

STATE CHAMP



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STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

For McGhee, conversations are in the bag

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

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Drew McGhee, 16, stocks a cooler at Vandal's Family Market in Blooming Prairie. "It's weird," he said, "but there's something about seeing (the cans) all lined up." McGhee loves chatting with customers and employees.

Sheriff to seek another term

Thiele hopes to continue serving Steele County

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

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munity, and I have no reason to leave." Thiele, 55, has been in law enforcement for 31 years, and he has found the past four years as being the most challenging of his career. His office has been dealing with a worldwide pandemic, on-going budget constraints and the influx of racial issues from the Twin Cities area highlighted by the killing of George Floyd. Despite the challenges the police profession is facing right now, Thiele said his office is

See SHERIFF on A7 ▶



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Business owner loses battle with cancer

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See BUSINESS on A4 ▶

STEELE COUNTY TIMES

Blooming Prairie, Owatonna MN

Volume 130, No. 33

507-583-4431 | news@steelecountytimes.com

ON-LINE: steelecountynews.com

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AREA DEATHS

Bonnie Peterson, 68, Owatonna

Dale Springer, 78, Owatonna

Donnavon Eaker, 72, Ellendale

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2022

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See MCGHEE on A7 ▶



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OUR VIEW

Record surplus calls for drastic change

Minnesota seems to have hit the jackpot. Last week state budget officials announced that Minnesota will have a historic \$9.2 billion surplus. It's believed to be the most of any other Midwest-ern state.

And now the fun begins at the State Capitol as lawmakers wrestle with what to do with the hefty windfall.

Sen. John Jasinski, who represents Steele and Rice counties, put it bluntly: Minnesotans are “way, way, way overtaxed.” Senate Republicans are now proposing the largest tax cut in state history.

Under the Republican plan, a Minnesota family making \$100,000 would see tax savings of \$1,000 each year. A typical person making \$37,000 would receive an annual reduction of \$500.

“What Republicans have proposed is permanent, ongoing tax relief for all working Minne-sotans and senior citizens,” said Senate Majority Leader Jeremy Miller, R-Winona.

DFL Gov. Tim Walz wants one-time rebate checks paid out to all taxpayers. “This gives us the opportunity to get those checks in the hands of folks,” Walz said.

And, of course, this is all coming to a head just in time for this fall's election.

While the governor's idea for a rebate would be nice for the pocketbook, we wonder if rebates would in the long term be shortsighted. After all, it's time for state officials to give back what they have taken from us.

With democrats and republicans sparring over what should happen, it would seem that a perma-nent and significant tax relief is what Minnesotans deserve. We need to look at long-term solutions and what's best for the state over the long haul.

As both sides figure things out, they also need to proceed with caution. There is great uncer-tainty right now about the economic effects of the war in Ukraine, the future of the pandemic and inflation.

It's no secret that taxes in Minnesota are high. This is the time to roll back and undo some of the damage that has been done in the past. Let's make this an affordable state to continue living in.

YOUR VIEW

Be open to other perspectives

To-the-Editor:
I attended the Owa-tonna School Board meeting on Jan. 24 and witnessed a pow-erful moment.

During the public forum, one person spoke in opposition to a variety of topics currently supported by our school board. It was obvious she has made her opinions known previously.

In her statement, she told the school board that she was honestly trying to have an open mind on these mat-ters. I believe she was sincere, and I com-mend her, as well as the school board and our superintendent, for providing an excellent example of what true public debate and true learning looks like.

Learning is not about being on the same side of an issue. Learning is about being open to hearing a perspective you had not yet considered, and being open to considering if there is something of value in that different perspec-tive. That is why stu-dents open textbooks everyday – to encoun-ter new and different perspectives.

Thank you to our school board, our superintendent, and all those who offer various perspectives during public forum. May we each strive to have an open mind towards ideas that are new or different than our own. That is ulti-mately how we learn.

Julie Fiske
Owatonna

Thanks for support with snowmobile accident

To-the-Editor:
Hi, Senator John Jasinski, back in my office. You all heard I had a snowmobile acci-dent about three weeks ago. I just wanted to say thanks to all the people that have sent me cards and texts and voicemails and things like that, as well as all the first responders and the deputies and the sheriffs and the doctors and the nurses that have taken care of me and got me back

on my feet over the last three weeks. It's truly phenomenal.

It really is an eye-opener to what can happen to a person. So I am very, very thank-ful for everybody who has shown me so much love and family con-nections over the last three weeks. So I want to say thank you again to that. It really does mean a lot. Thank you.

Sen. John Jasinski
Faribault

A gift to our Steele County friends



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

Some exciting things are hap-pening with the Steele County Times, and I'd like to share some of them with you this week.

This week we're go-ing out to an expanded audience as nearly ev-ery household in Steele County will be receiv-ing the newspaper. In the newspaper indus-try, we refer to it as a “sample copy,” where we send the paper to everyone whether they are a subscriber or not. It's a gift to our friends who cherish local news.

Our primary mission is to provide quality community news with the best interest of Blooming Prairie, Ellendale, Medford and Owatonna as well as the rest of the county in mind each week. We think we provide a dy-namic newspaper filled with hometown news for our readers every week. We don't want

anyone to miss out. But that's not all that's going on.

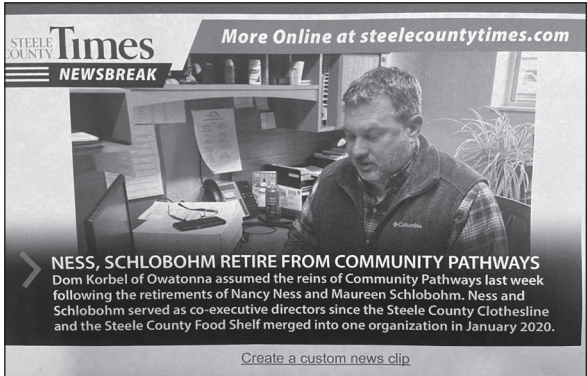
Along with the great print product we pro-duce each week, we are always looking at op-portunities to enhance the ways we reach the community.

We are launch-ing an indoor digital newschannel network with the help of a com-pany that has become the largest indoor digi-tal billboard network in Minnesota. Right now, the company has over 250 venue locations that feature indoor digital billboards. About half of them are partnered with newspapers.

Basically what happens is digital screens will be installed in various businesses like bars, restaurants and service places. The screens will feature captivating hyper-local community content, including advertising from local businesses. This is a different way for businesses to reach clients.

We expect this to hit by early May if not sooner. Stay tuned for more about this as it gets closer.

Within the next month, we will be revealing our newly revamped website at www.steelecountytimes.com.



This has been in the planning stages for the past several months. You are going to find a website that's easier to navigate and be able to pull up local news, a lot of which is not hiding behind a pay wall.

February was a pivotal month for our website. We reached a record number of 38,000 unique visitors and nearly 1.5 million hits in what was a shortened month (28 days). The viewership has been climbing steadily over the past nine months.

Besides the beefed up website, we will also be adding another new and exciting digital option. Later this spring we will launch a news app where readers can get local news and sports as well as community no-tifications with just one click. This will offer fast access to information.

A news app is partic-ularly exciting because you will get breaking news and other informa-tion exclusive to Steele County. We want to keep you up to date with news that impacts you and your community. Again, we will share more about this once it's ready to go.

I'd also like to remind you that we are now serving Steele County from two great locations: Blooming Prairie and Owatonna. We recently opened a second office to better serve our readers in Owatonna. We are lo-cated at 109 W. Rose St.

As you can see, the gift of local news comes in many shapes and sizes. We are excited to offer you various options to keep you informed about the greater community of Steele County.

We're never sitting idle. We love going in hot pursuit of providing the area's best option for local news coverage.



GUEST COLUMN

Add 'em up and numbers are unfathomable

BY JAN MITTELSTADT
TIPPETT

Numbers are num-bers – no matter what year it is, what state you live in or what country you visit. A one is a one; pi is pi. Scores are scores.

However, defining the meaning of a num-ber, or a number used in a measurement, or the value of a particular number, provides a dif-ference. Add in (no pun intended) numerology, and numbers take on yet another meaning.

I don't think I'm alone in my perception of num-bers. What I think has to do with how I saw, used or spent it as a child. Or it could be what I figured out it was as I grew older, based on what is my own consumer index or my own experiences. I know about what one mile is – it was about a mile from the house I grew up in to the Owatonna Public Library. I know how long 100 yards is – I could see it from the bleachers

at the Owatonna High School. I know that 75 degrees in a comfortable temperature.

But 75 degrees Fahr-enheit is 24 degrees Cel-sius. I don't immediate-ly think that 24 degrees is a comfortable tem-perature. I think that 24 is cold, despite living in Minnesota where I see people in shorts when it is 24 F. (Those folks have a different ther-mostat than I do.) When I've been outside of the U.S. I have to translate those Celsius tempera-tures into Fahrenheit in order to decide if I need a jacket or not.

And then there's money.

Intellectually, I can understand what a certain amount of money might be – what is it is worth, how much can it purchase, or how much I might need of it to main-tain a certain standard of living. And dear readers three, we now must add in inflation, supply chain dif-ficulties and the soaring price of gas and utilities.

My brother and I reminisce about the \$25 weekly budget my mom had for food. Alice and C.C. had a Friday night date to go to Duffy's. So did many of their friends. Duffy's was the place to be in the 1960s. When they came home, my dad beeped the horn and Ted and I went out to help carry in the brown bags. The truck of the Chevrolet Bel-Air was full, full to the lid. Today, \$25 in groceries might take one or may-be two plastic bags. One inflation calculator says that \$25 in 1962 equals about \$233 today.

I cannot wrap my arms around really big numbers. I can get millions. A million isn't even serious money these days. I cannot fathom what a billion or trillion of anything would stack up to be. Ms. Google tries to help out by using another example of a unit that we can understand – seconds. A story in the New York Times, and

not fake news at all, says that 1,000 seconds is equal to almost 17 minutes. It would take almost 12 days for a mil-lion seconds to elapse.

That is an under-standable unit. It becomes a little less clear when it is me-ga-millions or billions. It would take 31.7 years for a billion seconds to elapse. Try subtracting 31.7 from your current age and think about all the time that has elapsed. The highlight reel would take a long time to share.

And if that doesn't make you shake your head, a trillion seconds would take more than 31,710 years to elapse. We often read about bil-lion and trillion dollar budgets and expenses. No wonder we just nod our heads and go on with whatever we are doing.

Jan Mittelstadt Tip-pett is a retired news-paper publisher who lives in Owatonna.

STEELE COUNTY Times

www.SteeleCountyTimes.com

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news@steelecountytimes.com
507-583-4431

Deadlines:
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Times Staff:

- Rick Bussler, Publisher and Owner
952-224-6331, rbussler@steelecountytimes.com
- Deb Flemming, News Editor
507-583-4431, dflemming@steelecountytimes.com
- Sherrie Pechan, Office Manager
507-583-4431, news@steelecountytimes.com
- Wygonne Priebe, Sales Specialist
507-456-4299, wpriebe@steelecountytimes.com

- Johnnie Phillips, Sports Editor
507-583-4431, jphillips@steelecountytimes.com
- Kay Fate, Staff Writer
507-583-4431, kfate@steelecountytimes.com
- Joni Hubred, Staff Writer
248-568-0581, jhubred@steelecountytimes.com
- Charlene Wolff, Owatonna Office/Sales
507-583-4431, cwolff@steelecountytimes.com
- Chris Baldwin, Staff Writer
507-583-4431, news@steelecountytimes.com

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MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

2022 —12 state awards (1st place- General Excellence)	2017 —2 state and 3 national awards	2013 —7 state and 2 national awards
2021 —16 state awards	2016 —8 state and 6 national awards	2012 —2 state awards
2020 —9 state awards	2015 —7 state and 4 national awards	2011 —4 national awards
2019 —9 state awards	2014 —3 state and 3 national awards	

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

Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Natalie Sorensen's first-grade class at Blooming Prairie Elementary School celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday last week with a homemade tribute to one of his most popular books, "The Cat in the Hat." In the front row, from left, are Brayton Motl, Liesel Swanson, Opal Vincent, Laiden Maher, Paisley Wolf, Annika Gaines, Linkynn Doocy, Avery Peterson and Jordan Crozier. In the back, from left, are Grayson Spinler, Robert Cardenas, Bergen Klemmensen, William Schultz, Ryan Parr, Kashton Witt, Alex Elkins, Lane Jones and Miles Jensen. The entire school marked the end of February's "I Love to Read" month with a celebration and by singing happy birthday to the author on March 2.

The arm of Community Pathways far reaching

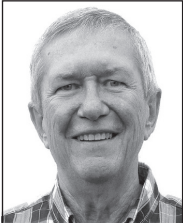
Blooming Prairie is under served by Community Pathways of Steele County, emphatically states Pathways Executive Director Dom Korbelt.

Korbelt was in BP a few weeks, rallying supporters at a Sunday worship at First Lutheran Church. Following a talk to the congregation, Korbelt met further with BP residents at a special forum presentation.

Korbelt is the new Community Pathways director who meets the public in a sincere, charismatic manner.

Korbelt credited his father David with providing the catalyst that spurred him to get involved in non-profit endeavors.

Community Pathways was already on fire prior to Korbelt joining the fold, but now with his leadership the goals become even more reachable.



Reflections

HOWARD LESTRUD

One of the goals is to raise \$2.6 million in capital funds to expand the food shelf building proper. Space will be doubled to allow the food shelf to be more able to meet community needs.

With the raising of the funds, it will now be possible to double the size of Community Pathways of Steele County.

Korbelt told Blooming Prairie churchgoers a few weeks ago that Blooming Prairie will be a "Test Run" for the Pathways food truck to

come to First Lutheran Church and distribute foodstuffs to needy persons.

The Pathways food truck will be in BP on Thursday, March 24 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. People can also drop off items at the food truck on this day. The truck will be located on the west end of the First Lutheran parking lot.

It's because of volunteers and partnerships with local businesses that Community Pathways has been able to extend its reach.

Pathways provides special shopping times for families. This enables families to more prudently pick the items they need, Korbelt said.

Building New Pathways is the theme of the Community Pathways capital campaign. The campaign was structured by co-executive directors Nancy Ness

and Maureen Schlobohm.

This year has been uniquely challenging in food insecurity areas across Steele County because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has weakened fragile economic systems and significantly elevated the need for critical services like Community Pathways.

More funds for Community Pathways of Steele County were raised last weekend at the Hometown Sampler Concert Series. Local bands performed at the Little Theatre in Owatonna. Just passing the hat at one of the concerts, produced \$1,000.

A total of \$28,000 was easily surpassed by the genuine generosity of local people, said Korbelt.

Donations are always encouraged and accepted. Help your neighbor by donating to Community Pathways of Steele County.

Here's how to navigate the Steele County Times

The Steele County Times is a countywide newspaper serving all of Steele County and the surrounding counties.

As a helpful tool, we'd like to share some information with you to help you navigate the Times and use it to your fullest potential. Many of the questions below come from people who want to know more about our publication.

How often is the Steele County Times published?

The Times is a weekly newspaper coming out on Wednesday afternoons and distributed to most subscribers via U.S. Mail on Thursdays.

We also have a strong on-line presence in which we share breaking news stories and update news stories throughout the week at www.steelecountytimes.com.

Why did I get a newspaper this week if I don't subscribe?

This week we are sending the newspaper to nearly every household in Steele County as a way for you to become acquainted with us. This week's paper is representative of the kind of news you can expect each and every week. We would love to count you among our growing reader base.

How many people read the Steele County Times?

Our circulation is approaching the 3,000 mark. In the past year and a half, we have added hundreds of new readers. This kind of growth is unprecedented for any newspaper.

What can I expect from the Steele County Times each week?

Our newspaper is packed with community news, sports and feature stories from all communities within Steele County, including Blooming Prairie, Ellendale, Medford and Owatonna. We provide hometown news of people that matter most to you—friends, neighbors and people in your community. We are 100% local with everything we do. Our motto is ALWAYS LOCAL, ALL THE TIME.

How do I subscribe?

There are four easy ways to subscribe to the weekly newspaper:

- **In person**—at one of our two offices in Blooming Prairie (411 E. Main St.) and Owatonna (109 W. Rose St.)
- **By phone**—call us at 507-583-4431 and we'd be glad to take payment over the phone.
- **On-line**—you can go to www.steelecountytimes.com and click on the "subscribe" button on the right side at the very top.
- **Mail**—send payment of \$49 for 14 months for print edition or \$35 for E-Edition to Steele County Times, P.O. Box 247, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917 or 109 W. Rose St., Owatonna, MN 55060.

What's E-Edition?

For those who would prefer to access the newspaper on-line instead of a printed

copy, we offer the E-Edition, which is an electronic form of the entire newspaper. The E-Edition is generally available late Wednesday afternoon. We are currently offering an E-Edition only special of \$35 for 14 months. Call our office for more details.

What's this newsletter I hear people get during the week?

We offer a service called E-Blast, which is an electronic newsletter highlighting major news stories of the week. We also utilize this service to provide breaking news stories when they occur. We send an alert to your email, which directs you to our website for the news update we are putting out. Just call our office and ask to be placed on E-Blast. All we need is your email address.

How do I submit a news item or story idea?

We are always looking for news items and story ideas to share with our readers. You can come into one of our offices, call us or email information to news@steelecountytimes.com.

How do I place an advertisement?

We have qualified people to help you with your advertisements. You can reach out to us by coming into one of our offices, calling us or emailing to news@steelecountytimes.com.

Can I submit a letter to the editor?

Yes, we always accept letters to the editor or guest columns. However, they must be signed and contact information must be given to us so we can verify the letter or column. Letters are generally 300 words or less and columns can go up to 500 words.

Where is the newspaper printed?

Our newspaper is printed at the House of Print in Madelia. The House of Print prints roughly 35 newspapers across southern Minnesota as well as several daily newspapers throughout the region. Readers have often commented about the excellent print quality of our newspaper.

How big is your news staff and what kind of experience does it offer?

We have a team of seven editors and writers representing 175 combined years of journalism experience. Most of the members of our news team have been in the business for 20, 30 or more years. This is highly unusual for a publication of our size. We feel fortunate to offer dedicated and talented journalists who share a strong passion for community news.

Isn't the newspaper industry dying?

Absolutely not! We are living proof that the industry can thrive and will be around for many years to come. Just like any industry, ours has experienced challenges in recent years. But we are confident that being hyper-local will allow newspapers to survive. We continue to grow as readers want to be connected to their communities and know what's going on.

GUEST COLUMN

Permanent tax relief needed in light of expanding surplus

BY JOHN PETERSBURG

Lawmakers returned to St. Paul understanding they would be making decisions on how to allocate a record state budget surplus. On Feb. 28, the surplus record was broken again.

In their latest economic forecast, Minnesota's economic experts project a \$9.3 billion surplus for the 2022-23 legislative biennium. That figure is up \$1.5 billion from the already historic \$7.7 billion surplus projected in November.

I firmly believe we have to put this money back in the hands of Minnesotans through permanent tax relief, especially since residents are facing higher costs of living on everything from food to gasoline. Prices are skyrocketing under the Biden/Walz economy and enacting tax relief is one way we

can help as it allows people to keep more of what they earn.

As I've stated before, eliminating the state tax on Social Security would be a good place to start. Many senior citizens are living on fixed incomes to begin with, and it doesn't make sense for Minnesota to be taxing their benefits. All areas of tax relief should be on the table this session, as we should be seeking to help as many Minnesotans as we can.

It's also worth exploring if we should pay cash for some one-time projects such as road and bridge construction. Doing so could lower future state debt in our capital investment bill, where transportation funding projects of statewide significance are typically funded.

But the overwhelming majority of this surplus, in my opinion, should be used for

permanent and significant tax relief. A record windfall gives lawmakers the opportunity to do something historic for our taxpayers, and we should take advantage of it.

Deadlines Approaching

While work has been steady in our House committees since the start of session, things will really begin to heat up in the next month as committee deadlines are approaching. These deadlines represent the times when a bill must receive action from a committee in order for it to move forward the rest of session. The deadlines do not apply to the House committees on Capital Investment, Ways and Means, Taxes, or Rules and Legislative Administration.

The first deadline is for committees to act favorably on bills in the house of origin (in this

case, the Minnesota House) is March 25. The second deadline is for committees to act favorably on bills, or companions of bills, that met the first deadline in the other house (in this case, the Minnesota Senate) is April 1. The third deadline is for committees to act favorably on major appropriation and finance bills is April 8.

With session ending in mid-May, many of the bills that move forward in the next few weeks will likely be a part of any end of session agreement made between the House and Senate. I will be sure to keep you updated on these as we move forward.

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

YOUR VIEW

State House needs to act on unemployment

To-the-Editor: Governor Walz and the Minnesota Senate both agree resolving the unemployment insurance trust fund deficit with surplus dollars is the right thing to do. The Minnesota House of Representatives is on the clock.

If they do not pass a clean bill (SF 2677) to resolve the unemployment

insurance trust fund deficit by March 15, businesses in our community will see double-digit payroll tax increases.

Thirty-one other states across the country have repaid unemployment insurance trust fund debts with surplus dollars, taking the burden of massive payroll tax increases off of employers.

Our businesses had no control over the pandemic and the forced business closures—but now could face double digit tax increases at a time of great economic uncertainty. They shouldn't be penalized for unemployment created by the pandemic and forced closures. The last thing we need is another cost increase, and more barriers

to economic recovery.

The Senate has acted and passed SF2677. Thank you to Sen. John Jasinski for voting for this bill. The House of Representatives needs to get this done. Thank you Rep. John Petersburg for your support in the House.

Brad Meier
Owatonna Chamber President

Can COVID-19 cause shingles?

Dear Savvy Senior,
How effective is the shingles vaccine and what is the CDC recommendation for getting it? My older brother and sister, both in their fifties, got COVID a few months back followed by shingles. Do you know if there is a connection between these viruses, and would the shingles vaccine have protected them?

Scared of Shingles

Dear Scared,
Great question! Many healthcare professionals across the country have been urging their older patients to get the shingles vaccine (in addition to the COVID-19 vaccinations) during the pandemic because getting COVID-19 can increase your chances of developing shingles. And the more severe case of COVID you get, the greater your risk for shingles.

The reason for this is because when you contract COVID-19 your immune system becomes compromised fighting off the virus, which gives shingles – a virus that already exist in your body if you’ve had chickenpox – a chance to reactivate.

Here’s what you should know about shingles, the shingles vaccine, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations.

What are Shingles?

Shingles, also known as herpes zoster, is a burning, blistering skin rash that affects around 1 million Americans each year. The same virus that causes chickenpox causes shingles. What happens is the chickenpox virus that most people get as kids never leaves the body. It hides in the nerve cells near the spinal cord and, for some people, emerges lat-



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er in the form of shingles.

In the U.S., about one out of every three people will develop shingles during their lifetime. While anyone who’s had chickenpox can get shingles, it most commonly occurs in people over age 50, along with people who have weakened immune systems. But you can’t catch shingles from someone else.

Early signs of the disease include pain, itching or tingling before a blistering rash appears several days later, and can last up to four weeks. The rash typically occurs on one side of the body, often as a band of blisters that extends from the middle of your back around to the breastbone. It can also appear above an eye or on the side of the face or neck.

In addition to the rash, about 20 to 25 percent of those who get shingles go on to develop severe nerve pain (postherpetic neuralgia, or PHN) that can last for months or even years. And in rare cases, shingles can also cause strokes, encephalitis, spinal cord damage and vision loss.

Shingles Vaccine

The vaccine for shingles called Shingrix (see *Shingrix.com*) provides much better protection than the old shingles vaccine, Zostavax.

Manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline, Shingrix is 97 percent effective in preventing shingles in people 50 to 69 years old, and 91 percent

effective in those 70 and older.

Shingrix also does a terrific job of preventing nerve pain that continues after a shingles rash has cleared – about 90 percent effective.

Because of this protection, the CDC recommends that everyone age 50 and older, receive the Shingrix vaccine, which is given in two doses, separated by two to six months.

Even if you’ve already had shingles, you still need these vaccinations because reoccurring cases are possible. The CDC also recommends that anyone previously vaccinated with Zostavax be revaccinated with Shingrix.

You should also know that Shingrix can cause some adverse side effects for some people, including muscle pain, fatigue, headache, fever and upset stomach.

Shingrix – which averages around \$205 for both doses – is covered by most private health insurance plans including Medicare Part D prescription drug plans, but there may be a cost to you depending on your plan. Contact your insurer to find out.

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

History from the News Archives

‘All I have on is KRFO’



Todd Hale, Arnie Schuman and Pink Allen gather at Central Park to advertise Crazy Dayz in Owatonna. They prominently boasted that “all I have on is KRFO.” This photo is one of many featured at the current music display at the Steele County History Center in Owatonna. The music display runs through the end of the year.

10 Years Ago March 10, 2012

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

After being vacant for several years, a landmark restaurant in Mower County is about to come to life again. But, this time it won’t be as a restaurant. Lansing Corners has rich history of being an entertainment venue in the region dating back to 1938, will open as an event center later this month and will be called Lansing Corners Event Center, according to owner Dave Olson. It will officially open March 24 with a wedding reception. Not only available for weddings, but graduation and retirement parties and pretty much any types of special events.

Blooming Prairie’s highest educator is being recognized as one of the top administrators in Minnesota. Barry Olson, superintendent since 2001, will be honored as an administrator of excellence. The veteran superintendent is being honored for his leadership, concern for students and active involvement in professional and community affairs. He is active in the Blooming Prairie Education Foundation, Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce and a former member of the Minnesota High School League.

20 Years Ago March 5, 2002

ELSIE SLINGER, EDITOR

Blooming Prairie Elementary school students had fun with dress up Fridays in February. The winners of “Hat Day” are Kyle Rossow, Aaron Schroeder, Erin Johnson, Autumn Hamberg, Ashley Hueman, Collin McDonald, Adam Driessen, Isaac Clark, Josh Kaplan, Nicole Weiss, Allison Stoltz, Lyndsay Pryor and Time Decker.

At the Chili Supper held in Blooming Prairie last Saturday night, many made and brought their favorite chili recipes for enjoying. At the supper, Jim Fieberger won the “Inferno” category; Kim Lea won the “Unique Class” and the “People’s Choice” category and Worlein Funeral Home won the “Theme” category.

50 Years Ago March 6, 1972

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

George D. Carroll announced this week that he has sold the Round-the-Clock Laundromat in Blooming Prairie, which he opened in 1959, to Howard R. Kusske. The new owner will take over the operation on March 10. Kusske is a former employee of the Blooming Prairie Coop and has resided here for a number of years. He plans to continue operation at the same location and in a manner similar to the previous owner.

Two members of the Blooming Prairie FFA chapter won top honors in the District and Regional State Farmers Review recently. They are Don Olson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Christy Olson and Gary Schultz, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Schultz.

