of them keep practicing until almost sundown. Golf requires a lot of repetition and they're putting in a lot after practice every day and on the weekends," Peterson said. "You can't keep them off the golf course," he joked.

That hard work could be the result of some extra motivation after coming in second place in the section two years ago when just first-place team made it to the state tournament.

Given their recent success, Peterson



The Blooming Prairie boys and girls golf teams acquire the Gopher Conference championship trophies. Team members include: (front row from left) seventh-grader Aubrey Alwes, senior Maggie Bruns, senior Halle Strunk, senior Jessica Ressler, eighth-grader Caitlyn Stangl and seventh-grader Ella Farr; back row: Coach Andrew Hardecopf, junior David Kartes, junior Garret Farr, senior Kollin Alwes, seventh-grader Colby Johnson, junior Colin Jordison, freshman Kaiden Alwes, Coach Tommy Braaten and Coach Carl Peterson.

expected the Blossoms to compete for the conference title this season.

"We knew we'd have a chance because we did well two years and we returned the same team from two years ago," he said.

However, it wasn't that easy.

"After the first nine holes on Thursday, it looked like we'd lost the conference, but then we had two kids who have not been our top performing golfers, Garret Farr who shot a 41 and Kaiden Alwes who shot a 44, which were their best scores of the year. Kaiden is sometimes our fifth scorer but his second nine really helped us," he said.

Thanks to Farr's and Alwes' back nine, the Blossoms won the conference title by two strokes. On top of winning the conference, three Blossoms also earned individual honors: Colin Jordison and Kollin Alwes were named All-Conference and Garrett Farr was

named Honorable Mention All-Conference.

Meanwhile, he reported that the girls team was quite a ways ahead at the beginning of the conference final tournament so there was little doubt they'd win the conference.

The girls' commanding success throughout the season is even more impressive when you consider that the Blossoms had just one girl out for golf last year.

"We knew Halle [Strunk] and Jessica [Ressler] would be good, but we didn't have any idea about the other four golfers," he said.

Strunk, who averaged a 46.8, and Ressler, who averaged a 47.2 did indeed lead the Blossoms, but Maggie Bruns also finished in the top five individual golfers in the Gopher Conference with an average of 55.5.

In addition to team success, three Blossoms earned individual honors when Halle Strunk, Jessica Ressler and Maggie

Bruns were all named All-Conference.

Regarding who would be the conference's top girl golfer, Peterson said Strunk and Ressler were very close all season. In the end, it was Strunk who beat out Ressler for individual first place by two strokes.

"Both Halle and Jessica work very hard in the season and in the offseason. They spend a lot of time with Aaron Ressler and his golf simulator. They just worked hard enough year-round to make themselves better players," he said.

He mentioned that Bruns, who was competing in golf for the first time this season, struggled at the beginning of the season, but, "It's unbelievable how much she's improved over the course of a month and a half."

While winning the Gopher Conference title is a great accomplishment for both teams, Peterson said the Blossoms will have to continue to improve to achieve similar

success at the section tournament.

"The one thing that we've worked on the most is the short game, chipping and especially putting. We have improved but we could stand further improvement if we want a shot at the state tournament," he said.

Having come so close to reaching the state tournament two years ago, Peterson said it's certainly a goal of the boys to reach the state tournament this year.

The girls team hasn't had the same sort of recent success at the section meet, but he still believes they can achieve similar success.

"We didn't know good the other teams in the section are, but there is a chance the girls could win at sections," he said.

The boys next compete at Owatonna Country Club against Owatonna on Thursday. Both teams will be playing the Section 1A tournament at Eastwood Golf Club in Rochester on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Huskies pick new wrestling coach

The Owatonna High School activities department has selected Derek Johnson as the new head wrestling coach pending school board approval.



Derek Johnson

"We are very pleased and excited to have Derek joining our coaching staff at Owatonna High School," said Owatonna Activities Director Marc Achterkirch. "Coach Johnson brings a tremendous amount of wrestling knowledge and experience to the position. Coach Johnson will be an excellent leader and role model to help develop great students on and off the mat."

Johnson is no stranger to Owatonna wrestling as the Owatonna High School alum was a four-time state participant, two-time state champion, and All-American Honorable Mention for the Huskies during his senior year. He's also a member of the Owatonna High School Athletic Hall of Fame.

