Steele County Times

$1

Tuesday, December 8, 2015

Serving Blooming Prairie and Steele County since 1893

Medallion Hunt Clue #2

Are you ahead or behind?
Don't take the hunt lightly
Now go-go-go
Next week's clue is:
Three in a row!



Holiday Events
D1

Dodge County Planning Commission approves feedlot permit



By KAREN JORGENSEN
County Staff Writer

Dodge County's feedlot controversy resurfaced last week as the county's Planning and Zoning Commission voted in favor of a conditional use permit for Jason Masching and forwarded its recommendation to the County Board.

Masching is asking for the permit to allow him to establish a new feedlot on a 3.52-acre parcel in Hayfield Township. The feedlot would be for 3,300 head of finishing hogs or 990 animal units.

Although the issue of feedlots has been contentious over the past year, last week's public hearing saw considerably fewer comments from those on both sides of the issue and the discussion was more related to the general question of feedlots than Masching's request.

"I feel it's in a good location, far from neighbors," Masching told the commissioners.

Zoning Administrator Melissa DeVetter said that the property is on the Dodge-Mower County line and that all feedlots involving 500 animals or larger require a Conditonal Ue Permit (CUP). She also said that although Masching would not be required under state rules to get a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) water permit, he had indicated he would apply for one.

She also added that the closest neighbor to the property is Jeff Swanson who is approximately 2,300 feet east, well outside the 1,000 feet setback required by county rules.

Ron Behounek, supervisor from Hayfield Township, said the township board had re-

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Holiday Dazzle

Staff photos by James Knoop
ABOVE: Ann Weedman (right) cheers as she is crowned the 2015 Blooming Prairie Scrooge.

RIGHT: Santa greets children in front of F&M Bank on Friday night.

See more Holiday Dazzle photos on Pages 1D and 8D.



Ellendale community celebrates, despite lower numbers

By JAMES KNOOP
County Sports Editor

Due to a host of various activities around the county, folks at Ellendale's "Christmas in the Country" saw a heavy decline in participation but succeeded in entertaining those who showed.

The 28th annual celebration included town-wide activities including meal and store specials at different establishments, pictures with Santa at various locations, ornament painting at Country Charm Ceramics and a vendor/craft sale and Bingo at the community buildings. While these events have brought crowds in past years, organizers and attendees alike agreed that the weekend was just too busy around the area. With sports activities and the annual Wild Game Feed in Geneva, numbers in Ellendale stayed low.

Those low numbers didn't stop organizers or some dedicated community members from having a fun weekend, however.

One such event was the annual kids' Bingo, hosted by Brian Wayne and Scott Groth. The two have been calling out letters and numbers since 1985 and are always looking for ways to keep the kids engaged.

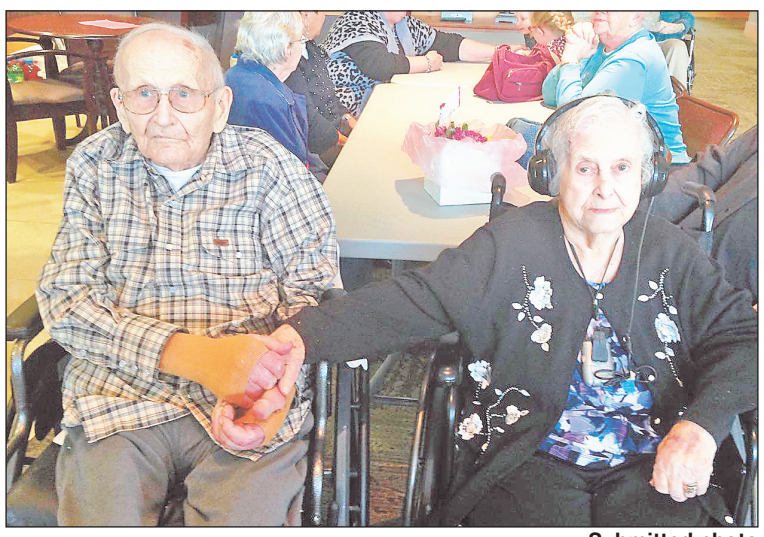
"We used to do movies and you could never keep the kids attention," said Wayne. "We try to buy nice enough gifts that the kids want to at least win the prize, and we always have a grand prize."

This year's grand prize was awarded to the first kid to reach a "blackout" on his or her Bingo

IN THE COUNTRY
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Staff photo by James Knoop
One mother and daughter await the next call during bingo at the Christmas in the Country event in Ellendale on Saturday.



Submitted photo
Jerry and Roselyn Rysavy, of Owatonna, recently celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary. The couple's wedding was originally scheduled for Nov. 12, 1940, but was postponed to Nov. 14 due to the infamous Armistice Day blizzard of 1940.

A love that weathers all storms

Local couple celebrates 75th anniversary

By LAURA BERNDT
News Editor

Jerry and Roselyn Rysavy, of Owatonna, have created many memories during the 75 years they've been married. Both still recall the powerful Armistice Day blizzard of 1940 that forced the couple to reschedule their wedding.

The wedding was supposed to take place on Nov. 12, 1940. On Nov. 11, however, a fierce winter storm unleashed itself upon the Midwest, creating hazardous traveling conditions that would last for days and rendering many roads impassable.

Although Jerry and Roselyn lived across the road from one another as children, they did not attend the same school and, therefore, did not meet until they were young adults. "As kids, we never got together," Roselyn said.

Jerry and Roselyn met when Jerry's brother, Evan, and Roselyn's brother, Jerome, spent some time together. The young couple enjoyed going to shows together in places like Hope, and also went to many, many dances. Roselyn remembers that Jerry was always a gentleman. "We got home and sat there for a few minutes and I was going to go inside when he asked me if he could kiss me," said Roselyn, smiling at the memory.

Roselyn also remembers being excited for her wedding. She and her father took a trip to town to have her hair styled for the wedding and to pick up the person who was going to prepare the wedding feast. Roselyn recalls that, on the morning of Nov. 11, the weather was pleasant and unseasonably warm.

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Opinion

Blame is right here for Vikings loss

HOT PURSUIT



RICK BUSSLER

All right, you can blame me for the Minnesota Vikings' embarrassing drubbing to the Seattle Seahawks Sunday afternoon in Minneapolis.

Not normally one to venture to Vikings games, I made this one. I'm convinced I am the reason why the Seahawks smoked the Vikings 38-7.

I think I brought a little bad luck to the Vikings as I made a guest appearance in the stands. I don't normally go to any Vikings games largely because of the cost for tickets. But I was fortunate to land a couple tickets last minute. My son, who is an avid football fan, and I took in the shellacking on the field.

As the end of the third quarter came, my son looked at me and said, "Let's get out of here." I talked him into staying for a few more minutes and we saw the 101-yard kickoff return touchdown from wide receiver Cordarrelle Patterson. It was a good thing we stayed because at least we saw the only bright spot of the game for the Vikings.

It was obvious the Vikings' poor performance was having a chilling effect on fans in the stands. Fans around us got a little feisty as it became apparent the Vikings were doomed from getting anything going. A couple next to us refused to sit down after someone politely asked if they wouldn't mind taking a seat.

What a miserable game this was to watch. The only silver lining was that the weather wasn't bad as temperatures hovered right around 40 degrees. The Vikings stunk up the field and simply got embarrassed.

Just how embarrassing was it?

This proved to be their poorest overall performance of the season. The offense didn't produce a single point and eked out just 125 yards of offense, the lowest total in nine years. The defense got shredded by Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson, who threw three touchdown passes and scrambled for another. The special team allowed a 47-yard return on the opening kickoff.

While the Vikings have stepped it up a notch or two this season, Sunday's loss was a painful reminder that the Minnesota team still has a ways to go to be with the big boys. Granted we have an 8-4 record and in a first-place tie with Green Bay. But we need to start beating some of the big teams if we have any chance of going further in post-season.

Sunday's game wasn't a total loss for me, though. Actually the bright spot for me happened off the field and near the concession stands. As I grabbed a cheeseburger and some cheese curds, I came across a $20 bill on the ground.

Despite the loss, it still proved to be a fun afternoon with my son. But a lesson has been learned.

I'm staying away from going to the Vikings games and sticking to being in hot pursuit of watching them from the comforts of my living room couch.

Our view

A second look at volunteers

Last week we pointed out that volunteers mean a lot to our communities and when one person passes on or decides to call it quits, it puts a hurt on an event that is going on. A lack of volunteers can also cause problems across Steele County and other areas of Minnesota.

Take, for example, the Steele County Salvation Army: they have raised less money so far this year for its Red Kettle campaign because there are less volunteers ringing bells in local storefronts. Black Friday donations to the Red Kettle campaign only amounted to about one-third of funds raised last year.

And those involved with the Red Kettle campaign will tell you that the decrease in money raised is directly correlated to fewer volunteers. "Our bell ringers are down, so our donations our down," said Social Services Director Gina Shepherd in a story in today's Steele County Times.

Regional Thrift Store Manager Sarah Pirkl added that people see volunteers having fun out there, they hear bells and feel the Christmas spirit. "People see people and they are more willing to drop some pocket change after grocery shopping. It's about that presence."

Once more, it needs to be stated that if volunteers don't step up to help, there is a good chance that any activity or event will not succeed or will even end.

The hope is that the Red Kettle campaign picks up through the season and ends up with the funds needed to provide the different programs that help people in our communities across Steele County. And that is the main reason many of these campaigns are even held; to help raise the money needed to provide those in need with clothing, food or even, at times, shelter.

In October a group of people from Blooming Prairie, Ellendale and Medford participated in a Blandin Leadership program. And there was much discussion in large groups, small groups and one-on-one about the need for more volunteers to keep programs and events going.

Individually, members of this Blandin leadership group have discussed their own plights involving trying to get volunteers for different challenges. The hope is that these individuals will not forget those discussions and provide a spark to help keep volunteers an active part of our communities.

This has to be because without these volunteers we will lose much more than we will ever know.

A cancer victim in my prayers

A GLIMPSE OF STEELE COUNTY



ALAN VAN ORMER

Just this week these words were passed on to myself and many others via email.

They read "…kiss your spouse, hug your kids, tell a friend how much they mean to you. Do it now, and often. It's powerful, and meaningful."

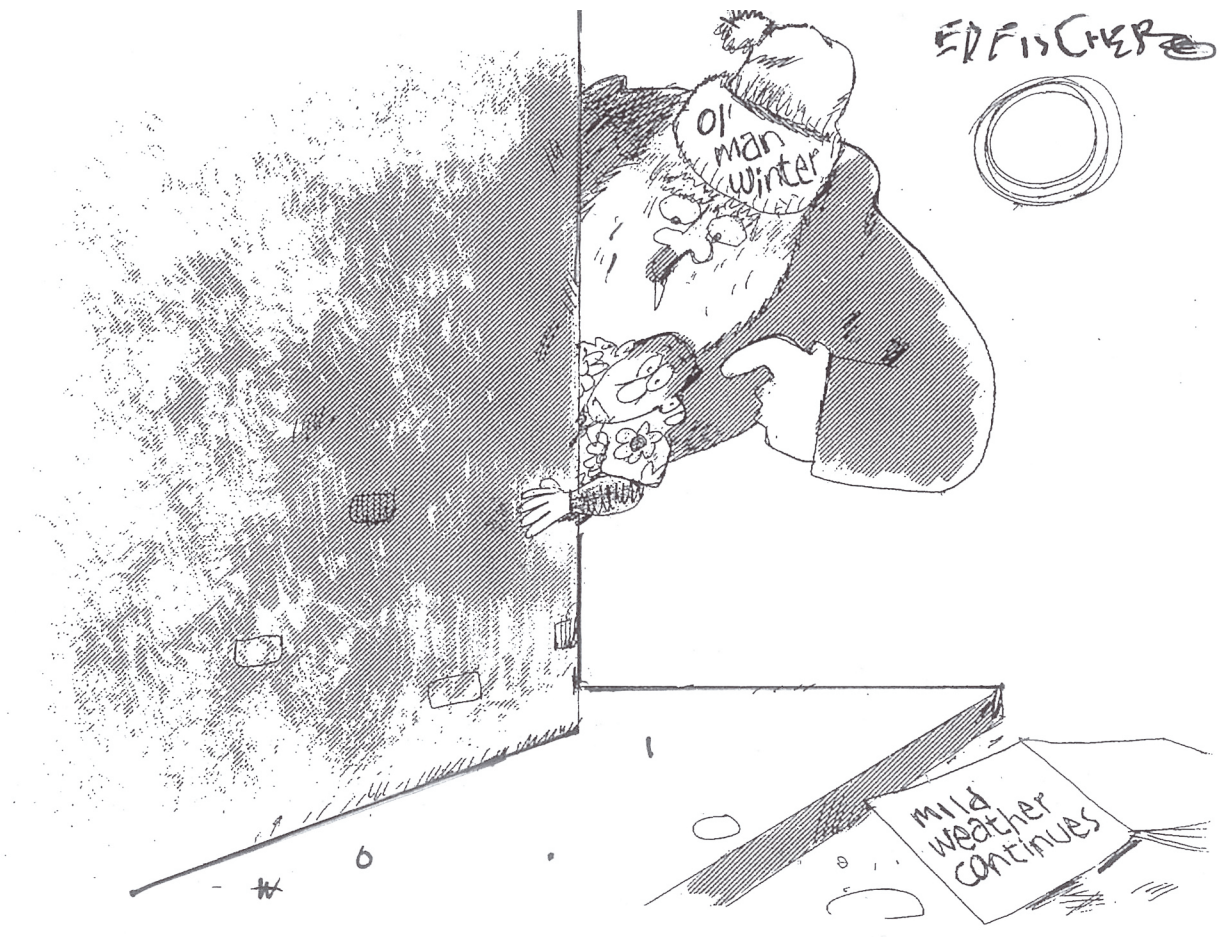
Those words came from Adam Czech, who is a spokesperson for the Minnesota Corn Growers Association. Adam just found out he has Stage IV colon cancer. He is currently discussing with his doctors and family the best treatment options.

My heart goes out to Adam and his family. I have had many dealings with him over the past two years involving agriculture stories that I write for the Steele County Times. He has always provided comments, facts about the industry and anything else that I need to put together ag stories. Adam has also helped me understand more and more what the ag industry is all about.

In the almost three years I have been at the Steele County Times I have written many stories dealing with the dreaded cancer disease. The last couple of years we have done several stories leading up to the annual Blooming Prairie Cancer Group live auctions. And, just about a month or so ago, we started our Cancer Corner to provide insight on the cancer group and cancer itself.

At times it is difficult to write about these brave souls that battle the disease each and every day. But, at times it is also rewarding to cover such stories because you see the strength that these people have with the battle, and it provides you the strength to help tell their stories. The optimal goal for everyone involved is to find the cure that will get rid of this dreaded disease.

I know it will be a tough struggle for Adam, but I also know that he is one tough customer and will give it his all to make it through this. My prayers and I'm sure many, many others, are with you.



Guest column



Senator Amy Klobuchar

Building a 21st Century broadband infrastructure

Technology is reshaping the ways we live, work, play, and communicate. The Internet is connecting communities and creating opportunities we couldn't have imagined even a few decades ago. Today, you don't need to live off an interstate highway or in a major city to find a good job, launch a new business, or take college classes. But without a reliable high-speed Internet connection, your options can be limited. In the 1930s, our country brought electricity and telephone service to communities from coast to coast. In order to compete in today's global economy, we need to make that same commitment to connecting all Minnesotans with high-speed broadband Internet.

I have seen firsthand the benefits that broadband have delivered, as well as the challenges faced by communities where broadband hasn't reached. I recently had the opportunity to visit Pine Technical and Community College in Pine County and learn that the school has expanded the number of hours each day the computer lab is open. Why? Because most students have no option except a slow dial-up connection at home, making online research very hard—especially for students

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A STATE AND NATIONAL AWARD WINNING WEEKLY

2015
4 National Awards
7 State Awards

2014
3 National Awards
3 State Awards

2013
2 National Awards
7 State Awards

2012
2 State Awards

2011
4 National Awards

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

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Opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Steele County Times and the editor reserves the right to edit letters when necessary. Please limit opinions to no longer than 350 words.

The Steele County Times encourages readers to write letters to the editor as a means of communicating ideas and opinions with others, with a goal being to make the community better for all people.

ETHICS
The Steele County Times editorial staff strives to present the news in a fair and accurate manner. Please bring any grievances against the Steele County Times to the attention of the managing editor.

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Second Front Page

Learning about fair and profitable farm rental agreements

By LAURA BERNDT
News Editor

As part of a series of educational meetings offered through the University of Minnesota Extension office, producers, farmers and others with an interest in agri-business gathered in Blooming Prairie on Thursday to learn about farm rental agreements.

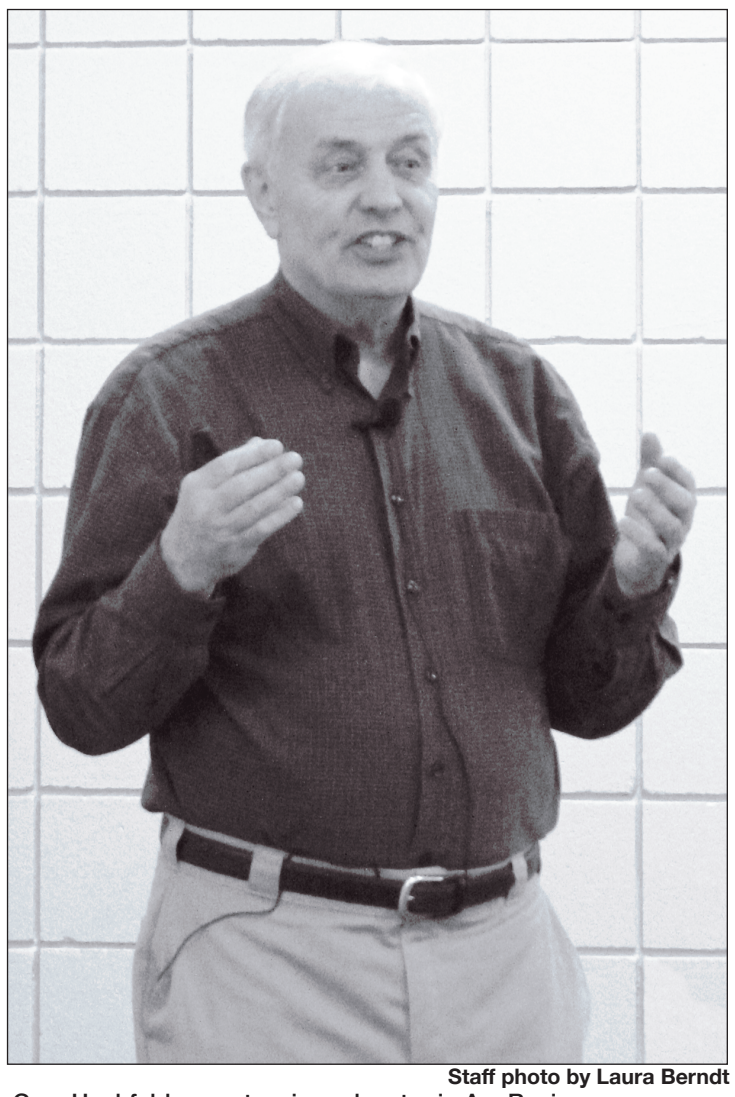
Karen Anderson, the University of Minnesota Extension agriculture extension educator for Rice and Steele counties, and Gary Hachfeld, an extension educator in Agriculture Business Management, facilitated the meeting.

Hachfeld provided information regarding past and projected farmland rental rate trends, current farm land values and even shared worksheets that can be used to help determine a beneficial rental agreement.

David Bau and Pauline Van Nurden, other extension educators in Agriculture Business Management, have also helped conduct meetings in other regions across the state.

The meetings began on Nov. 9, and the series will wrap up on Dec. 11.

"It's always good to have an informed perspective when trying to make some of these decisions," said Anderson. "We're letting people know what the current scenario is and how to best navigate some of those conversations and negotiations. That's why Extension is here. We want to provide that unbiased perspective in order to help them, being a landlord or tenant, make that informed decision."



Staff photo by Laura Berndt

Gary Hachfeld, an extension educator in Ag. Business Management, speaks about fair and profitable farm rental agreements last week.

During the meeting, Hachfeld highlighted best practices and resources to help landlords and tenants construct a fair and profitable farm rental agreement.

Hachfeld works out of the Mankato regional office with the Extension's Agri-Business Management team. While his "specialty" is estate planning and transfer, Hachfeld is also knowledgeable about other topics.

On Thursday, he discussed rental agreements and reviewed projected corn and soybean budgets for 2016.

"We're going to share some ideas, thoughts and processes of how to go ahead and look at this, both from the landlord and tenant operative's position," explained Hachfeld.

Hachfeld noted that the data and statistics he shared were not representative of any single producer or landowner, but instead were based upon overall averages, identified through careful examination of available data.

The information, said Hachfeld, could serve as a helpful "benchmark" when planning and creating agreements tailored to individual needs.

"A landlord/renter agreement is based upon a good relationship and trust," said Hachfeld, as he covered steps both parties could take to ensure their investments and assets are safeguarded against unforeseen circumstances or challenges that may present themselves after the agreement has been drafted.

As always, Hachfeld reminded the group that it's important to be vigilant in all aspects of the industry, from securing a good price to keeping updated on current land values.

"There are going to be some opportunities out there, but anything can change," he said, explaining that the value of the American dollar, crop failures, an increase in demand and numerous other factors all influence producers' profits.

Following the session, attendants were encouraged to ask questions and collect additional information.

Additional farm rental agreement resources

- *University of Minnesota Extension's farmland rental rates and land economics links*
  http://www.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/business/land-economics/
  or call 507-444-7685
- *University of Minnesota Extension's Agricultural Business Management website*
  http://www.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/business/
- *United States Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service*
  http://www.nass.usda.gov/
  or call 800-727-9540
- *FINBIN Farm Financial Database*
  http://finbin.umn.edu/
  or call 800-234-1111
- *Farmland sales (Minnesota Land Economics)*
  http://www.landeconomics.umn.edu/
  or call 612-625-3103
- *Lease examples (North Central Farm Management Extension Committee)*
  http://www.aglease101.org/
- *Fair Rent program (Center for Farm Financial Management, University of Minnesota)*
  https://fairrent.umn.edu
  or call 612-625-1964
- *2015 or 2016 Farm Resource Guide*
  (Cost is $30)
  E-mail David Bau at bauxx003@umn.edu
  or call 507-372-3900

FEEDLOT

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viewed the request.

"We see no problem with it whatsoever," he said.

While none of the neighbors or township residents attended to speak specifically in opposition to Masching's requests, Dale Schmeling who lives in Westfield Township did speak to the question of water quality as he had recently had problems with his well.

Schmeling told the commission he had not originally intended to speak at the hearing but did have questions about how much manure is being applied to fields in Dodge County and how close that application is to private wells.

He explained that because of health issues he had his well water tested and the first test came back showing coliform bacteria in the water.

"My only question is where the coliform is coming from," he said, "and how much manure we are applying and how close to private wells."

After receiving the first report, he said, he disinfected the well and the second test showed no coliform.

Neither report showed that E. coli bacteria were present.

Dean Schrandt from Dodge County Environmental Services responded that coliform is a large family of bacteria and that it can get into water supplies in a variety of ways including when a well is opened up and not adequately bleached. While any illnesses caused by coliform are generally of a mild nature, E. coli is the bacteria usually associated with serious illness and typically does come from a manure source or the malfunction of a septic or feedlot system.

"When it (E. coli) shows up," he said, "it's a red flag."

Schmeling said he had a new pump put in the well in 2009 but it had not been opened since then. He asked if the coliform bacteria could survive that long in the well.

Schrandt replied that the bacteria could easily survive in the well "six years or 60 years."

Since the well tested clean after the disinfecting, he suggested Schmeling test it again in six months. If that test would come back showing coliform it would be time for additional investigation of the cause.

Douglas Eayrs did speak against the request from Masching for the CUP on behalf of Dodge County Concerned Citizens (DCCC) although most of his comments were directed at the general question of feedlots and how their approval is handled by the county.

Eayrs said that a majority of the members of the commission either owned feedlots or worked for them and that staff members had a "long history of supporting feedlots." Those commission members with ties to feedlots, he said, should recuse themselves from the discussion.

He said he had talked to several Hayfield residents opposed to the feedlot but felt it "impossible to get a fair hearing" from the county.

He also raised the issue of DNR water permits and said that several of the commission members owned farms that did not have permits. He also said that only six of the feedlots in the county had the required permits.

Eayrs also questioned the involvement of local banks, in particular Citizens State Bank of Hayfield, in funding feedlots with loans because a number of family members of feedlot owners worked at the banks.

"We're concerned about the concentration of feedlots and the manure produced," Eayrs concluded. "We'd ask you to oppose it."

Dodge County Concerned Citizens also submitted a large binder of information that they requested be entered into the record.

Jim O'Connor, a farmer from the Blooming Prairie area, also briefly addressed the commission in favor of Masching's request.

"There is nobody better to talk about it than people who know about it," O'Connor said. "People from urban areas don't get it."

The statements about banks prompted Commission Chair Richard Wolf to say later in the meeting that the commission was not involved in or had any interest in who got bank loans from any particular bank.

"We are not bankers and we don't approve loans," he said. "It's irrelevant to us."

He also said that owning or working for a feedlot should not mean an individual should not be dealing with feedlots as a commission member.

Commissioners also live in the county and own houses and vote on people who want to build houses, he said.

Commissioner Joshua Toquam also responded to Eayrs comments about his involvement in feedlots.

"I would love to know where my animal units are," he said. He said his parents and brother do have feedlots and he does sometimes help them take care of the animals.

DeVetter also responded to Eayrs comments during discussion after the closing of the public hearing. She said that not all feedlots require DNR water permits but as of the day before the hearing 29 had active permits and three have permits pending.

Eayrs said after the meeting that the commissioners and staff made their comments after the public hearing was closed so he was unable to respond to any of their comments. He said that last year when the issues were first raised only six feedlot operators in the county had water permits. The fact that owners now have or have applied for those permits is because DCCC raised the issue, he said.

Ultimately the commissioners voted unanimously to give their approval to the CUP. The issue must still be voted on by the Dodge County Board of Commissioners.

Feedlot issues have been a hot topic in Dodge County for the past year.

In late 2014 Lowell and Evelyn Trom sued Dodge County to block a hog feedlot near their home in Westfield Township. The Dodge County District Court initially backed their claim saying proper procedures had not been followed in issuing the permit. In her ruling, Judge Jodi Williamson also said that the applicant, Nick Masching, could reapply provided all the required information was submitted. He did resubmit the application and the permit was again granted.

The Troms then filed another suit alleging the county has a biased process to deal with feedlots and that case is now pending. Williamson removed herself from the case and it is now being heard by a judge in Olmsted County.

Dodge County Concerned Citizens was also organized during the same time frame largely through the efforts of the Troms' daughter, Sonja Trom Eayrs.

MAILBAG

Continued from Page 2A

facing midterm deadlines.

Students aren't the only ones facing challenges. A farm equipment company in Willmar called Haug Implement flies its equipment over a farmer's fields to capture aerial imagery, and then the farmer uses the information provided to make decisions about how to improve their crops. When those farmers can't download this information efficiently, it limits Haug's ability to grow its business. Haug employees told me that they often encourage their customers to bring their laptops to the closest restaurant or coffee shop because many farmers don't have access to a reliable Internet connection at home. Our farmers shouldn't have to order a hamburger to meet the demands of their businesses.

In communities that have prioritized investments in broadband, we're seeing life-changing results. Essentia Clinics in Virginia and Aurora have begun connecting patients with health services through the Internet, and instead of spending hours traveling by car, people who need to see a doctor can now head to the local clinic and, with the click of a mouse, find themselves face-to-face with specialists from around the state. From delivering behavioral health services to providing specialized kidney treatments, healthcare professionals on the Iron Range are leveraging new technology and high-speed Internet to improve their patients' lives.

These examples illustrate the stark "digital divide" we've seen emerge in Minnesota across the country. While 97 percent of Anoka County homes enjoy access to high-speed internet, less than one percent of the homes further north in Aitkin County have the same broadband access.

There are commonsense ways we can increase broadband access. The first is with funding. The federal government recently awarded more than $85 million to Minnesota for rural broadband deployment. This will help connect more than 170,000 Minnesota homes and businesses to high-speed Internet. Second, I am leading a bipartisan effort with Republican Senator John Thune of South Dakota in calling on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to modernize its support for rural broadband services to better fit the needs of consumers. Currently, support is tied to traditional telephone service. This means consumers with a package of telephone and broadband service can receive support, but those with standalone broadband subscriptions are not eligible. These outdated rules create a needless link between customers signing up for services they may not want, or need, and broadband deployment. Senator Thune and I have been calling on the FCC to update these rules, including leading a bipartisan letter this spring urging the FCC to ensure rural consumers can have access to affordable broadband services without being compelled to purchase other services.

I am also leading a bipartisan bill to reduce the costs of building broadband infrastructure. My legislation would require states and federal agencies to coordinate highway construction with broadband installation – in other words, that they only "dig once" and lay the groundwork for broadband when building or expanding roads. The bill would also cut red tape for companies, states, and local governments that want to install broadband infrastructure on federal land. I also introduced legislation that would provide incentives for wireless carriers to lease unused spectrum to rural or smaller carriers in order to expand wireless coverage in rural communities.

Minnesota has a strong economy. To keep it strong it's critical that we connect all Minnesotans so they can take advantage of the opportunities that come from being able to quickly reach people across town, the state, and the globe.

Education

Retired seniors become familiar faces at Medford School

By ANNA SEGNER
County Staff Writer

Twelve senior citizens visit Medford School once or twice a week. After signing in at the office, the volunteers go to their classrooms and begin assisting the teacher, carrying out one-on-one tutoring sessions or just talking with the students.

Medford started the Retired and Senior Volunteer (RSVP) program last year, and already it has been deemed a success. The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program is a way for seniors to connect with the youth and the youth to learn from the experienced individuals.

It started as a way to gain more community involvement, and it has grown into so much more.

"They're a part of the school now. The kids that had them in class last year will see them in the hall this year and say 'hey'," said Elementary School Principal Mark Ristau. "To see the smiles on the students and the seniors faces. It's a win-win!

"Any time we can get another adult with a student, it is good for them to gain new insights and perspectives," said Ristau. "We thought this was a nice avenue to involve folks that support the school."

Fifth-grade teacher Malia Norton has George Sierakowski as a volunteer through the program. Norton said that Sierakowski has a "rich history" as he was in the army and is a professional artist.

