

"Now is the time to take action and slow the spread down in our communities."

Amy Caron
Steele Public Health Director

HUNKER DOWN

Steele declares emergency as coronavirus hits county



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

A deafening silence has fallen on communities throughout Minnesota as Gov. Tim Walz ordered all restaurants and bars to shut down on March 17 in an effort to curb the spread of the coronavirus. Here, the American Legion Club in Owatonna is one of many area businesses shut down until at least March 27. Judging by the number of new cases popping up, it's likely the shut down will extend into at least April.

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Just days after county officials declared a peace-time emergency for the coronavirus pandemic, three confirmed cases of

COVID-19 have surfaced in Steele County. On Saturday morning, Public Health Director Amy Caron confirmed the first two cases of COVID-19 in Steele County. She said those affected are a person

in their 40s and a person in their 50s with apparent transmission traveling to other states in both cases. "These patients are in isolation at home and recovering," Caron said. "SCPH is working with the Minne-

sota Department of Health and health care partners to address the needs of these patients and provide guidance to others who may have contact with them."

SEE HUNKER DOWN, A6



THE LATEST

Coronavirus Pandemic

- 235 cases in Minnesota
- 3 in Steele County, 2 in Dodge County
- 1 Death in Ramsey County
- Bars, restaurants, spas and salons shut down

Small-town grocer responds to needs in height of crisis

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Brady Holmberg, part owner of Vandal's Family Market, holds up two sought-after items, toilet paper. Holmberg, wife Brandy and Brandy's brother Waco have been scurrying in recent weeks to meet customer needs during the coronavirus pandemic.

There's a lot to be said about a small-town grocer, remarked a customer of Vandal's Family Market in Blooming Prairie. "They are responding to the public's needs," said this loyal customer. Vandal's was there when people were running out of toilet paper and other necessities of life. They were "running scared" because of the threat of the coronavirus, said store owner Brandy Vandal-Holmberg. "Toilet paper has been the most sought after commodity but everything in the store has been taken off the shelves by our customers," commented Waco Vandal, part owner. "I have to go back and make some more hamburg-

SEE SMALL-TOWN GROCER, A10



Pastor Michael Simmerman of Bethel Baptist Church in Owatonna delivers his weekly message from the confines of the basement office in his home as he is in self-quarantine from the coronavirus.

Staying connected in a disconnected world

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Even though Pastor Michael Simmerman is in the middle of being self-quarantine, he is still

finding a meaningful way to connect with his church members.

In response to the pandemic crisis, Bethel Baptist Church of Owatonna began live online stream-

ing Sunday at 9 a.m. Simmerman delivered his message without leaving home from the confines of his basement office. The

SEE STAYING CONNECTED, A7



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OUR VIEW

Pandemic crisis brings quick action and the need for compassion

As our nation wades into uncharted territory with the coronavirus pandemic, we need to stop and recognize those who are attempting to keep us safe through the storm.

We commend the Minnesota lawmakers for their quick action last Monday night in passing a supplemental spending allocation of \$21 million for emergency public health response. It's good to know that the Legislature can work together in bipartisanship when the going gets really tough. And this crisis certainly fits in that category.

Throughout the past week, many people have stepped up to the plate during this serious crisis. Minnesota-based 3M is shipping a half million N95 masks for medical workers to New York and Seattle. The company announced it will almost double production of the masks over the next year to an annual rate of 2 billion masks worldwide.

Another Minnesota company, Medtronic, has ramped up production of ventilators in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Medtronic officials say they've already increased ventilator manufacturing by 40% increase this year, and have plans to further increase their output.

State and local health officials have done a remarkable job in keeping us up-to-date on how to fight this silent enemy. The Minnesota Department of Health, along with the Steele County Public Health Department, has issued many warnings to keep us safe.

By now, everyone should fully understand the basic rules we must obey to keep this nasty bug from spreading. They are wash your hands, avoid crowds and be extremely careful if visiting the elderly.

While we all hunker down, perhaps the greatest thing we can practice is staying compassionate to our friends, neighbors and relatives and offer gratitude to those we rely upon. Some simple kind words will go a long way. Try to find the good in what's happening instead of dwelling on the negative.

If there is a way to help your neighbor, this is probably the best possible time to make that happen. Reach out and give a phone call to those people who are going to be lonely.

Let's be sensible when you head to the grocery store. You don't need to pack a year's supply of toilet paper into your shopping cart. Leave some for the family of five or six that hasn't been to the store yet.

We are without a doubt in unprecedented times. As we navigate through these challenging times, help do your part by staying calm, practicing safety and being compassionate to fellow humans. All of this will put us in the driver's seat to a better tomorrow.

GUEST COLUMN

Pandemic sparks unprecedented changes

BY PEGGY BENNETT

The spread of COVID-19 has caused unprecedented changes in our communities and around the world, and it has now altered our work at the State Capitol.

The House formally will remain in session as the state addresses the pressing public health issue surrounding COVID-19, but going forward meetings and floor sessions will only be taking place on an on-call basis until April 14. Here's where things stand.

COVID-19 NEWS

On March 17 lawmakers passed a \$200 million COVID-19 Emergency Funding bill that ensures our hospitals, health care providers, and our state, county, and local health care agencies have the funds they need to respond to this global pandemic. The bill includes protections for taxpayers including legislative oversight, penalties for unauthorized use of funds, stringent reporting requirements, and any funds not used will cancel back to the general fund in February.

On March 16, Gov. Tim Walz issued an executive order to ensure workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic have full access to unemployment benefits. According to the Minnesota Unemployment Insurance Program, the executive order makes applicants eligible for unemployment insurance benefits if:

- A healthcare professional or health authority recommended or ordered them to avoid contact with others.

- They have been ordered not to come to their workplace due to an outbreak of a communicable disease.
- They have received notification from a school district, daycare, or other childcare provider that either classes are canceled or the applicant's ordinary childcare is unavailable, provided that the applicant made reasonable effort to obtain other childcare and request time off or other accommodation from the employer and no reasonable accommodation was available.

The executive order also eliminates the one week waiting period to ensure applicants have access to unemployment benefits as quickly as possible, and assures business owners that benefits paid as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic will not increase their future unemployment tax rate.

If your employment has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the department urges you to apply for unemployment benefits online. Visit the Unemployment Insurance Program website at www.uimn.org to learn more.

SCHOOLS AND DAYCARE

The Minnesota Department of Health has a hotline available related to schools and/or childcare. Call 651-297-1304 for more information.

Do you have questions about your school district's COVID-19 response? Visit the following:

Albert Lea: <https://www.alschools.org>
Bloomington: <https://www.blossoms.k12.mn.us>

Hayfield: <http://hayfield.k12.mn.us>
N.R.H.E.G.: <https://www.nrheg.k12.mn.us/pages/NRHEG>

MOVING FORWARD

Though meetings and floor sessions will be limited over the next few weeks, residents should know that I remain available to answer any legislative questions they have. I am still working for you and want to hear from you. Please contact me at rep.peggy.bennett@house.mn.us or by phone at 651-296-8216.

I also want to let our small business owners know that we understand that some of the governor's executive orders directly impact their livelihood, as well as the good people they employ. Small business owners are the backbone of our rural communities, and I want our local employers to know that we remain ongoing as to how the State can best assist them during this time of crisis.

Finally, I'm hopeful residents are doing their best to stay calm as COVID-19 dominates the headlines. It is a serious issue to be sure, but if we all use some common sense it will hopefully be a short term issue as well. Look after your neighbors in need, take care of yourselves, and don't let fear rule the day! I pray for your good health, and look forward to hearing from you soon.

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.

Seeing the good

There certainly is little debate that we are in the midst of some unprecedented times as we grapple with the coronavirus pandemic.

As I checked in on my parents this past weekend, my 86-year-old father shared how he has never experienced anything like this during his lifetime. It seems like life as we know it is essentially shutting down right before our eyes. In many cases, it changes by the hour.

In recent years, I have noticed a change in society as a whole. It seems like everyone is so fixated on displaying a "me first" attitude as they go about their daily lives. Many people function with the drive to only look out for themselves.

I'll be the first to admit I'm not crazy about how the world is changing so rapidly in light of the pandemic. It's downright scary in many ways. But I'm also hopeful and optimistic that something greater will come out of all of this.

Maybe it will force families to become, well families again. How about remembering those people who live in your house instead of sailing onto the next event, activity or business venture? It shows we can survive without sports and many other unnecessary distractions.



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

Perhaps it will motivate people to do something good for others rather than focusing on what's in it for me. Just maybe we can slow down this rat race that we call life. And I'm just going out on the limb with this one, but maybe this is God's way of shaking us all up and forcing us to slow down.

Despite the gloomy times that are likely ahead of us in regards to the economy and world markets, I have no doubt that we will come out of this stronger than ever. It will force us all to think outside the box, be creative and do things differently than what we've grown used to doing.

This is the time we all need to take care of others and just be kind to one another. Seeing some of the videos of people around the world playing music or singing on their balconies is heartwarming. I encourage everyone to see the good in what's hap-

pening around us during these difficult days. I want to know about the positive things people are doing in our communities whether it's through church, non-profit groups and organizations or just anybody in general. If somebody is doing something good, whether as part of a group or as an individual, I want to know about it.

This is not the time to hide these acts of kindness. These kinds of stories will help bring a more positive outlook into everyone's life. And we all need a little more of that during this dark time in our country.

If you have something to share about seeing the good, please email me at rbprick@frontier.com or call our office at 507-583-4431. In the coming weeks, we are going to make a concentrated effort to share the "see the good" stories with our readers. Let us in on what's happening out there so we can share it with everyone else. During this crisis, no act of kindness or good should go unnoticed.

The world is a dark place, but only if you let it be that way. We can make this world a better place, one act of kindness at a time.

My goal is to go in hot pursuit of seeing the good of our communities over the coming weeks.

SEE THE GOOD

Share acts of kindness and stories of hope taking place all around us during the pandemic crisis:

- Email Rick Bussler at rbprick@frontier.com
- Call Times office at 507-583-4431



YOUR VIEW

Fair is moving ahead as planned

To-the-Editor:

As COVID-19 continues to spread in Minnesota and the United States, we want to keep everyone up to date on the 2020 Steele County Free Fair.

Many of our wonderful vendors from all over the U.S. are asking where we are and what our thoughts are on this year's fair.

Health and safety of our staff, volunteers and guests to the Steele County Free Fair grounds is our number

one goal always. However now, COVID-19 has presented many challenges for the fair industry and all the other businesses across our great country.

The 2020 Steele County Free Fair is scheduled for Aug. 18-23, which is five months from now, we are moving ahead as planned.

The Steele County Free Fair will continue to communicate any changes as we rely on the State of Minnesota Department of Health

Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to guide us in these trying times. The fair is also staying in close touch with Steele County officials and the City of Owatonna leaders.

Thank you for your continued support and yes, we will get through this together and we will see all of you at the fair!

Scott Kozelka
Steele County Fair Manager

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State of Emergency

County Board prepares for Coronavirus pandemic

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

During an emergency meeting held last Wednesday, March 18, the Steele County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution declaring a state of emergency within the county.

"Conditions were right to declare a state of emergency," emergency management head and Owatonna Fire Chief Mike Johnson explained. "What this does is it authorizes us to implement the emergency plan and take the appropriate

actions that we need to do in order to manage this until it passes."

The board also enacted paid leave for county employees being affected by the coronavirus in addition to closing county facilities to the public through Friday, April 17.

In order to prepare for the possibility of county employees needing to self-quarantine, the county utilized a paid leave policy for employees who have contracted the virus, or who have family members who have contracted the virus.

With the promotion of "social distancing" across the nation in order to stem the flow of the COVID-19 virus, the county felt that it was best to temporarily close its facilities to the general public.

"I have reached out to the department heads just to get some feedback from them," County Administrator Scott Golberg said. "The majority of them can work through this, there's going to be some challenges, but I think we need to do this."

At the time of the

meeting, around 15 other counties within the state had taken similar steps aimed at reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. "What we're seeing is a kind of trickle effect in regards to some of our services," Golberg explained. "As these other counties are closing people are coming to our offices for our services."

"I think it's the right thing to do," Commissioner Greg Krueger said when contemplating the closure of county facilities to the public. "We're trying to

keep as many people as healthy as possible, and the more interaction we have the less likely that's going to be."

The facilities listed as closed to the general public are the administration center, the county annex, the community corrections facility, the public works facility, the landfill office, and the Four Seasons Centre.

"This is just the beginning and I think you all realize that," Golberg told the board. "At our next board meeting, there will

be some things for you to consider that will be a continued response to this emergency. We're going to continue to implement these practices going forward."

As local governments continue to prepare and take steps to stop the spread of the virus, Americans' way of life under this new threat is still taking shape. The county may need to take additional actions moving forward depending upon the severity of the virus as it slowly sweeps across Minnesota.

It was Toilet Paper Tuesday at the Pizza Cellar

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

What's this world coming to? Now, pizza places are delivering toilet paper.

With the demand for toilet paper intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pizza Cellar of Blooming Prairie thought they would give a roll of toilet paper to anyone who ordered a pizza to go Tuesday of last week.

Pizza Cellar owners Colette and Tony Lea were forced to close their establishments, the Pizza Cellar and the Cue Company, because of an order by Gov. Tim Walz.

The Pizza Cellar could not cater to in-restaurant dining and had to provide the product only by curb service. Hence, the thought of a toilet paper promotion.

The Leas have cut their hours by two hours, now closing at 8 p.m. rather than 10 p.m.

"As long as our food suppliers can get us product, we will stay open," Colette said. "Hopefully, Blooming Prairie will be supportive of us," she added.

Colette said the State of



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Pizza Cellar employee Zach Koster was busy making pizzas last week and delivering them to the curb outside, where customers would drive up to pick up another tasty pizza.

Minnesota never directly contacted them about closing their business establishment because of

COVID-19. She and Tony learned about it from Gov. Walz' television announcement.

Mayo restricts patient visitors

Mayo Clinic continues to actively monitor all aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic situation. The safety of our patients, staff and community remains Mayo's highest priority.

On March 20, hospitalized patients will no longer be permitted to have visitors.

Compassionate exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis, including births and end-of-life care, among other specific circumstances. All visitors granted exceptions will be screened prior to entry. Those who screen positive for respiratory illness will be prohibited from visiting. No visitors under the age of 18 will be allowed.

Mayo stated the visitor restrictions will remain in place under further notice.

As part of Mayo Clinic's response, Mayo has carefully evaluated the readiness of our facilities, personnel, capacity and supply availability, and assessed community transmission within our regions, said Dr. Amy Williams, dean of the practice with Mayo.

Based on this review, Mayo Clinic will defer all elective care that can be deferred for eight or more weeks. This will include both elective surgeries, procedures and office visits. Semi-urgent, urgent and emergency care will continue in clinic and hospital settings. This deferment

will be effective March 23 at all Mayo Clinic locations nationwide, including Mayo Clinic Health System.

This decision is being made to ensure the safest possible environment for our patients and staff and to free up resources to assist in Mayo Clinic's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff working in impacted areas will be redeployed where needed most.

"We will be reaching out to patients to update them if changes to their appointments are needed," Williams said.

For Mayo Clinic Health System updates on COVID-19 please visit: <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/covid19>.

Sheriff restricts access to courthouse

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

With a peacetime emergency being declared in Steele County, changes are taking place in regards to public safety and the courts.

Sheriff Lon Thiele began restricting access to the Steele County Courthouse in Owatonna Monday morning. Only essential staff, officers of the court and people with scheduled court hearings will be allowed into the courthouse. This includes court administration workers, judges and staff and employees of the sheriff's office, county attorney's office, probation, social services, public health, victim advocates and public defenders.

"The courthouse is not being closed, just restricted," Thiele said. "No other members of the public will be allowed into the court-

house until deemed safe to do so," he added.

Thiele recognizes the restrictions will inconvenience many people. "We just need the communities to pull together and understand the roles of everyone," he said. "We have never had to do anything like this before. This is new territory for everyone in the public sector."

There are other changes happening with law enforcement services. The Steele County Detention Center has discontinued fingerprinting until further notice. Only essential employees and necessary vendors will be permitted access to the jail, Thiele said. He added video visitation of inmates will continue.

Thiele has also limited access to the sheriff's office lobby. He said civil process and records departments will remain open at this time with

limited access for mandated services. All non-mandated services have been suspended, he noted.

Despite the various restrictions, Thiele assures citizens that public safety is still being performed at its highest level. "We are using extreme caution through this. We are making sure the law enforcement world stays safe and making sure public safety is done the best we can," Thiele said.

Some precautions his deputies are taking when dealing with the public are utilizing masks, hand sanitizer and latex gloves. Thiele has delivered some masks to the Blooming Prairie Police Department for its officers to minimize risks with the public.

"We're just making sure everyone is as safe as possible," Thiele said. "This is not deterring our role in public safety. We're just taking a different approach."

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Beginning Monday, March 23, Farmers and Merchants State Bank will temporarily limit access to our lobbies by appointment only. All other banking services will remain available via each drive-thru, ATMs, Cash and Debit cards, Internet and Mobile banking as well as Telephone banking. All banking services will continue including lending and opening new accounts. Drive-up hours will be the same: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday.

We anticipate this limitation to be in place through Friday, April 3, however we will continue to monitor the situation and respond accordingly. You may contact us at:

Blooming Prairie Branch 507-583-6688
Austin Branch 507-437-3253

More information on all of our services along with our latest updates on our response to this pandemic can be found on our website at www.fmbankmn.com.

Additional contacts for information to us as a resource are:

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus
MN Dept of Health: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases
Mayo Clinic: www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/covid10
MN Public Health Association: www.mpha.net

We stay committed to supporting your banking needs and appreciate your understanding of the inconvenience caused by this action. The guidance is an attempt to reduce physical contact in hope that is will reduce the transmission of COVID 19 for the safety of our communities.

Stay Healthy!

James J. Fiebigler
President
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Blooming Prairie area churches take action

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Responses have varied with Blooming Prairie area churches but all express concern about the outbreak of the coronavirus and recommended safety measures.

First Lutheran Church's six-member Executive team met in a special session Monday morning under social distancing standards and made critical decisions concerning worship and other church activities.

All meetings of boards and committees are suspended until further notice. This included Deacons, Trustees and the regular council meeting scheduled for last Tuesday, March 17.

All public worship services, including Wednesday night Lenten services and Sunday worship services, are suspended until further notice.

As of mid-week last week, Red Oak Grove Lutheran Church had also suspended all worship services.

The Rev. John Wilmut St. Columbanus Catholic Church of Blooming Prairie said he was waiting for further direction from the Archdiocese of Winona. He is also priest for the Holy Trinity Catholic Church of Litomysl and for Sacred Heart Catholic Church of Hayfield.

The Rev. Matt Fennell of First Baptist Church

of Blooming Prairie told the Times that he urges everyone to remain calm and exercise their faith. First Baptist held worship services at 10 a.m. Sunday. The Bible Study following worship was called off. Pastor Fennell said First Baptist will follow recommendations of State Health Department and the CDC.

"We have not cancelled any activities and recommend that people take measures to reduce potential exposure," said Rev. Fennell. He said the church is not panicking and feels it not necessary to cancel church services. He said if someone is ill, they should refrain from coming to services. "We are here to help

our friends and neighbors and to be faithful," Pastor Fennell remarked.

Many churches in the state have voluntarily suspended activities in light of the CDC (Center for Disease Control) recommendation to limit groups to 50 or fewer.

First Lutheran Church has altered its hours, with the building open from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. Business hours are from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

A detailed letter was sent to all First Lutheran parishioners late last week, detailing direction taken by the church. Pastors Heidi Heimgartner and Mike Walrus announced that a private worship with a baptism was to be held

Sunday, March 22.

