



Wednesday, May 5, 2021  
www.SteeleCountyTimes.com  
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

# STEELE COUNTY Times

## PROM 2021

Leif Michaelson gives Alivia Schneider a twirl to show off her shiny dress during the grand march at the Blooming Prairie High School's prom. Medford also held its prom on Saturday, May 1. See pages A6 and B3 for more prom photos.

## Sheriff earns spot in top national group

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

Outside of being elected sheriff of Steele County, Lon Thiele said he considers his most recent achievement as the greatest highlight of his law enforcement career.

Last week, Thiele was elected to the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Association (FBI-LEEDA) executive board during its 29th annual executive training conference in Fort Lauderdale.

"It's always humbling when elected sheriff, but adding something on the national level is just as humbling," said Thiele, who has served as sheriff since 2010. He calls FBI-LEEDA the "premier executive training provider for law enforcement leaders."

Thiele will serve on the board for six years and eventually take over as the group's president. He joins chiefs and sheriffs from Iowa, Maryland, Georgia, Missouri and Pennsylvania on the board.

Only two other Minnesota law enforcement officials have served on the FBI-LEEDA board since its inception in 1991. They are former chiefs of the Brooklyn Park and Minnetonka police departments.

FBI-LEEDA, a private non-profit organization that is not part of the FBI or acting on its behalf, advances the science and art of law enforcement leadership and promotes the exchange of information to improve law enforcement management practices through

training, education and networking.

Thiele said he went to the Florida conference to gain greater insight into training for his department.

While he was there, he decided to run for the executive board "to be a part of what training is produced" for police officers. He defeated two other police executives from other parts of the country for the position.

Thiele first became involved with FBI-LEEDA when he graduated a few years ago from



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele was elected to the executive board of the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Association last week in Florida. He will begin a six-year term on the board during which time he will eventually become president.

## Spring planting underway; commodity prices strong

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

As farmers head into the spring planting season, they are finding renewed optimism for something that has been missing for years: a sunny forecast for a profitable year.

Dean Jirousek, a long-time farmer outside of Ellendale, said farmers like himself are

See SPRING on A8 ▶



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Dean Jirousek of rural Ellendale loads his corn planter with more seed Thursday afternoon as he plants on a 120-acre field in southern Steele County.

## LIVING LIFE UNSEEN

Teen overcomes disability, powers her way to state

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

Megan Copeland has a different view of life than most people.

It's a view that has forced the Owatonna teenager to overcome obstacles in just carrying out the normal routines of daily life. She lives a life unseen, at least from her perspective.

Copeland has been blind since birth. She suffered septo-optic dysplasia. Her parents, Rian and Jennifer Copeland, learned to adapt quickly to their daughter's disability.

But don't even begin to feel sorry for her because she wouldn't want her life any other way.

"I would not want a cure for blindness. God made me the way I am for a reason," said Co-

peland, quickly adding, "I don't want to mess with it."

Copeland is quite content with her disability. "I can see in my own way," she said. "I have an amazing life just the way I am, and it just happens to be that I can't see."

Despite being blind, Copeland is proving that nothing stops her. She recently qualified for the state speech tournament for the first time as a senior. She competed in Extemporaneous Reading, which is considered a challenging category.

At state, Copeland's category involved reading from a book, "All the Light We Cannot See," by Anthony Doerr. A major character in the novel is a blind girl who loves to read novels, which strikes an

See LIVING on A11 ▶

## Former sheriff Ringhofer dies at 70

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

He came into law enforcement quite by accident, but by the end of his career, Gary Ringhofer had risen to serve as sheriff of Steele County.

Ringhofer died

Friday at the age of 70 at his home in Owatonna after a battle with leukemia.

Long-time friend and colleague Gene Fisher of Owatonna said he triggered Ringhofer's interest in law enforcement back in the late 1970s after Ringhofer

returned home from serving in Vietnam in the U.S. Army.

Fisher, who served 36 years as a police officer in Owatonna with the last six as chief, took Ringhofer on many ride-alongs when the former

See FORMER on A7 ▶



FILE PHOTO

Gary Ringhofer retired as Steele County sheriff in April 2010 after 30 years with the sheriff's office.

\$1.00 | Volume 129, No. 41



507-583-4431 | bptimes@frontier.net

### INSIDE

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### AREA DEATHS

Marlye Harvy, BP  
Nave Knutson, formerly of BP  
Jennifer Duane, 36, Owatonna  
Gary Ringhofer, 70, Owatonna

Serving  
Blooming Prairie  
and Steele County  
since 1893



-Our Students- Worth A Million!

18th Annual  
Blooming Prairie  
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SALE AUCTION  
Saturday, May 22, 2021

Live 4 PM - 11 PM

Live auction is a 21+ event  
Under the big tent at  
the BP Cue Company!

Silent 1 PM - 3 PM

Inside the Pizza Cellar

## OUR VIEW

### Signs of spring, yes; return to normalcy, no

If the beautiful spring weather hasn't brightened your mood, a drive around the county might.

You're sure to see children out playing, walkers, runners and bicyclists. Take a closer look and you'll notice the trees and the flowers blooming or someone mowing the lawn. Drive a little farther and you're likely to see farmers in the fields. You might even run into some road construction.

That's what we expect to see this time of year when we're out and about.

This past weekend, unexpected sightings might have included a bustling Farmer's Market in Owatonna's Central Park; or a group of teens dressed in formal attire headed to prom. You might have even seen folks mingling around a campfire or gathering for an outdoor barbecue.

Everything seemed so normal, almost as if the past year and the pandemic were behind us.

Yes, we are beginning to return to normal.

If you are fully vaccinated, you can start doing many things that you had stopped doing because of the pandemic, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.

While masks are still required in public indoor spaces in Minnesota, the CDC now says that those who are fully vaccinated can now do almost anything outdoors without a mask, with the notable exception of attending a crowded event, like a parade, game, or concert.

Unfortunately, too many of our neighbors aren't fully vaccinated – which probably explains the recent spike in cases here. According to the latest statistics, only 32.3% of Steele County residents are fully vaccinated.

That's a far cry from the 80% needed to reach herd immunity.

Given the numbers, it's easy to understand why public health experts are now saying we may never reach herd immunity. It's also very frustrating.

Yes, the rate of COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths has slowed. But that isn't good enough.

More people need to get fully vaccinated if we ever hope to return to life as we knew it before the pandemic.

Ponder that on your next drive around the county.

## GUEST COLUMN

### Putting down roots in rural Minnesota

BY TIM PENNY

Anyone who knows me well knows that I regularly champion the benefits of living in rural Minnesota. Not only was I born and raised here, but I have served Greater Minnesota for many years, first during my time in the U.S. Congress and now as the president and CEO of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF). Now there is growing evidence that many young people are putting down roots in small towns, drawn to a strong sense of community, the lower cost of living, the proximity to natural areas and, increasingly, the awareness of the ability to work remotely.

Married couple Caleb and Blake Lauritsen-Norby were happily settled in the Twin Cities but made the decision to move to Lanesboro after their first visit there reminded them of the small towns where they grew up. They ended up opening a grocery store, Parkway Market and Coffeehouse – a much-needed amenity in Lanesboro. With the help of a Small

Enterprise Loan from SMIF and loan partner CEDA, Caleb and Blake were able to update the building's equipment. Caleb also has a Lego business, Planet Brick, upstairs. For Caleb and Blake, the reasons behind moving to rural were plentiful. The real estate is more affordable, the high-speed internet is faster than what they experienced in the metro, they are surrounded by beautiful landscape and they are able to have a close connection with their customers.

For Shawn Vogt Sween, one of SMIF's Board of Trustees, her move to rural Minnesota was about returning to the place where she grew up, in a small township between Grand Meadow and Spring Valley. Now a Harvard-educated lawyer, Shawn initially left her hometown to pursue her education and kickstart her career. She found herself moving across the country for a span of 14 years with her husband and high school sweetheart, Patrick. From Washington D.C. to California, nothing felt home to See PUTTING on A7 ▶

## A teenager with a jolt of positivity



**Hot Pursuit**  
RICK BUSSLER

While everyone has been focused on getting a COVID-19 shot, and for understandable reasons, there is something else that would help people out and uplift their spirits. It's a jolt of positivity.

I found my blast of positivity during a recent interview with Megan Copeland of

Owatonna. A senior who will graduate from OHS next month, Megan qualified for the state speech contest last month.

I am always taken back when I find a teenager like Megan who is years beyond her age. Megan sees things a little differently than most of us. She has been blind since birth and

began learning how to get around with a cane as a small child.

"Nothing gets in my way," Megan said matter of fact. "My positivity helps me get through a lot of stuff. I know I am going to be able to conquer (whatever comes along)."

The teenager said she doesn't want to be See TEENAGER on A3 ▶



## GUEST COLUMN

### Don't rewrite history by changing names

BY JAN MITTELSTADT TIPPETT

Is it true that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet? Does a name change stick just because some government body or citizen group decides it should?

Should historical place names be changed to fit modern values? No. No. No.

I'm of the school that we can't rewrite history by changing the name of the street or a peak or a building. I'm also of the school that taking down statues doesn't change a darn thing. We can't fix history by calling something another name. We can, and should learn from what has gone before us so that we don't repeat mistakes.

Our children and grandchildren – and maybe some parents and grandparents – need to learn about the history of the world and the history of the United States and of Minnesota and of Steele County – both the

good and the bad.

Not all history can be held up as an example of how to live a good and faithful life.

But should we strike the names of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and others who were slave holders at a time when that was perfectly legal but absolutely morally repugnant? Should we remove Franklin Roosevelt's name from schools and streets and memorials because he was the guy who approved internment of Americans of Japanese descent during World War II? The internment stripped those Americans of property and rights.

Should we erase John F. Kennedy's name from schools and boulevards because we have learned that his personal behavior before and during his presidency was less than chaste?

No. No. No. Lest I be accused, dear readers three, of speaking out of both sides of my mouth, I

must engage both sides a little. I think there are names of things that should be stricken – words that might be the "it" word or the "is" word or the "r" word and others words that describe unflattering portrayals of people or persons. However, I do not believe that these words should be edited out of historical novels such as *Tom Sawyer* or *Huckleberry Finn* or countless others. We can use the language in these cases as a way to teach history.

And, I'm lately of the school that removing labels, except on canned goods, would be helpful. I don't think it's helpful to add the hypernotation to describe ethnic backgrounds these days. I think it's divisive as the hyphen use is selective today and usually describes people who aren't white or who don't speak English as a first language. But I digress.

So, Harney Peak near Custer, S.D., the highest peak at 7,242 feet, is now Black Elk peak. And

Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis is Bde Maka Ska, Dakota words meaning Lake White Earth. Swell. Sibley High School is getting a new name. These are but a few examples. The name changes haven't erased the treatment of the Native Americans across the United States by the old white guys and never will.

This whitewashing or trying to adjust our collective memory to adjust our collective acceptable understanding is almost sinister in trying to sweep the less than attractive past practices under a really big rug that can never cover up these ills.

*Jan did change her name with marriage 29 years ago from Mittelstadt to Tippett, two t's at the end, two p's in the middle, same number of t's but still answers to Janet Mittelstadt as she was known when she lived here. She can be reached at jtippett@midco.net.*

## Fighting to level playing field for local newspapers

BY AMY KLOBUCHAR

On May 7th of last year, the Hastings Star Gazette printed its last issue. The paper's first issue as The Hastings Independent was published in 1857, a year before Minnesota gained statehood. Generations relied on papers like this for local news – they told you who was born and who died, whose daughter just broke the county record for the 400-meter freestyle, whose Holstein won a surprise ribbon at the

State Fair, and how your local leaders voted.

My dad was a Minnesota newspaper columnist and sports reporter. Even though he worked his way up the ranks to interview everyone from Mike Ditka to Ronald Reagan to Ginger Rogers, he was always, as his managing editor put it, "a champion of those on the outside."

But today, newspapers of all sizes are struggling and closing. The shuttering of the Star Gazette was helped along by the coronavi-

rus pandemic, but long-term trends in newspaper ad revenue show that the Star Gazette and many local papers like it were already on their last legs when COVID-19 struck.

Ad revenue for U.S. newspapers plummeted from \$37.8 billion in 2008 to \$14.3 billion in 2018. During that time, two other companies, Facebook and Google, grew over \$2.2 trillion combined – became advertising titans.

These two companies don't just control the ma-

jority of online advertising; they've built power over the news, crushing local outlets along the way. It saddens me to think my dad might not have a job in today's tech-dominated world, let alone a chance to interview a U.S. President.

In rural and small-town communities across America, we are seeing the impacts of this consolidation firsthand – expanding "news deserts" where local coverage is increasingly difficult to come by. See FIGHTING on A14 ▶

STEELE COUNTY Times

Founded in 1993  
Bussler Publishing, Inc.  
www.steelecountytimes.com  
Email: bptimes@frontiernet.net

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

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

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**MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION**

|                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2020 – 18 awards                     | 2019 – 7 state and 4 national awards |
| 2019 – 9 state and 4 national awards | 2018 – 7 state and 3 national awards |
| 2018 – 8 state and 4 national awards | 2017 – 7 state and 3 national awards |
| 2017 – 6 state and 3 national awards | 2016 – 2 state and 4 national awards |

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



# Cases level off, but another death reported

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

As COVID-19 cases appear to be leveling off from where they were last month, yet another death has been recorded in Steele County.

Public Health Director Amy Caron reported that a man in his 60s, not in long-term care, has died from complications of COVID-19. This is the second death in the past month involving men in the same age group.

While no other details are available surrounding the most recent deaths, Caron said, "It's a little scary given their ages."

There have now been 15 deaths in Steele County attributed to COVID-19.

After a spike in late March and continuing into April, the number of new cases has leveled off, with 63 new ones reported in the past week bringing the county's total to 3,786, according to Caron. "We are trending back down," she said.

Caron said 54% of residents in Steele County have been vaccinated with at least one dose. That compares to the statewide average of 59%. She reported 4,094 have received first doses, while 3,364 have

completed their second dose. "I am happy to see we are up over the 50% mark," said Caron, who admits she initially did not think the county would get that high. But, she stresses, it would be nice to go even higher.

Of those who have been vaccinated, 86% of the 65 and older group have received their COVID shots. Caron said the county isn't so strong in vaccinations for younger people.

There are varying reports of 25 to 75% needed to achieve herd immunity, Caron said. "It would be great if we

can get more people vaccinated," she said.

To those who haven't been vaccinated, Caron said, "If you're able to get a vaccination, do it for yourself, do it for your family and do it for others. We need to beat the virus, so we don't have to wear masks and do social distancing."

Caron said there are various reasons why people haven't been vaccinated, including worries over possible side effects and those wanting to wait it out longer. She has also seen myths floating around. One of the hottest myths right now is that the vaccine causes infertility. Caron

said that's simply unfounded.

In the coming weeks, Public Health plans to work with the county's larger employers to get workers vaccinated.

One of Caron's frustrations right now is that they are wasting vaccine because not enough people are coming in. Though she said only small amounts have been wasted, Caron doesn't want to

see anything thrown away. Once vials are tapped for shots, the vaccine needs to be used within a few hours. "Up until two weeks ago, we hadn't wasted any vaccine," Caron said.

Public Health will be focusing on targeted outreach in the coming weeks to underserved groups, including minorities and homeless people.

## COVID-19 VACCINE WATCH

|         | First Doses | Second Doses |
|---------|-------------|--------------|
| Steele: | 4,094       | 3,364        |
| Dodge:  | 2,177       | 1,684        |

Source: Steele County Public Health

## Back in business



STAFF PHOTO BY DEB FLEMING

Central Park in Owatonna was bustling Saturday with the opening of The Farmer's Market. Traditionally, the market opens in May and runs through October. Last year, however, COVID-19 delayed the market's start until June. Above, Pres Mendez of Owatonna straightens items s he and his wife, Vicki, operate. Vendors must make or grow the items they sell. The Farmer's Market opens at 7 a.m. on Saturdays.

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

The six best days of summer have been put on hold—again.

The Freeborn County Fair has been canceled for 2021 due to continuing COVID-19 restrictions. The fair had been scheduled to run Aug. 3-8.

Officials cite the current restrictions on both indoor and outdoor entertainment events and the lack of information about when such restrictions will be lifted as their reasons for canceling the fair, which is billed as "the six best days of

summer."

Freeborn has always been known for having rich entertainment, typically featuring rising country stars in its grandstand. The Fair Board said it had to decide now to avoid spending money on entertainment that might have to be canceled.

According to the Fair Board, the expense of performer contracts, stage, sound and lights is typically around \$300,000. That expense is usually offset by other events held at the fairgrounds throughout the year. However, the fair-

grounds located in Albert Lea have been closed since last May because of the pandemic.

"This is a very difficult decision that the Board and I had to make, not taking it lightly," said Mike Woitas, manager of the fair. "We understand that people want to get out and enjoy the fair, but planning for a successful fair at this time when there isn't any guarantee the restrictions will be lifted, would jeopardize the fair for years to come."

The board plans to work with the 4-H pro-

gram for some type of show for livestock and non-livestock exhibits.

This is the second year in a row that the fair has been canceled. Before last year's cancellation, the last time the fair had been nixed was in 1946 because of polio. The fair was also shut down in 1903 due to heavy rain.

The fair, which traditionally offers a big grandstand line-up of entertainers, had several top acts booked for the past couple of years. Among them were Michael Ray, Oak Ridge Boys, Newsboys United and Sawyer Brown.

## Freeborn's fair canceled again

## A teenager with a jolt of positivity

▲ TEENAGER from A2 defined by any physical handicap.

"God made me the way I am for a reason," Megan says. "I have an amazing life just the way I am, and it just happens to be that I can't see."

Life, Megan stresses, isn't about what or how you look. With not being able to see, Megan finds herself at an advantage over most people.

"I see the inner self and see people's true character," Megan said. "I think some people aren't able to see because they are looking too much on what a person looks like on the outside. We all have a character on the inside."

Contrary to what you may think, Megan

doesn't look at life as a struggle even though she can't see. "I haven't had a reason to feel any other way," she said. "I always feel happy and comfortable," she added.

Megan's parents, Rian and Jennifer Copeland, initially struggled with having a special needs child. That's until they came across a poem.

"Welcome to Holland," the poem shares about when you're having a baby, it's like planning a fabulous trip to Italy. After months of anticipation and preparation for Italy, the day finally arrives and you set off only to end up in Holland. You're forced to stay in Holland and do not get to Italy.

It ends by saying if you spend your life

mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special and lovely things about Holland.

Jennifer said that has rung true of having a child who just happens to be blind.

"If you think of all the things you're missing, you'll never notice what's in front of you," Jennifer said. "You have to enjoy all the beauty that's there."

Jennifer said she is so proud of Megan and what she has accomplished in her life. "It doesn't matter what the obstacles have been, she always comes out shining," she said. "She doesn't let too many roadblocks get in her way," she added.



Megan Copeland

Many people, Jennifer said, have commented how Megan has inspired them by her positive attitude.

After graduating next month, Megan will head off to the Academy for the Blind in Faribault. She wants to pursue a career in the legal field, possibly as a court reporter.

Something tells me Megan won't have any trouble going in hot pursuit of obtaining her goals.

## Popular dairy promotion succumbs to COVID again

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

Steele County's largest dairy promotion has fallen victim to COVID-19 for the second straight year.

The Breakfast on the Farm has been canceled for June, according to Gail Zollner, spokesperson for the Steele County American Dairy Association. The one-day event has been scheduled to take place this year at the Aaron Schroit farm in rural Owatonna.

Zollner said the dairy association still hopes to have some sort of Dairy Days promotion similar to what it had last year at the Steele County Fairgrounds. In late June, the group had a Drive-In Dairy Days where people could get milks. Other food vendors also joined in the event.

time during its 27-year history that the breakfast has been canceled. Last year officials called off the event shortly after the pandemic began. There was one other time the event was postponed because of a deluge of rain. However, the promotion was moved to later in the summer as a supper event.

The breakfast had been scheduled to take place this year at the Aaron Schroit farm in rural Owatonna. Zollner said the dairy association still hopes to have some sort of Dairy Days promotion similar to what it had last year at the Steele County Fairgrounds. In late June, the group had a Drive-In Dairy Days where people could get milks. Other food vendors also joined in the event.

## County Board receives public health update

BY CHRIS BALDWIN  
STAFF WRITER

During last week's meeting the Steele County Board of Commissioners listened to a presentation by Amy Caron, Public Health Director for both Steele and Dodge Counties. The big highlight of the presentation was the county's response to COVID.

Entering the second year of the pandemic, Caron and the county feel that things are beginning to stabilize. Steele County has had a total of 3,727 cases of COVID-19 and 14 deaths. According to Caron, there were 65 new cases the week of April 19.

"That's slightly down," Caron said. "However, we have been experiencing a spike here in Steele County over the past month. In fact, about a week ago, we were at the same spot as the middle

of January, so I'm glad to see this come down this past week."

Steele County led a spike of cases in the southeast region over the past month. "I'm hoping that we're on a downward slope now," Caron said. "We did have some clustered cases and some clustered spikes as associated with schools."

Caron said she remains hopeful that new cases will continue the trend of decreasing. "The good news is that we've had about 52% of our residents in Steele County who are 16 years or older who have gotten at least one dose of the vaccine," she explained.

"We are holding vaccine clinics usually about twice a week, usually on Wednesdays and Thursdays, sometimes on Wednesdays and Fridays," Caron said. While the slots for the vaccine were filled

during initial clinics, now it seems that there are open slots.

After reaching out to other counties, Caron and her team confirmed that this was a trend. "Everybody seems to be experiencing this dive of people taking the vaccine," she said. "They're experiencing the same thing in the metro area."

"I think we're at the point where we've covered those that really want the vaccine and now, we're at a point where we need to try to convince some people to get the vaccine," Caron said. Still, with 52% of residents vaccinated Steele County Public Health remains positive.

A big part of the county's success has been attributed to informing residents on public health. "We really wanted to get out and explain what public health does so the community

understands, and I think we've achieved that," Caron said.

Public health has worked with long-term care facilities, Mayo Clinic, and others within the community. "We have such outstanding healthcare partners within the community and I cannot stress just how great that relationship has been," Caron said. "That's been huge."

Caron also said public health has strived to reach under-served populations, including populations of color within the county. "This pandemic has been really rough on them," she said.

Early on, public health established a testing site at the Army and offered testing at long-term care facilities. "At this time, I really want to thank a lot of departments," Caron said. "It's been great to successfully run these vaccine clinics."

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**STEELE COUNTY Times**



|                |             |                |       |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------|
| World.....     | 153,000,000 | Freeborn.....  | 3,381 |
| Deaths.....    | 3,200,000   | Deaths.....    | 29    |
| Recovered..... | 89,600,000  | Recovered..... |       |
| U.S.....       | 32,400,000  | Mower.....     | 4,586 |
| Deaths.....    | 577,000     | Deaths.....    | 32    |
| Recovered..... | 22,265,000  | Recovered..... |       |

COVID-19 UPDATE

MN.....579,000

Deaths.....7,253

Recovered.....480,000

Steele.....3,786

Deaths.....15

Recovered.....3,615

Dodge.....1,804

Deaths.....4

Recovered.....1,755

AS OF MAY 3, 2021

AS OF MAY 3, 2021

**BLOTTER  
SPOTLIGHT**

**Domestic: On April 23, police responded to domestic disturbances in the 1900 block of 4th Ave. SE at 11:42 a.m. and the 500 block of State Ave. NW at 5:38 p.m. They arrested subjects at the scenes.**

## Toddler's alleged killer admits to murdering mother

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

The man accused of stuffing the body of a little girl in a ditch outside of Blooming Prairie has pleaded guilty to killing the girl's mother.

Dariaz Higgins, 37, of Milwaukee, pleaded guilty to first-degree intentional homicide and attempted first-degree intentional homicide in a Milwaukee courtroom on April 20.

Sentencing for Higgins is set for July 26. The plea came just days before Higgins was set to go on trial for the murder.

Higgins shot and killed Sierra Robinson outside of a Milwaukee apartment building on March 11, 2019. After the murder, he is accused of fleeing Wisconsin to Minnesota with the couple's daughter, Noelani Robinson. A nationwide Amber Alert had been issued to find the child.

On March 15, 2019, a passerby found Noelani's body wrapped in a blanket just north of Hwy. 218 and 30 by Blooming Prairie. The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and the Steele County Sheriff's Office investigated the death scene.