"The kids are completely fascinated by George. They just light up when he walks through the door. I mean, they could listen to him all day," said Norton. "The kids just wait for Wednesdays because it means that George is coming."

Like other seniors, George has built relationships with students as he helps them with math or reading. "It is really good for the kid's self-esteem. He makes students feel valued, and they definitely have a reciprocal relationship," said Norton. "It helps me out a lot too, since I don't always have as much time for one-on-ones with students."



Staff photo by Anna Segner

Carol Steinbauer, retired Medford school nurse, helps a kindergarten student with her studies in Medford school through the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.

The 12 volunteers are primarily assigned to K-5 classrooms. However, there is one volunteer in the English Learner's classroom, which is technically K-12.

Each volunteer spends two to three hours in a classroom per week. Some come twice a week, while others come once for a longer period of time.

Ristau said that most volunteers have connections with Medford or have grandchildren in the school. One of the volunteers, Carol Steinbauer, was actually the school nurse for many years and is now in retirement.

"These volunteers certainly are not getting rich doing this," said Ristau. "They're coming because they want to, so it has worked out well."

Ristau said that the Medford school is certainly proud of the program and its success. "It has been a good program," he said. "I'm definitely glad that we followed through with it a year ago."

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program is facilitated by Catholic Charities. With various grants, Catholic Charities is able to provide supplemental insurance coverage for seniors while volunteering and cover mileage reimbursement through the Senior Corps program.

RSVP is one of the three volunteer programs of the Senior Corps. The other two programs are foster grandparents and senior companions.

RSVP tasks are vast and fit the need of the community, such as organizing neighborhood watch programs, tutoring and mentoring disadvantaged or disabled youth, renovating homes, teaching English to immigrants and assisting victims of natural disasters.

"Seniors bring a wealth of experience to classrooms. They do provide a small role of mentoring, but it works both ways; volunteers get as much out of it as students do," said Michael Maas. "Our volunteers bring a lot of value to the schools and organization."

Catholic Charities Regional Program Coordinator Maas said that there are senior corps volunteers helping in schools in Medford, Owatonna and New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG).

Maas covers Steele, Rice, Dodge, Mower and Fillmore counties. In Steele County alone, Maas estimated that there are about 55 seniors volunteering in the schools. Nationally, over 40,000 seniors volunteer through one of the RSVP branches.

He visits each school at least once a week to get that "personal contact with both parties: the school and the volunteers."

"We want to make sure everything is running as smoothly as possible," said Maas. "Then I get to meet the volunteers or school faculty and hear their stories too."

If interested in giving back to the community by becoming a senior volunteer at Medford school, contact Maas at 507-450-1518 or email mmaas@cc-winona.org.

Planning strategically for the future at NRHEG schools

NRHEG SCHOOLS



DALE CARLSON

This time of year provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the past year while looking forward with great anticipation of what the new year will bring. As I reflect on the changes I have experienced in the past year, I am most thankful for the opportunity to serve the students, parents, employees and the NRHEG school community. I wish you a blessed holiday season and a new year filled with hope and joy!

The NRHEG School District is a great place to learn, live and work. Our staff approaches its work each day with a commitment to serving students so that every student has the opportunity to achieve at the highest level. I am proud to be part of a team that values every child, and is dedicated to continually improving what we do so that our students receive the very best.

We are fortunate to be led by a Board of Education (BOE) that is committed to continuous improvement in everything that we do. As part of this commitment, the BOE will be leading and engaging the school community in the development of a revised strategic plan that will provide us with a roadmap designed to lead us to achieving our "destination" or vision as a school district.

The BOE has approved partnering with the Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA) to assist our communities with revisiting a strategic planning process with the goal of crafting a continuous improvement plan that will clearly identify a vision of what we want to achieve as a school community, confirm our purpose or mission and affirm what core beliefs and values we believe in, live by and expect from all of us. We are fortunate to also have the South Central Service Cooperative collaborate with MSBA and us on this journey.

A thoughtful and purposeful strategic plan developed with the input of stakeholders across the school district is essential for our sustained success and growth as a school community. Understanding and believing in a clear vision of what we want to achieve in the future is critical to our continual improvement. Knowing and committing to a shared mission or purpose is also essential to growing and improving what we do for our children throughout our communities. Finally, and perhaps most important is acknowledging what we believe and value collectively as a school community. This is especially important in organizations like a public school district that employs a diverse workforce and also serves a diverse stakeholder base. Public school districts are some of the most diverse organizations when you consider not only the students that are served, but also the communities at large. Having shared beliefs and core values as a school community enables you to work together more effectively in achieving your vision.

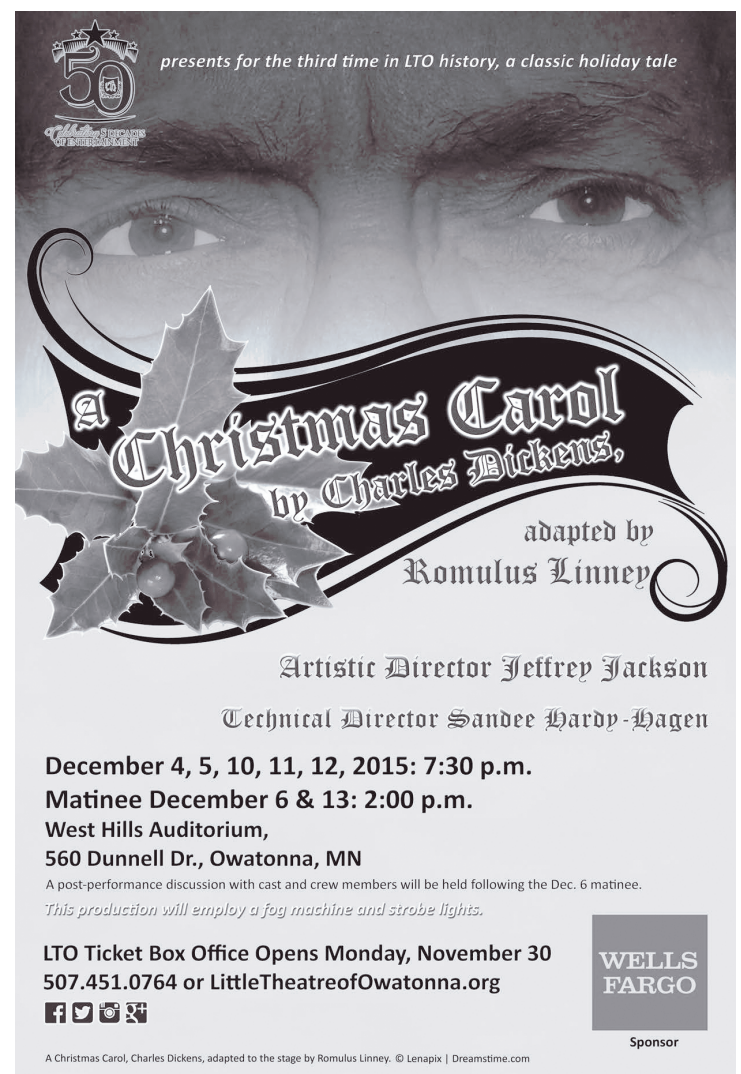
Throughout my 31 years in public education, I have found that we often share the same end goal in what we want to achieve, but it is agreeing on the best plan to reach the goal that can create challenges. A strategic plan will not only bring clarity to what the end goal is, but more importantly, it will assist us with maintaining our focus on what is most important in order for us to reach our agreed upon priorities and goals.

The BOE looks forward to leading the strategic planning process in order to set a vision for what we want to achieve in the future after considering the input from stakeholders throughout the school community on what is most important when it comes to providing quality programming for our students. You can anticipate hearing more about opportunities in the coming weeks and months for you to participate in the planning process. The BOE is developing a survey to be administered to school district residents in late January and/or early February. The BOE will also be hosting public engagement sessions as part of the strategic planning process planned for February or March.

The BOE conducts its regular monthly School Board meeting on the third Monday of each month. The location of the meeting is rotated monthly between the NRHEG Secondary School Media Center in New Richland and the NRHEG Elementary School Media Center in Ellendale. The Dec. 21 meeting will be in New Richland, and the January regular School Board meeting will be held in Ellendale on Jan. 19, 2016, which is a Tuesday. The BOE is meeting on a Tuesday in January due to the School District's observance of the Martin Luther King Holiday on Jan. 18.

Thank you for your continued support and for the difference you make in the lives of our students.

Dale Carlson
NRHEG Superintendent







How to make your kitchen safer and easier to use



THE SAVVY SENIOR

Brought to you by: Prairie Manor Care Center

Prairie Manor Care Center & Heather Haus
220 3rd St. NW, Blooming Prairie
583-4434

Dear Savvy Senior,
What tips can you recommend for making a kitchen senior-friendly? My wife, who loves to cook, has had several kitchen-related accidents over the past year, which is why we would like to modify to make it safer and more practical.
Hungry Husband

Dear Hungry,
There are a number of simple modifications and inexpensive add-ons that can make a big difference in making your kitchen more age-friendly. Depending on your wife's needs, here are some tips for each aspect of the kitchen.

Floors
If you have kitchen throw rugs, to reduce tripping or slipping, replace them with non-skid floor mats or consider gel mats, which are cushiony and more comfortable to stand on for long periods. GelPro.com and WellnessMats.com offer a nice selection.

Lights
If the lighting in her kitchen is dim, replace the old overhead fixture with a bright new ceiling light, and add under-cabinet task lighting to brighten up her kitchen countertops.

Cabinets and drawers
To reduce bending or reaching, organize your kitchen cabinets and drawers so that the items you most frequently use are within comfortable reach. You can also make your cabinets and pantry easier to access by installing pullout shelves or lazy susans. And D-shaped pull-handles for the cabinets and drawers are also recommended because they're more comfortable for arthritic hands to grasp than knobs.

Faucet
If you have a twist-handle kitchen faucet, replace it with an ADA compliant single handle faucet. They're easier to use, especially for seniors with arthritis or limited hand strength. There are also kitchen faucets on the market today (like the Delta Touch20 faucet and Moen MotionSense) that will turn themselves on and off by simply touching the base or moving your hand over a motion sensor. And, for safety purposes, set your hot water tank at 120 degrees to prevent possible water burns.

Microwave and stove
If your microwave is mounted above the stove, consider moving it to a countertop. This makes it safer and easier to reach. And if you're concerned about your wife remembering to turn the stove off, there are automatic stove shut-off devices you can purchase and install to prevent a fire. See cookstop.com, stoveguardintl.com and pioneeringtech.com for some different options.

If you're looking to upgrade some of your appliances too, here are some different senior-friendly features you should look for when shopping.

Refrigerator and freezer
Side-by-side doors work well for seniors because the frequently used items (refrigerated and frozen) can be placed at mid-shelf range for easy access. Pullout adjustable height shelves and a water/ice dispenser on the outside of door are also very convenient.

Stove or cooktop
Look for one with controls in the front so you won't have to reach over hot burners to turn it off, and make sure the controls are easy to see. Flat surface electric or induction burners, or continuous grates on gas stoves are also great for sliding heavy pots and pans from one burner to the next. And ask about automatic shut off burners.

Oven
Self-cleaning ovens are a plus, and consider a side-swing door model. They're easier to get into because you don't have to lean over a hot swing-down door. Also consider a wall-mounted oven, installed at your wife's preferred height to eliminate bending.

Dishwasher
Consider a dishwasher drawer that slides in and out, and is installed on a 6 to 10-inch raised platform. These require less bending to load and unload.

Washer and dryer
Front-load washers and dryers with pedestals that raise the height 10 to 15 inches are also back-savers and easy to access.

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.***

History from the news archives

10 Years Ago
Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2005
Dan Evans, Publisher

As many of you have noticed, the Blooming Prairie Times recently added two new writers to the staff. BPHS seniors, Jenna Nelson and Derek Haubenschild, are both planning to pursue writing careers after high school and are eager to work for the Times. The 18-year-old daughter of Rodney and Rozann Nelson, Jenna Nelson, lives on a farm north of Blooming Prarie. She says, "I'm a Blooming Prairie girl at heart. I think about leaving here and spreading my wings, bit I think that my heart will always bring me back home. Blooming Prairie is all I've ever known and I'll probably end up here someday."

The 18-year-old son of Mike Haubenschild and Kathy Hatteberg, Derek Haubenschild, has also live in Blooming Prairie all of his life. Derek plans to bring a fresh new outlook on the news to the Blooming Prairie Times. "I would love to write on things that appeal to Blooming as a whole," said Derek. "I always find trying to find the truth behind rumors very interesting. I'd like to write about anything that would interest other people. That is what writing is all about."

20 Years Ago
Tuesday, Dec. 12, 1995
Elsie Slinger, Editor

Theresa Hatteberg, daughter of Curt and Susan Hatteberg, was selected first-place winner in the local VFW Post 878 Voice of Democracy audio essay scholarship competition. Theresa's award-winning script will now advance to the district competition.

After a somewhat spirited truth-in-taxation meeting, Blooming Prairie City Council spent the next hour taking care of business. Part of the work included the development of their vision statement: The City government of Blooming Prairie will be efficient and responsive so that the citizens will have an opportunity to live, work and play in a safe and attractive city that has a vision for the future.

50 Years Ago
Thursday, Dec. 9, 1965
Victor, Vernon and Vyrle Krejci, Editors

Another hotly contested town election was held in Blooming Prairie on Tuesday of this week, which resulted in Robert "Bob" Dandelet defeating incumbent Ross W. Hollowell for Mayor and Jack Cashman being elected as councilman, replacing A.L. Fosteson, who was not a candidate for a new term. Both of the newly elected officials will assume office on Jan. 1, 1966. A total of 660 voters went to the polls in the spirited election and the turn-out was one of the largest ever recorded here for town officials. Supporters of both mayor candidates campaigned right up to the deadline Monday night, with hand-bills in circulation throughout the village in their behalf. Blooming Prairie's new mayor informed the Times Tuesday night that "he was extremely gratified by the large vote given him at the polls and that he will endeavor to serve the people of Blooming Prairie in a fair and impartial matter at all times."

An impressive and well-attended service was held at the Red Oak Grove Lutheran Church Sunday afternoon, Dec. 5, when Rev. Leland L. Evenson was installed as the pastor of the parish. The Evensons returned only recently from the mission field in south Africa, where they had served for the past 15 years. They served there since 1950 under the Department of World Missions of the American Lutheran Church.

Blooming Prairie High School's basketball team scored an easy 81-46 win over the Morristown Comets in a game played on the local court last Friday night. The Blossoms jumped to an early lead and were in command of the play throughout the contest.

75 Years Ago
Thursday, Dec. 12, 1940
Frank Krejci, Publisher

There's no lack of Christmas color along Blooming Prairie's main street this week. Stores almost unanimously installed special lighting decorations for their windows last week to take advantage of the light company's offer to furnish free juice to all who cared to use Christmas lights in their store windows or on the storefronts. The response was gratifying and resulted in some beautiful displays. Practically every store along main street has colored lighting displays. The general effect is a delight to the traveler's eye.

Village police and other officials are planning to attend a meeting in Rochester Dec. 17 to be conducted by Elden Rowe, superintendent of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension of Minnesota. The meetings will cover present problems in fifth column activities and sabatoge.

Steele County Times Professional Directory

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319 East Main Street, Blooming Prairie | 888-933-6828 | Fax: 507-583-2389

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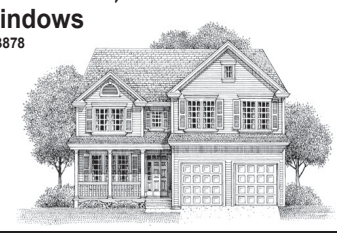


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Community

Wild Game Feed attracts a crowd

By JAMES KNOOP
County Sports Editor

With holiday activities dominating Steele County and the surrounding areas, the 31st Annual Wild Game Feed in Geneva attracted over a thousand men, women and children searching for a good meal and a chance to win a firearm.

At the Geneva Bar and Grill, organizers of the event supplied both on Saturday, offering a wide variety of meats including: pheasant, duck, alligator, frog legs, goose, fish, venison, wild turkey and more. Of the more than 1,000 served, proceeds from the meal raised money for the Eagles Cancer Telethon in conjunction with the January Geneva Cancer Auction.

A large tent was set up behind the bar and grill, but one had to walk through a crowded bar first to even get to the tent. Once inside, a person was hard-pressed to find a place to sit, and as a line formed around the guns, as well as in the meal line, the tent became difficult to weave one's way around.

Besides an enormous variety of meat, guests also had many chances to win a gun. Though the promotional sign praised 50-plus guns, there were 70 raffled off at the event, providing hours of entertainment for those at the event. A game was played for each gun, in which guests purchased a ticket with a color, letter and number. The matching ball selected from the stage would be announced and the winner would choose his or her gun.



Staff photos by James Knoop

Todd Schmidt (left) poses with Tae Schmidt and the Marvin 30-30 he won at the Geneva Wild Game Feed.

One winner of a Marlin 30-30 was Todd Schmidt, a hunter who has been attending the event for five years. Enjoying the afternoon with family, Schmidt stated that this wasn't his first lucky year at the event.

"Last year I won two guns, and so far I got one this year," said Schmidt early in the day.

Schmidt was just one of many who were able to sit, enjoy a good meal and feel the thrill of winning.



One lucky winner chooses his fun prize after winning the raffle drawing on Saturday, Dec. 5.

Milestones

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

Dec. 8
Devin Thompson

Dec. 9
James Krejci
Kevin Johnson
Courtney Vermilyea
Steve Ille

Dec. 10
Gabriel Thompson
Cory Hendrickson
Glen Valek
Leanne Hanson
Lucas Wallace
Bill Schabert
Keely Rose Winn

Dec. 11
Mike Jones
Susan Thorson
Harlan Hinzmann
Maurice Lembke

Dec. 12
James Konz
Kristine Smith
Joshua Jones
John Fouarge

Dec. 13
Elizabeth Wurst
Bob Arett
Tony Schiller

Dec. 14
Jake Ressler
Nikki Ryks
Harvey R. Farr
Joan McDonald
Katie Jo Alderete

Anniversaries

Dec. 10
Robert and Mary Olson

Dec. 11
Mike and Melissa Trihus

Dec. 12
Gwen and Gale Klinger
Tom and Barbie Johnson

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SEMCAC senior menu

Dec. 8: Potato Crusted Pollock, Wild Rice Pilaf, Italian Blend Vegetables, Romaine Salad, Carrot Cake

Dec. 9: Hot Turkey, Mashed Potatoes, Cranberry Sauce, Broccoli, Fresh Fruit Cup

Dec. 10: Hamburger Veg. Soup, Crackers, Cheese on Rye, Peach/Cottage Cheese, Apple Crisp

Dec. 11: Hamburger on Bun, Potato Salad, Calico Beans, Melon Wedge, Cookie

Dec. 14: Beef, Rice & Cabbage, Pickled Beets, Mixed Fruit Cup, Dinner Roll, Cranberry Chews

Dec. 15: Meatloaf, Baked Potato w/Sour Cream, Green Beans w/Mushrooms, Ice Cream

Dec. 16: Baked Ham, Alt: Beef Pattie, Sweet Potatoes, Green Beans/Mushrooms, Dinner Roll, Ice Cream

75 YEARS TOGETHER

Continued from Page 1A

By the time they were headed for home, however, it began to rain, and the rain soon turned to snow. "When we got home, it started to blow," said Roselyn. "It got cold and it was starting to snow. We couldn't do much about it. We couldn't even get out of the yard. In those days, there was no snowplows or snow-blowers or anything; you just had to go with the shovel."

Jerry and Roselyn were disappointed, but had no choice but to postpone the wedding. The food for the party had already been prepared, including some ducks. The family stored the ducks on the porch, which stayed cold until the wedding, held two days later.

The wedding was held in the basement of the Litomysl Church, since the main floor was under construction at the time. Following the ceremony, the couple and their guests enjoyed the meal at home. Most of their family members were able to attend the celebration.

The couple also traveled back to town to have some photographs taken. "They didn't come out to the place and take pictures," remembers Roselyn. "They didn't take hundreds and hundreds of different pictures; one or two scenes and that was it!"

Roselyn also recalls that her mother and Jerry's mother opened the couple's gifts, so everyone could see what they received. "It was a little different then it is now," she said, laughing.

Another difference was the cost of the wedding. Today, a wedding dress can cost hundreds – or even thousands – of dollars, but in 1940, Roselyn paid just $8 for her wedding dress and veil.

That night, the festivities continued with a dance at the North Hall, also known as the St. Joseph Society Hall, which was located across the road from the Litomysl church. "We danced until two o'clock," recalls Jerry.

"We had a pretty good turnout, so it all turned out alright," said Roselyn. The newlyweds were unable to go on a honeymoon, due to the poor traveling conditions, which persisted for several days. In the years that followed, however, the couple did take many trips together, visiting the Bahamas, all 50 states and Mexico.

When their children were born, however, the couple spent more time at home. "We didn't go out much when the kids were little," Roselyn said, with a laugh.

The Rysavys also had seven children (six boys and one girl) and 19 grandchildren. They also have 15 great-grandchildren. This November, the couple celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary with family and friends. "We enjoyed our lives together," said Roselyn.

Library cards offer musical opportunities

BOOK NOOK



NANCY VAILLANCOURT

For several years you have had the ability to download five songs per week legally and free with your Blooming Prairie Branch Library card.

Just go onto the Owatonna Public Library website, www.owatonna.info, and choose Freegal. A library must be chosen - in this case, Blooming Prairie is listed under our main library, the Owatonna Public Library. Recently, a new feature has been added to Freegal - you can now stream music up to three hours per day in addition to your five song downloads per week.

The Freegal music collection offers choices of over 40 genres, including Christmas, Caberet, Celtic, Chamber Music, and Cajun – and that is just under the C's! You can also create your own playlist, so your songs are ready to listen to anytime.

This is only one benefit of having your own library card! Stop in, email at bpbl@selco.info, or call the library at 507-583-7750 for more information.

Just a reminder that our Friends of the Library/Barnes & Noble book sale continues through Thursday, Dec. 10. The profits will be used to support the library and our programming. See you at the library!



A HEAD TURNING FACT!

Birds can turn their heads almost in a complete circle, partly due to their S-shaped cervical curve. Giraffes lack a curve, severely limiting their mobility.

How's your curve?

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Area Church Spotlight



First Lutheran Church, Ellendale

Pastor's corner

Practice patience, joy and kindness this season



Many Christian traditions have times of special preparation before Christmas and Easter. The pre-Christmas or Advent season is in full swing. I will confess that I am an Advent Grinch.

By that, I mean that I resist the world's pull to be fully in a Christmas mode as soon as Halloween is done. It also means that I wait to put up my decorations, I avoid too much time in the decorated stores and like to listen to carols well into the Christmas season – that goes until Jan. 6!

The Advent calls us to a period of preparation and then celebration that is quite at odds with what is happening in the world around us. I think that there is wisdom in the Church's approach and that we can incorporate the expectation of the Advent season into our personal pre-Christmas preparation.

The heart of this is to take on three disciplines, which we carry with us throughout the season: patience, joy and kindness. It is not easy to be patient in the midst of a crowded store or an overflowing parking lot. It is not easy to remain joyful in the sometimes frantic pace that we set for ourselves with the round of parties, decorating and shopping. It is not easy to practice kindness when confronted by rude and strung-out people. And yet, it is precisely these three virtues that we are called to cultivate as we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Savior.

As we enter another Advent season, I find myself, once again, needing to take a step back and find some perspective in my life. I need to embrace the waiting, not becoming impatient to get to Christmas because I need to hope more than I need to find the perfect tree. I need, above all, to hope that in the darkness there is light. This Advent I encourage you to heed the call of Jesus to be vigilant at all times so that we will be prepared to welcome him at his coming. Through your patience, joy and kindness allow the Lord to transform you. Then, when we come to the end of this season and celebrate the great gift of our redemption, not only will our house be ready, but our heart will be resplendent, as well.

Fr. John Sauer,
Sacred Heart, Owatonna
and Holy Trinity, Litomysl

Area Church Schedule



Lutheran

AURORA LUTHERAN
6329 SE 38th St., Owatonna
Pastor Stephanie Wood
(507) 676-5696
9:15 a.m. Sunday School
10 a.m. Sunday Worship Service

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
5881 S.E. 118th St., Blooming Prairie
Interim Pastor David Hurtt
(507) 633-9331
8:30 a.m. worship 9:30 a.m. Sunday school 10:30 a.m. worship

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH—ELCA
434 First St. SW., Blooming Prairie
Charles Leonard, Senior Pastor
Heidi Heimgartner, Associate Pastor
(507) 583-6621
firstlutheranbp.com
Worship: 8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
8953 S.W. 37th Ave., Hope
Pastor Sandy Miller
(507) 451-3854
Services: 9 a.m. Sunday School, Adult Ed: 10:15 a.m.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN—LCMS
2500 Seventh Ave. N.E., Owatonna
The Rev. Mark Rosenau,
the Rev. Gregory Schlicker
(507) 451-4125
www.goodshephardowatonna.com
Services: 8 a.m., 9:15 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
9651 SW 75th Street Ellendale
(507)465-8366
Family Choir 9:00-9:15 a.m.
Sunday School/Adult Education 9:15 a.m. Sunday, Worship 10:15 a.m.

ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN—ELCA
30450 570th Ave., Waltham
Minister Dwight DoBell
(507) 567-2474
Service: 8:30 a.m. Sunday Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

RED OAK GROVE LUTHERAN—ELCA
30456 Mower-Freeborn Road, Austin
Pastor Lindsay Stolen
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Making a difference



Miley Ahrens, age 7, of Owatonna, donated over eight inches of hair to Pantene Beautiful Lengths on Nov. 24. She was trying to grow it long enough to donate 10 inches to the organization Wigs for Kids, but fell about a little over an inch short. She still, however, collected $60 in money donations for the non-profit that gives free hair pieces to children battling cancer and other diseases that cause them to lose their hair. Miley also donated her eight inches of hair to another organization called Pantene Beautiful Lengths, that has partnered with the American Cancer Society to give free wigs to women battling cancer. Above are Miley and Lynn Parker, of the Hair Revolution in Owatonna, who also helped make her hair donation possible.

Search for Miss Steele County announced

If you are female, single, have never been married or given birth and are between the ages of 19 to 30 years, applications are being accepted for the title of 2016 Miss Steele County! Miss Steele County will represent her county at the Miss Minnesota pageant, which will be held at Ritsche Auditorium, March 12, 2016, in the city of St. Cloud, Minnesota.

The young lady chosen as Miss Steele County will become an ambassador for the Steele County area and will receive an official title and sash.

The young lady chosen as Miss Minnesota will receive a prize package worth $7,000 and the chance to represent Minnesota at the 2016 Miss International pageant held in Jacksonville, Florida.

"Go Red for Women," American Heart Assoc., is the official Charity of the Miss Minnesota Pageant.

Miss contestants will compete in "personal interview," "fitness wear," "fun fashion wear" and "evening gown" categories. (There is no talent or swimsuit competition).

Young ladies living in Steele County interested in applying should write for a bio-form to Miss Minnesota, International Pageant, 7287 West 153rd Street, Box 240537, Apple Valley, MN 55124. Or, call for information at 952-432-6758, or send a fax to 952-953-3896, or e-mail pagunltd@frontiernet.net.

Blooming Prairie Cancer Group

Cancer Corner

Support the fighters, Admire the survivors, Honor the taken.

An ever-changing cancer group

By ALAN VAN ORMER
Managing Editor



Staff photo by Alan Van Ormer

Cheri Krejci and Jennifer Milton are just two of many volunteers who have helped the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group raise money since 2001 to help those with cancer and to provide resources for cancer research.

Each year the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group tries to add a little different spin on its annual two-day cancer auction. Stay tuned for the 2016 auction to see what's new.

"People like to see something different. It makes it exciting having something different," said Jennifer Milton, who has been a member of the cancer group for most of the 14 years it has existed. "We're trying to raise more money."

An 80-year-old Eunice Coughlin started the cancer group in 2001. The first event was a silent auction, bake sale and dance on May 12 in the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club. That day an estimated $1,700 was raised.

It has grown since and other activities have been added.

In 2004, the event was moved to the Blooming Prairie Cue Company and has been held there ever since. That day there was both a silent and live auction. In addition, $10,000 was raised as people watched Sparky Wachlin's long hair being cut.

Two years later in 2006, it was changed to two nights and included two live auctions.

Cheri Krejci said that was important because the group thought it could raise more money with two nights of live auctions, because of the increased donations.

Over the next couple of years there were two different events added. In 2007, it was a pigeon race. The next year was the great goat giveaway.

In 2009, the community fund started. Since that year the fund has been used for gas cards, parking passes and grocery cards. The group has also purchased a bed, bought lumber and assisted with paying for utilities.

"We don't give cash to people," Milton said. "We give some kind of card or gift certificate."

The 2010 edition was the 10th annual event. It included a "Dancing with the Stars" quilt donated by Linda Christianson in honor of the 10th annual event. Then, in 2012, Paint Blooming Prairie Pink was introduced, as was the Field of Flags. The first year there were 75 flags. In 2015, the Field of Flags grew to 250.

Krejci said the introduction of the Field of Flags has been very uplifting because people are able to see it. "They just stop by and think about it," she said. "I've heard people say they drive by and they get the shivers."

Then came 2013, when the Cancer Walk was reintroduced. In addition, Cutting for a Cure started and the cancer cab began running.

Milton said the cancer group's goal is to help those in the community and surrounding area who are struggling with cancer. "It helps ease their burden a bit in hopes they will pay it forward when they are done," she said. 'We help them, they'll help us, and we can help somebody else. We've found that to be true."

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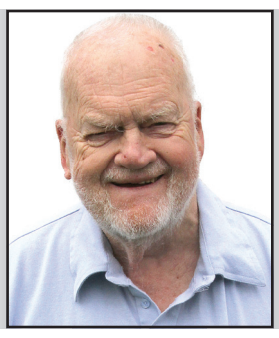
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OUTSIDE THE LINES



LEMAR NELSON

The sports week

After one full week of winter sports, some observations start to emerge and some accomplishments noted. Although the boys' basketball team is under .500, I think it has played better than many expected. Everyone knew that Anthony Nelson would get the attention of all opponents and have to carry the team. The play of sophomores Jake Ressler and Marten Morem has been a pleasant surprise. The two have taken turns as second scorers, and they have been a rather steady presence on defense as well.