First Lutheran Church's director of children's ministry, Melissa Stoen, planned some educational outreach with technology for Sunday School families.

A brief devotion time has been secured on KOWZ Radio to replace Lenten worship on Wednesdays leading to April 1.

First Lutheran's pastors are sending a one-page, large print "Postcards from your Pastors" letter to residents at Prairie Manor and Heather Haus.

Pastor Sue Froelich of Red Oak Grove Lutheran Church, Austin, said the church is following recent recommendations of the CDC and Lutheran Synod.

First Lutheran and Red Oak Grove are both ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran - a Church of America) churches. Their actions fall in line with the recommendations outlined by Bishop Regina Hassana. The recommendations included suspension of worship.

Hassana said policy does not allow her to mandate the suspension of worship. She said that decision must be made in conversation between congregation council and pastors and deacons.

"Our participation in slowing the spread of COVID-19 seems the best way to care for our neighbors," remarked Bishop Hassana.

Area Catholic churches will suspend public masses

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Following a public announcement by The Winona-Rochester Diocese, three Blooming Prairie area Catholic churches will suspend Masses from March 20 to Friday, May 15.

The Most Rev. John M. Quinn, Bishop of Winona-Rochester, on March 18 announced suspension of Masses for eight weeks.

Father John Wilmut will follow this direction at the following parishes he serves: St. Columbanus Catholic Church of Blooming Prairie, Holy Trinity Catholic Church

of Litomysl and Sacred Heart Catholic Church of Hayfield.

In his announcement, Bishop Quinn greeted with parishioners with the words of Jesus Christ, "Do not be afraid."

Quinn stated, "During these days of great uncertainty, due to the many changes and unknown consequences of the COVID virus, we are reminded that the Lord is with us and His love surrounds us."

The Bishop said in response to the guidance by the Center for Disease Control and the Governor of Minnesota, to provide for the health of our community, and after much prayer and consultation, he decided on the following decisions:

All public Sunday and weekday Masses will be suspended for the next eight weeks through Friday, May 15.

On or before May 15, a decision will be made to continue or to lift restriction on public Masses.

The faithful of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester will continue to be dispensed from their Sunday obligation for the duration of time that public Masses are suspended.

Priests will continue to offer daily a private Mass

for the intentions of the parishioners.

Churches may remain open for private prayer. Sacramental ministry will be available for the Sacrament of Penance, Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum, on an individual basis.

Funeral Masses, baptisms and weddings will continue, but only a small number of immediate family members are to attend.

Quinn said the decision to suspend public Masses "is the most difficult decision I have ever made." The decision is based on a desire to protect people as advised by public officials and health care experts.

COVID-19 temporarily closes BP clinic

Mayo Clinic Health System will temporarily close two of its regional part-time clinics in Blooming Prairie and Kenyon. The temporary closures are necessary to reallocate staffing resources to other critical care needs deployed in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

"These are unprecedented times and we need to redirect our staffing resources to address the virus outbreak," says Jay Mitchell, M.D., chair of the Southeast Minnesota outpatient practice subcommittee. "We want to emphasize that patients in Kenyon and Blooming Prairie will continue to have various options to receive Mayo Clinic care. We have a 24/7 Nurse Line, Express Care

Online and are working to provide video visit capabilities for primary care, in addition to in-person visits at neighboring Mayo Clinic Health System facilities."

Both sites, which were open two days a week or less, temporarily closed beginning March 23. The pharmacy in Blooming Prairie will remain open.

Mayo will continue to assess the situation and patient demand at all its sites to ensure staff is deployed to best meet the need in the entire service area.

Patients who have upcoming clinic appointments scheduled will be notified. Nearby locations to receive care locally include Mayo Clinic Health System in Albert Lea, Austin, Owatonna and Faribault.

If you are showing any sign of possible COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), please call first before presenting to a healthcare facility. If you meet testing criteria, you will be directed to a local testing site.

Please visit Mayo Clinic Health System COVID-19 online resource site for the latest information and the most up-to-the-minute information about COVID-19 and what to do if you have symptoms, unrelated health care needs, or need to visit someone at the clinic or hospital. You can also view updates via Mayo Clinic Health System's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels.

School's out in Blooming Prairie

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

The staff of Blooming Prairie School District 876 is doing the best it can to work through the situation, says Superintendent Chris Staloch.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz on Sunday, March 15 announced that he was closing schools beginning on Wednesday, March 18 and continuing until Friday, March 27 because of

the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff, under social distance learning, has been working on plans for equitable education for all students, said Staloch.

Staff members, certified and non-certified, are working in small groups according to departments.

Staloch reports that the food service is up and running and school officials are in communication with parents in respect to picking up or delivering food.

A day care has been set up at the Blooming Prairie Elementary School for about 19 students, said Staloch. The day care service is provided for children of emergency responders and children of health care workers.

Staloch says the mood of staff is good. "There are lots of unknowns and they create concerns," Staloch said. During this shutdown period, Staloch has kept contact by conference calls



CHRIS STALOCH

with the Department of Health, the Department of Education and with the Governor's Office.

"We will work through this," promised Staloch.

Distance learning will start Monday in BP

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Blooming Prairie Superintendent of Schools Chris Staloch has informed the Times that BP schools will start distance learning for their students on Monday, March 30.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz announced on

Sunday, March 15 that all Minnesota schools would close on Wednesday, March 18 and would re-open on March 30 after eight days of closure. Blooming Prairie schools actually closed on Monday, March 16, two days ahead of the state mandated closing.

Now, it appears Blooming Prairie students will be doing their studies at home, beginning March 30.

Staloch says schools have not yet been given a timeframe of how long they will do distance learning.

"Our staff is working plan about two weeks out at a time with the understanding that changes can happen quickly to that plan," Staloch said.

Staloch says he is on daily conference calls with the Commissioner of Education (Mary Cathryn Ricker), and she will provide the school district with an estimated timeframe of how long that distance learning will be in effect.

More direction may be given Minnesota school districts this week.

Foundation donates humanitarian aid in wake of crisis

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Owatonna Foundation (OF), is making humanitarian aid donations to the Owatonna community.

Typically, the Foundation issues grants for "capital" or "bricks and mortar" projects to local 501(c)(3) non-profits. The mission of the Owatonna Foundation is improving the quality of life for present and future generations by supporting Owatonna projects that focus on community, arts, recreation and education.

The donations that are being made towards the COVID-19 crisis reflect the "improving the quality of life for present and future generations," according to Laura Resler, executive director of the Foundation.

"The Trustees felt that in response to the community's current situation that we should show support that directly impacts the well-being of our citizens. It is our community's people that

SEE FOUNDATION DONATES, A9

Prairie Manor locked down

The Prairie Manor Care Center is following Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations and locked down its facilities on

March 18. Only staff and medical professionals will be allowed into the facilities, says administrator Joseph

Mason. Vendors are dropping off shipments at the proper door. Emergency vendors would likely be allowed to

enter, said Mason. Prairie Manor was one of the last senior care health facilities in the area to be locked down.

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TO LOVE, TO HONOR, TO REMEMBER

*Owatonna Granite takes families
through difficult times*

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Owatonna Granite and Monument owners John and Barb Heerema are attempting to make the best out of a situation beyond their control.

The Heeremas had hoped to showcase their products and services during a special open house beginning last week and continuing through the end of the month. But with the coronavirus taking hold across the country, they cancelled the open house and now have devised another way to connect with potential clients that won't require any in-person contact.

"We would love if people would call or email us," Barb said. "We can email designs to them while we are on the phone and make them feel more comfortable with the process."

Barb understands why senior citizens don't want to venture out during the pandemic. "Business is not as usual for us, but we can still do business," she said. She noted that

"For people who have been together for a long time, it's a good idea if they can make the decision together."

Barb Heerema
Owatonna Granite and Monument

it's just the two of them at the store and they plan to stay open even if it means communicating remotely with clients.

Owatonna Granite generally performs two types of services, pre-need and at-need. Pre-need focuses on people, generally in their mid-40s or older, pre-purchasing their memorials while at-need deals with unexpected deaths, generally younger people.

Barb estimated about 40% of their business is pre-need. She says there are many reasons why people should consider purchasing a memorial before a death occurs.

"For people who have been together for a long time, it's a good idea if they can make the decision together," Barb says. "You are able to have it say what you want about your life."

Specifically, the choice will reflect your wishes. A personalized memorial reflects your life, style and everything that's important to you. "When you choose your memorial, you have the opportunity to share your values and beliefs in a lasting and meaningful way," Barb said. She noted kids often times don't know what their parents wishes are for a memorial. "If you do it yourself, you get it the way you want it," she added.

Pre-planning a memorial completes estate planning, Barb said. She advises in order to fully complete your estate planning, your memorial should absolutely be included. This will spare your spouse and/or

SEE TO LOVE, TO HONOR, A6



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Barb and John Heerema own and operate Owatonna Granite and Monument. They have been serving families throughout southern Minnesota since 2006. John has been working in the industry since 1988. They encourage families to consider pre-ordering their memorials to save the stress and anguish for surviving family members once a death occurs.

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'Trishaw' coming to Fairview Care Center later this year

BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although the Covid-19 virus currently has caused Dodge County's Fairview Care Center in Dodge Center and other similar facilities to restrict visitors, residents and their family members can still look forward to a new program later this spring or summer.

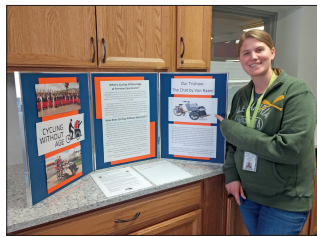
Last year Fairview received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Health to start a program called "Cycling Without Age." The grant paid up to half the cost of the purchase of a "trishaw," a three-wheel bicycle that can carry two people up front while the "pilot" in

the back pedals.

The trishaw was ordered last fall and it is anticipated it will be arriving in April or May, said Activities Director Alyssa Huisenga.

Fairview staff had intended to feature the trishaw at the now-cancelled Dodge Expo and to solicit names of individuals who would be interested in training to become a "pilot." Although the exact date of the trishaw's arrival (it was ordered from a company in Denmark where the idea started) and when it will be put to use is now unknown, Fairview staff is still wanting to get the word out that volunteer "pilots" will be needed.

Cycling Without Age got its start seven years ago in



STAFF PHOTO BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN

Fairview Care Center Activities Director Alyssa Huisenga stood by the poster introducing the trishaw that was to be at the center of the care center's Dodge Expo display. The trishaw will arrive this spring although because of Covid-19 restrictions it is unknown when it will actually be put into service.

bicycle-friendly Copenhagen, and the program has since spread throughout Europe and now the United States.

Both Fairview Director Jane Sheeran and Activities Director Alyssa Huisenga said earlier they were looking forward to getting the trishaw and providing another enjoyable activity for residents.

Last fall Sheeran explained she had seen an interview with Ole Kasow, the Dane who got the program started, and was impressed with the passion he had for the project.

"He has seen beautiful things happen and we want it to be here," she said.

When the idea was initially presented to the residents they, and their families, were excited.

"It will be something new to do together," Huisenga said, "a new hobby."

Sheeran said she could envision residents being taken on outings through their old neighborhoods, places they used to frequent or maybe just on the paths around the facility with another resident, a spouse, a friend or perhaps grandchildren.

When the trishaw arrives and conditions related to the Covid-19 virus have relaxed there will be training sessions both for those who volunteer to serve as a pilot and to learn how to maintain the vehicle.

"These are precious lives," Sheeran said, "so we will be cautious."

Alyssa Huisenga

HUNKER DOWN: Steele declares emergency as coronavirus hits county FROM A1

By Sunday, a third case of COVID-19 had been confirmed in Steele County. In neighboring Dodge County, two cases have been reported with the first one coming on Friday. Caron, who also serves as public health director for Dodge County, said a person in their 20s came down with the coronavirus and that it was unknown how it had been transmitted. The Dodge County victim also was in isolation at home and recovering, she said.

There have been 235 confirmed cases in Minnesota as of Monday afternoon when this edition went to press. So far one person in their 80s has died from the coronavirus in Ramsey County. There have been six cases reported in Mower County. Freeborn is one of the only counties in southeastern Minnesota that hasn't had any confirmed cases yet.

State officials are doing everything in their power to stop the spread of COVID-19. On March 17, Gov. Tim Walz shut down all bars and restaurants in Minnesota. The only service available from restaurants is delivery and curbside to go. Spas and sa-

lons were also added to the shut down on March 18.

Minnesota lawmakers passed a bill authorizing \$200 million emergency funding plan for health care providers preparing to deal with the coronavirus. Walz said the state's health care facilities "are Minnesota's first line of defense against COVID-19."

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spread primarily by respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, according to Caron. She said it can also spread when people touch surfaces that have been contaminated by an infected person and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

"There is much that we do not know about this virus and how it has rapidly mutated," Caron said. "We have no vaccine, no antiviral medication and can only treat the symptoms when they become serious."

However, Caron stressed, there are things that everyone can do to protect themselves, family members, neighbors and vulnerable populations. A checklist of precautions is shared as a sidebar to this story.

"Now is the time to take action and slow the spread down in our communities," Caron warned.

Gov. Walz announced Monday morning he will self-quarantine for a period of 14 days after learning he had contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19. "The most important thing Minnesotans can do to stop the spread of COVID-19 is to stay home," he said. "I'm using this as an opportunity to lead by example. Though I'm feeling healthy and not showing any symptoms, I'm going to work from home and model the protocol we are asking all Minnesotans to follow."

Over the past week, Walz has been busy issuing executive orders one after another.

On March 19, Walz ordered health care providers to postpone elective surgeries and procedures indefinitely to prioritize COVID-19 response.

"The greatest risk we face during the COVID-19 pandemic is overwhelming our health care systems and limiting their ability to respond to emerging cases," Walz said. "This executive order keeps more

health care resources open and prioritizes life-saving intervention for COVID-19 patients and other emergency care."

The governor signed three additional Executive Orders on Friday to further strengthen Minnesota's response to the pandemic. These orders ban price gouging in Minnesota and ensure that critical services continue for our state's most vulnerable.

One of the orders authorizes the Minnesota Department of Human Services to seek federal authority to temporarily

waive or modify certain requirements for federal programs, including but not limited to the Minnesota Family Investment Program, Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare, to ensure these programs continue providing necessary support to families during the pandemic.

Minnesotans can report instances of price gouging by calling 1-800-657-3787. Complaints may also be made online at www.ag.state.mn.us/office/complaint.asp.

MNSure has announced a 30-day special enrollment

period beginning Monday until April 21. It will allow uninsured individuals 30 days to enroll in health insurance coverage through MNSure.org.

"As more cases of COVID-19 are diagnosed throughout the state, we want to make sure every Minnesotan has the security of health insurance to ensure they can get the care they need if they contract this serious illness," said MNSure CEO Nate Clark. "Uninsured Minnesotans can come to MNSure.org to sign up for coverage."

AVOIDING THE CORONAVIRUS Public Health Recommendations

- Practice social or physical distancing from others by keeping a distance of six feet between you and others out in public.
- If you have an underlying health condition or are an older adult, take precautions now. Consider limiting any visitors to your home. Consider asking others to assist you in getting the things you need, including groceries and medications.
- Do not gather in groups and find new ways to conduct your daily business. Make use of technology by using phones, Facetime, Skype and other ways to communicate.
- Stay home if you have cold or flu-like symptoms and avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into your sleeve.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom or before eating.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs.

TO LOVE, TO HONOR FROM A5

family the responsibility of selecting and purchasing your memorial. And perhaps more importantly, it can ease grief and stress during a difficult time, she said.

By purchasing a memorial now at a younger age, the cost will be less, Barb said. Granite typically increases about 2% every two years, according to Barb.

At Owatonna Granite, John does a lot of the designing of memorials by himself. He has been working in the industry since 1988. They also have access to a design team in St. Cloud. "We can customize to anything they want," Barb said. She added people love the design program they utilize, which is far different than the days of when everything was sketched out on paper.

Once an order is processed, it takes about 60 days for the memorial to be installed. Some can take

up to six months if they are shipped from overseas.

Owatonna Granite features a full show room with various displays of memorials both inside and outside at its location on East Frontage Road. "With our seven month winters in Minnesota, a show room is pretty helpful," Barb said.

Barb admits she often deals with families who dread the process of picking out memorials, but by the time they leave, they are feeling much more comfortable about it. "We try to put people at ease by getting them to talk about the person who passed away and trying to figure out who they are," she said.



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STAYING CONNECTED: in a disconnected world FROM A1

rest of the service featured a few people providing music from the church.

Doing church service in his own home has been an "unexpected blessing" for Simmerman. He used his small children's Crayola markers and paper duct taped to the wall as a visual during the sermon.

Simmerman's self-quarantine expires Friday so he expects to be back in the church building presenting his sermon together with the worship presenters for next week's online service.

Earlier this month, Simmerman flew overseas into Amsterdam. In mid-flight, he received the news that the U.S. had placed a ban on travel to foreign countries. He had planned to visit a church in Ukraine, but he decided to turn around and quickly come back home once the travel restriction was put in place.

Once Simmerman returned back home, he placed himself in 14-day quarantine to protect others from possible exposure. He does not have the coronavirus, but he is taking all the necessary precautions.

Besides dealing with a quarantine, Simmerman had another issue on his hands. He had to figure out how to continue church services after the CDC recommended no large gatherings take place. "What we had to do in the last two weeks is find a way to keep people's routine in place," he said.

Bethel Church decided to offer live streaming of services. "That has been a helpful and familiar piece to know you can count on a gathering on Sunday morning," Simmerman said. "Our goal is that we have to find ways to keep people connected. We need to keep people as connected as possible."

The only glitch Bethel ran into this past weekend was some technical difficulties with live stream-

"Our goal is that we have to find ways to keep people connected."

Pastor Michael Simmerman
Bethel Baptist Church

ing. "The internet couldn't handle all the streaming at one time," Simmerman said, pointing out that many other churches are doing the same thing.

About 450 people worship at Bethel on a normal Sunday. Simmerman isn't sure how many are tuning in to worship on the live stream, but he vows to keep doing this as long as needed to get through the pandemic crisis.

Simmerman reminds people that "God is in control of everything." And he is confident that good will arise from this crisis. God controls the circumstances," Simmerman said. "I can't imagine not having the piece of understanding that God is with us through all of this."

The pastor acknowledges his mission over the coming weeks will be to help people make sense of the serious crisis facing the world. Through his preaching, Simmerman plans to show how people can best help others in this time of need. "The world is broken, what do you put your hope in," he said.

The coronavirus, Simmerman says, will no doubt produce a mixture of hardship and difficulty for many people. But, he reassures, God will absolutely use this for the good in the end.

Simmerman said it was important for churches like Bethel to follow the government's recommendations to avoid large gatherings. He said Bethel is committed to doing its part in trying to "slow the spread of this."

While he hopes it won't drag out for a long time, Simmerman recognizes it could be months before things get back to normal. "It's all new for us," he

said. "We have never been here before, but we are going to work through this together."

Simmerman says Bethel has developed a template with its online services in the last few weeks that "could walk us through the foreseeable future."

For now, Simmerman's attention is drawn to this coming weekend's service. "Our hope is to get less than 10 of us together to do a live stream from the sanctuary," he said. "I

think there is a richness of being together in the same place. We can observe the 6-foot rule and practice social distancing," he added.

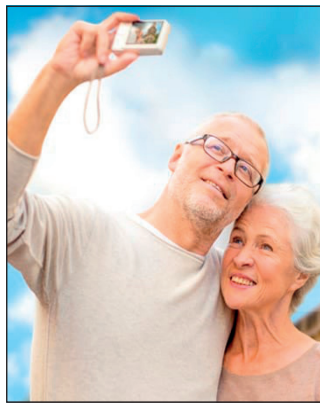
The crisis has forced Simmerman to look at doing some things differently with his family in their own home. They have enjoyed singing songs together. "It has a real life element that's really healthy," he said.