Johnson has coached in the Owatonna youth program for six years and was a high school assistant in 2014. Prior to his coaching career, Coach Johnson competed for one season on the University of Wisconsin-Madison wrestling team.

While attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Johnson earned his bachelor of arts degree. He currently serves as a mortgage banker and marketing strategist with Roundbank.

Prior to Johnson becoming head coach, Adam Wottalla served as head wrestling coach for five years, including his first year when he was co-head coach with Scott Seykora. Under his leadership, the Huskies won fourth place at the state team tournament in 2020 and have sent multiple individual wrestlers to the state tournament each of the past two seasons.

ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS
From the Hosts of the Motor Medic Radio Show
By Shannon Nordstrom and Russ Evans

Dear Motor Medics, I have purchased my first camper and I am trying to get it ready for the road. It is a 40-foot fifth wheel toy hauler that weighs about 20k lbs. I have a 2017 Ram Diesel truck that I use to pull my boat, but it does not have working trailer brakes. The dealer wants over 1k to repair the system. Can I install an aftermarket brake controller on the truck even though it came with a factory one? The ride home from the camper dealership was a little scary without camper brakes and I do not want to pull to far without them.

Ralph in Beaumont Texas Its good to see that you have a truck that should be able to pull that size camper. We have many calls and emails from people wanting more power out of their truck so they can overpull which is never a good idea. The second most answered question is getting the trailer to stop. Trailer brakes are required for large campers most everywhere by law loaded or unloaded. Many trucks are now coming equipped with factory installed brake control units but when they fail the cost can be outrageous. We have seen many aftermarket brake controls installed and the factory one bypassed either due to failure or personal choice. Ask your local trailer dealer to recommend one to fit your needs. If you are not comfortable installing and testing one ask them to install it.

Take care, The Motor Medics
5/27

Dear Motor Medics, My 2008 GMC Acadia seems to be having a transmission issue. When I drive it for short trips such as 3 miles or less it works fine but if I drive over 3 it starts to act up. The transmission will jerk extremely hard as it shifts and sometimes when I stop it seems to go into neutral then bangs into gear. The dealer replaced it at no charge under extended warranty once but now it's out again and they want \$3800 to replace it. Is there any cheap fix I can do to get it going again?

Mike in Bloomington Illinois The short answer is no, there is not a cheap fix for this one. We have replaced over a hundred of this model's transmission in our own shop and yes, they are expensive if you go with a new dealership part. There are alternatives though and if you like your dealership they may even be able to offer you one of them. Many aftermarket companies build great transmissions with 3yr/100k mile warranties and there are used transmissions from parts sources like car-part.com who can help you source a certified used part with a warranty. We have seen used units as low as \$2k installed. While still expensive, it is a far cry from \$3800. The other option for you may be having yours rebuilt. The cost can greatly vary depending on how much is wrong with your unit.

Take care, The Motor Medics
5/27

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On The Farm
CLAIRE LACANNE

This time of year makes me eager to get out and tend to my yard and gardens. The cool weather has put a bit of a damper on my progress, and I am waiting for a stretch of warmer temperatures to really work on my lawn.

Everyone has different goals for their lawn – some people may want a more natural habitat that can support some wildlife, others may want their lawn to look highly manicured. Remember that a weed can be described as “a plant out of place.” What may be a hated weed invader for some, might be a tolerable ground cover to someone else. Whatever our goals, we can keep in mind some best management practices, and even incorporate the principles of integrated pest management into our lawn care routines.

First of all, it is important to schedule your lawn care maintenance during times

that match the life cycle of the turfgrass. Some rules of thumb include:

- Do not add fertilizer too early in the spring. This may encourage the grass to grow during a time when it should be slow or dormant.

- Do not spray to control weeds when temperatures are warm. This increases the likelihood of damaging the lawn.

- Do not fertilize in hot mid-summer months. This can cause irreversible damage to your lawn.

- Crabgrass doesn't develop until late spring or early summer, so don't apply herbicide used to prevent pre-emerging crabgrass in the fall.

