



The Decker girls of Waltham were at the Pumpkins in the Prairie attraction last week in Blooming Prairie. Shown from left are sisters Sterling Decker, 11 months; Claire Decker, 3 and Emma Decker, 8. The attraction is on the vacant lots along Main Street just east of B to Z hardware where the Bakery used to stand. See more photos and a story on Page A18.

Buttera: Remote court improves jail safety

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Prisoners in the Steele County Detention Center in Owatonna are appearing in court without ever leaving the confines of the jail.

When the coronavirus pandemic hit in March, court and jail officials scrambled to find a new way to get prisoners in front of a judge. They came up with remote court hearings through Zoom to allow for court appearances. It's a practice that won't be going away any time soon. And if one local jail official has his way,

it's something he hopes will become permanent even after fears of COVID-19 subside.

Jail administrator Anthony Buttera wants remote court to become the norm for in-custody court appearances, which in the past have required sheriff's office deputies to transport to the Steele County Courthouse in downtown Owatonna, several miles away from the jail.

"It has worked really good," Buttera said. "We have coordinated with the courts to make it safe for everyone."

Buttera points out that statistically the

greatest likelihood of prisoner escape occurs during transport to court. "The most volatile time is the first week of someone being in custody," he said, stressing the importance of remote hearings at least for the first court appearances. "With safety, you can't put a price on that," he added.

Currently, jail staff brings prisoners into a small courtroom in the jail where court is held through a web cam equipped with a microphone on the table. The jail has also discontinued past practice of having attorneys com-

ing into the jail to meet with prisoners. "They (attorneys) appear by Zoom as well, and we give inmates the ability to make phone contact with attorneys," said Buttera.

Besides enhanced safety improvements, remote hearings are also saving money for the county. Annual transport costs for the jail usually top \$20,000, but this year the county has only spent \$2,000, according to Buttera. The savings, he said, are coming from reduced manpower hours needed for

SEE BUTTERA, A3

BP Council may have violated open meeting

Closed meeting pertains to police chief

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

There was apparently no valid basis for the Blooming Prairie City Council to meet in a closed session on Monday, Sept. 14, according to the attorney for the Minnesota Newspaper Association (MNA).

The council did meet to discuss discipline already levied against Police Chief Greg Skillestad. The council claimed the closed meeting was to discuss a personnel matter.

However, Attorney Mark Anfinson told The Times there are

only two personnel related reasons government entities can meet in closed session:

- 1) Routine performance evaluation
- 2) Preliminary consideration of charges and complaints against an employee (NOTE: This was already done.)

Adjourning its regular meeting at 7:25 p.m., City Administrator Andrew Langholz said the council would meet in a closed session to handle a personnel matter.

Anfinson said this is where the council erred. It did not mention

SEE BP COUNCIL, A6

Officer reunites where career began

Fandel leaves behind rioting and turmoil in Mpls.

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

After being on the front lines of the rioting and dealing with the chaos first hand in Minneapolis earlier this year, Officer Brandon Fandel is looking forward to a little more peace and calmness in Owatonna.

Fandel has rejoined the Owatonna Police Department as a patrol officer after being away for the past five years as a Minneapolis officer. Fandel worked for Owatonna from 1999 to 2015 as a patrol officer and later as a detective. He left for Minneapolis in 2015, but he remained living in Owatonna with his family the entire time.

While Fandel admits he was looking to come back to Owatonna even before the riots took place in late May because the commute from Owatonna to Minneapolis was wearing on him, it was the riots over the George Floyd killing that ultimately sealed his



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Officer Brandon Fandel has rejoined the Owatonna Police Department after leaving the force and going to Minneapolis Police for five years. Fandel says he is glad to be back home working in the community he grew up in.

decision. Fandel said it was frustrating to work through the riots and then experience the demands to defund the police and abolish the police department.

"I want to go back to a place where we have community support and department support," said

Fandel, who is a 1997 graduate of Owatonna High School. After high school, he went to Alexandria where he obtained his law enforcement training.

Fandel says working the riots took an emotional toll on him as well as the rest of the Minneapolis officers.

"It was surreal," he said. "I couldn't believe it was happening. It takes a toll on you."

He shared how officers in Minneapolis were getting shot at almost nightly. "I was hyper-vigilant," Fandel said. "I was left

SEE OFFICER REUNITES, A5

Help Kiwanis win \$25K in equipment

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Wouldn't \$25,000 be nice to win?

The Owatonna Kiwanis Club sure thinks so, but it needs your assistance in helping it win \$25,000 in playground equipment.

From now until Sunday, Sept. 27, folks can vote in support of the Owatonna group's entry in the Kiwanis Legacy of Play contest. People can vote once each day. Go online to play.kiwanis.org, which will take you to the Kiwanis Legacy of Play contest page. Scroll down the page to the submissions and go to the Owatonna Kiwanis Club submission and click on "Vote." People will then be directed to enter an email address and a verification number will be sent to your email to enter in a box under your email.

Gege Abraham, president of the Owatonna club, said the Kiwanis submitted an entry on behalf of the "We All Play" adaptive playground and Miracle Field project. The playground and ball field construction has begun at Manthey Park in Owatonna.

"When finished it will provide a unique inclusive space for the community to gather, interact and play," said Abraham. "It will bring people of all ages and abilities together where everyone can play together," she added.

The new playground, Abraham said, will be a destination as people from around the area and around the state will come to play. "It will also bring business and awareness of the great things our community is doing," she said.

SEE HELP KIWANIS, A15

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AREA DEATHS

Patricia Decker, 85, BP
Lorraine Brown, 85, BP
Russell James, 82, Geneva

Serving
Blooming Prairie
and Steele County
since 1893

OUR VIEW

Openness protects the right to know

Minnesota has one of the strongest Open Meeting Laws in the nation and the strength of that law is in protecting the public's right to know.

Generally, our local governments are good at following the components of the Open Meeting Law.

Just lately, however, it appears that the Blooming Prairie City Council and city staff have strayed a bit in following guidelines of the law.

All too often, the local council has finished its regular meeting, only to say it will hold a closed meeting to discuss a personnel issue.

This action has become commonplace with other governmental units in Minnesota.

Yes, the Open Meeting Law does provide an opportunity to close a public meeting to discuss an employee's routine evaluation or preliminary consideration of charges and complaints against an employee. However, there is no general exception for "personnel matters."

Council already had discussed the evaluation and reprimand. Employee should also have been named and given the opportunity to have an open meeting.

There are other exceptions to the law for meeting closure but generally all meetings shall be open.

It's to a government body's advantage to hold open meetings. Conducting all business in the open provides protection for elected officials showing that they have nothing to hide.

Last week, the BP Council adjourned the regular meeting to go into closed session for what was called a meeting to discuss a personnel matter.

After a 30-minute closed session, the BP Council went back into public session, making two motions. One motion attempted to rescind an employee evaluation and reprimand. That motion failed. Another motion was made to uphold the evaluation and reprimand of an employee. This motion was adopted.

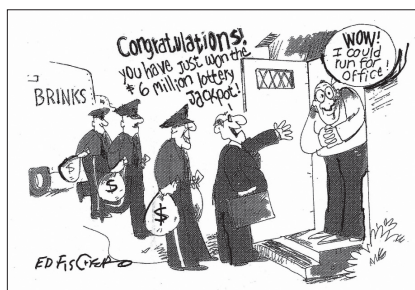
To this point, the employee had not been identified. It didn't take long, however, to determine that the public employee was the local police chief. He attended the closed meeting with his attorney.

More information has to be forthcoming on this matter. When only bits of information are available, an understanding of the matter is difficult to be reached.

The Minnesota Open Meeting Law was originally enacted in 1957. It was strengthened in 1973 under the direction of Attorney General Warren Spannaus. Minnesota Newspaper Association (MNA) attorney Mark Anfinson helped write parts of the law and he continues to be a respected expert on the law.

Keeping tabs on government officials to make sure they are following laws is just one of many roles of your community newspaper.

Openness is healthy. Our right to know must continue to be protected.



GUEST COLUMN

The role of foundations during crises

BY TIM PENNY

In times of crises, life as we know it quickly unravels, but we immediately start to pick up the pieces and do our best to navigate new terrain. It helps to have organizations that are already positioned to help pick up those pieces. The current health and economic crisis has highlighted the important role that foundations and other nonprofits can play during a time like this. At Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), our total impact in COVID-19 response efforts in our 20-county region is already nearing \$11 million.

To put this in perspective, SMIF typically invests \$5 million each year in the region through our standard programming and grantmaking, which fall under the areas of economic develop-

ment, early childhood and community vitality. Not only have we largely continued our normal work, but we have become a major partner in recovery efforts in those same areas, tripling the impact we typically have on the region in a normal year.

Since April, we have worked closely with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to funnel relief dollars to our region's entrepreneurs. We dispersed 50 Small Business Emergency Loans from DEED for a total of \$1.2 million to restaurants, bars, hair salons and other public accommodations impacted by the emergency shutdown. Most recently we have partnered with DEED once again to verify, administer and distribute more than 900 Small Business Relief Grants to southern

Minnesota businesses that are dealing with financial hardship for a total of \$9 million.

We have also supported food entrepreneurs through our Grow a Farmer Assistance Grants, awarding three organizations a total of \$30,000 to support at least 120 farmers in southern Minnesota. They have created a microgrant program to help producers respond to new challenges brought on by the crisis, like building an online presence and implementing new cleaning and sanitizing measures. They have also built handwashing stations to distribute to farmers and are developing marketing campaigns to create more awareness about farmers in the region.

In the Early Childhood space, we created the Emergency Child Care Grant Program

SEE THE ROLE, A15



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo...

After a longer than anticipated break, I have found myself living in a cuckoo world again.

That statement alone is wide open for many different interpretations and realities, especially after the year we have been living this year.

But I'm not talking about politics, social issues, health crises or any other every day issue. Instead, I'm referring to a small wooden device that hangs on my wall giving off hints of what time it is.

Living in a cuckoo world again



This cuckoo clock hails from Germany and hangs on Rick's living room wall.

Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo and away it goes off.

For years, I have owned a German cuckoo clock thanks to a gift from my parents after they traveled to Germany where our ancestry hails from. A while back my cuckoo was

rendered inoperable and sat silent for quite some time. That's not a good thing for a cuckoo clock or a cuckoo like me who relies on some cuckiness in his life.

I finally found a clock repair shop in the area.

SEE LIVING IN, A16



Reflections
HOWARD LESTRUD

Blooming Prairie business and industry leader Craig Kruckeberg was so correct when he said not too long ago that it is great to live in a small town.

When the chips are down, small town community members roll up their sleeves and help our people in need. Kruckeberg and wife Robyn sponsored the Big Tent located this past weekend next to the Cue Company. It was erected for the purpose of raising funds for the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group.

Had it not been for



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Remote control racer Chris Watts does some tuneup work on his race car during a Cure for Cancer fundraiser at the Blooming Prairie RC Track last Saturday. All proceeds (\$3227) from the races went to the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group.

the Kruckebergs' kind donation, the gun bingo fundraising event would not have been held, said organizer Connie Trom.

Where, but in a small town, can you put up a Big Tent to help fight cancer. The Big Tent

SEE IT'S FUN TO LIVE, A15

YOUR VIEW

Keep momentum going with Gnemi

To-the-Editor:
I am really optimistic about Steele County.

We saw tremendous turnaround on the Steele County commissioners in 2016. In just four years, under decisive leaders like Rick Gnemi in the Third District, things have greatly improved from seeing

the county portion of your property taxes going up by double digits as it had in the past, to a more compassionate, yet sensible budget to meet our county's needs while living within our means.

Rick Gnemi understands real estate, budget and finances. He has always been a positive in-

novator and knows how to get things done affordably. Keep that momentum going. Keep Rick Gnemi on the job. He'll make your tax dollars work for you, and not the other way around.

On Nov. 3, vote Rick Gnemi.
Mary Seykora
Owatonna

Return the commissioner incumbents

To-the-Editor:
Over the last four years the current Board of County Commissioners has made great strides in stabilizing and vastly improving the operations and finances of Steele County government.

Among their accomplishments are: the completion of the new public works facility to meet the wishes of the taxpayers; completion of long over-due renovations of the court house; eliminated "division

directors", an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy, and empowered department heads thus saving money; unburdened Steele County taxpayers by dissolving a lopsided agreement with Benedictine Health System and selling Park Place and Cedarview to a private developer; through prudent fiscal management, they have been able to accumulate a rainy day fund, which may prove very beneficial in this time of

decreasing revenues due to COVID-19.

The current board made promises during the 2016 campaign and they kept their promises. They have been transparent and have listened to the taxpayers. Jim Abbe, Rick Gnemi and Greg Krueger deserve your support and your vote to be re-elected to the Steele County Board of Commissioners.
Jeff Falk
Owatonna

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Publisher.....Rick Bussler
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County Writer.....Karen M. Jorgensen
County Writer.....Chris Baldwin

DEADLINES
News: Noon Fridays.
Web: 11 p.m. (Daily)
Advertising: 4 p.m.
Thursdays.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Steele, Dodge,
Freeborn & Mower \$46
Elsewhere
in Minnesota \$49
Out of state \$52

A state and national award winning weekly

MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION
2020-5 state awards
2019-7 state awards
2018-6 state and 4 national awards
2017-2 state and 3 national awards
2016-3 state and 6 national awards
2015-7 state and 4 national awards
2014-3 state and 4 national awards
2013-7 state and 2 national awards
2012-2 state awards
2011-4 national awards
(Awards presented by the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the National Newspaper Association)

BP approves \$41K for program to help businesses

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

On a motion by Blooming Prairie City Council member Bill Newman, approval was given to an allocation of \$41,000 for the CARES Business Grant Program.

The action was taken at a regular council meeting at the City Government Center on Monday, Sept. 14.

The City of Blooming Prairie and Steele county have teamed up to provide assistance in the form of grants to businesses located within the community. The

application period for business grants in the sum of \$5,000 runs from Sept. 10 to Oct. 12. Materials can be picked up in person at City Hall, or on the city's website, or sent by e-mail if requested.

The program is being facilitated by the Blooming Prairie EDA (Economic Development Authority) with assistance from the BP Area Chamber of Commerce.

Local businesses are encouraged to complete an application for reimbursement for COVID-19 related expenses. There are stipulations in the guidelines that allow

for the EDA to make adjustments that they deem necessary as this is a new program.

Eligible businesses are entitled to a grant up to \$5,000 but must provide all the documentation that is stipulated in the application. Steele County has chosen to partner with local communities to assist the grant programs and has pledged \$34,000, making the total grant funding available at \$75,000.

City Administrator Andrew Langholz says the City of Blooming Prairie and Steele County are recognizing the hardships

and impact caused by COVID-19 on the business community.

Grant funds will be awarded to businesses in most need of assistance after the application deadline, remarked Langholz.

The city retains the authority and discretion to approve or deny an application and reserves the right to subsequently add further priorities, change eligibility criteria or discontinue the program in response to changing circumstances.

Businesses must meet all of the following criteria as of March 1, 2020 in order to be eli-

gible for the Blooming Prairie CARES Business Grant Program:

1) Private, for-profit business with a physical establishment in the city.

2) Be in good standing with the Minnesota Department of Revenue and Secretary of State, the county and the city. If the applicant is found not to be in good standing, they will be given one week to rectify the situation.

3) Ability to demonstrate the business was adversely affected by an Executive Order related to COVID-19 or experienced a significant financial hardship as a direct result of

COVID-19.

4) The business must have been in operation since Nov. 1, 2019 and must remain open for six months under the current ownership from the date of fund issuance.

5) Employs 30 or less full-time equivalent (FTE) employees.

Other COVID-19 items included:

- Council voted to approve audio-visual upgrades for the council chambers to live stream council meetings. Langholz said he has gotten quotes from \$7,500 to \$12,500. This expense would be covered under CARES funding.

Mayo's tracking tool provides latest COVID data

The number of COVID-19 cases is surging in some regions nationally and retreating in others, making reliable information and personalized guidance on the pandemic more important than ever.

To help people protect themselves and their loved ones, Mayo Clinic has introduced a tracking tool on MayoClinic.org that features the latest COVID-19 data for every county in all 50 states and Washington, D.C., and Mayo Clinic insight on how to assess risk and plan accordingly.

