



Steele County Times



WALL OF BLESSINGS B10 | NEW CENTENARIAN B1

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2020

Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

NEW PRODUCT
Al-Corn has added hand sanitizer to its ethanol product line.

CRUISING MAIN
Engines were a revving as BP finds a unique way to replace personal contact.

BANDS SILENCED
A popular summer band festival in Owatonna has been cancelled.

SENIORS HEARTBROKEN
Area seniors are shocked at the school year ending suddenly.

Steele cases surge, but no deaths

Caron attributes spike to more testing

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

After low numbers for several weeks, COVID-19 cases in Steele County jumped sharply over the past week. Public Health Director Amy Caron reported 10 new cases in Steele County over the past week, bringing to total of 24 confirmed cases since the outbreak began in mid-March. For the first time in weeks, Steele surpassed Dodge County in the number of cases. Currently, Dodge has 22 positive cases and no deaths.

"We went up significantly," Caron said. On a more positive side, there have been no deaths and only two patients have been hospitalized throughout the pandemic.

While cases are going up, there still are no reported COVID-19 cases in any long-term care facilities in either county, Caron said.

Caron attributes the increase to more testing taking place across the state. "We are not surprised we are seeing more positive cases," she said. "We expect it to keep ramping up," she added.

SEE STEELE CASES SURGE, A10



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Even though people are trying to navigate through a world of crisis right now because of the COVID-19 pandemic, love is in the air and still evident. On May Day, Friday, May 1, Eli Peterson's kindergarten teacher, Lisa Bruns, did not forget him. She brought him a May basket to his home. She then read him a book. Thanking her, he said, "I love you, Mrs. Bruns." She replied, "Mrs. Bruns loves you, too." Bruns is a teacher at Blooming Prairie Elementary School. Teachers across the state have been adjusting to distance learning since the coronavirus began in March.

Calmness in the midst of a crisis for top health official

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

It has been a tough balancing act, but Steele County's top public health official has tried to bring calmness in the midst of the worst public health crisis in more than a century.

At the center of the coronavirus pandemic for residents in Steele and Dodge counties has been Public Health Director Amy Caron. She has been the director for both counties for

the past five years after serving in the same role for Waseca County for nearly two years.

From the start of the crisis in mid-March, Caron has been at the forefront of providing weekly, and sometimes even daily, updates to the public and working with a team of professionals to roll out a strategic community response to the deadly virus, which to this point hasn't been nearly as serious as it has in other parts of the state.

Steele County has maintained a relatively low number of cases thus far, coming in with 20 confirmed cases and no deaths as of Monday. In Dodge County, there have been 19 cases and no deaths.

Most importantly, Caron's goal is to keep people staying calm. "Fear and panic don't do us any good in a situation like this," Caron says.

Caron sets out disseminate "accurate and timely information" as she leads the area through the crisis that has brought devastating results to many areas. There have been 395 COVID-19 deaths in Minnesota. "I just want to be a valid source of information so people can make their own decisions," she said.

In handling the pandemic on a local level, Caron has put aside all her regular work. She has been logging in 50-55

hours a week since the start of the crisis. She oversees a staff of 45 in Steele County and another 16 in Dodge County.

"It has upended and disrupted our regular services," she said. "Our system is stressed right now."

As director of both counties, Caron goes wherever she is needed the most, though she said Steele County demands more of her time because it's a larger county. At times, she pointed out, it has been a "little tricky" to balance the work load between both areas. "I am lucky to have a capable and supportive staff," she says.

Caron has been working remotely throughout most of the pandemic as the county health buildings are currently closed to the public. She has been utilizing vari-

SEE CALMNESS, A8

"It's not going to be a sprint, it's going to be a marathon."

Amy Caron
Public Health Director



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Safety is always emphasized by our local emergency first responders. Isreal Wacek, Blooming Prairie firefighter and ambulance crew member, tries on a safety shield donated to the two departments by Federated Insurance's community relations department.

Community effort results in 700 protective shields being delivered

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Countless volunteers are working to make our Steele County community safer during the coronavirus pandemic that has paralyzed the world.

Michael Beckman, system developer at Federated Insurance in Owatonna, followed up on an email from Federated's

community relations department asking employees to reach out and partner with other organizations to provide safety shields for first responders in Steele County.

The safety shields were created after Beckman reached out to his contacts who owned 3D printers. A prototype shield was

SEE EFFORT RESULTS, A7



Steele County Public Health Director Amy Caron has been at the forefront of the worst public health crisis to hit Minnesota in more than a century.



COVID-19 UPDATE

World.....	3,530,000	U.S.	1,190,000	MN.....	6,228	Steele.....	24	Dodge	22
Deaths	248,000	Deaths	68,678	Deaths	395	Deaths	0	Deaths	0
Recovered.....	1,130,000	Recovered.....	153,000	Recovered.....	2,397	Recovered.....	14	Recovered.....	15

AS OF MAY 4, 2020

OUR VIEW

Flyovers mark solidarity for COVID-19 heroes

The Minnesota National Guard is on a mission to honor those on the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis. As part of a nationwide Air Force initiative, the National Guard conducted statewide flyovers on Wednesday in recognition of those working on the pandemic response. Officials say these flyovers are their way of showing solidarity for those who have stepped forward to serve during this outbreak. The flyovers will reach many medical facilities throughout the state, including Rochester. Other sites in the state will be flown over during future flyovers planned for later in the month. The National Guard is incorporating the flyovers into previously scheduled training missions. The aircraft flying these missions will be combinations of F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft and C-130 Hercules aircraft. COVID-19 has been a tough deal for many people and it doesn't appear it is going to get any better any time soon. We would like to join in with the National Guard in saluting health care workers, emergency responders, food industry and other essential workers throughout the state that have done their part or even gone beyond to keep the state functioning during the stay-at-home order. There are many heroes in this crisis that are keeping everything going for the benefit of the rest of Minnesotans. For nearly two months already, these heroes have been on the frontlines working hard for Minnesota citizens. Without their dedication and heroism, who knows where we would be right now. Thank you for your service. Each week we have seen some pretty amazing things being done in our local communities to soften the blow of this horrible crisis. We need to continue standing by each other. It's been said often, but bears repeating. We will pull through this together. That's what true Americans have always been known for no matter what the circumstances are in the world.

YOUR VIEW

Governor's order is a real gut punch

To-the-Editor: In response to Gov. Tim Walz's continued stay-at-home order issued on April 30, the governor's decision is a real gut punch to the Main Street business owners who have been holding their breath for

weeks and are nearly out of air. Minnesota can methodically and carefully reopen its economy and keep Minnesotans safe, it doesn't have to be one or the other. Our small stores can safely serve the public

in the same ways being given to our larger retailers, and the governor needs to trust them and give them that opportunity. Rep. Peggy Bennett District 27A Albert Lea

GUEST COLUMN

Grow your own salad



Mastering Gardening LORRIE RUGG

A few tips to help you have the fresh delicious salad: • If you want to plant early – plant shallow rooted plants • Use cold tolerant varieties, they tend to have more sugar in the variety Earliest plants to be planted – not to much risk if we have a frost late in the season. • Radishes • Spinach • Broccoli • Cabbage • Peas • Onions Late spring frost tolerant • Potatoes • Bok Choi • Chinese cabbage • Cauliflower • Lettuce • Carrots Last Spring Frost tolerant • Snap beans • Sweet corn

Examples of shallow rooted plants: Beets, broccoli, carrot, cauliflower, celery, greens and herbs, on-

ions, peppers, radishes, and spinach • One thing to remember about shallow rooted plants- They can't wait to long between waterings. You want to water your plants during pollination, when the fruit or vegetable is growing. Make sure you do wider spacing of rows to allow good air movement through your garden Plant greens that say on the package- widely adaptable, or heat tolerant Another example – peas – you want to plant more than one kind, early peas and a later variety Diversity in your plant choices to a way to help manage fluctuations in early spring temps The last frost date in the spring is changing, but it is around May 12 for our area. The fall frost date is pretty stable and has not changed that much. Our growing season is changing – it is getting longer. Consider a soil test in the spring to determine if your garden needs anything. Add compost to your garden to help the soil

Don't walk in your garden if it is too wet, likewise don't walk in your yard until it dries up and doesn't feel squishy. Use mulch between the rows after your garden is up and growing to help maintain a more even moisture level also to help with weed control. Also make sure your garden gets at least six hours of sunshine – most vegetables need at least that much to give you the yield you desire, Watch the weather forecast – to help you determine when to plant. Tomatoes, for example, want heat, they don't do well in cold ground. So it is not real beneficial to get the plants in to early. We have to plan for the unexpected in the garden, and we learn from our mistakes! Best feeling in the world is "smelling dirt" in the spring and getting those hands dirty. Lorrie Rugg of Owatonna is the master gardener coordinator for Steele County. She writes a column for this newspaper regularly.

'Honk, 4 my birthday'

In these days of a coronavirus-filled world, one never knows what you're going to find along the roadside. In late April as I was traveling between my offices in Kasson and Blooming Prairie, I stumbled across some commotion at the end of a driveway just outside Hayfield. As I went by, I honked my horn because that's what I was instructed to do thanks to a poster declaring, "Honk 4 my birthday."

As any good journalist would do, I quickly turned around to find out exactly what was going on along Hwy. 56. I found Anthony Schnable celebrating his 10th birthday along with his parents Nancy and Andrew and his younger brother, Ethan.

Only in a COVID-19 induced society is one going to find a family gathered at the end of a driveway in the middle of the country celebrating a special occasion.

It's not exactly the way Anthony envisioned celebrating the first of his double-digit birthdays, but things are anything but normal these days. The coronavirus pandemic has changed everything.

Anthony and his family practiced social distancing by decorating a golf cart and spending the day camped out at the end of the driveway. They took turns flashing the honking motion to get passing truckers to blast their horns and



Hot Pursuit RICK BUSSLER

other vehicles to chime in with a few toots.

While getting passing motorists to recognize Anthony's birthday, the family enjoyed a baseball-themed lunch of hot dogs, chips and a baseball ice cream cake from Nick and his crew at the Blooming Prairie Dairy Queen. Anthony was decked out in his Chicago Cubs jersey in honor of a baseball season that has yet to be.

Asked what he thought about his birthday, Anthony responded, "It's weird."

"It's a different way of celebrating," acknowledged Anthony's mom. "You do what you can."

Added his father Andrew, "I don't think we will do this every year for your birthday."

As a MnDOT snow plow made its way northbound on Hwy. 56, Nancy asked out loud, "Do you think we can get a snow plow to honk in April?" They all motioned their arms high in the air and within seconds, the snow plow blasted its horn, bringing chuckles and smiles to the faces of Anthony and his brother.

A little while later a semi truck came by

and laid on its horn. "That was kind of a wimpy one for a semi," Nancy commented about the horn. "Some are really big."

The original plan was for the family to go to Dave & Busters, an arcade in the Twin Cities, for Anthony's birthday. But once the COVID-19 crisis forced families to stay at home, the Schnables rolled with the punches and came up with a different way to celebrate. The Schnables hit the end of their driveway around 9 a.m. and planned to stay there until mid-afternoon. Even though it wasn't what the family had in mind, Nancy said they had fun with Anthony's birthday. "You make the best of every situation," she says. "It's a big birthday with him turning double digits. This is one to remember, that's for sure."

Nancy hopes the stay-at-home restrictions will loosen up next month when both she and her husband have big birthdays. They both turn 40 this year. "We hope we can celebrate," she said. "If not, you'll be seeing us at the end of the driveway," she added.

And, if that happens, the Schnables at least have a little practice under their belts. "For now, this is as good as it gets," Nancy said. All we can do is hope that families going in hot pursuit of celebrating birthdays will be able to do so without restrictions much longer.



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Anthony Schnable celebrates his 10th birthday on April 23 with his family in a decorated golf cart at the end of the driveway of their rural Hayfield home by getting passing vehicles along Hwy. 56 to honk their horns. Celebrating with Anthony are his brother Ethan and parents Nancy and Andrew Schnable.

YOUR VIEW

Grateful for generosity of area communities

To-the-Editor: Steele County Public Health would like to extend a huge Thank You to our caring community for donating cloth masks to help protect our health care workers, essential business providers, and vulnerable populations. Steele County received 190 masks from Blooming Prairie Fire Department, 126 from

Medford, and 831 from Owatonna during the Minnesota State Mask Drive initiated by Gov. Tim Walz. We are extremely grateful for all of those who have contributed to these efforts. Steele County Public Health continues to accept PPE, cloth masks, and other donations. Donations can be dropped off at the Steele County Public Health office

Mon-Friday 8-5:00 located at 635 Florence Ave. Owatonna. We encourage all people who can to wear a mask when out in public or interacting with others outside of your immediate families and continue to practice social distancing. Steele County Public Health Owatonna



Joe Motl and son Garret went cruising' Blooming Prairie's Main Street on May Day, May 1.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD



Even tractors participated in Cruising down Main Street of Blooming Prairie on this particular Friday night.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD



It was a beautiful spring night to go cruisin' Main Street in Blooming Prairie. This oldie coasts by the Pizza Cellar.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Al-Corn sells ethanol for hand sanitizer

BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN
COUNTY WRITER

As the demand for ethanol for fuel has dropped because of the COVID-19 pandemic, ethanol plants throughout the Midwest have seen their markets contract. Al-Corn Clean Fuel in Claremont has joined those in the industry who have made the decision to add a new product to its business – ethanol for hand sanitizer.

Randy Doyle, CEO of Al-Corn, said as the demand for ethanol for fuel dropped, he needed a way to keep the facility working.

“I want to keep everybody working,” he said, “and to keep grinding corn.”

They knew the demand for hand sanitizer was growing, and they knew hand sanitizer requires ethanol. The solution, provide the product another industry needed.

The ethanol used in hand sanitizer is not exactly the same as that used in fuel, Doyle said.

The company set up a separate line to make the sanitizer ethanol where the product is distilled differently, Doyle said. “The purity (for hand sanitizer) is a little higher,” he said.

The ethanol used in vehicles does not need to have all the impurities removed, he said, but that used in hand sanitizers must be a pure as possible.

With the new product available, Doyle said, they still had to find buyers.

“I’m spending most of my days looking for sales,” he said.

They have been selling the product to area craft distilleries that have also switched over to a new product. The customers, he said, have included Harmony Spirits in Harmony and Maple Products in Adams.

The COVID-19 pandemic is just the latest challenge the U.S. ethanol industry has faced over the past several years.

Because Americans are now driving less, industry experts estimate a 15 to 20% reduction in gasoline use over the next couple of months. According to a University of Illinois report, demand for ethanol could drop by 120 to 170 million bushels.

“It’s affecting us, definitely,” Doyle said earlier. “It’s not a secret, people are not driving.”

Even before the pandemic, the industry had been suffering from an oil price war, trade dispute and small refinery waivers that had all worked against the industry.

Two bright spots recently have been the administration’s decision not to challenge a ruling by a federal court that curbed the EPA’s ability to exempt oil from bio-fuel blending requirements and the additional need for ethanol to be used in hand sanitizer.

Cruising for something other than corona

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

There’s no better way to spend a Friday night.

Cruise Main Street in Blooming Prairie. That’s what happened Friday night, May 1 when all kinds and shapes of vehicles took to dragging Main Street.

There were muscle cars, convertibles, old cars, a farm tractor and even a Volkswagen bug in the cruising parade. A rough estimate of participating

vehicles was in the 60-75 range.

The word passed through Facebook pages, urging all ages to take their places in a parade of sorts, “Cruisin’ Main Street of Blooming Prairie.”

Jennifer Walsh and Pam Farr were two of the promoters of Cruisin’ Main Street in Blooming Prairie. Banking partners Pam Farr and Ann Weedman rode in a car with a moon roof, and they shouted acknowledgment to those watching from

the Main Street sidewalks.

Muscle cars made their presence known with the loud reverberation of their mufflers.

Joe Motl and son Garret paraded in Joe’s 1946 Ford featuring exposed power normally found underneath the hood.

A “Poppin’ Johnny” farm tractor also made his presence known in the cruisin’ parade.

Following many swipes down Main Street from Highway 218 to Blooming Prairie High School and then

back down Main to 218 where the route went south to the Cenex station, which served as the turnaround spot.

After 90 minutes of fun, many of the vehicles and their passengers ended in the BPHS parking lot.

Lots of vehicles also lined up at the Blooming Prairie Dairy Queen. The line wrapped into drive-up from the street. Owner Nick Schiefert was busy taking orders and helping process the orders with his work crew.

Bar owner: It will kill restaurants and bars

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

“We will just have to wait it out,” says J & H Liquors owner Harvey Farr when reflecting on a timeline when bars and restaurants will be able to open again.

Farr and wife Nancy have owned and operated the onsale and offsale liquor store on Blooming Prairie’s Main Street for the past 34 years.

Because of the executive order of Gov. Tim Walz on March 16 to shut down bars and restaurants, J & H was forced to close its doors to the bar but was allowed to keep the offsale part of the business open. That order was later extended another 14 days. A second extension set the closure date until May 18.

Farr said off sale business “has gone up

some” but not substantially.

Offsale hours are 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays.

The Farris have said their customers have told them they can’t wait to return to the bar to visit with people. “Look out on Main Street and most days it looks like a ghost town,” said Farr.

Farr said “it has been a tough, tough time” and it caused J & H to miss out on a St. Patrick’s Day celebration, on an individual’s 60th birthday, two pool tournaments and a 34th anniversary/customer appreciation day.

Farr said Gov. Walz was following the actions of neighboring Wisconsin in extending its closure. “This will kill restaurants and bars,” Farr said.

“It’s making it tough on families with elder-

ly people,” said Farr. He says it is imperative that we get a vaccine and eliminate the virus. “That would be great,” he remarked.

“People will be gun shy to be in large groups of people and will stay away from going to restaurants,” Farr predicts.

Farr said he has talked to other bar owners and it is their belief that our bars and restaurants will be closed until after Memorial Day, which is May 25.

He said it is his understanding that leaders are making that decision because they feel the curve of cases reported hasn’t been flattened enough.

