



STEELE COUNTY TIMES



Girls hockey 1C

\$1

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Tuesday, January 31, 2017

Ice cold in Steele County



Staff photo by Emily Schoenbeck

Winter is getting fiercer in Steele. Snow storms closed down area schools on Jan. 25 giving kids a welcome snow day. The Owatonna Parks and Rec hosted a winter-themed weekend of events, including a polar plunge to raise funds for The Special Olympics. In the coming weeks, both Medford and Owatonna high schools will celebrate winter weeks of their own to help break the boredom students can face in these blistery months.

Area teacher competes for top state honor



An educator from Owatonna has been named a finalist for Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

Scott Noet, a social studies teacher at Owatonna Junior High School, is one in a field of 132 candidates for the top honor, Education Minnesota announced Thursday.

Noet was named Owatonna Teacher of the Year last May. He has been teaching in Owatonna since 1997. He teaches several U.S. history courses each day.

He graduated from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and Southwest State.

The finalists have accepted their nominations and completed the required materials to become eligible for the honor, according to Education Minnesota. Candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and adult basic education teachers, from public or private schools.

Over the coming weeks, a 25-member panel of community leaders will name a group of semifinalists and finalists.

This year's program will name the 53rd Minnesota Teacher of the Year, celebrating the tradition of excellence in teaching. The top educator will be announced May 7 in Bloomington.



Staff photo by Mark DeLap

The law office of Henefeld-Iacovino has undergone some changes this year in partnership. Shown from left to right are secretary, Monica Anderson, Attorney, Jason Iacovino and Attorney Frank Henefeld

BP lawfirm adds partner

Henefeld Law Office in Blooming Prairie is undergoing some internal changes in 2017.

The law firm owned solely by Frank Henefeld for 45 years has changed to a partnership this year.

Long time Blooming Prairie native, Jason Iacovino, is a 2006 graduate of the University of Minnesota and has come home to become the majority shareholder with the firm.

Henefeld will still be a part-owner of the business and will remain in the office on a part-time basis.

The name will soon be changed to Henefeld-Iacovino.

Local attorney picked for Waseca County judgeship



A local attorney has been named the state's newest district court judge.

Gov. Mark Dayton has chosen Carol Hanks of Waseca as the new judge for Waseca County, replacing the Honorable Larry Collins, who retired last year.

Hanks is a shareholder at Patton, Hoversten & Berg, where she handles cases in family and criminal law, estate planning and probate and trust administration.

Previously she was a judicial law clerk to Judge Renee Worke, Judge Casey Christian and Judge Joseph Bueltel in the Third Judicial District, which includes Steele and Waseca counties among others.

She earned her bachelors degree from Minnesota State University and her law degree from Mitchell Hamline College of Law.

Hanks is a member of the Fifth District Bar Association, member and past president of the Steele County Bar Association, member of the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Fifth District Ethics Committee and a Children's

Justice Initiative committee member for Steele and Waseca counties.

"Through her significant professional accomplishments, Ms. Carol M. Hanks has demonstrated her fairness and acumen," Gov. Dayton said. "Her service on committees focused on judicial ethics and justice for children shows her commitment to fairness and service. I thank her for taking on this important role."

Dayton had also considered two other candidates for the judgeship, Steele County Attorney Daniel McIntosh and Jeffrey Johnson, chief public defender for the district.

No date has been set at this time for Hanks' swearing in.

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Opinion

Our view

Leaders must lead

We’ve all seen the Instagram and Facebook pictures with the side-by-side designations of what a leader looks like vs what a boss looks like. One inspires fear, the other generates enthusiasm. One focuses on process while the other focuses on people. One places the blame for breakdown and then shames the “culprit” while the other fixes the breakdown.

A leader will develop people. A boss will use people. The antonyms go on and on. High turn-over rate in industry can sometimes be attributed to the quality of people that are hired and sometimes it’s the lack of effective leadership to turn coal to diamonds.

It was a basketball coach who reminded us that his job was to not only locate the buried treasure on his player’s ocean floor, but to help bring that treasure to the surface. On their ocean bottom rested the next championship.

Ray Stedman is quoted as saying, “I have learned there is a great deal of difference between a Western shepherd and an Eastern shepherd in the way they care for their flocks.”

A good illustration is also found in the classification of “shepherding.” They say that an eastern shepherd would lead his sheep. Tend to them. Care for them. Get them safely to the fold. One that was genuinely concerned with their welfare. A western shepherd, on the other hand would drive his sheep and rule them with fear and a rod. All he cared about was shearing the wool, driving them to their destination and collecting his money.

In this country and in this community if you are placed in a position of leadership, you have a choice to lead or to drive. One can create loyalty, the other can achieve short-term goals before they are driven to the point of extinction, exhaustion and humiliation.

You can be the smartest man or woman in the world, but if you do not know how to effectively communicate and treat those around you, there will be no long-term relationships created and you will constantly be training up new people.

In management, it is said that a fine line must be maintained between managers and employees. Best friends are better served outside the workplace. That being said, there are some traits that a leader, a coach, a teacher, a supervisor must maintain for maximum production and high morale in the workplace.

You don’t have to give up your high standards to be understanding. It doesn’t reflect on you poorly if one of your employees is learning to walk and stumbles, any more than blaming a parent whose child stumbles while learning to walk.

Great success is never measured at the expense of others. It’s in the inclusion of others.

Don’t abandon friendship. Don’t abandon compassion. Don’t abandon the employee that has made a mistake. Don’t discuss shortcomings with others. Don’t expect someone else to do what you are called to do. Care.

“A great leader posses a clear vision, is courageous, has integrity, honesty, humility and clear focus. He or she is a strategic planner and believes in teamwork.” -Forbes

Guest column

Board member clarifies operations of KODA Living

It’s a fact that in January and February of 2014, Owatonna endured 53 individual nights of below zero temperatures, 24 consecutive days with cooler than average low temperatures, 62 straight hours of below zero temperatures, and regular wind chills of minus 20 degrees including a record 48 degrees below zero.

If that was the only piece of factual information available to make a judgement of where to

make a home, one might be persuaded that our community is uninhabitable and destined to be a frozen wasteland. We know, however, that is not the case and that relying on a single piece of factual information, taken out of context, can lead to inaccurate conclusions and false narratives.

So, it is with a segment of our community, led by Marlene Nelson. Mrs. Nelson’s letter to the editor which appears on this page last week deserves some context for your consideration.

• “\$5.5 million loss” – close to the truth. The actual cumulative 4-year operating loss is \$5.1

KODA

Continued on page 6A



HOT PURSUIT



RICK BUSSLER

I can’t begin to imagine the pain and horror Patty and Jerry Wetterling have experienced over the 28 years. It’s almost incomprehensible.

On Friday during the Minnesota Newspaper Association’s annual convention, I had the opportunity to hear the Wetterlings speak about the tragedy that has gripped the state for almost three decades. The remains of their son, Jacob, were found last year near Paynesville after his killer led authorities to the scene.

The Wetterlings had many grizzled newspaper publishers and editors, including myself, in tears as they recounted the days leading up to Jacob’s discovery. They had held out hope that Jacob would be found alive, but an evil man dashed any hope of that happening.

In jail for unrelated porn charges, Danny Heinrich admitted to kidnapping, sexually assaulting and murdering Jacob before stashing his body where no one ever found

Wetterlings praise newspapers and encourage openness

him. Heinrich is now facing 20 years in federal prison on the porn charges. Desperate for answers, the Wetterlings agreed to a plea bargain with Heinrich that kept him from facing murder charges.

Patty and Jerry told about the years of dealing with police investigators, prosecutors and other people in their quest for finding Jacob. Patty signaled out a number of people who helped solve the decades old mystery, including Janelle Kendall, the Stearns County Attorney who grew up in Blooming Prairie. Kendall was instrumental in bringing closure to the case. And Patty alluded to the fact that it wasn’t easy for Kendall, who made the decision to give up prosecutorial rights with Heinrich on the more serious charges.

Perhaps the most stunning part of the message from the Wetterlings for me was how they credited the media, especially newspapers, with helping solve their son’s disappearance. For 27 years, the Wetterlings had a close relationship with the media as they searched for answers.

Patty spoke about how investigators found going through newspaper archives at a Paynesville newspaper especially helpful.

Said Patty: “I doubt

they are going to have tweet archives. They don’t pay attention to the accuracy and the details.”

As she spoke to hundreds of newspaper professionals, Patty said, “We have been blessed with attention to detail and accuracy.”

Jerry added, “I want to echo a thank you for all the work you and your colleagues do out there in the trenches.”

Patty offered some sound advice during her emotional speech. She said parents need to make sure their boys do not grow up into men who abuse youths. “We need men to grow up and say, ‘We don’t do this here.’”

They referred to the Minnesota media as “the truth tellers.”

And perhaps even a greater compliment came when Patty said, “You were respectful. You were honest, Youy have high bar here. I will continue to scream about that. We need you. We needed you. That is why we wanted to come today and thank you.”

After so much experience with the media, Patty offered this to others: Be honest, know what you want to say and talk to reporters.

That’s certainly helpful advice for those who may someday end up with the media in hot pursuit of their story.

Letters to the editor

characterizations of the Women’s March

Dear editor,

Judging from David Nielson’s Jan. 24th letter, there are some misunderstandings about the Women’s March and the motivations of its participants. Perhaps, I can clear up some misconceptions as to why this historic protest took place, not just in Washington, but in every state and in many countries in the world.

What were these millions trying to communicate to American citizens and to the new administration?

The marches on Jan. 21 were peaceful and full of joy, song, and celebration. According to one reputable estimate, over three million people—women and men— came out to demonstrate their values.

These marches conveyed the great concern women have for human life, the earth, children’s health, education, and civility.

Women marched against the racism, sexism, homophobia, and xenophobia, which they saw exhibited during Trump’s campaign.

It is simply not true that women want to “choose to end their babies lives,” as Mr. Nielson claimed. In fact, access to contraception and women’s

healthcare services—now threatened under President Trump—are vital to prevent the need for abortion.

The number of abortions has reached an historic low due to policies that support women including access to free or low-cost women’s health clinics like Planned Parenthood, and government programs which provide women with the basics of food, shelter, and child care.

If one is pro-life, then that stance ought to encompass the totality of life, including the vital services that make healthy lives possible, and environmental regulations that make human life on earth viable.

Women are concerned that

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DEADLINE

News: Noon Fridays.
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LETTERS POLICY

The opinions of our readers in the form of Letters to the Editor are a vital contribution to the healthy exchange of ideas on the Steele County Times opinion page. All letters must be signed by the writer/writers and include a telephone number for verification purposes. Letters are accepted through personal delivery, by mail or by email at bptimes@frontiernet.net.

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.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Steele, Dodge, Freeborn & Mower....\$42
Elsewhere in Minnesota.....\$44
Out of state.....\$46



Now that I'm a month into my first legislative session I'm finally beginning to adjust to the chaotic pace of my new role. There hasn't been much time to ease into things, either; starting day

one we have buckled down and got to work. My early session priorities have centered on two issues that I've received more feedback on than anything else: health insurance costs and the highway 14 expansion project. Senate File 1 is the Health Care Emergency Aid and Access Act, which provides emergency relief to families who have been pummeled by soaring MNSure premiums, and helps seriously ill patients continue their course of treatment. There was a disagreement about how best to distribute this aid, but after a few days of discussion, the

Legislature compromised with Gov. Dayton and accepted his preferred delivery mechanism. Just as important as the relief are the reforms included in the bill, including pricing transparency changes, letting for-profit HMOs offer their products in Minnesota, and a provision that lets farmers purchase less expensive group plans through agricultural cooperatives. Once an agreement was reached, things moved quickly. A day after the compromise, the bill passed both the House and Senate with strong bipartisan votes, and was signed by the

governor. The speed and success of the health care emergency relief bill is an encouraging sign for the rest of session. Though gridlock has been a hallmark of recent years, Republican majorities in the House and Senate were able to work with Gov. Dayton to get things done for Minnesotans. On the local front, the project to expand highway 14 is on everyone's mind. After a study was completed on the project in 2010, it received its first round funding under the Corridors of Commerce program in 2013. The initial phase of the project was completed in 2015; the next

step is to finish the section that runs from County Road 3 east of Owatonna to Trunk Highway 56 in Dodge Center. My first bill, Senate File 142, appropriates \$183 million to finally expand this stretch to four lanes in both directions. Officials have been talking about this expansion since the 1960s, and it becomes more urgent with each passing year. So many accidents occur on the road that it has earned a reputation as one of the most dangerous stretches of highway in the state. Increased traffic will only add to the danger. Expanding the road

is not just necessary for safety reasons. It will better connect our communities to commerce, spur economic growth, and equip us to handle population growth and growing volumes of truck traffic. This is a long time coming. We've been chipping away at it for years, and recent bipartisan support has moved us closer to finishing it than ever before. This will be one of my top priorities; I will work tirelessly to make sure it gets done this year. There will certainly be more to come. Please don't hesitate to contact me with your questions or concerns.

Two Owatonna students create winning design for state memorial

Artistic talent from Steele County has been chosen to adorn a memorial plaque at the state capitol in St. Paul. A pair of Owatonna sixth graders, Riley Kalbach and Kalina Boubin, has created the winning design for the new Capitol Builders' Memorial plaque, according to the Minnesota Department of Administration. Kalbach attends Willow Creek Intermediate School while Boubin is at St. Mary's School. Their designs will be featured in a permanent marker in the Minnesota State Capitol Building. A jury panel of nine members chose the winning designs. The design concepts will be combined to create a bronze-casted commemorative plaque to be unveiled during

the Minnesota State Grand Opening Celebration Aug. 11-13. The selection panel included Owatonna eighth-grader Chloe Beede, who helped originate the memorial initiative and testified before the legislature on behalf of the authorizing legislation, which was carried by Rep. John Petersburg and former Sen. Vicki Jensen. The competition was open to sixth-graders from across the state. A total of 58 design concepts were submitted. The memorial will be dedicated to the memory of six construction workers who died during the original construction of the Capitol, and to the contributions of all construction workers who have worked on the building since the groundbreaking in

1896, including those working on the current restoration project. The letters and testimony of sixth-grade students from Willow Creek under the guidance of their teacher, Jennifer Hansen, inspired the legislation authorizing the memorial. "Our state's students have given us a powerful reminder that the Capitol is ultimately about people," said Commissioner Matt Massman. "Those of us involved in the State Capitol restoration are touched that the students took the initiative to honor the sacrifices and labor of the construction workers who brought Cass Gilbert's masterful design to reality."

Panel challenges factory farming in Minnesota



Factory farming in Minnesota will highlight a panel discussion this weekend in Rochester. The event called, "Factory Farming in Minnesota—Time for a Change?" will take place Saturday at 10 a.m. at Assisi Heights Spirituality Center, 1001 14th St. NW, Rochester. It is co-hosted by the Sisters of St. Francis - Assisi and Saint Mary's University of Minnesota/Cascade Meadow Wetlands and Environmental Science Center. The event is free and open to the public. Dr. Jeff Johnson, a frequent lecturer on the topic of animal welfare, is the brainchild of this weekend's event. Following a tour of factory farms in southern Minnesota, Dr. Johnson joined forces with other faculty members at St. Catherine University and Sonja Trom Eayrs. Her parents are currently involved in a pending appeal before the Minnesota Court of Appeals which challenges installation of the 11th swine factory farm within a three-mile radius of the Trom family farm in rural Dodge County. Panelists include: Dr. Jeff Johnson (Philosophy, St. Catherine University), Dr. Colleen Carpenter (Theology, Sister Mona Riley Endowed Chair of Humanities, St. Catherine University), Sonja Trom Eayrs (attorney

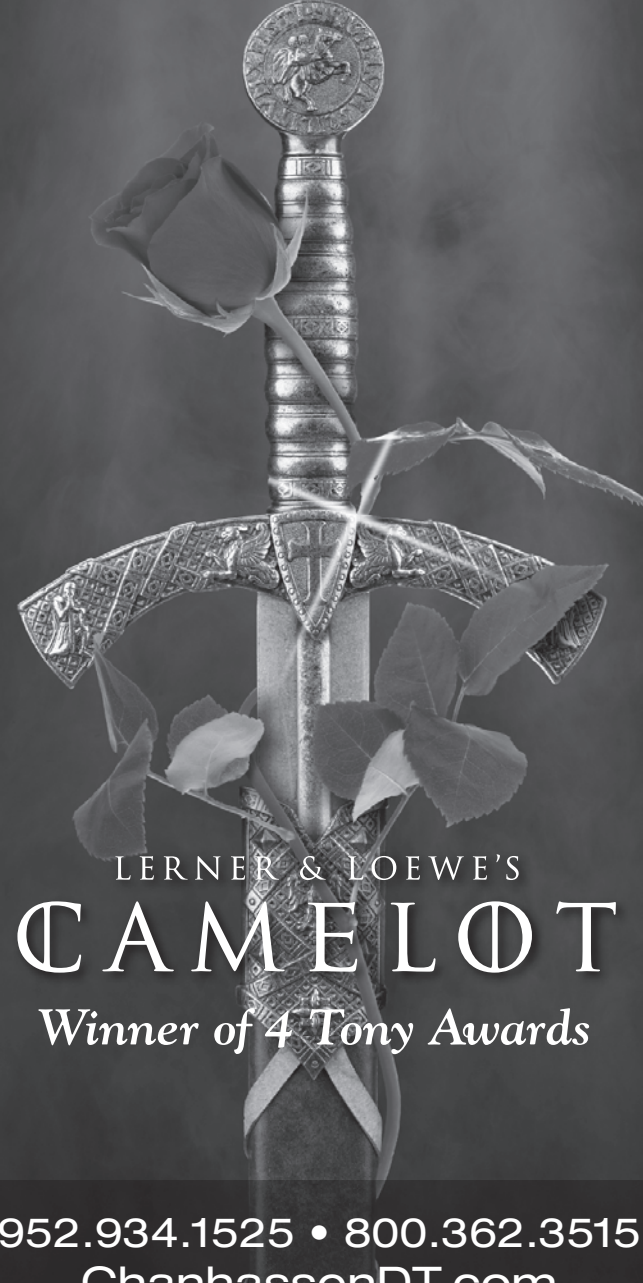
and farmer's daughter) and Chris Peterson, Independent Pig Farmer and Socially Responsible Agricultural

Project Associate) for an informative and compelling discussion.

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CHAMBER SPOTLIGHT

BP Servicemen's Club given makeover



Staff photo by Howard Lestrud

When you visit the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club, you no doubt will meet up with CEO Doreen Blome, left, and Jenny Flaherty, manager. Both are leaders in implementing recent changes at the club that have resulted in a successful operation.

By HOWARD LESTRUD
Staff Writer

Every community needs an event center and that need has been met by the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club which has recently experienced a makeover. The operations of the club have seen some major changes in the past several months due to the direction of Doreen Blome, board chief executive officer and Jenny Flaherty, club manager. The makeover has come with the acquisition of 60 new banquet tables and 256 new chairs, paid for by generous community donations. The tables and chairs represent Phase 1 of club changes. Greg Johnson of B to Z Hardware sold the tables and chairs to the club at cost. More changes are planned with a new floor being installed in the kitchen area. This represents Phase 2. The floor replacement is expected to begin on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 5, Tim Wacek leading the crew. Other upcoming changes, labeled by Blome as Phase 3, include putting new flooring in the club office and painting the walls. She also plans to oversee reorganization of files and paper work. Phase 4 will be painting the Liberty Room (banquet room) and Foxhole (main bar area). The board has been very responsive to the needs of the club," Blome said. She points out that the club is here for the Blooming Prairie and surrounding communities. The club is currently enjoying

good times because of the leadership shown by the American Legion and VFW and their auxiliaries and by the Sons of the American Legion. The Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club has become the hub for Memorial Day events, Veterans Day events, other veterans occasions, weddings, benefits, birthday parties and fundraisers. Events are filling up fast, Blome and Flaherty said. Call 507-583-7884 to schedule an event. Events don't just come from Blooming Prairie but also from Owatonna, Austin, Hayfield and Ellendale organizers. Part of the reason the BP Servicemen's Club has become such a popular spot, of course, is because of the food. When the food subject is introduced, Blome is quick to pass on the highest compliments to Jenny Flaherty, who serves as club manager, event coordinator, chef and bookkeeper. It is no accident that the club is flourishing under the guidance and extra efforts of Flaherty and Blome. Both are not afraid to try new things, whether it be changing the operation of the club, or in offering new food menus. Jenny, a current resident of Blooming Prairie with daughter Audrey, 9, and son Isaac, 6, worked 11 years at the Pizza Cellar in Blooming Prairie before taking over the dining end of the Servicemen's Club a year ago. She also went to Dakota County Technical School studying the culinary arts. Jenny is always coming

up with popular menu items. She says one of the most favored dinner items is the roast beef and Haddock combination. The barbecue ribs have also proven to be big favorites. "She's good at her job," Doreen said. In addition to new menus, the club has installed a new computer system, ringing in orders by use of a touch screen. Other new items at the club include a new grill, new fryer, new prep table, dish washer (coming) and updated bookkeeping system. Soon after being elected chairman and secretary of the board, Doreen took charge of cleaning the kitchen, storeroom and outdoor storage sheds. In cleaning the inside storeroom, Doreen and her fellow volunteers found space to store chairs and tables. Former Mayor Harold Ulrich built special storage carts for the tables and chairs. Doreen's husband Tom has been her prime maintenance man. She also works closely with gambling manager Ken Esplan. Most of the upgrades to the club happened because of the generous donations of club customers. "These changes have cost thousands of dollars," Doreen said. "People want to see this place flourish," she added. "It's because of Jenny, our employees, the board (Mike Hoffman, Charles Williams, Doug Miner, Steve Wencl, Doreen Blome and Dean Zilm) and our customers that we have enjoyed success," Blome said.

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Welcome to new business section

Beginning this week, the Steele County Times, along with its sister publication the Dodge County Advantage, will dedicate two pages specifically to business. This feature will run in both publications monthly.

While Steele and Dodge counties may be smaller in size, there are many businesses throughout the two county area that play an important role in the eco-

nomie vitality of southeastern Minnesota.

We hope to feature some of the business success stories throughout the region and look at what new innovations are being created locally. We may focus on a mom and pop shop one time and look at a company that employs hundreds another time. We plan to spread out our coverage on all types of business, including manufacturing, whole-

sale, retail and service.

We also will provide information that owners and executives will find useful to help their businesses flourish.

Rick Bussler
Publisher

Please contact either newspaper office if you have something that you feel is deserving of coverage in our business section.

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A SIMPLY PERFECT DAY for cake and coffee

By **MARK DELAP**
Managing Editor
markdelap@hotmail.com

THE BIRTH OF A DAUGHTER CALLS FOR CAKE!

For Thea and Eric Farrington, the birth of their daughter, Tatiana, didn't cause the couple to just run out and purchase a cake, but they in addition bought a cake store.

The Perfect Day Cakes And Bakery, located at 324 N. Cedar Ave. in Owatonna is now 12 years old and so is Thea's daughter who has a story within the story, selling candy out of the eclectic cake emporium.

With cake, there is coffee. The perfect marriage for any perfect day, and The Perfect Day Cakes and Bakery has added that all important component to its repertoire with the purchase of Central Park Coffee Co. located just up the block at 113 N. Cedar Ave. A perfect combination.

Farrington, who is the master baker for Perfect Day has made a few changes as she ran full-steam-ahead with the quaint coffee shop which has been a central fixture in downtown Owatonna. She has replaced all the baked goods with her own creations that include so much more than cake.

You name it, she will bake it. And not only her, but her husband as well who bakes a lot of their breakfast pastries

and doughnuts. He is often heard telling his wife at 4 a.m., "it's time to make the doughnuts."

Farrington learned her baking skills from her father, Harvey Berg, who is a mechanical engineer by profession, but found himself very comfortable around the kitchen. His hobby was due in part to the fact that Thea was diagnosed at an early age with diabetes and he developed many specialty sugar free recipes so she wouldn't have to miss out on the goodies that other kids enjoyed.

"My favorite was his sugar free pumpkin pie," said Farrington. "My dad had a lot of great specialty foods that I have passed along to my customers."

Farrington went from student to teacher as she passed along her culinary skills to her husband. The bakery keeps the family very busy and now, with the addition of the coffee shop, Farrington credits her success to her incredible staff.

Although the bakery enjoys a steady flow of customers, Farrington said that the busy time of year is June. With graduations and wedding season just around the corner, much of the planning and preparation is already begun. In planning for that all-important wedding cake, Farrington said that although she enjoys the input from the bride and groom, she feels she does a lot better when she gets the creative freedom to perform her craft.

Cake can be a challenge for many who have problems just following the instructions on the back of the box. For a pastry chef, there can also be a degree of difficulty when branching off into specialty cakes. Her "topsy-turvy" cake is a cake that leans. On purpose. At extreme angles. And it doesn't topple.

She says that it is one of the most challenging cakes that she makes. Kind of like the leaning tower of cake.

The inspiration of her father baking pastry that she could eat has not gone without a continuation of the gift. One of

her most incredible creations was actually cupcakes.