"U.S. Coronavirus Map: What Do the Trends Mean for You?" is an interactive map on Mayo Clinic's COVID-19 online resource center. This map presents key data and trends in an easy-to-use format. Data include the total number of cases by county and state, new cases per day, positive test rate and fatality rate, presented with trends over time and Mayo Clinic guidance on how to take action.

Mayo Clinic has been a national leader in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In March, Mayo an-

nounced an early test to detect COVID-19 infection, and Mayo Clinic Laboratories has been a national leader in COVID-19 testing, processing over 1.4 million tests. In April, the Food and Drug Administration named Mayo Clinic the lead institution to coordinate access to convalescent plasma for patients with severe or life-threatening cases of COVID-19. Throughout the pandemic, Mayo researchers and experts have provided expertise to guide the public health response, and clinical staff have been on the front lines providing lifesaving care for patients with COVID-19.

"COVID-19 infections continue to rise and fall in many areas, and information at the local level on the prevalence of disease and future trends are more important than ever to help people prevent the spread of infection," says Henry Ting, M.D., a cardiologist, health services researcher and educator at Mayo Clinic. "This interactive map, enriched with Mayo Clinic expertise, is designed to be easy to use, with

the most current data available and correlated with the latest Mayo Clinic guidance."

Dr. Ting, who is Mayo Clinic's chief value officer, worked with a team of Mayo Clinic data scientists to develop content sources, validate information and correlate expertise for the tracker. All of which will be enhanced with more real-time data and predictive modeling.

"From our experience in treating patients and talking with them about their concerns, we believe there's a need for easy-to-access local data on COVID-19 trends and what it means," Dr. Ting says. "This tracker enables people to see ongoing and emerging hot spots across the U.S. where they live, where their family and friends live, and where they might travel, along with information from Mayo Clinic experts about risk, diagnoses and treatments."

Mayo Clinic's COVID-19 resource center provides guidance on how to wear a mask properly, maintain social distancing, wash hands frequently, and clean and disinfect

surfaces. It also includes a self-assessment tool for users to determine whether they have symptoms and should seek medical care, and information for COVID-19 survivors on how to donate plasma to help others.

Nilay Shah, Ph.D., chair of the Mayo Clinic Division of Healthcare Policy and Research; John Poe, chair of the Department of Quality and Affordability; and Dr. Ting were appointed COVID-19 data governors for Mayo at the beginning of the pandemic. They have led a team of scientists and clinicians, including experts in infectious diseases, epidemiology, predictive modeling and artificial intelligence to develop projects such as the COVID-19 tracking tool.

"Much remains to be learned about the COVID-19 virus and how it affects a person's health in the short term and longer term," says Dr. Ting. "It's vital that people become more aware of local information, what the trends are, and make appropriate action to protect their health and the health of others."

Health officials begin statewide COVID survey

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Workers with the Minnesota Department of Health will be making house calls throughout southeastern Minnesota over the next few weeks.

Public Health Director Amy Caron said MDH employees wearing marked vests will be knocking on doors throughout the region, though she doesn't know specific areas of where they will be. They are canvassing six regions around the state. The southeast survey is made up of 11 counties, including Steele, Dodge, Freeborn and Mower counties.

Caron said workers will be completing a survey regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. MDH will also offer a nasal test to determine if someone has COVID and a finger stick to take blood in order to see if someone has had COVID in the past. She is not sure how long COVID stays in a person, but says it's at least 40 days. "Some people are interested to know if they've ever had it," she pointed out.

The statewide survey, Caron says, is part of an ongoing effort to better understand the prevalence of COVID-19 in Minnesota. The goals of the survey include:

- Understand how COVID has spread
- Understand what caused COVID to spread in certain areas
- Explore how transmission and infection rates differ

among regions in Minnesota

- Identify the percentage of people infected with COVID that have no symptoms
- Improve health messaging and help stop spread.

During the survey, teams of health professionals will visit randomly selected households in 180 pre-selected sites around Minnesota. Caron noted the survey is strictly voluntary.

Participants with positive results for either test will be contacted by a nurse to receive additional information. All questionnaire responses and results will be kept private.

The survey continues through Sept. 30.

Another Increase COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Steele County. Over the past week, there have been 28 new cases, bringing the total of positive cases to 525. 478 recovered, 2 deaths and no hospitalizations.

Despite the increase, Caron says Steele's cases for the past week reflect "more of an average number" throughout the entire pandemic. She noted the previous two weeks were much worse for the county.

Dodge County cracked the 200 mark with a jump of 21 cases over the past week, including 15 over the weekend. Dodge now stands at 203. "That's never happened before," Caron said of Dodge's weekly spike. Though she doesn't

SEE HEALTH OFFICIALS, A18

BUTTERA: Remote court improves jail safety

FROM A1

courtroom transportation and security.

The plan right now, Buttera said, is to continue with remote hearings until at least the end of the year. Asked if he would like to see the practice continue beyond COVID-19, Buttera responded, "I hope so because we recognize it's a pretty big safety measure. We will push for the technology piece."

But Buttera stressed making such a change will ultimately fall onto the court system. "It will take a lot of people to

work together," he said. "We would be supportive to do it this way (permanently)," he added.

Buttera said COVID-19 has forced the courts and jail staff to do things differently, including offering virtual programs with other counties for inmates. "Sometimes change is good," he says. "We have done the best we can with it. We have tried to pick up the silver lining somewhere. There's not a lot, but some out there."

The jail has also kept

focused throughout the pandemic of keeping the virus out of the jail. To date, there has only been one positive case involving a jail staff member in late August. The facility immediately went into lockdown where Public Health came in to test everyone twice.

"Luckily no one else came down with COVID," Buttera said. "I think we dodged the bullet. We have been pretty fortunate." Steele County continues to keep its jail population low. Buttera said



Anthony Buttera

the inmate count is usually in the mid-to-high 40s. Prior to COVID-19, there were normally 90 or more inmates.

Stay healthy by keeping up with preventive care appointments

MNSure is reminding Minnesotans that all plans sold through MNSure.org cover preventive care services and chronic disease management at no cost to you (even if you haven't met your yearly deductible).

Preventive care can include screenings, check-ups and patient counseling to help prevent illness, disease or other health problems. These services can include blood pressure and diabetes

screenings, mammograms, colonoscopies and more. Vaccinations for children and adults, including flu shots, are also available at no cost.

"It's so important—especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic—to make sure your family is vaccinated against diseases like the flu and measles and continues to get routine health screenings to prevent major health problems down the road," said MNSure CEO Nate Clark. "We know

it's easy to put off routine visits right now, but don't delay these services. Keep safe and healthy by scheduling preventive care visits for yourself and your family today."

Preventive services don't necessarily need to be done in person. Telehealth services or phone visits may be covered by your plan. Check with your health insurance company to find out if telehealth or phone visits are covered.

For more detailed information, check the

summary of benefits and coverage (SBC) document that was provided by your insurance company or reach out to the number on the back of your insurance card.

In addition to essential health benefits, such as preventive care services, hospitalization, emergency services and pediatric services, all plans offered on MNSure include consumer protections. For a full list of essential health benefits and consumer protections, visit MNSure.org.



Wear a mask in public spaces.



Get tested if you have any symptoms.



Answer if your health department calls.

mn MINNESOTA

STAY SAFE MN

COVID-19 UPDATE

World.....31,100,000
Deaths.....962,000
Recovered.....21,300,000

U.S.6,830,000
Deaths199,000
Recovered2,310,000

MN.....90,069
Deaths2,017
Recovered28,205

Steele.....525
Deaths2
Recovered478

Dodge 203
Deaths 0
Recovered 165

AS OF SEPT. 21, 2020

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.**

Police urge motorists to drive smart and buckle up

Driving in Greater Minnesota with the open countryside and less traffic can be a welcome contrast to the congestion of city driving. What isn't different is the need to buckle up to stay alive.

In 2019, 77% of the unbelted deaths occurred in Greater Minnesota.

The Owatonna Police Department is joining more than 300 agencies in the statewide Click It or Ticket campaign Sept. 18-30 to enforce the life-saving seat belt law and remind motorists to drive smart. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (DPS-OTS) coordinates the campaign and the funding provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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

Police point out that bad decisions contribute to life-changing outcomes, some of which include:

- In 2019, 73 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads.

- Adults must take the time to correctly use child restraints, teach children the value of buckling up and model seat belt use. From 2015 - 2019:

- 17 children (ages 0-7) were killed in motor vehicles
- Seven of the victims were properly secured, six were not properly restrained, and restraint use was unknown in four fatalities.

- Of the 87 children (ages 0-7) seriously injured in motor vehicles, 53% were known to be properly secured.

Good decisions are a lifesaver, police say. In crashes from 2015 - 2019, of the 17,655 children ages 0-7 that were properly restrained, 87% were not injured while another 10% sustained only possible injuries. In 1987, 4,176 vehicle occupants suffered severe injuries

in traffic crashes. That number dropped to 1,052 in 2019.

Save Face. Buckle Up. Drive Smart.

An unbelted motorist can crash into a windshield, be thrown into other passengers or ejected from the vehicle and killed.

Drivers are in charge of their vehicles and the safety of their passengers. They can refuse to start the car until every passenger is belted. Passengers can also speak up if the driver is endangering everyone in the vehicle by not buckling up.

The Law is for Safety
Minnesota law states that drivers and passengers must wear seat belts or be in the correct child restraint.

Officers will ticket unbelted drivers or passengers. Occupants must correctly wear seat belts low and snug across the hips, and they should never tuck straps under an arm or behind the back.

Child Car Seat Law and Steps

• In Minnesota, all

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

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

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

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

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

CRIME BRIEF

Woman allegedly found driving with high alcohol level

Owatonna Police arrested a woman for allegedly operating a motor vehicle with a high alcohol level.

Sirena Un, 29, of Owatonna has been

charged with two counts of third-degree DWI and giving a false name of another person to police. All charges are gross misdemeanors.

On Sept. 7, an officer was in the parking lot of Kwik Trip on S. Oak Avenue handling some found property when a citizen came up to him to report a vehicle in the parking lot had been swerving all over the place and nearly hit her.

The officer saw Un exit the store, walk



Sirena Un

to the car and start the engine. The officer intervened and smelled an odor of alcohol coming from Un.

While talking to the officer,

Un gave a couple false names before admitting her real name, according to police.

An attempt to perform field sobriety tests, but since she was unable to maintain balance, they were halted for her safety, police said. Officers placed Un under arrest.

While at the jail, Un provided a breath test, which revealed her alcohol level was at .24, which is three times the legal limit to drive.

when they can sit with their back against the vehicle seat, knees bent comfortably and

completely over the vehicle seat edge without slouching, and feet touching the floor.

COURT NEWS
Steele County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Aug. 31 - Sept. 6:

BLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Kelvin A. Flores, 35, Willmar, no insurance and invalid license, \$375; Daniel C. Gregg, 41, Farmington, speeding, \$215; Joshua Hsaw, 28, St. Paul, expired registration, \$105; Ariel N. Keeton, 29, Bloomington, speeding, \$125.

MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER

Jeffrey D. Amundson, 27, Rochester, speeding, \$115; Alisha A. Balzer, 32, St. Paul, possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, \$175; Jeffrey L. Bergman, 67, Cedar Falls, IA, speeding, \$115; Zachary A. Caswell, 25, Olathe, KS, speeding, \$115; Edward O. Dowling, 18, North Liberty, IA, speeding, \$215; Jason K. Fladager, 49, Edina, speeding, \$115; Ajay K. Gagnepalli, 27, West Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$125; Terry E. Hilleshien, 57, Rochester, speeding, \$115; Abdulsalan H. Hussein, 24, Rochester, revoked license and permit violation, \$225; Ahmed H. Ibrahim, 34, Faribault, speeding, \$145 and 1 year of unsupervised

monitoring without conviction; Hunter S. Keeley, 21, Boulder, CO, speeding, \$125; Ethan M. Kent Draman, 18, Iowa Falls, IA, speeding, \$375; Matthew D. Kirk, 25, Eureka, CA, speeding, \$275; Sara B. Lepisto, 47, Horseshoe Bay, TX, speeding, \$115; Jennifer J. Long, 35, Burnsville, speeding, \$125; Cade J. McMahon, 21, Blaine, speeding, \$275; Michael T. Miller, 42, Austin, speeding, \$115; Whitney E. Plumb, 21, Moline, IL, speeding, \$275; Brenda J. Sammon, 57, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Shacon S. Scott, 37, Carbondale, IL, speeding, \$135; David P. Senkyr, 43, Clive, IA, speeding, \$125; Sai V. Suluguri, 26, Overland Park, KS, speeding, \$125; Vincent S. Wehr, 29, Leon, KS, speeding, \$115; Abigail T. Zimmerman, 22, Northfield, wrong way on one way, \$175.

OWATONNA POLICE
DEPARTMENT

Isaac K. Erickson, 20, Owatonna, speeding, \$275; Paloma Hinojosa Silva, 36, Claremont, no insurance, \$275; Cole S. Krauth, 25, Medford, speeding, \$135; Elizabeth A. Long, 41, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$105; Cassie K. Meixner, 24, Owatonna, seat belt, \$100; Chelsea M. Pederson, 27, Faribault, speeding, \$115; Gladys M. Pelovsky, 79, Owatonna, failure to stop for school bus, stay of adjudication, \$145 and 1 year of unsupervised

program and 1 year of supervised probation; Yamil Ruiz Santiago, 38, Faribault, speeding, \$135; Cole J. Wilhelm, 31, Dodge Center, expired tabs, \$105.

STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Aden M. Abdi, 34, Faribault, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$145 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; David T. Bugard, 20, Mukwonago, WI, speeding, \$215; Diana K. Deraad, 47, Austin, failure to drive in single lane, \$125; Regina L. Larson, 54, Farmington, speeding, \$115; Keely A. Manion, 47, Minneapolis, speeding, \$135.

POLICE BLOTTER
Steele CountyBLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE

Sept. 13
Suspicion: Police responded to suspicious activity in the 100 block of 2nd St. SW at 6:39 a.m. They arrested a subject at the scene.

Sept. 16
Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 500 block of Highway Ave. S. at 3:20 p.m.

OWATONNA POLICE

Sept. 11
DUI: Police made DUI arrests at Main St. E. and Truman Ave. SE at 1:13 a.m., at Cherry St. NE and Chestnut Ave. NE at 9:45 p.m. and the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 11:49 p.m.

Sept. 12
Domestic: Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1400 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 1:52 p.m.

Sept. 13
Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 600 block of Oak Ave. S. at 8:45 p.m.

Sept. 15
Welfare: Officer conducted a welfare check in the 2100 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 1:29 a.m.

Domestic: Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 500 block of Rose St. E. at 5:44 p.m. They arrested a subject at the scene.

Sept. 14

Shoplifting: At 1:17 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 3900 block of Cabela Dr. NW. Arrest: Police arrested a motorist during a traffic stop at Elm Ave. N. and Pearl St. E. at 3:57 p.m.

Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 200 block of Pearl St. E. at 9:41 p.m.

Sept. 15

Pursuit: Officers pursued a subject at Cedar Ave. S. and 18th St. SE at 1:28 a.m.

Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 3600 block of County Road 45 N. at 1:15 a.m.

Thefts: Police took theft reports in the 600 block of Willowbrook Dr. NE at 5:57 p.m. and the 100 block of Rose St. W. at 8:22 p.m.

Sept. 16

Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 200 block of 18th St. NE at 8:57 a.m.

Fraud: Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 400 block of North St. W. at 1:45 a.m.

Criminal Sexual Conduct: Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 300 block of Park Dr. NW at 12:52 p.m.

Pursuit: Police arrested a subject following a pursuit at Elm Ave. S. and Mill St. E. at 3:01 p.m.

Sept. 17

Thefts: Police took theft reports in the 500 block of Adams Ave. NW at 10:23 a.m., the 400 block of State Ave. NW at 11:39 a.m. and the 1700 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 1:33 p.m.

Uttering: At 10:36 a.m., illegal dumping occurred in the 300 block of 14th St. NE.

Drugs: Officers responded to drug activity in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 12:18 p.m.

DWI: Officer made a DUI arrest in the 500 block of 14th St. SE at 11:24 p.m.

STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF

Sept. 11
Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 13900 block of 72nd Ave. SW in Berlin Township at 6:09 p.m.