Harvey and Nancy are most supportive of

their community and have invested time and money in promoting and helping the community.

Expressing disappointment, Farr said he was recently contacted by the band J & H planned to sponsor for the Fourth of July street dance this summer and told that the band would not make that commitment.

Social distancing and other measures are something “we are not used to doing,” Farr says. “We haven’t seen our three grandkids in weeks,” Farr related.

“We are most concerned about the safety and well being of everyone at this time,” Farr says with sincerity.



Harvey and Nancy Farr are not able to run their bar business at J & H Liquors, but they are still active business people, running their off sale business on Main Street.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Area airports receive CARES Act funding

U.S. Rep. Jim Hagedorn has announced that 15 airports across southern Minnesota will receive transportation funding from the CARES ACT, which he supported in the House of Representatives in March.

Included in the airport funding for \$30,000 each are Owatonna’s Degner Regional, Austin Municipal, Albert Lea Municipal, Faribault Municipal and Dodge Center Airport. The Rochester International Airport will receive almost \$2.5 million.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) grants for safety fixes and infrastructure improvements total nearly \$3 million.

“Transportation and safety of southern

Minnesota airports are critical for restarting local economies,” said Hagedorn. “Rochester Airport, for example, facilitates the transportation of tens of thousands of lab tests per day, including a large number of coronavirus tests, along with patients and medical experts around the world to the Mayo Clinic.”

Hagedorn said he continues to prioritize transportation for southern Minnesota by working with state and federal colleagues to secure funding for projects, such as completion of the Highway 14 corridor, that he considers essential to the long-term economic development and road safety of our working families.

Steele Landfill implements restrictions

The Steele County Landfill is open for business again, but with certain restrictions.

At this time, the landfill is open only to Steele County residents, according to Bruce Holland, supervisor of the landfill. Holland said people must bring identification when making drop-offs so that workers can verify residency. He added residents from outside the county will be turned away.

Holland also made it clear that Landfill

personnel will not be helping people unload their vehicles as they have in the past. “We are trying to do the distance thing,” he said. “Plan accordingly. If someone helped you load it, bring them with you to unload it,” he added.

“We’re just trying to keep everyone safe and healthy,” said Holland.

The Landfill is operating under normal hours Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

How about a toilet paper cake?

Area baker says she'll try anything once

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

“A toilet paper cake, you’ve got to be kidding,” said a friend of Karen Peterson, owner of the small Blooming Prairie business called Confections by Karen.

“I will try anything once,” laughs Peterson when asked if she would make a toilet paper cake.

If Peterson’s house lights are on at 1:30 in the morning, it is because she is embarking on another order.

The baking orders have been piling up for Karen ever since the COVID-19 pandemic started. “I have made over 800 donuts in the last month and a half,” says Peterson.

Since The Bakery burned on Jan. 28,

Peterson’s business has grown with donuts being the most popular item she creates. She makes cake donuts and filled donuts.

“I’m trying to adapt,” Peterson remarks. She claims to be the only person in Blooming Prairie who is making homemade donuts and cakes. She also makes cinnamon rolls and caramel rolls. Both are popular items, she says.

Because of the pandemic, Peterson is no longer able to substitute teach in the Blooming Prairie district. That’s why she has stepped up her baking chores. It’s a way for her to make up for those lost monies.

“If I have the ingredients, I try to satisfy a customer request,” Peterson offers. “It keeps

me from sitting on my butt,” she comments.

Peterson says it is important for her to do her baking early in the morning because it is a quiet time and she does not have a crew to do preparation or icing. She preps her dough the night before and when she is frying, she is the only one frying.

Classified as a cottage industry, Peterson has to follow certain state guidelines and operating procedures. Most of the operating procedures involve common sense, she informed. “I keep my kitchen clean; that’s imperative,” she insists.

Peterson says she cannot do all of her baking in one day. She said she does 3-4 donuts at a time and it usually

takes her a minute-and-a-half for each donut. While making donuts, she has to find a rhythm that works.

“I will never be like Gregg,” Peterson says, referring to The Bakery owner Gregg Fristedt, who has developed quite a popular reputation during his 23 years as a baker. She says she has her own identity.

Peterson was proud of herself the other day when she tackled bagels. She made eight for her son Caleb on his 11th birthday. “He loved them, but I thought they were a little flat,” she said.

If interested in ordering one of Peterson’s products, or wanting her to make a special request, call Karen at 507-340-0171.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Karen Peterson of Confections by Karen of Blooming Prairie will try any baked good a customer requests, she said. She even fulfilled a customer's request for a toilet paper cake.

In her spare time, Peterson is coordinator of the Blooming Prairie Backpack program.

She said the program is slow right now. She last provided food to needy families on April 2. She served 11 families

out of a capability of 36. Sixty-one students are served at the program’s peak. If people are in need of food, they may also contact Community Pathways of Steele County at 507-455-2991 ext 106.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Blooming Prairie's Class of 2020 had some fun during Homecoming Week last fall by dressing in their favorite jerseys. Pictured from left to right are: Front row: Gemini Johnson, Marti Snider, Baylee Sorenson, Emily Krampitz, Jillian Wigham, Jayde Wacek and Heather Pirk. Second row: Riauna Bishop, Maya Lembke, Adam Larson, Julia Worke, Zach Archer, DJ Stender and Alex Baldwin. Third row: Melanie Suchanek, Grace Robins, Viridiana Villarreal and Gabe Hagen. Fourth row: Karson Vigeland, Isaac Ille, Devonte Freese and Cortney Espe.

Sudden end makes seniors heartbroken

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

From being heartbroken to shock is how two Blooming Prairie High School seniors reacted to learning they would not be returning to school this year because of the coronavirus outbreak.

The Times contacted some Blooming Prairie High School seniors to learn their reactions to school being called off for the rest of the year. Distance learning will continue until the end of May.

Many of these seniors were hit with

a double whammy because not only are they completing their last year in high school, but they saw their senior spring sports season wiped off the books because of the virus.

Some senior members of the Section 1A championship boys basketball team also saw their chance eliminated to compete in a state basketball tournament. The Minnesota State High School League cancelled all tournaments going on at the time.

“I was very heartbroken and it still does not seem real,” remarked senior Maya

Lembke. She was also going to be varsity first string catcher on the Awesome Blossoms girls softball team.

Gabe Hagen, all-state football player for the Awesome Blossoms, said he was “shocked” by Gov. Tim Walz’s announcement that schools would be closed, except for distance learning, for the rest of the school year.

“It sucks that we aren’t going back but when I think back on my high school career, I had a bunch of great memories,” said Hagen.

Senior Baylee Sorensen reflected on

the decision to call off school. “This school year came to a sudden and unexpected ending for all students,” she commented. “We didn’t know that our last day was our last day.”

“As we continue to learn online, there are still many unknowns about the rest of the school year, such as graduation. It is hard to grasp what is truly happening because every day there are more updates and more news stories about COVID-10. We never know what the next day will bring but the

Child care grants awarded by SMIF

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) recently awarded 525 emergency grants totaling \$254,950 to child care providers in SMIF’s 20-county region.

A total of 491 family-based providers and 34 centers received grants. Providers in all 20 counties in SMIF’s region received funding, including \$20,450 to 43 providers in Steele County, \$11,450 to 23 providers in Rice County, \$11,250 to 25 providers in Dodge County, \$6,850 to 14 providers in Freeborn County and \$11,900 to 24 providers in Mower County.

At the urging of Gov. Tim Walz, the six Minnesota Initiative Foundations, including SMIF, created the Emergency Child Care Grant Program to provide immediate relief to child care providers caring for the young children of emergency and essential workers in Greater Minnesota. Providers in SMIF’s region who received grants are car-

ing for more than 1,800 children of emergency and essential workers. Statewide, the six Minnesota Initiative Foundations supported more than 1,500 providers with nearly \$1.4 million.

The program was launched March 26 with dollars going out the door over the two weeks that followed. The intent was to get immediate support to child care providers experiencing financial strain until a larger source of public funding allocated by the Minnesota Legislature and administered by Child Care Aware could be made available.

“For years we have worked to provide trainings for child care providers in quality care, and we have worked with communities to address the child care shortage by helping to create new slots,” said Rae Jean Hansen, Vice President of Early Childhood at SMIF. “Now our

State awards first emergency child care grants

More than 1,200 Minnesota child care providers will receive about \$9.8 million to continue serving children of essential workers through the first round of emergency state funding announced Monday by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

The grants, proposed by Gov. Tim Walz and authorized by the Minnesota Legislature last month, will help family child care providers and child care centers ensure there is enough capacity to serve these families during the state’s COVID-19 response. A total of \$30 million has been authorized by the state to assist child care providers. Whether or not they received a grant in the first round, child care providers will have the opportunity apply for grants in the second and third rounds in mid-May and mid-June.

“These grants are an important step to ensuring those who are working on the front lines of this crisis will have qualified professionals to care for their children,” said Minnesota Human Services Commissioner Jodi Harpstead. “With child care providers

struggling to keep their doors open, we know there is high demand for additional support. Fortunately, they will have an opportunity to apply for the second and third round of grants.”

The grants were awarded through Child Care Aware of Minnesota, which received applications from 5,380 state licensed child care programs and 22 tribally licensed programs. Implementation of the Peacetime Child Care Emergency Child Care Grants has been a successful partnership between the Minnesota Children’s Cabinet, Child Care Aware and the Department of Human Services.

“Child care providers are critical to the state’s response to COVID-19. They are the heroes on the frontline supporting our children and families,” said Erin Bailey, Children’s Cabinet Executive Director. “Additional resources are critical to ensuring that providers are able to stay open and continue to provide care and education to our littlest Minnesotans.”

Selected applicants will receive an award on a month-to-month basis. Monthly grant awards

In challenging times, everyone misses one another

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

These are challenging times and not knowing what the future holds, makes it difficult to move forward, says Blooming Prairie High School Principal John Worke.

“Everyone misses one another,” reflected Worke on the decisions to cancel the spring sports season and to not call the students back to the classroom this school year.

Worke, his wife Mary, a guidance counselor, and their daughter Julia, a senior, have all been directly affected by these major decisions forced by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Worke has been in

contact with seniors and said he always tells students that when things don’t go their way, they will come out a better person because of it.

“These are memories, although sad and difficult, our seniors will never forget,” remarked Worke.

Worke said these two decisions represent another opportunity that students missed out.

In regard to the spring sports season, Worke said Blooming Prairie Awesome Blossom coaches have been trying to stay connected with student athletes, and hopefully making the best out of a difficult situation.

The decisions were

sad but understandable, Worke emphasized.

“We are all human and it is by nature to need/want that human contact,” Worke believes. “I think the toughest factor is the unknown. Educators are planners. It is a major part of the profession.”

Worke said there are a lot of events planned during the springtime. “Although we will try our best to do some of them, it just feels like the year is unfinished,” he observes.

“I want our students to understand that we are a society and this virus, for the most part, affects the elderly and people with underlying medical conditions,” said Worke.

“In most cases,”



JOHN WORKE

Worke said, “our younger population is not affected, however, they still need to make small sacrifices following the stay at home order as well as the social distancing to help the situation.”

Worke said Blooming Prairie’s students may not realize it now, at their age, but as they grow older, they will realize these are small sacrifices they made for the betterment of our society.

In a “me first” world a lot can be learned during these challenging times, Worke concluded.

SEE STATE AWARDS, A7

Do Pneumonia Vaccines Protect Seniors from Coronavirus?



THE SAVVY SENIOR

Brought to you by:

Prairie Manor Care Center & Heather Haus

220 3rd St. NW,
Bloomington
583-4434

Dear Savvy Senior,
Do currently offered vaccines against pneumonia provide seniors any protection against the coronavirus disease? I've always been bad about getting vaccinated, but this coronavirus pandemic is causing me to change my thinking.
Pro-Vax Patty

Dear Patty,
This is a great question. Because the coronavirus (COVID-19) attacks the lungs and respiratory system, many readers have asked whether the pneumonia vaccines, which are administered to millions of patients each year, might protect someone if they contract the coronavirus.
But unfortunately, the answer is no. Vaccines against pneumonia, such as pneumococcal vaccine and Haemophilus influenza type B vaccine, do not provide protection against the new coronavirus.
This virus is so new and different that it needs its own vaccine. Researchers are in the process of rapidly developing a vaccine against COVID-19, but it is expected to take at least a year before it's ready.

Having said that, you should also know that there are several other important vaccines the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all seniors should get up to date on after the coronavirus pandemic dies down. Here's a rundown of what they are, when you should get them, and how they're covered by Medicare.

Flu vaccine: While annual flu shots are recommended each fall to everyone, they are very important for older adults to get because seniors have a much greater risk of developing dangerous flu complications. According to the CDC, last year up to 647,000 people were hospitalized and 61,200 died because of the flu – most of whom were age 65 and older.

To improve your chances of escaping the seasonal flu, this September or October consider a vaccine specifically designed for people 65 and older. The Fluzone High Dose or FLUAD are the two options that provide extra protection beyond what a standard flu shot offers. And all flu shots are covered under Medicare Part B.

Pneumococcal vaccine: As previously stated, this vaccine protects against pneumonia, which hospitalizes around 250,000 Americans and kills about 50,000 each year. It's recommended that all seniors, 65 or older, get two separate vaccines – PCV13 (Pneumar 13) and PPSV23 (Pneumovax 23). Both vaccines, which are administered one year apart, protect against different strains of the bacteria to provide maximum protection. Medicare Part B covers both shots if they are taken at least a year apart.

Shingles vaccine: Caused by the same virus that causes chicken pox, shingles is a painful, blistering skin rash that affects more than 1 million Americans every year. All people over age 50 should get the new Shingrix vaccine, which is given in two doses, two to six months apart. Even if you've already had shingles, you should still get this vaccination because reoccurring cases are possible. The CDC also recommends that anyone previously vaccinated with Zostavax be revaccinated with Shingrix because it's significantly more effective.

All Medicare Part D prescription drug plans cover shingles vaccinations, but coverage amounts, and reimbursement rules vary depending on where the shot is given. Check your plan.

Tdap vaccine: A one-time dose of the Tdap vaccine, which covers tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough) is recommended to all adults. If you've already had a Tdap shot, you should get a tetanus-diphtheria (Td) booster shot every 10 years. All Medicare Part D prescription drug plans cover these vaccinations.

Other Vaccinations
Depending on your health conditions, preferences, age and future travel schedule, the CDC offers a "What Vaccines Do You Need?" quiz at www2.CDC.gov/nip/adultimmsched to help you determine what additional vaccines may be appropriate for you. You should also talk to your doctor during your next visit about which vaccinations you should get.

To locate a site that offers any of these vaccines, visit VaccineFinder.org and type in your location.

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

Looking back at past epidemics

One of the most feared childhood diseases

Editor's Note: This is the final part in an installment of stories about past epidemics in Minnesota. Over the past few weeks, Nancy Vaillancourt has shared information about Minnesota's first pandemic, smallpox in 1871, and the Spanish flu in 1918.

BY NANCY VAILLANCOURT

While the epidemics featured in the last articles, smallpox and the influenza of 1918, were before the life span of almost all of us, this week's topic may be more relatable. Many of us know people who have had polio or may have relatives who dealt with it in the past.

Linda L. Christianson of Bloomington, who was diagnosed with polio as an infant, has spoken of her experiences. She has also authored a memoir, All the Steps I Have Taken, which is available through local libraries, or for purchase from Linda.

Polio, with the medical name poliomyelitis, has been known to exist for centuries. It is a highly contagious viral infection, which brings an inflammation of the central nervous system. Polio can cause paralysis

in the body, including in the diaphragm, leaving the affected unable to breathe on their own, leading to the development and use of an iron lung.

Polio was one of the most feared childhood diseases, although it could also affect adults. In the United States transmission of polio grew in the 1940s and 1950s, crippling an average of more than 35,000 people each year. Quarantines were sometimes imposed on homes or on entire towns when polio was discovered. Parents kept their children indoors and away from other children. Unlike the flu or other viruses, polio was more prevalent in warm weather.

In Steele County, polio was somewhat limited, with 18 children infected in 1946. While the 1946 Steele County Free Fair was being held, the Minnesota State Fair was cancelled by the State Department of Health because of the epidemic. Schools delayed their openings. Steele County schools did not open until Sept. 16, although some of the rural district schools opened on time.

The City of Owatonna banned children

from attendance at any public gatherings. Theater, baseball parks, Sunday school, picnics were off limits. Any gatherings of more than five children under the age of 15 were prohibited. The newspapers regularly reported the names and addresses of those afflicted.

Another round of polio struck Steele County in 1948. In September 1948, no activities were held in the children's room at the Owatonna Public Library. It was arranged that books, which had been in contact with polio, would be sent directly to a polio hospital by the borrower, with the library assuming all financial loss.

Entire families were affected during this epidemic. Mrs. and Mrs. John Gillen of Medford experienced the death of their oldest child, Robert, at the age of 13. The following month their remaining three children, Janet, age 10, Clare Jean, age 9, and Richard, age 11, were all treated in the University of Minnesota hospital. Those children recovered, although the long-term effects are not known.

Community groups were organized to assist. The Steele County

chapter of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis aided all families experiencing polio.

The peak of the disease in Minnesota occurred in 1952 when over 4,100 cases were reported. The deaths from polio were 220 that year.

During that time, a race was on to develop a vaccine, which was accomplished by Jonas Salk. Clinical trials were held and the first public immunizations were given in 1955. Widespread immunization did not occur until 1963. Thanks to this vaccination, the United States has been polio-free since 1979. However, polio still occurs in some countries and infected persons could bring it into the U.S.

For more information about the polio epidemics, consider reading All the Steps I Have Taken by Linda Christianson. There are also several books available about Sister Elizabeth Kenny, an Australian nurse who pioneered new treatment options for polio and established a clinic in Minneapolis.

Nancy Vaillancourt is the director at the Bloomington Prairie Public Library. She is also an avid history buff.