I should also remind you that using phosphorus fertilizer on lawns is restricted in Minnesota. While purchasing fertilizer, look for the zero in the middle of the nutrient analysis and use a lawn fertilizer labeled phosphorus-free unless you are seeding a new lawn or have a soil test showing that phosphorus is needed. Phosphorus is restricted to protect water quality; it is a nutrient that can cause over-enrichment



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

Some people may want their lawn to look highly manicured.

of lakes, rivers, and wetlands. Another consideration is to think about using the principles of integrated pest management while deciding on whether to apply pesticides to your yard. The MDA and the University of Minnesota developed a set of core voluntary best management practices which include some principles of integrated pest management. These turfgrass best

management practices help protect water resources, humans, and non-target organisms including pollinators.

Best management practices for pesticide use in the lawn include:

- Identify weeds and understand why they're growing where they are. Killing weeds without correcting underlying problems only invites continued weed invasion.

- Try to tolerate a few weeds as long as

your lawn is generally healthy.

- Promote overall plant health to create a vigorous lawn that can prevent any serious weed problems from taking over.

When using pesticides, follow the label directions exactly as printed on the product container.

For more information about recommended lawn care practices, visit <https://extension.umn.edu/>

[lawn-care/lawn-weeds](https://extension.umn.edu/lawn-weeds) and <https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/lawn-care-calendar> or contact me at 507-330-0447 or lacanne@umn.edu.

Claire LaCanne is the agricultural extension educator with the University of Minnesota for Steele and Rice counties. Her column appears in this newspaper regularly.

SMIF program helps ensure farmland will be farmed

BY TIM PENNY

Many of the farmers that I know in southern Minnesota work on the same land that their parents, grandparents or even great-grandparents farmed. Because of this, the farm is more than a parcel of land to grow crops or raise ani-

mals – it is a living piece of family history. At the same time, we are faced with the reality that the average farmer is close to retirement age, and that not everyone has an heir to transfer the land to when the time comes. Fortunately, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

(SMIF) has a program that can help farmers safeguard the legacy of their land while simultaneously giving back to their communities.

SMIF's Acres for Good program allows farmers to donate their land as a charitable gift. What makes this model unique is that rather

than liquidate the asset as most charities do, SMIF retains the land and keeps it in production by a rental arrangement. This allows retiring farmers the peace of mind that their land will continue to be farmed. The landowner receives a tax deduction and bypasses capital

gains tax while still being able to maintain a stable revenue source for life.

As the name suggests, the Acres for Good program is also a way to do good things for your community. The income stream from the land is used to support southern Minnesota communities well into the future. With more than \$7 billion of wealth in SMIF's region expected to transfer by 2030, this program can help retain that wealth locally while creating a unique opportunity for farmers to make a long-lasting impact on rural Minnesota.

Farmers will choose how they want to allocate their gift of land. It can go toward one of SMIF's 30 community foundations which invest in their communities through grants and programs. For a region-wide reach, farmers can allocate their land toward SMIF's general endowment, or SMIF's specific funds which support youth and entrepreneurs in the region. Farmers can even set up a Donor Advised Fund to allocate resources to their specific interests and values such as their

place of worship, alma mater or local charity. We will work with farmers to make the process as simple as possible.

If you know a farmer who is thinking about estate planning, please let them know that there is a way their land can remain active farmland and provide them with a steady revenue stream, while in the long-term also benefiting the communities and causes they care about most. This is gifting with a purpose at its best – and SMIF is here to help.

To learn more about the Acres for Good program visit smifoundation.org/acresforgood or contact Alissa Oeltjenbruns, Philanthropy Officer, at 507-214-7023 or alissa@smifoundation.org.

As always, I welcome your comments and questions. You can reach me at tim@smifoundation.org or 507-455-3215.

Tim Penny is the President & CEO of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. Tim represented Minnesota's First Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1982 – 1994.

The oldest farm in Steele County

The Jirouseks

Dean Jirousek has the distinction of operating the oldest farm in Steele County.

The farm, which is located 10 miles south of Owatonna, has been producing crops for 157 years. Jirousek's ancestors originally settled on the southeast edge of Owatonna.

"The amazing thing is I have the oldest family farm and we did not homestead it"

Jirousek said.

It doesn't come without saying the Jirousek family has deep roots in Steele County. His father was a successful farmer and co-owner of Butter Capitol Dairy. Jirousek pointed out at one time Steele County produced more butter than any county in the world.

Jirousek was born and raised on the farm and was not involved with any outside activities. He has two daughters, Taylor, 25 and Georgia, 23.

He currently raises corn, soybeans, sweet corn, peas and wheat. Jirousek uses White tractors and equipment on his farm. "I have the only White tractor in the neighborhood," he said.

