

BE THE LIGHT
Schools pay tribute to
graduating seniors.

ANGEL BUNNIES
In uncertain times, First
Lutheran Church delivers hope.

A TWIST OF PROTECTION
A light-hearted moment
in a serious crisis.

SEWING MASKS
BP woman makes 200
face masks for protection.

Area spared from COVID-19 deaths

Remain
at home,
Caron says

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Despite a spike in deaths statewide from the coronavirus pandemic, southeastern Minnesota continues to be spared of any COVID-19 deaths.

Minnesota hit a daily high of 11 deaths on April 9—the highest one-day total in the state since the pandemic started.

There have been 69 confirmed cases in Steele (9), Dodge (15), Freeborn (22) and Mower (23) counties. However, no deaths have been recorded as of Monday afternoon in those areas.

Public Health Director Amy Caron said the age range of the cases in Steele and Dodge counties is under 1 year old to 70 years old. She is contacted by the Minnesota Department of Health whenever someone tests positive for COVID-19 and reside in either county.

Caron said she is not releasing specifics about the individual cases because it is protected information and it preserves the privacy of the individuals.

There is still no vaccine for COVID-19, and officials can only treat when there are serious cases, Caron said.

"I urge you to continue to take the actions to slow down the spread in our communities," Caron said. She urges people to abide by the stay-at-home order. She also wants people to practice social distancing by maintaining a distance of six feet.

On Wednesday, Gov. Tim Walz extended the statewide stay-at-home order until May 4. He argues that such a move will slow the delay of the peak of the pandemic until summer, giving Minnesota hospitals enough time to become equipped to handle excessive cases.



Doctors, nurses and other medical staff at Allina Health Owatonna Hospital are grateful for the shields they have been provided by a local community effort spearheaded by Michael Beckman of Federated Insurance in Owatonna.

"We want to make it so they (first responders) are safe so they can help other people."

Bob Ayers
Foam Craft Packaging

COMPANIES BUILD SHIELDS TO FIGHT COVID-19

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

It started out as a simple email request as the coronavirus began unfolding. And now it has turned into a community wide effort that puts face shields into the hands of front line workers to fight the deadly disease.

Michael Beckman, system developer at Federated Insurance, received an email from Federated's Community Relations Department asking employees to reach out to partner organizations to see what help they needed with the pandemic. Beckman reached out to Ryan Seykora at Owatonna.

SEE COMPANIES BUILD SHIELDS, A5



Scott Behne, left, and Brad Anderson cut shields on the waterjet at Foam Craft Packaging in Owatonna. They are among numerous people helping with the shield project to provide protective shields to front line workers in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chamber seeks
temporary
tax relief

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

With the COVID-19 pandemic closing down many businesses or severely impacting their operations, a local chamber organization is pushing for some temporary relief to help ailing business owners.

Brad Meier, president of the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber is asking the state to delay property tax payments for businesses. Meier noted the issue has already been brought up to the Steele County Board where it was discussed at a special board meeting April 10. County commissioner Greg Krueger said parameters may have to be set for individuals and small businesses rather than larger corporations. "I think it's the small businesses that are really going to need the cash flow to get through this situation more so than

SEE CHAMBER SEEKS, A2

How you can
help in the
COVID-19
response

Public health officials are asking that individuals who are interested in donating personal protective equipment (PPE) or monetary donations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to contact Steele County Public Health. Donations will be utilized for Steele County COVID-19 response. PPE donations will be properly vetted and distributed to Steele County Healthcare Providers and Public Safety partners per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Minnesota Department of Health's recommendations.

SEE HOW YOU CAN HELP, A2

Better than window dressing

COVID-19 lockdown forces families to find unique ways to interact with loved ones

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

With most nursing homes under lockdown, loved ones of residents have been forced to find other unique ways to interact.

At the Prairie Manor Care Center, only staff is allowed in the building. Everyone else is off limits until the lockdown is lifted. Some families have worked with Prairie Manor staff to arrange for window

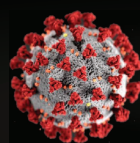
visits with their loved ones. Chairs are placed near the resident's window outdoors and the family members call their mother on the cell phone and talk to her that way.

SEE BETTER THAN, A10



Connie Trom and sister Corky Drexler made a recent window visit to their mother who is a resident at the Prairie Manor Care Center in Blooming Prairie. Since Prairie Manor is under lockdown, families are forced to find other ways to communicate with their loved ones.

COVID-19 UPDATE



World..... 1,897,373	U.S. 576,695	MN..... 1,621	Steele..... 9	Dodge 15
Deaths 118,304	Deaths 23,068	Deaths 70	Deaths 0	Deaths 0
Recovered..... 444,492	Recovered..... 42,223	Recovered..... 842	Recovered..... N/A	Recovered..... N/A

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AREA DEATHS

John S. Peterson, 94, Owatonna

Serving
Blooming Prairie
and Steele County
since 1893

OUR VIEW

Support critical for local journalism amidst COVID-19 pandemic

A call is going out by a group of U.S. senators to save local journalism in America. And it's something we all need to pay attention to in saving our communities. Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar joined a group of 17 senators last week in calling for funding to support local journalism and media in any future COVID-19 relief package. The senators warn that the widespread impact of the coronavirus pandemic could seriously impair local and regional news outlets even as communities have become increasingly reliant on their reporting amidst one of the worst public health outbreaks in the country's history.

"The current public health crisis has made the already vital role of local news even more critical," the senators wrote. "Some of the most important guidance for families and businesses during this crisis has been highly localized. Local journalism has been providing communities answers to critical questions, including information on where to get locally tested, hospital capacity, road closures, essential business hours of operation and shelter-in-place orders. During this unprecedented public health crisis, people need to have access to their trusted local news outlets for this reliable and sometimes life-saving information."

This alarm sounding of desperation for helping print media is very real and alive as evidenced just in the past couple weeks in southeastern Minnesota.

Six communities in Fillmore and Houston counties lost their local community newspapers all at once two weeks ago. On Friday, March 27, owner David Phillips closed the doors to newspapers in Chatfield, Spring Valley, Preston, Rushford and Spring Grove, Phillips, who just turned 65, wanted to retire, but sadly he found no interest in someone wanting to keep the community institutions alive. So he just shut them all down.

These closures bring the total to eight newspapers just in southeastern Minnesota that have ceased publishing in the past year and a half. In December 2018, Byron and Dodge Center lost their community papers.

Last week, the Austin Daily Herald and Albert Lea Tribune announced that they are ceasing to be dailies and cutting back to a two day per week publication schedule. In making the announcement, the newspapers said, "In response to the economic challenges presented by the COVID-19 novel coronavirus, as well as the change in recent years as to how readers consume community news and information," the papers will begin publishing two print editions on Wednesday and Saturday. This is an incredible loss for southern Minnesota.

Within the past month, the parent company of the Owatonna People's Press announced staff cutbacks in light of the COVID-19 crisis. Adams Publishing Group, which owns more than 60 newspapers in Minnesota, cut its workforce hours by 25%. Just last week, Jeffrey Jackson, the long-time editor of the People's Press, announced his retirement.

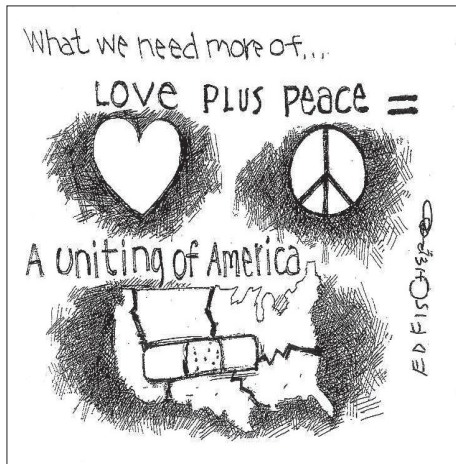
By now, you should be noticing a disturbing trend. Local news is in a state of crisis that has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As many communities have shut down local restaurants, entertainment venues, and other non-essential businesses in an attempt to "flatten the curve," local papers have lost even more advertising revenue they rely on from these businesses.

The widespread impact of the coronavirus, including plummeting advertising revenue, could, and already has proven to in some areas, decimate local and regional news outlets even as communities have become increasingly reliant on their reporting amidst this major crisis.

As Americans battle through the pandemic, reliable local news and information is critically important, yet it is becoming more scarce. Any future stimulus funding must provide help for this important industry at such a critical time.

Without funding from the next stimulus package, Americans stand to lose one of the most important sources of information needed to navigate through every day life.

Congress needs to take action before it's too late. Sadly, in some areas, it has already proven to be too late.



YOUR VIEW

Loves the paper

To Publisher & Staff:
Thanks for printing a great paper. Andy & Mary Lerberg
Please sign us up for three more years. Ellendale

COVID-19 and factory farms

To-the-Editor:
COVID-19 data for the state of Minnesota shows that Martin County in the rural, southern part of the state has the highest rate per capita for those affected with coronavirus. Martin County also has more hog farms than any other county.

The world of science sees a correlation between factory farms and pandemics. Last November, the American Public Health Association advised federal, state, and local governments and public health agencies to impose a moratorium on all new and expanding Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), aka: factory farms.

The time to take action is past due.
Brad Trom
Blooming Prairie

A new way to celebrate

Getting together to mark major milestones has always been a cornerstone of my family. Whether it's graduations, birthdays, holidays or game nights, the Bussler clan is always finding ways to celebrate.

The latest celebration involved my uncle, who turned 80 years old on Easter Sunday. We had planned to get together for a party on Saturday, but to keep everyone safe and follow the stay-at-home order, we cancelled the gathering and found a different way to honor him.

My brother orchestrated a virtual birthday party through Zoom, which claims to be the leader in modern enterprise video communications. Yep, we took advantage of modern technology in the new age without having anybody leading the ship without the help of relatives from several different locations joining in on the fun.

We had a split screen so that we could see everybody all at once on the monitor. This makes telecommuting seem much more human as it helps you feel connected.

With the COVID-19 coro-



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

navirus wreaking havoc across the world, Zoom has become an essential tool for many people that need to keep in touch and continue with their lives, especially for work.

Don't ever think the Busslers aren't hip to the latest gizmo available. Even my 86-year-old father joined in the action.

I'll admit it wasn't the same as getting together and sharing some laughs in person or munching on goodies and treats or even sharing a cocktail. Call me old-fashioned or whatever you want, but I prefer to see people face-to-face.

Sometimes this new technology kicks my you know what as I fight to keep ahead of it all. Not easy for an old geezer like me, as my teenage daughter

often reminds me.

What is important, though, is that we got the opportunity to still celebrate and recall the good old days from years gone by. Everyone had the chance to share some stories. And, yes, we even tuned up the Bussler choir and sang, "Happy Birthday." Look out, Mormon Tabernacle Choir, the Busslers are knocking on your door.

Once the air clears from all this coronavirus bug, I'm sure we'll still get together in person to celebrate the outings we've missed over the past month or so. We can't remain cooped up forever, can we? It would be nice to return to civilization again.

But, in the meantime, it's comforting to know that technology allows loved ones to communicate in ways that we couldn't even dream about 15 to 20 years ago. I encourage anyone who has something special coming up and can't leave home to check out Zoom. It definitely allows one to zoom in on the action whenever you may be.

Let's hope we don't have to go in hot pursuit of utilizing Zoom to celebrate Christmas this year!

GUEST COLUMN

Invisible is still real

BY HEIDI HEIMGARTNER

On March 22, the first official Sunday of the pandemic, leading worship without the Body of Christ gathered at First Lutheran, was an experience we'll never forget. Without tangible, real-time feedback from worshippers, the energy in our sanctuary is different, muted.

Now a month has gone by, and we have learned some things. For example, Pastor Mike Walrus and I both summon our imaginations for the faces of members and friends in their familiar places, and we take turns sitting in the pews so the other has someone to preach to. Even still, it is a bit tender to look over at the empty choir loft and the tidy Worship Team space, bereft of volunteers. No ushers are walking back and forth in the narthex. No acolytes lighting candles and collecting offering. No students running up to the chancel for the children's sermon or baptism. No babies cooing. The musical prelude, normally filled with happy, hushed chatter, echoes through church speakers, to a cable that broadcasts to the radio station, then to your homes.

Even though our eyes cannot perceive it, our hearts trust that each Sunday morning, in the invisible congregation, the Body of Christ, and the communion of saints, is present. We believe Christ is as present in our worship hour just as before, for whenever two or three are gathered in his name, Christ promises to be there. Yes, we know, deeply and fully, that you are gathered, and united as one: listening, participating, worshipping God.

By the time you read this, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday will have come and gone. We are fasting from the Lord's Supper, and the Tenebrae Service we will not enjoy trumpets Easter morning, but there were the scent of two lilies, and gold-trimmed banners were hung. Your pastors wore white vestments and shouted, "Christ is Risen!" just as before. This ancient greeting is proclaimed each sunrise service, each year, around the world.

But we are not sad, nor should you be. In the silence, there is hope. In the stillness, there is love. In

the empty places, there is comfort. The resurrected Jesus we worship is not, of course, contained in a tomb, and certainly not contained in our building, nor any church building. Jesus lives in you. His word—which you receive—is known. Faithfulness is what each believer is called to, especially when what is familiar is invisible, for the time being.

And we are not the first. In time of longing and exile, Isaiah spoke God's word to scattered believers millennia ago:

so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

God's word, invisible, is still real. Easter heartens us; and of this, there can be no doubt: Faithfulness accomplishes God's purposes. Simple faithfulness, belief, trust. And nothing more.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Rev. Heidi Heimgartner is senior pastor at First Lutheran Church of Blooming Prairie.

CHAMBER SEEKS: temporary tax relief FROM A1

the large businesses," said Krueger, who is a former small business owner.

Krueger would also like to see farm taxes delayed to the end of the year without any penalties.

However, local officials are taking a wait and see approach right now and will monitor what the state does prior to doing anything.

Meier said the idea is being pushed through the Minnesota Chamber of

Commerce. On April 8, the state organization gave its support to delaying property tax payments for this year.

Under state law, property taxes are due by May 15. The law leaves little room for anyone to change that date. Meier is hoping to get state lawmakers to extend the deadline in an effort to help with the cash flow of businesses hit hard by the coronavirus.

"The Legislature would

need to take action," Meier said. He added he would like to see it pushed out for 60 days.

The chamber's focus, Meier said, is on small businesses. "We are thinking of small businesses that are struggling already," he said. "It could help," he added.

Meier pointed out that 70% of homeowners have their taxes taken out through escrow accounts so most of them would not be impacted at this time.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: FROM A1

Examples of acceptable equipment donations include:
• N95 Masks
• Surgical Masks
• Homemade Cloth Masks
• Disposable Gowns
• Reusable Gowns
• Eye Protection (i.e. face

shields and goggles that fully cover the front and sides of the face)
• Non-sterile Gloves
• Hand Sanitizer
Those interested in donating or who have questions about donations should contact Steele

County Public Health at 507-444-7650. There will be a drop off site for donations outside the Steele County Public Health office located at 635 Florence Ave. Owatonna, Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

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DEADLINES
News: Noon Fridays.
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Advertising: 4 p.m.
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Steele, Dodge,
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Elsewhere
in Minnesota \$49
Out of state \$52

A state and national award winning weekly

MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION	
2020-9 state awards	2015-7 state and 4 national awards
2019-7 state awards	2014-4 state and 3 national awards
2018-4 state and 4 national awards	2013-7 state and 3 national awards
2017-2 state and 5 national awards	2012-4 state and 5 national awards
2016-4 state and 6 national awards	2011-4 national awards

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

Prairie Home Floral makes deliveries despite pandemic

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

"I love my job because everyone is happy to see me at the door," says the owner of one of the widest smiles in Blooming Prairie.

Owner of that effervescent smile is none other than Jackie Vorlicek, owner in her own right, of Prairie Home Floral, Decor & Gifts of Blooming Prairie.

Vorlicek has been ringing lots of door bells the past few weeks when Blooming Prairie residents were abiding by Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz's executive order to "Shelter in Place." Walz extended that order another three weeks until May 4.

Prairie Home has been a very busy place with Vorlicek processing orders that have been increasing daily.

Floral shops were able to continue their business of doing non-contact delivery and curbside pickup. "I just had 18 deliveries the other day," said Vorlicek, who is getting to be a familiar sight, driving her green-colored smaller automobile.

Vorlicek said she has been working with the floral industry of Minnesota in monitoring restrictions to her floral business.

Has her business changed since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak? Yes, it has, admits Vorlicek. "It's become a bit more tedious because we are following a few more steps than usual," she says. "It's a fun job to deliver a floral bouquet, and see the huge smile on the recipient's face," Vorlicek shares. "We are following social distancing and cannot even accept a hug," she frowns.

Customers of Prairie Home need to be cheered up and that's where Vorlicek enters the picture.

She says it has been proven that flowers and plants lift people's moods. "Gosh, we need happiness in our life," Vorlicek believes.



Jackie Vorlicek always displays that customer friendly smile as she makes another delivery of an Easter lily. Jackie said her business, Prairie Home Floral, Decor & Gifts has been extremely busy ever since the outbreak of COVID-19.

"We will get through this."

Jackie Vorlicek
Prairie Home Owner

Feedback has been very positive about Prairie Home's deliveries. "The other day, a family member of a Heather Haus resident thanked us while holding back tears. "She made me cry," Vorlicek said.

She said the mood of people on the street has vacillated. "My floral community and family community support has been overwhelming," Vorlicek says.

"We will get through this," she says with confidence.

Prairie Home has a website and can take orders through it and by using Facebook, or by calling the store at 507-583-7837.

Vorlicek thanks her customers for their support.

"We, in turn, support our local restaurants and businesses," she said. "We are all in this together," she added. She and her husband Jason continue to eat out by patronizing food places that offer curb service.

"That means I don't have to cook," she laughs.

Vorlicek is still planning to start up a garden center. She is hopeful that her father-in-law, Frank Vorlicek, may be able to help with his expertise from running Frank & Tom's Garden Center in the past.

"We are so thankful for the support we have received from the community, especially during these trying times for everyone," concluded Vorlicek.