"There was a little boy who couldn't have certain food colorings and was allergic to everything," she said. "He was on a special diet and I had to research all these ingredients to see if he could have it."

The cupcakes were not only a success, but the little boy was able to take cupcakes to school for the first time in his life and enjoy with his classmates. Paying it forward yielded a lasting legacy passed down from father to daughter who had a heart to make a difference.

In addition to the fresh pastry and baked goods, there are eat-in accommodations at both locations and a menu of homemade soups and sandwiches which includes Farrington's personal favorite, the panini melt which she describes as an adult grilled cheese.

Add to that a fine collection of tea, coffee, cocoa and lattes and you have a Starbucks on steroids.

Farrington has added personal touches to both of her shops which help to promote the local artists of southeastern Minnesota. There are things such as homemade knitted items, jewelry, fresh tea, local honey and a photo gallery which changes each month and features the work of local artists.

For more information about the bakery or coffee shop and to get those orders in for the upcoming season, please call Thea Farrington at (507) 451-4242.

Farrington has given back to a community with her creativity and her pink panache. From the front door of her establishments, the cry goes forth, "LET THEM EAT CAKE!"



Photo by Mark Delap

Thea Farrington, of The Perfect Day Cakes And Bakery, which has been a downtown favorite in Owatonna for 12 years has expanded with the addition of Central Park Coffee Co. located just a block north of Owatonna Central Park. Farrington and her husband, Eric are the pastry chefs for both locations.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Claremont Chamber helps area causes

The Claremont Area Chamber of Commerce is helping causes around the region.

The chamber donates funds earned through a charitable gambling arrangement.

In December, Damon Bryngelson, gambling manager for the chamber, donated \$4,000 to several organizations in Blooming Prairie. The donations included: \$1,500 for Toys for Tots; \$1,500 to public safety agencies in Blooming Prairie and \$1,000 to the Boys and Girls Club of BP.

The Claremont chamber has donated nearly \$40,000 to charitable causes in the past seven years, according to Bryngelson.

In addition to a gambling site at J&H Liquor in BP, the Claremont chamber has five other gambling locations in Steele and Dodge counties.

Minimizer goes white box at HDAAW

Minimizer's booth at HDAAW in Las Vegas is turning heads.

Distributors won't find any company logos outside of the 53-foot show trailer. Rather, Minimizer is focusing on what's inside the trailer.

"We spend a lot of money to help sell through our distribution channel," Minimizer CEO

USDA seeks to help rural businesses

USDA is seeking applications for the Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Program.

Applications for Minnesota projects are due by close of business on April 14.

and Chief Visionary Craig Kruckeberg said. "We're showing distributors the difference here."

Outside, the company presents a white box look, with text such as 'Nameless' and 'No Support' decorating the booth.

Inside the trailer, however, distributors find the usual Minimizer marketing materials, as well as the 'Partnership Promise,' which details a mutually beneficial relationship.

"We have to work with our distributors and they have to work with us," Kruckeberg said.

"We offer verified leads and aggressive marketing support. In return, we need their support to have a trained sales team with product on-hand and not order as needed. Essentially, we support you; you support us. It's a true partnership."

Kruckeberg said Minimizer is a great company offering a great product and that the company wouldn't be where it's at today without these distributors. "We simply want to show them what it would be like if we were a no-brand supplier ... because the flipside is reality," he added.

For more information on the RBDG program or help with an application, please visit www.rd.usda.gov/mn and contact your local area office.

RBDG is a competitive grant designed to support targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas that have fewer than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenues. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity type grant activities.

Funding is available to public bodies, non-profit organizations, and federally recognized Tribes to finance and facilitate business opportunity or business enterprise projects that serve rural areas.

Examples of business enterprise projects include, but are not limited to: acquisition or development of land, project planning, technical assistance, pollution control and abatement, feasibility studies and business plans, capitalization of revolving loan funds, and distance adult learning for job training and advancement.

In fiscal year 2016, USDA awarded nearly \$400,000 for six grants to help support the start-up or expansion of rural Minnesota small businesses through the RBDG program. Funding was used to provide financial assistance to help Main Street businesses rebuild and repair after a fire destroyed nearly half of its buildings.

For more information on the RBDG program or help with an application, please visit www.rd.usda.gov/mn and contact your local area office.

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Board member clarifies KODA living

KODA: from page 2A

million. However, it is important to recognize this is a book loss which includes non-cash expenses such as depreciation and amortization. At the same meeting, it was reported that over the same period of time, the Earnings Before Interest Depreciation and Amortization (EBIDA) 4 year cumulative is negative \$611,456, including a positive EBIDA of \$696,208 for YTD fiscal year 2017. SCCL is a non-profit corporation, does not pay income taxes and EBIDA is considered to be a more conservative valuation measurement. It was also reported that KODA and Park Place are currently operating with a positive cash flow. Mrs. Nelson chose not to include those positive pieces of information in her letter.

- “interest is coming from the county reserve fund”, partially true. The interest only payments are a combination of cash from both County reserves as well as from BHS (Benedictine Health System). The County reserves are from the Community Wellness Fund. The Community Wellness Fund is NOT property tax levy, but rather the residual revenues (profits) from the

former Cedarview/Park Place operation. In fact, the original \$1 million development investment by Steele County to SCCL was also from the Community Wellness Fund which means there has NOT been any property tax levy used by Steele County to fund SCCL. To be sure, the Community Wellness Fund is a Steele County asset, but those funds were NOT collected from property tax levies as has been suggested.

- “Since SCCL/Benedictine are supposed to each own 50% it was interesting that they now want the taxpayers to take \$2 million more of KODA debt.” Technically not true. The \$ 2 million Mrs. Nelson refers to is NOT taking on additional debt, but rather is the account payable owed to Steele County from SCCL. While not formally asking, SCCL has raised the concept of Steele County forgiving that payable to allow the financing and re-purposing of the former Cedarview building. The account payable does NOT represent cash advanced to SCCL from Steele County, but rather the value of the Park Place/Cedarview property when SCCL was created.

At that time, SCCL, BHS nor Steele County chose not to contract for a formal appraisal of the Park Place/Cedarview, but rather chose to save that cost and arbitrarily establish the \$2 million payable.

- “Why are we (Steele County) taking all the pain and Benedictine takes none of the pain?” Not true. As clearly reported at the meeting Mrs. Nelson attended, to date, BHS has contributed a total of \$3,841,414 in cash and Steele County a total of \$3,500,000 in cash. As indicated above, the \$3.5 million in County funds came from the Community Wellness Fund, NOT property tax levy.
- “At the end of the meeting no one from the public was allowed to speak”. Partially true. At the beginning of the meeting, the chair clearly stated that it was an informational meeting and due to board member commitments, it would adjourn at 6 pm. 6 pm came and went, county commissioners had questions which were answered. At least 2 individuals from the audience spoke without being recognized by the chair and when others interrupted, the meeting was gavelled to order.

- “I caught Tom Shea after the meeting adjourned and asked who makes up this shadowy group calling themselves SCCL. He said “It is the nine members of the board.” True, but there is more to my response. As I have on numerous occasions over the past few years, I shared with Mrs. Nelson that SCCL is a Community non-profit governed by a 9-member Board of Directors, currently seven Steele County residents and two BHS representatives. I have reviewed with Mrs. Nelson and others the vision, the operating structure, the organizing documentation, the articles of incorporation, by-laws, governance authorization, structure and responsibilities. For whatever reason, Mrs. Nelson does not accept the creation or existence of SCCL. She and others are entitled to their opinion on SCCL. They are not however, entitled to misrepresent, distort and factually misrepresent what SCCL is, distort its operation and malign the outstanding work of the dedicated Park Place and KODA staff.
- Mrs. Nelson asks the question, “Are board mem-

bers paid?” No, SCCL Board members are totally volunteer, receiving no compensation. Steele County Commissioners on the board are eligible for per diem for attendance at SCCL meetings. Mrs. Nelson is aware of this, yet she continues to infer that the community members of the SCCL Board have a financial interest and serve with ulterior motives.

- “They complained of workforce shortage, which never was a problem at Cedarview.” Not true. Cedarview was always challenged with staff turnover and retention. It is true that some long time dedicated Cedarview staff did not make a successful transition to KODA for a variety of reasons and for that I, as a SCCL Board member, accept responsibility.

Watch dog advocacy is an essential component of a healthy democracy. I support and encourage Mrs. Nelson and others to stay involved and continue their efforts to keep elected officials’ feet to the fire. However, there is no place in a civil society for personal vendettas, alternate facts, rumors, innuendo, and misleading projection of motivations. For any com-

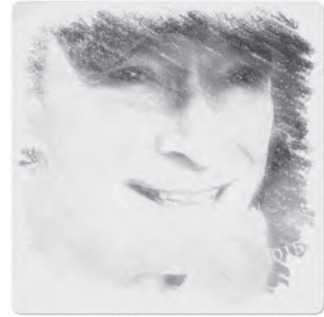
munity to be healthy and flourish, it is critical that its citizens, its journalists, its community and institutional leaders, and especially its elected officials, discern the difference and have the courage to stand up and speak to the truth.

As with a Minnesota winter, KODA has endured some cold, dark days. In the transition from county owned and operated skilled nursing facility to a professionally run community non-profit organization, mistakes were made and lessons learned. Today KODA is a vibrant, skilled nursing facility providing superior quality, compassionate, dignified care for Steele County residents. SCCL’s finances have improved dramatically over the past year and it is well on the way to long term stability. It is time those facts be recognized and celebrated.

Tom Shea serves on the board of directors for SCCL, a community non-profit organization that operates KODA Living in Owatonna. Shea is also the former Steele County administrator and a former county commissioner.

Cha-cha-cha changes

LITTLE THOUGHTS ON THE PRAIRIE



MARK DELAP

our country.

The JFK assassination in November. The Lindberg kidnapping in April. The Blooming Prairie Fourth of July parade in July. D-Day in June and Pearl Harbor in December. History is a wonderful thing and all too soon forgotten.

If you are a history buff and want to see how things unfolded and were reported long before you were born, hang on to your hats and buckle up your seatbelts. We are in for a great ride. And as always... be careful out there.

Most of you will notice of late that lots of things are changing here at the Steele County Times. We have created a new masthead and are rebranding to new and diverse areas including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and on our website.

In addition, we are in the midst of a major font conversion, switching over to a font more conducive to the visibility of the ink on the page and a font that is easier to read. We have also come away from the headline styles of yesteryear and are putting down fonts that are warm and friendly.

This is a great year for Steele County. Many businesses are experiencing anniversaries and celebrations. How awesome is it to be in a county where one of our towns is celebrating their sesquicentennial anniversary. Many congratulations go out to Blooming Prairie.

As you may have noticed last week, the front page was a bit different. A little bit gray perhaps, but fun nevertheless. In Blooming Prairie I am proud to say that I am working for a business that has been around for 124 years of that 150 years. You may have also noticed that that page reprinted on the front page of the Times last week ran in the same week of 1894.

At the newspaper it has been fun to go through the massive archives that we have available and to see businesses that have been established for a hundred or so years. We have dedicated one page to the 150th anniversary each week and we will be bringing you some great stories from our old newspapers.

In the month of January, we have found an item or two that occurred in the annals of Januarys past and each month we will respond with how our small town newspaper covered the breaking news that shaped

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HometownLiving Community Calendar

Event Spotlight: Owatonna Eagles Cancer Auction

The auction will take place at 6 p.m. on Feb. 3 and 4 p.m. on Feb. 4 at the Eagles Club in Owatonna. There will larger ticket items as well as a variety of gift baskets and gift certificates to bid on. Food and beverages will be available. All proceeds from the auction will go toward Minnesota centers for cancer research.

Last year around this time



Archived staff photo by Laura Berndt

Members of the Blooming Prairie Fire Department and Blooming Prairie Ambulance Service compete in a game of Dairyland Donkeyball at Blooming Prairie High School.

Happening NOW



Staff photo by Emily Schoenbeck

Medford students took a bow after they finished performing their one-act, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*. They took the show to competition this weekend.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE

Jan. 31:
10:30am - 11:30am BPBL Storytime
Feb. 1:
10:30am - 11:30am BPBL Story time
Feb. 7:
10:30am - 11:30am BPBL Storytime



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AUSTIN/MOWER COUNTY

Feb. 1st:
All day 1st Responders Meeting
Wed Feb 1, 2017 - Thu Feb 2, 2017
7am - 5pm Mayo Clinic Health Systems Auxiliary Linen Sale
10am - 5pm Second Floor Gallery Show - Paul Walech Roth
11:30am - 12:30pm SEMCAC Meal
12pm - 6pm American Red Cross Blood Drive
Feb. 2:
7am - 3pm Mayo Clinic Health Systems Linen Sale
10am - 5pm Second Floor Gallery Show - Paul Walech Roth
3pm - 6pm Ski and Snowshoe Rental
3:30pm - 5pm Mower Co, Southland ISD: Open Gym, M/HS Gym
5pm - 7pm First Thursday - Pretty in Pink
6pm - 7pm Brownsdale PL Puzzle Night (subject to change)
6:30pm - 7pm Twilight Tales: Evening Storytime
7pm - 8:30pm Keepsake Quilter's Guild Meeting
Feb. 3:
All day Austin Packers Classic Bantam Tournament
10am - 5pm Second Floor Gallery Show - Paul Walech Roth
11:30am - 12:30pm SEMCAC Meal
5:15pm - 7:15pm Bingo
6pm - 8pm Austin Big Band - Pink Swing
7pm - 10pm Austin Bruins vs Aberdeen Wings
7:30pm - 9:30pm Tonic Sol Fa
Feb. 4:
9am - 12pm Masonic Pancake Feed
10am - 3pm Second Floor Gallery Show - Paul Walech Roth
10:30am - 12pm Kids' Studio - Masks
11:30am - 3:30pm Plunge for the Pink/Speed Run
7pm - 10pm Austin Bruins vs Aberdeen Wings
Feb. 5:
8am - 12:30pm Austin All Stars Baseball Pancake Fundraiser
11am - 2pm 16th Annual Spaghetti Dinner "Superb-Owl Sunday"
12pm - 4pm Superbowl Sunday Shoot
1pm - 3pm Grand Meadow Open Gym,
1pm - 2:30pm Riverside Figure Skating Club - Basic Skills
2:30pm - 5pm Riverside Figure Skating Club - Power & Moves, Precision Line, Advanced Ice Time
Feb. 6:
11:30am - 12:30pm SEMCAC Meal
5:15pm - 7:15pm Bingo
7pm - 8pm Brownsdale City Council Mtg
Feb. 7th:
9am - 11am Open Dome Family Time
Where: Packer Dome, Wescott Field
10am - 5pm Second Floor Gallery Show - Paul Walech Roth
Where: Austin ArtWorks Center, 300 Main St N, Austin, MN 55912, USA
12pm - 1pm Tuesdays with Toastmasters
Where: Hormel Foods Corporate Office
3:30pm - 5pm Mower Co, Southland ISD: Open Gym, M/HS Gym

ALBERT LEA/FREEBORN Co

Jan. 31:
All day Family Reads
Tue Jan 17, 2017 - Sat Feb 25, 2017
8am - 9am Social Media Breakfast
10:30am - 11:15am Storytime
3:30pm - 4:30pm Let's Draw & Paint
6pm - 8pm Beginning Crochet
6pm - 7pm Ceramic Heart Ring Holder
6pm - 9pm Rock Gym
6:15pm - 7:30pm Yoga For Beginners
6:30pm - 7:45pm Gentle Movement Yoga
Feb. 1:
4am - 6:30am Soccer Skills & Games(3rd-7thGrade)
Where: Albert Lea Family Y, 2021 W Main St, Albert Lea, MN 56007, USA
7:30am - 8:30am AL Port Authority Mtg, AL EDA
7:30am - 8:30am Port Authority Meeting
3:30pm - 4:30pm Staff Mentee Meeting (Elementary)
4:15pm - 5:15pm Beginning Yoga
6:30pm - 8:30pm NHS Induction Ceremony
Feb. 2:
All day 8th Grade Courage Retreat
Thu Feb 2, 2017 - Fri Feb 3, 2017
10:30am - 11:30am ALPL Story time
10:30am - 11:15am Music & Movement
Where: Albert Lea Public Library, 211 East Clark Street, Albert Lea, MN 56007, United States
5:30pm - 6:30pm AL Council Workshop, City Council Chambers
5:30pm - 6:30pm Zumba
6pm - 7pm Night-time Storytime
Feb. 3:
All day 8th Grade Courage Retreat
Fri Feb 3, 2017 - Sat Feb 4, 2017
6pm - 9pm Rock Climbing Open Gym
Feb. 6:
2pm - 3:30pm LEGO Time for Homeschoolers
3:45pm - 4:30pm Book Pals (Gr. 5 & 6)
3:45pm - 5pm LEGO Time
7pm - 8pm AL City Council, Council Chambers
Feb. 7:
10:30am - 11:15am Storytime
3:30pm - 4:30pm Staff Mentee Meeting (Secondary)
3:45pm - 4:30pm Book Pals (3rd & 4th Grade)
5:15pm - 5:45pm Yoga Nidra for Children
5:30pm - 6:30pm AL Planning Commission, City Hall
5:30pm - 6:30pm Planning Commission
5:30pm - 6:30pm Zumba
6pm - 8pm Beginning Crochet
6pm - 8pm Key to My Heart Canvas
6:30pm - 7:45pm Gentle Movement Yoga

ELLENDALE/GENEVA

Jan. 31:
7pm - 8:20pm NRHEG Karate, ES Gym North Ellndl
Feb. 1:
5:30pm - 6:40pm NRHEG Yoga, DAPE Rm
7pm - 8pm NRHEG Yoga, DAPE Rm
7pm - 8pm NRHEG Zumba, DAPE Rm
Feb. 6th:
6:20pm - 7:40pm NRHEG Yoga, Media Center Ellndl
Feb. 7th:
7pm - 8:20pm NRHEG Karate, ES Gym North Ellndl



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Jan. 31:
9:30am - 10:30am OPL It's TALE TIME!
10am - 1pm WCPL Story Time/Crafts
Feb. 1:
All day Hope Curbside Recycling N of 42nd Av
Wed Feb 1, 2017 - Thu Feb 2, 2017
7pm - 8pm Medford Park Board (1st Wed even months)
Feb. 2:
2pm - 2:30pm The Arthritis Foundation: Medford Senior Exercise Class, Whistle Stop Diner
6:30pm - 7:30pm OPL Family Story Time
Feb. 4:
9am - 12pm WC Amer Legion Craft Show
Feb. 6:
All day WC Study Club
Mon Feb 6, 2017 - Tue Feb 7, 2017
1pm - 2pm Owatonna, Woman's Club bridge group, SeniorPlace
2pm - 2:30pm The Arthritis Foundation: Medford Senior Exercise Class, Whistle Stop Diner

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Jenn-Air, KitchenAid, Maytag, Panasonic, RCA,
Samsung, Toshiba, Whirlpool
Geneva, Mn
507-256-7258

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

Winter week wows Owatonna



Staff photo by Emily Schoenbeck

Owatonna Park and Recs celebrated winter week with events to get people outdoors despite the colder temperatures. There was sledding on Friday, ice fishing on Sunday, and right in the middle on Saturday was the polar plunge. To raise money for Special Olympics, residents took an icy dip in Lake Kohlmer. Leading the charge were Sheriff Lon Thiele of Steele County and Sheriff Kevin E. orgerson of Olmsted County. It was Torgerson's 132nd plunge for the cause.

Chili cook-off serves up a good time



Staff photo by Emily Schoenbeck

The Thirteenth Annual Chili Cook-Off Contest was a smash hit. Over 40 recipes were pitted against each other to raise money for the Andrew Lawrence Memorial Scholarship Fund. As of this January, the scholarship fund has over \$100,000 to provide scholarships to Owatonna high school students and will be awarding five additional scholarship this May.

Eagles' raising money for a cure



BY EMILY SCHOENBECK
County Staff Writer

The Owatonna's Eagles Club will be hosting their 55th annual cancer auction on Feb. 3 at 6 p.m. and Feb. 4 at 4 p.m.

They'll be auctioning of a wide range of items. Bigger tickets items include a set of table and chairs, an octagon fire pit, a beautiful black walnut table, and a Harley Davidson bench. There will be smaller items too, such as

gift baskets and gift certificates to local businesses. The club is still accepting donations for auction items through this week.

"Residents have been very generous this year," said Vicky Goodsell, the cancer auction chair. Goodsell has worked on the auction for several years and says it's important because, "in one way or another we're all touched by cancer."

"If you look back 20 years from where we are now," she said, "we've come such a long way."

She believes, "it's important for research to be happening."

All proceeds will go to fund cancer research at the Mayo Clinic Cancer Center, The University of Minnesota Cancer Center or the Hormel Institute.

Last year the auction raised over \$41,000 for research, and the eagles are eager to see if they can break that record this year.

The club's hosts the auction in hopes of upholding their motto, "People Helping People."

Civility in civil service



LOIS M. NELSON

At our last council meeting, it was preceded by a public hearing where we proposed the rework of a number of our streets in the southwest part of town.

"Street Projects" have been a continuous topic over the last two years as we did finish the crack filling and seal coating of the salvageable streets in town. The remainder requires the reworking that comes with both age and minimal maintenance over an extended period of time. We have a financial plan in place with our capitol plan. The street work remaining does require the resident or businesses equal participation in the cost through assessments with payment over the next fifteen years.

Never popular to affirm that your assessments/taxes will go up, but people expect good infrastructure and this does come at a cost. Right now with both oil prices and interest rates down, several of us thought this was a good time to address these capital projects. Even though the council, again after lots of early discussion, approved in January the authorization for the engineer's report and assessment role, at our Monday night meeting, two of the councilors voted against proceeding with the project-sufficient to stall any action again for some time.

Personally, although disappointed in the vote's outcome, what I did appreciate was the way the residents in attendance responded at the hearing with their comments and questions as well as the discussion around the council table, done in the same way. All done respectfully in the tone of their voices, courteousness and well thought out comments and questions.

Recalling my first newly elected officials conference five years ago, was surprised at how much time was devoted to the topic of civility. Then, heard from leaders in many communities where little respect was shown between councilors and the public almost always interfered with actions taken at their meetings, Civility is a tool for working with strongly held different views and learning how to diffuse tense situations and using 'please' and 'thank you' more. During my working years, the topic of 'How to Work with Difficult People' often was part of training, today this all falls under the umbrella of civility.

Through the many months of this past election season, anger, fear and disrespect for both the speaker and the audience was often evident. Maybe we have developed some bad habits and need to consciously become more civil in our interactions. Elected officials often are the brunt of individual frustration. Again, my reflection is that these officials or committee participants or board members, have already collected more information about the topic and proposed action than the public realizes. Sometimes more can be learned by quiet attendance and absorption of the discussion.

Thank you to our Medford residents, staff and councilors for demonstrating civility this past week...a great way to start off the new year!

Mayor Lois

(Lois M Nelson is now beginning her 5th year of service as Medford Mayor.)

What does it mean to be an Awesome Blossom?

By HOWARD LESTRUD
Staff Writer

Students at Blooming Prairie Elementary School were invited to participate in a writing contest explaining what it means to be an Awesome Blossom.

Principal Chris Staloch said students were also asked how they show their Prairie Pride.

Hundreds of entries were received with winners selected at each grade level.

Winners were: Sam Pirkil, sixth grade; Addison Doocy, fifth grade; Lexi White, fourth grade; Samantha Hefling, third grade; Gracelyn Anderson, second grade and Natalie Schumacer, first and Jeffrey Bruns, kindergarten.

"All students did a wonderful job and I am proud of all our students," remarked Principal Staloch.

Here's the works of three of the winners:

Jeffrey Bruns, Kindergarten -- "I am an Awesome Blossom because I respect techs (teachers) and freds (friends). I show Prairie Pride when I respect the luch (lunch) lades

(ladies) yoosing (using) my manrs (manners).

Sam Pirkil, sixth grade -- Have you ever been to Blooming Prairie? If you haven't, I'll tell you that it is an excellent community. Over the next few paragraphs, I'm going to tell you what makes an Awesome Blossom truly awesome.

An Awesome Blossom respects property. We pick up for ourselves. We don't write on walls, and we respect all property that isn't our own.

Awesome Blossoms treat people with respect. We don't call people names or bully them. We stand up for other students, even if we don't know them. We are always friendly and respectful to other people.

Doing your personal best makes you an Awesome Blossom. Here in Blooming Prairie, students of our schools try their hardest in school, out of school, and in sports, we try our personal best.

An Awesome Blossom resolves conflicts without arguing or violence. If there is a conflict we tell an adult. We can

also resolve conflicts ourselves by compromising or just saying sorry and move on.

Students of Blooming Prairie show Prairie Pride. We take pride in being Awesome Blossoms and we follow the rules of Prairie Pride such as personal growth, responsibility, safe environment and respect. We wear shirts and pants that say Awesome Blossoms because we are proud of this town.