"We are finding ways to stay connected at a time when we're told we can't be connected," Simmerman said. "We are actually finding that we are more connected."

Bethel Baptist Church is finding a new normal. 1611 Hemlock Ave. www.bethelowatonna.com

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH SERVICES

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 - YouTube on the Bethel Church Owatonna channel



Social Security Offices cut back to only phone service

All local Social Security offices will be closed to the public for in-person service starting March 17. This decision protects the population we serve—older Americans and people with underlying medical conditions—and our employees during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, Social Security is still able to provide critical services.

Social Security's secure and convenient online services remain available at www.socialsecurity.gov. Local offices will also continue to provide critical services over the

phone. We are working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state and local governments, and other experts to monitor COVID-19 and will let you know as soon as we can resume in-person service. If you need help from Social Security:

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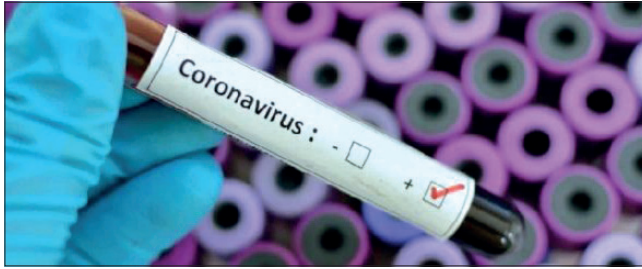
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Reflections
HOWARD LESTRUD

Whether you are officially placed on quarantine, act as though you are on quarantine during the next many days.

By placing yourself on a self-quarantine, you will be able to strengthen your chances of defeating that terrible coronavirus (COVID-19). During a self-imposed quarantine, you can prepare a list of things to do while on quarantine.

We will become a stronger nation by taking matters in our own hands and working diligently to become healthier.

Already, many of our neighbors have chosen to stay at home and not trek out into a land where we might make contact with the coronavirus.

I was at Vanda's Family Market in Blooming Prairie the other day when I turned the corner on Aisle No. 1 and nearly ran into a masked man. The masked man was wearing a baseball cap, had his sun glasses on top of his hat and was wearing an anti-septic mask.

It was none other than my friend Tom Peterson. "This is serious stuff," Peterson theorized.

It's so serious that many of us have decided to make our own hand sanitizer. My sister-in-law gave us

this recipe: Two-thirds cup of Aloe vera gel, one-third cup of Isopropyl Alcohol (at least 70%), 7-10 drops of essential oil to add fragrance.

Go to your computer or phone and find tons of material about what to do when you are on self-quarantine. I found one entitled "Coronavirus: What to do on a quarantine." It was penned by Rui Oliveira.

Numbers of infected Americans is growing by the hour. As this is written, the closest counties declaring a case of COVID-19 are Waseca County and Mower County. Steele, Dodge and Freeborn counties have yet to report a case.

It's coming, our neighboring counties will be added to the list. Be ready.

Many people are already at home because the company where they work is closed because the government, in this case state government, has closed companies (bars, restaurants, dental agencies, medical clinics, etc.

Many people are at home in quarantine. Nobody can say for sure, for how long, and when this situation will end.

By personally choosing to be self-quarantined, we can be doing our part to defeat this virus.

Here's some things this Binary Options Blog recommends:

1 - Enjoy the time

spent with the family:

On a daily basis, we end up having very little time to dedicate to our family, especially our children. Take the opportunity to be with them. Play games, talk. Do not stay closed in your rooms connected only to the internet and social networks.

2 - Organize your home: How many times do we want to organize our home, but we don't have time? Whether redecorating the room, organizing our old photos, or organizing our wardrobe.

3 - Organize your computer/mobile phone: From time to time it is necessary to organize our files, photos, documents, applications, etc. Enjoy and do it.

4 - Exercise: Being at home should not be synonymous with lying or sitting all day. Enjoy and exercise at home and with your family. Today it is easy to find exercises that do not require fitness equipment. Organize workouts at home and do them daily.

5 - Work from home: Today, much of our work can be done from a mobile phone or computer at home. Save a part of the day to deal with work-related issues so you don't have to accumulate tasks for when you get back to work. Respond to e-mails, talk to customers, organize meetings, etc.

6 - Earn money with Trading Apps: It is now easy to find investment applications that allow you to trade in the financial markets from home and simply. Enjoy free time and try to earn money online. The IQ Option platform is the world leader in online investments.

There are a lot of investments that can be made online, from home. Today, almost all the investment instruments are available on Brokers online, which allows pretty much to trade all.

7 - Play Games: There are also a lot of great games that can be very amusing. Even if you don't have a PlayStation or any of the most recent game gadgets there are a ton of games that you can download, or simply play online. Set up a card table and use it to hold a puzzle you choose to finish.

Organize your time to do a little bit of everything. The key is to make this unpleasant situation pleasant and productive.

But most of it, focus on point number 1 and point number 4. One will be a valuable time to spend, and the other will be very important to keep your physical and mental health in good shape.

And let us pray so that this awful coronavirus can be cured soon and that those infected can heal fast.

SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICES: cut back to only phone service FROM A7

status of an application or appeal, request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas), print a benefit verification letter, and much more - from anywhere and from any of your devices. We also have a wealth of information to answer most of your Social Security questions online, without having to speak with a Social Security representative in person or by phone. Please visit our online Frequently Asked Questions at www.socialsecurity.gov/ask.

If you cannot conduct your Social Security business online, please check our online field office locator for specific information about how to directly contact your local office. Your local office still will be able to provide critical services to help you apply for benefits, answer your questions, and provide other services over the phone.

If you already have an in-office appointment scheduled, Social Security will call you to handle your appointment over the phone instead. If you have a hearing scheduled, it will call you to discuss alternatives for continuing with your hearing, including offering a telephonic hearing. The call may come from a PRIVATE number and not from a U.S. Government phone. Please remember that employees will not threaten you or ask for any form of payment.

If you cannot complete your Social Security business online, please call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778). The National 800 Number has many automated service options you can use without waiting to speak with a telephone representative. A list of automated telephone services is available online at www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/contact/phone.html.



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How to Protect Your Elderly Parents from Coronavirus



Brought to you by:

Prairie Manor Care Center & Heather Haus
583-4434

Dear Savvy Senior,
I'm concerned about my 80-year-old mother who's at high risk for coronavirus. She lives on her own about 100 miles from me, and I've been keeping close tabs on her since this whole pandemic started. What tips can you offer long-distance family members?

Concerned Daughter

Dear Concerned,
Because the elderly and people with chronic medical conditions are the most vulnerable to the new coronavirus, following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guideline of social distancing and staying home is critically important.

Here are some additional tips and recommendations from the CDC and public health specialists that can help keep your elderly mother safe and healthy while she's hunkering down at home until the pandemic passes.

Know and follow the other CDC recommendations: Make sure you and your mom know and practice the CDC recommendations for older adults and those with compromised health conditions. Some of their guidelines – like washing your hands and avoid touching your face – you're probably already familiar with, but there are many other recommendations and they're constantly changing. For the complete list visit [Coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) – click on "Older Adults & Medical Conditions."

Have supplies on hand: Start by contacting your mom's healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications to have on hand for a prolonged period of time. If she cannot get extra medications, consider using mail-order for medications so she can avoid going into a pharmacy. Also be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies to treat fever and other symptoms.

She should also have enough groceries and household items on hand so that she can stay at home for an extended period of time. If she needs to restock supplies, there's online grocery delivery options like Amazon Fresh, Instacart, Peapod, Target and Walmart, and a growing number of stores including Walmart, Target, Whole Foods, Dollar General and many other that are offering curbside shopping options to vulnerable seniors to reduce their risk of being exposed to the virus.

There are also home delivery meal programs that can help home-bound seniors – see [MealsOnWheelsAmerica.org](https://www.MealsOnWheelsAmerica.org) to locate one in your mom's area. Or, check out companies like Silver Cuisine ([SilverCuisine.com](https://www.SilverCuisine.com)) or Mom's Meals ([MomsMeals.com](https://www.MomsMeals.com)) that deliver nutritious pre-cooked meals to seniors that can be heated up in the microwave.

Use technology: For many seniors, social distancing can also lead to social isolation and loneliness, which is a common problem in the older population. If your mom has a computer, tablet or smartphone, she can stay connected to friends and relatives via video calls through Skype, Zoom or FaceTime, which is a safe alternative.

If your mom isn't familiar or comfortable with mainstream technology there are other solutions like the GrandPad ([GrandPad.net](https://www.GrandPad.net)), which is a simplified 4G tablet designed for seniors 75 and older that allows one-to-one video calls, email and much more.

And for peace of mind, there are also check-in services like Snug ([SnugSoft.com](https://www.SnugSoft.com)) that send free daily check-ins to your mom's phone to confirm she's OK. And, will let you know if she doesn't respond.

Skip nonessential doctor's appointments: Most public health experts are also recommending that seniors at risk cancel nonessential doctor's appointments. If your mom has a condition that she feels should not be put off, see if a telemedicine session, which is now covered by Medicare would be an option.

Talk to caregivers: If your mom uses a home health or home care service, that means a number of different aides may be coming through her door.

Be sure you talk to the agency she uses or her aides about hygiene. They should all be reminded to wash their hands or use hand gel sanitizer frequently. And any equipment they bring into your mom's home should be wiped down with disinfectant.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit [SavvySenior.org](https://www.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 March 30, 2010

RIK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

The Blooming Prairie School's 5th and 6th grade team took first place in the Zumbrota Education District's marathon contest and earned a trip to the state contest in April. The other 5th and 6th grade team placed fourth, while a junior high team took second in their division and a second team placed fourth. The 5th and 6th grade winning team included Camden Heimerman, Sally Peterson, Elijah Baker, Margaret Jones and Tommy Braaten. Fourth place team included Marisa Larson, Kaci Gwilt, Nicholas Poe, Ethan Strunk and Carol Pirkil. Alternates on the two teams were Anthony Nelson and Dylan Gasner. The junior high team which placed second consisted of Joshua Kaplan, Tom Wanous, Krisi Kaplan, Phillip Ramsey, and Isaac Baker. Garrett Kubik, Courtney Lee and Katie Wolf were other junior high students who competed in the event.

Once again the community has demonstrated the commitment by all of the residents when the Blooming Prairie Education Foundation Auction last Saturday night again set a new record for receipts. Preliminary figures indicate that the annual event brought in approximately \$55,000, which would put it ahead of last year by almost \$10,000. That was quite an accomplishment in the light of the fact the economy is very slow in recovering from last year.

The superintendent of the Medford School District has announced he will retire later this year. Gary Hanson made his resignation from the district effective June 30. Hanson's resignation comes after the School Board decided to reduce the superintendent position to part-time. We felt that our best option – trying to make sure our focus number one was education and saving the district money, was to keep two principals and go to a part-time superintendent.

20 Years Ago March 28, 2000

ELSIE SLINGER, PUBLISHER

An armed robbery attempt was foiled Saturday at Central Co-op Convenience Store in Blooming Prairie with the alert actions of three local people. A juvenile male and adult women were taken into custody and will be formally charged in the incident. Police records state the two suspects entered the store, threatened the clerk with a hidden gun and asked for the money and several cartons of cigarettes. Two customers filling gas outside at the time noticed the robbery attempt and ran to Budget Mart to make emergency call. Police Chief Wayne said prompt

call and the two men's description of the car and license number allowed authorities to make the arrest as the suspects headed south.

On Tuesday, March 7, the Sub-section 2A solo and ensemble contest was held at Riverland Community College in Austin. Blooming Prairie had 26 entries in this year's contest. Twelve entries received superior ratings and eight received excellent ratings. Students who receive superior ratings move on to compete in Sections in May. Vocalists receiving excellent ratings consisted of Gretchen Powers, Melissa Srock, Laura Mans and Emily Wencil. Superior ratings included Abi Christianson, Kaitlin McAnnay, Amanda Stoa, Leah Hanson and Jenny Jacobusse. Instrumentalists receiving excellent ratings were Maren Peterson, Amy Johnson, Nicole Trostman, Alicia Smith, and Emily Grant. Superior ratings were received by Gary Tashima, Kristi Schwake, Michelle Maxwell, Marissa Block, Lisi Ingvalson, Emily Wencil and Sara Mueller.

New head coach Chris Staloch will have six letter winners from which to mold a successful baseball team. Twenty-five hopefuls from grades 9 through 12 will compete for spots in the starting lineup. According to Coach Staloch, "Our strength will be our team speed, but we will have to improve our pitching. However, we are setting the conference title as our goal and we want to win some playoff games as well." Coach Staloch summarized his impressions of his new capacity this way, "Byran will be a leader for the squad and the junior class will have to make strong contributions for a competitive program. My personal goal is to get the program at a level where we can compete with the top teams anywhere in the state."

50 Years Ago March 25, 1970

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

Induction ceremonies for thirteen new members of the Blooming Prairie Chapter of the National Honor Society were conducted at the high school before all school assembly and parents and friends of the new members. The new members of the National Honor Society are: Seniors – Thomas Becker, Russel Buhrow, Brad Carey, Julie Grandprey, Mary Jirele and Greg Lea; Juniors – John Becker, Charles Halstenson, Joan Hellick, Louise Johnson, Ronald Simonson, Andy Swenson and Nancy Taylor. Immediately following the ceremony, the members and their parents were honored at a coffee hour.

TDAN Steve R. Nelson recently graduated from the U.S. Navy Aviation Electronics Technical School "Class A" as an honor man, completing the 18-week course in 12 weeks.

He has also completed Tradesman School "Class A" at NATTC, Memphis, TN. While at San Diego, CA, he was also selected as the "outstanding recruit." Steven will be stationed at the Barber's Point Naval Air Station in Hawaii, where he will help train crews to fly patrol aircraft. His wife is the former Barbara Bassness of Blooming Prairie. They are spending a 30-day leave here and will leave April 5th for 2 years' duty in Hawaii.

Two members of the Blooming Prairie Future Farmers of America were elected to Dist. 14 offices, Howard Bode, Advisor, announced today. Jerry Invalson was elected as Dist. 14 president for the coming year. He will also serve as a State vice-president. Donn Olsen was elected to the office of District Reporter for the coming year. There were nineteen schools in District 14 with delegates running for seven offices. Other Blooming Prairie members who attempted to gain office were Ed Butler, Dale Hensrud, Dennis Heimerman and Gary Schultz.

75 Years Ago March 29, 1945

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

Pfc. Raymond E Christofferson was seriously wounded in Germany March 7, according to word received by his wife, who resides in Austin. They have four daughters, the oldest is 9 years old. Raymond, who entered the service a year and four days before he was wounded. He was formerly employed by the Big Four Bottling Co., Austin. He was a truck driver in the 94th division and was wounded either by Nazi shellfire or a strafing plane. Mrs. Christofferson has been informed that her husband was taken immediately by plane to a base hospital in England. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Anker Christofferson and the brother of Mrs. Thomas Jelinek, Blooming Prairie.

The senior class has selected "Star Crazy" by Don Elser as the class play to be presented April 27. The cast includes Joyce Peterson, Joan Johnson, Lola Hunter, Edna Lysne, Betty Stockton, Loren Holm, Arthur Moen, Roger Invalson, Junior Estenson, Dennis Conrad, John Skalsky, Joyce Dillefson and Corrine Herron. Mr. Stockton will be in charge of business arrangements and Miss Borger is the director.

The response by Times readers for playing cards to be sent to our wounded servicemen in hospitals has been most gratifying to the committee in charge of used card collection. About 25 decks have been brought in to date. More are needed. First shipment of cards will go out Saturday so there is still time to bring your cards in. This is the least we can do to help our wounded men pass their time while recuperating in our hospitals. Bring the cards to M Nelson's store or the Times office.

FOUNDATION DONATES

FROM 44

drive what the Owatonna Foundation does, and what we are doing is to serve in their best interest," Resler said.

The Trustees feel that these extraordinary times called for an immediate response to the crisis and are offering support to the following organizations that they feel will be immediately impacted:

- \$10,000 to Community Pathways (formerly the Steele County Food Shelf) for the purchase of food
- \$10,000 to SEMCAC for meals to seniors that are shut-in during the crisis

"As our community faces the struggles related to the COVID-19 situation, the Trustees felt that the Foundation should give humanitarian aid in the form of financial support to our community via these organizations," said Denny Meiller, Foundation president. "Our families, businesses, and community have been turned upside down, and our daily lives have been

severely altered due to this crisis. It is our hope that this show of support will help to ease some of the burdens that are facing so many of our neighbors and friends, and that our organizations will follow suit and offer their support as well."

The Owatonna Foundation, now in its 82nd year of serving the Owatonna community, provides capital grants in Owatonna and its environs. The Foundation was established in 1938 with the goal of improving the quality of life for present and future generations of Owatonna residents. Since then, the Owatonna Foundation has invested more than \$12 million dollars in grants to Owatonna projects and annually awards \$30,000 in scholarships for both traditional and non-traditional students.

For more information about the Owatonna Foundation, please visit www.owatonnafoundation.org or call 507-455-2995.



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BOOK NOOK

Alternatives for the library during the coronavirus

NANCY
VAILLANCOURT

In the Book Nook column two weeks ago, the headline was "Library is prepared for coronavirus." As circumstances have changed quickly, I can no longer say that. Presently, the Blooming Prairie Branch Library is closed to the public. For several days, we have provided curb side pickups of books and movies. After discussion with the Owatonna Public Library staff, it has been decided that offering the curb side pickup has its own risks and problems. However, libraries are more than brick and mortar, or physical books and movies. As difficult as this may be, please consider exploring the online options that can help you at this time.

First, if you are on Facebook, "like" the Blooming Prairie Branch Library page. By checking it regularly you will be able to get updates and even listen to a weekly storytime

on Facebook. We will also be forwarding messages from other library systems. Several reading and educational sources have opened their subscription services to the public while school is not in session. Links to those sources will be found on our Facebook page.

Second, be sure to check out the databases at www.owatonna.info. Your Blooming Prairie Branch Library card allows you to use those resources. Future articles will highlight some of those databases. Our wi-fi system can be accessed from the public parking lot and does not need a password, so if you need internet connections for your phone or computer, you can consider that an option.

Don't be concerned if you have library items out that are due soon. There will be no late fees until tentatively the end of April. You do not need to call the library to renew items. However, if you have questions we anticipate that staff will be available through email at bbbl@selco.info or 507-583-7750.

I sometimes end the article by writing, "See you at the library!" It is surreal that I don't know when I will see you at the library. Please know that we still want to help you and look forward to seeing you again...soon!



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BIRTHDAYS

March 25
Jenny Heimerman
Charles Wagner
Whitney Burrue
Nala Klemmensen
Becky Severson
Mark Anderson
Bryan Rossow
Douglas Wend
Kathleen Christey
David Maixner

March 26
Cale Braaten
Tiffany Peterson
Steve Wollenburg

March 27
Betty Ingvaldson
Chad Klemmensen
Val Garcia
Lois Friesner

March 28
Rick & Lisa Hocking

March 29
MaKenna Brown
Becky Maschinger
Mary Camerer

March 30
Kevin Eichens
Trig Klemmensen
Elaine Vermilyea
Gary Thorson

March 31
Emerson Nelson
Phillip Ramsey
Rhonda McCabe
Maisie Holmberg

March 32
Darrell Hansen

March 33
Robert Salinas, Jr.
Alicia Ilie
Olivia Kruger

ANNIVERSARIES

March 20
Larry & Gerry Wurst

March 21
Doug & Kim Hillson
Dick & Norma Hegal

March 22
Rick & Lisa Hocking

March 23
steeldodgepnews.com
bptimes@frontiernet.net
507.583.4431



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUE

It indeed is a family business at Vandal's Family Market in Blooming Prairie. All Vandal family members have been pressed into action during the threat of the coronavirus. Shown from left are: Waco Vandal, son Adrian Vandal, son Brady Vandal-Holmberg, Brandy Holmberg and Maisie Holmberg.