One other positive so far in the young season is the enthusiasm and intensity of all the players. The team has been fun to watch and I am betting that they will get better, as the younger players gain more experience.

And who would have thought that the girls would begin the new week with a three-game winning streak. The loss of the team's leading scorers, Taylor Hagen and Madison Worke, put a big hole in the offense, but new coach John Bruns has managed to make the team competitive and win games, even though at least the first two, were pretty ugly contests. Again, the play of junior Marissa Larson and sophomore Sam Wurst have given the offense a little boost. Add the experience of Lauren Larkoski, Kalyn Naatz and Hannah Ahrens, and there is a nucleus for a representative contingent. They also have surprised fans with their enthusiasm and their gutsy work habits.

Finally, what coach Chad Gimbel wouldn't give for a few more bodies of size to shore up the wrestling squad. It is already evident that there are some wrestlers of quality who will more than hold their own. Several have already won all four of their dual bouts so far. But when the team has to forfeit three or more bouts in each match, it becomes a test of wills to keep the enthusiasm high and the will to participate strong. A tip of the hat this week goes to that undermanned group of athletes. The team has already won a match, and it won only two all of last year. Keep fighting, boys.

A final tally

Elsewhere in this issue I summarized the fall volleyball season. As a last hurrah for the team, coach Ranell Kittelson presented several individual awards and honors at the end-of year get-together. The team finished the season with a 9-16 overall record and placed fourth in the conference at 3-3.

Abby Wayne and Lauren Larkoski gave the team exceptional leadership as the co-captains, and Larkoski earned Most Valuable Player honors and an All-Conference selection as well. Wayne shared the Most Valuable Player Offense honors with Alyssa Krohnberg and made Honorable Mention All-Conference. Bria Baldwin received the Most Valuable Player Defense award, and Kate Grunklee gained the Most Improved honor.

Wayne earned the Most Dedicated Player award, and Hannah Ahrens was named the Awesome Blossom. Fifteen girls earned letters, and 10 of the players also were handed academic honors too. As coach Kittelson summarized the team and the season,

OUTSIDE THE LINES
Continued on Page 3B

OWATONNA BOYS BASKETBALL

Bringin' it home



Staff photo by James Knoop

Huskies find first win of the season at home

Owatonna's Andrew Jackson (34) and Jay Sullivan watch as sophomore Dalton Kubista throws down a dunk against Rochester Mayo en route to the Huskies first win of the season. Owatonna defeated the Spartans 63-43.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE WRESTLING

Blossoms matmen 1-2 in quad to start season

By LEMAR NELSON
Staff Sports Writer

After wining the second match in a quadrangular meet at St. Clair, the Blooming Prairie wrestling team is already halfway to its win total of a year ago.

The Blossoms defeated the host Cyclones 40-25 in the second match of the invitational at St. Clair on Tuesday, Dec. 1, to win one and lose two for the night.

The team lost to Mankato East 39-31 in the first match of the meet, and was soundly trounced by Maple River 60-19 in the final match. Ethan Arett, Colton Krell, Jon Hansen and Seth Peterson all finished with 3-0 records in the dual bouts.

In the winning match, besides the four three-time winners, Dylan Nirk won by a fall over David Loefler in the second period at 170, and Payton Simon lost a tight 6-4 decision to Dylan Rasmussen at 132 on an escape in the last period.

Arett and Hansen won by falls at 113 and 138, Krell took a close 12-10 verdict over Aaron Draebel at 160, with a reversal, near fall, escape and a takedown, all in the third period; and Peterson scored a major decision 20-5 at 152 over George Goebel.

In the first match against East, Arett took a major decision, Hansen recorded a fast first period pin and Peterson pinned his opponent in the

BP WRESLING
Continued on Page 3B



Staff photo by James Knoop

Blooming Prairie's Ethan Arett lifts his hips as NRHEG's Brett Kubiatowicz attempts to take him to the mat. Arett won the bout with a 12-8 decision.

MEDFORD BASKETBALL



Staff photo by James Knoop

Medford's sophomore Bryce McCarty drives past a Wolverines opponent during last Tuesday's home win.

Tigers win at home

By JAMES KNOOP
County Sports Editor

In exciting fashion, the Medford Tigers boys basketball team found their first win of the season in a 55-52 battle against the Glenville-Emmons Wolverines.

The game was the Tigers' second straight home game, and like the first game, it would prove to be close through and through with Medford barely edging out the three-point victory.

Medford would have less luck on the road, as the Cleveland Clippers easily cut off any momentum with a 49-28 victory. The loss dropped the Tigers to 1-3 this season with three straight road games still ahead.

The first comes against a young Blooming Prairie squad who has nabbed half of its four games for a 2-2 record. Next will come 3-1 Jordan, and the final road game will be against 1-2 Triton.

The Tigers lost to Blooming Prairie twice last year by scores of eight and six. They beat Triton in a nail-biting 63-61 finish.

Medford will not play at home again until Friday, Dec. 18, when they host the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva Panthers.

Sports

BLOOMING PRAIRIE GIRLS BASKETBALL

Girls starts season 3-0 under new coach



Staff photo by Chris Schad

Senior Kalyn Naatz looks gets wards off a Triton opponent on Tuesday, Dec. 1. The Blossoms won the game 43-38.

By LEMAR NELSON
Staff Sports Writer

The third game of the week proved to be the best game for the Blooming Prairie girls basketball team as it defeated Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton (JWP), 56-42 at home Friday, Dec. 4.

The first conference victory upped the Blossom record to 3-0 for the young season.

The locals jumped to an early lead and were able to hold a 6-to-10-point lead most of the way. The most encouraging aspect was the way they closed out the game. Unlike the win over Grand Meadow earlier, the Blossoms outscored the Bulldogs 13-5 in the last three minutes on free throws and the ability to withstand late pressure from JWP.

"We built a lead early tonight," remarked coach John Bruns, "and we did a much better job of closing out the game. The girls handled the Bulldog late pressure and were able to score from the free throw line as well. This was an impressive victory for our young and inexperienced squad."

The team shot 32 percent from the field on 22-of-68 tries, while JWP made 22 percent on 14-of-63 attempts. The girls have been taking turns in leading the team, scoring, and this time Marissa Larson had the hot hand. She scored 18 points and pulled down 18 rebounds for her first double double and a career night.

Lauren Larkoski had 11 points and four steals, center Kalyn Naatz added 10 points, including four big free throws in the last two minutes, and Kylie Forystek and Sam Wurst added eight and seven points. Hannah Ahrens contributed five steals, five rebounds, and an assist. JWP outrebounded the Blossoms 43-40, but they turned the ball over 23 times to 17 mistakes for BP.

The junior varsity team improved its record with a 41-20 victory over JWP. Coach Cory Hendrickson commented that the team played a pretty complete game this time. "We played two good halves," he said, "and we had a number of girls step up and be aggressive."

Sam Wurst led the scoring with 11 points, but Ayren Ingvalson, and Maya Lembke counted eight and six points, and six other girls scored at least two points. The team is 2-1 for the year.

An 8-minute stretch of no points in the first half did the freshmen in, and they lost to the Bulldogs 32-21. BP trailed 18-8 at the break. Riauna Bishop counted eight points to lead the Blossom scoring for the 0-2 team.

Girls escape with win

Missed free throws in the last minute almost cost the Blooming Prairie girls basketball team a victory, but the team hung on and escaped with a 36-35 win over Grand Meadow in the home opener on Thursday, Dec. 4.

"We led the entire game, twice by 11 points, but Grand Meadow made some shots late and took advantages of some missed free throws by us to make the game close," coach John Bruns said.

A Grand Meadow three-pointer at the buzzer closed out the game.

Sophomore Sam Wurst recorded her first double double of the season with 11 points and 12 rebounds. The team shot only 29 percent from the field, but the defense held the Super Larks to just 18 percent on 10-of-53 attempts. BP made just 4-of-14 free throw attempts, while Grand Meadow sank 13-of-18 tries.

Grand Meadow had a narrow 34-33 edge in rebounding, with Marissa Larson second to Wurst with seven boards. Lauren Larkoski stole the ball six times, had an assist, nine points and three rebounds. Kylie Forystek added four steals and two assists.

Grand Meadow won the junior varsity preliminary, 28-25. Sam Wurst had nine points for the locals.

Girls win opener

Trailing for most of the game, the Blooming Prairie girls basketball team took its first lead with less than eight minutes remaining, and then struggled to a 43-38 season-opening game over Triton at Dodge Center. The contest on the Cobra floor Tuesday, Dec. 2, opened the non-conference season for both teams.

Both teams had difficulty in shooting, as the Blossoms made only 20 percent from the floor on 10-of-49 attempts. Triton shot a little better, making 15-of-50 for 30 percent.

BP took its first lead at 7:40 left on two free throws from Sam Wurst, and it kept the lead, despite some poor shooting. The locals did get to the line 47 times, making 23 of them for 40 percent. The Cobras made only 5-of-15 attempts, and four Triton players fouled out of the game.

Kalyn Naatz led the local scoring with nine points and Lauren Larkoski, Wurst and Marissa Larson all contributed eight. BP had a 51-40 margin in rebounding, led by Larson and Hannah Ahrens with 12 and 11, respectively. Kylie Forystek had six steals and two assists, but the Blossoms also had 17 turnovers.

"Many of the girls were playing in their first varsity game, but we did some good things, despite the poor shooting," coach John Bruns said. "For a first game, I thought the girls got a good start, and if we can improve on the turnovers, we will be all right."

It was a split for the Blossom prelim teams. The junior varsity team defeated Triton, 45-39 after the locals led 26-19 at the half, but the freshmen scored only two points in the second half and was humbled 35-11 in that prelim.

"It was nice to get a first win, but we had too many turnovers and missed opportunities," coach Cory Hendrickson said. "We built a good lead, but then had to hang on by rushing too much and making too many mistakes. It was a pretty typical first game."

Sam Wurst, McKenna Hein and Rachael Oswald counted 12, 11 and nine points in the JV win, and freshman Julia Worke added eight. Worke had five of the 11 points scored by BP in the freshman prelim, and three other players scored two points each.

Coach Hendrickson lamented the excessive turnovers as a main factor in the inability to score.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE BOYS BASKETBALL

Blossoms go 2-1 after early losses

By LEMAR NELSON
Staff Sports Writer

Waterville-Elysian-Morristown (WEM) showed Blooming Prairie little mercy, as the Bucs rolled to a 76-51 victory over the visiting Awesome Blossoms Friday, Dec. 4, in the first conference boys basketball action of the season.

WEM led 35-24 at the break and then poured in 41 second half points for the runaway victory. The Blossoms played without sophomore Jake Ressler in this game

BP shot just 33 percent as a team and managed just 29 rebounds in the contest. Anthony Nelson led the local scoring with 19 points on 7-of-10 shots from the field and 5-of-6 at the free throw line. Marten Morem had 13 points and five rebounds, but no other Blossom managed more than four points. Nelson pulled down six rebounds, and Wyatt Grundmeier and Connor Getchell had five rebounds each. The team made just 9-of-17 free throw attempts, but the boys had only eight turnovers in the game, as they dropped to 2-3 for the season.

Way too many turnovers and missed free throws led to a 56-33 loss for the junior varsity team in the prelim.

BP edges athletics

Although they trailed most of the game, the Awesome Blossoms led when it really counted and defeated Lyle-Pacelli (LP) 57-52 in the first win for the team on home floor and evened the record at 2-2 for the young season. St Clair had defeated the locals in an earlier home contest.

Most of the excitement came in the last two minutes of the game when BP came from behind. A driving layup by Anthony Nelson got the locals within two at 51-49, and Nick Thompson's rebound basket tied the game at 51-51 with 1:29 left on the clock. One of two free throws by Jordan Cotter put the Athletics up by one, but sophomore Jake Ressler scored on a shot from close in, and the Blossoms were up by one again with 1:25 left.

A LP turnover gave BP the ball, and Dawson Heuer calmly sank two free throws for a three-point edge. Anthony Nelson's basket at the buzzer iced the game for the locals.

When asked after the game what he was thinking when he went to the free throw line and just a one-point edge, Heuer remarked, "I was thinking I had better make these." He did.

BP shot a torrid 47 percent from the field, including 4-of-12 from three-point range. Nelson again led the scoring with 22 points, but Ressler added 14 and Marten Morem chipped in 10. Noah Jiskra counted 20 points for the Athletics, mostly on drives through the lane. Cotter added 14 for the visitors.

The JV team evened its record at 2-2 with a convincing 56-29 victory over the Athletics. All 18 players on the team got into the game, and 11 different boys counted points. Cameron Kubista had 13 and Max Romeo added 11 points to lead the Blossom scoring.

Gabe Hagen scored 22 points and Tim Wolf added 10, as the freshmen pummeled Lyle-Pacelli 55-26 in their prelim. The locals led 23-13 at the halftime

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Gopher Conference Standings

Girls Basketball

	Conf.	Overall
Blooming Prairie	0-0-0	3-0-0
Bethlehem Academy	0-0-0	2-0-0
NRHEG	0-0-0	2-0-0
United South Central	0-0-0	1-1-0
Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	0-0-0	0-0-0
Medford	0-0-0	0-1-0
Maple River	0-0-0	0-2-0

Boys Basketball

	Conf.	Overall
Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	1-0-0	4-0-0
Maple River	1-3-0	2-0-0
United South Central	3-3-0	1-1-0
Bethlehem Academy	0-5-0	2-3-0
Blooming Prairie	1-1-0	1-2-0
NRHEG	1-0-0	1-2-0
Medford	0-0-0	1-3-0

Wrestling

	Conf.	Overall
Maple River	1-0-0	3-0-0
WEM/JWP	0-0-0	0-2-0
United South Central	0-0-0	1-0-0
New Richland-H-E-G H.S.	1-0-0	2-2-0
Blooming Prairie	0-1-0	1-3-0
Medford	0-0-0	0-1-0

Big 9 Conference Standings

Girls Basketball

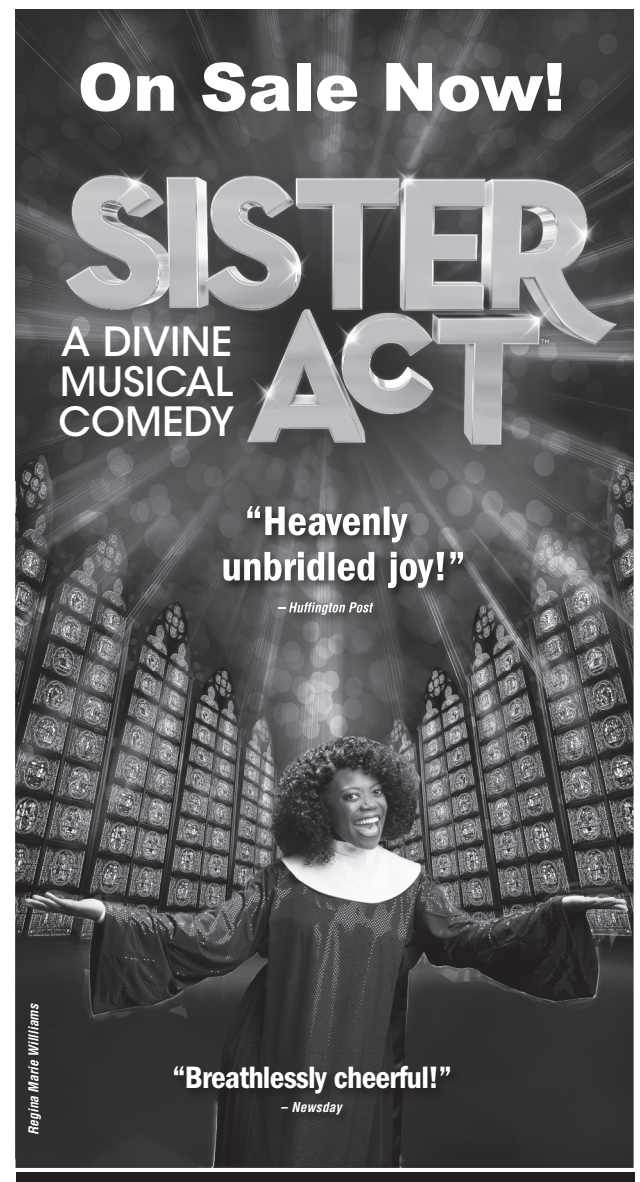
	Conf.	Overall
Northfield H.S.	3-0-0	3-0-0
Rochester John Marshall	2-0-0	2-1-0
Rochester Mayo	1-0-0	3-0-0
Winona	1-0-0	2-0-0
Austin	1-1-0	1-1-0
Rochester Century	1-1-0	2-2-0
Red Wing	1-1-0	1-3-0
Mankato West	0-0-0	1-0-0
Owatonna	0-0-0	0-0-0
Albert Lea	0-2-0	0-2-0
Faribault	0-2-0	0-2-0
Mankato East	0-2-0	1-3-0

Boys Basketball

	Conf.	Overall
Red Wing	4-0-0	5-0-0
Rochester John Marshall	3-0-0	3-0-0
Austin	2-0-0	3-0-0
Northfield H.S.	3-1-0	4-1-0
Owatonna	2-1-0	2-2-0
Mankato East	1-2-0	2-3-0
Faribault	1-2-0	1-2-0
Mankato West	1-2-0	1-2-0
Winona	1-2-0	1-2-0
Rochester Mayo	1-3-0	1-4-0
Albert Lea	0-3-0	0-3-0
Rochester Century	0-3-0	0-5-0

Wrestling

	Conf.	Overall
Albert Lea Area	1-0-0	8-0-0
Owatonna	1-0-0	1-0-0
Northfield	1-3-0	2-1-0
Rochester John Marshall	1-2-0	4-2-0
Rochester Mayo	1-1-0	2-2-0
Austin	0-0-0	2-2-0
Mankato East	0-0-0	2-3-0
Winona/Winona Cotter	0-0-0	0-3-0
Faribault	0-1-0	0-1-0
Mankato West	0-1-0	0-1-0
Rochester Century	0-2-0	0-3-0



Sports

BLOOMING PRAIRIE CROSS-COUNTRY

Cross-country team honored

By LEMAR NELSON
Staff Sports Writer

Along with the fall volleyball summary, coach John Bruns and the cross-country teams had their annual wind-up program last week, at which time the coach presented several awards.

Sophomore Alec Ille and junior Alison Pryor led the way for their respective teams. Ille finished first in all but two meets, with Elijah Baker not far behind. Ille became the first Blossom runner since Ian Campbell in 2005 to earn a spot at the state meet.

He was named the team Most Valuable Player. He, Elijah Baker and Isaac Baker were All-Conference selection. Ille's fastest time in the season was a 16:28, and he counted three other 16-minute plus times and ran just over 17 minutes in the state meet.

The Most Improved runner award went to Ethan Grant and Most Dedicated honor was accorded Ille. Isaac Baker received the career Most Dedicated runner. Cameron Kubista, Jesse Schewe and Grant also made the Academic All-Conference list. Six runners earned letters this season.

For the girls, Alison Pryor made the most news, leading the girls in every meet. Unfortunately the team ran incomplete most of the season until near the end, when several junior high runners advanced to the varsity. Pryor earned Most Valuable Player honors and recorded her fastest time of 20:45 over the 5,000-meter course late in the season. Five girls earned letters.

Pryor was also presented the Most Dedicated award and Ashley Brown received the Most Improved runner honor. Pryor, Allison Krohnberg and Rose Johnson made the All-Conference Academic team.

As Bruns summarized the season, "We had some really good improvement on our teams, especially the boys. Ille transformed into a great leader and a very good runner, and he still has room for improvement. He finished in the top five of almost every meet he ran. Pryor also finished high for the girls in every meet and improved a lot over the season. Overall, it was a very good year for BP cross-country."

'Overall, it was a very good year for BP cross-country.'
— John Bruns, Blooming Prairie Cross-country Coach

NRHEG BASKETBALL

Boys and girls roundups

By LEMAR NELSON
Staff Sports Writer

It is only two games into the season, but the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) girls basketball team claimed its second straight victory Friday, Dec. 4, when the Panthers defeated Fairmont 62-52.

The Panthers jumped an early lead and never gave the lead up. The team held a 27-22 margin at the half.

"We had to readjust defensively early because of some foul problems," commented coach Onika Peterson, "but we attacked the basket because of it, instead of counting on the three-point shooting."

The Panthers scored 35 points in the second half.

NRHEG had a 40-35 edge in rebounding and shot 34 percent from the field. Gretchen Raimaker led the scoring with 20 points, and Maddie and Marnie Wagner added 11 and 10. Marnie Wagner pulled down nine rebounds, had an assist and a steal, and Maddie Wagner added seven rebounds, with four assists and three steals. Raimaker also handed out four assists and had a steal.

The team upped the record to 2-0 and travels to Waseca for a non-conference game tonight (Tuesday).

Boys

After two early season losses, an early flurry of points to build a lead enabled NRHEG to get its first win of the season against always-tough Bethlehem Academy 66-41.

The first conference game of the year at Faribault on Friday, Dec 4, left the Panthers 1-2 in the young season.

"We got some good looks inside," commented coach Pat Churchill, "and we got some extra possessions by hustling on the offensive board I thought we played more aggressively in this game, especially on defense, and we were able to build on the early lead."

Oakley Baker led the scoring with 22 points, but Tyler Raimann counted 14 points, with eight rebounds and John Cole added 12 points. Eight players scored for the winners, who led by 12 at the break. Jack Clark and Brenden Trump counted 12 and 11 for the Cardinals.

BP WRESTLING
Continued from Page 1B

third period. Krell won an 11-7 decision and Riley Olson and Mitchell Oswald both recorded falls in the first period.

In the final match against Maple River, Arett won by a fall, Hansen took a 10-4 decision, Peterson won by forfeit and Krell won a wild 14-5 decision.

"I was happy with this first effort," commented coach Chad Gimbel. "We had a couple of tough losses, and I saw things that need improvement quickly, but it was a good first meet."

NRHEG wins BP dual

Four forfeits doomed the Blooming Prairie wrestlers, as New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) handed BP its third loss of the season.

The Panthers used two of the forfeits at the top weights to break open a close, 30-27 match and win by a 42-27 count at New Richland Thursday, Dec. 4.

After Mitchell Oswald pinned Alex Burkmeier in 55 seconds of the first period at 195 pounds, the locals trailed by just three points, but the hosts then won the match by the two forfeits.

Ethan Arett scored the first points for BP on a 12-8 verdict Brett Kubiatowicz at 113 pounds. Two forfeits gave NRHEG a lead, but Payton Simon recorded a fall over Tyler Jacobson in the third period at 132 pounds, and Jon Hansen gave BP its first lead at 138 pounds on a second period pin of Trai Wirks. Hansen led 7-1 after the first period on two takedowns and a near fall.

Cole Stilicho took the lead back for the Panthers at 145 pounds and Bryce Upland scored a major decision over Seth Peterson at 152 pounds for a 22-15 edge. Colton Krell drew the Blossoms back within one point with a first period pin over Lucas Herrmann, but Dylan Nirk lost an 11-4 verdict to Karter Stetten at 170 pounds, and Troy Hoppe outpointed Riley Olson 18-1 at 182 pounds. Mitchell Oswald counted the last points with a first period pin of Alex Buccmaer at 195 pounds, but the two last forfeits sealed the Panther win.

As coach Chad Gimbel commented after the match, "We just have to give away too many points from forfeits. We are very competitive in the bouts that we do wrestle, and a few individuals are already posting some impressive wins. We will just keep going with what we have."

OUTSIDE THE LINES
Continued from Page 1B

"We made great strides and a lot of improvement over the course of the season. As a first year varsity coach, I could not have asked for a better group of girls, and a more hardworking team. They made the year just a lot of fun!"

'Tis the season

I don't know about the rest of you, but when Thanksgiving has ended and the Advent season has arrived, I usually begin reminiscing about the year just passing. This year is no exception. I will have more to say about 2015 in the next two weeks, but my thoughts have already turned to winding up this year and looking forward to another brand new year and new adventures.

Most of my readers probably are aware that one of the most enjoyable traditions in my immediate family is the tradition of Red Elf. I don't mind telling you that I am beginning to worry just a bit because neither that little guy nor his brothers (sisters) have made an appearance yet. My little tree is still perched on the cabinet, and I have started to turn the lights on each evening, but so far, no elves. I realize that it is still a trifle early, but I will be relieved when they return. I will keep you posted.

Out and about

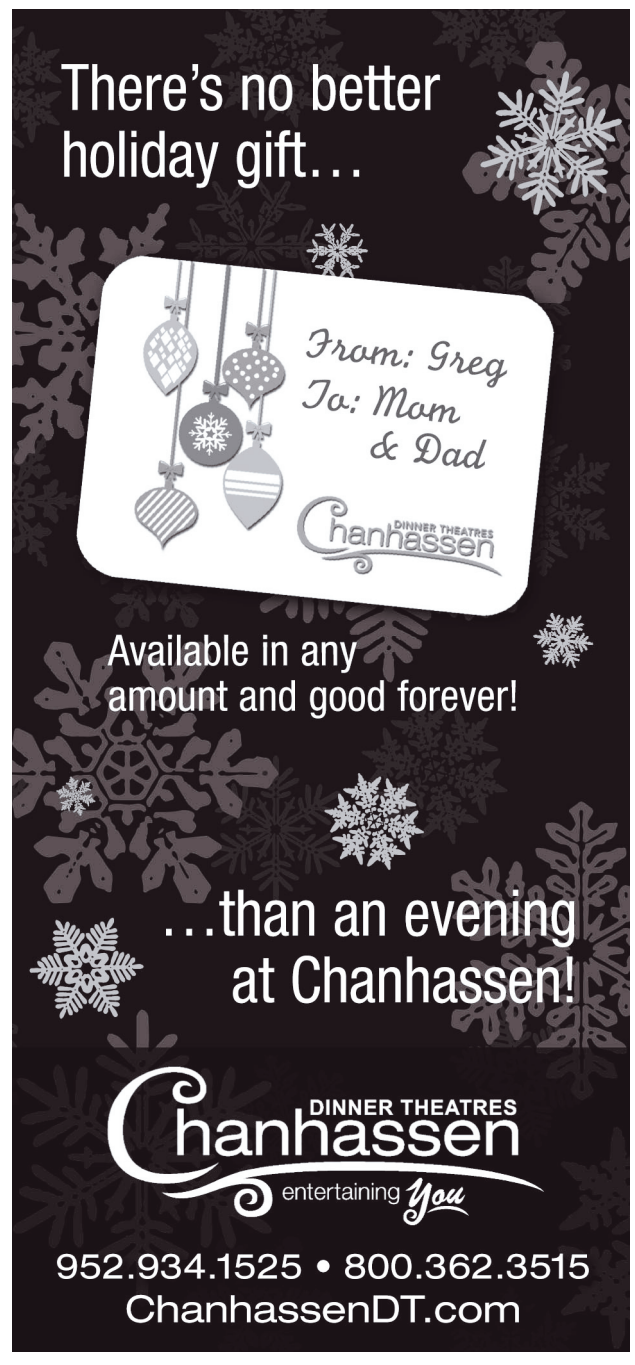
If the line down the block gave an indication, the Holiday Dazzle celebration proved a successful one. The line formed to see Santa Claus at Farmers and Merchants Bank early, and the occasion kept everyone busy. In fact, the ribbon-cutting, the Santa House, the wagon rides, the crowning of Mr. Scrooge and the various specials at the downtown businesses gave the event a good deal of publicity and success.

One of the reasons for its success came in the form of pleasant weather. If my memory serves me right, this particular event usually occurs on the coldest day of the winter. The mild temps showed that snow is not necessary in organizing an event to satisfy an audience. It was a good time all around.

The brunch at St. Columbanus Church Sunday morning brought many people in, especially to see all of the nativity pieces that were displayed. The various pieces from the entire world impressed all visitors to the brunch, and it provided a unique and wonderful scene to put the Christmas spirit into the public eye.

Last night the BPHS music department presented its annual Christmas concert at First Lutheran Church. I will have more to say about that next week, but the groups again did much to instill the holiday spirit into all who attended, and they did a fine job, as always. Out of space, but who says there is nothing going on in Blooming Prairie.

We'll talk again.



About leaving: Thank you

THE HIGHLIGHT REEL



JAMES KNOOP

I sat in the locker room listening to Coach Aaron Morehart give an inspiring halftime speech.

It was the final tournament of my senior year of basketball. It was the same tournament I'd won with my older brother three years earlier, and I couldn't wait to win again.

We were up by seven.

"We are going to press for the entire game," Coach had said before the game. He wasn't kidding, and at halftime he reminded us of that.

Kirby Yoder, Matt Boyd, Isaiah Hoppe, Jerry Martin and me were not the most talented basketball players you ever saw. We were, however, the most in shape, and we killed teams with our full-court press and our fast-break offense. It was with that speed and endurance that we kept that seven-point lead the rest of the game, pressing our way to a third championship in five years.

And then — just like that — it ended. My high school basketball career was over.

The seniors

There were four seniors on the team that year (Kirby, Jerry, Matt and myself) and we were all very aware of the weight of that game. We would never play another game together. We knew that. Sure, we could make plans for alumni games and reunions, but we all knew it wasn't likely.

We were right, and almost seven years later, "going our separate ways" would be an understatement.

Kirby currently lives in South Carolina with his wife and newborn baby girl. Jerry still lives in northern Minnesota with his wife and baby girl. Matt lives in Massachusetts with his wife and my wife Meredith and I (along with our son, Elijah) are moving to Oregon.

Kirby and I still keep in touch, but that's about it. We all have different lives and live in completely different parts of the country.

Endings

That's the thing about leaving. It just keeps happening our whole lives. You spend years growing up with people you love in a state you love, but then before you know it they are leaving and then you are leaving.

I miss my senior basketball team. High school sports is just something you can't really ever replace. It's hard to explain. You become best friends off the court, and on the court, those players are more than friends — they are an extension of yourself. You know exactly what they are thinking. They know what you are thinking. You will do anything for them, and you know they have your back. You work together for each other, and no one cares about personal glory.

And then it's over.

The lesson

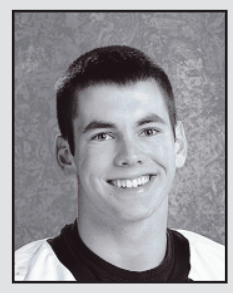
My family and I will be leaving Blooming Prairie this week for a new adventure in our lives, and while I'm thrilled to see what adventures God has in store for us, I feel the weight of leaving.

I feel the weight of leaving friends, family and the best state in this country.

