



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
Pure joy and excitement radiate from the faces of members of the Owatonna Huskies boys basketball team after they captured the Section 1AAAA championship trophy Friday night in Rochester. Shown from left: Evan Dushek, Brayden Williams, Ty Creger, Nick Williams and Blake Burmeister with Ayden Walter (with the hoodie to the right of Burmeister) and Collin Vick on the far right. Owatonna defeated the Farmington Tigers 69-61 to qualify for the state tournament. The Huskies opened state action Tuesday afternoon after this edition went to press. For more on the section championship, turn to sports in the B Section.

WE ARE THE CHAMPS!

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

After a rocky start in Southeast Minnesota, the Center of the American Experiment ended on much better footing. The conservative think tank sponsored visits last week to Rochester, with an evening stop in Owatonna. The plan was to discuss what the group labeled the “Crime Crisis,” featuring a panel discussion on current crime trends, an overview of the criminal justice system, the role of key officials in fighting crime and proven strategies to reduce crime.

The panelists included local representatives of law enforcement, the court system and the school district. Instead, the Rochester visit was canceled, “after leftist activists pressured the venue with an online petition signed by 90 people,” said Bill Walsh, director of communications for the group. The CAE immediately filed a breach of contract lawsuit against the Rochester Country Club, and plans to proceed with a claim against the club for damages. No such drama in Owatonna, with the tone set by Mike Jensen’s opening remarks. “What we really hope for today ... is that we have an opportunity to learn from each other, get to know each other, get to know what’s happening in the law enforcement community,” he said. Jensen is president of the Owatonna chapter of CAE. Michael Olson, outreach director, said the group is “terribly unique, in that we focus on policy as it relates to the state of Minnesota,” concerning education, healthcare, public safety and more. See **PANEL** on A5 ►

Chamber’s Guthier wins top women’s award

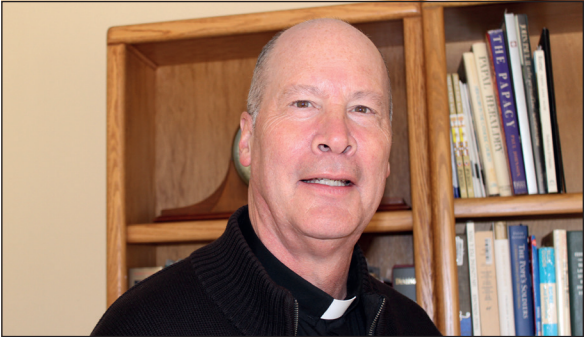
BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

Owatonna women took center stage Saturday night during the 50th annual Woman of Achievement awards celebration at the Owatonna Country Club. Owatonna Business Women hosts the event to recognize lifetime achievement, an outstanding young professional, scholarship winners, and above all, to reveal their top award. This year’s Woman of Achievement, selected by an independent panel of judges, is Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Director of Operations Rhonda Guthier. A panel of independent judges evaluated five finalists, including Jennifer Copeland, Tanya Paley, Peng Olson, and Sarah Struss. The award was a surprise to everyone, and no one more than Guthier. “The caliber of women that was in my category, I just can’t believe this is happening to me,” she said. Panelists said Guthier, a life-long Owatonna resident, “radiates love of community and its members. Her sense of pride and extensive list of activities and volunteering is impressive and humbling.” That includes 50 years with the 4-H program, raising funds with Relay for Life and Walk to End Alzheimer’s, volunteering with the Early Edition Rotary Club and Exchange Club, and supporting JA Big Bowl (a Junior Achievement fundraiser), Beds for Kids, and Toys for Tots drives.



STAFF PHOTO BY JONI HUBRED
Woman of Achievement winner Rhonda Guthier is pictured with her grandchildren Lauren and Brady.

In accepting the award, Guthier encouraged everyone to be engaged in the community and “make a difference, small or large, it doesn’t matter.” “Make sure everything you do is with passion,” she said. The event raised more than \$25,000 to support the Owatonna Business Women’s scholarship program. Scholarship Committee member Christy Tryhus, who is Dean of Academic Affairs at Riverland College, introduced these 11 women who will each receive \$1,000 to further their education: Continuing education: Beth Christesen, Business Management-Bemidji State University; and Katherine Wurdeman, Family Nurse Practitioner-University of Minnesota. Graduating seniors: Audrey Simon, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Ava Hess, Drake University; Ava Westbrook, University of South Dakota; Haley Meiners, College of St. Benedict; Hillary Haarstad, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse; Julia Christenson, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities; Jessica Neuhaarth, South Dakota State University; Madison Moen, University of Wisconsin-Madison; and Melanie Winzenburg, St. Mary’s University. Introducing the See **CHAMBER** on A10 ►



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD
Rev. Bill Becker has returned back to his childhood home of Blooming Prairie to take over as priest of four area parishes.

New priest returns home to BP

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

“Everything is old and everything is new,” says Rev. Bill Becker, reflecting on the return to his roots as the new priest serving four area parishes. Happy with his new assignment in the Blooming Prairie area, See **PRIEST** on A12 ►

Debra J. Flemming 1954-2022

She shared a passion of community journalism

For more than three decades, she shared a passion of community journalism with readers of publications throughout southern Minnesota. There was no hiding the fact that Debra Flemming believed that community newspapers were the heart and soul of any community. Flemming died March 14 at a hospital in Faribault after a very brief bout with lung cancer. She was 67. Her career spanned many years while working at mostly daily newspapers in her hometown of Waseca, See **DEBRA** on A3 ►



Debra J. Flemming

OUR VIEW

United Way pulls off a miracle

Despite a year of unknowns, the United Way of Steele County pulled off a miracle. And it's a miracle that will impact the lives of many people.

In 2021, the United Way raised almost \$772,000—just shy of its \$800,000 overall fundraising goal. President Annette Duncan has successfully led the United Way on a marathon to achieve such an ambitious goal.

None of this would have happened without the outstanding support from another important community asset—the Steele County Free Fair. Fair officials stepped up when they were needed most to help guide the United Way toward its goal by serving as the community campaign leader. This was the first time the United Way has partnered with another nonprofit group.

Fair manager Scott Kozelka and president Dan Deml and their team pulled out all the stops to help the United Way achieve better health, financial stability and improved overall life for all residents of Steele County.

This kind of partnership is exactly what makes Steele County such a great place to live. Efforts from these groups as well as all those who donated during the campaign are transforming lives by ensuring that everyone has access to health, education and income resources needed to lead enriching lives.

United Way advances the common good by creating opportunities for all. Its focus is on education, income and health—all building blocks needed for a good quality life.

Thanks go out to Steele County residents and businesses for supporting a much-needed organization like the United Way. This kind of effort exemplifies the true spirit of giving in a world where compassion for fellow human beings still rules.

YOUR VIEW

Prohibition story needs clarification

To-the-Editor:

I was very disappointed with the article this past week (March 16 edition) in the Times concerning my talk given at the Historical Society on March 10.

My presentation had nothing to do with any crackdown by Federal authorities between 1928 and 1932. It was in fact the contrary. I covered the first still raid in 1929 in detail and its aftermath. I covered the New Years Eve raid of 1929 in Blooming Prairie and the reason for it.

Truck drivers and car drivers were not worried about the authorities since their routes were protected by cash, they had to worry about hijackers. The passengers helped with this

situation.

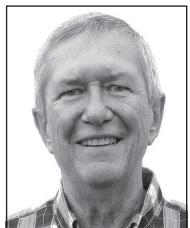
I covered the June 1932 indictments, nothing came crashing down, the big still operated normally until the Dec. 5 raid, which was a planned raid to get the still crew out and make the Feds look good.

It should be obvious that between 1928 and 1932 there was a three-way partnership in effect. That partnership put a lot of money into Syndicate pockets, local pockets and Fed pockets.

After the presentation, I was available to answer questions. I also had copies of previous articles that were accurate and followed by the time line, so please, no excuses.

Steve Wencil
Blooming Prairie

Deb Flemming's dedication to community journalism will continue



Reflections

HOWARD LESTRUD

Sadness prevails with the passing of Deb Flemming, who most recently was an editor for the Steele County Times of Blooming Prairie.

She passed suddenly on March 14, 2022 fighting a very aggressive form of cancer.

She was an exceptional journalist and always was giving her “all” to make community journalism stronger. She was a main reason the Times earned a General Excellence award from the Minnesota Newspaper Association's Better Newspaper Contest.

I applaud her contributions to the newspaper industry.

See **DEB** on A3 ►



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

When my news editor, Deb Flemming, shared with me three weeks ago that she had received a cancer diagnosis, I don't think either one of us expected things to change so rapidly.

Doctors initially told Deb she couldn't work on the weekend just days after she was diagnosed with aggressive lung cancer. But in true Deb fashion she expected to be back doing what she loved to do best—community journalism.

Regrettably, that never happened.

Deb died last Monday night (March 14) just minutes after I finished wrapping up putting together and designing last week's edition. It's almost as if she gave her final blessing on last week's paper and then moved on to a better place.

While the two of us worked together on the paper for the past year

Don't put off telling people how much they mean

and a half with many late Monday nights, something was missing last week when I was doing it alone. It just didn't seem right. I didn't have her to bounce ideas off or suggestions for making things better.

Just to let you know how fast things happened, when it became apparent Deb couldn't stick with us any longer, we had planned to have a get together with her to recognize her many years of dedication to the newspaper industry. Sadly, she became sick so quickly, we didn't even have a chance to say goodbye.

She didn't even get a chance to read any of the coverage we had in last week's edition, including the column I wrote about her passionate career as a journalist. I know she probably wouldn't have been happy with me that I made such a fuss about her.

But Deb deserved every bit of fuss we made about her.

I just regret we weren't able to get together one last time.

As I look back over the past few months, I will forever cherish

one moment Deb and I enjoyed together. She got to go out in a blaze of glory at the Minnesota Newspaper Convention in January when the Times captured the first place general excellence category. She was incredibly proud of earning that award, which has long been considered a benchmark of a successful newspaper. Very deserving for such a passionate journalist like Deb!

She was a passionate believer in the First Amendment and the public's right to know what elected officials were doing. She filed several lawsuits against government bodies over the years in support of the state's Open Meeting Law.

And she was ever so skeptical of most everything in life (a great trait for a journalist), even with things going on within our own organization. We all got a chuckle a few weeks back when Deb in her most sincere tone questioned our rapidly increasing website numbers and implied that somebody must be padding them. We

assured Deb there was really no way for that to happen.

The newspaper industry is more solid because of Deb Flemming. Our communities across southern Minnesota are in a better place because of Deb Flemming. Some young journalists are shining brighter because of Deb Flemming.

And, of course, the Times is a better newspaper because of the contributions from Deb Flemming. She possessed very high standards and expected nothing less from those of us who worked with her.

If there is one thing I've learned over the past few weeks, don't put off telling those that matter most how much they mean to you. As I found in this particular situation, you may never get that chance again. Life changes that quickly!

I will be forever grateful of what Deb provided our readers, even in the last few months when her body struggled with cancer. She was a gem that will be greatly missed.

May Deb go in hot pursuit of eternal rest.



YOUR VIEW

Local employers to see taxes rise

BY JOHN PETERSBURG

If you provide a job to someone in our area, prepare to see your taxes jump by 15% or more.

Minnesota needs to replenish its current deficit in the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Trust Fund by more than \$1 billion. We have \$9.3 billion in available state surplus funds that could be used for this purpose, as could federal COVID relief funding that totals more than \$1 billion.

If neither of these pots of money are utilized, the default repayment (funded by employers) is tax increases on local business owners by 15% or more.

Last month, Governor Walz's employment commissioner said March 15 was the deadline for the lawmakers to pass legislation and prevent significant tax increases on Minnesota businesses. Since then, the Minnesota Senate approved a full UI repayment bill on an overwhelming 55-11 bipartisan vote three weeks ago, while House

Democrat leadership has done nothing.

Prior to the deadline, House Republicans attempted to declare an urgency to debate legislation that would prevent this tax increase from taking effect. The move was blocked by the House Democrat majority. In fact, the House majority leader basically stated this issue would be linked with the entire 2022 House Democrat legislative agenda, so it is being used as part of an elaborate political game being played by House Democrats.

The sad reality is local employers will now see their taxes rise. While every other legislative caucus, as well as the Governor's Office, wanted resolution, House Democrats wanted to keep the issue alive so it could be used as a bargaining chip.

Public Safety priority

While too many lawmakers have been talking about 'defunding the police,' a good number of us recognize

the importance of law enforcement and the job they do in keep us safe.

Not long ago, House Republicans unveiled our public safety agenda, highlighting a series of initiatives that focus on crime prevention and accountability for criminals; police recruitment and retention and holding the criminal justice system accountable.

Most people I talk with understand that in order to decrease crime, you need to keep repeat criminals behind bars, have more men and women joining the profession, and give law enforcement the tools they need to succeed. Making law enforcement the enemy is not, and never will be part of the solution.

Light Rail audit passes

On a strong bipartisan basis, the Minnesota House has approved legislation that I co-authored that would audit the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) program. This project, once estimated to cost just under \$1 billion, has now

escalated to more than \$2.75 billion and its opening date has been pushed back another three years. We also attempted to freeze spending on the project while the audit is conducted, but House Democrats did not agree to that.

Because of this troubling news, I have authored a number of bills that would cut back on Minnesota planning projects of this sort until we can determine why the mismanagement of SWLRT occurred. Don't forget, the Met Council oversees this project. It is an unelected, appointed board with no accountability to the taxpayers whatsoever, and every dollar of Southwest Light Rail construction is coming from the taxpayers.

It's clear funding of this boondoggle needs to end – and soon.

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

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A state and national award winning weekly



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 —7 state awards	2014 —3 state and 3 national awards	

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

Lessons for a lifetime, from a lifelong journalist

Editor’s Note: Kay Fate had planned to sit down with Deb Flemming for an interview about her long career in community journalism. Unfortunately, Deb’s condition worsened sooner than expected before she died quickly on March 14. While Kay never got the interview she had hoped, she wrote this story based on her professional ties with Deb dating back to 1989.

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

Sometimes, even when you write for a living, you can’t find the right words.

My editor and friend, Deb Flemming, died last week.

Those words are all wrong. They’re not what I wanted to write today, because they mean something I can’t quite comprehend.

Let me tell you, instead, what I know to be true.

Deb hired me when I was a 27-year-old mother with two kids under 2, no journalism degree and no experience with newspapers – other than reading them.

She interviewed me (with spit-up on my shoulder and down my back, I later found out), and said, “anybody with two little kids who writes on their job application, ‘I want to WORK!’ is somebody I’m going to hire.”

She taught me literally everything I know about journalism.



FILE PHOTO

Deb Flemming ended her journalism career in a blaze of glory just a few months ago at the Minnesota Newspaper Convention when the Times earned first place general excellence. Flemming is shown with MNA President Justin Lessman, center, and Times Publisher Rick Bussler.

Everything.

Every story I’ve written, any award I’ve stumbled into, any thank-you cards I’ve received, any odd bit of praise on the street I’ve gotten – they’re all because of Deb.

She was the most principled, straight-shooting, no-bullshit journalist I’ve ever met. In 2005, she’d been the executive editor of the Mankato Free Press for 10 years when a greedy corporate buyer announced it would be cutting two reporter positions from the newsroom.

Deb quit. Like, flat-out quit.

Here’s how I like to imagine the conversation went in the corner office: “You’re doing what? Cutting reporters? That’s bullshit. I have a better idea: *F* quit. Now you can pay the reporters.”

I have a feeling that’s not too far off. She gained instant rock-star status in the newspaper world, with good reason.

When’s the last time you heard of a boss quitting so the employees could be paid better?

Deb didn’t understand the fuss – and really, didn’t like it.

“We’re supposed to report the news, not be the news,” she said, frequently. She would have absolutely hated all of these stories about her, stories from me; from publisher Rick Bussler; from her latest student, sports writer Johnnie Phillips.

She shared not only the wealth, but the glory. When she was editor of the Owatonna People’s Press, she won the Herman Roe Editorial Writing award, presented by the Minnesota Newspaper Association.

When it was an-

nounced, she pointed at me – her idiot copy-editor with spit-up down her back – and said, “it’s thanks to her. You can’t have a good editorial without a good editor and headline-writer.”

She taught me not to eat at assignments (“It’s not ethical. And besides, if you eat their food and write something they don’t like, they’re going to be mad AND think you’re greedy. Don’t do it.”); she taught me to write a solid lede; she taught me to trust my gut; she taught me humility (“I’ll pay everyone \$100 if we can go 30 days without a correction in this paper.” She never had to pay.).

You didn’t write a sloppy story for Deb Flemming.

If you didn’t understand what you were writing about, you’d better learn.

“You don’t have to

like it,” she used to say. “You have to report it objectively.”

She and I lost touch for a number of years. I saw her again in the late 1990s in, of all places, the chemotherapy den at Mayo Clinic. I was there with my mom; she was there with breast cancer. “Deb?” I asked.

“You recognized me without hair!” she said, with utter delight.

She became a bit of a nomad after that health scare, landing in places from the west coast to the east coast, before settling back in Minnesota.

In late 2020, when she became editor of the Steele County Times, she thought of me again, and asked if I’d do some freelancing for her.

If any other person on God’s green earth had asked me, I would’ve turned them down. But it was Deb, so I said yes. Then she hired me as a full-time reporter.

So 32 years after she first hired me, she hired me again. We laughed – a lot – about life’s crazy twists. We bragged – a lot – about the years of experience between us, but here we were, working at a little weekly newspaper in southern Minnesota.

Nearly every time she’d call, I’d hear one of two sentences, depending on the situation: “You’re going to hate me, Kay Fate, but...” or “you’re going to thank me for this, my friend...”

Deb developed a cough in early January. She sounded more hoarse and more tired, but never stopped put-

ting out a solid, quality paper, week after week.

She hated doctors, she hated hospitals and she hated needles, but she eventually made an appointment.

All she wanted, she told me repeatedly, “was some damn cough syrup with codeine! Then I can get some rest.”

Instead, she got a biopsy. Cancer in her lungs, in her brain. “They told me four to six months, but we’ll see,” she told me a couple days later. “I’m a tough old bird.”

She spent the next weekend with her siblings, including a sister from out of state. Her sister flew back home Sunday night with a plan to return in a couple of weeks.

But that was the night Deb slipped away; she was unresponsive the next morning, and died about 16 hours later. I like to think she’d said her goodbyes and thought, “four to six months? That’s bullshit. I’m doing this my way.”

She was a tough old bird, but not so tough that she didn’t cry with me a few days earlier, when we talked for what turned out to be the last time.

“Howya doin’, kid?” she asked – her standard greeting – then quietly said, “I know, I know,” as I sobbed about her diagnosis.

“I’m glad our paths crossed again,” she said. “Wasn’t that something?”

It really was something. I just wish I had the right words to tell you.

Letter to the editor: Losing a talented journalist



Steele Sports
JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

One of the most classic staples of print journalism is the letter to the editor.

Usually sent by members of the public to address the concerns of a community – whether it be about how something is represented or underrepresented in a publication – it allows individuals the opportunity to voice their opinions openly in the paper.

One thing that I can’t let go underrepresented is the notion that we must tell the people in our lives who truly make a difference that we appreciate them.

Today, I am writing my letter to the editor for a person very near and dear to not only myself, but to The Steele County Times as a whole – Deb Flemming.

Journalism lost a wonderful person and a talented professional last week when Deb passed away on Monday, March 14 during her battle with cancer.

In a short seven months since starting at The Steele County Times, I was blessed to be able to learn from such a highly regarded journalist every single day in all aspects of the job.

When I first started, I felt as though I had a sense of what being a journalist would be like.

What I was not prepared for was the crash course that would be lovingly referred to as “the school of Deb Flemming.”

“The goal is to learn something new every day. If I’m not learning something, it’s because I’m dead,” Deb would always say with a chuckle in the newsroom.

When I first heard those words, they almost felt like satire – a kind of saying that I wasn’t sure if we all were supposed to believe.

Looking back over the past seven months, I’m not sure there is a more perfect saying to fit the job description.

Every day that I write, I learn either a new word, a new phrase or even just subtle a new way to use punctuation.

There is no perfect way to write something, but there are countless different ways that you can change something to improve it, and that is what we must strive to learn as journalists.

While perfection may be unattainable, working your hardest to try and prove that statement wrong is where the magic comes from.

That was the standard that Deb set.

Nobody I know strived harder for journalistic perfection than Deb, and in my opinion, I don’t think anyone else came closer to it.

We’ll miss you, Deb.

She shared a passion of community journalism

◀ **DEBRA** from A1
Owatonna, Traverse City, Mich., and Mankato. She also did stints as an adjunct professor at St. Cloud State University and executive director of the Minnesota Newspaper Foundation.

In 2020 while the pandemic raged across the country, Flemming became news editor of the Steele County Times. While the Times was the smallest publication she had ever worked at, Flemming often commented how her career had come full circle and loved putting out a weekly newspaper for Steele County and surrounding areas.

“She took incredible pride in the product that she put together every week,” said Rick Bussler, publisher of the Times.

“She was the first one to beat herself up if a mistake slipped past her radar. She would be the first to point them out before anyone else could.”

She worked on the newspaper up until three weeks ago with the March 2 edition being the last one she put together.

good at that,” Fate said. Fate recalled when Flemming introduced her to the newsroom through a blue haze of cigarette smoke, Flemming said: “I hired this lady because she wrote, ‘I want to work’ on her application. So let’s put her to work.”

Flemming and Fate eventually went their separate ways before reuniting last year.

“She was a mentor like no other, and I was still learning from her,” Fate said. “Every bit of good that I’ve done as a journalist is a direct result of my relationship with Deb. As one of our mutual friends said last week, hours after Deb died, ‘I can’t believe this is a world without Deb Flemming in it.’ Neither can I.”

More recently, Flemming recruited, trained and mentored Johnnie Phillips, a recent college graduate who became sports editor of the Times in 2021. “It was her happy place to know that she was training the next generation of journalists,” Bussler said.

Deb Flemming's dedication to community journalism will continue

◀ **DEB** from A2

I felt I knew her well, even though I actually didn’t meet her one on one until she began her duties as editor at the Steele County Times about 1? years ago. I did see her at many Minnesota Newspaper Association conventions.

Deb was very active with the MNA on various projects.

The Open Meeting law was dear to her heart as it is to me. She filed many lawsuits against government bodies in support of the Open Meeting Law.

We were connected with a passion to uphold the public’s right to know. Deb was often a MNA speaker about this First Amendment freedom, some times in the roundtable format at a MNA convention.

She worked very

closely with MNA’s attorney Mark Anfinson in not just supporting the existing Open Meeting laws but a desire to make the law stronger.

Something that was very personal for her was her mentoring young reporters.

Deb had a real knack for evaluating writers during the interview process and then spending considerable time coaching the new hires.

Of course, Deb loved to write herself and also was very involved in laying out the newspaper. As a freelance writer, I sent my copy to Deb and also to Rick Bussler, our publisher. Deb had a real talent of putting the newspaper pieces together.

What qualities makes a great journalist? Checking the Internet I found five qualities that makes a

great journalist. Deb has them all.

They are, as listed on the Internet:

- Integrity – To be a good journalist, you must possess a “solid ethical core” and integrity. Journalists must have their audience’s trust in order to succeed. Fairness, objectivity and honesty are three factors that need to be built into every story. It is a journalist’s duty to report accurate and reliable information to the public. If a journalist is ever put into a scenario where trust could be compromised, they should step aside. A good way to familiarize one’s self with the ethics of journalism is to read and follow the Society of Professional Journalist’s Code of Ethics.
- Courage – A good journalist must also be

courageous and bold. Part of the job is asking tough questions and digging deeper when deemed necessary.

Personal feelings must be put aside in order to unleash the truth. In most cases, journalists will need to be out on the scene to get a full, unique story. This includes traveling to drastic and dangerous events to get details.

- Communication skills – Strong communication skills are a must for a journalist. These skills are used on a regular basis to interview sources and to write in-depth stories and reports. To be a journalist, a bachelor’s degree in communication or journalism is necessary, along with some form of internship experience. A journalist must also possess skills

See **DEB** on A4 ▶

Besides the product itself, Flemming also took tremendous pride in mentoring and grooming young people to become journalists. One of the recipients of that was Kay Fate, who now serves as a reporter for the Times. Flemming hired Fate in 1989 at the Owatonna People’s Press and again 32 years later in 2021 at the Times.

“I had no journalism degree and I’d never worked at a newspaper, but this was back in the day when we had copy editors (proof-readers), and I was

In days just prior to her death, Phillips shared with Flemming: “The past seven months have been some of the best of my life. I have learned more than I could ever imagined since I left college. You have been my biggest role model.”