SMALL-TOWN GROCER: responds to needs in height of crisis

er," said Waco, pointing out that this would be the third time during this day that he has had to make another batch of hamburger. He said he typically makes it only once a day.

"It's been crazy," acknowledged Brady Holmberg, another family owner. "There's not a square in the store," Holmberg said, relating that they had TP stocked to the ceiling. It was gone in 6 1/2 hours, he said.

With the closing of school early in the week, Holmberg said there was a rush on breakfast cereals and frozen pizzas.

Customers were also buying out all the hand sanitizers and disinfectants still in the store. "We can't get any more sanitizer until the end of the month," Holmberg said.

The store owners said during this rush on products, they had never seen so many people in the store. "Over a four-day period, our sales were 2 1/2 times

the norm," said Waco.

Many customers are first-timers, they report. Waco, Brady and Brandy said they have an advantage over the big, box stores in that they can request an emergency truck of product from their supplier, Spartan Nash of St. Cloud. "Our system is better than a lot of stores' suppliers," said Waco.

"We got a new shipment of milk and in two hours I was out of 2%," said Waco. Brandy said she and husband Brady often tease one another that they are crazy to be in the food business. "Now, the pandemic has put us even more into the business," she said.

Many loyal customers have been thankful to Waco, Brandy and Brady for having groceries on the shelf. The three family grocery store owners are hopeful that things will soon get back to the old normal.

Sudoku Corner

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

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Answers

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

Recipe Corner

Goulash
Four servings

1 lb ground beef, browned and drained
1 lb ground turkey, browned and drained
1 15-oz pkg black eyed peas
1 15-oz pkg corn

1 15-oz pkg cannellini beans or kidney beans
1 14-oz can diced tomatoes
1/2 medium chopped onion
1 envelope Hidden Valley Ranch Dip
Chili powder to taste

Mix all ingredients and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes or put all in a crock pot on low for 4 hours.

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Coronavirus outbreak poses new challenges for churches



Pastor Heidi Heimgartner
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
BLOOMING PRAIRIE

In light of the CDC recommendation to limit groups due to the COVID-19 outbreak, public weekly worship and all regular meetings and

activities at First Lutheran in Blooming Prairie are suspended until further notice. This took place by unanimous action of elected leaders on March 16. This unprecedented step that we (and religious communities around the world) have taken is out of prayer, love, and caution: to protect our members and greater community. However, worship, study, and service—the three core components of our church's mission—are still going on in new and creative ways.

Whatever steps your faith community is taking to respond, I pray we work together, and know that God will guide us. Here are just a few endeavors that may cheer and reassure you about First Lutheran's ministry going forward:

- By the time you read this, we will have had our first Sunday worship via Livestream on Facebook. Pastor Mike is hopeful this may be the first step to becoming a megachurch (kidding, of course).
- We are firmly committed to maintain our 9 a.m. Sunday radio broadcast on KOWZ 100.9FM, and we have added a Lenten devotion at 6:40 p.m. Wednesday evenings on the station, too. What a gift to share God's word in this way!
- We continue to connect with Sunday School families; and the Church Facebook page will be our primary means of communication. (We sure miss our students already!)
- Monthly newsletters continue, and weekly bulletins are available at our

website: firstlutheranbpc.com. At our website, you may also sign up for FlockNote, our text messaging service; secure online giving through Vancor; and easily link to Facebook, too.

- We have begun a weekly one-page newsletter, *Postcards from Your Pastors*, distributed to members at Prairie Manor, Heather Haus, and our homebound list. If you would like to be added to this mailing, just send a carrier pigeon, or call our office 8-11 a.m., Monday-Friday.
- Pastors Heidi and Mike, and our visitation Pastor Dick Hegal, will make every effort to continue pastoral care. Church voicemail is checked regularly.
- Scheduled pastoral acts (baptisms, weddings, funerals) will be handled

on a case-by-case basis, following guidelines of the CDC, MN Department of Health, and local health departments.

As we are able, we WILL provide pastoral support, educational opportunities, and God's Word, and we know other pastors and faith communities are committed to the same. We are so grateful for you. Along with God's love, you are your church's most precious resource. We need you!

Speaking of you, dear readers, how are you? How are you faring...really? What are your fears, your joys, your blessings? How are your children and grandchildren adjusting in these days? Would you like someone to pray with you by phone? Or do a grocery drop-off? How are your

neighbors? What can you offer your family, your city, your world right now? This is not the time for us to be timid, but to reach out in all the ways we can.

As I visited Heather Haus and Villa 2 last Monday, we talked about residents' experiences with the polio epidemic. I admired their faithful memories of how God took care of them then... and still does, today. I encouraged them to hang on to those memories, and even more, to that faith. God is near—God's love never changes. Morning by morning, there are new mercies. Great is God's faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:23)

With prayers for your health and well-being, and deep confidence in God's faithfulness, Pastor Heidi Heimgartner.

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 Venn 507-256-4288 Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun. FIRST LUTHERAN — AFLC 503 Radel Ct., Ellendale Pastor Richard Sliper 507-684-4551 Men's Bible Study: 8 a.m. Saturday Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday (Kids church- 9 a.m. and Confirmation- 10:15 a.m.) Jesus and Me: 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesday & Thursday Call to Prayer: 7 p.m. Tuesday Bible Study: 9:30 a.m. Wednesday Wednesday School: 6:15-7 p.m. followed by Youth Group- 7-9 p.m. FIRST LUTHERAN — ELCA 434 First St. SW, Bloomington Senior Pastor: Rev. Heidi Heimgartner Associate Pastor: Rev. Mike Walenius 507-383-4621 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 goodshepherdowatonna.com Worship: 8 a.m., 9:15 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sunday School: 9:15 a.m. MOLAND LUTHERAN — ELCA 7618 NE 84th Ave., Kenyon Pastor Nancy Edwardson 507-789-6661 Worship: 10:45 a.m. Sun. Sunday School: 9:30 a.m. PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN — ELCA 9651 SW 75th St., Ellendale 507-465-8366 Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun. Sunday School: 9 a.m. Sun. REDEEMER LUTHERAN — LCMS 1054 Truman Ave., Owatonna Pastor Kirk Griebel 507-451-2720 Worship: 9 a.m. Sun. Education Hour: 10:15 a.m. Sun.	RED OAK GROVE LUTHERAN — ELCA 30456 Mower-Freeborn Road, Austin Rev. Suzanne Froelich, Interim Pastor 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 28959 630th Ave., Sargeant Pastor Collin Duling 507-251-5568 Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun. Sunday School: 9 a.m. ST. JOHN LUTHERAN-ELCA 1301 Lincoln Ave. Owatonna Pastors Dave Klaviter and 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 770th 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 Krusemark 507-567-2272 Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun. Sunday School: 9:45 a.m. ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN — ELCA 2781 SW 92nd Ave., Meriden Pastor Rev. Dean Smith 507-451-2165 Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sunday Sunday School: 9:15 a.m. TRINITY LUTHERAN — ELCA 609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna 507-451-4520 tclowatonna.org Senior Pastor: Rev. Todd Bugler Associate Pastor: Rev. Amanda Floy Deacon: Kris Oppegard Worship: 5 p.m. Saturday; 8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m. Sunday Sunday School: 8:15 a.m. & 9:30 a.m. TRINITY LUTHERAN — ELCA 104 First St. SE., Hayfield Pastor Paul Hauschild 507-477-2248 www.trinityhayfield.org Worship: 8 a.m., & 10:30 a.m. Sun. Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.	TRINITY LUTHERAN — LCMS 108 Thistle 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 Krusemark 507-567-2272 Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun. Sunday School: 9:15 a.m. ZION LUTHERAN — ELCA 7126 SW 98th St., Ellendale Pastor: Rev. Dean Smith Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sunday Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.	ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH 512 S. Elm Ave., Owatonna Pastor James Starasinch Deacon Patrick Fagan 507-451-4845 Saturday Mass: 4 p.m. Sunday Mass: 8 & 10 a.m. Reconciliation: 3:30-5 p.m. Sat. Daily Mass: 8 a.m. Tues., Wed. & Fri. (Communion Service 8 a.m. Thursday) Adoration Chapel available Mon. - Fri. 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Key job required after hours or weekends CHRISTIAN CHRIST COMMUNITY COVENANT 540 SE 18th St., Owatonna Dr. V. Brent Carlson, Pastor 507-451-1032 Worship: 9 a.m. Sun. Sunday Connections: 10:15 a.m. PENTECOSTAL FIRST UNITED PENTECOSTAL 230 Locust Ave., Owatonna Pastor Eliazar Talamantes 507-363-2240 Worship: 10 a.m. Sunday; 6:30 p.m. Wednesday METHODIST BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST 43089 180th St., Medford (Seven miles west of Medford on CR 25) 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 Girsena 507-484-2731 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: 9 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 Pettit 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. Worship (Spanish): 10:30 a.m. Sun. Bible Study: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday 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. Sun. Prayer Meeting: 7:30 p.m. Wed. MORMON THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS 404 31st St. NW, Austin Bishop Rick Bremner 507-433-9042 Worship: 9 a.m. Sun. PRESBYTERIAN ASSOCIATED CHURCH Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ 800 Havana Road, Owatonna 507-451-1546 www.associatedchurch.org office@associatedchurch.org Sunday Worship: 9 a.m. (Fellowship, Church School, and Adult Discussions follow) Wednesday Activities: Sept - May (see website for schedule) FIRST PRESBYTERIAN 109 E. Main St., Hayfield Pastor Kirk Johnson 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 651-955-4012 Worship: 11 a.m. Sat. Bible Stud: 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.vibrantlifeag.com Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun. Kids Church: 10:30 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 www.firstbaptistowatonna.com Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Sun. Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun. BETHEL BAPTIST 1611 Hemlock Ave. Owatonna Pastor Mike Sinnerman 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.
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65 Science Fair projects unveiled at BP

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Sixty-five Blooming Prairie Elementary school Science Fair projects were displayed and judged on March 9 in the elementary gym.

Winners (first place) of the Science Fair now advance to regional competition in Mankato.

The Science Fair was open to all students in grades 3-6. Science Fair participation was mandatory for all fifth graders. Students used online resources and curious ideas of their own to create Science Fair experiments and entries, said fifth grade teachers Kayla Harvey and Alexis Shaw.

Students set up their projects at 4 p.m. and had them judged at 4:30. The fair was open to the public at 6 p.m.

One project took pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters and entitled their project "Energy out of



Slava Kritzer, right, a senior at Blooming Prairie High School, was one of the judges of the BP Elementary School Science Fair last Monday. Here, he judges a project called "Going Down Gone."

Spare Change." The change made a light bulb light up. Another project showed how different drinks affect teeth.

"How Salty Does the Sea Have to be to Make an Egg Float" was another project. Jayden Wencil, a fifth grader, made his project about milk mysteries of milk composition.

Andrew Schwarz and Mason Peterson, third graders, put together a project called "Egg-Pastic." Claire Staloch and Lizzy Johnson had a project called Bread Battle, determining what type of bread molds the fastest. Montgomery Matuschak, a third grader, built a project on splitting water molecules.

Bristol Hansen and Amelia Pauly, both third graders, made a project called "What cleans pennies best."



Aubrey Klocke, left, and Sophia Esplan, right, sit with their booth entitled: "Rethink Your Drink." They had samples of what beverages can do to your teeth.

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And the walls came tumbling down

BP Main Street landmarks demolished

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

The corner of Main Street in Blooming Prairie will look much different after the demolition of The Bakery and Sportstitch buildings are demolished.

That's a given from well-known Blooming Prairie contractor Keith Johnson.

Johnson and his crew began the demolition process last week and he said he hoped to have the job completed in 10-12 days.

"That's one thing my company does," Johnson said. The Bakery building is the former First National Bank building that was constructed in 1875.

The Bakery, owned by Gregg Fristedt and Sportstitch, owned by Linda

Klemmensen shared a common wall. The Sportstitch building was actually owned by Tara Amundson.

Fire on Jan. 28 severely damaged both buildings. Johnson was one of two bidders on the project.

Johnson put up a fence around the buildings during the demolition process. "We've got to barricade it and keep people out," he said.

Johnson said he plans to save the floor and metal rafters in the Sportstitch building and he hopes to salvage the wooden beams in the basement of The Bakery building. Plans are also to save the front which once was a bank.

He will have 4-5 workers on the project, including his brothers Kyle and Kent.



Blooming Prairie's Main Street has a big hole after two landmark businesses were demolished with the past week. Top left: Slabs of cement in the Sportstitch building were salvaged by K.J. Construction. Top middle: The basement below Sportstitch and The Bakery was attacked by demolition equipment with Keith Johnson supervising the effort. Top right: Two young onlookers are busy following the demolition. They are Sam Hinzmann, 2, at left, and Will Hinzmann, 4, at right. Their parents are Amy and Mark Hinzmann of BP. Big Photo: Munch! Munch! The hungry excavator clears out some more rubble while doing the demolition of the buildings gutted by fire. The project continues this week and will consume about 10-12 work days, according to Keith Johnson.

STAFF PHOTOS BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Former Owatonna radio personality named to Hall of Fame

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

A Twin Cities radio personality who got her start in the business in Owatonna has been named to the Minnesota Broadcasting Hall of Fame.

Pam Lundell, who hosted the morning show on KTIS-Radio, 98.5, began her radio career at KRFO in Owatonna in 1982. Long-time Owatonna radio icon Todd Hale was responsible for giving Lundell her first crack at radio.

"The legendary Todd Hale hired me and I started part-time weekends," Lundell said. "I particularly remember coming in Sundays and unwrapping Casey Kasem's Top 40 album each week and putting it on the turntable and inserting local breaks after that it was the Polka Hour."

Recalling her early days in Owatonna, Lundell says she loved working with local businesses producing their radio ads for KRFO. Lundell jokes about how long ago she got her start that she can't even remember what name she used on the Owatonna airwaves. "I honestly can't remember what name I used. It was Pam and probably my maiden name of Neese," she said.

She stayed at KRFO for about two years before moving to the Twin Cit-



Former KRFO Radio personality Pam Lundell has been inducted into the Minnesota Broadcasting Hall of Fame. She got her start in radio thanks to Owatonna radio icon Todd Hale.

ies. "I will never forget the great staff and mentoring by Todd Hale and the crew," Lundell said. "It was the start of what's now turned into an over 30 year Twin Cities radio career."

After leaving KRFO, Lundell performed traffic reporting at Metro Traffic Control where she met her first husband, John Lundell, who passed away in 2005. She will join John in the Hall of Fame as he was posthumously inducted in 2009.

Lundell also performed other stints at Classic Country 104, Smooth Jazz 104.1, 104.1 The Point, Minnesota News Network, KLBB mornings and most recently for the past 15 years with KTIS, a Twin Cities Christian station.

She attended the University of Minnesota where she majored in broadcasting and psychology.

Paul Shea, who is the current KRFO brand manager, was excited in not only sharing the news about Lundell's induction, but also the person responsible for her beginnings. "Todd got the ball rolling for her," Shea says. "He certainly can identify talent."

Shea acknowledged that Lundell's time at KRFO wasn't a long stop, but "it was a launching for her and the first real on-air gig."

Joining Lundell in this year's Hall of Fame will be Randy Shaver, Larry "Moon" Thompson, Allen Lottberg and Don Egert.

The induction ceremony is scheduled for Sept. 12 at the Pavek Museum in St. Louis Park.

Nutrition for women, infants and children



Steele Talkin
ANDREA MARSHALL

Do you know someone who is pregnant? Breastfeeding? Or a parent with a child(ren) under age 5? If so, they may be eligible for the WIC program designed to improve their health and wellbeing!

What is WIC? WIC was established as a permanent program in 1974 to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. This mission is carried out by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, nutrition education (including breastfeeding promotion and support), and referrals to health and other social services.

Where is WIC available? The WIC program operates out of Steele County Public Health, located at 635 Florence Ave., Owatonna. WIC appointments can also be scheduled at the Blooming Prairie Clinic on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Interested families can contact the WIC Dept. at 507-444-7660 for the Owatonna office or toll free from Blooming Prairie 507-583-2283 or Ellendale 507-684-2211. While funded through grants from the Federal

Government, WIC is administered by 90 State agencies, with services provided at a variety of clinic locations including, but not limited to, county health departments, hospitals, schools, and Indian Health Service facilities.

WIC Facts

- If you participate in another assistance program you may be automatically income-eligible for WIC.
- Breastfeeding mothers are eligible to participate in WIC longer than non-breastfeeding mothers.
- More than half of the infants in the U.S. participate in WIC.
- WIC participants support the local economy through their purchases.
- WIC works with farmers markets to help increase participant access to provide fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

What food benefits do WIC participants receive? The foods provided through the WIC Program are designed to supplement participants' diets with specific nutrients. WIC authorized foods include infant cereal, baby food, iron-fortified adult cereal, fruits and vegetables, vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable juice, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, soy-based beverages, tofu, peanut butter, dried and canned beans/peas, canned fish, whole wheat bread and other whole-grain options. For infants of women who do not fully breastfeed, WIC provides iron-fortified in-

SEE NUTRITION FOR WOMEN, B7

State funds final stretch of Hwy. 14 expansion

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

The coronavirus didn't stop Minnesota lawmakers from improving the last stretch of a deadly highway running through southern Minnesota.

On March 16, the legislature passed a bill to complete the expansion of Hwy. 14 from Nicollet to New Ulm. The bill would make the roadway a four-lane stretch. About half of the funding would come from a \$36 million federal loan with a 1% interest rate. The Minnesota Department of Transportation has also applied for a federal grant that would fund the remainder of the

\$74 million project.

State officials have promised to find the extra money to fund the 12-mile expansion if the state doesn't get the federal grant.

Construction on the four-lane could begin as early as 2021. "This is a historic day for southern Minnesota. The Legislature's action is a welcome piece of good news amid all the uncertainty our communities are currently facing," said Karen Foreman, president of the U.S. Highway 14 Partnership. "By taking up this Highway 14 legislation during such a trying time, it signals that legislators are doing all they can to respond to the COVID-19

crisis while still making the types of long-term investments that will help Minnesota pull through and thrive for years to come."

Foreman pointed out that this legislation represents the final major piece in an effort that has lasted more than 60 years. "Expanding Highway 14 to four lanes all the way from New Ulm to Rochester will undoubtedly save lives and stimulate our regional economy," she said. "Every time we have expanded a segment of Highway 14, economic growth along the corridor has followed. This stretch will be no different," she added.

The other two-lane stretch between Owatonna and Dodge Center had pre-

viously been approved for funding. While trees and brush have been cleared over the past few months, the actual construction is expected to start this spring. Construction will take two years.

The U.S. Highway 14 Partnership has been pushing for the expansion since 1998. The Partnership includes local governments, private businesses and other organizations across Southern Minnesota. Follow the Partnership on online at ushighway14.com and on Twitter at @Hwy14Pshp. Over the years, there have been countless fatalities and injuries along Hwy. 14, mostly in the two-lane stretches.

Times are changing



MAYOR
LOIS NELSON

It's Friday the 13th as I start this article. Today's mail included the CENSUS 2020 form so sat down and completed it on the computer in about six minutes. Remember to use the specific ID on your letter when responding to my2020census.gov website. If you do not have access to a computer, the letter does state "...we will send you a paper questionnaire in a few weeks for you to complete and mail back."

There is a yard full of robins dancing around and helping themselves to the winter season bird bath. The first crocus is showing its pretty little head along with the first resurrection bulbs popping out of the lawn mulch in a protected corner of our patio, all signs that spring must be coming!