I feel the weight of leaving the best job I have ever had. I'm leaving an amazing managing editor, who has taught me so much and been patient with me as I've learned. I'm leaving coworkers and community members who have been so encouraging of my work, and I'm leaving high school athletes whose dedication and work ethic have made my job so amazing.

I guess the lesson here is that when you are an amazing person, you make it hard for people like me to leave. I'm so grateful for you all. God bless and Merry Christmas. Thanks for reading.

ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



ANTHONY NELSON

Following his exploits on the football field, Anthony Nelson is the Blooming Prairie athlete of the week. The senior Mr. Do-Everything has led the scoring for the Blossoms in all of the games so far. Last week he scored 19 and 22 points in two games, and earlier in the year he fell just one point short of John Rumpza's record when he poured in 43 points in the season opener. He also brings the ball up the court in games.



SAM WURST

Just a sophomore, Sam Wurst gets the first nod as female athlete of the week for winter sports. In the win over Grand Meadow last week, Wurst earned her first double double of the season by scoring 11 points and pulling down 12 rebounds. She led a good team effort on defense, holding the visitors to just 18 percent shooting and only 35 points.

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Winter SPORTS 2015/16

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DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION
November		
20	Triton	Triton
21	Triton	Triton
24	St. Clair	Blooming Prairie
December		
4	Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	Waterville-Elysian-Morristown
10	Grand Meadow	Grand Meadow
11	Medford	Blooming Prairie
12	Alden-Conger	Alden-Conger
15	Southland	Southland
18	United South Central	Blooming Prairie
January		
5	Bethlehem Academy	Bethlehem Academy
8	Maple River	Blooming Prairie
9	Mankato Loyola	Mankato Loyola
9	Mankato Loyola	Mankato Loyola
14	Kenyon-Wanamingo	Kenyon-Wanamingo
22	Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	Blooming Prairie
23	Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	Blooming Prairie
26	Medford	Medford
29	United South Central	United South Central
Februray		
2	Bethlehem Academy	Blooming Prairie
4	Goodhue	Blooming Prairie

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION
December		
1	Saint Clair/Mankato Loyola	Saint Clair
1	Maple River	Saint Clair
3	New Richland-H-E-G H.S.	New Richland-H-E-G H.S.
5	Redwood-River Valley	Springfield
10	United South Central	Blooming Prairie
17	Hayfield	Hayfield
19	Kenyon-Wanamingo	Kenyon-Wanamingo
January		
7	Maple River	Maple River
9	Saint Clair/Mankato Loyola	Saint Clair
16	Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial Area	Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial Area
19	GMLOKS	Blooming Prairie
21	Triton	Triton
28	Medford	Blooming Prairie
Februray		
4	WEM/JWP	Waterville-Elsyian-Morristown

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION
December		
1	Triton	Triton
3	Grand Meadow	Blooming Prairie
8	Goodhue	Goodhue
11	Medford	Medford
12	Alden-Conger	Aledn-Conger
15	Southland	Blooming Prairie
18	United South Central	United South Central
January		
5	Bethlehem Academy	Blooming Prairie
8	Maple River	Maple River
9	Mankato Loyola	Mankato Loyola
14	Kenyon-Wanamingo	Blooming Prairie
22	Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	Waterville-Elysian-Morristown
23	Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	Blooming Prairie
23	Tri-City United	Blooming Prairie
26	Medford	Blooming Prairie
26	United South Central	Blooming Prairie
Februray		
2	Bethlehem Academy	Bethlehem Academy
5	Maple River	Blooming Prairie
9	Hayfield	Hayfield
16	Byron	Blooming Prairie
19	Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	Blooming Prairie

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BLOSSOMS

Public Safety

Blotter spotlight:

DWI. Officer arrested a motorist for driving while intoxicated at Cedar Ave. N. and Vine St. E. in Owatonna on Dec. 1.

Intruder charged with burglary



Hampton

Willie C. Hampton, 35, has been charged with first-degree burglary and fourth degree damage to property and disorderly conduct after a disturbance incident on Nov. 25.

According to the Owatonna Police Department, officers were called to 444 Dartt during the morning hours for a disturbance. It was reported that a male was attempting to kick in a door. The first arriving officer located a male wearing a bandana on his face inside the screen door to the residence.

The male told the officer he was trying to get inside the home to get his money. The report says he alleged a female in the home had his money. He indicated he tried to get into the home through a side window with a stick and also tried to push in the front door with his shoulder and damaged the door doing so.

Claremont man arrested in prostitution case

A 41-year-old Claremont man has been charged in Olmsted District Court with two felonies after he was arrested in Dodge Center for allegedly responding to an ad placed online by the Rochester Police Department's Street Crimes Unit.

Jesse Paul Wegener appeared in court Monday morning before Judge Dennis Murphy. He was charged with one count of Prostitution-Hire or Agree to Hire 13 to 15 year-old and one count of Solicit Child to Engage in Sexual Conduct-Prohibited Act, both felonies.

Rochester Police arrested Wegener in Dodge Center last Thursday. Police said he responded to the ad and made plans to meet a "girl" even after he was under the impression he was talking to a 15-year-old.

The Dodge County Sheriff's Office worked with the Rochester Police to set up the meeting. He was arrested when he showed up for the meeting.

He was taken to the Olmsted County Adult Detention Facility until his Monday court appearance when he was released on bond.

His next court appearance is set for Dec. 14.

Police blotter
Steele County

Blooming Prairie Police

Nov. 30

Search Warrant. Police executed a search warrant in the city at 4:37 p.m.

Dec. 3

Warrant. Officer arrested a subject for an outstanding warrant at 10:22 p.m.

Owatonna Police

Nov. 27

Shoplifting. Police responded to shoplifting incidents in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 6:43 a.m. and in the 1400 block of 21st Ave. NW at 4:09 p.m.

Domestic. Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 8:32 a.m.

Fraud. At 9:55 a.m., a citizen reported being the victim of a fraud incident in the 100 block of Selby Ave. SW.

Child Protection. Police took child protection reports in the 500 block of Adams Ave. NW at 3:12 p.m. and in the 1100 block of School St. E. at 3:28 p.m.

Medical. Officers responded to a medical emergency in the 800 block of Dawn Place NE at 6:50 p.m.

Arrest. Officer arrested a motorist following a traffic stop at Oak Ave. S. and School St. W. at 11:32 p.m.

Nov. 28

Domestic. At 5:40 a.m., police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 500 block of Oak Ave. S. They arrested an adult at the scene.

Theft. Officer took a theft report in the 1400 block of Lincoln Ave. S. at 9:28 a.m.

Nov. 29

Arrest. Police made an arrest at Bridge St. W. and State Ave. NW at 12:54 a.m.

Vandalism. Property damage was reported at Locust Ave. NE and Rose St. E. at 12:18 p.m.

Civil. At 2:33 p.m., police responded to the 200 block of Pearl St. E. to assist with a civil matter. They arrested a subject at the scene.

Criminal Sex. Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 1300 block of Clover Lane SE at 12:21 p.m.

Nov. 30

Medical. Officers and paramedics responded to a medical emergency in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 12:26 a.m.

Child Protection. Officer took a report of child protection in the 200 block of Pearl St. E. at 12:19 p.m.

Fraud. Police took reports of fraud incidents in the 2400 block of Bridge St. W. at 12:59 p.m. and in the 700 block of 17th St. SE at 2:54 p.m.

Domestic. At 7:35 p.m., officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 300 block of Cedar Ave. S. They took a subject into custody.

Dec. 1

Vandalism. Property damage was reported in the 100 block of 18th St. NE at 10:39 a.m.

Juvenile. Police received juvenile complaints at 9:58 a.m. from the 400 block of School St. E. and at 2:16 p.m. from the 100 block of Vine St. E.

Shoplifting. A shoplifting incident occurred in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 3:14 p.m.

Domestic. Officers made an arrest following a domestic disturbance in the 100 block of Bridge St. W. at 6:37 p.m.

Civil. At 4:25 p.m., police responded to a civil matter in the 400 block of Cedar Ave. N. They made an arrest at the scene.

Trespassing. Officer arrested an adult for trespassing in the 300 block of Oak Ave. S. at 9:01 p.m.

Dec. 2

Property Damage. Police received a vandalism report from the 1200 block of 21st Ave. NW at 12:47 p.m.

Property. At 4:56 p.m., police recovered stolen property in the 100 block of St. John Dr. NW.

DWI. Officer arrested a motorist for driving while intoxicated at Cedar Ave. N. and Vine St. E. at 6:05 p.m.

Dec. 3

Arrest. Police arrested a motorist at Cherry St. NE and Mineral Springs Rd. at 12:44 a.m.

Traffic Arrest. At 12:24 a.m., officer made an arrest following a traffic stop at 16th St. NE and St. Paul Place NE.

Burglary. Police began an investigation of a burglary in the 200 block of North St. W. at 8:32 a.m.

Child Protection. Police received two child protection reports at 9:27 a.m. – from the 500 block of School St. E. and the 100 block of 21st St. NW.

Fraud. A fraud incident occurred in the 200 block of Main St. E. at 8:31 a.m.

Crash. Paramedics and officers responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries at Grove Ave. S. and South St. E. at 9:33 a.m.

Threats. Police responded to a subject making threats in the 900 block of Alexander Dr. SW at 9:35 a.m.

Steele County Sheriff

Nov. 27

Criminal Sex. Deputies began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 6800 block of 28th St. SE at 9:42 a.m.

Nov. 28

Domestic. At 10:51 a.m., deputies responded to a domestic disturbance in the 4700 block of Rose St.

Nov. 30

Crash. Deputies assisted the State Patrol with a motor vehicle accident resulting in property damage on Interstate 35 northbound at 5 p.m.

Dec. 1

Vandalism. At 12:19 p.m., deputies responded to a property damage incident at 44th Ave. NE and Rose St.

Dec. 2

Theft. Deputy took theft report in the 100 block of 1st Ave. NE at 12:25 p.m.

Fraud. A citizen reported being the victim of a fraud incident on 6th St. SE at 1:56 p.m.

Dec. 3

Weapon. Shots were heard fired in the 700 block of 2nd Ave. NE at 12:50 p.m.

Welfare. Deputies completed a welfare check in the 400 block of 2nd St. SW at 6:16 p.m.

DWI. At 8:11 p.m., deputy made a DWI arrest at 39th Ave. SW and 8th St. SW.

Court news
Steele County

The following cases were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Nov. 23 with Judge Karen R. Duncan presiding:

Miguel A. Galvan, 30, Elk River, previously appeared and was convicted of felony controlled substance. Galvan was sentenced to 134 months in St. Cloud State Prison.

Logan A. Marsh, 21, Rapid City, SD, previously appeared and was convicted of felony controlled substance crime. He was sentenced to $1,000, 1 day in county jail, no possession of firearms, chemical dependency evaluation, 240 hours of community service and 3 years of supervised probation.

Sabrina M. Henry, 35, Faribault, previously appeared and was convicted of felony controlled substance crime. The defendant was sentenced to $1,081, 30 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, mental health screening, 240 hours of community service and 5 years of supervised probation.

Nicholas S. Osterhus, 26, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony controlled substance crime. He was sentenced to $100, 7 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, 80 hours of community service and 5 years of supervised probation.

Denasha R. Sutton, 18, Janesville, previously appeared and was convicted of felony controlled substance crime. Sutton was sentenced to $81, 8 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, obtain GED, cognitive skill training, mental health screening, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, 170 hours of community service, and 3 years of supervised probation.

Christina R. Jensen, 28, Albert Lea, previously appeared and was convicted of felony fleeing a peace officer in a motor vehicle. She was sentenced to $1,081, 5 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, cognitive skill training, no alcohol or controlled substance use, no possession of firearms, 80 hours of community service and 3 years of supervised probation.

Logan D. Kaiser, 24, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony failure to notify police of personal injury accident. The defendant was sentenced to $1,081, 270 days in county jail, complete one education presentation each year to discuss alcohol, driving and decision-making, attend and complete victim impact mediation, attend MADD impact panel, no alcohol or controlled substance use, no possession of firearms, do not enter liquor establishments, 40 hours of community service and 5 years of supervised probation.

Joshua P. Kempe, 21, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony fleeing in motor vehicle and misdemeanor DWI. Kempe was sentenced to $1,081, 30 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, 80 hours of community service and 5 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Nov. 23 – 27:

MN State Patrol
Golden Valley

Noel Lopez Ayala, 34, St. Paul, cancelled license, $281.

MN State Patrol
Rochester

Rosanne N. Ackerman, 29, Owatonna, speeding, $221; Clay R. Burow, 16, Wanamingo, speeding and seat belt, $156; Perry A. Caron, 55, Kenyon, vehicle weight violation, $1,081; Kaitlyn C. Choumboua, 18, Coon Rapids, speeding, $221;

Lionel L. Cornormia, 28, Brooklyn Park, invalid license, $181; Maing L. Garcia Lopez, 21, Austin, speeding and no insurance, $321; Matthew R. Hager, 26, Owatonna, revoked license, $281; Isaiah N. Jibben, 28, Waseca, window tint violation, $131; Adam R. Johnson, 35, New Brighton, speeding, $131;

Zakry T. Krenz, 23, Ellendale, fleeing in motor vehicle, $1,081, 3 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, 100 hours of community service and 2 years of supervised probation; Benjamin L. McAllister, 47, Janesville, IA, speeding, $121; Phillip J. Myers, 59, Punta Gorda, FL, speeding, $131;

Gregory D. Orwig, 25, Lake Park, IA, fleeing in motor vehicle, $1,081, 3 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, 100 hours of community service and 2 years of supervised probation; Jair Ramirez, 18, Worthington, speeding, $141;

Jessica M. Ramirez, 35, Oronoco, speeding, $121; Matthew R. Schulz, 21, Farmington, inattentive driving, $121; Bryce W. Tillman, 31, Eagle Lake, speeding, $141; Blas O. Varela-Santos, 39, Anoka, open bottle and illegal operation, $281.

Owatonna Police Department

Erin N. Abbe, 19, Owatonna, liquor sale to minor, $181, 10 hours of community service and 9 months of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Salad M. Ali, 51, Owatonna, failure to obey traffic control device, $131; Yasir A. Alshowbacki, 28, Rochester, stop sign and careless driving, $231; Deshaundra Booker, 28, Owatonna, shoplifting, $75, diversion program and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction;

Kyle E. Bos, 31, Owatonna, disorderly conduct, $381, 21 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, cognitive skill training, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments and 1 year of supervised probation;

Joseph M. Davis, 30, Owatonna, domestic assault, $1,081, 30 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, domestic abuse evaluation, psychological evaluation, chemical dependency evaluation, no possession of firearms and 2 years of supervised probation; Maria L. De Martinez, 55, Owatonna, violation of order for protection, $381, 2 days in county jail, and 1 year of supervised probation;

Tessa L. Heathman, 27, Owatonna, revoked license, $281; Andrew J. Paulsen, 34, Owatonna, DWI, $1,006, 90 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, Ignition Interlock Program, and 3 years of supervised probation;

Jamie L. Schiell, 34, Faribault, DWI, $1,081, 30 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, 240 hours of community service and 3 years of supervised probation;

Kendra J. Thomas, 21, Owatonna, domestic assault, $381, 2 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, domestic abuse evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, mental health evaluation, complete parenting programming, and 1 year of supervised probation;

Douglas P. Trom, 58, Blooming Prairie, violation of restraining order, $1,223.17, 3 days in county jail, no contact with victim, and 1 year of supervised probation; Bianca A. Villarreal, 26, Owatonna, shoplifting, $75, diversion program and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction.

Steele County
Sheriff's Office

Andrea M. Gunther, 29, Claremont, speeding, $141; Nicholas M. Huffman, 22, Owatonna, headlamps violation, $121; Daniel J. Kronebusch, 37, Waseca, speeding, $121;

Mark D. Sandberg, 41, Viroqua, WI, railroad stop sign, $121; Mildred D. Spindler, 83, Owatonna, failure to drive in single lane, $131; Heather M. Weaver, 24, Kasson, speeding, $121;

Robert M. Williams III, 33, Medford, domestic assault, $381, 2 days in county jail, domestic abuse evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use and 1 year of supervised probation.

Police blotter
Dodge County

Nov. 25

Stolen Vehicle. A vehicle was reported stolen from the 100 block of Front St. W. in Claremont at 12:36 a.m.

Domestic. Deputies responded to a domestic disturbance involving screaming and fighting in the 300 block of 1st St. W. in West Concord at 3:54 a.m.

Civil. Deputy assisted with a civil matter at 720th St. and 220th Ave. in Hayfield at 9:17 a.m.

Animal Complaint. At 2:01 p.m., deputies received a report that two dogs were chasing cars at 740th St. and State Hwy. 56 in Hayfield.

Juvenile. Deputies received a juvenile complaint from 6th Ave. SE in Hayfield at 2:25 p.m.

Sex Offense. Deputies began an investigation of a sex offense in the 57400 block of 210th Ave. in Dodge Center at 7:31 p.m.

Assault. At 10:02 p.m., deputies responded to an assault on Main St. E. in Dodge Center.

Nov. 26

Suspicion. A suspicious vehicle was reported in the 54000 block of 245th Ave. in West Concord at 1:49 p.m.

DUI. Deputies responded to a motor vehicle roll over at 120th and 575th St. in Claremont at 7:57 p.m. The driver was found to be intoxicated.

Nov. 27

Burglary. Deputies responded to burglaries on Main St. W. in Dodge Center at 3:50 a.m. and in the 500 block of U.S. Hwy. 14 in Claremont at 9:41 p.m.

Gas Leak. Deputies, Claremont Fire and Dodge Center Fire responded to a gas line that was cut in the 200 block of Front St. W. in Claremont at 2:23 p.m.

Nov. 28

DUI. At 1:06 a.m., a vehicle went into a ditch at Cemetery Rd. and State Hwy. 57 in Mantorville. The front of the vehicle was crunched and the driver was slumped over in the steering wheel. The driver was found to be intoxicated.

Domestic. At 2:39 a.m., a Dodge Center male called deputies when his wife pointed a gun at him and hit him in the face in the 700 block of 4th Ave. NW.

Animal Neglect. Deputies received an animal neglect report that individuals moved out and left their dog in a kennel in the 500 block of Front St. E. in Claremont at 3:58 p.m.

Sex Offense. At 5:21 p.m., deputies began an investigation of a sex offense in the 16600 block of 635th St. in Dodge Center.

Nov. 29

Threats. At 2:48 p.m., a woman called deputies when a hunter was threatening to shoot her dog in the 63400 block of 130th Ave. in Claremont.

Domestic. Deputies responded to a domestic disturbance in the 100 block of Center Ave. N. in Hayfield at 6:28 p.m.

Dec. 1

Harassment. A citizen reported being the victim of harassment in the 200 block of 1st Ave. SE in Dodge Center at 2:11 p.m.

Court news
Dodge County

The following cases were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Nov. 23 with Judge Jodi L. Williamson presiding:

PUBLIC SAFETY
Continued on Page 6D

SHERIFF'S TIPLINE

866-878-7964



If you have information about any crimes in Steele County, call the sheriff's tipline. You may remain anonymous.

The following individuals as they have active warrants in Steele County.
The sheriff makes this information available as a public service.

ACTIVE WARRANTS
Disclosing active warrants promotes public safety and aids in the identification & apprehension of those individuals wanted on a warrant.

Curtis Parker – domestic assault - $1,000 bail
Victor Parraga – DWI - $350 bail
Julie Patrin – theft - $20,000 bail
Sheronda Payne – assault - $500 bail
Patrick Pearson – no license - $12,000 bail
Eduardo Pena – FTA – no bail
Federico Perez – DWI - $56,000 bail
Joann Perez – assault - $500 bail
Martin Perez – DWI - $500 bail
Raymond Perez – toxic substance - $500 bail
Stephen Petersen – writ of attachment - $48,452.76 bail
Sharon Peterson – leave scene of accident - $550 bail
Cornelius Phillips – open bottle - $500 bail
Cory Piringer – DWI – no bail
Keith Pittman – DWI - $1,000 bail
Juan Placencia-Gonzalez – obstruction of legal process - $1,000 bail
Ray Polan – assault - $1,000 bail
Darrian Porter – interfere with 911 call – no bail
Amanda Portillo – DWI - $500 bail
Tishyra Powell – theft, shoplifting - $150 bail





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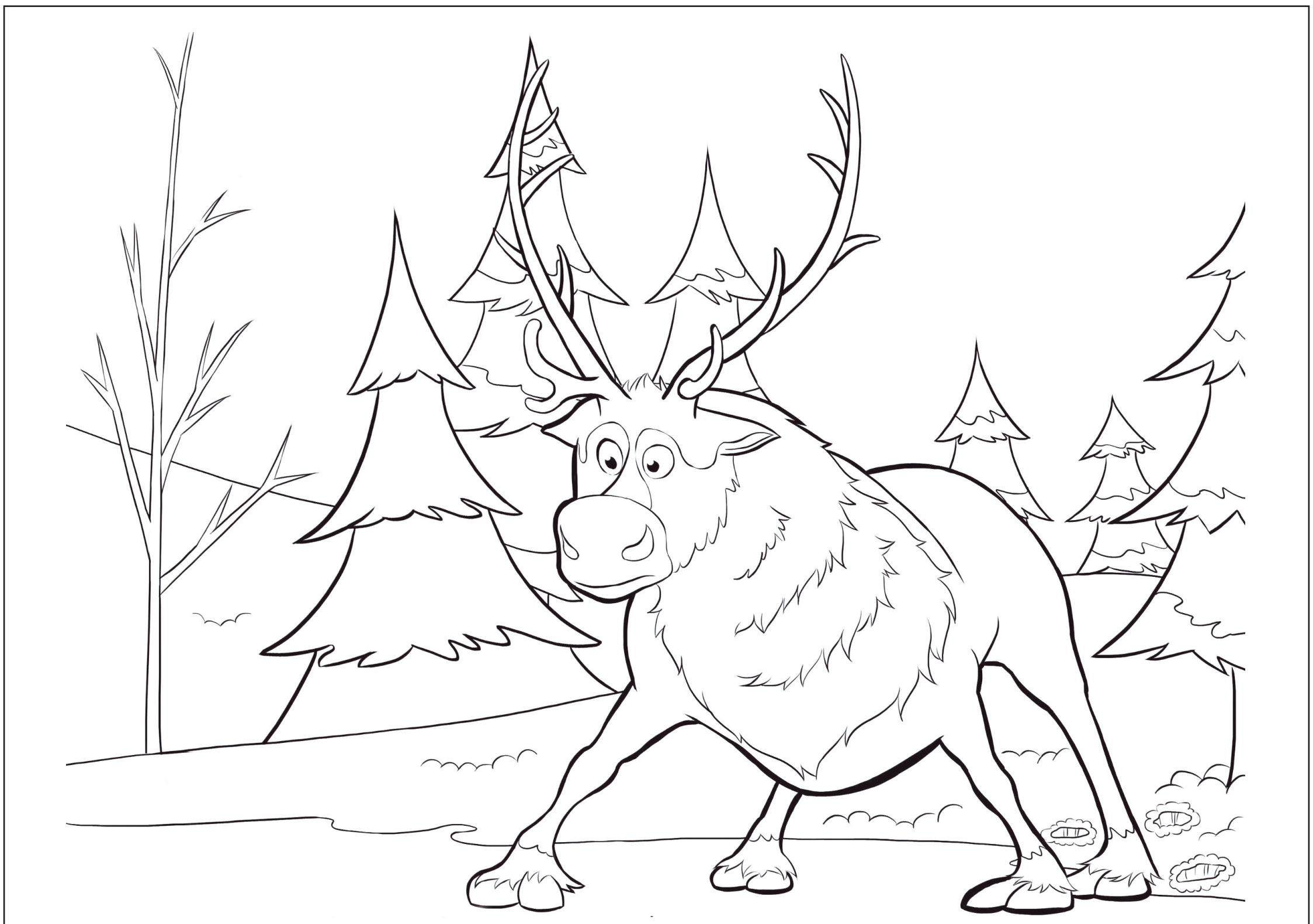


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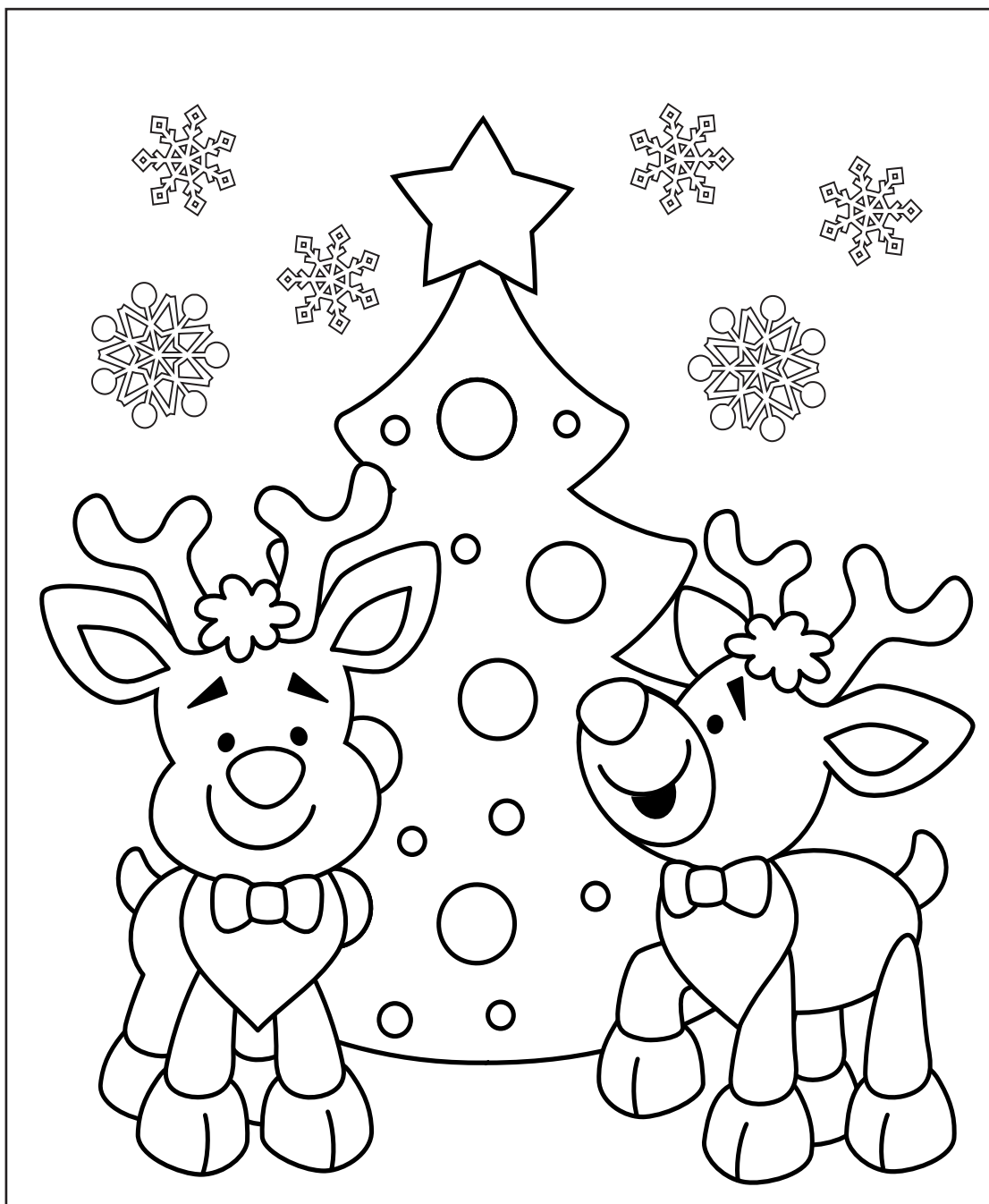
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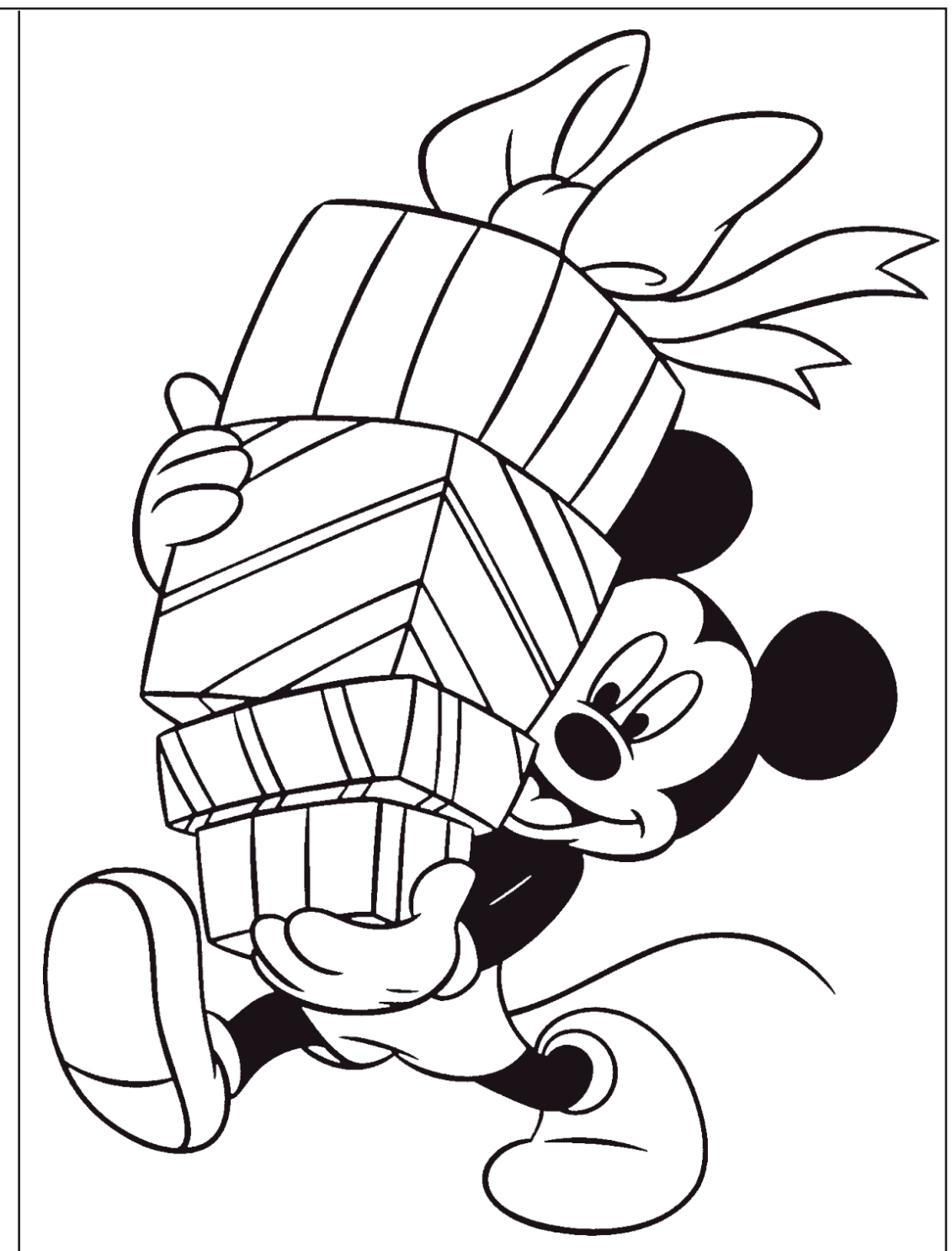