If you ever move or even just stop by to get gas here in Blooming Prairie, I can assure you that you will be greeted with a smile, a wave, or a "hello." Maybe, even all three! Everyone is welcome here, you will be treated with respect and friendliness, and that's what makes Blooming Prairie truly awesome.

Samantha Hefling, third grade -- What does being an Awesome Blossom mean?

I think it means to listen to what the world is telling you, tell the truth, even if you have to get a consequence, try your hardest, even if you fail the first



Submitted photo

Winners of the Blooming Prairie Elementary School Writing Contest were: Writing Contest winners. Back row - Sam Pirkil (6th), Addison Doocy (5th), Lexi White (4th), Samantha Hefling (3rd). Front Row - Gracelyn Anderson (2nd), Natalie Schumacer (1st), Jeff ey Bruns (K).

time, and be AWESOME

But...how do you show Prairie Pride? First, we need to be respectful to the grown-ups, even if you disagree with them. Be caring, even if you aren't friends with that person.

By paying attention, even if it's your least favorite subject.

Be kind, even if someone isn't kind to you. And, take care of yourself, even if someone isn't doing their job.

County Living

‘Chasing the dragon’ out of Blooming

By **HOWARD LESTRUD**
Staff Writer

Reality hit hard when students in grades 9-12 at Blooming Prairie High School recently learned first hand about the dangers of opiate use and addiction.

The students learned from viewing a 45-minute video, “Chasing the Dragon: The Life of an Opiate Addict,” and from personal stories shared by three women who had members of their family touched by the addiction.

“You’ve got to be strong enough to say no to drugs and don’t give in to peer pressure,” said LuAnn Jensen of Circle of Hope, an organization with the goal to create a comfortable place for parents, siblings and loved ones of addicts and alcoholics to share concerns, experiences and solutions in hope of releasing the stigma surrounding addiction.

Jensen’s son Jordon became addicted to opiates and died at age 20. “He is gone and now I have to live without him for the rest of my life,” Jensen said.

A two-hour block of time was devoted to each of the four classes, freshman, sophomore, junior and senior.

School counselor Mary Worke and Susan Arnold, a school

linked mental health counselor, introduced the video, which was released by the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration)

The video is about the lives of opiate addicts and aimed at educating students and young adults about the danger of addiction and the growing epidemic of prescription drugs and heroin abuse.

Letters were sent to parents of all students scheduled to view the video and to listen to discussion. Parents wishing not to have their children be part of the session were asked to notify the school.

Principal John Worke told 40 tenth graders, “You are old enough to take out of this what you want. This video and discussion will provide you with opportunities of how to handle the temptation to take drugs.”

The video is censored for language and has drug content. Its title refers to the never-ending pursuit of the original or ultimate high, and features shocking, first-person accounts told by individuals who have abused opioids or whose children have abused opioids, with tragic consequences.

Blooming Prairie sophomores Seth Peterson and Caleb Kubista said the video definitely had an

impact on them.

“It was a scary movie and pretty powerful,” Peterson said following the two-hour session.

“The video had a lot of meaning to me about how bad these drugs are,” commented Kubista. The drugs can have a big impact on one’s life,” he added. Not knowing of anyone addicted to opiates, Kubista said, “We have a pretty good class here.”

DEA authorities report that tens of thousands of Americans die each year from drug-related deaths, and more than half of these deaths are from heroin and prescription opioids.

Being addicted to opiates is like chasing a dragon, the video emphasized. A message in the video also said that the drugs are often introduced to people by friends or relatives. The most addictive drug, by far, is OxyContin, the video pointed out.

Following the viewing of the video, students were told by counselor Worke that one in five seniors in high school, have used prescription drugs. Looking over the size of the sophomore class, Worke said that would equate to eight individuals. “That’s way too many,” Worke said.

“Our hope is that when and if you are faced with the challenge to use drugs, you will

have the ability to say no and to make healthy choices,” Worke continued.

Susan Arnold chronicled her brother Dan’s usage of opiates. He started with marijuana and alcohol and it led to using cocaine. “He has been clean for 13 years and he is still in recovery,” she related.

Chris Lukes, one of the founders of Circle of Hope in Austin, told about her son Jordan being in recovery the rest of his life, too. He also started with marijuana and advanced to meth, alcohol and cocaine.

Chris said her son also used OxyContin and heroin. He stole thousands of dollars from his family, Chris said. “He tried to commit suicide and he survived because he realized he was needed to help others,” she said.

Drug addiction “grabs you by the throat and won’t let go,” Chris told the room of Blooming Prairie sophomores. “You guys have so much going for you; just say no,” Chris pleaded.

Heroin became son Jordon’s drug of choice after first trying marijuana, LuAnn Jensen informed the class of BP sophomores. Her story deeply touched the room of students.

Even though he is gone, his addiction stays; it took his life,” LuAnn said.

Principal Worke closed the



Staff photo by Howard Lestrud

“The message was pretty powerful,” said Seth Peterson, Blooming Prairie High School sophomore, after he viewed a video entitled “Chasing the Dragon: The Life of an Opiate Addict.” Sophomores also listened to personal stories related by three women who were impacted by a family member’s illicit use of drugs.

session with a message to the students emphasizing that marijuana can be a dangerous substance. “It is not the natural grass or weed, it’s what it is laced with,” he said.

Mrs. Worke said the students should reflect on the personal stories they heard on this day. “Our doors are always open and we have resources for you to use,” Mrs. Worke concluded.

Medford street project stalled

BY **EMILY SCHOENBECK**
County Staff Writer

When the Medford city council convened in the high school choir room on Jan. 23, the major piece of business on everyone’s mind was the proposed 2017 street project.

A special meeting opened for the usual council session, and city engineer Joe Duncan gave a report on the proposed project.

It would see the city replacing and repairing parts of Fourth Street Southwest, Third Street Southwest, Second Street Southwest, First Street Southwest, Third Avenue Southwest, Fourth Avenue Southwest, and Fifth Avenue Southeast.

The projected cost for the project is \$390,000. The cost would be split between the city and the 54 affected property owners. The exact amount paid by the property owner would depend on his or her front footage. The exact cost to each homeowner wouldn’t be known until after the project was completed. It would collectively total roughly \$195,000.

After the engineer’s report, the meeting opened to a public hearing where citizens could comment.

Public comments were mixed with many residents acknowledging the streets weren’t in great condition, but feeling that there was no reason why their



Staff photo by Emily Schoenbeck

An aerial map of Medford shows the streets in most serious need of repair highlighted in red. The 2017 street project would largely focus on the southwest corner of town.

street needed to be redone now.

Council members expressed concern that if the streets weren’t redone soon, they would only decay further and raise the cost of repair.

The project needed four out of five votes to continue. It fell one short, receiving only three when Mayor Nelson, and councilors Chad Merritt and Marie Sexton voted in favor. Councilors Matt Dempsey and Keith Maas opposed.

“I was quite surprised,” said Mayor Nelson, especially since the board has been discussing the project for the last 18 months.

“In December, we unanimously went forward with the survey,” she said referring to a preliminary step the board took the month prior.

She cited low gas prices and interest rates as a reason for wanting to move the project forward now.

As for where the city goes from here, a workshop is being held at 5:30pm before the next council meeting. It’s intent is to discuss the municipal building project, but Mayor Nelson said the street project will probably be addressed as well.

Flexible classrooms engage students

By **HOWARD LESTRUD**
Staff Writer

(EDITOR’S NOTE: Flexible classrooms implementing different seating arrangements have become the trend in many public schools. Blooming Prairie schools are no exception. Two BP teachers, Chelsea Van Roekel at the elementary school, and Gina Hendrickson at the high school, are using the flexible seating concept in their classrooms. A two-part series examines the setup in both schools.)

One word is used by a Blooming Elementary School third grader to describe his take on a flexible classroom. That word is AWESOME.

Another third grader says matter of factly: “It helps you learn better and we also have a choice of where to sit.” Come and visit Chelsea Van Roekel’s classroom and find students sitting on bouncing balls, seated on wiggly chairs, or seated at a tall desk.

Van Roekel is currently out on maternity leave, giving birth to twin girls last Dec. 12. She set up her flexible classroom at the beginning of the year and it is still being used by long-term substitute Becky Johnson.

Gina Hendrickson, English teacher at Blooming Prairie High School, has also implemented the flexible seating concept in her classroom. See Part II next week.

The flexible classroom concept is nothing new across the country but it is new to the Blooming Prairie School District.

Van Roekel saw the idea on a teacher’s online blog. She researched it more and then approached Principal Chris Staloch, requesting to implement the program.

“I always am trying to improve what I do in the classroom and this concept of giving students the freedom to sit at different locations in the classroom and on different furniture seemed to increase their engagement to learning,” Chelsea remarked. “Flexible classrooms give kids movement,” she explained.

Van Roekel began implementing the program in small pieces after gaining the blessing of Principal Staloch.

First objective was to move out all desks and bring in tables, yoga balls, stools, table at ground height, standing desk and pedals.

Van Roekel says the opportunity for kids to sit where they choose increases the kids’



Staff photo by Howard Lestrud

Some students including Kloe Wacek use a bouncy ball as a classroom seat at the Blooming Prairie Elementary School. Flexible seating is practiced in Chelsea Van Roekel’s third grade classroom. She is currently out on maternity leave and her classroom is currently taught by Becky Johnson.

motivation. “One of the biggest and most pleasant surprises was that the change brought in a sense of community, Van Roekel said.

The whole classroom environment changed with the implementation of the flexible classroom. Kids don’t have assigned seats and can choose a different place to sit every day.

Students are sometimes moved by the teacher to give the students an idea where they worked best. “They seem to concentrate more when seated in a spot they chose,” Chelsea says.

The flexible classroom concept allows the students to work on self awareness, Chelsea interjects. “It seemed like we were making all the choices for them. Now, they make their choices and it makes the kids feel better socially and emotionally.”

Substitute teacher Johnson “has been fabulous” in continuing the flexible classroom concept, Chelsea shared. Johnson recently sent a classroom video of her students to Van Roekel. Van Roekel hopes to bring her twins to her third grade class sometime in February.

The third graders in Mrs. Van Roekel’s class have adjusted “far better than I would have ever thought,” she said. She admits to being nervous about the initial transition but says that students like to call space their own and this gives them independence, she further explained.

Van Roekel believes more teachers at both the elementary school and high school levels will choose the concept.

Prior to making the change at the beginning of the school year, Van Roekel said she received “lots of help” from Assistant Principal Ali Mach and from Mrs. Hendrickson.

Van Roekel is making flexible classrooms her thesis for graduate school. She said other teachers at the elementary school are interested in the concept and Van Roekel believes we will see more and more classrooms moving that way.

The flexible concept improves learning, Van Roekel believes. She says there are no real drawbacks to the practice except the fact that students may make the transition back to the traditional classroom.

“It is great to see our teachers continually looking for ways to increase student engagement in our school,” commented Principal Staloch.

“The students absolutely love the learning opportunities that the flexible classroom provides them. We are fortunate to have many teachers who continually make positive changes to their classrooms to make sure that we are providing our students with a wonderful education.”

NEXT: Read about flexible seating at Blooming Prairie High School.

Blossoms gather again



Submitted photo

The 1943 graduating class of Blooming Prairie High School gathered for their 73rd class reunion at Pizza Ranch in Owatonna on Aug. 16. Returning Blossoms included Gladys Pechacek, Donald Yentsch, Lavonne Smith, Ronald Bartels, Orene Dennis, Ludwig Wencil, and Nina Mae Rogers.

Public Safety



CRIME BRIEF

Woman faces felony in stabbing attempt

An Owatonna woman faces a felony charge in connection with a domestic disturbance Oct. 21. The Steele County Attorney’s Office has charged Diane Herda, 54, with second-degree assault with a dangerous weapon and domestic assault.

Police responded to a disturbance call in the 100 block of West Pearl Street. When officers arrived, they found a man standing outside reporting his girlfriend had tried to stab him. He told officers that “she does weird things when she is drunk, like cut herself and throw things,” police said.

During the incident, the woman allegedly wielded a steak knife making cutting motions at the victim. He was able to get the knife away from her before she did further harm to him or herself, according to police.



Diane Herda,

POLICE BLOTTER Steele County

Owatonna Police Jan. 20

Crash. Police responded to a motor vehicle accident resulting in property damage in the 1600 block of Mosher Ave. SW at 1:43 a.m. They took a subject into custody at the scene.

Fight. Officers responded to a fight in the 300 block of School St. E. at 11:35 a.m.

Drugs. At 12:05 p.m., police responded to drug activity in the 500 block of State Ave. NW. They arrested a subject at the scene.

Road Hazard. Police responded to a road hazard at Landmark Dr. NE and 28th St. NE at 12:22 p.m. They made arrests at the scene.

Fraud. Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 2200 block of 46th St. NW in Clinton Falls Township at 3:50 p.m.

Hit and Run. A hit and run accident resulting in property damage occurred at Lincoln Ave. S. and Havana Rd. SE at 5:51 p.m.

Criminal Sex. Police began an investigation of a criminal sexual conduct on 25th St. NE at 5:53 p.m.

Theft. At 7:55 p.m., police received a theft report from the 2300 block of 43rd St. NW.

Jan. 21

Civil. Officer assisted with a civil matter in the 200 block of Pearl St. E. at 2:54 a.m.

Hit and Run. At 9:50 a.m., police assisted the state patrol with a hit and run accident resulting in property damage in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W.

Shoplifting. Officer issued a shoplifting citation in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 3:17 p.m.

Domestic. Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 100 block of Pearl St. W. at 5:15 p.m. They made an arrest at the scene.

Property Damage. Vandalism was reported in the 2200 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 9:17 p.m.

Jan. 22

Death. Police began a death investigation in the 400 block of State Ave. NW at 4:25 a.m.

Burglary. At 5:37 a.m., officers responded to a burglary in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W.

Jan. 23

Theft. Officer took a theft report in the 2200 block of 30th St. NW at 2:21 p.m.

Warrant. Police made a warrant arrest in the 200 block of 12th St. NE at 7:27 p.m.

Jan. 24

Civil. At 1:25 a.m., officer assisted with a civil matter in the 100 block of Selby Ave. SW.

Welfare. Officer completed a welfare check in the 100 block of Vine St. E. at 2:26 p.m.

Burglary. Police began a burglary investigation in the 800 block of Partridge Ave. SE at 6:43 p.m.

Domestic. Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 300 block of Grove Ave. N. at 9:18 p.m.

Jan. 25

Domestic. At 9:33 a.m., police arrested a subject following a domestic disturbance in the 200 block of Rose St. E.

Assault. Police responded to an assault in the 200 block of Rose St. E. at 10:33 a.m. They made an arrest at the scene.

Crash. Paramedics and officers responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries at Oak Ave. S. and Holly St. SW at 12:05 p.m.

Probation. Officers made a probation violation arrest in the 500 block of Florence Ave. NW at 3:59 p.m.

Jan. 26

Warrant. Police arrested a subject for an outstanding warrant in the 600 block of Mound St. SW at 9:12 a.m.

Shoplifting. At 5:48 p.m., officers issued a shoplifting citation in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W.

COURT NEWS Steele County

The following cases were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Jan. 16 with Judge Joseph A. Buettel presiding:

Rogelio R. Aguilar, 23, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony terroristic threats. He was sentenced to \$381, 172 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, psychological evaluation, cognitive skill training, 80 hours of community service and 3 years of supervised probation.

Shanna L. Rose, 35, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of marijuana. Rose was sentenced to \$131 and 19 months in Shakopee State Prison.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Jan. 16 – 20:

MN State Patrol Rochester

Caleb R. Armstrong, 25, Austin, speeding, \$221; Valentin Babincluc, 29, Coon Rapids, speeding, \$141; Julian B. Bednar, 20, Owatonna, speeding, \$221; Timothy E. Bennington, 26, Faribault, no insurance and suspended license, \$481; Anthony M. Bow-

ers, 43, N. Webster, IN, suspended license, \$281; Nicole A. Bump, 25, Mankato, DWI, \$381, 1 day in county jail, attend MADD impact panel, Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory and 1 year of supervised probation; Steven A. Dausey, 53, Owatonna, speeding, \$141;

Melanie K. Goss, 30, Forest City, IA, unsafe lane usage, \$131; Matthew R. Hinchley, 37, Rochester, seat belt, \$106; Tonya M. Honsey, 40, Minneapolis, speeding, \$141; Joshua M. Howell, 31, San Diego, CA, no license, \$181; Ashton A. Kane, 21, Owatonna, seat belt, \$106; Phouminh Kulavongsa, 36, Austin, revoked license, \$281; Elliot M. Larson, 19, Eagan, speeding, \$60;

Oscar Martinez-Ruacho, 30, Brooklyn Park, possession of paraphernalia, \$131; Mi Meh, 21, Austin, seat belt, \$106; Robin L. Minette, 32, Austin, revoked license, \$281; David W. Neely, 24, Albert Lea, permit violation, \$131; Don E. Nelson, 51, Brooklyn Park, speeding, \$121;

Kerrie A. Osnoe, 45, Weyauwega, WI, seat belt, \$106; Michael C. Osnoe, 46, New London, WI, seat belt, \$106; Robert A. Rasmussen, 56, Glencoe, husbandry violation, \$131; Alan R. Schwartz, 20, Austin, seat belt, \$106; Deonne M. Seals, 51, North Mankato, speeding, \$121; Christian G. Skjeveland, 47, Claremont, inspection decal violation, \$181;

Mouaying Vang, 25, Brooklyn Center, speeding, \$141; Gage J. Wallin, 22, Clarks Grove, revoked license and no insurance, \$481; Ryan S. Wetzstein, 19, West Concord, speeding, \$121; Nicholas L. Willis, 21, Owatonna, possession of marijuana, \$131; Belle M. Yaffe, 68, Orono, speeding, \$131.

Owatonna Police Department

Cody J. Altepeter, 23, Owatonna, no insurance, \$181, 10 hours of community service and 1 year of supervised probation; Julian B. Bednar, 20, Owatonna, following vehicle too closely; Tiffany M. Bennett, 33, Owatonna, theft, \$131; Charles Buniaq, 42, Austin, no insurance, \$2,029; Victor A. Carrejo, 52, Faribault, tumultuous conduct, \$181;

Roberto Cecilio-Aleman, 21, Austin, no license and no insurance, \$381; Joshua A. Ellgren, 22, theft, \$81 and 5 hours of community service; Zachary J. Engel, 25, New Richland, theft, \$131, no trespassing at Walmart and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Jacob P. Finnegan, 22, Austin, possession of marijuana, \$131; Nancy J. Hust, 64, Wabasha, failure to obey traffic control device, \$131;

Leyton S. Matejcek, 16, Owatonna, speeding, \$131; Bradley J. Meyer, 26, Blooming Prairie, suspended license and no insurance, \$481; Natalie A. Moe, 31, Owatonna, cancelled license, \$381, 2 days in county jail and 1 year of supervised probation; Richard A. Nibbe, 46, Owatonna, disorderly conduct, \$131 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Stacey Y. Powell, 45, Owatonna, suspended license and no child passenger restraint systems, \$431;

Epifanio Ramon, 29, Owatonna, cancelled license, \$381 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Adrian I. Sabellini, 32, Mankato, expired license and expired registration, \$211; Jared Sammon, 25, Faribault, DWI, \$381, 1 day in county jail, Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, attend MADD impact panel and 1 year of supervised probation; Jazmyne A. Shinabarger, 24, Albert Lea, revoked license and speeding, \$341;

Dennis K. Skala, 27, Meriden, DWI, \$381, Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory and 1 year of supervised probation; Lacey M. Skorr, 29, Owatonna, dangerous weapons – reckless discharge of firearm within a municipality, \$381, 240 hours of community service and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Ronald R. Thornburg III, 40, Owatonna, theft, \$391, no

trespassing and 1 year of unsupervised probation;

Corey J. Vanthomme, 35, New Richland, no insurance and revoked license, \$381 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Barbara L. Wheelock, 75, Waseca, speeding, \$121.

Steele County Sheriff’s Office

Ruqiyo O. Ali, 19, Owatonna, speeding, \$106; Kimberly K. Anderson, 37, Le Center, speeding, \$121; Diane E. Bedney, 65, Owatonna, issuance of dishonored check, \$2,285.53, 1 year of diversion program and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Denver D. Brown, 21, Coon Rapids, speeding, \$131;

Kolten A. Christenson, 22, Waseca, speeding, \$121; Carrie S. Cook, 39, Owatonna, revoked license, \$281; Troy A. Enberg, 30, Nerstrand, stop sign, \$131; Brian K. Francis, 26, Rochester, speeding, \$221; Adam S. Johnson, 32, Faribault, suspended license, \$281;

Amy Jo E. Lewer, 26, Waseca, speeding, \$121; John J. Pieri, 56, Prior Lake, speeding, \$121; Traci L. Ranslow, 40, Owatonna, speeding, \$141; Joshua J. Schimek, 35, speeding, \$221; Brady D. Seitz, 22, Colorado Springs, CO, prohibited lights, \$121; Alice M. Spangler, 19, Waseca, speeding, \$121; Robert W. Surat, 52, New Richland, expired registration and speeding, \$151;

Albert Torres Aguilar, 27, Claremont, no license and no insurance, \$381; Benjamin G. Watkins, 35, speeding, \$121; Kevin W. Webster, 27, Owatonna, suspended license and speeding, \$341; Paul F. Yenter, 77, St. Peter, speeding, \$141.

POLICE BLOTTER Dodge County

The Dodge County Sheriff’s Office handled 178 complaints during the week of Jan. 18 – 24. Some of them include:

Jan. 18

Larceny. Deputy took a report of an iPad stolen out of a vehicle in the 500 block of Hwy. St. E. in Dodge Center at 11:24 a.m.

Driving. Deputies received a driving complaint of an intoxicated driver at State Hwy. 56 and State Hwy. 30 in Hayfield at 3:18 p.m.

Disturbance. Deputies responded to subjects fighting in the 300 block of 3rd Ave. NE in Dodge Center at 3:36 p.m.

Vandalism. Deputy took a vandalism report on Main St. W. in Dodge Center at 5:44 p.m.

Alarm. At 7:22 p.m., deputies responded to an alarm in the 100 block of Front St. W. in Claremont.

Jan. 19

Drug Court. At 2:19 p.m., a drug court violation occurred at the Court House.

Jan. 20

Medical. Deputies and Dodge Center Ambulance responded to a work-related medical emergency involving a forklift in the 11400 block of U.S. Hwy. 14 in Claremont at 10:14 a.m.

Civil. Deputy assisted with a civil matter in the 400 block of 1st St. NW in Hayfield at 1:16 p.m.

Larceny. Deputy took a report of a purse stolen from a vehicle in the 300 block of 1st St. NE in Hayfield at 9 p.m.

Jan. 21

Traffic. Deputy made a traffic stop and found the motorist to be in possession of marijuana at 2nd St. SE and 2nd Ave. SE in Dodge Center at 1:10 a.m.

Suspicion. Deputies responded to suspicious activity in the 100 block of 1st Ave. NE in Hayfield at 2:15 a.m.

Civil. Deputies assisted with a civil matter involving a truck

driver refusing to return a truck until he gets paid in Claremont at 10:23 a.m.

Fire. Deputies responded to a large recreational fire in the 75300 block of 100th Ave. in Blooming Prairie at 6:31 p.m. It was attended and everything was OK.

Crash. At 7:20 p.m., a vehicle hit a pole at State Hwy. 56 and 690th St. in Hayfield. One was transported to St. Mary’s Hospital.

Jan. 22

Suspicion. At 12:55 a.m., deputies responded to suspicious activity in the 19000 block of Dodge/Mower Rd. in Hayfield.

Domestic. Deputies responded to a domestic disturbance involving an unwanted intoxicated male in the 400 block of 1st St. SE in Hayfield at 6:08 p.m. They arrested the male subject and transported him to the Steele County Jail.

Disturbance. Deputies received information regarding a physical domestic in the 200 block of Main St. E. in Dodge Center at 6:33 p.m.

Jan. 23

Harassment. At 8:23 p.m., a citizen reported being the victim of harassment in the 100 block of 2nd Ave. NE in Hayfield.

Jan. 24

Disturbance. Deputies responded to a disturbance in the 200 block of 2nd St. SW in Dodge Center at 3:27 a.m.

Assault. At 9 a.m., an assault occurred in the 100 block of 1st Ave. NE in Hayfield.

COURT NEWS Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Jan. 16 – 23:

Dodge County Sheriff’s Office

Paul M. Bell, 34, Mantorville, parking violation, \$32; Zachary W. Ciffra, 28, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Nikolos R. Devorak, 32, Claremont, disorderly conduct, \$100; Benjamin Espinoza-Sota, 34, Kasson, invalid license, \$180; Brian C. Ginder, 39, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; William R. Harsted, 23, Waltham, speeding, \$140; Jennifer M. Langemo, 37, Mantorville, speeding, \$220; Cathy L. Martin, 61, Dodge Center, DWI, \$505, chemical assessment, 40 hours of community service and 1 year of supervised probation; Houston I. Peterson, 30, Dodge Center, speeding, \$220; Pamela R. Schelling, 47, Kasson, parking violation, \$32; Anthony T. Schreyer, 22, Zumbrota, possession of paraphernalia and marijuana and open bottle, \$280; Patrick T. Towey, 42, Hayfield, parking violation, \$32.