The Southern Minnesota Regional Medical Examiner's Office determined Noelani died from "homicide due to blunt force trauma to the head."

On March 5, 2020, the Mower County Attorney's Office filed unintentional second-degree murder charges against Higgins for the toddler's death, which was determined to have taken place in Austin.



Dariaz Higgins

The complaint against Higgins outlines that he and the child stayed at a motel in Austin from February 6 to March 10, 2019. He told investigators that Higgins "fell off a toilet" in the motel and died. He allegedly wrapped her in blankets and left her for a few days while he went to Milwaukee to get a vehicle.

He returned to Austin on March 10, allegedly put the girl's body in the vehicle and drove toward Minneapolis.



Noelani Robinson

The complaint states that Higgins put the girl's body in a ditch outside of Blooming Prairie because he knew she was dead and could not travel with him.

Following the grisly discovery, the Blooming Prairie community rallied to remember the toddler. A makeshift memorial was created and First Lutheran Church in BP collected and sent items to the family in Wisconsin.

Higgins has not entered a plea yet for Noelani's murder.

### CRIME BRIEF

#### Man faces strangulation charge in Owatonna domestic

A man faces felony charges in connection with a violent domestic disturbance in Owatonna.



Andrew Bogenschutz

Andrew Bogenschutz, 38, of Owatonna has been charged with domestic assault by strangulation and two other felony counts of domestic assault. In addition, he has been charged with knowingly failing to fulfill registration requirements as a predatory offender.

On April 15, a woman reported being the victim of a domestic assault. She alleged the argument took place over relationship issues and things led to physical violence.

Police said the victim claimed Bogenschutz grabbed her by the throat and pushed her against a wall. She said the force left her "seeing stars and losing control of her bladder."

According to police, Bogenschutz told the victim to shut up because he would do 46 months in prison. He also threatened to kill her if she called police, police reports said.

Officers saw red marks on the victim's neck consistent with the size and shape of fingers, police said. Police arrested Bogenschutz on April 19.

### COURT NEWS Steele County

The following cases were heard in Steele County District Court over the week of April 19 with Judge Joseph A. Buellet presiding:

Jermale J. King, 38, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of marijuana and gross misdemeanor domestic assault. King was sentenced to 175, 174 days in county jail, obtain and maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, chemical dependency evaluation, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state, no possession of firearms, domestic abuse evaluation and 3 years of supervised probation.

Joshua N. Stolte, 21, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony domestic assault and misdemeanor violation of no contact order. He was sentenced to 250, 11 days in county jail, domestic abuse evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, obtain and maintain employment, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state, no possession of firearms, domestic violence inventory and 3 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court over the week of April 19 – 25:

#### BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Merton E. Burke, 55,

Blooming Prairie, speeding, \$215; Cody E. Dill, 28, Perham, suspended license, \$275; Montrez S. McGruder, 30, Columbia Heights, possession of license, \$275; Clayton L. Nelson, 34, Dexter, expired tabs, \$105; Noah S. Springer, 19, Rochester, revoked license, \$275; Jimmy A. Walker, 50, revoked license and no insurance, \$475.

#### MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Sharmarke A. Abdi, 27, Savage, weaving over lane lines and possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, \$225; Nasra J. Ahmed, 44, Owatonna, failure to yield, \$125; Vamsidhar Attaluri, 41, Plymouth, speeding, \$215; Madalyn N. Brainerd, 23, Mankato, speeding, \$135; Shawn E. Campagna, 46, Albert Lea, suspended license, \$275; Joshua D. Carlson, 25, Coon Rapids, speeding, \$125; Brian A. Carpe, 34, Neptune City, NJ, speeding, \$115; Jenny M. Contreras, 18, Owatonna, speeding and permit violation, \$185; Tashema R. Cooke, 36, Owatonna, hands free violation, \$125; Donna J. Copeland, 29, Minneapolis, speeding, \$135; James S. Cummins, 50, Lombard, IL, speeding, \$115; Kenneth L. Davis, 58, Woodbury, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Rhonda A. Davis, 33, Duluth, speeding, \$135; Tiesha M. Day, 29, St. Paul, revoked license, \$275; Maximino A. Delgado, 31, Albert Lea, no license and speeding, \$235; Colin A. Engberg, 28, Anoka, suspended license, \$275; Mark J. Farmer, 57, Paris, TX, speeding, \$115;

Megan M. Flaherty, 24, South St. Paul, speeding, \$115; Jessica V. Flores, 40, Minneapolis, no license, \$475; Talia P. Garcia, 25, St. Paul, possession of marijuana, \$125; Gari O. Gari, 21, Austin, speeding, \$125; Jacob R. Golden, 35, Nelson, speeding, \$115; Erick D. Gomez, 35, Houston, TX, no license, \$175; Mihret F. Halle, 30, Ankeny, IA, speeding, \$125; Shelby A. Haug, 20, Northfield, speeding and no insurance, \$415; Faith A. Hausen, 19, Fairbault, seat belt, \$100; Felipe E. Hernandez, 44, Monticello, speeding and cancelled license, \$355; Richard S. Iverson, 21, Blooming Prairie, speeding, \$115; Ricardo M. Jimenez, 30, Chatsworth, CA, speeding, \$215; Landon M. Klatt, 20, Madrid, IA, speeding, \$125; Tiffani M. Koehler-Sear, 27, Albert Lea, revoked license, \$275; Mallory J. Kurth, 34, Chicago City, revoked license, \$275; Mikayla N. Larson, 25, Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$275; Gregory S. McPherson, 59, Bloomington, speeding, \$275; Treyvon M. Mockette, 18, St. Paul, no license, \$175; Angel A. Morales Cano, 20, Bancroft, IA, speeding, \$125; Hunter L. More, 23, Owatonna, no insurance, \$475; Andy P. Mott, 43, Austin, seat belt, \$100; Xavier M. Murphy, 19, Austin, speeding, \$135; Barry A. Nelson, 53, North Liberty, IA, no license, \$175; Stephen A. Palmer, 65, Renwick, IA, illegal u-turn, \$125; Addison S. Perdue, 23, Brooklyn Park, speeding, \$115; Aziel A. Portillo Romero, 20, South St. Paul, suspended license, \$275; Kelvin X. Rivera Martinez,

24, Jeffers, speeding, \$135; Capriteshay N. Rogers, 29, Minneapolis, revoked license and hands free violation, \$225; Michael J. Shadow, 19, Dodge Center, revoked license, \$275; Kewan P. Smith, 29, St. Paul, revoked license, \$275; Timothy Smith, 65, Brooklyn Park, speeding, \$215; Marco T. Spangler, 28, St. Paul, speeding, revoked license and possession of marijuana, \$625; Brittany A. Tyler Line, 20, Greenwood Village, CO, speeding, \$125; Shannon E. Wallace, 30, St. Petersburg, FL, no license, \$175; Victor H. Wegner, 59, Medford, seat belt, \$100; Mohamed A. Well, 24, Fairbault, speeding, \$135; Steven C. Williams, 42, Chicago, IL, speeding, \$115.

#### OWATONNA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Karen A. Cully, 32, New Richland, speeding, \$135; Robert S. Garza, 18, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Aleisha M. Gordon, 28, possession of marijuana, \$125; Smilie F. Granadoz, 24, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Jesse M. Greenslade, 19, Kenyon, suspended license, \$275; Robert C. Hayes, 37, Waseca, revoked registration, no insurance and revoked license, \$775; Caitlin J. Johnston, 23, Rochester, theft, \$175, no trespassing at Fleet Farm and 1 year of supervised probation; Corey J. Jones, 23, Minneapolis, assault, stay of adjudication, diversion program and

2 years of supervised probation; Jamie Krutson, 43, Owatonna, no insurance, \$275; Jessica M. Larson, 38, Owatonna, failure to stop for traffic control signal, \$145 and 1 year of supervised probation; Bobbi L. Love, 35, Waseca, failure to stop for traffic control signal, \$175 and 30 days of unsupervised probation; Juan F. Mendoza, 44, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275; Carter E. Olmans, 16, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Payton M. Schwartz, 18, Owatonna, operate motorcycle without protective gear and headlights, \$165; James W. Shea, 42, Kasson, stop sign, \$125; Nurdin A. Sheikh, 29, Rochester, DWI, \$156, attend MADD impact panel, 5 hours of community service and 1 year of supervised probation; Elizabeth A. Shively, 85, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Nicholas H. Skoggen, 42, Fairbault, DWI, \$400, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, attend MADD impact panel, substance abuse subtle screening inventory, 30 hours of community service and 1 year of supervised probation; Jacob P. Slater, 21, Owatonna, criminal damage to property, stay of adjudication, \$500, diversion program and 2 years of supervised probation; Brandon L. Swee, 24, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$105; Edward W. Thorson, 27, Owatonna, failure to deliver title and seat belt, \$200; Auzztin M. Williams, 20, San Antonio, TX, assault and underage drinking and driving, \$125, 1 day in county jail and 6 months of unsupervised probation.

#### STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Norbert L. Andrade, 18, Dodge Center, speeding, \$115; Abigail A. Attleson, 30, Austin, no insurance, \$275; Cody H. Borwago, 26, Medford, stop sign, \$125; Tyler M. Buck, 17, Medford, speeding, \$135; Sean M. Cicero, 41, Owatonna, contempt of court, \$1,125 and 126 days in county jail; Carla J. Dahlberg, 47, Medford, cancelled license, stay of adjudication, \$80 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Michael T. Fink, 37, Medford, possession of paraphernalia, \$175; Donovan J. Gillilan, 51, Monticello, speeding, \$115; Calvin R. Harrison,

47, Minneapolis, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Larry L. Hough, 45, Burnsville, speeding, \$215; Brandon J. Jano, 30, Waseca, revoked license, \$275; De Sazio L. Johnson, 25, Minneapolis, revoked license, \$275; Joseph D. Langer, 17, Fairbault, speeding, \$135; Samson Maundu, 39, Rochester, speeding, \$115; Joseph R. Medall, 57, Geneva, failure to notify owner of property damage, \$175; Joseph N. Peterson, 21, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Anukone J. Somphanth, 21, Byron, speeding, \$115; Frank E. Springer, 64, Owatonna, speeding, \$215; Seth D. Thompson, 21, Ellendale, fleeing police officer, \$175 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Selena K. Torres, 19, Albert Lea, use fictitious information, \$175 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Elazar B. Valenzuela, 21, Tucson, AZ, speeding, \$135; Joseph J. Wallin, 24, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Myron W. Wunderlich IV, 53, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Marilyn A. Zacharias, 80, Owatonna, stop sign, \$125.

#### POLICE BLOTTER Steele County

##### OWATONNA POLICE

**April 23 Theft:** Police received theft reports from the 200 block of Beech Ave. NE at 3:14 p.m., on Allan Ave. SW at 4:48 p.m. and the 2800 block of 18th St. NW at 6:37 p.m.

**Shoplifting:** Police issued shoplifting citations in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 4:01 p.m. and 4:18 p.m.

**Criminal Sexual Conduct:** Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 600 block of Rose St. E. at 4:28 p.m.

**Mental Health:** Officers responded to a mental health incident in the 600 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 4:32 p.m.

**Warrant:** Police made a warrant arrest in the 500 block of Elm Ave. S. at 5:54 p.m.

**April 24 Welfare:** Officer conducted a welfare check in the 1000 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 6:09 a.m.

**April 25 Theft:** At 4:51 p.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 600 block of Bridge St. W.

**April 26 Fraud:** Officer took a See BLOTTER on A7 ►

**BUSINESS of the WEEK**

Salinas Auto Repair and Sales has been in business and a Chamber Member since 1992. We appreciate Robin, Robert, Medo and Stephen for their continued support of the Chamber and the Blooming Prairie Area Community.

Salinas Auto Repair and Sales is located at 656 3rd St. N.E., Blooming Prairie. They are the oldest independent repair shop in Blooming Prairie and are celebrating 29 years of business in November. They cater to the Spanish community in addition to servicing and selling a wide range of vehicles – Electric, Diesel, Truck, Sedan – check them out on their website: <http://salinas-sales.edan.io/> or give them a call at 507-583-6620 today!

**Congratulations to Salinas Auto Repair and Sales for being recognized as the Chamber of Commerce Business of the Week!**

**FEDERATED INSURANCE**

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Visit [federatedinsurance.com](http://federatedinsurance.com) for COVID-19 resources.



## How seniors can learn new technology skills online



*Dear Savvy Senior, Can you recommend some good technology classes or online learning resources for inexperienced seniors? I have a computer and a smartphone, but my knowledge and skills are pretty limited. Tech Challenged Senior*

Dear Senior, There are many different technology teaching tools available to older adults that can help you learn new tech skills so you can better utilize your devices. Here are some good options to consider.

**Local classes or workshops:** Depending on where you live, there may be community resources that offer beginning computer and personal technology classes, be it online or in-person, for older adults that are new to technology. To find out what's available in your area, contact your local public library, senior center, college or university, or local stores that sell computers. Your Area Agency on Aging may also be able to help you. Visit the [Eldercare Locator at Eldercare.gov](http://Eldercare Locator at Eldercare.gov) or call 800-677-1116 to get your local number.

**GetSetUp.io:** This is one of the best online learning websites that partners with guides to provide training on tech tools for adults 50 and older. They provide more than 350 online classes taught in real-time by retired educators and tech industry experts in a way that lets older adults learn-by-doing, versus just watching a video.

Their technology classes—all taught via Zoom—cover things like learning how to use smartphones and

tablets, how to set-up and use Zoom, how to utilize Gmail features, how to recognize online scams, how to sell your stuff online and so much more. Most of their classes are free, however some charge a small fee.

**SeniorPlanet.org:** Created and sponsored by national nonprofit OATS (Older Adults Technology Services) and recently joining forces with AARP, Senior Planet offers 60-and-older adults a wide variety of free online courses, programs, and activities that are taught in real-time to help seniors learn new technology skills, as well as save money, get in shape and make new friends.

Some of their more popular tech classes include "All Things Zoom," "Everything Smartphones," and an "Introduction to Social Media." They even offer a "lunch & learn—tech discussion group" offered at various times throughout the year where you can ask questions as well as share your struggles and experiences.

And, if you ever have a technology question that pops up during the week, you can call their National Senior Planet Hotline for tech help at 920-666-1959 anytime Monday through Friday during working hours.

**OasisEverywhere.org:** This nonprofit educational organization for older adults provides more than 10 low-cost/free online computer, internet and mobile technology courses for beginners. And when the pandemic dies down, they will resume offering beginner tech classes in their 27 locations (located in nine states) throughout the country.

**CandooTech.com:** This company provides fee-based online tech support and training to help older adults feel more comfortable with phones, computers, tablets, home safety devices and more.

Their specially trained tech concierges will teach you how to use your technology, fix what's not working and install software, as well as learn how set-up and use email, video chat, social media, online shopping and entertainment, ride sharing services and more.

They offer one-hour, one-on-one or small group sessions for \$50, or you can become a member and get two 90-minute training sessions plus unlimited quick support (30 minutes or less) for \$180 per year. They also provide device installation and set-up done remotely for \$180.

**TechBoomers.com:** This is a free educational website that provides video and article tutorials that teach older adults and other inexperienced technology users how to use the most popular and trusted websites, apps and devices.

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

STEELE COUNTY

*Always local, all the time.*

## History from the News Archives

### Superior music ratings



Blooming Prairie students competed for music awards in April 2001. Those receiving superior ratings included: Back row, from left: Laura Mans, Sarah Spande, Emily Grant, Lisi Ingvalson, Gary Tashima and Gretchen Powers; front row: Wipusa Sriyapai, Marissa Block, Emily Wencil, Sara Mueller, Stephanie Dirksen and Amy Johnson

### 10 Years Ago May 3, 2011

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

Blooming Prairie athletes of the week are: Erica Manske, she continues to set the pace on the pitching mound for the Blossoms softball team and holds the record for strikeouts. Dylan Hatch, he led the Blossoms golf team in their first match of the season with the low round at the invitational at Willow Creek; Anna Noble, had low score for the girl's golf team in two meets last week; Pat Jones, led the boys golf team with low score in a dual meet at JWP.

On April 27th eighteen new members were inducted into the Blooming Prairie High School National Honor Society. The new members are: Adam Driessen, Taylor Farr, Alex Fiebigler, Hunter Henderson, Lucas Hueman, Jeanna Johnson, Patrick Jones, Dylan Jorgenson, Lyndsay Pryor, Samantha Reynolds, Nicholas Richardson, Maggie Sorenson, Emmeline Soto, Meagan Spiller, Dylan Srsen Katie Williamson, Kayla Wobschall and Lucas Zellmer.

### 20 Years Ago May 3, 2001

ELSIE SLINGER, EDITOR

Ready or not, it is time to think Fourth of July. This year's winner of the Old Fashioned Fourth of July button contest was ninth grader, Matt Hansen, son of Darrell and Cindy Hansen. The winner was picked from eight students who submitted designs and picked by the Chamber of Commerce members.

The eighth-grade girls traveling basketball team won their Pacesetter Regional Tournament in Waterville. They now qualify for the state tournament to be held in St. Cloud in

July. The tournament players were Melissa Johnson, Janna Lindquist, Karl Lueth, Patricia Mans, Alicia Nelson, Megan Peterson, Calla Swenson, Chelsey Symes and Alyssa McDonald (unable to play because of injury. The girls are coached by Irv Peterson.

### 50 Years Ago May 4, 1971

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

Gary Benson has joined the staff of radio station KBUN in Bemidji, MN, as a combination announcer-engineer. He is a graduate of the Radio-Television Broadcasting and FXX license courses at the Brown Institute. He is a 1967 graduate of Blooming Prairie High School where he played baseball and was a member of the band. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Belvin Benson of Blooming Prairie.

Coach Don Shelton's Blooming Prairie golf team won the 4th Annual Invitational held at the Blooming Prairie Country Club. The win gives the golfers their third straight win this season.

### 75 Years Ago May 2, 1946

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

Donald Estenson, son of Superintendent and Mrs. Emil Estenson, arrived Saturday from Camp McCoy, where he was discharged from the U.S. Army after serving in the European theatre.

Two fire calls this week. The department was called to the house of the John Flannagan acreage where a 15 x 25-foot chicken house was totally destroyed by the fire. The fire department was also called to the rear of Pearl's Cafe, where a roofing tar cart became ignited when the operator left it temporarily unattended.

Owatonna Photo News

### 31 Years Ago

May 3, 1990

TOM SHEA, PUBLISHER

The McKinley School Patrols have recently received the Outstanding Safety Award, the highest award given by the Minnesota Safety Council. They are one of 11 patrol units among the 800 units, who received the recognition. McKinley has 38 patrol members and there are about 35,000 patrols in Minnesota. They have received awards 10 of the past 12 years.

## ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

HOME OF THE SHINING KNIGHTS

*Students of the Week*

*Charlie 4TH GRADE*



**CHARLIE CLUBB** is a "Shining Knight" in 4th grade. Charlie is a hard worker and puts great effort into his work. He has a thirst for learning and he loves to fill his brain with new knowledge. He likes to "dig deep" and wants to understand concepts. If he does not understand it, he works hard to figure it out. Charlie always completes his work on time and it is done well. Charlie gets along well with his peers and is willing to help his classmates. Congratulations Charlie on being a 4th Grade Shining Knight!

Parents are Phil & Katie | Charlie was nominated by Mrs. Wobschall

*Martha 3RD GRADE*

**MARTHA**, you are our 3rd grade Shining Knight! Martha is a hard worker who likes to always do her best work! She is helpful to others and always has an encouraging word. She is an awesome example of Jesus in our classroom, reminding others to speak with courtesy and respect. Her leadership skills are seen on the playground as she quarterback's her football team. She makes sure others are given equal opportunities to shine. Martha has a huge heart and cares well for her classmates. Keep doing you, Martha! Congratulations!



Parents are Ron & Kim | Martha was nominated by Mrs. Lattery



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



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## TURN OFF the television...



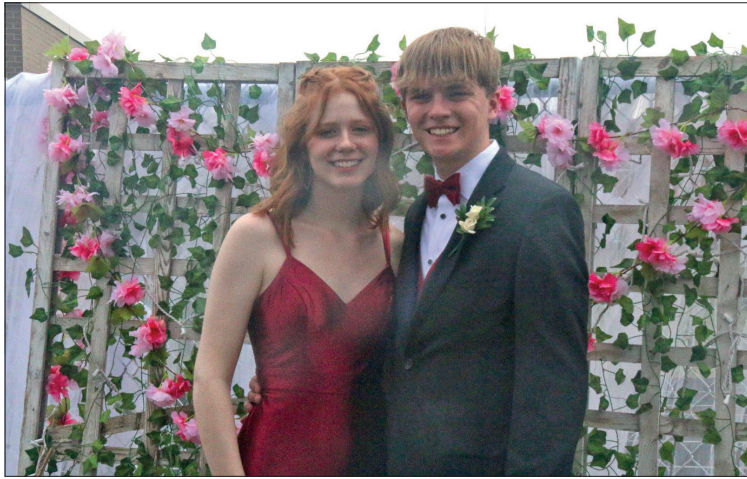
Encourage your children to make reading the newspaper a part of their everyday routine for lifelong learning.

STEELE COUNTY  
**TIMES**  
*Always local, all the time.*

# Celebrating prom during a pandemic

STAFF PHOTOS BY ALEX NUEHRING

COVID-19 didn't keep Blooming Prairie juniors and seniors from celebrating their prom Saturday afternoon outdoors under ideal weather conditions at the high school. They had the grand march on McFarland Field before boarding a bus to go to Owatonna for the rest of their festivities.



A wall of flowers provides a backdrop for Aine Stasko and Ethan Grant to share a moment together after the grand march.



Some fun got thrown into the mix with, from left: Drew Kittelson, Dawson Sorensen, Cole Christanson and Luke Larkoski pull their sunglasses down a bit before giving a point to the crowd.



Remember Charlie's Angels? Brooke Purrier and Mitchell Fiebigler do as they begin their grand march with a Charlie's Angels pose.



Piper Lund and Jared Rosas Cruz share a funny moment together during the grand march.



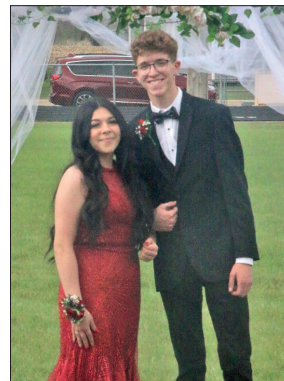
In keeping with the appropriateness of the times we're living in with COVID-19, Charlea Underwood and Jacob Naatz share a fist bump before their first pose.



Shyane Jorgenson and Boone Carlson give a big smile as they pose during the grand march.



Prom brought some giggles from those who participated. Rachel Thompson and Rose Michaud laugh after Michaud pretended to propose to Thompson.



Danielle Pena and Chris Shepard both give big smiles as they pose during the grand march.



## Sheriff earns spot in top national group

◀ **SHERIFF** from A1 an FBI Trilogy course, which focuses on organizational leadership for police leaders.

Getting involved in extensive police training comes at a critical time in law enforcement, especially with the George Floyd killing at the hands of a police officer in Minneapolis last year.

"I've always been active in this and with all the events going on across this nation with law enforcement drawing a lot of criticism, being active in this training is putting

"I am going to have a legacy of leading law enforcement in a better direction."

**Sheriff Lon Thiele**  
Elected to National Board

your voice forward." Thiele said. "I've always attended training that would benefit my role as sheriff and the communities I serve."

The sheriff said he gets excited every time he attends any FBI-LEEDA training. "Any time I come back from training, I always put something forward

to make sure we are doing the best for our county residents," Thiele said.

Thiele said the goal of FBI-LEEDA is to develop better leaders to assist all law enforcement personnel.

In regards to the Floyd killing, Thiele expects police reform to take place in Minnesota

and the rest of the nation. "We need to make sure law enforcement is doing its job properly and it all reverts back to proper training," he said.

Last year, Thiele took on a similar role by being elected to the Minnesota Sheriff's Association executive board. He will become president of the MSA in a few years. Thiele wants to help in any way he can in training police officers.

"I am going to have a legacy of leading law enforcement in a better direction," said Thiele.

## Former sheriff Ringhofer dies at 70

◀ **FORMER** from A1 sheriff worked with a bridge crew with the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

"He took a liking to it," Fisher said. And, at Fisher's urging, Ringhofer applied to be a sheriff's deputy and joined the Steele County Sheriff's Office on Jan. 1, 1980.