Then, we heard from the President and our Governor and all our normal day and nighttime activities have changed! Novel coronavirus or COVID19 messages are all over the place!

When COVID19 started in this country, emphasis was on four steps to maintain your health: 1) Stay home if feeling sick; 2) Cover your sneeze or cough; 3) Wash hands well and often; 4) Avoid touching your face. These are still the basic rules. Steele County Public Health has the lead locally in providing us with information. Its website: http://www.co.steele.mn.us/divisions/community_services/public_health/index.php

includes references to both the national and state department of health and local updates.

As the news changes from morning to night, we need to use common sense in trying to balance family, health and work. This includes grocery shopping! Over buying means someone else who can't get to a store or has limited income for purchases is doing without. Thank you to many of our area grocery stores for now designating early morning hours for senior citizens and those identified as vulnerable. At home, I've said that a goal has been to get to bottom of freezer and what better time to do so!

Be assured that your city and school district leadership are taking numerous steps to identify what will be a new normal for everyone. Whether for just two weeks or a longer time frame, we all need to keep you informed through our websites, Facebook pages, emails or written postings.

This is the time to really work with your neighbors. Make phone calls to those living alone or with health issues just to check on them and see if they need anything. A few groceries or a prescription pickup may be greatly appreciated.

We are into spring so with warmer temperatures, get out and walk, pick up sticks or put those holiday decorations away. Encourage your children to do the same for your neighbors. Send notes to older family members and neighbors. Encourage artwork from those students now stuck at home.

A Facebook message also suggested: 1) Trying a new recipe with all family members involved; 2) Getting out puzzles and board games; 3) Learning a new card game; 4) Demonstrate sewing on a button; 5)

Read a book out loud for everyone's enjoyment; 6) Resurrect spring cleaning activities-challenge your children to find the floor in their closets; and 7) you can certainly add to the list basic financing and household management. In Medford, we ask that you email or call, 307-455-2866 City Hall with any questions or concerns you may have. We also ask that you respect the health of our employees and use the drop box for making payments rather than walking in expecting to talk to someone. We are committed to keeping our office and infrastructure operating.

The Medford Muni is closed to on-line sales at least through March 27. Off-sale is open and pizzas can be ordered for pickup. Staffing is minimal at this time.

At our regular council meeting on Monday night, social distancing of each other was evident. Thankfully, our meeting included numerous, non-controversial house-keeping items requiring little discussion. The audit presentation was reviewed and handled by telephone. We did take the steps to support and pass an emergency resolution for our operations during the same period of time as the state declaration. Meetings will continue to be taped and available the Thursdays following our meeting at: <http://www.owatonna.com/owatonna-live.com/Medford-City-Meetings.html>.

In the meantime, be proactive with continuing the four basic steps mentioned, enjoy your extra family time, check in with your neighbors, write notes, take a deep breath and enjoy the outdoors. Mayor Lois

Lois Nelson is in her eighth year as mayor of Medford. She writes for this newspaper monthly.



First memorial honoring gold star families in state coming to Mantorville

BY ALEX MUEHRING
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Any military service member that loses their life while serving their country posthumously receives a purple heart. Consequently, the hole they leave in their family isn't forgotten as their family also receives an honor, a gold star, for their sacrifice.

One local gold star family, Dave and Kay Swenson, lost their son, Curtis, when he was killed in action on April 2, 2010.

Recently, the couple partnered with the Herschel "Woody" Williams Medal of Honor Foundation to establish a Gold Star Families Memorial in Mantorville.

"People will go 'Why Mantorville, you're from Rochester?' For us, we ride with a group called Tribute to the Troops and one of the founding gentlemen is a recording artist. He has an album called *Songs for Soldiers* and one of his songs is heroes come from small towns and so that's kind of how we explain it," said Kay Swenson.

Even though the memorial will be located in Mantorville and the Swenson family is from Rochester, she explained that it's meant to honor gold star families from all around southeastern Minnesota.

"We feel that it represents a community and an area as a whole," she said.

Dave Swenson said this memorial will remind the community that the impact of a military service member's dying extends beyond just that one person's life coming to an end.

"For every young man who's killed overseas, there's a family like ours

back here that people don't hear so much about. You see them in the news, but with our son and any family that's lost a child like that, you just don't want people to forget it. It's the same with this. They die, but there's also a grieving family behind them," he said. "We've met some gold star families from Vietnam and 50 years later you can tell the pain's still there. We want people to remember that our daughter lost her brother and we lost our son."

Someone else who thinks remembering the families who lost loved ones is important is Herschel "Woody" Williams.

He (Williams) was a marine in World War II and Medal of Honor recipient and when he came home, he felt the families of the fallen were not recognized enough for their sacrifice so part of what he did was start up this foundation," said Kay Swenson.

Through his foundation, she said Williams has unveiled 60 gold star families memorial across the United States, but the one that the Swensons are helping build would be the first one in Minnesota.

Before partnering with the Herschel "Woody" Williams Medal of Honor Foundation, they started a non-profit organization in their sons' name, the Curtis Swenson Memorial Fund.

"We've been incorporated since 2014, but we've been doing a golf benefit for the past 10 years and we raise money for scholarships, but when we got onto this [the memorial] a lot of the money is funneled through our foundation," she said.

Once all the money is

raised and the memorial is fully built, Kay Swenson said the front would feature a life-size cutout of a soldier. While the front of each memorial is the same, they get to design the homeland, family and sacrifice panels on the back.

"A lot of people will do designs specific to their home region," she said. Before they can make those choices, the Swensons have to finish raising funds for the memorial.

With about 15 months left, she said they're halfway to their fundraising goal.

"We've mainly been working with a lot of the veteran's groups and we've raised about \$35,000, but we have to raise \$70,000," said Kay Swenson.

Even though they have more funds to raise, they can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

"We're hopefully going to do some groundwork this summer and then dedicate it next summer," she said.

The tentative date for the memorial's dedication is June 19, 2021.

Any community members interested in helping the Curtis Swenson Memorial Fund reach its fundraising goal can do so by sending donations to: CPL Curtis M. Swenson Memorial Fund, attention: MN Gold Star Monument Committee, 4520 68th Ln NW, Rochester, MN, 55901.

Another way to give is by participating in the fund's 10th annual memorial golf benefit on Saturday, April 30. Registration for the benefit is currently open and golfers can register through the fund's Facebook page or by visiting csmemorialfund.org.

Matthew Kern joins RE/MAX Venture

Matt Gillard, broker/owner of RE/MAX Venture is pleased to announce Matthew Kern as the newest agent to join the Owatonna RE/MAX office.

"After completing my Active Duty service in the Army and moving back to Minnesota, I have spent the majority of my time working in the real estate realm, both in construction/remodeling and also purchasing investment properties," said Kern. "I will be putting this knowledge and experience to work helping people sell and buy homes and properties."

Kern went on to say, "I grew up on a dairy farm south of Owatonna, and now having acquired an interest in and passion for real estate, I am looking



Matthew Kern

forward to helping family, friends, former classmates and others achieve their dreams & goals."

He adds, "I didn't consider anything other than a real estate career with RE/MAX Venture. I appreciate the values on which Matt and Deb are building their business. I

know I will get the training and encouragement I need to be successful within a positive environment - from Broker, to fellow agents, to support staff."

"As a veteran myself, I am proud and appreciative of Matthew's service to our country. He is exactly the type of agent we are looking for," said Gillard. "He is learning-based and self-motivated, with a positive attitude and real desire to help others. He is a great addition to the professional, service-oriented team we are building here at RE/MAX Venture."

Located at 118 N Cedar Avenue in Owatonna, RE/MAX Venture serves Steele County and the surrounding areas, specializing in residential, small acreage, investment and commercial properties.

Auxiliary supplies sleep sacks at hospital

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

With profits earned during a two-day Holiday Bazaar last November, the Owatonna Hospital Auxiliary purchased 384 Halo SleepSacks to be distributed to infants born at the hospital.

The Halo SleepSacks are donated to the Birthing Unit of the Owatonna Hospital.

Audrey Oldendorf, tri-chair of the Holiday Bazaar, recently presented some of the SleepSacks to Wendy Sirek, RN and to Kelly Schwichtenberg, RN, in the Birthing Unit.

The SleepSacks provide safe sleep for youngsters from birth to several months old.

"The special SleepSack keeps the infants on their backs in a safe position," said Oldendorf.

The Hospital Auxiliary has been providing these sleep sacks for the hospital the last five years.

In 1961, Bill Schmid and his wife Cathy suffered an unspeakable tragedy when they lost their infant daughter, Haley, to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), which is the sudden, unexplained death of a seemingly healthy infant up to an age of one year.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Audrey Oldendorf (center), tri-chair of the Owatonna Hospital Bazaar, presents a Halo SleepSack to two Registered Nurses in the Birthing Unit of the Hospital. The Auxiliary purchased 384 SleepSacks. Accepting the SleepSacks are: Wendy Sirek, left, and Kelly Schwichtenberg.

After the loss of his daughter, Schmid began an exhaustive review of the latest medical research and health recommendations for creating a safe sleep environment for babies to help ensure other families would not have to endure the same tragedy.

As a professional engineer, Schmid devoted himself to finding new and creative ways to address sleep environment risks, which are primarily centered around loose bedding.

Bedding can accidentally cover a baby's face and interfere with breathing, Schmid learned.

With these risks in mind, Schmid formed HALO Innovations and created the HALO SleepSack Wearable Blanket, which is intended to eliminate the likelihood that a baby can get entangled with clothing and loose bedding during sleep.

The SleepSack wearable blanket is sleeveless and is worn over pajamas or a bodysuit to take the place of loose blankets.

Since its launch, the HALO SleepSack brand has become the nation's bestselling wearable blanket for babies and is widely used by hospitals nationwide.

Cancer Corner

Blooming Prairie Cancer Group

Purse Bingo has been postponed

Organizers of the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group's Purse Bingo have announced that the two events scheduled for Saturday, April 4 at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. have been postponed.

Cheri Krejci, BP Cancer Group treasurer, says Saturday, June 13 has been chosen as a replacement date at this time.

"We are sorry for this but it is the best decision for everyone," said Krejci.

Sponsored by Krejci Ford

St. Mary's music student chosen for honor band

Bennett Wray-Raabolle, an eighth grader at St. Mary's School in Owatonna, has been selected for membership in the Minnesota Band Directors Association (MBDA) 6-8 Grade State Honor Band for the 2019-2020 school year. Her director at St. Mary's School is Becky Berkley.

Wray-Raabolle was one of 89 students selected from 200 who auditioned this winter for a position in this group.

The students participating will have the opportunity to work with some of the finest music educators in their section coaches, and will be conducted by Verlene Stotts, Band Director at Discovery Middle School in Fargo, N.D. The students will rehearse with Stotts on Saturday, April 18 at Marshall High School in Marshall and will then perform a concert at 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 19 at the Schwan's Performing Arts Center at Marshall High School.

The Honor Band program is an on-go-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bennett Wray-Raabolle of Owatonna has been selected for the Minnesota Honor Band. She is a student at St. Mary's School in Owatonna.

ing project of MBDA, a professional organization of band directors representing band programs of all grade levels from throughout the state of Minnesota. The mission of MBDA is to assist in the development of band directors and band programs in schools, colleges, and communities throughout Minnesota.

Albert Lea Theatre reschedules comedy

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the CDC recommendations regarding large community gatherings to prevent the spread of coronavirus, Albert Lea Community Theatre (ALCT) has postponed the upcoming comedy "Doublewide, Texas" from its eight original dates next month to May 28-June 6.

Tickets that have already been purchased for this play, including season tickets, will be honored at the new corresponding show dates.

For example, tickets for opening night Thursday (previously April 23) are transitioned to the new

opening night Thursday, May 28.

Patrons do not need to purchase new tickets if they intend to attend the new corresponding show night. Any patron who would like to exchange tickets for a different date or request a refund should contact the box office at 507-377-4371.

"Doublewide, Texas," directed by Brian Mattson, will be performed at the Marion Ross Performing Arts Center in downtown Albert Lea on May 28, 29, 30, 31, June 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Shows start at 7:30 p.m., with the Sunday, May 31, matinee, at 2 p.m.

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

J & H LIQUOR

WINTER EVENTS

BAR BINGO: Monday @ 6:30 p.m.

BLOOMING GRAPEVINE WINE CLUB: Tues. 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. FEB 11, MARCH 10, APRIL 7, MAY 5. GALA BENEFITS THE EP YOUTH CLUB

EUCHRE: JAN 25, FEB. 22 AND MARCH 28
1 p.m. - 2 Person team sign up at the Bar

Mark Your Calendar

April: Customer Appreciation Day
"24 Years of Business"
July 3: Street Dance - Red Dirt
Post: 5 p.m. to Midnight - \$5 coverage charge. 21 and over. ID required.
July 4: Open - 9 am to close (Bar & Grill)
July 18: B.O.B. Ride - Toys for Tots. Registration: 9 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. @ 444 E. 1st Rd. Ride: Leaves @ 10:30 a.m. MEAL: 5 p.m. @ J&H. (2019 Donation was \$17,500)

All event details available at J&H Liquor
340 E. Main St. • Blooming Prairie
583-7557

BUSINESS FOR SALE

Need a career change?
Be your own boss!
Great opportunity to own this homebased bar/caf   sale.
Contact Harvey for details.

WE CAN ACCOMMODATE YOUR BIRTHDAY, ANNIVERSARY, OR RETIREMENT PARTY



Mastering Gardening
LORRIE RUGG

Welcome to Gardening with the Master Gardeners. I will be writing an article once a month and hope to bring some gardening news to the readers. I hope that we can have some guest writers from our Master Gardening group as the months progress. We will address gardening topics that are appropriate as the gardening season begins.

You might ask yourself, what can I do this time of year as I sit and look at the snow covering on my flower beds?

There are things to be done even as we are in the

waning part, hopefully, of the winter season.

Pruning trees tops the list of things that can be done, this time of year. Oaks, apple, crabapple, maple, birch, honeylocust, showy mountain ash, hawthorne, butternut, walnut, ironwood and blue beech are the varieties that can be successful pruned this time of year. Some trees like birch, maple and walnut mat drip sap from the cuts, but that is OK. It is a natural occurrence.

Start seeds that take a long time to germinate or grow to planting size, such as, geraniums, pansies, wax begonias, leeks, onions, alpine strawberry, brodiaea, dusty miller, fountain grass, impatiens, larkspur, lobelia, stocks, torenia and celery. There

are many products on the market for seed starting, peat pots work great and you can just plant them in the ground. Make sure to score the bottom or simply remove it before directly planting it into the soil.

Get your gardening equipment and tools ready to go for the season. Clean those tools with a rag or old towel and wipe all surfaces with isopropyl or ethyl alcohol (70-100%). A 10% bleach solution is fine for non-metal items. Alcohol is better for metal as it won't cause rusting. Sharpen pruning tools with a sharpening stone. A file can be used to sharpen the blades of shovels, hoes, trowels, garden forks, spades and any other gardening tools. Get them ready before you really need them.

Finally, beat the rush a get a soil test done. Spring is a busy time at the U of M Soil Testing Lab, so doing it early you will get a quicker turn around time. I know there is still snow on the ground, but you may be able to collect a sample as the frost is not as deep in the ground this winter. I hope these tips will help you get a jump on your spring gardening. Hopefully we will not have any late April snowstorms, so we can get out early this year. I will have to more tips next month on more things to do as the weather gets warmer and the snow continues to melt.

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

LTO cancels "Cat's Cradle"

Due to the ongoing situation with the COVID-19 virus and the recommendations from the CDC and the Minnesota Department of Health, the Little Theatre of Owatonna has come to the decision to cancel this season's production of "Cat's

Cradle" by Leslie Stands. The committee is committed to helping keep patrons, volunteers, cast, and crew safe. LTO expressed that it is truly saddened that it will be unable to share this story with audiences at this time. LTO hopes to bring

this production to the community in a future season. LTO is committed to its mission to provide the community of Owatonna and surrounding areas the opportunity to participate in quality live theatre as an audience member, actor or pro-

duction crew. As a non-profit dependent on the community as well as ticket sales to remain open, LTO did not come to this decision lightly. The organization thanks everyone for their understanding and patience at this time.

BP Ed Foundation auctions postponed

The auction committee of the Blooming Prairie Education Foundation met on Monday, March 16 and made the decision to postpone the scheduled March 28 Ed Foundation auctions.

No alternative date has been chosen by the

committee. The committee is still accepting auction items and has a nice collection of items already, says Karen Fouarge of the committee. Items can be dropped off at New York Life or at Floor Tech.

Allina scales back hospital services

Working in concert with the Minnesota Department of Health and other health care providers in Minnesota and Wisconsin, Allina Health is making adjustments to its coronavirus (COVID-19) testing procedures to conserve resources for the most critically ill patients and for the safety of staff.

Allina operates Owatonna Hospital. This means that effective immediately, no outpatient testing for COVID-19 will be performed in Allina Health clinics, Urgent Care, Everyday Clinics and Emergency Departments. Patients who require hospitalization may still be tested. In addition to the most critically ill, health care providers will continue to have access to testing, if needed.

If you believe you need urgent clinical assessment for COVID-19, please continue to isolate yourself at home and complete our free online COVID-19 screening interview. It's available 24/7 and takes about 15 minutes to complete. An Allina Health Everyday Online provider will review your information and email you with next steps.

Allina Health is taking other steps to conserve resources and protect staff. Those steps include:

- Implementing further

visitor restrictions across Allina Health. Beginning March 18, Allina Health will restrict all visitors across our system, with compassionate exemptions available.

- Suspending all non-essential/non-urgent visits in clinics until further notice. Some visits may be converted to a virtual visit when appropriate;
- Going to an urgency ranking system in all of our hospitals for elective surgeries and procedural areas.

Beginning today surgical and procedural leaders and surgeons are making decisions about which currently scheduled and future elective surgery cases will proceed and which cases will be canceled and rescheduled for a later time. It does NOT mean that all surgeries are being canceled. Impacted patients will be contacted about their specific situation.

The surgical and various procedure areas changes will affect all of our facilities across Allina Health. Allina Health remains focused on all aspects of the response in the communities it serves and is making changes as the situation continues to rapidly evolve. Allina's priority remains keeping staff and patients safe.

While Allina understands that these changes may be challenging to the public, it is taking all necessary steps to ensure that it can protect staff and safely provide care for all those who need it. Flattening the curve by practicing good hygiene and social distancing, including staying home as much as possible remains the best response that we have to preserve our resources for those who need it the most. Allina's continued promise is to update staff and patients on the latest information as it becomes available.

Exchange Club cancels regular meetings

The Exchange Club of Steele County is canceling its regular meetings, starting Friday, March 20, until

further notice due to the COVID-19 situation. The club typically meets at 7 a.m. each Friday.

GUEST COLUMN

Still working for you amid Covid-19

BY JOHN PETERSBURG

If you ever wondered how quickly things can change, just revisit the events of the past week or two as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have gone from telling people to wash their hands to watching the governor close schools, businesses, and restaurants.

Similarly things have changed at the State Capitol as well. Talks of tax relief and bonding bills have been set aside in place of coronavirus preparedness. Because the actions have been fast and furious in St. Paul lately, I wanted to provide the most recent updates.

On Standby
The House will formally remain in session, but going forward meetings and floor sessions will only be taking place on an on-call basis until April 14. Please note that this does not mean my work is finished. I am still working for you, and if you have legislative questions or comments I want to hear from you. Please contact me any time by email at rep.john.petersburg@house.mn or by phone at 651-296-5368.

COVID-19 Bill
Early March 17, the legislature unanimously approved in the House and Senate \$200 million in additional funding to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding adds to the \$21 million passed last week to assist the Department of Health and local health agencies, making resources available to hospitals, providers, ambulance services, long-term care facilities, and other entities who will be involved in the response to this outbreak.