History from the News Archives

10 Years Ago

May 11, 2010

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

After 32 years of leading 6 and 7 year olds around the room and through the hallways of Bloomington Prairie Elementary School, Ann Clausen has decided to pursue her love of camping and gardening full time and let someone younger follow in her footsteps. Clausen was honored by fellow teachers and former staff at a retirement party on May 6th. Following snacks, social conversation and thanks on her long career in kindergarten by Supt. Barry Olson and Sandra Grinnell, Elementary Principal, teachers Diane Pfeiffer and Lisa Bruns recited a special alphabet with comments for the retiree. Ann was presented with gifts from the school district and BPTA. Clausen responded with a little resume of her career and appreciation.

Honors to our police during National Police Week. Our thanks and appreciation to: Chief Paul Wayne; Sgt. Mark Lange; Officers Jacob Peterson, Steve Seipp, Rick Ellington and Mike Studer; K-9, Krux. Special remembrance of Officer Neal Johnson, killed in the line of duty, Dec. 22, 1951.

A salute to BP Athletes of the Week go to DaVyll Smith, girls track, Adam Driessen, boys track, Jeana Johnson, girls golf, Dylan Hatch, boys golf, Aaron Krejci, baseball and Tayla Jones, softball.

20 Years Ago

May 9, 2000

ELSIE SLINGER, PUBLISHER

Prairie Manor has earned a five-star rating, placing it among the top ten percent of all nursing homes nationally. Prairie Manor and Comforcare Good Samaritan Center of Austin were the only area homes to receive five-star ratings. "This comes as a wonderful surprise," said Prairie Manor Administrator Mark Robinson. "This is something our staff can be very proud of; it says a great deal about the good job they do."

The following students attended the South Central

Regional Science Fair in Mankato: Danielle Leek, Nicole Kaplan, Mallory Macal, Ashley Masching (3rd place overall in 6th grade environmental category), Laura Williamson, Kelley Pogonesm Aminae Kazemi (first place overall 4th grade, physical science), Patrick Rumpza, Justin Krell (first place overall 4th grade, botany), Jaooly Carlson, Sam Tashima, Derek Haubenschild, David Leek, Ashley Schmeling, Jenna Nelson, Carly Coddington, Rebekah Holmes, Laura Peterson, Lauren Hines and Patrick Mattox. Congratulations to all these participants.

Bloomington Fourth of July Button design winner has been announced. She is Amber Thompson. Amber was one of about 30 students who participated in the contest and her design was one of 90 submitted by students. She will receive \$25 in BP Bicks for her efforts.

50 Years Ago

May 6, 1970

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

The Bloomington Prairie High School Band and Mixed Chorus have each received "star" ratings at the Regional Music Contest held at Alden on May 2nd. They had recently won "star" ratings at the District contest. The band, under the direction of Cliff Jones, was one of only two bands in the entire region to receive the rating in Class I competition. The chorus, directed by Dennis John, competed in the Class II division. This was the first time in many years that any Bloomington Prairie vocal group has received a "star" rating at the regional level.

Cub Scout Pack 200 held its regular meeting Monday evening. The meeting was called to order; the Pledge of Allegiance given by all followed by singing "America." Twenty-eight Cub Scouts received awards. Nine Webelos Scouts were graduated into Boy Scouts. Willis "Bud" Miller, Scoutmaster for Troop 261. Along with the scouts of Troop 261 welcomed the boys into their troop. Boys graduating were Doug Harvey, Doug Johnson, Michael Kranda, Scott Olson, Terry Schneider, Jim Smith, Steven Ulrich, Steven

Vaith and Phillip Walch. Three members of the boys track team set new school track records. LaVerne Klecker broke Chris Olson's record of 4:44.4 in the mile with an outstanding time of 4:37.8. Tome Walsh, a freshman, broke the 880 record of Arlie Olson with a run of 2:00.7. Doug Betlach broke his own record in the shotput with a throw of 46' 1"??.

75 Years Ago

May 10, 1945

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

The long-awaited, eagerly expected, welcomed Victory in Europe news finally came. As official announcement by President Truman came Tuesday morning at 8 o'clock, Bloomington Prairie church bells pealed forth the joyous tidings. Never did their chimes sound more melodious to our residents. Businesses came to an abrupt end. Banks did not open for the day, eating houses, recreation places, garages, service stations, professional offices – in fact never in history of Bloomington Prairie was the businesses lid clamped on so tightly. Grade and high school pupils were dismissed for the day. The brief period of rejoicing did not let our citizens forget for a moment the toil and efforts still lie ahead. Solemn was the observation of V E Day here.

One of the most outstanding events ever to be staged in Bloomington Prairie will take place Decoration Day at Victory Park when the Western Stock Horse Show will exhibit here. The show is being sponsored by the local American Legion Post under leadership of Jor Johnson, commander. Unique and interesting, the show attracts all ages irrespective of their love of fine horses. Entries from owners of educated saddle and trick horses have already been received from Iowa, Wisconsin and numerous points in Minnesota.

Mrs. Sophia Aldahl of Austin has been notified by the War Department that her son, Pfc. James Aldahl, was killed in action in Italy on April 16. He was the son of the late John Aldahl and a cousin of Ernest Thompson and Mrs. William Pechacek of Bloomington Prairie. He was 24 years of age.

CHILD CARE: grants

FROM A4

region and state is facing a new challenge, but our commitment to child care providers remains the same. We are deeply

appreciative to the donors who built this fund quickly so that we could help providers during this difficult time."

Due to overwhelming response, this grant program is currently closed. Should sufficient funding become available, the application will reopen. SMIF is also working to support

strategy and business planning for child care providers during this difficult time.

The fund for SMIF's Emergency Child Care Grant program was launched with \$100,000

from the Minnesota Council on Foundations and Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation through their Minnesota Disaster Recovery Fund for Coronavirus and \$50,000 from SMIF.

Additional support came through from Blandin Foundation, Compeer Financial, Goodhue County, Granite Equity Partners, U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo and individual donors.

SEEING THE GOOD

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



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

A parade of firetrucks and cars streamed through Medford’s streets on Tuesday afternoon. The parade was organized by Medford Senior Care staff and was a fun way to get residents out in the community during the COVID-19 crisis.

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage the country, local communities are finding fun ways to remain positive and stay together during these trying times. Medford recently saw a parade of citizens from Medford Senior Care rumble through their streets. On April

28, firetrucks escorted a line of cars from City Hall to the Medford Senior Care facility, with a John Deere tractor following closely behind. It was a fun and safe way to celebrate for Medford’s senior population, who otherwise have been subject to the current shelter in place order. “I love the fact that residents got on winter coats and masks to come out and greet

families,” Medford Mayor Lois Nelson said. The idea was organized by Alyssa Crowley, manager at Medford Senior Care. “There was a good mixture of friends and family that were part of the parade from as far away as Prior Lake and Eagan –where it was pouring rain when they left home,” Nelson said. “We all appreciate our firemen’s willingness

Medford remains strong with pandemic parade

to participate in these spontaneous parades making for good memories.” “As many of the residents also have country routes, seeing the John Deere tractor from Kibble Equipment was a treat,” she said. “Before the residents got inside, there was another area farmer who came around the corner with his big rig too. Guessing there were many smiles and chuckles on the participants, staff, and residents faces.” Father Jim Staras-inich from Christ the King Church also participated in the parade as many of the residents are parishioners of his church. With the COVID-19 pandemic, local communities are finding creative ways to continue with daily activities, and that includes going to mass. Christ the King held a special mass Sunday at noon with a parking lot service commemorating the month of May’s devotion to the Blessed Mother. The mass included music

and prayers, and was another inventive work-around for the shelter in place order. During its regular session last week, the Medford City Council continued to address the current pandemic moving forward. The council rescheduled the public hearing for the 2021 Mainstreet Project for May 20 at 5:30 p.m. The public hearing will be streamed live from City Hall. “People can submit their comments ahead of time in writing by mail, or email, or they can drop them off,” City Administrator Andy Welti explained. “They also have the ability to call in and listen.” “It’s just one step in the process, and this doesn’t mean this is a ‘go’ yet by any means,” Mayor Nelson said of the upcoming public hearing. “In fact, we’ve got quite an interesting year I’m sure coming up relating to COVID and the whole financial picture of things, etc.” While the city has many options on the

project if they decide to go ahead, they can also delay it for a year or two. “To get the country reenergized and moving again infrastructure has been talked about,” Nelson said. “It’s been talked about amidst all of this that shovel ready projects might be able to get some federal or state dollars.” “To me that means we should keep moving along knowing we can pull the plug at almost any time,” she said of the reasoning behind continuing to move forward with the project at this point. As they move forward, the city council has expressed its dedication to continue to look at the project and listen to the concerns of residents. With the COVID-19 pandemic still in full swing heading into summer, local communities will continue to operate while finding time to bring a little levity into daily life under quarantine. For Medford, that means coming together, even if that’s in the seat of one’s car.

Mayo nurses armed with masks



SUBMITTED PHOTO

You may not be able to see it in their faces because, well, they are covered with masks, but these nurses at Mayo Clinic Health Systems in Owatonna are very appreciative of protective masks they have received as part of a donation from Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Owatonna. The nurses include: Angie Knudsen, Amanda Duciquame, Jillian LaDuke, Renae Keppers and Dana Girtler. Our Savior’s has donated more than 1,700 masks throughout the area during the coronavirus pandemic. Many community groups have risen to the occasion to help out during the crisis by providing masks.

Mustangs fill the void of COVID-19 boredom

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

It may be a scary world out there right now, but an Owatonna couple is using the COVID-19 crisis to cash in on some new cars and a little lightheartedness to boot. Carl and Denise Wieman took delivery a couple weeks ago on two new GT500 Shelby Mustangs. Denise took stock in a red Mustang while Carl found a blue one to his liking. Faced with the shelter-in-place order affecting all Minnesotans, Carl said, “We have been looking at new cars. We found a pair at a very good price.” With a little extra time to kill, the Wiemans went in search and soon found just what they were looking for. “They were built totally by hand, no robots involved,” Carl pointed out. “They have the same build date, April 19, 2020, making them very collectible.” And they did it while following on social distancing and stay-at-home orders with the current pandemic. Not possible? Well, for the Wiemans, they made it possible by building their own with paper through Car and Driver, an auto website.

“We can’t give you a real GT500 or the leeway to take one for a drive when you’re supposed to be sitting at home watching your loved ones slowly unravel,” Car and Driver states on its website. “But we can give you these paper cut-out GT500s and the permission to make a little vroom-ing noises as you pilot it across your kitchen countertop.” Because color is everything to a Mustang lover, Car and Driver provides five color choices. The only trick is your printer’s ink cartridge needs to be up to task. The GT500s, paper ones, that’s, can be accessed at yahoo.com/autos/build-own-paper-ford-mustang-201400752.html. Carl is an avid car lover. When he’s not faced with extra time on his hands to build paper cars, Carl shuttles vehicles around the Midwest for Car Time of Owatonna. Denise, who recently retired after decades at Walmart in Owatonna, is still trying to find a routine for all the extra time on her hands. Building cars seemed to fill the void, at least for one afternoon amidst a coronavirus-filled world where everyone is hunkered down and scrambling to find things to do.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Carl and Denise Wieman of Owatonna took delivery on two new Shelby Mustangs recently. They even got to build them from the comforts of their own home.

CONTEST EXTENDED BY TWO WEEKS!

DON'T LET COVID-19 GET YOU DOWN!

Kids and adults: have some fun and win prizes while staying at home!

Kids Coloring Contest (for kids up to age 12)

- Choose anything to color on 8-1/2 by 11" paper with this criteria:
 - Up to age 5: 1 bird somewhere
 - Ages 6-9: 2 birds somewhere
 - Ages 10-12: 3 birds somewhere or bouquet of flowers
- Public will judge and entries will be displayed in main street businesses.
- Mail entries to P.O. Box 441 Blooming Prairie or drop off at 319 2nd St. SW, Blooming Prairie
- Win \$10 in BP Bucks in each category

Adult Video Contest

- Lip sync and dance to any song
- Earn points for costumes, choreography and dance moves
- 1-minute video
- Upload to Facebook business page thread
- Win \$25 gift card to J&H or Pizza Cellar

More information on both contests available on **FACEBOOK** at Jennifer Walsh Real Estate.

Entries due for both contests by Saturday, May 16

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SUDDEN END: makes seniors heartbroken

FROM A4

next day is all we have to look forward to."

Most seniors are on the same page when revealing their reactions to the school announcement. "I was sad when I found out but knew I had to put it behind me and continue to work hard," stated senior Karson Vigeland.

Vigeland suffered a serious knee injury in an early February basketball game against Hayfield. He was out for the rest of the basketball season. Vigeland hopes to be able to start his freshman year in college at Bethel in St. Paul.

Teacher and girls basketball coach John Bruns echoed Baylee's comments, saying, "I don't think any of the seniors thought that when they walked out the doors on March 13, that this would be their last day they come to school at Blooming Prairie High School."

Marti Snider, one of Bruns' basketball reserves, said it is "super sad" knowing students will not be going back to school with their classmates and best friends.

"It is just a tough situation, but I know the seniors will stick together and take care of each other," Bruns continued.

Learning that he would not be going back to school this year was "devastating" for Jacob McHenry. "The worst part is I won't be able to spend the final month of school with my friends," he explained.

McHenry said he "wants to encourage people to stay strong."

"I was sad when I found out but knew I had to put it behind me and continue to work hard."

Karson Vigeland
BP Senior

He added, "We will get through this together and life will eventually go back to normal."

Senior Julia Worke shared a feeling with her fellow seniors that this school closing announcement might come. "It is still sad that I won't get to see my friends and to goof around in school. I am sad that we cannot get together as a whole again, but I am grateful for my experience at BPHS."

Like so many, art teacher and coach Nate Piller looked forward to seeing students and athletes back in the building again.

"We're kind of limping along, doing the best we can, under these circumstances," Piller said. "There's no equivalent to being able to interact in person with students and athletes," he believes.

It was a tearful day for both seniors Riauna Bishop and Jayde Wacek, best of friends.

"I have shed many tears and I felt very sad when I found out that I will no longer walk the halls with my classmates and best friends," said Bishop.

"I have created many bonds with my class, underclassmen and teachers. I have made so many fun memories and looked forward to making more memories my senior year," Bishop

further stated. "Our grade has made history and we are very close knit, making it harder for us seniors knowing we will never be able to go back to school and make more memories with each other."

Wacek said she "cried a lot" when notified of the decision to discontinue regular school this year.

"I used to count down the days till graduation, but now I would do anything to go back and make those last few memories with my people," remarked Wacek. "I've grown so many friendships not only with other students but with the teachers and staff," she added.

Senior Zach Archer says he luckily is close to many of his fellow seniors. "I will still see them around and will be able to hang out with them," Archer says. "I am sad that I won't get to see the teachers as teachers again; I will miss walking in after the second bell and getting weird looks from some teachers."

Jarrett Larson said, "As much of a pain school seems to be sometimes, I wish I could've spent the last few months of high school with my friends rather than distance learning." Amen!

COMMUNITY EFFORT:

FROM A1

designed by Steve Frank. By late April, 700 shields had been created and delivered.

Another 200 are in progress and by May 1, the volunteer effort will have created 1,000 shields, reported Melanie Gross and Liza DeBoer of the community relations department.

Gross and DeBoer recently delivered 40 shields and 50 ear protectors to the Blooming Prairie Fire Department and the Blooming Prairie Ambulance Service.

Isreal Wacek, a Blooming Prairie firefighter and an ambulance crew member, accepted the 40 shields and 50 ear protectors on behalf of the fire department and ambulance service.

Both said it is "heartwarming" that a group of volunteers has responded so quickly during a time of community need by creating safety shields.

Thus far, Steele County community volunteers have provided shields and ear savers to:

- Allina Hospital – Owatonna (300 shields and 150 ear savers)
- Steele County Public Health (50 shields and 50 ear savers)
- South Central Human Relations Center (10 shields and 10 ear savers)



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Two members of Federated Insurance's community relations department recently presented 40 safety shields and 50 ear protectors to the Blooming Prairie Fire Department and BP Ambulance Service. Isreal Wacek, volunteer for both emergency departments, accepted the donations from Liza DeBoer, left, and Melanie Gross, right, of the Federated community relations department.

- City of Owatonna – First Responders (210 shields and 210 ear savers)
- City of Blooming Prairie – First Responders (40 shields and 50 ear savers)

The volunteers are reaching out to the other towns in Steele County and will work on supplying them with shields and ear savers. After that, Beckman said his volunteers will work on the assisted living facilities.

Beckman said the Federated community relations department was first alerted to the community's needs by Allina Hospital in Owatonna.

"Once we took care of the medical community's needs, it just made sense to continue forward with our first responders,

and our most vulnerable community members in assisted living facilities," remarked Beckman.

"After we meet these needs, we want to focus on the essential businesses, and provide help for businesses that require close contact in order to function," explained Beckman.

"Our work is far from over," commented Beckman.

This aggressive community effort started on March 18. Volunteers continue to seek out groups they may have missed.

Donations to this Steele County COVID-19 shield project can be made to: Owatonna Area Business Development Center, 1065 24th Ave. SW, Owatonna, MN 55060. In the memo write shields/masks.

STATE AWARDS:

FROM A4

start at \$4,500 with up to \$15,500 additional funding based on added services and capacity. The grants are intended to provide about \$10 million per month over three months to make sure child care is available. Child care programs receiving the grants will be able to continue charging fees

for families still attending their programs. The grant funding will help support expenses not covered due to decreased enrollment.

Providers who meet eligibility criteria may apply for future rounds of grants through the Child Care Aware website at www.childcareawaremn.org/providers/emergen-

cy-child-care-grants/. There are approximately 420,000 children under the age of 12 who live in a household that has essential workers in a sector that is considered critical. Of these, the state estimates that during this peacetime emergency, about 270,000 children will need care and approximately 120,000 are likely to need and use licensed child care settings.