Those in pain appreciate being seen, Schwert says

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Dr. Jeffrey Schwert, dentist serving the Blooming Prairie area for the past 29 years, says his patients deserve care in emergency situations. His practice is located at 132 2nd Ave. SW.

"Those in pain need to be seen as soon as possible," remarked Dr. Schwert in acknowledging the need to see patients even when the dental care facility is shut down.

Schwert's practice was shut down like other dental offices in Minnesota with an exception only for emergency situations because of the coronavirus. Schwert, who resides near Rock Dell, has responded to all emergency calls.

He said the pandemic is shattering in their window of opportunity to retire. "I don't want to retire yet," he confesses.

"I have never seen anything like this, and I



Dr. Jeffrey Schwert of the Blooming Prairie Dental Center at 132 2nd Ave. SW, cares for a patient during a recent visit. Because of the current coronavirus pandemic, Dr. Schwert is seeing only patients with a need for an emergency appointment.

really feel for those people who have lost their jobs," commented Dr. Schwert.

The best response for everyone, he said, is to follow guidelines including social distancing. "That's easy for my wife and I because we live on a farm, way off of a road," Schwert related.

Schwert said he does not want to see anyone else get sick. He said his patients have responded with total understanding to the dental office closure.

He says he is hopeful that the office can be reopened on May 4, the date set by Gov. Tim Walz to lift "Stay at Home" restrictions.

State Farm returning \$2B dividends

In an effort to help customers during these challenging times, State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company, the nation's largest auto insurer, is announcing up to a \$2 billion dividend that will go to its auto insurance customers.

With schools and businesses closed, and many are sheltering in their homes, people are driving less right now, so State Farm is returning value to customers as it anticipates fewer auto claims.

Customers do not need to take any action to receive this dividend, which will appear as a credit on their auto policy.

The dividend is part of the Good Neighbor Relief Program that also includes customer payment options and neighborhood philanthropic relief. This is the single largest dividend paid to customers in our company's history. As the nation-

al leader in auto, home, and individual life insurance, State Farm has the financial strength necessary to help millions of customers and communities recover from the unexpected.

On average, State Farm Mutual auto customers can expect to receive a credit of about 25% of premium for the time period March 20 through May 31; exact percentages will vary by state. Every State Farm Mutual auto insurance customer will receive credits applied against bills beginning as early as June. State Farm will continue to monitor its loss experience and respond appropriately.

"State Farm is returning value through a dividend to our customers," said Chairman, President and CEO Michael L. Tipsord. "We insure more cars than anyone and we see from our claims activity people are driving less.

This dividend is one of the ways we're working to help our customers during this unprecedented situation."

State Farm is committed to giving back not just to customers, but to communities where employees live and work by providing \$5 million in donations across the country. These efforts are in direct response to COVID-19 and are focused on relief and recovery efforts.

State Farm is here to help its customers in these challenging times. The company is making decisions that balance short-term solutions with maintaining its ability to remain financially strong for customers to keep promises now and in the future.

State Farm encourages customers facing financial challenges to call their State Farm agent. Agents are working with State Farm customers one-on-one providing payment options.

Minnesota issues first \$600 CARES Act payments

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) announced that the agency received final guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor to be one of the first states to make \$600 additional compensation payments to people receiving unemployment benefits.

These payments were authorized by Congress in the Coronavirus Aid,

Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which was signed into law on March 27.

"As soon as the CARES Act became law, our team at DEED got to work putting the technology in place to support these payments and ensure that we were ready to get the money to Minnesotans in need," said Commissioner Steve Grove.

"With a record number of unemployment applica-

tions, we know this is an uncertain and challenging time for many. It was critical that we act swiftly and provide this additional compensation without delay."

All individuals who are currently receiving Minnesota unemployment benefits will qualify for the \$600 additional compensation and will continue to receive their regular unemployment benefit.

What Minnesotans need to know:

- The first week for which you can get the additional \$600 is the week beginning March 29.
- You could request the week of March 29 on or after April 5. If you already requested payment for that week, you will get the \$600 payment automatically.
- You do not need to contact DEED or do anything to get the additional \$600.

We will automatically process the additional \$600 payment AFTER you request benefits for the week of March 29 (and every week after that you are eligible).

- You will not see the \$600 payment on your unemployment benefit account. You will only see it on your bank account or your unemployment debit card statement.
- Payments may take

a few days to reach your bank/debit card.

DEED is the state's principal economic development agency, promoting business recruitment, expansion and retention, workforce development, international trade and economic development. For more information about the agency and its services, visit the DEED website or follow DEED on Twitter.

It's 1918 all over again



Reflections
HOWARD LESTRUD

It definitely is Deja vu, 1918 all over again.

Going back through the Blooming Prairie Times issues of 1918, one feels like we are living during that mass influenza, the Spanish Flu once again.

Only this time, it is called coronavirus COVID-19. We are experiencing a worldwide pandemic with the United States leading all countries in respect to cases and deaths.

How could anything be any worse, but it was in 1918.

The 1918 influenza pandemic lasted from January 1918 to December 1920, which was 100 years ago.

The deadly influenza of 1918 infected 500 million

people, about one-fourth of the world's population at the time.

The death toll was estimated to have been anywhere from 17 million to 50 million, and possibly as high as 100 million, making it one of the deadliest pandemics in history.

As of Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020, the U.S. case count was 530,000 and the death toll had risen to over 20,000.

Our sister publication, the Dodge County Independent, researched the Spanish Flu in a column by Janet Kubat-Willette. This motivated me to check out some 1918 issues of the Blooming Prairie Times to see how this pandemic was covered back then.

The headline in the Oct. 17, 1918 BP Times read: "Influenza hits BP and vicinity."

Let's read from the Times: "Drastic measures are being taken as preventative. There are now three cases under quarantine."

Late Tuesday when several cases of the Spanish influenza were reported to the Board of Health, the following preventative

health measure was taken by the officials.

"As a means of safety to prevent the spread of the present epidemic of influenza, the Village Board of Health in cooperation with the Village Council and the Board of Education, have decided to close the public schools, theaters, churches and all public gatherings."

This note of closure of many institutions in Blooming Prairie closely resembles what is happening in our communities in 2020.

The issue of Oct. 24, 1918 addressed these three questions: 1) What is the Spanish influenza? 2) Is it something new? 3) Does it come from Spain?

"The disease now occurring in this country and called the Spanish Influenza, resembles a very contagious kind of cold, accompanied by fever, pains in the head, eyes, ears, back or other parts of the body and a feeling of severe sickness."

"Epidemics of influenza have visited this country since 1647."

The U.S. Department of Public Health reported that



Police in Seattle wore face masks for protection against the Spanish Flu in 1918.

it is especially important to beware of the person who coughs or sneezes without covering his mouth and nose. This is again representative of what is happening globally in 2020.

The Times said "in all health matters, follow the advice of your doctor and obey the regulations of your local and state health officers."

Health officials even got poetic with their health safety warnings in 1918: "Cover up each cough and sneeze, if you don't, you'll spread disease."

The issue of the Times of Nov. 14 headlined: 2 more soldier boys, Lester Cregan and

Henry B. Holstenson died of pneumonia, the end result of having the Spanish Flu.

If curious about more history on the Spanish Flu, go to Wikipedia. Find out that there were claims that the epidemic originated in the United States. Historian Alfred W. Crosby said in 2003 that the flu originated in Kansas. Further research disputed that and pointed to Spain.

It is also ironic to learn that China, supposedly the source of the coronavirus coming to the U.S., was one of the few regions of the world seemingly less affected by the 1918 flu epidemic.

Wikipedia says the second wave of the 1918 pandemic was much more deadly than the first. The first wave had resembled typical flu epidemics; those most at risk were the sick and elderly, while younger, healthier people recovered easily.

By August, when the second wave began in France, Sierra Leone, and the United States, the virus had mutated to a much more deadly form. October 1918 was the month with the highest fatality rate of the whole pandemic.

Continue to stay at home and be healthy during this latest world pandemic.

BP woman makes nearly 200 sanitary masks

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

"It is something I can do to help," explains Blooming Prairie woman Nancy Peterson, telling why she has made nearly 200 sanitary masks.

She strongly supports keeping people safe and protected.

Some of those masks have gone to Prairie Manor Care Center in Blooming Prairie, and others have gone to Dallas, Texas; to the Mayo Clinic; to South Carolina; to West Des Moines, Iowa; and to Park City, Utah.

Nancy and husband Tom were two of the first ones to wear a variety of masks in the Blooming Prairie community.

Nancy said she is pleased to see more shoppers and workers at the local grocery store, Vandal's Family Market, wearing the protective masks.

At press time, Nancy had made 177 face masks on her sewing machine. Nancy is an avid quilter, active in a quilting group at First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie.

Some of her masks have gone to the Petersons' daughter, Laura Houllillon, a pediatric nurse practitioner.



Blooming Prairie woman Nancy Peterson models one of her protective masks she has created. She has made nearly 200 of the masks.

Daughter-in-law, Randi Peterson, works as a registered nurse at a hospital in Austin and has taken masks with her.

Nancy also sent some masks to a nurse at the Mayo Clinic, working in oncology.

The Peterson-made masks are made of cotton fabric and flannel backing. They have elastic ties. She gets some of her material from her own quilting stash and from other materials.

Daughter-in-law, Randi Peterson, works as a registered nurse at a hospital in Austin and has taken masks with her.

Nancy's masks are washable. Designs on the masks range from Disney characters to baseballs, and from a cowboy motif to ballerinas. She also makes them in plain colors.

Husband Tom has helped with some of Nancy's deliveries to friends. "We are both doing well and wish everyone else the best of health," says Nancy.



Here's a few of the homemade protective masks Nancy Peterson of Blooming Prairie has made. She has made nearly 200 of the masks, with many going to the Prairie Manor Care Center and others to family members and friends.

More COVID-19 help from the state

BY JOHN PETERSBURG

Legislation to provide presumptive workers compensation insurance to front-line workers who contract COVID-19 was approved by the Minnesota House of Representatives April 7.

The bill is a compromise made by legislators from all four House and Senate caucuses, and advocates from labor and business groups. The bipartisan agreement was approved unanimously in an emergency meeting of the Workers Compensation Advisory Council on April 6.

The plan will benefit first responders, health care officials and numerous other professions that are responding to the COVID-19 crisis.

The people who are caring for those stricken with COVID-19 and their families are heroes because they're putting others' needs ahead of their own. In my opinion, approving this workers' compensation package is the least the State can do to show its appreciation

for their efforts.

Watch Out

We've begun to hear how with the stay-at-home order in place, some crimes may be slightly on the rise, such as burglaries.

Many of us have repeated the importance of checking in on our vulnerable neighbors to see what they might need during this time of crisis. We should also be using this time to look out for each other by watching for any suspicious activity, and reporting it appropriately to the authorities.

Veterans Assistance
Veterans and their spouses who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic are now able to access a pair of state government programs that were created to provide them with financial assistance.

On March 26, the Minnesota Legislature voted to fund a special appropriation to assist Veterans who may be financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 Specific Programs have been activated specifically in response to mitigate the economic effects

COVID-19 is having on our Veterans and their families.

According to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, these programs can close at any time without notice due to the exhaustion of approved funding. Status updates will be posted here regarding the status of these programs. All of the grants are awarded on a first come, first serve basis, and the amount of grants awarded is limited to the length of existing funding.

The Legislature also approved COVID-19 Disaster relief grants, which are designed to mitigate the negative effects and economic impact COVID-19 has had on Veterans and their families by providing a one-time financial relief grant in the amount of \$1,000.

Visit mn.gov/mdva/blog/74d-1066-42565 for more information.

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

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Hy-Vee offers online meal ordering

Hy-Vee, Inc. announced that, at more than 200 locations companywide, customers will be able to order curbside meals-to-go online.

Through Hy-Vee's Mealtime To Go offerings, customers can order hot, prepared foods along with take-and-bake meals. Meals will be available for free pick up in as little as 30 minutes or can be

scheduled for a future pick up time.

Customers can order online at hy-vee.com/mealtime and can also access ordering via Hy-Vee's Asides Online app. Options will vary based on offerings available at each Hy-Vee store. Meals will include selections from Asian, Hickory House, sandwiches, breakfast, sushi and take-and-bake

items. Several meals will come with one side option included. Customers may also choose to add on additional food items to their orders.

Customers will call a designated phone number provided in a confirmation email once they arrive at their store location for pick up. Employees will deliver food orders directly to customers' vehicles.

COMPANIES BUILD SHIELDS: to fight COVID-19

FROM A1

tonna Fire Department to learn that masks and disinfectant were at the top of the list of what first responders needed.

"I reached out to my network of peers, and Seth Madole from Viracon sent me a link for a design for a 3D printed mask that had been released for free to the world in response to the pandemic," Beckman said. "I knew that several of my co-workers at Pedestal had 3D printers so I posted a message out on our bulletin board asking for help printing the 3D mask."

It didn't take long for six people to step forward with 3D printers and a willingness to help. Beckman soon learned that Shaun Robbins at Owatonna Middle School had 3D printers. Robbins had seven printers in his classroom and volunteered to use them to create whatever was needed for the effort.

The prototyping of the masks began by design expert Steve Frank, who began producing various models of masks. Beckman took the first four prototypes to Owatonna Fire. Chief Mike Johnson took them to Allina Hospital in Owatonna to determine safety and usage criteria.

"Allina saw the prototypes and shared with us that while the masks would be helpful, they had immediate need for shields," Beckman said. Frank immediately began prototyping shields and a design approved by Allina was found.

An immediate need for plastic came up. Beckman reached out to the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce, which referred them to Andy Michaelitz of Poly Plastics. "Andy was able to get us a roll of 38mm plastic donated for free and delivered to Owatonna," Beckman pointed out.

The next step involved Bob Ayers at Foam Craft. Ayers volunteered to use

his waterjet cutter and his staff to mass cut the plastic shields. There was no cost involved.

Cindy's Tailoring jumped on board to make the elastic straps. Judy Peterson tracked down rolls of buttoned elastic to size the shields. "This final design was approved by Allina, and we were able to deliver 300 ASAP," he said.

Foam Craft's part in the process was pretty easy, according to Ayers. "Mike is the one sitting at home putting these things together," Ayers said.

Beckman said the process for assembling the shields is complex with social distancing and the stay-at-home order. "My house has basically become a distribution center where people drop off the supplies at my front door, and then I contact the next person in the process to pick up the supplies," he said.

Here is an example of the shield parts from one of the 3D experts. They are dropped off at his front door.

Beckman receives the plastic from Poly Plastics, pre-cut by Foam Craft and ready to be assembled.

Beckman sands and cleans up the plastic parts, attached the plastic parts to the shield, washes and sanitizes them and then contacts Cindy LaBathe for straps.

Cindy's Tailoring picks up the partially completed shields and attaches the straps and returns them to Beckman.

Beckman glues the 4-inch pieces of weather stripping to the shields. They are finally complete.

Natalie Ginter from Allina is notified, and she delivers them to the hospital.

tal.

"There is little to no personal contact between each of us during this process," Beckman emphasizes. "We communicate through email, texting and phone calls. I do all of the assembly in my garage," he said.

Ayers calls the entire process "time intensive" mostly because of the 3D printing, which can take up to two hours to print a single one. He points out that while the country wasn't prepared for this type of crisis, he is happy to be doing a small part in helping with this particular project. "God has blessed us," Ayers said. "I just feel we try to give back wherever we can. We want to make it so they are safe so they can help other people."

Ayers said he admires first responders and other front line workers for what they have to do. "It's really nice when you can do something for the front line people," he said. "We can stay away from people and talk across the street, but they can't. I would try and do whatever we can for them."

Beckman said he is prioritizing shields in the order of medical/dental, first responders, assisted living facilities and businesses that need to remain open during the stay-at-home order. As of Monday, 300 will be going to Owatonna hospital, 210 to City of Owatonna (one for every city employee) and 150 to Steele County Public Health.

"We're focusing on Steele County, but we have been contacted by several other surrounding communities for help," said Beckman.

The effort is not for profit. Beckman said. They are taking financial donations through the Owatonna Area Business Development Center, which is a 501(c)(3) entity. "We will be working with the first responders on our masks, shields and whatever they need," Beckman says. "We'll keep making shields as long as the need is out there."

Added Beckman, "It's a total team effort, and the amount of sacrifice and dedication from our team is a great statement of what our community is all about."

How seniors can protect their health and finances during COVID-19

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, health officials have been clear and consistent in their message to seniors: While anyone can fall victim to COVID-19, those who are 65 and older are in an especially high-risk group.

That's why older Americans need to be especially careful and – in the case of the very elderly – family members may need to step in to make sure they are taking the right precautions, says Chris Orestis, the president of LifeCare Exchange who is known as the "Retirement Genius."

"As with just about everyone, coronavirus is touching all areas of the lives of seniors, from health to finances to how they socialize," Orestis says.

He offers a few tips on things seniors and their families can do:

Prioritize healthy practices. Follow health guidelines. Wash your hands, avoid touching your face, and sanitize surfaces.

"Social distancing and staying in place have become important new additions to our lifestyle because avoiding contact with infected people is the surest way to prevent contracting the virus," Orestis says. "Grocery stores and retailers have set up senior-only shopping hours, and seniors should take advantage of those. In addition, food delivery services can bring take-out meals or groceries to your home."

Trust nursing homes. "Despite the tragic deaths that occurred at LifeCare Center's nursing home in Kirkland, Wash., the nursing home industry has been working around the clock in every community to protect their residents," Orestis says. Nursing homes are always vigilant for influenza, pneumonia,



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and other viral outbreaks.

"If you have a loved one in a nursing home, do not go more susceptible than usual," Orestis says. "Stay in touch remotely through a cell phone, computer, or the staff to help the nursing home avoid contamination."

Know what financial resources are available. "We've experienced a stock market drop, but it is important at times like this to not 'panic sell' and lock in your losses," Orestis says. He points out there are still safety nets and even financial opportunities that can help seniors. For example, the passage of the CARES Act will pump \$2 trillion into the economy. Social Security income, Medicare, and Medicaid payments remain unchanged. Income from annuities remains guaranteed.