CORRECTION

In history photo featured in last week’s edition, the Times incorrectly stated that Roger Tenney had passed away. He is still alive and living at a care facility in the Twin Cities, according to local historian Todd Hale. The Times apologizes for this inadvertent error and any confusion this may have caused.

Business owner loses battle with cancer

◀ **BUSINESS** from A1

pointments during her cancer battle.
Johnson called Eaker “the energizer bunny of energy.” Eaker was known as a hard worker, driven, detail oriented, kind and generous, Johnson said. “She loved her work, cared for her co-workers and enjoyed her customers,” she said, adding she had worked behind the scenes even recently.

Eaker will be remembered for always being on the cutting edge of innovation, advertising and customer service, Johnson said.

“Donnavon will be deeply missed but her example will influence my life in many ways for years to come,” Johnson said. “It comforts me to

know she knew Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior and lived each day as a witness.”

Doctors diagnosed Eaker with non-small lung cancer in November 2020. At the time a CT scan showed cancer in the brain, bones, liver, lymph nodes and a tumor in the lung. She immediately began treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester.

“I’m not ready to hang it up yet,” Eaker said during a 2020 interview with the Times shortly after her diagnosis. “I will fight this,” she said with determination.

Among the treatments she received was Keytruda, a relatively new drug that is immunotherapy for advanced non-small

lung cancer patients. While chemo doesn’t penetrate the brain, Keytruda does get at it.

Throughout the battle, Eaker leaned on her faith to get her through the darkest times. “I let my faith be bigger than my fear,” Eaker said. “I know Jesus is surrounding his arms and protecting me. I can’t imagine anyone without faith. It would be such a deep hole.”

Eaker expressed a great amount of hope during her cancer battle. “If I don’t have hope, it’s a darn lonely road to go down,” she said. The cancer diagnosis forced Eaker to be away much of the time from the meat market. She became emotional on Christmas Eve 2020 when she couldn’t be at work on the busiest day of the year helping at the store. Instead she was receiving chemo.

Eaker graduated from Claremont High School in 1968 and attended beauty school in Faribault. The family moved to Ellendale in 1973 when they purchased Pete and Rubes Market, paving the way to it becoming the legendary Steve’s Meat Market.

In addition to owning the business, Eaker was heavily involved in the community. Her biggest passion was leading the Ellendale Days committee and organizing the Ellendale centennial.

She was involved on the boards of the Minnesota Association of Meat Processors and the American Association of Meat Processors for many years.

Funeral services were held Wednesday at First Lutheran Church in Ellendale.

A full obituary can be found on Page A17.



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PANTHER OF THE WEEK



KIARA MOEN

This week’s Panther of the Week is **TIANNA WALLACE**. She is the daughter of Kurt and Alicia Wallace and they reside in Geneva. Tianna is in Mr. Beynon’s third grade class.

Tianna really excels in staying positive and being respectful. She is always offering to help Mr. Beynon with tasks around the room and she’ll sacrifice her free time to help others. Tianna always has a positive attitude and she’s incredibly creative.

Tianna loves riding bike and riding horse during the summer! Keep up the great work Tianna!



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District 1 on track to see special election primary

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

With less than a week left in the special election campaign filing period, it looks like Minnesota's First Congressional District is headed for a primary on its path to filling the seat of the late Rep. Jim Hagedorn.

He died of kidney cancer Feb. 17, forcing a series of elections to find his successor for the remainder of his term, which expires in January, and to select a new Congressman for 2022-24. Funeral services were held this past Saturday in Truman.

Confirmed candidates

State Rep. Jeremy Munson (R-23B), of Lake Crystal, has thrown his hat in the ring; he's already announced he won't run for re-election at the state level.

According to the Minnesota Secretary of State website, Republicans Bob "Again" Carney Jr. and Ken Navitsky have also filed for the seat.

Readjusted boundary lines for the district brought both Wabasha and Goodhue counties into the fold, which in turn has brought Red Wing resident and businessman Richard DeVoe into play.

He joins Richard Painter, a law professor at the University of Minnesota who has said

he will move to Faribault, on the Democratic ticket.

Ballotpedia.com lists Republican Michael Hastings as a candidate in the Republican primary; Logan Wajer, of Worthington, has filed for the general election as an Independent.

Voting boundaries

But not everyone in the newly drawn First Congressional District can vote in the string of elections that is required to fill Hagedorn's seat.

Only those who lived within the old district boundaries can vote in the special election processes, because they're the people who were represented by Hagedorn.

All residents of the updated Congressional District 1 are eligible to vote in the primary for the general election, as well as the general election itself.

Other candidates?

Hagedorn, a two-term legislator, edged out Democrat Dan Feehan in 2018, with a margin of just 1,300 votes out of a total of nearly 292,000. It was one of the closest races in the nation.

Their 2020 rematch wasn't as close; Hagedorn defeated Feehan by 3% of the vote, with a third-party candidate picking up nearly 6%.

Feehan said last week he wouldn't be running in the special election, but hinted he

wasn't finished with politics.

Also rejecting a bid to run were Republican state senators Carla Nelson of Rochester and Julie Rosen of Fairmont, as well as Republican Jason Baskin, an Austin City Council member.

Jennifer Carnahan, Hagedorn's widow and the former chair of the Minnesota Republican Party, has people speculating that she'll step in to fulfill her late husband's term. She resigned from her state role amid a fundraising controversy and her association with a man indicted for sex trafficking.

Brad Finstad, a former Republican

state representative from New Ulm, is also considered a likely candidate, though he hasn't announced any plans.

Election season

The filing period for the special election ends Tuesday. The primary for the special election is May 24; the special election – with the winner filling Hagedorn's seat until January – is Aug. 9.

The filing period for the general election is May 17-31. The primary for the general election will also be Aug. 9, and will set the ballot for the Nov. 8 general election.

The winner of that election will serve a full two-year term in the U.S. House of Representatives.



Ashes to ashes



Christians mark the start of the Lenten season by having ashes placed on their foreheads. Rev. Todd Buegler and Rev. Amanda Floy of Trinity Lutheran Church in Owatonna imposed ashes on parishioners with the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Lent is the six-week period leading up to Easter, one of the most important times of the year for many Christians.

STAFF PHOTOS BY RICK BUSSLER

Working together

Over the past few years we have become accustomed to sharing our opinions with little or no regard for the consequences. As a result, our communities are feeling the impact, neighbor against neighbor, business against business, a me first attitude.

Over the last two weeks, the country appears to be slowly uniting. Sadly, it seems to be centered around the attack on the Ukraine. The unified front across not only our country but the world has been uplifting. Countries taking in refugees, companies removing Russian made items from store shelves, donations streaming in for basic needs. I am truly in awe of how quickly we all came together.

Imagine if we could do this in our daily lives, one block at a time. The neighbor who is struggling to get that last bit of ice off their driveway, or a kind word on a Facebook post or maybe no word at all on a Facebook post.

It is time we dial back the rhetoric, focus on how we can become a positive contributor to our local and global society. Stop arguing with one another and listen to each other's opinions with an open ear. We do not have to agree, but we do need to get back to being respectful and considerate of each other. Stop spreading inaccurate information. Instead take the time to verify what we are sharing, have honest and open communication on the issues



Steele Talkin' STEPHANIE KIBLER

and the needs we are facing.

It is time to embrace the individuals we come in contact with, not just our family and friends, but strangers also. And, it is time for us to embrace ourselves.

Research shows by performing or observing kind acts every day boosts happiness. It also shows that kindness from one helps foster kindness in others. We often take our cues from leaders, coworkers, and others we interact with daily. Why not be the kind person from whom others take their cues?

In addition, studies have found that being kind is linked to increased feelings of happiness, wellbeing, and life satisfaction for people of all ages. Across a range of studies, people who carry out acts of kindness are found to experience greater wellbeing.

So, let's take pause before we type that social media response or blurt out something we may regret. Let's take the time to choose our words carefully and with kindness. Let's lead with compassion, follow with kindness.

Stephanie Kibler resides in Ellendale and serves on the city council. She is also the executive director of the Freeborn County Historical Museum in Albert Lea. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.

Area historians resurrect sign from old ballroom

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

It would be easy to say Terry Prokopec and Lloyd Kaplan literally have a nose for history.

Something caught their eye as they drove by Bixby a few years back when they were making several trips to Blooming Prairie for another history project. They saw a sign lying in the weeds. Upon investigating a little further, they discovered it was a sign for Zeiner's Ballroom, which had been a booming hub

for dancing for many decades.

The sign once had hung on a pole in front of the ballroom.

Prokopec and Kaplan approached the owners, Ted and Shelly Janning, about the sign. The Jannings donated it to the local historians. LeRoy Sommers showed up with his trailer and hauled it away to his place for about seven years before he moved off the farm. It was then moved to Bill Hartle's place for another four years.

The large sign has finally found a permanent home at the Steele County History Center in Owatonna where it's currently on display for the music exhibit, which runs throughout the year.

"I'm glad we salvaged it," said Kaplan while looking at the sign all spiffed up and lit up just like old days. "I'm sure it would have eventually been destroyed, bull dozed."

Kaplan recalled the condition of the sign when they discovered it.

See AREA on A17 ►



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Several local history buffs have saved a sign that once illuminated outside Zeiner's Ballroom in Bixby. Those who assisted in getting the sign displayed at the Steele County History Center include, from left: Terry Prokopec, LeRoy Sommers and Lloyd Kaplan. The sign will be on display throughout the year as part of the music display.



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Record year for Hometown Sampler

Benefit raises \$28K for Community Pathways

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The top was blown off the record books for the 28th annual Hometown Sampler that supports the Steele County Food Shelf, now called Community Pathways of Steele County, Inc.

With the exception of a missed year in 2021 due to COVID-19, the Hometown Sampler Concert Series has brought local musical talent together to help raise funds for the Steele County Food Shelf.

The weekend of music supports community hunger needs.

Dom Korbelt, executive director of Community Pathways of Steele County, couldn't believe the total that rang up after four concert shows

helped raise funds to perpetuate the Community Pathways food shelf.

He revealed the grand total for the four concerts at \$28,032. Pathways volunteers also collected 200 pounds of food.

Attendance was listed at 1,200 for the four shows held at the Little Theatre in Owatonna.

"The overwhelming generosity of our Steele County residents just amazes me," said Korbelt.

Korbelt dusted off his trusty calculator for the four shows and came up with these impressive totals:

- Friday: \$11,775
- Saturday afternoon: \$3,938
- Saturday evening: \$4,806

• Sunday: \$7,513
Four very talented musical groups entertained some lively audiences following action on the LTO stage. The musical lineup looked like this:

Turn the Page—Colin Whalen, John Lestock, Jessica Dant, Paul Kunkel, Vianna Bohlen and Scott Rogness.

Bad Tangerines—Michael Ferch, Erin Terres, Tammi Ferch, Libby Berg, Don Hettin-ga, Jodie DeKam and Dan Dent.

The Gogs—John Weisenburger, Lindsey Hugstad-Vaa, Nate Sherwood, Mark Ander-son, Soren Bjornstad, Dan Leer, Marcia Ander-son and David Dow.

Mile 5—Benn Konold, Gavin Glynn, D.J. Chatelaine, Noah DeKam and Logan Johnson.

All entertainers were invited on stage for a finale number which



The Bowman triplets of Owatonna celebrated their eighth birthdays by attending a Community Pathways of Steele County event, the Hometown Sampler. They were also called on stage by one of the bands. Shown from left to right are: Kelsie Bowman, Carter Bowman and Cora Bowman.

turned out to be a popular Beatles number, "Here Comes the Sun."

An unexpected high-light came mid-way in the show when triplets Kelsie Bowman, Carter Bow-man and Cora Bowman were invited on stage to dance to the music. The triplets were celebrating their eighth birthdays on this date, March 4.

Dave Otto and John Havelka were emcees for the Hometown Sampler. They brought some fun-ny humor to the evening.

At Community Path-ways, its vision is to promote a stronger and healthier community by being a trusted re-source for food, clothing and other support.

The food shelf exists, says director Korbelt, "be-cause thousands of our friends and neighbors in Steele County rely on our help to provide basic needs and resources for their families."

Korbelt continued to elaborate on communi-ty needs saying, "While

we wish there was no need for our work, we are proud of the com-munity's response.

"We are mindful and grateful to the many people who freely and frequently volunteer their time, dollars and energies as well as those who lead the organizations we join in partnership."

Many of these concert entertainers were returning to the stage for the first time since COVID-19 struck.



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Turn the Page, a local musical group, kicked off the Friday night Hometown Sampler performance at the Little Theatre in Owatonna. The Sampler event raised funds for the Community Pathways of Steele County.

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Sheriff to seek another term

◀ **SHERIFF** from A1 handling the storm as best as it can. “As long as we are doing the right thing, it will keep us in good with the people,” he said.

As sheriff, Thiele has immersed himself into the community. “I involve myself in as many community organizations as I can,” he said, noting he currently serves on no less than 15 organizations on the local, state and federal levels.

As an example, Thiele recently took on the role as president of the Blooming Prairie Foundation. “My commitment is to everyone in the county,” he said.

During his latest term in office, Thiele has been elected to the executive board of the Minnesota Sheriff’s Association. He will become the association’s president in 2026, the first time Steele County has been represented on the state level since former sheriff Bill Hildebrandt served in 1996.

Last April he was elected to the executive board of FBI-LEEDA, which is a non-profit organization focused on advancing the science and art of law enforcement leadership.

He said he has become instrumental in the state and national boards to help get rid of law enforcement’s black eye. “Knowing I have a voice on most of these boards will help prevent problems like in the Twin Cities,” Thiele said.

Asked how he keeps his schedule straight, Thiele smiled and pointed to the Mountain Dew can next to him. “I like to lead by example,” he said. “As sheriff, you have to be one for the people.”

Throughout the past four years, Thiele has been focused on his budget. He has sliced nearly a half million dollars off his capital improvement plan over the next eight years by taking advantage of various grants and other programs offered as a result of COVID-19.

Some of the highlights include \$263,000 for portable radios, \$83,000 for a pick-up and emergency response trailer, \$42,000 for portable cell sense detectors at the jail,

\$41,000 for lifesaving AED machines and \$41,000 for a decontamination robot. All of those came at no cost to local taxpayers.

“I’m always looking for ways to save the county money,” Thiele said.

The veteran sheriff has also been able to re-instate the K-9 program through community donations. He chose to go with a non-aggressive dog, which offers tracking and narcotic enforcement, but does not bite anyone. “It’s working better than it ever has,” he said of the K-9 program.

The sheriff’s office added a School Resource Officer to Medford School last fall after receiving a federal grant that covers 75% of the cost for three years. The remaining 25% is split between the county and school district.

While Minneapolis and St. Paul have been plagued with record violent crime, it’s quite the opposite in Steele County. Thiele points to the overall crime rate, which is down in the county, and violent crime has been nearly nonexistent.

One of the greatest tests came last year during the Steele County Free Fair, which Thiele’s office is responsible for protecting. Other neighboring counties experienced issues at their fairs.

“We stepped up law enforcement at the fair after what happened in Olmsted County,” Thiele said. “There are a lot of logistics to keep public safety at an event of this magnitude,” he said, adding Steele County lowered calls for service and issues at the fair.

Others have taken notice. KFAN-Radio, for example, named Steele County as the best fair in Minnesota last year. “This comes from a lot of team work from fair staff and logistics of law enforcement,” Thiele said.

Thiele, who supervises 24 sworn deputies, is proud of his department’s training. “I’m always providing the necessary training and education for my deputies within my budget to ensure public safety,” he said.

He noted his office is not as hands on as

it once was. “We have gone from hands-on use of force training to training that focuses on today’s issues. It’s de-escalation talk instead of hands-on,” he said, adding much of the training now focuses on mental health disorders.

“I will put our training up against anyone in the state,” Thiele said. “We have phenomenal tactical instructors that teach everything needed in today’s changing law enforcement.”

As Thiele aims to make Steele County the safest around, he isn’t afraid to take a page from Andy Griffith TV Show and Mayberry.

“It’s not just about driving around and waiting for a call,” Thiele said. “It’s about getting out to talk to people like Andy Griffith did. I’m a firm believer in presence is power. Being visible to the public.”

Thiele and his wife, Brooke, have two daughters and live south of Owatonna.

No one has announced that they will challenge Thiele in this year’s election. Filing for local and state offices begins in May.

For McGhee, conversations are in the bag

◀ **MCGHEE** from A1 some. I love communicating with others.”

Communicating comes naturally – he gets a lot of it, as one of Kevin and Kim McGhee’s eight children.

“Sometimes, they say I talk too much,” he smiled.

A junior in high school, the 16-year-old has been home-schooled for the past seven years. He helps with the family’s large garden during the summer and loves to help around the house – “with a big family, there’s always chores,” he said.

His favorite thing, though, is building LEGO sets.

McGhee started applying for jobs in August, “and this one got me first,” he said. “I love being able to talk to other people – customers and employees. I’ve gotten to know a lot of people.”

He works about 25 hours each week, which fits nicely with his schedule.

“I can get my schoolwork done early,” McGhee said, and be at work by 3 p.m.

“Most of the time, he’ll be the first one (other employees) call to fill in,” Olson said. “He’s the one that will come in to cover for them.”



STAFF PHOTO BY KAY FATE

Drew McGhee, 16, works part time at Vandal’s Family Market in Blooming Prairie, where he’s known for his chatty demeanor. The job fits nicely into his home-school schedule and church activities.

McGhee stocks shelves, runs the cash register, makes salads; “pretty much whatever needs to be done, I do that,” he said.

“It’s weird, but I really love to fill these pop cases,” McGhee said, pointing to the glass-fronted coolers at the end of each checkout lane.

“There’s something about seeing them all lined up.” He

shrugged, then smiled. “It looks good.”

He broke away from the conversation to scan groceries for a customer, asking earnestly how her day was going, how her cat was doing.

Typical Drew, Olson repeated.

“He’s a good kid,” she said. “When he learns new things, he shows excitement – and he’s always ready to learn.”

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TIGERS OF THE MONTH

MARCH 2022

High School Tigers of the Month



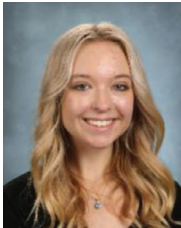
7th Grade – Alex Gonzalez



8th Grade – Evelyn Guerrero



9th Grade – Lydia Heiderscheidt



10th Grade – Ava Clark



11th Grade – Jenesis McGuire



12th Grade – Bryce Grayson

Elementary School Tigers of the Month



Kindergartner – Jasmine Meuwissen



1st Grader – Scarlet Jensen



2nd Grade – Lilly Krohn



3rd Grade – Avery Sheeler



4th Grade – Grant Salazar



5th Grade – Eric Garcia



6th Grade – Natalie Wolf

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An African Journey



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Reading is contiguous throughout Owatonna Schools, including Wilson Elementary, which recently featured a Family Night for students and parents. Top: Some students are having fun picking out books to read. Bottom: The night featured local children's author and illustrator, Joni Oeltjenbruns. Oeltjenbruns is from Owatonna and is the author and/or illustrator of a number of children's books. She provided an interactive demonstration of the writing and illustration process using her book, "Rafu: An African Journey."



Spread the Word to End the Word campaign

BY JILLIAN STAUFFER
OHS MAGNET WRITER

Spread the Word to End the Word is a campaign to raise awareness on the hurtful effects of the "R" word and encourage people to pledge to stop using it. A national awareness day is held on the first Wednesday of each March, and took place on March 2. Many schools choose to incorporate this campaign onto their campus, including here at Owatonna High School.

At OHS, the hope of this campaign is to raise awareness on the harmful effects of the R word towards the many students who

still use it as a regular part of their vocabulary. Senior Justice Holmes said, "It's really frustrating to see how many students here will throw this word around without thinking of how it affects others." This is also a time to focus on how OHS can better incorporate students with disabilities into student life. Special Education Teacher Ms. Michele Ulferts said, "I would love to see students with disabilities be more a part of mainstream high school things like dances and Snow Week." It is important to constantly be thinking of ways to include all in the school and community.

The campaign was founded in 2009 by college students Soeren Palumbo and Tim Shriver with the focus of not only eliminating the use of the R word but also to strive for inclusion for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Since 2009, over 840,000 people and more than 6,000 schools have participated in signing the online pledge to stop using hurtful language and work towards inclusion.

OHS students will be able to participate in this campaign by signing the "End The R Word" pledge in common areas at lunch. By signing this

pledge, it signifies to that student and others that they will remove dehumanizing language from their vocabulary and work to include others at the high school and in the community. Students will also receive bracelets about inclusion to raise awareness. Ms. Ulferts said, "My hope would be to see every single student and staff member's name on that pledge." While signing a name on a pledge or wearing a bracelet is a symbolic action that does very little in the real world, it can be a step in the right direction for the school as a whole to learn ways to spread inclusivity.



Owatonna Online accepting registration

Owatonna Online, the accredited K-12 online public school offered free through Owatonna Public Schools for any Minnesota student, is accepting registrations. Owatonna Online offers strong core in-

struction from licensed Owatonna teachers. The flexible schedule features personalized options and self-pacing, with support available. Visit owatonnaonline.org for more information and to register.

School Calendar

Important Upcoming School Dates

March 10: Owatonna Middle School Conferences
March 24: End of third quarter
March 25: No school, teacher work day
March 28-April 1: No school, spring break
April 15: No school
May 30: No school
June 2: Last day of school
June 3: Graduation

Upcoming School Board meetings

March 14: 5:30 p.m. – School Board Work Session
March 21: 5:30 p.m. – School Board Meeting (note date change)
April 11: 5:30 p.m. – School Board Work Session
April 25: 5:30 p.m. – School Board Meeting
May 9: 5:30 p.m. – School Board Work Session
May 23: 5:30 p.m. – School Board Meeting

All School Board meetings are held in the Small Group Forum at Owatonna High School

Students of the Week

Elementary School



Quinn Knudson
Second Grade
Parents: Nikkole Schwichtenberg
Matthew Knudson

Quinn is an amazing leader in our second grade class! She is a hard worker who always puts forth her best efforts. Quinn is a friend to everyone, and she is always willing to help her classmates and her teachers. Keep up the great work, Quinn!



Yadira Colunga
Fifth Grade
Parents: Ada Colunga Luna
and Jesus Colunga Gomez

Yadira amazes us with her ability to adjust from living in Mexico and speaking Spanish, to living in Minnesota and speaking English. She is a talented artist and avid reader who picks up new math skills quickly. Yadira is a kind, compassionate friend, and we are thankful that she is a part of our learning community!

High School



Skyllar Ortega
Senior
Parents: Desiree Gowlland
and Salvador Ortega

Sky continues to grow in academics, extracurricular activities such as carolers and concert choir, and her interactions with others. She is a positive influence on other students in the classroom, whether it's helping them with work, or showing them compassion. We are so proud of you, Sky!



Logen Rink-Bermea
Senior
Parent: Julie Garza

Logen has been doing outstanding work in his Algebra II class! It has been great to see him succeed! Logen is inclusive of his peers, always has a smile on his face, and he is willing to help anyone at any time! Keep up the great work, Logen!

The Addams Family takes stage



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Students at Owatonna High School performed the Addams Family musical last week. Based on Charles Addams' original macabre cartoons, the Addams Family musical conjured the irreverent spirit and morbid humor of the comics while illustrating that though the unknown may be frightening, when we face the darkness, love and acceptance await.

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Steele County Free Fair

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RICK BUSSLER
Publisher

Rick began his journalistic career in 1981 as an eighth grader by working at his hometown newspaper, the Brownton Bulletin. He has a mass communications degree from Minnesota State University Mankato. Since then, he has worked for several weekly newspapers and KAAL-TV as a news reporter. He also has 20 years of law enforcement experience where he produced and hosted a cable TV show for the police department. Rick has owned the Steele County Times since 2009 and is excited to focus solely on local news for readers.

DEB FLEMMING
News Editor

Deb brings 30 years of journalism experience to the Steele County Times. She has spent most of her career reporting and editing community newspapers. She began her career at her hometown newspaper, the Waseca Daily Journal. She is a former editor of the Owatonna People's Press (1985-1992) and the Mankato Free Press (1995-2005). She has also served as an adjunct professor for the St. Cloud State University's Department of Mass Communication.



KAY FATE
Staff Writer

Kay is another journalist offering 30 years of journalism experience to readers of the Times. She began her career at the Owatonna People's Press in 1989. Since then, she has worked at papers across southeast Minnesota and spent 10 years as the public safety reporter for the Post Bulletin in Rochester. She has a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Northern Iowa and has used that in her journalism work, as well, educating many civic groups on the importance of local media. She has also worked at KAAL-TV in Rochester.

JONI HUBRED
Staff Writer

Joni has recently joined the Steele County Times and brings with her 35 years of journalism experience as a reporter and editor. She is an award-winning journalist who began her career in the mid-1980s at a small town newspaper in Minnesota and continued in Michigan for many years before moving back to Minnesota last year. She grew up in rural Minnesota with a passion for reading and creative writing. She is passionate about community journalism.



HOWARD LESTRUD
Contributing Writer

Howard has been recognized by the Minnesota Newspaper Association for his 50 years in the newspaper business, most of which was as an editor for ECM Publishers, Inc. in Forest Lake. He also has done stints at newspapers in Albert Lea and Winona. Howard has been with the Steele County Times for the past six years.

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BLOOMING PRAIRIE

- MARCH 14**
7 p.m.— City Council Meeting

MARCH 15
10 a.m. — Online Storytime, BP Library
- MARCH 17**
7 p.m.- Band Concert at High School

MARCH 21
7 p.m.- School Board Meeting

ELLENDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

- MARCH 11**
11 a.m. — SEMCAC, Community Building

MARCH 14
11 a.m. — SEMCAC, Community Building
- 7 p.m. — Berlin Township Meeting, Community Building

MARCH 16
11 a.m. — SEMCAC, Community Building

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

- MARCH 12**
5 p.m. — Evening for Kid's Sake Gala Fundraiser, Torey's

MARCH 14
4:30 p.m. — Owatonna Park Board Meeting, City Hall
5:30 p.m. — Moonlighters Exchange Club, Owatonna VFW

MARCH 15
10:30 a.m. — Online Storytime, Owatonna Library
- 4:30 p.m. — Owatonna Library Board Meeting, Library
7 p.m. — Owatonna City Council Meeting, City Hall

MARCH 16
4 p.m. — Owatonna EDA Meeting, City Hall

MARCH 17-19
9 a.m. - North American Farm & Power Show, Four Seasons Centre

Future childcare center gets roof



A construction crew works late last week on the new pitched roof of the Leo Augusta Children's Academy in Blooming Prairie. The former Minimizer building is being remodeled, and will include more than 18,000 square feet of building and land renovations on three acres. The facility will "deliver a hands-on model of child development," its website says, with the capacity to serve more than 100 children, infant through age 12. It's scheduled to open this spring.

Let's polka! History Center to feature Sturza Band as part of music tribute

The Steele County Historical Society will be bouncing on March 19 as it welcomes the Dan Sturza Band into the History Center for an evening of old-fashioned music.