There are taxpayer protections in the bill including legislative oversight, consequences for unauthorized use of funds, and returning money that goes unspent back to the general fund.

Legislators will continue to monitor the COVID-19 outbreak as it unfolds, and take additional measures if necessary to maximize our state's ability to respond and care for those who are ill, at-risk, or dealing with the consequences of

the widespread school and business closures.

Unemployment
Governor Walz has issued an executive order to ensure workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic have full access to unemployment benefits. If your employment has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, visit the Unemployment Insurance Program website at www.uimn.org to learn more about applying for unemployment benefits online, or see answers to your questions.

Also, a note to our small business owners: we continue to discuss ways to help us face this unprecedented crisis, and I will keep you posted on any legislative progress.

Helpful Websites
Below you will find the best places to receive the most accurate COVID-19 information and if you have questions I urge you to visit these websites first:

The Minnesota Department of Health's COVID-19 page is: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>

The Center for Disease Control's COVID-19 webpage is: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

The Mayo Clinic's COVID-19 page is: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/symptoms-causes/syc-20479963>

Schools and Daycares
The Minnesota Department of Health has a hotline available related to schools and/or childcare. Call (651) 297-1304 for more information.

Do you have questions about your school district's COVID-19 response? Visit the following:
Owatonna: <https://www.owatonna.k12.mn.us/>
Waseca: <https://www.waseca.k12.mn.us/>
Please stay healthy, and I will continue to update on the latest Capitol news as it becomes available.

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

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

It's tough being a cop. If our jobs weren't stressful enough the way it is, we often have to deal with even more anti-law enforcement rhetoric during an election.

We all try and stay positive, focused, and motivated to continuing our calling, to keep you and your families safe, and to get home after every shift to our families. This can be a challenge when our national media, government leaders, and even some of our presidential candidates use anti-police rhetoric to push the false narrative of systemic racism in law enforcement to gain votes and power – a narrative that became an obsession with some after the Ferguson shooting. Political candidates have made several false and inflammatory comments during this election cycle:

Sen. Bernie Sanders, when asked by a black student at Bene-

dict College for advice if they get pulled over by law enforcement, told the student, *"I would respect what they (the cops) are doing so that you don't get shot in the back of the head."* REALLY, Senator?

Vice President Joe Biden was asked what advice he would give to a black student, if she was his daughter, if she gets pulled over by the cops. His response, *"If you were my daughter, you'd be a Caucasian girl and you wouldn't be pulled over. That's what's wrong."* REALLY, Mr. Vice President?

Last year, on the five-year anniversary of the Brown shooting in Ferguson, Mo., Sen. Elizabeth Warren tweeted *"Five years ago Michael Brown was murdered by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. Michael was unarmed yet he was shot six times. I stand with activists and organizers who continue to fight for justice for Michael. We must confront systemic racism and police violence head on."* REALLY, Senator?

Murder is the unlawful killing of a human being with malice and without legal excuse or authority. President Obama's Department of Justice found there was no criminal intent

on Officer Wilson's part. False rumors about Brown's death, including the "Hands Up Don't Shoot" claim, ignited violent protests in Missouri and the rest of Black Lives Matter, resulting in many officers being hurt, targeted, and killed because of this stoking of America's division.

This inflammatory rhetoric and political pandering not only makes our job more dangerous, but it also erodes the relationships and trust that most members of law enforcement have worked so hard to develop in the communities we serve.

As cops, we believe there are things worth fighting and dying for. We know that not every problem can be solved through rational discourse – that some problems can only be solved through the application of force and violence. While we do prefer the former, we are perfectly capable of the latter when necessary.

We believe that fighting with others fear is honorable, noble, and just – and we are willing to pay the price for that deeply held belief. Why? For most, it isn't a choice. It's simply who we are. It's how we are wired. It's our calling.

It's tough being a cop, and the cumulative stress of the job can really take a toll. These challenges are sometimes referred to as "The Weight of the Badge," and can end up being too much for some to manage without help – resulting in officer suicides. We've seen too many of these right here in Minnesota over the past year or two. Nationally, we are seeing more law enforcement suicides a year than line of duty deaths. As a profession, we are trying to change the stigma of mental health challenges recognizing that we need to create a working environment where it's ok not to be ok. It's ok to ask for help if you need it.

Please don't judge our cops based on some of these false and divisive comments made by politicians this year – it's a tough enough job the way it is without having to listen to our political leaders throwing us under the proverbial bus while pandering for your votes.

Scott Rose is in his second term as Dodge County Sheriff. He writes for this newspaper regularly.

CRIME BRIEF

Underage party busted by police

An underage alcohol party has been busted by Owatonna Police.

On March 13, police responded to a residence on Creekside Drive after receiving a 911 hang-up call from the house. Officers needed to verify there wasn't a need for emergency services.

Upon arrival, officers found a home in which a group of underage people were having a drinking party while the parents were on vacation. In all, 12 people were charged with minor consumption while the minor host of the party was charged with violating the social host ordinance.

Police said this case serves as a good reminder of the local social host ordinance, which stipulates it is unlawful for any person to host or allow an event or gathering where alcoholic beverages are present with underage people consuming.

COURT NEWS

Steele County

The following case was heard in Steele County District Court the week of March 9 with Judge Gary R. Larson presiding:

Jeremy M. Avelsgaard, 32, previously appeared and was convicted of felony violation of two or more order for protections within 10 years of previous conviction. He was sentenced to \$131, 30 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, attend support groups, psychological evaluation, no possession of firearms, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state and 3 years of supervised probation.

Benny Lendema, 27, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony violation of predatory offender registration requirement. The defendant was sentenced to \$131, 10 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, obtain permission to leave the state, predatory offender registration, 50 hours of community service and 3 years of supervised probation.

The following case was heard in Steele County District Court the week of March 9 with Judge Karen R. Duncan presiding:

Brandon C. Froid, 33, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony restraining order. Froid was sentenced to \$125, 45 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, psychological evaluation, obtain permission to leave the state, domestic abuse evaluation, cognitive skill training and 5 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of March 9 – 15:

BLUING PRAIRIE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Domingo D. Deluna, 18, Bluming Prairie, revoked

license and expired tabs, \$305.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Lisa R. Colby, 60, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Angelo M. Connolly, 51, Byron, speeding, \$115; Louis P. Doppelmann, 20, St. Paul, speeding, \$115; Darrell P. Eymann, 33, Iowa City, IA, speeding, \$215; Drew R. Ferguson, 27, Zumbrota, cancelled license, \$275; Nicholas G. Fladager, 23, Eagan, revoked license, \$275; Angel A. Gonzales, 31, Albert Lea, seat belt, \$100; Corey D. Hanson, 37, St. Peter, speeding, \$115; Su Haoyuan, 31, Chicago, speeding, \$125; Tanner S. Harlow, 24, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Amelia L. Howell, 37, Owatonna, seat belt, \$100; Mohammed J. Korneh, 27, Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$135; Theresa L. Langlie, 64, Ellendale, seat belt, \$100; David J. Neubauer, 35, Owatonna, cancelled license, stay of adjudication, \$25, ignition interlock program and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Cody L. Pack, 28, Fargo, ND, speeding, \$115; Olen W. Richardson, \$125; Sam L. Roberts, 21, Colorado Springs, CO, speeding, \$115; Sergio Rosas, 46, Austin, speeding, \$125; Gray A. Severson, 20, Monticello, speeding, \$115; Michael E. Volochienko, 41, Kansas City, MO, speeding, \$115.

OWATONNA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Jackson M. Bellomy, 18, Owatonna, no license in possession, \$95; Joshua M. Bentzen, 32, Owatonna, theft, \$175; Marcy K. Busho, 34, Owatonna, DWI, \$131, 12 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, attend MADD impact panel, psychological evaluation, mental health evaluation, obtain permission to leave the state, 160 hours of community service and 2 years of supervised probation; Bryce A. Butler, 49, Owatonna, failure to notify owner of damage property, \$225; Andrew T. Darst, 24, Waseca, failure to yield, \$125; Hal J. Edelman, 49, Northfield, possession of marijuana and DWI, \$351, 156 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol

or controlled substance use, chemical dependency evaluation, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state and 3 years of supervised probation; Mark T. Fielding, 49, Owatonna, cancelled license and possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$50, 2 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments and 2 years of supervised probation; Ahmed M. Garane, 23, Faribault, DWI, \$208, chemical dependency evaluation, attend MADD impact panel and 1 year of supervised probation; Sophia M. Giesecke, 19, Owatonna, minor consumption, \$175; Cody J. Haugen, 32, Owatonna, theft by swindle, \$125 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Katie M. Hoehn, 37, Janesville, theft, \$225; Kierra J. Holsington, 18, Faribault, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$50, 2 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, mental health evaluation, obtain permission to leave the state, 100 hours of community service and 3 years of supervised probation; Stephanie L. House, 42, Middlefield, VA, speeding, \$125; Joshua J. Indahl, 38, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; April L. Jamaica, 39, Owatonna, failure to yield, \$125; Darel J. Johnson, 63, Owatonna, wrong way on one-way street, \$175; Kiana R. Louks, 20, Owatonna, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$50, 8 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, psychological evaluation, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state and 2 years of supervised probation; Angelica F. Montemayor, 33, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Kristin F. Olson, 34, Medford, DWI, \$375, 4 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, attend MADD impact panel, chemical dependency

evaluation, alcohol monitor and 1 year of supervised probation; Sonya L. Rodriguez, 21, Owatonna, obstruct legal process, \$125, 1 day in county jail, write letter of apology, substance abuse subtle screening inventory and 1 year of supervised probation; Brandon S. Sedivy, 27, Eagle Lake, speeding, \$121; Matthew P. Segler, 18, Owatonna, minor consumption, \$175; Kristi M. Smith, 24, Owatonna, hands free violation, \$125; Whitney K. Stanke, 32, Owatonna, hands free violation, \$125; Brent A. Sutter, 36, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$105; Francis R. Talbert, 37, Owatonna, failure to obey traffic control device, \$125; Jesus Vazquez Zavala, 27, Medford, expired tabs, \$105; Dawn A. Wocelka, 43, Owatonna, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$50, 5 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, chemical dependency evaluation, do not enter liquor establishments, 50 hours of community service and 2 years of supervised probation.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Trista M. Adams, 35, Albert Lea, speeding, \$115; Alexander L. Alger, 22, Dodge Center, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$50, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation; Austin A. Bell, 23, Waseca, speeding, \$115; Brett B. Benner, 39, Devon, PA, speeding, \$125; Durrell Blackmon, 40, Owatonna, DWI, \$400, 1 day in county jail, attend MADD impact panel, substance abuse subtle screening inventory and 1 year of supervised probation; Douglas M. Blouin, 60, Ellendale, revoked license and expired tabs, \$305; Lyric R. Broton, 19, Owatonna, minor consumption, \$175; Marcy K. Busho, 34, Owatonna, DWI, \$131, 30 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, attend MADD impact panel, mental health evaluation, obtain permission to leave

the state and 2 years of supervised probation; Garrett A. Butler, 49, Medford, expired tabs, \$105; Dwayne L. Carr, 45, St. Paul, DWI, \$175, 14 days in county jail, attend MADD impact panel, no alcohol or controlled substance use and 1 year of supervised probation; Victor J. De Alba, 18, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Georgena R. Fail, 46, Austin, speeding, \$215; Ahmed M. Garane, 23, Faribault, DWI, stay of adjudication, \$75, diversion program and 2 years of supervised probation; Jacob T. Harlicker, 20, Owatonna, minor consumption, \$175; Wade A. Jorgenson, 57, Omaha, NE, DWI, \$375, 2 days in county jail, attend MADD impact panel and 1 year of supervised probation; Brian D. Kalberg, 19, Prior Lake, speeding, \$115; Tyler J. Mason, 22, Faribault, speeding, \$115; Credus T. Michael, 33, Mounds View, speeding, \$115; Brian L. Morrison, 35, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Tyler D. Sackett, 18, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Rigoberto Sahagun-Hernandez, 23, West Concord, no insurance and speeding, \$315; Darrell A. Schneider, 24, improper information on license, \$95; Samuel M. Zappa, 26, Burnsville, expired registration, \$105.

POLICE BLOTTER

Steele County

BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE

March 14
Arrest: Police arrested a motorist during a traffic stop at Highway 218 and Dodge Mower Road in Udolpho Township at 3:56 p.m.

OWATONNA POLICE
March 13
Shoplifting: Officer issued a shoplifting citation in the 1400 block of 21st Ave. NW at 8:42 p.m.

Juvenile: Police received a juvenile complaint from the 1800 block of Creekside Dr. NE at 11:22 p.m.

March 14
Child Protection: Police received a child protection report from the 1200 block of 3rd Ave. NE at 12:12 a.m.

Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 1400 block of Lincoln Ave. S. at 9:07 a.m.

Restraining Order: At 4:58 p.m., a restraining order violation occurred in the 1200 block of Woodridge Place NE.

Criminal Sexual Conduct:

Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 400 block of State Ave. NW at 8:16 p.m.

March 15
DWI: Police made DWI arrests at Rice Lake St. E. and Chambers Ave. SE at 12:46 a.m. and at Cedar Ave. S. and 18th St. SE at 1:04 a.m.

Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest in the 2300 block of Park Dr. NW at 3:30 p.m.

Harassment: Police received a report of a harassment incident in the city at 3:56 p.m.

Drugs: Officers arrested a subject for drugs in the 100 block of Broadway St. SW at 10:44 p.m.

Arrest: Police arrested a motorist during a traffic stop at Hoffman Dr. NW and 24th Ave. NW in Owatonna Township at 10:55 p.m.

March 16
Medical: At 7:20 a.m., police responded to a medical emergency in the 1000 block of Hoffman Dr. NW. They took a subject into custody.

March 18
Drugs: Police responded to drug activity in the 600 block of Florence Ave. NW at 8:45 a.m.

Burglary: Police began a burglary investigation in the 600 block of Mound St. SW at 2:28 p.m.

March 19
Littering: At 7:11 a.m., a littering incident occurred in the 400 block of Cedar Ave. S.

Vulnerable Adult: Police received a vulnerable adult report from the 700 block of Paris Place SE at 8:18 a.m.

Shoplifting: At 12:02 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 300 block of Park Dr. NW.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

March 13
Domestic: Deputies responded to a domestic disturbance in the 9500 block of 89th Ave. SE in Aurora Township at 7:21 a.m.

March 14
Domestic: Deputies took a subject into custody following a domestic in the 3900 block of 22nd Ave. SW in Owatonna Township at 11:59 a.m.

Warrant: Deputy made a warrant arrest at the detention center at 1:11 p.m.

March 18
Child Protection: Deputies received a child protection report from the 2200 block of 26th St. NW in Owatonna at 8:21 p.m.

SEE BLOTTER, B7

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

- Paulina Rivera – warrant – no bail
- Mario Rooha – domestic assault – \$10,000 bail
- Antonio Rodriguez – DWI – \$1,000 bail
- Carlos Rodriguez – DWI – \$12,000 bail
- Carlos Rodriguez – terrorist threats – no bail
- Joseph Rodriguez – theft by check – \$1,000 bail
- Deandre Rogers – revoked license – no bail
- Pedro Roldan-Minjaraz – false name – \$3,000 bail
- Jose Rosales – criminal sexual conduct – no bail
- Alex Salazar – DWI – no bail
- Sonny San – DWI – \$2,000 bail
- Jorge Sanchez – shoplifting – \$100 bail
- Roberto Sanchez – criminal sexual conduct – no bail
- Agnes Saueh – false name – \$6,000 bail
- James Schmidt – drugs – no bail
- Abbie Segura – theft – \$500 bail
- Yennifer Serban – drugs – no bail
- Ricky Shelton – assault – no bail
- Thomas Siagannis – seat belt – \$1,000 bail
- Oscar Sias – terrorist threats – \$25,000 bail

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

Blossom boys end as champions of Section 1A

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

There were some bittersweet moments for the 2019-20 edition of the Blooming Prairie High School boys basketball team.

The Awesome Blossoms finished 25-3 on the season, the most wins ever totaled by a Blooming Prairie boys basketball team. That's the sweet.

The Blossoms won a trip to the Class A State Boys Basketball Tournament. The Blossoms did not get to go to state because of the onslaught of the coronavirus. That's the bitter.

The Blossoms finished the season with a 59-51 victory over Hayfield to win the Section 1A championship in a hard fought game at the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester.

It was likely that the Blossoms would have played Henning sometime during the state Class 1A tournament.

It is ironic that this matchup was possible because Blooming Prairie played Henning in the state tournament 54 years ago in 1966, the last time a Blooming Prairie team had played in the state tourney.

Coach Nate Piller said the Blossoms "were well balanced" all season. He called forward Gabe Hagen and guard Kaden Thomas his meat and potato guys. "The others filled out the meal ticket as nice sides," Piller said.

Senior Gabe Hagen was a leader on the offensive and defensive sides of the ball. He had a scoring average of 15.3 points per game and hauled in an average of 7.8 rebounds a game. He notched an average of 4.5 assists per game.

Hagen found ways to score all season despite being double-teamed most of the season.



The Blooming Prairie Awesome Blossoms ended as Section 1A champions. Shown from left to right are: Front Row -- Cole Christianon, Luke Larkoski, Colin Jordison, Alex Miller, Alex Piller and Jacob Naatz. Second Row -- Asst. Coach Andrew Hardecopf, Manager Jacob McHenry, Drew Kittelson, Boone Carlson, Chris Naatz, Jerrett Larson, Kaden Thomas, Gabe Hagen, Zach Archer, Zach Weber, Isaac Ille, Karson Vigeland, Parker Vaith and Coach Nate Piller. Not pictured: Asst. Coach Brian Nelson.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD



Taking aim from the free throw line is senior Kaden Thomas of the Blooming Prairie Blossoms. Thomas reached the 1,000 point mark during this past season.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

"I believe Hagen is the best forward in Section 1A," said Piller.

"There simply isn't anyone else I would prefer to have on my team," related Coach Piller.

"If I started building a team with players from our section, I'd start with him. If you defend him with 1 player, he will score. If you defend him with more than one player, he will score or pass it to an open teammate."

"Most every half-court possession went through Gabe. He defends, he handles the ball (and often brings the ball up court), he gets rebounds. He's 6-foot-4-inches and 250 pounds of lean muscle. He has excellent hands (see any of his football games?). On top of that, he's a great teammate, a leader, and a great

person. Gabe is a very high character guy -- one of the best I've ever been around."

"Hagen also broke the 1,000 point mark for his career during this, his senior year. His teammate, senior guard Kaden Thomas also broke the 1,000-point mark. Both said those two games were big highlights for them for the year."

"Thomas averaged 13.3 points per game. He had an average of 4.4 assists per game. Thomas was the team's 'go-to guy,'" said Piller.

Both Hagen and Thomas were first team All Gopher Conference selections.

The Blossoms lost their tallest player, Karson Vigeland at 6-foot-5-inches, on Feb. 7 in Hayfield where he injured his ACL.

Vigeland was averaging 10 points a game at that time.

Sophomore Drew Kittelson took Vigeland's place in the lineup the rest of the season and was impressive.

Senior Zach Archer often came off the bench to give the Blossoms that extra hustler threat.

Senior guard Isaac Ille "is not a flashy player but a very good and dependable player," said Piller.

Junior Parker Vaith was another contributor from the bench. "Parker can get points off the bench, whether it's two's or three's, said Piller.

Piller was assisted during the year by Andrew Hardecopf and Brian Nelson. Student managers were Jacob McHenry and Lauren Schammel.

Huskies excel on and off the court

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

After reaching the section semifinals, the Owatonna boys' basketball team performed even better off the court as they were recently chosen as the state academic team champions for Class AAAAA.