Kasson Police Department

Dakota P. Delzer, 20, Mantorville, revoked license and expired registration, \$310; Patrick C. Jager, 48, Kasson, parking violation, \$32; Richard J. Morrison Jr., 20, Rochester, open bottle, \$180; Daniel J. Omalley, 27, Kasson, parking violation, \$32.

MN State Patrol Rochester

Jordan A. Abramo, 34, Owatonna, speeding, \$140; Kimberly A. Dahl, 46, West Concord, speeding, \$140; Larry A. Fennert, 33, Kasson, speeding, \$130; Sarah L. Hill, 25, Waverly, IA, speeding, \$130; Brandon L. McGilberry, 36, St. Paul, speeding, \$130; Rhonda L. McManimon, 59, Houston, speeding, \$140; Juan F. Mendoza-Negrete, 19, Rochester, speeding, \$280; William D. Potts, 39, Stewartville, speeding, \$120; Shannan M. Quam, 36, Byron, speeding, \$130; Blaine A. Stackhouse, 30, Hayfield, speeding, \$140; Mickey S. Sullivan, 20, Rochester, expired registration, \$110.

West Concord Police Department

Glenn D. Boyum, 34, West Concord, parking violation, \$32.

ARREST Steele County

Owatonna Police

Michael Rodney Brown, 50, arrested at 12:22 a.m. Jan. 20, felony assault and domestic assault, held for court.

Michael William Martin, 47, arrested at 1:20 p.m. Jan. 20, possession warrant arrest, \$500 bail.

Antonio Reyes-Guillen, 50, arrested at 9:49 p.m. Jan. 20, felony controlled substance, held for court.

Lennie Allan St. Martin, 37, arrested at 12:15 p.m. Jan. 20, possession and probation warrant arrest, held for court.

Diane Adeline Herda, 54, arrested at 5:46 p.m. Jan. 21, felony assault and domestic assault, held for court.

Charles Love, 48, arrested at 1:36 p.m. Jan. 23, felony burglary, held for court.

Crystal Marie Cox, 29, arrested at 1:36 p.m. Jan. 23, felony burglary, held for court.

Chase Douglas Hill, 19, arrested at 7:45 p.m. Jan. 23, probation violation warrant arrest, body only.

Jason Lee Waldhauser, 19, arrested at 10:25 a.m. Jan. 25, felony domestic assault and possession of controlled substance, held for court.

Zachery Phillip Pena, 23, arrested at 10:30 a.m. Jan. 25, felony assault and terroristic threats, held for court.

Robert Lynn Hagmann, 36, arrested at 2:37 p.m. Jan. 26, FTA warrant arrest, \$20,000 bail.

Steele County Sheriff

Ryan Lee Olson, 39, arrested at 1 p.m. Jan. 20, warrant arrest, \$20,000 bail.

Kevin Jackson, 51, arrested at 8:23 p.m. Jan. 20, warrant arrest, held for court.

Juana Eva Nin, 35, arrested at 4:51 a.m. Jan. 24, warrant arrest, \$500 bail.

Anthony James Brown, 49, arrested at 10:05 p.m. Jan. 24, DWI, possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, held for court.

Jamal Sargent, 20, arrested at 3 p.m. Jan. 26, alcohol warrant arrest, \$1,000 bail.

MN State Patrol

Rufino Lara Pina, 31, arrested at 4:58 p.m. Jan. 22, DWI and false name, held for court.

OWATONNA FIRE

Jan. 20

Crash. Fire rescue responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries in the 1600 block of Mosher Ave. SW at 2:07 a.m.

Carbon Monoxide. At 4:59 p.m., a carbon monoxide incident occurred in the 500 block of Murray St. SE.

Jan. 23

Gas Leak. Fire personnel responded to a natural gas leak in the 700 block of Bridge St. W. at 8:34 a.m.

Crash. A motor vehicle accident with no injuries occurred on Bridge St. W. at 4:33 p.m.

Jan. 25

Crashes. Fire fighters responded to motor vehicle crashes with injuries on Interstate 35 at 8:39 a.m. and on Oak Ave. SW at 12:07 p.m.

Jan. 26

Smoke. At 2:57 p.m., fire personnel assisted with smoke or odor removal in the 300 block of 18th St. SE.

Extrication. Fire fighter extricated a victim from a vehicle in the 8200 block of Crane Creek Rd. NW at 5:10 p.m.

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

- Tyler Woodruff – drugs – no bai
- James Woosley – contempt of court - \$1,000 bail
- Terry Yanzer – DWI – no bail
- Dionte Younger – false name - \$6,000 bail
- Jose Zamarripa – revoked license, no insurance – no bail
- Octavio Zapata – DWI, speeding - \$1,000 bail
- Terry Zoller – DWI - \$3,000 bail
- Joseph Zulker – dishonored check - \$6,000 bail
- Tanya Ackerman – drugs - \$40,000 bail
- Veronica Adame – disorderly conduct - \$1,000 bail

- Randy Aguilar – DWI – no bail
- Rashid Ahmed – assault - \$10,000 bail
- Belen Alaniz – DWI - \$12,500 bail
- Jonathan Aleman – motor vehicle theft - \$10,000 bail
- Omar Alfaro – minor consumption - \$500 bail
- Abdisalam Ali – controlled substance - \$5,000 bail
- Roger Allen – false information - \$1,500 bail
- Juan Alvarez – minor violation - \$6,000 bail
- Ben Ambrose – open bottle - \$181 bail
- Darren Anderson – theft by check - \$5,000 bail

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

ACTIVE WARRANTS

Smelling the roses at the Capitol

By PEGGY BENNETT
Guest Columnist

We had a busy and productive week in St. Paul. I am always thankful when my dog, Colter, can join me now and then. He loves seeing all the new faces, especially when my colleagues bring their kids around. Colter enjoyed some attention from Rep. Josh Heintzeman’s

children. I love it when we can “stop and smell the roses” a bit at the Capitol and include children – and occasionally even pets - at times. It allows us to stay connected to the “human-ness” of our work here in St. Paul, which is the heart of what we are all about. Health Care Relief and Reform We had a long floor session

to pass the 2017 Health Care Emergency Aid and Access bill on a bipartisan vote. The House quickly passed needed premium relief that will help middle class residents around the state who are struggling with unbearable health care costs. This is probably the number one issue I hear most about, and I was proud to support a bill that combines emergency relief with common-

sense reforms to preserve patient access in critical cases. We should have some form of this legislation on the governor’s desk shortly, and I can’t wait to see more long-term reforms later in session.

Early Education When I was teacher, I taught mostly young learners in first grade. It was easy to see which children were prepared to enter their formal education years and which were not. One issue I’m working on this year is helping close the achievement gap in Minnesota through Early Learning Scholarships. Nearly half of Minnesota children are coming into our schools unprepared for kindergarten. Too many never catch up. We know how important

education is to every person, as well as to our society in general, so it is critical that we address this problem. I believe that flexible Early Learning Scholarships are the way to address this issue. These scholarships target those children who are at highest risk and allow their parents to choose a high-quality learning program that fits the parents’ and students’ needs best. These might be based in a home, church, public school, community center, or even a non-profit organization such as Montessori. I based my instruction in my classroom on best practices to meet the varied needs of my students, a big part of which include flexibility and differentiation. There was no one-size-

fits all solution for my students, and there is no one-size-fits-all early childhood program that will meet the needs of these at-risk children either. I am looking forward to delving into this subject further as session moves on and working for the betterment of Minnesota children! As always, I would love your input. Please contact my office at 651-296-8216 or by email at Rep.Peggy.Bennett@house.mn if you have any questions or concerns.

Peggy Bennett is the state representative for District 27A, which covers the City of Blooming Prairie, most of Freeborn County and parts of Dodge and Mower counties.



New church plant celebrates 30 years in corporate ministry

Streetfire Ministries is a full-gospel, Spirit-filled ministry located right here in Minnesota.

Streetfire Ministries was incorporated in 1987, and in 2016, God had put it on the hearts of the Streetfire Ministries board to relocate to Minnesota, and start a new church plant into an already blooming prairie.

The vision is to one day have an *international spiritual medical center* that is 24/7 and ministers to the hearts, souls, minds and bodies of those in need.

We pray that you will be welcomed and ministered to – regardless of your income, your race or your spiritual condition.

There will be no Christian infomercials or pleas for money and no hidden agendas. Freely we’ve received and freely will we give back to a community that has opened its arms to us. We believe that God is the same yesterday, today and forever is still working in a mighty way with a practical and powerful word that is accompanied by signs and wonders following.

If you need a change. If you need a word of encouragement. If you are seeking to go deeper with God. If something inside of you has said that it’s time... we welcome you and remind you to “come as you are.”

Many of you may know Mark and Robin DeLap from their business ties to the community, and for the work that they do in both Steele and Dodge Counties.

After two years of preparations, prayer and fasting, God has finally established Streetfire Ministries in Blooming Prairie.

Mark DeLap has been an ordained Pastor since 1985 and has been in full time ministry for almost 40 years. He is a world-renowned teacher of theology as well as a Christian recording artist. Robin DeLap was ordained as a Pastor since 2012 and has been anointed as an international singer and conference speaker.

Our grand opening and first official service will be held at our new location at 568 4th Place SW in Blooming Prairie on Sunday morning, February 19th. We welcome you to come visit us as we celebrate 30 years of corporate ministry. Our Sunday morning worship service is at 10:45 a.m. and we have a Wednesday night Bible study at 7 p.m.

For more information about Streetfire Ministries and to view teaching videos, past services and future events, please visit us at: <https://streetfireministries.net>

August public records for Steele County

Steele County Births September 2016
Wesley James Reuvers, Parents: Grace and Robert, Sept. 2.
Makayla Helen Louks, Parents: Amy and Joseph, Sept. 2.
Allison Rose Johnson, Parents: Rebecca and Craig, Sept. 3.
Xander Maishe Polansky, Parents: Jordan Zamora and Zackarey Polansky, Sept. 3.
Josiah Josue Rangel, Parent: Annia Nieves, Sept. 3.
Cruz Tyler Moe, Parents: Melissa and Tyler, Sept. 4.
Alex Lee Baas, Parents: Jer-nelle and Christopher, Sept. 7.
Sailor Augusta Fox, Parents: Kristin and Maxwell, Sept. 9.
Ava Ileane Schlaak, Parents: Joy and Daniel, Sept. 9.
Piper Margaret Van Osdale, Parents: Karissa and Andrew, Sept. 12.
Addilynn Diane Johnson, Parents: Cassandra and Marcus, Sept. 14.
Fallon Robert Rogers, Parents: Brittany and James, Sept. 15.
Dax Thomas Kruger, Parents: Erin and Zackary, Sept. 15.
Ollyver William Swenson-Strommer, Parents: Danielle and Stephen Strommer, Sept. 22.
Rian Kate Miller, Parents: Heather and Jacob, Sept. 23.
Rahma Ahmed Mohamud, Parents: Ahmed Ismail and Ardo Sirad, Sept. 26.
Theo Bruce Foels, Parents: Amanda and Mitchell, Sept. 26.
Julissa Ayelet Arenas-Soto, Parents: Cindy and Arian, Sept. 27.

Scarlett Franceine Goodwin, Parents: Savannah Goodwin and Kyle Shaw, Sept. 29.
Maximiliano Casanova Gomez, Parents: Flor and Oscar, Sept. 29.
Emelia Rose Malecha, Parents: Jillian and Robert, Sept. 29.
Oliver Atlas Taghioff, Parents: Christina Anderson and Simon Taghioff, Sept. 30.

Steele County Deaths September 2016
Peter William Dodge, 69, Rochester, Sept. 1.
Doris Florence Kriesel, 99, Owatonna, Sept. 1.
William Ralph Wilen, 68, Bloomington, Sept. 2.
Eleanor Mae Johnson, 88, Owatonna, Sept. 4.
Maryellen Marie Miller, 82, Owatonna, Sept. 6.
Elaine Louise Wodarczak, 85, Owatonna, Sept. 7.
Leo Clement Antl, 95, Owatonna, Sept. 8.
Stanley Paul Nusbaum, 99, Faribault, Sept. 8.
Kenneth Norman Quam, 96, Owatonna, Sept. 9.
Glenn D. Froman, 71, Medford, Sept. 11.
Robert Burnette Wiese, 89, Owatonna, Sept. 12.
Frank Marvin Johnson, 83, Owatonna, Sept. 13.
Arlene Lois Erickson, 85, Owatonna, Sept. 13.
Howard Otto Schroht, 89, Owatonna, Sept. 15.
Faye Mary Conrad, 78, Owatonna, Sept. 16.
John Martin Idstrom, 86, Owatonna, Sept. 17.
Orwin Louis Frazier, 70, Owatonna, Sept. 22.
Alan Clare Mach, 48, Walcott Township, Sept. 23.
Maralyn Jane Meyer, 91, Owatonna, Sept. 27.
Timothy Lee Grems, 56, Owatonna, Sept. 28.
Deloris May Olson, 78, Ellendale, Sept. 29.
John Richard Mettler, 77, Owatonna, Sept. 29.
Charles Michael Rappe, 72, Owatonna, Sept. 30.
Peter J. Schneider, 89, Owatonna, Sept. 30.

Nicolas Allan Leiven and Lora Suzanne De La Cruz, Sept. 7.
Donald Marvin Ketterling and Megan Jean Roosmalen, Sept. 10.
Steven Douglas Krell and Kelly Jo Tomschin, Sept. 10.
Shawn Alan Jore and Breanne Adelle Berndt, Sept. 10.
Christine Mae Kubista and Staci Lynn Wilker, Sept. 10.
Patrick Edward Spindler and Kristine Sue Trom, Sept. 10.
Caleb Daniel Buck and Cassandra Jo Balvitsch, Sept. 10.
Debra Lee Motl and Chadrick Earl Watkins, Sept. 10.
Anthony John Hanneman and Devin Sarah Walsh, Sept. 13.
Scott Daniel Butterfield and Cynthia Lynn Aamot, Sept. 15.
Sarah Elizabeth Keeley and Jarod George Guse, Sept. 17.
Scott Andrew Larson and Sarah Rose Thissen, Sept. 17.
Tyler Daniel Morgan and Alexandria Joy Bandy, Sept. 17.
James Clifford Speer and Whitney Rose Dohrmann, Sept. 17.
Bobbi Joanne Falde and Chad Frank Fisher, Sept. 17.
Jessica Lee Wilker and Garret Daniel Jeddelloh, Sept. 17.
Kyle Kevin Spinler and Shannon Marie Cochlin, Sept. 17.
Joel Alan Adams and Katelin Marie Nash, Sept. 17.
Brian Allen Hacker and Victoria Ann Hacker, Sept. 20.
Colton Christopher Eustice and Brooke Maureen Southwick, Sept. 24.
Samantha Elizabeth Bednarek and Brandon Lee Dahl, Sept. 24.
Marc Lewis Pittman and Traci Danielle Meixner, Sept. 24.
Kelli Marie Stockwell and David Paul Hoffman, Sept. 24.
Sheleen Ann Connors and Mark Clayton Maass, Sept. 26.
Christopher James Jaszewski and Canaan Immanuel Ward, Sept. 28.
Leonard Keith Ehrich and Charlene Lucille Ellingsberg, Sept. 29.
Joshua Scott Lyman and Delma Rodriguez, Sept. 30.

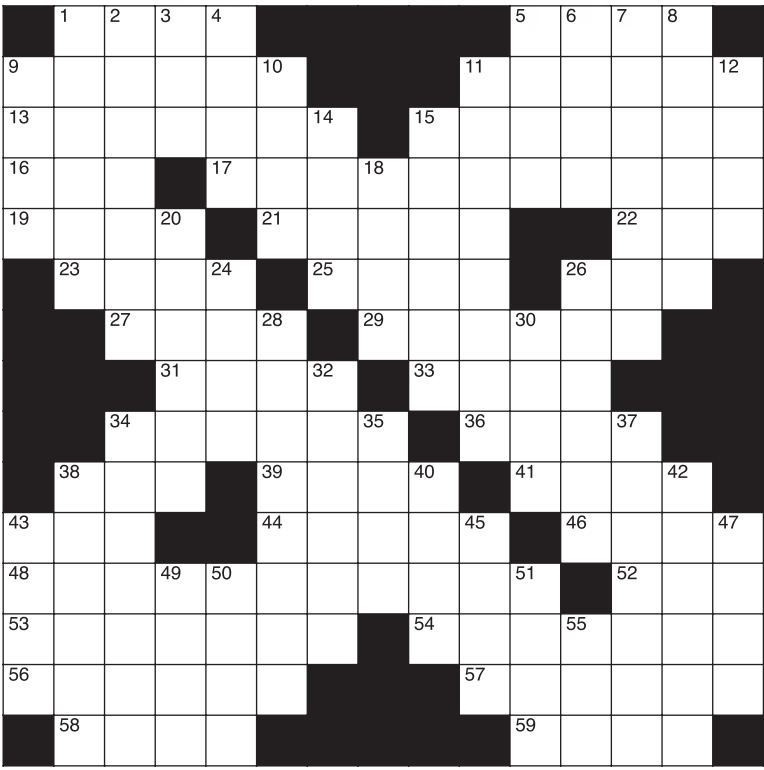
Steele County Divorces September 2016
Virginia Ann Clemens and Marlyn Edward Clemens.
Tyler Dylan Burke and Lauren Burke.
Abbie Liz Segura Rodriguez and David Rodriguez.
Joel Garcia-Pina and Lucero Garcia.

Steele County Marriages September 2016
Brandon Scott Ballstadt and Desirae Dawn Dyrssen, Sept. 2.
Shane Donovan Anderson and Nicole Rose Pedersen, Sept. 3.
Martin James Larsen and Kristina Marie Smayling, Sept. 4.

WEEKLY CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

1. Newts
5. Taxis
9. Ski down these
11. Solace
13. Thieves of the sea
15. Diacritical mark
16. Frost
17. Enmities
19. Furnace for baking
21. Founder of female institute
22. Eight
23. Earl Grey and chamomile are two
25. Messenger ribonucleic acid
26. Dull, unproductive pattern of behavior
27. A large and hurried swallow
29. Large nests
31. A way to choose
33. Grocery store
34. Drains
36. Hawaiian wreath
38. Where fish live
39. Get rid of
41. Beyond, transcending
43. Uncastrated male sheep
44. Asserts
46. Snoopy and Rin Tin Tin are two



CLUES DOWN

1. Call forth
2. Front legs
3. Third-party access
4. Hairlike structure
5. Ghanaian money
6. Settled down
7. Ill-natured

8. Choose
9. Mountain in the Slovenian Alps
10. Samsung laptops
11. Inquire into
12. Not slow
14. Thailand
15. Front of the eye
18. Kentucky town 41549
20. Extreme disgust
24. Not fast
26. Smelled bad
28. Portended
30. Leader
32. Comedian Noah
34. Course
35. Sloven
37. Perfect places
38. A vast desert in N. Africa
40. Monetary unit of Angola
42. Clerks
43. Canadian law enforcers
45. Without (French)
47. Having wisdom that comes with age
49. Delicacy (archaic)
50. Grows older
51. Bitterly regrets
55. It's present in all living cells (abbr.)

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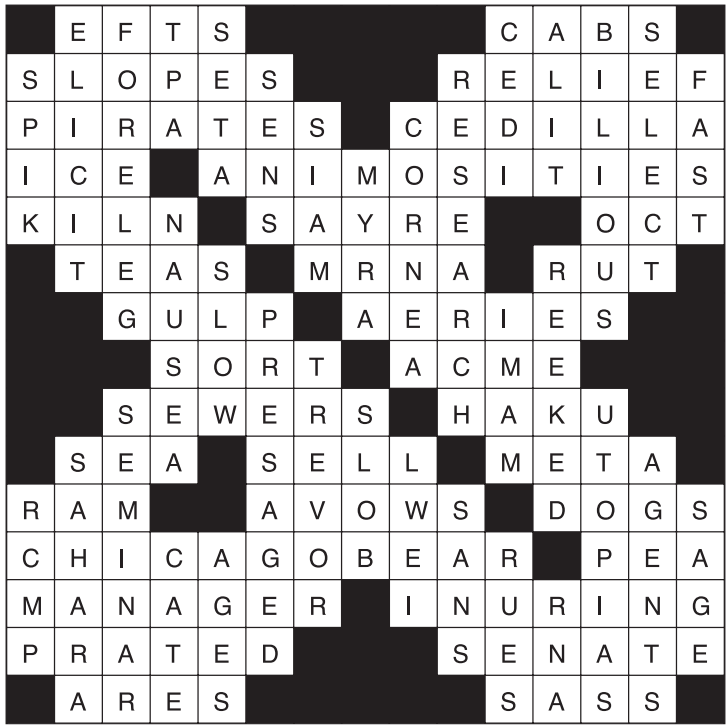
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HOW TO HELP ODLER DRIVERS GIVE UP CAR KEYS

Dear Savvy Senior,
What tips can you recommend that can help me deal with my mom's bad driving? At age 83, her driving abilities have declined, but I know she's bound and determined to keep driving as long as she's alive.
Nervous Nelly

Dear Nelly,
 There's no doubt that giving up driving can be a tough step for many elderly seniors, as well as a difficult conversation for concerned family members. While there's no one way to handle this sometimes touchy topic, there are a number of tips and resources that can help you evaluate and adjust your mom's driving, and ease her out from behind the wheel when she can no longer drive safely.

Assess Her Driving

To get a clear picture of your mom's driving abilities, your first step – if you haven't already done so – is to take a ride with her and watch for problem areas. For example: Does she drive at inappropriate speeds, tailgate or drift between lanes?

Does she have difficulty seeing, backing up or changing lanes?

Does she react slowly, get confused easily or make poor driving decisions?

Also, has your mom had any fender benders or tickets lately, or have you noticed any dents or scrapes on her vehicle?

These, too, are red flags. For more assessment tips see SeniorDriverChecklist.info.

If you need help with this, consider hiring a driver rehabilitation specialist who's trained to evaluate older drivers. This typically runs between \$100 and

\$200. Visit AOTA.org/older-driver or ADED.net to locate a specialist in your area.

Transitioning and Talking

After your assessment, if you think it's still safe for your mom to drive, see if she would be willing to take an older driver refresher course.

These courses will show her how aging affects driving skills, and offers tips and adjustments to help ensure her safety. Taking a class may also earn your mom a discount on her auto insurance. To locate a class contact your local AAA (AAA.com) or AARP (AARP.org/drive, 888-227-7669). Most courses cost around \$20 to \$30 and can be taken online or in a classroom.

If, however, your assessment shows that your mom really does need to stop driving, you need to have a talk with

her, but don't overdo it. If you begin with a dramatic outburst like "mom, you're going to kill someone!" you're likely to trigger resistance. Start by simply expressing your concern for her safety.

For more tips on how to talk to your mom about this, the Hartford Financial Services Group and MIT AgeLab offers a variety of resources at TheHartford.com/lifetime – click on "Publications" on the menu bar, then on the "We Need To Talk" guidebook.

Refuses To Quit

If your mom refuses to quit, you have several options. One possible solution is to suggest a visit to her doctor who can give her a medical evaluation, and if warranted, "prescribe" that she stops driving. Older people will often listen to their doctor be-



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fore they will listen to their own family.

If she still refuses, contact your local Department of Motor Vehicles to see if they can help. Or, call in an attorney to discuss with your mom the potential financial and legal consequences of a crash or injury. If all else fails, you may just have to take away her keys.

Alternative Transportation

Once your mom stops driving she's going to need other ways to get around, so help her create a list of names and phone num-

bers of family, friends and local transportation services that she can call on.

To find out what transportation services are available in her area, contact the Rides in Sight (RidesInSight.org, 855-607-4337) and the Eldercare Locator (800-677-1116), which will direct you to her area agency on aging for assistance.

History from the news archives

10 Years Ago
Tuesday, January 30th, 2007

From now on high school students won't be able to hack, download or flame, after new internet guidelines go into affect.

It was a short, but sweet, board meeting last week, with news of internet access highlighting the night. The board found out about how the internet has been hooked up and what the students have access to. Seventeen computers in the high school library have been hooked up to the world-wide web, giving access to the students.

Amanda Philips and Shalynn Carlson are just teenagers, but they have much more mature ways at looking at life these days.

That's because they both survived a near-fatal automobile accident on January 7th and found out how fragile life really is. Amanda, 17, returned to school last week noticeably nervous to see how her classmates would react to her after being in the hospital for two weeks. Her quick recovery and strong will surprised her doctors, who thought she may have rushed things.

20 Years Ago
Tuesday, January 28th, 1997

Catholic Schools Week is being celebrated January 28th through February 4th, 2007. It is a time for teachers and students to celebrate their Catholic School and let the community know how great it is

to attend their Catholic School.