Flemming shared a smile with family and friends at her side upon reading Phillips’ comments just days before cancer would take her life.

A Celebration of Life was held in Flemming’s honor Saturday in Faribault. A full obituary can be found on page A14.

Does Medicare Cover Power Lift Chairs?

Dear Savvy Senior,
Because of back pain and knee arthritis I'm interested in getting a power lift recliner for my living room that's easy for me to get into and out of. Does Medicare cover them?
Can't Get Up

Dear Can't,
Yes, Medicare does indeed provide some coverage for lift chairs, provided your doctor prescribes it for a medical reason, but they won't cover the entire cost of the chair. Medicare will only pay for the motorized lifting mechanism, which is considered durable medical equipment (DME), and is covered under Part B. The other parts of the chair – the frame, cushioning, and upholstery – are not covered. Here are a few more details you should know.

What Is a Lift Chair?

First, for those who aren't familiar with them, lift chairs, which look like traditional recliners, have motorized lift mechanisms built in that aid with standing up and sitting down for people with limited mobility. With the push of a button, a lift chair hoists a person from sitting to a position where they can comfortably stand up. It also works in reverse to help a person gently take a sitting position.

Medicare Coverage Requirements

If you're a Medicare beneficiary, to find out if you qualify for coverage, you'll need to get a prescription and a "Certificate of Medical Necessity" from your doctor that indicates your need for a lift chair. The conditions you'll need to meet include:

- That you have severe arthritis of the hip or knee, or a severe neuromuscular disease.



THE SAVVY SENIOR

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- That you can't stand up on your own from a regular chair.
- Once standing, you can walk independently or with the aid of a walker or cane.
- That you do not reside within a skilled nursing facility, hospice or nursing home facility.

You'll also need to purchase your lift chair from an equipment supplier that's enrolled in Medicare. To find and compare Medicare approved suppliers in your area go to *Medicare.gov/medical-equipment-suppliers*, type in your Zip code and "Seat Lift Mechanisms" in the equipment box.

If you do qualify, Medicare will pay 80 percent of the approved cost of the chair's motorized lifting mechanism, after you've met your Part B annual deductible. You, or your Medigap supplemental policy (if you have one), will pay the remaining 20 percent of the lift mechanism. You will also pay 100 percent of the remaining cost of the chair.

You should also be aware that if you do buy your lift chair from a Medicare supplier, you will likely pay for the total cost of the chair upfront and can then seek reimbursement from Medicare. Lift chairs can run anywhere from \$400 to \$2,000 or more depending on the fabric, options and upgrades. The reimbursement is usually between \$250 and \$300 depending on the state you live in.

Advantage Coverage

If you happen to get your Medicare benefits through a private Medicare Advantage plan, they too provide lift chair coverage, but they may impose different rules and will likely require you to see an in-network supplier. You'll need to contact your plan directly for details.

Other Helpful Options

If you find that Medicare won't cover your lift chair or if you're looking for something less expensive, there are assistive products you can add to your current furniture like the Stander EZ Stand-N-Go (*Stander.com*, \$140), which has adjustable support handles that can be used on any sofa or recliner to help with sitting down and standing up.

Another way to make your furniture more accessible is by increasing its height with "furniture risers." These typically range from 2 to 5 inches in height and are inserted under the legs of your furniture. Costs range from a few dollars up to \$50 or more and can be purchased at retail stores like Walmart and Target, or online at *Amazon.com*.

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.

Deb Flemming's dedication to community journalism will continue

◀ DEB from A3

in technical writing and source attribution, along with a high proficient in English grammar.

- Tech savviness – Technology and social media have become a huge part of journalism and reporting today; therefore, it is important that a journalist's

possess technology skills. Journalists are expected to use social media as a tool to report in real time and to provide transparent coverage of an ongoing event. Journalists also need to know how to search the internet so that they can properly fact check and access any public records that are necessary

for reporting a story. Social media also helps journalist connect with potential sources that could help build a story; therefore, knowing the ins and outs of each social media platform is necessary.

- Analytical mind – A good journalist should also have an analytical mind that allows them to base stories on fact instead of emotion. Critical thinking skills and sound judgement are crucial when it comes to reporting. Even when there are strict deadlines, a journalist should hone these skills to report stories accurately and to verify that all information they have found is true.

Deb will be dearly missed. Proper tributes to Deb were made at a celebration of life by journalists she hired during her career. All seemed to agree that Deb was a real challenger to the system.

By beating the drum for quality journalism, Deb helped strengthen writing skills. Deb was always wanting young journalists to tell a story their own way. Deb may have been super critical of the work of young reporters, but she helped them develop a style to best tell a story.

Thank you Deb for sharing your journalistic talents through your own writing and to the writing of others.

History from the News Archives

Owatonna captures region title, heads to state



The Region 1AA Champion Owatonna Indians held their championship trophy high to salute their loyal fans and celebrate another trip to the State Basketball Tournament in March 1991. Owatonna defeated Red Wing 53-50. Pictured are from left: Scott Springman, Jeff Hanson, John Stolz, Mark Randall, Reid Stransky and Scott Bangs. Owatonna opened the state tournament against Cretin-Durham Hall.

10 Years Ago

March 20, 2012

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

Blooming Prairie Mayor H. Peterson signed the proclamation for "Fire Up Blooming Prairie." It states, "Whereas healthy citizens make for a healthy community. Walking has been shown to be an excellent form of exercise, everyone could benefit from better physical condition and it is time for the citizens to get moving for their health." People can sign up at the Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce or Sportstitch. The 12-week walking challenge will begin April 1.

Carey Ramey has known exactly what she wanted to do with her life from a young age. The 2010 BPHS graduate has made a dream come true opening her own business of message therapy and western shop – Wildflower Trails. Opening her new business is the culmination of hard work and dedication and is located on Main Street. Following graduation from message school, she interned with a chiropractor in Owatonna. Welcome her to our downtown business community.

20 Years Ago

March 19, 2002

ELSIE SLINGER, EDITOR

It was a winter wonderland after rain turned to ice on Friday. Some power outages were reported, where south of Blooming Prairie, power was out for over 18 hours. The city was out for only a short while before going back on line.

While "March Madness" is being absorbed by fans of both college and high school sports fans, March is also the time for our school musicians to show their best. Some of our students traveled to Luther College for the Dorian Band Festival. Participants included Elisa Ingvalson, Gary Tashima and Emily Wencl. On that same day Music Boosters sponsored a pancake breakfast at the Servicemens' Club. Meanwhile some of the choir students sang at the Gustavus Adolphus College Honor Choir. They include Kaitlin MacAnnany, Alicia Smith, Hilary Jones, Melissa Srock, Angel DeWeese, Michael DeWeese, Brian Stoa and Matt Ravenhorst. To top off "Music in our schools" our third band and choir takes place on March 25.

50 Years Ago

March 22, 1972

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

Vigdahl's Caf? in Blooming Prairie will hold a "grand opening" at their newly remodeled and enlarged quarters on Saturday, March 25, according to Clarence and Lola Vigdahl, owners. The event will note the completion of a major remodeling and expansion project and also the official reopening of the

business, which has been closed for two months during construction.

The Boys' and Girls' State delegates have been announced by the Otto Lund Legion Post 53 and Auxiliary to represent the local post at the state this summer. The delegates are Paulette Hurdlik, daughter of Mrs. Victor Hurdlik. She is a junior at Blooming Prairie High School. She is a member of the Honor Society and involved in many activities such as GAA, Dicomus Club, CYC, art club and journalism club and track team. Douglas Simonson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Simonson is the boys' delegate. Douglas is a junior and has been active in both school and community activities. He is a member Lettermen's Club participating in football, basketball and golf. He assists in baseball in the summer.

75 Years Ago

March 20, 1947

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

Recognition is due a group of boys, namely the school's basketball team, who have done a good job and set an example of in sportsmanship and cooperation throughout the entire year. The team is comprised of the following: Don Blockhus, Don Morrison, John Peterson, Bill Underwood, Paul Jirele, Kenny Kiley, Wally Harding, Harvey Ille, Art Olson and Alan Morton.

The district speech contest was held March 18 in Alden. "Men Folk" a one-act play was given by the Blooming Prairie cast of Jane Cipra, Verna Ferrington and Diane Osby. Beverly Robinson gave "Mary Stuart" a memorized manuscript reading and Myrtle Thissen gave an extemporaneous manuscript reading. Charlotte Brantley and Eileen Jolson were stage managers and prompters with Miss Meier as advisor.

OWATONNA PHOTO NEWS

31 Years Ago

March 24, 1991

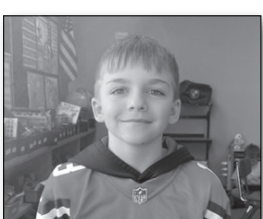
TOM SHEA, PUBLISHER

There will be no school tomorrow, so students may attend the state high school basketball tournament. This is the third year in a row Owatonna students have had extra days off from classes courtesy of Owatonna Boys' Basketball team. Eight fan buses full of Owatonna fans will be heading to the St. Paul Civic Center on Thursday. Over 3000 pre-sale tickets have been purchased by Owatonna fans. The state bound team consists of Scott Springman, Stoltz, Karl Erickson, Chris Kent, Tim Klaus, Mark Felber, Wade Jessop, Jeff Hanson, Matt Gwen Nathan Shores, Tom Wencl, Reid Stransky, Scott Bangs, Mark Randall, Joey Aul and Chris Ihrke. Head Coach is Len Olson and is assisted by Brad Larson, Harv Goldberg and Dan Meier. Managers for the team are Shawn Terpstra and Scott Springman. GOOD LUCK!



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PANTHER OF THE WEEK



JOHN THIBODEAU

This week's Panther of the Week is **John Thibodeau**. John is the son of Kelly and Brandon Thibodeau and they reside in New Richland. John is in Mr. Beynon's third-grade class.

John has such an infectious and positive attitude, you can't help but smile and laugh when you're around him. He's always respectful and he loves helping others when he's finished with his work. He's a big help in the classroom.

John loves hanging out with friends and playing football! Keep up the great work John!



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BLOTTER
SPOTLIGHT

Crash: Deputies responded to a fatal car accident in the 3600 block of Lemond Rd. in Owatonna Township at 5:18 a.m. on March 12.



Owatonna Police Chief Keith Hiller, right, speaks during a panel discussion sponsored by the Owatonna Chapter of the Center of the American Experiment. He and Steele County Attorney Dan McIntosh shared their views of the local criminal and judicial systems during the event.



Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele, right, makes a point during an event sponsored by the Owatonna Chapter of the Center of the American Experiment. Jeff Elstad, superintendent of Owatonna Public Schools, was also part of the panel.

Panel: Partnerships effective against crime

PANEL from A1

The keynote speaker was Jeff Van Nest, who spent 20 years with the FBI, and is now a public safety policy fellow with CAE.

He provided an overview of the criminal justice structure, then highlighted the changes in criminal trends and data in Minnesota, which admittedly focused on the Minneapolis area – and other parts of the country.

Generational crime, for example, is “obviously not here in Owatonna, not here in Steele County, and not here in Southeast Minnesota,” he said.

Van Nest started by saying he believes the term “mass incarceration” is “offensive to me as an American.”

“We don’t round people up, like a Third

World country, and send them off to prison. That’s not how things are done here,” he said, calling it a buzz word that has replaced the phrase “defund the police, and it’s thrown around by activist groups, reform-minded groups.”

It also suggests that “we should empty our prisons,” Van Nest said. “The goal that I’ve seen here is to decrease incarceration rates by 50%. So is that a good idea or a bad idea?”

He later answered his own question with statistics about recidivism and low- or no-bail cases.

“Three years after someone is no longer on supervised release ... what is the likelihood that they will commit another crime? At least 4 in 10,” Van Nest said. “At least a quarter are actually going to be sent

back to prison within three years.”

It’s the kind of data CAE is tracking.

“We’re finding cases where someone is likely under some form of supervised release; they commit some other kind of egregious crime, and they’re put back on the streets,” he said. “That’s an area of concern.”

Not always, said Steele County Attorney Dan McIntosh, who was part of the Owatonna panel.

“We should also be looking at what’s going on that brought that person into the justice system,” he said. “If there’s some condition or some status that we can treat in a safe way for everyone, then we should be doing that, too.

“A lot of the same factors that make you more likely to commit a crime

also make you more vulnerable to be a victim,” McIntosh said. “My challenge is ... crime is not always an ‘us versus them.’ For some people hearing that right now, that’s going to shock you a little bit, but we’re in a small community. It’s us. If we don’t deal with the causes of crime – and the people who are committing crimes – in a way that is effective to prevent next time around, we don’t make progress.

“There isn’t a silver bullet, it’s looking at what’s most effective for the community, for that victim to feel a sense of justice and moving to the next step, whatever that may be.”

McIntosh, Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele, Police Chief Keith Hiller and OPS Superintendent Jeff Elstad

all spoke about the sense of partnership they feel with each other and the community.

Elstad drew the only applause during the panel with his description of their interactions.

“This is the best community I’ve ever worked in when it comes to those partnerships,” he said. “When we have that in place, we can try our best to keep kids safe.”

Elstad also referred to another former FBI agent who spoke several weeks ago at Owatonna Middle School.

“One of the takeaways from that, that I think is important for community members to hear was, ‘Parents, your children don’t need any more friends. They need parents. They need people to say no, people that cooperate with the school district.’ We both



Jeff Van Nest, who retired last year from the FBI, is now a public safety policy fellow with Center of the American Experiment. He was the keynote speaker at an event last week in Owatonna.

have a vested interest in seeing our children be the best people they can be, and that’s a partnership – and we’re only as successful as that partnership.”

“We’re doing a lot of things right on a local level,” Jensen said after the panel discussion. “Now I encourage you to go out and build those relationships.”

COURT NEWS
Steele County

The following cases were heard in Steele County District Court the week of March 7 with Judge Joseph A. Buetel presiding: Duane R. Bostic, 30, St. Louis Park, previously appeared and was convicted of felony violation of order for protection. He was sentenced to \$125 and 21 months in St. Cloud State Prison. Hassan N. Hassan, 30, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony murder and assault-dangerous weapon. Hassan was sentenced to \$125 and 180 days in St. Cloud State Prison. The following cases were heard in Steele County District Court the week of March 7 with Judge Karen R. Duncan presiding: Allen D. Lawrence, 58, Van Meter, IA, previously appeared and was convicted of felony assault-dangerous weapon. He was sentenced to \$575, 1 day in county jail, no possession of firearms, no contact with victim, obtain permission to leave the state and 3 years of supervised probation. The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of March 7 – 13:

BLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Logan R. Branstad, 23, Austin, possession of paraphernalia, \$125; Crystal Plata, 19, St. Paul, possession of marijuana, \$225; Raul Ramirez Galarza, 20, St. Paul, speeding and permit violation, \$165.

MN DEPT. OF
NATURAL
RESOURCES

Kyle S. Parr, 38, Blooming Prairie, public water access violation, \$37.

MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER

Halimo M. Abdullahi, 20, Owatonna, speeding, \$215; Dena M. Bagby, 40, Eden Prairie, speeding, \$115; Darci A. Bergland, 53, Albert Lea, speeding, \$125; Jordan R. Collins, 28, Kansas City, MO, speeding, \$215; David Gerard, 44, Minnetonka, speeding, \$115; Andres Guzman-Garcia, 33, Elk River, suspended license, \$275; Steven D. Hills, 66, Minong, WI, following vehicle too closely, \$125; Linda R. Horsnell, 42, Delavan, speeding, \$215; Cantrell Johnson, 51, Brooklyn Park, speeding, \$215; Jaydon T. Knaak, 19, St. Peter, speeding, \$215; Eli L. Krambeer, 30, Cedar Rapids, IA, speeding, \$115; Antonio T. Lamadrid, 43, Blaine, speeding and no license, \$235; Alec J. Lewis, 31, Minneapolis, speeding, \$135; Alison R. Leytem, 32, Independence, IA, speeding, \$125; Peter W. McCollum, 31, Bloomington, speeding, \$115; Asetonan K. Orekan, 30, St. Paul, failure to change information on license, \$95; Abdigani M. Osman, 55, Shakopee, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$125 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Dustin C. Raper, 23, Pierz, no license, \$175; Pierre L. Rhodes, 22, Faribault, revoked license, \$275; Julian L. Rodriguez-Roost, 26, St. Paul, speeding, \$115; Chloe R. Shaw, 18, Overland Park, KS, speeding, \$135; Carter J. Sheets, 19, Monticello, speeding, \$115; Tara J. Steffel, 31, Waseca, speeding, \$115; Michael R. Straight, 63, Oregon City, OR, speeding, \$275; Adrianna M. Suttle, 34, St. Paul, speeding, \$215; Ler Taw, 34, Albert Lea, speeding, \$215; Destiny R. Torrez-Nagel, 21, Faribault, speeding, \$215; Brent M. Weinberger, 42, Blooming Prairie, speeding, \$115.

OWATONNA POLICE
DEPARTMENT

Justin T. Ambrus, 34, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275; Jessica C. Barajas, 26, Owatonna, parking violation, \$37; Kira M. Bock, 20, Owatonna, invalid license, \$175; Miles J. Brannan, 30, Owatonna, DWI, \$400, do not enter liquor establishments and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Anthony W. Caywood, 39, Owatonna, terroristic threats, stay of adjudication, \$200, 2 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, obtain permission to leave the state, psychological evaluation and 3 years of supervised probation; Jason R. Decker, 45, Lino Lakes, DWI, \$125, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, attend MADD impact panel and 1 year of supervised probation; Daniel Esparza, 20, Owatonna, DWI, \$150, attend MADD impact panel, substance abuse subtle screening inventory and 1 year of supervised probation; David F. Fitzgerald, 58, Owatonna, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Juan A. Francisco, 32, Austin, invalid license, \$175; Clinton E. Froderman, 43, New Ulm, speeding, \$125; Aleisha M. Gordon, 29, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275; William S. Gorrilla, 40, Minneapolis, speeding, \$125; Michelle S. Horness, 33, Owatonna, failure to yield, \$125; Chelsey L. Johnson, 36, Ellendale, failure to yield, \$125; Alexandria M. Jones-Orr, 33, Faribault, revoked license, \$200, 6 days in county jail and 1 year of supervised probation; Samuel J. Kenney, 18, Faribault, improper change of course, \$125; Ronan J. McLaughlin,

18, Fort Wayne, IN, speeding, \$375; Ali O. Mohamed, 37, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275; Guled A. Mohamed, 20, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Jordan D. Nicks, 22, Rochester, speeding, \$215; Makayla R. Prokasky, 20, Kesserson, OR, theft, \$1,086 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Denise L. Pursley, 53, Owatonna, careless driving, \$175; Joshua D. Robinson, 37, Owatonna, domestic assault, stay of adjudication, 1 day in county jail, obtain and maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, obtain permission to leave the state, no possession of firearms, domestic abuse evaluation and 2 years of supervised probation; Dustin J. Vanloon, 27, Owatonna, threats of violence, \$200, 37 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, psychological evaluation, obtain permission to leave the state, no possession of firearms and 3 years of supervised probation; Carrie L. Wallin, 42, Owatonna, revoked license, expired tabs and no insurance, \$505.

STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Amy N. Anderson, 41, Albert Lea, speeding, \$115; Diego C. Hernandez, 22, Mankato, speeding, \$115; Aaron R. Jennings, 24, Springfield, MO, speeding, \$125; Johnathon M. Jensen, 20, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Kelli J. Madson, 39, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Raymond J. Maes, 25, Denver, CO, speeding, \$135; Rhyanna C. Moynagh, 26, Winona, speeding, \$275; Scott D. Pasch, See **BLOTTER** on A8 ►

Man sent to prison
for drug possession

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

A man found asleep in a car at a stop sign last summer is headed to prison.

Devin Lee Polus, 35, was sentenced last week to 95 months in prison, with credit for 210 days already served.

He’d pleaded guilty in January to second-degree drug possession; in exchange for the plea, one count of first-degree drug possession was dismissed. Both are felonies.

The charges stem from an incident Aug. 19, when Steele County



Devis Polus

Sheriff’s Office deputies responded about 5:30 a.m. to a report of a car that was stopped at the intersection of U.S. Hwy. 218 and 98th St. SE.

The man, later identified as Polus, was See **MAN** on A8 ►

Jury convicts
woman of malicious
punishment

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

A former Owatonna resident will be sentenced in June after a jury convicted her of child abuse.

Tiffany Ann Wadley, 39, was charged in 2020 with three counts of gross misdemeanor malicious punishment of a child. She was convicted on two of the three counts last week after a two-day trial.

The investigation began in July of 2019, when Child Protective



Tiffany Wadley

Services received a report about a loaded firearm was accessible to children, a firearm in a vehicle and the child. See **JURY** on A8 ►

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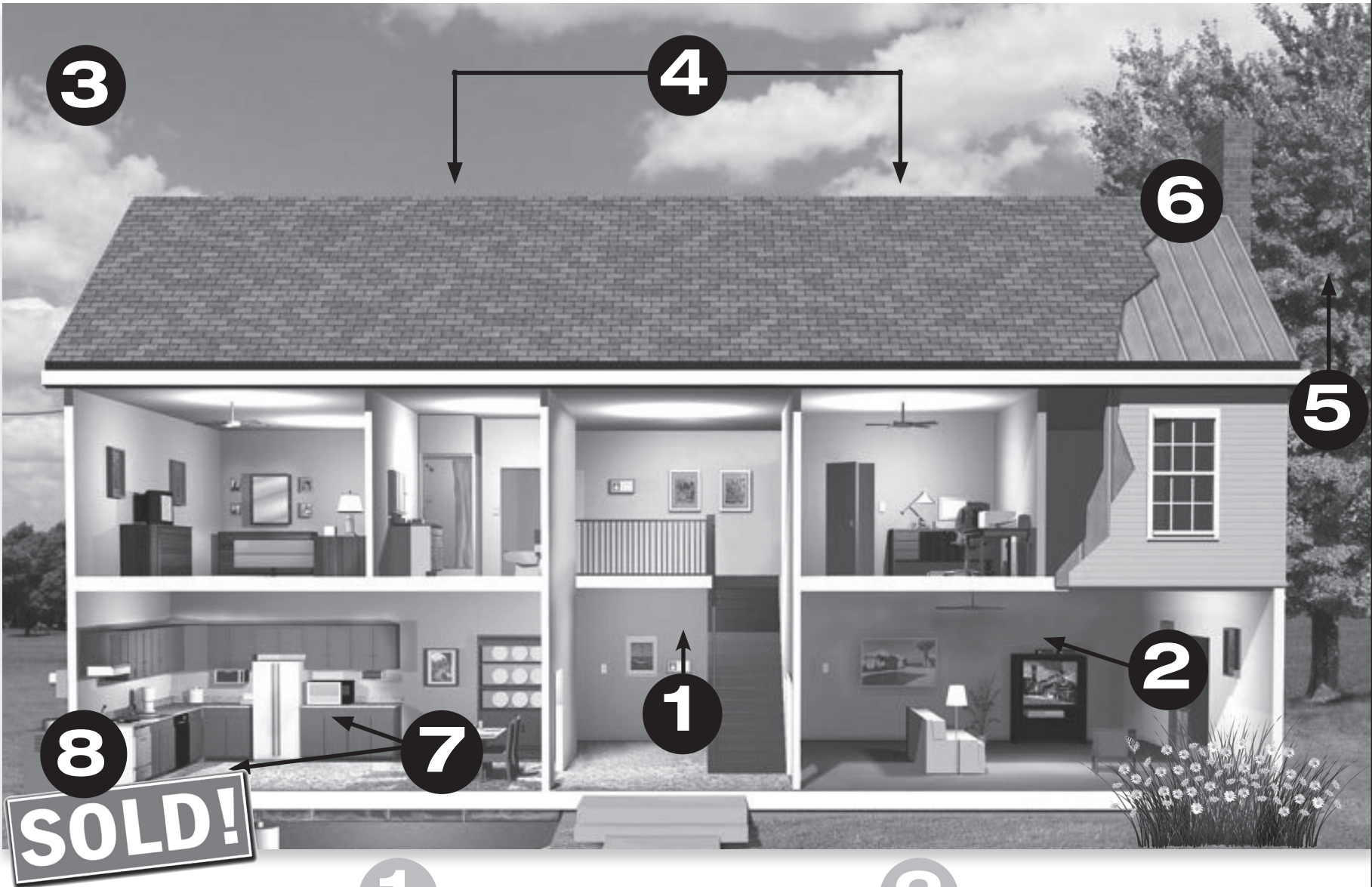