Upon learning about this honor, Head Coach Josh Williams said, "I was obviously excited and proud of our kids. It is their efforts in the classroom that makes something like this possible!"

He said this is the first time the Huskies have won the state championship, but, "We have won the section academic title probably eight out of the last 10 years, which is impressive in itself."

That sustained academic excellence, he said, is due to having smart kids who "Take pride in doing well in school as well as on the court and it shows. Can't get a much higher award than what they received!"

In addition to the students, he mentioned the students' parents also deserve credit for nurtur-

ing their sons' academic ambition.

"It says a lot about the kids and their families/parents and the value they hold for doing well in school," said Williams. "It's just our job as coaches to be an extension of that and support them in any way we can."

He explained that he and his assistant coaches emphasize the importance of academics throughout the season.

"We stress it from our parent/player meeting prior to the start of the season to our player specific meetings during the season and follow up with their teachers if needed during the year. In addition, there has definitely been a standard set as well with multiple [academic] section championships in years past," he said.

One reason there's been a standard set is because the Huskies' leaders have been strong role models in terms of balancing academics and athletics.

"We have been very fortunate with the leaders/captains we have. They have always been high

character kids who make the right choices off the court, take care of business in school, and lead by example on the court," said Williams.

Another reason, he said, the Huskies have been able to perform so well in the classroom is the teachers and staff at Owatonna High School [OHS].

"No doubt we have a tremendous teaching staff at OHS and the kids success is a reflection of that," he said.

Overall, he said this academic achievement is the result of a team effort.

"Everyone plays a part when receiving an award such as this. It starts and ends with the athlete, but no doubt many people have a part in what transpires throughout their educational experience. Whether that is parents/guardians, teachers, administration, support staff, coaches in various spots, etc.," he said. "It just comes down to the fact that we have some smart kids who typically apply themselves in the classroom because they value their education!"

Panthers earn Gopher Conference honors



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Jayna Dozier earned a pair of postseason honors. She was chosen as an Academic All-State by the Minnesota Girls Basketball Coaches Association and earned the Gopher Conference's Sportsman-ship Award.



SUBMITTED PHOTO
In addition to being named co-MVP of the NRHEG girls' basketball team, Sophie Stork, right, was named first team All-Conference and Sidney Schultz was named second team All-Conference.



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Blossom girls finish with impressive 21-6 record

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

What a season it was for Coach John Bruns' Blooming Prairie High School girls basketball team.

The Blossom girls finished one game away from making the Class A State Girls basketball Tournament, losing to Fillmore Central, 69-56 in the Section 1A championship game.

The Blossoms finished 21-6 overall and 10-4 in the Gopher Conference for a third-place finish.

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

Returning next year will be Megan Oswald, Bobbie Bruns, Maggie Bruns, Maren Forystek, Allison Krohnberg, Anna Kittelson, Emily Miller, Micalyn Trihus, Melanie Winzenburg and Anna Pauly.

Coch Bruns said the Blossoms' biggest wins of the season were over Medford, Triton, Kingsland, Southland, Hayfield (3) and Maple River (2).

Losses came at the hands of Goodhue, Waterville Elysian Morrissett (WEM), NRHEG, Medford and Fillmore Central.

The Blossom girls were ranked in the Top 10 Class A teams for most of the season. Blooming Prairie finished ninth in the final poll.

The Blossoms were a powerful defensive team, giving up only 40.4 points per game, 10th best in Class A girls basketball.

This year's participation in the Section 1A championship game marked the third time in the school's history and the first time since 2005.

The Blossom girls averaged 3.89 in Grade Point



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

The 2019-20 edition of the Blooming Prairie girls basketball team finished the season as Section 1A runners-up. Shown from left to right are: Front Row – Marti Snider (2), Maya Lembke (20), Baylee Sorensen (25), Maren Forystek (13), Allison Krohnberg (31), Emily Miller (14) and Melanie Winzenburg (22). Second Row – Anna Kittelson (4), Bobbie Bruns (3), Julia Worke (30), Micalyn Trihus (15), Anna Pauly (32), Megan Oswald (33) and Maggie Bruns (1).

Average to earn the Gold Academic Award for the team. Seniors Julia Worke, Baylee Sorensen and Maya Lembke earned Academic All State.

All 14 girls on the varsity roster earned Academic All Conference (above 3.5 GPA).

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.

The 5-foot-10-inch Oswald set career highs in points, rebounds, steals, free throw percentage and assists. She set the school record for most single season points with 483, single season rebounds, 295, and her 94 steals are good for the third most in a single season.

Oswald was a first team All Conference selection and led the Gopher Conference in points with 243, a 17.4 average; in rebounds

with 171, a 12.2 per game average and steals with 59, a 4.2 average.

"This fantastic individual year by Oswald was a key part of our team's success this season," Bruns said. "Megan is a player with a motor that won't quit and she always finds a way to make the big play," he continued.

Senior Julia Worke started all 27 games for Blooming Prairie this season. She earned career highs in points, rebounds, 3-point percentage, and free throw percentage. She was top 10 in the conference in rebounds, assists

and steals. She averaged 9.7 points per game.

Worke was named Honorable Mention All Conference. She was also named Academic All-State. Her career numbers over the past 4 years are impressive: 102 games played with 65 starts, 142 3-point shots made, 783 points (6th most all time), 182 steals (7th most all time) and 224 assists (4th most all time).

Worke's biggest attribute, Coach Bruns claims, is her ability to do anything out on the court that the team needs. She can play all five positions on both ends of the floor. "Whatever

we needed, Julia was able to step in and get it done all year long," said Bruns.

Bobbie Bruns, a sophomore, started all 27 games this season. She posted career highs in points (361 for a 13.4 average), rebounds, assists, and steals. She led the Gopher Conference in assists (73 – 5.2 apg) and was second in steals (53 – 3.8 spg).

She was named 2nd Team All-Conference. Her 101 assists ties her for second most in a single season (with her mom Lisa (Zwiener) Bruns).

Bobbie Bruns also is fifth all time with 88 steals in a single season. "Bobbie had an outstanding year and was a very consistent performer on both ends of the floor," said Coach Bruns.

"She handled the ball a lot and played through pressure and double teams all year long. Her ability to score and at the same time make others better around her was a big part of what made our team very good this season."

Junior Maggie Bruns started all 27 games this season. She had career highs in points (137 for a 5.1 point per game average), rebounds, assists and steals. She had two double-doubles (KW and Hayfield).

In the Gopher Conference, she was fourth in assists (43 – 3.1 apg) and fifth in steals (43 – 3.1 spg).

"Maggie was a key to our team this year in many quiet ways," remarked Coach Bruns. "Her ball-handling, rebounding, and ability to make solid decisions on the floor were a huge part of our success," he explained.

Team awards and conference awards will be announced after the team's banquet.

"Your Best Investment"
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Calendar of Events

owatonna

PARKS and RECREATION

540 West Hills Circle, Owatonna • Office Phone: 507-444-4321 • www.ci.owatonna.mn.us/parksrecreation

Tennis & Fitness Center 507-444-4290 | SeniorPlace 507-444-4280 | Brooktree Clubhouse 507-444-2467 | Park Maintenance: 507-774-7086 | River Springs Water Park 507-774-7370
Facebook: Owatonna Parks and Recreation | Email Address: parkrec@ci.owatonna.mn.us | Fax 507-444-4299

OUR MISSION

The City of Owatonna Parks and Recreation Department provides a diverse system of green spaces, trails, facilities, programs and services to enhance the quality of life for the community.

APRIL

April: Dancing at the Elks resumes this month
April 4: Little League player evaluations
April 6: Youth Soccer Coaches meeting
April 13: Youth soccer begins this week
April 21: Summer Brochure released
April 23: Summer Registration begins
April 24: Family Swim OMS
April 25: Munchkin Market
April 26: Earth Day Clean Up
April 30-May 3: 41st Corky's Early Bird Softball Tournament

MAY

May 1: Little League Registration complete deadline
May 4: Men's Softball begins this week
May 11: West Hills Social Commons-Pre-Planning Seminar
May 13: Co-Rec Softball begins this week
May 14-26: Parkview Travel-Ireland trip
May 22: Family Swim OMS
May 26: Little League Kick-off event for all players, parents, and coaches

T-ball and Mini Sluggers

Registration deadline is May 7th for T-ball and Mini Sluggers. Save \$10 on each program by registering before the deadline.

Thank you Park Board Members!

Greg Posch, Angie Malo, Greg Louis, Nicholas Elsner, Jonathan Thiel, David Christiansen, and Andi Arnold

Corky's Earlybird Tournament

will generate over \$225,000 in spending in Owatonna this year! The tournament starts April 30th and runs to May. Go to www.slowpitch.mnsoftball.com/corkys for more information!

DID YOU KNOW
PARKS & RECREATION
Leading Life Improving Community

SEASONAL POSITIONS: Hours vary from as few as 8 hours up to 40 hours each week to fit your schedule. If you're a student, retiree, stay-at-home parent, teacher or would like to supplement your income there are positions to fit your needs. Check the City of Owatonna's website for available positions at www.ci.owatonna.mn.us.

Registration begins April 23 for summer activities

For the latest with cancellations and closing as a result of COVID-19 call 507-444-4321.

<< www.ci.owatonna.mn.us >>

Corn and Soybean Growers to host salute to Steele County Agriculture Night

The Steele County Corn and Soybean Growers and their checkoffs will be hosting an evening event on March 31 at the Mineral Springs Brewery in Owatonna to help raise money for Steele County FFA chapters.

The evening will begin with social hour at 5 p.m. with one free beverage sponsored by Hodgman Drainage. Following social hour, there will be an optional tour of the brewery at 5:45 p.m.

A free dinner will be served, sponsored by Matejcek Imp., at 6 p.m. with the annual meeting to follow discussing Steele County

Corn and Soybean Growers' 2019 highlights.

"Our organization truly sees the potential in giving back to our local youth organizations," says Steele County Corn and Soybean Board Chairman and Minnesota Soybean Growers Association Director Matt Heers.

"We love to see students enhance their knowledge of agriculture and make a difference in our community."

For each person in attendance, \$10 will be donated to Steele County FFA chapters.

To register for this free event, please RSVP before Thursday, March 26 by calling/texting Matt Heers at 507-475-1015 or emailing

steele.co.corn.and.soybean.growers@gmail.com.

The Steele County Corn and Soybean Growers Organization is affiliated with the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council, which oversees the investment of soybean checkoff dollars on behalf of approximately 25,000 farmers in Minnesota.

The council is governed by the rules of a federally mandated checkoff program that requires all soybean producers pay a fee on the soybeans they sell. This money is used to promote, educate and develop market opportunities for soybeans.

CORONAVIRUS HOTLINES AND RESOURCES

Timely and accurate information is available regarding COVID-19:

Statewide Hotline
651-201-3920

Steele County Public Health
507-444-7650

Minnesota Department of Health
www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html

Center for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Mayo Clinic's COVID-19
www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/symptoms-causes/syc-20479963

Steele County makes additional restrictions regarding COVID-19

On Monday, Steele County made some additional restrictions to all health recommendations for social distancing with the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The Steele County Board has closed its regular meetings to the public for in-person attendance.

County Administrator Scott Golberg said the meeting will be streamed live and available for public viewing at www.owatonnaonline.com/SC-Board-Meetings.html. Commissioners had a meeting on March 24 in which the new restriction took place.

"Thank you for your

patience and understanding as we work through this emergency," said Golberg.

In another move, the county has closed its landfill to public self-hauling customers effective on March 24 until further notice. Any one with questions should contact the landfill at 507-583-7766.

NUTRITION FOR WOMEN: infants and children FROM B1

fant formula. Special infant formulas and medical foods may also be provided if medically indicated.

Program benefits include more than food. WIC benefits are not limited only to food. Participants have access to several resources, including health screening, nutrition and breastfeeding counseling, immunization screening and referral, substance abuse referral, and more.

Who is eligible? Pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5 who meet certain requirements are eligi-

ble. These requirements include income eligibility and State residency. Additionally, the applicant must be individually determined to be at "nutrition risk" by a health professional or a trained health official. To find out if you might be income eligible for WIC benefits contact Steele County Public Health or <http://wic.fns.usda.gov/wps/pages/start/jsf>.

How WIC Helps. WIC supplemental foods have shown to provide wide ranging benefits. They include longer, safer pregnancies, with fewer premature births and infant deaths;

improved dietary outcomes for infants and children; improved maternal health; and improved performance at school, among others. In addition to health benefits, WIC participants showed significant savings in healthcare costs when compared to non-participants.

Focus on breastfeeding. Even though breast milk is the most nutritious and complete source of food for infants, nationally less than 30% of infants are breastfed at 1 year of age. A major goal of the WIC Program is to improve the nutritional status of infants; therefore, WIC

mothers are encouraged to breastfeed their infants, unless medically contraindicated. Pregnant women and new WIC mothers are provided breastfeeding educational materials and support through counseling and guidance.

What is "nutrition risk" and why is it important? Two major types of nutrition risk are recognized for WIC eligibility: medically-based risks such as anemia, underweight, history of pregnancy complications, or poor pregnancy outcomes; and dietary risks, such as inappropriate nutrition/feeding prac-

tices or failure to meet the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Women, infants, and children at nutrition risk have much greater risk of experiencing health problems.

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) makes it easier to use food benefits. WIC agencies have been implementing WIC electronic benefit transfer (EBT) statewide since October 1, 2020. EBT uses a magnetic stripe or smart card, like a credit card, that participants use in the check-out lane to redeem their food benefits. EBT provides a safer, easier, and

more efficient grocery experience and provides greater flexibility in the way WIC participants can shop.

Find out more by contacting Steele County Public Health WIC program today!

Portions of this column were taken from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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

BLOTTER: FROM B4

ARRESTS

OWATONNA POLICE

Andy John Hiebert, 43, arrested at 10:06 p.m. March 17, felony DUI and drugs, held for court.

COURT NEWS

Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of March 8 - 15:

DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Walter A. Backstrom, 44, Dodge Center, speeding, \$140; Trisha L. Busch, 42, Dodge Center, disorderly conduct, \$180; Lauren M. Elias, 31, Rochester, parking violation, \$32; Jonathan A. Loera, 24, Rochester, failure

to yield, \$180; Matthew J. Lyman, 46, Mantorville, parking violation, \$32; John M. Raichert, 29, Ejota, revoked license and expired registration, \$310; Logan C. Shay, 18, Nicollet, speeding, \$220; Bianca Valenzuela Sarmiento, 42, Kasson, speeding, \$130.

KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Ruby D. Burgos, 30, Rochester, revoked license and speeding, \$320; Stephan L. Engen, 25, Albert Lea, parking violation, \$32; April D. Groes, 34, Stewartville, parking violation, \$32; Danielle R. Hale, 21, Rochester, suspended license, \$290; Dalton D. Head, 19, Mantorville, speeding, \$120; Dakota J. Howlett, 23, Chatfield, parking violation, \$32; Ashley A. Pace Friesse, 25, Waseca, parking violation, \$32; Noe Ricardoz-Carrasco, 53, Kasson, speeding, \$130; Jonathan A. Zimmerman, 44, Rochester, parking

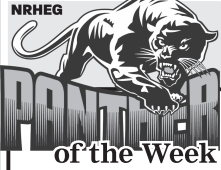
violation, \$32.

MN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Rich L. Bennett, 54, Dodge Center, allow illegal operation of a snowmobile by a juvenile, \$180; Mark A. Stevenson, 60, Kasson, transport loaded firearm, \$180.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Signe R. Faulhaber, 37, Minneapolis, unsafe passing and no insurance, \$350; Ashton A. Kane, 24, Owatonna, speeding, \$140; Troy P. Mullenbach, 49, Byron, speeding, \$120; Abby K. Namken, 32, Fairmont, careless driving, \$180; Chad M. Osgood, 41, Hayfield, revoked license and seat belt, \$305; Todd C. Syverson, 49, Wanamingo, speeding, \$120; Mason J. Tripp, 20, Mantorville, speeding, \$280; Rachel M. Ulrich, 56, Owatonna, window tint violation, \$130; Timothy R. Weller, 26, Hutchinson, speeding, \$130.



of the Week



Joya

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NRHEG Elementary-Ellendale

This week's **Panther of the Week** is **Joya Paczkowski**. She is the daughter of Matthew and Ramona and is in Mrs. Schultz's third grade class.

Joya has worked hard on getting her homework completed on time. She has a sweet personality, she's kind to other classmates, and she always shows respect.

Her favorite school subject is math, she enjoys crafts with mom, and she enjoys playing on the swing set. Keep up the great work Joya!

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PEACETIME EMERGENCY DECLARED IN STEELE COUNTY

Steele County Board of Commissioners passed a Resolution declaring Steele County in a state of peacetime emergency due to COVID-19 pandemic event effective March 18, which required service delivery modifications to protect the staff and community. These temporary service modifications were put into place on March 19 at 7:30 a.m. and will continue through April 17 at 5 p.m. We will continue to design new ways of delivering services that, in the past, relied on face-to-face contact.

CLIP & SAVE

Here is an overview of how residents can access county services during this Peacetime Emergency:

Administration Center

Steele County Administration Center located at 630 Florence Ave. in Owatonna is closed to the public. The following offices are located at this center along with the modifications that were put into place. 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

507-444-7445
• Physical inspection of property for valuation purposes is suspended.

• 2020 (payable 2021) Valuation Notices will be mailed with 2020 Tax Statements in the end of March. Property valuation/classification appeals will be handled by phone and/or email. Property inspections will be scheduled at a future date.

• Homestead and other applications can be returned via mail, email or by placing in drop box at the Steele County Administrative 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 homestead 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 drop box outside. 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.rysav@co.steele.mn.us.

Geographic Info Systems 507-444-7489
gisdept@co.steele.mn.us

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

• The printing of small and large formats will be delayed. Electronic maps and pdf documents 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 positions, 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
PO 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 bases 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 507-444-7450

• Passport processing is currently suspended

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

• Marriage licenses by mail and ceremonies by appointment outside of the office

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

• Fingerprinting by appointment only of Steele County residents and facilities

• 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 after-hours monitoring of these lines.

• No in-office appointments. Appointments are being conducted via telephone.

• Intent to File (ITFS) are being submitted electronically to protect the veteran's claims.

• Transportation to the VA Medical Center is for critical appointments only, verified by our office with the medical center the day before

• No outreach or in-home visits are being conducted.

• Veterans currently enrolled into the VA Health Care can call the 612-467-1100 for instructions for receiving community-based care in an emergency.

Other Service Information

• The VA Hospital has cancelled all non-critical appointments. For after-hours emergencies, the veteran must call the VA Medical Center directly at 612-467-1100

• Transportation to the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's) has been suspended indefinitely by the DVA. We will not transport patients to the clinics.

Other Steele County Facilities: Community Correction

• Our building is closed to the public until April 17

• 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

• Open

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 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: lccrecords@co.steele.mn.us

Civil Division: Office: 507-444-3808 Fax: 507-444-3894

Email: sccocivil@co.steele.mn.us

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

• Steele County Detention Center will discontinue finger printing until further notice.

• Video Visitation currently is available.

• Necessary vendors are still allowed.

• Records window is closed, but they are available for limited services; contact can be made on the "Red" phone in the lobby.

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misgen auto parts
507-684-2100
12880 SW 2nd Ave, Ellendale

Thinking of farmers during the COVID-19 outbreak



On The Farm
CLAIRE LACANNE

As we get ever-changing news about the status of the COVID-19 outbreak, I keep thinking about the farmers I work with in Steele and Rice counties. I reflect about what this world of social distancing means for them and how this respiratory disease might affect them if they were to contract it.