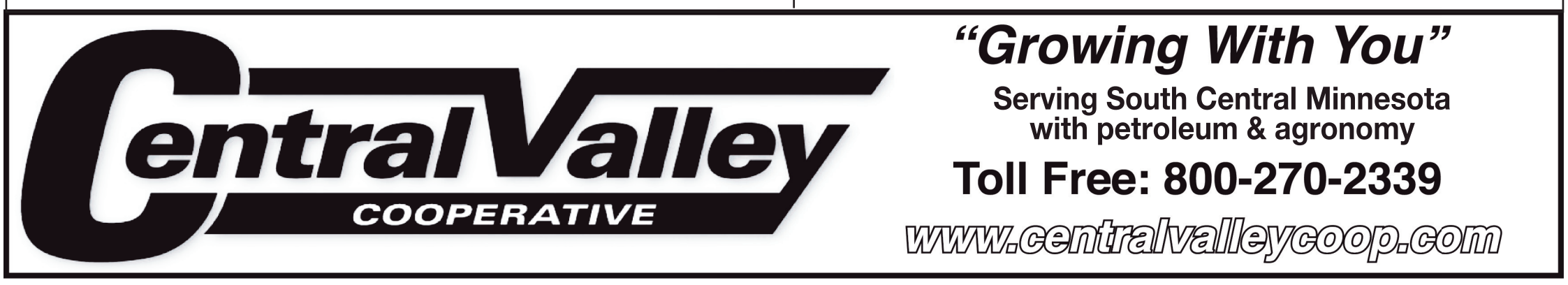



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2015 NRHEG Indoor Marching Band Concert

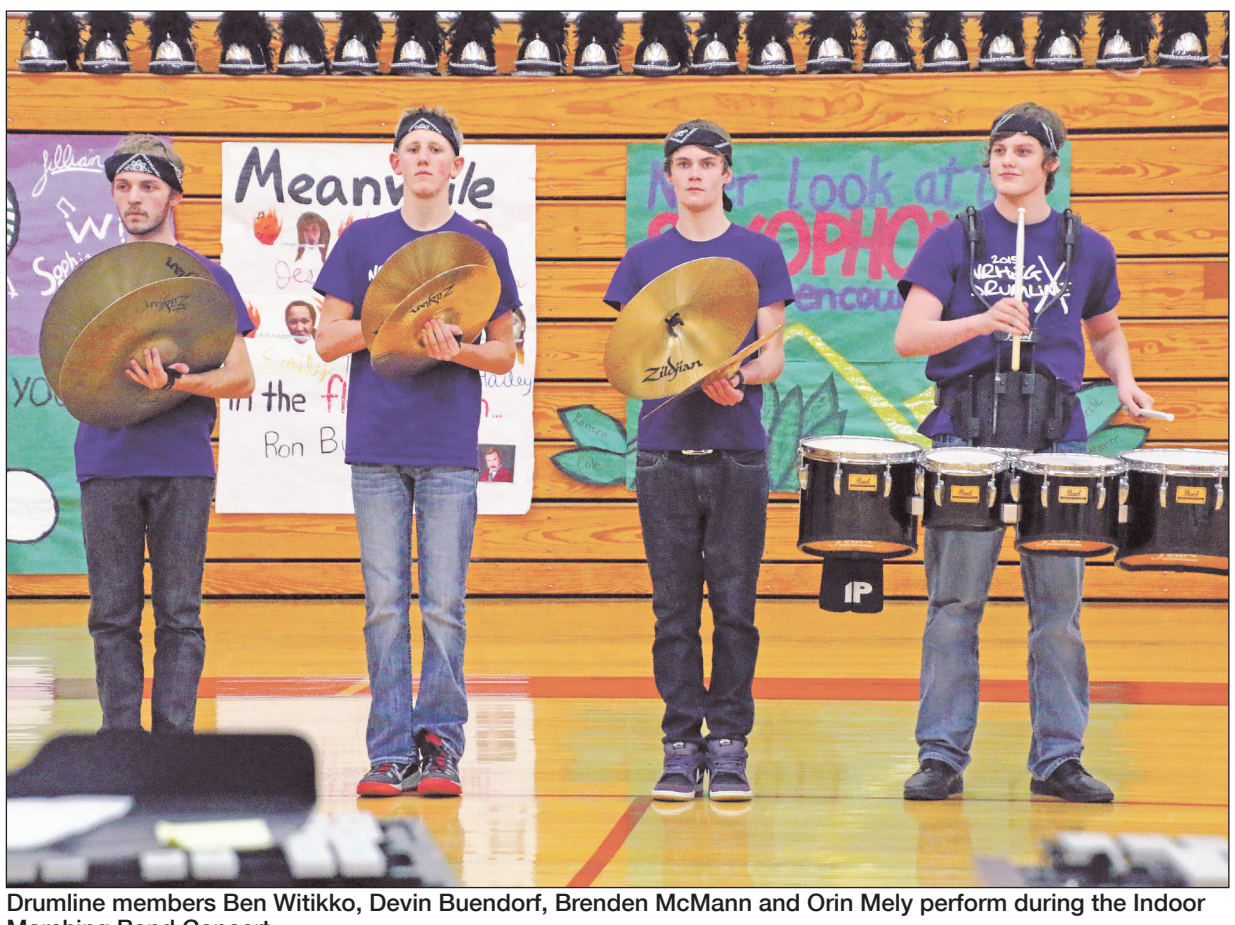


Staff photos by Laura Berndt

New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) jazz ensemble members Justin Mortensen, Chris Stenze and Becky Schoenrock play “Fly me to the Moon” during the 2015 Indoor Marching Band Concert.



Lillian Bell plays a solo during the NRHEG jazz ensemble’s performance at the Indoor Marching Band Concert.



Drumline members Ben Witikko, Devin Buendorf, Brenden McMann and Orin Mely perform during the Indoor Marching Band Concert.



NRHEG marching band members Hailey Stenzel and Emily Prigge perform a selection from the “Into the Wild” drill, written by Caleb Crouch.



Emma Tollefson smiles up at the audience as she performs along with other color guard members.



NRHEG drumline members Torrie Stencel and Nicole Edon get the audience pumped up during their performance.

Acceleration in phase one of public works project to save a potential $50,000

By ANNA SEGNER
County Staff Writer

A recommendation to add footings and foundation to phase one of the $12.6 million public works project was a motion approved by the county commissioners at their meeting on Nov. 24.

With this approval, the scope of work is estimated at $305,000, which includes plumbing, electrical, masonry foundation, column pads and piers, strip footings, excavation of wall bearing wall footings and deduction of precast below grade/change of connection detail.

'Saving time also saves money.'

— Anita Benson
Steele County Highway Engineer

"This item came up out of our first meeting with the architects, engineers and construction managers that recommended equaling off the design for phase one and phase two," said Steele County Highway Engineer Anita Benson. "They identified a cost savings of about $50,000 if the footings and foundations done in phase one."

Benson told county commissioners that the cost savings from the switch is essentially a "schedule saving." Avoiding winter conditions and heating costs could prevent those extra costs.

"Saving time also saves money," said Benson.

As presented in a document attached to the agenda, Amcon and Oertel Architects discussed the benefits of incorporating the

COUNTY COMMISSION
Continued on Page 6C

One shows for Level III Offender Community Notification

By ANNA SEGNER
County Staff Writer

Only one community member was present for the community notification meeting on Dec. 3 about the established residency of a level III sex offender in rural Owatonna.

Sean Patrick McKee, 30, has been convicted of criminal sexual conduct. Reports state that his release date from prison was June 17, 2015, according to Steele County's Sheriff Office report.

According to the Steele County Sheriff's Office, McKee will be residing in the vicinity of 44th Avenue and Highway 14 East. Law enforcement officials at the community notification meeting stated that McKee previously lived in Owatonna and is simply moving to rural Owatonna.

According to the Steele County's Sheriff Office, McKee has a history of sexual contact with a 14-year-old female victim. Reports state that the victim was known to the offender. McKee also reportedly has behavioral issues and chemical dependency.

He has served his sentence and is not wanted at this time.

Community notification is an action taken when a level III offender moves to a new residency.

According to Sara Hustad of the Department of Corrections, the community notification for level III offenders to do not always require a public meeting, and the form and extent of the community notification is based on the

NOTIFICATION
Continued on Page 5C

Calling all volunteers with holiday spirit

By ANNA SEGNER
County Staff Writer

With less volunteers ringing bells near the red kettles in local store fronts, Steele County's Salvation Army has raised much less money than it has in past years.

This year, Black Friday donations to the Red Kettle campaign only amounted to about one-third of funds raised last year. In 2014 Black Friday donations reached $1,610 total, and this year only $566 was raised on Black Friday.

The decrease in money raised is directly correlated to less volunteers. "Our bell ringers are down, so our donations are down," said Social Services Director Gina Shepherd.

"People see volunteers having fun out there, they hear bells and feel the Christmas spirit," said Regional Thrift Store Manager Sarah Pirkl. "People see people and they are more willing to drop some pocket change after grocery shopping. It's about that presence."

This year is not the first year that has had a rough start to the campaign. In the past, rough starts have recovered, but it takes volunteers for success.

The campaign runs from before Thanksgiving to Christmas. Shifts are available in two hour periods. Bells are rung between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. during the week and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

There are still many open two-hour shifts available. To sign up, call 507-413-6700.

The red kettles are placed primarily in Owatonna at various shopping locations, including Cash Wise, Hy-Vee, Fareway, Fleet-Farm, Wal-Mart, Sterling Drug, Walgreens and Cabelas. There are also miniature kettles placed at local businesses.

Some kettles are placed indoors, while some are outside.



Staff photo by Anna Segner
Gerry Gunderson, of Owatonna, rings the bell at Hy-Vee Grocery store in one of his dozen shifts as he volunteers his time.

"To be honest, those chilly locations bring in the most dollars," laughed Shepherd. "Those locations are busy with a lot of people coming in and out."

Pirkl and Shepherd find themselves bell ringing when they are not in the store working. "When I am out in the cold ringing the bell, I always think about how I can go home and make hot chocolate, slip into a warm pair of fuzzy slippers and warm up. Some people don't have that luxury," said Pirkl. "I can ring the bell a few hours in order to bring some of those basic necessities to others.

"Young, old, families, all are welcome to ring bells. We can accommodate needs, whether they need a chair or need to be indoors," said Pirkl. "If you can sit and shake a bell, we need you. It's so easy and so important."

Eighty-seven cents of every dollar donated stays local.

"Every dollar that comes into the organization, we truly remember the donor and think 'is this where the donor would like their dollar spent?" said Pirkl. "Being in the office at Salvation Army is such a privilege—to have the responsibility of making the executive decisions of someone else's good will. We take that seriously. Our mission is to do the most good."

The Red Kettle campaign funds Salvation Army's charitable action and programs for the year.

Last year alone, Salvation

BELL RINGERS
Continued on Page 4C

Raising awareness about elder abuse



By LAURA BERNDT
News Editor

Many aging adults select those whom they trust to serve as their power of attorney (POA), entrusting them to help make decisions about their properties, finances and even end-of-life care. But what happens when that person betrays their trust?

According to the Minnesota Elder Justice Center, about one in 10 older adults is a victim of abuse, neglect and/or financial exploitation. And, unfortunately, many of the perpetrators of abuse are people that the victims know and trust, including their own children and other loved ones. That's exactly what happened to Jane (who does not want her real name to be revealed), a local woman who was 89 years old when she lost her car, her home and even her beloved dog, as a result of her own daughter's actions.

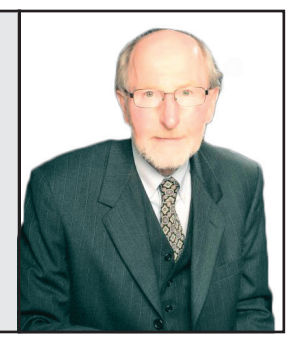
Jane's story

Jane's daughter, Carrie (whose name has also been changed), had been designated as her POA. This summer, Jane became ill and, after an extended stay in the hospital, Jane was sent to a dementia care facility. Jane's other daughter, Barbara (name also changed), received a phone call from a concerned family member who stated that Jane was not receiving good care at the new facility. Barbara and Jane had never had a strong relationship, and so Barbara had not been aware of the recent events.

Upon investigation, Barbara discovered that Jane's living conditions were poor indeed. Barbara began to review her mother's medical records and discovered that she had never actually been diagnosed with dementia. Instead, the word "dementia" had simply been mentioned on a few of the documents, when Jane was first admitted to the hospital, was dehydrated and disoriented, resulting from pneumonia and a urinary tract infection.

ELDER ABUSE
Continued on Page 7C

STEELE TALKIN'



JERRY F. ZETAH

Giving thanks to community – another view

Meister Eckhart, a spiritual writer of the 13th century, offered a single reminder to us when he wrote: "If the only prayer you say in your entire life is 'thank you' that would suffice."

We, the board of directors and staff of the Hospitality House of Owatonna say "Thank you" to our community for keeping the house alive and thriving. We say thank you for the many financial donations, for the gifts of food, clothing and household supplies. We greatly appreciate the ongoing support on behalf of homeless men in our midst.

We also say thanks to the men who knock on the door and entrust their needs to us, that they will be respected and assisted. Just think about it. What must it be like to be 20, 40, or 70 and be homeless? We applaud their courage to take one more risk and to trust again.

When asked to identify what each is thankful for in being at the House, no sense of bitterness was detected. Notwithstanding their current reality of being without their own address and zip code, expressions of thanks and appreciate came through. They wrote:

- the chance to succeed
- grateful for a shoulder to lean on
- for a break from the outside world of problems
- friendships I have made
- the help it gives me in staying sober
- being able to spend time with my terminally ill son and my other kids
- having another chance to get my life back and find out where I went wrong
- couldn't do this while drinking
- because of having a place to stay, I've got a job
- safe, warm welcoming home a place to be while homeless
- thankful to have a sober place to be and live
- a bed and food
- me and my family get the chance a lot of people don't get
- for teaching me once again that I can be someone and do great things
- for all the donations and the roof over my head

To us who have been given much, our own thank you is in order. We offer a prayer for your continued generous heart. Please continue to give. Thank you!

Steele Talkin' is a weekly column featuring officials from various organizations throughout Steele County. Jerome F. Zetah, Ph.D., is a board member of Hospitality House in Owatonna and a former therapist at South Central Human Relations Center.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE

First Quarter Honor Roll



Staff photos by Laura Berndt

Members of the Blooming Prairie junior high "A" Honor Roll include, from left to right in the front row, Allison Krohnberg, Maren Forystek, Baylee Sorensen and Rachael Riley. In the second row are Reese Millam, Ashleigh Alwes, Maggie Bruns, Megan Oswald and Emily Kubicek.



Above are the Blooming Prairie senior high "A" Honor Roll students. From left to right, in the front row, are Rachael Oswald, Alison Pryor, Rose Johnson, Payton Simon and Ethan Arett. In the second row are Sally Peterson, Ellysienne Magnuson, Jerrin Jax, Leah Schiefert, Tommy Braaten, Jake Hyland and Carter Millam. And, in the third row, are Mitchell Oswald, Jesse Schewe, Salome Ramirez, Anthony Nelson, Alicia Ptacek, Samantha Wurst and Camden Heimerman.

A Honor Roll

Grade 7
Ashleigh Alwes
Maggie Bruns
Maren Forystek
Allison Krohnberg
Emily Kubicek
Reese Millam
Megan Oswald
Rachael Riley

Grade 8
Baylee Sorensen

Grade 9
Rachael Oswald
Payton Simon

Grade 10
Ethan Arett
Jerrin Jax
Mitchell Oswald
Salome Ramirez
Jesse Schewe
Samantha Wurst

Grade 11
Thomas Braaten
Camden Heimerman
Jake Hyland
Rose Johnson
Ellysienne Magnuson
Carter Millam
Alison Pryor
Alicia Ptacek
Leah Schiefert

Grade 12
Anthony Nelson
Sally Peterson

A - Honor Roll

Grade 7
Lillian Abbe
Thomas Donnelly
Charlie Heimerman
Brianna Hensrud
Shyane Jorgenson
Luke Larkoski
Mackenzie Madsen
Grace Magnuson
Rose Michaud
Alexander Miller
Christopher Naatz
Jacob Naatz
Joseph Pirkl
Jessica Ressler
Halle Strunk
Gretchen Sunde
Kiya Thompson
Micalyn Trihus
Wyatt Voss
Taylor Wurst

Grade 8
Kisha Aquino
Riauna Bishop
Raynee Fawver
Gabriel Hagen
Gemini Johnson
Colton Krell
Adam Larson
Jarrett Larson
Maya Lembke
Hazel Michaud
Chase Peterson
Matthew Pryor
Dondi Stender
Kaden Thomas
Viridiana Villarreal
Zachary Weber
Jillian Wigham
Julia Worke

Grade 9
William Cardenas
Casaundra Green
Colton Ivers
Riley Millam
Seth Peterson

Grade 10
Kathryn Borchert
Mckenna Hein
Ayren Ingvalson
Christian Sorensen

Grade 11
Jasmine Anderson
Laura Grant
Wyatt Grundmeier
Leah Inwards
Sasha Katzung
Rachel Kubicek
Hailey Naatz
Taylor Peterson
Benjamin Smith

Grade 12
Ethan Strunk

B Honor Roll

Grade 7
Mitchell Fiebiger
Mikayla Gwilt
Lane Lembke
Casey Lyman
Maggy Motl
Erin O'brien
Danielle Pena
Alexander Piller
Madison Suchanek
Brenda Talamantes

Grade 8
Hope Johnson
Jacob Mchenry
Dylan Nirk
Alexis Olivo
Heather Pirkl
Brent Weinberger

Grade 9
Nicholas Freese
Jaclyn Hyland
Mckenzie Jensen
Hannah Kinny
Colin Lerum
Brett Motl
Amy Peterson
Timothy Wolf

Grade 10
Emma Christianson
Jacob Gwilt
Jeremy Hocking
Alec Ille
Brandon Jimenez
Talon Kent
Lucas Noble
Kory Rafdal
Maxwell Romeo
Bradley Staska
Cory Wagaman
Zachary Wiese

Grade 11
Bria Baldwin
Austin Christians
Luke De La Cruz
Kayleigh Douglass
Joshua Hein
Emily Tynjala

Grade 12
Brody Carlson
Dillon Easton
Kevin Eischens
Brianna Green
Dakota Hanson
Mitchell Jones
Lauren Larkoski

B + Honor Roll

Grade 7
Adrianna Bermea
Abby Braaten
Cole Christianson
Rylie Cisneros
Ethan Grant
Cole Graves
Brian Jimenez
Dylan Johnson
Christopher Shepard
Rachel Thompson

Grade 8
Zachary Archer
Kassidy Borgen
Lila Carlson
Andrew Martinez
Gracie Rudlong
Marti Snider
Karson Vigeland
Jayde Wacek

Grade 9
Raeann Grundmeier
Jessica Gwilt
Isaac Hanson
Caleb Kubista
Jeannette Lozano
Alexyss Magnuson
Clint Peterson
Trenton Swenson

Grade 10
Linnea Byers-Sunde
Kyler Christianson
Rylee Fawver
Jonathan Herron
Michael Hillson
Marten Morem
Rachel Pirkl
Kieara Raschke
Jake Ressler
Nicholas Thompson
Asia Thostenson

Grade 11
Elijah Baker
Richard Feeney
Kylie Forystek
Quentin Kubista
Aaron Larson
Rachel Peterson
Zachary Piller
Marnie Reese
Zachary Sisler
Elly Strunk
Courtney Wobschall

Grade 12
Hannah Ahrens
Katelynn Grunklee
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Blooming Prairie Living

Blooming Prairie Elementary School presents Holiday Concert



Third-grade student, Cleopatra Carlson, plays "Frosty the Snowman" during the concert on Friday, Dec. 4, at Blooming Prairie Elementary School.



Alexis Ripka, along with the rest of the Blooming Prairie Elementary School band, plays "Holiday Medley" during Friday's concert.

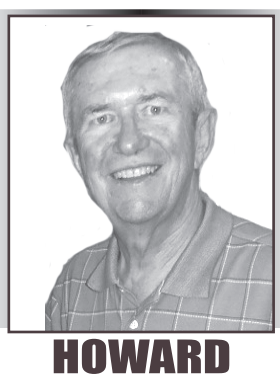


Staff photos by Laura Berndt

As the Blooming Prairie fourth-graders sing "Blizten Boogie," Mason Simon plays Blizten, the boogie woogie reindeer, during the Holiday Concert.

Remembering 'the day the music died'

Reflections



HOWARD LESTRUD

When I think of the late and great Buddy Holly, the music lyrics of American Pie by Don McLean come to mind. Let's take a look at these lyrics, which served as a commentary on the death of Buddy Holly, J. P. Richardson (The Big Bopper) and Ritchie Valens.

"A long long time ago
I can still remember how
That music used to make me smile
And I knew if I had my chance
That I could make those people dance
And maybe they'd be happy for a while

But February made me shiver
With every paper I'd deliver
Bad news on the doorstep
I couldn't take one more step

I can't remember if I cried
When I read about his widowed bride
Something touched me deep inside
The day the music died
So

[Chorus]
Bye, bye Miss American Pie
Drove my Chevy to the levee but the levee was dry
And them good ole boys were drinking whiskey and rye
Singin' this'll be the day that I die
This'll be the day that I die"

The three Rock 'n Roll singers were killed on Feb. 3, 1959, in an airplane crash near Clear Lake, Iowa, the day following a performance by all three at the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake.

For many of us who are Baby Boomers or grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, we vividly remember the tragic crash that took the lives of three young entertainers and the life of a young airplane pilot.

My wife Judy and I and two of our closest friends visited the Minnesota History Theatre in St. Paul recently to enjoy "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story." Witnessing this blockbuster of a play was like being placed in a time capsule during the time frame of 1957-59.

As we entered the auditorium that seats 550, we were told by an usher that we would find it difficult to stay seated, due to the Rock 'n Roll rhythms that would be absorbed by our bodies.

From the beginning to the ending of the play, it was tough to stay quiet in the narrow theater seats.

Nicholas Freeman played the role of Buddy Holly and did a magnificent job of capturing the vocal techniques of the rock star. Before we attended the play, I warmed up for the performance days in advance by listening to Holly's greatest hits on a car CD player.

I thought it would be impossible for anyone to capture the vibrating rock sounds of Holly, but Freeman did it.

The early action in the play took place in Lubbock, Texas, Buddy Holly's hometown. The action also moved to Clovis, New Mexico; to New York City and to Clear Lake, Iowa, between January 1956 and February 1959.

The theater performance was like being at a concert, but better than that, because the smaller History Theatre venue made it seem like the performers were in the row ahead of us. The acoustics of the theater are excellent, and the music was "slam on" in comparison to the original scores.

A dozen Buddy Holly songs were presented by Freeman and his band, The Crickets.

Popular Buddy Holly tunes that were recreated for "The Buddy Holly Story" included "That'll Be the Day," "Everyday," Not Fade Away," "Peggy Sue," "Words of Love," "Oh, Boy," "True Love Ways," "Baybee Baby," "Heartbeat," "Raining in My Heart," "Rave On" and "Johnny B. Goode."

As the final act came to a close, we were treated to the popular songs sung by The Big Bopper ("Chantilly Lace") and by Ritchie Valens ("La Bamba").

Buddy Holly's style was influenced by country music and rhythm and blues acts, and he performed in Lubbock with his friends from high school. Holly opened for Elvis Presley on several occasions. His band's style then shifted from country and western to rock 'n roll.

Buddy Holly's career zoomed ahead after the Decca and Brunswick recording sessions. He performed with The Crickets, traveling to Australia and the United Kingdom. In early 1959, Holly assembled a new band consisting of future country music icon Waylon Jennings and Tommy Allsup and embarked on a Winter Tour which included an appearance at the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake.

The rest is history. After a show in Clear Lake, Iowa, Holly chartered an airplane to travel to his next show in Moorhead, Minnesota. Soon after takeoff, the plane crashed, killing Holly, the 17-year-old Ritchie Valens, the Big Bopper, and the pilot, Roger Peterson, 21.

The History Theatre program on "Buddy" tells of the fateful end to three musicians' careers. The concert ended just before midnight. Holly declared after his final song: "Good night. We've got a plane to catch but we'll be back in the spring!"

History is recorded saying that Holly chartered the plane for himself and his backup band, but Jennings gave up his seat to The Big Bopper, who was running a fever and had trouble fitting his stocky frame comfortably into the bus seats. When Holly learned that Jennings wasn't going to fly he said, "Well, I hope your old bus freezes up." Jennings responded, "Well, I hope your plane crashes." This friendly banter haunted Jennings for years.

Band member Allsup flipped a coin with Valens for the fourth seat in the plane. Valens won the flip.

History, again, tells us that the plane took off at about 1 a.m. and disappeared in the stormy sky shortly after. Parts of the airplane and bodies of the entertainers were later found in a farm field.

The energy of the cast members could be felt throughout the performance. The characters were frozen in time when performing their final songs at the Surf in Clear Lake. Accepting a standing ovation from audience, the cast members then continued a rendition of "Johnny B. Goode."

I clearly remember listening as a teenager to the songs of Buddy Holly, The Big Bopper and Ritchie Valens on my brother's Hi Fidelity phonograph. He still has the 45 RPM records of these entertainers.

The music didn't really die on that day. It lives on and is strongly etched in our memory banks. More performances of "Buddy" continue at the History Theatre through Dec. 20. The story of the life of Fargo's Bobby Vee, whose rise to fame began "the day the music died," will be told in a matinee performance at the History Theatre on Sunday, Jan. 17.



Staff photo by Howard Lestrud

Nicholas Freeman plays the role of Buddy Holly in the Minnesota History Theatre performance of "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story." The show continues through Dec. 20 at the History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St., St. Paul.

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Owatonna Living

Megers host food shelf benefit

Glen and Cheryl Meger hosted their 16th consecutive food shelf benefit social Nov. 19 at the Brick–Meger Funeral Home in Owatonna for fellowship and a meal.

The annual event brings together spouses and members of the Msgr. Henry Speck Assembly, Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus. Attendees were treated to Greek shish-kebabs and egg rolls specially prepared by Glen.

Attendees made cash donations and also donated non-perishable food items. At the conclusion of the event a total of 94 pounds of food and $510 were collected for the Steele County Food Shelf.

Host Glen Meger said, "The need for food is always present, but this time of year it is particularly urgent. My Brother Sir Knights are a very generous and caring group and exemplify the first principal of the Knights of Columbus, that being charity."



Submitted photo

Glen and Cheryl Meger of Owatonna display some of the food they recently collected for the Steele County Food Shelf. The Megers held a food shelf benefit at the Brick-Meger Funeral Home.

OPU customers' bills to see increase in 2016

On Nov. 24, the Owatonna Public Utilities Commission approved its 2016 budget, including a rate decrease of 2.5 percent for residential natural gas (2 percent for commercial and industrial) and an increase of 3 percent for electric.

The rate change, which will go into effect Jan. 1, 2016, will cause an average residential customer's electric bill to increase by approximately $25 per year or $2.08 per month and natural gas bill to decrease by $20 per year or $1.67 per month. Overall, residential customers who have both electric and natural gas utilities will see a net increase of $5 per year or $0.42 per month. Rates will be approved at the December commission meeting.

OPU's electric rate increase is due to a wholesale rate increase by Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA), OPU's electric supplier. OPU's controllable expenses, including labor costs, benefits, and ongoing expenses, are projected to be the same as 2015.

"SMMPA is raising its rates to us in 2016 by 6 percent," said OPU General Manager Mark Fritsch. "In order to cover this additional cost we included a 3 percent electric increase in our 2016 budget which was just approved by our commission."

Continued low natural gas prices and changes to the way OPU purchases gas have allowed OPU to decrease natural gas rates in 2016. Rates will be 2.5 percent lower for residential natural gas customers in 2016, which will nearly offset the electric rate increase for residential customers. Commercial and industrial customers will also see a 2 percent natural gas decrease in 2016.

Holiday Train brings holiday cheer to Owatonna

By LAURA BERNDT
News Editor

Every year, the Canadian Pacific (CP) Holiday Train visits communities across the United States and Canada, raising money for worthy local organizations. This year, the train stopped in Owatonna and raised money for the Steele County Food Shelf (SCFS).

The CP Holiday Train has been touring the upper Midwest and Canada for 17 holiday seasons, making stops in multiple communities each year. Since 2009, the train has returned to Owatonna every other year.

It's estimated that about 2,500 people attended the event this year. At the event, $908.50 and 1,571 pounds of food were donated to the SCFS.

Canadian Pacific also donated $7,500 to the Steele County Food Shelf, and Stormy Trom, executive director of the SCFS, and Tom Kuntz, Owatonna mayor, accepted the check on the boxcar stage this Sunday.

Non-perishable food items and cash donations were accepted during the event, and all contributions will stay within the local community. Trom thanked the hundreds of guests in attendance on Sunday. "All of this is so needed and appreciated so much," Trom said.

The SCFS provides a supply of nutritious foods to individuals and families in need. It also offers daily helpings of perishable foods, including dairy, baked goods and produce, and information about nutrition and nutritional recipes. The SCFS can also serve as a connecting resource, providing additional information and referral services about other available programs.