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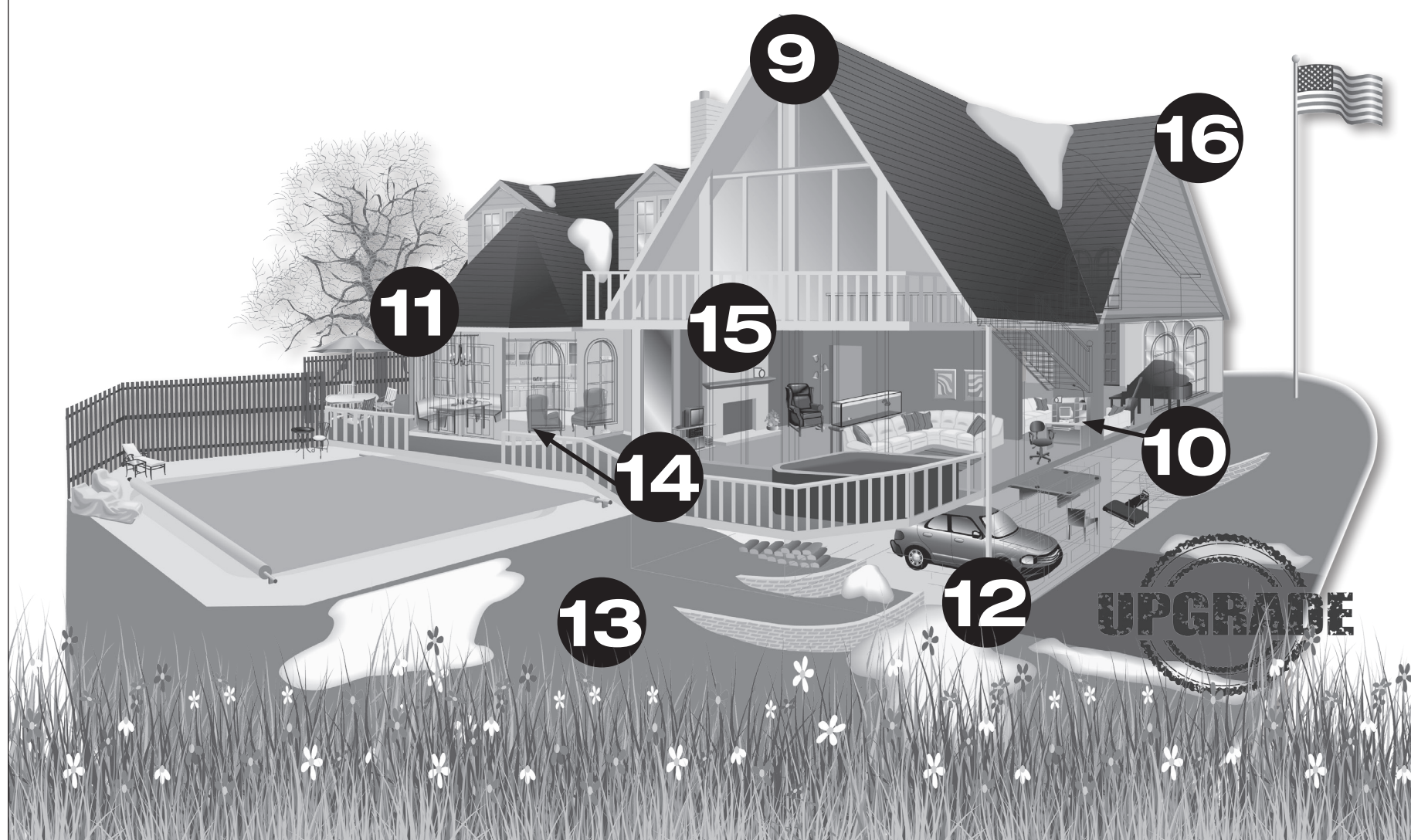
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PUBLIC SAFETY

◀ **BLOTTER** from **A5**

63, Owatonna, failure to obey traffic control signal, \$125; Jordan H. Rivera Betancourt, 20, Owatonna, invalid license and no insurance, \$375; Miranda K. Robinson, 35, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Noor M. Salim, 32, Mankato, speeding, \$135; Seth D. Thompson, 22, Ellendale, disorderly conduct, \$125.

POLICE BLOTTER
Steele County

BLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE

March 11 Juvenile: Police received a juvenile complaint from the 100 block of Main St. W. at 9:34 p.m.

March 14 Juvenile: Police received a juvenile complaint from the 300 block of 3rd Ave. SE at 6:40 p.m.

March 15 Suspicion: Suspicious activity was reported in the 200 block of 1st St. NW at 5:40 p.m.

OWATONNA POLICE

March 11 DWI: Officer made DWI arrests at 11th St. NE and Cedar Ave. N. at 12:35 a.m., at Broadway St. E. and Elm Ave. N. at 1:46 p.m., at Elm Ave. S. and Park St. SE at 11:08 p.m and at Main St. E. and Elm Ave. S. at 11:47 p.m.

Criminal Sexual Conduct: Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 300

block of School St. E. at 7:47 a.m. and 4:04 p.m.

Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest in the 200 block of Barney St. SW at 7:14 p.m.

March 12 Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 300 block of McIndoe St. SE at 12:05 p.m.

Juvenile: Police received a juvenile complaint from the 600 block of Mound St. SW at 12:24 p.m.

Drugs: Drug activity was reported in the 200 block of 22nd St. NW at 7:57 p.m.

March 14 Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 300 block of Elm Ave. N. at 4:08 a.m.

Thefts: Police took theft reports in the 900 block of 30th Place NW at 6:52 a.m., the 100 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 4:15 p.m. and the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 7:30 p.m.

Shoplifting: At 10:21 a.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 600 block of Bridge St. W.

Fraud: Police received a fraud report from the 2200 block of 46th St. NW at 6:16 p.m.

Arrest: Police arrested a motorist during a traffic stop in the 700 block of State Ave. NW at 11:47 p.m.

March 15 Fraud: Officer took a fraud report in the 300 block of Mineral Springs Road NE at 10:45 a.m.

Domestic: Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 300 block of 22nd St. SE at 12:41 p.m. They took a subject into custody.

March 16 Criminal Sexual Conduct: Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 300 block of Elm Ave. N. at 2:03 a.m.

Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 2000 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 6:17 a.m.

Shoplifting: At 7:05 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W.

Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest in the 400 block of State Ave. NW at 7:37 p.m.

Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 300 block of Mineral Springs Road NE at 11:41 p.m.

March 17 Fraud: Officers received a fraud report from the 800 block of School St. E. at 1:03 p.m.

Domestic: Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1500 block of St. Paul Road NE at 5:16 p.m.

STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF

March 11 Suspicion: Deputies responded to suspicious activity at 21st Ave. NW and 36th St. NW in Clinton Falls Township at 3:20 p.m.

Arrest: Deputy arrested a motorist during a traffic stop in the 5500 block of Highway 218 in Aurora Township at 10:41 p.m.

March 13 Animal: Deputies responded to an animal call in the 1800 block of 44th Ave. SE in Havana

Township at 4:14 p.m.

March 15 Arrest: Deputies arrested a motorist during a traffic stop in the 600 block of Hoffman Dr. NW at 8:21 a.m.

March 16 Warrant: Deputy made a warrant arrest at the detention center at 6:23 a.m.

ARRESTS
Steele County

OWATONNA POLICE

Rochelle Annette Vela, 49, arrested at 2:22 a.m. March 11, DWI, held for court.

Joshua Daniel Montoya, 29, arrested at 1:19 p.m. March 15, domestic assault/assault, held for court.

Charles Grant Rubel, 50, arrested at 9:30 p.m. March 16, warrant arrest, held for court.

Darren Eugene Morrison, 36, arrested at 10:30 a.m. March 17, warrant arrest, held for court.

Adam Michael Pederson, 32, arrested at 3:05 a.m. March 18, DWI and possession, held for court.

STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF

Raul Lionel Robles, 52, arrested at 8:50 a.m. March 15, DANCO violation, held for court.

Matthew James Cantu, 30, arrested at 6 a.m. March 16, warrant arrest, \$2,000 bail.

Gage Travis Gourhan, 27, arrested at 10:30 a.m.

March 17, warrants arrest, held for court.

COURT NEWS
Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Feb. 27 – March 6:

DODGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Graham L. Christianson, 16, West Concord, speeding, \$280; Arianna M. Fernholz, 17, Egota, speeding, \$280; Joseph A. Garza, 18, Claremont, invalid license, \$180.

KASSON POLICE
DEPARTMENT

Gabrielle M. Bennerotte, 18, Claremont, tobacco usage in public school, \$130; Jeremy J. Elton, 43, Kasson, parking violation, \$32; Dakota T. Feine, 17, Hayfield, speeding, \$140; Riley A. Knudson, 18, Byron, speeding, \$140; Christopher K. Wanous, 53, Kasson, parking violation, \$32.

MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER

Michael D. Cosens, 45, Owatonna, speeding, \$120; Cyle N. Erie, 40, Rochester, speeding, \$130; Joseph A. Garza, 18, Claremont, speeding and suspended license, \$320; Logan A. Holmes-Gertner, 19, Kasson, seat belt, \$105; Kyler E. Johnson, 22, Hayfield, seat belt, \$105;

Bisharo A. Mohammed, 31, Faribault, give officer false information, \$255; Jesus Reyes, 26, Dodge Center, revoked license and no insurance, \$480; Janet L. Spencer, 36, Claremont, speeding, \$140; Andrew D. Stahl, 41, Kasson, revoked license and no insurance, \$480.

WEST CONCORD
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Heather R. Erickson-Hansen, 45, West Concord, parking violation, \$32.

OWATONNA FIRE

March 12 Crash: Fire rescue responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries in the 3500 block of Lemon Road SW at 5:19 a.m.

Assist: Fire personnel assisted a policy agency in the 1700 block of State Ave. N. at 8:46 a.m. and the 3100 block of 74th Ave. NE at 10:33 a.m.

March 13 Burning: Firefighters assisted with an authorized controlled burning in the 400 block of Mineral Springs Road NE at 12:49 p.m.

March 14 Assist: Fire personnel assisted police in the 200 block of Florence Ave. NW at 12:29 a.m.

March 15 Crash: Motor vehicle accidents occurred in the 1000 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 9:38 a.m. and at Hoffman Dr. and Interstate 35 at 10:02 a.m.

Jury convicts woman of malicious punishment

◀ **JURY** from **A5**

dren “being forcefully grabbed and yelled at” by Wadley.

Two children told investigators that Wadley would spank them with a belt or make them stand in the corner for hours if they got in trouble. They complied, one child said, because if they moved and got caught by Wadley, she would spank them with a belt.

According to the criminal complaint, the victims were hit multiple times with the belt on various areas of their body.

One of the children said Wadley whipped her in the legs twice with a rubber snake; the injury was still visible months later.

The older child said Wadley “gets frustrated easily,” and drinks to the point of not remem-

bering things the next day.

The younger child said Wadley would spank her with the belt folded in half; she was once spanked for not knowing hamburger and ground beef were the same thing, and because she didn’t wear a brace on her wrist for an injury.

The “red, puffy marks” from the spankings would last

two or three days, the children said.

Wadley told investigators that the longest the children ever sat in the corner was 30 minutes, but admitted spanking them with a belt, saying she would only hit them once and the spankings never left a mark.

She is scheduled to be sentenced on June 7.

Each count is punishable by up to a year in jail, a \$3,000 fine, or both.

Man sent to prison for drug possession

◀ **MAN** from **A5**

sleeping in the driver’s seat with his foot on the brake.

Deputies learned he had a felony warrant out of Winona County for a probation violation on a felony drug case. When they searched the car prior to it being towed, one of the officers found two clear plastic bags

which were later determined to be about 120 grams of methamphetamine.

There was also a small torch and a glass pipe in the car’s center console.

With Minnesota’s two-thirds rule, as well as Polus’s credit for time served, he could be released in less than five years.

TAX GUIDE

File tax returns on time to avoid costly fees

File tax returns on time to avoid costly fees

Taxpayers should file their tax return by the deadline even if they cannot pay their full tax bill. Taxpayers who owe tax and don’t file on time, may be charged a failure-to-file penalty. This penalty is usually five percent of the tax owed for each month, or part of a month that the tax return is late, up to 25%.

If an individual taxpayer owes taxes, but can’t pay in full by the April 18, 2022, deadline, they should:

File their tax return or request an extension of time to file by the April 18 deadline.

- People who owe tax and do not file their return on time or request an extension may face a failure-to-file penalty for not filing on time.
- Taxpayers should remember that an exten-

sion of time to file is not an extension of time to pay. An extension gives taxpayers until October 17, 2022, to file their 2021 tax return, but taxes owed are still due April 18, 2022.

To get an extension to file, taxpayers must do one of the following:

- File Form 4868 through their tax professional, tax software or using Free File on IRS.gov.
- Submit an electronic payment with Direct Pay, Electronic Federal Tax Payment System or by debit, credit card or digital wallet and select Form 4868 or extension as the payment type.

Pay as much as possible by the April 18 due date.

- Whether filing a return or requesting an extension, taxpayers must pay their tax bill in full by the April deadline to avoid interest and penalties.

- People who do not pay their taxes on time will face a failure-to-pay penalty.
- The IRS has options for taxpayers who can’t afford to pay taxes they owe.

Set up a payment plan as soon as possible.

- Taxpayers who owe but cannot pay in full by April 18 don’t have to wait for a tax bill to set up a payment plan.

- They can apply for a payment plan on IRS.gov.
- Taxpayers can also submit a payment plan request using Form 9465, Installment Agreement Request.

Interest is based on the amount of tax owed and for each day it’s not paid in full. Interest rates are determined every three months and can vary, based on type of tax; for example, individual or

business-tax liabilities. More information is available on the Interest on Underpay-

ments and Overpayments page of IRS.gov.

Source: IRS

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CONGRATULATIONS

*To the Valentine royalty at
Prairie Manor Care Center*



Congrats Queen Naomi Erickson and King John Whiting!

Here's a list of the royalty from Prairie Manor dating back to 1973:

1973 Ora Olson & Ed Mott
1974 Juanita Shaw & David Morgan
1975 Crodula Mullenback & Pete Hansen
1976 Katherine Ranum & Amos Eaker
1977 Alma Murphy & Frank Snider
1978 Libby Sanders & Vern Paulson
1979 Dorothy Lipold & Hartwig Hanson
1980 Martha Herdina & Art Anderson
1981 Isabel Taylor & Joe Matejeck
1982 Mary Cochlin & Clarence Anderson
1983 Elsie Wend & Mike Lester
1984 Agnes Wolf & Walter Noble
1985 Alice Starch & George Peterson
1986 Anna Johnson & Frank Kubat
1987 Libby Ruzek & Victor Jensen
1988 Myrtle Jensen & Lawrence Pfeiffer
1989 Mable Madsen & Ray Bray
1990 Hilda Wojohn & George Kubista
1991 Jessie Collins & Ray Young
1992 Mary Skalicky & Ed Skalicky
1993 Gladys Peterson & Harvie Goldberg
1994 Marie Branderhorst & Andie Anderson
1995 Emma Kruckeberg & Jack Worke
1996 Mable Eaker & Sy Kruckeberg
1997 Mayme Summer & Bernard Nelson

1998 Anita Tapp & Joe Wright
1999 Christy Jelinek & Otto Anderson
2000 Grace Sauke & Leon Thompson
2001 Harriet Ward & Al Burns
2002 Clara Bocker & Lester Janke
2003 Marjorie Smith & Hugo Harpel
2004 Gertrude Nelson & Merlin Nelson
2005 Evelyn Lewison & Franklin Pierce
2006 Eveline Lysne & Stan Bratten
2007 Irene Filley & Don Williamson
2008 Ysable Cervantes & Leon Thompson
2009 Georgia Block & Dale Budreau
2010 Pearl Mason & Herbert Graff
2011 Doris Halstenson & Hank Halstenson
2012 Marion Becker & Robert Becker
2013 Alice Fuhr & Eugene Motl
2014 Evelyn Trom & Robert Swearingen
2015 Sylvia Plunkett & Charles Mollenhaur
2016 Helen Pagakis & Vernon Jackle
2017 Marilyn Thorson & Eugene Kaplan
2018 Donald Bakke & Donna Dittlevson
2019 Clara Sibenaller & Gary Boettcher
2020 Helen Krystosek & Bill Gebhardt
2021 Doug & Elsie Kiser
2022 Naomi Erickson & John Whiting

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Staloch: BP Ed Foundation brings community together

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Blooming Prairie Superintendent of Schools Chris Staloch says the community is “very fortunate” to have an active organization like the Blooming Prairie Education Foundation. The Foundation’s annual auction will be Saturday, April 2 at the Cue Company. The silent auction goes from 2-4 p.m. and the live auction follows at 5 p.m. Staloch has been in the district 23 years, teaching, serving as elementary principal and currently assuming the role of superintendent of schools.

In his various roles, Staloch has seen the BP Ed Foundation evolve. It was started in 1999 with its funding source, an annual auction beginning in 2004. Staloch was a teacher representative in the early days of the Foundation. “The Ed Foundation has brought the community together,” believes Staloch. Funds have been used to enhance education and are available when school district funding is not able to support various programs. “It’s a unique funding source,” smiles Staloch. “Our teachers always know there will be opportunities to look

for more educational opportunities for our kids,” he added. The BP Education Foundation last year surpassed the \$1 million mark in fund raising since its existence. Getting the community behind schools creates a positive atmosphere,” Staloch says. “It’s fun stuff,” he remarked. Here’s how the BP Ed Foundation has helped create more educational opportunities. It has touched these areas:

- Technology improvements
- Added books to the elementary library
- Focused on STEM (Science, Technology,

- Engineering, Math)
- Field trips
- Addition of equipment for agriculture technology
- Implementation of Robotics
- Artist in residence program at elementary

“We are so fortunate to live in Blooming Prairie and see the people of the community behind our kids and also willing to help people in need,” Staloch said. “We are in a very special and unique place,” he added. Two allocation periods for funds exist in the fall and in February. That’s when teachers submit ideas in application form.

The BP Ed board with staff support determines how the proposals fit into school district goals. Staloch says the Ed board receives between 20-25 applications. A high percentage of them are approved, he noted. Other school districts in southern Minnesota also have organizations like the BP Ed board, “but not to the level of BP,” said Staloch. Elementary students and students at the high school get involved in supporting the annual auction by offering services like picking rocks. Students also put baskets together for the annual auction.



CHRIS STALOCH

A continuing goal the BP Ed Foundation holds is to sustain “what we have for opportunities” and to add more opportunities in the future, Staloch said. “We are very thankful for those who donate their time to help improve our student opportunities,” Staloch added.



Owatonna Business Women presented \$1,000 scholarships to these 11 women who are either beginning or continuing their post-secondary education.

Chamber’s Guthrie wins top women’s award

◀ **CHAMBER** from A1 Lifetime Achievement Award winner, Owatonna Business Women Vice President, Public Relations Rebecca Moore said Betsy Lindgren has been a “key contributor” to the community. As a single mom in 1985, Lindgren took a loan against her car to buy an Express Employment Professionals franchise. She grew revenues from \$800,000 in its first year to over \$14 million in a top sales year, before selling the business in 2017. Lindgren’s community service includes the Owatonna Noon Rotary Club, United Way of Steele County, Steele County Food Shelf, and more than 20 years on the Owatonna Foundation Board of Directors. She was named Woman of the Year, a forerunner to Woman of Achievement, in 2002. “When you talk about it takes a village, it takes women to

build a community,” Lindgren said, adding she was “honored and humbled” to receive the award. The group also recognized Annie Granlund, associate editor with the Owatonna People’s Press and Waseca County News, as the 2022 Young Careerist. Nominating committee member Jessi Harty said Granlund got her first byline with the Detroit Lakes Tribune at age 17 and worked for the Echo Press in Alexandria before coming to Owatonna five years ago. As a volunteer with Owatonna Business Women, Engage Owatonna, and the Steele County Historical Society, “she actively participates in making Owatonna a better place,” Harty said. In her keynote address, 2020 Woman of Achievement honoree Lisa Hyland said the day after she received

her award, Governor Tim Walz declared a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. “The past two years took something out of me that I am just beginning to reclaim,” she said. “I have worked hard and continue to work hard in two areas, reclaiming optimism and reclaiming my sense of joy. I want to walk through my day expecting awesomeness.” Hyland talked about choosing to see optimism, which she finds in her co-workers at Federated Insurance Companies, her daughters, and the Owatonna community. “People making choices to do good and to be good is what spreads optimism and brings joy to the world,” she said, calling Owatonna Business Women “a true force for optimism and joy in our community.”



Betsy Lindgren received the Owatonna Business Women Lifetime Achievement Award during Saturday’s celebration at the Owatonna Country Club.

Could a GrandPad help mom remember daughter’s visits?

Dear Live Grand: My mom is in memory care. I’m able to visit her several times a week but sadly, right after I’ve left, she’s forgotten that I was there. While I know this is normal for her disease, it still hurts. Mom’s strangely capable in some ways, so I try to stimulate her mind and my research has led me to the GrandPad. I know that she’d love the video calls and photos if they are easy enough to use, but is it realistic to think that she could use this tablet, or is she beyond that point? – RE

Dear RE: Understanding that your mom’s forgetfulness is normal for her disease doesn’t take away the sting. Even so, you haven’t given up on trying new ways to improve her life and GrandPad can help with that. Since the GrandPad was developed for older adults and people with various challenges such as dementia, your mom should be able to use many of the features. There’s no confusing clutter. All she’d see would be large, uniquely colored icons and clear text with great contrast and easy navigation. She’d have wonderful sound on front-facing speakers, and the tablet is charged by laying it on the included cradle. There’s a large, convenient HELP button that she can tap if she



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forgets how to use a function or even wants to chat. And guess what? Your mom’s personal representative will be the person to answer her call. One suggestion that could help your mom remember your visits is to take a selfie of the two of you with her GrandP?ad camera. While you don’t want to make your mom feel bad by suggesting that she’s forgotten your visits, you could answer any complaints with, “Oops, I forgot to tell you. We took a picture together. Let’s look!” Then guide her to tap the Photos app and there you’d be. Even if the image doesn’t remind her of a particular visit, she’d see these photos and remember that she’s loved. The only calls and emails she’d receive would be from people added to her Contacts. When you set this up if you label family members such as “Daughter Rebecca” that would help identify the person’s place in the family. To answer a call, she’d simply tap Answer

when your photo pops up on her screen. To call you, she’d touch the word Call next to your image in her Contacts. There’s a relaxing Moods app, and the Music app could provide her with both comfort and entertainment. She might even want to try games like tic-tac-toe or Bingo. GrandPads are designed for people with different abilities, RE, so your mom could have fun with the features that she wants to use without feeling pressured to do more. Consider, too, that he can’t get into trouble using a GrandPad, and our unique customer service would provide her with an extra friend. All of this together should go a long way toward helping her remain content. *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.*

St. Mary's School

Shining Knights



Student Name:
RYLEE
Grade: **5th Grade**
PARENTS: **Jesse Langley & Michelle Langley**



Student Name:
БРЫNN
Grade: **8th Grade**
Parents: **Jesse & Kristine Routh**

Rylee comes to class each day with a big smile on his face. He loves creating characters and making books of his characters to share with the class. Rylee’s kind heart shows in how he interacts with his fellow classmates. He is always willing to lend a helping hand or give a positive comment to someone who needs it. Rylee is a bright young man and is always willing to engage in our classroom discussions. Rylee shows gratitude for the little things in life which is an inspiration for others to witness. I am happy to nominate Rylee as our Shining Knight.

It is my great pleasure to honor Brynn today! Brynn has emerged as a leader in her class; she is smart, hardworking, kind, and able to get along with lots of types of people. Brynn is helpful to her classmates.. Brynn’s gentle spirit shines through when she encourages her fellow students, and we see her determination when she works hard to reach a goal. Like a Knight, Brynn holds herself to a high standard but also looks out for others. May God bless you, Brynn!



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United Way celebrates volunteers who helped raise \$771K

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

How do you celebrate raising more than \$771,000 to support organizations that serve thousands of people in need?

United Way of Steele County answered that question Thursday with a luncheon honoring the people who worked hard to achieve that ambitious goal. President Annette Duncan said recognitions typically happen in the fall, but COVID-19 canceled the 2021 event.

After a tough year, the organization wanted to bring everyone together again—in person.

“It’s really just a big celebration honoring the great partnerships we’ve had,” she said. “I feel that it’s important that we take the time to acknowledge all of the work everyone had done, despite the challenges we’ve faced.”