For owners of permanent life insurance policies, Orestis says, there are a couple of options to get liquidity from this asset. If the owner wants to keep the policy in force, they can take out a policy loan for upwards of 90% of the cash surrender value. If the policy owner wants to stop paying premiums, they could use a life settlement to sell the policy under tax-favorable conditions to receive a percentage of their death benefit as a lump-sum today.

Beware of scams. Seniors often are prime targets of scams, and with their heightened level of distress, could be even more susceptible than usual, Orestis says. "Be on the lookout for such things as emails from imposters of the CDC asking you to open a link or download a list telling you where positive cases are in your area," he says.

Get your news sources. The coronavirus is getting round-the-clock news coverage. But mixed into the information coming from reliable sources is a flood of misinformation. "Fact-check information by reading statistics from the websites of reliable medical resources and verified news organizations," Orestis says. "Don't fall for conflicting statistics or attempts to minimize the severity of the outbreak by comparing it to car accidents, the flu, or other outbreaks. The danger is people can be lulled into underestimating the danger and let their guard down."

"No one is sure how long this crisis will last or what the outcome could be," Orestis says. "But the most vulnerable members of our population can protect themselves by following smart health practices, avoiding unwise financial decisions, taking advantage of financial safety-nets, and being on the lookout for scams and bad information."

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Assisted living, nursing homes cope with changing lifestyle

BY KAREN
M. JORGENSEN
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While Dodge County nursing homes and senior living communities have escaped COVID-19 infections among their residents, life has changed dramatically for both residents and staff.

All are following the same basic guidelines from the state and federal level that are prohibiting visitors to the residents and limiting communal activities within all senior care facilities.

That has led the facilities to come up with a variety of other ways residents can communicate with their families and stay involved.

Madonna Summit in Byron has started a new program they are calling "GramsFor Grands" that encourages children, family members and the public to send cards, letters, artwork, drawings or inspirational messages to the residents.

"Recent changes in federal and state regulations have led to restrictions in visitors to senior care centers nationwide as well as limits in group activities," said Kelsey Wright, the Madonna wellness director. "As a result, our residents are adjusting to a change in routine that no longer includes regular visits from family members and friends."

Wright said that the emotional health and well-being of the residents is very important and by inviting the community to get involved and send cards, letters and drawings, there will be a day brighter for the residents.

The cards, letters and drawings can be addressed to specific residents or they can be sent to Madonna Summit in general and they will be posted for all to see.

Family members and friends, of course, are also invited to communicate with residents by telephone or other means.

At Fairview Care Center in Dodge Center the staff is encouraging family and friends to stay in touch with by mail, telephone, Facetime and Skype, said Activities Director Alyssa Huisenga.

Residents are staying in their rooms for the most part and the staff is encouraging lots of mail, she said.

They are also encouraging "window visits," Huisenga said, where family members can come outside the resident's window and talk with them by cell phone.

The staff has also come up with other ideas to make the residents' days brighter, she said, including a dog parade and hallway bingo.

Staff members brought their dogs to Fairview recently and paraded them around the outside of the building, Huisenga said, with the staff and residents waving each other as they walked by. Those outside, she added, also kept the appropriate distance between walkers.

They also have started hallway bingo games where residents sit in their doorways and play bingo with other residents nearby.

"We're trying hard to be positive," Huisenga said. The entire community, she said, has also been supportive of the residents and their families.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A Fairview resident sits by a window covered with hearts at Fairview Care Center in Dodge Center. Local senior care centers have been coming up creative ways to keep residents in touch with family and friends during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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SEEING THE GOOD

The Times continues its "Seeing the Good" feature in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are profiling stories of hope and encouragement of friends, neighbors and others doing extraordinary acts of kindness during a bleak period in our nation's history. If you have any ideas of stories we can feature, please reach out to us at bptimes@frontiernet.net or call our office at 507-583-4431. Your ideas will help make this an interesting segment for our readers.

Bunnies with a twist of protection

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Even the Easter bunnies are taking extra precautions.

A display featuring four Easter bunnies and eggs at a rural Owatonna residence generated a few chuckles and smiles from passers-by over the past week. The bunnies at the Dick and Susie David home along Hwy. 216 by Pratt were decked out with precautionary masks amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"People like to see something that makes them feel good," said Colleen Schultz, a sister to Susie David. "She is always doing good things for other people," Schultz said of her sister.

Schultz said she knows of at least one older couple that stopped once they saw the bunnies with protection and smiled.

David decorated her yard for nearly every ma-

jor holiday, including Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas, Schultz noted. "She really gets into Halloween. The whole neighborhood enjoys it," Schultz said.

Like most people, Schultz is abiding by the governor's stay-at-home order. She hasn't been able to see her sister's display, but rather relied on her daughter to provide some pictures of the festive yard.

"It's hard," Schultz said of being stuck at home. "It's going to be a different world."

Schultz said she hopes there will be a positive side to the pandemic. "It gives families more time to spend together," she said.

In Schultz's case, she is finding more time on her hands. "It makes me learn more on the computer and Facebook," she said with a chuckle. She is also hoping to get outdoors soon to enjoy spring flowers and some fresh air.



Susie David of rural Owatonna decorated her yard with Easter bunnies. She added a special twist to each of them: Precautionary medical masks amid the COVID-19 pandemic.



The lights of McFarlin Field in Blooming Prairie shined brightly April 6. Blooming Prairie was one of more than 220 Minnesota schools who turned on their stadium lights to signal support for our high school seniors.

Be the Light at McFarlin Field

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

More than 200 high schools, including Blooming Prairie High School, turned on their stadium lights at 8 p.m. April 6 to pay tribute to high school seniors.

This "Be the Light Minnesota" movement originated in Texas and quickly went viral in other states, including Minnesota.

McFarlin Field, named in honor of former Superintendent Maurice McFarlin, illuminated throughout town on this particular night.

The Blooming Prairie Fire Department was part of the special lighting event as firefighter Rick Hansen brought the ladder truck, which hoisted the American flag into the limelight.

McFarlin Field stayed lit until 9 p.m.

At exactly 8:20 p.m., residents of Blooming Prairie either turned on their porch lights, or put out luminaries to honor Awesome Blossom seniors.

Many vehicles cruised by the athletic field to witness this example of solidarity. A few cars stopped outside McFarlin Field to take a look at this emotional gesture supported by Blooming Prairie School District 767.

Residents left their porch lights on for 20 minutes and 20 seconds to symbolize the graduation year 2020.

Similar scenes took place across Minnesota as stadiums were illuminated in a show of support for spring athletes, all senior students and entire communities shut down by the

pandemic, COVID-19.

Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) media specialist John Milles spurred interest in this lighting spectacular by tweeting Minnesota schools seeking interest. The interest was there with more than 220 schools indicating an interest to participate.

Minneapolis Star Tribune writer Chip Scoggins wrote: "This crisis has affected everybody in some capacity. Days are gripped with so much sadness as the death toll climbs and surging unemployment brings stress to families."

"Sports often provide distractions in times of hardships, but that's been stripped away, too. For high school athletes, especially seniors, that loss of competition and sense of togeth-

ness with friends is a hard reality to accept."

Not only did Minnesota high school athletes see their spring seasons go by the boards, many saw their winter seasons cut short at tournament time.

Blooming Prairie's boys basketball team earned a trip to the state tournament by winning the Section 1A championship over Hayfield.

The team was told the following day that tournament play was suspended because of the coronavirus outbreak, thus a second trip to the boys tournament for the Blossoms in their history was nixed.

Many who witnessed the "Be the Light Minnesota" event were touched by the community's positive reaction. "This gesture tells our seniors that we are all in this together," said a local resident.

Angel bunnies

In uncertain times, church delivers Easter hope

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Nearly 100 Easter baskets were delivered in the Blooming Prairie area to First Lutheran Church Sunday School kids last Saturday, the day before Easter.

It took about five hours for Melissa Stoen, her children Isaac and Cora and Pastors Heidi Heimgartner and Mike Walertus to deliver 97 of the colorful baskets.

The baskets were delivered by no contact. The bags were placed at the front door by the delivery people and then they disappeared. All delivery people wore gloves and face masks in

making the deliveries.

Stoen, the director of Children's Ministry at First Lutheran Church, said Pastor Heidi came up with the idea and passed it by the pastors and executive council. All agreed it was an outstanding ministry.

"We have had to be really creative on how to continue ministry during these uncertain times," remarked Stoen.

"We miss our Sunday School kids," said Stoen. They ranged in age from 3-year-olds to sixth grade.

In the baskets were a devotion for the kids, Easter eggs and candy. The bags

were in Melissa's garage days before delivery and they were assembled by her and her family.

"It was absolutely worth every minute of the time it took to make the baskets and to deliver them," remarked Stoen. "The smiles on the kid's faces were priceless," she added.

Stoen called her delivery people her "angel bunnies." Director Stoen has 133 students enrolled in Sunday School. One bag was given per family.

Stoen thanked her delivery people and her mother Ana Trom for helping with directions throughout town and in the country.



Melissa Stoen, director of children's ministry at First Lutheran Church of Blooming Prairie and her two children, Cora and Isaac helped deliver nearly 100 Easter baskets to Sunday School kids last Saturday.



Ella Farr, Sunday School student at First Lutheran Church of Blooming Prairie was excited to get an Easter basket last weekend.

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GUEST COLUMN

Chamber is committed to making Owatonna safe

BY KAREN PEHRSON

In these unique and challenging times, our team at The Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism has stepped up and is working hard to be proactive and supportive to our small business owners, tourism partners and our community. The health and safety of Owatonna is our top priority and we are confident we will get through this together. We all know that social distancing is the right thing to do yet the effect of COVID-19 has already taken an unprecedented effect on our local economy.

The tourism sector is one of the hardest hit by the outbreak, with impacts on both travel supply and demand. This pandemic presents our tourism sector with ever evolving challenges. As we navigate this changing situation and its impact on our community, there's never been a better time for cooperation and strategic thinking. Visitors are waiting for someone to ease their social anxieties and take control of the narrative. Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism would like to be that voice and convey a positive message to promote and market our small businesses and tourism partners while being sensitive of social distancing.

With the new stay-at-home order put in place by the governor last week, we've already made changes to our marketing campaigns and shifted our content to reach visitors while they are still practicing social distancing.

We believe now is the time to stay in touch with conversations and let visitors know they shouldn't cancel their travel plans but postpone them. Our Minne-Roadtrip partners have come together and designed a digital billboard with messaging that is encouraging visitors to start planning their future trips. The OACCT team also put together a fun short video featuring the "Minne" station wagon of things to do and see during a road trip to Owatonna.

As the weather warms up, we plan to create and promote outside hiking, biking and downtown walking tours through social media and e-newsletters.

COVID-19 has also disrupted events like the Corky's Early Bird Tournament, but instead of canceling the tournament director Loren Dietz is working hard to postpone and move the event to another date later in the year. We are also continuing to work well into the future and reach out to planners and event organizers to offer grants and sponsorships that help bring new events that will stimulate the tourism industry. There is no doubt that hospitality and tourism businesses will feel the pain of this challenging time, but with storm clouds come a silver lining and we know we will recover. The tourism industry will come back stronger than ever.

Karen Pehrson is the director of conventions and tourism for the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce.



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John S. Peterson, 94, Owatonna

John S. Peterson, 94, of Owatonna passed away peacefully at Prairie Manor in Blooming Prairie on April 7, 2020.

The memorial service will be held at a later date at Sacred Heart Church with full military honors at Sacred Heart Cemetery.

John was the son of Palmer Peterson and Robina (Mackie) Peterson. He was born March 14, 1926 in Austin. He lived his childhood in Blooming Prairie. His true graduation class was 1944, but he enlisted in the Navy instead. Before he left for the Navy, he was sleeper for the Owatonna Fire Department for one summer. He came back from the Navy in 1946 and went back to Blooming Prairie High School and was very active in sports. He graduated in 1947.

John and Esther loved the game of golf and both worked at Brooktree Golf Course for 26 years. Also, they were avid sports fans of all the Owatonna High School teams. In 2011, John received the Hall of Fame Award in Blooming Prairie for his high school accomplishments for football, basketball, and baseball.

John was a member of Sacred Heart Church in Owatonna for 73 years. He also lived at Real Life in Owatonna from 2007-2019 before moving to Prairie Manor in Blooming Prairie. John enjoyed his life to the fullest with good times with family, wonderful friends, and a good round of golf. John is survived by his children: Pat (Wayne) Winter of Weslaco, Texas, Mary Ellen (Dale) Pedersen of Rochester, John Peterson of Swanville, Minn., and Sue (Jeff) Ost of Owatonna; grandchildren: Greg Winter of Rochester, Kris (Dirk) Stienessen of Byron, Kevin (LeeAnn) Winter of Cypress, Texas, Jenny (Dean) Thompson of Rochester, Stephanie (Jake) Johnson of Minneapolis, and Dana (Bill) Wood of Owatonna; and 13 great-grandchildren.

John was preceded in death by his parents, wife Esther, sister Janet Miller, and grandson Jason Ost.

The family prefers flowers be sent at the time of the memorial service.



John S. Peterson

Insurance options available through MNsure during pandemic

MNsure, the state's health insurance exchange, reminds Minnesotans who have recently lost a job, experienced a reduction in hours, or are otherwise uninsured to visit MNsure.org to get connected to health insurance.

On MNsure.org, Minnesotans looking for health insurance coverage can compare plans and see if they qualify for financial help to cover the cost of insurance premiums or low-cost or no-cost health insurance either through Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare.

Here's what you need to know:
Uninsured? Sign up now.

MNsure is offering a COVID-19 Emergency Special Enrollment Period through April 21. This special enrollment period is open to uninsured individuals who need health insurance at this critical time. Shop and compare plans and see if you qualify for financial help to pay for your plan by using MNsure's plan comparison tool.

See if you qualify for low- or no-cost coverage.

An individual earning up to \$24,980 per year or a family of four with a combined income of \$51,500 or less per year can qualify for low-cost or no-cost health insurance through MinnesotaCare or Medical Assistance. Enrollment in these programs is open year-round and provides comprehensive coverage.

Recently lost your employer-sponsored insurance? You may qualify to enroll.

If you have recently lost or will lose insurance through your employer, you may qualify for a special enrollment period to enroll in a plan through MNsure. This special enrollment

period is available year-round to qualifying individuals. To enroll, you must contact MNsure and pick a plan within 60 days of losing employer coverage. To avoid a gap in coverage, you can contact MNsure up to 60 days in advance of your employer's plan ending to begin the enrollment process.

MNsure offers comprehensive coverage.

All MNsure plans cover comprehensive benefits like doctor's visits, hospitalizations, prescriptions, mental health services and more. Additionally, all MNsure plans are waiving in-network cost-sharing for COVID-19 related diagnostic testing and in-patient treatment.

Currently enrolled and experience a decrease in income? Update your account.

Changes in household income can affect your eligibility for coverage or financial assistance. If you don't report income changes, you could end up with the wrong amount of financial assistance. Report changes in your current income or changes to your projected annual income by calling the MNsure Contact Center.

Have additional questions or need more information?

MNsure has a statewide network of expert assisters who can help Minnesotans apply and enroll, free of charge.

The MNsure Contact Center is open between 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday, at 651-539-2099 or 855-366-7873.

MNsure's online help tools can be used to access frequently requested services.

Special note: if you have questions on what your plan covers, or how to use your benefits at this important time, contact your insurance company.



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Pauline Chud M. Eliechene
Director of Operations/Chief Medical Officer
1000 1st St. S. Suite 100
Tel: (507) 583-2271 Fax: (507) 583-2272
Blooming Prairie, MN 55607

BOOK NOOK

Library staff keeps busy despite COVID-19



NANCY VAILLANCOURT

During this uncertain time, not knowing when social isolation will be somewhat eased, the Blooming Prairie Branch Library remains closed. But we are still checking our emails and telephone messages, so we can answer your questions and concerns. Again, there will be no fines or overdue fees on any items you may have checked out. You can keep these items at your home until the library is again open.

During this time, the library staff has been able to work from home, thanks to arrangements made with the city administrator. There are several projects we are working on at this time. Not knowing what the situation will be this summer, librarians across the country are

looking at various online options for the Summer Reading Program. Hopefully, these plans will not be necessary, but we will be prepared to help the children of Blooming Prairie keep reading and learning throughout the summer. Stay tuned for updates as summer quickly approaches!

Another project that I am working on is the organization of a local history collection. This collection contains files on area families, local businesses, and general history. And yes, there is information on bootlegging and other unsavory topics. It's part of Blooming Prairie history, after all.

Be sure to check the library's Facebook page daily. We are doing live storytimes on Wednesday mornings, but they can be watched at any time. We encourage you to post what you are reading right now. Additionally, the Owatonna Public Library has several Facebook activities going on - Lego Challenges, travel plans, and storytimes on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

See you at the library - hopefully soon!

Allina extends call for donations of face masks

Generous donors from across Minnesota and western Wisconsin have already donated more than 200,000 pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE) since Allina Health first put out the call for donations on March 21. Today Allina Health is extending its call for donated PPE.

The initial request was to have expired on April 5. "As we prepare for the anticipated surge of coronavirus patients, we are doing everything we can to ensure adequate supplies of personal protective equipment to protect the safety of our employees and patients," said Allina Health President and CEO, Dr. Penny Wheeler. "We are very grateful for the generosity and expressions of support from the community. We anticipate we will continue throughout the course of this pandemic so have extended the call for donations."

Allina operates the hospital in Owatonna.

WHAT WE NEED

Allina Health is accepting a wide variety of PPE including:

- factory-made N95 and ear loop masks
- hand-sewn ear loop masks (instructions for hand-sewn masks are online here)
- headbands with three secure buttons per side (used to attach an ear loop mask for ear protection)
- surgical mask strap extenders, including those made with 3D printers
- isolation gowns
- Nitrile exam gloves
- PAPR and CAPR
- PAPR hood/shroud
- safety glasses/goggles
- face shields, including those made with 3D printers
- must extend 3 inches below chin to cover mask/respirator
- front is clear plastic and fastens in the back
- shoe covers
- commercial disinfectants including Quat-based sanitizers, bleach and hydrogen peroxide-based disinfectants and unopened disinfectant wipes

Donations can be dropped off at most Allina Health hospitals, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Donors are asked to bring their donations into the respective buildings.