During the train's visit to Owatonna, hot chocolate was available to keep guests warm. Musicians Kira Isabella and Doc Walker also performed a number of songs about love, giving and Christmas on the boxcar stage, illuminated by the train's colorful decorations. The event was made possible by several businesses, organizations and individuals, including the City of Owatonna, Jennifer Libby and the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, Mike Johnson and the Owatonna Fire Department, the Community Emergency Response Team, Distributive Education Clubs of America students and staff, the Owatonna Bus Company, Jerry Besser at Tone Music, Corky Ebeling at the Owatonna Parks & Rec Department, Fareway Foods, Owatonna Hy-Vee, Kwik Trip, Cash Wise Foods, Chris Harris and the Owatonna High School Christmas carolers, Ryan Gillespie, Lowe's, Walmart, American Rent-All, the Owatonna Today Show, Owatonna People's Press, Steele County Times, Radio stations KOWZ and KRFO, Stormy Trom, Alonso Hernandez, SCFS Manager and the volunteers and members of the board of directors at the SCFS.

For more information about the SCFS, or to inquire about volunteering or making a donation, contact the food shelf at 507-455-2991 or visit the location at 155 Oakdale Street in Owatonna.



Staff photos by Laura Berndt

Musicians entertain the crowd during the CP Holiday Train's fourth visit to Owatonna.



Brooklyn Mechtel, age 4, stays warm with a cup of hot chocolate during the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train's visit to Owatonna on Sunday.

Meet volunteer Gerry Gunderson

By ANNA SEGNER
County Staff Writer

People like Gerry Gunderson of Owatonna make time to volunteer ringing the bell for Salvation Army's Red Kettle campaign.

When asked why he volunteers, he simply said "because I can."

Gunderson retired a few years ago and decided that he had some free time to give back. This year he signed up for a dozen two hour time slots to ring the bell for the Red Kettle campaign, devoting 24 hours total.

Gunderson greeted every customer at Hy-Vee with a warm smile and a "happy holidays" or "merry Christmas."

"I enjoy the constant conversation with people. To be honest, I spend a lot of time gabbing," he laughed. "I know that not everyone can give, but people can smile."

Gunderson has some arthritis, so the Hy-Vee location is perfect because he is indoors and can greet customers from a chair. "I feel blessed to be here to do this. It gives me a chance to see people and talk," said Gunderson.

"We're here to bring awareness," said Gunderson. "Owatonna is so giving. If someone is in need, the community will be there to help out."

BELL RINGERS

Continued from Page 1C

Last year alone, Salvation Army helped 699 families in Steele County through the Crisis fund, money raised from the Red Kettle campaign. The fund helps families with basic necessities, such as warmth, shelter, hunger and clothing.

Salvation Army's fall backpack program provided 850 kids in Steele County with brand new backpacks full of school supplies.

Another activity in the fall was the Shop with a Cop program. Twenty-two children were granted money from Salvation Army to spend shopping for school clothes with the shopping advice from local law enforcement. The program is designed to build relationships between local youth and law enforcement.

Thirty-seven children from Steele County were sent to a five-day summer camp for free. Pirkl and Shepherd spoke to the camp's value in developing strong self-esteem and strong ethics.

This past year was the first year that the Salvation Army offered healthy cooking classes for those on a tight budget. The class was offered twice last year, and it teaches families how to make a healthy meal serving four people with ingredients amounting to only $10.

They also have a program that donates steel-toed boots to individuals beginning a career in industry or manufacturing. This is a partnership between Owatonna Shoe and Salvation Army.

"Owatonna has a lot of industrial job openings and many that want to fill those positions have the barrier of not being able to afford that start up with the steel-toed boots," said Shepherd.

In total, Salvation Army served 2,646 community members this year alone. Those individuals were helped because of the dollars donated to the Red Kettle campaign.

In 2014, the Red Kettle campaign raised about $70,000 and 2013 gathered $81,000. The Salvation Army hopes to help just as many individuals if not more, but they can only help with the funds that they receive through the Red Kettle campaign.

"Owatonna has always been such a kind and giving community, so we are hopeful that we can turn this around," said Pirkl. "We need volunteers. It is the time of giving, and nothing says Christmas like the ringing bells."

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Owatonna Living

‘Coming home’

Star of Hope service and lighting ceremony honors dearly departed



Staff photos by Laura Berndt

The Ellendale United Methodist Church Choir, directed by Allie Larson and accompanied by Maryalice Hanson, sing during the Star of Hope service on Sunday evening.

By LAURA BERNDT
News Editor

Area residents gathered at DayBreak Community Church in Owatonna on Sunday for the Star of Hope service and lighting ceremony. Speakers and musicians shared a message of love and hope, while benefiting a worthy cause.

Donations to the Star of Hope event will go toward the Patient Care Fund, which assists hospice families with limited resources. During the ceremony, Laura McKibbin, a social worker with Allina Hospice at the Homestead Hospice House in Owatonna, shared some information about the Patient Care Fund. McKibbin explained that hospice care encompasses a variety of needs. The founders of the Homestead Hospice House established a Patient Care Fund to help people afford the necessary room and board.

“This fund covers up to 100 percent of the room and board fee at Homestead for those patients who are unable to afford to pay it privately,” said McKibbin. “It’s very rare for a community the size of Owatonna to have a residential hospice facility. It’s unprecedented to have a residential hospice facility where the community helps pay for the room and board for those who need it.”

Pat Buretta, Hospice and Home Care manager, also shared a message about “going home” during the service. Buretta has been serving as the Hospice and Home Care Manager since August and has had a career in nursing and care for over 40 years. “Early in my career, I learned that hospice work was a passion for me, and it was something I was driven to do,” she said.

Buretta shared that there are over 100 synonyms for the word “home” and explained that home is a place where one can find comfort and peace. “My work as a hospice nurse and now manager here has given me great experiences and opportunities to witness the passage, the going home, of many, many folks,” Buretta said, finishing with a quote by American author and biochemistry professor, Isaac Asimov: “Life is pleasant. Death is peaceful. It’s the transition that’s, at times, troublesome.”

Roy Collette, who welcomed guests to the ceremony, noted that this year’s ceremony carried a special significance for event organizers. This year’s service marks the 25th year of the event and this year’s honorary “star lighter” performed the task in honor and memory of Phyllis Rowe, a Star of Hope task force member who passed away in November.

“This year, 2015, has had a very different feeling for most of us on the team,” said Collette. “A couple of weeks ago, we lost our teammate and friend, Phyllis Rowe. She had been involved for many years with us. She will be greatly, greatly missed.”

During the service, guests enjoyed music by the Ellendale United Methodist Church Choir, the Owatonna High School carolers and, following the ceremony, additional music by the Owatonna High School String Ensemble. Roy Collette, Sister Franchon Pirkl, the Rev. John Linde and Maureen Mahoney also provided messages, prayers and blessings during the service.

Once the program came to a close, all were invited to join a processional from the church to the Homestead Hospice House (located across the street) to witness the lighting of the Star of Hope, which rests atop the windmill outside the Homestead Hospice House. Refreshments were also available in the church’s activity hall.

NOTIFICATION

Continued from Page 1C

discretion of local law enforcement.

The only present community member at the notification meeting lives in the vicinity of the sex offender’s new residence. The concern was the protection of potential neighbor children and overall safety of the neighborhood.

Hustad explained to the community member that McKee, like all level III offenders, is under a close watch under the Intensive Supervision Program.

Minnesota Department of Corrections Agent Jason Mullenbach spoke about the success of offenders on Intensive Surveillance Release (ISR), especially level III. Mullenbach explained that level III offenders wear GPS devices for a certain amount of time and offenders are required to tell agents where they are at all times. He said that unannounced visits by agents are frequent and random.

“When these guys get out of prison and are on ISR, they are not just thrown out of prison and we forget about them,” remarked Mullenbach.

Mullenbach also explained to the one community member present that there is a zero tolerance for drug or alcohol use.

Offenders such as McKee are not allowed direct or indirect contact with children.

Mullenbach used the example of “if McKee was shopping and a mother and child walked towards him in an aisle.” He explained that McKee and other level III offenders under ISR are required to turn the opposite directions as them and walk away.

Mullenbach has worked directly with McKee and said that McKee has been following the appropriate steps to assimilate back into society. According to officials, he is doing appropriate programing for his needs.

“He is doing well. He is doing what he needs to do,” said Mullenbach. “He’s trying to acclimate back to society, so he will be seen out and about. He has served his sentence, but this is complex. This is a sensitive time for him.”

Mullenbach advises all individuals to contact law enforcement if something seems off. Hustad encourages educating oneself, family members and friends about sexual violence, when to be cautious or suspicious, how to notice symptoms of abuse in others and educating children about safety.

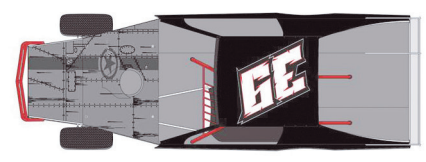
“There are people that are never caught that are more dangerous because they are not being watched,” said Hustad.

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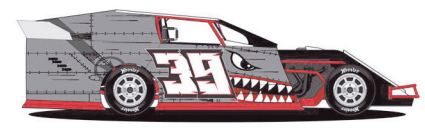
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Ellendale Living

NRHEG Elementary students encourage donations for toy drive

By LAURA BERNDT
News Editor

New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) students are taking their "Panther Pride" one step farther as they collect donations for the school toy drive, which will benefit area children.

Each year, the NRHEG Elementary School hosts a toy drive that will help brighten the holidays for many area children. Students and community members alike are invited to bring toys to the NRHEG Elementary School office. The toys will later be distributed to area children through the Ellendale and New Richland area food shelves.

"At our school, the toy drive has been a tradition," said NRHEG Elementary Family Services Coordinator Barb Handahl. "It's been happening for many, many years. We've always had a successful toy drive."

Fourth-grader Kiyah Mikesell thinks that the toy drive is an important part of the NRHEG school culture because it provides an opportunity to be kind to others. "Just a little act of kindness can do something that you wouldn't even imagine it could probably do," Mikesell said.

Handahl explains that the toy drive is just another way the students can show their "Panther Pride." Panther Pride is an NRHEG program designed to help students grow as individuals and develop important character traits. Panther Pride teaches students and staff alike to be Positive, Respectful, Responsible and Safe (also known as "PRRS," inspired by the "purr" of a panther).

"For the past three years, we have established Panther Pride here at the school," said Handahl. "What we have done is integrated Panther Pride into the climate of school, so it's really a positive atmosphere between the students and the staff and everybody here at school. That flows out into our actions and what we do."

Throughout the year, there have been opportunities for the students to give back to the community. In November, the students participate in a "Turkey Trot" and February signals the start of the annual book drive. In March, students also collect donations for Minnesota Food Share month. "The kids are really giving back and showing citizenship. That's one of our goals here: to get connected and be a responsible citizen," Handahl said. "So, it's important that what we do at school always reflects back onto Panther Pride."



Staff photo by Laura Berndt

NREHG students Aubri Denherder, Sydney Lewer and Kiyah Mikesell are excited about the school's annual toy drive, which continues through Friday, Dec. 11. Community members can donate toys to the Ellendale Elementary School office. Above, the students point to some posters promoting the toy drive.

Students can show Panther Pride in a variety of ways throughout the school day. Fourth-grade students identified a few ways they show their Panther Pride, including taking care of the school's iPads, listening to their teachers and offering to help another student who has dropped their books.

The students also understand that the toy drive is another extension of Panther Pride.

"Giving toys out to the toy drive is helping others," said Sydney Lewer, a fourth-grade student.

"Donating toys is positive, respectful and shows love," agreed fourth-grader Aubri Denherder.

Handahl also said that the students work hard to help promote the toy drive. They make announcements over the school Public Address (PA) system, create posters and even videos to promote the toy drive.

"The kids do a really good job in actually being active in the toy drive, not just by giving toys, but by sharing information about the toy drive," Handahl said. "And they do an excellent job.

"When we talk about the 'PRRS,' it all blends together with caring about and sharing with other kids and other people in our communities," Handahl said. "It's even blossomed into some of the homes. That's really our goal: to spread Panther Pride throughout our community because, in the end, that's going to make the world a better place. And it all starts with us; one person at a time."

Donations can be delivered to the NRHEG Elementary School office, in Ellendale, through Dec. 11.

COUNTY COMMISSION

Continued from Page 1C

foundation work into phase one.

"Including the foundation work in phase one would allow the concrete and masonry foundation work to be completed during the dryer part of the summer," states a memorandum from Amcon. "Performing the concrete and masonry foundations in the spring of 2017 the project is susceptible to more weather delays and possible increase cost due to the soil condition/correction and weather delays."

The interior work of the building could be largely completed without the heating expenses. According to the agenda report, without the need for a temporary heating system during the fall and winter months of 2017, the county could potentially save an approximate $50,000.

September 2016 is the anticipated completion date for Phase one of the project.

If the project follows the current anticipated schedule start of May 2017 for phase two, the building construction will be approximately two to three months ahead of schedule

The recommendation states that earlier completion of the project could result in reduced temporary leased facility costs. The monthly lease rate of $15,630 per month could result in savings of $31,260 for two months or $46,890 for three months earlier completion.

This savings is dependent on the leased facility owners in finding a different tenant to lease the facility, if the facility can be vacated by the county prior to the May 31, 2018 lease end date.

While there will still be a phase one and phase two of the project, this alteration to the schedule is designed to make a smoother process. "Instead of doing it in two distinct phases, it will be seamless between the two phases," said Board Chair Nina Huntington.

IN THE COUNTRY

Continued from Page 1A

board. This year's grand prize was an Apple shuffle iPod, and it was awarded to Brad O'Connor, who was the first to reach a "blackout" on his bingo board.

"It's been a good success," said Wayne, admitting that the turnout was a lot less than the 50 kids who showed up last year. "Hopefully the kids enjoy coming out."

The bingo event always ends with Santa coming to give gifts to the kids, but there was a big problem this year.

"The real Santa was AWOL," joked Wayne.

While Wayne and Groth took turns entertaining the kids and asking them why Santa was late, the other would call Santa, who could not seem to be reached. So, to save the day, Groth dressed as Santa, himself.

A missing Santa wasn't the only mix-up on Saturday, as the vendor/craft sale was moved from The Refuge at Vibrant Life Assembly of God Church to the community building.

Those who made it to the sale were greeted with a host of tables, ranging from homemade bird feeders to therapeutic-grade essential oils.

Making her debut as a vendor at the Christmas in the Country event was Valerie Christiansen, who is a local distributor for Young Living, a 21-year-old supplier in essential oils. Joining Christiansen to promote the brand were Dianne and Lisa Davis, who made the trek from Des Moines, Iowa, to help.

With a table full of promotional information, pamphlets essential oils, toothpaste and more, the booth also offered a free gift for visitors.



Staff photo by James Knoop

Corinne and Dale Swanson sold homemade bird feeders at the Christmas in the Country event in Ellendale on Saturday, Dec. 5.







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Weekly crossword

on Page 5D

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Medford Living

'Young Life' growing in Medford

By ANNA SEGNER
County Staff Writer

Young Life, a Christian faith based youth group that has been wildly successful in Owatonna for years, is finally spreading to Medford.

A group of dedicated community leaders are beginning to set roots for Young Life success in Medford. The Young Life model is focused on fun and faith for junior high and high school students, but each community's Young Life is unique to the individuals involved.

Medford resident and nurse Dawn Steffen and Medford Trinity Lutheran Church Pastor Mark Biebighauser are two organizers in the process of reaching out to the community for support.

Both Steffen and Biebighauser are parents themselves and believe that Medford is in need of a faith-based youth group.

"We want to give kids a fun and safe environment to get to know Jesus," said Steffen. "I think it is great for a group of students to have a place to go, hang out, and become inspired by this great message."

Steffen and Biebighauser expressed interest to Owatonna's beloved Young Life director Chuck Jamison. They were invited to a Young Life banquet in the fall, and the two fell in love with the idea of Young Life in Medford.

"I think this could be wildly successful in Medford," said Jamison. "Across the country, we are seeing small town Young Life explode! The key to it is the right adults that love Christ and love kids. They have to have other tools in the toolbox, but love is important.

"I think Mark and Dawn could be great leaders. We try to do fun and funny stuff, but the best leaders have time to listen," commented Jamison. "Junior high and high school is a tough time of life. Another adult and presence can only help."

The first steps to organizing Young Life in a community is setting up a network of adults to support Young Life, since the organization so values the relationships between adults and students.

Steffen and Biebighauser have been reaching out to adults in the community by word of mouth. They have already held a few informational sessions in which they saw major interest, yet they need as many people to get involved as possible.

"It is about bringing individual identities and talents, so we are drawing from the whole community, people of all generations," said Steffen. "We are hopeful to bring different parts of the community together."

Biebighauser attended the Blandin Foundation retreat with a handful of Steele County community leaders. He said that starting Young Life in Medford was a big topic of conversation at the retreat and something that many supported.

The Medford Young Life will collaborate with the Owatonna Young Life for a little bit until the Medford Young Life finds its own feet.

Jamison said that Owatonna is willing to help out Medford as much as they need with training and collaboration. Medford will likely use Owatonna's Young Life as a model for their program.

Like Owatonna, Medford plans to have "club," a weekly meeting full of games, music, skits and a celebration of God's message. Steffen and Biebighauser visited Owatonna's Young Life club and were struck by the balance of fun and faith.

"What does every kid across America say? I'm bored. Even in Owatonna kids say that all the time," said Jamison. "Young Life is not school. It's not church. It's meaningful and fun."

Medford Young Life wants to reach the love of God and community to all of Medford.

The Lazy U Mobile Home Park West of the Medford Outlet Mall is one area that Medford Young Life would like to reach out to. "That community is physically so far from the other residential areas, yet there are so many kids there," said Biebighauser. "We hope to reach out to them and hope that Young Life brings the community closer.

"There isn't anything more important that the love of God. I am so inspired by the group of teenagers in Medford now, in who they are and who God is leading them to be," said Biebighauser. "We want to bring those that know about God's love closer to him, but we also want to help bring some to that faith."

The relationship building is important for both adults and youth. "There are people that feel the calling to be involved. We need people to be involved and to lead, to work with kids, and share that message," said Steffen. "Eventually, we will set up a committee of volunteers to work out details."

For now, they are in the process of starting a Facebook page so that they can find out interest and get in touch with people who want to help in the creation stages.

A meeting for adults is being planned for after the New Year in January. They were uncertain of dates, but they said that they would be posting the meeting information on their brand new Facebook Page once it is up and running. More information will be present at the meeting.

The goal is to have weekly Young Life "club" meetings start in autumn. However, it takes time to set it up, and as Biegbighauser said "we want to do it right."

If interested in learning more about Young Life and Owatonna's model, visit owatonna.younglife.org.

ELDER ABUSE

Continued from Page 1C

After consulting a second physician, Barbara's suspicions were confirmed: her mother was completely lucid and did not need the constant supervision of a dementia-oriented facility. Barbara attempted to help her mother regain her home and possessions, but Carrie had already given away most of her personal items and begun the process to sell the estate. Carrie even had Jane's dog euthanized, claiming it was necessary, as the dog was suffering from complications of diabetes. Barbara spoke with the veterinarian, who said that the dog did not, in fact, have diabetes. As Carrie was still Jane's legal POA, Barbara was unable to make a strong case against her questionable decisions. Carrie had possession of Jane's social security card, Medicare card and driver's license and instructed assisted living staff not to allow Barbara to visit, claiming she had ill intentions.

"I made an appointment with an elder law specialist, and it was one of the best decisions I could ever have made," said Barbara. The attorney advised Barbara to help get Jane out of the assisted living facility and, eventually, revoked Carrie's POA.

Barbara wrote her mother's story and plans to present the information to government and state officials, in hopes that it will inspire them to take action to help educate and protect other people. "Elder abuse is happening every day all over our country," Barbara wrote. "Most often, it goes unreported. For a person in Mom's situation, it is impossible for them to fight their way out. It takes a strong pull from the outside and a very good attorney to accomplish what we did."

Barbara hopes to help others realize that, in the wrong hands, a POA can be very dangerous and that, sometimes, even trusted loved ones will become blinded by the idea of money and power. She also hopes that there can be a stronger screening process for individuals who are placed in assisted living facilities and dementia wards, ensuring that the people who live there truly need the services they are receiving.

Just one example

While Jane's story is a powerful one, experts say that many people experience similar situations as they age. "There are no boundaries on this kind of issue," said Iris Freeman, President and Chair of the Board of Minnesota Elder Justice Center. "You'd think someone with great deal of savings and advisors would be protected. But, philanthropist Brooke Astor, of Waldorf Astoria, New York, was robbed by her own son. He directed millions of dollars that were supposed to go to charity into his own pocket. There are situations for even someone who's been in field for some time, that make your eyes go wide open. You can be a person as wealthy as an Astor, or someone who's just getting by…. They are all at risk."

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center identifies multiple types of elder abuse, including financial exploitation, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and falling prey to financial scams. The majority of perpetrators are family members and other trusted individuals. According to the Center's website, "In Minnesota, there were 20,000 reports of vulnerable adult abuse, neglect and financial exploitation reported to Adult Protective Services in 2011. The number rose to 32,000 in 2012 and 34,667 in 2013." The website also notes that a significant majority of elder abuse goes unreported.

"We see a lot with especially elder abuse victims that, when we peel back the onion, we often find other forms of abuse," said Amanda Vickstrom, Minnesota Elder Justice Center Executive Director.

One resource for people dealing with elder abuse

The Center was incorporated in February 2014 and launched Oct. 1, 2014, and is the result of a merger between the Vulnerable Adult Justice Project and MN S.A.F.E. Elders Initiative. The mission of the Minnesota Elder Justice Center is to "mobilize communities to prevent and alleviate abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of elders and vulnerable adults." As the program continues to grow and evolve, staff and volunteers hope to continually provide new resources for people in need.

Freeman, who has been working in the field for over 40 years, said she has seen some improvements. "Certainly, one positive has been more public awareness, intended to give tools to protect and law enforcement to protect and some ways to regain some justice," Freeman said. Yet, she also notes that more awareness and education is critical to keep making needed improvements.

"As we add staff, the depth of the amount of work and the numbers of victims we can serve increases," said Vickstrom. "But, while this organization is new, this issue isn't new. Elder abuse is so hidden, so much so that we don't know in terms of research and data and numbers. As we build our programs, we sort of uncap or release floodgates. Up until this point, we have been very grass-roots. Yet, people still find us and still call us."

How to combat elder abuse

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center is just one organization that's fighting to advocate for victims of elder abuse, and strives to provide educational resources to prevent more instances from taking place. The best way to stop elder abuse, said Freeman, is to prevent it from starting in the first place. "Prevention, whether it's for heart disease or cancer or financial exploitation, is more effective than trying to recover what's been lost," Freeman said. "It's a whole lot better to try to deal with something up front than something that's been going on a while."

'Power of attorney can be a good thing, and people need them and use them successfully every day. We need them and we want them. But they also can be damaging if not used properly.'

— Amanda Vickstrom
Minnesota Elder Justice Center Executive Director

It's important, said Vickstrom, for people who see elderly people on a regular basis, to recognize the warning signs of abuse and to know where they can turn for guidance or to report an issue. It's also crucial, she said, for aging people to know their options and think carefully about their care before it's too late. Regarding Jane's cautionary tale, Vickstrom explains that it's not a bad idea to have a POA. Instead, it's a good idea to make sure the right person, or people, has the POA.

"Power of attorney can be a good thing, and people need them and use them successfully every day. We need them and we want them. But they also can be damaging if not used properly," Vickstrom said. "I think that a misconception is that, if someone else also has power of attorney, they still have own rights and that, legally, those decisions have to be for my care or benefit. The minute when a power of attorney is signed, that other person granted legal rights. It's wise to have an attorney talk with you about the power of attorney; who am I choosing, and why? Who do you trust the most, and don't make the choice out of obligation. Choose someone who would represent your best interest."

Beginning the healing process

Jane now has two separate POAs and is living in a senior living apartment. There, she receives assistance from trained nursing staff as needed, but is still able to live independently and even drive her car when the weather is favorable. She is heartbroken about the loss of her home, dog and most possessions, but even more devastated by her own daughter's actions. Jane is, however, extremely grateful for Barbara's support and dedication to help her through her time of need. The two are now very close. Neither Jane nor Barbara speaks to Carrie.

"I now really enjoy the company of my mother," Barbara wrote. "My only regret is that it took such a long time to form this amazing relationship."

RECIPE CORNER

Sautéed Chicken Breasts

- 1/3 c. flour
- 1 1/2 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 4 T. Butter
- 2 T. Oil
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt
- Pepper
- 1 T. minced parsley

By Sarah Lenz

Spread flour on waxed paper and dredge each chicken breast. Melt butter and oil in a skillet. When it foams, add chicken and cook until done. Remove to a serving platter. Stir lemon juice into fat in skillet. Add salt & pepper to taste. Spoon sauce over chicken. Sprinkle with parsley. Test by inserting a knife in center. Cut into 12 squares.

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GRIEF RELIEF



Sometimes children don't seem to care. It's not uncommon for some children, especially those under age 5 to show little feeling when told of the death of a relative. And while it may seem a child should feel sad, the child may have little understanding of the meaning of death. The child may not have been particularly close to the deceased or realized that death is permanent. Allow and accept the child's honest expression and don't make the child feel guilty or pressured.

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Recent happenings in the Steele County area



Submitted photo

The Exchange Club of Steele County Treasurer Mary Wencl (far left) presented $2,466.75 in checks Dec. 4 to the Exchange Club Center for Family Unity in Owatonna during the Club's weekly meeting at Valleyview in Owatonna. The checks were the result of a parking fundraiser during the Steele County Free Fair, a Kohl's Associates in Action grant for their participation in the parking fundraiser, and Dollars for Kids collected during the Steele County Club's weekly meetings. Fair parking funds earned by the Club were also used this fall to purchase a new office printer for the Center. Representing the Center for Family Unity were board members (second from left to right) Brad Haugen, Annette Frank and Coordinator Rachel Grunklee. The Exchange Club Center for Family Unity provides mentoring services to prevent child abuse for families in Steele, Rice, Dodge and Waseca counties.



Staff photo by Laura Berndt

Emerson Ditlevson, who is almost 2 years old, looks very thoughtful during a visit with Santa at the Medford Veterans Memorial on Saturday, Dec. 5.



Staff photo by Anna Segner

Finally, some construction has begun on the Casey's General Store being built on the undeveloped land located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Central Avenue and Riverview Court in Medford. The convenience store will be a 4,200 square foot building with six fuel islands.



Staff photo by Anna Segner

Shelby Ross met Mrs. Clause (Dodie Ellingson) at the Village of Yesteryear on Dec. 4 for Christmas in the Village. Shelby wants a "Frozen" themed microphone for Christmas because she likes to sing.



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This weeks Vandal's winner is: Diane Nelson

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There will also be a drawing with all the entries from the last four weeks on Monday, Dec. 22, for one lucky reader to win the ***GRAND PRIZE*** of two tickets to Chanhassen Dinner Theatre!

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This weeks Express Pressure winner is: Karlene Hansen

HOMETOWN EXTRA
Steele County



Staff photo by Laura Berndt

The Canadian Pacific Holiday Train arrives in Owatonna on Sunday afternoon. This year marked the Holiday Train's third visit to Owatonna. ABOVE LEFT: Greta Burnham-Erickson found a comfortable spot to enjoy the Holiday Train's visit to Owatonna. Together, she and Tim Erickson, both of Owatonna, are enjoying the music on Sunday, Dec. 6.



Staff photo by James Knoop

Addie O'Connor was all smiles upon receiving a gift from Santa at the Christmas in the Country holiday event in Ellendale on Saturday.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas



Staff photo by James Knoop

One boy looks through the gifts in Santa's House during Blooming Prairie's Holiday Dazzle last weekend.

By LAURA BERNDT
News Editor

In Steele County, have been plenty of opportunities for local people to get into the holiday spirit. This past weekend offered many holiday-themed events, in Blooming Prairie and Owatonna.

On Friday, Dec. 4, Blooming Prairie hosted its annual Holiday Dazzle event, kicking off the celebration with a ribbon cutting to commemorate the newly completed Main Street construction. That night, families enjoyed a variety of other events for all ages, from wagon rides and a visit from Santa himself.

On both Friday and Saturday, the Steele County Historical Society (SCHS), of Owatonna, held its annual Christmas in the Village event. Guests were encouraged to visit the historic buildings in the SCHS Village of Yesteryear. From cookie decorating to caroling, there was something for everyone to enjoy during the festivities.

On Saturday, there was even an Artisan Market, featuring a variety of handmade creations. Santa, Mrs. Claus and even a reindeer were present during the event and the Village of Yesteryear was beautifully decorated for the occasion.

The 28th annual Christmas in the Country, in Ellendale, also took place on Saturday, Dec. 5. Ellendale businesses and organizations offered a variety of shopping specials, in addition to activities for the whole family to enjoy. Santa posed for photos with visitors to Ellendale and families could also enjoy ornament decorating. There were also a few lively games of "Santa Bingo" and an impressive craft and vendor sale.

Owatonna was also aglow with the holiday spirit this Sunday. That evening, the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train rolled into town, raising money and collecting non-perishable food items for the Steele County Food Shelf. Santa stepped off the train to visit with the crowd and visitors stayed warm with a cup of hot chocolate during the event. Musicians also dazzled the crowd with music from the boxcar stage.

Later that night, many people also took time to participate in a different type of holiday activity: the Star of Hope service and lighting. This event is an opportunity to remember and honor loved ones who have passed away. The ceremony also carried a message of hope, as donations to the Star of Hope will help assist hospice families with limited resources.



Staff photo by James Knoop

Representatives of Young Living pose for a photo at the Ellendale Christmas in the Country Craft and Vendor sale. Left to right are Valerie Christensen, Dianne Davis and Lisa Davis.



Staff photo by Anna Segner

Carolers wished all a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year through song at the Christmas at the Village event on Dec. 4.



Staff photo by James Knoop

The long-awaited Santa Clause gets a ride on a horse drawn carriage as he approaches F&M Bank where a large line of children and parents stand waiting.



Staff photo by Laura Berndt

Guests at the Star of Hope service and lighting ceremony take pause to remember long-time volunteer Phyllis Rowe, who passed away in November.



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State lifts ban on poultry exhibitions

By KAREN JORGENSEN
County Staff Writer



4-H Club members throughout the area are happier now knowing that the Minnesota Board of Animal Health has lifted the ban on poultry exhibitions that was put in place earlier this year because of avian influenza.

As of Dec. 1, birds will be permitted at fairs, swap meets, exotic sales, petting zoos and other events.

The ban was especially hard on 4-H club members participating in poultry projects.

The ban was announced on May 15, 2015, which was also the deadline for 4-H members to identify the animals used in their projects, said Tracy Ignaszewski, 4-H program coordinator for Steele County.