To open the program, held at the Owatonna Country Club, Board president Janie Rolloff announced the fund-raising total of \$771,818 and said last year held “a lot of unknowns.”

“But we did know we had a lot of partner agencies that needed us to raise that money,” she said. “I couldn’t be more excited about that number, and I love thinking about the impact it will have on the residents of Steele County.”

Chief among the partners involved in fundraising has been the Steele County Free Fair, honored Tuesday as Community Campaign Leader. While United Way typically works with a corporate campaign leader, Fair organizers stepped in when an unexpected staffing change forced last year’s business leader to bow out.

“They stepped up and simply knocked it out of the park,” Rolloff said.

United Way Community Impact and Fund-raising Coordinator Tom Worhach said Fair Manager Scott Kozelka and his team were there time and again, from

supporting a digital campaign thermometer to decorating a 75-foot float for the lighted parade.

“There was no request too big or small,” Worhach said.

“We became a family working together,” Kozelka said, adding the fair board and staff were proud to help. “We’re already talking about this year’s fair and what we can do.”

The agency honored the service of board members Kris Busse and Peng Olson.

Even before becoming city administrator in 2007, Busse said, “I always knew that there was something special about Owatonna.” Her time on the United Way board, she added, gave her an opportunity to learn about all aspects of the community. “It’s been a great privilege.”

Olson also said she learned a lot as a board member. “The United Way really, truly is a partner in the community. It really is changing lives.”

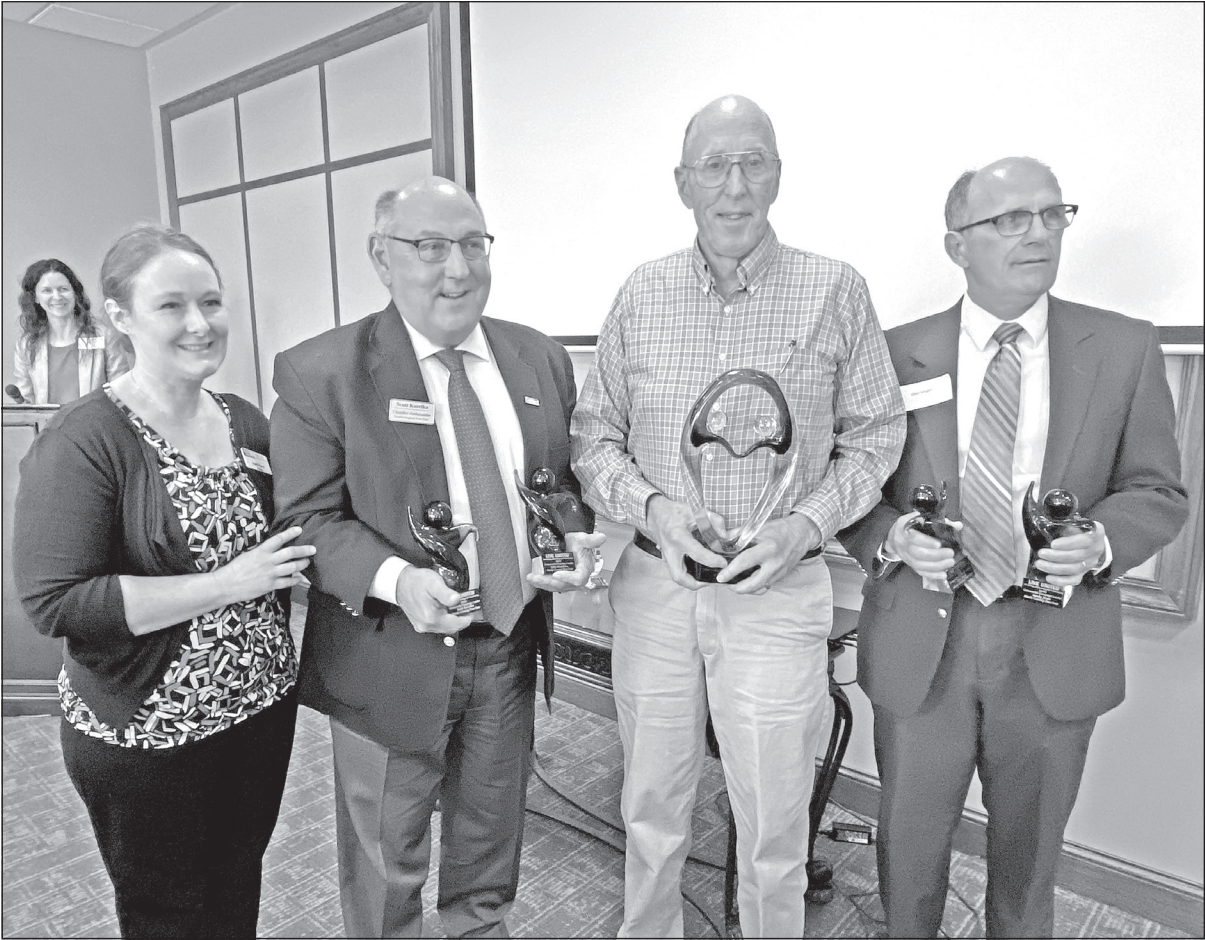
The LIVE UNITED awards, Duncan said, recognize exceptional contributions in charitable giving, volunteering, leadership, and advocating for projects and programs that change lives in Steele County. Selection starts with a survey sent to the Board of Directors and select community members.

“That group of individuals have an idea of who truly represents those qualities,” she said.

This year’s honorees include:

Partner Agency – Let’s Smile, Inc.

Let’s Smile offers oral health education and preventative dental services to children. In presenting the award to Executive Director Holly Jorgenson, United Way board member Matt Durand said the nonprofit faced unique challenges during COVID, due to the cost of Personal Protective Equipment. Let’s Smile also loaned supplies to the Ellendale Fire Department when their Emergency Medical



United Way of Steele County President Annette Duncan is pictured with Steele County Free Fair honorees Scott Kozelka, Dan Deml, and Glen Meger during Tuesday’s Campaign Celebration Luncheon.

Technicians all contracted COVID.

Small Business – OTB Café–Old Town Bagels

Board member Stephanie Olson said Old Town Bagels figured out a way to continue serving the community despite extended pandemic shutdowns. Owners Mark and Stacy Wilson and their crew then took a giant leap and built OTB Café, which provides a space where people feel “safe, valued, and heard”. The Wilsons support

United Way programs, including a supply of bagels and cider distributed to local businesses during Acts of Kindness week.

Community – Kim Ramsey

A 25-year substitute teacher with Owatonna Public Schools, Ramsey oversees the United Way’s Adopt a Family Christmas Gift program, which last year served 56 families. She’s instrumental in organizing the Women United Power of the Purse event and ensuring that every child in

Steele County receives a book every month, through age 5. She volunteers with many other nonprofits and made 800 masks during the pandemic.

Tocqueville Society Award – Jeff and Marty Fetter

This award recognizes local philanthropic leaders who have devoted their time, talents, and funds to tackling the community’s biggest issues. Jeff Fetter is chairman of the Federated Insurance Companies. He and Marty, who died

on Dec. 27, have been a part of the Tocqueville Society for eight years. Among many other charitable causes, the Fetter’s were instrumental in the \$2.4 million drive to expand Community Pathways food shelf and thrift store. Marty also supported early childhood literacy through Women United.

“This is a couple involved in pretty much everything in Steele County,” Rolloff said. “I can’t think of a couple more deserving of this award.”



Board member Jeff Elstad presents an award for board service to Peng Olson during Tuesday’s United Way of Steele County celebration.



Board member Matt Durand presents the LIVE UNITED Partner Agency award to Holly Jorgenson of Let’s Smile, Inc.



LIVE UNITED Community Award winner Kim Ramsey (left), an Owatonna Public Schools substitute teacher for 25 years, once taught United Way board member Tess Heyer-Brown, who presented her award.



Mark Wilson of Old Town Bagels accepts the LIVE UNITED Small Business award from United Way of Steele County board member Stephanie Olson.

TIGERS OF THE MONTH

FEBRUARY 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

Kindergarten – Jasmine Meuwissen

1st Grade – Scarlet Jensen

2nd Grade – Lilly Krohn

3rd Grade – Avery Sheeler

4th Grade – Grant Salazar

5th Grade – Eric Garcia

6th Grade – Natalie Wolf

Brolsma named new postmaster in BP

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Blooming Prairie has officially been without a United States Postal Service employee carrying the title of postmaster since May 1, 2021.

That has now been changed. Gary Brolsma, proud to be a Dutchman, officially became the Blooming Prairie Postmaster on Feb. 12. He succeeds Michelle Lawson, who retired on May 1, 2021.

Brolsma, 65, said he started his postal career “sort of late in 2005.” His first assignment was to be a part-time clerk in Dodge Center.

While at Dodge Center, he pulled postal duty in Hayfield, Kasson, Rochester, Pine Island and in his current home, Austin.

Brolsma grew up in a small town, Dunnell, Minn. This small town of 360 is located southwest of Fairmont. He graduated in 1975 from Sherburn High School.

Following high school, Brolsma attended college for a year but decided it was not for him. He then worked for John Morrel & Co. for 10 years. Next stop



Clerk Joeley and Postmaster Gary Brolsma mind the front service window from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Staff photo by Howard Lestrud)

was employment at Pizza Hut in Austin. He moved there in the spring of 1987.

Prior to joining the Postal Service in 2005, Brolsma worked 12 years for Quality Pork in Austin.

Before taking on the

role of officer in charge in Blooming Prairie, Brolsma served 27 years as postmaster in Spring Valley.

Change continued with Lawson’s retirement. Diane Bergstrom, a postal clerk, retired that same day. Long-

time postal clerk Eileen Loverink retired on July 31.

The Blooming Prairie Post Office is now staffed by a postmaster, two clerks (Joeley and Lee) and three rural carriers (Tom, Diane and Tim). “I am very

fortunate to have a good crew,” says Brolsma.

Brolsma starts his day at 6 a.m. and works often past 2 p.m. Window hours at the Blooming Prairie Post Office are from 9-11 a.m. and from 12 noon to 4:30 p.m. Monday through

Friday. The window is open from 10-11 a.m. on Saturday.

Monday is one of the heaviest days at the BP Post office, says Brolsma. He added Saturday has also become a busy day.

Largest customer for the BP Post Office “is Amazon, by far,” said Brolsma, noting Amazon averages 150 packages a day and up to 400 a day close to Christmas.

“It’s become easier for people to order products online,” remarked Brolsma. He said the higher gas prices have forced people to rely more on online ordering.

“Some days it is so busy that we are pulling our hair out,” said Brolsma. “It is what it is,” he added. The Christmas rush begins at Thanksgiving and continues until the first of the year.

Brolsma and his wife Serena have three children, Deveny, Riley and Chelsea. All live in Austin.

The postmaster loves to ride his 2014 Harley Davidson and also enjoys camping with his family near Madison Lake.

New priest returns home to BP

◀ **PRIEST** from A1 Becker said there is a “comfort level” knowing the lay of the land and knowing people who reside here.

Now that he’s back in Blooming Prairie, Becker says he would like to knock on the door of his former house and ask for a tour. The house is located at 2nd Street and 2nd Avenue S.W., between the grade school and the high school.

“I grew up here with my parents both active in the community,” said Becker. His father Bob taught English at Blooming Prairie High School. His mother Marian was a piano teacher and St. Columbanus organizer for many years.

Becker serves St. Columbanus Catholic Church in Blooming Prairie, Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Hayfield, Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Litomysl and St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Newry (no Mass). He resides in the Rectory in BP.

Each parish has about 150-200 families. Becker says Mass at

Sacred Heart in Hayfield at 5 p.m. on Saturdays, at Holy Trinity in Litomysl at 8:15 a.m. on Sundays and at St. Columbanus at 10 a.m. on Sundays.

These churches are part of the Winona-Rochester Diocese.

When not serving those four parishes, Becker takes time for himself. He collects flags of all kinds and sizes.

“I’m a cat lover because they just jump into your heart,” smiled Becker as he petted his “buddy” Moses, a black cat with only three legs.

“I’ve always loved cats,” admitted Becker as he continued with an interview to welcome him back to the community.

Rev. Becker is proud to be a Blossom and said he was active in the fine arts, performing in high school plays and competing in speech tournaments.

Becker was ordained in 1988 at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Winona.

His prior service includes 10 years in Plainview at St. Joa-

chim and at Immaculate Conception in rural Kellogg. Prior to that assignment, he served St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Winona.

He also served in Austin, Winona and Rochester carrying out parish, teaching and chancery work.

Becker also taught at the seminary in Winona and logged three years of doctoral study in Rome. Reflecting on his career, Becker said has totaled nearly 34 years in the priesthood.

How did he get drawn to the priesthood?

“That’s a good question,” responded Becker. He explained that his mom and dad were very faithful and loved the church. He received their encouragement toward the priesthood.

“We had a wonderful priest in Pastor Larry Ginther and he encouraged me to look at the priesthood,” said Becker.

He also received encouragement from teachers Frank Vorlicek and Renee Burns. “I thought they were nuts,” Becker laughs.

He said he thought

he would enter law enforcement, or would study International Relations at the University of Minnesota.

Becker recalls taking a vocation flyer from the back of the church. “I sent it in and not long after, I received a call from a priest.

“I asked how do you know that the priesthood is for you. I was told that this vocation is a mystery and you won’t know until you leave and pray with other men. I then went to seminary to try it out and it seemed a good fit for me.”

After high school, Becker went to seminary for four years. He then went five years to seminary in Rome.

Becker is very close to his family. His parents have passed, but he still clings to many wonderful memories they left him.

As the interview progressed, Becker pulled out his cell phone and played an organ piece by his mom. She had suffered a stroke but still managed to play with one hand at the Prairie Manor Care Center.



Rev. Bill Becker pets his buddy Moses, a black cat. Becker has long been a cat lover. He and Moses live at the Rectory next to St. Columbanus Catholic Church.

Becker was one of nine children. They are all living. He has sisters Cathy Schroeder of Mapleton, Mary Lilliquist of Caledonia, Patty Marsnik in Wisconsin and Barb Hartmann in South Dakota and brothers Tom in Oklahoma, Jim in Arizona, Larry in Virginia and John in Oakdale.

Asked to comment on any recent changes in the Catholic church, Becker said some changes have been made in wording and it is now more of a challenge to remain religious. The rise of computers and the internet has reshaped our society, he said.

He enjoys music and

film. “I enjoy singing,” he confessed.

Becker, in addition to his flag collection, wrote a book on Vatican flags. He has collected about 100 large flags and 200 small ones. He has two posted in the Rectory hallway at all times.

God’s word is always close to Becker and he says one of his favorite verses comes from Luke 5: v8-10 and is about the calling of the First Disciple while they were fishing.

“When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, ‘Go away from me, Lord, I am a sinful man.’ Jesus said to him: ‘Don’t be afraid, from now on you will catch men.’”

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Drew Wondra, 25, Owatonna



Drew Wondra

Dominique and Darla Wondra were blessed with their second child, Drew Thomas, on May 1, 1996 in Owatonna. He was welcomed by his older brother Dylan, and later blessed with another younger brother, Dominique, quickly developing into true brotherhood. Drew passed away unexpectedly on March 15, 2022 at his favorite place in the world, the Wondra Cabin in Spring Lake, Minn.

Drew graduated from Owatonna High School in 2015, and was currently working on his college degree while spending time outdoors in northern Minnesota. Drew was full of plans and aspirations – buying his own cabin, planting a garden and living off the land.

Drew had the most contagious laugh and biggest smile. His laugh made his cheeks turn red and his shoulders shake. When he hugged you, he would wrap you up in his big arms and pull you so tight you could actually feel his heart beat up against yours. He loved and accepted everyone. You always felt like he was genuinely excited to see you – even if he had just met you.

Drew's greatest happiness was found in the simplest things, mainly spending time with his family and friends. He loved nature, this earth,

and was committed to figuring out how to preserve it. His distinct curiosity created a passion to finding answers to the unknown. His simple kindnesses are what the world needs more of these days and will be dearly missed.

Drew was a wonderful son. A devoted grandson. A loving brother. A present uncle, dedicated godfather, and a loyal friend.

Drew was a good man. A lover of the outdoors and a creator of so much joy. He will be forever loved and missed by so very many. This world, and all who knew him, were lucky to have him for nearly 26 years.

Drew is survived by his parents Darla and Dominique, brothers Dylan (Lauren) and Dominique, his niece RosieLynn and his grandparents Thomas and Rosie Wondra. He is survived by many aunts, uncles and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents June and Richard Trom.

Visitation was held on Sunday, March 20 at Michaelson Funeral Home in Owatonna, followed by a funeral service in the chapel room. Flowers, donations, and condolences may be offered at 52348 S Center Road, Spring Lake, MN 56680. Donations will be directed to an environmentally conscious nonprofit, in Drew's memory.

Michaelson Funeral Homes of Owatonna is handling the funeral arrangements.

Edward Springer, 64, Owatonna



Ed Springer

Ed Paul Springer, lifelong resident of Owatonna, died March 14, 2022, at St. Marys Hospital in Rochester.

Mass of Christian Burial was Saturday, March 19, 2022, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Owatonna. Visitation was held on Friday, March 18 at the Brick-Meger Funeral Home, with a KC Rosary being recited. Visitation continued one hour prior to the funeral liturgy on Saturday.

A Celebration of Life was held at the Owatonna Elk's Club on Saturday evening.

Ed was born Sept. 24, 1957, in Owatonna, the son of Bob and Billie (Maseda) Springer. He attended Owatonna High School and was a graduate of the class of 1976. He attended Ag Vo-Tech in Faribault and earned a degree in Agriculture. From little on, he farmed with his father and was always his right-hand man. He started Ed's Backhoe Service in 1990 and was still servicing customers. When the housing market declined, Ed's passion turned to working with local greenhouses, completing underground construction of expansions at Owatonna and Mason City locations.

Ed married his best friend, Janet Spinler, on Sept. 10, 1983, at St. Joseph Catholic Church. Ed and Janet were blessed with three daughters whom they raised on the family farm in

Owatonna.

Ed loved going on vacation in Cancun with his family. He was so skilled with a backhoe that he participated in local and national equipment rodeos. Ed loved inventing things and tinkering on different projects at the farm. Most of all, he loved spending time with his family.

Ed was a member of the Elks Club, Sons of the American Legion, and the Knights of Columbus.

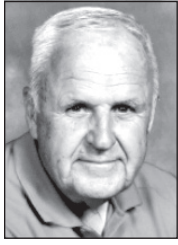
Ed always had a cigarette in his hand and a smile on his face, welcoming and ready to befriend anyone he met.

Ed is survived by his wife Janet of 38 years; daughters: Elizabeth (Abraham) Kasper, Kelsey (Steven) Pfeifer, and Rachel (Jon) Gasner; grandchildren: Isabel, Josephine and William Kasper; and Landon Gasner; mother-in-law and father-in-law Jake and Julie Spinler; two sisters-in-law Judy (James) Brady, and Jerine (Dan) Plaisance; one brother-in-law Clark Haselton; three sisters Linda Springer, Sharon (Dick) Olsen, and Patty (Ben Aronson) Springer; and many nieces and nephews. He will also be remembered by many friends.

Ed is preceded in death by his parents; one sister, Janet; two nieces Hannah Plaisance and Mandy Clark; and his little white dog Sophie.

**BRICK-MEGER
& MEDFORD**
 FUNERAL HOME

Neil Tellijohn, 82, Owatonna



Neil Tellijohn

Neil Edward Tellijohn, 82, of Owatonna, passed away Monday, March 14, 2022.

Neil was born Jan. 28, 1940, in LeSueur County, to Melvin and Anna Tellijohn. He married Mary O'Brien on Aug. 28, 1959.

Neil attended St. Olaf College on a football scholarship and then attended Mankato State University, receiving a certification as a Civil Engineer. He served in the United States Army as a helicopter mechanic, later starting his own businesses as a crop duster and helicopter mechanic.

He was an avid golfer and enjoyed spending his winters in Florida.

Neil is survived by his children, Lisa Tellijohn, Juli (Greg) Chapman, Joni (Doug) Oeltjenbruns, Kris Tellijohn, Pete (Kelly) Tellijohn, Dan Tellijohn, 22 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Mary, daughter, Laura, and great-grandson, Trey Christopher.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Wednesday, March 30, at Brick-Meger Funeral Home from noon until 2 p.m. with a prayer service to follow. Burial will be at Sacred Heart Cemetery with military rites by the Steele County Funeral Unit.

**BRICK-MEGER
& MEDFORD**
 FUNERAL HOME

Richard Thamert, 79, Owatonna



Richard Thamert

Richard "Dick" Thamert, 79, of Owatonna went to be with the Lord on Sunday, March 13, 2022. He was diagnosed with Mesothelioma in late 2021; he accepted God's plan for him with grace and chose to spend his final months at

home where he could be surrounded by his loving family.

He was born to Melvin and Marie (Deml) Thamert on March 24, 1942, in Owatonna. He grew up on the fourth generation Thamert family farm near Pratt, where he attended country school with his two brothers and two sisters. He later attended St. Mary's School in Owatonna and completed his high school years at the Ag School in Waseca.

In 1965, he married the love of his life, Mary (Steichen) Thamert in Adams. Richard and Mary spent 56 wonderful years together operating and growing the family farm, where they raised their eight children and made their life together.

Dick was strong in his Catholic faith and led by example in all that he did. He was steward of the land he farmed, a provider for his family, an entrepreneur in his business ventures, a fair and honest businessman, a loving and supportive husband, a wonderful father, and a cherished Grandpa.

Dick led a very purposeful life filled with many interests including music, traveling around the country, handyman work, volunteer work, and involvement with charities and the church. He was an entertainer and sang in church choirs, musical groups, and performed karaoke at many nursing homes. He also played his tuba and bass fiddle in many groups and loved to put a smile on people's faces any way he could. He

preferred to work side by side with people rather than alone and is remembered for his joyous invitations to come join him in the barns and the fields – he was a patient and humble mentor to his children and others. He had many words of wisdom such as reminding you to keep a nickel in your pocket, so you'd always be worth something. In his final days he repeatedly said how incredibly proud he was of his kids and his family, and that he never had a favorite because each was special in their own ways.

Dick is survived by his loving wife, Mary, and eight children: Cheryl (Tony) Ginnetti of Owatonna, Donna (John) Wheeler of Owatonna, John (Tracy) of Owatonna, Kelly (Tim) Irwin of Pompano Beach, Fla., Amy (Mark) Provo of Clarksville Tenn., David (Emily) of Owatonna, Jerry (Jennifer) of Ramsey and Katie (Steve) Holmstadt of Byron. Dick and Mary have been blessed with 31 grandchildren, and six great grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother Robert (Barb) of Lakeville, and sister Virginia "Jinny" Wanous of Owatonna, and many extended family members.

He was preceded in death by his parents, brother Father Mark Thamert, OSB of Collegeville, and sister Mary (Keith) Thamert of Farmington.

Mass of Christian Burial was held on Saturday, March 19 at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 512 S. Elm Ave., Owatonna. There was a Knights of Columbus Rosary followed by visitation prior to the service at the church. Burial was at the Sacred Heart Cemetery in Owatonna following the funeral.

Memorials are preferred to St. Mary's School in Owatonna, or Bethlehem Academy in Faribault.

**BRICK-MEGER
& MEDFORD**
 FUNERAL HOME

Brett Delhanty, 19, Owatonna



Brett Delhanty

Brett Alan Delhanty, 19, of Owatonna, died Saturday, March 12, 2022, as a result of injuries sustained in a car accident.

Funeral service was Monday, March 21, at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Owatonna. Visitation was on Sunday, March 20, at the Brick-Meger Funeral Home and an hour before services at the church.

Brett was born on Oct. 19, 2002, at Owatonna Hospital. He was "on the go" from the moment he learned to walk. As soon as he was old enough, he began walking around the block and meeting neighbors. In fact, he even introduced his parents to many nice people, including the Perkins family with whom they became fast friends. He was dubbed the "Mayor" of Linn Avenue at a young age because of his engaging personality. Brett loved people!

Brett attended Owatonna schools.

During high school and the past year, he had various part-time jobs. He loved children and reveled in being a good friend to his young second-cousins and others. He also enjoyed visiting and working on the Perkins' family farm.

He is very loved by his family and will be greatly missed.

He is survived by his parents, Keith and Brenda Delhanty, and his "second parents" Barb and Duane Perkins; his brother Hunter and sister Jennifer (Tim) Schlund. He is also survived by his grandmother Betty Jean Guderian; grandfather Burlyn Delhanty, and aunts, uncles, cousins, a niece, two nephews, and friends.