Ringhofer quickly rose through the ranks, being promoted to investigator in 1983. In 1999, he was promoted to chief deputy. On March 1, 2002, Ringhofer was appointed sheriff, replacing retiring sheriff Bill Hildebrandt. Ringhofer remained as the county's top law enforcement official until he retired on April 30, 2010.

"I was glad to see him climb the ladder to become sheriff," said Fisher.

Fisher recalled how the city and county "worked well together" in the early years when both he and Ringhofer were officers. "It was a close-knit law enforcement community," Fisher said.

For about two years, Fisher and Ringhofer overlapped as top officers serving the area. Fisher as chief of Owatonna

and Ringhofer as county sheriff. Fisher retired in 2004.

"It was easy to go to each other for help," Fisher said of the years they served as chief-sheriff combo. "We had a lot of inner workings between the two departments."

But Fisher and Ringhofer's relationship extended far beyond work. They have known each other for about 50 years, starting with motorcycle rides together. Later they started fishing, hunting and playing softball together. Ringhofer married the sister of Fisher's wife.

"We became very close," Fisher said, adding the friendship continued after the two left law enforcement.

Fisher said he will remember Ringhofer most for his hunting skills. Ringhofer often traveled to places like Wyoming and Utah to hunt pheasant, bear, turkey, elk and deer. "He loved to hunt," Fisher said. "You say hunting and he was ready to go."

Funeral services are planned for Thursday morning at St. John Lutheran Church in Owatonna. A full obituary can be found on page A12.

## Putting down roots in rural Minnesota

◀ **PUTTING** from A2 the couple quite like life in rural Minnesota. The pair realized they wanted to raise their children in their home community. Today, Shawn, Patrick and their five children live on a hobby farm two miles from the farm where Shawn grew up and her family still lives. Shawn serves her community through her law practice and is proud to demonstrate that small towns are an excellent place for business owners to be. She has found that people are eager to support local businesses and has enjoyed being able to give back to the community where she grew up.

A recent report from the Center for Rural Policy and Development found that wages in rural Minnesota can go further in meeting the cost of living compared to the seven-county metro area. Employers and economic development professionals can use this report, and the accompanying tool that shows wage data for various occupations across the state, to recruit more people to move to rural Minnesota. Additionally, remote work has become so commonplace that more people are able to live where they want to live instead of where their work is located. This is a huge opportunity for small towns to gain

a younger generation of workers who are committed to building their lives in rural Minnesota.

SMIF is able to play a supporting role for people moving back to the region. For entrepreneurs who want to start or grow a business here, we offer business financing and training opportunities. For families who have young children, we support early childhood through a variety of programs and funding, including efforts to enhance the availability and quality of childcare facilities.

Personally, there is no place I would rather be than in rural Minnesota. As the pandemic continues to shape our

lives, I believe more and more people will be moving back home or choosing rural where they can work remotely or start their own businesses while taking advantage of small-town life.

To read more stories about young people who are choosing to work and live in SMIF's 20-county region, visit [smifoundation.org/](http://smifoundation.org/) stories.

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

## Deputy's PIT maneuver brings chase to stop, driver arrested

**BY RICK BUSSLER**  
PUBLISHER

A Waseca man faces a felony charge after a deputy deployed the PIT maneuver during a high-speed chase in Steele County.

Sebastian Robert Schumacher, 26, has been charged with fleeing police in a motor ve-

hicle, which is a felony. In addition, he has also been charged with driving after revocation and reckless driving, which are misdemeanors.

The charges stem from an incident on April 26 in which a Steele County sheriff's deputy was monitoring traffic on Hwy. 14 at 72nd Avenue. The deputy saw

a smaller car increasing speed on a truck traveling eastbound on Hwy. 14. The officer clocked the vehicle at 88 mph.

After the deputy pulled into traffic to stop the vehicle, it increased speed to 111 mph. As the vehicle approached 18th Street S.W., it made erratic movements by swerving back and

forth, the criminal complaint said.

The deputy performed the PIT maneuver, which spins the vehicle out of control and brings it to a stop. After he was taken into custody, Schumacher was apologetic to the deputy saying that he was sorry, according to the complaint. He stated he didn't know why he

failed to stop other than he was on parole and was scared.

A small plastic box and a baggie that contained marijuana was found by police during a search of the vehicle. The deputy also located another small plastic container on the driver's side floor that contained a glass pipe

and rubber tubing, which are commonly used for ingesting illegal narcotics, the complaint said.

Court records show Schumacher has a revoked license due to a DUI offense in February 2017.

The felony charge is punishable up to three years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

### PUBLIC SAFETY

◀ **BLOTTER** from A4 report of a fraud incident in the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S, at 11:57 a.m.

**April 27**  
**Theft:** Officers took theft reports in the 700 block of 16th St. SE at 7:56 a.m. and the 1000 block of Frontage Rd. W, at 4:36 p.m.

**April 28**  
**Thefts:** Police received theft reports from the 300 block of 22nd St. SE at 8:32 a.m. and the 200 block of Mill St. E, at 5:41 p.m.

**Identity:** At 8:49 a.m., identity theft occurred in the 600 block of El Dorado St. SE.

**Suspicion:** Police responded to suspicious activity in the 5000 block of Hoffman Dr. NW at 2:26 p.m.

**Shoplifting:** At 2:46 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W.

**April 29**  
**Warrant:** Officer made a warrant arrest in the 600 block of Willowbrook St. NE at 8:32 a.m.

**Child Protection:** Police received a child protection report from the 500 block of 15th St. NE at 1:44 p.m.

**Restraining Order:** At 4:53 p.m., a restraining order violation occurred in the 300 block of Mineral Springs Road NE.

**STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF**

**April 23**  
**Crash:** Paramedics and deputies responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries in the 11000 block of County Road 3 in Summit Township at 7:35 a.m.

**Shoplifting:** At 12:18 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 100 block of Riverview Court in Medford.

**Drugs:** Deputies responded to drug activity at the detention

center at 8:45 p.m.

**April 24**  
**Hit and Run:** At 5:12 p.m., a hit and run accident occurred in the 300 block of 4th Ave. W. in Ellendale.

**April 25**  
**DWI:** Deputy made a DWI arrest at Highway 30 E. and 64th Ave. SE in Blooming Prairie Township at 1:52 a.m.

**Theft:** Deputy took a theft report in the 4000 block of Crane Creek Road in Owatonna Township at 4:53 p.m.

**Drugs:** Deputies responded to drug activity at the detention center at 5:10 p.m.

**April 26**  
**Pursuit:** Deputies pursued a subject at Highway 14 W. and 39th Ave. SW in Owatonna Township at 6:58 a.m.

**April 27**  
**Burglary:** Deputies began a burglary investigation in the 15600 block of 35th Ave. SW in Summit Township at 6:14 a.m.

**Suspicion:** Deputies responded to suspicious activity in the 8900 block of 46th St. SE in Aurora Township at 8:56 a.m.

**Fraud:** Deputy took a report of a fraud incident in the 400 block of Main St. S, in Medford at 1:43 p.m.

**Disturbance:** Deputies responded to a disturbance at County Road 3 and Highway 30 W. in Summit Township at 8:44 p.m.

**April 29**  
**DWI:** Deputy made a DWI arrest in the 3900 block of 28th St. SW in Owatonna Township at 12:21 a.m.

**Crash:** At 9:16 a.m., a motor vehicle accident occurred at 69th St. NE and 34th Ave. NE in Medford Township.

**Suspicion:** Deputies responded to suspicious activity in the 8600 block of 108th St. SW in Lemond Township at 8:32 p.m.

**ARRESTS**  
Steele County

**STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF**

Darlan Margaret Bolchman-Rejula, 27, arrested at 10:20 a.m. April 28, warrant arrest, held for court.  
Edward Anthony Thomas, 44, arrested at 1:31 a.m. April 29, DWI, held for court.  
Christian Markus Pickett, 33, arrested at 5 a.m. April 29, extradition hearing, arrest, held for court.

**COURT NEWS**  
Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District court the week of April 19 - 25:

**DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Jason A. Andrist, 50, Mantorville, parking violation, \$32; John G. Baker, 40, Dodge Center, disorderly conduct, \$280; Cody J. Cunningham, 17, West Concord, speeding, \$280; Mark T. Fielding, 50, Owatonna, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$1,000, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, mental health evaluation, cognitive skill training, 100 hours of community service and 5 years of supervised probation; Eric F. Heins, 58, Mantorville, burning permit violation, \$105; Marty A. Hinrichs, 47, Eyota, speeding, \$220; Jimmy A. Jones, 23, Lee Summit, MO, speeding, \$220; Kelsey K. McGrane, 34, Rochester, speeding, \$130; Jose G. Mendez, 41, Kenyon, invalid license, \$180; Tanner C. Minette, 25, Mantorville, DWI,

\$1,005, ignition interlock, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments and 2 years of supervised probation; Bill E. Ndumbe, 18, Rochester, speeding, \$380; Garrett C. Rasmussen, 20, Dodge Center, invalid license, \$180; Nicholas L. Schulz, 16, Mantorville, speeding, \$220; Thomas L. Stammen, 60, Lonsdale, jay passing, \$130; Scott D. Tester, 32, Minneapolis, disorderly conduct, 45 days in county jail, Ashton S. Voss, 18, Dodge Center, speeding, \$140; Nathaniel B. Wallin, 26, Rochester, speeding, \$380; Fred K. Yearagay, 36, Dodge Center, invalid license and speeding, \$220.

**KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Heather J. Behnken, 44, Oranoc, careless driving, \$75; Chastidy A. Burgo, 28, St. Paul, Harmony, hands free violation, \$130; Samantha L. Keefe, 42, Byron, speeding, \$140; Annie M. Leitzner, 35, Minneapolis, DWI, \$455, 4 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments and 2 years of supervised probation; Logan J. Onken, 28, Dodge Center, revoked license, \$280; Giovanni Padilla, 28, Kasson, possession of marijuana and DWI, \$405, chemical dependency evaluation, no controlled substance use and 2 years of supervised probation; Wesley T. Parson, 36, Dodge Center, DWI, \$1,005, 30 days in county jail/home electronic monitoring and 2 years of supervised probation; Jezreel J. Ramirez Olmeda, 33, Rochester, stop sign, expired registration,

speeding and revoked license, \$700; Megan A. Reed, 36, Byron, suspended license, \$280; Rachel H. Wieboldt, 38, Pine Island, DWI, \$505, chemical assessment, no alcohol use, ignition interlock program and 1 year of supervised probation; Brian T. Woods, 43, Rochester, invalid license and probation violation, \$480; Myron W. Wunderlich IV, 33, Owatonna, revoked license, \$280.

**MN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

William J. Barry, 55, Rochester, hunt pheasants without stamp validation, \$130.

**MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER**

Karen L. Adams, 51, Byron, speeding, \$120; Travis R. Andrist, 39, Kasson, speeding, \$140; Brenda L. Bayardo, 36, Owatonna, speeding and no registration, \$320; Timothy J. Brown, 38, Cambridge, limited license violation, \$180; Ethan G. Burgett, 21, Emmons, seat belt, \$105; Kyle G. Greene, 34, Byron, speeding, \$120; Melissa L. Hitchcock, 33, Hayfield, speeding, \$130; Katherine J. Knetter, 26, Kenyon, speeding, \$120; Brett A. Persons, 15, Mankato, possession of paraphernalia, \$130; Payton D. Richard, 19, Rochester, allow illegal operation, \$180; Scott A. Simon, 47, Owatonna, speeding, \$130; Kayla M. Thompson-Wooner, 27, Rochester, speeding, \$220; Breanna M. Williams, 29, Byron, no insurance, \$280.

**WEST CONCORD POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Ann M. Rassavong, 31, St. Paul, speeding, \$140; Keith A. Schandorff, 54, West Concord, parking violation, \$32; Calvin J.

Shilts II, 25, Hampton, suspended license, \$280.

**OWATONNA FIRE**

**April 16**  
**Crash:** Fire rescue responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries at 54th Ave. SE and Highway 14 E, at 7:23 a.m.

**April 17**  
**Accident:** At 1:54 a.m., a motor vehicle accident with injuries occurred at 3rd Ave. NW and 21st Ave. SE: Fire personnel assisted with a police matter in the 2200 block of Hartle Ave. SE at 11 a.m.

**Burning:** Firefighters responded to an authorized controlled burning at 18th St. SE and 84th Ave. SE at 1:48 p.m.

**Carbon Monoxide:** At 6:59 p.m., a carbon monoxide incident occurred in the 100 block of Cedar Ave. N.

**April 20**  
**Fire:** Firefighters responded to a transport vehicle fire on interstate 35 at 8:06 a.m.

**April 21**  
**Crash:** At 5:51 p.m., a motor vehicle accident with injuries occurred in the 3500 block of 29th St. SW.

**April 22**  
**Brush:** Firefighters responded to a brush fire in the 1200 block of Frontage Road W. at 5:46 p.m.

**Building:** Firefighters responded to a building fire in the 5200 block of Kenyon Road NE at 6:22 p.m.

**Fire:** Fire personnel assisted with a prescribed fire at Cedar Ave. N. and 36th St. at 8:44 a.m.

**April 23**  
**Brush:** At 11:18 p.m., a brush fire occurred in the 5200 block of Kenyon Road NE.



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSLER

Ellendale farmer Dean Jirousek began planting his soybeans last week. Once his soybeans are in the ground, he'll plant his sweet corn.

## Spring planting underway: commodity prices strong

▲ **SPRING** from A1 heading into spring planting with the perfect combination that will likely lead to revenue they haven't seen in at least eight years.

"I am super optimistic right now because crop prices have jumped up significantly," said Jirousek as he stepped away from his tractor last Thursday afternoon to reload more corn seed into the planter. He also said farmers are finding the perfect combination of good soil, great weather conditions and excellent commodity prices.

Specifically, Jirousek pointed to corn and soybean prices, which finished at \$7.39

per bushel and \$15.74, respectively, April 30 on the Chicago Board of Trade. "That's an eight-year high," he said. "The last time we saw those kinds of prices was in 2013. It has put farmers in a good mood."

By comparison, corn prices averaged \$3.67 from 2013-2019 and soybeans were often below \$9 during that period.

Jirousek said he credits the rebound in commodity prices to several factors, including weather conditions throughout the U.S. and South America as well as demand for grains to be exported.

Jirousek, 66, operates 400 acres of corn, soybeans, sweet corn

and peas. "I'm noted as the small farmer in the neighborhood," he said with a smile.

Fueled by great weather conditions over the past week, Jirousek has finished planting his field corn and turned to soybeans on April 30. "Planting soybeans in April is unheard of," he said. "It's going in fast... it has been perfect."

He said he plans to plant sweet corn within the next two weeks.

When asked what the greatest reward is from farming, Jirousek pointed to the ground and said, "It starts right here. A farmer is successful if he grows something."

Jirousek said that for the time and invest-

ment devoted to farming, he would probably be better off doing something else. But he said it all goes back to the crops that grow, which motivates him to continue farming. "I love working with the soil," he said.

The past several years, Jirousek said, have been particularly tough for him and other farmers as they have been forced to watch their expenses closer than ever. "There wasn't a lot of profit margin," he said. "But, now we can buy things we had delayed over the past few years."

Asked about the priorities for farmers, Jirousek said: "The list is long. Most farmers

are looking to replace equipment they have put off for years."

Jirousek said he is hopeful that the crops he is planting right now will lead to a bountiful harvest. He also said he will be praying for rain this summer.

And he's cautiously optimistic the commodity prices will remain where they are at.

"Sometimes these high markets are short-lived," Jirousek said. "That's the big unknown if the markets will remain."

For now, Jirousek said they are sitting in a good position.

"There is not a whole lot to complain about," he said.

## Minnesota farmers' 2020 bottom line improves

Minnesota farms saw improved profitability in 2020, despite the challenges COVID-19 created. Much of this increased profitability is related to improved commodity prices in the third and fourth quarters of 2020.

Median net farm income for Minnesota farms reached \$106,969 in 2020.

This was a welcome increase after seven years of low profitability. When adjusted for inflation, 2020 farm profits were above average compared to the historical records tracked by University of Minnesota Extension and the Minnesota State Agricultural Centers of Excellence. Overall, the average Minnesota farm saw improved working capital, positive earned net worth change and improved debt coverage in 2020.

"Minnesota farmers have faced many struggles in recent years," said Pauline Van Nuden of the University of Minnesota's Center for Farm Financial Management. "This past year's increased profitability has given many a sigh of relief and renewed hope for the future of their farm."

All farm types experienced positive net farm income last year, something not seen since 2014. For much of the year, the pandemic created considerable uncertainty and many challenges for farms and small businesses alike. Without the commodity price improvements and government payments received, Minnesota farms would have experienced an eighth year of low profits.

"Government support payments played a crucial role for our farms during the initial phases of the See MINNESOTA on A10 ▶



STAFF PHOTO BY DEB FLEMING

Ron Wegner, of rural Faribault, removes the last of his corn seed from the seed boxes of his planter before heading back out to the field to plant about 200 acres of soybeans in northern Steele County. Wegner started planting corn on April 23 and on Saturday said he expected to finish planting the soybeans by May 4.

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### Recipe Corner

### Greek-Italian Chopped Salad

Serve with grilled chicken or fish and good bread, yum!

Whisk together in a small bowl to make the dressing:

- 1 T olive oil
- 3 T white wine vinegar (or rice wine vinegar)
- 1 tsp dried oregano (or a T fresh snipped)
- 1 med garlic clove, minced or pressed
- 1/2 tsp Dijon Mustard
- Sea salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste

Combine these ingredients (add or delete to taste) in a large bowl:

- 6 C chopped romaine lettuce
- 1 15-1/2 oz can garbanzo beans (chick peas) drained
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 C very thinly sliced red onion
- 1 C very thinly sliced fresh fennel bulb
- 1/2 C crumbled feta cheese (about 3 oz) (or Asiago)
- 2 oz thinly sliced Italian Genoa salami, cut into strips
- 1/4 C sliced, pitted Kalamata olives
- diced tomatoes

Just before serving, toss dressing and salad ingredients. Serve on a large platter. Makes 6 generous servings.

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STEELE COUNTY Times

## Japanese beetle traps - are they a sales trap?



**On The Farm**  
CLAIRE LACANNE

I get lots of questions about Japanese beetle traps at the Extension office every year. People want to know where to place them, how many to place in their yard, what brands work best.

I understand that folks assume these traps are an effective way to manage the beetles, because advertisements for these Japanese beetle traps are seemingly everywhere and the capture numbers look impressive. Keep in mind that the companies selling the traps are understandably going to make claims about how effective they are. Any solution to this pest can seem attractive, especially as we've seen such a surge in Minnesota recently. Although the University of Minnesota is still performing research to better understand this pest, one thing we do know is Japanese beetle traps do not reduce beetle feeding.

This may come as a surprise to you because the number of beetles in these traps looks so impressive. I've seen pictures of the traps absolutely overflowing with beetles. Yes, the traps do appear to capture large numbers of beetles, but the important thing to consider is whether it actually benefits your yard or garden. Beyond the emotional satisfaction of bagging hundreds of beetles, what's actually going on? Is your yard or garden experiencing less damage from the beetles?

By using the Japanese beetle traps, you are luring beetles to your yard. The traps are baited with the scent of flowers, the scent of beetle pheromones, or may be baited with both. Beetles pick up on the scent, causing beetles to come on over. Beetles end up both inside and outside the trap, and as large numbers of beetles congregate, they put off more pheromones that attract even more beetles, whether they are in the trap or not. What happens when Japanese beetles get together? They make more Japanese beetles.

Studies show that traps lead to more plant damage in the areas they are placed in. One study found that a trap placed alone led to nearby vegetation having more damage than in similar areas where no traps were placed.

Sometimes sellers highlight how placement or number of traps can make the traps more effective. One study investigated the impact of where traps were placed in terms of the number of traps (one or multiple), location (near vulnerable plants or not), and wind direction (upwind or downwind from susceptible vegetation). Regardless of number or placement, the areas around the traps had more beetle feeding damage than if there had been no trap at all.

While the damage Japanese beetles cause is unattractive, it is usually only cosmetic and will not kill plants. For information about managing the beetles in a way that works, visit: <https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-insects/japanese-beetles>. Look for beetles in your yard and garden starting in late June and start management when they first appear. Damaged leaves attract more beetles so minimizing beetles on plants should mean fewer beetles will be attracted to them.

Claire LaCanne is the agricultural extension educator for the University of Minnesota for Steele and Rice counties. Some information in this article was gathered from an Extension webpage by Marissa Schuh.





**Mastering Gardening**  
LORRIE RUGG

Have you ever wondered why you feel good after working in the garden? Yes, we all have sore muscles after the first few times in the spring when we have been working outside. But emotionally and mentally do you feel better? There is scientific research to back that statement up. Research has shown spending time outside is good for not only our bodies but our minds as well.

Let's think about some of the benefits that we maybe never thought about. Gardening is a way to help us realize the unpredictability of life, that we can't always be in control of the situation. We can't control the rain, the sunshine, or the temperature outside, but we can adapt to those changes. If you consider yourself to be a perfectionist, I think we all do in some regard, the lack of control in the garden can be helpful to learn to not put so much pressure on yourself. When we realize that sometimes

we have failures in the garden, that stimulates us to learn what went wrong and opens us up to learning new things. Giving those brain cells a workout.

Good relationships often develop with others that have common interests as we do. There is nothing better than boosting our mood, by talking about gardening with others and sharing our passion.

Gardeners develop a relationship with the plot of ground they are tending. You feel like a parent to those little plants and want to nur-

ture them along. You want those little plants to grow and survive just like your kids when you send them out into the world. Ever wonder why garden centers are sometimes called nurseries?

I often find myself totally absorbed in the gardening process. My mind concentrates on what I am doing, right in that moment. I don't worry about what am I going to have for supper, or how much laundry I have to do. The rest of the world fades away and I connect with getting my hands and fingernails dirty. I

hear the wind rustling the leaves, the birds singing, and smell the fragrance in the air. Whatever stresses are in my life that day seem to disappear and my mind gets recharged and reenergized. The first thing I like to do when I have a particularly stressful day is to take a walk around my yard. It seems to help me let go of that stress, helpful in healthy emotional well-being.

It goes with saying gardening provides great physical exercise. Movement helps your body get those endorphins going to boost

your mood and lower anxiety levels.

Eating healthy foods that you have grown is a benefit for your diet. Helping to limit processed whole foods and substitute them with fresh fruits and vegetables can have a significant impact on our mental health.

I always knew I felt better after being outside in the garden and now I know why. Happy Gardening everyone!