"A lot of 4-H'ers will be really happy to bring their animals to the fair," she said. "We probably have 60 to 70 youth in poultry projects."

Participants can bring more than one bird to the county fair, she said, so close to 200 are normally being entered.

The ban affected not only chickens but all birds including turkeys, geese, ducks and

It also took some creative thinking on the part of organizers to find ways for the club members, who had put a lot of time and effort into their projects, to be able to compete at county fairs.

Despite not being able to actually bring their birds to the fairs they were still able to use displays to explain their project and stuffed toy birds took the place of the real thing for demonstrations.

Kelly Vinceletti, 4-H program coordinator in Dodge County, agreed everyone is happy with the removal of the ban.

"We're really excited," she said, "especially with work starting on the new building."

Work was scheduled to start this week on a new poultry/rabbit building at the Dodge County Fair Grounds. Local 4-H Club members have been raising money for a year to pay for the new building.

Dodge County usually sees 30 to 40 club members participating in the poultry project with more than 100 birds being displayed, she said.

The kids were disappointed last summer, she said, but understood the ban was necessary for the safety of their poultry.

There are a lot of components to the poultry project besides physically showing the birds, Vinceletti said. While they could not actually bring their birds to the fair they could still participate in the demonstrations and other aspects of the project.

The directive from the state to ban birds from exhibition was made in response to the outbreak of the highly pathogenic avian influenza HPAI. The ban was put into place to minimize the spread of HPAI and protect the state's domestic bird population.

The spring 2015 outbreak saw 108 farms, most of them turkey farms, spanning 23 counties in Minnesota infected, including one farm in Steele County.

As of Nov. 13, all of the infected farms have completed cleaning and disinfection of the facilities and 104 have been cleared to restock their barns with birds.

No new cases of HPAI have been found in Minnesota since June 5, 2015, according to the Board of Animal Health

Workshop on avian influenza, biosecurity in pastured poultry

By WAYNE MARTIN Alternative Livestock Systems, University of Minnesota Extension

A workshop on avian influenza and biosecurity in pasture and outdoor production systems will be 9 to 11:30 a.m., Dec. 12 in Northfield.

The event is offered by University of Minnesota Extension, the Minnesota Board of Animal Health and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The workshop is in the community room of Community Resource Bank, 1605 Heritage Drive

It is free and open to the public. To register, contact Wayne Martin, Extension educator in alternative livestock systems, at marti067@umn.edu or 612-625-6224, by Dec. 10. There will also be on-site registration at 8:30 a.m.

Speakers will address:

•The development and progression of the recent outbreak in Minnesota;

•The Board of Animal Health and APHIS roles and responsibilities during an outbreak;

•What producers need to know during an outbreak regarding testing and movement of poultry;

•Biosecurity in pasture or outdoor settings.

"It is essential for all farmers, whether using a pasture or confinement system, to make their farm as bio-secure as possible," said Carol Cardona, University of Minnesota veterinarian and Extension specialist. "This workshop will help farmers understand more about what occurred last spring and help them prepare for an outbreak in the future."

More information from the Extension poultry team on pasture production and biosecurity is at z.umn.edu/smallfarmspoultry and z.umn.edu/avianinfluenza.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

USDA begins 49th enrollment period for the Conservation Reserve Program

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack reminded farmers and ranchers that the next general enrollment period for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) ends on Feb. 26, 2016. December 2015 also marks the 30th anniversary of CRP, a federally funded program that assists agricultural producers with the cost of restoring, enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

As of September 2015, 24.2 million acres were enrolled in CRP. CRP also is protecting more than 170,000 stream miles with riparian forest and grass buffers, enough to go around the world 7 times. For an interactive tour of CRP success stories from across the U.S., visit www.fsa.usda.gov/CRPis30, or follow on Twitter at #CRPis30.

"Over the past 30 years, farmers, ranchers, conservationists, hunters, fishermen and other outdoor enthusiasts have made CRP one of the most successful conservation programs in the history of the country," said Vilsack. "Today, CRP continues to make major environmental improvements to water and air quality. This is another long-standing example of how agricultural production can work hand in hand with efforts to improve the environment and increase wildlife habitat."

Participants in CRP establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers") to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. At times when commodity prices are low, enrolling sensitive lands in CRP can be especially attractive to farmers and ranchers, as it softens the economic hardship for landowners at the same time that it provides ecological benefits. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish native plant species on marginal agricultural lands for the primary purpose of preventing soil erosion and improving water quality and related benefits of reducing loss of wildlife habitat.

Contracts on 1.64 million acres of CRP are set to expire on Sept. 30, 2016. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP.

Since it was established on Dec. 23, 1985, CRP has:

•**Prevented** more than 9 billion tons of soil from eroding, enough soil to fill 600 million dump trucks;

•**Reduced** nitrogen and phosphorous runoff relative to annually tilled cropland by 95 and 85 percent respectively;

•**Sequestered** an annual average of 49 million tons of greenhouse gases, equal to taking 9 million cars off the road.

Since 1996, CRP has created nearly 2.7 million acres of restored wetlands.

For more information FSA conservation programs, visit a local FSA office or www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation. To find your local FSA office, visit http://offices.usda.gov.

The Conservation Reserve Program was re-authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill, which builds on historic economic gains in rural America over the past six years, while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for taxpayers. Since enactment, USDA has made significant progress to implement each provision of this critical legislation, including providing disaster relief to farmers and ranchers; strengthening risk management tools; expanding access to rural credit; funding critical research; establishing innovative public-private conservation partnerships; developing new markets for rural-made products; and investing in infrastructure, housing, and community facilities to help improve quality of life in rural America. For more information, visit www.usda.gov/farmbill.

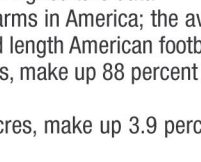
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DID YOU KNOW?

WHAT IS THE AVERAGE SIZE OF AN AMERICAN FARM?

According to the USDA 2012 Census of Agriculture data:

There are approximately 2.1 million farms in America; the average size is 418 acres. An acre, by comparison, equates to a little less than one 100-yard length American football field. 97 percent of farms are family-owned.

•Small family farms, averaging 231 acres, make up 88 percent of farms and 48 percent of total farm acres in the U.S.

•Large family farms, averaging 1,421 acres, make up 3.9 percent of farms and 13 percent of farm acres in the U.S.

•Very large family farms, averaging 2,086 acres, make up 4.6 percent of farms and 23 percent of total farm acres in the U.S.

WHAT IS THE AVERAGE AGE OF AN AMERICAN FARMER?

According to the U.S. Labor Department, the average age of farmers and ranchers is 58. This is not because farmers are among America's oldest workers – their average age has been growing rapidly for approximately 30 years, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Census of Agriculture. The Census, which is published every five years, shows that during the past 30 years the average age of U.S. farmers has grown by nearly eight years, from 50.5 years to 58.3 years.

This is a concern for the future of farming since there are fewer individuals choosing farming as an occupation than before. While there are certainly many exceptions, a growing number of young adults are going off to college and pursuing other careers, and not staying (or coming back after college) to work on the family farm.

AgPower ENTERPRISES

September Public Record

Steele County Births
September 2015

Isabel Teresa Machacek, Parents: Celeste and Ryan, Sept. 2

Reagen Lynn Everhard, Parents: Lauren and David, Sept. 2.

Breeley Judith Noasconi, Parents: Sarah and Steven, Sept. 5.

Wyatt Donald Kubat, Parents: Janice and Brent, Sept. 6.

Leilani Leah Corona, Parents: Melyssa Dominguez and Gabriel Espinoza, Sept. 6.

Maddison Rae Corona, Parents: Melyssa Dominguez and Gabriel Espinoza, Sept. 6.

Isabella Rosario McGurran, Parents: Sarah and Jon, Sept. 8.

Devyn Marie Ahlman, Parents: Kristi and Brandon, Sept. 9.

Oliver Eugene Simon, Parents: Selby and Brian, Sept. 9.

Avery Jacob Stock, Parents: Whitney and Jacob, Sept. 11.

Cora Rose Balzer, Parents: Bethany and Ross, Sept. 13.

Cyrus Adrian Jackson, Parent: Lindsey Abraham, Sept. 15.

Connor Reed Torgerson, Parents: Ashley and Christopher, Sept. 15.

Lorenzo James Garcia, Parent: Jazlyn Webster, Sept. 16.

Maryan Cabulaahi Mohamed, Parents: Khadra Jama and Cabulaahi Seraar, Sept. 17.

Meiah Marie Barnett, Parents: Kayla and Tyler, Sept. 17.

Grayson Allen Ferguson, Parents: Misty and Shane, Sept. 18.

Connor William Flynn, Parents: Lindsey and Jeffrey, Sept. 18.

Jack Koda Blackman, Parents: Dawn and Joseph, Sept. 22.

Maxwell Raymond Prondzinski, Parents: Tricia and Michael, Sept. 23.

Danni Geri Knutson, Parent: Jasmine Vaupel, Sept. 24.

Tucker James Finley, Parents: Jamie and Timothy, Sept. 25.

Abubakar Abdurahman Nor, Parents: Fardowza Abdow and Abdurahman Adam, Sept. 25.

Zuhaib Abdullahi Abdulle, Parents: Asha Aden and Abdullahi Abdulle, Sept. 28.

Capree Lyn Nomeland, Parents: Faith and Leif, Sept. 28.

Davisen Bradley Boyum, Parents: Elizabeth and Bradley, Sept. 29.

Steele County Deaths
September 2015

Gregery Allen Pretegard, 55, Claremont, Sept. 2.

Donald Charles Kasper, 83, Owatonna, Sept. 3.

Lauretta Ann Wesely, 78, Owatonna, Sept. 3.

Charles Richard Schafer, 80, Owatonna, Sept. 3.

Joseph Patrick Ptacek, 78, Owatonna, Sept. 6.

Lois Jean Buzick, 86, Owatonna, Sept. 7.

Willard Loren Ehrich, 76, Owatonna, Sept. 9.

Ella Marie Benson, 97, Blooming Prairie, Sept. 15.

Dorothy Ann Claesgens, 89, Owatonna, Sept. 16.

Teresa Joan Landherr, 63, Owatonna, Sept. 16.

Bobbette Marie Larson, 68, Owatonna, Sept. 17.

Wesley Carl Bettin, 93, Medford, Sept. 18.

Audrey Joan Stormo, 77, Watertown, SD, Sept. 18.

Brian Douglas Schultz, 43, Owatonna, Sept. 20.

Cecil Neal Knights, 82, Owatonna, Sept. 24.

Russell Clarence Grinolds, 95, Owatonna, Sept. 25.

Michael Dean Bartsch, 57, Owatonna, Sept. 27.

James G. Rossel, 86, Hope, Sept. 27.

Ruth Marie Selvik, 84, Owatonna, Sept. 29.

Clifford Jerome Bartsch, 86, Aurora Township, Sept. 29.

Steele County Marriages
September 2015

Noah Dean Braget and Skye Lynne Swedin, Sept. 4.

Jason Jon Meyer and Rachel Elizabeth Sanders, Sept. 5.

Nathan Wade Ahrens and Molly Ann Hanson, Sept. 5.

Megan Kay Leet and A'ron Depree Clark, Sept. 5.

Todd Richard Yancey and Nadine Esther Grams, Sept. 5.

Jonathan David Wigham and Alisha McKenzie Baker, Sept. 5.

Kelli Jean Hall and Rocco Ray Bachara, Sept. 5.

Elias Haile Demessie and Kathy Jo Duden, Sept. 8.

Nicholas Ray Pratt and Saray Loretta Morgan, Sept. 10.

Bryan David Botten and Tara Leigh Beucler, Sept. 11.

Joshua Jay Liefring and Alissa Marie Crippen, Sept. 12.

PUBLIC RECORD
Continued on Page 6D



Make sure your resume doesn't cost you a job

Many a night's sleep has been lost worrying about an upcoming job interview. Questions like "Will I make a good impression?" or "Am I qualified for the job?" can make for a restless night's sleep on the eve before a job interview.

Writing a resume is another aspect of the job hunt that can stoke your nerves. Men and women may pour over job timelines and skill summaries for hours in an effort to ensure they have included the right mix of information to get noticed.

Though resume writing has changed considerably over the years, some conventional wisdom about resumes still prevails, and how closely potential applicants adhere to these rules goes a long way toward determining if they earn a chance at an interview.

Me, myself and I

While the resume should showcase your professional accomplishments, it also should showcase how your skills relate to the job you're applying for. This way the company understands you have researched the position and are in tune with what they're looking for in an applicant.

One document for all responses: A resume is not a static document. It needs to change depending on the job you're applying to. Although there will be certain information that can remain the same, update the skills and other information based on each position.

One page is best

Applicants were long told to keep their resumes concise, limiting the document to just one page. However, if your experience is extensive or one page cannot contain a long job history, don't be afraid to submit a two-page resume.

Failing to be selective

You need not include your entire job history on a resume, especially if certain past positions you have held are completely irrelevant to the position for which you are applying. Don't be afraid of job gaps, either. Many of today's recruiters understand that the changing economy can make it challenging to maintain steady employment.

Overembellishment

Do not embellish your skills. Always be open and honest on your resume. You may be asked to prove you can perform certain tasks, and if you cannot back up what is included on a resume, you will have wasted your time and the time the interviewer spent discussing his company's opening with you.

Imperfections

A resume is a reflection of you, so one with typographical errors or a poor layout is never acceptable. Ensure your resume is as professional and error-free as possible. Have a friend or a proofreader look it over before distributing.

Paid positions

Internships or volunteer work are perfectly acceptable to include on a resume, particularly for younger applicants who may not have a wealth of professional experience. Include a mix of information on the resume that will reflect your versatility.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Kasson-Mantorville Schools
have an immediate opening for a
.5FTE Speech/Language Pathologist.
Please complete application on-line at:
www.komets.k12.mn.us
and include a resume, application letter, transcripts and reference letters.
51c

KRUEGER TRUCKING
CDL driver over the road dryer van. Driver benefits included. Paid holidays, vacation pay, and 401K health plan.
Krueger Trucking
Austin, MN
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49-51c

Kasson-Mantorville School
is seeking a
Special Education Teacher
to begin January, 2016
Please complete application on-line at:
www.komets.k12.mn.us
and include a resume, application letter, transcripts and reference letters.
51c

JUMP-START your Human Services or Healthcare Career!
REM Woodvale Hire Day!
SEEKING DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS TO SERVE ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES THROUGHOUT ALBERT LEA, AUSTIN, KASSON & OWATONNA!
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jobs.thementornetwork.com/search/woodvale
AAE/EOE
51c

WHEN A NURSING HOME IS NOT FOR YOU OR YOUR LOVED ONE...
Wellington adult care has trained staff who work 24 hrs. a day to provide you with services such as prepared meals, medication management, personal care such as bathing, dressing and grooming, as well as other activities of daily living. All meals are served family style in the dining room. Special diets are not a problem. We also arrange transportation to and from medical appointments accompanied by staff or family. We supply laundry services, and housekeeping. Our home is wheelchair accessible. We have a 1 to 5 staff to client ratio. All rooms are private. We serve a variety of clients over the age of 55. We are licensed by Dodge County and the State of Minnesota.
For more information please contact
Jane Hill @ 507.374.2198 or 507.319.5134
20tfc

Kasson-Mantorville Schools
have an immediate opening for an
EC Paraprofessional
(20-30 hours per week)
Please complete application on-line at:
www.komets.k12.mn.us
and include a resume and application letter.
51c

DRIVERS- Class A CDL Job Fair
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McLane Company, Inc.
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35tfc

Office Assistant



The Dodge County Independent newspaper, along with its printing operation, Dodge County Printing, is accepting applications for a part-time office assistant to handle general office duties and be the point of contact to the public.

Ideal candidate should have strong customer service skills for in-person contact, email and phone; exceptional organizational skills, computer skills and ability to stay focused and pay attention to detail.

Position will be at least 25 hours per week and may grow into full-time. If interested please send resume and letter of interest to Publisher Rick Bussler at

bprick@frontier.com

DODGE COUNTY INDEPENDENT

The City of Kasson
Public Works Director

Plan, organize, manage and continually evaluate all assigned public works functions in a manner which is consistent with directives of the City Administrator and which facilitates the provision of efficient utilities and a safe, usable and expandable infrastructure throughout the City.

Perform difficult administrative work, planning, organizing and directing streets, drainage, water and wastewater utility, electrical utility and related public works and public utility functions, coordinating work with other departments and the City Administrator, maintaining records and files, preparing reports, and related work as required. Work involves setting policies and goals under the direction of the City Administrator. Departmental supervision is exercised over Electric, Water and Wastewater, Parks and Recreation and subordinate personnel. Salary Range: $35.18-$42.62.

Application materials are available from the "employment" page of the City of Kasson website (www.cityofkasson.com).
Completed application and resume are to be sent to:
Linda Rappe, City Clerk, City of Kasson
401 SE 5th St., Kasson, MN 55944.
Applications will be accepted until the position is filled; however, interested applicants are strongly encouraged to apply not later than noon, Tuesday, December 15, 2015.
Review of applications begins on December 16, 2015.
50-51c

MINNESOTA PRAIRIE COUNTY ALLIANCE
COMMUNITY SERVICES OF DODGE, STEELE & WASECA COUNTIES

POSITION AVAILABLE:
Account Technician
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Application Requirements can be found at:
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Owatonna, MN 55060
EOE

Legals

Foreclosure

15-101570

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE |FORECLOSURE SALE

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

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: December 21, 2006 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: $116,000.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Joseph L. Erler and Barbara R. Erler, Husband and Wife; Jeremy J. Erler and Brittany L. Erler, Husband and Wife and Jeff T. Evans, a single person MORTGAGEE: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. MIN#: 100021278104668400 LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON THE MORTGAGE: Rochester Mortgage Company SERVICER: JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Filed December 22, 2006, Steele County Recorder, as Document Number A000346604, thereafter re-recorded March 28, 2007 as document number A000348663 to add additional mortgagors

ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association; Dated: July 27, 2015 filed: August 3, 2015, recorded as document number A000403434 LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot 9 and the East 6 feet of Lot 8 in Block 23 of the Original Town (now City) of Owatonna, Minnesota; Excepting the South 55 feet to the above described premises. PROPERTY ADDRESS: 404 Elm Ave S, Owatonna, MN 55060 PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 17-100-2310 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: $107,927.01 THAT all pre-foreclosure requirements have been complied with; that no action or proceeding has been instituted at law or otherwise to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: January 12, 2016, 10:00am PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff's Main Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN 55060 to pay the debt secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any, on said premises and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys fees allowed by law, subject to redemption within 6 months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s) the personal representatives or assigns. TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the real estate is an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling, unless otherwise provided by law, the date on or before which the mortgagor(s) must vacate the property, if the mortgage is not reinstated under section 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under section 580.23, is 11:59 p.m. on July 12, 2016, or the next business day if July 12, 2016 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. "THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 582.032 DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN 5 UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: November 17, 2015

JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association
Assignee of Mortgagee

SHAPIRO & ZIELKE, LLP

BY _____
Lawrence P. Zielke - 152559
Diane F. Mach - 273788
Melissa L. B. Porter - 0337778
Randolph W. Dawdy - 2160X
Gary J. Evers - 0134764
Tracy J. Halliday - 034610X
Attorneys for Mortgagee
12550 West Frontage Road, Ste. 200
Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 831-4060

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR

11/24, 12/1, 12/8
12/15, 12/22, 12/29

Foreclosure

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

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That Default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: 09/23/2004 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: $100,700.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Dale L. Louks and Bonjonette Louks, Husband and Wife; and Lanny R. Louks MORTGAGEE: ¬Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Heartland Home Finance, Inc. DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: 10/12/2004 as Document Number A000326422 in the Office of the County Recorder, Steele County, Minnesota ASSIGNMENT OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to Ventures Trust 2013-I-H-R by MCM Capital Partners, LLC its Trustee DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: 03/05/2015 as Document Number A000401080 in the Office of the County Recorder, Steele County, Minnesota TAX PARCEL I.D. NO.: 17-016-1153 LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Commencing Ten (10) rods West of the Southeast corner of Lot Four (4) of Lot Eighteen (18) in the Northeast Quarter (1/4) of Section Sixteen (16) in Township One Hundred and Seven (107) North of Range Twenty (20) West, running thence North Ten (10) rods, thence West Four and one-half (4 1/2) rods, thence South Ten (10) rods, thence East Four and one-half (4 1/2) rods to the place of beginning. A B S T R A C T STREET ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 240 Northview, Owatonna, MN 55060 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR: Heartland Home Finance, Inc. RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE SERVICER: BSI Financial Services Inc. TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. TRANSACTION AGENT'S MORTGAGE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER ON MORTGAGE: 100031101000011041 2 THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE AS OF THE DATE OF THIS NOTICE: $103,796.01

THAT no action or proceeding has been instituted at law to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; that there has been compliance with all pre-foreclosure notice and acceleration requirements of said mortgage, and/or applicable statutes. Pursuant to the power of sale contained in said Mortgage, the Mortgage will be foreclosed, and the mortgaged premises will be sold by the Sheriff of Steele County, Minnesota at public auction as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: 01/19/2016 at 10:00AM PLACE OF SALE: Steele County Sheriff's Office, 204 E. Pearl, Owatonna, MN 55060 to pay the debt then secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any actually paid by the mortgagee, on the premises and the costs and disbursements allowed by law. The time allowed by law for redemption by said Mortgagor(s) or Mortgagor's personal representatives or assigns is six months from the date of sale. TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the mortgage is not reinstated under Minn. Stat. §580.30 or redeemed under Minn. Stat. §580.23, the mortgagor must vacate the mortgaged property by 11:59 p.m. on 07/19/2016, or the next business day if 07/19/2016 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

MORTGAGOR(S) RELEASED FROM FINANCIAL OBLIGATION ON MORTGAGE: None

THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 582.032, DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS THAT MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: 11/24/2015
Ventures Trust 2013-I-H-R by MCM Capital Partners, LLC its Trustee, Mortgagee/Mortgage Assignee
Klatt, Odekirk, Augustine, Sayer, Treinen & Rastede, P.C., By Brian G. Sayer, Attorney for Mortgagee/ Mortgage Assignee
925 E 4th St., Waterloo, IA 50703

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

11/24, 12/1, 12/8
12/15, 12/22, 12/29

Foreclosure

15-101819

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

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

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: April 21, 2008 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: $159,101.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Lee Mullerleile and Christy Mullerleile, husband and wife MORTGAGEE: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. MIN#: 100249120000143128

LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON THE MORTGAGE: Marketplace Home Mortgage, LLC SERVICER: CitiMortgage, Inc. DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Filed April 25, 2008, Steele County Recorder, as Document Number A000356812 ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: CitiMortgage, Inc. LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot 8, Block 6, Re-Plat of Highland Park Addition to the City of Owatonna, together with the North Half of the vacated alley lying directly South of said Lot. PROPERTY ADDRESS: 627 E Academy St, Owatonna, MN 55060 PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 17-136-0608 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: $159,226.97 THAT all pre-foreclosure requirements have been complied with; that no action or proceeding has been instituted at law or otherwise to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: January 12, 2016, 10:00am PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff's Main Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN 55060 to pay the debt secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any, on said premises and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys fees allowed by law, subject to redemption within 6 months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s) the personal representatives or assigns. TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the real estate is an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling, unless otherwise provided by law, the date on or before which the mortgagor(s) must vacate the property, if the mortgage is not reinstated under section 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under section 580.23, is 11:59 p.m. on July 12, 2016, or the next business day if July 12, 2016 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

"THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 582.032 DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN 5 UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: November 20, 2015

CitiMortgage, Inc.
Assignee of Mortgagee

SHAPIRO & ZIELKE, LLP

BY _____
Lawrence P. Zielke - 152559
Diane F. Mach - 273788
Melissa L. B. Porter - 0337778
Randolph W. Dawdy - 2160X
Gary J. Evers - 0134764
Tracy J. Halliday - 034610X
Attorneys for Mortgagee
12550 West Frontage Road, Ste. 200
Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 831-4060

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR

11/24, 12/1, 12/8,
12/15, 12/22, 12/29

Foreclosure

15-101690

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

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

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: November 21, 2005 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: $229,050.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Amado Mendez Solis and Lorna E. Mendez, husband and wife MORTGAGEE: Town and Country Credit Corp. LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON THE MORTGAGE: Town and Country Credit Corp. SERVICER: Specialized Loan Servicing LLC DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Filed December 7, 2005, Steele County Recorder, as Document Number A000337562 ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: Ameriquest Mortgage Company; Dated: December 2, 2005 filed: December 26, 2007, recorded as document number A000354323; thereafter assigned to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. dated December 2, 2005 recorded December 26, 2007 as document number A000354324. Thereafter assigned to U.S. Bank National Association, as Trustee, successor in interest to Bank of America, National Association, as successor by merger to LaSalle Bank National Association, as Trustee for Certificateholders of Bear Stearns Asset Backed Securities I LLC, Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2006-HE2 dated March 19, 2012 recorded April 9, 2012 as document number A000383927. LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot 6, Block 3, Radel's Francis Addition PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1283 Bellflower Lane, Owatonna, MN 55060 PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 17-437-0306 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: $372,214.97 THAT all pre-foreclosure requirements have been complied with; that no action or proceeding has been instituted at law or otherwise to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: January 12, 2016, 10:00am PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff's Main Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN 55060 to pay the debt secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any, on said premises and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys fees allowed by law, subject to redemption within 6 months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s) the personal representatives or assigns. TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the real estate is an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling, unless otherwise provided by law, the date on or before which the mortgagor(s) must vacate the property, if the mortgage is not reinstated under section 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under section 580.23, is 11:59 p.m. on July 12, 2016, or the next business day if July 12, 2016 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. "THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 582.032 DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN 5 UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: November 20, 2015

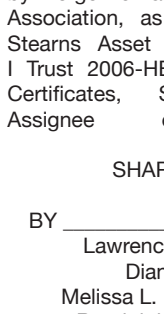
U.S. Bank National Association, as Trustee, successor in interest to Bank of America, National Association, as Trustee, successor by merger to LaSalle Bank National Association, as Trustee for Bear Stearns Asset Backed Securities I Trust 2006-HE2, Asset Backed-Certificates, Series 2006-HE2
Assignee of Mortgagee

SHAPIRO & ZIELKE, LLP

BY _____
Lawrence P. Zielke - 152559
Diane F. Mach - 273788
Melissa L. B. Porter - 0337778
Randolph W. Dawdy - 2160X
Gary J. Evers - 0134764
Tracy J. Halliday - 034610X
Attorneys for Mortgagee
12550 West Frontage Road, Ste. 200
Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 831-4060

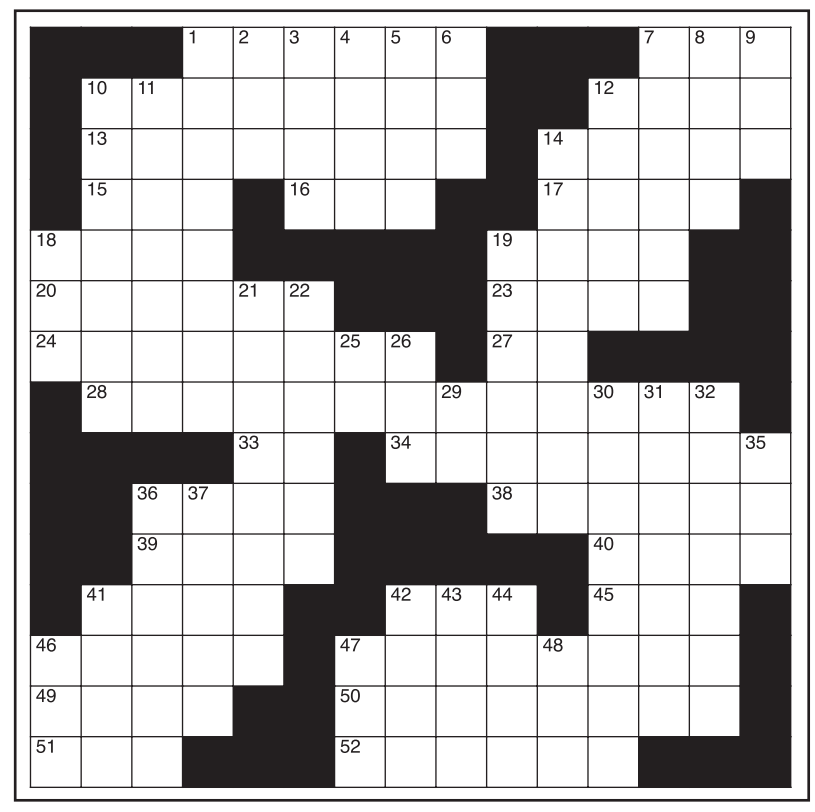
THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR

11/24, 12/1, 12/8,
12/15, 12/22, 12/29


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WEEKLY CROSSWORD

Answers on Page 6C



CLUES ACROSS

1. Red wine
7. Best nurse-patient aid
10. Footwear closure
12. Chinese dynasty 1122-221 BC
13. Persuade to one's side
14. Advocate
15. Mandela's party
16. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
17. About aviation
18. Shallowest of the Greats
19. Sheathe
20. Frightened
23. Brews
24. Relates
27. Atomic #52
28. Up the ante
33. The "Kings's" initials
34. Lepton
36. Cornmeal mush (British)
38. One who analyzes syntactically
39. Algonquian tribe
40. Systems, doctrines, theories
41. Herb __, San Francisco columnist
42. Informed about the latest trends
45. Seven
46. Morocco's capital
47. What a doctor practices
49. Beaks
50. In a way, extends
51. A number or amount not specified
52. Gambling

CLUES DOWN

1. Composition for orchestra and soloists
2. Bulgarian monetary unit
3. Settled upon
4. Common frog genus
5. Electronic counter-countermeasures
6. Golf ball supporter
7. Divided into 3
8. Crazy (Spanish)
9. Billiards stick
10. More deficient
11. Solomon Islands capital
12. Larval crabs
14. Malta capital
18. Clairvoyance
19. Tomato condiment
21. Alleviation
22. French seaport
25. New Testament
26. Shortened (abbr.)
29. Employee (abbr.)
30. Opposite of leaving
31. Lip locking
32. Foes
35. Many not ands
36. Covered with healing scrapes
37. Regions
41. Abel's brother (Bible)
42. Greek Queen of the gods
43. Esau's descendants (Bible)
44. Canarium ovatum
46. Ribonucleic acid
47. Gas usage measurement
48. An oppositional argument

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Legals

Summons

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DISTRICT COURT
CIVIL DIVISION

COUNTY OF STEELE
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
Case Type: Action to Determine Adverse Claims to Real Estate

Jared J. Hendricks,
Court File No. 74-CV-15-2447

Plaintiff

v.