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FROM A DISTANCE... WE STAND TOGETHER



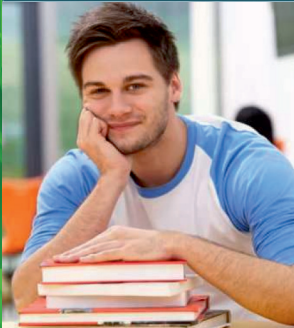
2020 SENIORS

FROM A DISTANCE... WE STAND TOGETHER



2020 SENIORS

FROM A DISTANCE... WE STAND TOGETHER



2020 SENIORS

FROM A DISTANCE... WE STAND TOGETHER



2020 SENIORS

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Thresia Heimerman, 92,
Blooming Prairie



Thresia Heimerman

Thresia Irene Heimerman, age 92 of Blooming Prairie, passed away Monday, April 27, 2020 at Prairie Manor in Blooming Prairie.

On Feb. 24, 1928, Thresia was born to Joseph and Catherine (Fischer) Schmidt in Stacyville, Iowa. She attended country school until 8th grade. On Sept. 25, 1946, Thresia married John Heimerman at St. Peter's Church in Rose Creek, and they had nine children.

She loved being a homemaker to her family, while farming with John until 1974 when they then moved to Albert Lea and lived there for 21 years. Throughout the years, Thresia worked at Naeve Hospital in Albert Lea performing housekeeping and laundry duties from 1976 to 1991. The two later moved back to Blooming Prairie in 1995. Thresia's true passion was dancing, and they belonged to the Stateline Polka Club and Polka of A Club. When Thresia wasn't dancing up a storm, she was sewing, baking cookies and bread, or reading.

She served as President of the Council of Catholic Women at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Newry and was currently a member of St. Columbanus Catholic Church, Blooming Prairie.

Thresia is survived by her husband, John Heimerman; nine children, John "Jack" (Janet) Heimerman of Apache Junction, Ariz.; Jerome "Jerry" (Beverly) Heimerman of Medford; Charles "Chuck" (Cheryl) Heimerman of Bellville, Ill.; Donna Tope of Tensed, Idaho; Dennis (Carol) Heimerman, of Blooming Prairie, Dean (Terri) Heimerman, of Cleveland, Minn.; Jeanne (Mike) Trullinger of Hanover, Minn.; Steve (Laurie) Heimerman of Faribault; and Lori (Tim) Stoll of Champlin; 18 grandchildren; 20 great grandchildren; sister, Dorothy Swehla of Prescott, Ariz.

She was preceded in death by her parents; four sisters; five brothers; son-in-law, Clarence Tope; and granddaughter, Anna Marie Heimerman.

Memorials are preferred to St. Columbanus Catholic Church of Blooming Prairie. A private family service and interment will be held at St. Columbanus Cemetery, Blooming Prairie. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

Arrangements are being handled by Worlein Funeral Home.

Roger Jensen, 83,
Austin



Roger Jensen

Roger Edward Jensen of Austin, passed away Wednesday night, April 29, 2020 at Adams Health Care Center in Adams. He was 83.

Roger was born on Nov. 2, 1936 to Edward and Josie (Ingvaldson) Jensen.

He attended and graduated from Austin Public Schools. Roger was united in marriage to Rose Pfeifer on Oct. 2, 1965 at Red Oak Grove Lutheran Church.

Roger farmed in the Cornring area from the time he was a little boy. At age 15, he took over the responsibilities of the family farm. He enjoyed working alongside neighborhood farmers, visiting, playing cards, watching stock car races, sharing corny jokes, swimming at Beaver Lake, and traveling with his family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Edward and Josie, his sister, Donna (Ed) Pfeifer, his half-sister Joanne (Art) Schammel, and his wife, Rose.

Roger is survived by his two sons, Chris (Christine) of Rochester and Jay (Peggy Dainty) of Minneapolis; one sister, Lois (Steve) O'Neill of Arizona; three grandchildren, Rose, Peter, and Alex; and numerous cousins, nieces, and nephews.

The family thanks the kind souls at the Cedars of Austin, Adams Health Care Center, and Mayo Clinic Health System's Hospice Program for the tender care and attention they provided to Roger over the months and years.

A private funeral service will be announced in the weeks to come. In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred to the Future Farmers of America (www.ffa.org).

BOOK NOOK

Curbside delivery comes to library



NANCY VAILLANCOURT

I am happy to announce that the Blooming Prairie Branch Library is now providing curbside delivery! It has been difficult knowing that our patrons want their books and movies, but we could not provide them. While the library will still be closed, physical items can again be checked out.

You can place your own requests through the online library catalog available at www.owatonna.info. You will need to have your library card number and password. If you need help finding those numbers, give us a call. If you are not comfortable with computers or the internet, leave a message at 507-583-7750. When your requests are ready, library staff will call you to schedule a pickup time.

Pickup times will be between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday

through Friday. If you cannot come during those hours, please call us to make other arrangements. Park on the west side of the library. When you arrive, call the library at 507-583-7750. We will bring your items outside and place them in your trunk.

Please return any items in the outside book drop. Do not bring them into the building. Library staff will quarantine returned materials for 72 hours before processing them. Due dates are extended until further notice. No fines will accrue while the building is closed.

At this time we will not have any live programs, but Tale Time storytimes will continue via Facebook live. Tune in on Wednesday mornings for new stories or watch them whenever you would like. We have been posting Lego challenges, virtual escape rooms, and other information you may need on our Facebook page.

While we would love to welcome you back inside the library, curbside delivery is a first step in making sure you receive what you need from the library. See you soon!

COLLEGE NEWS

Arthur initiated into Honor Society

Riley Arthur, an Iowa State University student from Owatonna, was initiated into the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society this May. The initiates were recognized with a virtual initiation.

Arthur was one of 84 Iowa State students with a major in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) who were initiated into the prestigious honor society. Founded in 1776 at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, Phi Beta Kappa recognizes students for outstanding academic achievement in a broad curriculum in the liberal arts and sciences.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Iowa State University was granted its Phi Beta Kappa chapter charter in 1973.

CALMNESS : in the midst of a crisis for top health official FROM A1

ous means of technology to communicate with stakeholders involved in the crisis.

Public Health is currently operating under an emergency preparedness program, according to Caron. "Since 9/11 occurred, that's when we developed a preparedness program. We have been training for two decades," she said.

Even though Caron's department has been training regularly for situations like this, she is surprised that the training is finally coming into play. "I honestly did not think we would see something like this in our lifetime," she said.

Through it all, Caron says her department

has been able to make things work. "Plan for the worst and hope for the best," she said.

Steele County Emergency Management Director Mike Johnson is one who has worked closely with Caron and her staff during the pandemic. Johnson relies on statistical data updates from the state and county public health departments.

"It's valuable for us to get a picture of what is going on in our area," he said. He noted based on what's happening, it dictates which action plans may be implemented.

"Public Health both on the state and county levels are very important in managing a pandemic," said Johnson,

who is also fire chief in Owatonna. "It's a tough thing to go through. It has been a challenge, and it's not over yet."

Johnson credits Caron for doing a good job in managing the pandemic on the local level. "We are lucky to have good people," he said.

One of Caron's frustrations to this point has been how the pandemic has forced her department to go against what it is used to doing. Many of the services offered by Public Health in a normal circumstance are educational and proactive measures. "We are in a very reactive mode (right now), not proactive," she said. "People are getting put into roles they are not regularly in," she added.

When the coronavirus first came to light in China earlier this year, Caron admits she really wasn't too worried. "When it filtered over to the U.S., reality set in," she said.

Caron knows she is in this current crisis for the long haul. "It's

not going to be a sprint, it's going to be a marathon," she said.

Over the past month, Caron has regularly supported the governor's stay-at-home orders. "I honestly think the stay-at-home order has helped," she said. "I expected our numbers to spike a lot quicker. Those measures have controlled it and slowed it down for us."

One thing is certain. Caron says COVID-19 has not peaked yet in Minnesota, despite a number of days with 20 or more deaths in the past two weeks. Part of the challenge for Public Health officials is that they don't know when that peak will come. Models have placed it anywhere from May to August.

And then to make matters worse, Caron says there will likely be a second wave coming later this year, most likely in the winter months. She expects this crisis to be around for at least a full year.

Asked how she responds to critics who say this coronavirus is

no big deal, Caron had this to say: "A lot of people if they get it will be seriously ill or die from it. People have to think beyond themselves."

Caron tries to get information out as fast as she can on the local level, but it's often hampered because things change from day to day, and even at times from hour to hour. "We're trying to stay on top of the latest changes," she said. "It has been a moving target for us," she added.

She has been impressed with how the community has reacted to this crisis. "Our communities have come together," Caron says. "When we put a call out to the community, they respond swiftly and greatly. We are in this together."

Through it all, Public Health nurses still are going out to handle their regular homebound clients. Caron notes that her department hasn't refused services to anyone. "Our staff has really stepped up while putting themselves at risk," she said.



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STEELE COUNTY Times

NEW OFFICE HOURS
9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday-Friday

507-583-4431

Recipe Corner

Honey Oat Casserole Bread

1 package yeast dissolved in 1/4 cup warm water

Mix and cool:
2 eggs
1 cup quick oatmeal
1 tsp salt
2 cup flour

Add:
2 cup flour

Mix well with floured hands, kneading for 5 minutes. Let rise 50 minutes. Punch down, shape and put into greased 8-inch casserole dish or bread pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes. Butter top and remove from pan.



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Email to [bptimes@frontiernet.net](mailto:frontimes@frontiernet.net)
OR Send to: P.O. Box 247, Blooming Prairie



Pastor Matt Fennell

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
BLOOMING PRAIRIE

Scripture: Philippians 2:14-15

If you are ever up North and you get the chance, stop in to the Dorothy Molter Museum in Ely, Minn. While you're there be sure to pick up a case of Dorothy's Isle of Pines Root Beer. You won't be sorry.

Dorothy Molter was the last person to live in what is now the BWCA. The Boundary Waters Canoe Area is a beautiful wilderness area in

Northern Minnesota. As the government sought to make it a protected wilderness, they demanded that every one leave, but they made an exception for Dorothy. You might say she "grand-mothered" in. For 50 years, she lived quite simply off the land in a rustic little cabin. The little money she needed she made by brewing root beer and selling it to the tourist who canoed past her little cabin.

Why does this concern our devotional? Well, Dorothy was actually known for two things; her hand crafted root beer and her motto. She said it so often it has outlived her and can be found on every bottle of Dorothy's beverage. Around the neck of every bottle in capital letters can

be read. KWITCHUR BELLIKIN. In case you need a translator it is saying, "Quit your Belly Aching!" Stop complaining and move on. The apostle Paul says something very similar albeit perhaps without the bluntness of a Northern Minnesota Wilderness woman.

Paul urges us to do all things without murmuring and disputing. I love that word murmuring. It falls into my favorite class of words onomatopoeia, or words that sound like what they are. Go ahead say murmuring several times. Try muttering it under your breath, or in a discouraging discontented tone out the side of your mouth. Murmur, murmur, murmuring. Did you hear it? It's a type of cowardice complaining. I lack the courage to come right

out and confront someone over an unpleasant situation or issue, possibly because I know I am at least partially in the wrong, so what matter a snide comment under my breath. "What was that?" "Oh, nothing... forget about it" So on we go spreading our "little bit of sunshine" everywhere we go. Pretty soon that murmuring has picked up a pretty noticeable hum. Now it sounds like a wonky refrigerator. When we finally have enough people has "happy" as we are someone will find the mob courage to break forth with an accusation or attack. We have a dispute on our hands. The latter grows quite naturally from the former. Any hope of a quick, quiet and peaceful resolution that may have been possible has been stolen by the murmur-

ers. Convinced now that they are in the right by the humming background, with emotions now whipped into a fury they most often blind-side the object of their growing disdain This my friend is very human. It is very common. It is very wrong. What untold harm, discord and misery comes from our murmuring.

Go back and look at our text. Paul implicitly forbids this type of activity. Complaining and blaming merely breeds the same. We are to be without blame, without harm, without rebuke. Why, because this very thing makes us different from the world. It causes us to shine; to illuminate a crooked and perverse world. What a convicting truth. Jesus before his accusers remained silent. He knew that noth-

ing he could say would change their hardened hearts. Maybe that is a model worth following. If you can see that their hearts are set against you, and that they are no longer willing to listen why waste your energy providing added fuel to the fire, further words they can twist. Much better to refuse to participate in the argument and let them consume themselves till their fury has burnt out.

Dear friends, let us not resort to their tactics. Let us be joyful and banish murmuring to its rightful place. I close with this old saying, never argue with an angry man. It's like trying to teach a pig to sing. It wastes your time and only irritates the pig further!" or KWITCHUR-BELLYAKIN.

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN

AURORA LUTHERAN

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

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN – ELCA

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

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 Prairie
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Heidi Heimgartner
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mike Walerius
507-583-6621
firstlutheranbp.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
507-451-4125
goodshepherdowatonna.com
Worship: 8 a.m.,
9:15 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

MOLAND LUTHERAN – ELCA

7618 NE 84th Ave., Kenyon
Pastor Nancy 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., Sergeant
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 Klawiter and Jacie
Richmond
507-451-7293
stjohnowatonna.org
Worship: 5 p.m.
Thursday & Saturday;
8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Summer Services:
8 a.m. & 9:30 a.m. Sunday

ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN – ELCA

30450 570th Ave., Waltham
Pastor Dwight DoBell
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
tlcowatonna.org
Senior Pastor: Rev. Todd Buegler
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Amanda Floy
Deacon: Kris Oppgaard
Worship: 5 p.m. Saturday; 8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 8:15 a.m. & 9:30 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA

104 First St. SE., Hayfield
Pastor Paul 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 Third Ave. SW., Medford
Pastor Mark Biebighauser
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

ZION LUTHERAN – ELCA

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

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN – ELCA

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

CATHOLIC

CHRIST THE KING

205 Second Ave. NW, Medford
507-451-6353
Father James Starasinich
Deacon Patrick Fagan
Mass: 5:30 p.m. Sat.
Mass: 9 a.m. Mon. & Fri.

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS

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

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL

9946 SE 24th Ave. Owatonna
Father John Wilmot
507-583-2784
www.litomysl.webs.com
Sunday Mass at 8:30 a.m.

with Children's Church Sacrament of Reconciliation Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Faith Formation classes for K thru Confirmation

Second Sunday of month:
Family Faith Formation
Litomysl Finance Council:
2nd Thursday
Litomysl Pastoral Council:
2nd Thursday every other month

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC

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

SACRED HEART PARISH

810 S. Cedar Ave., Owatonna
Father John Sauer
Parochial Vicar
507-451-1588
www.sacredheartowatonna.org
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday;
8:30 a.m. & 10 a.m. Sun.
Spanish Mass: 11:45 a.m. Sun.
Daily Mass: 7:15 a.m.
Reconciliation: 4 p.m. Sat.
Adoration: 8 a.m. – 10 p.m. Thurs.

ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC

114 E. Main St., Blooming Prairie
Father John Wilmot
507-583-2784
www.stcolumbanuschurch.com

Mass: 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Reconciliation: 9 a.m.
First Friday & Saturday

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH

512 S. Elm Ave., Owatonna
Father James Starasinich
Deacon Patrick Fagan
507-451-4845
Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8 & 10 a.m.
Reconciliation: 3-3:30 p.m. Sat.

Daily Mass:
8 a.m. Tues., Wed. & Fri.
(Community Service
8 a.m. Thursday)
Adoration Chapel available
Mon. – Fri. 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Key fob required after
hours or weekends

CHRISTIAN

CHRIST COMMUNITY COVENANT

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

PENTECOSTAL

FIRST UNITED PENTECOSTAL

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

METHODIST

BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST

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

ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST

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

OWATONNA UNITED METHODIST

815 E. University, Owatonna
Rev. Scott Jakel
Linda Boorman, Associate Pastor
Joyce Parker, Associate Pastor
507-451-4734
www.owatonnaumc.org
Traditional Worship (Pathways):
9 a.m. Sunday

NON-DENOMINATIONAL

BRIDGES OF HOPE COMMUNITY

130 W. Bridge St., Owatonna
Pastor Keith Haskell
507-215-2249
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

Biblestudy: 9 a.m. Sun.
Reformers Unanimous Meetings:
7 p.m. Friday

CEDAR CREEK

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

DESTINY CHRISTIAN

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

ELEVATION NORTH

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

NEW BEGINNINGS

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

SIMPLE CHURCH

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

MENNONITE

PRAIRIE MENNONITE

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

MORMON

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

404 31st St. NW, Austin
Bishop Rick Bremner
507-433-9042
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

PRESBYTERIAN

ASSOCIATED CHURCH

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

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

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

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

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

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

2373 Seventh Ave. NE, Owatonna
Pastor Brian Beavers
651-955-4032
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 Prairie
Pastor Matt Fennell
507-583-2673
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.
& 6:30 p.m. Wednesday
Sunday School: 9 a.m.
Bible Study: 11:30 a.m. Sun.

FIRST BAPTIST (Owatonna's oldest church)

123 E. Main St., Owatonna
Pastor Carla Nelson
507-272-9834

www.firstbaptistowatonna.com

Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

BETHEL BAPTIST

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

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

VICTORY LIFE

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

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STEELE CASES SURGE: *but no deaths* FROM A1

In Freeborn County, there have been 35 cases compared to 28 in Mower County. No deaths have been reported in either county.

Widespread testing is scheduled to take place over the next two weeks across the state. Caron will be meeting with officials at Mayo Clinic in Owatonna this week to discuss its plans once widespread testing gets underway.

Another change happening on the local level is that Steele County Public Health will be conducting contact case investigations instead of the state. Caron explained any time there is a confirmed case in Steele County, one of her workers will be conducting the follow-up investigation. At least eight public health workers in Steele County will receive extra training to handle the investigations, she said.

In other developments this past week, Gov. Tim Walz an-

nounced that he was extending the stay-at-home order to May 18 in a continued effort to slow down the spread of COVID-19. "That's not a huge surprise," Caron said. "They are trying to balance the safety of people with the safety of opening back up businesses. They are taking it in small steps."

Caron said the whole idea behind staying at home is to allow health care facilities to get ready for coronavirus. "We have done a good job in Minnesota so are hospitals are ready for any surge or swell," she said.