In addition to working the fields, Jirousek cares for Guernsey dairy cattle. His family takes pride in having the oldest Guernsey herd in Minnesota dating back to 1928. He has shown homebred cattle for more than 50 years with many doing well at the national level.

He also has a farm parts business to keep him busy.

"My greatest joy in farming is developing an outstanding animal and raising great crops," Jirousek said. He added he strives to do the best in taking care of the land and livestock.

As Jirousek works on his farm, he thinks about what his ancestors endured over the years. **"Each generation has had its challenges,"** he said.



Staff photo by Rick Bussler

Dean Jirousek operates about 400 acres in southern Steele County. **"I'm noted as a small farmer in the neighborhood,"** he said with a smile

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An encouraging message



The students at Owatonna's ALC want to send a message of encouragement to the community. #OwatonnaProud seniors, finish strong! Graduation is just around the corner!

OHS softball is swinging for the fences

BY ABE STOCKWELL
OHS MAGNET WRITER

A year ago the OHS girls softball team had its season canceled. After a year off, the team is in full swing. With a 9-7 record in one of the toughest conferences, the team has held its own.

This year the team is very young, including three senior players and one senior manager. Overall, this will allow the team to succeed in the future since they will have already formed the team chemistry needed to overcome their opponents.

Coach Jeremy Moran said, "Ana LaDuke, Haylee Mullenbach, Alyssa Ringhofer and Hailee Olson (student manager) have been a part of this

program for many years and are leaders on and off the field." As seniors, they provide the leadership for the team and their leadership will help the team as a whole, as they advance to sections.

Ana LaDuke, senior and captain of the OHS girls softball team, has many positive things to say about their season so far. Not only has the team spirit been great this year, the shenanigans before games are always uplifting.

LuDuke said, "Before every game, the team plays a game including a hacky sack that we learned from one of our coaches, Rachel Malo."

For the team, it is a fun way for them to bond with each other and build up energy before each game.



Owatonna's Elizabeth (Izzy) Radel plays second base against Red Wing.

OHS MAGNET PHOTO BY OLIVIA SHAW

Swinging into boys golf

BY COLE EARLES
OHS MAGNET WRITER

As May comes around the corner, the Owatonna boys golf team is in full swing. With the completion of the Big 9 mid-season tournament, a well balanced team of leadership in veteran players and young players who contribute are looking forward to playing their best in the Big 9 conference final tournament.

Senior Jonny Wall has the best round of the year, scoring a 75 on a difficult course. The course Wall played was the bridges in Winona, located in the Pleasant Valley. A big part of golf is spending time actually golfing, Wall said, "We have a great group of guys who come to practice everyday with an excellent attitude." As the rest of the season continues, Wall reflects on the future with, "No expectations, just aspirations."

The team proceeds to improve as the season progresses. Coach Mark Langlois said, "The players' course management, and focusing on



Huskies golfer Sam Snitker lines up the putt during some recent competition.

OHS MAGNET PHOTO BY ABE STOCKWELL

the present has helped us get some wins, and allow us to see steady improvement." The team's best low total was set in Waseca on April 15. They managed to score a 335.

Evan Little is a senior at OHS, this is his first year as a golfer. Little chose to golf because he

used to play baseball in the spring and golfed in the summer, later deciding that he enjoys golf more and would rather spend the last of his senior year doing something he has a passion for. Little has come a long way this year with his form on and off the

green. He mentions, "I'm expecting to do much better at the final Big 9 tournament, than what I did at the mid-season Big 9 tournament."

The Owatonna boys golf team hit the greens in the Big 9 tournament on May 25 at Northern Hills in Rochester.

Meals available for kids this summer

All children, ages 1-18, are able to eat free this summer through meals provided by Owatonna Public Schools. Meal bundles are available for pick up on Mondays and Wednesdays, June 7-Aug. 13.

Pick up locations:

Owatonna Middle School
600 15th St. N.E., Door #13
12-1 p.m.

Wilson Elementary
325 Meadow Lane, Door #1
12-1 p.m.

Owatonna Public Library
105 N Elm, Parking Lot
12-12:30 p.m.

Lincoln Elementary
747 Havana Road, Door #1
12:30-1 p.m.

Monday bundles include breakfast and lunch meals for two days. Wednesday meal bundles include breakfast and lunch meals for three days.