One such school in our area is St. Isidore's in Litomysl. It is a great school created for students to learn to model Christ-centered behaviors. Events will be planned at the school all throughout the week, such as; Service day, Crazy hair day, a talent show, Pajama day, Student Appreciation day, Hat day and the students and faculty will attend a play on Friday.

In other news, it was just another typical day in the office until an right foot snake slithered across the floor!

Dale Hansen a local business owner, former outstanding baseball player for BPHS, just and all-around nice guy tells the story like this:

"You've got to picture this. I am sitting here at my desk just talking to these folks about some property that they are interested in, and out of the corner of my eye I see this snake."

As Hansen reenacts it all as if it just happened moments ago, with his eyes as big as saucers he continues, "I didn't want to freak out my clients who were sitting right across from me."

50 Years Ago
Thursday, January 27th, 1967

Two salary proposals for instructors in District 756 were presented to the school board by delegation of teachers, representing the Blooming Prairie Education Association, at a special meeting of the directors on Wednesday

night Jan. 19th

The proposal called for a starting base salary for instructors with a B.A. degree of \$5,000 on an index of 4.5% to 7,700 and also for payment of a hospitalization and medical program. The other plan requested a starting base of \$5,100, with experience steps 1-8 of \$225.00 each and the remaining four increments at \$250.00. Payment of the hospitalization and medical program was also included in the second proposal.

75 Years Ago
Thursday, January 29th, 1942

Initial steps toward local production of clothing, surgical dressing and other materials for the American Red Cross were taken here this week.

Named as general for production chairman was Mrs. J.J. Betlach, with Mrs. Ray Herron as assistant.

A call has been made for sewing machines, and anyone having a sewing machine which could be loaned to the workers should communicate at once with Mrs. Betlach or Mrs. Herron.

Rabbit hunters bagged a total of 80 jackrabbits and cottontails Sunday in the Red Cross benefit rabbit hunt. Sale of the rabbits netted about \$12.00 which was contributed to the Red Cross war fund..

Over a hundred hunters registered for the hunt, but many of them found hunting very poor due to the muddy conditions of the fields.



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BLOOMING PRAIRIE

Continuing the tradition of community journalism

The torch of producing a community newspaper continues to be passed on in Blooming Prairie.

Over the 124 year history of the local newspaper, the Krejci family has had the longest running ownership of the more than 16 owners. The Krejcis ran the paper for 45 years beginning with Frank Krejci operating it for nearly 20 years. In 1956, he sold the operation to his sons, Victor, Vyrle and Vernon Krejci, who then carried the torch for 27 more years.

The Krejci brothers sold the local paper as well as the Ellendale Eagle to John Iacovino in 1983. The paper actually shut down for a brief time in 1988 due to financial disputes before starting back up as a new paper, Blooming Prairie News. Iacovino continued running the paper until he sold it to Jeff Schrag in 1994.

Schrag opened for business at the beginning of 1994 with the Blooming News and Times Publishing, Inc., and combined the old assets and going business into the Blooming Prairie News and Times for the remainder of the paper's centennial year, ending on May 10, 1994.

The paper returned to its historic name, The Times, in May 1994.

Schrag's tenure as owner was short lived, however. He left the paper after a few short months and sold it Ron and Elsie Slinger in September 1994. Elsie Slinger became the first woman publisher in 63 years.

Throughout Slinger's ownership, the newspaper increased in size going from six pages to an average of 12 pages every week.

Slinger continued with the newspaper until 2005 when she sold to Dan and Joyce Evans of LeRoy. The Evans family published several other papers in southern Minnesota and northern Iowa.

For the first time in the history of the newspaper, the Evans introduced full color to the paper by offering full color on the front and back pages. They began publishing color photographs. In 2005, a new look with a new masthead and new page headers were placed throughout the paper.

"I hope that the photos will only enhance our product and give our readers and advertisers more of a reason to continue to support our product," Evans wrote while introducing color to readers. "We want to give Blooming Prairie a great newspaper and this is just another step in making that happen."

Bussler, a former television news reporter and police officer, came onto the scene of community journalism by taking over the Times in November 2009. From the start, Bussler made a commitment to readers that he would produce one of the finest small town newspapers in Minnesota.

Under Bussler's leadership, the newspaper expanded its news staff, added more pages and splashed more color throughout the entire paper. The office also underwent a significant remodeling and Bussler also made some major equipment purchases.

In September 2011, the newspaper expanded its news coverage to become more countywide and changed its name to "The Times."

Bussler changed the name of the paper yet again in November 2014 to Steele County Times as a way to mirror the newspaper's rapid growth over the previous three years. From 2011 to 2014, readership nearly tripled, sales skyrocketed and the size of the paper doubled with more news, features and sports.

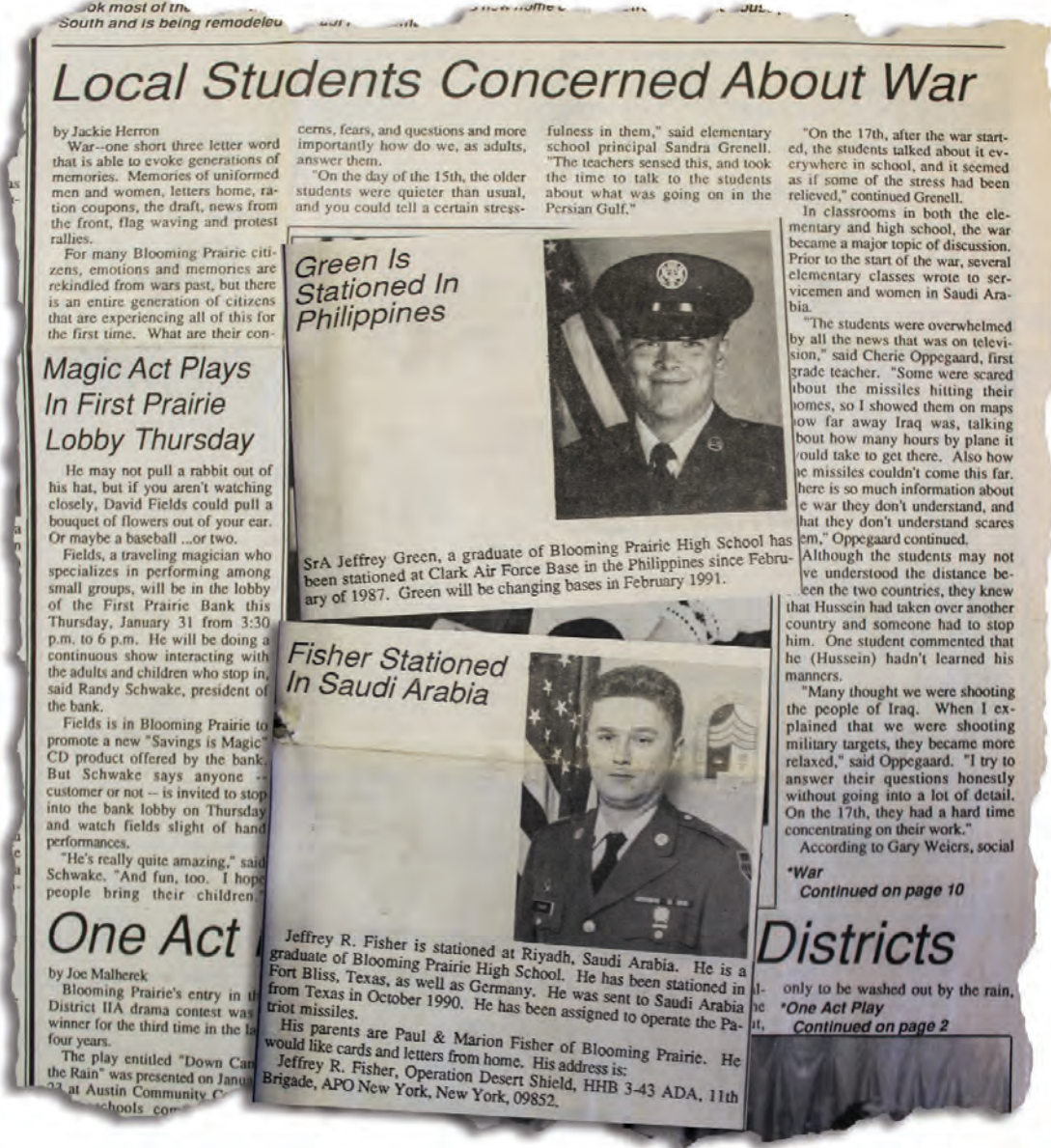
Citizens made it clear that they were hungry for a different alternative to local news coverage than what they were receiving from the county's daily paper.

Bussler has also strived for journalistic excellence with the newspaper. This appears to have been accomplished as the Times has won 29 state and 19 national awards of excellence over the past six years.

"My goal has been and will always be to produce a paper that is journalistically sound," Bussler said. "There's the notion that small towns can't have great newspapers, but I'm here to prove differently."

The paper is currently printed at the Post Bulletin Company in Rochester.

Editor's Note: This is the final part of a multi-part series on the evolution of the Blooming Prairie Times, now Steele County Times, since it began publishing in 1893. The Times will continue reflecting on other stories of interest about Blooming Prairie throughout the remainder of 2017.



It happened in January 1991.

From where I sit ... *by Joe Marsh*

Happy Ending With
A "Familiar Ring"

Buck Howell says he and his Missus had quite a time at the Stockman's Convention in Chicago. But for a while they had a "breakdown in communications."

The phone bell in their hotel room was pitched so low they often didn't answer their calls. "Never knew if it was for us or not," Buck said, "always sounded far off—like it was ringing in someone else's room."

Finally, Buck hit on the obvious solution. He just made a deal with the hotel switch-board operator that whenever she called them she'd use two

long rings and a short—their party-line signal back home.

From where I sit, our own familiar routines tend to make other ways of doing things seem strange. That's natural. For instance, if you've always had ice water with your meals, you might think it's odd that lots of us prefer a bottle of beer at dinner-time. I say you've a right to *your* own customs . . . but don't call *mine* wrong.

150

BLOOMING PRAIRIE

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In honor of Blooming Prairie's 150th anniversary, the Times is looking for reader submissions detailing life in the community.

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Raiders blank Huskies



Staff photo by Josh Zimmer

Owatonna goalie Laura Ebeling (30) stops a Raiders' shot in the second period of the Huskies' 4-0 loss to Northfield Satu day at the Four Seasons Centre. Ebeling stopped 27 of the 31 shots she faced.

Owatonna suffers first loss since Dec. 28

By JOSH ZIMMER
Sports Editor

The Owatonna girls hockey team has not suffered a loss since Dec. 28, going 8-0-2 the last ten games. Of those two ties, Northfield was one of them. There were no ties Saturday. Powered by three goals from their special teams, the Northfield Raiders dominated the

Huskies (15-6-2, 13-1-2) 4-0 Saturday night at the Four Seasons Centre. Of the four goals from the Raiders, two came on a power play and one was short-handed. After a relatively even start to the period – with each team having just a combine six shots on net - Northfield woke up and started to assert themselves. A goal from Brynn Puppe

at the 11:12-mark of the first period gave the Raiders a 1-0 lead. After Jenna Bogen was called for her fifth minor penalty, Northfield was back on the power play. Northfield dominated the first period, holding a commanding 13-2 advantage in shots on goal. Due to receiving her fifth penalty, Bogen was then ejected for the remainder of the contest.

A typical power play quickly turned into a 5-on-3 advantage after a bench minor was assessed on the Huskies after head coach Tim Hunst attempted to convene with the officials on the penalty. With just under ten seconds remaining, Puppe added her second goal of the contest. The Raiders would add two more goals in the third period.

Huskies 6, Cougars 1
It's been ten games since the Owatonna girls hockey team suffered a loss, going 8-0-2 in that span. Thursday night, the Huskies hosted Mankato East/Loyola. Back on Jan. 17, Owatonna defeated the Cougars 3-1 in

HOCKEY
Continued on page 3C

FOUR-POINT STANCE



JOSH ZIMMER

My letter to all recruits

It's officially that time of year... National Signing day. A day where hundreds of high school stars sign a piece of paper. Yes that right, a piece of paper that will forever impact their future. First, congratulations to all of those who will be signing their letter of intent. This is for all of you. This is the first step in having a drastic change that will only better your life.

Take it from me. My decision in 2009 allowed me to live out a dream. I was a 6-foot, 265-pound defensive end from Montana. A two-sport star; set a handful of school records, both in the weight room and on the field. I received a few Division 1 offers, which was something I always had my sights set on. Something about the whole "bigger the better" stigma placed on college athletes.

Instead, I took a chance on this small school in North Dakota. From there, my life was transformed by my decision to not get sucked into the stigma and follow the best fit.

Instead of playing in front of tens of thousands of fans, I was playing in front of just thousands, heck even hundreds. Instead of playing against NFL-bound caliber players every weekend - although I had a few battles with Brock Osweiler in high school - I was would face the Adam Thielen, the CJ Hams and the Zach Moores of the college football landscape.

Now, as the day continues to inch closer, people, heck even some you may have never met before are going to be trying to sway you or pull you in all different directions.

If you take anything away from this, I hope everything blow are those things.

Remember, it's a decision that will affect you. Not your coaches, your parents, your friends, etc. It solely affects you.

Look at every possible angle; be sure that you can justify to yourself on how you are going to benefit from your time there.

Lastly, this is the key point. Wherever you choose to go doesn't affect you for the next four to five years; it affects you for the rest of your life. It can catapult you to a bright future.

Don't fall into the stigma, don't be swayed and most importantly don't try to fit in. Stick out like a sore thumb and go with the best fit.

Again, congratulations on such a tremendous accomplishment and best of luck to all of you in your future competitions.

Blooming at the right time

Blossom girls win two-straight in conference

By LEMAR NELSON
Staff Sports Writer

Wells - The Blooming Prairie Awesome Blossom girls basketball team is blooming at the right time, outlasted United South Central 44-41 for their second conference victory in a row. The Blossoms started fast in the game building a 24-12 lead, but the struggled late in the half, allowing the Rebels to cut the lead to 24-22 at the half after a 10-0 run. In a tightly played second half, the Blossoms led most of the way, but never by more than five points. Some big defensive plays and two free throws each from Kylie Forystek and Marissa Larson proved big for the Blossoms in crunch time. "Several factors help get this win," remarked coach John Bruns. "We got some big defensive stops late, with Ayren Ingvalson hauling down a couple of nice rebounds, and the girls calmly making the big free throws. "Sam Wurst also did a commendable job defending USC's big scorer to just half of what she scored in our



Staff photo by Josh Zimmer

Blossoms forward Marissa Larson (24) goes up for a jumper during the first half of Blooming Prairie's 57-46 Gopher Conference win over Medford on Tuesday, Jan. 24. Larson recorded a double-double, scoring 24 points and grabbing 12 rebounds.

BLOSSOMS

Continued on page 3C



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Blossoms down Rebels

Blooming Prairie wins two straight in Gopher Conference



Staff photo by Mark DeLap

Blossoms guard Ben Smith (2) squares up his Tigers opponent in Blooming Prairie's 54-35 Gopher Conference win Tuesday, Jan. 24 at BPHS. The Awesome Blossoms picked up a pair of conference wins, with a 63-51 win over United South Central Friday.

By LEMAR NELSON
Staff Sports Writer

The Awesome Blossom boys made it two straight over USC this season with a 63-51 victory over the Rebels on the home court Friday.

“It was kind of a wild game,” commented Blossoms head coach Nate Piller. “ We got off to a little slow start, but fought back on some great man to man defense, great team play, and a lot of help for each other against USC scorers.”

BP trailed by two points at the half, but outscored the Rebels 38-24 after the break.

Freshman Gabe Hagen led the scoring with 20 points, and Seth Bedenbaugh counted 11. Cameron Kubista contributed 10 points, Kaden Thomas 8, and Max Romeo and Jake Ressler 5 each.

One of the little team victories came against USC scorer Ryan Kloos, who counted 27 points on the Blossoms the first time the teams met.

Kloos scored 16 points, and Colby Kloczek added 11.

Blossoms 54, Tigers 36

Romping to a 34-11 first half lead, the Awesome Blossom boys routed Medford 54-35 in a conference tilt Tuesday Jan. 24.

Eleven players scored for the Blossoms in the contest, led by Bedenbaugh, who counted 13 points. Bedenbaugh missed the last three games with illness.

“It was good to get everyone a lot of playing time,” remarked coach Nathan Piller. “The boys got off to a great start shooting the ball well, and we tried to work on some new things against a different team. It was also good to get some guys a little rest and get well.”

Besides Bedenbaugh’s 13 points, Hagen had 12 points, and Nick Thompson and Romeo each added 7 points. Ben Sutcliffe scored 10 points for Medford, and seven other Blossoms counted at least 1 point in the game.

The wins evened the Blossom record in the conference at 4-3 and put them at 9-7 for the season.

BP travels to Hayfield Tuesday.

Z-M matmen down Westfield

By LEMAR NELSON
Staff Sports Writer

Hayfield - A powerful Zumbrota-Mazeppa wrestling squad vanquished Westfield 42-22 in Hayfield Thursday.

The Cougars won the last three bouts by decision to put distance between them and the Razorbacks.

The three decisions began with a 13-6 verdict for Hayden Voxland over Dylan Nirk at 195 after Voxland recorded two late takedowns and near fall.

A 5-2 decision for Jacob Bennett over Mitchell Oswald at 220 when Bennet recorded a takedown in the third period to outpoint Oswald.

Another 5-2 verdict for Jarred Haglund over Trey Chatman at heavyweight. Haglund scored all five of his points in the third period on two escapes a stalling point, and a takedown late in the period.

Ethan Arett got the Razorbacks off on a good note with an 8-0 major decision over Michel Majerus at 106, but John Poulin and Cole Poncelet put ZM on top with two forfeit wins.

Jackson Heydt used takedowns in the first period and two more takedowns and a near fall in the second period to take a 10-4 decision over Jack Smothers at 126 to close the gap to just five points.

Pins for Hayden Stensland

over Quinten Kubista in the first period and Luke Tupper in the second period at 138 put the Cougars up 24-7.

Jordan Sullivan pinned Ben Roberts in just 23 seconds at 145, but a 2-0 verdict for Richard Gehrke at 154 upped the lead to 27-13.

Colton Krell edged Sam Nordquist 6-5 with a third period reversal at 160, and Morgan Moreno pinned Tyler Soltau in the second period to pull Westfield back to just five points behind.

However, Tristin Reicken suffered a fall by Gayclan Steffen, in the second period at 182, and the three straight losses by decision gave ZM its final margin.

Husky round up

By JOSH ZIMMER
Sports Editor

Wrestling

Bloomington – For the No. 6 ranked Huskies, Saturday provided the opportunity to continue to work on the small things if they are to reach the goal of qualifying a team to the state tournament.

With a healthy lineup for the second straight contest, Owatonna stole the show.

The Huskies went 3-0, defeating No.8 ranked Hastings in the final round 36-23 to capture the Bloomington Kennedy Duals Saturday.

Owatonna won the first four matches, with Landen Johnson (106) and Riley Becker (120) recording falls. The Huskies would not lose back-to-back matches until 160 and 170 pounds, when Paker Westphal fell to Hastings’ TJ Pottinger and Cody Leflay narrowly defeating Nick Staska. Pottinger won by tech-fall 21-9 while Leflay managed to earn an escape in the final period to down Staska 1-0.

When it was at the 182-pound weight class, all eyes were focused on the mat as Class AAA’s top-ranked and defending state champion Brandon Moen went head-to-head with No. 2 ranked Trey Rogers. Moen – who is still

undefeated on the year – dominated with the 5-3 victory after recording a pair of takedowns in the second period. Rogers recorded all of his points via Moen allowing him to escape.

Moen was perfect on the day, winning all three of his matches. Defending state champion Peyton Robb, also had a strong performance. In fact, all of Owatonna’s state-ranked wrestlers (Moen, Robb, Tut, King, Thorn) all went perfect on the week-



end. Joining them was Becker and Johnson. Head coach Scott Seykora also noted that Kaden Nelson had a strong day for the Huskies.

Owatonna defeated Champlin Park 83-0 in the first round before downing Bloomington Kennedy 45-13 in the second round.

Owatonna will be back in action on Friday against nationally-ranked Kasson-Mantorville in Kasson.

According to USA Wrestling’s Intermat national rank-

ings, the Komets are ranked No. 26 in the country.

On thursday, the Huskies had a Big Nine Conference triangular against Mankato East and Rochester Century.

Owatonna dominated both teams, winning 54-17 against Mankato East and 64-15 against Rochester Century.

Boys Basketball

Mankato - On Tuesday, the Huskies - who have won five in a row - were on the road to face Big Nine conference for Mankato West.

Powered by Dalton Kubista’s 22 points, Owatonna downed the Scarlets 67-48. Alex Raichle and Jay Sullivan each added 11.

Huskies 73, Wingers 57

Red Wing - In a rescheduled contest, the Huskies dominated the Wingers 73-57. Kubista continues his hot streak, scoring a game-high 26 points. Nolan Malo added a season-high 18 points.

Huskies 78, Tigers 42

Albert Lea - The Huskies ended the three-game road trip with a 78-42 win over Big Nine Conference foe Albert Lea.

Kubista socred a game-high 20 points while Malo and Sullivan added 12 and 14 respectively.

The Huskies have now won eight-straight games.

Panthers round up

By LEMAR NELSON
Staff Sports Writer

Girls basketball

NRHEG girls kept their conference record perfect at 9-0 and upped their overall mark to 13-5 with a 71-30 romp over Medford Friday, Jan. 27. NRHEG splurged for a 54-20 first half lead, and everyone had minutes of playing time in the second half.

The Panthers had a great shooting night and looked sharp on defense in holding the Tigers to just 10 second half points. Marnie Wagner, Rachel Collins, and Kayley Camerer all had 14 points each, and Betsy Schoenrock contributed 10.

Grace Johns and Maddie Wagner added 7 points each, and six other players had at least two points. It was a complete domination for the winners. The Panther JV team defeated the Tigers 50-48 in a close game

Panthers 59, Eagles 55

NRHEG led by two points at the half of the conference game on the home court and hung on for a 59-55 win over Maple River. That victory pushed the Panther record to 12 -5 overall.

Maddie Wagner and Betsy Sheetrock both scored 20 points to lead the home team. Schoenrock also led the rebounders with 14, and Maddie Wagner pulled down 11 rebounds, had 5 assists and 3 steals. Kayley Camerer contributed 10 points and added 6 rebounds.

Medford - The NRHEG boys basketball squad continues to wreak havoc in the Gopher Conference.

Holding a 20-point lead by the end of the first half, the Panthers demolished a young Medford squad 63-30 Friday night in Medford.

NRHEG had three players reach double-figures with Tyler Raimann leading the charge with 18 points. Benji Lundberg and Jason Jongbloedt eached added 10 points.

Panthers 80, Eagles 60



Maple River - The Panthers boys basketball squad looked to continued their winning ways with a Gopher Conference matchup against Maple River on the road. While the scores may indicate differently, NRHEG has been tested in each of the last two contests.

Oakley Baker wasn’t feeling a test.

In NRHEG’s 80-60 conference win over Maple River Tuesday, the St. John’s commit was on a different level than his compeitition. of his game-high 35 points, 25 of them came in the first half as the Panthers took a commanding 46-27 lead into the half. NRHEG also managed to not all

an offensive rebound the entire first half.

“Obviously he was locked in tonight,” commented head coach Pat Churchill.

Maple River managed to cut the Panthers lead to 14 in the second half before Panthers’ forward Tyler Raimann generated a hot-streak of his own. According to Churchill, Raimann scored 12 of his 16 points in the second half.

Wrestling

The Panthers were in Kasson Friday to wrestle at the Swalla duals.

NRHEG will continue its search for the first dual win of the season, dropping three matches.

The Panthers were blown out in each match, losing 76-6 against LARP, 77-0 agaist Smiley and 78-6 against Byron.

*Editor’s note

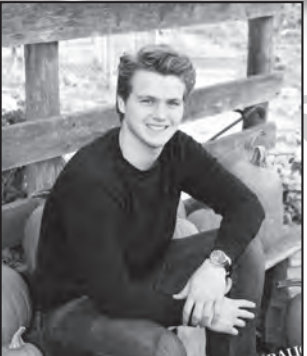
There is no Tiger’s round up this week due to competition within the Gopher Conference against Blooming Prairie and NRHEG.

Wrestling competed at LCWM and Lake City. Final stats were not reported prior to press despite efforts to contact staff.

We aplogize for any inconvenience and hope to have a round-up for Medford athletics in the next edition.

STARS OF STEELE

Seth Bedenbaugh



Margo Achterkirch



After missing the past three games with an undisclosed injury, the Blossoms senior has been on a tear.

In two conference matchups, Bedenbaugh as reached double figures, scoring a team-high 13 against Medford and 11 against United South Central.

Owatonna has suffered just one loss in the last 11 games on the ice. Junior forward Margo Achterkirch has been a big reason why.

The junior has 21 points with 15 goals and 10 assists during that span, to include five in the last three games.