*Lorrie Rugg is the coordinator of the Steele County Master Gardener program. She lives in Owatonna.*



## BLOSSOM SCHOLARS SHINE THROUGH COVID

*Special congrats to these students at Blooming Prairie High School for achieving honor roll status for third quarter!*

### A Honor Roll

#### Grade 7

Regan Donnelly  
Noah Graves  
Madelyn Harvey  
Jonathan Heimgartner  
Brady Johnson  
Chloe Weber

#### Grade 8

Cooper Cooke  
Mia Johnson

#### Grade 9

Addison Doocy  
Tyler Forystek  
Claire Foster  
Derek Kubicek  
Macy Lembke  
Jamie Reinke  
Hailey Schumacher  
Mason Simon  
Kolby Wigeland  
Rachel Winzenburg

#### Grade 10

Olivia Anderson  
Lilyanna Bakken  
Abigail Heffling  
Ava Krejci  
Sierra Larson  
Madison Lea  
Chloe McCarthy  
Samuel Pirkil  
Clare Rennie  
Madeline Stoen

### Grade 11

Bobbie Bruns  
Colin Jordison  
David Kartes  
Asha Lighthizer  
Alivia Schneider  
Bradley Simon  
Carson Wacek  
Melanie Wigham  
Melanie Winzenburg

### Grade 12

Adrianna Bermea  
Maren Forystek  
Charlie Heimerman  
Dylan Johnson  
Shayne Jorgenson  
Anna Kittelson  
Allison Krohnberg  
Emily Kubicek  
Luke Larkoski  
Rose Michaud  
Alexander Miller  
Megan Oswald  
Joseph Pirkil  
Jessica Ressler  
Rachael Riley  
Halle Strunk  
Kiya Thompson  
Rachel Thompson  
Micalyn Trihus  
Wyatt Voss  
Taylor Wurst

### A-Honor Roll

#### Grade 7

Tyler Anderson  
Allison Blume  
Allison Bruggeman  
Layla Coleman  
Natalee Devries  
Ella Farr  
Samantha Heffling  
Carsten Ingvallson  
Lance Lembke  
Ambriella Miller  
Drew Reinke  
Claire Schwarz  
Cannon Wacek

#### Grade 8

Catelyn Bartlett  
Isabel Dickel  
Scott Johnson  
Abby Jordison  
Brady Kittelson  
Alex Lea  
Madilynn Madsen  
Jacob Pauly  
Ella Smith  
Bo Zwiener

#### Grade 9

Annaka Forsberg  
Anna Haberman  
Shanna Halverson  
Luke Heimgartner

### Grant Magnuson

Logan Marzolf  
Elizabeth Miner  
Maxmar Ogren  
Khara Peters  
Benjamin Riley  
Molly Robins  
Lily Schammel  
Jaylee Schleicher  
Aidan Slowinski  
Ava Smith  
Shawntee Snyder  
Justin Stork  
Sophie Thomas

### Grade 10

Haven Carlson  
Micah Donnelly  
Brittany Johnson  
Jenna Johnson  
Ethan Marzolf  
Tyler Miller  
Anna Pauly  
Anna Reese  
Joie Ruhter  
Lucas Schammel  
Susan Smith  
Alexis Steckelberg  
Anika Sunde

### Grade 11

Lindsey Baltazar  
Carson Brenneke  
Josie Hoffman  
Tyler Iverson  
Drew Kittelson  
Parker Kubicek  
Piper Lund  
Emily Miller  
Lauren Schammel  
Grade 12  
Abby Braaten  
Cole Graves  
Brian Jimenez  
Jacob Naatz

### B+ Honor Roll

#### Grade 7

Landon Allison  
Bradley Boyd  
Aden Doocy  
Noah Fawver  
Miley Fulton  
Colby Johnson  
Ella Salinas  
Kloe Wacek

#### Grade 8

Braden Farr  
Anna Kuglin  
Addison Lyman  
Kohan Miller  
Sophia Schiller  
Elijah Skillestad

### Grade 9

Holly Davis  
Jaxon Harberts  
Layla Lembke

### Grade 10

Hosea Baker  
Morgan Camery  
Jesse Cardenas  
Heidi Judy  
Samuel Michaud  
Dakota Mueller  
Alexander Riley  
Madison Thurnau

### Grade 11

Abigail Aldrich  
Emily Anderson  
Alana Braaten  
Xavier Rennie  
Samuel Skillestad  
Dawson Sorensen  
Brennan Tapp

### Grade 12

Thomas Donnelly  
Brianna Hensrud  
Christopher Naatz  
Erin O'Brien

### B Honor Roll

#### Grade 7

Chase Boehme  
Cody Braaten  
Sadie Jensen  
Lincoln Quail  
Kaydance Verhey-Schumacher

#### Grade 8

Lauren Brown  
Cooper Garmess  
Callie Iverson  
Jeremiah Jones  
Grady Steckelberg  
Alexis White

#### Grade 9

Dylan Anderson  
Karson Strand

#### Grade 10

Cade Christianson  
Cyrus Schleicher  
Abigail Thoreson  
Leah Thorsen

#### Grade 11

Tyler Archer  
Triton Cordes  
Payton Fristedt  
Jett Swenson  
Garrett Weckwerth

#### Grade 12

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# Welcoming new businesses



Submitted photos  
Ambassadors from the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism visit Baker Tech Services at 209 West Bridge St. in Owatonna to welcome the company as a new member. Nolan Baker is the owner. Baker Tech Services is here for all your business and residential technology needs, including computers, WiFi, security cameras, phone systems, data recovery and more. The ambassadors also welcomed BridgeWater at Owatonna, located at 125 E. Park St. Heather and Brad Bass are the owners and Amy Liffing is the executive director. BridgeWater offers Independent Living and Assisted Living Care. It brings innovative elder care to Minnesota, providing a real home with quality care.

## Minnesota farmers' 2020 bottom line improves

▲ MINNESOTA from A8 pandemic," said Keith Olander of the Minnesota State Northern Agricultural Center of Excellence. "Federal and state programs benefited farmers and rural small businesses in their time of need."

Government payments accounted for 12 percent of gross farm income for the average producer last year. Many of these payments were related to the pandemic and disasters from previous years. Market and supply chain disruptions loomed large in April and May, but most farms were able to endure and continue operations.

This analysis includes 2,225 participants in Minnesota State Farm Business Management programs and 105 members of the Southwest Farm Business Management Association. Participating farmers represent approximately 10 percent of Minnesota's farms that have gross incomes of more than \$250,000 annually.

**Crop Farms**  
The median income for crop farms was \$109,774. This improved

profitability was the result of strong yields and improved year-end prices for Minnesota's major crops. Crop yields were above average for corn, soybeans, and sugar beets.

After dealing with prevented plant issues over the last few years, the higher corn and soybean yields were much needed for our southern Minnesota farms," said Garen Paulson, Extension ag business management educator. Crop prices improved by year-end, but cash sale prices received during the 2020 marketing year were mixed. Cash corn price received was six percent below the previous year at \$3.40 and soybean price was six percent better at \$8.98.

Crop farms did benefit from government program payments as well. "Many of the government program payments received in 2020 marketing year were related to disasters in 2018 and 2019. Other payments were related to low crop prices resulting from COVID during the 2020 marketing year," said Ron Dvergsten, Farm Business Management instructor at

Northland Community and Technical College in Thief River Falls. WHIP+ (Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus) provided crop disaster relief related to the 2018 and 2019 production years. The Market Facilitation Program provided payments to producers of commodities impacted by trade-related losses and the Coronavirus Food Assistance Programs offered support for farm operations experiencing market disruptions related to the pandemic.

**Dairy**  
The plight of dairy farms has been in the news over the past several years. Prices started to improve in 2019 and that continued into 2020. The median dairy farm earned \$173,460 last year, compared to \$64,144 in 2019 and \$15,907 in 2018. The average milk price, at \$19.73 per hundred pounds, was the highest since record prices in 2014. The challenges of COVID led to many supply chain disruptions for all livestock markets in the early months of the pandemic. Government assistance helped sta-

bilize the situation and support farms in their time of need.

"Minnesota dairy farms were able to play catch-up in 2020. Many farms saw accounts payable build and deferred necessary maintenance when prices were depressed. The profits of 2020 allowed those farms to make repairs and pay old bills," said Nate Converse, Farm Business Management Instructor at the Staples campus of Central Lakes College. Cash expenses for Minnesota dairy farms increased by 9 percent in 2020, indicating dollars spent on deferred repairs and other outstanding bills.

**Pork producers**  
Pork producer net earnings continued to rebound with the median producer earning \$310,042, up from \$96,245 in 2019. Wean-to-finish producers made \$13 per head. Again, government payments played a significant role in hog farm profitability last year. Without aid related to trade and pandemic challenges, Minnesota pork producers would have seen profits diminish. The spring of

2020 caused once-in-a-lifetime disruptions for many of the state's hog producers. With processing plants closed because of COVID, many producers were forced to euthanize hogs. The realities of this caused severe mental health challenges in rural Minnesota. Hog farmers endured, making many difficult management decisions along the way.

**Beef producers**  
Beef producers enjoyed a return to positive net farm income in 2020. Median net farm income for beef producers was \$42,850, an improvement over the \$4,000 of net profits the prior year. Despite COVID-related challenges, cattle finishers showed almost \$35 of net return per head. But a subset of beef farmers, beef calf-cow producers, only broke even. Beef prices improved less than other commodity prices in the state and government support was also received by these farms. Many Minnesota beef operations have additional sources of income, mainly from off-farm sources. This group of producers

have the highest levels of nonfarm income in the database at \$55,325 in 2020.

**2021 prospects**  
USDA forecasts net farm income to decrease 8 percent in 2021. Much of this decline is expected because of lower government payments to farmers. Case in point, no farm payments were included in the most recent stimulus legislation, the American Rescue Plan. Improved commodity prices are expected to continue in 2021. But operating expenses will likely trend up, related to higher energy and increased input prices. Livestock producers will likely see profits limited by increased feed prices. As spring nears, many farmers are optimistic for a more "normal" year after the uncertainty and challenges of 2020. But many unknowns remain related to the pandemic and our nation's economic recovery. Hope springs eternal for the Minnesota farmer though, and plans for 2021 production are well underway.

### ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS®

From the Hosts of the Modern The Hood radio show  
By Shannen Nordstrom and Russ Evans

**Dear Motor Medics,**  
I am having a problem with my lights on my 2009 Ford Taurus. Both the front and rear lights have water in them. The rear looks like a bathroom mirror after a hot shower on both sides and the front has water collected towards the bottom of the driver side headlight. When the weather is dry for long periods they will clear up, but if I wash the car or it rains once they fog right back up. The bulbs themselves seem to be working ok and this has gone on for a couple of years. What can I do to fix this? I just don't like the way it looks.

**Pat in Larchwood Iowa**

Dear Pat,  
Many vehicles have this issue. The moisture comes from the seal around the plastic lens leaking where it is bonded to the inside light reflector housing. During hot sunny days, the heat generated by the sun will break down the seal and moisture will occur. In some cases, the lens will separate completely from the reflector. We have seen people try many things to repair their existing lights but usually the most effective fix is to replace the assembly. Check several places for the best deal. Auto recycling facilities, the dealer, and auto parts stores usually carry the assemblies. Once you find a good light at a reasonable cost, you could possibly install them yourself. You will want to have the front aimed by a professional though.

*Take care, the Motor Medics*

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# Checks for charities



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Despite COVID-19 challenges, limitations and closures, the Owatonna Eagles recently awarded more than \$30,000 to two local organizations. RIGHT: Wes Jones, gambling manager at the Eagles in Owatonna and Eagles' Aerie & Auxiliary Presidents Curt and Patt Concannon and members present a check for \$10,000 to team members at Community Pathways to assist in the organization's efforts to provide food and assistance to community members. LEFT: The Eagles present a check for \$21,000 to team members of 'We All Play' to construct an all-inclusive playground in Owatonna.

## Helping preserve family unity



SUBMITTED PHOTO

President Gail Buckingham of The Exchange Club of Owatonna presents a check to Jim Barnes, acting director of the Exchange Center for Family Unity. The money raised will help to provide services to families of five surrounding counties.

## GUEST COLUMN

### Honoring a teen who views things differently

BY GAIL BUCKINGHAM

It is the pleasure of the Exchange Club of Owatonna to introduce you to our club's 2020-2021 A.C.E. recipient, Megan Copeland of Owatonna.

She received the Exchange Club's A.C.E. award on April 22 during a Youth of the Year Essay Committee meeting on Zoom. She will now go on to the district level with the winners from there going on to nationals.

Megan from day one, the day of her birth, viewed life differently from most of us. Megan was not meant to view her mother's smile or her father's strength. But she would learn to feel the atmosphere of a smiling mother and a supportive father.

Megan is beyond her years in knowledge. It

has been said when one human sense is not with you, your other remaining senses kick into high gear. And this represents Megan. Megan was not given the gift of sight, but she "sees" things in a clearer view than most people. Her ability to listen is greater than most people. She comprehends what is spoken and then will speak. So often, we as humans listen slightly because we in our minds are already deciding how to respond. As we see, we fail to hear many things around us. I assure you Megan hears much more per day than we do because she is keen of her unveiled surroundings.

Megan all her life has accepted the challenge with excellence. Megan most recently dealt with health issues that hospi-

talized her with a long recuperation period. Megan probably saw how low she could go mentally and physically. With the help of medical staff, caring parents, brother, and friends, she was able to regain her position in life and once again, she looks forward to an aspiring future.

Megan Copeland has learned traits of survival that we could all brush up on to become a better person. The time spent with Megan Copeland will have you in awe of this young woman. She is encouraged by others to use her abilities and change the world, and I truly see Megan doing just that!

*Gail Buckingham is the president of the Exchange Club of Owatonna. She lives in Owatonna.*

## LIVING LIFE UNSEEN

▲ LIVING from A1 instant connection for Copeland.

"(Being blind myself) makes my performance more powerful," she said.

In Extemporaneous Reading, competitors use the same book throughout the season. On competition days, each person learns which sections of the book they can choose from for their 7-minute reading.

Copeland has read the entire book over and over. She said she's broken it down into sections that can be recited in the 7-minute period with her own introduction for each section. She does it all in Braille, which she has been doing since she was 3 years old.

Heading into the state tournament, Copeland said, "I know it's going to be tough competition, but I know I am a really good speaker. Ever since I was little, I have had the gift to gab."

"I would not want a cure for blindness. God made me the way I am for a reason."

**Megan Copeland**  
State Speech Qualifier

During her four years of high school, Copeland has always participated in Extemporaneous Reading, which allows her to not worry about writing her speech.

"I have always had a passion for public speaking and for reading books," said Copeland. "Speech is my way of making new friends and meeting people."

The only regret she has is that speech didn't come along sooner.

Copeland wasn't able to participate in speech until high school as it just became available to middle school students in the past few years.

For Copeland, team bonding has been her favorite aspect of speech.

"It doesn't matter if I don't place," she said, adding that the speech team members are supportive of each other.

She said she credits speech with helping her grow as a speaker.

"It has also given me an opportunity to meet people I would have never met," said Copeland.

The teenager has no worries about speaking in front of large audiences. A few years ago, she spoke in front of a crowd of 500 Lions Club members accepting an essay contest award. "The more people there are, the better," she said, adding she doesn't understand why people have a fear of getting up in front of people. "I'm immune to nervousness."

She has even done presentations on her blindness for doctors at the Mayo Clinic.

Copeland said she doesn't even consider blindness a major challenge in her life. "It's not going to define me," she said. "I want to be known (as someone) who can do this, this and this, and (by the



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Helping Megan Copeland throughout the speech season are her coaches Mark Anderson, Marcia Anderson and Betsy Cole.

way) I'm also blind."

Even though she can't see people, she considers herself a good judge of another person's character. "I can only see you by your personality," Copeland said. "I judge you by what you are like and how you treat others... and not by how you look."

After graduating this spring, Copeland said she plans to attend the Academy for the Blind in Faribault. She is considering a legal career, possibly court reporting.

"I have a couple of people trying to convince me to be a judge," Copeland said, adding she has spent a considerable amount of time trying to gain an understanding of legal terminology.

Copeland's moth-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Megan Copeland performs her speech during the recent state speech contest held virtually this year because of the pandemic.

er, Jennifer, said her daughter has challenges from being blind. "But it's how she reacts to them," she said. "She has a positive attitude that helps her get through it."

Copeland said she has often been asked

if she wants to be changed. "Absolutely not," she said.

"I've always felt comfortable with who I am as a person," said Copeland, adding she isn't about to let a physical disability determine who she is.

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## April showers bring May baskets



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUESSLER

Becky Noble, left, and Karen Thoen of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 52 provide a special surprise to Blooming Prairie Elementary School Principal Jacob Schwarz on Thursday afternoon. The Auxiliary provided May baskets for all staff members at the elementary and high schools in Blooming Prairie in time for May Day. Noble reported that they made up 112 baskets.

### OBITUARIES

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## Naven Knutson, 89, formerly of BP



Naven Knutson

Naven Judine Knutson, 89, of Clarksville, Tennessee, formerly of Blooming Prairie and the Leland/Lake Mills area in Iowa, died Thursday, April 8, 2021, at the Vanderbilt Medical Care Center in Nashville.

A graveside committal service will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday, May 6, 2021 at Elk Creek Lutheran Cemetery, 4108 Kildeer Ave., Kensett, Iowa with Rev. Tom Martin officiating.

A Celebration of Life gathering will be held immediately following the graveside in the fellowship hall of Elk Creek Lutheran Church

until around 2:30 p.m.

Naven Judine Knutson was born on Aug. 6, 1931, in Mason City, Iowa, the son of Eddie and Myrtle (Bravig) Knutson. Naven graduated from Blooming Prairie High School in 1949, and graduated from San Francisco State University, in San Francisco, California. He was united on Sept. 2, 1956 in marriage to Doris Elaine Johnson (deceased), in Bloomington, Minnesota. They lived in California from 1956 to 1975 and in Alaska from 1975 until 1992. They settled in Clarksville, Tennessee in 1992.

Naven was a noted athlete in high school, served his country during the Korean War, was a recognized expert in his field of accounting, a loving husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather, and a friend to everyone he met.

Left to cherish his memory are his two sons, Naven John Knutson and his wife Janey of Arab, Ala., and Paul Edward Knutson and his wife Trudy of Frankfort, Ky.; four grandchildren; Elaine Knutson Wanstreet and her husband Gavin of West Lafayette, Ind.; Mary Knutson Lawlor and her husband Lucas and daughters Lydia, Cora, and Emma of Huntsville, Ala.; Anna Knutson and her son Matthias of Arab, Ala.; Naven E. Knutson, his wife Carmen and son Naven L. of Frankfort, Ky.; his brother David Knutson and wife Ethel of Cedar Rapids, Iowa and sister Elinor Ladd and husband Leroy of Milaca, Minn.

Naven was preceded by his sister Marilyn Thomas and brother Robert Knutson.

The family would like to give a special thanks to John Wallace, a special friend and neighbor for his companionship and help during Naven's final years.

Arrangements are being handled by Corner Colonial Chapel in Northwood, Iowa; www.cornercolonialchapels.com.

## Gary A. Ringhofer, 70, Owatonna



Gary A. Ringhofer

Gary A. Ringhofer, a lifelong resident of Owatonna, died April 30, 2021 at his home in Owatonna.

The funeral service is set for Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 11 a.m. at St. John Church in Owatonna with interment to follow at St. John Cemetery with Military Honors being provided by the Steele County Funeral Unit. Friends may greet the family on Wednesday, May 5, 2021 from 4-7 p.m. at Brick-Meger Funeral Home and one hour prior to the funeral service at the church on Thursday.

Gary was born on Aug. 9, 1950 in Owatonna and was one of five children to Clarence and Irene (Horak) Ringhofer. He attended Owatonna High School and graduated in 1968. After high school, Gary worked at Tubeco until enlisting in the U.S. Army in 1969 where he served in Vietnam until he was honorably discharged in 1971.

He returned to Owatonna after

serving his country and worked for MNDOT. In 1980, Gary started working as a deputy for the Steele County Sheriff's Office under then Sheriff Wes Wilker. In 1983, he was promoted to investigator and in 1989 was promoted to chief deputy. Gary was elected as sheriff in 2002 where he served until his retirement in 2010. Gary also attended the FBI Academy. Gary was the Commander of the Owatonna American Legion for two separate terms. His memberships included the Owatonna VFW, American Legion, Eagles and the Elk's.

Gary will be remembered for community minded spirit and long-standing service to the Steele County communities. He will be missed by many friends and co-workers.

Gary loved everything outdoors from deer and bear hunting to fishing and elk hunting. He loved spending time up north at the cabin and especially loved those times when his children and grandchildren were able to join him. Gary adored his family and was very active in their lives. He was very close

with his children and grandsons and enjoyed taking hunting and fishing trips with them as well as going to baseball games and watching the grandsons' sporting events. He will be greatly missed by his children Jason Young and Amy Richter, both of Owatonna. His grandsons Anthony Young, Christopher Richter and Jackson Richter. Siblings Donny (Jackie) Ringhofer, Barb and (Ed) Beupre, Duane (Jina) Ringhofer and Dennis (Becca Sletten), all of Owatonna.

Gary is preceded in death by his parents Clarence and Irene (Horak) Ringhofer. A Celebration of Life Event will be held at the Owatonna American Legion on Saturday, May 22 starting at 3 p.m.

Memorials are preferred to the Owatonna American Legion Building fund. For more information or to leave a condolence message go to www.megercares.com.

**BRICK-MEGER & MEDFORD**  
FUNERAL HOME

## Jennifer Duenes, 36, Owatonna



Jennifer Duenes

April 18, 1985, Panama Beach, Fla., was somehow not recorded in The Old Farmer's Almanac as it should have been. The day Florida was blessed with one of the mightiest hurricanes to ever make landfall, Jennifer Lynn Duenes.

She was born with hair as black as coal and sparkly brown eyes that could enchant anyone she came across. She and her family moved back up to Minnesota in the late 80s.

As a child she loved giggling and getting chased around the farmhouse and yard by her mom and sister and brothers, piggy tails flying and giggles lighting the way for us to follow. She loved helping her mom in the kitchen, which usually ended in hilarity and disaster of equal proportions. She was always singing her own little songs. She was a sassy little mischief maker. She grew up with the exact same sass and spirit that never changed.

April 26, 2021. Every single one of us woke up not knowing what

the ugly underbelly of addiction, mental illness and the sometimes, insurmountable pain that comes with it had taken away from us in the night. As we slept blissfully unknowing, Jennifer claimed her own piece of peace in this world. No matter how hard she tried she just could not get away from the demons that ruled her body and mind. I can say loudly and proudly that she tried her damndest. Because I knew Jennifer enough to know that she would not bother saying it if she did not truly mean it. She tried and she tried, and she was not quiet about it, she asked aloud.

On July 14, 2001, she met the first love of her life, when Destiny Ann was born to her and Luke. The other three loves of her lives were to follow in Kaylee, Jana, and Tyler. Jennifer loved life and sucked the marrow out of every day when she could. She was so proud of her kids. She was proud of herself when she was keeping things steady and working and paying bills. She loved her dad and mom, brothers, and sister and was proud of everything they did as well. She was a little grease monkey just like her dad Henry and brother's Eric and Jason.

She loved her Harley and the fact that she was the one that maintained it and kept her own little junkyard wherever she went just like her dad as well. The knowledge that her dad and mother is the only thing that takes almost all of us say okay then right now. No one understood them like they did each other.

Jennifer leaves behind her children, Destiny Ann, Kaylee Dawson, Jana Vanblaricon and Tyler Vanblaricon. Her mom Deb Gossman, stepdad Jerry Brandt, brothers Steven Duenes (Jude), Eric Duenes (Brittney), Jason Duenes, Melissa (Duenes) Lindberg (Kent) and Zak Duenes (Leah). Nephews and nieces, cousins, aunts, and uncles.

She was preceded in death by her beloved father Henry Duenes, Grandma and Grandpa Joe and aunt Lisa Baldwin.

There will be a celebration of Jennifer's life in the next few weeks that will be announced. Funeral arrangements are being handled by Brick-Meger Funeral Home in Owatonna.

**BRICK-MEGER & MEDFORD**  
FUNERAL HOME

### BOOK NOOK

## BP library is 45 years old



NANCY VALLANCOURT

Happy 45th anniversary, Blooming Prairie Branch Library! The library's 45th birthday was held in May 1976 at its first location, the Hansen Building on Highway 218 (now KIK Graphics). Having a library in Blooming Prairie had been the goal of many long before 1976. I have found newspaper articles in the Blooming Prairie Times from the 1920s that refer to the local library. It seems that the school library was used as a community library, including evening hours set aside for the public's attendance.

In the Blooming Prairie Update, Harold Severson included information compiled by Mrs. M.E. Magnuson in 1976 regarding the founding of the library.

For many, many years, there were repeated efforts to obtain library service for Blooming Prairie. Early minutes of the Book Club, which is over 50 years old, mention a committee formed to explore the library situation.

Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Thorson worked with

a group that was told that the existence of the Carnegie Library in Austin would make it impossible to get funds for a library here.

In November 1961, to counteract a decline in library use by the rural residents, the Steele County Library Committee was organized with 21 participants representing eight of the county's 13 townships. Baptist minister David Ferrington of Blooming Prairie served as chair, with Mrs. Vernon Krejci of Ellendale serving as vice-chair. The committee worked with State Library Services, Steele County Commissioners, and the Owatonna Public Library board.

In March 1962, a bookmobile was brought to Blooming Prairie and other communities in Steele County for interested citizens to view. Plans by the committee included a branch library for Blooming Prairie and a bookmobile service for the rest of the county. Hugo Harpel headed the committee to find a site and the Blooming Prairie city council was willing to help with the project. Even though this plan would allow library materials to be more accessible to all county residents, the commissioners refused the request.

Next week: How did Blooming Prairie finally get its own library?

### DEATH NOTICE

## Marlys Harvey, BP

Marlys Harvey of Blooming Prairie died Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at home. A private memorial service was held on Monday, May 2, 2021.