• Owatonna Hospital, Emergency Department entrance

• District One Hospital, Faribault, main entrance

Donations can also be mailed to: Allina Health Central Warehouse, Attention: Supply Chain Operations, 2800 10th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407.

Allina requests that all donated items be in their original packaging with the exception of hand-sewn masks. After collection, Allina Health Supply Chain and Infection Prevention experts will review and properly prepare supplies before they are deployed to caregivers, patients or visitors across Allina Health systems.

Allina also continues to welcome cards and notes of gratitude to share with our staff along with donations.

CARING FOR CAREGIVERS FUND

In addition to donating PPE, our neighbors have asked for more ways to help. The role of front line caregivers and all those who make our essential services possible has never been more crucial. We all want to keep our critical team members in their roles, doing what they do best. With your support, the Caring for Caregivers Fund will help cover mortgage or rent expenses, car payments, child care and utility expenses, and other financial hardships that may arise as our team members give their full attention to caring for those who are seriously ill.

Details on how to donate to the Caring For Caregivers Fund can be found online at <https://donate.allina.com/home-page/caring-for-caregivers>.

FOOD DONATIONS

Allina has heard from many individuals and businesses that wish to donate food to Allina Health staff members. Allina appreciates that generosity during this challenging time. To protect our staff we have set food donation guidelines. Find details on how to donate food online and help us keep our staff members, patients and community members healthy by accommodating our requests for safe donations.

Worship & Faith

Easter is not cancelled



Father John Sauer
CATHOLIC HEART
CATHEDRAL CHURCH
OWATONNA

"I can't believe they cancelled Easter." As a priest I have heard that more than once from parishioners who are saddened at the suspension of public worship at this significant time of the year. And it expresses the sense of disorientation we are all feeling during this time of stay at home orders and social distancing. We hold on in hope that the disruption we are experiencing comes with a promise that things will get better. But the thing is, Easter is not cancelled. Easter is not the day when Christ will rise but is our celebration of a resurrection already accomplished. Jesus is alive! The Easter story is about new life and new possibilities. Death, that once all-powerful force in human life is shattered by the obedience of Jesus as he embraced the cross. The Resurrection of Jesus and the Christian proclamation of that event give new meaning to our experience of death. Not only are we no longer separated from God but, by the power of Jesus Christ, we will live on in a new and more glorious existence. That is the promise. Jesus wants us to experience the peace that the world cannot give. But he wants so much more. The peace that Jesus brings is strength in the time of difficulty, joy in the face of tragedy, hope in the face of unrelenting violence. The peace that Jesus brings comes from knowing that the victory that Jesus won at Easter is not a partial victory. Although we still feel the effects of sin and a broken world all too sharply we know that this is not the end of the story. Jesus tells us, "I live in this." In his book, Easter: A Guide to the Eucharist and Hours, Monsignor Kevin

Irwin puts it this way, "What Easter does is not take away our problems. Rather Easter gives us the perspective to face and deal with those problems. The risen Jesus invites us not to be afraid; he assures us that we will be with him and he will be with us all the days of our lives. The experience of twin emotions - joy and fear - may well be the most accurate assessment of what Easter is and does for us. It makes us realistically hope filled; realistic to face what is problematic in life and also hopeful that Christ is ever with us in the midst of problems. Jesus is the God of real people, who live real lives, and have real joys and sorrows. The love of Jesus drew to himself sin and selfishness, he took to himself all suffering and death and took it to the cross. So we live in joy and hope. A friend of mine, Mark Brinkman, is a Christian song writer. I love his Easter anthem, "From the Third Day On." "From the third day on...Christ is risen! From the third day on...He is alive! From the third day on...We are forgiven! Make sure you're livin'... from the third day on."

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AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN

AURORA LUTHERAN
6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna
Pastor Stephanie Wood
507-676-5696
Worship: Sunday at 9 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN - ELCA
106 Third St. SE, Geneva
Pastor Kristen Venne
507-256-4288
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.

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

FIRST LUTHERAN - ELCA
434 First St. SW,
Bloomington
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Heidi Heimgartner
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mike Walenius
507-583-6621
firstlutheranbpc.com
Worship Service: 9 a.m.
Sunday School: 10 a.m.

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

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN - LCMS
2500 7th Ave. NE, Owatonna
Pastor Greg Schlicker
Pastor Mark Neumann
507-451-4125
goodshepherdowatonna.com
Worship: 8 a.m., 9:15 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

MOLAND LUTHERAN - ELCA
7618 NE 84th Ave., Kenyon
Pastor Nancy Edvardson
507-789-6661
Worship: 10:45 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

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

REDEEMER LUTHERAN - LCMS
1054 Truman Ave., Owatonna
Pastor Kirk Griebel
507-451-2720
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Education Hour: 10:15 a.m. Sun.

RED OAK GROVE LUTHERAN - ELCA
30456 Mower-Freeman Road,
Austin
Rev. Suzanne Froelich,
Interim Pastor
507-583-2038 or 507-437-3000
www.roglutheran.org
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School
(Sept. - May): 10:15 a.m.

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

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN - LCMS
28999 630th Ave., Sargeant
Pastor Collin D. Wang
507-251-5568
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9 a.m.

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN - ELCA
1301 Lincoln Ave. Owatonna
Pastors Dave Klawiter and Jacie Richmond
507-451-7293
stjohnowatonna.org
Worship: 5 p.m. Thursday & Saturday; 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Summer Services: 8 a.m. & 9:30 a.m. Sunday

ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN - ELCA
30450 570th Ave., Waltham
Pastor Dwight Doell
507-567-2474
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN - LCMS
202 E. Park Ave., Hollandale
Pastor Jesse Kruemerk
507-567-2272
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN - ELCA
2781 SW 92nd Ave., Meriden
Pastor: Rev. Dean Smith
507-451-2165
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN - ELCA
609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
507-451-4520
tlcovatonna.org
Senior Pastor: Rev. Todd Buegler
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Amanda Floy
Deacon: Kris Oppgaard
Worship: 5 p.m. Saturday; 8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 8:15 a.m. & 9:30 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN - ELCA
104 First St. SE., Hayfield
Pastor Paul Hauchild
507-477-2248
www.trinityhayfield.org
Worship: 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN - LCMS
108 Third Ave. SW., Medford
Pastor Mark Bieghaus
507-451-0447
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday
Education Hour: 10:15 a.m.
Wednesday Worship: 6:30 p.m.

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

ZION LUTHERAN - ELCA
7126 SW 98th St., Ellendale
Pastor: Rev. Dean Smith
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

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
507-451-6353
Father James Starasnick
Deacon Patrick Fagan
Mass: 5:30 p.m. Sat.
Mass: 9 a.m. Mon. & Fri.

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS
307 SW First St., New Richland
Father Antony Arokiam
507-234-6244
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL
9946 SE 24th Ave. Owatonna
Father John Wilmut
507-583-2784
www.litomysl.webs.com
Sunday Mass at 8:30 a.m. with Children's Church
Sacrament of Reconciliation
Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.
Faith Formation classes for K thru Confirmation
Second Sunday of month:
Family Faith Formation
Litomysl Finance Council:
2nd Thursday
Litomysl Pastoral Council:
2nd Thursday every other month

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

SACRED HEART PARISH
810 S. Cedar Ave., Owatonna
Father John Sauer
Parochial Vicar
507-451-1588
www.sacredheartowatonna.org
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday;
8:30 a.m., 8:10 a.m. Sun.

Spanish Mass: 11:45 a.m. Sun.
Daily Mass: 7:15 a.m.
Reconciliation: 4 p.m. Sat.
Adoration:
8 a.m. - 10 p.m. Thurs.

ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC
114 E. Main St., Blooming Prairie
Father 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 Starasnick
Deacon Patrick Fagan
507-451-4845
Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8 & 10 a.m.
Reconciliation: 3-3:30 p.m. Sat.
Daily Mass:
8 a.m. Tues., Wed. & Fri.
(Communion Service
8 a.m. Thursday)
Adoration Chapel available
Mon. - Fri. 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Key fob required after hours or weekends

CHRISTIAN

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

PENTECOSTAL

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

METHODIST

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

ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST
200 Sixth St. NW., Ellendale
Pastor Randy Cirksema
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. Scott Jakel
Linda Boorman, Associate Pastor
Joyce Parker, Associate Pastor
507-451-4734
www.owatonnaumc.org
Traditional Worship (Pathways):
9 a.m. Sunday

NON-DENOMINATIONAL

BRIDGES OF HOPE COMMUNITY
130 W. Bridge St., Owatonna
Pastor Keith Haskell
507-215-2249
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.
Bible Study: 10 a.m. Sun.
Reformers Unanimous Meetings:
7 p.m. Friday

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.
SIMPLE CHURCH
4515 NW 22nd Ave., Owatonna
(Country Goods building across the freeway from Cabela's)
Pastor Todd Lundgren
507-451-5661
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.
Bible Study: 7 p.m. Wednesday

MENNONITE

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

MORMON

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

PRESBYTERIAN

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

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

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

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
2373 Seventh Ave. NE, Owatonna
Pastor Brian Beavers
651-955-4002
Worship: 11 a.m. Sat.
Bible Study: 9:30 a.m. Sat.

UCC

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

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

VIBRANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD
702 Third St. S., Ellendale
Pastor Patrick Stitt
507-684-3421
www.vibrantlifegag.com
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Kids Church: 9:30 a.m. Sun.

BAPTIST

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

FIRST BAPTIST (Owatonna's oldest church)
123 E. Main St., Owatonna
Pastor Carla Nelson
507-272-9834
www.firstbaptistowatonna.com
Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

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

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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

Legacy Monument Sales
Leon & Lori Bohlman
Leon's cell: 507-456-7864
Lori's cell: 507-456-3735
Email: landbo@gmail.com
Written lifetime guarantee on all our granite monuments. Always exceptional quality!

LERBERG'S FITNESS CENTER & CAR WASH
118 5th Ave.
Ellendale
507-684-2471

Dr. Deborah Lion
Dentist
Building Healthy Smiles!
222 2nd Ave. NE
Owatonna, MN 56007
507-583-6613

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Staff helped Prairie Manor Care Center resident Clara Sibenaller, 88, communicate with her family by creating this message board. The sign read: "Hello Kids! I hope you're being

BETTER THAN: window dressing FROM A1

Sisters Connie Trom and Corrine (Corky) Drexler have coordinated visits at the window of Clara Sibenaller, 88, their mother. Sibenaller has been a resident of Prairie Manor for the past 18 months.

Nursing home staff even made a sign, humorous as it was, pointed toward Sibenaller's family. The sign read: "Hello Kids! I hope you're being good like I taught you! - Mom."

Trom and Drexler both reside in Blooming Prairie, just a short distance apart. Their other siblings, brother Lynn lives in Owatonna, brother Tom lives in La Crosse and brother Mark lives in Lonsdale. Sister Michelle resides in Minneapolis and sister Mary lives in Eagan.

The sisters made a special visit to see their "mom" on Saturday, the day before Easter. The warm weather made it pleasant but awkward for them to talk to their mother with a closed window between them.

Sibenaller, fighting a slight hearing problem, has become quite good at using sign language. She flashes the "peace" sign or the universal OK sign (index finger and thumb together).

Trom says she cannot say enough about the care being given her mother. Staff has been very kind to Sibenaller and they always make her feel special, Trom says. Drexler is a retired Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Trom says Drexler, a veteran of 43 years

in nursing, is the family information center, having a better understanding of medical issues. "I feel bad for staff because it has been proven that residents don't do as well when they don't have family members there to visit them," said Trom.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

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An Easter celebration of different sorts in BP

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

The coronavirus COVID-19 caused the Blooming Prairie annual Easter Egg Hunt to be cancelled this year.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD
Melissa Korman and children, Emma and Owen had a front row seat when the Easter parade came by their house in Blooming Prairie last Saturday.

That didn't stop the event's sponsor, Women of Today, with coming up with a novel idea. "Let's have an Easter parade," suggested event chair Mandy Doocy. With the help of some volunteers, Women of To-

day got the idea of convincing the Easter bunny to ride in a Express Pressure Washer truck and visit kids and adults throughout Blooming Prairie.

Doocy's sister Brandy Munson was the Easter bunny. "She wanted to spread cheer with everything going on with the coronavirus COVID-19," said Doocy. Munson, Doocy and Lachelle Wondra of Express worked out the plans for an Easter parade.

"A huge thank you goes to the Easter Bunny (Brandy Munson), Express Pressure Washers, Lachelle Wondra, Women of Today member's and of course the community for coming out to say hello to the Bunny," said Doocy.

The parade started a little late, about 15 minutes after 11 a.m. last Saturday, April 11. It came to an end about 90 minutes later.

"We are grateful for

SEE AN EASTER CELEBRATION, B2



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD
Max, Carter and Madeline Sorensen keep their social distance from the Easter Bunny as he waves and passes by during an Easter parade Saturday in Blooming Prairie. Because of the governor's stay-at-home order, this year's Easter Egg Hunt was called off and a parade was put on in its place by the Women of Today. The bunny was escorted by Extreme Pressure Washers.

PARTNERING TO HELP MIGRANTS



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER
The parking lot at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Owatonna has been taken over by large trailers waiting to be home to Tri-Valley's Migrant Head Start program. A total of 13 trailers will be pieced together for the complex.

Our Savior's teams up with Tri-Valley on new facility

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

A unique partnership between a local church and a program aimed to eliminate the causes for and effects of poverty is poised to continue serving Steele County for many years to come.

Our Savior's Lutheran Church of Owatonna has partnered with Tri-Valley Opportunity Council with its federal migrant Head Start program for more

than a quarter of a century. The two plan to continue that partnership as Tri-Valley is constructing a new facility next to the church.

Thirteen trailers are currently occupying space in a large portion of Our Savior's parking lot awaiting to be tied together into one complex for the Head Start center. The older modular structure was taken down late last year.

Construction on the \$1.3 million project has started

with the goal to have everything completed by June 1. While the cost of the project is being covered through a federal grant, Our Savior's provides Tri-Valley with the land rent-free.

Crews broke ground within the past two weeks by doing excavating work and pouring a new foundation.

Rev. John Weisenburger of Our Savior's said the previous building had outlived its life span, which is normally 15-20 years. "Fixing

them was becoming very expensive," he said. "We are happy to see a new building coming in."

The Head Start center specializes in providing services to about 100 migrant children between May and October. Their parents often work at the canning company in Owatonna and live in grass camps north of the church. "This helps

SEE PARTNERING, B2

Medford finds new norm in education

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

As the state struggles through the current coronavirus pandemic, schools are learning to adapt to serve their students in this difficult time.

Like other area schools, Medford has adopted a distance learning approach. "For us the approach is to keep it fairly simple and not overload our students," Medford High School Principal Kevin Babcock explained.

After an extended spring break, Medford students began distance learning on March 30. "We're trying to keep a sense of normality for our students and staff," Babcock said. "The coordination of our staff was phenomenal, and I want to give a lot of praise to the teachers who have done an amazing job on this."

With students logging in and communicating with each other and their teachers online, there are definitely challenges to be had. "The biggest struggle you find is to keep them coordinated and keeping them motivated," Babcock said. "We're going to keep

focusing on things that are fun and working for our students."

In order to organize their approach to distance learning, schools across the state leaned on one another to decide their own methods. "There was more conversation between principals across the state than you would ever imagine," Babcock quipped. "Everyone bounced things off each other, and each approach is based on what each school needs."

According to Babcock, the students are all responding well to the new normal of distance learning. "Right now, their responding really well, down the road we'll have to keep them motivated," he said. "Students have embraced this really well."

Due to Medford being a one-to-one district, students are already familiar with many of the components at work here. However, teachers also had to adjust to the new distance learning curriculum.

"We did a survey the other week, and I think teachers felt a little bit

SEE MEDFORD FINDS, B2

One word during crisis: Hope



Steele Talkin'
JESS STROMLEY

Hope is a word we're using a lot these days—it's what keeps us going. Here at Community Pathways we're hoping that all these changes are helping our customers stay calm and safe during this difficult time.

This pandemic has changed a lot on how we run our programs. The first being the closing of Unique Finds, as it's considered non-essential. We are currently using some of that space to quarantine our food donations, which we keep separate for three days until the virus is no longer a threat. We're not taking donations at this time but asking "if you can hang onto them" we would appreciate it and accept them when we re-open.

Marketplace has changed a lot, too. We're

doing curbside pick-up and all our monthly food is pre-packaged. Our customers pull up, stay in their vehicles, we go out to get their information, and bring out their food package. We also had to make a difficult decision and temporarily stop our daily program. Our daily program offers bakery items and produce for our customers every day. This program relies heavily on donations from our local grocery stores. Due to contamination concerns and the safety of our customers, volunteers and staff, we have put a temporary hold on picking up from the stores.

Our mobile food program has also changed. Instead of delivering a five-day grocery supply twice a month, we're now delivering their full 10-day grocery supply once a month. Less contact and allows us to take on more deliveries. We've had a lot of our current customers asking for delivery in fear of leaving their homes, because their considered more vulnerable with this virus.

Changes are happening every day. We're all

SEE ONE WORD, B2

Young Life Cake Auction to feature online bidding

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

With a shelter in place order currently in effect for Minnesota, local fundraisers have had to adapt, or in some cases cancel entirely. Owatonna Young Life's Cake Auction lies in the former camp, with all of their bidding set to take place online.

"We've moved everything online," explained Owatonna Young Life Area Director Lindsay Thompson. "You can start bidding at noon on Friday." The auction will be held entirely online from Friday, April 17 to Saturday, April 18.

There are 140 different items up for grabs, including unique experiences and cool items to bid on. All of the money raised will go to the Owatonna Young Life or-

SEE YOUNG LIFE, B3



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Bidders circle the tables at last year's annual Young Life Cake Auction. But, unlike last year, this year's auction will be held entirely online due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Area farms honored with century recognition

Several area farms are being recognized this year for being in the family for at least a century.

In Steele County, the Wencil Farm of Owatonna has been in the family since 1920. Other area farms being honored include: Freeborn - the D&P Farr Farm of Ellendale (1919); Dodge - Schleeter Family Farm of Mantorville (1912) and Mower-Holst Farms of Brownsdale (1920).