Sept. 12

Theft: Deputy took a theft report in the 2500 block of 62nd Ave. SW in Meriden Township at 7:45 a.m.

Sept. 16
Theft: Deputies received a theft report from the 4500 block of 66th St. NW in Deerfield Township at 9:54 a.m.

Sept. 17

Thefts: Deputies took theft reports in the 200 block of 6th St. SE in Medford at 7:36 a.m. and the 300 block of Beaver Lake Road N. in Berlin Township at 4:05 p.m.

Criminal Sexual Conduct: Deputies began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 200 block of Pearl St. E. in Owatonna at 12:04 p.m.

ARRESTS
Steele County

OWATONNA POLICE

Braiden Michael Timmerman, 19, arrested at 11:15 p.m.

Sept. 15, domestic assault/assault, held for court.

COURT NEWS
Dodge County

The following case was heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Sept. 6 with Judge Jodi L. Williamson presiding:

Blendy J. Olsis, 25, Moose Lake, previously appeared and was convicted of felony burglary. Olsis was sentenced to \$130 and 27 months in St. Cloud State Prison.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Sept. 6 - 13:

DODGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Domenic D. Adreon, 21, Mantorville, DWI, \$1,005, 2 days in county jail, chemical

dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments and 1 year of supervised probation; Jack A. Hawkins, 28, Mapleton, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$100 and 6 months of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; River L. Johansen, 22, Sargeant, speeding, \$140; Demonte L. Reynolds, 27, Kasson, careless driving and speeding, \$240; Isaac L. Shadow, 19, Hayfield, stop sign, \$130.

KASSON POLICE
DEPARTMENT

Tyler R. Clement, 30, Rochester, hands free violation, \$130; Roberto Estrada, 26, Rochester, no insurance, \$280; Troy R. Flatness, 43, Eyota, possession of marijuana, \$290; William J. Gaw, 59, Kasson, criminal sexual conduct, stay of adjudication, \$300, no contact with victim, 30 hours of community service and 2 years of supervised probation; Larry A. Hegna, 83, Kasson, careless driving, \$480, chemical dependency evaluation, attend MADD impact panel and 1 year of supervised probation; Michael D. Horton, 50, Chicago, IL, speeding, \$140; Allison A. Miller, 58, Kasson, controlled substance crime and theft, stay of adjudication, \$300, 6 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, 30 hours of community service and 2 years of supervised probation; Blake L. Rix, 30, Beebe, AR, hands free violation, \$130.

MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER

Jonathan D. Balkcom, 21, Rochester, speeding, \$140; Lee A. More, 56, Mankato, suspended license, \$200; Hannah J. Steuck, 24, Claremont, speeding, \$120; Todd M. Thoen, 59, Waltham, speeding and brakes violation, \$170; Han N. Vorwerk, 39, Rochester, speeding, \$120.

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Should I Buy Long-Term Care Insurance?



Dear Savvy Senior,
My wife and I have thought about purchasing a long-term care insurance policy, but we hate the idea of paying expensive monthly premiums for a policy we may never use. Is there a good rule of thumb on who should or shouldn't buy long-term care insurance?

Getting Old

Dear Getting,

There are two key factors you need to consider that can help you determine if purchasing a long-term care (LTC) insurance policy is a smart decision for you and your wife. One factor is your financial situation and second is your health history. Currently, around 8 million Americans own a policy.

Who Needs LTC Insurance?

As the cost of LTC – which includes nursing home, assisted living and in-home care – continues to rise, it's important to know that most people pay for LTC either from personal savings or Medicaid when their savings are depleted, or through a LTC insurance policy. National median average costs for nursing home care today is around \$92,000 per year, while assisted living averages around \$50,000/year.

While national statistics show that about 70 percent of Americans 65 and older will need some kind of LTC, the fact is, many people don't need to purchase a LTC insurance policy.

The reasons stem from a range of factors, including the fact that relatively few people have enough wealth to protect to make purchasing a policy worthwhile. Seniors with limited financial resources who need LTC turn to Medicaid to pick up the tab after they run out of money.

Another important factor is that most seniors who need LTC only need it for a short period of time, for example, when they're recovering from surgery. For those people, Medicare covers in-home health care and nursing home stays of 100 days or less following a hospital stay of more than 3 consecutive days.

So, who should consider buying a policy? LTC insurance policies make the most sense for people who can afford the monthly premiums, and who have assets of at least \$150,000 to \$200,000 or more that they want to protect, not counting their home and vehicles.

Another factor to weigh is your personal health and family health history. The two most common reasons seniors need extended long-term care is because of dementia and/or disability. And, almost half of all people who live in nursing homes are 85 years or older. So, what's your family history for Alzheimer's, stroke or some other disabling health condition, and do you have a family history of longevity?

You also need to factor in gender too. Because women tend to live longer than men, they are at greater risk of needing extended LTC.

Choosing LTC Insurance

After evaluating your situation, if you're leaning towards buying a LTC policy, be sure to do your homework. The cost of premiums can vary greatly ranging anywhere between \$2,500 and \$8,000 per year for a couple depending on your age, the insurer, and the policy's provisions.

Also note that because of coronavirus, it may be more difficult to qualify for coverage now if you're age 70 or older, in a high-risk group or have had a positive COVID-19 test.

To find a policy, get a LTC insurance specialist who works with a variety of companies. See the American Association of Long-Term Care Insurance website (AALTCI.org) to locate one. Also shop insurers like Northwestern Mutual and New York Life, who work only with their own agents.

Another option you may want to consider are Hybrid policies that combine long-term care coverage with life-insurance benefits. These policies promise that if you don't end up needing long-term care, your beneficiaries will receive a death benefit.

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

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History from the News Archives

10 Years Ago

Sept. 28, 2010

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

Congratulations to Luc Zellmer this week. He was named the Owatonna paper's Prep Athlete of the Week a week ago. Last week, although Rochester paper doesn't always cover Blooming Prairie as much as they do Rochester schools and other schools in their immediate area, the Post Bulletin made Zellner their Prep Athlete of the week as well. That was quite an accomplishment.

The kindergarten class from Blooming Prairie Elementary School are getting an early jump about fire safety. They toured the Blooming Prairie Fire Department on Monday and Tuesday in preparation for next week's Fire Prevention Week. Fire Marshall Nick Schiefert put on his fire gear for the kids and even allowed some to try on helmets.

Owatonna and Blooming Prairie were among the many areas affected by an onslaught of heavy rains for a 24-hour period last week. In this short period of time, it was reported that 7.75 inches fell in Owatonna, causing road closures, home damage and declaration of state of emergency. In Blooming Prairie, the biggest issue caused by the storm was street flooding and ground saturation. About 30 homes were reported to have light to severe basement flooding and some trees were reported down following the storms.

20 Years Ago

Sept. 26, 2000

ELSIE SUNLGER, PUBLISHER

We have a good beginning to the new school year at the elementary school this year. The new Student Council has been elected. The new members are: fifth grade – Kristi Wanous, Courtney Diessen, Jessica Masching, Patrick Rumpza, Beth Hillson, Justin Kreil, alternates, Blaire Shave, Cody Poshusta-Schmitz and Jenny Miller. Sixth grade: Courtney Bailey, Mariesa Rossow, Brennen Toquam, Lara Hillson, Alex

Johnson, Lori Pirkil, alternates, Jessica Wroblewski, Emily Thoen, Leigh Yentsch.

The City of Blooming Prairie Fire Department turns 100 years old and there will be a celebration during National Fire Safety Week in October. On Oct. 14, there will be the annual dance and raffle as well as open house. Chief administrator Mike Jones reported on the new air compressor donated by Atofina for the department as well as the purchase of a 2,000-gallon tanker.

Yes, homecoming is next week, and the traditional King and Queen Coronation program will be on Monday, Oct. 2. Congratulations to the candidates for the honor they were selected for the honor. Queen candidate are – Amanda Busbo, Randi Goette, Rebecca Naatz, Kristin Thoen, Stephanie Thompson, Allison Trom and Sami Zweiner. King candidates are – Karl Hattberg, Bryan Kramer, Kody Thurnau, Lee Trotman and Jeremy Wangen.

50 Years Ago

Sept. 30, 1970

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE

KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

The Blooming Prairie Fire Department answer two calls this week in the rural area. They were summoned to the Dennis Johnson home, on the Roger Amundson farm, in the morning. A plastic pillow in front of an electric heater melted and caused smoke damage in the house.

Monday afternoon they were called to the new trailer home on the Earl Jensen farm, west of town. The gas stove was being hooked up when it ignited, causing damage to parts of the walls.

Two Blooming Prairie students were awarded Letters of Commendation honoring them for their high performance on the 1970 National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. The commendations are: Joan Helleck, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Helleck, and John D. Becker, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Becker. They are among 35,000 students in the United States who scored in the upper 2 per cent of those graduating in 1971.

75 Years Ago

Sept. 27, 1945

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

The Band and Chorus officers for the coming year were elected as follows: Chorus – President, Dorothy Hallick; Vice-president, Donna Anderson; Secretary-Treasurer, Jane Cipra; Librarian, Alice Maladry; Wardrobe Custodian, Diane Osby. Band officers are: President, Harriet Wold; Vice-president, Junior Estenson; Secretary-Treasurer, Virginia Peterson, Librarian, Ardis Ellinger; Wardrobe Custodian, Yvonne Johnson, Stage Manager, Delbert Johnson.

Mrs. Emil Knutson received a wire Tuesday advising her of the liberation of her nephew, Lloyd Larson from a Jap prison camp. He had been confined for 3 1/2 years. The message was sent by Soldier Larson from Manila. He is expected to arrive back to the United States soon.

Owatonna Photo News –

31 Years Ago

Sept. 14, 1989

TOM SHEA, PUBLISHER

The summer banquet of the Owatonna Gun Club was held Wednesday at the club. Triphies presented were as follows: High Individual Race – Dave DeMars and Jack Gillard tied for 1st; Nig Lee was 3rd; High female – Rhonda Reysack; High female handicap – Kim Bohrer; Junior Leader – Doug Haug, Dan Pirkil; Most improved were – Joe Wagner and Jan Krause; High Team – 1st, Pat's of Morristown; 2nd, Casa Zamora of Austin; 3rd, Pioneer Boys of Glenview.

Saturday, Sept. 23 is the Regional Dog Show Day at John Marshall High School, Rochester. The following from Steele County are: Kory Klecker, Joy Knipfle, Ben Rysavy, Scott Behne, Janelle Jensen all of Owatonna; Deana Ripka of Claremont; Jessy Wheeler, Scott Brown and Bruce Brown all of Medford; Tonya Kubick of Blooming Prairie.

OFFICER REUNITES: where career began FROM A1

wondering when is this car that's shooting going to come rolling by me. When is it going to be my turn? I don't say that in an excited way, either."

During the riots, Fandel had several "close calls" with commercial-grade fireworks, though he escaped without any injuries during the mayhem. "We were pelted with rocks and bottles," he said. "My hearing might be a little worse," he added.

Fandel said it was very difficult to work as a Minneapolis officer during the riots and the weeks following. "I felt abandoned by our leadership – the mayor, the city council and the top police department managers," he said, noting nearly every officer on the department felt the same way. "In the moment, we felt abandoned."

Since the riots, there has been a mass exodus of officers from the Minneapolis force. More than 150 officers have filed work-related disability claims after the Floyd killing and ensuing unrest while many others are simply jumping ship. On Fandel's shift of 24 officers, one sergeant and four officers left within a week earlier this month. He said other

"Owatonna is the community I have grown up in. This is the place I care about and want to keep safe."

Officer Brandon Fandel

Owatonna Police

er precincts in the city have fared much worse. Some officers have walked away from the profession while others like Fandel have gone to other departments.

"My fear is that people will look at it that they are all bad cops," Fandel said. But, he stressed, quite the opposite is true. "The vast majority are good cops and smart people," he said. "They are saying I don't deserve this and I'm not the enemy."

He is especially frustrated with community members who are always quick to criticize the police. "We are putting our lives at risk to help others," Fandel said. "People lose sight that we are trying to help victims. People lose sight that there is a victim on the other side who wants justice. The victim of these cases goes unnoticed and we are made out to be the bad guy."

Despite the abandonment by Minneapolis leadership as Fandel

calls it, he said many community members came up to Minneapolis officers to express their appreciation and support for the police. "That did mean a lot to us," he said.

Fandel said he began exploring the possibility of coming back to Owatonna last year, but he and his wife decided it wasn't the right time. When the opportunity came up again this year, he said, "I can't not come back. I need to be there for my family and the best way to do that is to be back home."

He and his wife have three children. Even though he is excited about coming back, Fandel says it's hard to look back with any regrets of leaving Owatonna the first time. During his stint with Minneapolis, Fandel had the opportunity to work the Super Bowl, Final Four and other major events. While there are certain things Fandel will miss about policing in Minneapolis, he is quick to point out that Owatonna is his community and this is where he belongs.

And protestors with the recent unrest in Minneapolis helped drive that point home for Fandel. "Protestors yelled that we didn't live there," he said. "You have the thought in the back of your mind:

"Why am I here? Why am I not a target for a city that I care about?" He quickly realized Minneapolis is not his community.

"It's time for me to come home," Fandel said. "Owatonna is the community I have grown up in. This is the place I care about and want to keep safe."

He enjoys the small town charm Owatonna has to offer. "It's a big enough city where it keeps you involved and interested, but it's small enough where you know everybody," he said. "This is the town I am comfortable with," he added.

Fandel is well aware of the dangers involved with law enforcement and realizes there is a chance when he goes to work he may never return home again. "I want to risk my life for something I care about. This is my community. I am okay putting my life on the line for my community," he said.

He is thankful Owatonna hired him back where he can focus on protecting and serving Owatonna residents. He will be working the overnight shift from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. once he completes a field-training program, or as he calls it a "re-acclimation period."

Fandel said his goal is to do the job the best way he knows how to. And, he says, he will be just content if he never has to be involved in a riot situation again for the rest of his career.

Once life settles down again, Fandel hopes to reengage in community activities in Owatonna.

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THE BUCKLE UP
KOHLER



CHIEF GREG SKILLESTAD

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

It was a personnel matter. That's how the Blooming Prairie City Council justified a

closed meeting session following a regular council meeting on Monday night, Sept. 14 at the City Government Center.

The Council met in regular session from 7 to 7:25 p.m. (25 minutes) and met in a closed session from 7:30 p.m. to 8:05 p.m. (35 minutes).

Prior to closing the regular meeting at 7:25, City Administrator Andrew Langholz said the public could wait in the lobby, indicating that the council would be

re-convening another regular meeting after the closed meeting.

Writers from the Owatonna Peoples Press and the Steele County Times followed the meeting gymnastics and re-entered the council room following the ending of the closed meeting.

The Times can only speculate about the subject of the personnel session.

It is likely that it pertains to an evaluation and a reprimand of Police Chief Greg Skillestad by Langholz. Chief Skillestad was in attendance at the

regular meeting and was included in the closed session with his attorney Richard Wylie, a civil rights attorney from Minneapolis.

Asked on the following morning if the closed session pertained to him, Skillestad said he could not confirm or deny whether the matter pertained to him.

When council resumed its regular meeting of Sept. 14, council member Mary Kittelson introduced a motion to uphold the performance evaluation and improvement plan and to rescind the

written reprimand. A second came from Bill Newman.

Kittelson asked what the benefit would be to keep the reprimand. Langholz said he thought the review and reprimand were just and responsible. He also said that things have gotten better since the review and reprimand.

The evaluation reportedly was very detailed. Langholz said he thought it should have been done earlier.

Kittelson's motion was voted down. Mayor Curt Esplan then introduced a motion to

uphold the review and reprimand. Council member Newman gave the second. Esplan, Newman, Tara Gimbel and Brad Clark voted for the motion. Council member Kittelson abstained.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m. Both Langholz and Mayor Esplan

confirmed that the review and reprimand concerned a Blooming Prairie police officer. Langholz and Esplan also said the decision could be appealed by the employee in question.

BP COUNCIL: may have violated open meeting FROM A1

what statute they were relying on to justify a closed session, which the Open Meeting law requires them to do, Anfinsen explained.

The council consisting of Mayor Curt Esplan and members Mary Kittelson, Bill Newman, Tara Gimbel and Brad Clark remained in the council chambers as

did City Administrator Langholz and City Attorney Jason Iacovino.