Social gatherings are still locked down to the fullest extent. Walz says social distancing in these settings continue to be the state's "strongest tool" to prevent the spread of the disease.

While most of the limits on public life will remain like they have since mid-March, the governor loosened

restrictions for nonessential retail businesses, which can now offer curbside pickup and delivery services for customers.

With more businesses opening, they must develop a plan to safely operate and publicly post it. The state won't review each plan to approve or deny it, but will reserve the right to see such plans if complaints come in about working conditions.

Many Republican leaders have been critical of the governor's continued stay-at-home orders, which have essentially shut down many small businesses. State Rep. Peggy Bennett, R-Albert Lea, reacted angrily after hearing the governor's extension last Thursday. "It is a real gut punch to Main Street business owners who have been holding their breath for weeks and are nearly out of air," Bennett said. "Minnesota can methodically

and carefully reopen its economy and keep Minnesotans safe, it doesn't have to be one or the other."

State officials are still waiting to implement widespread testing, which will be able to test every Minnesotan who has symptoms of COVID-19. The state announced the breakthrough in testing on April 22. Experts say the widespread testing will track the disease and isolate the sick.

With nicer weather coming and parks opening up, the temptation will be for people to become more lax with coronavirus rules. "We still need people to practice six feet of social distancing," Caron said. "We highly recommend to wear cloth masks to protect others," she added.

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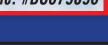
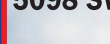
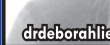
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COVID-19 silences band festival

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

A popular summer tradition in Owatonna is the latest in the COVID-19 casualties.

The Wenger Marching Band Festival Board has made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 festival, which had been set for Saturday, June 20, according to Leslea Partridge, festival president.

Partridge said the board saw the writing on the wall at its March meeting, but waited until April to make a decision. "With a heavy heart, we had

to cancel," she said.

In a statement on its website, the board said, "The safety of everyone who attends is first and foremost in any decision we make."

The board based its decision on direction provided by Gov. Tim Walz and state health officials on April 23. At that time, they said, "Assembling in large groups is not recommended at this time or for the foreseeable future."

In addition, the state ordered Minnesota schools to finish the academic year with distance learning.

"This will not allow, for marching bands, the ability to prepare a show for the typical marching season," the festival board said.

The grand marshal for this year's festival was going to be Carol Hodaff, a retired Owatonna teacher. The board hasn't decided at this time if she will be held over for next year's festival, which is set for June 19, 2021.

The local band festival began about 10 years ago as a summer competition for marching bands around the state. Eleven bands had been scheduled to participate in

this year's festival. The festival teams up with the Lake Waconia Band Festival in Waconia on the same day. Many of the bands start in Owatonna and end up in Waconia later in the day.

The band festival is the third major community celebration in Steele County in as many weeks to shutter because of the pandemic. Both Medford and Ellendale have cancelled their summer festivals for this year.

Blooming Prairie is expected to make a decision on its annual Fourth of July celebration this week.

Fair faces tough decision

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

One of the toughest decisions bearing down on members of the Steele County Free Fair Board is whether or not to cancel Southern Minnesota's largest celebration for this year.

Even though it hasn't happened in 77 years, the likelihood of no fair is appearing to be more likely as time moves closer to the event. Stay-at-home orders have been extended twice since the coronavirus outbreak began in mid-March. The current order expires on May 18. Public Health officials say the peak could come as late as August, which is when the fair is set for its annual six-day run.

"We're still planning a fair," said fair manager Scott Kozelka Friday afternoon. "No one has thrown in the towel yet. There are a lot of moving parts that are still unknown."

Kozelka said he has been talking with other fairs every week over the past month or so. "Everybody is in the same boat as we are," he said.

The fair board will meet for its regular monthly meeting Thursday at 6:30 p.m. It's unknown if a decision will be made at that meeting.

As of Monday, no fairs in Minnesota have cancelled yet for the 2020 season. Many are presumably waiting for direction from the Minnesota State Fair.

The State Fair is also wrestling with the dilemma of keeping the fair going. A couple

weeks ago officials announced that it was a matter of all or nothing for the State Fair. "Alternate fair dates, a change in duration of the fair, or significant restrictions are not being considered," said Jerry Hammer, the fair's general manager. "We continue to remain hopeful that we can celebrate this year in our usual style, but ultimately please know and rest assured the State Fair will do the right thing for Minnesota, our nation and our world."

It's expected the State Fair will make a decision within the next few weeks.

Steele County Public Health Director Amy Caron said it may still be a little premature for Steele County to make a decision about the fair. However, she said depending on what the State Fair does, it will likely have bearing on what happens with the Steele fair.

Since its inception, the State Fair has been held every year with only five exceptions: in 1861 and 1862 due to the Civil War and U.S.-Dakota War, in 1893 because of scheduling conflicts with the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, in 1945 due to WWII and in 1946 due to a polio epidemic.

In Steele County, the last time the fair was cancelled took place in 1943 because of World War II, according to Kozelka. He noted in 1874, the fair was one day because of a grasshopper invasion throughout the state.

A century milestone Harms relies on faith in hard times

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

"It's hard to believe, and I never thought I would get to this age," says Eleanor Harms, currently a resident of the Prairie Manor Care Center in Blooming Prairie.

Harms, who has lived most of her life in Blooming Prairie, will turn 100 on May 28.

"I have my phone," Harms responds when asked how difficult it is for her not to have company at Prairie Manor, locked down since mid-March. Most senior care facilities in Minnesota have been quarantined because of the coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak.

Harms' family asks friends to send her a birthday card at the Prairie Manor Care Center, Room 34, 220 NW 3rd St., Blooming Prairie, MN 55917.



"I have a good memory of those olden days."

Eleanor Harms
BP Area Centenarian

SEE
A CENTURY
MILESTONE,
B2

Eleanor Harms was born on May 28, 1920. She will be celebrating 100 years. She has resided in Blooming Prairie for over 65 years. She currently is a resident of the Prairie Manor Care Center in Blooming Prairie.

BP honor students inducted via ZOOM

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Social Distance are two words that have become part of our daily vocabulary in recent weeks.



Via ZOOM, current members and new members participated in an induction ceremony. A candlelight ceremony was led by seniors Gemini Johnson, Adam Larson, Baylee Sorensen, Riauna Bishop and Julia Worke.

ZOOM is another new technological word that has become part of our means of connecting with one another.

With the mandate still existing to follow social distance and not

populating over 10 in a group, it was necessary to utilize modern technology to bring Blooming Prairie High School members of the Minnesota Honor Society together.

Current members (19) and new members (20) of the Minnesota Honor Society got together April 29 via electronic means, ZOOM to be specific. Honor Society members were linked by their computers.

Guidance counselor Mary Worke coordinated the virtual ZOOM experience and welcomed participants.

In addition to Honor Society members in attendance, others on the electronic hookup included: Chris Staloch, superintendent; John Worke, principal; Alison Mach, activities director/associate principal and the Rev. Heidi Heimgartner, First Lutheran

Church. Some Society members were also accompanied by their parents on the hookup.

Participating in the candle lighting ceremony were:

- Gemini Johnson, opening and Pledge of Allegiance
- Adam Larson, Scholarship
- Baylee Sorensen, Leadership
- Riauna Bishop, Service
- Julia Worke, Character

The awards were presented by Principal John Worke and Guidance Counselor Mary Worke.

Current Minnesota Honor Society members are:

Zachary Archer, Riauna Bishop, Gemini Johnson, Jarrett Larson, Luke Rennie, Marti Snider, Dondi Stender, Viridiana Villarreal, Zachary Weber;

SEE HONOR STUDENTS, B2

Meeting emotional needs during COVID-19



Steele Talkin'
BOBBI MATHERN

Many aspects of our day-to-day lives have changed as a result of COVID-19. There are safety regulations in place that determine where we can go and how closely we can be in proximity to others. This includes social outings, school, recreational activities, meetings for work, as well as medical and other healthcare appointments.

For some of us, it is a welcome change from the hustle and bustle of an overly packed schedule; a chance to relax and enjoy the little things in life. For others, it is a time of increased responsibilities, financial stress, deep loneliness, sense of loss, boredom, stress,

or intense fear. Many people find themselves experiencing a wide array of these emotions, depending on the day or even the hour.

With transition comes stress. It is common during times of significant transition to feel stressed and overwhelmed. Increased stress can affect your mental health, physical health, and lead to unhealthy habits such as overeating or under eating, not getting exercise, not engaging in fulfilling activities, spending too much time on screens, and using alcohol or drugs to cope.

Telehealth is a safe way to provide mental and chemical health care. One way that COVID-19 has impacted our society is the way in which we communicate with each other. Thankfully, technological advances allow us to easily connect with family, friends, coworkers, and health care providers over the phone, through two-way video, and with social media.

SEE MEETING, B2

MEETING: emotional needs during COVID-19 FROM B1

Community Mental Health Centers recognize that the need for support is greater now than ever before. We are still here for you, even though we are not seeing people in our offices. Through Telehealth, we are able to deliver the same quality of mental health and chemical health care that we have always provided but in the safety of your home. Telehealth appointments occur when the provider and client are in different locations, communicating through live two-way video or standard audio-only phone calls. Telehealth is HIPAA compliant and secure, so you don't need to worry about your privacy being compromised. Telehealth appointments are reimbursable by insurance plans, just as face-to-face sessions are. Community Mental Health Centers offer therapy (individual, family, and couples), group therapy, psychiatric care, medication management, case management, and other community mental health services through telehealth.

Feedback about the quality of services delivered has been quite positive. Some people prefer to talk with providers from the comfort of their homes. Some appreciate the decrease in drive time and gas money. Some feel more comfortable talking over the phone or over the computer to a face to face interaction when discussing difficult topics.

Call your local Community Mental Health Center to schedule an intake appointment. We will walk you through filling out the intake paperwork and get you scheduled with a qualified mental health or chemical health provider. We will help you set up the technology to be able to meet with your provider virtually.

Our Regional Mobile Crisis Team is also meeting with people through telehealth or telephone. If you or someone you care about is struggling with a mental health crisis, even if it is not to the point of suicide, call the crisis line at 844-274-7472 or Text MN to 741 741. You should call 911 if you or someone you care about is actively suicidal.

If you are in a situation where it is unsafe to talk, such as domestic violence, you can text-to-911. Simply enter the numbers "911" in the "to" field; then type your location and emergency in the text message. Be ready to answer questions via text and follow instructions. Use simple words, not emojis, pictures, or slang. Breathe!

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

Extending goodwill during a crisis



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD
The US Bank branch of Blooming Prairie was busy again reaching out to local businesses and institutions by thanking them for their efforts to help people deal with the coronavirus outbreak. Branch manager Becky Josephson, far left, presented a meat and cheese platter, water, crackers, chips and cookies to staffers Anna McIntosh, Raeann Grundmeier, Karen Inwards and to volunteer Riley Millam.

Hwy. 251 detour begins as road construction underway

Motorists using Hwy. 251 between Hwy. 218 and Interstate 35 are encountering a detour as a construction project kicked off Monday.

The detour will occur in two stages.

- Hwy. 251 through-traffic and traffic to Hollandale detour for Stage 1 begins May 4—Take Hwy. 218 north to Freeborn County Road 35 west to Freeborn County Road 30 south to Hwy. 251

- Hwy. 251 through-traffic and traffic to Hollandale detour for Stage 2, which follows completion of Stage 1—Travel north on Freeborn County Road 30 to Freeborn County Road 35 west to I-35 south to Hwy. 251

- Single-lane traffic on Hwy. 251 bridge over I-35

- Freeborn County Road 26 detour during Stage 2, south of Hwy. 251—Follow Freeborn County Road 26 south to

Freeborn County Road 25 west to Freeborn County Road 45 north to I-35 north to Freeborn County Road 35 east to County Road 26 south. The detours are needed while culverts are replaced that cross the highway, requiring construction crews to dig up the portion of the road where these are located. People will still have access to their businesses and homes along the highway.

Project benefits

- Resurfacing approximately 16.7 miles of Hwy. 251 from I-35 east to Hwy. 218, mostly in Freeborn County, with a small portion also in Mower County

- Replacing approach panels on the bridge over I-35

- Replacing culvert/pipes along the route

- Improving ADA access in Hollandale

- Replacing guardrail on Hwy. 251

Ulland Brothers is

the contractor for the project, which is scheduled to be complete in late October. Questions about access to properties or issues encountered can be directed to the contractor's access manager, Chris Venem, at 507-391-2600.

Motorists can find more information on the plans and sign up for email updates at the MnDOT project website at www.mndot.gov/d6/projects/hwy251-resurfacing/index.html or join MnDOT's SE Minnesota Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/MnDOT-southeast/.

MnDOT road work has been identified as a critical service in Gov. Tim Walz's Stay at Home executive order. MnDOT is being as flexible as possible with schedules during this period of lower traffic volumes to keep projects moving forward and minimize the impact

to motorists. Following guidance from state and federal health officials, and to prevent further spread of COVID-19, crews will maintain social distancing practices while working.

Motorists are reminded that while in the work zone:

- Slow down when approaching every work zone, then navigate through with care and caution

- Stay alert; work zones constantly change

- Watch for workers and slow moving equipment

- Obey posted speed limits. Fine for a violation in a work zone is \$300

- Minimize distractions behind the wheel

- Be patient; expect delays, especially during peak travel times. For traffic and travel information in Minnesota, visit www.511mn.org or get the free smartphone app at Google Play or the App Store.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Blooming Prairie High School students participated in a Minnesota Honor Society induction Wednesday night, April 29, via the electronic means of ZOOM.

BP HONOR STUDENTS: inducted via ZOOM FROM B1

Kisha Aquino, Gabe Hagen, Adam Larson, Maya Lembke, Grace Robins, Baylee Sorensen, Parker Vaith, Jayde Wacek and Jillian Wigham.

New Minnesota Honor Society members are:

Maggie Bruns, Charlie Heimerman, Shyane Jorgenson, Emily Kubicek, Megan Oswald, Joseph Pirkel, Rachael Riley, Halle

Strunk, Kiya Thompson, Micalyn Trihus;

Maren Forystek, Dylan Johnson, Allison Krohnberg, Luke Larkoski, Reese Millam, Jessica Ressler, Chris Sheppard, Gretchen Sunde, Rachel Thompson and Taylor Wurst.

NOTE: An iMovie of the Minnesota Honor Society induction is posted on the Blooming Prairie High School Facebook page.

A CENTURY MILESTONE: Harms relies on faith in hard times FROM B1

With the pandemic still having our state in its grip, it is not certain how family will observe Harms' hallmark birthday. "My family had a big party planned," she says.

It doesn't take long to get to know Eleanor Harms, even if it is via the telephone. She is a proud woman, who values her family heritage. Her immediate family says that many people who meet her cannot believe she is soon to turn 100.

To what does Harms attribute her long life. She quickly responds that it is her faith that has shaped her long life. "I wouldn't want to brag, but the most important thing in my life has been Jesus dying for me," Harms professes.

"Jesus didn't die for just me, he died for everyone and blotted out all of our sins. He looks at us as perfect people. What more can you want!"

Harms has been a member of Grace Bap-

tist Church in Austin for the past 40 years. She is quick to mention that this church has promoted having church services in their former parking lot of Target in Austin. Worshipers stay in their vehicles, tune in their radios and meet for an hour beginning at 1 p.m.

Talking about the COVID-19 pandemic, Harms says it is real and people should be mindful of that. "People are taking it serious and they had better," she warns. She urges everyone to follow the guidelines set up by state and federal government.

If people don't stay at home and follow strict guidelines including social distancing, they could be subject to fines. "That's OK with me," she says.

Harms vividly recalls living through the Great Depression. "These were really rough times," she confesses. She worked at Johnson's Laundry in Albert Lea at that time

and was paid 23 cents an hour.

She also worked in the farm fields south of Hollandale. Her husband was a vegetable farmer.

Born at home on May 28, 1920 in Franklin County, Iowa, just south of Mason City, Harms was the next to the oldest in a family of 10 children. Lenora was the oldest. Then came Eleanor, Edward, Inez, Orville, Walter, Matilda, Dwight, Delbert and Lauretta.

Remaining siblings include Dwight, 89, of Albert Lea; Delbert, 86, of Clarks Grove and Lauretta, 82, of Austin.

Harms was born during the administration of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. She thus has lived during the time of 18 U.S. presidents.

Vividly recalling people talk about the Spanish Flu which raged the countryside from January 1918 to December 1920, Harms said it "must have been horrible."

She says she remembers her parents telling about a young family of mother, father and three little children being found dead in their beds, the cause being the Spanish Flu. Her mother cared for five people sick in bed. "She must have had immunity because she never got the flu," Harms said.

From Iowa, Eleanor and her family moved to a plot of land north of Hayward. She was six at that time.

"I have a good memory of those olden days," she claims. Her father bought a small piece of land, put a house on it and then raised potatoes and onions. "We rented land, all we could get a hold of," she relates. The most land rented was 160 acres.

Harms said The Great Depression, drought and dust storms are happenings that she will never forget.

During that time, Harms said her parents had a house full of people because neighbors' land was under water and they are forced to live

with the Karsjens family (Eleanor's parents). "My mother did a lot of cooking and we all learned to cook," she says.

Harms worked in the fields south of Hollandale, weeding onions. "It was hard work on wonderful peat soil," she tells.

Eleanor and Doede were married on April 12, 1941. "Where was the wedding?" she is asked. Eleanor pauses and asks "What wedding?"

Doede died six years ago. He and Eleanor had four children: Dean, Inver Grove Heights; Darla Hjelmen, Gulf Shores, Ala.; Juanita Ingvaldson, Grand Rapids and Daniel, Deer River.

The Harmses built a home on Center Avenue 65 years ago. They bought land on the gun club road. "We grew produce but couldn't make money because people stole the produce," she says sadly.

She worked at the Hemp mill where Associated Grocers was in Blooming Prairie. She

also worked six years in the dietary department at St. Olaf Hospital in Austin.

Asked what advice she would give our seniors who are distance learning. "I never got a chance to go to high school," Harms said. "I wouldn't have any advice, we just worked," she said.