Brett was preceded in death by grandfather Clarence Guderian and grandmother Janet Delhanty. Memorials may be directed to the family. To leave a message of condolence go to www.megercares.com.

**BRICK-MEGER
& MEDFORD**
 FUNERAL HOME

Kenneth Mjoen, 93, Owatonna



Kenneth Mjoen

Kenneth Lyle Mjoen was born in a stone house on a farm near Volin, S.D. on Feb. 14, 1929, to Edward and Gertrude Mjoen. He died in Rochester on March 14, 2022, with his family by his side. During the

years between, he lived a life full of love and laughter.

Growing up in Volin, he enjoyed swimming holes, playing basketball, and singing in high school productions. After graduating from Volin High School, he enlisted in the Navy and served on the USS Missouri during the Korean War. While on leave he met his future wife, LeElla Docken. Together they created an incredible partnership and raised four children: David (Gloria), Lori (Rol), Becky (Jim), and Amy and welcomed three grandchildren: Eddie, Jackie, and Emma and two great-grandchildren

dren Ethan and Skye.

Kenny was an active member in Sons of Norway, Kiwanis, his church, and other community programs. He dreamt of traveling to the Holy Land, also known as Norway, and to go fishing in Canada. He achieved both several times. He loved nature especially watching the birds at his multiple birdfeeders. He loved to learn and to educate which he did as a high school science teacher in Austin until he retired. He loved pumpkin pie and gardening. He loved opera and woodworking. Every day he laughed, told stories, and was grateful for all he had. He was, quite simply, joy.

He has now joined his wife, his son, and three brothers and has left cherished memories with his family and friends.

A memorial service will be held on Friday, March 25, 2022, at 11 a.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church, 609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna. Visitation starts at 10 a.m. and a lunch will follow the service.

DEATH NOTICE

Robert Skow, 64, Twin Valley

Robert Ray Skow, age 64, of Twin Valley, Minn., died Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at his home in Twin Valley.

Upon family request, funeral services will not be held.

Arrangements entrusted to Anderson Family Funeral Home in Twin Valley. To leave an online tribute, please go to www.andersonfamilyfh.com.

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BIRTHDAYS

March 23

James Trihus
Kelsey Wolf
Blake Symes
Katie Wolf
Karen Thoen
Isabella Salinas
Nolan French

March 24

Kay Toquam

March 25

Jenny Heimerman
Charles Wagner
Whitney Burrue
Nala Klemmensen
Becky Severtson
Mark Anderson
Bryan Rossow
Douglas Wencil
Kathleen Christey
David Maixner

March 26

Cale Braaten
Tiffany Peterson
Steve Wollenburg

March 27

Betty Ingvaldson
Chad Klemmensen
Val Garcia
Lois Friesner
MaKenna Brown
Becky Masching
Marv Camerer

March 28

Kevin Eischens
Trig Klemmensen
Elaine Vermilyea
Gary Thorson

March 29

Emerson Nelson
Phillip Ramsey
Rhonda McCabe
Maisle Holmberg

ANNIVERSARIES

March 27

Doug & Kim Hillson
Dick & Norma Hegal

March 28

Rick & Lisa Hocking

H HONEST-1

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Hollandale Fire hosts Soup Supper



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

These two youngsters enjoyed a soup supper put on by the Hollandale Fire Department on Monday, March 14 at the Three in One Restaurant in Hollandale. Firefighter Matt Horan (middle) brought his two youngsters to the supper: Morgan Horan, 3, (left) and Samantha Horan, 9.

BOOK NOOK

In-person programs coming back to Library



NANCY
VAILLANCOURT

Library turn to our busiest season of the year – summer! The theme of the program this year is Oceans of Possibilities. I am pleased to announce that at this time we are planning in-person programs guaranteed to perk up your summer days. We will have CLIMB Theatre, the Zooman, Greg the Great Magic Show, the Eagle Center, Bazillions, Chione Quintet, and more! Children's movies will also be shown this summer. Children can now attend live, in person Story time, and it will continue in person throughout the summer. It is held in the library at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays. We are continuing to stream it through Face book Live so families can watch it any time of day, according to what works best for your schedule. As we make summer plans, there are a few items that we are in need of for our Take and Make bags. If you have extras of the following, could you please bring them to the library? · Sea shells, including oyster shells · Clean plastic quart size jars with lids (mayonnaise jars work well) · Paper towel rolls If you have other beach or ocean themed craft items, please give us a call at 507-583-7750. As we come up with more craft ideas, we may be requesting more items. Thanks for your help!

Recipe Corner

CHEESY FLAT BREAD



1 loaf frozen bread dough, thawed

3 T. butter, softened

2 T. finely chopped onion

2 to 3 tsp. paprika

1/2 tsp. dried oregano or basil

1/2 tsp. garlic powder

1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

Pat dough onto bottom and up sides of greased 14" pizza pan or 15x10x1 inch pan, forming a crust. Spread with butter. Sprinkle with onion, paprika, oregano, and garlic powder. Prick crust several times with a fork. Sprinkle with cheese. Cover and let rise in a warm place for 30 minutes. Bake at 375 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. Makes 8 servings.

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Owatonna senior named top scholar

Fardouza Farah, a senior at Owatonna High School, has been named a 2022 Coca-Cola Scholar and will receive a \$20,000 college scholarship. Less than 1/4th of 1% of applicants were chosen to receive this extremely competitive award. One hundred fifty high school seniors were selected from an initial pool of 68,000+ applications from across the country based on their academic excellence, leadership, and service demonstrated in school and community activities as part of a 3-stage selection process. As a member of the 34th class of Coca-Cola

Scholars, Farah not only exemplifies superior leadership, service, and academics – she is a change agent, positively affecting others in the community. A joint effort of Coca-Cola bottlers across the country and The Coca-Cola Company, the Coca-Cola Scholars Program is the largest corporate-sponsored, achievement-based scholarship program in the United States. With the addition of the 2022 class, the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation will have provided more than 6,600 Coke Scholars nationwide with over \$78 million in



Fardouza Farah

scholarships over the course of 34 years. "We believe that identifying these young leaders throughout the country and encouraging their passion for serving others not only empowers the students, but also lifts up those around them." said Jane

Hale Hopkins, President of the Foundation. "The Coca-Cola system is dedicated to giving back to the communities they serve, and the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation is proud to be a part of that commitment." Farah is actively involved in the Justice Education Project, International Central Asian Project, Speech, Mock Trial, National Honor Society, Students Helping Others Choose (SHOC), Green Team, Girls United, Student Council, and Color Guard. She is also president of the Minnesota Youth Against Sexual Violence organization.

COLLEGE NEWS

Owatonna senior attends scholars program

An area high school senior was one of more than 50 seniors that attended the University of Dubuque's Second Century Scholars Program. Max Zirngible of Owatonna took part in the program on Feb. 18 at the Dubuque campus. He is the son of Doug and Tracie Zirngible. The program awards two renewable full-tuition scholarships as well as significant one-time scholarships to incoming first-year University of Dubuque (UD) students who show a wide-ranging curiosity about their world, a strong capacity for self-discipline, and a passion for academic excellence in service to their communities. "These are students who will perpetuate the Mission of the University of Dubuque in thought, word, and deed," said Lara Fluhr, director of admission at UD. In order to be considered for a Second Century Scholars Award, students must have a minimum high school grade point average of 3.7 and participate in the scholars' day on campus. The day included a series of interviews and a writing exercise. Additionally, students learned about the UD's Scholar-Leader Honors Program and met with faculty and students. The day concluded with a dinner and recognition ceremony. Students were presented a Certificate of Achievement by UD Chairman of the Board of Trustees Joseph Chlapaty (C'68, DHL'98) and his spouse, Linda, during the recognition ceremony.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BLOSSOMING INTO LEARNERS AND LEADERS

LOOK WHO'S BEING AWESOME!

Blossoms Students of the Week

Blooming Prairie Elementary School



Sterling Schmidt – 1A

Ms. Ruen's Class

Parents: Robert Schmidt & Staci Schewe

Sterling is an excellent example of an Awesome Blossom! He shows Prairie Pride each day. Sterling is a kind and caring friend to all. Without being asked, he is constantly helping others or helping a teacher clean up the room and organize, or just helping someone in need. Sterling is a hard worker in all areas of school and is continually striving to improve each day. Sterling is a leader in our classroom, and we are so glad he is in 1A! Keep being an Awesome Blossom, Sterling!



Jadon Feyereisen – 4A

Mrs. Volgarino's Class

Parent: Crystal Kvestad

Jadon is a wonderful example of Prairie Pride. Jadon sets a positive example in our classroom by being a great listener, hard worker, and kind friend to all. He always gives his best effort and shows perseverance when facing challenges. He is always willing to lend a helping hand to classmates and teachers. Way to go, Jadon! 4A is so proud of you!



Lanie Osmon – 6A

Mr. Peterson's Class

Parents: Aaron & Kelly Osmon

Lanie Osmon is a very hard-working student with a positive attitude. She is constantly smiling, laughing, and in a good mood. In addition, she is always eager to help out her classmates and teachers. We are very lucky to have Lanie in our 6A classroom. She is undoubtedly an example of how to be respectful and kind to others.

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BLOOMING PRAIRIE & AUSTIN

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BLOOMING PRAIRIE

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Thursday, March 24

6:30-7:30 p.m.

Free

BPHS Room 206

Foundations of Investing

Thursday, April 28

6:30-7:30 p.m.

Free

BPHS Room 206

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

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Michelle Southworth

Community Education Coordinator

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Don't be all serious and solemn during Lent



Rev. Leandra Anderson

RED OAK GROVE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
AUSTIN

One of our dogs is not the biggest fan of cold weather. She is a chihuahua dachshund mix, and she despises when her little paws get cold and wet, especially at anything below 10 de-

grees. She has a tendency to be quite dramatic about her dislike of the cold when her feet get cold. On a walk on those frigid winter days she will happily walk about two feet into the snow and slowly begin to pick up one foot at a time until she eventually just rolls over on her back. This is the time when I will pick her up and carry her around until her sister gets tired of outside, too. The coats in our house have become a sign of instant shivers and dramatics of the highest caliber because,

well, chihuahua mix. All of this show in the cold is quite funny, even if our dog believes it to be a solely solemn and tragic situation. This past week, however, we witnessed the beauty of the 40s, 50s, even a day of 60 degrees and sun! The coats got to come off! This wonderful glimpse of those spring feelings and long walks outside with the dogs, reminded me of the hope that is found in the coming of longer days. No matter how much we hate daylight savings mode, that extra

hour adds a brightness to the evening that we haven't seen in a while. I love it, and it is perhaps just in time to chase off some of those more blue days. Maybe, just maybe, there will be hopes of seeing green and flowers sooner rather than later. In the middle of the Lenten season, for those of us who practice this piece of the church year, we can sometimes feel bogged down by the solemnness of this time. This weight is aided by the teasing of spring, but yet still living with one foot in the winter

time. The world has a lot of weighing down it is doing too on our hearts and minds. I'm sure of it. While enjoying this burst of warmer weather, there was a gentle reminder from my spouse that it is okay to slow down and enjoy what is going on right now. It is okay to need the hope of springtime and to see the world ever so slightly begin to think about that process of waking up. I figured if I needed the reminder that during lent we aren't always meant to be so se-

rious and solemn, that maybe you could use it to. God is filling our world with hope in front of our eyes, we just have to see it, hear it, and take it in. Sometimes we need the laugh of how silly our dogs can be in the depth of winter. Sometimes we need to take off the coats and enjoy the fresh air of a coming spring. Sometimes, we need the hope that comes with this changing time of year. That in its own way is so beautiful and so very hopeful. Happy first week of Spring, friends!

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN AURORA LUTHERAN 6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna 507-451-2819 Sunday Worship: 9 a.m. Sundy 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 Worshop 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 Worshop 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.rog.lutheran.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., Sergeant 320-674-0351 Sunday Worship 10:15 a.m. Sunday School 9 a.m. www.saintjohnssergeant.jimdo.com ST. JOHN LUTHERAN – ELCA 1301 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna 507-451-7293 Sunday & Summer Worshop 8 a.m. & 9:30 a.m. Thursday Worshop 5:30 p.m. Saturday 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. info@stjohnnowatonna.com ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN- ELCA 30450 570th Ave., Waltham 507-567-2474 Sunday Worshop 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 Worshop 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 Worshop 10 a.m. deaconbilliejo@gmail.com TRINITY LUTHERAN- ELCA 609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna 507-451-4520 Sunday Worshop - 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 owatonnaalive.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 Worshop 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 Worshop 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 Worshop 8:30 a.m. deaconbilliejo@gmail.com OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN – ELCA 1909 St. Paul Rd., Owatonna 507-451-4853 Sunday Worshop- 8:15 a.m. - Traditional Service & 10:45 a.m. - Contemporary service, also livestreamed on Facebook. www.oursaviorsowatonna.com	CHRISTIAN CHRIST COMMUNITY COVENANT 540 SE 18th St., Owatonna 507-451-1032 Sunday Worshop: 9 a.m. Sunday Connections: 10:15 a.m. www.owatonnacovenantchurch.org CHRISTIAN FAMILY CHURCH 2300 Heritage Pl. NW, Owatonna 507-455-3205 Sunday Worshop 9 a.m. www.cfchurches.org VICTORY CHRISTIAN CHURCH 1380 Rice Lake St. E., Owatonna 507-451-8111 Sunday Service: 10 a.m. www.victorymn.org	NEW BEGINNINGS 332 14th St. NE, Owatonna 507-413-0209 Sunday Worshop: 10 a.m. Wednesday Service: 7 p.m. www.nbclife.org SIMPLY CHURCH 105 2nd St., Geneva 507-438-5418 Sunday Bible Study: 9:30 a.m. Sunday Worshop: 10:30 a.m. Tuesday Worshop: 5:30 p.m. Wednesday Worshop: 5:30 p.m.	Sunday Worshop: 10 a.m. Sunday School: 9 a.m. Sunday Bible Study: 11:30 a.m. Wednesday Service: 6:30 p.m. www.fbcbloomingprairie.org FIRST BAPTIST (Owatonna's Oldest Church) 123 E Main St., Owatonna 507-272-9834 Sunday Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Sunday Worshop: 10:30 a.m. www.firstbaptistowatonna.com GRACE BAPTIST-OWATONNA 65 26th St., Owatonna 507-451-3494 Sunday Worshop: 10 a.m. Sunday School: 8:45 a.m. Sunday Evening: 5 p.m. Wednesday Adult Service 7 p.m. Wednesday Youth Service 7 p.m. gracebaptistministry.org info@gracebaptistministry.org BETHEL BAPTIST 1611 Hemlock Ave., Owatonna 507-451-8548 Sunday Worshop: 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	
		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: 8:15a.m. www.litomysl.webs.com SACRED HEART CATHOLIC 150 NE Second St. Hayfield 507-477-2256 Saturday Mass: 5p.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: 10:00 a.m. 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. Sunday Mass: 8 & 10 a.m. Adoration Chapel available Mon-Fri. 7 a.m. -5:30 p.m. (Key fob required after hours or weekend) www.stjosephowatonna.org	PENTECOSTAL FIRST UNITED PENTECOSTAL 230 Locust Ave., Owatonna 507-363-3046 Sunday Worshop: 10 a.m. Wednesday Service: 7 p.m.	METHODIST BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST 43089 180th St., Medford (Seven miles west of Medford on CR. 23) 507-835-8726 Sunday Worshop: 8:30 a.m. Sunday School: 9:45 a.m. www.bloominggroveumc.org ELLEDALE UNITED METHODIST 200 Sixth St. NW, Ellendale 507-382-2483 Sunday Worshop: 10:30 a.m. Sunday School: 9:15 a.m. www.ellendaleumc.org OWATONNA UNITED METHODIST 815 E University St. – Owatonna 507-451-4734 Sunday Traditional Worshop (Pathways) 9 a.m. www.owatonnaumc.org NON-DENOMINATIONAL CEDAR CREEK 30 E Main St., Hayfield 507-477-2255 Sunday Worshop 10 a.m. www.cedarcreekchurch.org DESTINY CHRISTIAN 2515 Harvest Lane NW- Owatonna 507-456-4775 Sunday Worshop: 9 a.m. Wednesday Worshop: 6:30-7:30 p.m. 1st & 3rd every month www.destinycc.org ELEVATION NORTH 2002 Austin Rd., Owatonna 507-363-3099 Sunday Worshop (English) 10 a.m. Sunday School: 10:30 a.m. Sunday Worshop (Spanish) 2 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study: 6:30 p.m. Spanish Evangelism & Prayer: Friday 7 p.m. www.elevationnorth.blogspot.com	SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST 2373 Seventh Ave NE, Owatonna 651-955-4032 Saturday Worshop: 11 a.m. Saturday Bible Study: 9:30 a.m. www.owatonnasdachurch.org	FREE CHURCH CORNERSTONE EVANGELICAL FREE 1500 18th St. SE, Owatonna 507-446-5850 Sunday Worshop: 9 a.m. Sunday School: 10:30 a.m. www.cornerstoneowatonna.com NORTH RIDGE CHURCH OF GOD 1650 7th Ave. NE, Owatonna 507-451-5467 Sunday Worshop: 10:30 a.m. Prayer: 7-8 p.m. www.churchnorthridge.com BRIDGE OF HOPE 500 Dunnell Dr., Owatonna 507-215-2249 Sunday Bible Study: 9 a.m. Sunday Worshop: 10 a.m. Friday RU Recover pfm: 7 p.m. ST. PAUL EPISCOPAL CHURCH 220 S. Cedar Ave., Owatonna 507-451-5319 Sunday Worshop: 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study: 11 a.m. Wednesday Evening: 7 p.m. www.stpaulsowatonna.org EMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN 750 Jeffery St., Owatonna 507-455-2729 Sunday Worshop: 9 a.m. www.emmanuel-wels-owatonna.com
			UCC CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST 211 Main St. S., Medford 507-451-4596 Sunday Worshop: 10 a.m. www.ucc.org	PRESBYTERIAN ASSOCIATED CHURCH Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ 800 Havana Rd., Owatonna 507-451-1546 Sunday Worshop: 9 a.m. (Fellowship, Sunday School and Adult Discussion follow service) Wednesday Activities Sept-May (see website for schedule) www.associatedchurch.org office@associatedchurch.org FIRST PRESBYTERIAN 109 E Main St., Hayfield 507-477-2631 Sunday Worshop: 10 a.m. www.firstpresbyterianhayfield.com FIRST PRESBYTERIAN P.O. Box 66 121 East St. N., Claremont 507-528-2320 Sunday Worshop: 10 a.m. www.faithstreet.com	BAPTIST FIRST BAPTIST 104 First Ave., Blooming Prairie 507-583-2673	

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STEELE COUNTY

Times

CANDIDATES DEBATE A3 | SPRING BRIDAL 'I DO' ON 2-22-22 B1

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022

District gets first look at preliminary design

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

The Blooming Prairie School District has taken the first step into its \$34 million renovation project – but it's a big one.

The concept phase of the project was revealed last week, using the work done by the district's Core Planning Group to determine criteria for the building layout, quality and functionality to create 2D floor plans and a preliminary architectural design.

Though preliminary, the presentation was thorough – and met with high praise from

In this graphic overview of the \$34 million renovation and construction at Blooming Prairie High School, the new performing arts center, art rooms and adjoining lobby will be built on the south end of the current building. The newly expanded CTE area is near the weight room. The new game gym will be built on the west side of the current building, and the fifth- and sixth-grade classrooms will be constructed on the northwest end of the

including parents, community members, staff, students and other local

“comparable features for items that were part of the referendum” said Vaughn Di-

He outlined the criteria and guiding principles used for the schematic stage, “the

The criteria, Dierks said, “is pass-fail. Either it's there or it isn't, and they're a little more critical to understand-

The planning group spent a lot of time talking about the classroom addition for fifth- and sixth-graders, as well as the space adjacent to it.

It was apparent safety remained at the forefront while moving those students out of the elementary school building and into the secondary building. The classrooms are grouped in one area on the far northwest end of the current school, with 2/3 transparent walls between the classrooms and the flex resources areas for those grades.

In addition, the students' lockers or other permanent storage will be in the classroom; the grades will have their own designated toilet

See DISTRICT on A6 ▶

DEBRA J. FLEMMING

1954-2022

Debra J. Fleming, 67, died Monday, March 14, 2022, at District One Hospital in Faribault.

Deb Wendland was born to Joni and Ken Wendland on Aug. 5, 1954. She graduated from Waseca High School in 1972 and was a proud student of Drake University and received a degree in journalism from the University of Minnesota.

She and Loren Fleming were married in November 1978 in Waseca. They lived in Waseca,

Owatonna, Mankato and Traverse City, Mich., moving to where Deb's job with newspapers took them. The place they both loved and returned to was their cabin on Roberds Lake in Faribault.

After her divorce, Deb continued to live her passions and values in her work and community. She became active in the Landmark program, eventually becoming a leader in its family division, working with children. She also began to explore living in other locales – San Diego

and the Largo, Fla., area.

Deb's passion, after her family and friends, was journalism. She worked as a reporter, copy editor and editor, but relished being a mentor to young journalists. She was a passionate believer in the First Amendment and the public's right to know what elected officials were doing. She filed several lawsuits against government bodies in support of the Open Meeting Law.

Deb returned to southeastern Minnesota in 2019 to become a consultant for

the 761 Foundation in Owatonna, and then the editor of the Steele County Times.

She is survived by her family, sister Laurie (Art) Griffith and her children, Kristin (Aaron) Hugen, John (Caytlyn) Griffith, Samuel (Hannah) Griffith, and David Griffith; brother Brad (Monica) Wendland and his children Matt and Olivia; step-son Jason Fleming and his children, Ashley, Ciyera, Evert and Trinity; and many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

She is preceded in death by her parents, former

husband and niece Abby Wendland.

There was a celebration of life gathering Saturday, March 19, 2022 at Parker Kohl Funeral Home in Faribault. For online condolences and further information, please visit ParkerKohlFH.com.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred to the family or the 761 Foundation/Debra J. Flemming journalism scholarship.

Obituary as Deb would have written:
Debra J. Fleming
– 30 –



Owatonna senior guard Ty Creger tries to drive past a Farmington defender in Owatonna's 69-61 win against the Tigers in the Section 1AAAA championship game. Creger put up this second 20-point game of the playoffs by scoring 21 points on nine of 13 shooting from the field.

Huskies headed back to state

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna Huskies are headed back to the state tournament after head coach Josh Williams' squad defeated the Farmington Tigers 69-61 in the Section 1AAAA championship game last Friday.

Owatonna found itself in a 34-minute battle with a Farmington team that kept the Huskies' lead within 10 points for the majority of the game.

"We knew coming in that it was going to be a physical war. A lot of people had asked, 'What is Farming-

ton like?' I told them Farmington is kind of like a mirror image of us. They guard hard, they defend, they're physical, they like to transition... they play the same way we do. Just the toughness, the grit and the desire we showed tonight were so good," said Williams.

The Huskies had to bring their A-game from the opening tipoff against the Tigers.

The game's opening minutes featured tough defensive pressure from both sides and low scoring totals on the scoreboard.

However, Owatonna made the first offen-



Huskies guard Brayden Williams drives past a Farmington defender. Williams scored a team-high 24 points in the Huskies' 69-61 win in the Section 1AAAA championship game last Friday.



Owatonna senior Nick Williams attempts a three-point shot against Farmington in the Section 1AAAA championship game. Williams made the shot and had three points in the Huskies' 69-61 win.

sive breakthrough in the game and kept its rhythm for the majority of the first half.

While the Huskies struggled from three-point range — usually a key part of their game — the team was efficient as ever from inside the arc and scored on 50% of its two-point field goal attempts.

The hot shooting of senior guard Ty Creger contributed to the Huskies' lead massively.

Creger made it back-to-back 20-point games by shooting a blistering 62.9% from the field, scoring on nine of his 13 field goal attempts.

As a result of Owatonna's offensive surge in the first half, the Huskies took a 35-29 lead into halftime.

In the second half, Owatonna began to reap the benefits of its hard attacking offense.

Farmington began to fall into foul trouble with three players recording their fourth foul before the halfway point of the second half.

Williams said that his team was aware of the Tigers' foul troubles, but that it was not a point of emphasis for his team to exploit the situation.

Instead, Williams' squad continued its scoring ways by shooting 55.6% from the field with a game-high 60% shooting percentage from three-point range in the second half.

Owatonna's offense proved to be too much for the Tigers.

Farmington managed to cut the Huskies' lead to four points briefly in the waning minutes of the second half, but never regained the lead in the game.

The Huskies outscored the Tigers 34-32 in the second half and went on to take home the 69-61 win and some section championship hardware.