Two other individuals remained in the room: Police Chief Skillestad and attorney Richard Wylie, apparently Skillestad's attorney.

Wylie is a civil rights attorney from the Twin Cities.

Reporters from two

Steele County newspapers, The Times and the Owatonna Peoples Press, were asked to leave and told they could return when the council resumed its regular meeting.

The reporters did return to the public meeting and lacked background on the reason for a closed session.

It became clearer when council member Kittelson offered a motion to rescind an evaluation and reprimand concerning a city employee, likely Skillestad. Her motion was seconded by Bill Newman. Motion was defeated.

Mayor Esplan then made motion to uphold the evaluation and reprimand. Motion was carried by a 4-0 vote, Kittelson abstaining.

When confronted about the alleged violation, Iacovino said he did not close the meeting. In actuality, the council

closed the meeting on the advice of Langholz. He said the employee's name should have been revealed publicly before the closed session.

Iacovino referred to the Open Meeting Law, Sub. 3, stating: "A public body may close a meeting to evaluate the performance of an individual who is subject to its authority. The public body shall identify the individual to be evaluated prior to closing a meeting. At its next open meeting, the public body shall summarize its conclusions regarding the evaluation. A meeting must be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting." However, it appears that the council had already evaluated the chief in a previous meeting.

"I want to get this right and will check into it further," Iacovino told The Times.

PET TIP OF THE WEEK



What can I do with the seasonal change for itchy dogs?

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Program guidelines and applications are available at www.co.steele.mn.us.

Questions please email us at CRFApplications@co.steele.mn.us or call Steele County Administration at 507-444-7400.



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I value each one of you and ask for your vote on November 3rd.

I would love to hear from you:

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Hometown Living

STEELE COUNTY TIMES

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

A7

Gun Bingo raises over \$18K for cancer in BP

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

More than \$18,000 was earned for the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group by the Second Annual Gun Bingo fundraiser held on Friday night, Sept. 18.

This event was one of several fundraising efforts for the BP Cancer Group.

The annual BP Cancer Auction under the Big Tent was cancelled this year because of the coronavirus. BP Cancer Group volunteers didn't let the virus stop them from raising funds in a different way.

The Big Tent was brought back for Gun Bingo on Friday night and for Crazy Days for a Cure under the Big

Tent on Saturday. A luncheon to benefit the BP Cancer Group (eat-in or take out) was held at the Cue Company.

A city-wide garage sale was sponsored by the Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce. Many of the 24 garage sale locations were also open on Friday.

A Grand Opening for Pumpkins in the

Prairie was held on Saturday. The pumpkin patch featured lots of pumpkins and gourds. Kids also had the opportunity to visit the Bounce House and to enjoy the many games featured at the site.

Another benefit for the BP Cancer Group was staged by the

SEE GUN BINGO, A8



The Second Annual Gun Bingo was held under the Big Tent next to the Cue Company last Friday night. Bingo callers were Kelly LaMotte, left, and Michael Clayton.



Owatonna Police Officer Alan Callahan takes a look at one of the classic car's engines. Callahan and his fellow officers were on hand to escort the vehicles safely during the first leg of the car cruise.

In COVID times, annual car show goes mobile

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

On Saturday morning classic cars lined the side of 18th street in Owatonna before peeling off to begin their journey around the county. The event was a unique spin on the classic car show hosted annually by the Steele County Historical Society.

"We talked about the car show and spent a lot of time wondering how—in the format of a show—we would meet

the requires and guidelines for COVID-19," said Jerry Ganfield, the interim director for the Steele County History Center. "We realized it just wasn't going to work because of social distancing."

Despite the initial trepidation, Ganfield and others quickly found a way to keep the spirit of the annual car show alive. "We came up with a car cruise idea when talking to some of the committee members," Ganfield said. "Then



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

A host of classic cars lined up in Owatonna just before beginning their cruise past several care facilities in the county. The classic car parade was a social distancing inspired substitute for the annual car show held at the History Center each year.

Terry Prokopec happened to talk to the police chief in Blooming Prairie who suggested that we go by the care communities."

From there the route was determined: a 70-mile track taking the cruisers through Blooming Prairie, Ellendale, Owatonna, and Medford driving by care facilities in each community. "We thought that was a great idea, so people could stay in their cars and social distance," Ganfield said. "We think we will have a great show for the care communities."

Prokopec, who has helped to organize the car show in the past drove the lead car, a blue '67 Chevelle. "The body is the way it was, I didn't have to do anything with that, but the whole powerplant and drivetrain all had to be redone," Prokopec said of the restoration process.

"When I got it, it only had 22,000 miles on it and now it's got 37,000, but it's got a new motor,

a new transmission, new differential disc brakes all the way around, power steering, and air conditioning so it's set up really nice," he further explained.

For Prokopec, who Ganfield described as a "car nut," the restoration was part of the fun in owning a classic car. "We did a little each year, it was never that it was completely tore apart," Prokopec said. "It took a couple of years."

"We wanted to have a car show but with the rules and regulations with the virus we went this route," Prokopec said as he straddled between the line of cars before the start of the cruise. "I was expecting a bigger crowd than what we got, but what we get is what we get."

Although participation was understandably down from the annual car show, which would often see many owners drive in from around the

SEE IN COVID TIMES, A8

Council eyes 5% levy increase in BP

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Blooming Prairie residents will see a 5% increase in the tax levy, which was certified by the Blooming Prairie City Council at a regular meeting Sept. 14 at the City Center.

The 2021 proposed budget reflects LGA (Local Government Aid) as certified by the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

The property tax levy reflects a \$22,631 increase, which equates to a 2.94% tax levy increase. City Administrator Andrew Langholz proposed a 5% increase providing a cushion to allow for shortfalls that may come in the form of LGA or other areas.

"This gives us some wiggle room," he said.

Budget highlights show the operation levy increased at \$17,600 and the debt service levy increased by \$5,031.31. The net increase is \$22,631.

The General Fund budget for 2021 is proposed at \$1,557,915 compared to the budget of \$1,596,880 for 2020.

LGA increased by \$9,114. The budget figure includes a transfer to the Capital Fund by \$12,000. Majority of the increase is toward fire and police department capital outlay.

Wages have been increased to reflect the 1.5% COLA approved by the council. The administration budget has increased slightly, mostly

SEE COUNCIL EYES 5%, A18

Integrated health: Caring for the whole person



Steele Talkin
SCOTT J. WESTBROOK

Big changes are happening at South Central Human Relations Center (HRC) over the next year as HRC is working to become a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC).

CCBHCs were created by Congress in 2017 in order to provide more integrated and coordinated care for persons needing mental health and/or substance use treatment. People dealing with these

issues often have underlying physical health issues that need to be addressed in coordination with their behavioral health treatment. For decades these services have been fragmented and under-funded which has helped create the current crisis in providing truly effective mental health and substance use treatments. The CCBHC model not only provides for the necessary staffing to complete this, it also provides reimbursement for the actual costs of providing these services.

As a CCBHC, HRC will need to increase staffing in order to provide or arrange these coordinated services. At the heart of the CCBHC is integration—working

SEE INTEGRATED HEALTH, A9

OPD's K-9 Vegas to get body armor

Owatonna Police Department's K-9 Vegas will receive a bullet and stab protective vest thanks to a charitable donation from non-profit organization Vested Interest in K-9s, Inc. K-9 Vegas' vest will be embroidered with the sentiment "Honoring those who served and sacrificed." Delivery is expected within 8-10 weeks.

K-9 Vegas is a 2-year-old German Shepherd and is certified by the National Police Canine Association in both patrol work and narcotics detection. Vegas has been a member of the department since August 2019.

Vested Interest in K-9s, Inc., established in 2009, is a 501(c)(3) charity whose mission is to provide bullet and stab protective vests



K-9 Vegas with Owatonna Police will soon receive body armor. The German Shepard has been patrolling Owatonna since August 2019.

lifesaving body armor for four-legged K-9 is U.S. made, custom fitted, and NIJ certified. Since its inception, Vested

Interest in K-9s, Inc. has provided over 4,000 vests to K-9s in all 50 states at a value of \$6.9 million, made possible

by both private and corporate donations.

The program is open to U.S. dogs that are at least 20 months old, actively

employed and certified with law enforcement or related agencies. K-9s with expired vests are also eligible to participate. There are an estimated 30,000 law enforcement K-9s throughout the United States.

Vested Interest in K-9s, Inc. accepts tax-deductible contributions in any amount, while a single donation of \$960 will sponsor one vest. Each vest has a value of \$1,744-\$2,283, weighs an average of 4-5 lbs., and comes with a five-year warranty. For more information, or to learn about volunteer opportunities, please call 508-824-6978. Vested Interest in K-9s, Inc. provides information, lists events, and accepts donations at www.vik9s.org, or you may mail your contribution to P.O. Box 9, East Taunton, MA 02718.

County enters into regional mutual aid agreement

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

During its Sept. 8 meeting, the Steele County Board of Commissioners authorized the Steele County Sheriff's Office to enter into a mutual aid agreement with the Freeborn, Faribault, and Mower County Sheriff's Offices.

The intent of the agreement is to make equipment, personnel, facilities, and other resources available to a requesting party during a disaster event, fire, or

any other unforeseen circumstance that would cause the jail or Adult Detention Center to be inoperable for resident detainees.

According to the agreement, "the parties intend to work cooperatively, as needed, during emergency situations to house detainees from a requesting party in the jail or Adult Detention centers of responding parties when such an emergency need arises."

The Albert Lea Bus Company has agreed to provide transportation

for inmates from the Freeborn Adult County Detention Center to any of the other member's jail or detention center should the need arise.

As per the resolution, the mutual aid agreement between these four counties will be in force for a period of 10 years, however any of the member counties may terminate their membership within 90 days of written notice.

The main purpose of the agreement is to ensure that there is a local cooperating body of

sheriff's offices that can handle and properly coordinate the transportation and housing of inmates shall the need arise as well as the sharing of resources and manpower in case of emergencies.

After reviewing the specifics of the agreement during a work session, the commissioners unanimously approved the agreement, which will see the Steele County Sheriff's Office partner with the Freeborn, Faribault, and Mower County Sheriff's Offices.

Political signs not permitted on highway rights of way

The Minnesota Department of Transportation reminds everyone that the placement of campaign and other advertising signage on any highway rights of way is not allowed under state law. All state, county, city and township roads and highways fall under the same state law.

As political campaigns increase their efforts toward the Nov. 3 election, it's important to know and follow the state laws regarding placement of signs off of state property and only on land where there landowner has agreed to its placement.

Highway rights of way include driving lanes, inside and outside shoulders, ditches and sight corners at intersections.

Also, landowner consent is needed before signs are placed on private property outside of the right of way.

MnDOT is required to remove unlawfully placed signs and impound them at a local maintenance truck station.

Violation of the law (Minn. Stat. 160.27) is a misdemeanor. Civil penalties also may apply if the placement of signage contributes to

a motor vehicle crash and injures a person or damages a motor vehicle that runs off the road.

The Minnesota Outdoor Advertising Control Act (Minn. Stat. 173.15) also prohibits placing advertising materials on public utility poles, trees and shrubs, and painting or drawing on rocks or natural features.

When improperly placed signs are removed by MnDOT, every effort is made to temporarily store the sign and notify the owner where the signs can be retrieved.

For information about the proper placement of campaign signs or where to retrieve signs, contact the local MnDOT office at 507-296-7500. See also mndot.gov/gov-rel/rw_signs.html.

When placing signs, the best way to avoid an emergency or unintentionally striking an underground facility is to call 811 before digging, according to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. Go to the Gopher State One Call website and request that underground utilities be marked near the area of the digging.

GUN BINGO: raises over \$18K for cancer in BP

FROM A7

Blooming Prairie Remote Control Track.

Thirty-six racers were registered for the day's races. All proceeds were directed to the BP Cancer Group. Track manager Nate Schumacher said \$3,227 was raised, exceeding the track's goal of \$2,000.

"We needed that wonderful weekend," remarked Connie Trom, volunteer for the BP Cancer Group. She chaired the event and reported funds raised in excess of \$18,000.

Ten Bingo games were played with a gun being the prize for each Bingo winner. Four guns were also raffled. Trom said the 14 lucky winners represented seven women and seven men.

Sponsors of the four raffles were: Raffle No. 1, in memory of Phillip Milton; Raffle No. 2, in celebration of Robin Akkerman; Raffle No. 3, to honor the Blooming Prairie community members who are fighting cancer and Raffle No. 4, in memory of Darrel Trom.

The 10 Bingo games were sponsored by the following: Game No. 1, in memory of Marlene Symes; Game No. 2, in memory of Elaine Klemmensen; Game No. 3, to honor citizens of Claremont fighting cancer; Game No. 4, in memory of Casey Bernholtz and in celebration of her daughter Jill Baker; Game No. 5, survivor Gail Anderson; Game No.

6, in honor of Carole Toquam; Game No. 7, in memory of Wayne Akkerman; Game No. 8, in honor of Dodge Center community members stricken by cancer; Game No. 9, in celebration of Sharon Pirk's battle over cancer and Game No. 10, in celebration of Bebo Getchell's journey with cancer.

Seventy-five door prizes were secured by Denise Krell and Donnell and Brian Johnson. They were given in memory of Dylan Johnson.

"My heart just swelled because of all the support we received for this just cause," said Trom. "It was chaotic at times but thanks to some great volunteers, we were able to succeed with another money maker," she added.

Trom had about 12 volunteers working with her on Gun Bingo. Trom thanked all of her volunteers, donors of prizes and the gun sponsors.

She also thanked Craig and Robyn Kruckeberg for sponsoring the Big Tent. "We wouldn't have been able to have had the event, had it not been for the generous donation by the Kruckeberts," said Trom.

When not organizing the Gun Bingo event, Trom was promoting mum sales for the BP Cancer Group. Working with James Johnson, Trom said 510 mums were sold.

IN COVID TIMES: annual car show goes mobile

FROM A7

region, there was still a good showing of classic cars ready to make their way through the county.

"The care facilities were very excited to have us cruise past, they were excited especially because the residents enjoy these types of things and they love to see all the different color vehicles," Mary Anne Higgins, event coordinator with the History Center said.

"They were excited that we had included them."

The fee for drivers was \$10 at registration, with all the profits going to benefit the restoration of Gus' Station, a historic building situated in the Village of Yesteryear. The event was sponsored by Steve's Meat Market, Lerberg Food, Fitness, and Carwash of Ellendale, and Curt's Truck and Diesel, Inc. of Owatonna.

FCHM staff and volunteers participate in Autism Friendly Austin training

The Freeborn County Historical Museum, Library and Village (FCHM) staff and volunteers participated in training through the Autism Friendly Austin (AFA) Project on Sept. 17.

Mary Barinka, community autism resource specialist, Hormel Historic Home provide the training at the Historical Museum. Once the training was completed, FCHM was provided a certificate acknowledging participation, as well as a variety of items to be used by guests with sensory processing disorders.

The AFA Project

began as a way to encourage current Autism Service providers, retailers and businesses to work together to better serve the autism community. AFA's vision is to make the community and the surrounding area autism friendly, sensory sensitive and family welcoming. AFA promotes and understanding of and provides support for inclusion and acceptance for Autism and Special Needs through engaging, training and educating the entire community. FCHM is currently seeking funding for sensory support backpacks. The sensory support

backpacks would be able to be checked out when families or school groups arrive at the Museum. The parent/teacher or child/student would carry this with them while they tour. It allows someone with a sensory processing disorder to utilize tools that can assist with being overstimulated in a group setting. With the rise in Autism Spectrum Disorder, FCHM staff sees more kids come through that would benefit from having this available. In addition to the items needed to purchase, FCHM will also include visual aids

such as a Museum map and a social story on the Museum and Village relating to the artifacts and buildings.

The Freeborn County Historical Museum, Library and Village is a non-profit educational and cultural institution established in 1948, committed to building the future by preserving the past. FCHM collects preserves and tells the story of Freeborn County's past through museum exhibits, research, collections, tours, and educational programs. FCHM is located at 1031 Bridge Ave., Albert Lea, and can be reached at 507-373-8003.

ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS
By Shannon Nordstrom and Russ Evans

Dear Motor Medics, I drive a 2006 Ford F150 Super Crew truck with 140k miles on it. The truck has worked very well and until this year I have not replaced anything other than brakes. This last 12 months have not been so uneventful. I started out with a check engine light and ended up spending almost \$1400 in repairs which included 2 oxygen sensors and all 8 ignition coils and spark plugs. The next repair was a driver's side catalytic converter and then last month a passenger side converter which they noticed had a rattle while they were replacing my transmission. I thought I was done with repairs until I started getting a rattle when I come to a stop which was diagnosed as a cam phaser failure. Because of the miles they say I should replace the entire engine with a rebuild one instead of just replacing the phasers. What are your thoughts?

Luke in Albion Nebraska
That is a fair number of miles for one of these trucks depending on how it has been used and maintained. Coils are a common failure and if not addressed right away can lead to failed converters and oxygen sensors. As for the transmission it sounds like bad luck. On the cam phaser side, it is rarely just a phaser. In our shop we often see a drop in oil pressure internally at the phaser due to wear which requires engine replacement not just phaser repair.

Take care, The Motor Medics

Dear Motor Medics, I drive a 2002 Volkswagen Beetle and I am having electrical issues. I love the car, or rather my kid does who has used it for four years of high school and now three years of college. The car keeps blowing the passenger side turn signal fuse. The drivers side works fine but when I use the hazard lights or passenger side signal it blows almost every time. The thing we sometimes see just on the passenger side signal. We have only seen it twice in ten years so it's not a glaring issue but in your case it is possible. So, the mirrors have signal lights in them. If the light in the mirror becomes shorted, it could blow the fuse. The only way to know for sure is to remove the door panel and disconnect the mirror and see if the fuse blowing stops. As for passengers in the car, if the door is opened often it may cause the mirror to short more.

Billy in Leroy Minnesota
These cars are not known for many common turn signal issues but there is one thing we sometimes see just on the passenger side signal. We have only seen it twice in ten years so it's not a glaring issue but in your case it is possible. So, the mirrors have signal lights in them. If the light in the mirror becomes shorted, it could blow the fuse. The only way to know for sure is to remove the door panel and disconnect the mirror and see if the fuse blowing stops. As for passengers in the car, if the door is opened often it may cause the mirror to short more.

Take care, The Motor Medics

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BLOOMING PRAIRIE

SEPT. 29

10:30 a.m. — Storytime Online, Facebook Live

ELLENDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

SEPT. 25

10 a.m. — SEMCAC,
Community Building

Community Building

SEPT. 30

10 a.m. — SEMCAC,
Community Building

Community Building

SEPT. 28

10 a.m. — SEMCAC,

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

SEPT. 26

7 a.m. — Farmers
Market, Central Park

5:30 p.m. —

Owatonna City
Council Study
Session, City Admin
Building

SEPT. 28

4 p.m. — Owatonna
HRA Meeting, City
Admin Building

SEPT. 30

7 p.m. — Medford
City Council Meeting,
City Admin BuildingNoon — Big
Brothers Big Sisters
Virtual Information
Session

SEPT. 29

9:30 a.m. — Garden
Time, Owatonna
Library

OCT. 1

10:30 a.m. —
Storytime Online with
Daria, Facebook Live

Daria, Facebook Live

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

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

Alzheimer's Walk



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Dozens of teams took place in the annual Alzheimer's Walk in Owatonna Sept. 13 to raise money for research. These walkers were captured in action by Central Park.

Public Health sets flu shot clinics around county

Steele County Public Health is sponsoring drive thru flu shot clinics throughout the county in October.

The first clinic will be at Steele County Public Health offices at 635 Florence Ave. in Owatonna.

The clinic will move to Blooming Prairie on Friday, Oct. 9 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Heather Haus Assisted Living, 223 4th St. NW.

The final clinic will be Monday, Oct. 12 from 12 to 2 p.m. at Medford Funeral

Home, 310 Central Ave. E.

Public Health Director Amy Caron reminds everyone that they must remain in their vehicle at all times for the clinics. Social and physical distancing and face coverings are required. Caron also noted short sleeve shirts are necessary for vaccine administration.

The Minnesota Department of Health recommends the use of all flu vaccine types.

There is no recommendation to use one product over another.

Anyone with questions is asked to call Public Health at 507-444-7650 or go to www.co.steele.mn.us.

History Society sets next lunchbox series

The Mower County Historical Society is making plans for its next "2020 Lunchbox History Series," which will take place at 12 p.m. on Sept. 24 at the Historical Society in Austin.

The topic this month is: "Mower County COVID-19 History Project." This will be an outdoor event on the lawn and porch near the Administration Building. Social distancing guidelines will be enforced.

This is a FREE Event and the program will start promptly at 12 noon.

Randal J. Forster, MCHS executive director and Holly Johnson, executive director of the Hormel Historic Home will be discussing a new history project focusing on the global pandemic that the two organizations are launching jointly.

The Mower County Historical Society is excited to be working on this project with the Hormel Historic Home to document

community members' experiences living through a global pandemic. It is important to capture history as it is happening, so we look forward to collecting stories from the entire community and different segments of society.

We ask that everyone please wear a mask while gathering and encourage you to bring a lawn chair. Those attending may still bring their own lunch, however tables will be limited. This will be an ongoing project, so if you are unable to attend you can still get involved by contacting either organization.

You can support the Mower County Historical Society by becoming a member.

We also accept financial & in-kind donations year round to fund various projects. Please contact us at info@mower-countyhistory.org or call the office during regular business hours Tuesday-Friday between 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

AMVET Post 23 to meet

The next AMVET Post 23 meeting is set for Monday, Sept. 29. The meeting will

take place at 7 p.m. at the VFW Club, 135 Oakdale St., Owatonna.

Breakfast on Sept. 27 to benefit BP Veterans Memorial

Mark Sunday, Sept. 27 on your calendars as a day to forget your diet and a day to enjoy a tasty breakfast at the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club.

The event is a benefit for the BP Veterans Memorial located just east of the BP Servicemen's Club.

The breakfast runs from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. It will be held in the Liberty Room. A free will offering is asked.

Takeout or eat-in are both available.

The menu will in-

clude pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, orange juice, milk, water and coffee.

Wear a mask when attending and keep a social distance. Servers will wear masks and gloves.

All proceeds go to the BP Veterans Memorial.

Tickets are also available \$5 each with the grand prize being a 90 by 105 inch quilt pieced by Marilyn Meshke and quilted by Bev Wack. You need not to be present to win.

State offers 55+ driver discount program

The Minnesota Highway Safety Center will be offering 55+ Driver Discount courses in October.

There will be two 4-hour refresher courses on Oct. 6 from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. and Oct. 15 from 1 to 5 p.m. Both will be distance learning through Zoom.

The center will also be offering the 8-hour first time course on Oct. 19 and 20 from 5 to 9 p.m. This course will also be on Zoom.

Those interested can register for the courses at www.mnsafetycenter.org. The courses are also available online at

the same web address.

The class will save drivers up to 10% on their auto insurance.

Completion of the 8-hour course qualifies for the discount. To maintain the discount, drivers must complete a 4-hour refresher every three years.

A certified instructor will update you on defensive driving tips, changes in laws, vehicle technology and traffic safety.

The cost of the refresher course is \$22 and the first time course is \$26.

Anyone with questions can call 888-234-1294.

Cat's Cradle coming to LTO

The Little Theatre of Owatonna is showcasing Cat's Cradle in October.

Show performances will be Oct. 9-11 and 16-18. There are shows nightly at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m.

The box office hours will be Sept. 26-Oct. 18, Monday through Wednesday from

5-6:30 p.m., Thursday through Saturday, 5:30-7:30 p.m. and Sunday 12:30-2 p.m. Tickets may be purchased online at www.LittleTheatreofOwatonna.org.

Cat's Cradle is being directed by Jon Ter-

rill with co-technical directors Mary Butler-Fraser and Gaylene Steckleberg.

INTEGRATED HEALTH: FROM A7

with a person's treatment providers to treat the whole person. Care Coordinators work with the person to ensure they are accessing the services needed and help coordinate all their physical, mental, and chemical health needs.

In order to accommodate this increase in employees, HRC is beginning construction on a new building to be built on the land directly to the west of our current building on Florence Avenue in Owatonna. Site work and construction is scheduled to begin on or before October first with local contractor, Mohs Construction, being chosen for this project. This new building will house most of our community-based programs, with some new office designs to accommodate this mobile workforce.

CCBHCs around the country have shown to dramatically increase access to mental health and addiction treatment. They provide the

capacity to address the opioid crisis and establish innovative partnerships with community providers, social service providers and law enforcement. They have also shown to improve care, reduce criminal re-offenses, and prevent hospital readmissions.

All of us at South Central Human Relations Center look forward to the opportunities this presents for better service to our communities. Please watch for future articles about our progress and additional information about CCBHCs.

Scott J. Westbrook, MSW, is a licensed independent clinical social worker, and the CCBHC implementation project manager of the South Central Human Relations Center in Owatonna. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.

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46	47	50
49	49	54

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Blossom boys win 3-team meet

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

The fall of the year is a perfect time to go for a run.

If you are a member of a high school cross country team, it definitely is a perfect time to go for a run.

Blooming Prairie's Hosea Baker led the Awesome Blossoms contingent with a third place finish that helped the Blossoms with a three-team meet with Pacelli and USC at the Blooming Prairie Country Club on Sept. 15.

Baker's time, his career best, over the 3.1-mile course was 19:11.6. He finished behind Jayden Lewis of Pacelli who ran the course in 18:28.5 and behind Micah Hansen of USC who motored the course in 18:57.7.

Other BP boys finishers were: Jesse Cardenas, fifth in 20:14.4; Alex Miller, sixth in 20:22.8; Luke Larkoski, eighth in 20:27.6; Tyler Forystek, ninth in 20:30.4; Sytan Johnson, 10th in 20:49.3; Ethan Grant, 16th in 22:17.0; Roone Carlson, 17th in 22:23.9; Stephen Fennell, 19th

in 22:37.8; Joe Pirkel, 21st in 22:48; Mitchell Flebiger, 24th in 25:35.4; Sam Michaud, 26th in 28:48; Alex Riley, 27th in 30:02.7 and Tommy Donnelly, 28th in 37:00.3.

"Our runners 2-6 really ran well as a pack and finished only 35 seconds apart," said BP coach John Bruns.

"Those 5 guys (Jesse Cardenas, Alex Miller, Luke Larkoski, Tyler Forystek, and Dylan Johnson) did a great job taking turns leading the group and pushing each other," he added.

Bobbie Bruns, a junior, led the way for the Blossom girls with a season best time and a third place finish. She ran the course in 25:35.2. She followed Kirsten Koopal of Pacelli, first in 21:15.8 and Lauren Mutschler, second in 23:14.2.

Other Blossom finishers were: Megan Oswald, sixth in 25:11.8; Emily Miller, ninth in 25:35.2; Chloe McCarthy, 12th in 25:53.3; Maggie Bruns, 13th in 26:09.9; Abby Smith, 17th in 27:07.3; Asha Lighthizer, 20th in 27:51.8; Haven Carlson, 21st in 28:14.6; Ashleigh Alwes, 22nd in 29:23.9; Rose Michaud, 23rd in 30:49.0; Lauren Schamuel, 27th in 31:59.1; Anna Pauly, 28th in 32:21.7 and Melanie Winzenburg, 29th in 32:21.8.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Blooming Prairie High School senior Megan Oswald turns on the speed in passing a USC runner during a triangular meet at the Blooming Prairie Country Club on Tuesday, Sept. 15.

Oswald ran their best times of the year. McCarthy and Maggie Bruns each ran "fantastic" final miles to pass USC's fourth and fifth runners to move the team ahead into second place behind Pacelli.

Pacelli won the girls meet with a score of 30. BP was next at 43 and USC was third at 47.

In the junior high girls meet, Lila Quail of BP was first in 14:11.3. Other BP junior high girls finishes were: Rachel Winzenburg, fifth in 19:33.3; Anna Haberman, seventh in 20:07.9; Shanna Halverson, ninth in 20:35.8; Lily Schammel, 10th in 20:36.4 and Olivia Gonzales, 12th in 22:10.4.

Blooming Prairie junior high boys had the top four finishers: Jacob



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Nora Anderson, 7, is one of the more vocal cheerleaders for the Blooming Prairie High School girls cross country team. The varsity girls placed second to Pacelli in a triangular meet Tuesday, Sept. 15.

Pauly, first in 13:39.8; Jaxon Harberts, second in 13:48.4; Jack Bruns, third in 14:52.8 and Tyler Anderson, fourth in 16:27.4. Ben Riley was eighth in 18:41.9.

The cross country kids are in action again

on Monday, Sept. 28 at the Prairie Ridge Golf Course against RAACHE (Rochester Area Association of Christian Home Educators) and Waterville-Elysian-Morris-town.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Junior high cross country runner Jaxon Harberts of Blooming Prairie finished second in a race last Tuesday at the Blooming Prairie Country Club in 13:48.4.

West Concord racer claims Spirit of 83

BY MATTHEW GRAGE
RACING CORRESPONDENT

The Marquee event on the Chateau Speedway schedule, "The Spirit of 83" Memorial normally runs Memorial Day Weekend.

However the event this year, in memory of four-time track champion Mike Guttormson, was pushed back with the season not getting underway until July.

The annual event which honors Mike and the Spirit and Love for racing he had, especially at Chateau Speedway where he passed away shortly after winning his final feature race on

May 30, 1997, is always a popular event. A nice field of cars was on hand for the night's six class special with the big \$2,500 paycheck awaiting the winner of the "Mike Guttormson Memorial USRA A Mod Feature."

T.J. Wasmund of Pine Island grabbed the early lead in the French's Repair USRA A Mod Event for the Memorial Race with Ryan Wetzstein of West Concord dropping in line second. Wasmund led for the first half of the 35 lap race before mechanical issues ended his night. Wetzstein took over the lead spot and withstood the challenges of Jacob Bleess

of Chatfield the rest of the way to grab his first "Guttormson Memorial" Crystal Trophy and his second feature win of the year. Jason Cummins came up from row four to finish third right behind the top two. Heat winners on the night were Bleess. Joel Alberts of Mantorville and Wasmund.

In USRA B Mod action, Taylor Ausrud of Hayfield started on the pole and led flag to flag for his first feature win of the season at Chateau. This year's track champion Noah Grinstead of Austin chased him home in second followed by Jared Boumeester of

Waseca, and Ty Griffith of Webster City, Iowa. Griffith, Jim Chisholm of Osage, Iowa and Matt Brooks of Austin shared in the heat wins.

Action Builders WISSOTA Midwest Modified had one of the best features of the night. Pat McCarthy of Bloomington led more than half of the race before Dan Wheeler of Savage made a sweep around the outside of him in turn four to take over the top spot.

Zach Elward of Hayfield took top honors in the Adams Graphix WISSOTA Street Stock main event. Jim Williams of DeCraff came home in second.

Michael Roth of Deerwood, making his second appearance of the season at the track, took home a pair of wins in the Power 96 WISSOTA Pure Stock Class. After winning his heat Roth came from outside row two and worked his way to the point on lap six slipping past Brady Krohnberg of Walters.

Kruekeberg Services WISSOTA Hornets saw Andy Knutson of Rochester pick up his first feature win of the season. Heat winner Matt Wieman of Owatonna led much of the feature before issues had him slowing down on the track and seeing cars

slip by one by one. Justin Schelitzche of Cologne came home in second just ahead of Zach Korpi of Owatonna. Bo Noble of Faribault had the classes other heat win.

Chateau Speedway will host its "3rd Annual Autumn Extravaganza" Oct. 2-3 to wrap up the 2020 Season. The Track will actually host one other event, which will be an Enduro on Oct. 10. That event will be put on by SMP Promotions and will be the "Terry Eischens Memorial Enduro" which will feature 2 races, a Full Size and a Compact Enduro.

SEE WEST CONCORD, A11



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Even though COVID-19 has shuttered most of the fall sports season, athletes are still getting a workout. Top: Brady Kittelson hands off to Cole Wangen. Assistant coach Matt Kittelson was drilling these two football prospects on the importance of a strong handoff. Right: Blooming Prairie Coach Chad Gimbel works with junior high football prospects on the fine art of a proper stance. Practice started Sept. 14 and will continue for three weeks.