Fighting with her hearing aids, Harms often has to ask people to repeat themselves. "My memory is also failing; I can't grab the things the way I used to," she said. "If you don't have your memory, you don't have much," she said honestly.

She urges people to stick to the truth. "Don't cover up anything, stick to the Bible and put yourself in the hands of the Lord. He will lead you all the way, even through hard times. He will cover you with grace and mercy."

Offering encouragement about the current hard times, Harms says matter of factly, "This, too, will pass."

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.

Virtual hearings continue as courts extend in-person restrictions

Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea has issued another order that extends the limited physical access to court-houses until May 18, in order to reduce and slow the spread of COVID-19.

Remote, or virtual, technology may be used to conduct hearings in pending cases when possible. The order also suspends all jury trials, authorizing them to only begin June 1, at the earliest. The State Court Administrator, Jeff Shorba, has also launched a new webpage to assist Minnesotans who must participate in remote hearings, and to provide information to members of the public who wish to access a remote hearing.

Since the initial in-person restrictions were imposed, the Minnesota Judicial Council, State Court Administration, and judicial district and court administration leaders have been working with the Minnesota Department of Health, local health officials and justice partners to develop appropriate plans that will allow for an eventual safe reopening of court-houses.

“It is our top priority to ensure that when more in-person courthouse activities resume, we are doing so in a safe and efficient manner,” said Chief Justice Gildea. “Minnesotans have a constitutional right to access justice through state courts and we are committed to making sure that that access does not involve unnecessary risk.”

District Court

The order continues the previous authorization for the use of remote technology when possible to conduct hearings in any pending cases, except those required to be in the courtroom. Technology options courts are using in remote hearings include ITV, WebEx, Zoom, Virtual Courtrooms, and phone bridges. Litigants and attorneys required to participate in remote hearings, and interested members of the public who wish to listen to or view public hearings, can find information about remote hearings and the associated technology at: mncourts.gov/remote-hearings

Courthouses will continue to remain open on a limited basis for in-person hearings that should be held in courtrooms. The order once again specifies the hearings and case types where in-person hearings are required. Courts will continue to accept filings in all case types. Self-help services will continue to be conducted via phone or email.

Fines and Fees

Any questions about fines and fees should be directed to the appropriate district court (bottom of page) or the Minnesota Court Payment Center. Actions taken by the State Court Administrator, in response to the authorization in this order and previous orders, are posted and will continue to be posted under Public Notices on the Judicial Branch website. These public notices will also be available on the emergency webpage under Other COVID-19 Orders.

Jurors

Jurors must continue to follow the instructions on their paper summons, but the Minnesota Judicial Branch will not be calling any additional jurors to courthouses until June 1, at the earliest. No new jury trials will begin prior to that date. Grand juries that have been empaneled as of March 23, and are actively hearing a case, will continue to hear the case.

CRIME BRIEF

Traffic stop nets more than usual speeder

A traffic stop in Owatonna yielded more than a speeding motorist for police.

On April 24, Owatonna Police stopped a vehicle for traveling 48 in a 30-mile per hour zone. One of the officers recognized a backseat passenger from previous contacts and knew he was wanted on an outstanding warrant.

Shayne Bowers, 30, of Faribault was taken into custody. During a search, police found about a 1/2 gram of methamphetamine. Bowers also told police he had ingested 10 ecstasy pills just prior to the car being pulled over. He was provided with emergency medical care.



Shayne Bowers

Bowers was released from the hospital a few days later and jailed on the warrant. He has also been charged with fifth-degree possession of a controlled substance.

Police thanked by US Bank



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Becky Josephson, branch manager of US Bank in Blooming Prairie, presented nine gift cards to department officers for their dedicated service to protecting the community, especially during this COVID-19 crisis. Accepting the cards are Chief Greg Skillestad, far left, and officers Matt Miller, middle, and Dan Peach.

COURT NEWS Steele County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of April 20 – 26:

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Aaron J. Abert, 36, Montgomery, speeding, \$115; Mariah M. Aleman-Garcia, 20, Helena, AL, speeding, \$215; Julie L. Argo, 27, Hastings, IA, speeding, \$215; Timothy W. Bailey, 48, Elkhorn, NE, speeding, \$125; Garret B. Brandenburg-Wenninger, 19, Mankato, speeding, \$135; Jeremiah E. Brown, 28, Waseca, speeding, \$115; Jose Y. Campos, 54, Kansas City, KS, no license, \$175; Tucker A. Cobb, 22, Lakeville, speeding, \$125; Scott G. Duroche, 44, Prior Lake, speeding, \$115; Franklin D. Gates, 20, Maple Grove, speeding, \$125; Christian J. Kulzer, 26, Ham Lake, bicycle on highway, \$115; Tamekia D. Marison, 32, Omaha, NE, no license, \$175; Jaime C. Medina, 38, Harris, speeding, \$115; Ramiro Ortiz Alvarado, 48, Brooklyn Park, speeding, \$135; Shannon E. Shotwell, 42, Medford, seat belt, \$100; Brian M. Simon, 34, Owatonna, seat belt, \$100; Alex J. Swenson, 37, Mankato, speeding, \$115; Ler Wah, 19, Albert Lea, possession of marijuana, \$125.

OWATONNA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Dylan D. Adams, 29, Owatonna, violation of order for protection and damage to property, \$75, 17 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, no possession of firearms, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to

leave the state and 2 years of supervised probation; Jose L. Garcia, 21, Owatonna, give peace officer false information and possession of marijuana, \$125, 60 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state and 2 years of supervised probation; Kristi L. Johnson, 28, Waseca, theft, \$150.51; Chris A. Rivas, 24, Faribault, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$81, 66 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, obtain permission to leave the state, maintain employment, psychological evaluation, chemical dependency evaluation, cognitive skill training and 2 years of supervised probation; Abdulkadir F. Sharifali, 39, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; David Vela, 34, Owatonna, revoked license, hands free violation and no insurance, \$525.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Matthew J. Haberman, 46, Blooming Prairie, hands free violation, \$125; Roger F. Loth, 33, Blooming Prairie, speeding, \$135; Karen Martinez Tinajero, 30, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Tyler T. Nguyen, 17, Bloomington, speeding, \$215; Devin J. Sawyer, 25, Owatonna, speeding and possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, \$335.

POLICE BLOTTER Steele County

OWATONNA POLICE

April 24
Property: At 1:58 a.m., stolen property was recovered in the 200 block of 24th St. NE.

Arrest: Police arrested a motorist during a traffic stop in the 2400 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 9:16 a.m.

Crash: Officers responded to a motor vehicle accident resulting in property damage in the 300 block of Allan Ave. SW at 1:36 p.m. They issued a citation to one of the drivers.

Child Protection: Police received a child protection report from the 1200 block of 3rd Ave. NE at 4:58 p.m.

Shoplifting: At 8 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W.

Theft: At 10:17 p.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 100 block of Landmark Dr. NE.

April 25
Child Protection: Police received a child protection report from the 600 block of Broadway St. E. at 2:39 a.m.

Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 500 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 5:41 p.m.

Arrest: Police arrested a motorist during a traffic stop at Bridge St. W. and Park Dr. NW at 9:51 p.m.

Theft: At 10:10 p.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 300 block of Mineral Springs Road NE.

Weapons: Officers responded to a weapons-related incident in the 300 block of Allan Ave. SW at 11:52 p.m. They arrested a subject at the scene.

April 26
Crash: Paramedics and officers responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries in the 600 block of Bridge St. W. at 9:50 a.m.

Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest at Flora St. NW and State Ave. NW at 2:38 p.m.

Fraud: Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 1700 block of 3rd Ave. NW at 8:11 p.m.

April 27
Child Protection: Police received a child protection report from

the 500 block of Mosher Ave. SW at 8:24 p.m.

April 28
Mental Health: Police responded to a mental health incident in the 2200 block of Austin Road SE at 8:11 a.m.

Fraud: Officers took fraud reports in the 1100 block of Brady Blvd. NW at 9:51 a.m. and the 1000 block of Greenleaf Road SE at 2:21 p.m.

April 29
Theft: Police received a theft report from the 700 block of State Ave. NW at 3:16 p.m.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

April 25
Criminal Sexual Conduct: Deputies began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 4700 block of Rose St. in Havana Township at 4 p.m.

Crash: Paramedics and deputies responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries in the 6100 block of Kenyon Road in Merton Township at 6:12 p.m.

April 28
Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 100 block of Sunrise Dr. in Medford at 1:16 a.m.

Theft: Deputy took a theft report in the 11200 block of SE 64th Ave. in Deerfield Township at 4:43 p.m.

Domestic: Deputies responded to a domestic disturbance in the 200 block of 1st St. NW in Medford at 9:52 p.m. They took a subject into custody.

April 29
Pursuit: Deputies pursued a subject at Interstate 35 and 46th St. NW in Clinton Falls Township at 7:52 p.m.

Arrest: Deputies assisted another agency with arresting a subject in the 1400 block of 54th Ave. SE in Blooming Prairie Township at 10:20 p.m.

April 30
Theft: At 11:31 a.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 4800 block of 8th St. SW in Meriden Township.

Fraud: Deputy took a fraud report in the 4100 block of 66th St. NW in Medford Township at 6:27 p.m.

ARRESTS Steele County

OWATONNA POLICE

Shayne Dion Bowers, 30, arrested at 12:39 p.m. April 28, warrant arrest, \$10,000 bail.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

Jeffry Joe Bryant, 43, arrested at 12:10 p.m. April 28, probation violation warrant arrest, body only.

Blake Duane Oaklund, 29, arrested at 10:05 p.m. April 28, felony domestic assault and terroristic threats, held for court.

Randy Peter Hofius, 57, arrested at 11:30 p.m. April 29, order for protection violation, held for court.

Joshua Robert Thayer, 28, arrested April 29, felony fleeing and possession of motor vehicle, held for court.

COURT NEWS Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of April 19 – 26:

DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Jacob L. Cramer, 18, Owatonna, speeding, \$280; Delilah Delgado, 28, Faribault, speeding, \$140; Jeffery S. Fleck, 27, Hayfield, parking violation, \$32.

KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Tristian J. Hernandez, 19, Owatonna, speeding, \$220; Pauline S. Klemm, 63, Byron, revoked license, \$280; Karrie E. Skogen, 37, Mantorville, DWI, \$480, chemical dependency evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Laura P. Flores, 50, Waseca, speeding, \$140; Jorge Froylan, 40, Summit, IL, speeding, \$140; Bradley J. Gallagher, 46, Owatonna, speeding, \$120; Lucas J. Gullickson, 22, Pine Island, registration violation, \$180; Jerid A. Myers, 25, Claremont, speeding and possession of marijuana, \$190; William A. Olson, 21, Dover, speeding, \$120; Xavier S. Ortiz Ruiz, 32, Rochester, speeding, \$280; Trevon J. Schaefer, 18, Stewartville, speeding, \$220; Marisa J. Schultz, 21, Kenyon, speeding, \$120.

WEST CONCORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

David A. Montero Rocha, 21, Owatonna, suspended license, \$280.

OWATONNA FIRE

April 24
Fire: Firefighters responded to a grass fire on Highway 14 at 1:46 p.m.

April 25
Crash: Fire rescue responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries in the 6100 block of Kenyon Road NE at 6:13 p.m.

April 26
Accident: At 9:52 a.m., a motor vehicle accident with injuries occurred in the 600 block of Bridge St. W.

Gas Leak: Fire personnel responded to a natural gas leak in the 300 block of 13th St. SW at 11:14 a.m.

Building Fire: Firefighters responded to a building fire in the 500 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 8:03 p.m.

April 28
Arcing: At 8:24 p.m., an arcing, shorted electrical equipment incident occurred in the 1500 block of Cedar Ave. S.

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

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Jequinnson Fisher – DWI – no bail | 8. Ezequiel Garcia – failure to register as sex offender – no bail | 13. Conrad Ginter – DWI – no bail |
| 2. Luis Flores – traffic - \$100 bail | | 14. Mark Gomez – assault - \$10,000 bail |
| 3. Rogelio Flores – DWI, revoked license - \$12,000 bail | 9. Jose Garcia – revoked license - \$3,000 bail | 15. Miguel Gomez – theft - \$1,000 bail |
| 4. Jason Forest – criminal sexual conduct - \$250,000 bail | 10. Alfredo Garza Jr. – no insurance, cancelled license - \$9,500 bail | 16. Hiran Gonzalez – dishonored checks – no bail |
| 5. Kewana Freeman – card fraud - \$5,000 bail | 11. Domach Gatluak – DWI – no bail | 17. Sameria Graves – false name - \$500 bail |
| 6. Juan Gallegos – DWI - \$500 bail | 12. Zachary Gilliver – DWI – no bail | 18. Abraham Groth – DWI – no bail |
| 7. Anthony Galloway – DWI – no bail | | 19. Brandon Grunwald – DWI – no bail |

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

Albert Lea Theatre cancels 2 shows

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure the health and safety of its patrons, actors and volunteers, the Albert Lea Community Theatre Board of Directors has cancelled the remaining two shows for its 2019-20 season.

Shows cancelled are “Doublewide, Texas” and “Willy Wonka.” ACT plans to include these shows as part of next season’s four-show schedule, with dates and more information to be announced later this summer.

If you hold tickets to “Doublewide, Texas” and/or “Willy Wonka” from their originally scheduled dates, you have several options:

- Donate the value of your tickets. ACT is a local nonprofit organization. Your ticket purchase is a tax-deductible contribution, which plays a critical role in the sustainability of your community theatre. By not requesting a refund or credit for next season, you are donating the value of your ticket purchase to ACT.
- Hold your tickets as a credit for next season. Anyone purchasing 2020-21 season tickets (available later this summer) may use their current tickets for “Doublewide, Texas” and “Willy Wonka” as a credit for next season – meaning their season ticket would be half price. Retain your printed tickets and include them with your 2020-21 season ticket form.
- Request a refund. Call the box office at 507-377-4371 and leave a message with your contact information. Box office volunteers may receive a high volume of calls, and will respond as soon as possible.

When the world returns to its new normal, ACT is committed to its community and with providing local arts and entertainment for everyone to enjoy. Additional information and updates will continue to be provided in the coming months through the ACT website, social media, email, and other communications channels.

Safety camp falls to COVID-19



The annual safety camp that attracts hundreds of kids every June to Owatonna has been canceled because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Summer safety for area children will be taking a back seat this summer due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The annual Steele County Safety Camp has been canceled for June. “After some very careful deliberation, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the camp,” said Matt Oeltjenbruns, board chair. “The Steele County Safety Camp Board believes this is the responsible action to take in an effort to keep everyone safe during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic,” he said.

Oeltjenbruns said the health and safety of participants, volunteers, sponsors, staff and community remains the board’s top priority. “We know this news is very disappointing, and all of us feel the same, but we know that this decision is for the best,” he added.

“We are extremely grateful for all of our supporters during this unprecedented and challenging time so we ask for your patience and understanding as we navigate these new waters,” Oeltjenbruns said.

He pointed out that taking into account all of the planning and preparation that is required for the event, postponement is not a viable option.

The board will be sending a letter to camp sponsors within the coming weeks outlining options available with the money already donated.

Mower County Recycling opens again

Mower County’s recycling facilities and household hazardous waste collection are back in operation. They opened on Monday after action taken by the Mower County Board last week.

The Board of Commissioners discussed the situation with staff and agreed to reopen the Austin recycling center drop-off and restart curbside pickup. The drop-off facilities in outlying communities will also be reopened.

All facilities have been closed since March 18 along with curbside recycling collection and recycling drop-offs in rural areas of the county due to concerns with the COVID-19 global pandemic.

“We are pleased to reopen the recycling and hazardous-waste facilities to serve the public,” said Commissioner Mike Ankeny. “It is a very important program for the environment.”

Mower County’s recycling center has up to 12 employees from the nonprofit Cedar Valley Services (CVS) who help sort and collect recyclables. CVS has implemented new policies for their employees including social distancing and frequent hand washing, and they will be equipped with PPE gear and instructions. Additional employees may be added and extended shifts may be implemented in the interim.

The public is request-

ed to do the following:

- Help phase-in the startup by not putting all recycling at curbside and not bringing all recycling to the drop-off facilities the first day or week.
- Use the curbside service if it is provided instead of bringing it to the drop-off sites.
- Back vehicles into the marked (striped) stalls at the drop-off facility and maintain social distancing as much as possible.
- Observe signs and delineators.

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection will open for regular Wednesday hours starting May 6. Staff will wear PPE and will use disinfectant on surfaces, pens, door handles, etc. between customers. The “reuse room”, where salvaged material is displayed and can be picked up by the public, will not be open until further notice. The public is asked to observe all signs and delineators to help make ongoing recycling operations efficient. Only one customer may be in the facility at a time. Please consider waiting for a less busy time to bring all your waste products.

“We appreciate the public’s patience and understanding as we reopen our recycling program to serve the citizens of Mower County,” said Commissioner Tim Gabrielson.

For more information, contact Mower County Public Works at 507-437-7718.

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	9						2	5
6	8	2		5	1			
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3				7	4		8	
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Laura Houillion
Allison Bruggeman
Ella Farr

MAY 7

Charlie Heimerman
Logan Underwood
Meghan Butler
Danielle Hein
Lyndon Johnson

MAY 8

Gemini Johnson
Gary Dallman
Vi Iversen
Scott Swenson

MAY 9

Sarah Johnson
Levi Skillestad
Jeff Erickson
Rebecca Ingvalson
Vivian Ulrich
Mandy Doocy

MAY 10

Declan Noble
Lisa Kubista
Jason Manges
Arden Anderson

MAY 11

Amy Chladek
Natasha Smith

MAY 12

Doug Hillson
Alexandria
Thompson
Barb Brewington
Kirsten Paulson

MAY 13

Greg Johnson
Cody Schmeling
Randy Lea
Aubryana Alwes

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Manges

May 10

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Robbins
Eddie & Nelda
Haberman

May 11

Thomas & Shirley
Schneiderit

May 12

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May 13

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Help ensure a readily available blood supply amid COVID-19

With no known end date to the coronavirus fight, the American Red Cross is encouraging healthy individuals to make appointments to donate blood or platelets to ensure blood remains readily available for patients who still rely on transfusions.