Visit the school district website for more information, including menus: www.isd761.org/district-services/nutrition-services. Contact the Owatonna Public Schools Nutrition Services Department with any questions: 507-444-8616 or nutrition-services@isd761.org.

Owatonna Students of the Week

Elementary School



Thor Dotson
Fifth Grade
Parents: Nathan and Joan Dotson

Thor Dotson leads by example. He is THE student that others want to be around because he shares his positive attitude and passion for learning with everyone around him. Thor is driven by opportunities that challenge him to be his best self, academically and socially. Keep up the great work, Thor!



Aselynn Vargas
Fifth Grade
Parent: Erica Rodriguez

Aselynn brings honest perspectives to our classroom discussions while being respectful of others, even when their viewpoints differ. She lifts others up with her positivity and sincerity. Aselynn is hardworking, always giving her best effort. Way to go, Aselynn! Thank you for being uniquely you and a leader others can look up to.



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Congratulations

CLASS OF 2021



Watch for a special section honoring Blooming Prairie's graduating class in next week's edition

Congratulations
Kiya Thompson
Class of 2021 Graduate

We are very proud of you Sweetie!
Love, Mom, Dad, Graham, Coby & Dyer
Parents:
Chase & Jenny Kelner

Congratulations
Adrianna Bermea
Class of 2021 Graduate

Congrats Beant!
We are so proud of all of your accomplishments!
Love, Mom, Dad, Christian & Addison
Parents:
Joe & Ashley Hjelm

Congratulations
Boone Henry Carlson
Class of 2021 Graduate

We are so proud of you!
You are unstoppable. It is your time to shine and get after your dreams!
Love, Mom, Dad, Haven & Hollis

Congratulations
Casey Lyman
Class of 2021 Graduate

We are so very proud of you!
Love, Your entire Family
Parents:
Angela Haberman & Jay Lyman

Congratulations
Brian A. Jimenez
Class of 2021 Graduate

Congrats on your graduation and best wishes for your postadventure!
So proud of you son!
Love, Mom, Brandon & Lil Bicky
Mother: Lucero Rodriguez

Congratulations
Rylie Cisneros
Class of 2021 Graduate

We love you and are so proud of you!
Parents:
Matt Cisneros and Angie Peterson

Congratulations
Joseph Pirkil
Class of 2021 Graduate

Happy Graduation!
We wish you all the success today and always!
Love, Dad, Mom, Sam & Grandpa and Grandma
Parents:
Daniel & Laura Pirkil

Congratulations
Cole Graves
Class of 2021 Graduate

Open House
Sunday, June 6-12-4 p.m.
1218 St. N.W., Blooming Prairie
Parents:
Peter & Tracy Graves

Congratulations
Elin O'Brien
Class of 2021 Graduate

Open House
Saturday, May 29-4 p.m.
14768 34th Ave. S.E., Blooming Prairie
Parents:
Cate Carlson & Matt O'Brien

Congratulations
Shyane Jorgenson
Class of 2021 Graduate

We are so proud of you!!
Love, Dad, Mom, Dylan, Holly, Leo and your angel brother, Alex
Parents:
Jamie & Kristi Jorgenson

Congratulations
Alexander Miller
Class of 2021 Graduate

Open House
Saturday, June 26-4-7 p.m.
74797 State Hwy. 56, Hayfield
Parents:
Emil & Jackie Miller

Congratulations
Mackenzie Jane Grunklee
Class of 2021 Graduate

Open House
Saturday, June 12-1-4 p.m.
Blooming Prairie Senior Center
134 3rd Ave. S.E.
Parents:
Michael & Rachel Grunklee

Congratulations
Luke Ryan Larkowski
Class of 2021 Graduate

You've had so many accomplishments!
We are so proud of you!
Dad, Mom and Lauren

Congratulations
Allison Krohnberg
Class of 2021 Graduate

Open House
Saturday, May 29-11 a.m.-2 p.m.
6402 St. N.E., Blooming Prairie
Parents:
Randy & Michelle Krohnberg

Congratulations
Megan Oswald
Class of 2021 Graduate

Sunday, May 30-3-6 p.m.
3418 9th Ave. N.W., Austin
Parents:
Kathy Paukner & Phil Oswald

Congratulations
Emily Kubicek
Class of 2021 Graduate

We are so proud of you!
Love, Dad, Mom, Rachel & Derek

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