The Dan Sturza Band, a polka band hailing from Steele County, will be bringing its unique and fun sound to the community for the evening, highlighting some of the more traditional sounds of the county. The concert will be held in the History Center's exhibit hall, with the current exhibit moved to another section of the building so that guests can still take in the history and fun of Steele County Makes Music.

The concert will be held on Saturday, March 19 at 7 p.m., with doors opening at 6:30 p.m. Guests will be permitted to view the Steele County Makes Music exhibit as well, before and during the show. Concert goers will be able to purchase wine, beer, and soft drinks throughout the show.

Tickets are \$10 for the general public and \$5 for Steele County Historical Society members, and can be purchased at the door or ahead of time. To pick up tickets ahead of time, call or stop by the History Center.

This is the first concert of a series that will be held throughout 2022 at the Steele County Historical Society in conjunction with the Steele County Makes Music exhibit. More musical events and performances will be occurring throughout the year, featuring local artists and a variety of different musical styles.

Contact the Steele County Historical Society at 507-451-1420 with any questions or to purchase tickets.

Prohibition and Historic Pub Trivia coming to History Center

The Steele County Historical Society (SCHS) announces the program "History of Prohibition in Steele County" to be presented by Nancy Vaillancourt and Steve Wencil on Thursday, March 10 beginning at 6:30 p.m.

This free event to the public will take place at the Steele County History Center, 1700 Austin Road, Owatonna. Following the presentation, SCHS will host its first Historic Pub Trivia Night!

This free event tells the story, beginning in the 1920s, of home stills, bootlegging, and moonshine in the Steele County area. Small area farms were the masters of disguise as home stills and moonshine eluded law enforcement of that day. Starting at 7:30 p.m., teams will compete through several rounds of boozy trivia with the winning team receiving a prize.

Doors will open at 6 p.m. with wine, beer, and soft drinks available for purchase along with free snacks. Please call 507-451-1420 for more information.

New children's programming being offered

The Steele County Historical Society is introducing a new programming series at the History Center, focusing on content for children and their caregivers.

History Detectives is designed to provide entertaining and educational programming designed specifically for children ages 2 to 10 years old as well as their parents or guardians. Educational content will be rooted in local history and themes that can be found in the History Center and Village of Yesteryear, providing a local foundation for learning.

Programs will be held at the History Center with two sections available each time: one for 2-5 year-olds and one for 6-10 year-olds. These programs are free to attend, and each child will be able to leave with a craft and take home educational materials to allow for continued learning.

The first series of programs was held Monday, March 7 and again on Saturday, March 12 at 1 p.m. These sections will focus on music and dance and their histories and relationships to local cultures, with the programs coinciding with the current exhibit on display at the History Center entitled Steele County Makes Music.

Children will have the chance to learn and perform dances, play music, and create crafts under the supervision of staff and volunteers from the Steele County Historical Society.

Space is limited for these programs, so parents are encouraged to call ahead to reserve their spaces. Contact the Steele County Historical Society at 507-451-1420 with any questions or to make a reservation.

Sudoku Corner

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

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

AAUW to focus on financial issues facing women

The Owatonna Branch of American Association of University Women (AAUW) will be held on Tuesday, March 15 at the Owatonna Arts Center.

A social hour will start at 6:30 p.m. followed by the meeting at 7 p.m. Masks are required.

Christina Wetmore, financial advisor at Ameriprise Financial Services, will speak on specific financial challenges women face, ways to address these challenges, and the psychology of financial decisions as they relate to women, including the potential benefit of working with a female advisor.

A \$5 fee will be charged at the door and the net proceeds will be donated to the Owatonna Arts Center. This event is co-sponsored by the Steele County Home Economics Association and the Owatonna Arts Center.

Lenten benefit fish dinner set for Friday

The Knights of Columbus Lenten benefit fish dinner will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, March 11, at the KC Hall.

The "All you care to eat" dinner will be served in the KC Hall and in the Lounge and features baked and fried fish, whipped potatoes with country gravy, vegetable, roll, coleslaw, coffee and milk.

Cost is \$13 in advance and \$14 at the door, with children under the age of 6 eating free. Advance tickets can be purchased from these groups: Medford – Knights of Columbus and Medford – Catholic Daughters Contact: Dan Morgan at 507-339-2146, Cathy Nelson at 507-676-2192, or the KC Hall, 820 S Elm Ave.

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Ellendale food shelf feeds a local need

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

It was like something out of an old Laurel and Hardy skit last week at the Ellendale Area Food Shelf.

“Could I speak to the new director?” a visitor asked a group of about five people – all of whom pointed at someone other than themselves.

“More of a group effort, then?” The heads all nodded; a few fingers still pointed elsewhere.

Cindy Nelson eventually – and reluctantly – took the role of spokeswoman.

“I’m not in charge,” she said. “I’m just doing the things that I’ve

done forever: ordering the food, picking up the food...”

It hasn’t been forever, but since 2010, it’s made a difference for the people who use it.

That includes Karon Forbis and Eric Techau, of Ellendale, who picked up supplies last week not only for their own family of five, but for Forbis’s grandmother and uncle, as well.

“We try to get here every week,” Forbis said as they packed eggs, milk, pasta, vegetables, fruit and meat into boxes. “It’s been a rough few months.”

The shelf “fills a need in this area,” Techau said; their groceries

typically last them most of the week.

And it’s unusual, for a small food shelf: Not many offer fresh dairy, meat, fresh fruits and fresh vegetables – as well as ready-to-eat meals.

Nelson orders food from Channel One Regional Food Bank in Rochester, which is delivered twice a month. She also shops at Aldis, then picks up the meat and those prepared meals at Kwik Trip in Owatonna.

“I also try to get things from (Lerberg’s Foods) in town,” she said. “Local people support us, so I support the local communities.”

The food shelf, housed at United Methodist Church in Ellendale, serves an average of about two dozen families each week. That can easily translate into nearly 100 people, Nelson said, drawing residents not only from town, but from Blooming Prairie, Clarks Grove and Geneva, as well.

Every Thursday from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., volunteers use the Fellowship Hall in the church to display the perishable food, hygiene products, clothing and toys. A



STAFF PHOTO BY KAY FATE

Last week’s team of volunteers at the Ellendale Area Food Shelf included Linda Riendeau, front, and in the back, from left, Dianne Lee, McKenzie Mueller, Matthew Mueller, Penni Mueller, Julie Schonrock and Cindy Nelson.



STAFF PHOTO BY KAY FATE

Karon Forbis and Eric Techau pause in front of a cart filled with groceries from the Ellendale Area Food Shelf. The couple picked up food for their family of five, as well as items for Forbis’s grandmother and uncle. The food shelf is open from 4:30-6:30 p.m. each Thursday at the United Methodist Church in Ellendale.

freezer and refrigerators are kept in another room, along with shelves of canned goods and other non-perishables.

Tables were filled with loaves of bread and buns of all varieties; fresh fruit included grapefruit, apples and pineapple. Vegetables included cabbage, peppers and onions. Much of the fresh food comes from Kwik Trip, Nelson said, as do packages of cookies and pastries.

Safety protocols remain in place; everyone wore masks, and using the Fellowship Hall was done to promote social distancing for the shoppers.

The majority of the volunteers are members of the church, and last week included high school students up to retirees.

But it really does take a village.

“We have an older couple, a grandma and grandpa, and every year, they take their grandkids shopping” for the

food shelf, Nelson said.

“For Christmas toys,” she clarified, “and not just a few.”

Donations are always welcome, of course. To make a monetary donation, mail it to P.O. Box 295, Ellendale, MN 56026.

To drop off food, call the Methodist Church at 507-684-2731 to schedule a time.

ELLENDALE AREA FOOD SHELF

- Monetary donations:
 - P.O. Box 295
 - Ellendale, MN 56026
- Food donations:
 - United Methodist Church- Ellendale
 - 507-684-2731
- Hours:
 - Thursdays, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Veteran journalist joins Times staff

Another veteran journalist has joined the Steele County Times.

Joni Hubred of Faribault joined the Times news staff last week as she began working as a staff writer. She will be primarily covering Medford and Owatonna areas.

Born and raised in Minnesota, Hubred started her career in community journalism 35 years ago, as a reporter with the Kanabec County Times in Mora. From 1989 to 1999, she worked her way up from reporter to managing editor of the Lakeville Life & Times,

a free weekly newspaper eventually purchased by ECM Publishers.

Hubred left Minnesota and spent 20 years in Michigan, where she worked for Observer & Eccentric newspapers in suburban Detroit and launched the Patch.com website for the Farmington, Mich. community.

After a 2014 layoff, she launched Farmington Voice, an independent news website that reached an average 50,000 readers each month with daily news stories, a community calendar, and conversations on social media. She closed the website

last year, shortly after moving back to Minnesota last fall to be closer to family.

She has won several journalism awards over the years.

“My career really started with co-editing my high school newspaper and seeing how my writing could influence readers,” said Hubred. “My heart is in local news because that’s where stories have the greatest impact, whether it’s boosting a new local business or profiling candidates for city council. I look forward to doing more of that great work here.”

Publisher Rick Bussler said Hubred will be a wonderful asset to the Times. “We are incredibly lucky to get someone with Joni’s experience and passion for community news,” he said, noting her 35 years of experience will round out the combined experience of the Times’ news staff at 175 years. “There aren’t many publications our size that can boast the kind of experience we have on our staff,” he added.



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Joni Hubred has joined the Steele County Times as a staff writer. A veteran journalist, Hubred will be primarily covering the Medford and Owatonna areas.

Hubred is the mother of two adult children and grandmother of three, as well as an avid reader and writer of mystery novels.

COVID risk drops to medium

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

The COVID risk in Steele County has dropped over the past week.

Steele County has moved from the high category to medium since last week, according to Amber Aaseth, interim co-director of Steele County Public Health. With the improvement, the guidelines for wearing masks have been altered.

“If you are at high risk for severe illness, talk to your health care provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions,” Aaseth said. She added people with symptoms, a positive test or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.

Aaseth also encourages people to stay up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccines and get tested

if they have symptoms.

Positive cases and hospitalization rates continue to drop in Steele County. The hospitalization rate for COVID at the Owatonna hospital is at 15%, according to Aaseth.

There were 15 new confirmed cases of COVID over the past week, the lowest in months. Steele County now stands at 10,234 since the pandemic began with the death toll remaining at 58. There have been no new deaths for the past week.

This week marks the two-year anniversary of COVID-19 and much has been learned during that period. Aaseth said Public Health has more tools than ever before to protect residents and prevent COVID-19 from having a severe impact on communities.

“Vaccines, boosters, tests, treatments and

high quality masks are all available, offering more layers of protection than we had in 2020 and 2021,” Aaseth said. “Moving forward, this array of tools will help people protect themselves and help communities minimize the strain COVID-19 places on our health care systems.”

Aaseth said it’s important for people to not dismiss COVID-19 just yet. “The whole community can only be safe when we all take steps to protect each other, including the people most at risk from COVID-19,” she said. “Even if the level is lower in our community and things continue to improve for many of us, there are people in our communities who are immunocompromised, have underlying health conditions, disabilities or are older,” she added.

Steele County continues to hold weekly vaccination clinics every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 635 Florence Ave., Owatonna. All three vaccines are available. Public Health will also continue to provide iHealth COVID-19 antigen rapid tests while supplies last.

Owatonna Music Boosters

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	COVID-19 UPDATE			
	World.....	446,000,000	Deaths	6,000,000
	Recovered....	243,000,000		
	U.S.	79,200,000	Deaths	957,000
	Recovered.....	16,306,000	MN	1,420,000
			Deaths	12,373
			Recovered.....	908,000
			Steele.....	10,234
			Deaths	58
			Dodge	5,593
			Deaths	21
			Freeborn.....	8,929
			Deaths	72
			Mower.....	11,737
			Deaths	69

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STEELE COUNTY **Times**

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PUBLISHER

RICK BUSSLER

EDITOR

DEB FLEMMING

SPORTS

JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

NEWS

KAY FATE
HOWARD LESTRUD
CHRIS BALDWIN
JONI HUBRED

BLOOMING PRAIRIE
OFFICE MANAGER
SHERRIE PECHAN

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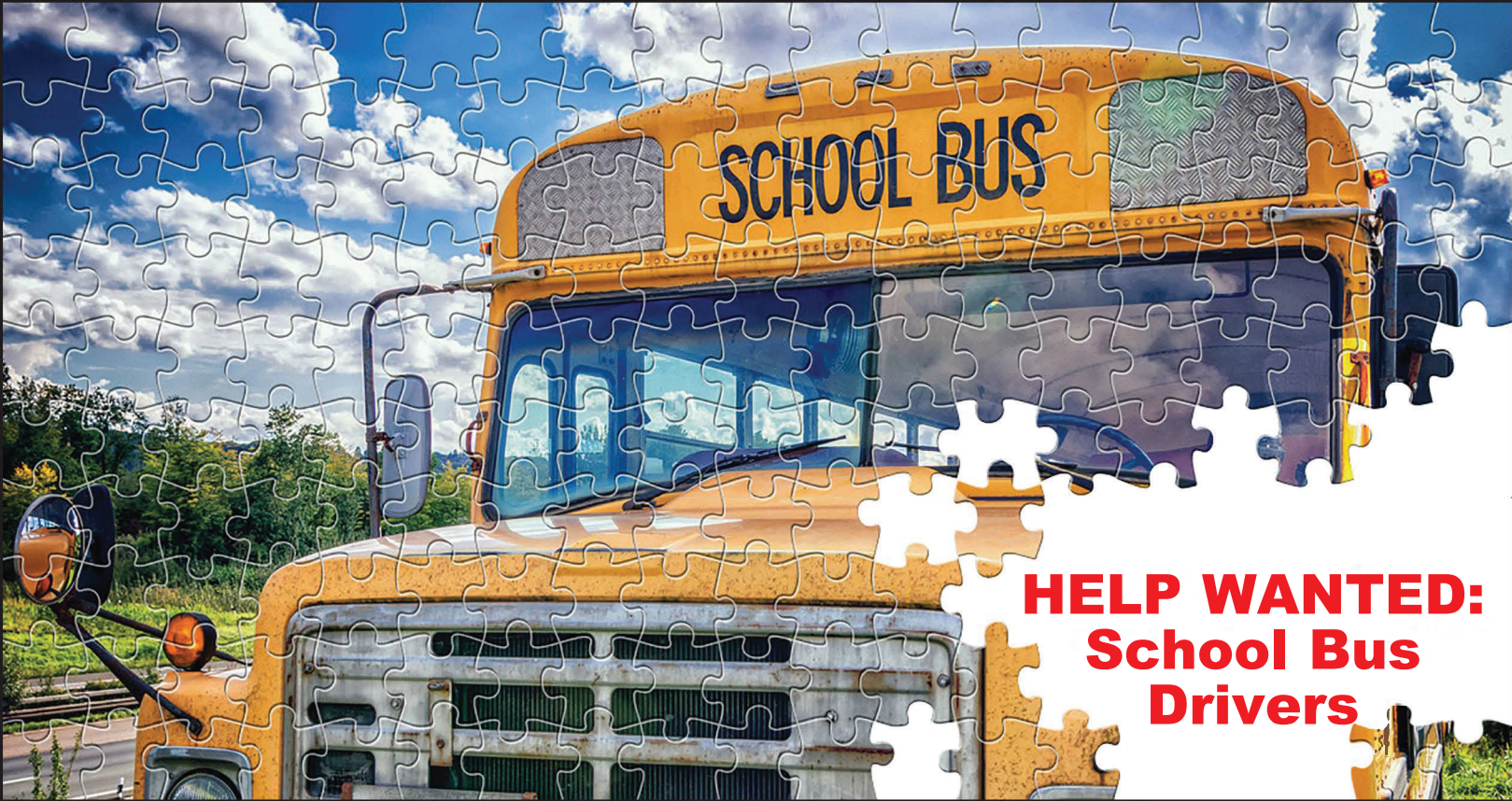
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Good news for Owatonna Schools on COVID

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

As the state goes, so goes the Owatonna School District – at least when it comes to COVID-19 infections.

In the past month, the infection rate in Minnesota has dropped by more than half.

Look at two months ago, and the number is down by more than 75%.

“It’s all good news,” Superintendent Jeff Elstad told Owatonna School Board members at last week’s meeting.

“I’m hoping that at some point, we don’t have to talk about this

anymore, but (Feb. 28), in our entire district, we had four reported cases,” he said. “I met with Steele County Public Health, and the numbers in Steele County continue to drop as well.”

In addition, masks are no longer required on public or private

school transportation, thanks to the most recent CDC guidelines.

“It’s all positive momentum,” Elstad said.

With less than three months until the Minnesota Legislature adjourns its regular session, the district also has work to do at the state level.

Elstad is encouraging Rep. John Petersburg, R-Waseca, to sponsor a companion bill to one from Sen. John Jasinski, R-Fairbault, supporting the addition of a mechatronics lab to the new high school as well as Riverland Community College.

“It’s a highly sought-after career pathway,” Elstad said, “because it includes automation, robotics and advanced manufacturing that will really serve our business community well.”

It focuses on the integration of mechanical, electronic and electrical engineering systems, and includes a combination of computer science, telecommunications and, of course, robotics.

“We’ve got Sen. Jasinski’s full support on that,” Elstad said. “Our business partners could not only use that as a recruitment of high school students coming through, but also for their current employees for advanced training.”

The bill would bring a grant for \$1 million for the project.

Meetings are also planned with the local legislators to talk about levy equalization for the district.

“Our taxpayers end up paying more than other taxpayers in other school district to get the same amount



Jeff Elstad

of service and dollars accrued,” Elstad said. “We’re asking them to consider equalizing that, so the ZIP code where your kids attend school doesn’t have a factor in how much taxpayers are paying – nor does it impact the amount of dollars that come in” to pay for student programming.

Work also continues on the existing high school task force; the formal recommendation for what to do with the current school will come at the April 11 work session.

The school board will consider the recommendation at its regular school board meeting April 25, and potentially take action.

“The new OHS continues to be on time and on budget,” said Mark Sebring, school board chairman.



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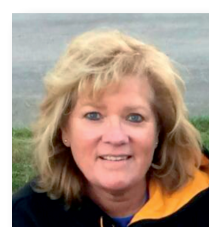
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Event celebrates achievements of women

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

A group formed more than 100 years ago to support women in the workplace will reveal and celebrate its 50th Woman of Achievement honoree during a March 19 event that is open to the public.

Owatonna Business Women vice president of public relations Rebecca Moore said the ceremony started as a luncheon and has “grown to be a bigger event and include the community more.”

“Anybody can nominate a woman,” she said, “and the woman doesn’t have to be a member (of Owatonna Business Women).”

Community nominations are vetted through a committee that selects four or five finalists for the award. Criteria include not only a successful career, but also civic engagement, community leadership, and helping others—particularly younger women—in their careers.

“I think most nominees would say it’s an honor just to be recognized,” Moore said, “because all are incredible women who go above and beyond in their careers and in their community... They’re typically the women who step up and get things done to make our community a better place.”

Independent judging
The finalists submit a more extensive ca-

reer history, a biography, information about their education and community involvement, all of which goes to three independent judges from the Twin Cities. That group also interviews each of the candidates before making their selection, which is sealed in an envelope until the Woman of Achievement event.

“That is a true reveal for everyone,” Moore said. “Nobody in Owatonna Business Women knows.”

Local residents are welcome to attend the March 19 event, which starts at 6 p.m. with a social hour before the program.

The organization will also present a Young Careerist award to a woman just starting out in the working world, a Lifetime Achievement award, and \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors and women who are continuing their education.

Moore said the scholarships represent an investment in the community and in women who may one day become a Woman of Achievement.

Community involved

Moore and event co-chair Melinda Estey both see the awards celebration as a way to ensure the community is aware of women’s accomplishments. Making those local connections has also helped with fundraising for the scholarship

program, which has grown to help 11 women this year.

“We are extremely proud of what this event represents for our organization and the community, and we’re really excited that each year we continue to break new records with our fundraising and the amount of scholarships we are able to provide,” Estey said. “Having the opportunity to lift up and recognize the amazing accomplishments of these amazing women is incredibly rewarding, especially since so many of them do so much behind the scenes that most people aren’t aware of.”

“We are so grateful that the community is willing to join us in the effort with their nominations, support, and praise for the honorees and nominees,” she added.

You can purchase a ticket for the Woman of Achievement event in advance at owatonnabusinesswomen.org or at the door. Also, Owatonna Business Women accepts award nominations via their website throughout the year.

“We want to hear from the community,” Moore said. “Who do you see doing great things?”

Honorees and finalists

The 2022 Woman of Achievement finalists are:

Rhonda Guthier
A 20-year staff member with the Owatonna Area Chamber of



Commerce and Tourism, Guthier serves as Director of Operations. After graduating from the Owatonna Community Leadership Academy in 2002, she ran the program until 2020. Her community involvement includes Exchange Club and Rotary activities, and for 50 years, the Steele County 4-H program. Her nominators “feel that Rhonda is one of those community leaders who just does the tasks in front of her, quietly, professionally, and willingly without expecting any recognition.”

Jennifer Copeland



See EVENT on A16 ▶



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Event celebrates achievements of women

◀ **EVENT** from A15
As Director of Human Resources, Copeland provides leadership at the Viracon Owatonna Plant. She is active with the Society of Human Resource Management and her community involvement includes Leadership Owatonna (2010), Exchange Club, Junior Achievement, and Girl Scouts. She has volunteered at Thanksgiving and Christmas Community Dinners since 2017. Nominators described her as “one of those women who has always been a key contributor to organizations around Owatonna for many years. If you need someone on your board, you call Jennifer because you want her thoughtful input.”



Tanya Paley
As grants manager for Nonviolent Peaceforce, Paley grew the nonprofit’s portfolio from \$400,000 to \$1 million in the past year. At the United Way of Steele County, she was the first coordinator for the Safe and Drug Free Coalition, collaborating with Owatonna Public Schools, Owatonna Chamber of Commerce and Workforce Development to create Steelecoworks which has become a self-sustaining partner agency of the

United Way. She has volunteered with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Music Boosters of Owatonna, and Alliance for Greater Equity. She was nominated for “spearheading the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and her strategic vision for county non-profits”, as well as hosting Rotary Exchange students.



Peng Olson
The Community Relations Manager at Federated Insurance has held other roles within the company and also worked in operations and project management at Mayo Clinic and Fairview Healthcare Hospitals & Clinics. Olson’s community involvement includes Jumpstart Owatonna, Alliance for Greater Equity, Engage Owatonna, and Owatonna Foundation. She was a project founder and campaign chairperson for the Owatonna Aquatic Center Initiative and is active with the Steele County DFL. Olson’s nominator wrote, “In addition to her successful career, her humble leadership and dedication is noticed by many in the community as someone who is always willing to give back and build up others through her involvement in numerous organizations.”



Sarah Struss
Struss owns Struss CPAs, P.C. and has previously held staff accountant and CPA roles at other Owatonna firms. A leader in her field, she volunteers with the Early Edition Rotary Group, helped raise money for the Owatonna fireworks,

the Steele County Food Shelf, and Vote Yes for OHS. She’s also a mentor and volunteer with Owatonna Public School District. She was nominated for career excellence and her active role in the community: “Sarah is as generous with her time as she is with her financial support to various organizations in town.”

Annie Granlund, associate editor with the Owatonna People’s Press and Waseca County News, is the Owatonna Business Women’s 2022 Young Careerist. In addition to her work in the community, Granlund volunteers as a board member for Owatonna Business Women and



the Steele County Historical Society.
Betsy Kennedy Lindgren will be honored for a lifetime of career and community contributions. The president and CEO of BK Lindgren, Inc. for 33 years owned Express Employment Professionals, which served southern Minnesota



and northern Iowa. Her community involvement includes the Owatonna Noon Rotary, United Way of Steele County Board, Steele County Food Shelf, and Owatonna Foundation. Twenty years ago, she was the Owatonna Business Women’s Woman of the Year, a precursor to the Woman of Achievement award.

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Dale Springer, 78, Owatonna



Dale Springer

On Saturday, Feb. 26, Dale Leo Springer, 78, of Owatonna passed away after a short battle with cancer.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday, March 13 from 3 to 5 p.m. at the VFW in Owatonna, with a short program beginning at 3:30

p.m. A private interment will be held at Sacred Heart Cemetery at a later date.

Dale was born on Feb. 28, 1943 in Owatonna to Luvern Springer and Arlene (Eaker) Springer. He was the oldest of five children. He attended country school in a one-room school-house in Havana until seventh grade, and went on to graduate from Owatonna High School in 1961. It was in country school that he met the love of his life Darlene Shirley (Dostal) Springer. They were a “match made in heaven” and were married in May of 1964.

Shortly after, Dale was drafted into the U.S. Army and completed the Aircraft Electrician Course at the U.S. Army Transportation School in Fort Eustis, Va. in 1966. During his three years of service, he was stationed in Vietnam where he worked on helicopters as an Aircraft Electrician. After service, he graduated from Dunwoody Industrial Institute in the electrical and auto programs.

Dale worked at Owatonna Ford for 35 years. Darlene and Dale made countless memories during their 34 years of marriage until Darlene passed away after a prolonged illness in 2010. He was by her side until the very end.

Dale belonged to Sacred Heart Catholic Church where he taught religion classes, was a long-time lector, and Eucharistic minister. He was a member of the American Legion, Eagles, and VFW. His biggest passion was for buying and restoring collector cars. He could find a way to fix or repair anything. He was also an avid hunter including fox, coyotes, and prairie dogs. He enjoyed biking and averaged 10 miles a day peddling in and around town. Perhaps one of his greatest joys was the many hours he spent over the years attending numerous sporting events in support of his grandsons.

Dale is survived by and greatly missed by his daughters, Pamela (Brian) Raichle, Cathy (Corey) Phelps, Jenny Thompson; grandsons, Nick and Alex Raichle, Mat Phelps, Aidan and Marek Thompson; siblings, Denis (Margo) Springer (Leander, Texas), Diane (Gary) Wilson (Owatonna), and David (Sandy) Springer (Cedar Park, Texas) and many friends.

He was preceded in death by his wife Darlene and sister, Donna (Springer) Trom.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Owatonna Park and Rec for bike trails.

Bonnie Peterson, 68, Owatonna



Bonnie Peterson

Bonnie Elizabeth Peterson, 68, of Owatonna, passed away peacefully at Mankato Hospital with heart failure on Monday, Feb. 28, 2022.

Bonnie was born Jan. 26, 1954 in Austin, to Raymond and Caroline (Graves)

Wilkemeyer. She married Richard Peterson on June 7, 1975. They adopted one daughter and then had three children together and later separated.

Bonnie worked at Venture Foods, Austin Hospital and Geneva Community Church during her life.

Bonnie enjoyed going shopping, doing puzzles, coloring, playing bingo, sewing, watching TV and loved watching her Sunday football teams: Minnesota Vikings and Kansas City Chiefs.