The need for blood for trauma patients, children battling cancer, mothers experiencing childbirth complications, patients with sickle cell disease and others continues. Donated blood has a limited shelf life of 42 days for red cells and just five days for platelets, so the supply must constantly be replenished.

Healthy individuals who are feeling well are asked to make an appointment to donate this May by downloading the free Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED

CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment prior to arriving at the drive and are required to wear a face covering or mask while at the drive, in alignment with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention public guidance.

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and additional precautions – including social distancing and face coverings for donors and staff – have been implemented to safeguard donors, volunteers and employees.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities
May 1-15:
Freeborn
Albert Lea
May 7: 12 p.m.-6 p.m., Bridge Community Church, 2016 Bridge Ave.
May 15: 9 a.m.-3 p.m., YMCA, 2021 W. Main St.

Geneva
May 11: 1 p.m.-6 p.m., Geneva Community Center, 314 1st Ave. SE

Steele
Owatonna
May 6: 12 p.m.-6 p.m., Owatonna VFW, 135 Oakdale St.
May 7: 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Owatonna VFW, 135 Oakdale St.
May 15: 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1909 Saint Paul Road

Spring planting far ahead of last year

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Corn planting in the southeastern counties of Steele, Dodge, Rice, Freeborn and Mower is far ahead of the pace of last year, farmers and University of Minnesota Extension officials report.

With ideal planting conditions, farmers were able to nearly complete corn planting by early this week. They then placed their focus on planting soybeans.

Claire LaCanne, University of Minnesota Extension educator serving Steele and Rice counties, said early last week that corn planting was 20 days ahead of last year and nine days ahead of the five-year average.

“We are ahead of last year by leaps and bounds,” LaCanne remarked.

Last year, farmers had to operate in less than ideal conditions, so that they could get their crops in. This year, planting and other field



Sunny and dry field conditions were on the farmers' side these past days as they were able to get most of their corn planted, 20 days ahead of last year and nine days ahead of the five-year average. Here, a local farmer finishes corn planting and then will begin planting soybeans.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

operations are going much more smoothly so far, area farmers report.

“We had to deal with lots of wet fields and poor planting conditions,” said Patrick O’Connor of O’Connor Family Farms. “We worked much harder to get the crops planted last year,” he added.

O’Connor said he has done most of the planting and acreage this year will be similar to last year.

Spring wheat plant-

ing and potato planting is also ahead of last year, Extension officials report. Sugar beet planting was said to be almost two weeks ahead of last year.

“Hopefully, we will get a good summer for our crops but that remains to be seen because we are controlled by Mother Nature,” O’Connor stated.

Last year’s harvest started late and seemed “to drag on forever,” an area farmer said. “It

was cold and miserable and a challenging time for us,” he continued.

The outbreak of the coronavirus COVID-19 has had its effects on many local farmers in southeastern Minnesota, especially with livestock production.

“We are doing everything we can to survive this pandemic,” said O’Connor. “We are doing our small part and everyone else has to do their small part,” he explained.

DNR installs safety buoys on Cedar River

Paddlers and boaters now have another layer of safety while enjoying the 25 miles of the Cedar River State Water Trail in Mower County.

On April 30, a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources crew anchored an orange buoy safety line, also known as a barrier float, across the Cedar River on the upstream side of the Fourth Avenue Northeast bridge in downtown Austin.

The DNR crew started the morning by re-installing the barrier float used for years above Ramsey Dam before floating down the river to remove tree-related hazards for paddlers in the wooded stretch north of Interstate 90. Once at Austin Mill Pond, the crew installed the new barrier float above the downtown dam where there is a small clearing on the east riverbank.

Afterward, the crew floated the rest of the Cedar River State Water Trail to the Minnesota-Iowa border, removing other hazards and reporting “excellent” conditions for paddling on the river.

With the barrier float, paddlers and boaters will see the orange warning for not going further downstream due to the dam. The barrier also will offer a line anchored to each side of the river for getting safely to the shoreline.

In August 2019, a DNR crew surveyed the shorelines above the downtown dam for installing a barrier float for the 2020 season. The DNR had been waiting for the major property redevelopment work to conclude at the former downtown power plant site along the river’s west side. That site now hosts the new YMCA at Austin Community Recreation Center and an earthen flood berm with a paved pedestrian trail along the river.

Cedar River Watershed District staff have been working with the DNR to add the safety measure downtown. CRWD also continues to work with the DNR and the City of Austin to explore possible funding, including state bonding, to create a safe portage around the downtown dam.

“As more people – locals and tourists – seem to be paddling the Cedar River State Water Trail, this is a welcomed addition by the DNR to enhance the safety of water recreation here,” said Tim Ruzek, CRWD’s outreach coordinator.

DNR has used a similar barrier float above Ramsey Dam, where it maintains a public motorized boat access across the river from The Old Mill Restaurant on Austin’s northern edge. This access is used for boaters and paddlers to

head upstream into the Cedar River’s Ramsey Mill Pond – the biggest waterbody in Mower County – that borders the DNR’s 395-acre Ramsey Mill Pond Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Since 2012, the DNR has maintained and promoted the Cedar River State Water Trail that flows south from the Mower County Road 2 bridge near the village of Lansing to the Minnesota-Iowa border. CRWD, with the support of State Sen. Dan Sparks and Rep. Jeanne Poppe, gained legislative approval in 2011 for the Cedar to be named a DNR state water trail.

With that designation, DNR crews float the Cedar River State Water Trail several times a year to maintain DNR signage and access points as well as remove hazards to paddlers and boaters, such as fallen trees. In 2019, the DNR did substantial work to address numerous trees blocking portions of the river, mainly between Austin’s two dams on the Cedar.

The DNR removes hazardous parts of downed trees but not the entire tree. Woody debris helps protect against soil erosion along a riverbank and provides habitat for fish, turtles and wildlife.

People can report hazards on the river to CRWD or directly to the DNR by calling 800-657-

3929 or submitting an online report at: www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails/conditions.html

Other safety tips, trail maps, real-time river level data and other paddling information for the state water trails are online at: www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails. Minnesota has 35 state water trails that offer more than 4,500 miles of paddling and are within one hour from where most Minnesotans live.

The DNR offers river-level data online for the Cedar River State Water Trail through gauges at County Road 2 near Lansing and south of Austin at County Road 28 in Austin Township. Color-coded ratings are offered for the levels, with “medium” being the most-ideal for paddling.

Other paddling safety tips from the DNR include:

- Scan ahead for hazards, such as overhanging trees, rocks, low bridges or rapids.
- If a river section appears too challenging, don’t be afraid to portage around it. This is much better than paddling in rapids or quick currents that you are not used to navigating. “When in doubt, get out and scout!”
- Rifles in the water mean rocks are dangerously close to the surface. Follow the smooth water shaped like a “V” pointing downstream.

Soil testing available at U of M



On The Farm
CLAIRE LACANNE

How is your lawn looking? Are you struggling to get grass to grow? Are you gardening for the first time or establishing a new garden? You may want to get your soil tested as you begin your green thumb efforts this spring!

Understanding your soil is important for successful gardening and lawn care. Soil analysis can help you as homeowners and gardeners determine the current state of your soil as well as provide insight on how to amend it for optimal performance.

You can send your soil to the University of Minnesota’s Soil Testing and Research Analytical Lab and remove the guesswork out of fertilizer recommendations. You can get a clear picture of what your soil needs, which ultimately helps you save money and may also reduce pollution from excess fertilizer.

The soil testing lab is still open during the COVID-19 pandemic. The laboratory’s typical turnover time is seven to ten business days, but timeframe is currently longer due to COVID-19 related security and safety measures. Additionally, the lab is accepting mail-in samples only. You can mail samples to:

U of MN Soil Testing Laboratory
Room 135 Crops Research Building
1902 Dudley Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108

The lab offers over 100 different tests. Results of a standard soil test include data on soil fertility, including insights on phosphorus (P), potassium (K), pH, and percent organic matter in your soil. In addition, fertilizer and lime recommendations are provided based on the test results.

The most common nutrient used for a fertility program is nitrogen. Nitrogen (N) is not commonly included with the test because of its mobile and ever-changing chemical forms in the soil. However, fertilizer recommendations are given based on plants or crops being grown, which you, as the farmer, gardener, or homeowner indicate on the form. Additional tests are available upon request, and are listed on the lab’s website: <http://soiltest.cfans.umn.edu/>.

General guidelines for collecting soil samples for the lawn and garden includes picking a spot where the ground is fairly level and the soil appears to be uniform. You may want to sample different areas which may vary in fertility. For example, you would likely want to test your back yard and front yard as separate areas. You need to collect one mixed (composite) sample for each area you’re testing. One mixed sample would consist of some soil from several random locations within your chosen area. You mix the soil together from your chosen area to make one mixed, composite sample that’s a total of about 2-3 cups. So, in this example, you’d be submitting two mixed samples; one 2-3 cup soil sample from your back yard and another 2-3 cup soil sample from your front yard.

The submission form and the complete instructions for gathering and submitting soil samples are available from your local Extension educator, or on the lab’s website. For more information, visit <http://soiltest.cfans.umn.edu/>, email soiltest@umn.edu, or call the Soil Testing and Research Analytical Lab at 612-625-3101.

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

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WAY TO GO ACADEMIC STARS

Congratulations to these Blossoms at Blooming Prairie High School who qualified for the third quarter honor roll.

A HONOR ROLL	A- HONOR ROLL	A- HONOR ROLL	B+ HONOR ROLL
Riauna Bishop 12	Kisha Aquino 12	Layla Lembke 8	Logan Marzolf 8
Gabriel Hagen 12	Zachary Archer 12	Macy Lembke 8	Elizabeth Miner 8
Gemini Johnson 12	Cortney Espe 12	Grant Magnuson 8	Shawntee Snyder 8
Adam Larson 12	Devontae Freese 12	Maxmar Ogren 8	Karson Strand 8
Maya Lembke 12	Jarrett Larson 12	Khara Peters 8	Sophie Thomas 8
Hazel Michaud 12	Matthew Pryor 12	Molly Robins 8	Lauren Brown 7
Luke Rennie 12	Melanie Suchanek 12	Hailey Schumacher 8	Jack Bruns 7
Grace Robins 12	Parker Vaith 12	Ava Smith 8	Scott Johnson 7
Marti Snider 12	Karson Vigeland 12	Catelyn Bartlett 7	Alex Lea 7
Jayde Wacek 12	Adrianna Bermea 11	Cooper Cooke 7	Kohan Miller 7
Zachary Weber 12	Abby Braaten 11	Isabel Dickel 7	Jacob Pauly 7
Jillian Wigham 12	Charlie Heimerman 11	Abby Jordison 7	Sophia Schiller 7
Julia Worke 12	Brianna Hensrud 11	Brady Kittelson 7	Grady Steckelberg 7
Maggie Bruns 11	Brian Jimenez 11	Naomi Lebak 7	Maveda Warner 7
Maren Forystek 11	Shyane Jorgenson 11	Madilynn Madsen 7	Alexis White 7
Dylan Johnson 11	Anna Kittelson 11	Ella Smith 7	B HONOR ROLL
Emily Kubicek 11	Allison Krohnberg 11	Bo Zwiener 7	
Luke Larkoski 11	Rose Michaud 11	B+ HONOR ROLL	Slava Kritzer 12
Megan Oswald 11	Christopher Naatz 11		Dylan Nirk 12
Jessica Ressler 11	Jacob Naatz 11	Kassidy Borgen 12	Heather PirkI 12
Rachael Riley 11	Joseph PirkI 11	Elizabeth Bramstedt 12	Gracie Rudlong 12
Bobbie Bruns 10	Halle Strunk 11	Isaac Ille 12	Viridiana Villarreal 12
Josie Hoffman 10	Rachel Thompson 11	Hope Johnson 12	Boone Carlson 11
Larisa Judy 10	Micalyn Trihus 11	Jacob Mchenry 12	Mitchell Fiebiger 11
Parker Kubicek 10	Wyatt Voss 11	Dondi Stender 12	Gavin Halverson 11
Asha Lighthizer 10	Taylor Wurst 11	Kaden Thomas 12	Sydney Mccarthy 11
Bradley Simon 10	Carson Brennecke 10	Kollyn Alwes 11	Maggy MotI 11
Isabelle Sunde 10	David Kartes 10	Cole Graves 11	Erin O'Brien 11
Melanie Winzenburg 10	Piper Lund 10	Grace Magnuson 11	Tyler Archer 10
Haven Carlson 9	Marquette Millam 10	Alexander Miller 11	Ethan Ehlers 10
Abigail Hefling 9	Emily Miller 10	Kiya Thompson 11	Natasha Gonzales 10
Sierra Larson 9	Xavier Rennie 10	Emily Anderson 10	Isabella Heiber 10
Chloe Mccarthy 9	Lauren Schammel 10	Lindsey Baltazar 10	Colin Jordison 10
Samuel PirkI 9	Alivia Schneider 10	Garret Farr 10	Samuel Skillestad 10
Madelaine Stoen 9	Carson Wacek 10	Payton Fristedt 10	Adam Walsh 10
Addison Doocy 8	Olivia Anderson 9	Tyler Iverson 10	James Wohlferd 10
Annaka Forsberg 8	Lilyanna Bakken 9	Drew Kittelson 10	Hosea Baker 9
Tyler Forystek 8	Morgan Camery 9	Gustaof Ogren 10	Bailey Brown 9
Shanna Halverson 8	Annika Green 9	Mackenzie Suchanek 10	Jesse Cardenas 9
Luke Heimgartner 8	Jenna Johnson 9	Brennan Tapp 10	Samuel Smith 9
Jamie Reinke 8	Ava Krejci 9	Cade Christianson 9	Anna Suchanek 9
Benjamin Riley 8	Madison Lea 9	Micah Donnelly 9	Leah Thorson 9
Lily Schammel 8	Ethan Marzolf 9	Brittany Johnson 9	Jacob Weinberger 9
Jaylee Schleicher 8	Trista MotI 9	Heidi Judy 9	Kaiden Chicos 8
Mason Simon 8	Dakota Mueller 9	Samuel Michaud 9	Elizabeth Dohrmann 8
Aidan Slowinski 8	Anna Pauly 9	Tyler Miller 9	Lilly Wacek 8
Kolby Vigeland 8	Anna Reese 9	Alexander Riley 9	Zoey Alwes 7
Rachel Winzenburg 8	Clare Rennie 9	Lucas Schammel 9	Carter Bishop 7
Mia Johnson 7	Joie Ruhter 9	Paul Sunde 9	Colton Braaten 7
	Susan Smith 9	Madison Thurnau 9	Braden Farr 7
	Alexis Steckelberg 9	Cameron Blume 8	Mairead Holmes 7
	Anika Sunde 9	Cale Braaten 8	Anna Kuglin 7
	Claire Foster 8	Sienna Fyksen 8	Addison Lyman 7
	Anna Haberman 8	Kadynce Hansen 8	Gage Mullenbach 7
	Jaxon Harberts 8	Gabriel Hein 8	Elijah Skillestad 7
	Derek Kubicek 8		Caitlyn StangI 7
			Will Sunde 7
			Cole Wangen 7

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Way to Go!


STEELE COUNTY Times

Coaches in state of disbelief

COVID-19 crisis shutter's spring sports

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

The message was brief but hurtful.

The Minnesota State High School League made this announcement on April 23, 2020: "Minnesota State High School League spring athletics and fine arts have been cancelled for the remainder of their seasons."

The announcement continued: "With this cancellation, all athletics are out of season."

This announcement affects Blooming Prairie's three spring sports teams: baseball, softball and track.

"I have been in a state of disbelief after hearing news that our season has been cancelled," remarked Awesome Blossoms softball coach Jenna Volgarino. She is in her second year of coaching softball in Blooming Prairie.

Coach Volgarino says she held onto some hope that the team would be able to play this season.

"It is difficult to wrap my head around this as I think about how challenging this is for our senior athletes," Volgarino said. "I hope to coach for many years to come, but this was their last shot at playing softball for their school and community," she said with sadness.

Baseball Coach Matt Kittelson says he misses being around the guys and being at the field. "It's the kids that I feel for," he said.

"I get to do this again next year," Coach Kittelson said, "but these kids only have so long to play the sports they love." He added, "Our seniors don't have another chance so they are the ones who are really affected."

Kittelson said he wrote his players and told them how sorry he was. "I really feel horrible for them losing out on their spring season. However, our job is to teach these kids and that includes more than just athletics.

"I tried to encourage them to look at the positives of the



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

The softball field at Blooming Prairie High School may look empty but signs showing positions held by the Awesome Blossoms make the field come to life.

situation, whether it be they get to spend more time together with their families or whatever it may be.

"For the kids who are coming back next year I encourage them to let this be a harsh reminder to never take anything for granted, and to let it motivate them to lift weights and hone their skills so that when they get the opportunity to get back on the field they can be their very best."

Volgarino said as a team, she and the players have worked hard to stay connected. The team members have weekly ZOOM meetings where they discuss "this roller coaster of emotions," she said.

Coach Volgarino put player signs on the ball field to honor the lost season. Players have made encouraging videos for the seniors.

"It is important we stick together as a team to support our seniors through these challenging times," said Coach Volgarino. "If there is one takeaway from this situation, it is that we are a team both on and off the field," she believes.

Volgarino (Krell) was a member of the 2013 Blooming Prairie state championship softball team.

"It's devastating, and my heart goes out to all athletes and especially to all the seniors," says Awesome Blossoms track coach Alli Schmidt.

"Blooming Prairie has had an exceptional year for all athletics and the energy coming into this season and personal goals were so high," she adds.

Schmidt says as a first-year coach, she was looking forward to this season to be working with "an awesome track staff and getting to know all of our athletes and helping them reach their goals."

With COVID-19, all of that is taken away and "we don't know what could have been," Schmidt continued.