Stars of Steele is brought to you courtesy of:



Boys basketball

Third period letdown

Owatonna surrenders three goals, fall 4-1 to Mankato East



Staff photo by Josh Zimmer

Huskies forward Nate Smith (4) looks to pass the puck during the third period of Owatonna's 11-0 thumping of Faribault on Monday in Big Nine Conference action at the Four Seasons Centre. Smith registered two goals in Owatonna's last two games.

By **JOSH ZIMMER**
Sports Editor

Mankato - Attempting to string three wins in a row, the Owatonna boys hockey team was on the road Tuesday night to face Big Nine Conference for Mankato East/Loyola.

While the game started off quick for the Huskies, the Cougars had just too much bite.

After going into the third period tied 1-1, Owatonna surrendered three goals to fall to the Cougars 4-1 Thursday night in Mankato.

Nate Smith gave the Huskies the 1-0 lead after finding the back of the net at the 7:26-mark of the first period.

Jake Anderson would answer around the same mark (7:20) of the second period to tie the game 1-1.

Huskies 11, Falcons 0

Heading into Monday's game, the Owatonna boys hockey team was looking to extend its win streak to two games, but more importantly, get back into contention at the top of the Big Nine Conference.

They did both.

Powered by an explosive first period that featured six goals, the Owatonna Huskies (8-7, 5-3 Big Nine) crushed the Faribault Falcons 11-0 at the Four Sea-

sons Centre in Owatonna. The Huskies also finished without surrendering any chances for a Faribault power play.

"The guys played the right way without rubbing it in their face, so I was really proud," commented head coach Josh Storm. "Zero penalty minutes in a game like that is pretty darn good for us; I thought we handled it well."

The Huskies started the scoring early and often as Nate Smith found the back of the net at the 3:07-mark in the first period. Second later, Carter Broton tallied the first of his two goals of the night off a quick wrist shot from the top of the circle to give the Huskies a quick 2-0 lead.

With his two-goal performance, Broton now has six goals in his last three games. After a goal from senior captain Adam Rehman, the Huskies fielded a 3-0 lead just six minutes into the game.

The scoring was a product of a balanced attack in the offensive zone as six different Huskies registered goals in the first period, to include a pair of career first. In a span of roughly two minutes, Walker Nelson and Breck Henderson each registered their first career goals.

Senior Mitchell Mayer added

the other Owatonna goal in the first period.

Whenever you have an explosive period, there is also a fear of a letdown and complacency, but not tonight. Owatonna would continue to dominate the offensive zone, managing to fire a game-high 17 shots on goal.

Of those 17 shots, Braeden Meier, Tyler Wencil, Broton and Rehman found the back of the net. Wencil and Broton's goals were part of a 2-for-3 effort on the power play.

"We talked in locker room and said, 'it's our job to play our style, our speed and our pace, not to go to anyone else's and I thought we did a good job of that,'" added Storm.

While Nate Smith opened the scoring for Owatonna, his brother Nick, scored the final goal for Owatonna in the third period after a pair of goals was waved off due to infractions.

Despite having a relatively quiet night between the pipes, Ryan Johnson broke the school record for career shutouts. With tonight's win, he recorded his seventh career shutout, stopping all eight of the shots he faced.

Owatonna will be back in action on Tuesday, when they travel to Northfield for a Big Nine Conference matchup.

penalties doom Huskies

HOCKEY: from page 1C

in Mankato.

Thursday was no different.

After playing to a 1-1 tie after the first period, the Huskies exploded for four goals in the second period to top Mankato East/Loyola 6-1 in Big Nine Conference action at the Four Seasons Centre in Owatonna.

Shannon VanReeth started the scoring for the Huskies, netting the game-winning goal at the 10:52-mark of the second period. In the final seven minutes of the period, Owatonna would register three goals. Margo Achterkirch would find the back of the net just a minute after VanReeth for her second goal of the game. She was the lone goal for the Huskies in the first period.

Jenna Bogen and Maylynn Prokopec would net the other two goals. The lone goal in the third period was scored from Lily Sampson.

Huskies 3, Falcons 1
Faribault - Playing a rescheduled contest from Jan.17, the Owatonna Huskies were on the road for a Big Nine Conference contest against Faribault.

Through the Huskies' 10-game streak without a loss, junior Margo Achterkirch has been on fire.

Tuesday, the heat only intensified.

Scoring a pair of goals in the final period, Achterkirch led the Huskies to a 3-1 win over the Falcons Tuesday night in Faribault.

After going the first two periods without a goal, both teams exploded in the third period. Only, Owatonna's wield-

ed more damage.

Maylynn Prokopec's goal at the 13:32-mark of the third period gave the Huskies' a commanding 3-0 lead.

Faribault would add a goal with just under a minute left in the period.

Huskies 3, Redhawks 1

Despite a 1-1 tie to Big Nine Conference foe Red Wing on Saturday, the Owatonna girls hockey team have yet to suffer a loss in their last ten games.

After a first period that was slightly uncharacteristic of the Huskies against Minnehaha United, the second period is when ice tilted to Owatonna's favor.

Guided by a two-goal second period, the Huskies (13-5-2, 11-0-2 Big Nine) managed to edge out a 3-1 win over the Redhawks Monday at the Four Seasons Centre in Owatonna.

Head coach Tim Hunst noted that the first period looked like his team was playing timid and also trying to do too much in while in the offensive zone. Holding a 7-4 advantage for shots on goal, Owatonna was unable to connect on anything.

"We looked like we were coming off a game where we were high emotion and going all out," commented Hunst. "We started off a little slow, but felt like we got better as we went on."

That all changed in the second period when Margo Achterkirch connected on a quick wrist shot from the point to give the Huskies an early 1-0 lead. The junior continues

her hot streak as of late, netting her fourth goal in her last three games.

Roughly ten minutes later, sophomore Kiley Friedrichs was able to find the back of the net off a feed from Grace Wolfe. It was the first-career goal for Friedrichs and wound up being the game-winner.

"It's always fun to see someone's first goal and watch their reaction, but she's been waiting for a long time. So, hopefully it's the first of many," added Hunst.

The Redhawks looked to make it a tight game in the third period despite only registering 11 shots on goal in the previous two periods. It wouldn't take Minnehaha United long as Jodie Clay managed to fire a shot just under the pad of Laura Ebeling to cut the Huskies' lead to just one.

The score would remain deadlocked at 2-1 until roughly six minutes remained when Jenna Bogen fired a shot that cemented the win for Owatonna.

Hunst added that the difference between the first period and the final two periods was that they played as a team.

"When we stick together, we're a pretty good team. When we start to go individual, we are pretty average and we're not here to be average," noted Hunst.

The Huskies will be back in action on Thursday when they travel to Rochester for a Big Nine Conference tilt against Rochester John Marshall.

Blossoms pick up key conference wins

BLOSSOMS: from page 1C

first meeting. We didn't have a great shooting night, but we made some big stops late and defended well all night."

Both Blooming Prairie and United South Central shot 34 percent from the field. The Blossoms connecting on 16 of their 48 attempts, while the Rebels made 14 of 41 tries.

Larson led the Blossoms in scoring with 18 points and eight rebounds. Wurst had 11 points while McKenna Hein contributed six points and nine rebounds. and Forystek dished out three assists and added a steal.

The Blossom JV team defeated USC 43-6 in the pre-lim to improve its record to 7-9. Allison Krohnberg had

13 points, and Riauna Bishop added 10 points for the Blossoms, as nine girls scored points in the game.

Blossoms 57, Tigers 46

Medford - A 12-0 run of points to end the first half turned a 5-point deficit into a 27-20 lead at the half, and the Awesome Blossom girls earned a big road win 57-46 at Medford Tuesday, Jan. 24.

An emphasis on rebounding also helped the cause.

"A big key in the win tonight," remarked Coach Bruns, "came from our rebounding."

"This has been a point of emphasis for us, and it carried us to the victory. The girls claimed 45 rebounds to only 27 for Medford, after the

Tigers had pulled down 26 offensive boards the first time we played them.

Larson had another monster night to lead the offense. She recorded another double-double with 12 rebounds to go along with 24 points, including 10 of 12 from the charity stripe.

Wurst had 14 points, and McKenna Hein contributed 12 points and 12 rebounds. Emma Kniefel scored 21 points for the Tigers.

Team shooting favored the Blossoms, as they shot 40 percent from the field on 22-of-55 attempts. The Tigers made 28 percent on 17 of 59 tries. BP had 20 turnovers in the game to just 13 for Medford.



Staff photo by Josh Zimmer

Owatonna's Jenna Zeman (30) goes up for a layup in the first half of the Huskies' 70-36 Big Nine Conference win over Albert Lea Friday. Zeman scored 10 points in the win.

Huskies down Tigers

By **JOSH ZIMMER**
Sports Editor

Coming off a 70-36 win over Big Nine Conference foe Albert Lea, the Owatonna girls basketball team hosted the Farmington Tigers in a battle of Section 1AAAA teams Saturday at the OHS gymnasium.

While the start of the game wasn't ideal, the finish was just right. Managing to fight back from a late first half deficit, the Huskies (13-3, 11-2 Big Nine) were able to pull away from the Tigers in the second half to record the 64-59 win Saturday.

The Huskies struggled in the early goings of the contest with Farmington's full court press and quickly fell to a 12-4 deficit. After a quick timeout, it game started to slow and Owatonna managed to battle back to keep the score within striking distance. The Huskies would go into the half down by one (30-29).

Out of the half, it was almost a completely different Owatonna squad. Head coach Lindsey Hugstad-Vaa said that the difference was just coming out and simply playing.

"It was coming out and not being scared, playing hard, and keep shooting the shots we were shoot-

ing. We were a little out of sync in the first half but, it was good for the girls to play through a tight game like this and come out on top," she said afterward.

The Tigers would sustain a 40-37 lead midway through the second half. Then, the Huskies hit a 7-2 run to take a 44-42 lead with just under ten minutes left. After quickly connecting on a jumper to regain the lead, junior Sydney Schultz was sent to the line and gave Owatonna the lead for good.

After a relatively quiet first half, Schultz took over in the second half, scoring 11 of her team-high 17 points in the second half. Bria Wachowiak, Ahnna Stelter and Jenna Zeman also had strong performances for the Huskies. Wachowiak hit a pair of three-pointers in the second half on her way to scoring 12 points while Zeman and Stelter each registered 10 points.

Owatonna 70, Albert Lea 36

Looking to keep the recent win streak alive, the Owatonna girls basketball team was at home Friday night for a Big Nine Conference matchup with Albert Lea.

Owatonna started the scoring early in the first half and really never looked back.

Guided by two runs that accumulated over 20 points, the Lady Huskies (12-3, 11-2 Big Nine) crushed the Lady Tigers 70-36 on

Coaches vs. Cancer night at OHS.

Despite not playing with the usual starters, junior Sydney Schultz – who on Monday recently joined the 1,000-point club – was just as dominate. Schultz, who saw reduced minutes due to a large lead, would lead all scorers at the half with 10 points.

"We mixed it up," commented Huskies head coach Lindsey Hugstad-Vaa. "We wanted to play everyone and be patient on offense."

The only thing more dominant than Schultz' presence on the court was Owatonna's three-point shooting. Going on a 23-6 run in the final ten minutes of the half, the Huskies connected on five shots from beyond the arc, to include a pair of three-pointers from Lexi Falken. Owatonna finished the contest shooting 57 percent from beyond the arc.

During halftime, it was announced to the crowd that \$2,550 was raised for cancer research after gift baskets were raffled off during most of the first half in the commons area of OHS.

At the start of the second half, there appeared to be a small let-down from Owatonna as Albert Lea quickly put together a 15-9 run to cut the lead to 15, forcing an Owatonna timeout. Unfortunately, the run was too little, too late for the Lady Tigers.



Weddings





JR's Barn is a new barn wedding venue that displayed at the Owatonna Spring Bridal Show. Located just south of Janesville, it's a fourth generation farm run by a couple, who themselves were married there. They've hosted two weddings on their farm so far and have assisted in over 30 others. They pride themselves on how well the barn and surrounding buildings have been restored, while still maintaining their original rustic charm. Showing images of their picturesque farm, they joke that they don't need to digitally enhance anything. The sky really is that blue. The grass really is that green.



Sweet and Salty's Popcorn is a new venture by Owatonna residents. The owners of The S'Cream ice cream parlor are branching out and offering to provide flavored and colored popcorn to events to make them even more festive. To cater to a more health-conscious public, they air pop their popcorn to avoid excess oil.

Donate, recycle and reuse for a greener wedding

Sometimes a wedding can be a testament to excess.

In order to make an impression and please every guest, couples often go above and beyond with regard to food, favors, flowers, and much more at their weddings. At the end of the night, couples might be left with a good deal of food and other items that go to waste.

That is, unless you donate the excess to someone who can use it.

Leftover wedding food, flowers and wardrobes can be donated and make a difference in other people's lives.

By asking a few questions and doing a little legwork, you can turn items that would be discarded into something that goes on to help another person.

Food: Food is one area of the wedding that's often prepared in abundance, particularly for buffet-style weddings. In order to keep chafing dishes filled and inviting, catering halls or restaurants may prepare much more food than is necessary.

At the end of the night there's plenty of leftovers. Some caterers have already contracted with food recovery groups to take leftover food and bring it to the needy. You can ask your caterer if they do so.

If not, do an online search for a food recovery organization and find out how you can donate the remainders of your wedding feast

Clothing: Bridesmaid dresses and formal wear is seldom worn again, unless you

are a person who has mastered the art of turning pink taffeta into a new ensemble. However, you may be able to donate a dress or suit to a consignment store or thrift shop, where it can be purchased and worn by someone who may not be able to afford an off-the-rack item.

You can also consider donating it to an organization that provides clothing to the underprivileged. Some people offer wedding clothing for sale at deep discounts through newspaper classifieds or online, where it can also live on in someone else's closet.

Floral arrangements: Wedding centerpieces can last for several days before they wilt.

While friends and family members may take some home,

several centerpieces will likely be left at the end of the night. Think about bringing them to a hospital, hospice center or nursing home. The flowers can help brighten the day of others who are in somber settings.

If you cannot find a place that will take them, consider dropping one or two of them off at the home of an elderly

relative who might be confined to his or her home.

Favors: Provided your favors have not been engraved with a date or names, you may be able to return extras to the store.

There's also the possibility of making them available to a couple who is planning their wedding and is looking to cut

costs wherever possible. Or, take the favors home and send one out to any person who gives you a gift or a card but wasn't able to make it to the wedding.

Weddings do not have to be wasteful. If you put your mind to it, you can find ways to reuse items featured on your big day.



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Weddings





Based out of Faribault, Bluebird Cakery designs wedding cakes for local couples. At their booth, everyone was encouraged to design their own cake using their provided samples and frostings. According to them, the busy season for wedding cakes starts in the spring and lasts through the fall. Winter is a quieter time for weddings.



Dream Day is a dress shop out of Owatonna that provides for any formal attire needs. The owner, Marcia Halvorsen, opened the shop after her mother passed away suddenly. She said it taught her to take a leap of faith because you never know how much time you have left. Helping brides find their dream dress brings her joy. Catering to often stressed brides, she and her staff provide friendly emotional support to the bride to make the process easier.



For 19 years, Completely Kids and Maternity has helped bridal parties find affordable formal attire for their youngest participants. They can order a variety of styles and colors, and their flower girl dresses range from \$35 to \$85. The owner says their mission is to make sure everyone gets a good price for their little miss or sir.



Sugar Mama Bakery wants to help couples satisfy their sweet tooth. Owner Wendy Anderson has been baking for 18 years. She says she's worked through a wide range of trends in cakes. When she started out, pillars and fountains were everywhere. Now couples tend to favor smaller more affordable cakes and to serve a variety of pastries or cupcakes instead of just the one cake.

Staff photos by Emily Schoenbeck

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Six ways to recycle a wedding gown

When planning their weddings, many brides-to-be devote a large portion of their wedding budgets to their wardrobes. Statistics released by The Knot in 2014 indicated the amount the average woman was willing to spend her gown was \$1,281.

Wedding gowns are among the most costly wedding expenditures. Because wedding gowns can be so expensive, many brides elect to have their gowns cleaned and preserved.

Reusing a wedding gown is a cost-effective and earth-friendly idea. Women have many options when it comes time to putting their wedding gowns to use after they have tied the knot. The following are just some of the great ideas couples can explore.

1. Transform it into other attire. There are a number of different occasions when wearing white is acceptable. Religious ceremonies such as baptisms and communions
2. Donate the gown. Brides in need may not have the funds to purchase their own beautiful gowns. Work with an organization that will provide dresses to the less fortunate. Or donate it to an organization that can sell the gown to fund projects for others in need. Another option is the Mary Madeline Project, which uses wedding dress fabrics to create burial outfits for stillborn infants.
3. Cut it up into usable fabric. Wedding gown fabrics can be used in various applications. Dresses can be transformed into decorative pillows or other wedding mementos. Stretch the

qualify, and a wedding gown in the hands of an experienced seamstress or tailor can be transformed into a baby's Christening ensemble or a beautiful dress for a youngster about to receive First Holy Communion.

4. Use it as a Halloween costume. Dress as a bride for Halloween. Otherwise, tailor the dress to fit a child and she can use it for any number of dress-up opportunities.
5. Donate it to a costume archive. Theatrical companies may be able to use the fabric to create costumes for their productions.
6. Create a keepsake. Cut a small piece of the fabric and put it into a pendant or locket. A piece of tulle or lace also can be placed inside a clear Christmas ornament and hung on the tree for years to come.

Wedding gowns can be upcycled into many new and innovative items. Doing so eliminates long storage times and can benefit others.



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CommunityLiving



Submitted photo

Times publisher Rick Bussler, left, accepts two first place awards from Minnesota Newspaper Association president Mike Jacobsen at the MNA Awards Banquet Thursday night in Bloomington. The newspaper won awards for local breaking news coverage and a human interest story.

Times picks up two state awards

It wasn't the newspaper's best showing, but the Steele County Times still captured a pair of first place state awards of journalistic excellence last week.

The awards came during the Minnesota Newspaper Association's annual convention Thursday night in Bloomington.

Managing editor Mark DeLap achieved a first place with a human interest story he wrote on transporting the Amish who transported a friend. In making the selection, judges commented: "This entry has by far the most powerful

writing in this category. That it is told in first person could be seen as either distracting or lending immediacy, but what really sets the piece apart is the description—strong and emotional.

This category is human interest, and this is the entry where the humanity is most powerfully evident, as in this: 'By 7:50 the labored breathing had gone to shallow breaths, pushed out like contractions every few minutes. As if he were birthing his own death.'"

Publisher Rick Bussler, along with his daughter, Kyrie, earned a

first place award for local breaking news coverage of last summer's meth-related killing in Steele County. Judges said, "The level of detail included in the story was an excellent way to connect with readers. Comprehensive coverage shows dedication to providing full context of not just this story but a trend of drug-related issues."

Bussler said the newspaper did not win as many awards because of a clerical error in reporting the paper's circulation to MNA. The Times ended up competing in a higher circulation category, week-

lies 2,501-5,000. The paper's actual circulation is 2,300, which means it should have been in the 1,501-2,500 category.

"Even though we didn't win as many awards, the first place honors still exemplify our level of commitment to journalistic excellence," Bussler said.

Over the past six years, the Times has won 29 state and 19 national awards. Two years ago the paper won a community leadership award, which is one of the top awards given to week



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Sophie Thomas
Natalie Winzenburg
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Area Church Spotlight

St. John's Lutheran Church, Sargeant, MN

Pastor's corner: Where in the World is History Taking Us?

Are we witnessing history in the making? Or are we witnessing a disaster about to strike? Who can say?

History is a complicated story. How many of you remember history class in school? What was your favorite part of history to study?

I remember being overwhelmed by all the different dynasties, wars, revolutions, names and dates. I could keep track for a little while, then pretty soon I lost a grip on what happened in history. I couldn't make sense of the story as well as the textbooks could.

Psalms 89 is one of those

places in the Bible that teaches us how to make sense of history. What is the main story of history? David's kingdom, and the descendants of his kingdom. Figure this out, and I promise you, you can figure out the story of the whole world. You can even tell the future, generally, if you understand the throne of David. That's where God's hand is working; that's where God's strength is located, and that's what will move from history into the present and into the future. "I will establish his offspring forever, and his throne as the days of the heavens."

When the angel Gabriel visited the Virgin Mary, he said, "You will conceive and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ... The Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

When people don't know that THIS is the main story of history, they assume other things are the main story. Think about Nazi Germany -- they were pretty sure THEIR throne would never end. Think about the Soviet Union -- they were pretty sure THEIR throne would never

end. The results were catastrophic. The United States, too, will not last forever, because it's not the throne of David, and it's not the center of the world.

BUT, you ARE a citizen of David's kingdom! You are a member of Christ, who reigns on the throne forever and ever. Trust in Him -- not in yourself, or your own good behavior. Not in strongmen, or in resistance movements. Trust in Jesus Christ, for in Him there is abundant mercy. If you rely on Him, you'll be on track to be a part of history also.

Pastor Collin Duling,
St. John's Lutheran Church,
Sargeant

Area Church Schedule

Lutheran

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6329 SE 38th St., Owatonna
Pastor Stephanie Wood
(507) 676-5696

10:45 a.m. Sunday Worship Service
9:15 a.m. Sunday School

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
5881 S.E. 118th St., Blooming Prairie
Pastor Stephanie Wood
(507) 676-5696

Sunday School 10:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH—ELCA
434 First St. SW., Blooming Prairie
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
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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.

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Service: 9 a.m. Sunday
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REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH—LCMS
1054 Truman Ave., Owatonna
Pastor Kirk Griebel
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104 First St. S.E., Hayfield
The Rev. Paul Hauschild
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Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN—LCMS
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Pastor Jesse Krusemark
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Service: 10:15 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9 a.m.

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Education hour: 10 a.m.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
2781 S.W. 92nd Ave., Meriden
Interim Pastor Cheryl D. Indehar
(507) 451-2165

Worship 10:30 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH—ELCA
609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
Todd Bugler, Senior Pastor
Dean Smith, Associate Pastor
(507) 451-4520 www.tlcowatonna.org

Worship Services: Saturday: 5 p.m.
Sunday: 8:15 & 9:30 a.m.

Sunday: 10:45 a.m. Contemporary
Holy Communion served
All Saturdays & 1st/3rd Sundays
8:15 & 9:30 am Sunday School

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, AFLC
Ellendale, Minnesota
Pastor Richard Sliper
Saturday - 8 a.m. Men's
Bible Study Sunday - 9 a.m.
Worship: 10:10 Sunday School;
10:15 Coffee and Fellowship

Tuesday - 6 a.m. Call to Prayer, open
to all Churches; 7 p.m. Call to Prayer
Wednesday - 9:30 a.m. Bible Study;
6 p.m. Call to Prayer; 6:15 Hands
of Praise; 6:30 Confirmation;
6:30 p.m. Youth Group

MOLAND LUTHERAN CHURCH
7618 NE 84 Ave., Kenyon
Pastor Nancy Edwardson
(507) 789-6666

(Sept. - May) 10:45 a.m. Worship
(June - Aug.) 9:00 a.m. Worship
9:30 a.m. Sunday School

Catholic

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC
150 NE Second St. Hayfield
The Rev. Thomas Niehaus
(507) 477-2256

Sunday Mass: 8 a.m.
Reconciliation: Before Mass
Adoration: Thursdays 9 to noon

ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC PARISH
114 E. Main St., Blooming Prairie
The Rev. Thomas Niehaus
(507) 583-2784

stcolumbanuschurch.com
Sunday Mass: 10 a.m. Sunday.
Office hours: M-F, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS
307 First St. SW., New Richland
The Rev. Raul Silva, Pastor
The Rev. Adam McMillan,
Parochial Vicar
(507) 465-8217

Saturday Mass: 5:00 p.m.

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL
9946 SE 24th Ave., Owatonna
The Rev. John Sauer, Pastor
Fr. Jose Morales,
Parochial Vicar
(507) 451-1588

www.litomysl.webs.com
Sunday Mass: 9:30 a.m.
with Children's Church
Reconciliation: after Mass 1st Sunday
Family Faith Formation and Adult
Bible Study after Mass with noon
potluck; 2nd Sunday of month Faith
formation for Kindergarten thru
Confirmation: every Wednesday
evening 6:30 p.m.

Annual turkey bingo, Sunday, Nov. 20
7 p.m.

SACRED HEART PARISH
810 S. Cedar Ave., Owatonna
The Rev. John Sauer
The Rev. Jose Morales,
Parochial Vicar
(507) 451-1588

www.sacredheartowatonna.org

Sunday Mass: Vigil 5 p.m. Saturday,
8:30 a.m. & 10 a.m.
Spanish Mass: 11:45 a.m. Sunday
Daily Mass: 7:15 a.m.
Reconciliation: 4 p.m. Saturday
Adoration: Thursdays 9 a.m. - 10 p.m.