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WEST CONCORD: racer claims Spirit of 83

FROM A10

Feature	#	Competitor	Finish
1	90	Ryan Wetzstein	West Concord
2	21	Jacob Blees	Chattfield
3	71	Jason Cummins	New Richland
4	50	Brandon Davis	Hayfield
5	24W	Brad Waits	Rochester
6	0	Mark Gartner	Mapleton
7	77	Jacob Stark	Austin
8	211	Jesse Ely	Webster City, Iowa
9	33	Joe Ludemann	Grand Meadow
10	20H	Joe Horgdai	Kasson
11	14M	Brian Mahlstedt	Ionia, Iowa
12	31	Bill Stettner	Inver Grove Heights
13 DNF	99	Josh Angst	Winona
14 DNF	74	Mark Noble	Bloomington
15 DNF	23	Darwyn Karau	Kasson
16 DNF	4A	Joel Alberts	Mantorville
17 DNF	51W	JT Wassmund	Pine Island
18 DNF	13	Ryan Konkel	Winona
19 DNF	98M	Michel Madery	Kasson
20 DNF	72	Doug Hillson	Bloomington
DNS	65D	Dustin Brown	Thornton, Iowa
DNS	71J	Greg Jensen	Albert Lea

HEAT 1	#	Competitor	Finish
1	21	Jacob Blees	Chattfield
2	71	Jason Cummins	New Richland
3	90	Ryan Wetzstein	West Concord
4	65D	Dustin Brown	Thornton, Iowa
5	211	Jesse Ely	Webster City, Iowa
6	13	Ryan Konkel	Winona
7 DNF	2H	Joe Horgdai	Kasson
8 DNF	71J	Greg Jensen	Albert Lea

HEAT 2	#	Competitor	Finish
1	4A	Joel Alberts	Mantorville
2	50	Brandon Davis	Hayfield
3	24W	Brad Waits	Rochester
4	74	Mark Noble	Bloomington
5	0	Mark Gartner	Mapleton
7	14M	Brian Mahlstedt	Ionia, Iowa

HEAT 3	#	Competitor	Finish
1	51W	JT Wassmund	Pine Island
2	99	Josh Angst	Winona
3	98M	Michel Madery	Kasson
4	77	Jacob Stark	Austin
5	33	Joe Ludemann	Grand Meadow
6	72	Doug Hillson	Bloomington
7	31	Bill Stettner	Inver Grove Heights

Feature	#	Competitor	Finish
1	5A	Taylor Aasrud	Hayfield
2	99	Noah Grinstead	Austin
3	81	Jared Boumeester	Waseca
4	56	Ty Griffith	Webster City, Iowa
5	55H	AJ Huff	Mantorville
6	24C	Jim Chisholm	Osgo, Iowa
7	107	Trevor Fecht	Allison, Iowa
8	44	Matthew Brooks	Austin
9	33S	Dustin Steinbrink	Austin
10	7W	Drew Williams	Rochester
11	56H	Brandon Hare	Elma, Iowa
12	40	Larry Scott	Northfield
13	45	Cole Longergan	Dexter
14	81K	Caleb Korpi	Claremont
15 DNF	99B	Bill Engler	Hixton, Wis.
16 DNF	55	Brody Shaw	Brownsdale
17 DNF	48	Gavin Shaw	Brownsdale
18 DNF	15	Zach Elward	Hayfield
19 DNF	54	Jett Sorensen	Rochester

HEAT 1	#	Competitor	Finish
1	56	Ty Griffith	Webster City, Iowa
2	55H	AJ Huff	Mantorville

Feature	#	Competitor	Finish
1	10T	Trevor Fecht	Allison, Iowa
2	5A	Taylor Aasrud	Hayfield
3	56T	Brandon Hare	Elma, Iowa
4	48	Gavin Shaw	Brownsdale
5	70	Larry Scott	Northfield

HEAT 2	#	Competitor	Finish
1	24C	Jim Chisholm	Osgo, Iowa
2	99	Noah Grinstead	Austin
3	81	Jared Boumeester	Austin
4	7W	Drew Williams	Rochester
5	81K	Caleb Korpi	Claremont
6	99B	Bill Engler	Hixton, Wis.

HEAT 3	#	Competitor	Finish
1	44	Matthew Brooks	Austin
2	33S	Dustin Steinbrink	Austin
3	55	Brody Shaw	Brownsdale
4	45	Cole Longergan	Dexter
5 DNF	15	Zach Elward	Hayfield
6 DNF	54	Jett Sorensen	Rochester

Feature	#	Competitor	Finish
1	RED1	Dan Wheeler	Savage
2	17	Trevor Underdahl	Northfield
3	79	Jeremy Misgen	New Richland
4	5G	Patrick McCarthy	Bloomington
5	612	Ryan Goergen	Stacyville, Iowa
6	98D	Christopher Deno	Kasson
7	1M	Josh Mattick	Hayfield
8	44Z	Anton Nelson	Wanamingo
9	79H	Luke Hainka	Wanamingo
10	14	Tyron Friese	Zumbrota
11	28	David Gustafson	Pine Island
12	33	Darryl Hainka	Wanamingo
13 DNF	4	Brayten Cisneros	Bloomington

HEAT 1	#	Competitor	Finish
1	5G	Patrick McCarthy	Bloomington
2	612	Ryan Goergen	Stacyville, Iowa
3	98D	Christopher Deno	Kasson
4	14	Tyron Friese	Zumbrota
5	28	David Gustafson	Pine Island
6	33	Darryl Hainka	Wanamingo
7 DNF	1M	Josh Mattick	Rose Creek

Feature	#	Competitor	Finish
1	31	Raey Hastings IV	Austin

HEAT 1	#	Competitor	Finish
1	21	Jesse Stahl	Austin
2	46	Stacy Krohnberg	Walters
3	38J	Dan Klingfus	Austin
4	4	Chris Hotovec	Dodge Center
5	43	Tony Shaner	Owatonna
6	KOL34	Kolton Brauer	Eyota

HEAT 2	#	Competitor	Finish
1	34JR	Bradley Brauer	Eyota
2	22W	Jim Williams	DeGraff
3	15	Zach Elward	Hayfield
4 DNF	147	Brent Holland	Glenville
DQ	36K	Kevin Vogt	Rose Creek

Feature	#	Competitor	Finish
1	59	Andy Knutson	Rochester
2	14	Justin Schellische	Cologne
3	20K	Zach Korpi	Owatonna
4	36M	Matt Wieman	Owatonna
5	88	Matt Tighe	Austin
6	511	Shawn Poston	Red Wing
7	15	Bo Noble	Faribault
8	6	Timothy Barnett	Owatonna
9	29	Tommie Tesch	Waseca
10	51LR	Maison Poston	Red Wing
11 DNF	3X	Brandon Blanchard	Chester, Iowa
12 DNF	103	Carter Magdanz	Faribault
DNS	17	Bryce Lasowski	Faribault
DNS	21S	Brian Schott	Maazopa
DNS	19H	Robert Schmidt	Owatonna

HEAT 1	#	Competitor	Finish
1	15	Bo Noble	Faribault
2	88	Matt Tighe	Austin
3	16K	Carter Magdanz	Faribault
4	6	Timothy Barnett	Owatonna
5	511	Shawn Poston	Red Wing
6	19H	Robert Schmidt	Owatonna
7 DNF	3X	Brandon Blanchard	Chester, Iowa
8 DNF	17	Bryce Lasowski	Faribault

CONTINGENCY AWARDS:

KS Engineering: \$250 to Top KS Engineering Powered USRA A Mod - 90 Ryan Wetzstein
KS Engineering: \$830 Certificate for Refresh or Build to Top Non KS Engineered Car USRA A Mod - 21 Jacob Blees
KS Engineering: \$100 to Top KS Engineering Powered USRA B Mod - 99 Noah Grinstead
KS Engineering: \$500 Certificate for Refresh or Build to Top Non KS Engineering Car USRA B Mod - 3A Taylor Aasrud
KS Engineering: \$100 to Top KS Engineering Power WISSOTA Midwest Mod - 79 Jeremy Misgen
KS Engineering: \$500 Certificate for Refresh or Build to Top Non KS Engineering Car WISSOTA MW Mod - Red1 - Dan Wheeler
Craig Bentzin: \$100 Each 8th and 3rd Place Finishers WISSOTA Midwest Mod - 44Z Anton Nelson (8th) - 79 Jeremy Misgen (3rd)
Craig Bentzin: \$100 Each 8th and 3rd Place Finishers USRA B Mod - 44 Matt Brooks (8th) - 81 Jared Boumeester (3rd)
Schaefer Racing Oil: Case of Oil - 3rd Place Hornets - 20K Zach Korpi
Schaefer Racing Oil: Case of Oil - 9th Place Pure Stock - 33 Jim Briggs
Schaefer Racing Oil: Case of Oil - 10th Place Street Stock - 147 Brent Holland
Schaefer Racing Oil: Case of Oil - 7th Place Midwest Mod - 1m Josh Mattick
Schaefer Racing Oil: Case of Oil - 8th Place B Mod - 44 Matt Brooks
Schaefer Racing Oil: Case of Oil - 2nd Place A Mod - 21 Jacob Blees
Joe Vogt Custom Pumping: Hard Charger Pure Stock - 31 Raey Hastings IV
Joe Vogt Custom Pumping: Hard Charger Street Stock - 15 Zach Elward - 34JR Braeden Brauer
French's Repair: \$100 Hard Charger USRA A Mod - 00 Mark Gartner
Todd Narveson: \$300 Hard Charger USRA A Mod (From Sale of Print) - 00 Mark Gartner
Dan Klingfus - Moline Sports - Hard Charger Trophy - 00 Mark Gartner



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Patricia Decker, 85, Bloomington Prairie

Patricia "Pat" J. Decker, age 85 of Bloomington Prairie, passed away Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2020 at Prairie Manor Care Center in Bloomington Prairie, surrounded by her loved ones.

Patricia Janell Kading was born July 24, 1935 in Owatonna, to Clarence and Jeanette (Kahnke) Kading. She attended Bloomington Prairie High School. On March 17, 1958, Patricia married Ferris "Chip" Decker at the minister, Rev. Weeks home in Hayfield. Together they raised five children: Mitchell, Mark, Diane, Todd and Allison.

In addition to being a stay at home mom, Pat worked for a few years as a phone operator and also as a secretary for the Steele County Times. She was a volunteer for the V.F.W. Auxiliary and in her earlier years was a member of St. Columbanus Catholic Church in Bloomington Prairie.

Pat had an outgoing and friendly personality and loved all things girly. In her free time, she enjoyed going shopping and gardening. She loved going on dates with Chip and they had a wide circle of friends with whom they enjoyed dinner dates and dancing. Pat will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Survivors include her children, Mitchell (Julie) Klempf of Dodge Center, Mark Decker of Waltham, Diane (Dan) Bergstrom of Austin, Todd (Tiffany) Decker of Waltham, Allison (Ben) Bergstrom of Dexter; 13 grandchildren and eight great grandchildren with three on the way; sister, Barbara Wesely of Owatonna; and a niece and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Clarence and Jeanette Kading; and her husband, Ferris "Chip" Decker.

A private family service will be held at Worleim Blooming Prairie Funeral Home Chapel in Bloomington Prairie. Interment will be in Waltham Cemetery, rural Waltham. Worleim Funeral Home of Bloomington Prairie is assisting the family with arrangements. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worleim.com.

Russell James, 82, Geneva

Russell "Russ" Allen James, 82, passed away peacefully on Sept. 18, 2020 at the Homestead Hospice House, after a battle with cancer.

Russ was born to LeRoy and Henrietta James on Nov. 1, 1937. Growing up, Russ enjoyed his time hunting with his father in South Dakota. Russ joined the Navy in 1954 where he served on the USS Bennington. In his four years of service, he traveled around the world to Japan, Australia, Alaska, and Hawaii.

When returning from the Navy, he wed and had three children, Doug (Annette) James of Granville, Iowa, Greg (Vicki) James of Le Mars, Iowa, and Sharon (Jeff) Bailey of Cleveland, Minn.

Russ spent many years serving as a police officer in Merrill, Iowa. Later on he enjoyed working for Kmart in Sioux City and Dundas, Iowa and Faribault. Russ retired soon after his move to Faribault in 1989 and spent the rest of his years socializing with family and friends, collecting, and serving as the unofficial neighborhood watch - always finding ways to continue helping others in his community.

Russ is survived by sister Judy (DJ) Smut-ter of Kingsley, Iowa, daughter Sharon (Jeff) Bailey, daughter-in-law Vicki James. Grandchildren, Danny (Megan) James of Sioux Falls, Amanda (Andy) Rust of Rock Rapids, Iowa, Reese Hageman of Marcus, Iowa, Shelby (Ryan) Noble of Bloomington Prairie, Courtney (Tyler) Bailey of Maple Grove, Jolene Aduddell of Le Mars, Iowa, Joelle Aduddell of Le Mars, Iowa, Justin Aduddell of Le Mars, Iowa, Jesse Aduddell of Le Mars, Iowa, Alisha James of Granville, Iowa, Adam James of Granville, Iowa, Great grandchildren, Willow and Trenton Hageman (Reese), Cael, Beckett, Luna Rust (Amanda), Declan James (Danny), Bailey Noble (Shelby).

Russ is preceded into death by parents, Leroy and Henrietta. Siblings Laura, Norma, Ruth, and Ernie. Sons, Doug, and Greg James.

Military Service to be held on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020 at the Bloomington Prairie Servicemen's Club at 10 a.m.

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Lorraine Brown, 85, Bloomington Prairie

Lorraine A. Brown, age 85 of Bloomington Prairie, passed away Thursday, Sept. 10, 2020 at Prairie Manor Care Center in Bloomington Prairie.

Lorraine Alice Klemmensen was born Feb. 10, 1935, to Carl and Marie (Koekenberg) Klemmensen at home in Steele County. She attended District 85 and graduated from Bloomington Prairie High School in 1952. She then went on to attend Austin Community College.

On Oct. 15, 1952, Lorraine was united in marriage to Donald Brown. Their marriage was blessed with four children. Lorraine was a working mom while earning her LPN license in 1971. She worked in multiple medical facilities throughout the years, including Owatonna Hospital, St. Olaf Hospital, St. Mark's Nursing Home, and Prairie Manor Care Center. In 1978, she obtained her RN license and worked until her retirement in 2011.

Lorraine loved music. As a 90-pound kid, she played the tuba in the Bloomington Prairie High School band. Lorraine also played piano and made sure all her children took music lessons. Lorraine's other passions in life included camping and flower gardening. She was a member of the First Lutheran Church in Bloomington Prairie and in her younger years she belonged to Merry Lane 4-H Club, which she enjoyed very much. Lorraine will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Survivors include her children, Ray (Dell) Brown of Hollandale, Rodney Brown of Bloomington Prairie, Douglas Brown of Albert Lea, Jeanne (Greg) White of Cambridge, seven grandchildren, Wade, Stacy, Marcy, Renee, Chris, Michaela, Andrew, seven great grandchildren; siblings, Harry (Jan) Klemmensen, Dwain (Nancy) Klemmensen, Mavis Klemmensen; sister-in-law, Gert Een.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Carl and Marie Klemmensen; husband, Donald Brown in 2011; brother, Carl Francis Klemmensen; sister, Phyllis Koehler; and daughter-in-law, Marsha Brown.

A memorial service will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020, at Worleim Blooming Prairie Funeral Home Chapel in Bloomington Prairie. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the funeral home is limited to 50 people for the service. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service on Saturday at the funeral home. Interment will be in Union Cemetery, Bixby.

Memorials are preferred to the First Lutheran Church in Bloomington Prairie, Prairie Manor Care Center, or KJLY Radio. Services are prearranged and performed with Worleim Funeral Home in Bloomington Prairie. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worleim.com.

The Owatonna Foundation is pleased to announce a scholarship opportunity for women.

Funded by the late June A. and Melvin Nelson, the scholarship is for women who wish to return to school and further their education in a non-traditional career. There are two \$1,500 scholarships available annually. To be eligible, applicant must be a woman, pursuing a non-traditional career, and have an Owatonna mailing address or have worked at an Owatonna business for at least the past two years.

Possible non-traditional career options include aircraft mechanic and service technician; architect;

automotive service technician and mechanic; barber; carpenter; carpet, floor, and tile installer and finisher; chef; clergy member; computer programmer; construction; construction/building inspector; drywall installer; ceiling tile installer; and tapers; electrician; engineer; firefighter; heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration technician; machinist; maintenance and repair worker; musician; pilot; police and patrol officer; railroad conductor; sheet metal worker; small engine mechanic; truckdriver; welding, and soldering, and brazing worker.