The coaching staff, Schmidt said, has reached out to the athletes to let them know they understand this is a crazy time. "We are here for them if they need anything at all, whether it be sports, school work or anything in life," she said with assurance.

Senior track participants will be honored for the time and commitment they had given to track over the years, Schmidt remarked.

Former head varsity softball coach Ali Mach said she hasn't "fully processed" the decision of Gov. Tim Walz and the Minnesota State High School League have made to call of the spring sports season.

"As a spring coach myself, it's been weird coming home from school and not having a practice or game to run to," Mach said. "I feel bad for our families, athletes, coaches and the community because sports are such a social event and are sometimes the highlight of a day," she added.

Mach, who serves as activities direction and associate high school principal, says the school's No. 1 priority is the safety of its students.

"I am sad for our seniors because many of them looked forward to finishing their careers on their terms," she said. "They should be proud of the impact they made through the years, however," she pointed out.

In spite of sadness and disappointment they are feeling, our seniors have always shown strong leadership and resiliency, Mach said. "They should be proud of the year they had and all of their accomplishments; they need to look forward to their futures as they are bright," she concluded.

Blades captain commits to Chicago area college

The Steele County Blades are proud to announce that 2019-20 Captain Jake Freise has committed to play college hockey at Roosevelt University in the fall.

Freise just finished his fourth season with the Blades, ending his junior career in Owatonna with the most games played in a Blades uniform.

The Evanston, Ill. native played in 45 games for the Blades this season which was statistically his best year in Orange and Black. He netted 11 goals and assisted on another 21 with an accompanying 113 penalty minutes. In his four seasons with the Blades, Freise played in a total of 164 games with 31 goals, 41 assists and Blade record 465 penalty minutes. Freise was also recently named the 2019-20 Steele County Blades Most Valuable Player, as voted on by his teammates.

Head Coach Nick Adamek had this to say about Freise's choice. "I have seen Jake Freise grow up from a young, immature boy into the strong willed, independent man he is today. I feel like I am losing a part of my own family, but I couldn't be happier to see him leave the person he has become. Roosevelt University and Coach Karr are getting a team first player who is willing to do anything he can to secure victory for his team."

Adamek added, "Steele County is lucky to have had Jake for the time we did. He was loyal to our team and city. I know he leaves here proud of what he has accomplished and we couldn't be happier for him."

Adamek's sentiments were echoed by Coach Billy Karr: "We had been very interested in Jake since last fall. What I saw him do at the Showcase in December

was proof enough that we wanted him to be a central figure on our team for years to come. His mix of natural ability and his leadership is exactly what we are trying to build our team around, so we are beyond excited that he has decided to become a Roosevelt University Laker."

"I couldn't be more thankful and appreciative of the years I've spent in Owatonna playing for the Blades. Coach Nick and the organization, as a whole has, helped me become the player I am today, and I'm proud to say that I'll be continuing my hockey career as a Laker playing at Roosevelt University this upcoming fall. Huge thank you to all my billets over the years, all the volunteer staff, and all the people that are a part of the process every day of being a Blade. Thank you to my family for supporting me and Coach Nick for believing in me over the years. I'm very excited for this opportunity and I'll make the Blades organization proud," added Freise.

Roosevelt University is located in Chicago. The Lakers, which up until a merger this year, were known as Robert Morris University Eagles, with a history of a winning culture, play in the Central States Collegiate Hockey League (CSCHL) at the ACHA Division I level. The Lakers are led by Billy Karr, who finished the season ranked No. 21 at the Division level out of 70 teams nationally.

Freise is the third Blade from the 2019-20 season to make his college commitment, following Carter Broton (Marian University) and Will Christensen (Utah State University). More information on where other Blades will be headed will be available shortly.

Senior athletes thought they had something special this spring



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Senior Gabe Hagen of Blooming Prairie proudly shows the 2020 Boys Basketball Section 1A championship trophy. The Awesome Blossoms were slated to compete in the state tournament but their season came to an end because of COVID-19.

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Awesome Blossoms senior athletes thought they had "something special" as they were set to embark on the 2020 spring sports season.

That something special, burning inside the senior athletes from the baseball, softball and track teams will never be unleashed as the season was cancelled by the Minnesota State High School League due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

"I wasn't surprised that the spring sports were cancelled, but I still was hoping that we would have a track and field season," remarked

star Blooming Prairie three-sport letter winner Gabe Hagen.

Track and field hasn't been "very big" in Blooming Prairie the last couple of years "but I felt like this year we had something special," Hagen believed.

Riauna Bishop, starting pitcher for the Awesome Blossoms the past three years, feels the same competitive fire as Hagen.

"Our softball team has worked so hard to get to this point," Bishop says. "We have such a great bond and looked forward to achieving the many goals we had for ourselves and the team this season," she added.

Bishop's teammates shared her optimism about the 2020 spring softball season. "I had high hopes for this softball season, so it is very disappointing," says catcher Maya Lembke.

"I was devastated and sad because I grew up playing softball and it hurts knowing that I will never be able to play softball again for Blooming Prairie," Marti Snider related.

Awesome Blossom softball fans were also saddened to learn of

spring sports being cancelled. "It is very sad to think I will never get to watch and cheer on my best friends who play the sports they love," said Jayde Wacek.

Baylee Sorensen also shares that feeling. "I was shocked the season was cancelled. I had thought (probably hoped) that the Minnesota State High School League would postpone the spring seasons until the summer. I never thought that the last time I watched my friends do what they love would be the last time."

Softball player Julia Worke doesn't hide her feelings. "I am upset that spring sports got cancelled," she said. "I know that it is the right thing to do, though, but it still makes me upset," she added.

Girls varsity basketball coach John Bruns said there are many things, including sports, that everyone takes for granted.

"I think this experience should make us really appreciate those memories that we make every day with our friends in school and in all of our extra-curricular activities," Bruns mentioned.

Boys basketball coach Nate Piller and his fellow coaches and players were disappointed they did not get to see action in the state tournament because of COVID-19.

"At this point, I'm grateful that we had the opportunity to play the section championship game and know that we qualified for the state tournament," Piller said.

"All-in-all, we had a terrific year," Coach Piller said. How the state tournament would have turned out, no one really knows, he pointed out. "I think we would have competed and had as good of a chance as anyone," he said.

Only three teams from Class A qualified for the state tournament before the season was cancelled: Blooming Prairie, Henning and Southwest Minnesota Christian.

Piller also shared the disappointment of senior athletes. Many had legitimate chances to go to state this spring and set school records in their sports.

Piller, an art teacher, said many high school art shows have also

been cancelled.

"Obviously, we're all doing what we can and the pandemic is overwhelmingly the focus of our attention," remarked Piller.

"But these experiences are things that high school students have worked hard at for months and years, so you feel bad for everyone involved," Piller continued.

"You have to take solace in the fact that we haven't been decimated by the virus and that our actions may have prevented worst-case scenarios that were being predicted," he said with thankfulness.

"Getting our spring sports cancelled for our senior year just goes to show you that you should never take anything for granted and appreciate what you have in front of you," said senior athlete Jarrett Larson.

Jacob McHenry, track competitor and manager for the state champion Awesome Blossoms football team, admitted that he was shocked by the cancellation of the spring sports seasons.

McHenry gives the following advice to



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Blooming Prairie High School senior softball pitcher Riauna Bishop was envisioning a fun season for the Awesome Blossoms this spring. Then, the season was cancelled because of the coronavirus. Riauna is shown in action from last year.

everyone: "I just want to encourage people to stay strong because I know we will get through this together and life will eventually go back to normal."

Senior Zach Archer is not a spring sports person but has compassion for those spring sports athletes who lost their season. "These athletes waited all year for their season and then had it cancelled," Archer said.

Because of an injury that befell him during the basketball season, Karson Vigeland was not able to prepare for a spring sports season. "I am sad to see the year had to end like this," said Vigeland.



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SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #756

BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA 55917

MONDAY, MAY 18, 2020

PROPOSED TENTATIVE AGENDA

6:00 a.m., Thursday, May 14, 2020
*Regular School Board Work Session (Teleconference)

7:00 p.m., Monday, May 18, 2020
*Open Public Forum (Teleconference)

7:15 p.m., Monday, May 18, 2020
*Regular School Board Meeting (Teleconference)

Any person may raise a question to the School Board. The Board will not act on any item presented to them, which is not on the agenda, until the following Board meeting. Also, the Board would like persons to limit themselves to five minutes, with a maximum of 15 minutes per topic. These limitations are needed for us to run a timely and orderly Board meeting. Persons are requested to identify themselves prior to speaking.

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

I. Call to order - chairperson

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll call - clerk

IV. Approval of agenda

V. Principal reports

VI. Items on which board action is requested

A. Consent Agenda

Minutes

Bills

Treasurer's Report

Resignation

Donations

B. Employment

C. Volunteer Coaches

D. Staff Development Waiver 2020-21

E. Preliminary 2020-21 Budget

F. Technology Lease

VII. Items of information and discussion only

A. Distance Learning

B. Committee Reports

C. Enrollment Data

D. Dates to Note

VIII. Superintendent or board member items

IX. ADJOURNMENT

*Agenda may be subject to changes

5/6

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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 by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

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Office of the Secretary of State
Filed 04/22/2020
11:59PM
/s/ Steve Simon
Secretary of State

5/29, 5/6

SPECIAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #756

BLOOMING PRAIRIE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2020

HIGH SCHOOL BOARD ROOM • 6:30 A.M.

Any person may raise a question to the School Board. The Board will not act on any item presented to them, which is not on the agenda, until the following Board meeting. Also, the Board would like persons to limit themselves to five minutes, with a maximum of 15 minutes per topic. These limitations are needed for us to run a timely and orderly Board meeting. Persons are requested to identify themselves prior to speaking. **Due to the current pandemic, the above meeting will be held via teleconference.** Please email ctaloch@blossoms.k12.mn.us if you have questions or would like to request additional information.

I. CALL TO ORDER - CHAIRPERSON

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL – CLERK

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

V. ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTION IS REQUESTED

2019-2020 School Calendar Adjustment

VI. ADJOURNMENT

*Agenda may be subject to changes

5/6

Proposed City of Blooming Prairie City Council Meeting Agenda

May 11, 2020 7 P.M.

MEETING CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

Will be Live Streamed on Facebook • City of Blooming Prairie

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

7 P.M. - Public Hearing: Condition Use/Interim Use Permit – RC Car Track – 124 Mill Ave S
Public Questions/Comments Pertaining to the Public Hearing should be sent to City Administrator Andrew Langholz at cpb@smig.net by 1:00 P.M. on Monday, May 11, 2020

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda

2. Approval of Minutes of April 13, 2020 – Regular City Council Meeting

3. Approval of Minutes of April 13, 2020 – Public Hearing – Annexation

4. Approval of Minutes of April 13, 2020 – Public Hearing – Board of Equalization

5. Approve Resolution Accepting Donation from the BP Chamber of Commerce

6. Approve the Commercial Façade Improvement Program Application
Nick's Prairie Cafe

Financial Report

Committee/Commission Reports

1. B.P. Public Utilities

Business

1. Conditional Use/Interim Use Permit – Jim O'Connor – Operate RC Car Track

2. COVID-19 Updates

3. Liquor License Fees

4. Pine Springs Pool – 2020

5. BPPD Permanent Part-time Police Officer Hire

City Administrator's Report

1. 2019 Audit Draft

2. Splitting Parcel in Industrial Park to Sell to BPPU

3. S & S Motors – Nuisance Abatement Process

City Attorney's Report

Council Members' Reports

Adjourn

AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

5/6

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47

48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

CLUES ACROSS

1. Plural of be

4. Dress

10. Nothing

11. Relating to apes

12. They protect and serve

14. Swindle

15. Show's partner

16. Lift

18. Raise up

22. Do something to an excessive degree

23. Occupies

24. Power-driven aircraft

26. Indicates position

27. Matchstick games

28. This and

30. No longer here

31. Health insurance

34. Spore-producing receptacle on fern frond

36. Monetary unit

37. Sweet potatoes

39. Tropical Asian plant

40. Guilty or not guilty

41. Carbon dioxide

42. Able to arouse intense feeling

48. Earl's jurisdiction

50. Omitted

51. Heartbeat

52. Albania capital

53. Fashion accessory

54. Interaction value analysis

55. Symbol of exclusive ownership

56. More promising

58. student, learns healing

59. Nonresident doctor

60. Midway between east and southeast

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47

48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

CLUES DOWN

1. Enrages

2. Capital of Saudi Arabia

3. Uses in an unfair way

4. Cesium

5. Written works

6. Breakfast item

7. Found in showers

8. A way of fractioning

9. Unit of measurement

12. Sailboat

13. Indian goddess

17. For each

19. Farewell

20. Ethnic group of Sierra Leone

21. German industrial city

25. Measures intensity of light

29. Small, faint constellation

31. Promotes enthusiastically

32. Malaysian inhabitant

33. Ancient units of measurement

35. An unspecified period

38. Frame house with up to three stories

41. Lassie is one

43. Martinis have them

44. Rant

45. Famed journalist Tarbell

46. Opening

47. Round Dutch cheese

49. Archaic form of do

56. Once more

57. Registered nurse

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THE WALL OF BLESSINGS



Vicky Dornink of rural Hayfield stands proudly in front of her living room wall showcasing all 12 of her children. She is holding photos of her deceased daughter, Dianna, and youngest child, Josiah. She affectionately refers to the spot as “the wall of blessings.”

Mother reflects on joy of raising 12 kids

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RICK BUSSLER

Raising a family is a unique experience for most parents. But for Vicky Dornink, it's extra special a dozen times over.

She and her husband Gene are the parents to 12 children, eight girls and four boys. They range in ages 12 to 32.

Dornink admits raising such a large family is “kind of strange,” especially by today’s standards of most families having two or three kids, but it’s something she wouldn’t trade for anything in the world.

“I always wanted 12 children,” said Dornink, who grew up in a family of seven siblings near Leroy. “I don’t know why, 12 is my number,” she said. In the middle of having her family, she thought she never wanted to be done having kids. But, she acknowledges, after having her 12th child, she was content with not having any more. She chuckles about how her husband Gene only wanted six kids.

In 2000, Gene built their five-bedroom home, which features an open floor plan to accommodate for a large family. To celebrate holidays, Vicky Dornink said, “We just move the couch and put up a long table. We rearrange the furniture and make it all work.”

Asked what a family of 14 is like, Dornink responded, “It’s really a family affair. We all pitch in and do things together.”

As Dornink looks at a living room wall showcasing pictures of every child with both baby and graduation or older photos next to each other, she reflects, “It’s the wall of blessings.” She went through each child and their ages starting with the oldest Melody, 32. When she got to child No. 10, Charity, Dornink paused as she lost track of her age. Almost on cue, Charity walked in the house at the mo-

“It’s really a family affair. We all pitch in and do things together.”

Vicky Dornink
Mother of 12 Children

ment when mom turned to her and asked, “Hey Charity, hold old are you?” She replied 16.

The Dornink children are Melody, 32; Dustin, 30; Kelly, 29; Dillon, 27; Michelle, 23; April, 21; Christina, 19; Rachel, 18; Charity, 16; Teressa, 14 and Josiah, 12. As for naming them, Dornink said they simply picked out names that they liked. All the middle names are named after relatives.

Being a mother hasn’t come without its trials and tribulations. About two years ago, their fifth child, Dianna Fleshman, was killed in a car crash about a half-mile from their rural Hayfield home. She was traveling with her husband, Dylan, and 2-month-old son, Vincent, to the family’s house for dinner when their vehicle crashed into a large crop sprayer. Dylan and Vincent came away without any injuries. She died of major head trauma and a fractured skull. She was 22 at the time.

In a surprising twist of fate, Dornink is able to keep close to

her deceased daughter’s family as another daughter, Michelle, ended up getting married to Dylan about a year ago. They now live in Oklahoma.

Dornink takes great pride in how she has home schooled all 12 of her children. Faith in God has been the cornerstone and foundation of the education she has instilled in all of her kids. “We wanted to instill values and character building qualities that we didn’t have growing up,” she said.

Each of the children plays piano and also learned to sing. “I made sure they each took piano lessons so they had an understanding of music,” Dornink said.

One of the requirements of growing up in the Dornink household was cooking and helping out in the kitchen. They would take turns one by one making an entire meal for the family. She said two of her older sons were opposites when it came to meal time. “One of them wasn’t real creative with what he made while the other

one got out the cookbook and always made something,” she said.

The siblings rotated chores on a weekly basis on their 5-acre farm with some having the outside duties and the others taking care of things indoor. The family has a big garden in which they harvest and freeze or can the produce. They have seven freezers in the house to store all their produce.

As for recreation, the family loves to play volleyball in their yard. When asked how the teams get split, Dornink replied, “It’s hard some times. We try to do it as evenly as possible. We have a lot of fun with it.”

Being a mother has been a blessing to Dornink. “I love it,” she says. “It’s amazing how the children help me see what is inside of me and what comes out of me. They helped me grow,” she said. She indicated that her children have brought out the qualities of patience, gentleness and kindness in her.

She has taken great joy in seeing each of her children grow up. “It’s amazing to see the people they develop into,” Dornink said.

In addition to raising 12 children, Dornink is now the proud grandmother of 13, though that number is likely to climb much higher in the coming years. She’s not certain any of her kids will try to outnumber the dozen children she has had. Her deceased daughter may have come the closest as she always indicated she wanted to have 16 children.

Dornink says she has absolutely no regrets to having such a large family. “I am so grateful that I have all of them. I wouldn’t trade any of them,” she said.

Mother’s Day, she said, is a great time for her to reflect on the joy each of her children has brought into their lives. “Life would be boring without them,” Dornink said.



Melody- 32



Dustin- 30



Kelly- 29



Dillon- 27



Dianna- Deceased



Michelle- 23



April- 21



Christina- 19



Rachel- 18



Charity- 16



Teressa- 14



Josiah- 12



Besides being the mother to 12, Vicky Dornink is also a grandmother to 13 children. Enjoying an afternoon with grandma is Tryel Dornink, 3.