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH
512 S Elm, Owatonna • 507-451-4845
Fr. Kevin Connolly

Deacon Patrick Fagan
Sat. Mass: 4 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.
Reconciliation 3-5:30 p.m. Saturday
Daily Mass 8 a.m. Tues., Wed. & Fri
(Communion Service 8 a.m. Thursday)
Adoration Chapel avail Mon-Fri

7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. key fob
required after hrs or wknds

CHURCH OF CHRIST THE KING
205 NW Second Ave., Medford
(507) 451-6353

Fr. Kevin Connolly, Pastor
Deacon Patrick Fagan
Sunday Mass: 8:30 a.m.
Monday Mass: 9 a.m.

Christian

Christ Community Covenant Church
540 18th St. SE, Owatonna
Dr. V. Brent Carlson, Pastor
507-451-1032

Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.
Connections 10:15 a.m.

DESTINY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Owatonna Campus
422 W. North Street, Owatonna
Pastors Sam and Cheri Benson
507-254-8514 www.destinycc.org
Service: 10 a.m. Sunday

Mormon

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
404 31st St. N.W., Austin
Bishop Rick Bremner
(507) 433-9042

Service: 9 a.m.-10:10 a.m.

Presbyterian

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
109 E. Main St., Hayfield
Pastor Steven Robertson
(507) 477-2631

Service: 10 a.m. Sunday

Seventh-Day Adventist

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
2373 Seventh Ave. N.E., Owatonna
Pastor Robert Brauer
(507) 340-7143

Service: 11 a.m. Saturday
Sabbath School: 9:30 a.m. Saturday

UCC

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
211 Main St. S., Medford
Pastor Louise Bender
(507) 451-4596

Confirmation: 9 a.m. Sunday
Service: 10 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 10 a.m. Sunday

Assembly of God

VIBRANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD
702 Third St. S., Ellendale
Pastor Patrick Stitt
(507) 684-3421

Service: 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9 a.m.
vibrantlifeag.com

Baptist

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
104 First Ave. N.E.,
Blooming Prairie
Pastor Matt Fennell
(507) 583-2673

Services: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday
and 10 a.m. & 11:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9 a.m. Sunday

Contemporary Worship: 10:45 a.m.
Church School/Adult Classes: 10 a.m.

Non-Denominational

BRIDGES OF HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH
130 East Bridge St. Owatonna,
Pastor Keith Haskell
507-215-2249

Sundays 10:00 AM
Coffee Fellowship starts at 9:30 a.m.
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Fridays at 7 p.m.

CEDAR CREEK CHURCH
30 E. Main St. P.O. Box 224,
Hayfield
Pastor Aaron de Neui
(507) 477-2255

www.cedarcreekchurch.org
Service: 10 a.m. Sunday

ELEVATION NORTH CHURCH
2002 Austin Rd.
Pastor Doug Jones
(507) 363-3099

www.elevationnorth.blogspot.com
Sun 10 a.m. English Service
10:30 a.m. Service & Kids Zone
2 p.m. Spanish Service
Wed. 7:00 Bible Study
Fri 7:00 Spanish Outreach

NEW BEGINNINGS CHRISTIAN CHURCH
332 14th St. N.E., Owatonna
Pastor Scott Peterson
(507) 721-1366

Service: 10 a.m. Sunday
Gateway Connection: 7 p.m. Saturday

DESTINY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Owatonna Campus
422 W. North Street, Owatonna
Pastors Sam and Cheri Benson
507-254-8514

www.destinycc.org
Service: 10 a.m. Sunday
SIMPLE CHURCH
Pastor Todd Lundgren
507-451-5661

Sundays 9:30
Meeting in the Country Goods
building across the
freeway from Cabela's.
Other gatherings? Please call.

Mennonite

PRAIRIE MENNONITE CHURCH
13638 750th St., Blooming Prairie
Dennis Martin
(507) 583-2081 & (507) 477-3216

Services: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday
and 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

Mormon

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
404 31st St. N.W., Austin
Bishop Rick Bremner
(507) 433-9042

Service: 9 a.m.-10:10 a.m.

Presbyterian

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
109 E. Main St., Hayfield
Pastor Steven Robertson
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Service: 10 a.m. Sunday

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Pastor Matt Fennell
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Services: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday
and 10 a.m. & 11:30 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 9 a.m. Sunday

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Preparing for farm loan renewal time

Reality is that some operations are going to be faced with the real issue of foreclosure this year. Others will need to look hard at restructuring debt, switching lenders, making major changes to their operation and/or living, and maybe even selling off excess assets. So how can you make your operation be the best it can be through a stressful renewal season? Here are a few things to consider before you go into your renewal appointment:

Be prepared. Come into your renewal appointment with a plan. Have detailed estimate of your costs for the coming year, a cash flow that makes sense and is grounded in reality (no \$7 corn sales), and include reasonable spending for family living. If your cash flow shows significant changes from previous years, come with an explanation. For example: “My family living is down 20% from last year. We have a monthly budget and a commitment from our family to stick to it. We will send monthly accountability reports to show we are serious.” If you just reduced family living to make the cash flow work without a plan on how to make that change actually work, it’s not believable.

Be honest. Being honest with yourself is just as important as being honest with your lender. Take a hard look at your operation and figure out WHY your operation is having a tough time at renewal. It isn’t just because commodity prices are down. If that were the case, every operation would be experiencing this stress and they are not. So what’s different about your operation? What costs have changed in the past five to six years? Where can you make different choices about your costs?

Be accountable. This is YOUR farm operation. YOU get to make the choices about how the money is spent. Many times I hear, “We just don’t have a choice on how much we spend.” The reality is you make choices

every day. You can choose a different seed variety or a different seed vendor (or any other input). You can choose to operate older equipment instead of having the latest and greatest technology. You can choose between buying a \$60,000 family vehicle or a \$30,000 one. You may have to make unpleasant choices, but they are still your choices to make. The choice of whether or not a bank continues to finance you may not ultimately be yours, but the choices that led to that decision were yours.

Being ready for your appointment may only be half the battle, but it will show you have a commitment to turning your operation around.



When a farm operation loan is denied

If your bank does deny continued funding, there are other options to consider.

Your current bank is not the only one who can finance your operation. You can go back to the “drawing board,” get even more organized and prepared, and try another bank or two.

If you are unable to obtain credit elsewhere, you may qualify for a loan from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). The funding for these loans can change from year to year and is set by the government so there may be first come-first served access to these loans. More information about these loans can be found at: https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/fsa_br_01_web_booklet.pdf

Consider liquidating some assets. It may seem like you can’t operate without ALL of your equipment, but it may be a good time to rent some of those larger assets such as a combine or have your harvest done by a custom harvester. If you sell some equipment so you can retire debt, you may be able to put yourself into a position where you can service the remaining debt while continuing to farm. You also may need to liquidate some land to keep going. Don’t forget to hold back some proceeds for income taxes.

Bankruptcy may be a word that comes back into normal conversation. Our office is preparing to dust off old books and take classes to prepare for potential questions from farmers hoping to avoid or best navigate through the potential reality of bankruptcy. While avoiding bankruptcy will be ideal, the laws exist for a reason and may be a good tool for you to use so your operation can continue. Unfortunately, bankruptcy is complicated and the services of a good attorney and accountant will be necessary to complete the process.

Seek expertise and engage your support network

Regardless of the outcome, going through a stressful renewal is tough on everyone. I don’t know a single lender who got into the business with the goal of putting farmers out of business and I don’t know a single farmer who wanted their business to end with a liquidation.

Using your management team is going to be important. It may seem silly to be paying professional fees when you are trying to cut costs, but many of these issues are very complex and require detailed expertise.

It is also stressful for your family. Consider professional counseling to protect those relationships, your marriage, and your mental health. Talking about financial struggles is never fun, but keeping it to yourself could cause even bigger consequences.



Oh the weather outside is frightful

ON THE FARM



Kendra Schroeder

The turkey is eaten, presents are shared, and we rang in the New Year with a big ‘WHOOHOO!’ I don’t know about anyone else, but now that the holiday cheer is gone, winter can end anytime.

Farmers know that with the last, and arguably the harshest, three months of winter left in front of us, it can be hard to tolerate what feels like an eternal blizzard here in Minnesota. If you’re struggling with the cold, it’s a good idea to think about how your cattle are feeling.

When accustomed to the cold, cattle are well equipped and even prefer to stay outside all day and play in the snow. Though able to withstand the temperatures, when the weather takes a turn for the worst with high winds, cold rains, or heavy wet snow, they seek out somewhere warm to snuggle up. A well bedded, three sided shed facing away from prevailing winds is suggested for cattle that spend the winter outdoors.

Problems can arise when moving your cattle from a warm environment to outside housing. Compare this transition to a Florida-native moving to Minnesota. Just as the Floridian has the ability to bring a heavy coat, cattle have the ability to grow special layers of hair that offer excellent protection against the cold. But, what if the Floridian doesn’t have a coat? If your cattle’s winter coat is not grown out, wet, or matted with manure or mud, they will not be prepared to face

a Minnesota winter; be cautious letting them outside for any length of time, as they are more susceptible to hypothermia and frostbite. Just as people need to be prepared and take time to get used to the cold, cattle need to be clean, dry, and accustomed to the winter weather before they are left outside for days or even hours at a time.

You stress about unpaid bills or tasks that need to be finished, but your cattle feel a different type of stress—cold stress. As stress increases, so does one’s appetite; this is your body’s way of saying it needs more calories to maintain its normal function. Similarly, beef and dairy cattle alike can tolerate the cold, but need extra calories and plenty of clean water to maintain production levels, keep up their winter coat, and to stay warm all winter.

If your lactating cow is being housed outside, keep a close eye on her teats. Frozen or frostbitten teats can be an open door for mastitis and other infections. Getting mastitis can compromise the cow’s ability to produce milk, stay healthy, or can even cause death. Post dipping dairy cows after they’re milked is always highly recommended, even in below freezing temperatures. If the cow needs to go outside shortly after milking, leave the post-dip on for at least 30 seconds, and then wipe it off before she exits the barn or parlor. Although it takes a little extra time and double the towels, post-dipping your dairy cows, even for this short time, kills many of the mastitis bacteria left on her teat after milking.

Winter can be tough on both you and your animals. Make sure everyone is comfortable and cozy these next few months! For more information contact me at 507-444-7685 (Steele), 507-332-6109 (Rice), or schr1123@umn.edu.

Kendra Schroeder is the inter-im county agricultural extension educator for Steele and Rice counties. She will be in the position until spring.

New loan available for small farmers



Grow a Farmer Fund Live!

Supporting small-scale, sustainable farmers with lower-interest loans

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), along with its partners through the FEAST Local Foods Network, including Renewing the Countryside and Slow Money Minnesota, are happy to announce the launch of a new loan fund for small-scale, sustainable farmers.

The Grow a Farmer Fund is a revolving loan fund managed by SMIF that offers lower-interest loans up to \$15,000 to individuals in SMIF’s 20-county region

for inventory, supplies, working capital or machinery/equipment.

Fundraising for the Grow a Farmer Fund kicked off last May at Slow Money Minnesota’s annual gathering and was inspired by the principles of Slow Money, which originated out of the slow food movement. Slow Money’s mission is to catalyze the flow of capital to local food systems, connect investors to the places where they live and promote new principles of fiduciary

responsibility that “bring money back down to earth.”

“In Minnesota, those of us working with farmers have seen the challenges and risks faced by those growing fruits and vegetables, raising grass-fed livestock, and producing honey, maple syrup, and other ‘specialty crops,’” said Jan Joannides, Executive Director of Renewing the Countryside. “These farmers often have difficulty accessing traditional sources of capital, which

is why the Grow a Farmer Fund is a critical resource.”

Since May, the fund has grown to nearly \$100,000. Those interested in supporting the Grow a Farmer Fund can still donate online. SMIF contributed \$25,000.

“One of the most encouraging things about the Grow a Farmer Fund is all the collaboration that went in to making it happen,” said SMIF President and CEO Tim Penny. “Over 250 people and organizations donated to this fund, so clearly people are interested in seeing more local food options.”

The Grow a Farmer Fund is yet another outcome of the FEAST Local Foods Network, a collaborative network across Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin of local foods advocates. The FEAST Network organizes the annual Feast! Local Foods Marketplace, held annually in Rochester.

More information about the fund can be found online at www.slowmoneyminnesota.org/about-gaf.

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Legal Notices

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: August 6, 2014

ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$80,329.00

MORTGAGOR(S): Corey Aldrich and Jayna Aldrich, husband and wife

MORTGAGEE: JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.

LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON THE MORTGAGE: JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.

SERVICER: Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC

DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Filed September 5, 2014, Steele County Recorder, as Document Number A000398583

ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot Nine 9, in Block Ten (10) Village of Blooming Prairie, Minnesota.

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 112 E Main Street, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 14-100-1009

COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele

THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$82,943.47

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: March 16, 2017, 10:00am

PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff's Main Office, Law Enforcement

Steele County

PROCEEDINGS OF THE STEELE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SPECIAL SESSION

January 13, 2017

STATE OF MINNESOTA)) ss
COUNTY OF STEELE)

The Steele County Board of Commissioners met in Special Session at 3:00 p.m. on January 13, 2017 with Commissioners Glynn, Brady, Krueger and Gnemi present. Commissioner Abbe was absent. Also present were County Attorney Dan McIntosh, Probation Services Director Tim Schammel, HR Assistant Gina McGuire, County Engineer Anita Benson, County Administrator Laura Elvebak and County Auditor Laura Ihrke.

Call to Order and Pledge.

Discussion on damage at the Courthouse.

County Administrator Laura Elvebak gave the Board an update on the damage at the courthouse. Representatives from different agencies have been involved in assessing the damage and talked about the relocation of services and staff.

Commissioner Glynn thanked all that have been involved and what a great job they have done.

Commissioner Krueger offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Gnemi

Resolution Delegating Authority to County Administrator

WHEREAS the County of Steele has sustained significant damage and disruption of services to its Courthouse, including Court Administration and Steele County Probation Services as a result of water damage caused by a water pipe failure on January 10, 2017; and

WHEREAS Steele County is a public entity within the State of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS substantial damage has been sustained to public and private property; and

WHEREAS part of the County's response to the Courthouse event, and in order to ensure as much continuity of services as possible, certain agreements must be executed, after consultation with Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of County Commissioners, for and on behalf of the citizens of Steele County, hereby delegate Laura Elvebak, Steele County Administrator, authority to execute agreements on behalf of the County relating to the January 10, 2017 courthouse event. Administrator Elvebak shall consult with MCIT, Board Chair, Board Vice Chair, County Engineer and/or Building & Grounds Maintenance Director, County Attorney and all other appropriate parties in the execution of these duties.

This authority is granted for 60 days from the date of adoption, unless rescinded earlier.

Upon the vote being taken, 4 Commissioners voted in favor thereof, Commissioner Abbe absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.

Motion by Commissioner Krueger, seconded by Commissioner Glynn to adjourn at 3:15 p.m. Ayes all.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST: AUDITOR

1/31

Steele County

PROCEEDINGS OF THE STEELE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR SESSION

January 3, 2017

STATE OF MINNESOTA)) ss
COUNTY OF STEELE)

The Steele County Board of Commissioners met in Special Session at 5:30 p.m. on January 3, 2017 with Commissioners Huntington, Glynn, Schultz, Ebeling and Brady present. Also present were County Engineer Anita Benson, County Treasurer Cathy Piepho, Human Resources Director Julie Johnson, County Attorney Dan McIntosh, County Sheriff Lon Thiele, Chief Deputy Sheriff Scott Hanson, County Assessor Bill Effertz, County Administrator Laura Elvebak and County Auditor Laura Ihrke.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Commissioner Huntington, seconded by Commissioner Glynn to approve the agenda. Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Brady seconded by Commissioner Glynn to approve the minutes of December 13, 2016 and the minutes of December 13, 2016 Budget Hearing. Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Brady seconded by Commissioner Huntington to accept the December 23, 2016 Listing of Bills. Ayes all.

Commissioner Huntington offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Glynn

Resolution Adopting Negotiated Changes To The 2017 – 2018 AFSCME Courthouse Unit Labor Agreement

WHEREAS, the current Collective Bargaining Agreement between the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees – Courthouse Unit expired effective December 31, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the County has recently negotiated a two (2) year labor agreement with AFSCME; and

WHEREAS, the proposed agreement is reasonable, fiscally prudent and within current budget parameters;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Steele County Board of Commissioners approves the proposed labor agreement effective January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2018 between Steele County and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees AFL-CIO, Council 65, Local 147 – Courthouse Unit.

Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.

Commissioner Brady offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Huntington

Resolution Adopting Negotiated Changes To The 2017 – 2018 AFSCME Highway Unit Labor Agreement

WHEREAS, the current Collective Bargaining Agreement between the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees – Courthouse Unit expired effective December 31, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the County has recently negotiated a two (2) year labor agreement with AFSCME; and

WHEREAS, the proposed agreement is reasonable, fiscally prudent and within current budget parameters;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Steele County Board of Commissioners approves the proposed labor agreement effective January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2018 between Steele County and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees AFL-CIO, Council 65, Local 147 – Highway Unit.

Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.

Commissioner Huntington offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Schultz

Resolution Adopting Negotiated Changes To The 2017 – 2018 Law Enforcement Labor Services Sheriff's Department – Certified Peace Officers Unit Labor Agreement

WHEREAS, the current Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS), Sheriff's Department – Certified Peace Officers Unit expired effective December 31, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the County has recently negotiated a two (2) year labor agreement with LELS; and

WHEREAS, the proposed agreement is reasonable, fiscally prudent and within current budget parameters;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Steele County Board of Commissioners approves the proposed labor agreement effective January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2018 between Steele County and the Law Enforcement Labor Services, Sheriff's Department – Certified Peace Officers Unit.

Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.

Commissioner Glynn offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Schultz

Resolution Adopting Negotiated Changes To The 2017 – 2018 LELS Sheriff's Department - Essential Jailer Unit Labor Agreement

WHEREAS, the current Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS), Sheriff's Department – Essential Jailer Unit expired effective December 31, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the County has recently negotiated a two (2) year labor agreement with LELS; and

WHEREAS, the proposed agreement is reasonable, fiscally prudent and within current budget parameters;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Steele County Board of Commissioners approves the proposed labor agreement effective January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2018 between Steele County and the Law Enforcement Labor Services, Sheriff's Department – Essential Jailer Unit.

Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.

Motion by Commissioner Huntington seconded by Commissioner Schultz to approve the License/Use Agreement between FEMA and Steele County to use the Cedarview Care Center premises as a Public Assistance Processing Center office to expire no later than April 18, 2017. Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Schultz, seconded by Commissioner Brady to adjourn Sine Die at 5:42 p.m. Ayes all.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST: AUDITOR

PROCEEDINGS OF THE STEELE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SPECIAL SESSION

January 3, 2017

STATE OF MINNESOTA)) ss
COUNTY OF STEELE)

The Board was called to Order by the County Auditor who called for nominations for Chairman for 2017.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to nominate Commissioner James Brady as Chairman for 2017.

Upon the vote being taken, Commissioner Brady was unanimously elected Chairman for 2017.

Commissioner Brady then took the Chair.

Motion by Commissioner Gnemi, seconded by Commissioner Abbe to nominate Commissioner John Glynn as Vice Chairman for 2017.

Upon the vote being taken, Commissioner Glynn was unanimously elected Vice Chairman for 2017.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to approve the agenda. Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Gnemi to place on file the Comprehensive

Local Water Management Plan Amendment correspondence. Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Gnemi to

authorize the Chairman to sign bills on January 10, 2017 for payment on January 13, 2017. Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Krueger, seconded by Commissioner Gnemi to adopt the Rules of Order for 2017 with an amendment to Motions (must have a second motion). Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Abbe, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to approve the Board Meeting Schedule for 2017 with the correction of the October 22, 2017 moved to October 24, 2017. Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Gnemi to award the publication of the 2017 Commissioner Proceedings, legal notices, 2016 Delinquent Tax List and Financial Statement to the Steele County Times. Upon the vote being taken four Commissioners voted in favor thereof, Commissioner Krueger voting against.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to award 2nd Publication of the 2016 Financial Statement to another paper located in the County to the Owatonna People's Press. Ayes all.

Commissioner Glynn offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Krueger

Resolution Designating Official Website of Steele County And Transportation Project Bids

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that www.co.steele.mn.us will be and hereby is designated the official website to publish the proceedings of the County Board, ordinances, official notices, real estate delinquent tax lists, County Board of Equalization, financial statements, and all other notices to be posted by Steele County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that www.co.steele.mn.us will be and hereby is designated as the official website for publication of Steele County transportation projects, as provided for in Minn. Stat. §331A.12.

Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Abbe to approve the following committee appointments: Erick Kylo to the Extension Committee, Jennifer Wayne to the Parks & Recreation Board, Brian Schmidt to the Planning Commission, Steve Jaster to the Planning Commission, LeRoy Meier to the Planning Commission and Greg Lammers to the Planning Commission. Ayes all.

Commissioner Abbe offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Glynn

Resolution Establishing Per Diem Amounts for Citizens on Boards and Commissions in 2017

WHEREAS, Minnesota Stat. §375.47, Subd. 1, allows the County Board of Commissioners to set per diem payments for members of boards or agencies authorized by statute, and members of advisory boards or committee, performing duties for all or part of the county, when the board or agency does not itself have power to make expense allowances for its members;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the per diem amount be \$45 when members are attending a meeting on behalf of the Steele County Board of Commissioners.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members may receive a mileage reimbursement equivalent to that adopted by the Steele County Board of Commissioners.

Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.

Motion by Commissioner Gnemi seconded by Commissioner Krueger to approve the 2017 Board of Commissioner Committee Assignments as proposed by Board Chairman Commissioner Brady. Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to appoint the five Commissioners, County Administrator, County Auditor and County Treasurer as the AMC Delegates for 2017. Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn seconded by Commissioner Gnemi to approve the 2017 Policy Committee appointments as follows: Commissioner Abbe-General Government, Commissioner Glynn-Environment & Natural Resources, Commissioner Krueger-Health & Human Services, Commissioner Gnemi-Public Safety and Commissioner Brady-Transportation & Infrastructure. Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to approve travel & training for officers and employees if within the state and within the budget. Ayes all.

Commissioner Glynn offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Gnemi

RESOLUTION REGARDING OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL BY STEELE COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS

WHEREAS, the 2005 regular session of the Minnesota State Legislature has mandated that every County develop and approve, by a recorded vote, an Out-of-State Travel Policy for its applicable elected officials (Minnesota Statutes 471.661) no later than January 1, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the elected officials for Steele County affected by this statutory requirement are the five (5) County Commissioners: Sheriff, Attorney, Auditor, Treasurer, and Surveyor; and

WHEREAS, each of the elected officials have different statutory duties which require the elected officials to seek ongoing education and training, as well as to receive updated information and technical expertise;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the following Out-of-State Travel Policy shall apply for all Steele County Elected Officials beginning January 1, 2006.

- Each elected official shall determine when travel out of the state is appropriate, and in the interest of the office they hold; is in the interest of the citizens of Steele County; and is in the interest of good County Government.
- Expenses when traveling out of the state shall be limited to:
 - Actual transportation costs incurred by the official (i.e., mileage/airfare/parking, ground transportation);
 - Actual lodging costs incurred by the official (i.e., room rental, parking, etc.);
 - Actual meal expenses incurred by the official, consistent with County policy, provided, however, that a receipt shall be required.
 - Event conference, seminar or educational program registration or admittance fee actually incurred.
- Elected officials shall notify the County Board of Commissioners by letter or e-mail in advance of their intended travel out of state. Approval for elected official travel to out-of-state locations shall be presumed unless the County Board passes a resolution disapproving a specific out-of-state travel request.

This Out-of-State Travel Policy shall be available for public inspection upon request and shall be reviewed annually by the Steele County Board of Commissioners.

Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting.

A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.

Motion by Commissioner Gnemi, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to authorize the expense reimbursement for registration, travel, lodging and meal expenses consistent with the Steele County Personnel Rules and Policies for Commissioners and staff to attend AMC and NACO meetings as included within the approved budget. No more than 2 Commissioners at a time allowed to attend NACO meetings. Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to set the mileage rate for 2017 at 53.5 cents per the IRS guidelines. Ayes all.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Brady to set the interest rate on ditch liens for 2017 at 5%. Ayes all.

Commissioner Glynn offered a **Resolution**, seconded by Commissioner Krueger setting the minimum salary for Elected Officials.

Resolution Establishing the 2017 Minimum Salaries for Elected Officials

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes state that “*At the January meeting prior to the first date on which applicants may file for the office county attorney (county auditor, county sheriff, county treasurer) the board shall set by resolution the minimum salary to be paid the county attorney (county auditor, county sheriff, county treasurer) for the term next following*”; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Steele County Board of Commissioners that the annual minimum salary to be paid the elected official for the term next following be set at Step 1 of the Comparable Rating and Wage Scale System used by Steele County.

County Attorney (Minn. Stat. §388.18): E83

County Auditor (Minn. Stat. §384.151): D62

County Sheriff (Minn. Stat. §387.20): E83

County Treasurer (Minn. Stat. §385.373): D62

Continued from D2

Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution in on file in the Auditor's offices.