A strong supporter of Owatonna, and with a passion for women's

education, Nelson stated, "My late mother and I were thrilled to be able to fund this scholarship program that supports two \$1,500 annual scholarships for women pursuing a non-traditional career path. It is so important to be an advocate for women's education, supporting them in any way possible to ensure their future success, whether financially, by mentoring, or other support. We know that thru the Foundation's well-established scholarship program we will be able to help empower women with a better education."

Scholarship criteria-

ria and applications are available on the Foundation's website at www.owatonnafoundation.org/ apply for a scholarship or from Jill Holmes, Foundation scholarship coordinator.

Please note that the scholarship criteria for the Nelson Scholarship have changed and previous recipients may now apply for a second time. If you have questions, please contact Holmes at 507-455-8058. The deadline for applications is Oct. 25. Please note that due to the COVID 19 pandemic applications are only available online at this time.

BOOK NOOK

Online author visits coming to library



NANCY
VAILANCOURT

Here are the dates and a bit about the authors:

Oct. 1 - Brian Freeman writes thrillers based in Minnesota, including the stand-alone *Thief River Falls*, and his Jonathan Stride series. He has recently written *The Bourne Evolution*, which continues the Jason Bourne series begun by Robert Ludlum.

Oct. 6 - Mary Blackwell writes picture books for children. Her latest, *Clair's Hair*, deals with friendship, illness, and laughter.

Oct. 8 - Shannon Gibney's book *Dream Country* spans a family's history over two continents and two centuries as they journey into slavery, then freedom in Liberia, and back to the United States.

Oct. 22 - Sheila O'Connor has written six novels including *Evidence of V: A Novel in Fragments, Facts, and Fictions*, a genre-bending book for adults. She has also written novels for readers of all ages.

Oct. 28 - Sarah Stonich's books, including *The Lamentarian Divide*, are often set in Northern Minnesota featuring cabins, wilderness, and family dramas.

All of these programs are available thanks to the Minnesota Library Legacy program and the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Fund. Thank you, citizens of Minnesota!

Deadline nears for Nelson Scholarship for Women

Recipe Corner

**Pumpkin
Spice Bread**

3 cups sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
4 eggs, lightly beaten
1 can solid pack pumpkin
3-1/2 cups flour
2 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
1/2 cup water

In large bowl, combine sugar, oil and eggs. Add pumpkin and mix well. Combine dry ingredients and add to pumpkin mixture alternately with water. Pour into 3 medium pans and 2 small pans. Bake about 45 minutes at 350 degrees. If using bigger pans, about 1 hour. Cool in pans 10 minutes before removing to wire rack. Adding about 1 cup miniature chocolate chips really makes this recipe special.

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Times



BIRTHDAYS

Sept. 24
Brody Carlson
Joy Lynn Stetten
Patrick Wallace
Kristen Romeo

Sept. 25
Lanah Motte Weber
Nicholas Nelson
Danya Zilm
Henry Sundine

Sept. 26
Soren Peterson
Joanne Sorenson
Sandy Jones
Kayla Brown
Grace Olivia Nelson
Mike Trom
Wayne Njos

Sept. 27
Diane Olson
Samuel Skilledstad
Jeff McCabe
Mia Farr
Mandy Trom
Anthony J. Olson

Sept. 28
Kathryn Weiss
Craig Ingvalson
Kurt Underwood
Nicole Weiss
Larva Wollenburg
Kelli Jo Wallace
Rhonda Toquarn
Kevin Mans
Valerie Beaton
Amy Totman
Jared Wagner
Leri Burkhardt
Katie (Dorely) Ingvalson

Sept. 29
Breanna Rask
Blake Arrett
Bradley Nelson
Amanda Steinberg

Sept. 30
Les Shawback
Julie Halla
Phyllis Peterson

ANNIVERSARIES

Sept. 25
Tim and Melody Amberg
Glen and Ashley Valde
John E. and Theresa Heimerman

Sept. 26
Joe and Ashley Hjelman
Steve and Holly Iile
John and Karen Fougare
Larry and Anette Lindquist

Sept. 27
Adam and Kristin Bishop
Larry and Sue Schmeling

Sept. 28
Nels and Yvonne Lee

Sept. 29
Donna and Dave Maloner
Kim and Mark Symes
Terry and Ana Trom

Sept. 30
Judy and Howard Leostad
Joy and Carol Iverson

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HAYFIELD



School in a different learning environment



Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, classes at Owatonna Public Schools are still going on in somewhat different learning environments. Left: Owatonna Middle School students take advantage of the great weather and enjoyed Phy Ed at the Park by doing some chalk art on one of the trails. Right and bottom: Students at Lincoln Elementary School enjoy Craft Day where they were excited to use glitter and display their masterpieces in the hallway!



Homecoming plans switched up because of COVID

Due to COVID limitations, Owatonna High School could not enjoy the usual homecoming traditions. Instead, this fall we are having "Homecoming Part 1" with hopes of bringing back the traditional

homecoming events in the spring. Homecoming Part 1 will be Sept. 28 through Oct. 2. Events include student volleyball at Lava Burger, coronation, movie on the football field, and honoring the home-

coming court during half-time at a soccer game. The community can cruise main street from 6 to 8 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 2 for a reverse parade. Storefronts will be decorated for our Owatonna Huskies.

1 STRONG SCHOOLS. STRONG COMMUNITIES.

Our community recognizes that strong schools help build strong communities.

We are Owatonna proud.

2 YOU VOTER. WE KEEP PROMISES.

In 2013, voters approved a seven year operating levy to help fund our schools' programs and services. This levy expires June 2021. You voted and trusted us to manage the money, and we've done exactly what we promised.

3 FUNDING PRESSURES.

We do our best to stretch every dollar, being as efficient as possible while maintaining a quality education for our students - but this is becoming increasingly difficult.

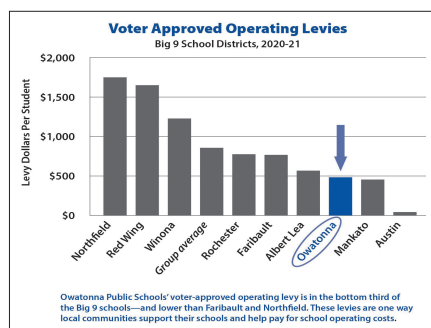
4 WORKING TOGETHER.

Education funding is a shared partnership between the state and federal governments and local communities. By law, local voters have the opportunity to provide additional funding for their schools.

Learn more: visit www.isd761.org, email levy@isd761.org, or call 507-444-8650

INFORMATION SESSION

Monday, Oct. 5- 6:30 p.m.
Owatonna High School Small Group Forum
(online or live-stream)



November ballot to include school funding

The November election is not just about who will be our next President. Also on the ballot are two school funding requests for Owatonna Public Schools.

Question one would renew an existing operating levy that is about to expire.

Question two would phase-in increases to the operating levy in 2022 and 2025.

By phasing in the increase over time, it also phases in the tax impact with no tax

increase until 2022. The additional revenue provided if question two is approved would enable the district to maintain quality programming and activities, appropriate class sizes and career-technical education programs, while providing financial stability for the next decade.

Last fall, Owatonna residents approved bond funds to build a new high school. Bonds can only be used to build or maintain buildings.

Operating levies, such as the ones that will be on the November ballot, are a legally separate funding stream. Levies fund school operations, such as staff, classroom supplies, curriculum, and bus transportation. The majority of Minnesota school districts have voter-approved operating levies, as one way local communities support their schools.

Learn about the two levy requests at our Levy 2020 website: www.isd761.org/levy.

RE-ELECT RICK GNEMI
Steele County District 3 Commissioner

RickGnemiforCommissioner.com

Prepared and Paid for by Rick Gnemi for County Commissioner



Let's keep your tax dollars working for you, not the other way around!

Hagedorn earns biofuel award

Minnesota Congressman Jim Hagedorn has received Growth Energy's 2020 Fueling Growth Award for his efforts to support the biofuels industry.

This is the second consecutive year that Rep. Hagedorn has been recognized by Growth Energy for his support of biofuels initiatives and recognition of the industry's importance to rural communities and the economy.

Since taking office, Hagedorn has worked in bipartisan fashion on the House Agriculture Committee and Congressional Biofuels Caucus to ensure greater transparency and oversight in the small refinery exemption (SRE) process and that the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) is administered as Congress intended.

"I'm honored to once again be recognized as a champion of



Jim Hagedorn

the biofuels industry and all the jobs that provides in the First District," said Hagedorn. "I will continue working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, as well as local stakeholders, to promote pro-growth policies that help ethanol and biodiesel plants and their employees power our corn, soybean and grain farmers, rural communities, and economy in southern Minnesota."

Hagedorn was presented the award in a Zoom call with ethanol industry leaders.



On the Farm
CLAIRE LACANNE

Farmers, you've likely heard about Palmer amaranth being found in some Minnesota conservation plantings and crop fields in recent years. Palmer amaranth is a concern because it is a highly competitive pigweed. It can grow 2-3 inches per day, causing large yield reductions if it goes uncontrolled. Control is often challenging, because Palmer amaranth has resistance to many different herbicides. Palmer amaranth is on Minnesota's prohibited noxious weed and seed list with the intention to eradicate it before it becomes widely established in the state.

There are several routes Palmer amaranth can take into Minnesota, one of them being in contaminated feed ingredients. Minnesota has at least one infestation in the state that has been attributed to arriving via con-

Palmer amaranth in livestock feed ingredients

taminated cattle feed. The potential for this to happen again is high, especially when sourcing feed ingredients from areas where Palmer amaranth and other problematic weeds are more common.

For feed, the amount of risk for contamination with weed seeds depends on the type of feed and where it originates. Feed that has been ground, pelleted, or ensiled is less concerning compared to less-processed feed ingredients. Feed ingredients which are most concerning include feedstuffs coming from southern states where Palmer amaranth is more common and forages from weedy fields.

Any feed ingredient that was produced where Palmer amaranth is present in fields is more likely to become contaminated. Cottonseed and sunflower screenings have been the source of several infestations in the Midwest. Other feed ingredients, including hay, produced where Palmer amaranth is more common are also concerns.

Forage produced in weedy fields will likely contain weed seeds, whether harvested as dry hay or ensiled. Ensiling forages will help reduce the viability of weed seed but does not entirely solve the issue.

Animal digestion will not kill all of the seeds, ideal feed and manure management, weed seed from contaminated feed ingredients can survive the process and cause issues. It is much easier to manage Palmer amaranth and other new weeds with prevention. Be on the lookout for Palmer amaranth and other new weeds around feed storage areas, feeding areas, near manure storage areas, and in fields with recent manure applications.

For tips identifying Palmer amaranth, visit: extension.umn.edu/annual-broadleaf-weeds/preventing-palmer-amaranth-minnesota.

One method that can more effectively destroy weed seeds is composting manure. Internal heat generated by properly composted manure will kill most weed seeds – even Palmer amaranth. Aged manure is not the same as composted manure. Weed seeds are killed in composted manure due to warm temperatures (>140°F) for several days. In typical on-farm compost-

sites, weed seed viability is typically reduced by <90%. For more information on Palmer amaranth in manure visit: <https://blog.crop-news.extension.umn.edu/2019/06/palmer-amaranth-in-manure-what-can-you.html>.

Even with ideal feed and manure management, weed seed from contaminated feed ingredients can survive the process and cause issues. It is much easier to manage Palmer amaranth and other new weeds with prevention. Be on the lookout for Palmer amaranth and other new weeds around feed storage areas, feeding areas, near manure storage areas, and in fields with recent manure applications.

For tips identifying Palmer amaranth, visit: extension.umn.edu/annual-broadleaf-weeds/preventing-palmer-amaranth-minnesota.

Claire LaCanne is the agricultural educator for the University of Minnesota Extension. She writes a column for this newspaper regularly.

THE ROLE: of foundations during crises FROM A2

to provide immediate financial support to licensed child care providers. We were able to award \$254,950 in immediate funds to 491 family providers and 34 centers, serving approximately 1,800 children. Most recently we have been awarded funding from the Minnesota Department of Education and the

Governor's Emergency Education Relief to support organizations that provide early care and education wrap around programming for children birth to age eight, more details of which will be made available in late September.

Under our Community Vitality umbrella, we offered a matching grant to our 30 com-

munity foundations to support their localized relief efforts. By leveraging this opportunity, so far 18 community foundations have provided a total of \$121,050 to their communities to support their local food shelves, meal programs and other groups that need immediate support. We were also able to shift our Small Town

Grant focus to specifically support communities under 10,000 as they recover from the crisis, and anticipate awarding close to \$180,000 once the review process is complete.

We have been able to support our region to this extent because of the strength of our partnerships and the generosity of our donors. We are honored to be in a position to help people in our 20-county

region during this time of great need. As I have said before, we will get through this by working together.

More information about our COVID-19 response and the partners we work with can be found at smifoundation.org/covid-19. To support our Love Where You Live campaign, which supports our COVID-19 response efforts, visit smifoundation.org/lovewhereyoulive.

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

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

PROUDLY FARMING FOR FIVE GENERATIONS

The Nobles

Farming in Steele County has been in the blood of the Noble family for more than 130 years. The farm is currently operating in its fifth generation.

In the late 1800s, Kevin and Scott Noble's great grandparents bought the original farm, which is still operational today. The farm is located about 10 miles northwest of Blooming Prairie. Kevin and Scott are brothers.

In 1966, Jack and Darlene bought the adjacent farm, which is now the main farm where Scott, Michelle and Whitney live along with Ryan, Shelby and Bailey. Ryan is Kevin's son.

The Nobles' farms feature a dairy operation of 85 milking cows as well as crops. They raise corn, soybeans, alfalfa and oats. They also raise heifers and Holstein and Angus beef.

Kevin indicated a couple reasons why he went into farming. "Growing up on the farm and a passion of caring for the land and taking care of the animals is what we learned from our parents (Jack and Darlene)," Kevin says. "Plus being able to raise children on the farm offers its own rewards."

"Farming can be very rewarding, but it can also come with many challenges," said Kevin, pointing to weather, financial stress and now the pandemic. And he notes 2020 has been a particularly challenging year for their family. "This COVID-19 has put disruptions in supply chain and processing of agricultural products," he said.

But the Nobles are up for the challenge.

"Being able to go to work and do something you truly love makes it all worth it," Kevin said.



The Noble farm family includes, from left: Lisa (holding Bailey), Kevin, Shelby, Ryan, Whitney, Michelle and Scott.



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OWATONNA, MN 55060
507-451-3131

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northlandfarmsystems.com

HELP KIWANIS: win \$25K in equipment FROM A1

Abraham encourages residents to vote over the next several days to push the Owatonna club into the top 10, which will then move into a second phase of judging for selecting

the winner. "Share this with your family, friends and co-workers," she said.

As of Sunday afternoon, Owatonna was in 12th place with 672 votes. The top vote getter to

this point is the Kiwanis Club of Lima, Ohio with 2,137 votes.

Owatonna's We All Play is working with Mohs Contracting, the Owatonna Park and Rec Department and the City of Owatonna to have the playground and field installed by Oct. 31, 2021. The project is also supported through contributions from individuals, private and corporate businesses, the school district and many non-profit organizations.

LEGACY OF PLAY CONTEST

- Go to www.play.kiwanis.org
- Vote for Owatonna Kiwanis Club's "We All Play"
- Now until Sunday, Sept. 27
- Voting allowed once per day

IT'S FUN TO LIVE: in a small town FROM A2

served as the site of the Second Annual Gun Bingo event on Friday night for the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group.

As soon as the final Bingo game was finished, attendees stayed and helped take down tables to make the tent ready to house local crafters on Saturday for Crazy Days for a Cure.

Main Street businesses also offered

some crazy bargains on a busy, fall day.

Where, but in a small town, can you bring in over 1,000 pumpkins and set them up to be sold on two lots on Main Street that previously were inhabited by a bakery and by Sportstitch.

More small town unity was shown with 24 homeowners participating in a city-wide garage sale on Friday

and Saturday.

The coronavirus has knocked out many community events including Blooming Prairie's annual cancer auctions scheduled for September this year. The auctions were no more this year but that didn't stop BP Cancer Group from promoting other ways to make up these lost funds.