There are over 600 farmers in Rice county who are 65 years of age or older, which makes up approximately 31% of total producers in Rice county. Steele county has about 375 (62%) farmers who are 65 or older. This means that many of our farmers are in the age category that is at higher risk for severe illness, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). This means that it is especially critical that farmers, and those who work with farmers, follow preventive and protective recommendations. It's important to follow the CDC's guidelines of washing

hands, limiting travel and social distancing. These are things we can all do to keep ourselves and one another healthy.

Farmers or rural families often travel less frequently and are naturally more spread out, already experiencing a degree of social distancing. In this way, we may think that farmers aren't as impacted by this recommendation. However, I worry that this may turn into social isolation, as many gathering places, such as churches, local schools, and Universities are changing their typical operating practices. One way that many organizations are addressing the need for social distancing is by using online resources and communicating using the internet to provide services and resources. This works for many sectors, but may be difficult for some rural residents where high-speed internet service is not available. 23% of farms in Rice county and 21% of farms in Steele county don't have internet access. Even farms that do report having internet may not have internet that is capable of some of the high-speed demands of video conferencing, streaming webinars, etc. Using the phone and communicating using mail are still necessary tools to reach our farmers.

The University of Minnesota is following recommendations for social distancing and all in-person Extension events are canceled through March 31. Extension is still here to help if you have questions related to agriculture, horticulture, or yard and garden. Please contact me, Claire LaCanne, at lacanne@umn.edu or 507-330-0447 if you have questions, concerns, or ideas for how we can bring resources to you. Extension is offering several learning opportunities online, for those with internet. To keep apprised of Extension's online courses and events, visit: <https://extension.umn.edu/courses-and-events>.

We can do our best to come together as a community, even when we can't physically get together. In this time of uncertainty, I urge you to call your friends and family. Social distancing does not have to mean social isolation. Talking to one another about what's going on can lift spirits, just take practical precautions to limit the spread of the disease.

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

Medford FFA student receives scholarship

A Medford FFA student is one of 19 members from around the state that will receive the James W. Tracy scholarship.

Holly Larson will be getting the scholarship, which is available to Minnesota students who are enrolled or planning to enroll in an accredited

post-secondary school and pursuing a degree in agriculture.

The scholarship is scored on leadership, involvement, agriculture interest and financial need. These scholarships are possible due to the generosity of James W. Tracy, a farmer from Dennison who

lost his battle with illness in 2014. Tracy had a deep love for the land, farming and the desire to support youth, which led him to donate his farm to the Minnesota FFA Foundation. Generations of high school seniors interested in studying agriculture will benefit from this donation.



Gardening Tips
JULIE WANOUS

Ever wonder why some gardeners prefer to order from a seed catalog rather than just picking out packets of seed from the seed rack? And then, wonder why someone would go to the extra effort to save their own seeds from year to year? There are benefits to each method of seed selection, but first, what information is included on the seed packet itself. The information listed on the seed packet includes but is not limited to the following:

First, of course, is what type of seed it is. For example, tomato, cucumber, or marigold are all printed in bold. Some seed packets may list the Latin genus and species name under the common name as well. And then, with the common name of the seed, a picture of the mature fruit or flower will be on the packet. However, one thing to note, if you buy from the seed catalog, they may or may not have the picture on the packet as they would in the catalog. Some seed packets also include a sketch of the seedling as it would emerge from the soil. This is helpful in determining if this seedling is a garden weed or what you planted a number of days ago.

Other information commonly included on the seed packet is planting instructions. The instructions would include correct placement for light requirements such as shade, partial shade, partial sun, and full sun. Correct planting depth is also listed, and correct spacing. One extra bit of information listed in the seed catalog for planting requirements, would be information in regards to soil temperatures. Also, if the plant is frost or heat tolerant, drought tolerant, and/or resistant to pests.

The normal days to germination and days to maturity should also be included in the information. On a perennial seed packet, you would also list the zone the perennial is hearty or heat tolerant in. Steele County is Zone 4. There can also be printed an "after frost date" map, important when planting warm season crops.

And finally, which year the seeds were packaged

for is printed on the seed packet. Seeds packaged for previous years should be tested for germination to check the viability of the seed. This is easily done with counting out the number of seeds and a wet paper towel, letting them sprout, then calculating the percentage of seeds that have germinated.

With this information, you can determine whether or not to plant the remaining seeds in the packet. But why order through a seed catalog versus buying off the seed rack? For many gardeners, myself included, in the dead of winter, it is a breath of fresh air to open a seed catalog. It's easy and pleasant to sit and read all the possibilities available, new varieties available, and unique characteristics developed. For instance, purple cauliflower, or a new plum colored oriental poppy, or a huge "Bodacious" tomato are all new recently. But sometimes, some of these new unique plants could be listed as marginally hardy for our zone. You may be able to order it, and treat it as an annual, or find a protected area in your yard, and get it to grow and flourish.

Have a special event coming up? Need bouquets of flowers to grace your tables that coordinate with your color theme? In the seed catalog, you can quite often buy packets of seed containing just the one color of bloom or a particular height. This is not always possible on the store seed rack. Enjoy planting heirloom varieties of vegetables or flowers? Seed Savers send out a catalog of only heirloom varieties.

Seed catalogs give a more detailed description of the varied uses for the item grown. Will it be best eaten raw, or better frozen, or used in canning? Better as a cut flower or left standing in the garden for the bees, butterflies and birds? Will it be possible to grow it in a container, and will it need a support? This is all good information to read about, while enjoying a hot cup of coffee in your favorite chair, on a cold January day.

It may be more costly to order from a seed catalog. Here's a pro-tip: sign up for email

lists, and come spring-time, there are usually multiple money saving offers available to you. I've also created an account, place items in the cart and let them sit. More often than not, an offer comes through, with a discount or coupon to entice you to complete the purchase in your cart.

The seed packets found in garden centers, box stores, and grocery stores are convenient! Realized you forgot to buy did seed when you planted the cucumbers? The seed is just minutes away, no waiting for it to arrive in the mail. The seed racks can be less expensive, as often there is some type of sale on them. We look at the pictures and determine what to buy and go with it. If something gets planted too early and the frost nips the tender seedling, there is another packet available to plant it again, and get it in the ground. Summer is short, time is limited!

Savings seeds from the previous year, to be planted the following spring, can be very satisfying for the gardener as well. It takes some planning ahead, and doesn't always work with a hybrid plant, as they like to revert back to their parent plant qualities. However, if you grow heirloom seeds, seed saving is the best way to acquire seed - many catalogs won't carry that same variety. One has to be careful to not let certain plants cross pollinate during the growing season, however. Seed saving takes a bit more of your time, but can save you a lot of money in the long run. There are lots of great books, articles, and YouTube videos on how to save seeds of your favorite varieties.

With the days getting longer, the sun drying out your yards and gardens, it's easy to have spring fever. Whether you choose to order from the seed catalog or buy off the rack (I do both) or save your own seeds, enjoy your gardening moments, all season long!

Julie Wanous is a master gardener in Steele County. She may be reached for additional information at jwuanous12@gmail.com.



TAX TIPS 2020

Tax Day now July 15: Treasury, IRS extend filing deadline and federal tax payments regardless of amount owed

The Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service has announced that the federal income tax filing due date is automatically extended from April 15, 2020, to July 15, 2020.

Taxpayers can also defer federal income tax payments due on April 15, 2020, to July 15, 2020, without penalties and interest, regardless of the amount owed. This deferral applies to all taxpayers, including individuals, trusts and estates, corporations and other non-corporate tax filers as well as those who pay self-employment tax.

Taxpayers do not need to file any additional forms or call the IRS to qualify for this automatic federal tax filing and payment relief. Individual taxpayers who need additional time to file beyond the July 15 deadline, can request a filing extension by filing Form 4868 through their tax professional, tax software or using the Free File link on IRS.gov. Businesses who need additional time must file Form 7004.

The IRS urges taxpayers who are due a refund to file as soon as possible. Most tax refunds are still being issued within 21 days.

"Even with the filing deadline extended, we urge taxpayers who are owed refunds to file as soon as possible to file as soon as possible," said IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig. "Filing electronically with direct deposit is the quickest way to get refunds. Although we are curtailing some operations during this period, the IRS is continuing with mission-critical operations

to support the nation, and that includes accepting tax returns and sending refunds. As a federal agency vital to the overall operations of our country, we ask for your personal support, your understanding - and your patience. I'm incredibly proud of our employees as we navigate through numerous different challenges in this very rapidly changing environment."

The IRS will continue to monitor issues related to the COVID-19 virus, and updated information will be posted on a [special coronavirus page](https://www.irs.gov) on IRS.gov. This announcement comes following the President's emergency declaration last week pursuant to the Stafford Act. The Stafford Act is a federal law designed to bring an orderly and systematic

means of federal natural disaster and emergency assistance for state and local governments in carrying out their responsibilities to aid citizens. It was enacted in 1988.

Treasury and IRS will issue additional guidance as needed and continue working with Congress, on a bipartisan basis, on legislation to provide further relief to the American people.



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NOTICE

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE
FORECLOSURE SALE

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN:

That default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage:

DATE OF MORTGAGE:

April 9, 2003

ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL

AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE:

\$131,000.00

MORTGAGOR(S): Mark A. Hill

and Cynthia S. Hill, husband

and wife

MORTGAGEE: Wells Fargo

Home Mortgage, Inc. n/k/a Wells

Fargo Bank, N.A. successor by

merger to Wells Fargo Home

Mortgage, Inc.

DATE AND PLACE OF FILING:

Recorded on April 14, 2003 as

Document Number A309434 in

the Office of the County Recorder

of Steele County, Minnesota.

ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE:

Assigned to: None

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF

PROPERTY: Lot 1, V.I.P.

Addition, Owatonna, Minnesota,

Steele County, Minnesota.

STREET ADDRESS OF PROPERTY:

310 16TH STREET NE,

OWATONNA, MN 55060-1706

COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED:

Steele County, Minnesota.

THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE

ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE:

\$87,437.63

TRANSACTION AGENT: None

NAME OF MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR:

Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Inc. n/k/a Wells Fargo Bank,

N.A. successor by merger to Wells

Fargo Home Mortgage, Inc.

RESIDENTIAL SERVICER:

Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.

TAX PARCEL IDENTIFICATION

NUMBER: 17-223-0101

TRANSACTION AGENT'S

MORTGAGE IDENTIFICATION

NUMBER: None

THAT no action or proceeding

has been instituted at law to recover

the debt then remaining

secured by such mortgage, or

any part thereof, or, if the action

or proceeding has been instituted,

that the same has been discontinued,

or that an execution upon the judgment

rendered therein has been returned

unsatisfied, in whole or in part.

PURSUANT to the power of sale

contained in said mortgage, the

above described property will be

sold by the Sheriff of said county as

follows:

DATE AND TIME OF SALE:

May 19, 2020 at 10:00 AM.

PLACE OF SALE: Steele County

Sheriff's Office, Law Enforcement

Center, 204 Pearl Street

East, Owatonna, MN 55060,

to pay the debt then secured by

said mortgage and taxes, if any

actually paid by the mortgagee,

on the premises and the costs and

UNION CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

of rural
Bloomington Prairie

will
NOT HOLD

an in-person
annual meeting

this year. Agenda
items or

concerns may be
directed to

Board Secretary
Gary Jacobson

at 507.250.1350

Gary Hansen

President

disbursements allowed by law. The time allowed by law for redemption by said mortgagor(s), their personal representatives or assigns is six (6) months from the date of sale.

TIME AND DATE TO VACATE

PROPERTY: Unless said mortgage is reinstated or the property

redeemed, or unless the time for

redemption is reduced by judicial

order, you must vacate the premises

by 11:59 p.m. on November 19,

2020.

THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW

FOR REDEMPTION BY THE

MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S

PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR

ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE

WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS

ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA

STATUTES, SECTION 582.032,

DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER

THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED

PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A

RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS

THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT

PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL

PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

MORTGAGOR(S) RELEASED

FROM FINANCIAL OBLIGATION

ON MORTGAGE: Mark A. Hill

and Cynthia S. Hill, 2020

Dated: March 17, 2020

WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A.

Mortgagee

TROTT LAW, P.C.

By: /s/

"N. Kibongni Fondongallah,

Esq."

Samuel R. Coleman, Esq.

Michael van Muelken, Esq.

Attorneys for Mortgagee

25 Dale Street North

St. Paul, MN 55102

(651) 209-9760

(20-0329-F-001)

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION

FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR.

3/25, 4/1, 4/8, 4/15, 4/22, 4/29

NOTICE

Office of the Minnesota
Secretary of State

Certificate of
Assumed Name

Minnesota Statutes
Chapter 333

The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable customers to be able to identify the true owner of a business.

ASSUMED NAME: Hands of

Mine Studio

PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS:

1453 38th St SW, Owatonna

MN 55060 USA

NAMEHOLDER(S):

Name: Abigail Flannery Hansen

Address: 1453 38th St SW, Owatonna

MN 55060

If you submit an attachment, it

will be incorporated into this document.

If the attachment conflicts with the information specifically

set forth in this document, this document supersedes the data

referenced in the attachment.

By typing my name, I, the undersigned,

certify that I am signing this document as the person whose

signature is required, or as agent

of the person(s) whose signature

would be required who has authorized

me to sign this document on his/her

behalf, or in both capacities. I

further certify that I have completed

all required fields, and that the

information in this document is true

and correct and in compliance with

the applicable chapter of Minnesota

Statutes. I understand that I am

subject to the penalties of perjury as set

forth in Section 609.45 as if I had

signed this document under oath.

SIGNED BY:

Abigail Flannery Hansen

MAILING ADDRESS:

None Provided

EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES:

studio@handsoffmine.com

Work Item 113984400027

Original File Number

113984400027

State of Minnesota

Office of the Secretary of State

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by Steve Simon

Secretary of State

3/2, 4/1p

Hy-Vee makes temporary changes to address COVID-19

Hy-Vee, Inc. announces that due to evolving concerns regarding coronavirus (COVID-19), it is adapting the ways in which it serves customers to ensure they receive the products they need while keeping customers, employees and communities healthy and safe.

STORE HOURS: Starting March 18, Hy-Vee stores will close at 8 p.m. Until further notice, Hy-Vee's new store hours will be 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week. These shortened hours will allow employees additional time to clean and sanitize all areas of the store, as well as restock the items in highest demand. Operating with shorter hours also will allow employees additional time to care for their families and loved ones.

CONVENIENCE STORES: All Hy-Vee convenience stores will continue to operate under their normal hours at this time. Customers can continue to purchase snacks, fuel and other items at these locations.

DINING AREAS: All dining areas in all Hy-Vee stores, restaurants and convenience stores are now closed to the public. Food service areas will still operate during their normal hours, offering

freshly prepared meal options for carry-out only. Also, all bars inside Hy-Vee Market Grille locations have been closed until further notice.

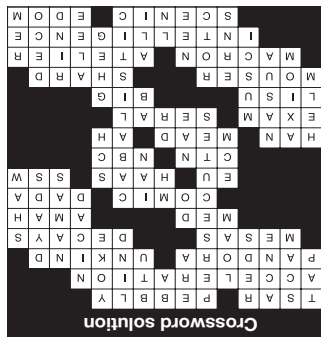
HY-VEE AISLES ONLINE: For Hy-Vee Aisles Online customers, deliveries will now be made by third-party partners like Shipt and Door Dash (where available) in order to help in-store employees focus on pickup orders and other needs at the stores.

Hy-Vee Aisles Online customers may find that their preferred delivery or pickup time isn't available at the moment due to increased demand. During this very unusual time, Hy-Vee is asking customers who are able to do so to shop in stores so that the available Hy-Vee Aisles Online timeslots can be used for those who are unable to shop for themselves or have been advised by health care professionals to limit their public exposure.

CORPORATE AD: For the time being, Hy-Vee is suspending its weekly corporate advertising circular that is distributed to all stores and found in many local newspapers, including the Steele County Times. Due to the current high demand for many products,

suppliers are unable to guarantee the fulfillment of certain products. This makes it difficult to determine in advance which products can be advertised in print publications. Customers may still have received this week's ad circular as it was already inserted into the newspaper. Stores will honor the products featured if they are in stock. Customers are also encouraged to check Hy-Vee's social media pages and Hy-VeeDeals.com for the company's latest sales during this time.

"This is an unprecedented situation for all of us. We've never dealt with anything like this before, and we know our customers haven't either. We appreciate their patience and loyalty as we navigate these changing times," said Randy Edeker, Hy-Vee's chairman, CEO and president. "We are committed to doing all we can to keep our customers and employees healthy and safe, and to being the helpful smile in every aisle that is needed during this time."



WEEKLY CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

1. Emperor of Russia

5. Abounding in rocks

11. Increase in speed

14. Music app

15. Not nice

18. Tables (Span.)

19. Decomposes

21. student: learns

22. healing

23. Nursemaid

24. Joke-teller

28. Male parent

29. Group of countries (abbr.)

30. "Rambling Rose" actor

Lukas

32. Midway between south

and southwest

33. Cartoon Network (abbr.)

35. Peacock network

36. Principal ethnic group

of China

39. Made of fermented

honey and water

41. Exclamation of surprise

42. Evaluates skill or knowledge

44. Stage in ecological

succession

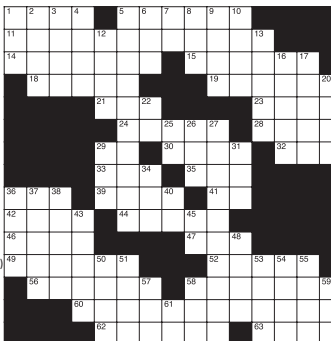
46. Ethnic group of SE Asia

47. Not small

49. A cat is one

52. Broken piece

56. French president



58. Artist's workshop

60. Ability to apply knowledge and skills

62. Visually stunning

63. Ancient region south of

Dead Sea

CLUES DOWN

1. Used to pour beer

2. Con game

3. Skin disorder

4. Communists (slang)

5. Subjects to hostility

6. A major division of geological time

7. Hitting statistic (abbr.)

8. British thermal unit

9. Influential envoy to

Woodrow Wilson

10. Fits on neck of animal

12. Fertile soil

13. Type of battery

16. Khoikhoi peoples

17. Consist of two parts

20. Small group of trees

22. Execute or perform

25. Millinery

26. 007's creator

27. Associated with esoteric doctrine

29. Electronic countermeasures

31. Schenectady County

Airport

34. No (Scottish)

36. Position of leadership

37. Statement

38. Raccoons belong to this

genus

40. One who diagnoses

43. True moose

45. Blood type

48. Albanian

Unreserved Public Consignment Auction

Jay Klemmensen

With equipment from other consigners. Accepting consignments until Mar. 27

Bloomington, MN | April 4, 2020 · 10 am



2008 New Holland CR9060 & 2010 New Holland 99C 8 Row



1998 Case IH 9370



2010 New Holland T5070



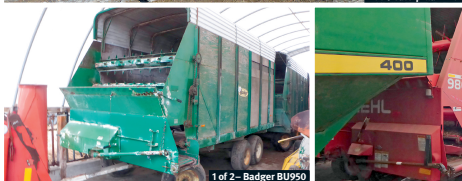
1993 Peterbilt 375



2004 Caterpillar 226B



2009 MacDon F070



1 of 2 - Badger BU950



Gehl BU980



Miller Pro 1060 Series II



B&B 18 ft x 6 ft 8 in.



H & S AR1061 10 Wheel



Walsh LP500 40 Ft.



Gehl 95XD



Brillion SCP9 3 PT Hitch 7 Shank



2014 Soil-max Gold Digger 20



2010 GMC Yukon 4x4



2002 Chevrolet 2500 4x4



Clubcar

Location: 10282 44th Ave SE, Bloomington, MN.

For more information: Jay Klemmensen: 507.456.1247, jay@eagleprairieinsurance.com

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