Bonnie's most favorite thing to do was spending time with her children and grandchildren. Bonnie will be remembered for making up jokes to get people to laugh. Bonnie was a caring

and loving person that would help others when needed. Throughout Bonnie's life she had faith and love for God.

Bonnie is survived by her three daughters: Melissa (Dirk) Newman, Valerie Carter (boyfriend Reino Paananen), Kimberly (Dustin) Hanson, and son Tyrel Peterson; 12 grandchildren: Rebecca, Kylie Peterson, Joshua Nelson, Natalie, Alexander Talbert, Maddison, Noah, Rayden, Nevaeh Hanson, Jack, Claire, Luke Newman; siblings: Greg Wilkemeyer, Ted (Alice) Wilkemeyer, Wally (Julie) Wilkemeyer, Chris (Terry) Howell, Dan (Sheri) Wilkemeyer, Therea (Dale) Baker, Tim (Karen) Wilkemeyer. Bonnie was preceded in death by her parents, two brothers Norman and Mike Wilkemeyer, nephews James Peterson, Randy Matejcek, Caleb Wilkemeyer, and niece Lori Matejcek.

No funeral arrangements have been made at this time.

BRICK-MEGER & MEDFORD
FUNERAL HOME

Donnavon Eaker, 72, Ellendale



Donnavon Eaker

Donnavon Elaine Eaker, 72, of Ellendale, died Thursday, March 3, 2022 at Methodist Hospital in Rochester.

She was born Feb. 9, 1950 in Fort Dodge, Iowa, the daughter of Donald and Ada (George) Colee. She moved to Minnesota in 1956 to the Bixby/Claremont area. During her junior year of high school, she became sweet over her neighbor from one mile away, Steve Eaker. She graduated from Claremont High School in 1968 and then attended beauty school in Faribault.

On Aug. 30, 1969, she married Steven Eaker at St. John's Lutheran Church rural Claremont. The couple lived in St. Paul and worked in the Twin Cities. In 1972, Michelle entered their lives and in 1973 the family moved to Ellendale. They purchased Pete and Rubes Market and it became known as the legendary Steve's Meat Market. In 1974, Rachael joined the family. Steve and Donnavon successfully operated the business together.

After Steve's death in 2006, Donnavon and Rachael kept the fine quality smoked meats business alive and running. She celebrated the 49th anniversary of the business in January 2022.

Service to her church and community was important to Donnavon. She faithfully served in her church as a Sunday School teacher and was involved in Wednesday school and the Luther League program. Her community involvement included 4-H, Ellendale-Geneva High School yearbook and the Junior Achievement program at the school for many years.

Her biggest passion was leading the Ellendale Days committee and organizing the Ellendale centennial. Business service included serving on the Owatonna Hospital board and the boards of both the Minnesota Association of Meat Processors and the American Association of Meat Processors.

Donnavon loved flower gardening, taking pictures, chatting with her sister, Marcia, and spending as much time with the grandchildren as she could. If you knew Donnavon, you know she loved spending time at her home in Florida and traveling the world with friends.

She is survived by daughters, Michelle (Frank) Steever of Cranston, Rhode Island and Rachael (Mark) Lee of Ellendale; granddaughter, Genevieve Steever and grandsons, Daxter Lee, Gavin Steever and Jared Lee; half-brother, Don Tool and sisters, Kathy Macey, Joyce (Louis) La Moore and Marcia (Donny) Smith.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Donald and Ada and husband, Steven Eaker.

Visitation was Monday, March 7 at Michaelson Funeral Home and continues at First Lutheran Church – Ellendale on Wednesday, March 9 from 2:30-3:30 p.m. Funeral services will be held Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 3:30 p.m. at First Lutheran Church – Ellendale. Interment will be in First Lutheran Cemetery in Ellendale immediately followed by a lunch reception at the Community Building in Ellendale.

Memorials are preferred to Ellendale Community Action Group, First Lutheran Church in Ellendale and Trinity Lutheran Church in Medford.

Michaelson Funeral Home of Owatonna is handling the arrangements.

Mom loves Bingo in assisted living, but she wants it every day

Dear Live Grand:
My mother lives quite happily in an excellent assisted living facility where they offer different activities. She thinks the music, art, and exercise are fine, but she loves Bingo and can't understand why she can't play it every day. I explain that the facility needs to please a lot of people and she seems to understand at the time, but she's soon back to asking why it's not Bingo Day. Would a GrandPad come with Bingo? If so, could someone with moderate memory problems like mom play it? What else could she do with this tablet? – DP

Dear DP: Like any age group, older adults have varied interests so as you noted, care facilities rightly offer a mix of activities. Your mom needn't be left wanting, though. GrandPad not only offers Bingo but games such as hearts, four-in-a-row, tick-tac-toe, and tiles, as well.

This tablet is designed for people like your mom, so she'd navigate it easily. She'd love the large icons and comfortable screen. Should she have a question, she could tap her Help button and her personal representative would cheerfully assist her in getting back on track. She'd probably enjoy GrandPad's game days and tournaments, too. There are prizes for most games played, most games won, and participation that make it extra engaging.



Our users also love the fun and interesting articles. Options like Cat of the Day, Dog of the Day, Health, Home and Garden Inspiration, and Crafts all update regularly, as does GrandPad's own newsletter. Your mom could build her personal list by clicking the Add to Favorites button on the article's page. That way she can go back later and read them again.

Of course, she'd love the Photos app – everyone does! The family admin would simply upload photos and videos to her GrandPad and they'd be ready to view.

The video chats are just as easy. If she'd like to call someone, she'd simply tap her Call app and then the call button by their picture. She'd answer a call by touching Answer.

Listening to music is not only entertaining but has been shown to be good for the brain. Whether your mom prefers country, rock, or Christian, the choices are ready for her. She could easily create her own Music Collection, too.

The Radio app would provide music as well as talk regarding topics of interest to people of her generation. There are pre-sets like GrandPad Radio that feature both. The popular Radio Recliner option is another hit with people in retirement living since it's hosted by individuals in similar circumstances. If your mom already has a favorite station, the family admin could add that as an additional option.

Studies have shown that people can preserve their cognitive abilities longer when they have convenient access to mental challenges like those offered by GrandPad. We're convinced that while your mom would love playing Bingo daily, she'd also be thrilled to discover the many other interesting options available on her GrandPad tablet.

Live Grand is a weekly column brought to you by GrandPad – the simplest, safest tablet-based solution that helps reconnect families.

To submit your question see: www.LiveGrand.me.

Area historians resurrect sign from old ballroom

◀ **AREA** from A5
“Dirty,” he said, noting it had green moss all over it. “We power washed it with a washer, and the metal for as old as it is cleaned up good,” he added.

The trio of historians was surprised to find the sign was mostly intact with only a couple chips in the corners of the plexiglass, which had fallen inside and were able to be retrieved and repaired. Prokopec said they found it hard to believe the sign didn't crack or shatter.

They were also excited to find that all the bulbs inside the sign still worked allowing it to be lit up brightly.

“With the conditions it sat in, you would think it would be shot,” Kaplan said. “It was a find.”

Prokopec said they thought the sign would be a “good piece” for the history center. They did not know what the sign would be utilized for at the time they took possession of it. “It's finding its home now,” he said, adding it goes right along with the current music exhibit.

Kaplan said it will be up to the history center what to do with the sign after the music exhibit is over. He would like it to eventually be displayed in the service bay being considered for Gus' Station in the Village of Yesteryear. However, there are no funds available yet for the addition to Gus' Station.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN STYNDEL

This photo was taken of Zeiner's Ballroom in Bixby in 1958. The ballroom, which was built in 1938, had been a hub for entertainment for many decades before being demolished in 2007.

“We're preserving history of the county so it isn't forgotten.”

Lloyd Kaplan
Local History Buff

“They're not going to get rid of it,” Kaplan said of the sign.

Asked what Zeiner's Ballroom meant to Steele County, Kaplan replied: “It was party time. Anybody and everybody went there. It was packed.”

Prokopec had his wedding dance at Zeiner's in 1970. “It was a hopping place back then when everyone had dances,” Prokopec said. “Everyone had their spots with the booths,” he said, adding the ballroom sold mixes and beer while customers brought their own alcohol.

The ballroom, which was built in 1938, held up to 300 people. The last dance took place around 2000 before it was demolished in 2007. “You sure bumped into a

lot of people when you were dancing,” Kaplan recalled.

Among the many memories, they recalled “Grandma Zeiner” (Josephine Haberman Zeiner), who usually took tickets at the door. “If you didn't have a ticket, you would just give her a swig of your bottle,” Kaplan said.

As for the sign, the history buffs are thrilled to have saved it.

“This is preserving history,” Prokopec said. “You know the younger generation never heard of Zeiner's.”

Added Kaplan, “When we see something that is from our time, we want to preserve it. We're preserving history of the county so it isn't forgotten.”

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Glen



Mike



Brett

Brick-Meger Funeral Home & Medford Funeral Home
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PROUDLY SERVING STEELE COUNTY

Recipe Corner

SAUSAGE POTATO SOUP

1 lb. ground beef

1 pkg. Lipton onion soup

4 carrots

4 potatoes

1 (8oz.) can tomato sauce

2 c. water

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1 tsp. lemon juice

1/4 tsp. pepper

Mix and form into tiny meatballs, the ground beef and Lipton onion soup. Brown and drain. Put in crockpot. Add carrots, diced potatoes, tomato sauce, water, Worcestershire sauce, lemon juice, and pepper. Stir together. May add more water if you like thinner stew or if thicker, may thicken with 2 teaspoons cornstarch mixed with water. Cook on high 4 to 5 hours. Makes 6 servings.

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BOOK NOOK

NANCY VAILLANCOURT

The effects of the pandemic have been with us for two years now and will no doubt continue for decades. Two years ago we had big plans at the Blooming Prairie Branch Library to commemorate the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote. As you know, those plans and many others fell through. But that doesn't mean we can't individually celebrate and learn about the women who fought for suffrage and other

women who have influenced and improved society.

The month of March has been designated by presidential proclamation to honor women's contributions to American history. The theme for Women's History Month 2022 is Providing Healing, Promoting Hope, honoring caregivers and frontline workers during the pandemic, as well as recognizing "women who have provided healing and hope throughout history."

The website www.yourdream.liveyourdream.org shared some ways commemorate Women's

History Month:

1. Explore the history of women's rights. Visit the library for books and movies showcasing women.
2. Be aware of issues women still face today. There are still wage inequities, workplace stigmas, double standards, domestic violence, hiring bias, the pink tax, and more to be dealt with.
3. Support a women's nonprofit that works with women and girls in need.
4. Support women-owned businesses. Women still are the minority of business owners. March is a perfect time to show

your solidarity with these tenacious leaders, entrepreneurs, and service providers.

5. Write a thank you note to a woman who inspires you.
6. Watch TED talks for women. The TED website has a whole list of videos about and by women.
7. Support women authors and artists by reading their books and appreciating their art.
8. Mentor a girl or fellow woman. This can change your life as well as the one you are helping.

Stop by the library to find out more about amazing women and our own history.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE

Upcoming Community Education Classes

Defensive Driving 4 hour refresher

Wednesday, March 23

5:30 to 9:30 p.m.

BPHS Room 201

\$24

Four Pillars of a New Retirement

Thursday, March 24

6:30-7:30 p.m.

BPHS Room 206

Free

Foundations of Investing

Thursday, April 28

6:30-7:30 p.m.

BPHS Room 206

Free

Register by calling Michelle at 507-583-4426 or email msouthworth@blossoms.k12.mn.us, or electronically in the Community Ed section of www.blossoms.k12.mn.us

Walk-ins are welcome for the 2 financial classes ONLY.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Michelle Southworth

Community Education Coordinator

BLOOMING PRAIRIE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BLOSSOMING INTO LEARNERS AND LEADERS

LOOK WHO'S BEING AWESOME!

Blossoms Students of the Week

Blooming Prairie Elementary School

Sailor Lea – KB

Mrs. Bruns' Class

Parents: Anthony & Colette Lea

Sailor is an awesome student to have in class! She has been working very hard in school and is very excited to learn! She is also a very kind and helpful classmate. She is a great role model to others. She is great at following the classroom rules! Keep being AWESOME, Sailor!

Bergen Klemmensen – 1B

Mrs. Sorensen's Class

Parents: Jay & Jamie Klemmensen

Bergen is an excellent choice for being honored as an awesome student. Every single day, Bergen comes to school prepared to do his very best. Recently, we had a new student join our classroom, Bergen was the first to say he would help him out. Bergen has been so kind to him and is a great role model to all students. He also has worked hard on his school work and is excelling in reading. Keep up the amazing job here at school, Bergen!

Leah Watson – 5B

Mr. Kiehne's Class

Parents: David & Ashley Watson

Leah is an awesome choice for being caught showing her Prairie Pride! She is a wonderful student who has such a great enthusiasm for learning. She gives her best effort in whatever she is doing and is always more than willing to help others in any way she can! She is someone who is truly always leading by example! Keep up the amazing work, Leah!

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WAY TO GO KIDS!

BLOOMING PRAIRIE & AUSTIN

OHS senior is National Merit Scholarship finalist

Claire Heyne, a senior at Owatonna High School, has been named a finalist in the 2022 competition for National Merit Scholarships. She was among 2 million students to take the PSAT last fall; her score was one of the best in the state.

Heyne is one of about 15,000 students who advanced to the finalist stage, where they are in the running to receive a prestigious National Merit Scholarship.

To become a finalist, she had to submit a detailed application with information about her academic record, participation in school and community activities, leadership abilities, employment and the honors and awards she's received. Heyne also had to write an essay.

The scholarships are awarded to the top 7,500 finalists and will total about \$30 million. The winners of the 2022 National Merit Scholarships will be announced in stages, from April through July.

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Blooming Prairie, MN

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Claire Heyne, an OHS senior, is one of 15,000 finalists for a National Merit Scholarship. She is now waiting to learn if she will be one of 7,500 students across the country to receive one of the prestigious \$2,500 scholarships.

SCHOOL LUNCH MENU

Blooming Prairie Elementary School

March 10- Walking taco, ham deli sub sandwich, spicy pinto beans, salsa, canned fruit bar.

March 11- Grilled cheese sandwich, chicken Caesar wrap, tomato soup, red/orange bell pepper, fresh fruit bar.

March 14- Crispy chicken nuggets, bread stick, chicken Caesar salad, mashed potatoes, gravy, baby carrots, canned fruit bar.

March 15- Beef chili, cinnamon roll, turkey ranch wrap, potato wedges, romaine lettuce, fresh fruit bar.

March 16- Chicken and cheese quesadilla, hotdog on whole grain bun, black beans, salsa.

Blooming Prairie High School

March 10- Walking taco, ham deli sub sandwich, cheese pizza, spicy pinto beans, salsa.

March 11- Grilled cheese sandwich, chicken Caesar wrap, max stick, tomato soup, red/orange bell pepper.

March 14- Crispy chicken nuggets, bread stick, chicken Caesar salad, hotdog on whole grain bun, mashed potatoes, gravy, baby carrots.

March 15- Beef chili, cinnamon roll, pepperoni pizza, turkey ranch wrap, potato wedges, romaine lettuce.

March 16- Chicken and cheese quesadilla, corn dog, pulled pork sandwich, black beans, salsa.

Owatonna student finalist in spelling bee

A seventh grader from Owatonna was one of 12 spellers competing in the Final Spelling Bee last week in Rochester.

Johanna Spielman participated in the bee held at Southeast Service Cooperative on March 1.

The champion of the bee was Sam Passe,

an eighth grader from Wabasha-Kellogg. He spelled the word discretionary in order to earn the title.

First runner-up was Addy Kobler, a fifth grader from Plainview-Elgin-Milville.

The 12 finalists were narrowed down from 59 representing 27 districts in southeast Minnesota.

BIRTHDAYS

March 9

Jeremy Wangen

Nicki Bishop

Kylie Forystek

Kim Eaker Lang

Adrian Noble

March 10

Elizabeth Salinas

Brenda Yentsch

Ryan Glynn

Jean Farr

Aspen Clayton

Olivia Anderson

March 11

Harlan Hansen

Neila Nelson

Marion Mast

March 12

Riauna Bishop

Denise Thompson

Charlotte Trom

March 13

Kelli Williamson

Andrea Farr

Lonnie Lembke

Kelly Peterson

Evie Emanuel

March 14

Elliot Swenson

John Abbe

March 15

Denny Zwiener

Carol Fristedt

Tony Motl

Adam Iversen

Kelly Njos

Kevin Christey

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Not so far away



Rev. Todd Buegler

TRINITY LUTHERAN
CHURCH
OWATONNA

For the last week, we have all been watching horrible events unfolding in Ukraine. On our screens, we have seen images of tanks crossing boulders, soldiers moving through the streets and missiles streaking across the sky. We have seen

video of the injured and dying. We have heard the pleas of Ukrainians asking for assistance. Our hearts break when we see these images.

But there is something about watching these events on our TVs, computers, tablets, or phones that creates distance between us and these events. While they are terrible to watch, they still feel so very far away from us here in Steele County. There are some of us who have said that we know people, or we are related to someone with connections in Ukraine; but generally, these scenes feel half a world away.

And they are. Physically, they are distant.

I would like to suggest that these events are not as distant as they may feel. Humans are not only physical creatures. We have emotional, intellectual and spiritual sides to ourselves as well. And for many of us, when viewed through these lenses, the conflict in Ukraine feels much closer.

Think of the young child in Owatonna who watches scenes of destruction, and who is frightened for the people who live in Ukraine, and who is frightened for what may happen someday closer to home.

Think of the anxiety

that watching armed conflict in real-time creates within someone who has been a victim of violence before. What is triggered for them?

Think of the pain and fear that is felt in the hearts of those who have friends or relatives who live in Ukraine? Or whose grandparents or great-grandparents immigrated from there.

For these people, and for many more, the conflict doesn't feel quite so distant.

As a community, we need to pay attention to the events and problems that are going on in the world around us, and we need to respond. We need to pray for

victims, to contribute to rebuilding efforts and to prepare to welcome refugees who are trying to escape violence.

And we need to pay attention closer to home. We need to listen to each other. We need to hear and understand fear and anxiety. We need to offer comfort. Pay special attention to children, who may be processing mass tragedy for the first time and may feel overwhelmed.

In the 23rd Psalm, we are reminded that when we walk through the places of shadow, we can fear no evil, for God is with us; the Good Shepherd's rod and staff comfort us.

The world was already under stress. COVID, polarization, violence surrounds us. Add the war in Ukraine into the mix and it feels like all this emotion is put into a pop can and the can is being shaken. For many, it begins to feel overwhelming.

But remember that we are never alone. Remember to pray for the victims in Ukraine and for all who are affected. Remember to care for each other. Listen empathetically, offer comfort, and extend grace to each other. This is what it is to be a community.

And remember to trust in God who promises to be with us.

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN

AURORA LUTHERAN
6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna
507-451-2819
Sunday Worship: 9 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.
office@auroralutheranchurch.org

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN – ELCA
106 Third St. SE, Geneva
507-256-4288
Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.
Every 3rd Saturday at 5 p.m.
communitylutherangenevamn@gmail.com

FIRST LUTHERAN-AFLC
503 Radel Ct., Ellendale
507-684-2451
Sunday Worship 9 a.m.
Sunday School and Adult Bible Study 10:15 a.m.
Call to Prayer Monday 7 p.m.
Bible Study
Wednesday 9:30 a.m.
Confirmation
Wednesday 6-7 p.m.
Youth Group
Wednesday 7-9 p.m.
Men's Bible Study
Saturday 8 a.m.
firstlutheranellendale@yahoo.com

FIRST LUTHERAN – ELCA
434 First St. SW, Blooming Prairie
507-583-6621
Sunday Worship 9 a.m.
Sunday School 10 a.m.
firstluthoffice@yahoo.com

FIRST LUTHERAN – LCMC
8953 SW 37th Ave., Hope
507-451-3854
Sunday Worship 9 a.m.
Sunday School and Adult Ed 10:15 a.m.
flichopemn@gmail.com

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN – LCMS
2500 7th Ave NE, Owatonna
507-451-4125
Sunday Hymn Service 8:30 a.m.
Sunday Praise Service, Sunday School & Bible Class 10 a.m.
info@gsowatonna.com

PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN – ELCA
9651 SW 75th St., Ellendale
507-213-0281
Sunday Worship 10:15 a.m.
Sunday School 9 a.m.
pontoppidanlemond@outlook.com

REDEEMER LUTHERAN – LCMS
1054 Truman Ave., Owatonna
507-451-2720
Sunday Worship 9 a.m.
Sunday Education Hour 10:15 a.m.
redeemerowatonna@outlook.com

RED OAK GROVE LUTHERAN- ELCA
30456 Mower-Freeborn Rd., Austin
BP: 507-402-9333
Austin: 507-437-3000
Sunday Worship 9 a.m.
www.rogolutheran.org

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN – LCMS

4532 SE 84th Ave., Claremont
507-528-2404
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m. (2nd & 4th Sunday Holy Communion)
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Wednesday: Advent 7 p.m. (with Holy Communion)
sjlcoffice@frontiernet.net

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN – LCMS

28959 630th Ave., Sargeant
320-674-0351
Sunday Worship 10:15 a.m.
Sunday School 9 a.m.
www.saintjohnssargeant.jimdo.com

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN – ELCA

1301 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
507-451-7293
Sunday & Summer Worship 8 a.m. & 9:30 a.m.
Thursday Worship 5:30 p.m.
Saturday 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
info@stjohnowatonna.com

ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN- ELCA

30450 570th Ave., Waltham
507-567-2474
Sunday Worship 9 a.m.
Pastor Barbara Finley-Shea
FB - St. Michael's Youth Activities Waltham, MN

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN – LCMS

202 E Park Ave., Hollandale
507-567-2272
Sunday Worship 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
www.motorcitychurch.org

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN – ELCA

2781 SW 92nd Ave., Meriden
507-451-2165
Sunday Worship 10 a.m.
deaconbilliejo@gmail.com

TRINITY LUTHERAN- ELCA

609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
507-451-4520
Sunday Worship -Sanctuary 8:15 a.m. & 9:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall 10:45 a.m., Live Stream 9:30 a.m. at facebook.com/tlcowatonna and tlcowatonna.org/worshiplive
Live broadcast 9:30 a.m. on KRUE 92.1 FM, Video on Spectrum (CH181) Metronet TV (Ch 900) and owatonnaonline.com Tuesday at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday at 6 p.m. and Sunday at 11 a.m.
www.tlcowatonna.org/

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA

104 First St. SE, Hayfield
507-477-2248
Sunday Worship 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
www.trinityhayfield.org

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMS

108 Third Ave. SW, Medford
507-451-0447
Sunday Worship 9 a.m.
Wednesday 6:30 p.m.
tlcmedfordoffice@gmail.com

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMS

57043 300th St., Waltham
507-567-2272
Sunday Worship: 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.

ZION LUTHERAN – ELCA

7126 SW 98th St., Ellendale
Sunday Worship 8:30 a.m.
deaconbilliejo@gmail.com

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN – ELCA

1909 St. Paul Rd., Owatonna
507-451-4853
Sunday Worship 9:15 a.m.
www.oursaviorsowatonna.com

CATHOLIC

CHRIST THE KING
205 Second Ave. NW, Medford
507-451-4845
Mass: 5:30 p.m. Sat
Mass: 9 a.m. Mon & Fri
parishoffice@stjosephowatonna.org

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS

307 SW First St., New Richland
507-234-6244
Saturday Mass: 5 p.m.
www.stannjan.com

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL

9946 SE 24th Ave., Owatonna
507-583-2784
Sunday Mass: 8:15 a.m.
Litomysl Finance Council: 2nd Thursday
Litomysl Pastoral Council: 2nd Thursday Every Other Month
www.litomysl.webs.com

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC

150 NE Second St., Hayfield
507-477-2256
Saturday Mass: 5 p.m.
Saturday Reconciliation: 3:45 p.m.
www.stcolumbanuschurch.com

SACRED HEART PARISH

810 S Cedar Ave., Owatonna
Mass Times: Daily Tuesday-Friday at 7:15 a.m.
Saturday Mass: 5 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8 a.m., 10 a.m., 12 p.m. (Spanish)
Reconciliation 4 p.m.
Saturday Adoration Thursdays 8 a.m. and 7 p.m.
www.sacredheartowatonna.org

ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC

114 E Main St., Blooming Prairie
507-583-2784
Sunday Mass: 10:30 a.m.
Reconciliation: 9 a.m. First Friday & Saturday
www.stcolumbanuschurch.com
columbanusbp@gmail.com

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH

512 S Elm Ave., Owatonna
507-451-4845
Daily Mass: 8 a.m. Tues., Wed. & Fri.
Communion Service 8 a.m. Thursday
Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.
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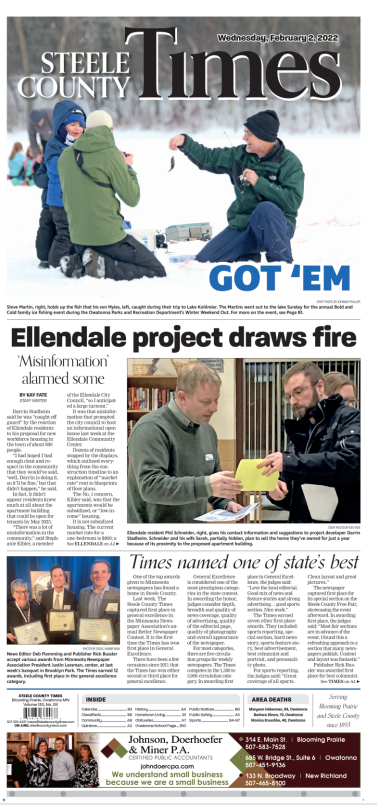
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Steele County produces 3 state champs



COURTESY GLEN MEGER

It's back-to-back state championship titles for Owatonna's Landen Johnson.

"I've been through a lot this year and it felt really good to go out on top the way that I did."

— Charley Elwood
Medford State Champion



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Owatonna senior captain Rian Grunwald is all smiles as the referee raises her hand to make her the first-ever MSHSL 114-pound girls state champion. Grunwald took down Aitkin's Madelyn Strohmayr by a 10-2 major decision to win the title.

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

Three local wrestlers — Rian Grunwald, Charley Elwood and Landen Johnson — all finished the 2021-2022 season by winning state titles at the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) state tournament this past weekend.

Headlining the show was Grunwald, who took home the first-ever MSHSL Girls 114-pound title with a 10-2 major decision win over Aitkin's Madelyn Strohmayr.

Owatonna's senior captain realized her dream by beating Strohmayr handily in the final match, avenging her loss to Strohmayr in the section finals.

Huskies head coach Derek Johnson said that he and Grunwald went to the drawing board after Grunwald's section loss to Strohmayr and knew exactly what they needed to work on to win at the state tournament.

On Saturday, the game plan was executed to perfection as Grunwald controlled the match from the opening whistle to take home Owatonna's first-ever girls state title.

Grunwald was Steele County's only first-time state champion of the tournament.