The Minnesota State Fair and the Minnesota Farm Bureau are recognizing

154 Minnesota farms as Century Farms in 2020. Qualifying farms have been in continuous family ownership for at least 100 years and are 50 acres or more.

Century Farm families receive a commemorative sign, as well as a certificate signed by Minnesota State Fair and Minnesota Farm Bureau presidents and Gov. Tim Walz.

Since the program began in 1976, more than 10,500 Minnesota farms have been recognized as Century Farms.

County lifts spring load restrictions

Spring load restrictions have been lifted from Steele County highways effective Monday, April 13.

The county will be removing load restriction signs. Highway maps showing the normal load postings that will be in effect are available on the Steele County website at:

www.co.steele.mn.us/divisions/public_works/transportation/road_restrictions.php.

For updates on load restrictions or Steele County highway construction projects, visit: www.co.steele.mn.us/divisions/public_works/transportation/index.php.

Owatonna intersection closed

The intersection of Rose Street and Grove Avenue has been closed for construction since April 10. Crews will replace a sanitary sewer and construct a mini roundabout at the intersection.

For Rose Street, a detour will be posted using Elm Avenue, Fremont Street, Mineral Springs Road, Cherry Street, and Pine Avenue. The detour route has only an 11-foot-8-inch clearance so trucks will need to use an alternate route.

For Grove Avenue, a detour will be posted using Pearl Street, Elm Avenue, and Fremont Street.

Work will also resume in the next few weeks along Rose Street from Hoffman Avenue to Wil-

low Avenue to complete pavement rehabilitation work that was started last year and update sidewalk pedestrian ramps to the current Americans with Disability Act requirements. That work will be done under traffic. Lane closures with flaggers may be used. Expect delays.

All dates are subject to change due to weather or other factors. Steele County advises motorists to drive with caution and slow down through work zones for their safety and the safety of the construction crews.

For updates on this or other Steele County Highway construction projects, visit: www.co.steele.mn.us/highway_construction/.

An Easter punch



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Jeff Zwienen of Blooming Prairie was plowing out his customers on the afternoon of Easter. The area was dumped on with the snowfall measuring 6 inches. Just the day before, residents were basking in 60-plus degrees with no wind.

County 23 road work underway

Crews closed County Highway 23 (West Frontage Road) between Hoffman Drive and 26th Street starting April 13 to repair a culvert just north of the Perkins restaurant. The work is expected to last about a week.

The road will be closed to thru traffic, but will remain open from the south end to local businesses. A detour will be posted using West Frontage Road, 24th Avenue, and 26th Street.

All dates are subject to change due to weather or other factors.

Steele County advises motorists to drive with caution and slow down through work zones for their safety and for the

safety of the construction crews.

For updates on this or other Steele County Highway construction projects, visit: www.co.steele.mn.us/highway_construction

PARTNERING: TO HELP MIGRANTS FROM B1

migrant families. Most of them are from Mexico," Weisenburger said.

Tri-Valley utilizes the kitchen at Our Savior's to provide meals to the children. In addition, children from the surrounding neighborhood can come in and eat free lunches during the summer months, according to Weisenburger.

"The church sees it as a ministry to families who use it as well as the community," Weisenburger said. "I don't know of any

other church doing it like us," he added.

Weisenburger enjoys having the church grounds filled with migrant children throughout the summer months. "In summer, there is more Spanish going on here than English," the pastor related. "Every day they teach me one new word. They bring us a lot of life."

The relationship between Our Savior's and Tri-Valley has always been a good one. Weisenburger noted. "We're looking

forward to another 30 years with them," he said.

Because of strict federal guidelines, there is very little volunteerism available for church members to help out at the Head Start center. However, some church members have been employed by Tri-Valley in the past, including a member that served as interim director for a period.

The Head Start program serves children ages 0 to 5. Tri-Valley is based in Crookston. The program

started in Owatonna around 1990 as a way to serve a large population of migrant families coming to the area for summer agricultural work.

The new facility at Our Savior's will also serve a non-migrant Head Start program operated by Semca Community Action Agency. Semca's program provides care for children ages 3 to 5 and currently is based at another location on the south end of Owatonna.

Sudoku Corner

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

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6	5	8	2	9	7	2	8	1
7	8	6	1	5	8	1	2	9
2	2	1	9	7	8	6	5	8
5	9	8	6	2	1	2	7	8
8	1	5	8	2	1	7	9	6
9	7	2	5	8	6	8	1	2
8	6	2	7	1	9	5	8	2

ONE WORD: during crisis: Hope FROM B1

learning how to deal with this pandemic on a daily basis. With the closing of Unique Finds and going to pre-packaged food, it has stream-lined our process. We're able to fulfill the need right now with just

our staff and it has allowed us to tell our volunteers to stay home and safe. So at this time we're not taking volunteers, but we miss you all and can't wait to see you.

For more information and to keep up to date on changes

happening, visit our website at www.communitypathwaysSC.org or our Facebook page www.facebook.com/communitypathwaysSC.

Jess Stromley is the fund development and

marketing coordinator with Community Pathways in Owatonna. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.

AN EASTER CELEBRATION: of different sorts in BP FROM B1

everyone's patience as the Bunny worked her way through town," said Doocy.

The parade featured only two units, the Easter bunny's truck and a truck to carry the music. Oh yeah, the horns on the vehicles were sounded to tell everyone that the bunny was coming.

The Easter Bunny's motorcade even took a swing through the circle at the Prairie Manor Care Center.

The parade's beginning came on 8th Street NW.

"We hope that this parade put a few smiles on kids and adults," said organizer Doocy.

She continued: "I think it was a great turnout! We saw a lot of kiddos and com-

munity members waving from their windows and curbs. Some made signs, other were holding bunnies, and everyone was smiling!"

"I think everyone that helped out would agree that it was just nice to spread some cheer and take people's minds off everything."

"Anything we can do right now to spread some love and kindness is great! We also want to apologize if we missed anyone, that was definitely not our intent."

"Overall though, Our collaboration came together nice and we were blessed with a beautiful day and a lot of smiles. Like the saying goes 'When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade!'"

MEDFORD FINDS: new norm in education FROM B1

more overwhelmed, but it's just that the preparation piece for getting ready for class is different," Babcock said. "They're adjusting their way through this, I think that they've adjusted really well."

When it comes to the specific approach Medford is taking, it depends on each teacher and each student. "It's more of a personalized learning model," Babcock said, explaining that it is similar to online classes in that students have a bit more freedom with their workload.

"Our students and families are taking the biggest brunt of things from any of this, so I want to give a shout out to the parents and guardians,"

Babcock said. "I think after this we're all going to have more appreciation for teachers as well as parents and families."

Although it is a bit further down the road, Medford School is already thinking on how to approach graduation.

"We're going to be doing something," Babcock said when it comes to a ceremony. But due to the current shelter in place order, just how they will celebrate is still to be decided.

As the current pandemic continues to disrupt and alter everyone's lives, schools like Medford will have to adapt and evolve over the coming months to continue to serve their students, families, and communities.

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THE BOULDER LOCK OF KOHLER

Extension airs new cow podcast for producers

The University of Minnesota Beef and Dairy Teams are now producing a cow podcast called, The Moos Room.

The podcast is hosted by Joe Armstrong, Brad Heins, and Emily Krekelberg, and is made for both beef and dairy producers.

The Moos Room is free to stream or download and available on Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts. The cattle focused podcast discusses relevant topics to help Minnesota beef and dairy producers be more successful. The information is evidence-based and presented as an informal conversation between the hosts and guests.

"Our goal with The Moos Room is to help Minnesota producers be more successful," said co-host Dr. Joe. "We want to discuss topics we see from our experience on farm in a way that is fun and constructive to

listen to. Brad, Emily, and I have developed a friendship that is built on banter, having a good time, still somehow staying on task, and our love of cows. I think listeners will be able to hear that in the podcast."

Make sure to subscribe to The Moos Room to get the most recent episodes on your listening platform of choice:

Apple Podcasts: z.umn.edu/themoosroomapple
Google Podcasts: z.umn.edu/themoosroomgoogle

The Moos Room will cover a wide range of topics, from markets to disease prevention to mental health and well-being. "The goal is really to arm producers with tools and resources they can use in the real world," said Dr. Joe.

For more news from U of M Extension, visit www.extension.umn.edu/ news or contact Extension Communications at extnews@umn.edu.

Corky's Softball reset to September

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

After getting postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic, Corky's Early Bird Softball Classic won't be so early this year.

Director Loren Dietz confirms that the 41st annual Corky's Softball Tournament will go on Sept. 11-13. It had been scheduled for April 30-May 3. Officials were forced to postpone because of the stay-at-home order facing Minnesotans with COVID-19.

Dietz said they let all teams involved in the classic to pick between two dates: July 9-11 and Sept. 11-13. They offered "strong encouragement" for teams to make the September weekend work, he noted.

Of the 200 teams involved, 155 chose September while 20 teams could not make either make-up date work, according to Dietz. There were 25 teams that had not responded prior to a decision being made. He said 40 teams have been on the waiting list and it is

likely that Corky's will see a full compliment of 200 teams just like it has for years.

"All hotels and vendors are on board for the September dates," Dietz said. "Of course, there is a small chance that Gov. Walz could still ban gatherings even into September, but for now, City of Owatonna, Faribault and Waseca have all approved the new dates."

Dietz said the event will be run "identical to the original May plan."



Corky's classic is an ASA slow-pitch softball tournament based in Owatonna. Last year it drew teams from 13 states. It has always been held the first full weekend in May. It is considered the fifth largest softball tournament in the world.

Former Owatonna Parks & Rec Director Corky Ebeling started the tournament in 1979. Ebeling selected Dietz as his successor about 10 years ago.

Legionville cancels camps for 2020

The committee that oversees the Legionville School Patrol Camp for the American Legion Department of Minnesota has decided to cancel for the 2020 season.

"It is with a heavy heart that this decision is made," said Legionville President Eugene Leifeld. "Legionville is central to what it means to be a Legionnaire in Minnesota. We hope to return to full strength in 2021."

"The safety and health of our campers is our No. 1 priority," said Department

Commander Mark Dvorak. "The decision to cancel was a difficult one, but it had to be made."

The camp teaches school-safety patrol procedures, guidelines for intersections and bus patrols and emergency bus safety to boys and girls all across Minnesota. Typically, the patrollers are entering fourth, fifth or sixth grade. The camp is a function of the Department of Minnesota (state level) but receives support from American Legion Posts and

Auxiliary Units all across the state.

The first session was planned to begin June 14. The last would have ended Aug. 7.

The camp welcomes more than 1,000 girls and boys each season over the course of seven sessions. Each session has a capacity of 168, and all sessions are co-ed. The American Legion operates under four pillars, and Legionville is part of the pillar for mentoring children and youth.

The Minnesota State Patrol and The American Legion teamed up in 1935 to begin a patrol program for youth. By 1948, The American Legion began to raise funds for a permanent training camp and purchased a site on North Long Lake near Brainerd.

"That camp today has provided many lasting memories for many Minnesota children and their families," Leifeld said.

For more information, go to www.mnlegion.org/legionville.

St. John cancels all church activities

All church activities at St. John Lutheran Church of Claremont have been cancelled for the month of April.

The church elders have suspended all activities and church services through at least

April 30 to comply with state guidelines known as shelter-in-place due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak.

If anyone is in need of pastoral care, please contact Pastor Broadwell at 507-528-2643.

Festival of Tables cancelled

One of the Owatonna Hospital Auxiliary's biggest fundraisers, the Festival of Tables, has been cancelled for 2020.

This year's event was scheduled for Tuesday, May 19 at the Owatonna Country Club.

Festival of Tables committee members considered setting a September date but finally decided to cancel the event totally for 2020 because of the consideration for the health and safety of the hostesses and guests.

Festival of Table try-chairs Deb Buck, Joanne Sorenson and Ronda Christenson issued the following statement:

"We had a wonderful event planned, and we know that the hostesses and those attending were so

looking forward to a wonderful time. Our committee's commitment to you is that we will have a Festival of Tables event in 2021.

Watch for future information about the 2021 event." The chairs concluded, "Stay home. Stay safe."

Purse Bingo date set for June 13

The Blooming Prairie Cancer Group's Purse Bingo fundraising event has been rescheduled from Saturday, April 4 to Saturday, June 13.

Two Purse Bingo sessions are planned for the same day, the first session at 11 a.m. and the second at 5 p.m. This fundraising event will

be held at the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club. Both sessions were sold out for April 4 and those tickets will be honored for June 13. Cheryl Krejci, treasurer of the BP Cancer Group, said a makeup date has not been chosen for the Ham Bingo event which was cancelled on March 19.

BP Ed Foundation auction reset for June

The planning committee for the Blooming Prairie Education Foundation's spring auction has rescheduled the fundraiser from March

28 to Saturday, June 27. Auction items may still be dropped off at New York Life.

Any questions, call 507-583-2200.

J & H LIQUOR

Future events will depend on the State of Minnesota COVID-19 guidelines.

OFF-SALE
"OPEN" Monday - Saturday
10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Sunday - Closed

BAR
The bar will remain closed till May 1st or until the State of Minnesota allows it to re-open.

FIREHOUSE PIZZA
TAKE OUT AVAILABLE Frozen \$9 Cooked \$10.50

340 E. Main St. Blooming Prairie • 583-7557

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AUSTIN 7-DAY FORECAST						
THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED
80	78	81	81	82	79	76
62	63	62	63	62	63	

**WEEKEND
Weather
Forecasts**
7am & 6pm
KSMQ TV
The Better Choice

YOUNG LIFE: Cake Auction to feature online bidding

organization, which provides local young people with a faith-based community.

"Our mission is to reach kids and the ministry that's going on now with calls, and texts, and on social networks is really neat to see," Thompson said of the adaptive approach her organization is taking to continue to support area youth.

The online auction itself will be a testament to the

dedication and determination of Thompson and all those involved. "There's a lot of planning leading up to this, and it's always the day of that's overwhelming because we just have so much support in the community," she said.

"We have 280 families that support us throughout the year," Thompson explained. "There's so many community members involved and we're grateful for all of them. With 42 years under our belt, they've helped us reach kids throughout generations."

Although the bidding will be entirely online, Thompson feels that it will be a great way for the community to come together. "That's really what we're here for, to bring joy in a time like this," she said.

"People will be there and be together in spirit. Hopefully we can bring some normalcy back."

Still, there are elements of their traditional auction that Thompson and others will miss, like getting to see the unique hand-crafted cakes on display. "It's amazing to see the passion we have in our baking

community, seeing people's reactions that's one thing we'll miss this year," she said.

An event like this one always hinges on those who donate as well as those who participate. "We are going to continue to support and donate because it is such an important mission to my husband and I," Kim Ramsey, a regular donor and bidder said.

"Both of my kids were in Young Life, and I was a Young Life leader for around 12 or 13 years," Ramsey explained. "As an organization, it's important to us, and to the kids in town."

While the online auction will continue this tradition, Ramsey echoes Thompson's statements when it comes to seeing each of the unique cakes on display. "That was definitely the highlight for me," she said.

With so much community support, and a dedicated group of people working behind the scenes to ensure that the auction continues, many are already looking forward to getting to see the cakes next year. "I think that Owatonna will come out and show their support," Ramsey said.

BIRTHDAYS	
APRIL 16 Richard Schwartz Ken Esplan Angie Avery Jesse Christiansen Kathryn Piller Timothy Adam Greene Matt Braaten Mary Beth Swenson	APRIL 20 Rosa Rivera-Escondon APRIL 21 Ken Esplan Ron Esplan Peter Vogt Mary J. Demmer Kyle Spinler Shawn Sundine APRIL 22 Cindi Hansen Elizabeth Miner APRIL 23 Jan Miner Miles Miller Karl Steckelberg Luke Heimgartner Diane Jensen
APRIL 18 Ty Forystek Brian Wencl Marc Braaten Rachel Pirkil Dale Underwood APRIL 19 Grady Steckelberg Hazel Trom Rachel Winzenburg Pam Doerhoefer	ANNIVERSARY APRIL 18 Kurt & Terri Underwood

THIS WEEKLY FEATURE SPONSORED BY
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507.206.8449

YOUNG LIFE CAKE AUCTION

Friday & Saturday
All bidding online at www.Owatonna.younglife.org
Proceeds benefit Owatonna Young Life, a faith-based organization

Safe at Home



SUBMITTED PHOTO BY THE HANSEN FAMILY

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz says our only vaccine against COVID-19 is staying at home and being safe. Bristol Hansen, 8, holds younger sister Harper, 7, to emphasize that they are safe at home. The girls are distant learning at home and are the daughters of Rachel and Steve Hansen of Blooming Prairie.



Loan program available for farmers affected by COVID-19

The Minnesota Disaster Recovery Loan Program is now accessible to farmers who are suffering financial damages related to the COVID-19 outbreak after the Legislature expanded access to the funds.

Legislative approval of a bill on March 26 increased program flexibility, providing a resource to farmers for expenses not covered by insurance. "These funds are an important tool that is available for farmers that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak," said Rep. Brian Daniels, R-Faribault. "If you are a farmer, I encourage you to reach out to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for more information regarding eligibility."

MDA indicates program dollars can be used to "replace livestock or flocks, make building improvements, or cover the loss of revenue. Loan proceeds may also be used to repair or replace septic and water systems, and replace destroyed agricultural buildings."

The program is coordinated by the Rural Finance Authority and farmers will work through their local lenders to secure financing. The MDA reports that RFA participation in a qualifying loan is limited to 45% of the principal amount, up to \$200,000. Other terms, conditions and qualification standards apply and can be found at the MDA website, or by calling 651-201-6666.

County updates services during COVID-19

The County has declared a health emergency due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic. The emergency declaration allows County government to proceed with emergency measures needed to contain and control the spread of COVID-19.

With the Governor's Stay At Home order extended until May 4, Steele County will continue to limit public access to our facilities until further notice, as per the Board of Commissioners' action on April 10, 2020 during a Special Board meeting. The County will continue to provide essential services and other services to our residents, as described below.