Francis H. Becker, and also any unknown assigns and successors of the above-named Defendant; and All other persons unknown claiming any right, title, estate, interest or lien in the real estate described in the Complaint herein,

Defendants.

THIS SUMMONS IS DIRECTED TO FRANCIS H. BECKER:

1. **YOU ARE BEING SUED.** The Plaintiff has started a lawsuit against you. The Plaintiff's Complaint against you has been filed with the Court. Do not throw these papers away. They are official papers that affect your rights. You must respond to this lawsuit even though it may not yet be filed with the Court and there may be no court file number on this Summons.

2. YOU MUST REPLY WITHIN 20 DAYS TO PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS. You must give or mail to the person who signed this summons a written response called an Answer within 20 days of the date on which you received this Summons. You must send a copy of your Answer to the person who signed this Summons located at:

Eric J. Mattison
Einhaus, Mattison, Carver & Haberman, P.A.
202 North Cedar Avenue,
P.O. Box 545
Owatonna, Minnesota 55060

3. YOU MUST RESPOND TO EACH CLAIM. The Answer is your written response to the Plaintiff's Complaint. In your Answer you must state whether you agree or disagree with each paragraph of the Complaint. If you believe the Plaintiff should not be given everything asked for in the Complaint, you must say so in your Answer.

4. YOU WILL LOSE YOUR CASE IF YOU DO NOT SEND A WRITTEN RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINT TO THE PERSON WHO SIGNED THIS SUMMONS. If you do not answer within 20 days, you will lose this case. You will not get to tell your side of the story, and the Court may decide against you and award the Plaintiff everything asked for in the Complaint. If you do not want to contest the claims stated in the Complaint, you do not need to respond. A default judgment can then be entered against you for the relief requested in the Complaint.

5. LEGAL ASSISTANCE. You may wish to get legal help from a lawyer. If you do not have a lawyer, the Court Administrator may have information about places where you can get legal assistance. Even if you cannot get legal help, you must still provide a written Answer to protect your rights or you may lose the case.

6. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION. The parties may agree to or be ordered to participate in an alternative dispute resolution process under Rule 114 of the Minnesota General Rules of Practice. You must still send your written response to the Complaint even if you expect to use alternative means of resolving this dispute.

7. This Action involves, affects, or brings in question real property situated in the County of Steele, State of Minnesota, described as follows:

The following property situated in Steele County Minnesota: Beginning at a point 11016 feet South of 382.62 feed East of the Northwest Corner of the East Half of the Southeast Quarter of Section 2, Township 107 North, Range 20 West; and running thence East 131 feet; thence South 115 feet; thence West 131 feet; thence North 115 feet to the point of beginning.

The object of this action is to obtain a judgment that Plaintiff Jared F. Hendricks is the owner of that real estate and that none of the Defendants have any estate or interest therein.

Dated: November 25, 2015
Einhaus, Mattison, Carver & Haberman, P.A.
Eric J. Mattison
MN# 151609
202 North Cedar Avenue
Owatonna, Minnesota 55060
Telephone: (507) 451-3580
Facsimile: (507) 451-3532
e-mail Mattison@owatonnalawyers

12/8, 12/15, 12/22

Estate

STATE OF MINNESOTA

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT
PROBATE DIVISION

COUNTY OF STEELE

Court File No 74-PR-15-2448

NOTICE AND ORDER OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR PROBATE OF WILL AND APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate of
Phyllis Rowe
a/k/a/ Phyllis E. Rowe,
Decedent

It is Ordered and Notice is given that on January 5, 2016, at 10:45 a.m., a hearing will be held in this Court at 111 East Main Street, Owatonna, Minnesota, for the formal probate of an instrument purporting to be the Will of the Decedent, dated, March 7, 1991, and ("Will"), and for the appointment of Kelly L. Rowe, whose address is 4029 Shavano Drive, Austin, TX, 78749, as Personal Representative of the Estate of the Decedent in an UNSUPERVISED administration. Any objections to the petition must be filed with the Court prior to or raised at the hearing. If proper and if no objections are filed or raised, the Personal Representative will be appointed with full power to administer the Estate including the power to collect all assets, to pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, to sell real and personal property, and to do all necessary acts for the Estate.

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

Dated: 2015.11.25

BY THE COURT

Joseph A. Bueltel
Judge of District Court

Attorney for Petitioner
Eric J. Mattison
Einhaus, Mattison, Carver & Haberman, P.A.
202 N. Cedar Ave.
PO Box 545
Owatonna, MN, 55060
Attorney License No: 151609
Telephone: (507) 451-3580
FAX: (507) 451-3532
Email: mattison@owatonnalawyers.com

12/8, 12/15

Estate

STATE OF MINNESOTA

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT

COUNTY OF STEELE

Court File No.: 74-PR-15-2482

NOTICE OF AND ORDER FOR HEARING ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION OF INTESTACY, DETERMINATION OF HEIRS, FORMAL APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In Re: Estate of
Richard R. Mead
Decedent.

It is Ordered and Notice is given that on January 5, 2016 at 10:45 a.m., a hearing will be held in this Court at 111 East Main, Owatonna, Minnesota, on a petition for the adjudication of intestacy and determination of decedent's heirs, and for the appointment of Kathleen J. Mead , whose address is 9252 SE 54th Avenue, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917 as personal representative of the decedent's estate in an unsupervised administration.

Any objections to the petition must be raised at the hearing or filed with the Court prior to the hearing. If the petition is proper and no objections are filed or raised, the personal representative will be appointed with the full power to administer the decedent's estate, including the power to collect all assets; to pay all legal debts, claims, taxes, and expenses; to sell real and personal property; and to do all necessary acts for the decedent's estate.

Notice is further given that, subject to Minn. Stat. § 524.3-801, all creditors having claims against the decedent's estate are required to present the claims to the personal representative or to the Court within four (4) months after the date of this notice or the claims will be barred.

12/3/15

BY THE COURT

/s/ Joseph A. Bueltel
Judge of District Court

SMITH, TOLLEFSON, RAHRICK & CASS
Stephen J. Smith MN# 102799
108 W Park Sq, Suite A
P.O. Box 271
Owatonna MN 55060
Telephone: (507) 451-6540
Facsimile: (507) 451-1846

12/8, 12/15

BP City

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT # 756
BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA 55917

MONDAY DECEMBER 21. 2015
HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER

PROPOSED TENTATIVE AGENDA

6:00 a.m. Thursday December 17, 2015 Regular School Board Work Session - High School Board Room

5:00 p.m. Monday, December 21, 2015 Open Public Figure - High School Media Center

5:15 p.m. Monday, December 21, 2015 Regular School Board Meeting - High School Media Center

6:00 p.m. Monday, December 21, 2015 Budget/Levy Discussion

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

I. CALL TO ORDER - CHAIRPERSON

II ROLL CALL - CLERK

III APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IV PRINCIPAL REPORTS

V ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTIONS REQUESTED
A. Consent Agenda
Minutes
Bills
Treasurer's Report
Resignation
Employment
B. Health Insurance
C. School Calendars
D. LT Substitutes
E. ZED Resolution
F. Final 2015 Payable 2016 Levy Limitation

VI. ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND/OR DISCUSSION ONLY
A. Rotation of School Board Officers
B. Committee Reports
C. Enrollment Data
D. Dates to Note

VII. SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

*Agenda may be subject to changes

12/8

BP City

Proposed
City of Blooming Prairie
City Council Meeting Agenda
December 14, 2015
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order
Pledge of Allegiance
Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes of November Regular City Council Meeting, the Public Hearing for Main Street East Assessments and the Public Hearing for the Street Reconstruction Plan

Financial Report

Committee/Commission Reports
1. B.P. Public Utilities
2. E.D.A.
3. B.P. Planning & Zoning
4. B.P. Fire Commission
5. B.P. Ambulance Commission
6. B.P. Police Commission

Business
1. Presentation of 2015 Budget
2. Public Comments
3. Approval of 2016 General Governmental Funds Budget
4. Approval of 2016 Enterprise Funds Budget
5. Certify 2016 Tax Levy
6. Designated Fund Balance
7. Certification of Additional Assessment Rolls
8. Resolution Granting Deferral of Special Assessments
9. Resolution Adopting a Street Reconstruction Plan
10. Ambulance Purchase
11. Cigarette License Renewal
12. Application for Permit to Consume Liquor in Park
13. Mediacom Franchise Agreement
14. 2016A Street Reconstruction Bonds Issuance
15. Aramark Service Contract

City Administrator's Report
1. Pedestrian Yield Sign Update
2. SW Drainage Ditch Landowners Meeting
3. Blooming Prairie Public Utilities General Manager Hire

City Attorney's Report

Council Members' Reports

Adjourn

This Agenda is Subject to Change

12/8

Assumed Name

OFFICE OF THE MINNESOTA SECRETARY OF STATE
CERTIFICATE OF ASSUMED NAME

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333

The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable customers to be able to identify the true owner of a business. ASSUMED NAME: Old Town Bagels PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: **211 North Cedar Ave Owatonna, MN 55060 USA** NAMEHOLDER(S): **Name MS Wilson, LLC Address 1260 14th Street S.E. Owatonna, MN 55060 If you submit an attachment, it will be incorporated into this document. If the attachment conflicts with the information specifically set forth in this document, this document supersedes the data referenced in the attachment. By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/hers behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath** SIGNED BY: **David L. Einhaus** MAILING ADDRESS: **None Provided** EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES: **markstacywilson@yahoo.com**

12/8, 12/15

Foreclosure

15-100715

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

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

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: February 7, 2008 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: $116,400.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Mark A. Boehme and Amanda D. Wacek, each a single person MORTGAGEE: Midwest Minnesota Community Development Corporation LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON THE MORTGAGE: Midwest Minnesota Community Development Corporation SERVICER: JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Filed February 8, 2008, Steele County Recorder, as Document Number A000355253 ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.; Dated: February 7, 2008 filed: February 8, 2008, recorded as document number A000355254 LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot Ten (10), in Block One (1), in Olson's Addition to the Village of Blooming Prairie PROPERTY ADDRESS: 250 2nd St SE, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917 PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 14-105-0110 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: $105,944.15 THAT all pre-foreclosure requirements have been complied with; that no action or proceeding has been instituted at law or otherwise to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: January 28, 2016, 10:00am PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff's Main Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN 55060 to pay the debt secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any, on said premises and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys fees allowed by law, subject to redemption within 6 months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s) the personal representatives or assigns. TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the real estate is an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling, unless otherwise provided by law, the date on or before which the mortgagor(s) must vacate the property, if the mortgage is not reinstated under section 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under section 580.23, is 11:59 p.m. on July 28, 2016, or the next business day if July 28, 2016 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

"THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 582.032 DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN 5 UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

Dated: December 4, 2015

JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association
Assignee of Mortgagee

SHAPIRO & ZIELKE, LLP

BY

Lawrence P. Zielke - 152559
Diane F. Mach - 273788
Melissa L. B. Porter - 0337778
Randolph W. Dawdy - 2160X
Gary J. Evers - 0134764
Tracy J. Halliday - 034610X
Attorneys for Mortgagee
12550 West Frontage Road, Ste. 200
Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 831-4060

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR

12/8, 12/15, 12/22
12/29, 1/5, 1/12

PUBLIC SAFETY

Continued from Page 5B

Landen A. Hill, 19, Dodge Center, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of Marijuana. He was sentenced to $1,075, 17 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical assessment, no possession of firearms, mental health evaluation, obtain GED, 100 hours of community service and 5 years of supervised probation.

Berlin G. Santiago, 25, Steele County Jail, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of Marijuana. Santiago was sentenced to no possession of firearms, comply with immigration process and 5 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Nov. 23 – 30:

Dodge County Sheriff's Office

Oliver B. Lee, 27, Hayfield, violation of no contact order, $1055, 90 hours of community service and 2 years of supervised probation; Gregory D. Love Stone, 33, Bloomington, seat belt, $105.

Kasson Police Department

Cory W. Kleeberger, 24, Austin, revoked license and seat belt $305.

MN State Patrol Rochester

Dean S. Aarsvold, 54, Mankato, revoked license and no insurance, $480; Michael M. Douglas, 57, Kasson, seat belt, $105; Jacob D. Fletcher, 19, Rochester, speeding, $220; Shari J. Garness, 54, Kasson, speeding, $130; Jeffrey J. Lapanta, 46, Faribault, speeding, $130;

Sarah K. McCool, 44, West Concord, speeding, $120; Shauna R. McIntire, 21, Mankato, speeding, $140; Mark D. Seabright, 57, Kasson, speeding, $120; Elizabeth J. Tippery, 18, Houston, speeding, $220; Richard C. Wiese, 82, Oceanside, CA, speeding, $130.

Steele Arrests

Owatonna Police

Willie Clearance Hampton, 34, arrested at 8:08 a.m. Nov. 25, felony disorderly conduct, damage to property and burglary, held for court.

Troy Daniel Shaske, 51, arrested Nov. 28, cancelled license and equipment violation, held for court.

Richard Robert Rodriguez, 25, arrested at 6:10 p.m. Nov. 28, felony terroristic threats, domestic assault strangulation and domestic assault, held for court.

Richard Allan Miller, 38, arrested at 8:20 p.m. Nov. 30, domestic assault, held for court.

Randalynn Nicole Guenthner, 29, arrested at 7:10 p.m. Dec. 1, domestic assault, held for court.

Christopher Allen Mills, 30, arrested at 3:37 p.m. Dec. 2, felony sale of Marijuana, held for court.

Chelsey Linda Larson, 22, arrested at 3:37 p.m. Dec. 2, felony aid and abet sale of Marijuana, held for court.

David Ray Kujac, 36, arrested at 5:42 p.m. Dec. 2, domestic assault, held for court.

Sunday Paul Puot, 19, arrested at 8:30 p.m. Dec. 2, felony failure to appear, held for court.

Shanna Jean Lillian Rose, 34, arrested at 5:15 p.m. Dec. 2, felony possession of controlled substance, held for court.

Bradley James Richards, 30, arrested at 4:05 p.m. Dec. 2, felony possession of controlled substance, held for court.

Antonio Taylor, 34, arrested at 10:04 a.m. Dec. 3, cancelled license, held for court.

Steele County Sheriff

Abdi Omar Ikar, 21, arrested at 12:15 p.m. Nov. 25, warrant arrest, body only.

Robert Maurice Williams, 33, arrested at 1:02 a.m. Nov. 29, violation of probation, held for court.

Winn Jeffrey Johnson, 56, arrested Dec. 2, felony terroristic threats, held for court.

Owatonna Fire

Dec. 1

Equipment. Fire fighters responded to an outside equipment fire in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 8:25 a.m.

Gas Leak. At 3:20 p.m., a natural gas leak occurred in the 100 block of Autumn Place NE.

Dec. 2

Assist. Fire personnel assisted police in the 600 block of Oak Ave. S. at 7:39 a.m.

Smoke. Fire fighters worked on removing smoke in the 500 block of Dunnell Dr. NW at 7:54 p.m.

Dec. 3

Crash. At 9:37 a.m., fire rescue responded to a motor vehicle crash with injuries on Grove Ave.

PUBLIC RECORD

Continued from Page 3D

Wyatt Lee Grose and Jennafer Lynn Paulson, Sept. 12.

Tanner Lee Wobschall and Jessica Rose Hildebrandt, Sept. 12.

Kyle Richard Kozelka and Lauren Marie Springer, Sept. 12.

Gregory Alen Leuch and Brianna Lea Brekke, Sept. 12.

Megan Ann Hedberg and Andrew Thomas Polzin, Sept. 19.

Nicholas Colton Severson and Ara Bree Summer, Sept. 19.

Brandon Scott Schroer and Tracy Jean Mundt, Sept. 26.

Ryan Robert Benrud and Morgan Marie Hanson, Sept. 26.

Joel Joseph Busch and Melanie Kay Staska, Sept. 26.

Brian John Hunt Jr. and Jennifer Anne Kuester, Sept. 26.

Andrew Paul Cody and Alexia Jean Dusek, Sept. 29.

Steele County Divorces September 2015

Jason James Rodenkirchen and Carol Joyner Rodenkirchen.

Yasin Ali Abdi and Fartun A. Ahmed.

Nicole L. Gibson and Shaun C. Gibson.

Aaron Daniel Meyers and Shelley Marie Meyers.

Evelyn Jean Haines and Jack Arnold Haines.

Jessica Lee Monson and Clark Paul Monson.

Donna Veronica Mouser and John Eugene Mouser.

Dustin Jonathon Graves and Reva Kae Graves.

Melyssa Ellen Dominguez and Gabriel Dominguez-Espinoza.

Elizabeth M. Hayson and Dodd G. Hayson.

Christine Marie Kraudy and Scott Richard Kraudy.

Jayme Nicole Lamers and Stephen Lamers.

Jeanne Frances Maas and Marvin Duane Maas.

Teresa Renae Blume and Marcus Burnett Blume.

Susan Marie Maloney and Mark Anthony Maloney.

HometownLiving

Community Calendar



Staff photo by Howard Lestrud

Hundreds attended the Council of Catholic Women's Annual Nativity Brunch and Bake Sale on Sunday, Dec. 6, and other than food, another attraction was the many nativity scenes on display on tables in the church basement. Here, Jameson Smith, 4, of Blooming Prairie has her eyes on one of the beautiful displays collected by Joanne VanWyck, a Blooming Prairie High School graduate. Jameson is the granddaughter of Vickie Smith, Blooming Prairie.

J&H LIQUORS
340 E. Main St. Blooming Prairie • 507-583-7557
JOIN US FOR THE HOLIDAYS
BAR BINGO: MONDAY @ 6:30 P.M.
WINE & WOMEN WED: 6-10 P.M.
MEAT RAFFLES: FRIDAY @ 5:30 P.M.
WINE CLUB: TUES. 7-8:30 P.M. NOV. 10, JAN. 12, FEB. 9, MARCH 8, APRIL 12, MAY 3
HOLIDAY DAZZLE DOWNTOWN FESTIVITIES: DEC. 4, 5-7 P.M. WINE TASTING • BAKE SALE CHAIR MASSAGES • MEAT RAFFLES
HARVEY'S HOLIDAY CHEER/ 60TH BIRTHDAY DEC. 12, 4-8 P.M. (NO CARDS OR GIFTS)
DEC 24: OPEN 10 A.M.- 5 P.M.
DEC 25: CLOSED **MERRY CHRISTMAS**
DEC 31: NEW YEARS EVE MUNCHIES & CHAMPAGNE
JAN 1: NEW YEARS DAY: OPEN 10 A.M. - CLOSE **HAPPY 2016**

Blooming Prairie

Dec. 8:
BP Card Club & Luncheon
7 p.m. BP VFW
7 p.m. BP VFW Auxiliary
7:30 p.m. BP Prairie Lodge Masons
Dec. 9:
10:30 a.m. BPBL Story time
Dec. 10:
Book Sale, Friends of the BP Branch Library, BPBL
7 p.m. BP AAUW, HS GYM
Dec. 14:
5 p.m. BP Education Foundation, HS Library
Dec. 15:
1 p.m. Red Cross Blood Drive, BP City Center
4:45 p.m. Boys N Girls Club Brd
Dec. 16:
10:30 a.m. BPBL Story time
12 p.m. BP Chamber of Commerce

Servicemen's Club
210 Fourth St. N.E. • Blooming Prairie • 507-583-7884
• Raffle drawing first Saturday of every month
• Happy Hour 3 p.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday
• Taco Tuesdays every Tuesday at 5 p.m.
"BURGER NIGHT" SPECIALS
#1 - MEATBALLS, GRAVY, MASHED POTATOES, VEGETABLE & ROLL
LUNCH SPECIAL (12/10 & 12/11):
STEAK SANDWICH W/ FRIES

Ellendale/Geneva

Dec. 8:
7 p.m. NRHEG Karate, ES Gym North Ellndl
Dec. 10:
5:30 p.m. NRHEG Yoga, DAPE Rm
7 p.m. NRHEG Yoga, DAPE Rm
7 p.m. NRHEG Zumba, DAPE Rm
7:30 p.m. Ellendale City Council Mtg (2nd & 4th Thurs), Training/Mtg Rm
Dec. 14:
Band/Choir HS Christmas Concert 7:30 p.m., NRHEG
6:20 p.m. NRHEG Yoga, Media Center Ellndl
Dec. 15:
7 p.m. NRHEG Karate, ES Gym North Ellndl

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Owatonna

Dec. 8:
Steele Co Commission
1 p.m. Steele Co SDA Mtg
6:30 p.m. Nat'l Alliance on Mental Illness Peer Support Group, Owatonna Hospital
7 p.m. Steele Co: Co Brd Mtg, Admin Center, BR
Dec. 9:
6 p.m. Four Seasons Public Skate
Dec. 10:
5:30 p.m. Owatonna Airport Commission, Airport Lounge
6:30 p.m. OPL Family Story Time
7:30 p.m. LTO "A Christmas Carol"
Dec. 11:
7:30 p.m. Jake Jones FREE concert, Owatonna Eagle's Club
7:30 p.m. LTO "A Christmas Carol"
Dec. 12:
10 a.m. Red Cross Blood Drive, Hy-Vee, Owa
7:30 p.m. LTO "A Christmas Carol"
Dec. 13:
8:30 a.m. Pillsbury Magical Christmas Breakfast, Camp Pillsbury, Owa
2 p.m. LTO "A Christmas Carol"
Dec. 14:
12 p.m. Owatonna Noon Rotary Club, Country Club
4:30 p.m. Owatonna Park & Rec Brd, Council Chambers, Brooktree Golf Couse or City Park
6 p.m. Four Seasons Public Skate, Owa
Dec. 15:
7 a.m. Steele Co Public Works Policy Comm Mtg, St Co Brd Rm
10 a.m. OPL So Many Books...So Little Time Book Club
11 a.m. Red Cross Blood Drive, Lowe's, Owa
4 p.m. Steele Co Committee of the Whole Mtg, St Co Brd Rm

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Medford

Dec. 10:
2 p.m. The Arthritis Foundation: Medford Senior Exercise Class, Whistle Stop Diner
Dec. 14:
2 p.m. The Arthritis Foundation: Medford Senior Exercise Class, Whistle Stop Diner
Dec. 15:
6:30 p.m. Court St Anne Catholic Daughters Meeting, Medford
Dec. 16:
7 p.m. Ft Robert Carlin Knights of Columbus Council, Medford

J&L Collision
406 1st Ave SE • Medford
507-456-1676
Check us out on Facebook!

SPOT LIGHT

Appearance by Jake Jones at the Owatonna Eagle's Club Dec. 11

Jake Jones and his band will be performing at the Owatonna Eagle's Club on Friday, Dec. 11.

The event is free and open to the public. If you liked Jake's solo appearance at the Fair or his Acoustic Duo show at the Fall Shindig, you're sure to enjoy Jake and his full band! Get a preview of music on his next CD set to be released in 2016.

Jake is a national recording artist based out of Woodbury and has many national performances under his belt, as well as being a featured artist on Season Three of The White Wall Sessions, an in-studio performance TV program.

Other counties

Freeborn
Dec. 10:
10 a.m. Fountain Lake Readers Book Club, ALPL
10:30 a.m. ALPL Story time
1 p.m. Red Cross Blood Drive, United Methodist Church, AL
5:30 p.m. AL Council Workshop, City Council Chambers
5:30 p.m. Council Workshop, CIty Council Chambers, City Hall, Albert Lea
6 p.m. ALPL Night-Time Story time
6 p.m. Polar Express Party, ALPL
Dec. 11:
6 p.m. Rock Climbing Open Gym, Albert Lea
Dec. 12:
ALPL Closed
6 p.m. Rock Climbing Open Gym, Albert Lea
Dec. 14:
10:30 a.m. ALPL Story time
3:45 p.m. ALPL Book Pals (Gr 5 & 6)
5:15 p.m. Human Rights Commission, City Council Chambers, City Hall, Albert Lea
7 p.m. AL City Council, Council Chambers
7 p.m. Choir Concert, ALHS Auditorium
7 p.m. City Council, Council Chambers, City Hall, Albert Lea
Dec. 15:
10:30 a.m. ALPL Story time
5:30 p.m. Parks and Recreation Board Meeting, Albert Lea
6 p.m. Nonfiction Book Club, ALPL
6 p.m. Rock Gym, Albert Lea

Mower
Dec. 9:
Annual Dobby Drive, APL
Lyle City Council Meeting
10 a.m. All Members Gallery Show, Austin ArtWorks Center
11:30 a.m. SEMCAC Meal, Heritage House, Lyle
12 p.m. Austin PS Early Release
12:30 p.m. Snack and Wrap, Mower County Senior Center
2 p.m. Glass Snowman Ornaments, Austin ArtWorks Center
5:30 p.m. Taste of Watercolor, Austin ArtWorks Center
7 p.m. Nat'l Alliance on Mental Illness Peer Support Group, First Congregational Church, Austin
Dec. 10:
Annual Dobby Drive, APL
10 a.m. All Members Gallery Show, Austin ArtWorks Center
3:30 p.m. Mower Co, Southland ISD: Open Gym, M/HS Gym
5:15 p.m. Closing Ceremony - 16 Days of Activism: Violence Against Women, Mower County Courthouse
5:30 p.m. Beginners' Wheel: Bowls, Austin ArtWorks Center
6 p.m. Brownsdale PL Puzzle Night (subject to change)
Dec. 11:
Annual Dobby Drive, APL
10 a.m. All Members Gallery Show, Austin ArtWorks Center
11:30 a.m. SEMCAC Meal, Heritage House, Lyle
3 p.m. Christmas in the County - Pre Sale Bake Sale, Mower Count Historical Society
4 p.m. A Handmade Christmas Indie Craft Show, Hormel Historic Home
4 p.m. Mower Co Historical Society, Christmas in the County
Dec. 12:
Annual Dobby Drive, APL
LeRoy Breakfast with Santa
9 a.m. A Handmade Christmas Indie Craft Show, Hormel Historic Home
10 a.m. All Members Gallery Show, Austin ArtWorks Center
10 a.m. The Artist's Way, Austin ArtWorks Center
3 p.m. Christmas in the County, Mower County Historical Society
Dec. 13:
Annual Dobby Drive, APL
1 p.m. Grand Meadow Open Gym, Wrestling Room, Weight Room
2 p.m. Handel's Messiah, St. Augustine Catholic Church, Aust

Minimizer
Blooming Prairie
800-248-3855
www.minimizer.com



The Blooming Prairie Friends of the Library group hosts a Barnes and Noble book sale at the Blooming Prairie library during Holiday Dazzle. Pictured left to right are: Group President Linda Christianson with group members Joanne Nahlovsky and Karen Thoen.



Parents and children lined main street for nearly an entire block to see Santa Clause at F&M Bank. Even after the doors opened, a steady stream of families continued to find their way inside.

Holiday Dazzle was another success

By JAMES KNOOP
County Sports Editor



Staff photos by James Knoop

Children and adults sang and played Christmas carols on Main Street during the 2015 Blooming Prairie Holiday Dazzle event on Friday, Dec. 4.

The air was fresh and crisp. Main street lights and decorations were hung and on display, and music filled the air as Blooming Prairie community members gathered to celebrate Christmas in their hometown last Friday.

Running from mid-afternoon to late evening, guests had their pick of the crop when it came to activities. Kids could meet Santa or purchase presents at Santa House. Parents and kids had the opportunity to buy a new book at the library or take a sleigh ride around town. There were prize games, a Scrooge contest, ambulance vehicle tours and the official ribbon-cutting ceremony honoring the reopening of Main Street.

One of the earlier events of the day was the Women of Today Santa House, which ran from 2-6 p.m. next to the library.

The event proved a safe place for parents to let their kids loose for a few minutes, as volunteers led children around, choosing presents to purchase for family members.

Second-year volunteer Carol Pirkl explained the concept.

"The idea is that the parents don't have to do a lot," said Pirkl. "They can just unload their kids on us for a few minutes. We'll help the kids make a list of who they are getting presents for and give them a bucket. Then we walk the kids around, or if they're old enough they can walk around themselves and pick what presents they want to get for who. (Lynn Borchert helps them figure out how much it all is. They tell their parents who give them the cash, and then we wrap the present and they can go."

Pirkl added that many of the gifts are hand-made and others are donated by the Women of Today.

Right next door to Santa's House was the first ever Friends of the Library book sale.

"This is a fundraiser that The Friends of the Library decided to do," said the organization's President Linda Christiansen. "We purchased books for sale and there are book for children, young adults and adults, and we're providing gift wrapping and gift tags."

Christiansen noted that 20 percent of ever book purchase goes back to the Friends of the Library.

"It's nice to have this opportunity, and this is just the perfect time with Holiday Dazzle, because all the kids are showing up to see Santa and do their shopping," said Christiansen.

Christiansen also noted that the event will be going on through Thursday, Dec. 9, and there will be one or two group members there each day.

"Hopefully, we'll run out of books by the end of that night," said Christiansen.

The Friends of the Library is a non-profit organization that has been supporting the young children and adults in Blooming Prairie since 1976. Christiansen invited any community member to come to a meeting. They are held at 6:30 p.m. every third Monday of the month.

The night in Blooming Prairie also held the announcing of the 2015 Scrooge contest winner. Each contestant raises money for the downtown holiday lights, and the contestant to raise the most is crowned Scrooge.

This year's nominees included Ann Weedman, Greg Johnson, Brad Clark, Eric Vigeland and Mitchell Jones. Weedman blew away the competition, raising over $200.

"I had heard Becky [Noble] mention that she needed another Scrooge, and I said I would do it," said Weedman. "She told me I needed to stop being so darn happy all the time. My jar came and I just started telling people to put money in it. And I had multiple people come back and put more money in it, so that was really nice."

With the money raised from all contestants, community members can only hope the street looks as beautiful at next year's Holiday Dazzle.



A small crowd gathered in the middle of Main Street on Friday, Dec. 4, to celebrate the reopening of Main Street with the official ribbon-cutting ceremony.



One shopper watches as his gifts are wrapped by local volunteers.

Congratulations
Carol Hodapp
of Owatonna
who won Channhassen ticket
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You can pick your ticket at The Steele County Times

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The primary goal of Toys for Tots is to deliver, through a new toy at Christmas, a message of hope to less fortunate youngsters that will assist them in becoming responsible, productive, patriotic citizens.
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