### BIRTHDAYS

|                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>May 5</b><br>McKenzie Jensen<br>Dennis Sauke<br>Brian Anderson<br>Becky Noble<br>Maverick Miner<br>Ryker Long  | <b>May 8</b><br>Gemin Johnson<br>Gary Dallman<br>Vi Iversen<br>Scott Swenson                                           |
| <b>May 6</b><br>Nathan Piller<br>Adam Bishop<br>Quinn Jensen<br>Laura Houillion<br>Allison Bruggeman<br>Ella Farr | <b>May 9</b><br>Sarah Johnson<br>Levi Skillestad<br>Jeff Erickson<br>Rebecca Ingvalson<br>Vivian Ulrich<br>Mandy Doocy |
| <b>May 7</b><br>Charlie Heimerman<br>Logan Underwood<br>Meghan Butler<br>Danielle Hein<br>Lyndon Johnson          | <b>May 10</b><br>Declan Noble<br>Lisa Kubista<br>Jason Mangas<br>Arden Anderson                                        |
|                                                                                                                   | <b>May 11</b><br>Amy Chladek<br>Natasha Smith                                                                          |

### ANNIVERSARIES

|                                            |                                                                         |                                                |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>May 7</b><br>Mr. & Mrs.<br>Roger Mangas | <b>May 10</b><br>Sean & Kristin<br>Robbins<br>Eddie & Nelda<br>Haberman | <b>May 11</b><br>Thomas & Shirley<br>Schneider |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|

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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
BLOOMING PRAIRIE

What's love got to do with it? This is the question that Tina Turner asked in her 1984 hit song that rang over the airways for many years, and still plays today. What's love got to

do with it? In this song, Ms. Turner seems to be asking this question from a position of fear — why we need to have love? And I understand her question. When we open ourselves, and our hearts, to another person, or people, we expose ourselves to the possibility of being hurt. And this seems to be the question the song asks. Why do we need a “second hand emotion,” as the song says, to be part of our relationships with others? What does love have to do with how we act, or feel, or interact with others?

I understand wanting to protect ourselves from hurt, especially if we have been hurt in the past, but true love is a gift from God or dained by God and given to us to experience God on earth. I John 4:18 says, “God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.” God is love. And when we live in love God lives in us. So, what's love got to do with it? Love has everything to do with everything. Love is God and God is love. It seems as if right now our world agrees

with the song. Everyone is living in fear of exposing themselves to hurt, so out of self-protection, we leave love out of interaction with others. Oh, we may love those close to us, but others who are different than us, whether they are different race, gender, religious tradition, or different political affiliation, loving them is out of the question. I understand we need to protect ourselves but in reality we are hurting ourselves and others. When we chose to leave love out of our interactions with people

that differ from us, we leave God out of those interactions. And without God there is no hope of solving our differences and resolving our problems. I'm not talking about love as an abstract emotion that feels like “butterflies in the stomach.” I am talking about love that listens to one another, works for the good of us all, and is focused on resolving differences with compromise and understanding. Love is a verb that needs to be lived out in the small, and large, daily choices we make. Love can be

turning off the news, or social media, and giving your mind a rest from all the chaos of the media. We need God, and we need love right now in all areas of our world, our country, and our community more than ever in my life time. If you feel that God is “missing” from some place, maybe it is love that is missing. Bring back love and understanding and God will be there with you. So although the song was a hit, I want to change it to, “What DOESN'T Love got to do with it?”

## AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**LUTHERAN**  
**AURORA LUTHERAN**  
6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna  
Interim Pastor:  
Rev. Dale Swendsen  
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 Hergartner  
Associate Pastor: Rev. Mike Walerius  
507-583-6821  
firstlutheranpb.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 Edwards  
507-789-6681  
Worship: 10:45 a.m. Sun.  
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

**PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN — ELCA**  
9651 SW 75th St., Ellendale  
507-465-8366  
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.  
Sunday School: 9 a.m. Sun.

**REDEEMER LUTHERAN — LCMC**  
1054 Truman Ave., Owatonna

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

**RED OAK GROVE LUTHERAN — ELCA**  
30456 Mower-Freeman Road, Austin  
Leandra Anderson, Pastor  
507-583-2058 or 507-437-3000  
www.redoakgrovelutheran.org  
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN — LCMC**  
4532 SE 84th Ave., Claremont  
Pastor Alan Broadwell  
507-528-2404  
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.  
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN — LCMC**  
28959 630th Ave., Sargeant  
Pastor Collin Duling  
507-251-5568  
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.  
Sunday School: 9 a.m.

**ST. JOHN LUTHERAN — ELCA**  
1301 Lincoln Ave. Owatonna  
Pastors Dave Klaviter and Jessie Richmond  
507-451-7293  
stjohnowatonna.org  
Worship: 5 p.m. Thursday & Saturday; 9 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  
507-451-2165  
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 Floy  
Deacon: Kris Oppengard  
Worship: 8:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Sunday- In-person  
9:30 a.m.- Live Stream at facebook.com/tclowatonna and tclowatonna.org/worshiplive

9:30 a.m.- Live broadcast on KRUE 92.1 FM  
Video on Spectrum (Ch. 181), Jaguar TV (Ch. 900) and owatonalive.com  
Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.  
Wednesday at 6 p.m. and Sunday at 11 a.m.

**TRINITY LUTHERAN — ELCA**  
104 First St. SE, Hayfield  
Pastor Paul Hauschild  
507-477-2248

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

**TRINITY LUTHERAN — LCMC**  
108 Third Ave. SW, Medford  
Pastor Mark Biebighauser  
507-451-0447  
Worship: 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.  
Education Hour: 9 a.m.

**TRINITY LUTHERAN — LCMC**  
57043 300th St., Waltham  
Pastor Jesse Krusemark  
507-567-2272  
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.  
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

**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  
507-234-6244  
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday

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

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

**SACRED HEART PARISH**  
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Father Swaminatha  
Potnendru, Parochial Vicar  
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www.sacredheartowatonna.org

**MASS: 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.stcolumbanuschurch.com  
Mass: 10:30 a.m. Sunday  
Reconciliation: 9 a.m. First Friday & Saturday

**ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH**  
512 S. Elm Ave., Owatonna  
Father James Starasich  
507-451-4945  
Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.  
Sunday Mass: 8 & 10 a.m.  
Reconciliation: 3-3:30 p.m. Sat.  
Daily Mass: 8 a.m. Tues., Wed. & Fri. (Communion Service 8 a.m. Thursday)  
Adoration Chapel available Mon. — Fri. 7 a.m. — 5:30 p.m.  
Key fab required after hours or weekends

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**CHRIST COMMUNITY COVENANT**  
540 SE 18th St., Owatonna  
Dr. 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

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**BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST**  
43089 180th St., Medford  
(Seven miles west of Medford on CR 23)  
Pastors: J. Stephanie Morgan  
507-835-8726  
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.  
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

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

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

**NON-DENOMINATIONAL**

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

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

**ELEVATION NORTH**  
2002 Austin Road, Owatonna  
Pastor Doug Jones  
507-363-3099  
www.elevationnorth.blogspot.com

Worship (English): 10 a.m. Sun.  
Sunday School: 10:30 a.m.  
Worship (Spanish): 2 p.m. Sun.  
Bible Study: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday  
Spanish Evangelism & Prayer: 7 p.m. Friday

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

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**PRAIRIE MENNONITE**  
13658 750th St., Blooming Prairie  
Bishop Dennis Martin  
507-583-7532  
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.  
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.  
Prayer Meeting: 7:30 p.m. Wed.

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

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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)

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109 E. Main St., Hayfield  
Pastor Kit Johnson  
507-477-2631  
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.

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## Fighting to level playing field for local newspapers

◀ **FIGHTING** from A2  
We can't stand by and watch this happen to our independent press. That's why I have introduced bipartisan legislation with Sen. John Kennedy (R-LA) and Reps. David Cicilline (D-RI) and Ken Buck (R-CO) to let news publishers join together to get fair terms with these digital titans. The Journalism Competition and Preservation Act will level the play-

ing field for the entire industry—not just a few publishers—by empowering local media outlets to make deals that ensure fair treatment. By giving independent papers the chance to compete, our bill will also give them the power to demand deserved revenue so that they can invest in quality reporting—ensuring that hardworking reporters can continue to inform their communities.

The Journalism Competition and Preservation Act is a way we can turn the tide on this unprecedented threat to fair and honest competition. It will help America maintain access to the trustworthy local reporting that is the bedrock of our communities.

*Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) was first elected to represent Minnesota in the U.S. Senate in 2006.*

## TIGERS OF THE MONTH

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Top left  
Kindergarten: Lenyx Jensen  
1st Grade: Paisley Schmidt  
2nd Grade: Noah Gillis  
3rd Grade: Claire Wildgrube  
4th Grade: Noah Herron  
5th Grade: Mason Kolling  
6th Grade: Zeah Weise

### HIGH SCHOOL



Top left  
7th Grade: Grace Aldrich  
8th Grade: Micah Snyder  
9th Grade: Emely Lazaro  
10th Grade: Rian Cloutier  
11th Grade: Ryan Warner  
12th Grade: Luz Peralta

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## Save the Date!

18<sup>th</sup> Annual  
**Blooming Prairie**  
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

# AUCTION

Saturday,  
May 22, 2021

**Limited Number of TICKETS... BUY NOW!**  
Tickets on sale for \$5 at The Cue Company in Blooming Prairie.  
Only 200 will be sold.  
Ticket will be needed to attend live auction.

**Live**  
4 PM - 11 PM  
Live auction is a 21+ event  
Under the big tent at the BP Cue Company!

**Silent**  
1 PM - 3 PM  
Inside the Pizza Cellar

# HERE'S MY CARD

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## Missing piece added to History Center

*Display traces county's deep roots*

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

Officials at the Steele County Historical Society felt something was missing from the History Center in Owatonna. And, in retrospect, it was something pretty obvious.

Until now, the center has never featured a permanent display of Steele County's history tracing back to its roots in 1854 when the first settlers arrived in the area. There have been some temporary displays over the years, but nothing permanent to tell the story of Steele County.

Beginning this month, the History Center unveils its display, "Story of Steele," featured prominently in the atrium leading to different parts of the



History director Kellen Hinrichsen looks over "Story of Steele" display featuring creameries and butter production from the early 1900s. All cities in the county are featured in the new display, which opens this month.

facility. "We will always be telling the story of Steele County (going forward)," said Kellen Hinrichsen, director of the center.

The new display includes boards highlighting transporta-

tion, industry, geography, and community from each area of the county. A timeline of significant historical milestones from 1850 to 2015 is featured on the walls around the atrium.

See MISSING on B2 ►

### HISTORY CENTER OPEN HOUSE

**Where:** Steele County History Center- Owatonna

**When:** Saturday, May 15 from 12-3 p.m.

**What's new:** Story of Steele and Jerry's Mural  
**Featured:** All displays will be open with refreshments

## Onward to normal



**Steele Talkin'**  
NANCY NESS

Community Pathways is gearing up for going back to 'normal' operations beginning June 1. We can't be happier to see a return to normal.

Since April of 2020, COVID-19 has forced the Marketplace program to limit our grocery service to curbside pick-up for our regular members. We are in the process of getting the store back to in-store shopping mode, getting our members to come in for their groceries. What a thrill it will be to have our neighbors and friends come back through our doors and pick the items that best suit their needs!

Marketplace Delivery, our grocery delivery program, will also change to the choice model on June 1. When the truck comes, members will be able to come onto the trailer and choose items suitable for them. Troy is busy getting our new trailer set-up with proper shelving to accommodate this change.

Unique Finds is also preparing to open to full capacity on June 1. We have been limiting shoppers to three in the store at one time, and we are looking forward to having the thrift store open to all. For now, we will continue to accept donations on Friday morning between 9 and noon but will be adding an additional day soon. Be watching our Facebook page for updates on donations days and hours.

Our capital campaign continues to make progress. As of today, we have raised \$1.17 million towards the overall goal of \$2.6 million needed to expand the facilities to meet the growing needs of our community. The cost of the new building. See STEELE TALKIN' on B10 ►

## BITTERSWEET

*Moms and daughters reflect on relationships, Mother's Day*

BY DEB FLEMMING  
NEWS EDITOR

**T**wo moms – one in Owatonna, the other in Medford – will soon be empty-nesters.

Their daughters are seniors and heading off to college in the fall. Both know things will change. But this Mother's Day, they're content knowing they will be able to spend time, at home, with

their daughters, their other children and their spouses. "The ultimate goal of a parent is to raise their children to be successful and productive members of society," said Mary Cronin of Medford. "I couldn't be prouder of Kinsey."

Kinsey Cronin recently committed to playing Division III volleyball at Smith College in Northampton, Mass., where she plans to study biology and take other pre-med subjects. By car, Smith is more than 1,300 miles from home.

"I've gotten to spend every day with Mom (since the pandemic happened)," said Kinsey. "I've really enjoyed every



Abby and Becky Munns of Owatonna

minute, and I'm going to miss it. It's going to be really hard not to see her every day.

See BITTERSWEET on B10 ►

## Medford educator finalist for state's top teacher award

BY DEB FLEMMING  
NEWS EDITOR

Medford teacher Kim Goblirsch is one of nine finalists for the Minnesota Teacher of the Year award. She is the only remaining candidate from a small school district.

Goblirsch, who teaches English language arts at Medford High School, graduated from Medford High School in 2000 and returned to teach in the district 12 years ago.

Goblirsch has a bachelor's degree in English/speech communication and education and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction. Medford High School Principal Kevin Babcock called Goblirsch advancement to the finalist group "extremely exciting."

"She's one of nine teachers out of thousands and thousands of teachers in the state," said Babcock.

"Kim has a good sense of what's good for the kids," said Babcock, adding that Goblirsch would tell you that this isn't just about her. "She's representing the whole school."

Goblirsch said earlier that she'd be thrilled to win the award but also would view it as a responsibility.

"If I won, it would mean that I have a duty to uphold that award," she said.

The Teacher of the Year program celebrates the tradition of excellence in teaching in Minnesota. Eligible candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade, Early Childhood Family Education and Adult Basic Education teachers, from public or private schools.

An independent selection panel of 24 leaders in education, business, government and nonprofits selected the

finalists from a group of 25 semifinalists. There were 75 candidates for this program year.

The top teacher is usually named at a banquet in May; however, it has been postponed because of COVID-19. The selection panel is tentatively scheduled to meet in June to conduct individual interviews with each of the nine finalists and to cast votes.

The Minnesota Teacher of the Year program,



Kim Goblirsch

which is in its 57th year, is the oldest and most prestigious recognition in Minnesota to honor excellence in education.

## BP foundation looks to break \$1M raised

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
STAFF WRITER

It's that time of year again.

No, not spring. It's time for the 18th annual Blooming Prairie Education Foundation auction, which will be held on Saturday, May 22.

This year's fundraiser is expected to be a watershed moment for the Education Foundation

as they're expecting to reach \$1 million raised over the past 18 years.

Education Foundation President Karen Fouarge said reaching that milestone is a meaningful accomplishment for her and the Blooming Prairie community.

"It means a lot to me that this community has bonded together and basically helped us raise a million dollars, which

the community itself can really be proud of themselves. What we make on our auction each year is our budget for that year," she said. "To be able to reach a million dollars is more of a congratulations to the community."

She said that all the money that the Education Foundation has raised through the silent and live auctions has stayed in the commu-

nity.

"We say it's for the students of District 756 because we've also have bought and donated some items for the youth club," she said.

The fundraiser starts with a silent auction, which will go from 1 to 3 p.m. It will be held inside the Pizza Cellar.

She said there's no limit on the number of people who can par-

ticipate in the indoor auction. But to meet COVID-19 regulations, it will be like a revolving door of people, so no one's stopping inside for long periods of time.

Then, from 4 to 11 p.m., the live auction will be held outside under a tent.

She said community members will need a ticket to get into the live auction, which goes from

4 p.m. to 11 p.m. The tickets are on sale for \$5 at the Culinary Pizza Cellar. The auction books, which have the bidding number on them, will also be sold for \$5.

"Our big push this year will be to make sure you get your tickets now because that'll guarantee you a seat. Our seating is limited to 200 people," she said.



**Reflections**  
HOWARD LESTRUD

"Slim" has proven to be my best friend, and I will tell you why.

As many of my readers know, I met up with some bad luck just before last Christmas when I fell and broke my right ankle in three places.

For the past four months, I have been recovering with the help of orthopedic surgeons, occupational therapists,

physical therapists, my dear wife Judy and a friend who I call "Slim."

Who is "Slim"? He's a black, metal walking cane (walking stick) that is adjustable and will extend far enough to accommodate a 7-foot-plus NBA basketball player. My desired height is 3 foot.

I was first introduced to a cane when my father, Willie (Lestrud), had a couple of canes lying around the house after he was laid up with a broken leg. He broke his leg when kicked by a cow on our small dairy farm located two miles west of Corning.

As a kid, I just used

the cane as a playing.

As I grew older, my father offered it to me when my son Troy and his wife Nancy announced that Judy and I were going to be grandparents (Kaley). My dad slyly pushed the cane toward me, acknowledging the fact that I was going to be a grandfather. Most recently, my physical therapist set me up with a fancy cane. I thought you just put the cane forward and began walking. Huh! It's not that easy.

Therapists Derek and Shannon gave me lessons on how to use a cane. Yes, there is a technique to using a cane.

When used as a mobility or stability aid, canes are generally used in the hand opposite the injury or weakness. Since my right ankle is the injured part, my therapists said I should carry the cane with my left hand.

I was taught to go up a flight of stairs putting my left foot forward first. When going down stairs, I was taught to lead with my "bad" foot.

It works! When going on a flat surface, lead with the cane and notice that the cane hits the ground when the right foot is forward and again when the left foot is forward.

"Slim" provides me with stability when walking. I can easily transfer most of my weight from the right side to the left side.

A cane is used primarily to aid walking and to provide postural stability or support, or to assist in maintaining good posture."

Wikipedia says in North America, a walking stick is a walking stick with a curved top, much like a shepherd's staff, but shorter. Thus, although they are called "canes," they are usually made of material heavier than cane, such as wood or metal.

I'm beginning to do

more walking without the help of my friend "Slim."

Judy teases me from time to time, saying "Where's Slim?" I respond with a quizzical look, indicating that I parked him somewhere, maybe in the bathroom, in the kitchen, or in my office.

I wholeheartedly recommend finding a cousin to "Slim" and using this device to make your journeys much easier.

I hope to soon retire "Slim" and plan on using "lefty" and "righty" to reach my destinations. Until then, I hope "Slim" will be close by at all times.

## Medford's MPCA investigation wrapped up

BY CHRIS BALDWIN  
STAFF WRITER

After receiving a fine in March and taking corrective action over several wastewater issues, the City of Medford announced that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's investigation has officially concluded. The investigation was ongoing before new

Mayor Danny Thomas taking office due to two spills in April and December of last year. "The spill in April was from a check valve malfunction," Administrative Director of Operations Jed Peterson explained. "This allowed sludge from a holding tank to drain back through the system and out the effluent into the river,"

Peterson said. "The overflow that occurred in December is estimated to be about 500 gallons. This overflow ran out of a splitter box onto the grass and did not make it to the river." Both spills were caused by a buildup of materials in the system. After a grinder that would normally grind up the material was tak-

en out of the plant, the city had implemented an insufficient screen that did not stop all of the debris and this resulted in clogs in parts of the system. Since joining the city, Peterson has worked with the MPCA to ensure that Medford's wastewater treatment plant was on the up and up. This included taking

corrective action to fix the plumbing issue. A screen was installed to catch any non-biodegradable material that passes through the plant to help prevent any buildup of material that caused the spills. The city is still

awaiting the screen and additional parts to fix the system.

After reviewing the corrective actions outlined by the City of Medford and fining the city \$5,100 in March, the MPCA officially concluded its investigation.

## Open house



STAFF PHOTO BY DEB LEMMONING

The Minnesota Autism Center (MAC) in Medford recently held an open house. Southeast Regional Director of the MAC Jen Grant, right, and Jaime Birr, a clinical associate at MAC, look over the information table at the event. They also provided tours to more than 25 guests who attended the April 29 open house.

## Missing piece added to History Center

MISSING from B1  
The Lange Theatre showcases a SmartBoard playing a PowerPoint of history and glass display cases that will highlight a community and an organization on a rotational basis approximately every six months. The center begins with Blooming Prairie and the Owatonna Foundation.

Other organizations and larger businesses with deep roots in the county will be allowed to take advantage of the display cases, said MaryAnne Higgins, the center's event coordinator. "We want to give them a chance to be a part of this building," she said.

SCHS member Jerry Ganfield was one of several who served on the committee to form the new display. "We wanted to display what's the history of Steele County," he said, adding the permanent

display can be changed and modified as needed. The story is told through original county maps created by Doug Meyer, who died last year. Ganfield said the display boards were kept short with bulleted items of interest. "We didn't want long text," he said.

The display begins in 1854, showcasing the first settlers of the area: John Sanborn, Abner Wright, Judge Owens, Aldred Cornell, William Pettitt, Orlando Johnson and William Colling.

By 1874, the railroads provided the first glimpses of transportation in the area. More hamlets were settled once the railroad came through. There were 10,000 people in the county in the late 1800s.

At the turn of the century, there were 30 villages, 22 churches, 90 country schools and 24 creameries scattered

throughout the county. A glass case features a creamery display of butter boxes, a milk can and photographs.

The county's population grew to about 21,000 in the mid-1900s. Interstate 35 opened between Medford and Owatonna in 1958. As part of the display, the center is also unveiling an original stained glass window from the Episcopal Church in Blooming Prairie in 1877. The window is in memory of Thomas Gray, one of the original settlers of Blooming Prairie.

Also included in the display is Jerry's Mural, which was recently salvaged from Jerry's Supper Club in downtown Owatonna. The 6-by-21-foot mural is now highlighted with special lighting on it. "It really made it pop," said Hinrichsen.

There is also a kiosk with pictures and his-

tory about the mural. About 219 people contributed around \$28,000 for the project, Ganfield said.

Eighteen mobile kiosks, Hinrichsen said, have been added throughout the Village of Yesteryear to share the history of the buildings. "It's just another way to give people a chance to learn more with a self-guided tour," he said.

With almost everything being shut down over the past year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, SCHS hopes to rejuvenate local interest in history again. Most of the visitors to the center recently have been from out of the area.

"We haven't been sitting idle all winter," Hinrichsen said.

Added Higgins: "When you walk through that door, you know you are in a museum."

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### Here's a long-lasting Mother's Day gift

Mother's Day has almost arrived. As an adult, you can fully appreciate all your mother has done for you, so, on this occasion, you may be happy to give Mom flowers, candy, jewelry or something similar. But Mother's Day is here and then it's gone. Is there a longer-term gift that can make a real difference in your mother's life? Actually, there is – the gift of knowledge for her financial future.

Specifically, there are two key areas in which you may be able to provide valuable help to your mother: long-term care and estate planning. But don't panic – you don't have to be an expert in either one of these subjects. You can, however, steer Mom – and possibly your other parent, too, if one is in the picture – in the right direction. Let's take a quick look at both these topics.

First, consider long-term care. If your mother is in good health, you may not have thought much about whether she would eventually need an extended stay in a nursing home or the services of a home health aide. But the odds aren't necessarily in her favor. About 70 percent of adults who reach 65 will eventually require some type of long-term service and support, according to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. And this type of care is expensive. The annual median cost for a private room in a nursing home is more than \$100,000, and it's nearly \$55,000 per year for the full-time services of a home health aide, according to a survey by the insurance company Genworth.

Unless your mother has accumulated a great deal of financial resources, she likely won't be able to pay these costs out of pocket without jeopardizing her financial independence. Furthermore, Medicare typically pays only a small portion of these expenses.

To help your mother deal with this potential financial threat, you might want to suggest she meet with a financial professional, who can explore possible strategies and products designed to address long-term care. And the sooner, the better, because these solutions will become more expensive and challenging the older your mother gets.

The second topic you may want to bring up with your mother is her estate plan. Has she drafted a will? Has she safeguarded her wishes by creating the necessary legal documents? These could include a durable power of attorney for finances, which allows her to name someone to manage her financial affairs if she becomes incapacitated, and a durable power of attorney for health care, which allows someone to make medical decisions for her if she is able to do so herself.