Following Grunwald's performance was Medford's Elwood, who took home his third MSHSL state title by cruising his way through the 138-pound division.

Elwood left no doubt who was the rightful winner at 138 pounds by beating Blackduck/Cass Lake-Bena/Kelliher's Christian Pater 15-0 by technical fall.

Elwood mixed a

flurry of takedowns and near fall attempts while playing perfect defense to walk back to his corner with one more state title than he came in with.

"It felt really, really good. I've been through a lot this year and it felt really good to go out on top the way that I did," said Elwood.

Elwood was also able to share a special weekend with his brother, Tommy, who placed fifth in the 126-pound division earlier in the tournament.

"It's awesome. Tommy, you know, I know he'll do better in these upcoming years. I know it's not what he wanted today, but he's got a couple more years. I know he'll end up on top."

Rounding out the championship runs

on the weekend was Owatonna's Johnson, who made it back-to-back state titles at 160 pounds with a 10-3 decision win over St. Michael-Albertville's Jed Wester.

The North Dakota State commit could be seen smiling on the mat as he rolled his way to victory with another clean sweep of the 160-pound division.

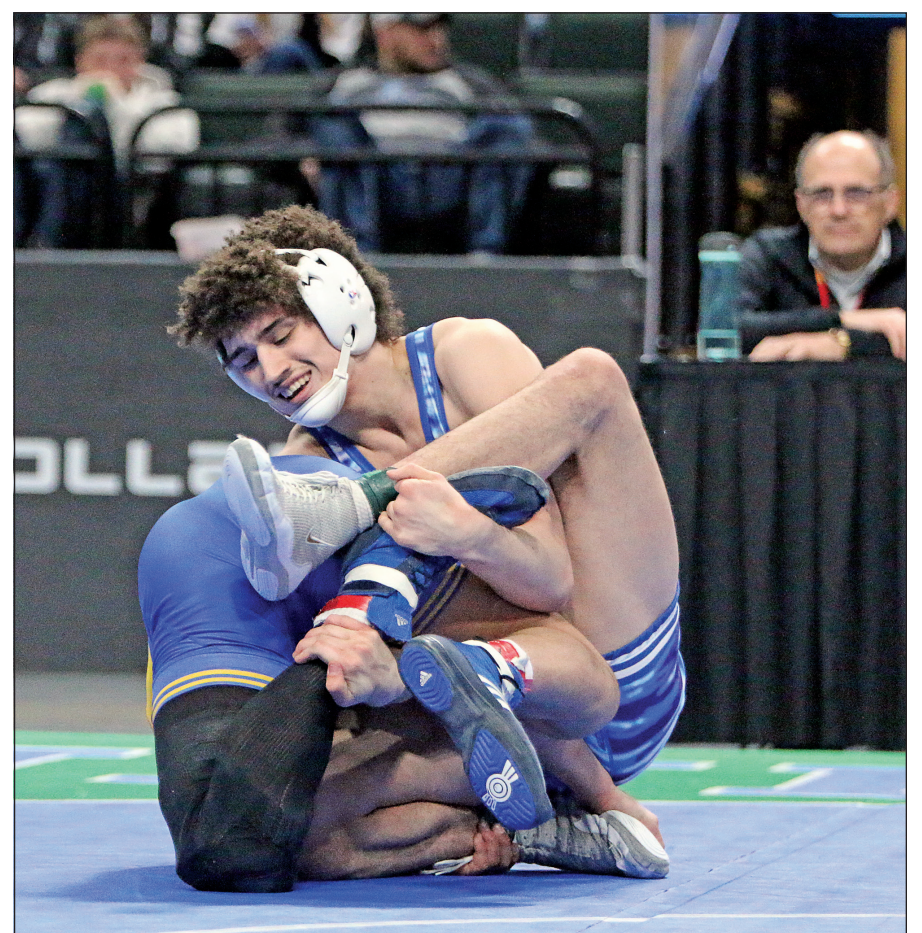
Close to joining Grunwald, Elwood and Johnson at the state finals were Medford's Tate Hermes and NRHEG's Ralph Roesler and Makota Misgen.

Hermes, Roesler and Misgen all took second in their finals matches, with Misgen narrowly missing out on a state title after losing in sudden-death double overtime.



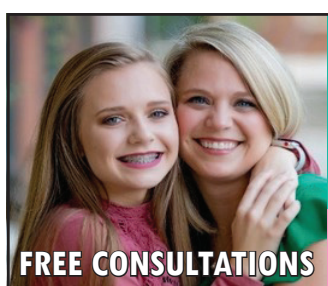
STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Medford's Charley Elwood sports a black eye and a state title first-place medal atop the podium at the MSHSL state tournament. Elwood won by a 15-0 technical fall to take home his third state title.



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Defending 160-pound state champion Landen Johnson of Owatonna smiles mid-match as he works his way to repeating his title run. Johnson won a 10-3 decision over St. Michael-Albertville's Jed Wester to make it back-to-back state titles for the senior.



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One Husky makes history, another repeats

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

Saturday, March 5 is a day that will go down in Owatonna wrestling history as Rian Grunwald became the first-ever girls 114-pound state champion and Landen Johnson repeated his 160-pound state title.

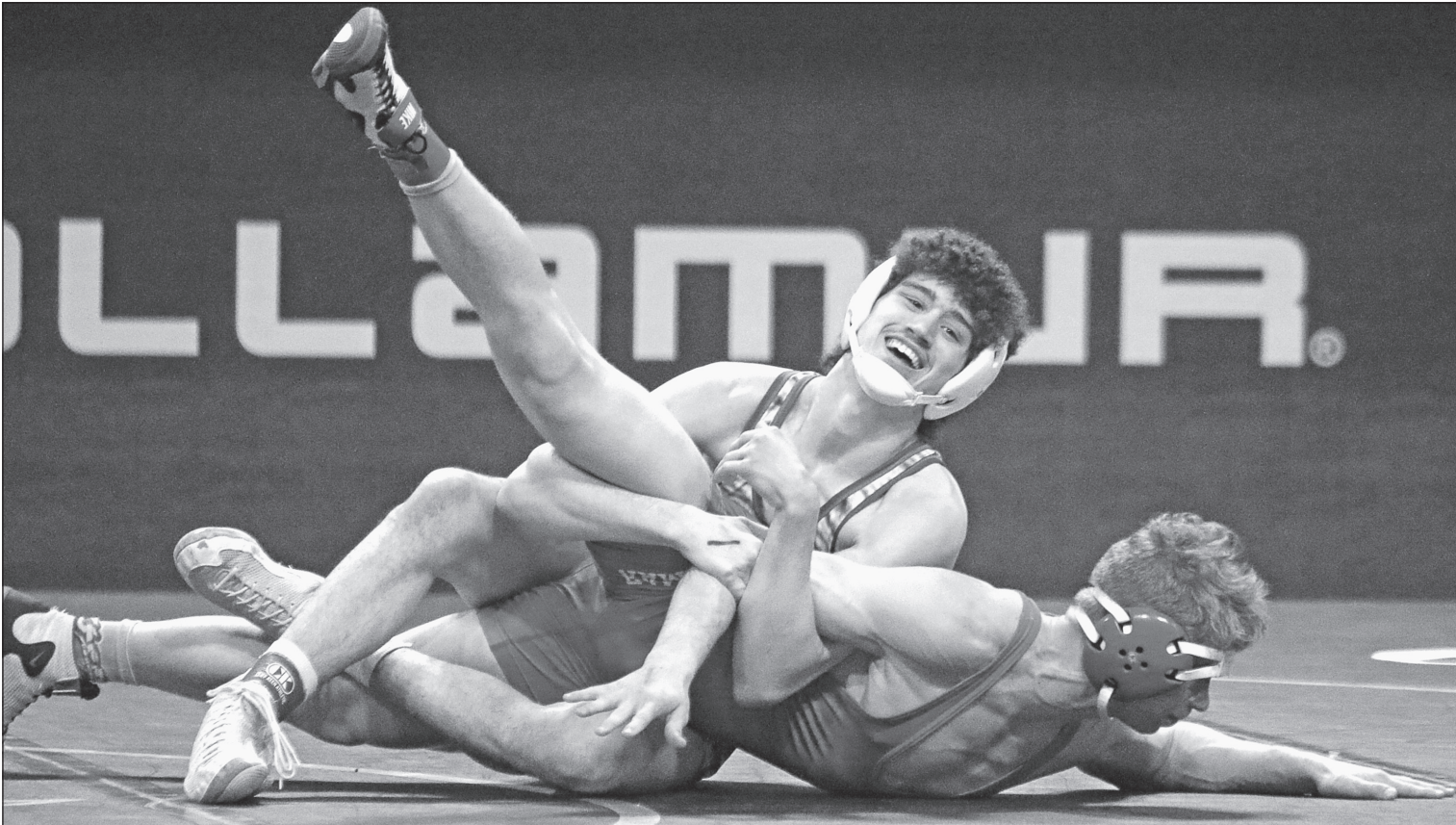
The two wrestlers sat atop their respective brackets and delivered as favorites in the tournament to give Owatonna fans the thrill of victory again in 2022.

Grunwald made her way to history by beating Sauke Center's Lanna Walter by a 10-6 decision before winning her finals match against Aitkin's Madelyn Strohmayer by a 10-2 major decision.

Not only will Grunwald's name be forever enshrined in the Minnesota state record books, but she is also Owatonna High School's first-ever girl state champion.



Owatonna junior Cael Robb eyes his opponent as he looks to make a move in the 132-pound third-place match. Robb went on to win the third-place match 4-2 and earned his place near the top of the podium.



Owatonna's Landen Johnson is all smiles as he looks to wrap up his semifinal match against Willmar. Johnson won the match 5-0 and went on to repeat as the 160-pound state champ by beating St. Michael-Albertville 10-3 in the final match.

On the boys side, Johnson successfully defended his 160-pound title on Saturday by beating Willmar's Jonas

Anez by a 5-0 decision before taking down St. Michael-Albertville's Jed Wester by a 10-3 decision to show why he is the top dog at 160 pounds.

Also competing for Owatonna at the state meet were Cael Robb, Isabella Townley, Lane Karsten and Andrew Nirk.

Robb put on a show in the 132-pound third-place match after suffering a loss on day one of the tournament.

The junior won his third-place match by a 4-2 decision after outscoring opponents 13-0 in the consolation bracket to get back into the mix on the podium.

Townley also had a memorable day at the state tournament and came in third place for Owatonna in the girls 107-pound bracket.

Townley's third-place finish went down as Owatonna's first official score at the girls state meet and Townley's initial 107-pound match against Forest Lake's Aspen Blasko was Owatonna's first-ever appearance at the girls state meet.

As for Karsten and Nirk, the freshman and senior were unable to win their first-round matchups on day one and found themselves being forced to take no-contest losses due to their

first-round opponents losing in the next round to meet them in the consolation bracket.

Neither Karsten nor Nirk placed at the state meet.

However, in a group of six athletes, Owatonna will be more than happy to take home four podium finishes and will have plenty of celebrating to do for Grunwald and Johnson taking state titles back to Owatonna.

Grunwald and Johnson will leave the Owatonna wrestling program next season due to graduation, and leave their senior legacy on the program as state champions.

Tigers place 3 on state podium

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

The Medford Tigers were able to celebrate three podium finishes at the Minnesota State High School League (MSHL) state meet this past weekend at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

Medford junior 138-pounder Charley Elwood earned his third state title while fellow junior Tate Hermes took second at 160 pounds and Elwood's freshman brother, Tommy, took fifth at 126 pounds.

The elder Elwood capped a spectacular 25-1 season with

a 15-0 technical fall win in the state finals match over Blackduck/Cass Lake-Bena/Kelliher's (BCLB) Christian Prater to take home his third title.

Meanwhile, Hermes made a run to the finals in the 160-pound bracket after winning three straight decisions over Dover-Eyota, United North Central Warriors and Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunberg.

However, Hermes was edged 7-0 by Jackson County Central's Payton Handeveldt, who finished the year on a 55-3 tear.

Tommy Elwood

made his presence felt at the tournament as a freshman by winning his initial match against Dover-Eyota by a 5-0 decision before ultimately losing to Royalton/Upsala in the quarterfinal round.

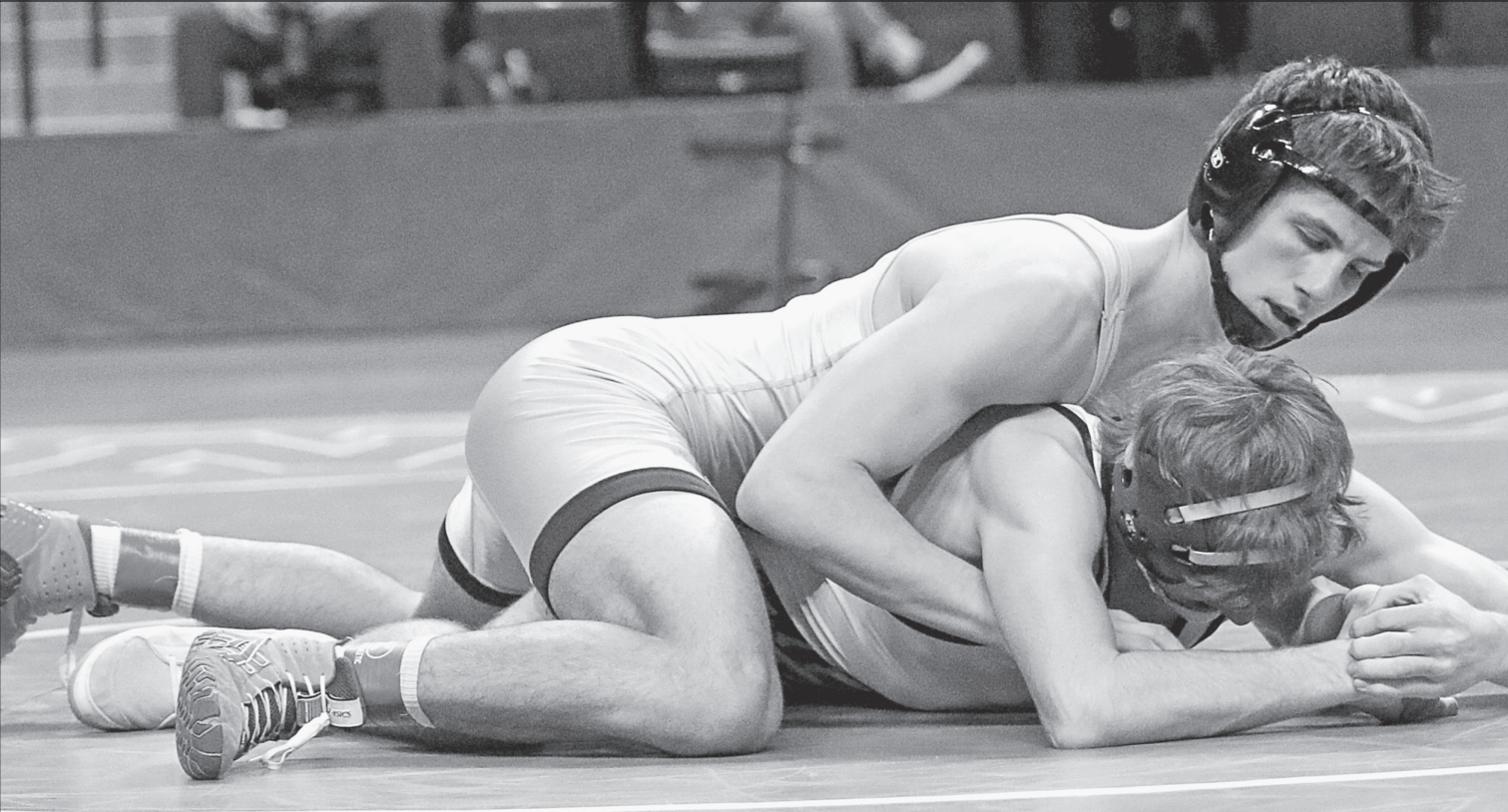
Elwood made a run in the consolation bracket, but lost to Border West to enter the third-place match.

Relegated to the fifth-place match, Elwood made his way to the fifth-place spot on the podium by receiving a medical forfeit from Chatfield.

Also wrestling for Medford at the state tournament were



Medford's Tommy Elwood fights to control his opponent from his back. Elwood took fifth place in the 126-pound division as a freshman this season.



Medford's Charley Elwood works from top position during his state final match. Elwood won the match against BCLB by a 15-0 technical fall to win his third state title.

106-pounder Luis Lopez, 152-pounder Garron Hoffman and 182-pounder Dylan Heiderscheidt.

Lopez made it through his first match against Minnesota before being taken out in the second round by Holdingford via injury forfeit.

Both Hoffman and Heiderscheidt were beaten in the first round on day one and neither wrestler was able to advance in the consolation bracket.

Tigers fans will be able to celebrate a state title win again with Charley Elwood bringing home the hardware, while Tommy Elwood and Hermes will look to make the leap to the top of the podium next season.

Three Panthers place at state

Roesler, Misgen take home runner-up titles

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

The NRHEG Panthers saw Annabelle Petsinger, Ralph Roesler and Makota Misgen all earn podium finishes at the Minnesota State High School League state meet last weekend.

Roesler and Misgen both made their way to runner-up finishes, earning their medals after battling in the championship match.

Roesler took home second at 195 pounds after making a run through the division with three consecutive wins to reach the finals.

On his way, Roesler won an 11-6 decision against Dover-Eyota, a 3-1 sudden victory win against United North Central and a win by fall against Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City in the semifinal round.

Roesler's elation was obvious after his win by fall as the senior shouted, "Finals, baby!" to an electrified NRHEG crowd of fans.

In the final match, Roesler battled with Benson's Thomas Dineen, but ultimately got caught and pinned in the first round to place second.

As for Misgen, the junior made a run to the 285-pound final match by winning some closely-contested decisions.

Misgen proved his heart on the mat by beating Jackson County Central's Cameron Scholton 1-0, Minnesota's Jackson Esping 3-2 and Eden valley-Watkins'

Austin Schlangen 5-1.

In the finals match against Royalton/Upsala's Jeremy Mugg, Misgen was forced to dig deep as the match came down to double overtime to determine the winner of the 285-pound state title.

Misgen chose to take the bottom position to begin the final 30-second period, but was unable to escape Mugg and earn the point he needed to win.

Sophomore Annabelle Petsinger made waves at the state meet by taking third place in the first-ever girls 120-pound division.

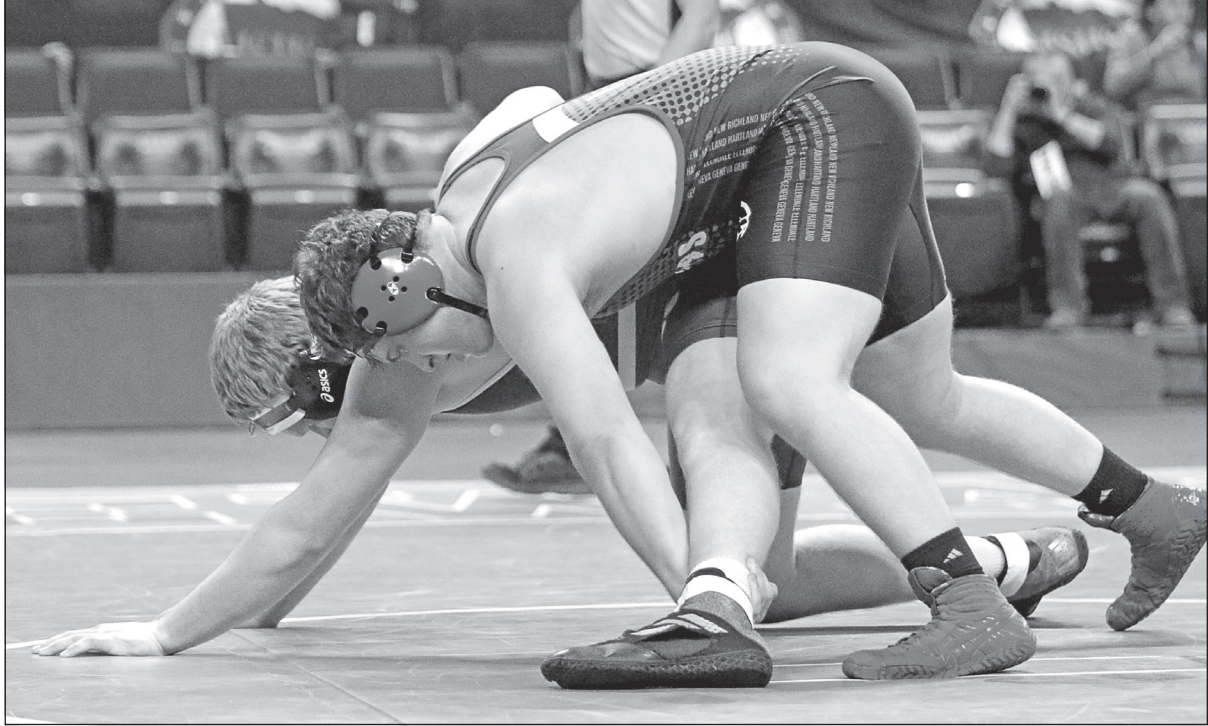
Petsinger opened the tournament with a 7-4 decision loss to Ortonville's Brooklyn Conrad, but earned her way into third place with a win by fall over Mora's Nora Houghlum.

Petsinger will go down in the history books as a state medalist in the inaugural girls state tournament as well as become NRHEG's first state medalist in the girls tournament.

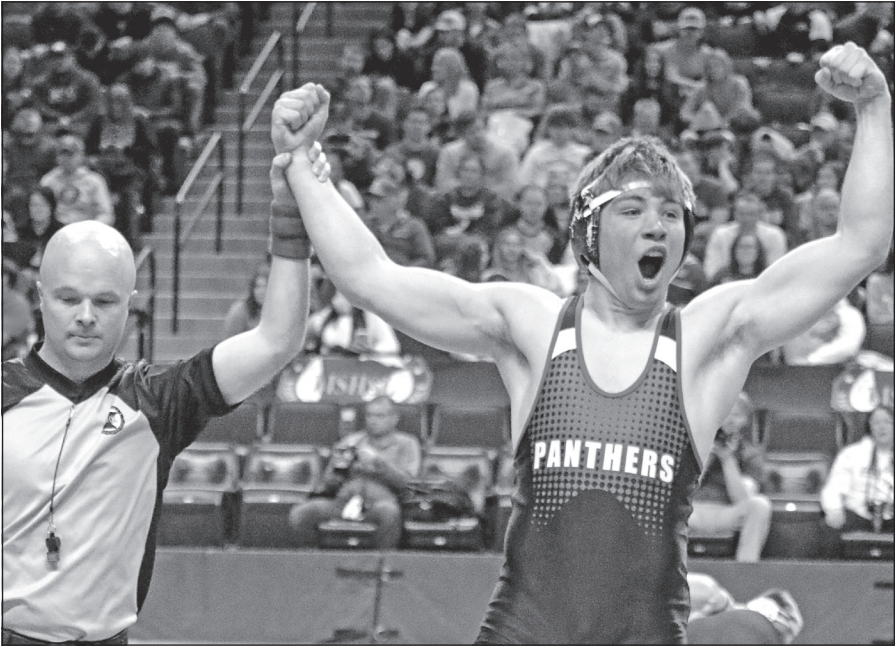
Petsinger's older brother, Nikolas, also competed at the state meet but did not place.

The elder Petsinger won his opening match by fall against LPGE-Browerille's Braden Thom, but was bested by Caledonia-Houston's Owen Denstad in the next round via a 3-2 decision to be sent to the consolation bracket.

In the consolation bracket, Petsinger beat St. Agnes' Johnny Cummings by fall, but

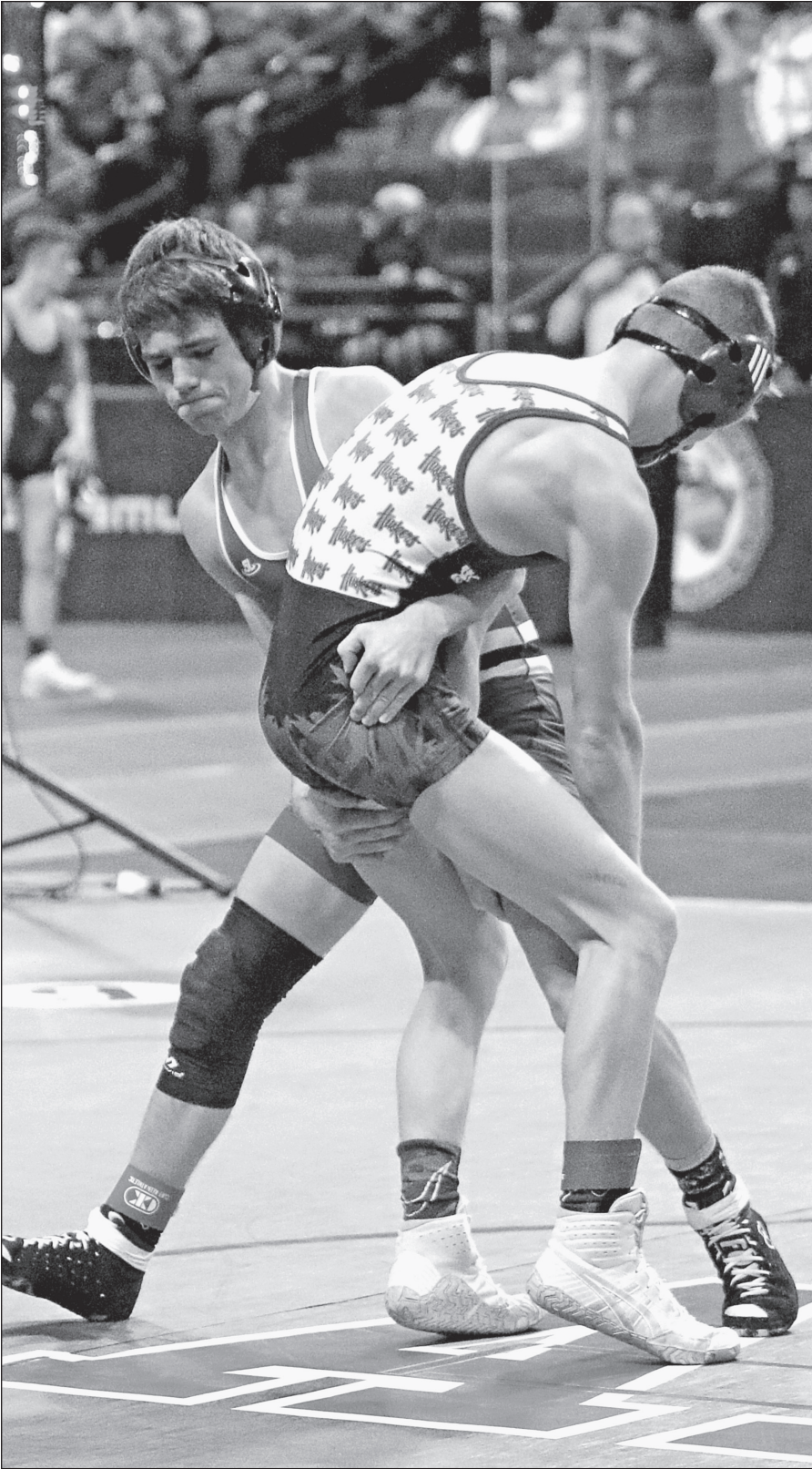


NRHEG junior 285-pounder Makota Misgen tries to hold his Royalton/Upsala opponent down in the 285-pound championship match. Misgen lost the title match in double overtime after being unable to escape from the bottom position.