Administration Center

Steele County Administration Center located at 630 Florence Ave. in Owatonna will remain closed to the public. The following offices are located at this center along with any service modifications are in place until further notice. Please review this notice on a regular basis for updates and/or changes that may occur.

If there is a service required that is not listed, please call the appropriate department for assistance or call the Administration Center at 507-444-7400.

Assessor's Office 507-444-7435

• 2020 (payable 2021) Valuation Notices will be mailed with 2020 Tax Statements are in the mail. Property valuations/classification appeals/questions will be handled by phone and/or email.

• Physical interior inspections of property for assessment purposes is suspended.

• Local Boards of Appeals and Equalization will be limited due to the suspension of interior physical inspections.

• All appeals must go through the Assessor's Office. We will place your name on the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization list to keep your avenues of appeal open to attend the County Board of Appeal and Equalization on June 16.

• When conditions improve, an appraiser from the Assessor's Office will call you to schedule an appointment for interior inspection.

• Homestead and other applications can be returned via mail, email or by placing in drop box at the Steele County Administration Center located along the east side of the

building facing Florence Avenue.

The following services by phone or email Assessor@CO.STEELE.MN.US

• Valuation/classification questions and appeals. The first step in the appeals process is to contact the Assessor's Office

• Requests for home-stead applications (also available on-line)

• Questions regarding special programs

Auditor 507-444-7410

• Delinquent Taxes

Payments can be mailed to our office or use the Steele County drop box. For other payments options please call our office. Taxpayers may want to call our office to verify the amount due

• Annual licenses - Mail in or call for more information

• You can also e-mail any questions to auditor@co.steele.mn.us

Facilities and Maintenance Department 507-444-7472

• Vendors are by appointment only. We can be reached by phone or email: Jacob.rysvy@co.steele.mn.us

Geographic Info Systems 507-444-7489

gisdept@co.steele.mn.us

• The Steele County GIS department is still providing most services. GIS support for all county services that are deemed essential will take priority.

• Electronic deliverables are the department preferred production methods during this time.

Human Resources Department 507-444-7401

or 507-444-7429

• Steele County current Employment Opportunities are available on the County's website through the following link: https://www.co.steele.mn.us

• For general questions or questions pertaining to open position(s), please email human.resources@co.steele.mn.us or call

Planning and Zoning 507-444-7475

• Building permit applications can be found online under the Land Use and Records/Planning and Zoning Department tab or contact the department to have one sent to you. Completed applications can be submitted via mail to: Steele Co. Building Inspection

P.O. Box 890

Owatonna, MN 55060

Or emailed to inspections@co.steele.mn.us

Small sized applications and payments can be placed in the drop box located in front of the Steele County Admin building.

• Inspections will be done on a case by case basis and arranged by calling 507-444-7475

• Zoning questions and

applicants should call to discuss the process.

• Septic questions should call our office and permit applications can be submitted via email, mail or utilize the drop box.

• Feedlot questions should call our office.

In case of emergency manure spills etc., call the State Duty Officer at 1-800-422-0798

• Pesticide and Manure Application licensing has been suspended at our location. Applicants should contact the MN Department of Agriculture at 651-201-6633.

Recorder/Registrar of Titles 507-444-7430

• Passport processing is currently suspended

• Recording of real estate documents continues through e-recording, mail and Steele County drop box

• Marriage licenses by mail, no ceremonies at this time

• Vital records - birth/death records - continue to be processed electronically and by mail

• Fingerprinting by appointment only

• Digital images of real estate documents, all documents are digitized

Treasurer/Finance 507-444-7420

• Property Tax Payments - Payments can be mailed to Steele County Treasurer's Office or dropped off at the Steele County drop box. Tax payments can also be paid online with a credit card (2.5% convenience fee), Visa debit card (\$3.95 convenience fee) or an e-check (\$1.50 convenience fee up to \$10,000 payment)

Veterans Services (507) 444-7460

• We are monitoring the phone, email, and fax communications Monday thru Friday, regular service hours. No afterhours monitoring of these lines.

• No in-office appointments. Scheduling and conducting telephonic interviews only.

• No outreach visits (in home or at community care facilities).

• Transportation to the VA Medical Center (VAMC) only for critical appointments as deemed by the VA (subject to prior screening of the veteran, and the availability of a certified volunteer driver).

• Transportation to the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) in Albert Lea, Mankato, and Rochester is managed by the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). Please call the DAV coordinator at 507-703-1139.

• The VA Medical Center is currently not accepting walk-ins. Must have an appointment scheduled in order to enter their facilities.

• Veterans enrolled into the VA Health Care must call 612-467-1100 for emergencies, appointments, and for care at local medical facilities.

OTHER STEELE COUNTY FACILITIES:

Community Corrections

• Our building is closed to the public until further notice or Board action.

• Payments are being accepted by mail only.

• No group activities or weekly treatment facilitation.

• No in person Cog Skills programming.

• General questions please email: timothy.schammel@co.steele.mn.us. Or call 507-444-7720

County Attorney 507-444-7780

• District Court is open, but the Court calendar has been reduced to only "high priority" cases. Court Administration is discouraging any non-essential visits to the courthouse until further notice. Limited attorney and support staff will be in the office at 303 South Cedar Avenue South Cedar during normal business hours. No in-person meetings will occur at this time. Contact with the County Attorney's Office may be accomplished by phone at 507-444-7780 or Attorney@co.steele.mn.us.

• Crime Victim Services will continue, just without

in-person meetings. Any crime victims may contact the office at 507-444-7780 or email teresa.dudley@co.steele.mn.us

Extension Office 507-444-4685

• Extension is closed to the public

• All Extension office activities are canceled

• All public scheduled meetings are canceled

Four Seasons Centre/Parks and Recreation 507-451-1093

• Four Seasons Centre is closed to the public

• All Four Seasons Centre activities are canceled

• All scheduled meetings are canceled

• Parks will remain open to the public

Landfill 507-583-7766

• Closed to public self-hauling customers and closed to all customers on Saturdays until further notice.

Public Health 507-444-7650

• Steele County Public Health will continue to provide essential services. This includes immunizations, TB services, and assurance of essential services for those placed in isolation or quarantine for an infectious disease by the Minnesota Department of Health. Please call to schedule appointments or for more information: 507-444-7650.

• WIC services will be provided by phone. Please call 507-444-7650.

• Essential Home Care Services will continue. Contact your nurse directly or call 507-444-7650 for questions.

• Other services will be provided via phone/video as we are able.

Public Works/Highway Department 507-444-7670

• Public Works Facility is closed to the public.

• Services will continue to be provided as usual.

• Staff is available by phone at the above phone number or via e-mail at hwy@co.steele.mn.us.

Steele County Courthouse

By order of Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele, effective March 23, 2020 at 7:30 a.m., access to the Steele County Courthouse will be restricted. The courthouse is not being closed.

Only essential staff, officers of the courts and people with scheduled court hearings will be allowed into the Steele County Courthouse. This would include employees of Court Administration, Judges and staff, along with employees of the Steele County Sheriff's Office, Attorney's Office, Steele County Probation (CCA), Steele County Social Services, Public Health, attorneys, public defender and victim advocates. No other members of the public will be allowed into the courthouse until deemed safe to do so by the order of the Sheriff.

Staff in Court Administration can still assist you by phone - calling 507-444-7700 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Steele County Sheriff's Office 507-444-3800

• Steele County Sheriff's Office is allowing limited access to the lobby

• Civil Process and Records will remain open with limited access for mandated services

• Please use the lobby phone if you need to speak with dispatch or an officer/deputy

• All non-mandated services are suspended

Records Division: Office: 507-444-3800 Fax: 507-444-0330 Email: Leerecords@co.steele.mn.us

Civil Division: Office: 507-444-3808 Fax: 507-444-3894 Email: Sscivil@co.steele.mn.us

Steele County Detention Center (507) 446-7000 Fax: (507) 446-7050

• Lobby visitation is suspended. Online visitation from home is still available via inmatecenter.com

• Lobby access is closed to the public. It is open to all approved contractors and individuals with criminal justice related business (attorneys, bonds people).

• Public fingerprinting is suspended.



TAX TIPS 2020

ECONOMIC IMPACT PAYMENTS

IRS will start sending payments to most Americans in April.

- Do not call
- Most people won't need to take any action
- Check back often for updates

LATEST UPDATES ON CORONAVIRUS TAX RELIEF

IRS mission-critical functions continue
While we continue to process electronic returns and issue refunds, some IRS services are limited. Get up-to-date status on affected IRS operations and services at irs.gov.

Tax deadline changed
The deadlines to FILE and PAY federal income taxes are extended to July 15, 2020.

Refunds

The IRS is processing tax returns and issuing refunds. File your taxes now to get your refund.



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(formerly Wencil Accounting & Tax Service)

Lisa Ackerman
Tax Preparer/Accounting Services

www.ackermanaccounting.com

lisa@ackermanaccounting.com

507-451-3399

221 Mineral Springs Rd Ste A • Owatonna



121 West Bridge Street
Owatonna, MN 55060

507-446-7100 | CLAAconnect.com/tax

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Blooming Prairie Business Schedules During COVID-19 Pandemic

- **St. Columbanus, Litomysl, and Sacred Heart in Hayfield:** All masses canceled but you may watch a mass on Channel 3 or 3.2 on Sundays.
- **Red Oak Grove Lutheran Church:** Closed and services canceled
- **First Lutheran Church:** Closed with services on 100.9 FM on Sundays at 9 a.m.
- **City Center, Public Utilities, Library and Chamber Offices:** Closed to the public you may reach them by phone with any questions.
- **Farmers & Merchants Bank:** Drive-up open 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Lobby closed except by appointment.
- **US Bank:** Drive-up open 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m., lobby closed except by appointment.
- **Prairie Manor:** Closed to ALL visitors! You can see loved ones through window visits or phone calls.
- **Krejci Ford:** Service department open 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. They will pick up and drop off your vehicle for servicing. Call for an appointment. 583-2018.
- **Koster's:** Service department open 8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call for an appointment. 583-2018.
- **Darrick's Preferred Auto:** Will pick up and drop off your vehicle for servicing. Call 583-9994 open Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Saturday. 8 a.m.-noon, 24-hour towing.
- **Johnson, Doerhoefer, Miner PA:** Available via phone, e-mail, or mail 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- **Jennifer Walsh with Keller Williams Premier Realty:** Available at 507-438-6678.
- **Plemler Insurance State Farm:** Available via phone or online. Payments etc. may be placed in drop box.
- **Geneva Meats/Dean's Smoke Shack:** Open Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Saturday, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
- **Steele County Times:** Open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
- **Heavy Metal:** Please call 583-0050 for repair work. They will meet you at their door.
- **Metal Services:** Open Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Call 583-2144.
- **R&R Insurance:** Open by appointment only 583-7971.
- **Miner's Outdoor & Rec:** Showroom closed, call for customer drop off or pick up. 583-2712
- **Blooming Prairie Youth Club:** Closed.
- **TT Motorcycles:** Open by appointment only. 583-6604. No service work done at this time. Shop online 24/7 @ www.tt-motorcycles.com to ordering parts etc. shipped to you & viewing ATV/UTV's.
- **Prairie Family Sports & Chiropractic:** Open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.
- **218 Off Sale:** Open Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Thursday-Saturday 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Sun. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Delivery option.
- **Confections by Karen:** Orders may be picked up or free delivery in town. Call 507-340-0171 or www.confec-tions-by-Karen.com.
- **Pizza Cellar:** Take-outs available 5-8 p.m. 7 days a week 583-7675.
- **Servicemen's Club:** Take-outs available open W-F lunch and dinner. Saturday. Dinner only. Call 583-7884.
- **Dairy Queen:** Drive-thru only 11 a.m.-9 p.m. You may call ahead to order. 583-2296
- **Subway:** Take-outs only available. Call for hours 583-5030
- **Bunkie's Grill & Lanes:** Closed until further notice.
- **Home Sellers:** Open by appointment only. Call 507-456-3741 with questions.
- **Brookside Campground:** Hoping to open May 1.
- **Hometown Insurance:** Closed for walk-ins. Call with questions. 583-6691
- **Oak Glen Seed:** Open for seed pick up or delivery. Call for arrangements.
- **Floor Tech:** Closed until April 13. Call 507-440-0107 for questions.
- **Vandals Foods:** Open every day 8 a.m.-7 p.m.
- **Bishop Excavating:** Open for business. Call 583-2999.
- **Main Street Dental:** Open for emergency only. Call 583-2141.
- **Blooming Prairie Dental Center:** Open for emergency only. Call 583-6613.
- **Mayo Clinic Blooming Prairie:** Closed
- **Kruckeberg Industries and Stiner:** Open for business.
- **J&H Liquors:** Off sale open for business 10 a.m.-10 p.m.
- **Express Pressure Washers:** Open by appointment. 8-5 M-F, Sat. 8:30-noon
- **BP Cancer Group:** Purse Bingo has been tentatively scheduled for June 13.
- **B-Z Hardware:** Will deliver to your car or your home.
- **Sportstitch:** 583-7001 taking orders via phone, e-mail or text.

Information provided by the Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce.

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Your ad could be here!
STEELE COUNTY Times

**Johnson, Doerhoefer
& Miner P.A.**
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**FLOOR
TECH**
322 East Main St.
Blooming Prairie
507-583-2276

**Vandal's
FAMILY MARKET**
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Emergency or on the farm repair
507-455-0388
(After hours 507-455-0483)

**Sorenson's
Appliances & TV**
GE, Frigidaire, Direct TV, Daikin, Gree, Bryant, Carrier, Amana, Kenmore, Whirlpool, Maytag, Panasonic, RCA, Samsung, Toshiba, Whirlpool
Geneva, Mn
507-256-7258

misgen
auto parts
507-684-2100
12880 SW 72nd Ave, Ellendale

BLOTTER
SPOTLIGHT

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



Behind The Badge
SHERIFF SCOTT ROSE

Remember 9/11? After the attacks, the biggest seller in the stores was anything that had a U.S. flag on it. Everywhere you turned you'd see the flag; on clothing, flying in every yard, even flags flying from vehicles. Everyone supported law enforcement, firefighters, and our first responders. It didn't matter what color you were, what your religion was, what part of the country you lived in, or what political party you supported – we were one! We were Americans standing as one against the terrorists.

Then that unity slowly changed as 9/11 became a memory. Over the years, our country has become divided. Our political parties have polarized. There are people in both major parties that don't recognize their own. We have elected officials focused on their own political careers and party agendas, often seemingly forgetting that their focus should be on our agendas, the people that elected them. Officials on both sides of the aisle that have done everything in their power to vilify anyone that doesn't agree with their ideology –

grandstanding at every chance they get to gain media attention and political points. No one was safe from these attacks – even law enforcement with politicians pandering to special interest groups jumping on the anti-law enforcement bandwagon born from the Ferguson shooting – inflammatory rhetoric and political pandering that not only made the job of law enforcement more dangerous, but also eroded much of the relationships and trust that most members of law enforcement have worked so hard to develop in the communities we serve.

These actions have torn apart our nation, have done nothing to help those struggling across the country, and have eroded much of the respect many of us had with our leadership – some at the state level, many at the federal level.

Fast forward to March 2020. COVID-19 is here. Schools are closed. Businesses are closed. Many essential items are hard to come by. People are scared. People are struggling. We are under attack again.

This attack has resulted in families being forced to spend more quality time together. Citizens are reaching out to others in need, especially our elderly. Neighbors are flying the U.S. flag and families are in their front yards reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Actors, musicians, and other stars doing

fundraisers and donating money to help. Local, regional, state, and national business leaders are pitching in to help – retrofitting their factories to make respirators, masks, and ventilators – including many Minnesota businesses large and small. National businesses like Starbucks are offering free beverages to first responders – Police Officers, firefighters, paramedics, doctors, nurses, hospital staff, and researchers. Child Care workers are helping with daycare for first responder families. Food and treats being sent to law enforcement and first responders as a thank you – in the last few days we've had rolls, and pizza sent to our staff from grateful citizens.

No more political ads. No more negative campaigning. No more clashes between parties pandering for our support and our vote. No more "witch-hunts" on both sides of the aisle – doing everything possible to slander, degrade, and defame the other side. No more law enforcement bashing (funny how that changes when we enter a crisis). A political "time-out" if you will – both sides working together against this attack. Once again, we are one and focused on the fight.

I find it sad that it takes a major crisis like this to bring our country together. To make us find our civility. To make us find our compassion. To make

us realize again what's really important.

In the shadow of this terrible crisis, let us embrace the unintended consequences – the political "time out" and the unity our country is showing. Let's stay positive during this time. Let's continue to help one another. Let's continue to be kind to one another. Let's support and thank those heroes working through this crisis – from first responders to our amazing medical professionals, from the convenience and grocery store workers to our truck drivers helping to keep their store shelves stocked, and everyone else in between. Let's take serious and follow the medical profession's recommendations to keep our families, our friends, and our neighbors safe. Let's take and learn from the lessons of this crisis so we are better prepared for the next one. Let's get through this crisis together.

Hopefully, when all is said and done, we won't soon forget how being unified and working together makes us so much stronger as a country.

Stay positive, stay safe, and stay healthy everyone!
Your Sheriff,
Scott

Scott Rose is in his second term as sheriff of Dodge County. His column appears in this newspaper regularly.

CRIME BRIEF

Police capture knife-wielding fugitive

A standoff between police and a knife-wielding fugitive ended peacefully with the man being taken into custody.



Christopher Rivas

Owatonna Police arrested Christopher Rivas, 24, of Waseca for three outstanding warrants and additional charges on April 8.

Police responded to a home in the 200 block of E. Rose Street April 8 for a disturbance. When officers arrived, they found Rivas, a fugitive they had been seeking in recent weeks, in the backyard. An officer directed Rivas to stop, but he fled on foot.

The foot pursuit went to Pirkki Gas complex on Mineral Springs Road where police contained Rivas within a perimeter. According to police, Rivas sat down, pulled a knife and held it to his throat. Officers negotiated with Rivas for some time before he stood up and began walking in the direction of an officer.

Police deployed a less-lethal Taser and after a struggle with Rivas, he was disarmed of the knife and taken into custody.