Having her estate plans in order can help protect your mother's finances and ensure her legacy is honored – which is almost certainly an outcome she would keenly desire. So, if your mother doesn't already have a comprehensive estate plan, encourage her to see a legal professional to start the process.

Helping your mother protect herself from the catastrophic costs of long-term care and the chaos of an inadequate estate plan may not sound like a typical Mother's Day offering, but your actions can help keep Mom in a good place in life – and that's a pretty valuable gift.

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

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## BLOOMING PRAIRIE

**MAY 11**  
10:30 a.m. — Online  
Storytime, BP Library  
Facebook

**MAY 12**  
6:30 p.m. — Awards  
Banquet at BPHS  
Commons

**MAY 13**  
6 a.m. — School  
Board Work Session

7 p.m. — Spring  
Concert at BPHS  
Gymnasium

**MAY 17**  
7 p.m. — School  
Board Meeting

**MAY 19**  
7 p.m. — Band  
Concert at BPHS  
Gymnasium

## ELLENDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

**MAY 7**  
11 a.m. — SEMCAC,  
Community Building

**MAY 10**  
11 a.m. — SEMCAC,  
Community Building  
8 p.m. — Berlin  
Township Meeting,  
Community Building

**MAY 12**  
11 a.m. — SEMCAC,  
Community Building

**MAY 13**  
8:30 p.m. —  
Ellendale City Council  
Meeting, Community  
Building

## OWATONNA/MEDFORD

**MAY 8**  
Owatonna High  
School Prom, Four  
Seasons

**MAY 10**  
4:30 p.m. —  
Owatonna Park Board  
Meeting, City Hall  
5:30 p.m. —  
Moonlighters  
Exchange Club of  
Owatonna, VFW  
7 p.m. — Medford  
Park Board Meeting,  
City Hall

**MAY 11**  
10 a.m. —  
Genealogy Club,  
History Center  
10:30 a.m. — Online  
Storytime, Owatonna  
Library Facebook  
5 p.m. — Steele

County Board Meeting,  
County Admin Building  
5:30 p.m. —  
Owatonna Human  
Rights Commission  
Meeting, City Hall  
5:30 p.m. —  
Owatonna Planning  
Commission Meeting,  
City Hall  
7 p.m. — Owatonna  
City Council Meeting,  
City Hall  
7 p.m. — Steele  
County Board of  
Adjustments Meeting,  
County Admin Building

**MAY 13**  
11 a.m. — Youth 1st  
Baseball & Barbecue,  
Cash Wise  
5 p.m. — Airport  
Commission Meeting,  
Airport Lounge

## An Enchanted Evening



STAFF PHOTO BY DEB FLEMING

Juniors Blake Dziewit and Kiara Adawa take a selfie Saturday while waiting for fellow prom-goers to finish the grand march that was being streamed on Owatonna Live. Parents and other guests were not allowed to attend the event because of COVID-19 restrictions. The grand march was followed by dinner, catered by Torry's Restaurant in Owatonna, a dance and an after-prom bowling party held in Owatonna.

## Annual art exhibition now open

The 68th Annual Steele County Art Exhibition is open and runs through May 30 at the Owatonna Art Center. Gallery hours are 1-5 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays.

Last year was first time the art exhibition, established in 1952, did not happen because of the pandemic.

After the year-long hiatus, the exhibit includes the work of 30 artists who are showing original works in oil, acrylic, pencil, pastel, collage, glass and clay. There are several new artists showing works and artists who have been showing for years.

## NRHEG inducts National Honor Society members

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School recently inducted 13 members to the National Honor Society.

Inductees included senior Katie Lee and juniors Alex Dobberstein, Cora Harpel, Jordan Horejsi, Brenlee Knudson, Cassie Kormann, Kylee Kruger, Ava Kyla, Miranda LaCanne, Mathew Mueller, Anna Peterson, Sophie Stork

and Journey Utpadel.

Also honored were the 2019-2020 inductees Elli Baker, Hanna Crabtree, Luisa Gaona Quesada, Tewodros Gushwa, Avery Hill, Anna Jacobson, Kendall Johnson, Caden Riewer, Lorelei Strom and Grace Tufte.

Induction ceremonies are typically held in the fall of each school year, but were delayed this year because of COVID-19.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

National Honor Society member Kendall Johnson is this year's valedictorian at New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva High School. Salutatorian is Grace Tufte.

## Village of Yesteryear tours begin

Guided tours of the Steele County Historical Society's Village of Yesteryear are avail-

able Tuesdays through Sundays at 1:30 p.m. through Sept. 30. Tour admission is

available at the front desk in the Steele County History Center; adult tickets, \$5 and children, age 6 to 17, \$3. Special

group tours also can be arranged by calling the Steele County Historical Society at (507) 451-1420.

NOTICE  
City Hydrant Flushing  
MAY 10-14

All city fire hydrants in Blooming Prairie will be flushed Monday-Friday, MAY 10-14, beginning at 7:30 a.m. and continuing until 4 p.m., weather permitting. Flushing of hydrants can cause some rust to come out of pipes in areas; particularly where the water system is not looped.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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Public Utilities



## Herbalist to highlight AAUW meeting

Members of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Owatonna invite interested guests and potential members to attend their meeting on May 10 at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Non-members interested in attending, please contact AAUW at aauwawatonna@gmail.com.

The featured speaker for the evening is Megan Schnitker, an indigenous traditional herbalist. Her father is hereditary Chief Bull Bear of the Kiyaksa

Band of Oglalla of Pine Ridge, S.D. She is an enrolled Sicangu Lakota of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. She grew up in a traditional family learning Lakota teachings and traditions. She will be sharing information about her small business, which features Lakota medicinal products and eco-friendly personal care products.

In addition, members will celebrate the past year, elect new officers, approve the 2021-22 budget, plan for the future and pay dues for the next year.

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Saturday: 9:00 AM - Close

Sunday: CLOSED

Bar Last Call: 10:30 PM - Close at 11:00 PM

Off-sale: 10:00 PM Close

Bar Bingo: Monday at 6:30 PM

(Must be 21 to play)

Wine Club: Tuesday 7 - 8:30 p.m.

April 27 &amp; May 18.

Masks &amp; Covid protocol will be followed.

Reservations are required.

May 8th: "Mother's Day in the Prairie"

Off-sale: 11 am - 2 pm.

Wine &amp; Seltzer Tasting / Sale

Door Prize Drawings.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATRONAGE

## Sudoku Corner

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

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## Answers

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| 4 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 5 |
| 9 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 6 |
| 2 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 9 |
| 5 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 9 |
| 5 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 2 |
| 1 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 8 |
| 7 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 1 |



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PANTHER OF THE WEEK

This week's Panther of the Week is JACK VANHAL. He is the son of Andy and Kelli VanHal and they reside in rural Ellendale. Jack is Mrs. Dobberstein's Kindergarten class.

Jack is a very responsible kindergartner, always doing his best! Our classroom is a better place because he is such a great listener and willing to help others. He is one of those kids you can always count on!

Thank you, Jack, for modeling your Panther Pride!



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# OWATONNA PROUD

B4 | WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2021

OWATONNA SCHOOLS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

## Info sessions planned for online learning

Owatonna Public Schools recently launched its state-approved virtual learning school, Owatonna Online. Owatonna Online is a K-12 online public school open to all Minnesota students free of charge.

An information session will take place on May 7.

Some of the benefits of Owatonna Online:

- A computer/device provided to all students

—and internet access for those who need it

- Combination of live and independent learning opportunities

• Online courses that meet all the Minnesota educational and high school graduation requirements

• Support from licensed Owatonna Public Schools staff

• Whole class and small group live sessions

- Playlist of activities to complete independently



• Learning Coach support to ensure success at home

• Regular one-on-one check-ins with the classroom teacher

Many families found success with online learning for their students during the COVID-19 pandemic. When all Minnesota schools were required to offer the option of distance learning for public health reasons. Some families appreciated the flexibility, and others noticed their students were more engaged and did better academically in the online learning environment.

Any Minnesota student can register for Owatonna Online. There are several upcoming informational webinars being offered to provide an overview and answer attendees' questions. To register for a webinar, go to [www.owatonnaonline.org](http://www.owatonnaonline.org). Questions can also be directed to Michelle Krell at [mikrell@isd761.org](mailto:mikrell@isd761.org) or 507-444-8613, or by visiting [www.owatonnaonline.org](http://www.owatonnaonline.org).



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Jacob Reinardy performs the long jump for the Huskies track and field team.

## MSHSL relaxes guidelines for outdoor spring sports

BY JONNY CLUBB  
OHS MAGNET WRITER

As spring sports get underway, athletes and coaches alike have had to figure out how to deal with wearing masks while competing outdoors. Some winter athletes are used to wearing masks while competing, but those who did not play a winter sport have had to make an adjustment. That is now changing as the Minnesota Department of Health updated its guidance to the MSHSL, and is now allowing active participants to remove masks.

On April 15, the MSHSL board unanimously

approved a statement from its eight member Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, which asked the MN Department of Health to adjust mask requirements, allowing masks to be removed when student-athletes are in outdoor competition, according to a tweet from MSHSL media specialist Mr. John Millea. That request was approved by the Minnesota Department of Health on April 22.

The updated guidelines still require masks for coaches, officials and spectators, as well as any athlete not actively participating in a game or event. The guidelines

allow the removal of masks at all outdoor practices and games, but still require them for any event held indoors.

Early in the season athletes and coaches were both affected by the guidelines that required masks. Tennis captain Maclean Pilcher said, "Singles players do not have to wear a mask, but doubles players do. I think breathing or respiration would be a little bit hard [if I had to wear one]." Coaches can also bring a fresh perspective. Head girls track and field coach Ms. Ann Christensen said, "I think that the girls are pretty much used to it

now. You know most of the people in track are in other sports, and so they're kind of used to it and just the day to day life of what we're living we're starting to get used to them."

Guidelines for fans remain unchanged. These guidelines include maintaining 12 feet of distance between themselves and the athletes, as well as wearing a face covering and maintaining six feet of distance between each pod of fans.

For more information on COVID-19 guidelines for athletes and fans, visit either the MSHSL or Big9 websites.

## Class in the great outdoors



SUBMITTED PHOTO

McKinley Elementary students prep gardens, plant seeds and spend time in the sun as part of their school day recently.



Reegan Lindholm

BY LAURYN BATEMAN  
OHS MAGNET WRITER

On Sunday, April 18, sophomore Reegan Lindholm, along with seven others from Owatonna High School's Student Council, attended the Student Council State Convention.

Lindholm ran for Minnesota Association of Student Councils State Secretary, and won, making her the new State MASC Secretary for 2021-2022. The convention, which

## Lindholm takes on the role of state MASC secretary

is normally a week-end event, was held in one day and less people attended, due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The convention brings together student council members from all over the state of Minnesota, they come together to try and make a difference within their high schools. Freshman and a member of OHS Student Council, Donte Miller stated, "I think the biggest takeaway would be how similar and different the council's around the state are, and what they all do when it comes to different situations."

There were many roundtable discussions among different groups of students. Many of the topics discussed were: mental health,

diversity/inclusion, spirit weeks, community outreach, COVID-19 support, dances, volunteer hours, service projects and many more. Lindholm and her group talked about mental health and diversity/inclusion, a perfect subject to discuss amid all the recent events happening in Minnesota. Talking about these topics is very important, not only for the student council to propose solutions but also for the students themselves to express how they feel because of the events.

The state executive board plans and executes all state level conferences, including the Summer Leadership, Fall Leadership and the State Leadership Convention.

As state MASC secretary, Lindholm's role is to keep minutes of the meetings, deliver messages to councils, coordinate between councils, communicate with others using social media platforms and assist in leading sessions at state council events.

Lindholm said, "I am very excited about being secretary, we have an amazing board. We are going to have a lot of fun planning things next year! Since I was a member at large this last year I can't wait to work with the new board and have a larger role in things this upcoming year."

Lindholm is ready to take on her new role and make a difference in her school and community.

## Owatonna Students of the Week

### Middle School



Aniston Sorum  
8th Grade  
Parents: Brad Sorum  
and Hilary Helgeson

Aniston Sorum is a leader. She works hard to have her work done on time and makes sure she is on track. Aniston is kind and positive and a pleasure to work with. She is an 8th grader on her way to a great experience in high school.

### High School



Istahil Mohamed  
Junior  
Parents: Hodan Abdi  
and Ahmed Gutale

Istahil Mohamed is an inviting, dedicated, and calm student who is passionate about improving societal conditions for equity. She participates often in class and asks great questions to deepen her understanding. Istahil stays very organized and works hard always – whether learning in person or from a distance at home. She is an exemplary presence both in and out of the classroom.

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## Team effort puts BP golfers on top

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
SPORTS WRITER

After missing out on first place in the first Gopher Conference golf meet of the season by just one stroke, the Blooming Prairie boys golf team made sure that didn't happen again by achieving a 163 team score, which beat its next closest competition, Faribault Bethlehem Academy, by 14 strokes on Tuesday, April 27.

Coach Carl Peterson said the Blossoms' low score was one of its best team scores in quite a few years.

He mentioned that Blooming Prairie's success was a true team effort.

"We had all six scores in the 40s or better which included two seventh graders, Brady Johnson 49 and Colby Johnson 38. Both of which won their spot on the varsity team in a qualifying match we had last week. We have 21 boys on the golf team this year and 10 to 12 of them are capable of playing at the varsity level. In high school golf you use the best four scores of your six players. It is always nice when one of the fifth or sixth players on the team comes through with a good score that counts," he said. The Blossoms were led by Colin Jordison who was the individual medalist with a score of 38.

"Colin Jordison has been playing on the varsity since he was in seventh grade. His biggest strength is his power. He can hit his tee shot 300 plus yards regularly. However, we all know that hitting it far doesn't make a good player. He has worked hard on learning to control his swing and keep the ball in play. Also, working on the short game around and on the green," Peterson said. Jordison finished just one stroke better than teammate Colby Johnson who tied for second place.

"Colby Johnson shooting 38 was a bit of a surprise, however, he has worked harder on his game than almost anyone. He played quite a bit last summer and he spent 3 to 4 days a week this winter in Bunkies working with



Blooming Prairie's David Kartes was in a difficult spot when his ball land on the dirt road behind hole one, but he got himself out of it with this chip shot. He finished with a score of 47 and tied for 14th place with his teammate Kollyn Alwes.

Aaron Ressler on his Trackman golf simulator," he said. He added that Johnson's score is even more impressive when you take into account his age.

"I don't believe that we have had a seventh grader shoot 38 in a varsity match before this," Peterson said.

In addition to Johnson and Jordison, Garret Farr also achieved a top five finish with a score of 41.

"Garret's 41 is his best score to date and he was very excited about how he played. It was fun to see him play well

Meanwhile, the Blossoms team score was rounded out by Kollyn Alwes or David Kartes, who both finished tied for 14th place with a score of 47.

"Both David and Kollyn were not happy with their scores. Both players are capable of shooting better scores and I am sure they will this year. So, it shows that we have room for some improvement," he said.

Currently, the Blooming Prairie boys

and girls teams are in first place in the conference. Halle Strunk and Jessica Ressler are tied for the lead in the individual standings on the girls side.

The Blooming Prairie boys and girls next golf meet is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 11, at Faribault Golf and Country Club.

### Panthers place fourth

The NRHEG boys golf team finished in fourth place with 203 points, but it was 17 strokes better than how they finished in the first conference golf meet of the season.

The Panthers were led by Porter Peterson who finished in ninth place with a score of 44. Carter Stenel was the next best NRHEG golfer with a score of 49, which was good for 18th place.

The third-best Panther was Nash Howe who finished the nine holes in 51 strokes and tied for 21st place. NRHEG's team score was rounded out by



Despite having to hit the ball out from underneath a tree, New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) golfer Nash Howe got this shot to land on the green. He tied for 21st place with a score of 51.

Andrew Hoelscher who came in 26th place with a score of 59.

The Panther boys' next golf meet is

scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Monday, May 10, at Riverside Town and Country Club in Blue Earth. The Panther

girls next golf meet is slated to start at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 6, at Riverside Town and Country Club.



Blooming Prairie's Colin Jordison hits a chip shot onto the green on hole one. He was the individual meet winner with a score of 37. He also led the Awesome Blossoms to the team win, beating Bethlehem Academy by 14 strokes.



NRHEG's Maverick Bueltel can only watch as his putt rolls toward the hole. Unfortunately, it sailed to the right of the hole, but he got it on his next putt.





Blooming Prairie Country Club patrons can view the fifth hole from an outdoor deck that surrounds the club house.

STAFF PHOTO BY DEB FLEMING

## Changes coming to Blooming Prairie Country Club

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
STAFF WRITER

With the lease between the Blooming Prairie Gun Club and the Blooming Prairie Country Club set to expire in 2024, the country club has decided to expand and revise the layout of its nine-hole course between now

and 2024.

President of the Board of the Blooming Prairie Country Club Doug Johnson said that when the country club loses the land it leases, it will lose two complete holes and two partial holes.

"We're looking at what we can do to keep a nine-hole golf course

here in Blooming Prairie when we lose that land," he said. "In order to accomplish that, we received some land called the north parcel that runs around Oak Glen Lake and we'll be adding two complete holes and two partial holes on that land. We also bought land to the south of course, the

south parcel, and we'll put two holes on that."

He said his goal is to get the four holes on the new land done by 2022.

Then, in late 2022 or 2023, Johnson said the country club will shift its focus to modifying the three existing holes with a new tee, new green and a different

layout so they're ready for the 2024 season.

"The game plan is to always have a minimum of nine holes available up until 2024 when we have the nine holes of the new course and they'll be all new holes," he said.

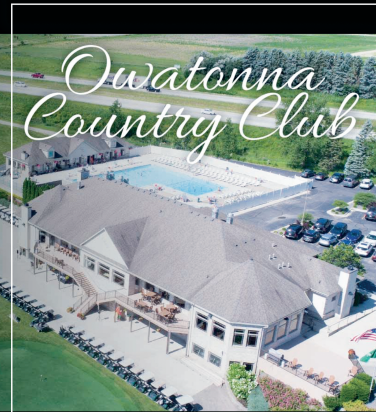
In addition to all new holes, Johnson said that the location of the

holes will also change.

There's currently five holes to east of clubhouse and four to west and when the construction is complete, he said all nine holes will be to the west of the clubhouse.

One aspect of the golf course that won't change that much is

See CHANGES on B7 ►



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Tuesday Night Men's League starts Monday, May 4th

**2021 Blooming Prairie Country Club  
Tournament Schedule**

|                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Sunday, May 16th         | 1-Man Best Shot                   |
| Saturday, June 19th      | 3-Person Best Shot                |
| Saturday, July 10th      | 2-Man Best Shot (Meat Tournament) |
| Saturday, July 24th      | 2-Man (9-9-9) Tournament          |
| Sunday, July 25th        | Junior Club Tournament            |
| August 14th & 15th       | BPCC Men's Club Tournament        |
| Wednesday, August 18th   | BPCC Women's Club Tournament      |
| Saturday, August 21st    | 3-Person Best Shot – RENO         |
| Saturday, September 11th | Calcutta Tournament               |
| Saturday, October 2nd    | Fall 1-Man Best Shot              |

**Fall 2-Man League Each Thursday in September**

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## Changes coming to BP Country Club

◀ **CHANGES** from B6 the distance between the holes, according to Johnson.

"It'll be pretty much the same. There's a little less yardage and we'll go from a par 36 to a par 35, but our goal is to keep it very close," he said. "Until we're actually on the land, it's hard to get an exact measurement."

Johnson said construction of the new course is underway with PGA professional Rodney Cole in charge of the design of the course.

Johnson also said the new course will include a practice

area on some of the land to the east of the golf course, a large putting green, a driving range and maybe three par 3 holes for junior golfers to help encourage them to enjoy the sport.

"My goal is to have the premier nine-hole golf course in southern Minnesota and give golfers a unique experience," he said. "That's our vision. That's what we're trying to get done."

For more information about the expansion and new layout of the Blooming Prairie Country Club, contact the country club's clubhouse at 507-583-2887.



Troy Barth can only watch as his golf ball gets slowed down by the rough and only goes a few feet into the green.

STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING



Ramiro Salinas ends his round on a high note by getting this putt to fall.

STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Charlie Nicholson finishes up his round of golf with this short putt on the ninth hole on Saturday, May 1.



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# Huskies dominate in track as girls earn first, boys second

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
SPORTS WRITER

It was a banner day for the Owatonna girls and boys track and field teams when they traveled to Rochester to take on the Rochester Mayo Spartans, the Mankato West Scarlets, the Winona Winhawks and the Rochester John Marshall Rockets on Thursday, April 29.

The Husky girls won their meet by scoring 466.5 points, just 11 points more than Mankato West. Meanwhile, the boys team scored 451 points, but came in second place behind Rochester Mayo.

Owatonna's Janessa Moore set a personal record by finishing the 100-meter dash in 13.32 seconds. She came in third place, just a couple hundredths of a second ahead of her teammate Ava Wolfe who finished in fourth place.

Emma Johnson earned third place in the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 17.95 seconds.

In the 200-meter dash, Lauren Waypa set a new personal record with a time of 27.79 seconds, which was good for third place.

Owatonna hurdler Madison Koslosky also earned third place in the 300-meter hurdles. She crossed the finish line at 32.30 seconds.

The Husky girls scored 33 points in the 400-meter dash thanks to Sarah Kingland, Anika Wiese and McKenna DuFrene who came in fourth, fifth and sixth

place, respectively.

Owatonna also scored 33 points in the 800-meter run. This time it was Anna Cox, Zinash Valen and Angela Zaccaria who finished in third (2:36.36), fifth (2:39.26) and seventh place (2:46.08), respectively. They all set new personal records.

In the 1600-meter run, the Huskies had a pair of top five finishers. Kiara Gentz finished in 6:06.81 and achieved fourth place, while Laura Stevens set a new personal record by finishing in 6:12.04 and earned fifth place.

The Huskies' relay teams had even better success. The 4x100 relay team, which consists of Moore, Laken Meier, Waypa and Wolfe, won the race with a time of 53.44 seconds to earn Owatonna 20 points. The 4x200 team, Moore, Aileen Jock, Waypa and Wolfe, also won their race and earned the Huskies 20 points.

DuFrene earned the Huskies 15 points by winning the high jump with a height of five feet, while Brooke Miles came in fifth place with a height of 4 feet and 8 inches.

Wolfe, Wiese and Waypa finished in second, fourth and sixth, respectively, in the long jump.

Rya Dixon won the shot put and set a personal record with a distance of 35 feet and 6.50 inches.

Last but not least, Hillary Haarstad came in second place in the

triple jump with a height of 33 feet and 5.25 inches.

Shortly after the girls meet ended, the boys meet began and the Husky boys achieved similar success.

The Huskies had three top four finishers in the 110-meter hurdles. Jack Titchenal came in first place with a time of 15.63 seconds, Ryan Gregory finished in 15.72 seconds for second place and Carter Johnson came in fourth with a time of 15.87 seconds. Combined they earned the Huskies 41 points in just that event.

Those same three boys also competed in the 300-meter hurdles. This time it was Gregory who won the race with a time of 40.08 seconds. Titchenal finished in 43.99 seconds for third place and Johnson came in sixth with a time of 45.16 seconds. Combined they earned the Huskies 38 points in that event.

Zach Stransky kept the Huskies' winning ways going when he finished in first place in the 400-meter dash with a time of 53.45 seconds. Less than a couple seconds later, Noah Wellnitz came in fourth place with a time of 54.87 seconds.

In the 800-meter run, Connor Ginskey and Riley Voracek came in third and fourth place, respectively, with times of 2:09.17 and 2:10.69.

The Huskies' 4x200 relay team, which consists of Justin Gleason, Kaven Torabpour, Garrett Karsten and Riley



Husky junior Ava Wolfe crosses the finish line just 0.17 seconds before the Rochester Mayo runner. Thanks to her and her teammate's efforts, Owatonna won that event with a time of 53.44 seconds.

Glassmaker, came in second place with a time of 1:34.81.

Owatonna's 4x400 relay team, Wellnitz, Torabpour, Stransky and Gregory, did even better, coming in first place and setting a season record with a time of 3:38.73.

The Huskies' 4x800 team, David Smith, Ty Svenby, Connor Ginskey and Jacob Ginskey, also earned Owatonna 20 points by finishing in first place with a time of 8:57.36.