Commissioner Glynn offered the following **Resolution**, seconded by Commissioner Abbe

Delegation of Duties to County Auditor

WHEREAS, Steele County maintains its payroll system in order to compensate County employees and officials for their services. These payments include the salary and per diem payments approved by the Steele County Board of Commissioners by annual resolution, pursuant to Minn. Stat. §375.055, subd. 1(a); and **WHEREAS**, The Steele County Auditor's Office is charged with the responsibility to ensure the timely and efficient administration of the County payroll system; and **WHEREAS**, it is advisable and prudent for the Board of Commissioners to delegate the review and approval of Steele County Board of Commissioner salary and per diem payments to the Steele County Auditor or her designee, pursuant to Minn. Stat. §375.18, subd. 1b; and **WHEREAS**, the Steele County Auditor has the internal accounting and administrative control procedures to ensure the proper disbursement of public funds, including the obligation to issue salary and per diem payments based solely on the annual resolution adopted by the Steele County Board of Commissioners. **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Steele County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the Steele County Auditor or designee to approve the payment of the County payroll, including approved Commissioner salary and per diem payments made pursuant to Minnesota law and the annual resolution approving certain meetings for per diem payments for the year of 2017.

Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.

Commissioner Krueger offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Glynn

BE IT RESOLVED, that the County Auditor & County Treasurer are hereby authorized to process payments by Auditor's Warrants, for which the precise amount is fixed by law, which include fees, utility bills, salaries, highway department fuel bills, freight, witness expenses, vehicle registration/tabs, telephone, postage and sheriff's paper service to other counties. Necessary expenses include prepayment of expenses for seminars and other county business trips. Further to authorize payment to contractors for work and material in place on the job as certified by the Engineer or Architect except that the final payment on any project be approved by Board action; to authorize payments for bonds and interest payments for the bonded debt fund and for investments; to authorize payments for purchases made by the County Board wherein an amount has been set and entered in the Board minutes; to authorize payment of emergency welfare funds and Social Service funds as an emergency issuance procedure, as prescribed by state and federal law and claims that are due and would incur interest and penalties. A listing of bills paid will be provided to the County Board for their review.

Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting.

A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.

Commissioner Glynn offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Krueger

A Resolution designating a Depository for the County of Steele and persons authorized to sign orders thereon.
BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Steele County, Minnesota, that "RBC Wealth Management" be and hereby are designated as depositories for deposits and safekeeping of said County for such amounts as may be deposited herein.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that orders of the County of Steele drawn on said RBC Wealth Management for funds to be transferred to another Steele County Depository in whatever form shall be signed by one if the officer is Catherine Piepho, Treasurer and Financial Director of Steele County and by two if signed by Laura Ihrke, Steele County Auditor and Joyce Hartle, Steele County Deputy Treasurer.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that orders to purchase or sell or receive or transfer investment securities on behalf of Steele County shall be initiated by Catherine Piepho, Steele County Treasurer and Financial Director.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that all transfers of funds or investment securities to and from any Steele County accounts on behalf of Steele County as directed to RBC Wealth Management may only be made to another depository or account of Steele County in the name of Steele County.

Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting.

A copy of the Resolution is on file in the Auditor's office.

Commissioner Krueger offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Glynn

WHEREAS, the Steele County Four Seasons Centre is an Enterprise Fund; **WHEREAS**, Steele County no longer wishes to operate the Four Seasons Centre as an Enterprise Fund. **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Steele County Board of Commissioners to transfer the funds of the Four Seasons Centre to the General Fund Administrator and/or Emergency Management Director to sign.

Upon the vote being taken, five Commissioners voted in favor thereof, none absent and not voting. A copy of the Resolution in on file in the Auditor's offices.

Motion by Commissioner Glynn seconded by Commissioner Krueger to authorize Steele County to serve as the fiscal agent for the Violence Against Women Act Grant and authorizes the Steele County Administrator to sign a letter of support. Ayes all.

Commissioners Reports:
Commissioner Abbe wanted to let the public know that they need to be patient as they are in the learning process and will be attending Commissioner 101 Training.
Commissioner Krueger wanted to let people know to get ahold of him if they have concerns.
Commissioner Glynn reported on his attendance at the MNPrairie meeting.
Commissioner Gnemi reported on his meetings with various departments.
Commissioner Brady reported on his attendance at the Soil & Water and SCHR meeting.

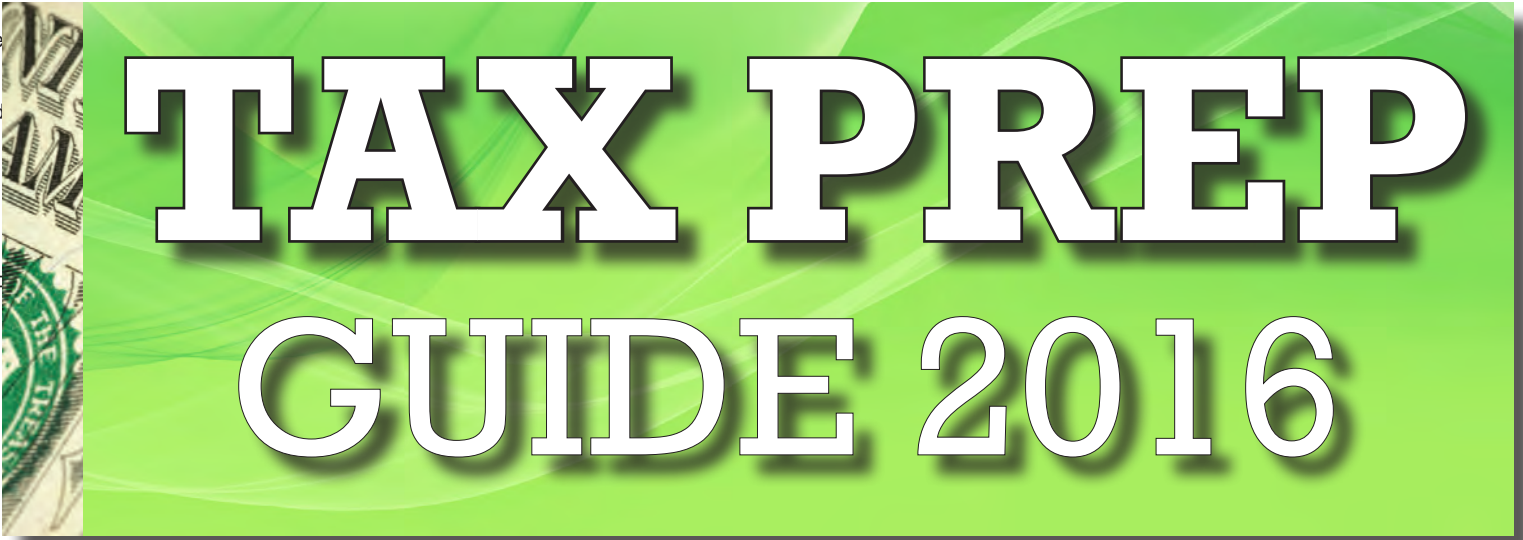
Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Krueger to approve the following listing of bills. Ayes all.

LISTING OF BILLS	
1/3/2017	
Business Solutions	15,573.20
Hertog PSY D LP	4,300.00
MCCC	2,236.00
MN Counties Intergovernmental Trust	9,990.00
Owatonna Heating & Cooling Inc	5,975.20
SHI International Corp	4,024.00
Youth 1st Community Initiative	5,000.00
26 Warrants under \$2,000	7,238.95
Total:	54,337.35

Motion by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Gnemi to adjourn to the Call of the Chair at 6:04 p.m. Ayes all.

ATTEST: _____ CHAIRMAN
AUDITOR

1/31



Many People in Rural America Qualify for Earned Income Tax Credit

The Internal Revenue Service wants taxpayers living in rural communities to be aware of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and correctly claim it if they qualify.

Whether living in the big city or a small town, EITC can help. The EITC is a federal income tax credit for working people who don't earn a lot (\$53,505 or less for 2016) and meet certain eligibility requirements.

Because it's a refundable credit, those who qualify and claim the credit could pay less federal tax, pay no tax or even get a tax refund. EITC can mean up to a \$6,269 refund for working families with qualifying children.

Workers without a qualifying child could be eligible for a smaller credit up to \$506. On average, EITC adds \$2,400 to

refunds.

Even though household income in many rural areas is below the national average, many of these taxpayers are often not aware that they may qualify for EITC.

An eligible taxpayer must have earned income from employment or running or owning a business or farm and meet basic rules.

Eligibility also depends on family size, but single workers without a qualifying child who earn under \$20,430 may qualify for a smaller credit. Also, certain disability payments may qualify as earned income for EITC purposes. The IRS recommends using the EITC Assistant, on IRS.gov, to determine eligibility, estimate the amount of credit and more.

To get the credit, Taxpayers must file a tax

return, even if they do not owe any tax or are not required to file.

Qualified taxpayers should consider claiming the EITC by filing electronically: through a qualified tax professional; using free community tax help sites; or doing it themselves with IRS Free File.

Many EITC filers will get their refunds later this year than in past years. That's because a new law requires the IRS to hold refunds claiming the EITC and the Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC) until mid-February.

The IRS cautions taxpayers that these refunds likely will not start arriving in bank accounts or on debit cards until the week of Feb. 27.

Taxpayers claiming the EITC or ACTC should

file as soon as they have all of the necessary documentation together to prepare an accurate return. In other words, file as they normally would.

The IRS and partners nationwide will hold the annual EITC Awareness Day on Friday, Jan. 27, 2017 to alert millions of workers who may be missing out on this significant tax credit and other refundable credits.

One easy way to support this outreach effort is by participating on the IRS Thunderclap to help promote #EITCAwarenessDay through social media.

For more information on EITC and other refundable credits, visit the EITC page on IRS.gov.



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PUBLIC NOTICE		
2017 STEELE COUNTY BUDGET SUMMARY STATEMENT		
This summary is published in accordance with MN Statute 375.169. The detail of the County's budget is on file in the County Treasurer's Office at the Steele County Administration Center in Owatonna, Minnesota. The budget can be viewed during normal business hours or 24 hours a day on Steele County's website at: www.co.steele.mn.us , or on OpenGov® Financial Transparency Portal at: https://costelemn.opengov.com/		
	2016	2017
Revenues		
County portion of tax levy	\$ 22,439,153	\$ 22,908,881
State paid portion of tax levy	1,724,096	1,782,727
Total Tax Levy	24,163,249	24,691,608
All Other Taxes (Sales, Wheelage, Etc.)	3,427,000	2,728,000
License and permits	53,000	81,500
Intergovernmental		
Federal	313,558	208,961
State	7,343,091	8,503,470
Other	302,280	101,661
Charges for services	5,202,468	5,613,234
Fines and forfeitures	36,000	36,700
Interest on investments	200,000	150,000
Miscellaneous revenue	3,504,833	4,306,892
Other Sources		
MN state bonding bill	-	4,000,000
Proceeds of bond sale	-	6,330,200
Budgeted use of available fund balance	2,149,250	1,446,000
Transfers in	3,235,218	164,144
Total Revenues & Other Sources	\$ 49,929,947	\$ 58,362,370
Expenditures		
General Government	\$ 7,931,126	\$ 8,245,078
Public Safety	9,679,258	10,902,974
Highways and Streets	15,226,113	13,704,363
Human Services	3,529,237	3,958,636
Health	3,270,942	3,468,273
Culture and Recreation	967,925	989,475
Conservation of Natural Resources	772,190	774,530
Sanitation	1,423,020	1,460,120
Economic Development	35,000	87,454
Debt Service	2,470,288	2,465,438
Capital Outlay	4,467,500	12,147,200
Transfers out	157,348	158,829
Total Expenditures & Other Uses	\$ 49,929,947	\$ 58,362,370

1/31

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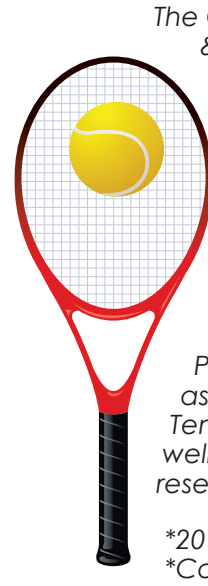


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Tennis & Fitness memberships are available



The Owatonna Parks and Recreation Department and West Hills Tennis & Fitness Center are excited to introduce our New Tennis Pro, Kelly Baker! We are looking forward to Kelly continuing the strong tradition of Tennis in Owatonna and are eager to be a part of the new programs and events he will bring to us to enhance our Tennis program in the community. Playing tennis for one hour burns about 600 calories, making it just as effective and jogging or an indoor cycling class! The Owatonna Tennis and Fitness Center has 6 indoor tennis courts available for use as well as lessons and leagues for youth and adults! Call 507-444-4290 to reserve your court time!

Playing tennis for one hour burns about 600 calories, making it just as effective and jogging or an indoor cycling class! The Owatonna Tennis and Fitness Center has 6 indoor tennis courts available for use as well as lessons and leagues for youth and adults! Call 507-444-4290 to reserve your court time!

*2017 Brooktree Memberships are available with payment plans!
*Cottage 11: Closed January & February

Now Hiring Lifeguards!

Are you looking for a job where you can make a difference and actively impact others every day? We have that opportunity for you! We are looking for self-motivated team players to join our lifeguard staff.

American Red Cross Certified Lifeguard
Minimum qualifications:
*Must be 15 years old
*Must be able to pass ARC Lifeguard Certification Class

Outdoor Public Skating



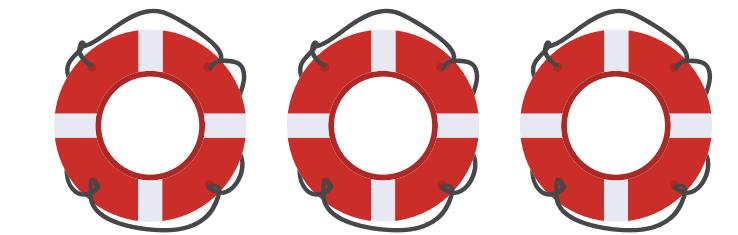
Warsinski rinks, located in Morehouse Park are the only supervised skating rinks in Owatonna. The Warsinski chalet, a large warming house complete with cross country ski and skate rentals and food concessions is located at the west end of School Street.

Open:
Sunday – 12:00 noon – 9:30 p.m.
Saturday – Holidays & School Vacation Days 11:00 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.
Monday – Friday: 3:00-9:00 p.m.

Schedule is subject to change due to weather and ice conditions.
Family bonfire events are held Saturday evenings at 5:30 p.m.

Upcoming Events

- January-February: Cottage 11 is closed
- February 6: SeniorPlace Recycled Greeting Cards
- February 7: Future Sports Stars 2nd Session begins
- February 21: Spring Brochure is released
- February 22: Lifeguard Training February Class begins
- February 24: Spring Registration Begins
- March 6: Brooktree Clubhouse hours begin
- March 9: Soccer/T-Ball Registration Deadline
- March 15: Adult Slow-Pitch Team registration deadline
- April 22: Annual Munchkin Market
- April 26: Lifeguard Training April Class begins
- May 1: Brooktree League play begins
- May 20: Brooktree Humane Society Tournament
- June 2: River Springs Water Park Opening Day
- June 17: Brooktree Young Life Tournament
- July: Summer Weekend Out



Lifeguard Training Classes

The purpose of the American Red Cross Lifeguarding course is to provide entry-level lifeguard participants with the knowledge and skills to prevent, recognize and respond to aquatics emergencies and to provide care for breathing and cardiac emergencies, injuries and sudden illnesses until emergency medical services (EMS) personnel take over.

Prerequisites:

1. Must be at least 15 years of age at time of class
2. Swim 300 yds continuously (crawl & breaststroke)
3. Swim 40 yds with a 10-pound brick, retrieving is from 10 feet of water, using only a kick, holding brick with 2 hands on the chest
4. You must attend all classes to pass
5. No refund will be issued if you do not pass

December Class: Dec. 17-20
February Class: Feb. 22-March 4, 2017
April Class: April 26-May 6, 2017

Watch for our Spring Brochure coming out February 21st! Registration for Spring activities: February 24th!

Parks and Recreation Contact Information:

Office & Information Line 507-444-4321	SeniorPlace 507-444-4280	Email Address parkrec@ci.owatonna.mn.us
Tennis & Fitness Center 507-444-4290	Facebook Owatonna Parks and Recreation	River Springs Water Park 507-774-7370
Fax 507-444-4299	Brooktree Clubhouse 507-444-2467	



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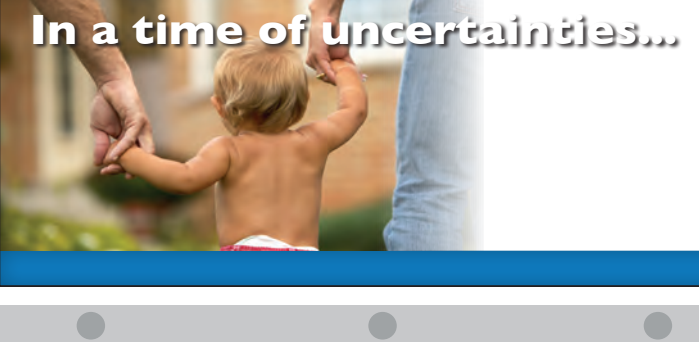












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Blood Clot patients, if you have experienced any serious problems with an IVC filter, call 507-201-8964 to speak with a lawyer. You may be entitled to compensation. tfc

KASSON, 1 br apt, laundry on-site, off street parking, heat included, must be 62+ or handicapped/disabled, rent based on income, equal housing opportunity, call 507-634-4188. 42tfc

2 bdrm apt in West Concord, util. included, \$600/mo. 507-358-6293 6nc, 7, 8c, 9nc

1 & 2 BD KASSON For Jan. & Feb. Clean & quiet! Flexible leases and deposit pay plans. Minutes from Byron and Rochester. 507-451-8524 www.lifestyleinc.net tdd 507-451-0704 Equal Housing Opportunity. 4,5c,6nc,7c

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1 & 2 BD DODGE CENTER Available Feb! \$600 & \$705 p/mo. Spacious units, large closets, 1 1/2 bath, AC,DW, blinds and much more! 507-633-2178 or 507-451-8524 www.lifestyleinc.net tdd 507-451-0704 EHO. 4,5c,6nc,7c

Farm land for Rent 150 acres + - with option to buy 75 acres, at 8589 Highway 218. Send bids to Smith's by 1/30/17, 2364 Maria Rd. Winona, MN 55987. 5-7c

2 bdrm rural apt. for rent. New construction, washer and dryer, garden space available. \$700/mo plus heat and electric. Non-smoker, no pets, deposit and references required. Available now. Call 507-884-7246 (47). No Saturday calls. 6-8c

Main Street Kasson- on-going business/store avail. immediately. Contact Pat at 507-319-6762. 5-6c,7nc

WANTED

Crop land to rent. Young farmer looking to expand existing corn and soybean operation in Hayfield and surrounding area, call David Stanton, 507-951-0915 38tfc

EMPLOYMENT

Wellington Adult Care has a full time day position available working with elderly residents. We are a home and community based facility. We provide 24 hr care. Applicant must be 18 years old have a valid drivers license, and pass a background check. Experience preferred but will train the right person. For application and interview Call Bill or Janie Hill @ 507-374-2198 or 507-319-4521. 5tfc

Part time bartender/ waiter to work flexible hours Mon.-Sun. Must be at least 18 yrs. of age and able to start work at 4 p.m. Will train. Pick up application at 505 Frontage Rd NW or send application/ resume to Byron American Legion. P.O. Box 687 Byron, MN 55920 6tfc

Part time help needed. 12:30-5:30 M-Fri. Must be able to do bookwork & lift. P&P TV and Appliance. Call 634-7007. 7-9nc

Person wanted to run truck pumping for septic tanks, and drain cleaning, must be used to hard work. CDL required. A or B, must be able to lift 90 lbs. Contact Leth Sewer Service, 507-635-5590. 7tfc

WELLINGTON ADULT CARE
has a full time day position available working with elderly residents.
•We are a home and community based facility.
•We provide 24 hr care.
•Applicant must be 18 years old, have a valid drivers license and pass a background check.
•Experience preferred but will train the right person.
For application and interview Call Bill or Janie Hill at 507-374-2198 or 507-319-4521


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Have you taken Invokana and suffered any serious side effects? Call 507-573-4551 to speak with a lawyer. You may be entitled to compensation. .tfc

NEW child care in Kasson has openings for all ages. Open 24/7. 507-301-2810 (call or text) crystalkay110@gmail.com 6,7c,8nc,9c

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For additional information call Kayla (320) (507)316-5231



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PANTHER OF THE WEEK



great integrity by always doing the right thing when no one is looking.

Some of Ben's favorite things to do are snowmobiling, fishing, and kayaking. His favorite foods are hot dogs and sausage pizza, his favorite book is Comanche Moon, and his favorite movies are the Fast and Furious series.

Keep up the tremendous effort Ben!



Ben Hagen is NRHEG's Panther of the Week.

He is the son of Brad and Allyson Hagen who reside in Ellendale. He is in Mrs. Dobberstein's class.

Ben has been chosen because he is a great model of respect, he's always taking time to help others, and he's considerate of their feelings. Ben shows

PRAIRIE PREDICTIONS



Winter is definitely not over. An eight-inch snowfall was recorded on Tuesday night, Jan. 24. Southern Minnesota caught the brunt of winter's grasp. The snow brought to an recent thaw.

Tuesday



High: 33°
Low: 21°

Wednesday



High: 21°
Low: 8°

Thursday



High: 17°
Low: 4°

Friday



High: 20°
Low: 9°

Saturday



High: 24°
Low: 21°

Sunday



High: 23°
Low: 8°

Staff photo by Howard Lestrud



Cancer Corner

Support the fighters Admire the survivors, Honor the taken.

Blooming Prairie Cancer Group donates \$64,000 to Eagles Cancer Telethon

By HOWARD LESTRUD
Staff Writer

With the Blooming Prairie Stix of Fury drum corps as a backdrop, three members of the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group presented a \$64,000 check to the fifth District Eagles Cancer Telethon in Rochester.

Making the check presentation at the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester on Saturday, Jan. 14 were BP Cancer Group board members Cheri Krejci, Jennifer Milton and Philip Milton. The three are all cancer survivors.

The Blooming Prairie donation and donations from the Geneva Cancer Auction and Owatonna Eagles Club represent a huge part of the telethon's success.

The Eagles Cancer Telethon has been held for 63 years. Prior to this year, over \$16 million was raised for cancer research at Mayo Clinic Hormel Institute for Cancer Research and the University of Minnesota Masonic Cancer Center.

Nearly \$1 million was raised this year.

Since the BP Cancer

Group was started in 2000, it has raised \$647,000 to fight cancer.

The BP Cancer Group celebrated its donation not only the night of Jan. 14 but the next morning at a special pancake breakfast held at the Pizza Cellar in Blooming Prairie.

Cheri Krejci, BP Cancer Group treasurer, said more than 285 persons attended the breakfast and donated free will offerings. "We found 100-dollar bills in the

collection basket and even received a check for \$250," Krejci said.

The breakfast not only featured a tasty offering of pancakes, eggs and sausage but also sponsored a silent auction of 30 items.

"It's just incredible how generous people are in this area," Krejci said. "Cancer touches everyone and we all have a soft spot for a loved one who may have fought cancer," Krejci added.



Staff photo by Howard Lestrud

The Blooming Prairie Cancer Group gave a \$64,000 check to the Eagles Cancer Telethon on Saturday, Jan. 14. Making the check presentation on Channel 10 in Rochester were Philip Milton, Jennifer Milton and Cheri Krejci. The Group donated \$73,000 last year.

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Movie Review: La La Land



initial friction, begin to fall in love. The demands of trying to follow their dreams in tinsel town, however, soon put tension on their relationship.

If the plot isn't striking you as terribly unique, it's because this movie isn't about the plot. It's about looking pretty, and there, it dazzles.

Whether it's playing out across the backlots of movie sets, surreal dreamlike sequences, or a dance among the stars, this movie harkens back to an age of Hollywood where romantic movies didn't have to be that sensible. They just needed to be, well, romantic.

The music is fun and bounces between up beat show tunes and jazz love ballads. While no song itself stuns, they're all welcome and blend very well with the actions playing out on

screen. It never feels like the movie is halting to allow for a musical number. They grow naturally out of the scenes.

Ryan Gosling as Sebastian is as charming as ever. After seeing his performance, a lot of women will no doubt add "must play piano" to their dream man checklists. Emma Stone is lovely as well, and her ability to communicate a lot of emotion with very little is welcome in the movie's quieter scenes.

This is a much smaller movie than most musicals, more intimate. There's no big Les Miserables company storming Paris, and there's no loud Chicago-esque dance scenes.

It's two people falling in love, but then, what more magic do you need?

Rated: PG-13

Apple Crisp

3/4 c. flour

1/2 c. butter

1 c. brown sugar

1/2 c. chopped nuts

mix together as for pie

crust

1 qt. sliced apples

1/2 c. water

1 tsp. cinnamon

Put apples in a buttered baking dish and pour on water. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Spread cumb mixture over top and bake for 30 minutes. Serve with whipped cream.



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