COURT NEWS
Steele County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of March 30 – April 5:

MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER

Bryan D. Botten, 52, Owatonna, seat belt, \$100; Matthew J. Busho, 40, Owatonna, seat belt, \$100; Hoang J. Chan, 22, Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$125; Chloe J. Hanson, 18, Rochester, minor consumption, \$175; Hayli J. Hausen, 17, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Mason M. Inberg, 19, Waseca, seat belt, \$100; Jordan J. Johnson, 35, Edina, speeding, \$125; Donald M. Reck, 51, West Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$135; Madison T. Skalecki, 27, Rochester, speeding, \$135; Kendal R. Wacholz, 21, Wells, hands free violation, \$125.

OWATONNA POLICE
DEPARTMENT

Jalen D. Asseeth, 19, Ellendale, minor consumption, \$175; Katherine A. Gillespie, 40, Owatonna, passing parked authorized vehicle, \$125; Brandi M. Grant,

39, Owatonna, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Chadwick S. Lange, 51, Snowmass Village, CO, failure to stop for traffic control signal, \$125; Margarito Maya Rivas, 41, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275; Tishyura E. Powell, 26, Owatonna, aggressive peace officer false information, \$131; Jane M. Swanson, 62, Glenville, stop sign, \$125.

STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Kaden W. Lopez, 20, Owatonna, speeding, \$135.

POLICE BLOTTER
Steele CountyBLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE

April 8 Fraud: Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 400 block of 3rd St. SE at 12:36 p.m.
Domestic: Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 300 block of 3rd St. SE at 10:11 p.m.
April 9 Child Protection: Police received a child protection report from the 300 block of 3rd St. SE at 10:17 p.m.

OWATONNA POLICE

April 3 Theft: At 5:39 a.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 200 block of School St. W.

Shoplifting: Shoplifting incidents occurred in the 1200 block of 21st Ave. NW at 9:42 a.m. and the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 4:51 p.m.

Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 1800 block of 2nd Ave. SW at 10:43 a.m.

April 4 Domestic: Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 600 block of Hilltop Ave. SW at 7:14 p.m.

Suspicion: Police received a report of suspicious activity in the 400 block of 16th St. NE at 8:39 p.m.

April 5 Thefts: Police took theft reports in the 2800 block of White Oak Lane NE at 8:01 a.m., the 200 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 8:12 a.m. and the 600 block of Lee St. NE at 5:54 p.m.

Hit and Run: At 10:38 a.m., a hit and run accident occurred in the 200 block of Grove Ave. N.

Burglary: Officers began a burglary investigation in the 1300 block of Crestview Lane NE at 12:38 p.m.

Domestic: Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 900 block of 25th Ave. NW at 8:25 p.m. They arrested a subject at the scene.

April 6 Burglary: Officers responded to a burglary in the 900 block of Alexander Dr. SW at 6:29 a.m.

Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 900 block of Brook Lane at 7:29 a.m.
Shoplifting: At 4:39 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S.

Fraud: Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 200 block of Pearl St. E. at 7:14 p.m.

Child Protection: Police received a child protection report from the 1300 block of Greenleaf Road SE at 7:41 p.m.

April 7

Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest at Lemond Road SW and Selby Ave. SW at 8 a.m.

Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 400 block of Mound St. SW at 8:33 a.m.
Property: At 11:18 a.m., stolen property was recovered in the 200 block of 21st St. NW.

April 8 Assaults: Police responded to assaults at School St. E. and Cedar Ave. S. at 7:57 a.m. and the 800 block of Rice Lake St. E. at 3:28 p.m.

Child Protection: Police received a child protection report from the 1000 block of 22nd St. NE at 4:59 p.m.
Disturbance: Officers arrested a subject following a disturbance in the 200 block of Rose St. E. at 7:40 p.m.

April 9 Forgery: Counterfeit money was found in the 1200 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 1:10 p.m.

Restraining Order: Police arrested a subject for violating a restraining order in the 1000 block of Oak Ave. S. at 7:14 p.m.

Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest in the 200 block of 22nd St. NW at 7:30 p.m.

STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF

April 3 Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 400 block of 1st Ave. SE in Medford at 9:11 a.m.

April 4 Theft: Deputy took a theft report in the 5200 block of Lemond Road in Meriden Township at 9:56 a.m.

Burglary: Deputies assisted with a burglary in the 11900 block of Highway 218 in Blooming Prairie Township at 2:43 p.m.

April 5 Burglary: Deputies began a burglary investigation in the 5200 block of Lemond Road in Meriden Township at 6:20 a.m.

Arrest: Deputies arrested a motorist during a traffic stop in the 4000 block of County Road 45 N. in Owatonna at 8:51 p.m.

April 6 Theft: Deputy took a theft report in the 6400 block of County Road 45 N. in Medford at 2:05 p.m.

Restraining Order: At 3:25 p.m., a restraining order violation occurred in the 7500 block of 52nd Ave. NW in Deerfield Township.
Hit and Run: At 6:05 p.m., a hit and run accident occurred at Cedar Ave. N. and 36th St. NE in Clinton Falls Township.

April 7 Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 400 block of 2nd St. NW in Medford at 7:29 a.m.

Crash: At 9:14 a.m., a motor vehicle accident occurred in the 100 block of 6th Ave. E. in Ellendale.

Animal: Deputies received a report of an animal bite in the 400 block of 6th Ave. W. in Ellendale at 3:15 p.m.

April 8 Theft: Deputies took a theft report in the 2300 block of Rose St. in Owatonna Township at 1:12 p.m.
Suspicion: Deputies responded to suspicious activity in the 700 block of School St. in Ellendale at 1:55 p.m.

April 9 Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 10100 block of Highway 218 in Aurora Township at 4:50 p.m.

ARRESTS
Steele County

OWATONNA POLICE

Chris Allen Rivas, 24, arrested at 4:30 p.m. April 9, warrants arrest, \$10,000 bail.
Luis Miguel Rocha, 35, arrested at 9 p.m. April 9, order for protection violation, held for court.
James Rashi Williams, 40, arrested at 8 p.m. April 9, DANCO violation and warrants arrest, held for court.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

Blake Lynn MacPherson, 21, arrested at 9:11 a.m. April 9, warrants arrest, \$300,000 bail.

COURT NEWS
Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of March 29 – April 5:

DODGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Roy L. Baker, 50, Austin, failure to yield, \$130; Tasia A. Jordan, 19, Lake Crystal, speeding, \$220; Josiah D. Van Moer, 20, Rochester, revoked license, \$280.

KASSON POLICE
DEPARTMENT

Luis M. Garcia Quevedo, 20, Kasson, possession of marijuana and suspended license, \$430; Dylan J. Homme, 19, Dodge Center, possession of marijuana, \$230.

MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER

Christopher C. Castner, 32, Burnsville, speeding, \$120; Luke J. Dudjoha, 17, Hayfield, speeding, \$220; Victoria A. Felten, 30, Rochester, speeding, \$130; Mollie E. Ireson, 39, Rochester, speeding, \$140; Benjamin D. Jensen, 29, West Concord, hands free violation, \$130; Lexi C. Knudsen, 23, Richfield, speeding, \$120; Thomas E. Ricke, 41, Hayfield, expired registration, \$110.

OWATONNA FIRE

April 9 Grass Fire: Firefighters responded to a grass fire at 43rd Ave. SW and 48th St. SW at 4:44 a.m.

NOTICE
City Hydrant Flushing
APRIL 27-30

All city fire hydrants in Blooming Prairie will be flushed on Monday–Thursday, April 27–30, 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

Blooming Prairie
Public Utilities



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

- Tong Yang – traffic – no bail
- Lovely Young – drugs – \$10,000 bail
- Dionte Younge – false name – \$6,000 bail
- Luis Zelaja-Rivera – domestic assault, DWI – \$4,000 bail
- Terry Zoller – DWI – \$5,000 bail
- Mohammed Abusheh – sales tax – \$4,000 bail
- Luis Acosta – warrant – \$20,000 bail
- Jose Acosta-Martinez – DWI – \$12,000 bail
- Daniel Adams – DWI – \$12,000 bail
- Mohamed Ali – careless driving – \$1,000 bail
- Norman Anderson – assault – \$2,000 bail
- Darcey Andrews – traffic – \$500 bail
- George Arcos – DWI – \$2,000 bail
- Maria Arredondo – theft – \$1,000 bail
- Rosalinda Banuelos – theft – no bail
- Jesus Barrera – controlled substance – \$100,000 bail
- Kristopher Barta – false name – \$500 bail
- Cody Batroff – DWI – no bail
- Brett Baumeister – drugs – \$10,000 bail
- Gary Bechtel – DWI – \$12,000 bail

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

Beware of Coronavirus Scams



THE SAVVY SENIOR

Brought to you by:

Prairie Manor Care Center & Heather Haus

220 3rd St. NW, Bloomington
583-4434

Dear Savvy Senior,
Amid all the troubling coronavirus news, I've also read that there are various coronavirus scams going around right now taking advantage of innocent people who are afraid of getting sick or are worried about those that have. What can you tell me about coronavirus scams and what can I do to protect myself?

Scared Senior,
Unfortunately, coronavirus scams are spreading nearly as fast as the virus itself, and seniors are often the most vulnerable. These con artists are setting up websites to sell bogus products, and using spoofed phone calls, emails, texts, and social media posts as a ruse to take your money and get your personal information. The emails and posts may be promoting awareness and prevention tips, and fake information about cases in your community. They also may be asking you to donate to victims, offering advice on unproven treatments, or contain malicious email attachments.

Here are some tips to help you keep the scammers at bay.

Click carefully: Don't click on coronavirus-related links from sources you don't know in an email or text message. The same goes for unfamiliar websites. When you click on an email or download a file, you could get a program on your computer that could either use your computer's internet connection to spread malware or dig into your personal files looking for passwords and other information.

Ignore bogus product offers: Ignore online offers for coronavirus vaccinations or miracle cures. There are currently no vaccines, pills, potions, lotions, lozenges, or over-the-counter products available to treat or cure coronavirus online or in stores. If you see or receive ads touting prevention, treatment, or cure claims for the coronavirus, ignore them because they're not legitimate.

Beware of CDC spoofing: Be wary of emails, text messages or phone calls claiming to come from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or the World Health Organization (WHO). These scams could take several forms — such as fake health agency warnings about infections in your local area, vaccine and treatment offers, medical test results, health insurance cancellations, alerts about critical supply shortages, and more.

For the most up-to-date information about the coronavirus, visit CDC.gov/coronavirus.

Beware of fundraising scams: Be wary of emails or phone calls asking you to donate to a charity or crowdfunding campaign for coronavirus victims or for disease research. To verify a charity's legitimacy use CharityNavigator.org. But, if you're asked for donations in cash, by prepaid credit card or gift card, or by wiring money, don't do it because it's probably a scam.

Beware of stock scams: The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is warning people about phone calls and online promotions, including on social media, touting stocks of companies with products that supposedly can prevent, detect or cure coronavirus. Buy those stocks now, they say, and they will soar in price. But the con artists have already bought the stocks, which typically sell for a dollar or less. As the hype grows and the stock price increases, the con men dump the stock, saddling other investors with big losses. It's a classic penny-stock fraud called "pump and dump." Making matters worse, you may not be able to sell your shares if trading is suspended.

When investing in any company, including companies that claim to focus on coronavirus-related products and services, carefully research the investment and keep in mind that investment scam artists often exploit the latest crisis to line their own pockets.

For more tips on how to avoid getting scammed, see the Federal Communications Commission COVID-19 consumer warning and safety tips at FCC.gov/covid-scams.

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



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History from the News Archives

10 Years Ago April 20, 2010

RIK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

The Elks are honored to give seven local scholarships and have three students receive \$6,000 in additional scholarships at the district level. Special thanks to the Scholarship Chair Kory Kath and Sandy Stahl for all of their work in the success of the program. Scholarship winners are Amanda Wamou, Taryn Anderson, Maggie Noble, Tim Boecker, Erin Johnson, Dylan Carlson and Jordan Noble.

It was a hectic week for BPHS sports! The boys golf team finished 2nd at its annual invitational, with NRHEG taking first. Boys track brought home a 1st place from the Panther Relays. After a loss to Mankato Loyola, the Blossoms' girls played a powerful game to defeat Triton. And, in boys baseball, the boys had a win over Lyle Pacelli, 16-0 and a loss against Mankato Loyola. The season is getting very busy, so get out there and support all our Blossom athletes. In recognition of National Volunteer Week, Prairie Manor would like to thank all our very loyal volunteers for the very special people that they are! Our volunteers assist our residents in many ways, sharing personal talents, bingo assistance, van trips, worship service assistants, reading and writing letters and many more activities. Thank you, thank you for all you do.

20 Years Ago April 18, 2000

ELSIE SLINGER, PUBLISHER

Almost as a swan song for their band, Blooming Prairie native Mark McCrady entered the Twin Cities based group in a national contest late last year. And wouldn't you know it, they won. McCrady's band, Bobby Liama, took top honors out of 899 bands in Sam Goody's bandemonium contest and received not only an all-expense paid trip to the finals in Panama City Beach, FL for spring break, but took home the title valued at more than \$20,000 including recording time. Besides, McCrady, who also sings, the band members include

Ellis Bergeron, Andrew Bast, Jessica Fox, Jason Rosenbaum and Matt Keil.

Last week early childhood programs at the elementary school celebrated "Week of the Young Child" with special events and activities. The School Readiness Preschool, Early Intervention Preschool and Title Preschool presented a program of nursery rhymes and dances for the residents of Prairie Manor. It was a fun way to show off their t-shirts which they decorated in class for this special event.

Mark Noble, race car driver, is to be congratulated on his early success he is having this racing season. He had a big win in the Mid-America Modified Championships in Batesville, Ark. That win was worth \$10,000, which is a pretty good prize and sure needed in the expensive sport of racing. Noble also placed second in an early race in Fort Worth, Texas and third in Royce City, Texas a week later. These wins have kept Mark near the top of the pack and has qualified for the Bristol Speedway in June. Good luck in the rest of the season, it looks to be an exciting and rewarding one.

50 Years Ago April 1, 1970

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

Members of the Blooming Prairie FFA Crops Team placed first in District 14 competition. Members of the team are Steve Prihoda, Mitch Klempf, Mike O'Connor and Linn Thoen. The contest includes the identification of about 130 samples if crop and weed seeds, plants and diseases; 8 grain grading samples and 6 seed analysis samples. Steve Prihoda was the high overall individual with Mike Klempf placing second and Mike O'Connor fourth. The top three teams will judge in the state contest in May.

Bill Fritze, head grid coach at Blooming Prairie High School, was honored recently by being named "District football Coach of the Year." Coach Fritze has been invited to the annual spring banquet at the University of Minnesota to accept this award. In addition his name will be placed in the balloting for Coach of the Year. BPHS grid team won the Gopher Conference championship the past year

and enjoyed an undefeated season.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hanson, of Austin, were honored at an open house celebrating their gold anniversary at the YMCA in Austin, friends and relatives called on the couple between 2 and 5 pm. The celebration was hosted by their children Arleigh Hanson, Anaheim, Calif., Betty White, of Blooming Prairie and Maynard Hanson, Norman, Oklahoma and Ramona Kerling, of Austin. They operated the Royal Caf? in Blooming Prairie for several years and were well known in the community.

75 Years Ago April 5, 1945

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

As the guns of America's fighting forces sounded ever closer the doom of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, Franklin Delano Roosevelt died in Warm Springs, Ga., where he had been resting for 10 days. Death resulted from cerebral hemorrhage on April 12th. Mr. Roosevelt was 63 years old. He had been President for 12 years, one month and nine days. Less than four months had elapsed since he had taken his historic oath of office for a fourth term. Fate denied President Roosevelt the chance to enjoy the fruits of victory over the Axis. Yet history seemed destined to enshrine him as one of the immortal American Presidents.

A defective brooder house stove was the cause of a destructive fire at the John Pogones farm on Monday night. The blaze was discovered at 11 o'clock and Blooming Prairie Fire Department was on the scene at 11:45. However, before the fire was extinguished the brooder house with around 1,000 little chicks and a machine shed went up in smoke. A strong gale was blowing at the time of the fire carrying burning embers to roofs of the barn, house and other building. The fact the roofs had been soaked by rain earlier in the day no doubt saved the structures from being destroyed.

Pfc. Evan C Rysavy in service in the Italian theatre of operation for three years, returned home on furlough to visit his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Rysavy of Owatonna. He was happily greeted home by many family and friends.

GUEST COLUMN

Legislation will help front line workers in COVID-19 crisis

BY PEGGY BENNETT

The Minnesota House has approved legislation that would ensure health care workers and first responders would qualify for workers compensation if they contract COVID-19.

The bill represents a bipartisan agreement made by legislators from all four House and Senate caucuses, and advocates from labor and business groups. The compromise was approved unanimously in an emergency meeting of the Workers Compensation

Advisory Council on April 6.

A number of professions will benefit from the change, including paramedics, home health care workers, police and fire officials, nurses, emergency medical technicians, correctional officers, and daycare providers who are caring for children whose parents are on the front lines.

The people on the front lines are working hard to treat the ill in order to keep us safe, and the state needs to show them we support their efforts. This bill ensures that if these workers are sidelined due to COVID-19, they will get the financial assistance they've earned.

STAY AT HOME EXTENDED

On April 8, Governor Walz announced he was extending his stay-at-home executive order until May 4. The governor has also decided his order for bar, restaurant, and other public area closure will also continue until May 4. Under the extended order, Minnesotans can continue leaving their homes for medical attention, getting groceries and take-out food, filling their gas tanks, and taking part in outdoor activities (using common-sense social distancing, of course). In other words, what we have been doing for nearly two weeks will now continue until May 4.

GOODBYE COLTER

My dog Colter has not only been such an integral part of my personal life (and even a part of my classroom when I was teaching), but he was also a big part of my legislative life. I often jokingly called him my second legislative assistant because he was many times my sidekick at legislative events. He loved to get out and around to see everyone, especially the kids.



COURTESY PEGGY BENNETT
Minnesota Representative Peggy Bennett said goodbye to her long-time companion, Colter, last week. Colter died unexpectedly at the age of 11.