In the discus throw, the Huskies earned 40 points thanks to three top four finishers. Eli Spurgeon came in first place with a distance of 137-11. Meanwhile, Trevor Schirmer and Nicholas Cummings came in third and fourth place, respectively.

Owatonna also had three strong finishers in the high jump. Owen Korbel came in second



Owatonna's Grace Jacobs, left, Kiara Gentz, center, and Laura Stevens get off to a fast start in the 1600-meter run on Thursday, April 29.

place with a height of 6 feet, Gregory hit 5 feet and 10 inches and Titchenal came in seventh place with a height of 5 feet and 8 inches.

Last but not least, the Huskies earned 35 points in the shot put. Schirmer earned first place with a distance of 46 feet and 4.75 inches, Spurgeon finished in fourth place with a

distance of 43 feet and 4.25 inches and Nathan Smith came in eighth place with a distance of 40 feet and 9.75 inches.

The boys' next track and field meet is a road meet at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, at Lakeville South High School. The girls' next track and field meet is a home meet at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 11.

## BP track girls earn second, boys third

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
SPORTS WRITER

It was a successful day at the track and in the field for the Blooming Prairie girls and boys track and field teams when they competed against United South Central, Waterville-Elysian-Morristown, Hayfield and Lyle-Pace in the Blooming Prairie Varsity Invite on April 27.

The girls team earned second place out of five teams with 74 points, while the boys team scored 72 points and missed out on tying for second place by just one point.

Starting with the girls team, Sierra Larson set a personal record with a time of 14.50 seconds in the 100-meter dash, which was good for fourth place overall.

The Blossom girls achieved even better results in the 400-meter dash and the 800-meter run. In the 400-meter dash, Chloe McCarthy crossed the finish line first with a time of 1:11.94 and Heffling came in third place with a time of 1:14.59. In the 800-meter run, Emily Miller won the race with a time of 2:46.48.

Megan Oswald came in fourth place in the 1600-meter run and set a personal record with a time of 6:58.00, while Asha Lighthizer also set a personal record and came in third place in the 3200-meter run with a time of 16:07.89.

In the 300-meter hurdles, Clare Rennie came in fourth place by finishing in 1:02.67.

Blooming Prairie's 4x200 relay, which consists of Lea, Heffling, Annika Forsberg and



Blooming Prairie seniors Ashleigh Alwes, left, and Megan Oswald put some distance between themselves and the pack of runners behind them during the 1600-meter run. Oswald set a personal record and earned fourth place with a time of 6:58.00, while Alwes came in sixth place with a time of 7:18.93.



Blooming Prairie sophomore Ezra Kiley gets ready to put, or throw, the 12-pound shot on Tuesday, April 27. Kiley set a personal record with a distance of 34 feet and five inches, which was good for fifth place.

Miller, earned second place with a time of 2:00.79.

Like the individual races, the Blossoms did even better in the 400 and 800 meter relays. Both Blooming Prairie's 4x400 team, Anna Kittelson, Grace Krejci, McCarthy and Miller, and its 4x800 team, McCarthy, Abby Smith, Lila Quail and Kittelson, won first place.

In the discus throw, Micalyn Trihus finished in third place with a distance of 82-10.

She also achieved a top five finish, fourth, in the shot put with a throw that went 31 feet and 6.50 inches.

Last but not least for the girls team, Oswald won the triple jump and set another personal record with a height of 28 feet and 1 inch.

For the boys team, Ezra Kiley finished in fifth place in the 100-meter dash with a time of 13.04 seconds.

In the 200-meter dash, Sam Skillestad won first place with a time of 24.80 seconds, while Kiley again came in fifth place, this time he crossed the finish line in 26.47 seconds. Blooming Prairie sophomore Sam Smith finished in fourth place in the 400-meter dash with a time of 58.24 seconds.

In the 1600-meter run, Hosea Baker finished in 5:41.14, which was good for fourth place.

Xavier Rennie finished in first place in the 110-meter hurdles and third in the 300-meter hurdles with times of 18.44 seconds and 47.25 seconds.

The Blossom 4x100 relay team, which consists of Ezra Kiley, Derek Kubicek, Brady Kittelson and James Wohlfert, finish in 49.27 seconds and earn second place.

Later, the 4x200 relay team, Kittelson, Sam Smith, Wohlfert and Skillestad, and the 4x800 meter relay team, Stephen Fennel, Jack Bruns, Alex Kiley and Hosea Baker each win first place.

In the shot put, Adam Walsh set a personal record and came in third place overall with a distance of 36 feet and 4.75 inches, while Ezra Kiley also set a personal record with a distance of 34 feet and 5 inches, which was good for fifth place.

Walsh also excelled in the discus throw. He set a personal record in that event with a distance of 105 feet and 2 inches, which earned him second place.

Last but not least, Xavier Rennie came in second place in the triple jump with a distance of 36 feet and 2 inches.

The boys and girls teams will get another shot at improving their time, height and distance when they compete against Medford, Bethlehem Academy and United South Central at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday at Medford High School.



## SPRING SPORTS ROUNDUP

# Panthers keep unbeaten season alive by shutting out BP

BY ALEX NUEHRING  
SPORTS WRITER

## SOFTBALL

## NRHEG 9, Blooming Prairie 0

The Panthers maintained their undefeated season and recorded their second straight shutout thanks to the play of starting pitcher Sophie Stork, who struck out 11 Awesome Blossoms and gave up just two hits on Thursday, April 29, and the Panthers' defense.

Meanwhile, NRHEG's offense scored five runs in the third inning and three more in the fourth before tacking on one more run in the seventh.

"The girls had some timely hits when we needed them," said Head Coach Wendy Schultz.

The Panthers' offense was led by Ava Kylo who recorded three hits, two RBI and one stolen base, Grace Tuft who got two hits, scored three runs and hit two RBI and Cloie Arndt who recorded two hits, including a triple, scored two wins and hit one RBI.

NRHEG is now 8-0 and host a doubleheader against Kenyon-Wanamingo that starts at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 11.

## Owatonna 6, Rochester John Marshall 3

After a tough 13-0 loss to Northfield, the Owatonna Huskies took their frustration out on Rochester John Marshall by scoring six runs in the first five innings and holding the Rockets to just three runs on Thursday, April 29.

In the bottom of the sixth inning, the Rockets had a chance to make the game a lot closer and potentially take the lead when they loaded the bases with no outs, but Owatonna's pitcher recorded three straight strikeouts to prevent any runs.

After a disappointing 11-1 loss to Shakopee the next night, the Huskies' record is now 5-4.



NRHEG Head Coach Wendy Schultz and her third baseman/daughter Sidney Schultz share a smile after Sidney hit a two-run triple in the top of the fourth inning during a recent game against Medford.

Their next home game is against Andover at 5 p.m. on Friday, May 7, at Morehouse Park.

## BASEBALL

## Rochester John Marshall 11, Owatonna 2

The Owatonna Huskies were looking to extend their winning streak to six games, but Rochester John Marshall's batter and its returning All-Conference pitcher Drew Lingen had other plans.

The Rocket batters scored four runs in the top of the first inning. Lingen then held the Huskies scoreless in the bottom of the first before John Marshall's offense added two more runs in the top of the second inning to take an early 6-0 lead.

In the bottom of the second inning, the Huskies scored two runs but the Rockets re-

sponded with two runs in the third inning and two more in the fourth as they cruised to a 11-2 win.

Lingen allowed just seven Huskies to reach base (five hits and two walks) in seven innings. Owatonna hosts Rochester Mayo at 4 p.m. on Thursday, May 6.

## Medford 11, Bethlehem Academy 3

After losing their first three games, the Medford Tigers look like they've gotten back on track since they've outscored their last three opponents by 25-9, including last Thursday's 11-3 win over the Cardinals.

With the win, the Tigers improved their record to 2-4. Medford's next home game is against Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial at 5 p.m. on Friday, May 7.

## Waterville-Elysian-Morristown 7, NRHEG 5

Following a disappointing one-run loss to Waseca, the NRHEG baseball team was hoping to rebound against

W-E-M, but it was Buccaneers who came away victorious.

Including this two-run loss, the Panthers' last four games have all been decided by two runs or less.

NRHEG's record fall

to 2-5

The Panthers' next four games are all on the road. The closest road game is when they travel to Blooming Prairie to take on the Awesome Blossoms at 5 p.m. on Friday, May 7.



## Blooming Prairie City Wide Garage Sales Saturday, May 15 - 8 a.m.

| Address                                       | Items                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| #1 118 2nd St. NW                             | Support the Blooming Prairie Women of Today so we can continue to support the community of Blooming Prairie                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| #2 173 3rd St. SE                             | Multi-family garage sale - women's clothing and shoes, furniture, exercise equipment, home decor, miscellaneous household items                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| #3 133 8th St. NW                             | Home goods, clothing, exercise bike & Misc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| #4 133 Main St. W.                            | Happy Baby Kids' Sale - Infant and kids boys & girl size clothes, swings, bouncers, jumper, changing table, high chair, toddler mattresses, crib, riding toys, pack & play, toys, children's books, games, kids bedding, Mini fridge, Desk, Leaf Blower, Weber Genesis grill, wood rocking chair.                                                                              |
| #5 821 N. Center Ave.                         | Over 60 collector plates (Kinkadee, Sandra Kuck, Grossman, others), 16-piece china, other dishes, kitchen items, serger, crochet magazines, books, costume jewelry, clothing, etc., 5x7 rug, AND MORE!                                                                                                                                                                         |
| #6 Vandal's Family Market 237 Highway Ave. S. | Multi-family sale in parking lot and BBQ to benefit the Blooming Prairie Youth Club. Hot dogs-\$1, brats-\$2, or donation you choose, all proceeds go to the Club!                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| #7 106 2nd St. SE                             | Estate & 2 family sale - MEGA household, kitchen, decor, misc. furniture                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| #8 425 5th Pl. SW                             | Tons of NB-Size 8 Boys Clothing, NB-Size 4 Girls Clothing, Kids Shoes, Stroller, Thomas the Train Items, Legos, Toys, Children's Books, Home Decor, Oak Shadow Boxes, Frames, & Shelving                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| #9 401 4th St. SE                             | Little bit of everything (clothing, household items, furniture, piano, miscellaneous and more).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| #10 313 1st St. NE                            | Kids clothing, Boys 12 months summer & winter, Girls 3T and 4T summer & winter clothing, women's clothing, toddler boy shoes, rain boots, girl shoes, boots, coats, American girl furniture, dolls, and clothes, dress up clothes, baby boy cribs, shelving, picture frames, cribs, laundry baskets, and several other household and children's items. All priced low to sell! |
| #11 145 8th St. NW                            | 7-8 youth girls, women's clothes (Nike, pink, under armor, American eagle), boys clothes (Nike, under armor, American eagle), men's clothes, shoes, stroller, household, tools, bikes, games, movies, books, and everything in between.                                                                                                                                        |
| #12 First Baptist Church 104 1st Ave. NE      | A fundraising garage and bake sale behind the church. Our youth group is raisin raising money to go to camp this summer. All sales will be by donation!                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| #13 424 3rd St. SW                            | Multi Family Sale: Household misc., copper tubing, girls, women's small & men's clothing, vintage wood folding chairs, something for everyone!                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| #14 Friends of the Library 138 Hwy Ave. South | Lightly Used Books - free will donations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| #15 11414 730th St.                           | House Decor, Furniture, Clothes (men, women, kids), horse tack & misc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| #16 643 2nd St. NE                            | Flower Planters & Misc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| #17 252 5th St. NW                            | Deco Rugs, Boys Cloths, Toys, Household items & misc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| #18 214 2nd Ave. NW                           | Rocks, Minerals, Gems & Kids Stuff                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| #19 318 4th St. NW                            | Multi Family: household items, furniture                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| #20 553 4th St. SW                            | Occ. Chair, Vacuum, Carpet Cleaner, Microwave, Household items                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| #21 10444 Dodge/Mower Rd                      | Household items, pictures, clothes, lawn tractor (blower & blade), power tools, swimming pool, patio furniture.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

Watch next week's edition for a map with all the listings!

## Medford volleyball star Kinsey Cronin chooses Smith College



This past week, Medford senior Kinsey Cronin signed her National Letter of Intent to play volleyball at D-II Smith College in Massachusetts. She is joined by her parents Bill and Mary.

# Moms and daughters reflect on relationships, Mother's Day

◀ **BITTERSWEET** from B1  
"Mom will have to upgrade to an iPhone so we can FaceTime."

Becky Munns said she likes to think that things won't change dramatically when her daughter, Abby, leaves for the University of St. Scholastica in Duluth in the fall.

After all, Duluth is only 220 miles north of Owatonna. And the two are planning a trip to Orlando over Christmas

break next year. Becky said they were planning to take the trip at the beginning of December last year, but COVID-19 changed those plans.

"I hope we will continue to travel together...doing the fun things we've been doing," said Becky, who paused mid-sentence. "But, life happens."

"I hope she does meet people, spread her wings and fly," said Becky, who doesn't

expect her daughter to come home monthly like her son who is attending the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

"She's been very independent since she was a little girl," said Becky, adding that by the time Abby was 2 years old, she'd figured out how to navigate her way out of her crib and put in the Kid's Songs music video and watch it. "When someone else came in the room, she'd crawl

back into her room and play by herself."

One of the highlights of this past year for both has been sharing TikTok, a social network for sharing user-generated videos, with their moms.

"I show her TikToks that I think she'll find funny," said Kinsey. "And she does, and we laugh together."

Abby said her Mom laughs too -- sometimes. "Sometimes, she just

stares with a kind of an annoyed look on her face."

As for Mother's Day, Abby said she has her Mom's gift picked out. "It will probably be a low-key day because prom is the night before."

"That's a secret," said Kinsey when asked about Mother's Day. But Mary said she has an idea of what's to come.

"For birthdays and Mother's Day, she writes notes that make

you cry," said Mary.

For both moms, spending time with their children and spouses is all they want.

When it comes to advice for other mothers, Becky said: "Find the things you enjoy and take the time to do those things. Time together is where the memories are."

And to other teens who will soon be leaving home, Abby countered: "Make use of the time left."

## MnDOT honors fallen transportation workers

The Minnesota Department of Transportation honors the men and women who have been killed or injured while working on state roadways during Work-

er Memorial Day on Wednesday, April 28. On April 28, the Interstate 35W Bridge in Minneapolis will be lit orange in honor of Worker Memorial Day.

Since 1960, 35 MnDOT workers and 16 contractors have lost their lives while working on Minnesota highways. The following are the workers from south-

east Minnesota who have lost their lives in work-related incidents.

• John Biever was working on a bridge on Highway 16 when he was hit by a truck on Sept. 19, 1982.

• Eugene Mitchell died working for MnDOT while in District 6 on April 23, 1964.

• Earl D. Held died while on a survey crew. He was on Highway 65 when three of the four men were struck by an automobile on Oct. 30, 1964.

• Roy Carls was on his way home from a meeting when his vehi-

cle left the road and hit a bridge abutment. He died March 2, 1968.

• Jerry Holter was struck and run over by a truck while performing inspection duties on Oct. 16, 1973.

• Grayston Cain lost his life when he was struck by a truck while he was performing inspection duties on Aug. 28, 1980.

• Thomas Schmit fell from a falsework deck suspended under a bridge and drowned in the Mississippi River on Oct. 21, 1994.

MnDOT reminds the public that motorists

and passengers suffer the majority of work zone deaths and injuries and urges all travelers to follow these recommendations in work zones:

• Stay alert; work zones constantly change due to lane shifts, closures and moving workers and vehicles

• Watch for signs, equipment and workers

• Minimize distractions behind the wheel

• Avoid tailgating

• Slow down. Follow posted speed limits and directional signs

• Be patient; expect delays, especially during peak travel times

## Onward to normal

◀ **STEELE TALKIN'** from B1  
and renovation of our current facility is \$1.6 million and our annual operating budget is \$1 million. When complete, we will double our space to offer more services, provide more selection and variety for our families, and be an improved resource for the community.

We have been working on the design of the

new facility in anticipation of meeting our goal. It's so exciting to figure out where the new walk-in cooler and freezer will go or the clothes washer and dryer. So many of the enhancements that will be in the new facility have been on our wish list for so many years.

We hope this becomes a reality soon so that we can begin the next phase of our organization's

journey and look inward towards improving upon our services.

*Nancy Ness is the co-executive director of Community Pathways of Steele County in Owatonna. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.*

## WAY TO GO TIGER SCHOLARS!

*Congratulations to these students who achieved high academic honors for third quarter at Medford High School!*



### High Honor Roll

#### GRADE 7

Cadence Aldrich  
Abigail Belch  
Casen Blome  
Mylie Born  
Taryn Dolney  
Andrew Erickson  
Emily Franco  
Quintin Goblirsch  
Landon Hachfeld  
Ashlin Havumaki  
Orion Heintz  
Ava Huizel  
Kendyl Larson  
Lauren Ristau  
Libby Sutherland  
Aleah Vogt  
Olivia Ward  
Reid Wildgrube

#### GRADE 8

Meghan Amberg  
Amanda Bock  
Hailey Chambers  
Delaney Driscoll  
Makenna Gare  
Lydia Heiderscheidt  
Hailey Hemann  
Anna Herr  
Jillian Kellen  
Logan Maas Hansen  
Emma McAdams  
Madysen McCarty  
Addison Poe  
Lauren Smith

Josef Sutcliffe  
Clara Thurnau  
Addison Vandereide  
Josue Zuniga

#### GRADE 9

Riley Babcock  
Ava Clark  
Abigail Cloutier  
Jacquelyn Cole  
Ava Cottrell  
Avery Dressen  
Jonathan Finke  
Sadie Kern  
Annette Kniefel  
Isabel Miller  
Addison O'Connor  
Carolina Perez  
Peyton Snow  
Tessa Underdahl  
Mackenzie Velishek  
Sarah Wall

#### GRADE 10

Andrea Bock  
Samantha Bueckler  
Casey Chambers  
Dylan Heiderscheidt  
Tate Hermes  
Josephine Homeier  
Emily Kappes  
Grace Keller  
Adalia List  
Jack Meyer  
Payton Ristau  
Tyler Steffen  
Reagan Sutherland  
Isis Walters

#### GRADE 11

Jacob Andrews  
Jake Barten  
Carter Blome  
Logan Bueckler  
Reed Cumberland  
Cheyenne Fedder  
Ryllei Federly  
Henry Grayson  
Nicole Harfmann  
MacKenzie Kellen  
Megan Klein  
Clara Kniefel  
George McCarthy  
Jessica Neuhaert  
Julia Niles  
Jack Paulson  
Justin Ristau  
Scott Scholljegerdes  
Nicole Schrot  
Hannah Schull  
Anna Sobrak  
Hayley Wall  
Rylan Warner

#### GRADE 12

Brayden Beede  
Jenna Berg  
Emily Chadwick  
Kinsey Cronin  
Cole Dusek  
Isaac Enzenauer  
Lizbeth Gutierrez  
Josiah Hedensten  
Ernesto Lazaro  
Mason Nagel  
Luz Peralta

Brooke Purrier  
Lily Roehrick  
Tyler Stursa  
Alex Vandereide  
Haley VonRuden  
Hanna VonRuden  
Layla Wenker  
Gunner White

### Regular Honor Roll

#### GRADE 7

Grace Aldrich  
Aiden Anderson  
Landon Capello  
Trenton Eliason  
Madalyn Huizel  
Elery LaCroix  
Jade Laue  
Cara Lawson  
Mari Nelson  
Gabriella Ortega  
Bailey Rathai  
Levi Sierakowski  
Parker Snow  
Kiera Steinbacher  
Bennett Stinocher  
Sarah Summy  
Alex Thurnau  
Conor Wilson  
Zoe Zacharias

#### GRADE 8

Jessie Aase  
Aiden Ahrens  
Kaden Harfmann  
Makailyn Hedberg  
Cain Johannes

Alivia Kappes  
Jayden Kennedy  
Kylee Krause  
Kyla Langeslag  
Harvey Prins  
Adrianna Schlund  
Erika Schrot  
Micah Snyder

#### GRADE 9

Mia Amberg  
Kelsie Casper  
Dakoda DuChene  
Thomas Furness  
Lily George  
Omar Guerrero  
Emely Lazaro  
Luis Lopez  
Noah Maas Hansen  
Adrianna O'Neill  
Hunter Perdue  
Cayden Thorson  
Jade Wegner

#### GRADE 10

Rian Cloutier  
Landon Driscoll  
Kylie Dusek  
Makenna Enzenauer  
Abigail Fitzgerald  
Connor Jones  
Morgan Jones  
Alexys Lustig  
Jenesis McGuire  
Riley Norland  
Cohen O'Connor  
Josephine Schell  
Martina Smith

Paige Stadler  
Cohen Stursa  
Annabelle Troester  
Anahi Zuniga

#### GRADE 11

Caydon Budde  
Jordan Capello  
Hailey Cuevas  
Paige Davis  
Blake Dziewit  
Dawson Gasner  
Bryce Grayson  
Noah Honsey  
Kimberly Jarvi  
Lynn Larson  
Hunter Laue  
Bridgette Lemke  
Samantha Miller  
Logan Schak  
Brielle Smith  
Jayme Stransky  
Malachi Sutcliffe  
Amelia Thompson

#### GRADE 12

Braden Barbeau  
Adam Cammock  
Johanna Grant  
Gavin Hermes  
Catrina Herr  
Angela Lippert  
Devin Luckey  
Sierra Lustig  
Peyton Seiler  
Chloe Van Ryn  
Miya Weber





## PUBLIC NOTICES from B11

11. In order to comply with Minn. Stat. Section 580.025, the undersigned hereby states that the following information is correct to the best of its knowledge:

(a) The street address and tax identification number of the mortgaged property: 1173 Austin Road Owatonna, Minnesota 55060

Tax Identification Number: 17-015-3111

(b) Transaction agent and transaction agent's mortgage identification number: N/A (c) Residential mortgage servicer, broker and/or originator: N/A

(d) Lender: Wells Feder-

al Bank, fsb a Federally chartered savings bank.

**12. This is an attempt to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.**

Dated: March 24, 2021

Citizens Community Federal, N.A. successor by merger with Wells Federal Bank, fsb, a Federally chartered savings bank

By: /s/ David A. Lutz  
David A. Lutz  
Attorney for Mortgagee  
120 South 6th Street,  
Suite 1550  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
612-424-2110  
3/31/16

## NOTICE

**SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOL DISTRICT  
#756  
BLOOMING PRAIRIE,  
MINNESOTA 55917  
MONDAY, MAY 17, 2021  
HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA  
CENTER  
PROPOSED TENTATIVE  
AGENDA**

**6:00 a.m. Thursday,  
May 13, 2021 \*Regular  
School Board Work Ses-  
sion – High School Me-  
dia Center  
7:00 p.m. Monday, May  
17, 2021 \*Open Public  
Forum – High School  
Media Center  
7:15 p.m. Monday, May  
17, 2021 \*Regular School  
Board Meeting – High**

## School Media Center

Any person may raise a question to the School Board. The Board will not act on any item presented to them, which is not on the agenda, until the following Board meeting. Also, the Board would like persons to limit themselves to five minutes, with a maximum of 15 minutes per topic. These limitations are needed for us to run a timely and orderly Board meeting. Persons are requested to identify themselves prior to speaking.