Gun Bingo, Crazy Days and remote control car races helped recoup some of those lost monies.

Blooming Prairie is a small community but a large community when it comes to donating to local charitable causes and when it comes to supporting local business and industry.

Thanks everyone for investing in your small town community. Rewards are many when we all support one another.

Craig Kruckeberg is right when he says there's nothing like a small town.

Elect Shea 24a Minnesota House

Prepared and paid for by Elect Tom Shea 24a Committee
P.O. Box 187 • Owatonna, MN 55060

NOTICE

State of Minnesota
Steele County

District Court
Judicial District: Third
Court File Number:
74-FA-20-1003
Case Type: Domestic
Abuse

In the Matter of:
April Murphy and On
Behalf of Minor Chil-
dren Petitioner

Order for Hearing
(Minn. Stat. § 518B.01,
subd. 5, 7, 11)

vs.
Jason Forest
Respondent

To the Petitioner/Re-
spondent named above:

It is ordered that a
hearing will be held at
via Zoom or in person
at the Steele County
Courthouse, 111 East
Main Street, Owatonna,
MN 55060 on October
6, 2020 at 8:30 a.m.
Since Mr. Forest is cur-
rently evading service
in CHIPS Court File
No. 74-JF-20-1470 and
CHIPS Permanency
Court File No. 74-JV-
20-1471, the Court will
order service by publi-
cation. Personal service
will be attempt- ed also.

If Petitioner fails to ap-
pear at the hearing, the
case may be dismissed.
If Respondent fails to
appear at the hearing,
the court may grant
whatever the Petitioner
has requested.

Date: September 16,
2020
/s/ Joseph Buell
Judge of District Court
923

NOTICE

Office of the
Minnesota Secretary
of State Assumed
Name Certificate of
Assumed Name
Minnesota Statutes
Chapter 333

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

NOTE: Information pro-
vided when filing a busi-
ness entity is public and
may be viewable online.
This includes but is not
limited to all individual
names and addresses.

1. List the exact as-
sumed name under
which the business is or
will be con- ducted: (Re-
quired) **The Blast**

2. Principal Place of
Busi- ness: (Required)
**5000 NW 60th St.,
Medford, MN 55049**

3. List the name and
com- plete street ad-
dress of all persons
conducting business
under the above As-
sumed Name, OR if an
entity, provide the legal
corporate, LLC, or Lim-
ited Partnership name
and registered office
address: (Required)
Note: a PO Box by itself
is not accept- able. At-
tach additional sheet(s)
if necessary. **The Blast
Northfield, LLC, 5000
NW 60th St., Medford,
MN 55049**

4. I, the undersigned,
cer- tify that I am sign-
ing this document as the
person whose signature
is re- quired, or as agent
of the person(s) whose
signa- ture would be
required who has au-
thorized me to sign this
document on his/her
behalf, or in both capaci-
ties. I further certify that
I have completed all re-
quired fields, and that
the information in this
doc- ument is true and
correct and in com-
pliance with the applica-
ble chapter of Minnesota
Statutes. I un- derstand
that by signing this doc-
ument I am sub- ject to
the penalties of per- jury
as set forth in Section
609.48 as if I had
signed this document
under oath.

/s/ Alexandria
J. Morgan,
Member 5-6-2020
9232

Foundation makes nontraditional scholarships available

The Owatonna
Foundation is pleased to
make available \$15,000
to assist students who
are preparing for a
technical career by
attending non-four year
programs at technical/
community colleges.

Applications for non-
traditional scholarships
are due Oct. 25. Scholar-
ships would be used for
spring semester 2021.
Eligibility require-
ments include that
recipients have an
Owatonna mailing ad-
dress or have worked at
an Owatonna business
for at least the past two
years. You must also

hold a GED or gradu-
ated from high school
prior to or with the
class of 2020. Scholar-
ship awards range from
\$500 to \$3,000 each.

Previous award
recipients have pursued
training in the follow-
ing areas: accounting,
business and office tech-
nology, agriculture ser-
vices and management,
carpentry/cabinet mak-
ing, child development,
civil engineering tech-
nician, construction
electrician, cosmetology,
culinary arts/chef,
drafting, electronics, in-
terior design and sales,
jewelry and gemology,

machining/tool and die,
microcomputer support
technician, radiology,
paramedic/EMT, and
sales and marketing.

"We are excited to be
offering these scholar-
ships. Currently, there
is a lot of demand for
skilled workers both
in and out of Owatonna,"
said Laura Resler,
executive director of the
Foundation. "Students
graduating from these
programs can earn
good wages and not
have a lot of debt when
they enter the work-
force at the time of their
graduation. The Founda-
tion has always recog-

nized the contributions
of these workers to our
local industry and is
proud to be supportive
of their education."

Applications must
be submitted by Oct. 25
and are available at the
Foundation's website
at www.owatonnafoundation.org/Grants/Scholarships, and Apply
for a Scholarship. If you
have questions, please
contact Jill Holmes,
scholarship coordi-
nator, at 507-455-3059.
Please note that due to
the COVID-19 pandemic
applications are only
available online at this
time.

SCHOOL LUNCH MENU

BP Elementary

Sept. 24- Roast turkey & Gravy, whole grain dinner roll,
yogurt pak with bagel, mashed potatoes, garden peas
Sept. 25- Roast turkey & Gravy, whole grain dinner
roll, yogurt pak with bagel, mashed potatoes, garden
peas
Sept. 26- Homemade French toast, turkey BLT
wrap, baked beans, baby carrots
Sept. 29- Beef hotdog, turkey BLT wrap, baked
beans, celery sticks
Sept. 30- Crispy chicken nuggets, whole grain
dinner roll, ham & cheese pinwheel, golden French
fries, broccoli florets

BP High School

Sept. 24- Beefy nachos with homemade cheese
sauce, spicy pinto beans, salsa, baby carrots, crispy
chicken sandwich, pizza
Sept. 25- Roast turkey & gravy, whole grain dinner
roll, mashed potatoes, glazed carrots, corn dog,
ravioli with meat sauce
Sept. 28- French toast sticks, sausage patty, break-
fast potatoes, baby carrots, BBQ chicken sandwich,
chicken alfredo with pasta
Sept. 29- Beef hotdog on a bun, baked beans, celery
sticks, cheeseburger on bun, cheese pizza
Sept. 30- NO SCHOOL

Hwy. 251 reopens, but short delays continue

Hwy. 251 between
Hwy. 218 and Interstate
35 reopened to traffic
Sept. 16 after crews com-
pleted a culvert replace-
ment, but motorists
should still expect short
delays as paving work
continues, according to
the Minnesota Depart-
ment of Transportation.

Paving, rumble strips
and striping are some
of the remaining tasks
that will be completed.
Motorists on Hwy. 251
will encounter flaggers
who will stop traffic
where paving is taking
place before safely al-
lowing them to pass.

Work is expected to be
complete by mid-October.

Project benefits

Resurfacing ap-
proximately 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 ap-
proach panels on the
bridge over I-35
- Replacing culvert/
pipes along the route
- Improving ADA
access in Hollandale

- Replacing guard-
rail on Hwy. 251
- Ulland Brothers is the
contractor for the
\$7.1 million project.

Questions about access
to properties or issues
encountered can be di-

rected to the contractor's
access manager, Chris
Venem, at 507-391-2900.

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/MnDOTsoutheast/.

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

Motorists are re-
minded that while in
the work zone:

- Slow down when
approaching every
work zone, then nav-
igate through with care
and caution
- Stay alert; work
zones constantly change
- Watch for workers
and slow moving equip-
ment
- Obey posted speed
limits. Fine for a viola-
tion in a work zone is
\$300
- Minimize distrac-
tions behind the wheel
- Be patient; expect
delays, especially
during peak travel
times.

LIVING IN: a cuckoo world again FROM A2

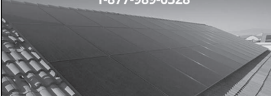
After a couple months
in the shop, it's back up
and running again on
my wall at home chirp-
ing away every hour on
the hour and half hour.
For those who haven't
had the pleasure, a
cuckoo clock is a pendu-
lum-regulated clock that
strikes the hours with a
sound like a common
cuckoo's call and has an
automated cuckoo bird
that moves with each
note. The mechanism to
produce the cuckoo call

has been in use since the
middle of the 18th cen-
tury and has remained al-
most without variation.
In traditional cuckoo
clocks, the "coo coo"
sound is derived from
a system of bellows,
pushing air through
two wooden whistles to
recreate the distinctive
two-note call of the
common cuckoo. My
cuckoo also plays music
after the chirping.
It's unknown who
invented the cuckoo and

where the first one was
made. But it is believed
that much of its develop-
ment and evolution was
made in the Black For-
est area in southwest-
ern Germany. These
clocks were exported
to the rest of the world
from the mid-1850s on.
Today, as evidenced by
my parents, the cuckoo is
one of the favorite souve-
nirs of travelers in Ger-
many, Switzerland and
Austria. It has become a
cultural icon of Germany.

It fits in right along
with my German nut-
crackers and smokers.
The cuckoo clock is
something very special.
It's a relic that I plan
to add to my home for
many years to come.
If anything, the cuckoo
eases the mind a bit from
the cuckoo world we find
ourselves in right now.
Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo.
Time to go in hot pur-
suit of winding up the
cuckoo clock again.

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WEEKLY CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

1. Warm-blooded vertebrates
8. Semitic peoples
11. Supervise
14. Historical German territory
15. Sweat
19. The Wolverine State
20. China
21. Violent disturbances
22. A way to commemorate the dead
23. Midway between east and southeast
24. Bird genus
25. Trim
26. Disparaged
30. More coherent
31. Abnormal rattling sounds
32. Healthy appetizers
33. Partner to "shocked"
34. French pianist Pascal
35. Jokes
38. Marks to omit print
39. Tall
40. Coverage
44. "A Death in the Family" author
45. Role of highlights
46. Fixed-radio access
47. Partly digested food
48. "Lamb Chop" puppeteer Lewis
49. In support of
50. Aluminum
51. Reduction in value over time
55. Running events
57. Portuguese region
58. Slovenly women
59. Strongly criticized

CLUES DOWN

1. Wiped up
2. Opposed to
3. Macon, GA, university
4. Wife
5. Small viper
6. Polynesia garland of flowers
7. Saw-like
8. Maltese-Italian composer
9. Moved faster than walking
10. Commercial
11. Covered with mud
12. Marksmen
16. Buenos ___
17. Tallest amphibian
18. Belonging to a thing
22. Mars crater
25. Most fair
27. Citrus fruit
28. Awkward
29. Brews
30. Beloved late broadcast-er Craig
32. All alone
34. Copies
35. Poster
36. Symmetrical
37. Grew older
38. Makes tractors
40. Not the front
41. State as fact
42. Long, narrow cut
43. Worked hard for
45. Indicates position in a box score
48. Tax
51. "Lockout Weekend" singer Debbie
52. Unhealthy
53. Inam name ___ Khan
54. A woolen cap of Scottish origin (abbr.)
56. The Golden State

Let's get you movin'!

Jennifer Walsh
507-438-6676
email: jenwalsh@kw.com
web: jenwalsh.kw.com

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SALE: 613 1st Ave. NW.
Thursday September 10

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WANTED**

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for disabled female. Ev-

every other Saturday days,
or every other Saturday
overnight. 9-12 hour
shifts. \$13.25 per hour.
NW Rochester. Will train.
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Byron, MN 55920
507-775-2316

 **First Security Bank** Member FDIC

 **Member FDIC**

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 will be hiring a 
**SPECIAL EDUCATION
TEACHER, GRADES K-5.**
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www.triton.k12.mn.us
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It's Pumpkins in the Prairie

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Several weeks ago, Jeff Peach, owner of B to Z Hardware in Blooming Prairie, was asked by a newspaper reporter as to what he planned to do with two open lots in downtown BP.

Peach purchased two open lots on Main Street, lots becoming vacant due to a fire destroying two business locations. The Bakery and Sportstitch.

Peach's reply was one of noncommittal. "I've just heard rumors," he continued.

A few weeks later, Peach heard about son Daniel's plans to plant a pumpkin patch on the two open lots. The idea was supported by B to Z Hardware. Dan is a full-time police officer for Blooming Prairie.

His idea of having fun with a pumpkin patch took legs with help from family and friend.

A Grand Opening was held last Saturday. The special pumpkin patch is filled with hay bales in social distancing measure and with many fall-like themes. Lots of games are also available for the kiddos.

The two vacant lots were filled with over 1,000 pumpkins when the fall spectacle opened. Lots of different shaped gourds will also be featured at the pumpkin patch.

It is especially proud of his sign welcoming people to



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Who is this pumpkin guy? It is none other than Farmer Dan Peach, holding a couple of pumpkins that are for sale at Pumpkins in the Prairie on Main Street in Blooming Prairie. The pumpkin patch is located on two vacant lots (formerly The Bakery and Sportstitch) owned by B to Z Hardware.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Alexia Hemmingway and son Harrison Hemmingway of Blooming Prairie visited the Pumpkins in the Prairie site and tried out a wooden jeep that is available for kids as a photo-op.

Pumpkin Land. Sandy Jones did the art work on the sign.

Todd Johnson of Owatonna is a volunteer who has helped Dan bring his idea to fruition. "Something like this brings people together," Johnson said. "In a small town,

you can do something like this," he added.

Dan has also been helped by his girlfriend, Shelby White and her parents, Chad and Stacy White. Others who helped include Dan's parents Jeff and Sheri, Nola Shanty and Jon Esplan.

Dan picked up many of his props from Twites Pumpkin Farm in Byron. The pumpkin farm closed after last season.

Lots of games are featured on the premises: Checkers, Connect 4, triangle obstacle course, Tic tac toe, Gnome ring toss, Big Foot run, five bean bag games and a Bounce house.

Dan has also made some benches and some other spots for photo opportunities. A wooden jeep and a wooden tractor are also there for the kids to enjoy.

Students from the Blooming Prairie Elementary School have been invited to visit the pumpkin patch. Pumpkins in the Prairie will be open until Oct. 31, Peach says.

He plans to have the pumpkin patch open the same hours as B to Z Hardware: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. Some Sunday hours may also be planned.

"We have tried to create a festive atmosphere and want to promote the new attraction as a happy place," said Dan Peach.

"I agree that this is a great use of the open lots at this time," said Jeff Peach. "I like to go big with projects and have fun at the same time," he said.

"Yeah, it's a way to make the downtown beautiful," Dan says.

HEALTH OFFICIALS: begin statewide COVID survey

have any scientific evidence, Caron believes some of the increase may be due to a recent community celebration in Mantorville that drew hundreds of people. The most recent increase of cases is attributed to 20-30 year olds, she said.

In Mower County, there have been 1,286 cases with 4 deaths

while Freeborn County has experienced 516 cases with 3 deaths. Caron was surprised to learn that MSHSL voted earlier Monday to return to football and volleyball beginning Oct. 9. Her only hope is that such a decision doesn't cause Minnesota to take steps backwards with COVID.

COUNCIL EYES 5%: levy increase in BP

FROM WAGE INCREASES due to Langholz's step increase and the COLA for the department.

The police budget has been reduced for 2021 in large part to hiring a new officer at a lower step rate.

The fire department revenue and expenditure budget appears different from previous years as both numbers are significantly lower. This is due to the change of how the funding from township contracts is being handled.

The street department budget reflects a significant increase mainly due to an increase in street maintenance and part-time help.

The library budget remains stable for 2021.

The park and pool budget remains relatively steady for the upcoming year.

The Operational Budget reflects a possible surplus of \$3,519. The debt service budget reflects a deficit of (\$5,491).

The EDA is projecting a \$1,171.50 surplus while the other portion comes from the Capital Outlay fund, which is used for future purchases.

Other business items included:

• Council set truth and taxation hearing for 7 p.m. on Dec. 14.

• Presentation on special assessment policy is planned for the October meeting.

• Minnesota Energy is looking at doing an energy gas valve installation for the Pine Springs Pool.

• The Hwy. 218 project is still planned for 2023. Langholz said more public meetings will be coming.

• The Zylstra property cleanup amounted to \$21,000. A house burned on this property. This amount will be placed on property taxes for the owner.

• Fire Department Brat & Corn Feed on Aug. 29 was the biggest ever at 570 meals served.

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