NRHEG senior wrestler Ralph Roesler is overcome with emotion after making it to the 195-pound state title match. Roesler lost by fall to Thomas Dineen in the final match.

Westfield shut out in St. Paul



Westfield's Bo Zwiener looks to secure a takedown in his opening match against Holdingford's Masyn Patrick. Zwiener went on to lose the match against Patrick by a 9-1 major decision.

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIP
SPORTS EDITOR

The Westfield Razorbacks were unable to return from the Minnesota State High School League state meet with any hardware at the conclusion of the weekend.

Bo Zwiener, Tyler Archer and Cade Christianson made the journey to the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, but were held to just one win by Tyler Archer over the course of the tournament.

Archer's win came in the opening round of the 170-pound bracket where he beat Wadena-Deer Creek's Koby Endres by a 7-1 decision.

However, Archer was beaten 10-8 in sudden victory by Badger/GBMR's Ethan Waage to be sent to the consolation bracket.

In the consolation bracket, Archer was sent home after losing a 4-1 decision to Kenyon-Wanamingo's Jaedin Johnson.

Zwiener was unable to hold off Holdingford's Masyn Patrick in the opening round of the tournament and lost a 9-1 major decision.

The consolation bracket was not kind to Zwiener as the freshman lost his next match to LPGE/Browerille's Gavin Albers by a 5-0 decision and was sent home.

Christianson suffered a similar fate as Zwiener and was forced to the consolation bracket after losing by fall to Bird Island-Olivia-Lake Lilian District's (BOLD) Austin Kiecker in the opening round.

From there, Christianson was sent home in the first consolation match by Pipestone Area's Nate Bobendirer via a 4-2 decision.

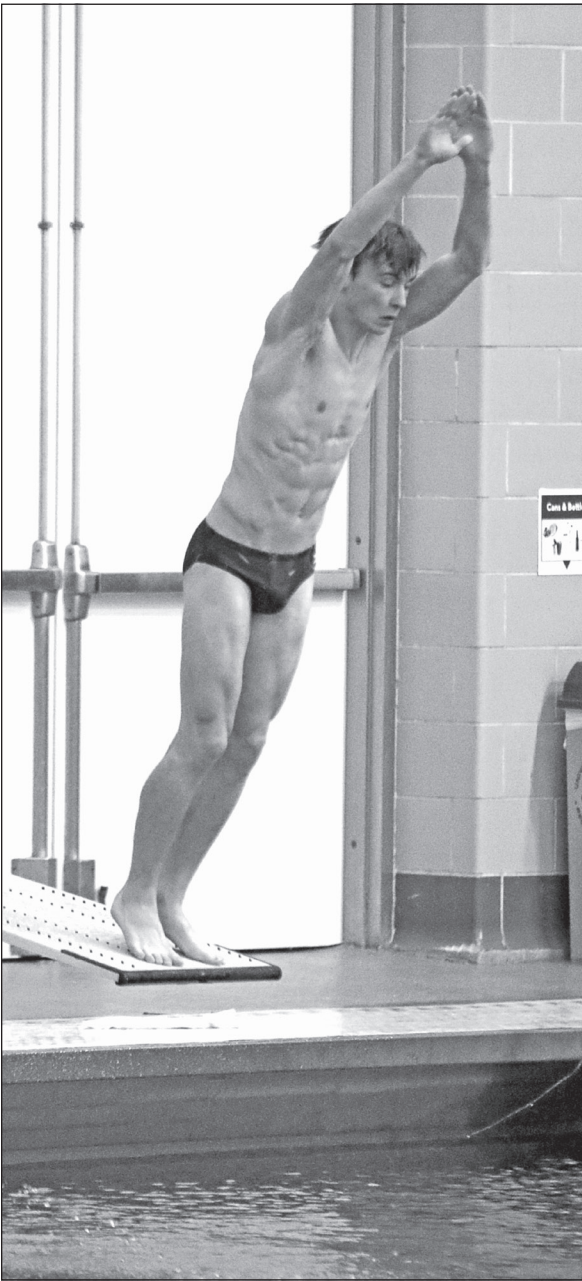
Westfield will lose returning state qualifier Archer to graduation next season, but Zwiener and Christianson will have another opportunity to avenge their losses, if they qualify again next year.



Westfield's Tyler Archer tries to break his Wadena-Deer Creek opponent down at the beginning of the second period in the quarterfinal round. Archer went on to win the match by a 7-1 decision to advance.

Diving into state competition

Piepho represents Huskies dive at state



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
Owatonna junior diver Cole Piepho prepares to jump off of the diving board at the MSHSL state meet. Piepho was eliminated from the state meet's final rounds after finishing in 26th place in the preliminary round.

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

Junior diver Cole Piepho represented the Owatonna boys swim and dive team at the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) state swim and dive tournament. Piepho was Owatonna's sole athlete at the state meet after qualifying to dive by placing fourth at the Section 1AA meet. "It was really close between our guys and who went to state. Cole took fourth and our other two athletes, Henry Hilgendorf and Ethan Peterson, took fifth and sixth; just missing the four--athlete cut off," said Owatonna dive coach Chris Snow. Regardless of being the only athlete at the state meet, Huskies fans and teammates alike showed up dawn-ing school colors to cheer on Piepho, who made his run to the state meet in his first year ever diving for Owatonna. "He had done some trampoline work over the summer and we thought he would be good, but he's blown us away with his skill and athleticism. It's been fun watching him grow and excel as a diver," said Snow. Piepho started his

five-dive routine in the preliminary rounds with a 25.50-point dive that put him at 20th place to begin the second round. Another solid 23.60-point dive improved his score to 59.10 total points to move to 18th place, however, a rocky 17.85-point third dive moved him back to 24th place. Piepho's fourth dive did not improve his

score either. The 16.40-point dive put the junior in 29th place with one dive remaining, a near-impossible task to make the qualifying rounds at 15th place or better. Regardless, Piepho finished the day on a high note by posting his best dive of the day, a 32-point showing that moved him to 26th place. Snow said that despite Piepho not mak-

ing it to the next round to dive at the state finals, he is excited to get back to the drawing board with him for next season and wants to highlight his feat of making it to the state meet in his first year in the sport. Piepho's elimination from the state meet's preliminary rounds marked the official end of the Huskies swim and dive season.

"He's blown us away with his skill and athleticism."

— Chris Snow
Owatonna Swimming Coach



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
Owatonna junior diver Cole Piepho breaks the surface on his first dive attempt at the MSHSL state meet. Piepho scored 25.50 points on his first dive to take 20th place.

Dogfight puts Panthers over top Bucs 52-51

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

The NRHEG Panthers kept their season alive last Thursday by beating the WEM Buccaneers 52-51 at Mankato East High School in the quarter-final round of the Section 2AAA playoffs. It was a dogfight for both sides as the two teams battled to a tie in the first half before NRHEG edged out the Buccaneers by one point for the win. "It was a tough battle all night. I am very proud of this team and what they have accomplished this season," said NRHEG head coach Onika Peterson. The Panthers and Buccaneers found themselves in a defensive gridlock in the first half. Both team featured scoring runs followed by extended droughts en route to being tied 23-23 come halftime. After the half, both sides were able to improve their first half point totals. However, it was NRHEG that won the scoring battle in the end by outscoring WEM 29-28 to edge out the one-point win. Senior Sophie Stork made her mark on the game by scoring 23 points while junior point guard Sidney Schultz supplied the Panthers with 21 points. Together, Stork and Schultz accounted for 44 of NRHEG's 52 points.

Earlier in the week, NRHEG won its opening-round game against Medford 67-50. NRHEG got off to a blistering start against Medford and leaped out to a 12-0 lead to set



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
NRHEG junior guard Sidney Schultz drives the lane against Medford. Schultz finished with eight points in NRHEG's 67-50 win against Medford.

the pace for the game. The Panthers kept their foot on the gas to end the first half leading by 18 points at 37-19. Both sides found continued success on

offense in the second half, but this time it was Medford who out-scored NRHEG 31-30. The boost in scoring for the Tigers was still not enough in the end, and NRHEG went on to

win by 17 points. "It was a great game. The team played well, had an awesome home-court advantage with such a fun student section. Medford is a See **DOGFIGHT** on B6 ►

Ukrainian boxers take the fight outside of the ring

While the world watches Russia continue its attempts to invade and conquer Ukraine, four prominent Ukrainian boxers have decided to leave their gloves in the gym and take the fight outside of the ring in their home country.

Oleksandr Usyk, Vasily Lomachenko, as well as brothers, Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko, have all joined Ukraine's national defense efforts in the past week to fight the invading Russian forces. As the mayor of Kyiv — the capital of Ukraine — Vitali Klitschko has led from the forefront of the defense efforts working with both the Ukrainian government and the civilians of Kyiv to ensure the safety of the population as much of the country is currently facing. "The armed forces of Ukraine heroically defend our land. We at Kyiv are ensuring the functioning of the capital's critical infrastructure. We are doing everything to protect our city. Perseverance and determination. Unity and a cold mind! Only there we will stand," said Vitali Klitschko in an Instagram post from Feb. 23. Vitali and Wladimir have long been figures of Ukrainian heroism as the two heavyweight boxers both held world titles at separate times over the course of their careers. Also joining the fight were Lomachenko and Usyk, who have taken roles as volunteer soldiers in their native regions of Ukraine. Lomachenko is currently serving in the Belgorod-Dniester



Steele Sports
JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Territorial Unit after returning to Ukraine from Greece after the invasion began. Usyk, on the other hand, put an approaching bout with former heavyweight world champion Anthony Joshua on hold to join a territorial defense unit in Kyiv to help defend Ukraine's capital. To witness these four athletes put their lives on the line for their country despite making millions of dollars annually in boxing is inspiring to say the least. In my opinion, it is a testament to the heart of fighters. In a time when the world needs inspiration and heroism, these four athletes have decided to put everything on the line to protect their fellow innocent countrymen and women from harm, no matter the harsh consequences they may pay in doing so. Some things in life are bigger than sports and the actions of Usyk, Lomachenko and the Klitschko brothers are a reminder that athletes are more than just the game that they play or the uniform they wear. I hope to see all four leave the conflict in Ukraine unharmed at its conclusion and wish them nothing but the best in their future endeavors.

Huskies smoke Red Wing 70-37, end conference play with perfect record

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna Huskies boys basketball team continued its dominance in the Big Nine Conference by beating Red Wing 70-37 at home. In standard fashion, Owatonna took the reins of the game early and never looked back. The Huskies jumped

out to a 34-16 lead at halftime thanks to 40.7% shooting from the field and 35% shooting from three-point range on 27 total first-half field goal attempts. Red Wing found itself in an offensive hole by allowing almost double the amount of field goal attempts that it had in the first half shooting the ball only 14 times

compared to Owatonna's 27 shot attempts. Coming out of halftime, Owatonna continued to score points in bunches by lighting up the scoreboard for 36 more points. A blistering 60.9% of Owatonna's field goal attempts dropped in the second half against Red Wing for the Huskies to jump out to the

33-point win. It was an all-around dominating performance by the Huskies who led the game in all major categories including points, rebounds, assists, blocks and steals. Even bigger for the Huskies was the team's ability to retain possession of the ball. The Huskies had less than ten turnovers all game and benefitted greatly from points off of Red Wing's 12 turnovers.

Leading Owatonna on the scorecard was senior Brayden Williams with 22 points. Earlier in the week, Owatonna had its hands full dealing with a Mankato East squad that made the Huskies fight all the way to the end for the 71-66 win. In unusual fashion, Owatonna found itself trailing at halftime to the Cougars 37-32. However, Owatonna head coach Josh Williams found the answers Owatonna needed in the second half and put his team in the position to mount a comeback in the second half.

The Huskies executed the game plan to perfection and managed to escape Mankato with the 71-66 win behind big scoring performances from Williams and senior forward Evan Dushek. Williams led the team again with 27 points, however, Dushek's double-double



Owatonna senior Noah Kubicek goes full-extension on a shot attempt against Red Wing. Kubicek was held scoreless but contributed two rebounds and two assists in Owatonna's 70-37 win.

with 21 points and 10 rebounds provided Owatonna with its typical one-two punch combination that has kept the Huskies undefeated in the Big Nine Conference all season.

The Huskies' two wins were their last of the regular season and kept the team at a perfect 22-0 mark in-conference and a solid 24-2 overall. See **HUSKIES** on B6 ►



Owatonna's Ty Creger maneuvers his way through the Red Wing defense. Creger finished the 70-37 win against Red Wing flirting with a triple-double at five points, six rebounds and eight assists.

Panthers knock Huskies out of playoffs

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

The No. 7 Owatonna Huskies fell to the No. 2 Lakeville North Panthers 72-36 in the opening round of the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) playoffs last week. Owatonna started the game in an offensive slump, and fell behind 12-0 after an early run by the Panthers. "When you miss those first few shots it's hard because you're working so hard to get them off. That little lead, in the beginning, was big for them until we made a run coming back. But credits to them, they have some really good shooters," said Owatonna head coach Lindsey Hugstad-Vaa. Hugstad-Vaa said that she knew the game was going to be an uphill battle on the road against the Panthers, and that the Panthers' post players and depth shooters were specific areas of focus during the week at practice. After falling behind 12-0, Owatonna managed to mount a comeback in the first half by

bringing the Panthers' lead to just five points. However, a late rally by the Panthers that was sparked by consistent three-point shooting and successful bonus free-throw attempts brought the Panthers' lead to 15 points at 37-22. Hugstad-Vaa said that coming out of halftime, the team had to reevaluate its defensive strategy by emphasizing pressure and rebounding. The Panthers' ability to move the ball freely led to multiple second-chance opportunities that cost the Huskies points on multiple possessions. Despite implementing the defensive game plan, Owatonna was unable to stop Lakeville North from increasing its lead. The Panthers went on to score an additional 35 points to Owatonna's 14 to end the game with the 36-point win. With the loss comes the end of the Huskies' 2021-2022 season. "They're such great kids. I told them, 'This game doesn't define your whole career.' We've had some really good games and some



Owatonna senior Lexi Mendenhall leaps up for a contested jump shot against Lakeville North. Mendenhall had six points in the Huskies' 72-36 loss in Lakeville last week.

really bright spots the last four years. They're just great human beings, and I'm really going to miss them. It still hasn't hit me that it's really over yet." Leading the way for Owatonna in scoring in the final game was senior Hillary Haarstad with 11 points. Haarstad, along with nine of her senior teammates, will move on from the team next year due to graduation. Owatonna's only active varsity athletes remaining on the roster for next season will be sophomores Carsyn Brady and Morgan Fisher.

Player Stats vs. Lakeville North				
	P	R	A	
Haarstad	11	0	0	
Mendenhall	6	0	0	
Simon	6	0	0	
Buytaert	5	0	0	
Shornock	4	0	0	
Brady	4	0	0	



Owatonna senior Hillary Haarstad drives to the basket against a Lakeville North defender. Haarstad had a team-high 11 points in Owatonna's 72-36 loss to Lakeville North in the opening round of the Section 1AAAA playoffs.

Spherion Staffing gives gift to Owatonna Foundation

Showing its continued commitment to the community, Spherion Staffing and Recruiting made a generous donation to the Owatonna Foundation recently.

As a new supporter, Spherion and owner Ann Miller gave a combined total of \$1,000 to support the Owatonna Foundation's mission.

Through generous contributions from local businesses and individuals, the Owatonna Foundation

supports the community by awarding scholarships and grants for projects related to education, community, recreation, and the arts.

"Spherion is proud to be a contributor to The Owatonna Foundation because we believe in its mission of improving the quality of life for present and future generations of Owatonna residents. Thank you, Owatonna Foundation!" said

Ann Miller, owner of Spherion Staffing in Owatonna.

"The Owatonna Foundation values the support of great businesses in our community like Spherion Staffing and Recruiting that invest in our community. All that the Owatonna Foundation has accomplished is made possible because of donors like Spherion," said Board President Tom Dufresne.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Spherion Staffing of Owatonna presents a \$1,000 check to the Owatonna Foundation. Those involved in the presentation include, from left: Michelle Martin, Spherion; Tom Dufresne, president of Owatonna Foundation; Laura Brady, Spherion; Ann Miller, owner of Spherion Staffing; Jessica Ortiz and Delana Sevier, both of Spherion and Betsy Lindgren, trustee of Owatonna Foundation.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Steele County Free Fair is responsible for leading the United Way of Steele County to a successful 2021 campaign as the United Way hit 96% of its goal. Involved in the campaign included: front row, from left: Scott Kozelka, Nancy Ness, Annette Duncan and Dan Deml; second row: Mike Hamilton and Sandy Jierele; third row: Josh Prokopec, Tim Arlt, Glen Meger and Wayne Steele; back row: Doug Meier, Gene Fisher, Jim Linder and Mark Ditlevson.

United Way campaign hits 96% of goal

Steele County Fair leads United Way to successful conclusion

United Way of Steele County, in partnership with the 2021 Community Campaign Leader, the Steele County Free Fair (SCFF), announce that they achieved 96.5% of goal, raising

\$771,668.36 to support the health, education, and financial stability of every person in Steele County.

"We want to thank the people that live and work in Steele County, who have come together to raise

the funds required to meet the increased needs of our community," said Annette Duncan, president of the United Way. "The caring power of this community is second to none."

See UNITED WAY on B10 ►

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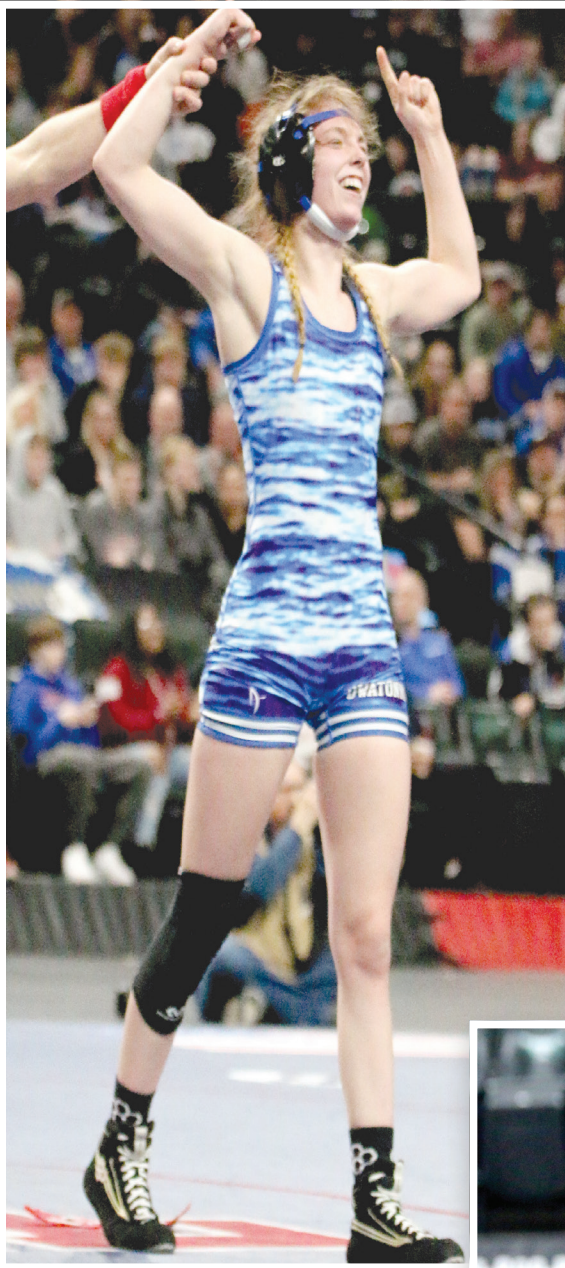
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RIAN GRUNWALD captured the first ever girls state wrestling title for Owatonna.

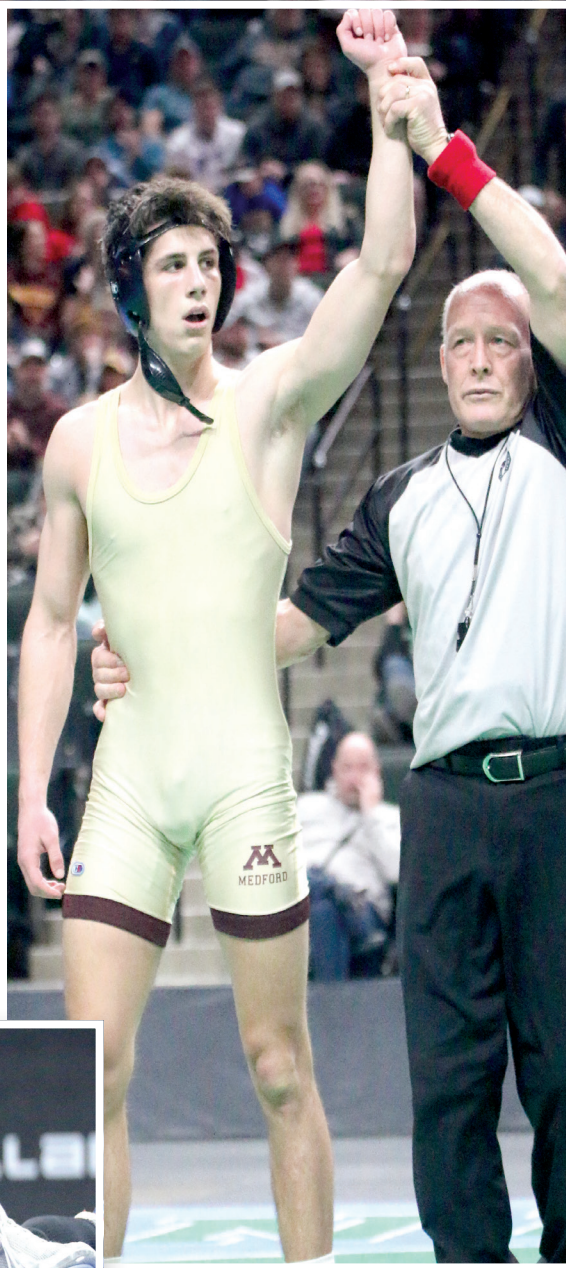


STATE CHAMPIONS

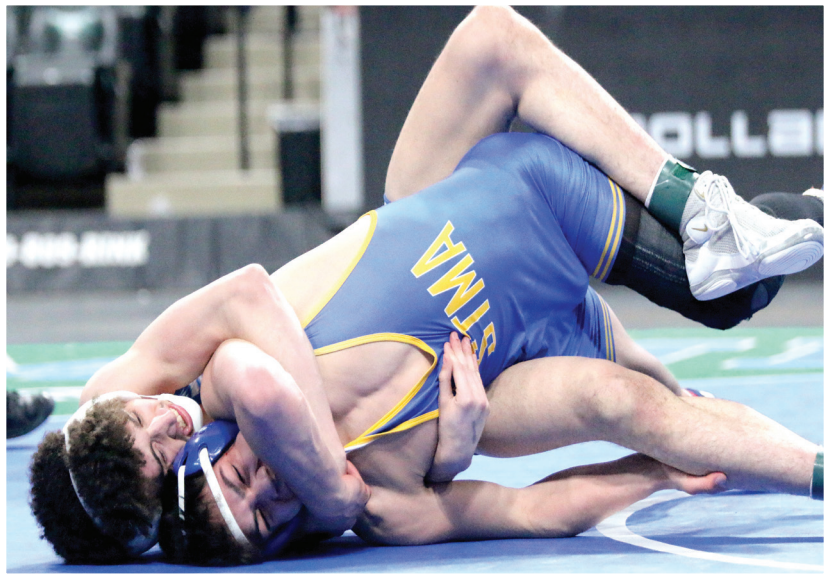
RIAN GRUNWALD
Owatonna, 114-pound

LANDON JOHNSON
Owatonna, 160-pound

CHARLEY ELWOOD
Medford, 138-pound



CHARLEY ELWOOD of Medford muscled his way to a third straight state title.



LANDON JOHNSON earned back-to-back titles for Owatonna.

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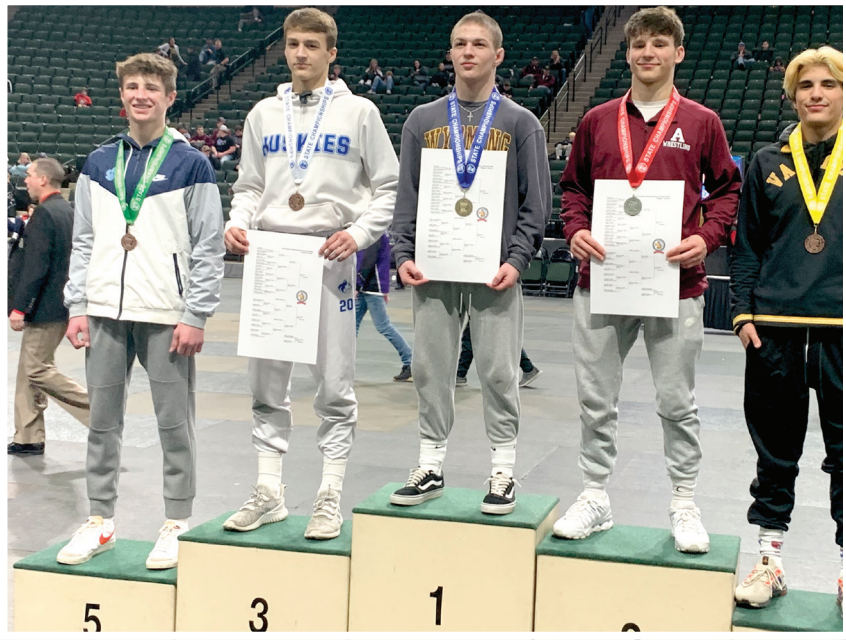
MAKOTA MISGEN of NRHEG came away with a runner-up title in the 285-pound division after dropping a heartbreaker in double overtime in the championship round.

STATE RUNNER-UPS:

- **TATE HERMES**, Medford, 160 pound
- **RALPH ROESLER**, NRHEG, 195 pound
- **MAKOTA MISGEN**, NRHEG, 285 pound

THIRD PLACE:

- **ISABELLA TOWNLEY**, Owatonna, 107 pound
- **ANNABELLE PETSINGER**, NRHEG, 120 pound
- **CAEL ROBB**, Owatonna, 132 pound



CAEL ROBB of Owatonna placed third in the 132-pound division.



Congratulations to all these area wrestlers for their outstanding performances this season!