**I. CALL TO ORDER –  
CHAIRPERSON  
II. PLEDGE OF ALLE-  
GIANCE  
III. ROLL CALL – CLERK  
IV. APPROVAL OF  
AGENDA  
V. PRINCIPAL REPORTS**

## VI. ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTION IS REQUESTED

A. Consent Agenda  
Minutes  
Bills  
Treasurer's Report  
Resignation  
B. Employment  
C. Volunteer Coaches  
D. Staff Development  
E. Waiver for FY22  
F. Preliminary Budget FY 22  
G. Maternity Leaves  
H. Technology  
I. Preschool Fees  
**VII. ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND/OR DISCUSSION ONLY**  
A. ESSER II and III Funding  
B. Class Sizes/Sections  
C. Learning Models  
D. Strategic Planning/Long Range Planning  
E. Committee Reports  
F. Enrollment Data  
G. Dates to Note  
**VIII. SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD MEMBER ITEMS**  
**IX. ADJOURNMENT**  
\*Agenda may be subject to changes

## NOTICE

Steele County Commissioner's Synopsis for 4/13/2021 Complete Minutes can be viewed on the Steele County Website:

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

- Glynn/Abbe to approve the Agenda, Ayes all.
- There were no comments from the public.
- Krueger/Glynn to approve the following Consent Agenda items, Ayes all.
  - Approve the minutes of March 23, 2021.
  - Approve Bills and Journal Entries
  - Approve Personnel Report
  - Approve Resolution accepting a donation for the Veteran's Service Van in an amount of \$75.00
  - Approve a one-year lease agreement extension to 4/30/2023 for Steele County Community Corrections
  - Approve the updated Steele County Preparedness Plan
  - Approve an Access Variance Request on CSAH 4 for Justin Andressen
  - Awarded the 2021 Maintenance Overlays Contract CP 074-021-002 in the amount of \$1,293,999.64 to Crane Creek Asphalt.
  - Awarded the 2021 Pavement Marking Contract CP 074-021-001 in the amount of \$105,647.60 to Sir Lines-A-Lot, LLC
  - Approve advertising for bids for the Steele County Detention Center Security Upgrades Project
  - Approve the purchase of a 2020 John Deere 644L wheel loader replacement in the amount of \$201,440.00 from RDO in Mankato.
  - Glynn/Abbe to schedule a Work Session for May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:00 p.m. to review the Transportation Plan, Ayes all.
  - Krueger/Abbe to schedule a Work Session for April 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. to meet with Rice County Board regarding an update on the Jail Collaborative effort, Ayes all.
  - Abbe/Glynn to approve the renewal of CUP #210, RDS Trucking Inc., allowing the mining of sand and gravel and the stockpiling and processing of recyclable aggregate material, O'Connor Pit in Section 8 of Blooming Prairie Township with conditions per the Planning Commission and to approve the Findings of Fact, Ayes all.
  - Glynn, Krueger to approve CUP #423, Blooming Prairie Country Club, to re-align two holes on their course onto two parcels in Section 11, Township 105 North, Range 19 West with conditions per the Planning Commission and to approve the Findings of Fact, Ayes all.
  - Krueger/Glynn to approve CUP #424, Crystal Valley Coop, establishing an agronomy sales facility in Section 30, Township 106 North, Range 20 West, Somerset Township with conditions, per the Planning Commission and to approve the Findings of Fact, Ayes all.
  - Glynn/Abbe to approve IUP #2021-02, Landfill, to excavate fill to be used as cover material on the landfill in Section 28, Township 106 North, Range 19 West, Aurora Township with conditions per the Planning Commission and to approve the Findings of

Fact, Ayes all.

- Abbe/Glynn to approve IUP #2021-03, Ulland Brothers, storing and crushing bituminous material in Section 30, Township 105 North, Range 20 West, Summit Township with conditions per the Planning Commission and to approve the Findings of Fact, Ayes all.
- Glynn/Gnemi to approve IUP #2021-05 for JJD Companies, requesting to mine sand and gravel in Section 29, Somerset Township with conditions per the Planning Commission and to approve the Findings of Facts, Upon the vote being taken, 4 Commissioners voted in favor thereof, Commissioner Krueger/Abbe abstaining.
- Krueger/Abbe to approve the Access Variance on CSAH 4 for Jeremy Bauer/JJD Companies LLC for the proposed commercial access, given the use, location, traffic volumes and sight distances the access does not present a significant safety issue for the highway users. Upon the vote being taken, 4 Commissioners voted in favor thereof, Commissioner Brady abstaining.
- Abbe/Gnemi to approve the Amendment to CUP #410 for Riverview Campground, and to approve the conditions per the Planning Commission with the removal of condition #9 requiring a 6' fence, and to approve the Findings of Fact with the removal of the fence requirement in criteria #2. Upon the vote being taken, 4 Commissioners voted in favor thereof, Commissioner Glynn abstaining.
- Krueger/Gnemi to approve the Sunday and Hard Liquor License for the Monterey Ballroom and to waive the 2021 license fees, Ayes all.
- Brad Meier, President/CEO of the Chamber of Commerce and Bill Owens, Executive Director of Owatonna Area Business Development Center discussed the development and growth in Owatonna.
- Commissioners went into Closed Session at 6:35 p.m. under the attorney-client privilege pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, Subd. 3(b) to discuss the following pending litigation: Coffey, et al. v. Sheriff Lon Thiele, Court File number 20-cv-2237, Ayes all.
- Krueger/Abbe to come out of closed session at 7:50 p.m. Ayes all.

**LISTING OF BILLS**  
04/13/2021  
ArchKey Technologies 3,962.00  
Baker Tilly US, LLP 2,500.00  
Bureau of Criminal Apprehension 6,780.00  
Central Farm Services 6,436.73  
Clark Equipment Co 46,966.40  
Community Co-Op Assn. 16,840.00  
Counties Providing Technology 2,100.00  
Hillyard-Hutchinson 3,178.81  
Honeywell Inc 13,220.01  
Innovative Office Solutions LLC 5,636.50  
Jones Haugh & Smith Inc 10,529.20  
Justice Planners LLC 16,500.00  
L & L Street Rods & Sport Trucks 2,583.90  
Loken Excavating & Drainage 2,047.40  
Olympic Fire Protection Corp 5,080.92  
Owatonna Groundsmasters Inc 5,835.59  
Owatonna Public Utilities 30,739.63  
Pre-West & Associates Inc 3,685.00  
Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc 3,153.57  
Steele County Highway Dept 6,518.20  
Summit Food Services LLC 7,787.22  
Univ of Mn Regents 39,762.38  
Valley Asphalt Products Inc 5,844.30  
Waste Management of W-Mn 52,613.09  
113 Payments less than \$2,000 40,512.58  
**Final Total:**  
342,954.07

18. Abbe/Gnemi to adjourn to the Call of the Chair at 7:50 p.m. Ayes all.

## Steele County Detention Center • Detention Center Integrator Upgrades

Project # S20030C

SECTION 00 03 00  
ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

**TITLE:** Steele County Detention Center  
Detention Center Integrator Upgrades

**LOCATION OF WORK:** Steele County Detention Center  
2500 Alexander Street SW  
Owatonna, MN 55060

**OWNER:** Steele County  
630 Florence Avenue  
Owatonna, MN 55060  
(507) 444-7400

**OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE:** ICS  
1331 Tyler Street NE Suite 101  
Minneapolis, MN 55413  
(763) 354-2670

**ARCHITECT:** Dewberry  
401 SW Water Street #701  
Peoria, IL 61602  
(309) 282-8000

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Work will consist of replacement of the existing cabling and security system, cameras, card access system and associated server equipment and programming to support new system. Work to include replacing selected doors and security control connections including high volume doors from intake-to-intake corridor and intake corridor to main corridor. Modifications to master control room and alternates that will include renovation at professional visitation and medical areas.

## BID DATE AND LOCATION:

Sealed bids will be received at Steele County Administration Building, 630 Florence Avenue, Owatonna, MN 55060 then publicly opened and read aloud. Base Bids will be received and stamped-in prior to 2 PM local time on Thursday May 13, 2021.

## EXAMINATION OF DOCUMENTS:

Bidders may view drawings and specifications for the project by contacting the office of the Owners Rep. For Electronic access to the bidding documents, please contact the Owner's Representative at (763) 354-2670. The Owner's Representative can also provide locations of Builders Exchange's holding plans for contractors to access. Bidders are responsible for any and all costs associated with the production of plans and specifications for their use.

## BIDDING REQUIREMENTS:

Each bidder must comply with the following requirements to reassure acknowledgment recognition of their bids:

Bids must be accompanied by bid security in form of certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond in amount of 5% of base bid submitted, made payable to owner, as guarantee that bidder will, if awarded, enter into contract in accordance with contract documents and submitted bid.

Completely fill in all blank spaces on the Bid Form, in ink or typewriter, in both words and figures.

Sign in longhand, executed by a principal duly authorized to enter into an agreement. If a bidder is a co-partnership, then signatures on the bid shall be by an authorized member of the firm, with names and addresses of each member of partnership.

Base bid and all alternate bids shall be stated both in writing and in figures. In all cases, written and numerical figures must agree; otherwise at Owner's option, it shall be cause for rejection of bid. Complete form without alteration.

Submit alternate prices (bid) for either increasing or decreasing the cost as called for on bid form and Description of Alternates. Submit a bid for all alternates.

Owner may make such investigations as he deems necessary to determine the ability and responsibility of the bidder to perform the work, and any bidder shall furnish to Owner all such information and data for this purpose, as the Owner may request. Owner reserves the right to reject any bid if the evidence submitted by, or investigation of, such bidder fails to satisfy the Owner that such bidder is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and to complete the Work contemplated therein. The competence and responsibility of bidder will be considered in making an award, including, but not limited to: (1) proof of financial responsibility, (2) quality of similar work, (3) amount of experience with similar projects, (4) facilities, personnel and equipment, (5) reputation for performance, and (6) ability to complete the work within specified time. Owner reserves the right to reject any Bid where there is reasonable doubt as to the qualifications of the bidder.

Owner reserves the right to (1) accept bidder's Base Bid only, (2) accept any one or more of bidder's Alternate Bids, in any order regardless of the order in which they were listed, (3) reject all Bids, (4) award contract based on his investigation of bidders, as well as acceptance of alternates, all of which Owner deems to be in his best interest, (5) waive informalities or minor irregularities in bids and waive minor irregularities or discrepancies in bidding procedure.

Upon award of Contract, Contractor shall provide AIA A312 Performance and Payment Bonds in the amount of 100% of Contract Sum in accordance with General Conditions and Amendments to General Conditions.

## BIDDING DOCUMENTS &amp; SITE REVIEW:

Each bidder (including subcontract bidder where appropriate) is required to visit the site and to fully inform themselves and record their own investigations as to the extent of the Work, the extent of the work performed by other contractors under other construction packages, conditions under which the Work is to be performed, existing buildings and streets, conditions of the area, existing utilities and other features, type of soil, available facilities and difficulties that may be encountered in connection therewith, and other relevant items which will affect their bid or the Work.

Prior to submitting a bid, each bidder is required to examine all of the bidding requirements, All Contract Documents, all drawings and specifications for the Project (including those primarily for other Subcontracts), become thoroughly familiar with the scope of the Project and all factors and items of work which will affect their bid or the Work, whether shown or specified in documents primarily for Work of others or Work of this Contract.

No extras will be allowed to the Contractor as a result of misunderstanding of the extent of scope of the Work as a result of his failure to study and record their own findings. Submission of a bid shall be proof that such examinations have been made and that bidder has recorded their own investigation and has become thoroughly familiar with all contract documents (including all addenda). The failure or omissions of any bidder to examine any form, instrument or document shall in no way relieve any bidder from any obligation in respect to his bid.

## PRE-BID CONFERENCE:

A pre-bid conference will be held at 10:00 AM on Thursday April 22nd at Steele County Detention Center located at 2500 Alexander Street SW, Owatonna, MN 55060. Please enter at the main entry on the southeast side of the building for the pre-bid conference. No extras will be allowed because of the bidder's misinterpretation to the amount of work involved, bidder's own error, negligence, or failure to examine the site.

## START DATE:

Work may begin after receipt of the signed contract from the Owner. Pre-construction and submittals work related to the project is to commence immediately after receipt of the signed contract. The work onsite is anticipated to begin July 18, 2021.

## SUBSTANTIAL AND COMPLETION DATE:

Owner requires work to be substantially complete on or before milestone dates as listed in Summary of Work, Section 01 01 00. Bids shall reflect all costs necessary to meet this schedule requirement. Work is scheduled to be complete by July 1, 2022. Bids shall reflect all cost necessary to meet this schedule requirement. 42873



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**TO PLACE AN AD**

Steele County Times

507-583-4431

bptimes@frontiernet.net

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

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GET THE THIRD FREE

UP TO 20 WORDS; 10¢ FOR EACH WORD AFTER

**TO PLACE AN AD**

Dodge County Independent

Dodge County Advantage

507-634-7503 • dci@kmtel.com

121 W. Main St., Kasson, MN 55944

**FOR SALE**

**FOR SALE:** Rifle. Ammunition. Factory new Remington .22-250 (20 rds.) \$25. Federal 300 Win. Mag. 180 grain soft point \$45; 7 boxes New Components 22-250 CCI 200, 33.1 GR IMR 4064, 55 Hornaday V-Max 140 rounds \$15/20 rounds or all for \$95; 100 rounds of .300 Wby. Magnum cartridges \$100; .223/5.56 bulk ammo (50-1,000 rounds) \$1.10/round. 763-226-9775 for information. 5/6/20pd

**NEED CASH?** I give free appraisals of your older coins from 1964 and older. I am also looking to buy older coins such as silver dollars, halves, quarters, dimes and Indianhead cents. Please call Ron from Hayfield at 507-477-2427 or 507-259-6460. 4/6/20pd

**FOR RENT**

**DODGE CENTER:** 1-bedroom upper apart-

ment in house, with private entrance. Stove, refrigerator, water and garbage serv. incl. Non-smokers only. No pets. Available now. \$600 per month, plus deposit. 507-374-6747. 5/6/20pd

**DODGE CENTER:** 3-bedroom house in country with barn used as a garage. No smoking. Call about pets. For rent for one year, possibly a little longer. \$1,000/month. 541-740-7672. 5/6/20pd

**2 & 3 BD - DODGE CENTER:** Smoke free two-story townhomes with garages! Open May 8 & June. \$1010 & \$1050 p/mo + util. Minutes from Hwy 14 & Rochester. 507-438-7935 or 507-451-8524 or www.lifestyleinc.net tdd 507-451-0704 EHO 4/20/21

**2 BD - CLAREMONT:** Rent based on income! Open May. Month to month leases and deposit pay plans. 507-398-6027 or 507-451-8524 www.lifestyleinc.net tdd 507-451-0704 Equal Housing Opportunity 4/20/21

**BLOOMING PRAIRIE RENTALS:** Smoke-free 1 bd apt for 62+ or disabled persons. Rent based on income, all utilities included! 507-438-7935 or 507-451-8524 or www.lifestyleinc.net tdd 507-451-0704 Equal Housing Opportunity 4/20/21

**DODGE CENTER APARTMENT FOR RENT:** Two bedrooms includes heat, water, trash, on-site laundry and off-street parking. Available March 1, 2021. \$650/month. Call Aaron at 507-398-6859. 4/6/20pd

**STORAGE FOR RENT:** Storage-Indoor-Kasson. 10 by 20 ft. \$90 month. 7 by 9 ft. \$60 month. Voice/Text 651-272-7970. 3/18/19/20

**SERVICES**

**NICK'S LAWN CARE & LANDSCAPING:** Weekly or vacation, residential or commercial, yard clean up, mowing and trimming, satisfaction guaranteed. FREE estimates. Please call 507-696-3849 and leave a message. 4/6/20pd

**STUDENT EMPLOYMENT**

**CALEB'S PET SITTING:** Cats and Dogs, please call me at 507-634-7907. 3/20/21

**BARGAIN FINDERS**

**FOR SALE:** Krause 16' type 1A industrial, extra heavy foldable ladder, 300# rating. \$50. Call: 507-528-2252. Leave message. 5/5/4pd

**CAREGIVER WANTED**

for disabled female, Every other weekend day or every other Saturday overnight. 9 to 12-hour shifts. Will train.

\$13.25 per hour;

\$14.25 after

(short online course.)

NW Rochester.

507-289-2756

**GARAGE SALES****BLOOMING PRAIRIE**

**GARAGE SALE:** 157 8th St. NW, Blooming Prairie. Friday, May 7 - Noon to ? and Saturday, May 8 - Noon to ? 5/5pd

**BYRON**

**GARAGE SALE:** 107 Country Ct. NE, Byron. Thurs-Sat May 6-8. Many misc. household items indoor and outdoor. Exercise bike, men's and women's clothing med-large sizes. 5/6pd

**DODGE CENTER**

**MULTI-FAMILY GARAGE SALE:** 58765 210th Ave., Dodge Center. May 7, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. & May 8, 8 a.m. to Noon. Men's & women's clothing, men's bike, tools, shaper table, canning jars, antiques, books, and lots of misc. Too many items to list. 5/6pd

**KASSON**

**MULTI-FAMILY GARAGE SALE:** 1100 3rd PL NW, Kasson. **MINI DONUTS!** Friday, May 14, Noon to 7 p.m. **Saturday, May 15, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.** Liz Claiborne, Pendleton, Abercrombie, Hollister, Nike, Columbia, Talbots, Coldwater Creek, LLBean, Little Tykes, Gymboree, Little Me, Carlers, Pampered Chef, Pier1, DressBarn, IKEA. Size 0-18 months, adult petite M/L, adult L-4XL. Maternity S-L. Jeans, coats, shorts, shirts, dress pants, dresses, suits. Educational toys, jewelry, frames, tons of vases, new wine glass sets, kitchenware, stoneware, home décor, horseshoe set, games, Airsoft. Typewriter, luggage, cameras, holiday items, KoMet apparel. Free stuff. **MINI DONUTS.** 5/6/20pd

**MULTI-FAMILY GARAGE SALE:** 12 4th ST SW, Kasson. Thursday, May 6, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, May 7, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wilton cake pans, household items, tools, canning jars, books and miscellaneous. Masks required. 5/6pd

**MANTORVILLE**

**GARAGE SALE:** 24733 619th St., Mantorville. Friday, May 7, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, May 8, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tons of household items, décor, girls clothes sized 3T-8, boys clothes sizes 6-10, women's sizes M-L, men's sizes L-XL, toys, games, books, puzzles, bikes, and lots more. Also, lots of authentic Swedish items! 5/6pd

**OWATONNA**

**GARAGE SALE:** 1832 Evergreen Rd NE, OWATONNA. May 7 - 7 a.m. - 4 p.m., May 8 - 7 a.m. - Noon. Kids books, bedding, end table, kids rocking chairs, car seats, misc. kitchen, clothing and furniture. 4/28/20pd

**Eugene & DeAnn Kaplan Estate Sale**

Friday, May 7th 12-6pm

Saturday, May 8th 9-1pm



**12509 34th Ave SE**  
**Blooming Prairie, MN**  
(Signs posted near sale)

NO early sales. NO numbers handed out.

Please check website/facebook for item list & photos.

www.lifetimetreasuresales.com

**CAREER OPPORTUNITY****Resident Assistant**

• FT & PT 2 p.m. - 10 p.m.

• FT & PT 10 p.m. - 6 a.m.

**Dining Assistant**

• 7 a.m. - 2 p.m. & 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.

**Activities Assistant**

• Part-Time

**Cook**

• Part-Time

**JAYBIRD SENIOR LIVING**  
Paririe Meadows  
SENIOR LIVING  
Apply on Indeed or 800 5th Ave. NW, Kasson, MN - EOE  
Professionally Managed by Jaybird Senior Living, formerly Senior Housing Management.

**TRANSFER STATION SEASONAL EMPLOYEE**

Dodge County vacancy for seasonal positions FT and PT (up to 4 months) at the Transfer Station. Daytime hours. Responsible for customer service and grounds maintenance. Valid Minnesota driver's license required. Wage range is \$15.14 - \$15.95. Visit our website at [www.co.dodge.mn.us](http://www.co.dodge.mn.us) to apply or contact Employee Relations at 507-635-6239. EOE 4/28/21



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**GIFTED AND TALENTED TEACHER** 6 FTE New London-Spicer Schools. MN Teaching License. For more information see: [www.nls.k12.mn.us/employment](http://www.nls.k12.mn.us/employment)

**FREE ONLINE SEMINAR**

**FREE ONLINE SUMMIT** to energize your business. 30 successful business leaders share their secrets. Watch on demand, May 19-22. Details and registration: <https://tinyurl.com/ImagineBestFuture>

**WANTED TO BUY****WANTED:**

**ALL 1970S MOTORCYCLES** Running or not. Titled or not. Cash in exchange. Sell now while prices are high! Call Dan at 612/720-2142

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**DISH NETWORK \$64.99** for 190 Channels! Blazing fast internet, \$19.99/mo. (where available.) Switch & get a FREE \$100 Visa gift card. FREE voice remote. FREE HD DVR. FREE streaming on ALL devices. Call today! 855/562-4309

**DONATE YOUR CAR**

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

**MISCELLANEOUS****AT&T WIRELESS**

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

**TIMESHARE**

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

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507.951.3409  
jill@bigelowlennor.com

EXPERIENCE IS GREAT BUT NOT REQUIRED. WE WILL TRAIN!

**Blooming Prairie Elementary School**

is accepting applications for a  
**Secretary/MARSS & ED-FI Coord.**  
(10 mo. work year/7.5 hours per day).

Student data reporting is an integral part of this position with the ability to multi-task, possess excellent computer skills, perform general office duties, and be a team player is a must.

Complete the online application at <https://www.blossoms.k12.mn.us/page/2818>.  
**Deadline for applications is May 14, 2021.** 5/5/21

**GARAGE SALE!!**  
**Byron • Claremont**  
**Dodge Center • Hayfield**  
**Kasson • Mantorville**  
**West Concord**

**Thursday, Friday & Saturday**  
**May 13, 14 & 15**

**\$15...** includes 2 garage sale signs, listing in the Dodge County Independent and Advantage plus online.

**SIGN UP BY NOON, THURSDAY, MAY 6**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SALE ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SALE CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DAY/TIME** \_\_\_\_\_

**DAY/TIME** \_\_\_\_\_

**DAY/TIME** \_\_\_\_\_

**SALE ITEMS** \_\_\_\_\_

**DODGE COUNTY INDEPENDENT**  
301 S. MANTORVILLE AVE, KASSON • 507-635-1480  
DCI@KMTTEL.COM

# BP chamber picks button design winner

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

Plans for Blooming Prairie's Fourth of July celebration are getting a jump start with a local fourth-grade student chosen as the winner of the design for the festival's official button.

Leah Watson of rural Austin received special recognition last Thursday by Emily Glaser, executive director of the Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce. Watson is in Haley Hasleiet's fourth-grade class at Bloom-



ing Prairie. Hasleiet and principal Jacob Schwarz joined Glaser in honoring Watson for her winning design.

In keeping with an annual Blooming Prairie tradition, all fourth-grade classes entered designs for the

button. This year there were 58 students. Glaser chose nine finalists before allowing chamber members to vote on the winning entry.

"This was a very big surprise for me," said Watson of being honored with the winning design. "I think it's amazing and awesome that I won," she added.

Watson designed the school's blossom mascot with a red, white and blue flag in sunglasses and a vaccine needle, symbolic of the pandemic was used for the last numeral in 2021.

She said it took her about five attempts before she finally came up with the final drawing. Watson credited her mother, Ashley, with inspiring her on the idea.

According to Glaser, Watson's winning drawing will now appear on 1,200 Fourth of July celebration buttons that will be available

for purchase later this month.

This is the first time a student in Hasleiet's class has won the contest. She made a big deal out of it with her class. "I was very excited for her. She's very deserving of it," Hasleiet said. "They know Fourth of July is a big deal around here, and it was neat to see them excited for her."

Schwarz is appreciative of the partnership with the chamber. "It helps build our relationship with the community," he said. "It's part of the tradition, and we hope to continue with it. We want the kids to have pride in their community," he added.

Blooming Prairie's Fourth celebration is set for July 3-4.



Leah Watson has been chosen as the winner of the Fourth of July Button Contest for Blooming Prairie. Joining in on the special recognition for Watson were her fourth-grade teacher Haley Hasleiet, left, Principal Jacob Schwarz and Chamber Director Emily Glaser holding her daughter, Kymberly.

STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

The American Legion  
Auxiliary  
Will be sponsoring their

## ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW

Luncheon & Basket Raffle

THURSDAY 29 JULY

at the Servicemen's Club  
Blooming Prairie

Blooming Prairie exhibitors - entries  
will be similar as in the past.

LIMITED SEATING for lunch -  
watch for further details

Plant Now and Plan to be a  
part of the great event!

## Happy Mother's Day!

**GARDENING TIP OF THE WEEK**

### Spring has sprung for gardening

- To avoid dandelions, mow your grass at least 3 inches long or longer. It will shade out weed seeds, and in dryer times help grass plants stay healthier.
- Mow your lawn in different directions to avoid stressing it in the exact same spots.
- Time to lightly fertilize your indoor house plants, to go along with our longer daylight hours.
- When moving indoor plants out for the summer, do so gradually. Start by putting them into a shady area, moving them gradually into sunnier areas.

Provided by Julie Wanous  
of the Steele County Master Gardeners

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Sunday,  
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Happy  
Mother's  
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**Mother's Day Brunch**  
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