Because of this, I want to let all of my District 27A family know that, Colter, my best buddy, my constant shadow, and my furry legislative assistant, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly this week at the age of 11. It was an unexpected medical issue. Colter didn't really just belong to me. He kind of belonged to everyone. It didn't matter if you were Democrat or Republican; if you liked dogs, you were his good friend. I think Colter will be missed at the Capitol — and perhaps at district events too. I sure know I will miss him.

You can see a fun news story about Colter at the Capitol that aired a few years ago at minnesota.cbslocal.com/2016/05/07/capitol-dog/. In a way, a little part of Colter will always be at the Capitol because of stories like this. That makes my heart happy.

Peggy Bennett is state representative for District 27A, which includes Blooming Prairie, southern Dodge County and most of Freeborn County. She lives in Albert Lea.



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NOTICE

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF STEELE

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT
PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No. 74-PR-20-495
NOTICE OF INFORMAL
PROBATE OF WILL AND
APPOINTMENT
OF PERSONAL
REPRESENTATIVE AND
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate of JoAnna Olson,
Decedent

Notice is given that an application for informal probate of the Decedent's Will, dated June 20, 2008, and ("Will"), has been filed with the Registrar. The application has been granted.

Notice is also given that the Registrar has informally appointed Janice M. Pederson, whose address is 425 East Hwy 30, Ellendale, Minnesota, 56026; Jonathan M. Olson, whose address is 1471 East Hwy 30, Ellendale, Minnesota, 56026; as personal representatives of the Estate of the Decedent. Any heir, devisee or other interested person may be entitled to appointment as personal representative or may object to the appointment of the personal representative. Unless objections are filed with the Court (pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 524.3-607) and the Court otherwise orders, the personal representative has full power to administer the Estate, including, after 30 days from the date of issuance of letters, the power to sell, encumber, lease or distribute real estate.

Any objections to the probate of the Will or appointment of the Personal Representatives must be filed with this Court and will be heard by the Court after the filing of an appropriate petition and proper notice of hearing.

Notice is also given that (subject to Minnesota Statutes section 524.3-801) all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the personal representative or to the Court Administrator within four months after the date of this Notice or the claims will be barred.

A charitable beneficiary may request notice of the probate proceedings be given to the Attorney General pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 501B.41, subdivision 5.

Dated: March 31, 2020

/s/ Deanna Verdick,
Deputy Probate Registrar

Dated: March 31, 2020

Robin Hoesley
Court Administrator

Attorney for Personal Representative

Marty G. Helle
Hooverston Johnson Beckmann & Hovey, LLP
807 West Oakland Avenue
Austin, MN 55912
Attorney License No: 0307476
Telephone: (507) 433-3483
FAX: (507) 433-7889
Email: mhelle@hooverston-law.com

4/15, 22

NOTICE

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF STEELE

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT
PROBATE DIVISION
Court File No. 74-PR-20-603
NOTICE OF INFORMAL
PROBATE OF WILL AND
APPOINTMENT
OF PERSONAL
REPRESENTATIVE AND
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate of Kenneth D. Long;
a/k/a Kenneth Dwane Long,
Decedent

Notice is given that an application for informal probate of the Decedent's Will, dated August 3, 2011, and ("Will"), has been filed with the Registrar. The application has been granted.

Notice is also given that the Registrar has informally appointed Perry S. Long, whose address is 4664 Flag Avenue N, New Hope, Minnesota, 55428 and Cory A. Long, whose address is 7981 174th Street, Lakeville, Minnesota, 55044, as personal representatives of the Estate of the Decedent. Any heir, devisee or other interested person may be entitled to appointment as personal representative or may object to the appointment of the personal representative. Unless objections are filed with the Court (pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 524.3-607) and the Court otherwise orders, the personal representative has full power to administer the Estate, including, after 30 days from the date of issuance of letters, the power to sell, encumber, lease or distribute real estate.

Any objections to the probate of the Will or appointment of the Personal Representatives must be filed with this Court and will be heard by the Court after the filing of an appropriate petition and proper notice of hearing.

Notice is also given that (subject to Minnesota Statutes section 524.3-801) all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the personal representative or to the Court Administrator within four months after the date of this Notice or the claims will be barred.

A charitable beneficiary may request notice of the probate proceedings be given to the Attorney General pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 501B.41, subdivision 5.

Dated: April 8, 2020

/s/ Deanna Verdick,
Deputy Probate Registrar

Dated: April 8, 2020

Robin Hoesley
Court Administrator

Attorney for Personal Representative

Molly R. Wiese
Deckert & Van Loh, P.A.
12912 63rd Avenue North
Maple Grove, MN 55369
Attorney License No: 0391941
Telephone: (763) 587-7100
FAX: (763) 587-7100
Email: molly@deckertvanloh.com

4/15, 22

NOTICE

SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
DISTRICT #756
BLOOMING PRAIRIE,
MINNESOTA 55817
MONDAY, APRIL 20 2020
HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA
CENTER
PROPOSED TENTATIVE
AGENDA

6:00 a.m. Thursday, April 16, 2020 *Regular School Board Work Session (Teleconference)
7:00 p.m. Monday, April 20, 2020 *Open Public Forum (Teleconference)

7:15 p.m. Monday, April 20, 2020 *Regular School Board Meeting (Teleconference)

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. Due to the current pandemic, the above meetings will be held via teleconference. Please email estatch@blossoms.k12.mn.us if you have questions or would like to request additional information.

I. CALL TO ORDER – CHAIRPERSON
II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
III. ROLL CALL – CLERK
IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
V. PRINCIPAL REPORTS
VI. ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTION IS REQUESTED

A. Consent Agenda
Minutes
Bills
Treasurer's Report
Resignations
Donations
B. Employment
C. Volunteer Coaches
D. Resolution for MSHSL Membership
E. Title I Resolution
F. Student Insurance Program
G. Safety Grant
H. Telephone Service
I. Budget Revision FY 20
J. Technology Lease
VII. ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND/OR DISCUSSION ONLY
A. Distance Learning
B. Food Service Bids
C. Committee Reports
D. Enrollment Data
E. Dates to Note
VIII. SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD MEMBER ITEMS
IX. ADJOURNMENT

*Agenda may be subject to changes

ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS
By Shannon Nordstrom and Russ Evans

Dear Motor Medics,
I have a 2017 Chevy Cruze and I've put over 190k miles on the car. During that time, I've had to replace three Turbo Chargers. One was under warranty and the other two I paid regular price for. After looking across the internet I have found many people who have had to replace theirs. Are these turbos no good or do I need to do other things to the car to make them last? I change the oil every 6k miles regularly.
Johnathan in Rochester MN

Well, Three Turbos on this engine in 190k miles is not unheard of. We've seen cars with 200k with one turbo but not too many in our own shop. We do tend to see more with early failures when the car is either driven hard such as on a long drive then shut off right away so the turbo does not have time to cool down and when the oil is not changed often enough. 6k miles is a long time on one of these cars. We recommend around 4k miles to our customers and they seem to have better luck. Small engines with high horsepower generate a lot of heat and the engine oil is the lifeblood of the engine. When the oil starts to break down it no longer protects and will start to burn on the turbo bearings. On another note we don't see many of these engines last over 200k miles.

Take care, The Motor Medics

Dear Motor Medics,
I'm on my second rear wiring harness and side obstacle detection sensors on my 2016 Chevrolet Impala. The first set went out when the car was only three days out of warranty, but I only had 22k miles on the car. I really thought that was low mileage for something like this to fail. It cost me almost \$1500.00 to repair it. They told me that both sensors located in the rear bumper area had water and salt get into them and that it damaged the sensor and the harness, so they had to replace them both. The second set only lasted another 10k miles and two years. Is there any way I can just have the system shut off so I don't get the warning light, and why are they so cheap?
Mary Anne in Joplin MO.

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WEEKLY CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

- Make ale
- Residue
- Female parent
- Succulent plants
- Of's judge
- Czech river
- Embarassing predicament
- NHL Legend Bobby
- Sunfish
- One who acclaims
- On the ___ running away
- Oklahoma's "Wheat Capital"
- The Golden State
- Merrymake
- Siberian nomads
- Pock-marked
- Baleen whale
- Leaf-footed bug genus
- Treasure
- Tanzanian shilling
- Changed
- Intestinal pouches
- Walked in a celebratory way
- South American mountain chain
- Jai ___ sport
- Consumed
- Firm
- Pubs
- Leafy drink

CLUES DOWN

- Crush
- Razorbill genus
- "Full House" actress
- Loughlin
- Bluish green
- Garlic mayonnaise
- Attacks repeatedly
7. Secretion
- Special distance

9. A handsome youth loved by Aphrodite
10. Tree genus in the mahogany family
11. Israeli city
13. Formed a theory
17. Remove
24. Type of light
25. Repeats
26. Certified public accountant
27. River in eastern France
28. Returned material authorization (abbr.)
29. Special ___: military group
35. Ribonucleic acid
36. Not even
37. Power transmission belt
38. Doctor of Education
40. Type of nerve
41. Types of tops
42. Large primate
43. Flooded, low-lying land
44. Gritty
45. Gets up
47. Stake
48. Not the most
49. Swedish rock group
52. Expresses pleasure
53. Expression of boredom
54. Queen of Sparta
55. Where Adam and Eve were placed at the Creation

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SECTION 1A COACHES OF THE YEAR

BP's Piller garners top honor for boys

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Humility is the middle name of two Blooming Prairie High School basketball coaches who were recently honored as Section 1A Coaches of the Year.

John Bruns earned the award in coaching the Awesome Blossom girls to a 21-6 record, and Nate Piller earned the same award, coaching the Awesome Blossom boys to a 25-3 record, including a Section 1A championship and a trip to the state tournament.

Both coaches credited others for being responsible for them earning these awards.

The trip to the state tournament never happened for the Awesome Blossom boys as all tournament action in mid-March was shut down because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

This is how Coach Piller views the Coach of the Year award: "They call it 'coach of the year,' but it goes to the whole coaching staff for this season, and it also goes to coaches of past seasons all the way down through Junior High to BPRH (Blooming Prairie Recreation Association) youth basketball."

"It means these boys have had good coaching for years," Piller professed. "The boys bought in to what they were told along; it reflects the athletes that the team had," Piller added. Piller praised the work of his assistant coaches, Andrew Hardecopf and Brian Nelson.

"We were blessed to have Coach Nelson come back to the team following his son Anthony's basketball career at Bethel College," remarked Piller. Anthony, who died in a car crash last year, was an Awesome Blossom basketball player. Coach Nelson provided a perspective that only he could, Piller said. He's Blooming Prairie alumni and has coached for years in this community.

"He's been great," said Piller. "I wish the circumstances that allowed his return were different, but Brian has had more of an influence on our players and coaches than he knows."

"We don't talk about it much, but our team and community have a hard-earned but very real perspective on things," Coach Piller said.

"Coach Nelson has done a great job being positive with these boys and the guys know he really cares for them and he wants them to do well," Piller says.

"He does a great job building a sense of community in these boys and illustrating their role in the community. Not only that, but years ago, Coach Nelson invested in a 'Shooting Gun' for the basketball programs. That was a great



Staff photo by Howard Lestrud
Blooming Prairie boys basketball coach Nate Piller talks strategy with his team during a Section 1A Basketball Tournament game in Rochester last month. The Blossoms finished 25-3 for Coach Piller, who was selected Section 1A Coach of the Year.

investment and has really produced great results for those players who have taken advantage of it."

Coach Piller also has valued the expertise imparted by assistant Hardecopf. "There isn't anyone short of my wife and kids who I spend more time with," said Piller in speaking about Hardecopf.

"From late May to late March, he's with me several hours of most days, often seven days a week, month after month. He and his family understand the sacrifices and the standards we share. He and I have had that relationship for five years, so he knows what and how we're doing things. He's accountable and he knows how to keep the athletes accountable so that when they're called on, they can answer the call."

Piller said his team "was blessed" with lots of strengths during the year. "Our athletes were very athletic and they had a great combination of size, strength and skill," said Piller.

"Of the 10 guys who played the bulk of the time throughout the season, nine of them were 6'1" to 6'5" and all 10 guys were very strong guys for their position. And then when you talk about skills, these guys put up some of the top career marks in BPHS boys basketball history. We set records with 3-point percentages, 2-point percentages, and assists. That reflects some pretty awesome skills."

Coach Piller said the 2019-20 boys team had a special chemistry. Family is the best term to describe how the team players worked hard together.

"We hold each other to high standards," Piller said. Each player did not want to disappoint their fellow team members, comments Piller.

Coach Piller thanked players' parents and the community for their support during the year. District leadership at the administrative and board levels have helped build strong programs, Piller believes.

Piller thanked the BP Ed Foundation and com-

munity members who have invested in the weight room to help improve overall athleticism. He also praised teaching staff members (past and present) who have held high standards.

"We are academics first and athletes second," affirmed Piller. "Don't forget our janitors who set up for every game and keep our facilities nice. Also, our team has had great fan support throughout the year and this was noticed by our players."

Looking back on the successful season, Piller said there were many highlights. One, of course, was earning a trip to the state tournament, a life-long goal of so many people, he said. Another highlight emphasized by Piller was the relationships on the team.

"This was a great group of boys," Piller said.

"Whether or not we were participating in basketball, they're just a fun group of guys to be around. This is a group that communities should be proud of. Over the years, they've volunteered hundreds of hours of community service and they represent our community in so many great ways."

Taking a peek into the future, Piller says it all starts over.

The Blossoms lose eight seniors: Jarrett Larson, Isaac Ille, Zach Archer, Karson Vigeland, Parker Vaith, Kaden Thomas, Zach Weber and Gabe Hagen. Returning will be juniors Boone Carlson, Cole Christianson, Alex Miller, Mitchell Fiebigler, Jacob Naatz, Chris Naatz, Alex Piller, and Luke Larkoski and sophomores Colin Jordison and Drew Kittelson.

"We have to take advantage of every opportunity we get. We have to get better every single day. We have to build all new relationships."

"The only thing different next year from any other year is that we've tasted success at a level that hasn't happened since 1966. We have an idea of what it takes but we're stripped back to 0-0 with different situations and different personnel."

Bruns says award belongs to many

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Blooming Prairie High School girls basketball coach John Bruns' name is on the Section 1A Coach of the Year award, but he says it is a sign of a lot of people doing great things.

Coach Bruns was quick to accept congratulations on an award recently bestowed him, but even quicker to share it with many other people.

"It is a product of great assistant coaches all the way down to the youngest levels," says Bruns. He was assisted by coaches Cory Hendrickson and Dean Meshke.

The award is also a tribute to excellent student athletes in the program, supportive parents and fans and an administration that values extra-curriculars, said Coach Bruns. "Everyone, in and around the program, played a major part in this recognition," he explained.

The Blossom girls finished 21-6 overall and 10-4 in the Gopher Conference. Fillmore Central ended the Blossoms' season in the Section 1A championship game with a 69-56 triumph. Bruns said this year's biggest team strengths were the team's experience and ability to stay poised under pressure.

"Time and again this season, the girls showed

that they could come back from any deficit and work through adversity no matter what the situation," said Coach Bruns.

Some examples Bruns listed were:

- Competing with Goodhue, who one of the best teams in AA early in the year on the road, and almost coming away with a win.

- The first Hayfield game when BP held the Vikings scoreless for the last 5 minutes to escape with a win on a basket with 5 seconds left.

- The Kenyon-Wanamingo game when the Blossoms trailed almost the entire game and came back to win on a buzzer-beater.

- The Hayfield playoff game when early foul trouble made the team change some things up, and were able to open up a big lead and put the game away early.

- Getting down early to Fillmore Central in the Section 1A Championship game and cutting Central's lead from over 15 points to 3 late in the game.

Bruns said, "The team had a lot of heart and determination." He said "that is something I will always remember about the girls."

Asked to name two highlights from the last season, Bruns said the first would be the team's playoff win, which included victories over LeRoy-Ostrander, Randolph and Hayfield by large margins. "We then had a great game in the championship contest with Fillmore

Central and just came up short," Bruns said.

A second highlight was the team's play in the Hayfield Christmas Tournament, Bruns related. "We did not play our best games, but we persevered and pulled out two nail-biting victories and won the tournament," he reflected. "I think winning those two games the way we won them really brought the team together and showed the girls what they could accomplish if they just kept playing hard," he added.

The Blossoms will have all players returning next year except seniors Baylee Sorensen, Julia Worke, Maya Lemke and Marti Snider.

"All four seniors have been in the program for a long time and have been huge assets to our team in many different ways," stated Bruns.

"We do have five girls who played significant minutes the past two seasons back and there are some very good players who are going to compete for spots coming up for Junior Varsity next year," Bruns shared.

"I think with a good summer of work we can definitely be a factor in the conference and section again next year," Bruns predicted.

Returning next year will be Megan Oswald, Bobbie Bruns, Maggie Bruns, Maren Forystek, Allison Krohnberg, Anna Kittelson, Emily Miller, Micalyn Trilhus, Melanie Winzenberg and Anna Lauby.

Megan Oswald, a junior, earned Honorable Mention Class A All-State. She averaged 17.9 points per game, 483 points for the season. She also surpassed 1,000 points last season in a game against Maple River. Oswald was the team's leading rebounder with 295 on the season.

Oswald started 26 games during the year. Her season is arguably the best in the school's history, Coach Bruns said.

This year's team earned a GOLD State Academic Award for having a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) above 3.75. Julia Worke, Maya Lemke and Baylee Sorensen all earned Academic All State.

The Awesome Blossoms also had all 13 letter winners earn academic all-conference.



Staff photo by Howard Lestrud
Blooming Prairie High School girls basketball coach John Bruns was recently honored as Section 1A Coach of the Year. His team compiled a 21-6 record and placed second in the Section 1A Girls Basketball Tournament.

A season in limbo



Staff photos by Howard Lestrud
The 2020 softball season for the Blooming Prairie High School softball team may not ever happen because of the coronavirus pandemic. Coach Jenna Volgarino placed names of her players on placards that were stationed at their respective positions on the softball field. Left: Emily Miller poses by her number. Right: Riauna Bishop makes her home on the pitching mound during the softball season.

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