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NO WALLS

Owatonna focuses on learning outdoors

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

Jan Gytri had a perfect example of why she believes students benefit from being – and learning – outside.

“It comes up constantly,” she said. “Just today, I had a student who was reading a book and came upon the word ‘deciduous.’ He knew that word, and he knew what it meant because of all the work that we did.”

The student is a first-grader. He knew the word because of the time he and his classmates spent outside last fall, identify-



Students in Stephanie Kingland's kindergarten class at Lincoln Elementary found some fresh tracks after a recent snowfall. The students have learned how to identify certain animal tracks, and are happy to head outside for lessons. Kingland recently attended at workshop at the Jeffers Foundation about teaching outdoors in the winter.

ing trees, learning why some lose their leaves and others don't. “I've always liked the idea of getting kids outside, using the outside as an extension of our classroom,” said Gytri, who teaches first grade at Lincoln Elementary in Owatonna. “If we're going to work on measurements in math, I could use the book and measure a line, or the side of my desk – or we could go outside and measure the depth of the snow, measure the distance around a tree.”

A couple of years ago, while looking for grants for school gardens, she came across the Jeffers Foundation.

The non-profit, based out of Plymouth, came from a bequest from Bob Jeffers. When he died in 1998, he had 350 acres of prime land in Prior Lake. Some of the land was developed – and the \$20 million that came from the land sale has funded the foundation since.

The remaining property, per Jeffers' wishes, was preserved “for physical, spiritual and psychological renewal, as well as for the education of all who visit.”

The purpose of the foundation, Gytri said, “is to get kids interested in the outdoors, and being good stewards of the outdoors, and they've found the best avenue for reaching the most kids is through teachers.”

Still, she said, “it's to encourage an interest in the outdoors; it's not all about knowing the answers, it's about making discoveries.”

She approached her fellow educator and outdoor-enthusiast, kindergarten teacher Stephanie Kingland, who was interested immediately.

The pair recently attended a one-day workshop about teaching outdoors in the winter.

“We're the students in that workshop,” Kingland said. “We go outside and make our own discoveries. So we go through the



First-graders in Jan Gytri's classroom at Lincoln Elementary use their magnifying glasses to get a closer look at the hoar frost clinging to trees on a recent winter morning. Gytri was sharing lessons she learned at the Jeffers Foundation, which encourages children to become good stewards of the outdoors.

lesson, just like we would teach it, and we're learning along the way.”

After reading the book “Big Tracks, Little Tracks,” her students were eager to head outside “and at least find a few tracks that we're familiar with,” Kingland said.

In the Lincoln schoolyard, that typically means rabbits and squirrels.

On a cold day last week, Kingland set her classroom timer for 15 minutes.

“Our class hadn't been outside for quite a while,” she said. “It's been cold and windy. But today it's sunny, and it's not windy, and I said, ‘you know what? There's fresh snow; let's go see if there's any tracks.’ They need that fresh air.”

Though the high that day reached just single digits above zero, “not one kid said, ‘I'm cold’ before it was time to go in.”

Jeffers offers the workshops for free; Gytri and Kingland are hopeful there may be enough in-

terest within the district to invite an expert to come to Owatonna for a lesson, perhaps on a professional development day.

They know it may not appeal to all educators.

“Our plates are so full of all the other things we have to teach,” Gytri said, “that if you're talking about teaching outdoors as one more thing they have to do, it's overwhelming. But if you can think of it as another tool – how can I use it for math, for social studies, for English – that might help.”

The teachers at McKinley Elementary, now with a focus on STEM, have also received training by the Jeffers Foundation.

“Jeffers is very big on teaching kids how to observe nature, make those discoveries, come up with questions,” Gytri said, acknowledging that some students are also initially reluctant.

“You always have maybe one or two kids who just don't get outside a lot at home, especially in cold

weather, and they don't want to go at first,” she said. “But as you spend more time outside, you're finding things and noticing things, they're able to tie in things that are relevant to them. What you're doing in the classroom, you're also using outside.”

In addition, “we're growing vocabularies; not just in book form, but in everyday speaking, and noticing things,” Kingland said. “These doors are opening to them that they may not be aware of. When you light that little fire in them ... yeah.

“It's not out of the ordinary; we're just calling attention to it,” she said of outdoor studies. “COVID really brought technology to the forefront; it pushed us to technology – and also pushed us to explore the things that have been around us for years and years and years.”

“The outside is a level playing field. It's always been there, we just have to start taking notice,” Gytri said.

United Way campaign hits 96% of goal

◀ **UNITED WAY** from B7
United Way will be hosting a Celebration luncheon on March 17 from 11:30 a.m. to 1

p.m. at the Owatonna Country Club. Tickets may be purchased online www.givebutter.com/UWSC_Celebra-

tion. All are welcome to attend.

This year's award recipients include:
• Community Cam-

paign Leader Award — Steele County

- Free Fair
- Agency Live United Award — Let's Smile
- Community Live United Award — Kim Ramsey
- Small Business Live United Award — Old Towne Bagels
- Tocqueville Society Award — Jeffrey and Marty Feters
- Board Service Awards: Kris Busse and Peng Olson

Scott Kozelka, SCFF manager shares, “The Steele County Board of Directors and I along with our staff couldn't be prouder of being chosen the 2021 Community Campaign leader for the United

Way of Steele County. This past several months was one of the greatest experiences that I have had in my role as SCFF manager. All the behind-the-scenes things that the United Way does here in our community are amazing. Thank you to Annette and her awesome staff for making our communities here in Steele County a great place to live and enjoy for everyone.”

Community Impact and Fundraising Coordinator Tom Worhach expressed his appreciation to the SCFF, “Every year Steele County comes together to celebrate the Steele County Free Fair, and we are thrilled to have continued that partnership throughout the successful completion of our Recover Reimag-

ine Rebuild campaign this winter.”

Duncan said the United Way has incredible partners in each of the communities it serves and having the opportunity to work side by side with an organization that cares just as much as it does about Steele County was a fantastic experience. “We are so thankful to Scott and his team at the Steele County Free Fair for taking the lead this past year and helping us to ensure that every person in Steele County has the supports they need when they need them most,” she said.

United Way is already planning for its next campaign and will announce this year's Community Campaign Leader later this summer. **LIVE UNITED.**





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Grade: **6th Grade**
Parents: **Matt & Nancy**



Student Name: **LIAM**
Grade: **1st Grade**
Parents: **Justin & Amber**

I am blown away by the growth I have seen in Adam this school year - both as a student and as a young person. Over the past few months, Adam has worked hard to build his academic skills and take on the responsibilities that come with being in middle school. Everything from tackling hard projects, preparing for quizzes, and managing multiple assignments and classes - Adam has been a rockstar. I'm excited to have the opportunity to continue to watch Adam grow into a young adult. Thank you Adam for all your hard work!

Liam is an excellent example of what it looks like to be a Shining Knight! Liam comes into the classroom each morning with a grin on his face and is ready to learn. He is eager to learn and puts his best effort into all that he does. Liam is often the first to help his classmates or his teacher. He is helpful, kind, and friendly to all. Liam brings joy and laughter to our classroom every day. Congratulations, Liam, on being our Shining Knight.



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Congratulations to these students at NRHEG High School for achieving academic excellence by making the honor rolls for first semester!

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Makenna Reeder

7TH GRADE

Jack Bartlett
Finnegan Baumann
Olivia Berg
Izley Boerner
Jada Braund
Clara Buendorf
Addison Buenger
Caleb Burgess
Alexander Deen
Amelia Duryee
Brooks Gilliland
Brynna Ingvaldson
John Lynne
Brendan Schmidt

8TH GRADE

Holly Bartness
Evan Berg
Meela Budach
Hudson Chrz
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Boden Kitzer
Jozie Klimmek
Wyatt Larson
Gavin Lewison
Alexis Loken
Chloe Riewer
Trevor Selover
Adalyn Stadheim
Abigayle Viktora
Kayden Warke
Owen Wayne

FRESHMAN

Hannah Brunsen
Eden Eads
Benjamin Hagen
Sierra Misgen

Tayla Sandry
Aidan Schlaak
Grace Starman
Rielly Weitzel
Olivia Wencl

SOPHOMORE

Grace Borchert
Kia Buendorf
Parker Bunn
Payton Bunn
Julia Churchill
Levin Kitzer
Jordis Kruger-Diaz
Keira Lenort
Sydney Lewer
Addison Loken
Kiyah Mikesell
McKenzie Mueller
Madison Murray
Evelyn Nydegger
Erin Peterson
Annabelle Petsinger
George Roesler
Tayler Schmidt
Elsie Schultz
Hallie Schultz
Brenna Sommer
Isabel Stadheim
Cayden Thorson

JUNIORS

Aidan Deyle
Anton Domeier
Bailey Ihrke
Bree Ihrke
Erin Jacobson
Shelby Johnston
Jackson Lageson
Malu Monrreal
Valerie Nelson
Sawyer Prigge
Sidney Schultz
Tatum Smith Vulcan
Mayla Soulisak
Brooklyn Strand
Ethan Thompson
Eva Wayne

Grace Wilkenson

SENIORS

Autumn Combs
Alex Dobberstein
Severin Eads
Linda Garcia Mejia
Cora Harpel
Madison Johannsen
Brenlee Knudson
Maverick Knutson
Cassie Kormann
Ava Kylo
Matthew Mueller
Cameron Nicholson
Ethan Peters
Anna Peterson
Porter Peterson
Ralph Roesler
Sophie Stork
Journey Utpadel
Torri Vaale

B HONOR ROLL

6TH GRADE

Kinley Adams
Abrianna Goette
Remington Johnson

7TH GRADE

Ariel Anhalt
Cameron Christopher
Abigail Cosgrove
Savannah Farr
Keira Hutchens
Shayna Kress
Anika Ladlie
Ryan Schlaak

8TH GRADE

Madison Bogue
Jordan Brouwers
Shya Diel
Fikadu Gushwa
Kaleb Hughes
Jacklynn Kress
Winter Pederson

Gabrielle Schlaak
Tatum Thibodeau

FRESHMAN

Owen Bartlett
Harbor Cromwell
Ava Cummins
Aiden Dobberstein
Wendy Garcia Gutierrez
Katelyn Grinnen
Aryanna Howe
Cole Hutchens
Lia Johannsen
Jozlyn Johnson
Jase Knudson
Lukas Loverink
Carter Martens
Bo McCamish
Megan Miller
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Jay Muilenburg
Mayson Patten
Cohen Riewer
Logan Schiell
Willa Seltun
Talon Smith Valcon
Aspyn Stenzel
Georgia Zimprich

SOPHOMORE

Ned Bell
Gavin Briggs
Kyra Cain
Jackson Chrz
Dacoda Malakowsky
Faith Nielsen
Preslie Nielsen
Samuel Olson
Jaylin Raab
Clay Routh
Reese Routh
William Tuttle
Malonna Wilson

JUNIORS

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Aden Berg
Faith Borchert
Andrea Briggs

Jared Cain
Alexus Chambers
Jaylee Christopher
Dylan DePew
Kara Doyle
Sarah George
Wyatt Groskreutz
Taya Lembke
Makota Misgen
Vada Nelson
Charlie Nissen
Jed Pfundt
Andrew Phillips
Cody Reistad
Josie Strom
Spencer Swenson
Will Utpadel
Corrie Warner
Gavin Wilkenson
Ashley Wobschall
Bradley Wobschall
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Hunter Bogue
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Rylee Gruenhagen
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Jordan Horejsi
Dakota Ketterling-Kor-
mann
Austin King
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Oh, deer... feasting at sunset



STAFF PHOTO BY KAY FATE
Humans weren't the only ones enjoying last week's warm temperatures in Steele County. With a backdrop of a beautiful sunset on the horizon, the deer took advantage of warmer — and longer — days to find food that's harder to come by in the winter months, scouring the fields east of Blooming Prairie. This is also the time does are preparing to give birth, so that extra nutrition comes in handy.



On The Farm
CLAIRE LACANNE

Reminders for staying safe on the farm

Farming can be a dangerous job. Too often, we hear or read of farm incidents where a farm worker or family member was seriously injured or killed. Most of us have probably been impacted by a farm accident in one way or another. Some common farm hazards include silo gas, gas from manure pits, and entering grain bins. Silos have unique hazards, like silo gas, falls, dusts that may contain mold, and more. During the silo fermentation process, lethal gases are produced. This is especially dangerous in confined areas. You should be cautious during ensiling and when working with silage. Remember to be conscious of timing when entering a silo; silage gas is elevated for up to 10 days after

filling. Be sure to use the buddy system and don't work around or in the silo alone. It's also important to be trained on symptoms and preventative measures for silage gas exposure, with an emergency plan in place. Outside of silo gas, you may encounter hydrogen sulfide on the farm. It is a colorless, flammable, and extremely hazardous gas. It is produced by the breakdown of animal wastes or manure. It is heavier than air and can collect in enclosed pits, open air lagoons, and low-lying areas. Knowing the risks that can occur with manure gas is important for farms raising animals. Be sure to ventilate your manure pit before and during pumping and while working near the pit. It's also important to have a properly working gas monitoring system or gas monitoring device. Flowing grain is dangerous, and be-

having like quicksand. In just 20 seconds, a fully grown adult can be completely buried. The pressure of the grain usually hinders self-escape and can even make assisted escape nearly impossible. One important reminder for grain bin safety: prevent spoilage! The most common reason people enter bins is to address problems associated with spoiled grain. To reduce the chance of grain spoilage, maintain aeration equipment and fix roof leaks. Also, store grain at the correct moisture and temperature. Another safety tip is to work from outside the bin. If clumps or crusts develop in the grain, use a pole from outside the bin to probe or knock the clump free. If you absolutely have to enter a bin or other grain storage area, take proper safety precautions. Overall, farming is a dangerous occupation. As general reminder,

having a well-stocked first aid kit can help you quickly respond to farm injuries. Being prepared can often mean the difference between an injury and a life threatening situation. One safety tip we can all use is to store first aid kits in multiple locations around the farm, such as the shop, tractor, and barn. For more in-depth farm safety reminders, join us for a Farm Safety Seminar at the Faribault Fire Department on March 16 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Farmers will have an opportunity to receive free safety equipment and first aid kits. For more information, visit: z.umn.edu/FarmSafetySeminar.

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



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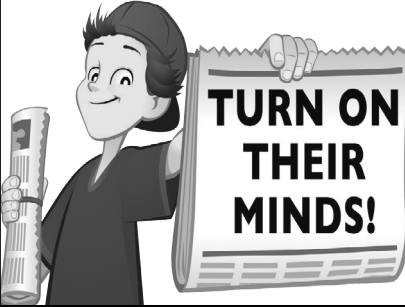
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TURN ON THEIR MINDS!

STEELE COUNTY **TIMES**
Always local, all the time.

BP farm family wins seed yield contest

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER
Klemmensen Family Farms has once again taken first place in the Dairyland Seed yield contest, something it's done on more than one occasion. Chad Klemmensen, who runs the business with his father, Rick, had a quick response when asked if he had a secret to his success: he laughed. "Nope, no secrets, none of that," he said last week, the day the national and state winners of the annual Corn, Silage and Soybean Yieldmaster contests were announced. In fact, "to be honest, they've been in different fields, a different area," he said of the winning yields over the years.

The farm won top honors in the Minnesota late soybean category, harvesting 68.5 bushels per acre. Klemmensen and his father farm about 700 acres north of Blooming Prairie, west of the Blooming Prairie Country Club, planting both corn and beans. "We've planted a lot of other seeds over the years," he said, "but Dairyland was a family-owned company, back when it meant something." The company was sold to Dow AgriSciences in 2008; its founder died a few years later. COVID put a halt to the awards banquet in 2020; the Klemmensens received the plaque in the mail a few days after the announcement of their win.

Nielsen Farms out of Albert Lea placed first in the Minnesota early soybean yield and second in early corn yield. "We are very proud to be a part of helping (farmers) achieve these outstanding yields," said Gary Leeper, general manager of Dairyland Seed. "It's because of growers like these that the future for agriculture is bright — as is our ability to continue feeding the growing world population." There are "some guys who will fertilize heavier, use just an acre" for better yield numbers for the contest, Klemmensen said. "They take it more seriously." Not him, though. "I just get in the tractor and planter, and go plant it."



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- Loader/Dozer Operator
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STEELE COUNTY
Times

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No additional jail time for woman in stabbing case

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

The Waseca woman who pleaded guilty to first-degree assault in a March 2021 stabbing has been sentenced.

Tierrah Vachon Lee Wells, 35, received an 88-day jail sentence, with credit for 88 days already served, and was placed on supervised probation for up to four years.

Steele County District Court Judge Joseph Bueltel also ordered her to complete cognitive skills training, a psychological evaluation and treatment; and prohibited her from using or possessing firearms or dangerous weapons, among other conditions.

She had faced up to 20 years in prison.

One count of second-degree attempted murder was dismissed

when she pleaded guilty to the assault charge back in January.

The charges stem from an incident on March 30, when Wells stabbed a 42-year-old man during an early-morning argument. There were several witnesses, including her two young children.

According to the criminal complaint, Owatonna police responded to an apartment on East School Street, where they found the victim on the floor of the dining room in a pool of blood, two stab wounds in his chest. At one point during officers' rescue attempts, the man stopped breathing and had no pulse, the reports said.

Two men in the apartment told police Wells had stabbed the man when he tried to prevent her from leaving, because she had



Tierrah Wells

children with her and had been drinking. One of the men said he saw Wells get a knife from a kitchen drawer, but he backed away when she threatened him with it.

The witness said the victim asked, "are you going to stab me? And that's when (Wells) stabbed him," the complaint says.

The injured man, who reportedly had an order for protection against Wells, was taken by helicopter to

Saint Marys Hospital in Rochester.

Wells left the apartment with her children before police arrived, taking the knife with her. She was stopped later that day in Waseca and her children were taken to the police department.

According to the criminal complaint, her 4-year-old child told a social worker that the victim "was bleeding because Mom poked him with a knife, at least two times," and pointed to the chest area of a diagram.

Wells initially denied any involvement in the stabbing, then changed her story several times, the reports said. When the investigator asked what Wells thought her children would tell officers, she "became upset and indicated she did not want her children interviewed."

BP woman reaches plea deal in golf cart incident

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

The woman charged with driving a golf cart while intoxicated after a man fell off and sustained a serious head injury was sentenced last week in Steele County District Court.

Krystin Nicole Dyche, 33, of Blooming Prairie, pleaded guilty to misdemeanor DWI; in exchange for the plea, two counts of felony criminal vehicular operation were dismissed.

She was sentenced to

90 days in jail, stayed; ordered to complete a chemical evaluation/treatment, and was placed on probation for a year.

The charges stem from an incident about 1 a.m. June 5, when Blooming Prairie Police responded to the 200 block of Second Street NW. The officer saw Dyche standing next to a man with blood on the back of his head, and a "pool" of blood in the street.

According to the criminal complaint, Dyche told the officer they were on the golf cart "and we

came around and he was standing on the back and he just fell off." She reportedly said the man was unconscious for "a minute," and fell off the golf cart because he was "absolutely" intoxicated.

A witness said he saw the man fall straight backwards from the golf cart onto the road; the golf cart continued traveling down the road as someone yelled, "man down."

The police report said Dyche had slurred speech and glassy, watery eyes, and she failed

standard field sobriety tests. She allegedly told the officer she'd had two vodkas and half a beer in the past nine hours.

A preliminary breath test at the scene indicated Dyche's alcohol content was .122; she was arrested and taken to the hospital for a blood draw. That sample, taken about 90 minutes later, indicated a blood alcohol content of .089.

The legal limit to drive in Minnesota is .08.

The injured man was hospitalized with a brain bleed.



WEST HILLS HAPPENINGS
THOMAS GORYCKI

We have been working to expand our trip offerings for the past few months and are partnering with Buckham West in Faribault. This new opportunity will allow us to combine our resources to reach more people and expand the number of trips offered. This will also allow you to select an additional pick up/ drop off location. Please see the list below of all our upcoming trips and call 507-444-4321 to sign up. Space is limited.

Expanding senior trip offerings

TREASURE ISLAND WITH BINGO OPTION
March 9
Visit Treasure Island Resort and Casino for a chance to win big and play some Bingo! A \$3 food voucher and \$15 of free slot play money will be provided to each participant. Bingo is not included in the price of this trip, so you need to bring extra money for bingo and food.

This is a partnered program between the West Hills Social Commons and Buckham West to give you more opportunities to connect with others. Please call 507-444-4321 to register or stop by the West Hills Social Commons.

West Hills Social Commons- Meet at 9:25 a.m.

Buckham West- Meet at 10 a.m.

STAG AND DOE- DAY TRIP- PERS THEATER
March 24
Bonnie and Brad are having a party to raise money for their upcoming wedding—the cost of which has secretly gotten out of control. Their wisecracking Maid of Honor, Dee, is still getting over being left at the altar seven years ago—and now she has to come face-to-face with her ex. Bridezilla Mandy and her dotting groom Rob are getting married today—even though their big white tent blew away in last night's storm. And oh yeah...single dad Jay just found out his entire catering staff is in jail! It's all happening at the same time, in the same community hall kitchen, in the same small town.

Stag and Doe is written by Mark Crawford,

who has been hailed as one of the funniest playwrights of our time, with Stag and Doe being called an absolute riot and funnier than any sitcom of the past decade.

These tickets include transportation and lunch. This is a partnered program between the West Hills Social Commons and Buckham West to give you more opportunities to connect with others. Please call 507-444-4321 to register or stop by the West Hills Social Commons.

West Hills Social Commons- Meet at 9:55 a.m.

Buckham West- Meet at 10:30 a.m.

Thomas Gorycki is a recreation supervisor with the City of Owatonna. He works out of West Hills Commons.

COLLEGE NEWS

THREE GRADUATE FROM SDSU
Three area students have graduated from South Dakota State University at Brookings.

Andrew James Becker of Blooming Prairie graduated with a bachelor of science degree from the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.

Katherine Lynn Schultz of Owatonna graduated with a bachelor of science from the College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions while Alissa Rose Weide, also of Owatonna, earned a bachelor of arts from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Weide also achieved the distinction of Summa Cum Laude.

STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM WINONA STATE
Five area students have graduated from Winona State University for fall semester 2021. They are Alexandra Thostenson of

Blooming Prairie with a graduate certificate in addition counseling; Haley Kartes of Hayfield with a bachelor of applied science in healthcare leadership and administration; Chelsey Fleming of Albert Lea with a bachelor of arts in individualized studies; McKenzie Arndt of Owatonna with bachelor of arts in history and Kate Hendrickson of Owatonna with graduate certificate in addition counseling.

AREA STUDENTS NAMED TO NDSU DEAN'S LIST
Several students from Steele County have been placed on the fall 2021 Dean's List at North Dakota State University in Fargo. They include: Vanessa Louks of Blooming Prairie, who is majoring in biological sciences; Patricia C. Biegert and Dawson D. Ringhofer of Owatonna, who are both majoring in exercise science and Jacelyn Stenzel of

Owatonna, majoring in business administration.

A student must earn a 3.50 GPA or higher and be enrolled in at least 12 class credits to qualify.

STUDENTS NAMED TO DEAN'S LIST AT WINONA
Many area students have been named to the Dean's List for Fall 2021 at Winona State University.

To qualify, students must be an undergraduate enrolled full time and achieve a minimum GPA of 3.5

Area students include:

Blooming Prairie: Ashleigh Alwes, Abby Braaten and Gemini Johnson;

Ellendale: Hanna Crabtree, Caitlin Goette and Katelyn Crabtree;

Owatonna: Emma Anderson, Sara Anderson, Camryn Bartz, Olivia Dantzman, Maggie Krumholz, Kailie Kubista, Elizabeth Kunkel-Erickson, Ryan Laatsch, Anasta-

sia LaDuke, Camryn Miller, Josie Mueller, Isabella Schroeder, Alexis Smith, Cheryl Smith, Nathan Smith, Shelby Staska and Joby Werk.

STUDENTS EARN DEAN'S LIST AT CONCORDIA
Several area students have been named to the first semester Dean's Honor List at Concordia College in Moorhead.

To qualify for this designation, students must carry a minimum of 12 semester credits and have a GPA of at least 3.7 on a 4.0 scale.

Local students include:

Blooming Prairie: Marie Otterson, senior, daughter of David and Sheila Otterson.

Owatonna: Gannon Kuehn, sophomore, son of Brian and Shelly Kuehn; Lauren Phelps, sophomore, daughter of Brian and Dawn Phelps and Meghan Rethemeier, senior, daughter of Eric and Julie Rethemeier.

PUBLIC SAFETY

◀ BLOTTER from B12
OWATONNA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Kenneth M. Carlson, 34, Owatonna, DWI, \$400, 2 days in county jail, substance abuse subtle screening inventory and 1 year of supervised probation; Colin M. Davies, 26, Mankato, expired tabs, \$105; Daniela Gallegos Mariscal, 39, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275; Jacob D. Goerd, 21, Owatonna, window tint violations, \$175; Gage T. Gourhan, 27, Rosemount, suspended license, \$275; Jessica L. Green, 30, Maplewood, stop sign and no insurance, \$325; Tiffany A. Hernandez, 32, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Tytiana N. Jackson, 20, Owatonna, invalid license, no insurance and child passenger restraint system violation, \$425; Anna H. Lee, 63, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Jason R. Lindquist, 46, Owatonna, suspended license, stay of adjudication, \$105 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Raney Luhda, 32, Owatonna, failure to stop for school bus, \$575; Anthony J. Moore, 47, West Concord, revoked license, \$275; Renee A. Munoz, 29, Minneapolis, revoked license, \$275; Sara J. Post, 24, Mazeppa, no insurance, \$275; Samuel A. Renlund, 21, Verona, WI, stop sign, \$125; Kashanae L. Richardson-Cason, 19, Des Moines, IA, invalid license, \$175; Logan R. Rink-Bermea, 18, Owatonna, DWI, \$225, attend MADD impact panel, no alcohol or controlled substance use and 6 months of supervised probation; Roberto H. Santiago, 49, Owatonna, DWI, \$400, Ignition Interlock, substance abuse subtle screening inventory, no alcohol or controlled substance use, attend MADD impact panel, 240 hours of community service and 2 years of supervised probation; Diane L. Schroht, 66, Owatonna, failure to obey traffic signal, \$125

and 1 year of supervised probation; Cody H. Skow, 35, Owatonna, cancelled license and failure to stop for collision, \$375 and 1 year of supervised probation; Joel W. St. John, 65, Claremont, cancelled license, stay of adjudication, \$75, Ignition Interlock program and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Eloy Tarango, 43, Dawson, theft, \$450 and 30 days in county jail; Joseph A. Taylor, 56, Spillville, IA, driving wrong way, \$115; Steven W. Tillmans, 58, Richfield, cancelled license, license plate violation, registration violation and no insurance, \$535; Irma Yanez Mendoza, 58, Owatonna, invalid license, \$175.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Juan R. Alvarez, 31, Faribault, invalid license, \$175; Talis J. Alwes, 20, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Robert D. Atcheson, 36, St. Paul, speeding and suspended license, \$315; Michael J. Bakken, 43, Albert Lea, speeding, \$135; Abrina T. Banks, 28, Mankato, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Rylee L. Burns, 27, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Eleazar Contreras, 20, Owatonna, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Wiley E. Decook, 21, Racine, speeding, \$215; Amber J. Dobberstein, 36, New Richland, speeding, \$135; Jose Esquivel Jr., 20, Owatonna, failure to register ATV, \$125; Devin R. Everding, 18, Stewart, speeding, \$115; Efren Garcia Herrera, 30, Minneapolis, passing parked authorized vehicle and invalid license, \$225; Kenyan E. Green, 23, St. Paul, suspended license and child passenger restraint system violations, \$375; Tracy M. Green, 42, St. Louis Park, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$105 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Deon M. Grunwald, 45, Owatonna, revoked license and drive through barricade, \$315; Arsenio B. Hanson, 32, Austin, revoked license,

\$275; Jes L. Hedberg, 36, Owatonna, failure to yield, \$125; Matthew C. Kramer, 35, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$105; Carlos J. Miguel, 29, Austin, suspended license, \$275; Robert F. Prihoda, 38, Albert Lea, speeding, \$135; Shari L. Rhoades, 52, Ellendale, speeding, \$115; Natnael Samson, 21, Minneapolis, obstruct legal process, \$175 and 6 months of unsupervised probation; Craig G. Weber, 23, West Concord, expired tabs, \$105; Tarren J. Weise, 23, Owatonna, failure to stop for school bus, \$575.