Leading the Huskies in scoring were Creger with 21 points and Brayden Williams with a team-high 24 points.

Brayden Williams — who celebrated his birthday on Friday — said that winning the game and getting to keep his senior season alive with his father was the best birthday gift he could imagine.

Huskies fans will be able to watch their team compete next at the MSHSL State Tournament beginning on Tuesday, March 22, and continuing throughout the week.

The Huskies earned the No. 2 seed in the tournament and were scheduled to face Cretin Derham Hall in the first round of the tournament.

Results from the game were not available at the time of press.

Player Stats vs. Farmington

	P	R	A
B. Williams	24	14	3
Creger	21	4	4
Burmeister	12	2	1
Dushek	7	6	2
N. Williams	3	4	1
Ginskey	2	1	0
Vick	0	1	0



Dr. Deborah I. Lien
DDS, MBS
ORTHODONTIC SPECIALIST

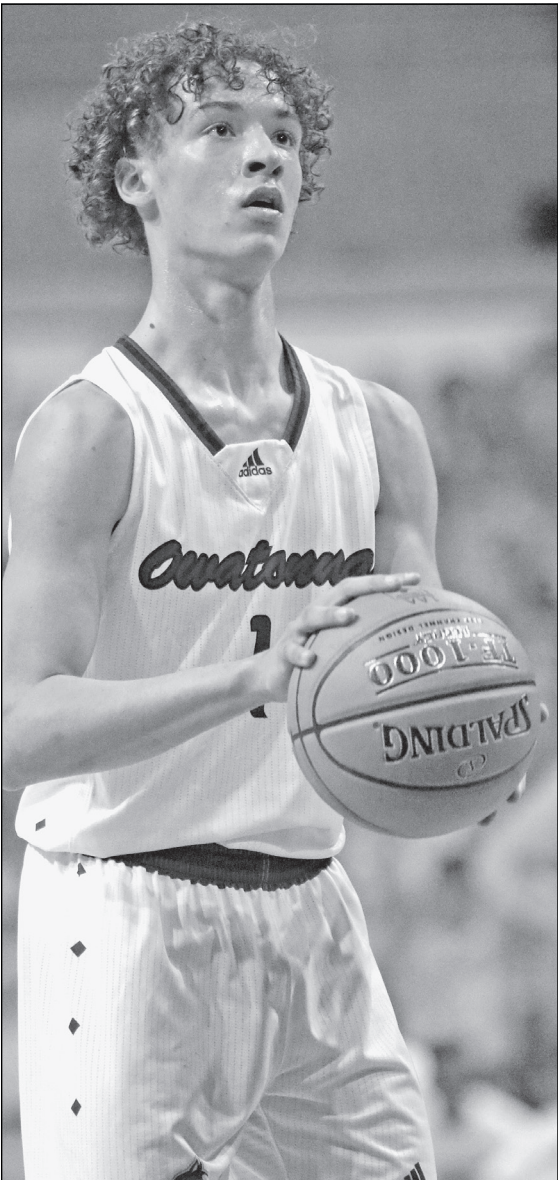
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Four Huskies earn All-Conference honors

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna Huskies were notified last week that four players — Blake Burmeister, Ty Creger,

Evan Dushek and Brayden Williams — all earned Big Nine All-Conference team honors. Owatonna's four selected athletes made up the largest number of athletes from one



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Owatonna senior guard Ty Creger focuses in on a free-throw attempt against Farmington in the Section 1AAAA championship game. Owatonna won 69-61, and earlier in the week, Creger was selected as a member of the Big Nine All-Conference team.

“There aren't words to describe it. I'm so happy for the team.”

Ty Creger
Big 9 All Conference Player

team on the all-conference team. “It's well deserved. No question it's well deserved after what they were able to accomplish. It started back in third, fourth, fifth grade with these guys. It started before their passion for the game,” said Owatonna head coach Josh Williams.

Burmeister, Creger and Brayden Williams were all selected to the team as guards while Dushek slots in at his usual forward/center position.

It's been a memorable season full of records and personal bests for the four selected athletes.

Back on March 9, Dushek became the Owatonna High School all-time leading scorer by breaking Drew Lundberg's record of 1,565 points set back in 2007, while Brayden Williams also made his mark on Owatonna basketball by surpassing the 1,000 points mark against Park of Cottage Grove back in January.

The elder Williams said that seeing his athletes reach milestones and break records along the way while working together tirelessly every day to accomplish their

dream of a state championship has been special to watch.

All four athletes, whom Williams has coached and watched grow over the years, earn their honors in what is shaping up to potentially be Owatonna's breakthrough

year at the state tournament.

The four nightly starters played through a regular season that saw them produce the Big Nine's most explosive scoring offense en route to a perfect 22-0 in-conference record before dominating the section playoffs with three straight wins.

Now, ranked as a No. 2 seed in the MSHSL State Tournament, the four have their eyes set on the next goal: a state title.

“There aren't even words to describe it. I'm so happy for the team. We put in so much work during the offseason and the regular season. We deserve it so much. I'm just so happy for my teammates, and I'm so happy for this team,” said Creger.

The No. 2 Huskies faced off against the Cretin Derham Hall Raiders in the opening round of the MSHSL State Tournament on Tuesday, March 22 after this edition went to press.



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Owatonna's Brayden Williams, left, Blake Burmeister, center, and Evan Dushek, right, all celebrate together after receiving their Section 1AAAA championship medals. The three were three of four Owatonna athletes to receive Big Nine All-Conference team selections, along with teammate Ty Creger.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Owatonna Adaptive Floor hockey team includes: front row, from left: Alexis Talley, Isabel Ihrke, Joseph Poole (holding trophy), Karryn Keller and Jessica Parsons; back row: Coach John Scheil, Emilee Moffett (mostly covered behind Alexis Talley), Javelle Higgs, Chloe Talley, Josiah Aviles, Jesse Fonner, Ryan Gander and Coach CW Wolfe. Not pictured: Kyle Goergen.

Huskies take fourth at state adapted floor hockey

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna adapted floor hockey team took fourth place at state after losing a close 10-9 game against the South Suburban Jets last Saturday to finish its run at the MSHSL State Tournament.

Owatonna came into the game on Saturday to attempt a run in the consolation bracket after losing 15-1 the day before to Burnsville/Farmington/Lakeville.

“Everyone was happy for a good season, and to have the opportunity to make it to the tournament. We were all proud of how we went out and performed, and to have the moments

with the team outside of just playing the game was special as well,” said Owatonna head coach John Scheil.

Owatonna's game against South Suburban was a nail-biter that came down to the last 50 seconds.

After South Suburban scored the game's first goal in the opening minutes of the first period, the two sides battled back and forth to gain an edge.

The Jets managed to keep their early lead for the entirety of the game; however, Owatonna fought through all three periods to level the score and complete the comeback.

Down 9-4 halfway through the third

period, Owatonna strung together four late goals in a quick fashion to make the score 9-8.

With the comeback in sight, Owatonna was unable to find its game-tying goal as South Suburban netted its last goal of the game to make the score 10-8 with two minutes remaining.

Owatonna managed to score one more goal with 50 seconds remaining, but the Jets maintained possession after the goal and kept Owatonna from being able to tie the game.

Scoring for Owatonna were Javelle Higgs with five goals and Chloe Talley with four goals.

The day before, Owatonna suffered

a loss in the opening round of the state tournament, losing to Burnsville/Farmington/Lakeville (BFL) 15-1.

Owatonna found itself down early as BFL managed to own possession and use its high-power offense to create a big lead.

“BFL is a very good team with a lot of depth and speed. The end result was 15-1, but I think our kids worked super hard and never gave up. Overall it was a good game,” said Scheil.

Scoring for the Huskies in the contest was Higgs, who netted the Huskies' lone goal in the second period on an unassisted play.

The Huskies' losses at the state tournament officially bring

the team's 2021-2022 season to a close.

“For the seniors to come in this season after not really having a junior season and just step up and be the leaders that they were was awesome. They're a group that I'm going to hold in my heart and really miss because there was a lot of talent, but there was also a lot of personality and heart that made our team what it was this year.”

Player Stats			
vs. Burnsville/Farmington/Lakeville			
	G	A	P
Higgs	1	0	1

vs. South Suburban			
	G	A	P
Higgs	5	1	6
C. Talley	4	1	5
Fonner	0	3	3
Poole	0	1	1

Robb brothers earn pair of podiums

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

Brothers Peyton and Cael Robb both earned podium finishes this season as individuals with the elder Robb, Peyton, taking fourth place at the NCAA tournament at 157 pounds for the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and younger brother, Cael, taking third place at the MSHSL State Tournament at 132 pounds.

Both athletes shined for their respective schools this season, and it's no surprise to the two brothers that each one was able to accomplish what they did.

Peyton earned his fourth-place podium finish at the NCAA tournament after ending his run with a 6-2 record.

The Huskers wrestler made a five-match run through the consolation bracket to make it to the third-place match where he lost a hard-fought battle by a 7-2 decision to Iowa State's No. 1 seed David Carr.

As for Cael, the Owatonna junior made a similar run to the podium by dominating competition in the consolation bracket after a loss on day one of the tournament.

A 4-2 decision win in the third-place match gave Robb his podium finish after outscoring his opponents 17-2 in consolation matches.

Both wrestlers figure to be back on the mats next season with Cael entering his senior season at Owatonna and Peyton returning as a redshirt senior for the Huskers.

Car racing stretches 3 generations for Wiemans

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Auto racing is a hobby that has become contiguous for an area family.

There are now three generations of racers in the Wieman family of Owatonna.

“We only have two grandsons, and no granddaughters to help carry on the tradition,” said Carl Wieman. “They will make three generations of racers with all of us in the family having competed through the years.”

Carl is excited to see the youngest generation picking up the torch with auto racing. His youngest grandson, Evan Wieman, has competed three times at the Arlington Raceway in the Auto Cross class. Not to be outdone, Evan’s brother, Jacob, also competed in the same class a few weeks later.

In the early years, racing took on a different twist for Carl. He competed in the snowmobile races for many years, as well as drag racing with cars while in the U.S. Army stationed at Ft. Bliss in El Paso, Texas.

“When I got home, I continued snowmobile racing and eventually got into Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) Solo II competition in 1981 for over 26 years,” Carl said, noting he competed at regional, state and national levels of competition.

Carl’s accomplishments have included many regional and state championships. He has garnered more than 50 first place finishes over the years while competing in Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Illinois, Wisconsin,

South Dakota and Texas.

Racing hasn’t only been a male dominated sport for the Wiemans. Carl’s wife, Denise, started competing in SCCA Solo II in 1987 and continued on for 19 years. She also competed at the state, regional and national levels of competition. She has earned many regional and state championships. Her biggest prize was winning the Midwest Division G-Stock-Ladies Class at Topeka, Kansas.

Carl recalled that Matt was at his first race when he was about 5 months old. “When he got to about 5 years old, I could not go to a race unless he could go along,” Carl said, noting he was a “very young” crew person. “Many of the other competitors were a little jealous when their son or daughter and wife would stay home.”

Asked what satisfaction racing brings, Carl responded: “Knowing that our sons and grandsons all look at the success that Denise and I have had and want to continue that success as a family.”

Carl said he has been motivated over the years by focusing on trying to do better than previous races. “When I was garnering a first place at almost every time out, I also helped coach my competitors so that they would not get discouraged as would sometimes happen,” he said.

But Carl wasn’t immune from getting discouraged himself. “I remember when I started Solo II, and if a certain person was entered, I felt I did not have a chance at winning,” he said. Instead of losing hope, Carl watched to learn what made them better.

“I always wanted my



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Wieman family has three generations of auto racers. They include, from left: Matt, Jacob, Evan, Carl, Dan and Denise Wieman.

“Many of the other competitors were a little jealous when their son or daughter and wife would stay home.”

Carl Wieman
Auto Racer

closest competitors to be my best friend and ask for advice,” Carl said.

As it turned out, that close competitor eventually became his wife.

“In many of the local competitions, we could have a passenger in practice,” Carl explained. “Denise would ride with me and I would ride with her and point out where she could improve on a corner,” he said, quickly adding they never got into an argument.

The real test came in 1993 at one of the races. For the first time Denise beat her husband as she came in first and he was

second. Carl said he has been regularly reminded of his wife’s win ever since.

Denise said, “Winning is fun, especially when you beat your husband.”

“After that day, and her great improvement through the years, we went to about 10 competitions per year, and for about a year and a half she either garnered first or I was first in class,” Carl said. “We were known as the husband and wife team to try to beat, and if any questions on how to go faster, go ask the Wiemans. It was very humbling to be known that way.”

Auto racing, the Wiemans say, has made them better drivers on the road. “As we can push the car to the limits on track and learn the limits in a controlled environment so that if a situation arises on the road, we can react faster and more correctly because we have had the experience,” Carl said.

While watching his parents compete for many years, oldest son Matt jumped into the action when he was 16 years old. He raced for more than 10 years and had many of the same successes of regional and state championships as his parents did.

Matt began competing in the Hornet Class at Elko Speedway for many years. He built a car for the Hornet Class at the Chateau Speedway in Lansing where he competed for three years having won several heat and feature races. He has also raced at Arlington Raceway, same location as his dad did

with snowmobiles as well as Mississippi Thunder in Fountain City, Wis.

Denise and Matt have competed in Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Wisconsin and South Dakota.

Another son, Dan, got involved in SCCA Solo II when he was 15 years old with a go-kart. He eventually moved up to a full size car competing at the state and regional levels. Dan has won a few state and regional championships in the few years of competing.

Matt’s youngest son, Evan, 14, started competing in the Auto Cross Class at Arlington Raceway last August. This is the same track that Carl started his racing career, but in a snowmobile race. Evan’s best finish so far is second in a Heat Race, which was his third race of his young career.

Matt’s oldest son, Jacob, has been the driver’s coach for his younger brother this year, as well as his Dad the past few years. He took the wheel in September at Arlington Raceway for his first time out competing in the Auto Cross Class.

Carl and Denise are excited that racing has become a tradition within their family. “It’s a sport that all of us can enjoy together and help each other as we know what it takes to get better and get better finishes,” said Carl.

Denise said they will always treasure their racing days. “We enjoy the camaraderie with other drivers who became long-time friends,” she said.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

This is Denise Wieman of Owatonna competing in the Solo II Nationals in Kansas in 1999. That is also her in the upper right insert with the rear wheel off the ground putting the car to the limits.

Owatonna grad returns to rowing

BY BARBARA BOXLEITNER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

This spring Erica Svenby has returned to rowing for Creighton University (Neb.).

The Owatonna High School graduate was a coxswain for the second varsity eight and varsity four boats during the fall. A walk-on to the program as a freshman, she was a rower for the second varsity eight during her first two seasons.

The senior filled in at coxswain when a need arose. “She’s kind of one of those all-around people,” Creighton head coach Daniel Chippis

said. “She took on a coxswain role and has been working really, really hard.”

“She actually did very, very well at it when we needed her to,” he said. “She basically goes wherever she’s needed.”

Svenby noted the responsibility of being coxswain, using commands and encouragement to steer her teammates in the race. “You have to gain that respect,” she said.

In the fall she was the coxswain during the second varsity eight boat’s win over Drake and during the varsity four boat’s fourth place at the earlier Head of

the Mississippi Regatta.

“As a coxswain it’s more mentally challenging,” she said. “As a rower it’s more physically challenging.”

During the first spring event, she rowed in the second varsity eight boat, which finished third.

She said usually has been in the seventh seat of the eight boat. “The seventh seat you have to be really in sync with the person in front of you,” she said. “I can row both sides. I can be placed in any seat.”

Though she has experienced success at both positions in the boat, she is excited about this season. “This year



Erica Svenby

is more special. We’ve made a huge goal this year to win the West Coast Conference,” she said. “I’ve never seen our team come together more.”

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

Faith Baptist Bible College freshman Tina

Harms averaged 4.6 points and 3.8 rebounds in 20 games. She played for Owatonna Christian.

WOMEN’S ICE HOCKEY

Freshman defender Grace Wolfe, who competed for Owatonna, had three assists in 32 games for St. Cloud State University.

WOMEN’S INDOOR TRACK

Previously at Owatonna, University of Minnesota’s Sydney Kretlow placed second in the 800-meter run at the Snowshoe Open.

Also from Owatonna, Hamline University junior Jalisa Mathews

finished 13th in the 800 at the Mark Miller Invite.

WOMEN’S SWIMMING

Verity Wray-Raabolle of Macalester College earned all-Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference recognition after placing third in the 100-yard backstroke at the conference championship. The Bethlehem Academy alumna was a part of the 200 freestyle relay that received all-conference honorable mention by finishing fourth.

Send updates about area athletes to Barbara Boxleitner at jdanddoc@gmail.com.



OWATONNA PROUD

B4 | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022

OWATONNA SCHOOLS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

School Calendar

Important Upcoming School Dates

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

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



Brinley Rami
Kindergarten
Parents: Matt and Amber Rami
Brinley always works hard. She does her best and doesn't give up. She also does the right thing, even when no one is looking.

Keep up the great work, Brinley!



Golpiemeye Luhda
Fifth grade
Parents: Valencia and Raney Luhda
Golpiemeye has a strong passion for learning and a gift for writing. Golpie's effort shows in the quality of her work. Her ability to analyze shows great depth and complexity. Her kind, gentle heart and delightful sense of humor make her someone who is easy to be proud of!

Cereal for families in need

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

The McKinley Student Council set a goal of collecting 100 cereal boxes by the 100th day of school. They exceeded that goal and decided to continue for another week to double it to 200 by 2/22/22. They collected a total of 240 cereal boxes and celebrated with a domino run! Student Council members dropped off the donations at Community Pathways. All Student Council members went on a virtual tour of the facility with Dom Korb, director, and Amanda Floy, board member. Valerie Seath and Karla Wilke are the Student Council advisors.



Recognizing influential women for Women's History Month

BY JILLIAN STAUFFER
OHS MAGNET WRITER

Since 1987, Women's History Month has become a nationally recognized celebration of women's achievements and contributions throughout history.

According to the National Women's History Alliance, the

theme for Women's History Month 2022 is about "Women providing healing, promoting hope." This theme comes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and recognizes the countless women that have provided healing and hope during this pandemic and throughout history. National

Women's History Month lasts all March, with International Women's Day celebrated on March 8. A way to celebrate Women's History Month is by telling the stories of influential women throughout history and recognizing their achievements to society. Marsha P. Johnson,

Claudette Colvin and Rosalind Franklin are some of the countless women who made extreme strides towards changes and did not get their story told.

Marsha P. Johnson (1945-1992)

Marsha "Pay it No Mind" Johnson was a Black trans woman who devoted her life to fighting for LGBTQ+ rights and creating safe spaces for the homeless transgender youth of New York. Johnson found herself at Stonewall Inn, a popular gay bar of the time, on the morning of June 28, 1969, when the New York City police raided the bar and arrested 13 individuals. Fed up with police harassment and social discrimination, this incident sparked off the Stonewall riots, a series of protests in the area lasting five days. Johnson was on the front lines of these protests that helped spark progress towards the gay rights movement. A year after Stonewall, Johnson and Sylvia Rivera formed the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR). This group was devoted to providing food and shelter for transgender youth experiencing homelessness in New York City. Senior Anora Vang said, "Marsha Johnson is actually one

of my favorite people in history, I really like her story." Johnson's legacy still lives on in the impacts she made towards the gay rights movement and the lives she protected.

Claudette Colvin (1939-)

Nine months before Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat in 1955, 15 year-old Claudette Colvin suffered a similar incident, though her name is not nearly as well known. On the bus home from school one day, the white section was full, and a white woman was left standing. The driver yelled for Colvin to give up her seat but she refused. She was roughly arrested and pulled off of the bus. Her bravery for not giving up her seat as a young Black woman set off a ripple effect for more people to speak up and protest the unfair rules of segregation. Colvin went on to become one of the plaintiffs in the federal case, Browder v

Gayle, which ultimately led to the desegregation of Montgomery's buses. Colvin is still alive and fighting against injustice to this day.

Rosalind Franklin (1920-1958)

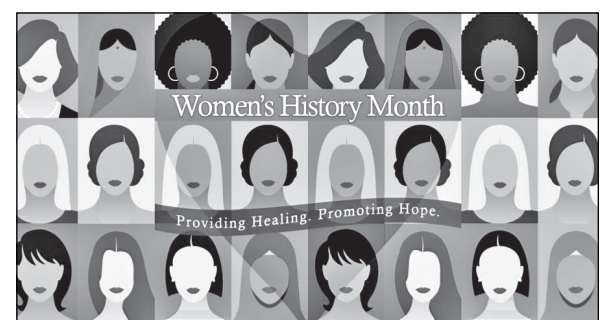
Rosalind Franklin was a chemist who played a key role in discovering the molecular structures of DNA, RNA, viruses, coal and graphite. Franklin's data was used to formulate Crick and Watson's 1953 hypothesis on the structure of DNA. Franklin's X-ray diffraction image that confirmed the helical structure of DNA was shown to Watson without her permission. The paper of Crick and Watson only slightly hinted at Franklin's contributions to their hypothesis. Being a woman in a heavily male dominated workforce, Franklin was only given credit for her scientific contributions after she had died, and the work she did is often overlooked.

Developing youth for the future



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Three students at Owatonna High School are involved with the Youth Skills Training (YST) program at Climate by Design, International in Owatonna. YST encourages, promotes and supports the development of local partnerships between schools, employers and community organizations. These local partnerships provide students with related classroom instruction, safety training, industry-recognized credentials and paid work experience in high-growth and high-demand occupations in the industries of advanced manufacturing, agriculture, automotive, health care and information technology.



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Al-Corn feels effects of shortages, Ukraine invasion

BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Like businesses and individuals throughout the area and the country, Al-Corn Clean Fuel in Claremont has been

affected by the volatile markets resulting from Russia's invasion of the Ukraine, although the impact is not as great as in some areas of the economy.

"In our industry," said Al-Corn CEO

Randall Doyal, "ethanol doesn't jump as fast as corn." But it is a commodity business, he said, and as such is still affected.

Doyal said that it was "incredibly good last fall." The situation

is Ukraine was not expected, he said, and has led to volatility in all markets.

He added there is no shortage of ethanol in the U.S. and nationwide there is a 40-day supply in storage.

Ethanol could play a role in stabilizing gas prices as increased ethanol in gas blends could serve as a replacement for using more oil.

The amount of ethanol required to be blended into gasoline

has already been an issue.

Ethanol producers, Doyal said, support bipartisan legislation introduced last week by Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Iowa

See **AL-CORN** on B11 ►



A little toast to the Irish

STAFF PHOTOS BY HOWARD LESTRUD

It was a little luck of the Irish being toasted on St. Patrick's Day last Thursday in Owatonna. Top: JoAnne Havelka, left, and Janet Nolan, toast one another happiness at a St. Patrick's Day dinner at the Owatonna Elks Club. Both are from Owatonna. Right: Steph Barter, left, and Becky VonRuder bring a couple of corn beef and cabbage dinners for the celebration to hungry guests.



BP approves officer, ambulance

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

The city of Blooming Prairie has hired its second part-time police officer in as many months.

Council members last week approved the conditional hire of Joseph Martin as a part-time officer.

The March meeting also featured the Council's first public hearing about the use of body-worn cameras for the city's police officers.

The cameras will be purchased and worn beginning in 2023; the \$5,000 annual cost will

be included in the city budget. A PDF of the policy is on the Blooming Prairie Police Department website; printed copies will be available at the next two public hearings.

No one from the public was at the first hearing; comments may also be emailed to bppd@smig.net or by phone to Chief Greg Skillestad at 507-583-7885.

In other public safety news, the City Council approved the purchase of a new rig for the Blooming Prairie Ambulance Service. The total cost for the 2022 Ford F450

was \$232,272 — the majority coming from a CD earmarked for equipment.

The upgrade is part of the 2022 capital improvement plan; paying the total price upfront brought a savings of about \$2,775. Waiting even a month would have resulted in an increase of about 30% for the same ambulance, said City Administrator Andrew Langholz.

The BP Ambulance Commission submitted its annual report for Council review. There were 211 billable calls for service in 2021, down just three from the year before. Ambu-

lance account balances for the end of 2021 totaled \$514,585.95.

There is always a need for EMTs; there are currently 13.

Council members also took the final step needed to declare Blooming Prairie a Purple Heart City. Mayor Curt Esplan — whose brother, Ken Esplan, was awarded the medal during his service in the Vietnam War — signed the proclamation.

The status comes at no expense to the city; once the process is complete, signs will be posted at the city's entrances.

District 1 race surprises even the experts

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

It'll be a ballot the likes of which most of us have never seen.