POLICE BLOTTER
Steele County

BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE

Feb. 26 Fight: Officers responded to a fight in the 300 block of Main St. E. at 6:47 p.m.
Feb. 28 Criminal Sexual Conduct: Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 200 block of 4th Ave. NW at 2:16 p.m.
Owatonna Police Feb. 25 Theft: Officers received theft reports from the 200 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 8:23 a.m. and the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 2:20 p.m.
Feb. 26 Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 200 block of Rice St. E. at 12:48 p.m.
Hit and Run: At 1:29 p.m., a hit and run accident occurred in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W.
Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest in the 100 block of Wilson Dr. NW at 6:47 p.m.
Feb. 27 Domestic: Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 100 block of 22nd St. NW at 5:38 a.m.
Shoplifting: At 3:37 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W.
Feb. 28 Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 3500 block of 18th St. SW in Owatonna Township at 10:43 a.m.
Domestic: At 9:48 p.m.,

a domestic disturbance occurred in the 800 block of Myers Dr. NE.
March 1 Thefts: Police received theft reports from the 300 block of School St. E. at 8:34 a.m. and the 3500 block of 18th St. SW in Owatonna Township at 9:45 a.m.
Juvenile: Police received a juvenile complaint from the 1000 block of 22nd St. NE at 11:58 a.m.
March 2 Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 900 block of Cotter Place NE at 12:30 a.m.
Shoplifting: At 10:54 a.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W.
Assault: Police responded to an assault in the 500 block of 15th St. NE at 2:57 p.m.
DWI: Officer made a DWI arrest at North St. E. and Cedar Ave. N. at 11:05 p.m.
March 3 Disturbance: Police responded to a disturbance in the 500 block of 15th St. NE at 10:53 a.m.
Child Protection: Police received a child protection report from the 200 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 1:34 p.m.
Drugs: Drug activity was reported in the 400 block of Hoffman Dr. NW at 7:02 p.m.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

Feb. 25 Crash: Deputies responded to a motor vehicle accident resulting in property damage on Interstate 35 in Somerset Township at 2:33 a.m. They issued a citation to one of the drivers.
Theft: Deputy took a theft report in the 700 block of 2nd Ave. NE in Medford at 10:42 a.m.
Fight: At 11:42 a.m., a fight occurred in the 700 block of 2nd Ave. NE in Medford.
Burglary: Deputies began a burglary investigation in the 200 block of 3rd Ave. SE in Medford at 4:49 p.m.
Feb. 26 DWI: Deputy made a DWI arrest at Oak Ave. S. and Barney St. SW in Owatonna at 1:29 a.m.

Feb. 27 Arrest: Deputies assisted another agency with arresting a subject in the 4300 block of Kenyon Road in Merton Township at 7:26 a.m.
Feb. 28 Theft: At 2:13 p.m., identity theft was reported in the 7600 block of Dane Road in Merton Township.
March 1 Arrest: Deputies arrested a motorist during a traffic stop in the 7100 block of 76th St. NW in Deerfield Township at 2:57 a.m.
Burglary: Deputies responded to a burglary in the 6500 block of Frontage Rd. W. in Medford at 10:14 a.m.
Theft: Deputy took a theft report in the 6200 block of County Road 45 N. in Medford Township at 10:59 a.m.
March 2 Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 6700 block of Frontage Rd. W. in Medford at 7:51 p.m.
DWI: Deputy made a DWI arrest at Highway 30 E. and 29th Ave. SE in Summit Township at 11:04 p.m.
March 3 Warrant: Deputy made a warrant arrest at the detention center at 10:16 a.m.

ARRESTS
Steele County

OWATONNA POLICE

Tommy Cedric Hondel-Reid, 29, arrested at 7:40 a.m. Feb. 27, felony domestic assault/assault and false imprisonment, held for court.
Kelsey Ann Koziolek, 30, arrested at 7:04 p.m. Feb. 28, domestic assault/assault, held for court.
Leroya Rondell Walker, 34, arrested at 2:30 a.m. March 3, DWI, held for court.
Tay Lee Beckjorden, 25, arrested at 2:45 a.m. March 4, warrant arrest, held for court.

STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF

Stephen Michael Tamburro, 56, arrested at 1:45 a.m. Feb. 26, DWI, held for court.
Michael Galvan, 35, arrested at 2:21 p.m. Feb.

28, probation warrant arrests, body only.

COURT NEWS
Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Feb. 13 – 20:

DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Erich W. Bergman, 50, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Ryan N. Hangartner, 36, Hayfield, speeding, \$140; Quindell L. Jefferson, 23, Mason City, obstruct legal process, 27 days in county jail; Matthew J. Kraai, 19, Rochester, speeding, \$135 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Alexander D. Proell, 27, Kasson, speeding, \$140; Luke B. Quimby, 26, Mantorville, speeding, \$140; Carmen N. Sutherland, 30, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Kylie J. Zea, 23, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32.

KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT

William R. Kullo, 37, Rochester, possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, \$180; Reed M. Parrish, 18, Kasson, failure to yield, \$130; Tyler J. Rodenz, 20, Kasson, parking violation, \$32.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Angela M. Day, 33, Lonsdale, speeding, \$220; Kendall C. Drury-Deboer, 20, Wykoff, speeding, \$130; Anna L. Emond, 25, Lakeville, speeding, \$120; Erin N. Ericson, 22, Onalaska, WI, speeding, \$140; Yovana N. Hackett, 26, Farmington, speeding, \$130; Cali S. Ketsane, 27, Eagan, speeding, \$140; Karla D. Rogers, 36, Dodge Center, speeding, \$140; Lauren A. Rosenthal, 36, Mount Dora, FL, speeding, \$280; Madison G. Tummons, 22, Hayfield, speeding, \$130.

WEST CONCORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

Joshua M. Gunderson, 41, West Concord, parking violation, \$32.

TAX GUIDE

Understanding the child and dependent care credit

Taxpayers who are paying someone to take care of their children or another member of household while they work, may qualify for child and dependent care credit regardless of their income.
For tax year 2021, the maximum eligible expense for this credit is \$8,000 for one child and \$16,000 for two or more. Depending on their income, taxpayers could write off up to 50% of these expenses.
For the purposes of this credit, the IRS defines a qualifying person as:
• A taxpayer's depen-

dent who is under age 13 when the care is provided.
• A taxpayer's spouse who is physically or mentally unable to care for themselves and lived with the taxpayer for more than half the year.
• Someone who is physically or mentally unable to take care of themselves and lived with the taxpayer for six months and either:
1. The qualifying person was the taxpayer's dependent or
2. They would have been the taxpayer's dependent except for one

of the following:
• The qualifying person received gross income of \$4,300 or more
• The qualifying person filed a joint return
• The taxpayer or spouse, if filing jointly,

could be claimed as a dependent on someone else's return
Taxpayers can use the Interactive Tax Assistant on IRS.gov to determine if they can claim this credit.

Source: IRS



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FORECLOSURE

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

Date: January 20, 2022

YOU ARE NOTIFIED THAT:

1. Default has occurred in the conditions of that certain mortgage that was executed by and between Joye Stallman, as mortgagor, and United Prairie Bank, as mortgagee, dated June 6, 2018 and recorded on June 11, 2018, as document number A000418631, with the Office of the County Recorder in and for Steele County, Minnesota.
2. The mortgage has been assigned as follows: n/a
3. The original principal amount secured by the mortgage was: \$54,500.00.
4. No action or proceeding at law is now pending to recover the debt secured by the mortgage, or any part thereof.
5. The holder of the mortgage has complied with all conditions precedent to acceleration of the debt secured by the mortgage and foreclosure of the mortgage and all notice and other requirements of applicable statutes.
6. As of the date of this notice, the amount due on the mortgage, and taxes, if any, paid by the holder of the mortgage is: \$51,985.93
7. Pursuant to the power of sale in the mortgage, the mortgage will be foreclosed on the land described as follows:

THE WEST ONE-HALF (W 1/2) OF THE WEST ONE-HALF (W 1/2) OF THE NORTH ONE-HALF (N 1/2) OF LOT 4, AND THE NORTH ONE-HALF (N 1/2) OF EAST 50 FEET OF LOT 5, ALL IN BLOCK 1, IN TRUESDELL'S ADDITION TO THE CITY OF OWATONNA, STEELE COUNTY, MINNESOTA. PIN# 17-116-0104

Street Address: 919 East Vine Street, Owatonna, Minnesota 55060

Tax Parcel Identification Number: 17-116-0104

and will be sold by the Sheriff of Steele County, Minnesota at public auction on Thursday, March 17, 2022, at 10:00 o'clock a.m., at the Office of the Steele County Sheriff, 204 East Pearl Street, Owatonna, Minnesota 55060.

8. The time allowed by law for redemption by the mortgagor or the mortgagor's personal representatives or assigns is six (6) months after the date of sale.
9. The date on or before which the mortgagor must vacate the property if the mortgage is not reinstated under Minn. Stat. § 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under Minn. Stat. § 580.23 is September 17, 2022 at 11:59 p.m. If the foregoing date is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, then the date to vacate is the next business day at 11:59 p.m.
10. THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR OR THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINN. STAT. § 582.032 DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

THIS IS AN ATTEMPT

TO COLLECT A DEBT, AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

United Prairie Bank, Mortgagee

LATHROP GPM LLP

By: /s/ Andrew J. Steil
Andrew J. Steil #387048
1010 West St. Germain Street
Suite 500
St. Cloud, MN 56301
(320) 252-4414

Attorneys for United Prairie Bank

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: May 7, 2012

ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$126,663.00

MORTGAGOR(S): Scott J. Matakis, a single person

MORTGAGEE: Homeservices Lending, LLC d/b/a Edina Realty Mortgage

DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Recorded on May 10, 2012 as Document Number A000384545 in the Office of the County Recorder of Steele County, Minnesota.

ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. by assignment recorded on August 1, 2012 as Document Number A000385959 in the Office of the County Recorder of Steele County, Minnesota.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: The South 68 feet of the North Half of Lot 1 in the Northeast Quarter of Section 16, Township 107 North, Range 20 West, Steele County, Minnesota.

STREET ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 512 CEDAR AVE S, OWATONNA, MN 55060

COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele County, Minnesota.

THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$117,382.38

TRANSACTION AGENT: None

NAME OF MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR: Homeservices Lending, LLC d/b/a Edina Realty Mortgage

RESIDENTIAL SERVICER: Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.

TAX PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 17-016-1102

TRANSACTION AGENT'S MORTGAGE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: None

THAT no action or proceeding has been instituted at law to recover the debt then remaining secured by such mortgage, or any part thereof, or, if the action or proceeding has been instituted, that the same has been discontinued, or that an execution upon the judgment rendered therein has been returned unsatisfied, in whole or in part.

PURSUANT, to the power

of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows:

DATE AND TIME OF SALE: March 29, 2022 at 10:00 AM.

PLACE OF SALE: Steele County Sheriff's Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN 55060.

to pay the debt then secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any actually paid by the mortgagee, on the premises and the costs and disbursements allowed by law. The time allowed by law for redemption by said mortgagor(s), their personal representatives or assigns is six (6) months from the date of sale.

TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: Unless said mortgage is reinstated or the property redeemed, or unless the time for redemption is reduced by judicial order, you must vacate the premises by 11:59 p.m. on September 29, 2022.

THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 582.032, DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

MORTGAGOR(S) RELEASED FROM FINANCIAL OBLIGATION ON MORTGAGE: None

Dated: January 24, 2022

WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A. Mortgagee

TROTT LAW, P.C.

By: /s/ N. Kibongni Fondungal-lah, Esq.
Samuel R. Coleman, Esq.
Sung Woo Hong, Esq.
Attorneys for Mortgagee
25 Dale Street North
St. Paul, MN 55102
(651) 209-9760
(22-0067-FC01)

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR.

FORECLOSURE

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: April 30, 2013 ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$138,775.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Lanny Louks, A Single Man MORTGAGEE: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., acting solely as nominee for American Mortgage and Equity Consultants, Inc. TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems Inc. MIN#: 100867104377691779 SERVICER: Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC LENDER: American Mortgage and Equity Consultants, Inc. DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Steele County Minnesota, Recorder, on April 30, 2013, as Document No. A000391091. ASSIGNED TO: Wells Fargo Bank, NA by an Assignment of Mortgage dated

05/13/2014 and recorded on 05/16/2014 as Document No. A000397022. WILMINGTON SAVINGS FUND SOCIETY, FSB, as Trustee of STANWICH MORTGAGE LOAN TRUST K by an Assignment of Mortgage dated 04/05/2021 and recorded on 04/05/2021 as Document No. A000435379. LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot 13, in Block 1, Hartle Addition, Owatonna, Minnesota. PROPERTY ADDRESS: 402 18TH STREET SW, OWATONNA, MN 55060 PROPERTY I.D: 17-243-0113 COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: One Hundred Thirty-Two Thousand Four Hundred Seventy-Four and 82/100 (\$132,474.82) THAT no action or proceeding has been instituted at law to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof; that there has been compliance with all pre-foreclosure notice and acceleration requirements of said mortgage, and/or applicable statutes; PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: 10:00AM on May 5, 2022 PLACE OF SALE: Steele County Sheriff's Office, in the Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, Minnesota 55060 to pay the debt then secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any actually paid by the mortgagee, on the premises and the costs and disbursements allowed by law. The time allowed by law for redemption by said mortgagor(s), their personal representatives or assigns is 6.00 months from the date of sale. If Mortgage is not reinstated under Minn. Stat. Section 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under Minn. Stat. Section 580.23, the Mortgagor must vacate the property on or before 11:59 p.m. on November 5, 2022, or the next business day if November 5, 2022 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. "THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 582.032, DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED." Dated: March 2, 2022 WILMINGTON SAVINGS FUND SOCIETY, FSB, as Trustee of STANWICH MORTGAGE LOAN TRUST K Randall S. Miller and Associates, PLLC Attorneys for Assignee of Mortgage/ Mortgagee Edinburgh Executive Office Center, 8525 Edinbrook Crossing North Suite #210 Brooklyn Park, MN 55443 Phone: 952-232-0052 Our File No. 21MN00163-1 A-4742432 03/02/2022, 03/09/2022, 03/16/2022, 03/23/2022, 03/30/2022, 04/06/2022

Proposed City of Blooming Prairie City Council Meeting Agenda

- March 14, 2022 7:00 P.M.
- Call to Order
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Public Hearing: Body Camera Policy
- Consent Agenda
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes of February 14, 2022
- Regular City Council Meeting

3. Approval of Street Closure – July 2nd Street Dance
- Financial Report Committee/Commission Reports
1. B.P. Public Utilities
2. B.P. Economic Development Authority
3. B.P. Planning & Zoning
4. B.P. Fire Commission
5. B.P. Police Commission
6. B.P. Ambulance Commission
- Business
1. Approval of Proclamation – Purple Heart City
2. Approval of Resolution Reestablishing Precincts and Polling Place
3. Approval of Ambulance Purchase
4. Approval of 2021 Ambulance Report
5. Approval of Abatement Order
- City Administrator's Report
1. 2022 Street Seal Coating
2. Reminder – Board of Equalization – April 11th at 6:30 p.m.
- City Attorney's Report
- Council Members' Reports
- Closed Session: MN Statute 13.D03 - Labor Negotiations Strategy
- Adjourn
- This Agenda is subject to change

NOTICE

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #756 BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA 55917 MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022 HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER

PROPOSED TENTATIVE AGENDA

6:00 a.m. Thursday, March 17, 2022 *Regular School Board Work Session

7:00 p.m. Monday, March 21, 2022 *Open Public Forum High School Media Center

7:15 p.m. Monday,

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1/27T6

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The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Stadium souvenirs
5 Have ____ on (claim)
9 Fraternity letter
14 Declare
15 Lie next to
16 Nobleman
17 Fix up
18 Sparkly mineral
19 "____, Don't Shop"
20 Former
22 Every so often
24 Ever and ____
26 River embankment
27 Life imitator
29 Company owner, e.g.
34 Table in chemistry class
36 Kate of "The Martian"
37 Epson product
38 Ripple
41 Strong desire
42 Like some traits
43 Put on a show
47 Foot the bill
48 Jockey's controls
49 Close in on
51 Swear words
55 Signs of spoilage
58 Went wild over
59 Kind of ring or swing
61 Translucent gem
62 Accustom
63 Plead

- 14
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41
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48
51
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62
65
64 Salazar of TV's "Undone"
65 Silent performer
66 Rough guess
67 Sports award

DOWN

- 1 Find fault
2 State positively
3 Bunion healer
4 Go gaga
5 Reservoir maker
6 Wading bird
7 Pastoral
8 Flower part
9 Drops off
10 Smooth operators

- 11 Teen's big date
12 Clinton's birthplace
13 Aardvark's fare
21 R2D2, e.g.
23 Cain raiser
25 Art subject
27 Cobbler fruit
28 Fred Berry role
30 Round Table title
31 Inappropriate
32 Field of play
33 Well-attired
35 Meddle
38 Took the gold
39 Prayer's end
40 YouTube upload
42 Misrepresent

- 44 Kindle user
45 Vintage toy material
46 Ill will
50 Love to pieces
51 Stiffly formal
52 "Doctor Who" villainess, with "the"
53 Egg, to a biologist
54 Class with mats
56 Coarse file
57 Do in, as a dragon
60 Center of a ball?

A	D	S	E		B	V	A	L	S		R	E	M	I	M
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V	H	D	T	V		S	B	I	D		S	D	V	C	

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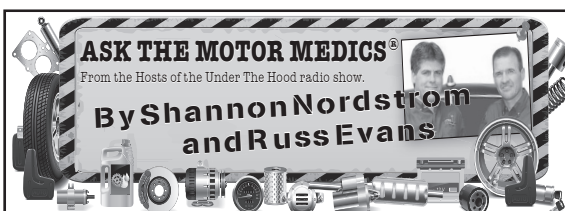
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Dear Motor Medics,

We have a new driver in the family, our teenage daughter. She will start driving on her own in a few weeks and we have spent many hours with her teaching the skills of driving. We feel that she is very responsible for her age and will be a responsible driver but we would like your advice on how we can teach her to deal with a few common emergencies that a teenager might face when starting out on the road alone for the first time.

Shelby in Carroll Iowa

Dear Shelby,

There are many things about common vehicle emergencies that a new driver and even a well-seasoned one can benefit from knowing. Some problems can be prevented with focused driving. A driver who is aware of their surroundings can avoid many common problems. First off, many teens I speak to don't know what to do about a flat tire. This is one of the easiest things to take care of but without proper knowledge can be very intimidating and even dangerous. Go over the procedures for installing a spare and don't forget safety first like making sure the car is in a safe location before attempting a change. Six inches from the edge of a busy highway is not safe. In general, think of all the issues you have dealt with in your daily driving and teach them before it happens. Dead battery, out of gas, locked out of car, etc.

Take care, the Motor Medics

Dear Motor Medics,

I get pulled over often by the police and although a lot of the time I either get no ticket or just a warning I just don't understand why they seem to target me. I drive a Honda Accord Sedan that's silver so it's not flashy and I rarely speed. Are there certain things that trigger getting pulled over more than others?

Jesse in Martinsville Virginia

Dear Jesse,

You just must have one of those magnetic attractions, one that attracts officers. You could take a cab, or you could avoid some common mistakes. If you are getting pulled over often you must be doing something to attract attention to yourself. Here are just a few things that will draw attention. Being the only car on the road, this puts all eyes on you. Passing too quickly, by darting out, around, and back in quickly, it looks like you are traveling faster than you may be. If you are traveling too fast, slow down. Loud music and dark tinted windows, and loud exhaust never help either. In general, you want to be as incognito as possible. Don't draw unneeded attention to yourself. If you do get pulled over the number one way to avoid that ticket is to be polite. The officers are doing their jobs and will be making the choice of ticket or not. Being rude is a surefire way of making sure they do their job as thoroughly as possible..

Take care, the Motor Medics



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Bruce Freerksen
(507)273-9110

brucewithschaefferoil@gmail.com
West Concord, MN



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Playing for audience of one

Blossoms standout plays for his biggest fan: his late grandfather

STORY BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

As the winter sports seasons come to an end, so does another chapter in the history of Drew Kittelson's storied athletic career with the Blooming Prairie Awesome Blossoms.

The senior added to his list of school records in the winter by snapping two Blooming Prairie boys basketball records – most points in a single game and the highest percentage of team points scored in a single game – while also tallying his 1,000th point against Lake City.

"I didn't really know at the time where I was at with the records because I was so locked in. I honestly didn't expect to break the record that night. I missed like all of my shots in warm-ups and thought I was off, but after the game, I realized I'd only missed maybe seven shots the whole time," said Kittelson after scoring 48 of his team's 59 points in a 86-59 loss to Triton.

Despite the loss, Blossoms fans were able to watch history before their eyes as Kittelson's 48 points snapped a Blooming Prairie record that had previously stood for over 65 years.

Back in 1957, Dean Brudwick set the school record by scoring 44 points against Hayfield – before the three-point play was introduced to the Minnesota State High School League.

"I wasn't surprised to see it broken, you know, records are meant to be broken. That was 1957. Now I'm 83, so that's 65 years ago. That's quite a spell in there. I didn't think it would stand this long, but it's always something I've kind of held onto," said Brudwick, who now lives in the Mankato area.

BLOSSOM RECORDS
BROKEN BY KITTELSON

- Most points in a single game: 48 (previously held by Dean Brudwick)
- Highest percentage of team points in single game: 81.3% (previously held by Anthony Nelson)
- Plus, Kittelson hit 1,000 points

Brudwick also said that he was happy for Kittelson to hold the record, as it's something he'll hopefully be able to cherish long after his playing days are over.

In the same night, Kittelson also broke the late Anthony Nelson's record for scoring the highest percentage of his team's total points by dropping 81.3% of his team's score to surpass the 69.3% mark set by Nelson in 2015.

Kittelson said that it was an honor to hold the record and be able to put his name in the record books with Nelson, and said that Nelson's family congratulated him on the accomplishment after the game.

However, according to Kittelson, playing has never been about setting records or earning the spotlight.

Instead, it was all about playing for his biggest fan: his late grandfather, Dean Goette.

"He'd been my biggest fan ever since I was a little kid. I know he'd be proud of me no matter what, even without the records or the wins. It means a lot to know that he was there with me through all of those years, getting to go through all of these amazing moments. I wrote his name on my shoes before the season, and I've dedicated my play this year to him."

Goette passed away at the age of 61 at the Mayo Clinic Hospital in Rochester on Thursday, Dec. 9, 2021.

Kittelson said it was hard to adjust to playing without having his grandfather in the stands, as Goette's signature cheering style made it easy for Kittelson to hear and locate his grandfather even while he was locked in on the game.



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Blooming Prairie senior Drew Kittelson puts up a contested shot against NRHEG in the Blossoms' game against the Panthers on Feb. 11. Kittelson recently broke two Blooming Prairie scoring records for most points in a single game and highest percentage of total team points in a game.

"I wrote his name (Dean Goette) on my shoes before the season, and I've dedicated my play this year to him."

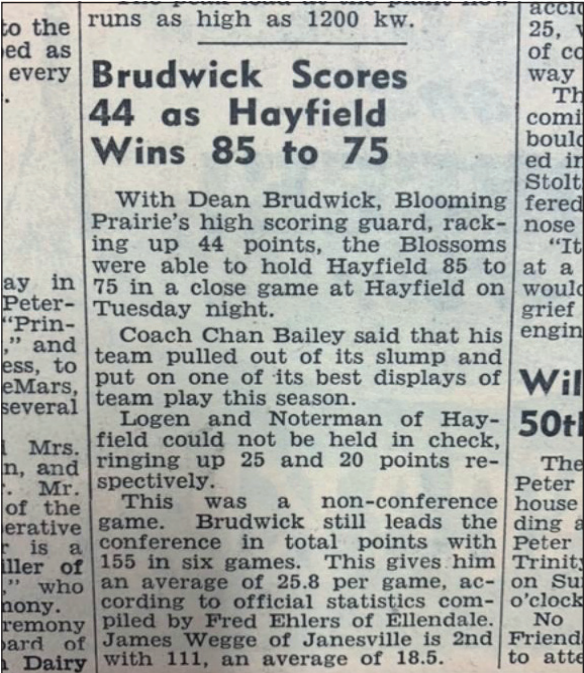
Drew Kittelson
Star Blossoms Player

"My grandfather's signature move was that he actually used to bark instead of cheering. He was always up in the stands getting rowdy and firing up the crowd, so when I broke the record, the student section and fans began to bark for me. It was a special moment for me... I almost began tearing up on the court."

While Blooming Prairie's football and basketball seasons are

both over for the year, Kittelson has the future to look ahead to now as the senior will prepare to join the Minnesota State University-Mankato football team in the fall as a freshman in college.

Kittelson said that while he is excited to get to campus and start his new journey, for now, he is planning on enjoying his time with friends and family where his athletic story all began – in Blooming Prairie.



This story appeared in the Blooming Prairie Times in 1957 when Dean Brudwick set the Blooming Prairie school record of most points in a game—44. That record stood for 67 years until last week when Drew Kittelson shattered it by scoring 48 points against Triton.



PHOTO FROM FACEBOOK

Drew Kittelson shoots the free throw that earned him his 1,000th point as an Awesome Blossom. The senior reached the 1,000-point mark in his final game as an Awesome Blossom.