"This is the electoral equivalent of a two-headed calf at the county fair," political science professor Steven Schier told Minnesota Public Radio last week.

Instead, southern Minnesotans are faced with a field of 20 candidates, all vying for the U.S. House of Representatives seat left empty with the death of Rep. Jim Hagedorn last month.

The Republican from Truman was in the last year of his second term in the state's First Congressional District when he died of kidney cancer.

The candidate who eventually fills the remainder of that term — just until January 2023 — will first have to make it through a special election primary on May 24. The primary will decide the nominees for the special election on Aug. 9, with the winner of that

contest filling the House seat until Jan. 3, under the current district's boundaries.

But it's not over.

There's still the regular November election, which is essentially a clean slate, politically. It's also a different group of voters, now including residents of the newly-drawn district.

In fact, all 20 candidates — or more, or fewer — from the special election can try again, and file for the regular election.

If there are more than two candidates in any party, that also means another primary, to whittle down the candidates and decide the nominee for the Nov. 8 election. The winner in November will represent a newly-drawn district.

The date of that primary? Aug. 9 — the same day as the special election.

That's where Schier's two-headed calf comes in: One day, two elections, same seat, different district boundaries.

U.S. CONGRESS DISTRICT 1 SCORECARD	
Republicans: Matt Benda Jennifer Carnahan Robert "Again" Carney Jr. J.R. Ewing Brad Finstad Kevin Kocina Jeremy Munson Ken Navitsky Nels Pierson Roger Ungemach	George Kalberer Richard Painter James Rainwater
DFLers: Warren Lee Anderson Sarah Brakebill-Hacke Candice Deal-Bartell Richard DeVoe Jeffrey Ettinger	Third-Party: Haroun McClellan, Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis Richard Reisdorf, Legal Marijuana Now
Special Election Primary: May 24 Special Election: Aug. 9 General Election Primary: Aug. 9 General Election: Nov. 8	

The role of play in child development


Steele Talkin'
LORRAINE NJOS

imagination, and learn about relationships. Play can also help create new neural pathways in the brain. Play enhances the development of self-discipline and mastery which is critical for success later in life.

Play is critical to all areas of development: cognitive, physical, communication, and social/emotional. Through play, children learn to problem solve, negotiate, share, and how to work with groups. Children can move at their own pace and discover their own interests through play. They practice and reinforce these skills in a way that can't be achieved through worksheets or screen time.

Play allows children to test out new ideas and make connections between previous experiences and their current inquiries. They begin to make connections

See **STEELE TALKIN'** on B8 ►

Owatonna eyes scooter ordinance

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

Owatonna residents will see a new mode of transportation on the road this year, as officials took another step Tuesday toward allowing scooter sharing services in the city.

California-based Bird Rides contacted city officials last year about doing business in Owatonna. In October, councilors signed off on a Letter of Intent

that set some general ground rules.

Since then, city attorney Mark Walbran has worked on an ordinance that outlined specific rules:

- Users must be at least 18 years old and have a valid Minnesota driver's license.
- Users can't ride scooters on city sidewalks.
- Bird Rides must either require or recommend the use of helmets.

- The scooter must be parked upright and stabilized when not in use.

Councilors unanimously approved a first reading of the ordinance on Tuesday. They'll consider final approval during their April 5 meeting.

Walbran said the action does not authorize the business but allows the city to enter into a license agreement with "micromobility sharing businesses."

Officials also established a schedule that includes annual fees of \$500 plus \$25 per scooter. If the city ends up impounding scooters that are parked in violation of the ordinance, the business will pay \$56, plus \$18 per day after the first 24 hours.

City communications manager Deanna Sheeley said a license agreement will spell out more details about how Bird Rides will do

See **SCOOTER** on B11 ►



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BACKtoSTATE

Congratulations Owatonna boys basketball on capturing the Section Championship.

Best of luck this week at the State Boys Basketball Tournament... Go Huskies!

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Owatonna activities director Marc Achterkirch, left, looks on with a smile as Huskies captains Evan Dushek (24), Ty Creger (1) and Brayden Williams (2) receive the Section 1AAAA championship trophy.



Owatonna senior Evan Dushek shares a moment with Huskies fans in the student section after winning the Section 1AAAA championship.



Huskies head coach Josh Williams looks on as junior Blake Burmeister fires up the Owatonna student section near the end of the Section 1AAAA championship game.

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GOOD LUCK!

The role of play in child development

◀ **STEELE TALKIN'** from B5
tions between their choices and the natural consequences of those choices. When children play, they feel safe and secure to try new ideas and experiment. Play allows opportunities for children to regulate their feelings, develop mindfulness, and delay gratification.

In today's world of balancing work and home schedules, it can be hard to have quality time with your child. Child's playtime can be enhanced by the presence of a caring adult. Playing with children builds lasting bonds that can last a lifetime. Humans are made for social interaction, and this includes babies and children as well.

As a parent, you are your child's first and favorite playmate. From the very beginning of life your child is playing with you, whether your baby is watching your face during feeding time or listening to your voice as you sing to them. When your baby starts to smile at you and you smile back, you are engaging in play.

Playing allows parents to appreciate the uniqueness of each child. When you play with your child you are giving your child a self-esteem boost. When you take time to

play with your child, you are conveying the message that they are not alone, that you are there with them. Interacting with them through play lets them know that you care. When playing with your child, allow them to lead the play. Try not to criticize how they play, and don't ask too many questions. Free play without trying to teach builds the child's

creativity, sense of security, and self-confidence. Instead of telling your child what a great job they are doing, say what you see them doing. "I see you building a tower." or "You pushed the button and made the drawer pop open." This type of response lets them know you are present with them. Allow children to use their imagination and place you in various

roles in their play. Take time to observe how your child is playing and experimenting. Observing is a great way to get to know your child's interests and gain an understanding about what he is learning. You may be surprised by how competent your child is when you focus on what he is doing. Parent-child play opens doors for the sharing of values. It increases communication and assists in problem

solving. It allows the parent to view the world through the eyes of a child. Playing with children can also be a stress reliever for parents. Laughing and relaxing are important to your own well-being. Now let's play and have fun!
Lorraine Njos, MSW
is a licensed independent clinical social

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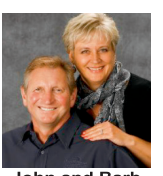


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Exhibitors ‘ecstatic’ with North American Farm Show turnout

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

After losing two years to the COVID-19 pandemic, the North American Farm & Power Show drew big crowds last weekend to the Four Seasons Centre in Owatonna.

Show director Brock Nelson of sponsor Tradexpos said even though he didn't expect attendance would rise to pre-pandemic levels, "We're very pleased with the turnout."

"We knew we were going to lose some ground, but we're looking forward to building it back," he said.

Thursday was a big day, with cars and trucks packed into every available parking lot and lining the street around the Centre and Steele County Free Fair

grounds. Nelson said exhibitors were "very ecstatic" about that day's turnout.

For Carol Peterson, whose booth promoted the Upper Minnesota Agricultural Safety and Health Center, the show offered a way to reach farmers with important information.

The Center, one of 11 across the United States, is part of the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. Funding comes through the Centers for Disease Control's National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.

"We promote occupational safety and health for farmers and their families," Peterson said. "We're just trying to sell prevention."

The Center's resources can help farmers who may feel overwhelmed



Julia and Jett Johnson of Waseca had fun climbing into equipment on display during the North American Farm & Power Show.



Owatonna resident Jordan Wiersma was among several employees staffing the Central Farm Service booth.

by the number of things they need to check for safety. Peterson also talked with those who haven't been injured and just don't want to think they may get hurt.

Along with dispensing safety information, she also listened to farmers talk about the injuries they've experienced. She directs those folks to a new website, tellingthestoryproject.org, that collects those stories with the goal of injury prevention.

"Farming is one of the most dangerous occupations," she said. "Injuries are preventable if you stop and think before you act."

Owatonna resident Jordan Wiersma works with Central Farm Service, a company that

has offices in Owatonna and more than 40 locations across southern Minnesota. He's part of the agronomy division, selling crop protection, seeds, chemicals, and fertilizers.

Wiersma, who was one of several company representatives at the show, said having a booth provides an opportunity to showcase all the company's offerings. That includes propane and other services that are not just for farmers.

"This allows us to say hi to customers we don't always see, and to make contact with new customers," Wiersma said.

Peterson and several other exhibitors offered prize wheels and other treats for the show's

youngest visitors. But kids seemed to have the most fun around the big vehicles and machines on display inside and outdoors.

Julia and Jett Johnson of Waseca came to the show with their grandmother. Suzanne. After spinning the wheel at the Sanco Equipment table, they climbed into a small John Deere vehicle.

Asked whether he wanted one of his own, Jett just smiled and nodded.

Nelson said farm show fans will have a new opportunity to visit exhibitors this summer, when the North Star Ag Expo opens July 26-28 at Ritchie Bros. Auction Site in Medford. More information is available at tradexpos.com.

Owatonna changes precinct lines

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

While some Owatonna voters will find themselves in new precincts this fall, most will see no real change resulting from the 2020 U.S. Census.

The city's population grew by 821 over the past 10 years. In Steele County, only Owatonna and Medford gained ground; other cities and townships lost residents.

Boundaries are redrawn after Census to ensure equal representation in Congressional districts. The State of Minnesota last month released a new map drawn by a panel of five judges, after Republican and DFL state lawmakers failed to reach a compromise on their respective submissions.

Once the state map was released, city staff began to work on adjusting the local lines. Community Development Director Troy Klecker said cities and townships have until the end of the first quarter of the second year after the Census to complete their maps.

Klecker said the goal was to realign boundaries so that precincts and wards are "as equal in population as practical." The map's population target for each precinct was 2,642.

Precinct 1 in the 3rd Ward saw the largest drop in population, 7.8%. Precinct 2 in the 2nd and 4th Wards gained 380 and 337 residents, respectively.

With the new boundary lines, every precinct falls well within the population target.

"The five wards are all within 12 people of each other and the

precincts are within 14 people of each other," Klecker said.

Klecker said the city took advantage of the redistricting to move one precinct location. Precinct 2 voters in the 2nd Ward on the city's east side will move out of the clubhouse at Brooktree Golf Course.

"We have had some issues with having that as a polling place," Klecker said. "Especially the primaries are in August, that's during golf season, so we had to close the golf course down for that... It's not unheard of either to be golfing at election time in November."

The city also had to make some adjustments because the club serves liquor. Under state law, polling places cannot be located "where

intoxicating liquors or nonintoxicating malt beverages are served or in any adjoining room."

Voters will instead cast their ballots at Bethel Church, 1611 Hemlock Ave.

No city council or county commission seats are affected; all elected officials remain in their current wards or districts, Klecker said. The changes approved Tuesday will take effect for the Aug. 9 primary elections.

Assistant City Clerk Jeannette Clawson said nothing will change for the May 24 special primary election to fill the 1st Congressional District seat left open with the death of Congressman Jim Hagedorn, who died of cancer in February.

Petersburg to run in new House district

State Rep. John Petersburg, R-Waseca, will seek re-election in the new House District 19B, which contains the cities of Owatonna, Waseca, and Medford.

Petersburg has represented much of this area for the past five terms, but a new redistricting map – required after every census to meet state population patterns – slightly changed the boundaries.

"I was pleased to see that much of our House district was kept in place after the redistricting process had been completed," Petersburg said. "It has been an honor



John Petersburg

to work for residents in Steele and Waseca counties, and I will be seeking their continued support in November."

Petersburg, who currently serves as the Republican Lead on the Minnesota

House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee, was instrumental in securing long-awaited funding that constructed a four-lane Hwy. 14 from Owatonna to Dodge Center.

During his tenure in the Minnesota House, Petersburg has also been one of the legislature's leading voices for tax relief, your 2nd Amendment rights, and pro-life initiatives.

Petersburg, who is a retired church administrator, resides in Waseca.

Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree

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MARCH 29
10 a.m. — Online Storytime, BP Library

ELLENDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

MARCH 25
11 a.m. — SEMCAC, Community Building

6 p.m. — Ellendale Ambulance Meeting, Community Building

MARCH 28
11 a.m. — SEMCAC, Community Building

MARCH 30
11 a.m. — SEMCAC, Community Building

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

MARCH 26
9 a.m. — KOWZ Home & Recreation Show, Four Seasons Centre

HRA Meeting, City Hall
5:30 p.m. — Moon-lighters Exchange Club, Owatonna VFW
7 p.m. — Medford City Council Meeting, City Hall

MARCH 27
11 a.m. — KOWZ Home & Recreation Show, Four Seasons Centre

MARCH 29
10:30 a.m. — Online Storytime, Owatonna Library

MARCH 28
4 p.m. — Owatonna

Lenten benefit fish dinners continue in Owatonna

The Knights of Columbus Lenten benefit fish dinner will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, March 25, 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 Grandparents for Education or from Linda Breyer at 507-390-4468 or St. Vincent de Paul Society or Joe Stiles at 507-456-3302 or at the KC Hall, 820 S Elm Ave. You may also purchase them at St. Joseph Parish Office at 507-451-4845 or Sacred Heart Parish Office at 507-451-1588.

Kiwanis searches for scholarship applicants

Kiwanis Noon Club announces an April 15 application deadline for high school seniors seeking Kiwanis college scholarships based on academic achievement and emphasis on volunteer work within the community.

Application forms are available from the Owatonna High School counselor’s office. Special consideration is given seniors active in the OHS Key Club, a sponsored organization of the Kiwanis Noon Club.

More information is available from the school counselor. Completed applications to be returned to the OHS main office. The club meets at noon on the first and third Wednesdays at SpareTime Entertainment, 333 18th St. SE, Owatonna.

Kiwanis is an International organization concerned for the development of children from prenatal stages onward.

Local club officers are Gege Abraham and Twylah Ottman, co-presidents, Cindy Barta, secretary, and Jerry Ganfield, treasurer Janita Paulson and Paul Molstre, board members. New members are always welcome!

Sudoku Corner

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

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8	7	6	9	1	9	4	2	8
2	8	9	1	8	4	9	7	6
9	6	8	9	7	8	2	1	4
7	4	1	6	9	2	9	8	8
6	2	4	7	8	1	8	9	9
8	9	7	2	4	9	8	6	1
1	9	8	8	9	6	7	4	2

Memorial Day quilt raffle will benefit BP Veterans Memorial

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

A Memorial Day quilt will again be raffled to benefit the Blooming Prairie Veterans Memorial, located just east of the BP Servicemen’s Club.

The quilt was quilted and pieced by Chris Butler. She has donated four quilts: 2015 2017, 2019 and 2022.

Marilyn Meshke is promoter for the fundraiser. She has made three quilts: 2016, 2018 and 2020. No quilt was done in 2021 because of COVID-19.

This year’s quilt is called “Shenandoh” and measures 74 by 74 inches. It is made of plaid scraps and features a Civil War pattern. The 2022 quilt has a country theme.

Tickets for the Quilt Raffle can also be purchased at the Servicemen’s Club, from any American Legion member, VFW member and their auxiliaries. Tickets may also be purchased from the Sons of America Legion, Marilyn Meshke at 507-583-2439, or Tom Peterson, 507-456-2017.

The fundraiser is designated for the parking lot blacktop at the Memorial. When the blacktop is down, the Memorial will be complete.

There are currently 528 names on Walls I, II, III, and IV, says Peterson, chairman of the Memorial. The black granite for Walls V and VI will be installed by Memorial Day with room for 192 additional names.

The Blooming Prairie Veterans Memorial Corporation is a charitable organization under IRS code section 501(c) (3) and your contribution is tax-deductible, to the extent allowed by law.

If you should have any questions about the Memorial, or want to purchase a Wall Paver for your veteran, please feel free to call at 507-456-2017.

Checks can be sent to the Blooming Prairie Veterans Memorial, P.O. Box 432, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

A Memorial Day Quilt Raffle is under way by the American Legion, VFW and auxiliaries and the Sons of the American Legion in Blooming Prairie. The quilt, quilted and pieced by Chris Butler will be the main prize from the raffle. Funds will benefit the Blooming Prairie Veterans Memorial. Pictured are Marilyn Meshke, Tom Peterson and Butler.

Cargill plans safety drill for April 9

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

For the first time in three years Cargill Bio-Industrials, formerly Arkema, Inc., will stage an external safety drill involving outside agencies and area first responders.

The drill begins at 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 9 at the Blooming Prairie plant on 157 Highway Ave. N.

First responders will include the Blooming Prairie Fire Department, BP Ambulance and BP Police.

Two scenarios will be presented, says plant manager Michael Green and safety director



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Cargill, Inc., will hold a safety drill on Saturday, April 9, involving area first responders. Here, Loan Trinh, safety director, oversees a drill in 2019.

Loan Trinh.

Following the completion of the drill, all will meet outside the maintenance shop.

Lunch, prepared by the Pizza Cellar, will be served at 11:45 a.m. It will feature broasted chicken, potato wedges, salad, cookies and beverage.

A plant tour follows lunch.

All Cargill employees are mandated to participate in the drill. All required Cargill participants must arrive at 8 a.m. to assist with drill preparation.

Kiwanis offers scholarship for career nurse

The Kiwanis Club of Owatonna offers a one-time \$300 scholarship for an individual in a nursing career to use for continuing education. The award is given in the name of the late Maureen Laird, a pediatric nurse, formerly a member of the Kiwanis Club of Owatonna.

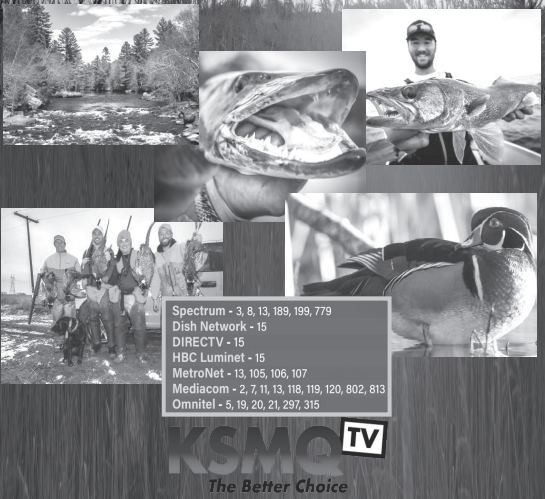
An application letter should be submitted to the Kiwanis Club of Owatonna, P.O. Box 153, stating the applicant’s name, place or places of employment, coursework desired, school or university of enrollment, dates and location. Applications should be received by April 30. Upon award, the scholarship funds will be directed to the school’s registrar.

The Kiwanis Club is part of an International service organization focusing on the needs of young children and youth. It currently meets twice monthly either in person and by Zoom according to extant Public Health guidelines. All individuals interested in service to the community are invited to join. Each year the local club raises funds through its peanut sales and spring hanging flower basket sales to sponsor children and youth scholarships, their learning activities plus assist other non-profit organizations in the community.

Current club officers are Twylah Ottman and Gege Abraham, co-presidents; Cindy Barta, secretary; Jerry Ganfield, treasurer, and directors Paul Molstre, and Janita Paulson.

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Forum focuses on how to respond to trauma

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Kids growing up in today's world face many challenges and these difficulties are multiplied when taken into account all of the changes and events which have affected everyone's life in the past few years.

Last Tuesday evening the Owatonna High School held a Mental Health Awareness Forum focused on teaching local educators and parents on how to best help children to cope with all of the challenges that they face.

The main theme of the presentation by Danielle Theis, director of Special Services at Owatonna Public Schools, was on trauma in the modern world and how to respond to it. "How many feel like they're hearing the word trauma a lot lately?" Theis asked the audience at outset.

Theis defined trauma as something that one cannot stop from

happening and cannot stop from happening to oneself, something that impacts a person over time, and something that has a negative impact on oneself.

"The sense that trauma is happening more often and more people are impacted by it but there's also the idea of what we should do about the trauma and the mental health needs in our schools and in our homes," Theis said.

Pulling up a slide filled with images of recent events, Theis asked the audience to think of words relating to the images. "As we think about the last two years, I have a question I want you to think about," she told the audience. "Is the pandemic a global traumatic event?"

While the pandemic is a large source of trauma for all who live in the modern world, including young people, other recent events such as wars, civil strife, protests, contentious elections, and cultural division have also stoked the fires of trauma



Danielle Theis, director of Special Services at Owatonna Public Schools, delivers a presentation on trauma response at the Owatonna High School March 15.

STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

ma within our everyday lives.

"The conversations that we have together as we move forward can bring us together because it impacted us all," Theis said. "When we think about these experiences and we think about the differences that adults can do and what kids can do, it's really important that we're having conversations about those differences."

"Adults have different neurological and psychological attributes to manage some of these things," she said. "We

have a different ability to compartmentalize things than children do, we have the ability to put things in perspective, to know when we need to lean into others, to guide and bring towards us those supports when we need them."

Theis' presentation walked through the mental development of young people and how to properly work with the traumatized or stressed brain. Taking a nurturing approach and utilizing a proper response to trauma is key to working with young people who have been impacted by trauma.

"What do we do and how do we support kids moving forward?" Theis asked the audience after detailing the difference in adults' brains versus those of young people. "The frame of mind that we bring to the interactions that we have is very important."

The presentation stressed predictability and routine when creating a safe environment for students and kids, face-to-face connection and interaction, managing one's internal dialogue, navigating technology, and role-definition or setting clear boundaries.

"Trauma sensitive means that I am aware and I have some compassion and empathy about the impact of trauma," Theis explained of the various roles' schools are taking towards trauma. "Trauma-informed means that I am going to take the time to be trained to inform and modify my practice as an educator."

OHS and Owatonna Schools are Trauma Responsive Schools. "Trauma responsive means application and implementation holistically across our school culture," Theis said. "It will be part of the paradigm, the lens, through which our staff see the children we serve. All these elements are necessary to change the paradigm of how we support and educate our children in schools."

Al-Corn feels effects of shortages, Ukraine invasion

◀ **AL-CORN** from B5 Republican Sen. Joni Ernst. The Home Front Energy Independence Act would expand the availability and production of American biofuel, following President Biden's ban on importing Russian oil.

"This legislation will help hold Putin accountable for Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine while investing in affordable, readily-available biofuels produced in the U.S. I have long pushed for pro-biofuel policies because they are good for drivers, farmers, and the environment. It's time for Congress to take action by passing this bill immediately," said Klobuchar.

Specifically, the Home Front Energy Independence Act would make E15 available year-round, establish an E15 tax credit and extend the tax credit for biodiesel, direct EPA to finalize their E15 rule and provide for biofuel infrastructure and compatibility with retailers.

The bipartisan legislation would also codify into law full restrictions on U.S. purchases of

Russian oil until the president determines Russia recognizes the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Figures from Klobuchar's office said the current excess ethanol capacity domestically is nearly the same as the amount of Russian gas the U.S. had been importing, roughly 83 million barrels versus 87 million barrels.

The Environmental Protection Agency is currently in the process of revising the rules regarding E15 ethanol, Doyal said. E15, which is gasoline with 15% ethanol blended in, can be used in all states but in some areas, particularly in heavily populated areas on both coasts, its sale is restricted during the summer months because of previous air pollution rules.

Also, not all stations sell E15, he said, because their pumps have not been certified to sell the blend. E15 gasoline has been approved for all vehicles made after 2001, Doyal said. He added that 2001 was selected as that is the earliest testing on engines was done.

Currently, Doyal said, the biggest problems that Al-Corn is facing are those that are plaguing industry nationwide.

There is a continuing shortage of workers, he said, and for Al-Corn transportation issues are paramount.

The ethanol produced by the plant, as well as the distillers grain sold as livestock food, are both transported primarily by rail.

Railroads, like other industries are facing

worker shortages and Al-Corn has problems both with getting their products delivered and also getting the empty tanker cars back to the plant.

In addition to Klobuchar and Ernst, the legislation was co-sponsored by a group of midwestern senators including Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Roger Marshall (R-KS), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), and Deb Fischer (R-NE).

Scooter ordinance

◀ **SCOOTER** from B5 business locally. Officials will consider the agreement on a future council agenda.

The company has been expanding in markets similar in size to Owatonna, Sheeley said.

"Our initial indication is there will be around 50 scooters and they'll be parked in several convenient locations around town," she wrote in response to an email query. "The actual designated spots are yet to be determined."

To reserve a scooter, riders must first download the Bird app, which is available through the iPhone app store and Google Play. A map shows the location of any nearby scooters, which are activated by scanning a QR code.

Payment happens through the app as well. Along with a \$1 activation fee, riders pay 39 cents per mile. Bird offers pay-as-you-go and prepay options, and users can earn and give free rides.

Bird Rides has placed the battery-operated

scooters in communities across Minnesota, from Grand Rapids to New Ulm, and operates in more than 350 cities around the world.



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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

HSA: A healthy way to save for retirement

Many expenses in life are unpredictable. But there are two things you know you'll have to pay for: medical bills and retirement. You'll probably need to take a variety of steps to meet these costs, but one financial instrument that can help is a health savings account (HSA).

If you're not familiar with an HSA, here are the basics:

Eligibility – If you are enrolled in a qualified high-deductible health plan (HDHP), you can generally contribute to an HSA. While HSAs are typically offered through employers, you can still open one if your employer doesn't provide it, or if you're self-employed, although you must have HDHP coverage. You also can't be enrolled in another health insurance plan, other than those permitted, such as dental, vision, long-term care and disability insurance, and you can't be enrolled in Medicare. Also, you can't be claimed as a dependent on another person's tax return.

Contribution limits – In 2022, you can put in up to \$3,650 to an HSA if you have single coverage, or \$7,300 for family coverage. And if you're 55 or older, you can put in an extra \$1,000 per year.

Tax benefits – An HSA has triple tax advantages: Your contributions are made with pre-tax dollars, so they can reduce your taxable income for the year; your earnings grow tax-free; and your withdrawals are tax-free, provided the money is used for qualified medical expenses. (Withdrawals taken before age 65 that aren't used for qualified medical expenses are taxable and subject to a 20% penalty; once you reach 65, the penalty no longer applies, although withdrawals are still taxable.)

In addition to its providing tax benefits, an HSA can help you in other ways. Perhaps most significantly, your HSA can be an additional financial resource for your retirement. That's because the money in your HSA can be carried over from year to year – you aren't obligated to "use it or lose it." So, the money not spent on annual medical expenses can continue to grow tax-deferred. Plus, an HSA is "portable" – it moves with you when you leave a job.

Furthermore, unlike a 401(k) or a traditional IRA, an HSA does not require you to begin taking withdrawals once you reach 72 – you can leave your account untouched for essentially as long as you'd like. And while you may need to use your HSA funds to meet your medical expenses in retirement – which can be considerable, even with Medicare – you can use what you don't spend on medical costs for your other needs without penalty, once you reach age 65. (As mentioned above, any HSA withdrawals not used for qualified medical costs are taxable.)

Here's one other point to keep in mind: Your HSA likely contains investment options, along with a cash account. If you put all your funds in the cash account, as many people do, you might be depriving yourself of the growth opportunities provided by the investment options. On the other hand, of course, these investments generally carry more risk. One possible way to benefit from both parts of your HSA is to keep enough cash to cover your health insurance's out-of-pocket maximum and invest the rest.

As you can see, an HSA can help you in numerous ways. If you have access to one, consider taking advantage of it.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

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Financial Advisor

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Owatonna, MN 56060
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jeffrey.hall@edwardjones.com

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ASSUMED NAME: **Koda Living Community**

PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: **2255 30TH ST., NW Owatonna, MN 55060 USA**

NAMEHOLDERS: Name: **Benedictine Living Community Owatonna**

Address: **6499 UNIVERSITY AVE NE, SUITE 300, MINNEAPOLIS MN 55432 United States**

By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

SIGNED BY: **Janel Paulson**

MAILING ADDRESS: **6499 UNIVERSITY AVE NE SUITE 300 MINNEAPOLIS MN 55432**

EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES: **janel.paulson@benedictineliving.org**

Work Item
1291839900021
Original File Number
1291839900021
STATE OF MINNESOTA
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FILED
01/25/2022
/s/ Steve Simon
Secretary of State

3/17T2

NOTICE

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #756 BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA JANUARY 18, 2022

A regular school board meeting of the School Board of Independent School District #756, Blooming Prairie, Minnesota, was held in the High School Media Center on January 18, 2022 at 5:15 p.m. (Open Forum at 5:00 p.m.)

OPEN FORUM – A school patron expressed excitement about the building project and how proud he is of our school and facilities.

- I. CALL TO ORDER – CHAIRPERSON
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. ROLL CALL - CLERK
Jon Sunde, Rodney Krell, Kelly Braaten, Pam Hameister, Jenny Thurnau

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools, High School Principal, School Patron, Member of the Press

MEMBERS ABSENT: Melissa Stoen, Dean Meshke

- IV. APPROVAL OF AGENCY

Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Jon Sunde to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)

- V. PRINCIPAL REPORTS
- Report given by Mr. Worke.

- VI. ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTION IS REQUESTED

- A. Designation/Rotation of School Board Officers
Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve the officers as follows: Rodney Krell, Chair; Kelly Braaten, Vice Chair; Pam Hameister, Clerk; and Jon Sunde, Treasurer. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)

- B. School Board Committee Assignments
Motion by Kelly Braaten and seconded by Jenny Thurnau to have school board committee assignments remain with no changes from 2021. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)

- C. Minutes, Bills, Treasurer's Report, Donations
Motion by Pam Hameister and seconded by Jenny Thurnau to approve items in the minutes, bills, treasurer's report, and donations. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)
- D. Employment
Motion by Kelly Braaten and seconded by Jenny Thurnau to approve the employment of Mary Cramer as a full-time elementary custodial effective January 13, 2022. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)

- E. Volunteer Coaches
Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Jon Sunde to approve Julia Worke and Kaden Thomas as volunteer basketball coaches. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)

- F. Designation of Local Depositories, Staff, Newspaper and School Attorney
Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve the following institutions as official depositories: MBT Bank; Minnesota Liquid Asset Fund; US Bank; and Wells Fargo. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)

Motion by Kelly Braaten and seconded by Jenny Thurnau to approve Christopher Staloch, Nancy Clark, and Kari Forystek to make electronic or paper transactions from any institutions for the district. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)

Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve "The Steele County Times" as the official paper of record. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)

Motion by Pam Hameister and seconded by Jenny Thurnau to approve Hoversten, Johnson, Beckman & Hovey, PLLP, Austin, MN as the district's designated attorney. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)

- G. Promulgation of Seniority Lists for the Teaching Staff

Motion by Jenny Thurnau and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve promulgation of the teaching staff seniority lists. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)

- H. Superintendent Contract

Motion by Pam Hameister and seconded by Kelly Braaten to approve a three-year contract for Christopher Staloch with an approximate annual increase of 3.4%. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)

I. Employee Mandatory Covid-19 Vaccination or Testing and Face Coverings Policy
No action was taken due to the Supreme Court decision to block Covid-19 vaccine mandate for larger employers.

J. Resolution Relating to \$27,345,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2022A; Ratifying the Award of Sale, Prescribing the Form and Details and Providing for the Payment Thereof
Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Jenny Thurnau to approve the above resolution. Motion carried. (Roll Call Vote: 5 Aye-Sunde, Kell, Braaten, Hameister, Thurnau/0 Nay)

- VII. ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND/OR DISCUSSION ONLY

- A. Safe Return to Learning Plan
Mr. Staloch reviewed the current status.

- B. Core Planning Committee Report
One more meeting taking place prior to the school board presentation.

- C. Building Project Financial Report
Bills are starting to be received.

- D. Committee Reports
A committee report update was given for the following committees: Ag/Industrial Trades; Building and Grounds/Facilities; Education Foundation; Negotiations; Technology; and ZED.

- E. Enrollment Data
Enrollment (per JMC) for the 2021-22 school year as of January 10, 2022 was 470 at the elementary school (grades K-6) and 364 at the high school (grades 7-12) (345 attending BPHS and 19 PSEO). The PSEO number consisted of 10 full-time and 9 part-time.

- F. Dates to Note
The Board noted dates of importance.

- VIII. SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Thank you's acknowledging memorial and get-well flowers.

- IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Jenny Thurnau to adjourn the meeting at 6:01 p.m. Motion carried. (5 Aye/0 Nay)

A complete copy of the official minutes may be found in their entirety in the official minute book located in the superintendent's office at the high school; however, they will not be available until approved by the School Board.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pam Hameister
Clerk of the School Board
Independent School District #756
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

NOTICE

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA January 13, 2022

A regular school board work session of the School Board of Independent School District #756, Blooming Prairie, Minnesota was held in the High School Media Center on Thursday, January 13, 2022 at 6:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jon Sunde, Melissa Stoen, Rodney Krell, Kelly Braaten, Pam Hameister, Jenny Thurnau

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dean Meshke
ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools

DISCUSSION ITEMS: General review and discussion was held on

agenda items for the January 18, 2022 regular school board meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pam Hameister
Clerk of the School Board
Independent School District #756
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

NOTICE

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ASSUMED NAME: **Wier Clean**

PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: **1800 Keller PL NE Owatonna, MN 55060 USA**

NAMEHOLDERS: Name: **Stacy L Wier**

Address: **1800 Keller PL NE Owatonna, MN 55060 USA**

By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

SIGNED BY: **Stacy Wier**

MAILING ADDRESS: **None Provided**

EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES: **wierclean@gmail.com**

Work Item
1284405000022
Original File Number
1284405000022
STATE OF MINNESOTA
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FILED
12/31/2021
/s/ Steve Simon
Secretary of State

3/23T2

PROBATE

STATE OF MINNESOTA DISTRICT COURT
STEELE COUNTY
THIRD DISTRICT
COURT FILE NUMBER: 74-PR-22-285
CASE TYPE: INFORMAL PROBATE

NOTICE OF INFORMAL PROBATE OF WILL AND APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In re the Estate of **Bonnie Lou Zimmerman aka Bonnie L. Zimmerman aka Bonnie Zimmerman, Decedent**

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND CREDITORS: Notice is hereby given that an application for informal probate of the above-named Decedent's Last Will dated October 9, 2019 has been filed with the Probate Registrar, and the application has been granted.

Notice is also given that the Probate Registrar has informally appointed the following: Howard D Mack, II 41313 135th

Street, Waseca MN 56093 entitled to appointment as personal representative, or may object to the appointment of the personal representative. Unless objections are filed pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 524.3-607, and the court otherwise orders, the personal representative has full power to administer the Estate, including, after 30 days from the date of issuance of letters, the power to sell, encumber, lease or distribute real estate.

Any objections to the probate of the Will, or to the appointment of the personal representative, must be filed with this court, and will be heard by the court after the filing of an appropriate petition and proper notice of hearing.

Notice is also given that, subject to Minn. Stat. §

524.3-801, all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the personal representative or to the Court Administrator within four (4) months after the date of this Notice, or the claims will be barred.

/s/ Darla J. Busian
Probate Registrar
Dated: 3/9/2022

Robin Hoesley
Court Administrator
Dated: 3/9/2022

Attorney for Applicant
Sarah E. Berger
Sarah Berger Law. PLLC
2738 West River Parkway
Minneapolis, MN 55406
Attorney License No: 0393547
Telephone: (612) 548-1544
Email: sarah@sarahbergerlw.com



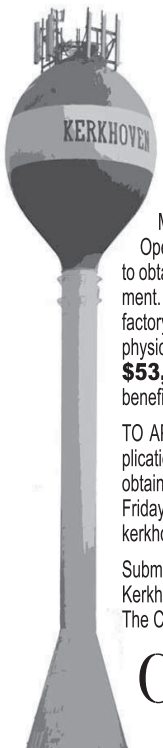


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Submit completed applications in drop box or by mail to: City of Kerkhoven, 208 N 10th St, PO Box 116, Kerkhoven, MN 56252. The City of Kerkhoven is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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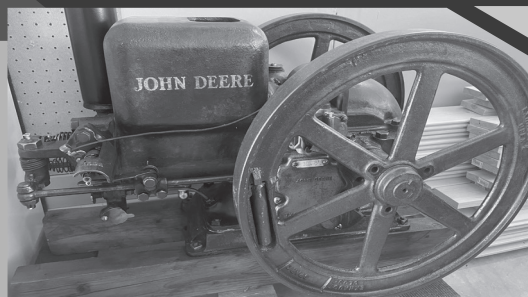
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ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS

From the Hosts of the Under The Hood radio show.

By Shannon Nordstrom and Russ Evans

Dear Motor Medics,

I recently witnessed a vehicle fire on the highway. As I passed by in the far lane, I could not even tell what kind of car it was because it was so intense. Even in the far lane I could feel the heat of the fire. When I first saw the smoke, I must have been about two miles away but saw no flames. As I got closer, I started to see the fire bellowing from the car and by the time I passed as I said I could not even tell what kind of car it was. All this occurred in the period of less than two minutes. I was amazed how fast the fire spread. Are vehicle fires common and what should I do if my vehicle ever catches fire?

David in Montrose Colorado

Dear David,

First and foremost don't panic. Think safety first, pull over and stop as fast as you can, as you witnessed vehicle fires spread extremely fast. Get the passengers out and move to safety. If there is smoke coming from a closed compartment do not open it. The fresh air can cause a fast flare up. The many different materials in a vehicle will emit gasses when burning that can quickly overcome you so even if all you see is smoke stay away from it. If you try to recover objects from the vehicle you could be harmed. Call the authorities and stay far away.

Take care, the Motor Medics

Dear Motor Medics,

I'm getting ready for a trip across country and would like to get the best mileage possible. I will be traveling about 6000 miles round trip so even one or two miles per gallon would make a noticeable difference in cost. Is there one thing I can do that will save me fuel that does not cost more than the fuel I will save by doing it? I have not done anything to my vehicle other than oil changes and air filter and I now have about 40,000 miles on the van. I used to get about 28mpg when new and now get about 24.

Melanie in Fisher West Virginia

Dear Melanie,

There are many things that could be contributing to your mpg loss but with only 40,000 miles you are probably in better shape than someone with many more. Spark plugs on newer vehicles usually will last more miles than you have before a major loss in mileage is noticed and you've had the air filter changed. Make sure the tires have proper pressure and if you have never had a professional fuel system cleaning having one done may gain a couple mpg in your case if all other tune up items are in good shape. As a vehicle builds up contaminants in the fuel system efficiency goes down and mileage suffers. A cleaning can restore the lost mpg and is affordable. Cleanings every one to two years is what's recommended.

Take care, the Motor Medics



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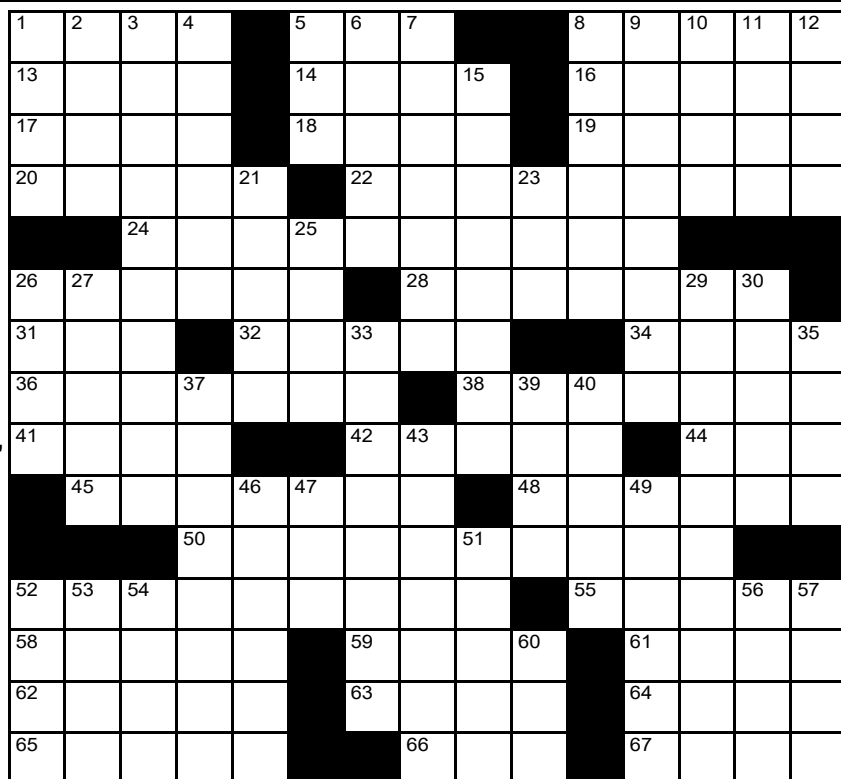
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The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Equestrian gear
- 5 Say further
- 8 Part of REM
- 13 Medicinal herb
- 14 Fedora feature
- 16 Battery terminal
- 17 Buddhist leader
- 18 Spanish wine
- 19 Hollywood VIP
- 20 Makes a scarf, say
- 22 60's sitcom, "_____ Junction"
- 24 Venomous snake
- 26 Having no key, in music
- 28 Barricade
- 31 Sassy talk
- 32 Jobs for Perry Mason
- 34 Pulled apart
- 36 Periodic Table entry



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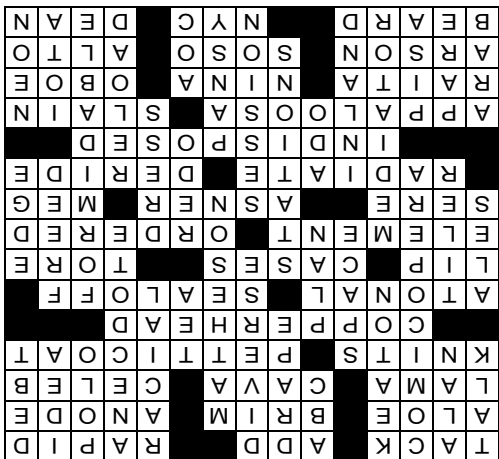
- 64 Kind of flute
- 65 Billy goat feature
- 66 Wall St. locale
- 67 College bigwig

DOWN

- 1 Kind of radio
- 2 Turing of math
- 3 Gilbert & Sullivan genre
- 4 1989 "Batman" portrayal
- 5 CBS competitor
- 6 Cover, in a way
- 7 Widely varied
- 8 Like some profiling
- 9 Personal account

- 10 Ralph Lauren label
- 11 Notion
- 12 Creditor's concern
- 15 Tim of "Virgin River"
- 21 Part of NASA
- 23 Tetley product
- 25 Scheme
- 26 Stein fillers
- 27 Flooring pro
- 29 Daunting
- 30 Shackled no more
- 33 Penn and Union, e.g.
- 35 Advantage
- 37 Dispute referee

- 39 Overhaul
- 40 Boutique buy
- 43 Legislative period
- 46 Away from the sea
- 47 Big fuss
- 49 Browser action
- 51 Spring bloomer
- 52 Kuwaiti, e.g.
- 53 Cut back
- 54 Leaning Tower city
- 56 Shred
- 57 Gas light
- 60 NYC rep since 2019



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How sweet it is...

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KAY FATE

Galen Peterson might have the best-smelling garage in Mower County.

It's the hub of his syrup-making process – three weeks every year that “you just run ragged,” he said last week in the middle of his 12th season.

Peterson started making syrup in 2010, the year he retired as the buildings and grounds supervisor for the Blooming Prairie School District.

Initially, his retirement hobby was wood-carving; he took a carving class and became friends with the instructor.

“Then my son’s wife bought us a couple of pails, and got us started on this,” Peterson said as he stood at the stove in his garage, three pans of syrup bubbling away. He and his friend were able to use their other hobby, too, and carved their own spiles, or taps.

Now, though, he has metal taps – 113 of them this season; some trees have more than one tap.

Making maple syrup, it seems, takes equal parts mathematician, scientist and outdoorsman.

Outdoorsman

Peterson and a friend head out to the woods every day at 5 p.m., bouncing along a muddy, rutted path to the trees, part of which sit on his brother’s land.

“It’s really fun to go into the woods,” he said. “That’s not so hard – other than being muddy.”

They regularly see bald eagles, sandhill cranes, wild turkeys, deer and more.

Ninety minutes later, they’ve emptied the blue collection sacks into five-gallon buckets. As the buckets fill, they’re then emptied into one of the 65-gallon barrels in the back of Peterson’s ATV.

“Oh, I don’t think I’m a chemist, but there’s a little bit of science involved.”

Galen Peterson
Maple Syrup Maker



Peterson’s sugar shack is a literal hotbed of activity during maple syrup season. The storage tank that holds sap overnight is in the upper right; it cooks down in the silver trough that’s sitting atop the fire, then is run into the silver pail at the lower right after the majority of the water cooks off. Peterson carries the pail into his garage for some of the final steps.



Galen Peterson, who bottles syrup under the name Prairie Rose Farm, drills into a soft maple near the family cabin. He’s been making syrup since 2010, and would like to bottle 200 pints of syrup this season. He has 113 taps this year and is hoping to hit 40 gallons per day at least once during the three-week season. It takes 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup.

After checking all 113 sacks, the pair drive back to Peterson’s sugar shack and empty the barrel of sap into the storage tank, where it sits overnight.

The next morning, Peterson runs the sap from the storage tank into a warming pan, and from there, it flows into a three-row metal trough heated by a roaring fire below. He has an ample stack of pallets to use as firewood, most of them donated by people who are “paid” in syrup.

The trip through the trough removes excess water and begins concentrating the sugar.

Peterson drains the trough into pails – those gifts from his daughter-in-law – and carries them into his garage for the first straining and the final boil.

Mathematician

“Slower than molasses in January” comes to mind when Peterson

talks about the time involved.

On a recent evening, he collected 32 gallons from those 113 taps. It takes 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup, “give or take,” he said. One gallon of syrup is eight pints, Peterson’s method of measurement. He’s improved his process over the years, going from cooking five gallons of sap an hour to seven gallons an hour.

That means Peterson spent about five hours cooking the 32 gallons of sap in the sugar shack, then another few hours at his garage stovetop, boiling the syrup and measuring its sugar content.

All that – before it even hits the syrup bottles. All that – for just six pints of the finished product.

“It’s a lot of physical work,” Peterson said, “and a lot of learning, but I keep trying to improve. I’d like to hit my 200.”

That’s 200 pints – which is 25 gallons of syrup. That means 1,000 gallons of sap, in three weeks.

Most of it, he admitted, he gives away.

“I end up giving my helper some – that’s his pay, too,” Peterson said. “My brother’s family gets some because it’s his land; my neighbor helps me get the wood, so he gets a 12-pack – of syrup. When I finally get done with that, there’s about two left,” he laughed.

“I never have trouble getting rid of it,” he added, though he’ll be setting some aside to donate to the BP Education Foundation auction.

Scientist

“This here? This is a hydrometer,” Peterson explained. He puts it in a tall silver container, then ladles in some boiling syrup. “I want to get it to 60 brix or so.”

A hydrometer measures the weight of the liquid displaced by the volume of the device; one brix is equal to about 1% of sugar content.

“Oh, I don’t think I’m a chemist, but there’s a little bit of science

involved,” he said. “At first, we just kind of guessed (when it had boiled long enough), let it foam up a couple of times and called it good. Now I have the hydrometer.”

The longer it cooks, the sweeter it gets. Too much heat, or “burning,” as Peterson calls it, turns it into candy.

Once a pan of syrup hits 60 brix – and about 190 degrees, Peterson carefully ladles it into a cone-shaped double filter, and lets it drain into a regular coffee urn.

Those filters remove the impurities and niter – also called sugar sand – that can settle at the bottom of the jar. The process improves the taste, clarity and color of the syrup, “and they do a nice job, because the syrup is really clear,” Peterson said.

The coffee pot spigot offers ease in filling the jars, which he then caps and places upside down.

“I saw some guys do that last year,” Peterson said of the inversion, “and since I’ve done this, I haven’t had one that hasn’t sealed” after the final canning process.

“I had 183 pints last year, and not one was bad.”

Peterson follows other syrup-makers on Facebook “to see what they’re doing – and they’re all making the same mistakes I’m making, but I’m learning some things, too.”

The results

If there’s syrup left over after Peterson’s “payments,” he sells it for \$10 a pint – unless it’s in a fancier jar.

“We’ve run out before,” he said of the supply he and his wife, Dorothy, keep. “We had to buy some, and it didn’t taste so good. I missed the real stuff.”

He also missed Dorothy this year; surgery on

her arm has prevented her from helping.

“She usually does the bottling part, but she’s still recovering,” Peterson said. “I miss her, because I don’t do this stuff.”

Indeed, he left the coffee urn tap open as he walked away to check the progress on the stove. That slow drip saved him.

“Oh, I’ve left it running onto the floor; I’ve come in (the garage) with a couple of pails and tripped; I’ve burned batches...” he said.

“We’ve done it all.” Except hit 40 gallons a day this season, and it bothers him a little.

“They haven’t been running good,” he said of his maples. “I guess I haven’t quite figured it out yet. We were pretty dry last fall... I guess we’ll know when the season’s over” how the weather has affected his yield.



Galen Peterson ladles syrup into a double filter above a coffee urn, the last step before it’s bottled. His wife usually handles the bottling process, but she’s recovering from arm surgery and unable to help.