



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER
Hair stylist Roberta Jensen (face shown in the mirror) shears off nine inches of hair from popular KOWZ/KRUE Country radio host Brad Kubat Friday night at the Home & Recreation Show in Owatonna. Jensen's assistant, Sue Wavrin, also joined in to help with the cut. Kubat donated his hair to "Maggie's Wigs 4 Kids," a nonprofit organization in Michigan that helps children with hair loss resulting from a medical condition. See Hometown Extra on Page B12 for more details.

Owatonna's oldest church to close

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

Carol Hofer has been a member of First Baptist Church in Owatonna for 67 years, the secretary for more than 20 years.

Now, at 86, she's starting over.

The congregation recently voted to sell the building and its contents to Redemption Church of Owatonna, which has been meeting in a strip mall on Oakdale Street since 2020.

That's also about the last time the First Baptist Church had a full sanctuary, Hofer said.

"We blame it on COVID," she said of the decline in membership and participation.

About 20 people now attend worship service every week.

"It's very low now," Hofer said, "and there's just not a lot of energy to keep it going. We just can't keep up with this big old building."

It is old: Built in 1893, it's the second church on that site since the Baptists organized in Owatonna in 1857 – building the first church in the county.

And for people like Hofer, "it's a second home."

Still, the members are glad to see it go to another church, keeping another religious site in downtown Owatonna.

See **OWATONNA** on A12 ►

Still Standing

Miraculous survival for soldier

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

What's a good recipe for a motivational speaker? Find a former member of the military, tell about his surviving a 200-pound roadside bomb in Iraq, add support from his family and friends and create an attitude that will help us overcome adversity.

In two words, the recipe could be titled "Still Standing."

That's the title former National Guardsman John Kriesel chose for a book that tells about his unbelievable

See **MIRACULOUS** on A3 ►



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD
Two soldiers who have lost friends/fellow soldiers in battle met March 23 at the annual meeting of the Dodge County Corn & Soybean Growers Association share a hug. Joe Wacek of Blooming Prairie is at right and John Kriesel, author of "Still Standing," is seated.

BP Ed auctions set to raise funds

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

The Blooming Prairie Education Foundation will build on a million-dollar legacy during its 19th annual auction held Saturday

at the Cue Company.

The nonprofit brought in enough last year to push the total raised over 18 years into the seven-figure range. Funds go toward providing educational

See **BP ED** on A3 ►

Purple Heart party set for April 9

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

There's just one more step to Blooming Prairie becoming a Purple Heart City: the celebration.

That final piece will happen April 9 at the Servicemen's Club, with dinner and a presentation by the Minnesota

Department Commander – who will also bring the signs that will be posted at the city's entrances.

The Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the president to those wounded or killed while serving with the U.S. military. It's the oldest military medal in the nation.

See **PURPLE** on A12 ►

Medford student spreads love of ASL

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

Medford High School junior Rachel Dziewit has a passion for American Sign Language (ASL).

As a sixth grader in Delaware, she took an ASL class, but a field trip Galludet University, a world-class school for students who are hearing impaired, real-

ly sparked her interest. She took classes every year, until moving to Medford a year ago.

"I fell in love with the language, the facial expressions, and how it makes you feel," said Dziewit, who recently launched an ASL club at the school. "It's an amazing language. It's so much fun, and it's a career that pays a lot."

She admits to feeling

disappointed when she learned Medford High School doesn't offer an ASL class and thought about pursuing her interest with online classes. When friends talked about wanting to learn, though, she got another idea.

"I had a lot of extra time, and I wanted to put that to good use," Dziewit said.

See **MEDFORD** on A12 ►



STAFF PHOTO BY JONI HUBRED
Junior Rachel Dziewit stands in front of mural at Medford High School. Dziewit has founded a new club for students interested in American Sign Language.

OUR VIEW

Winter athletes shine on the state level

With the culmination of the winter sports season last week, it's time to recognize the achievements of our area athletes.

In early March, three local wrestlers—Rian Grunwald, Charley Elwood and Landen Johnson—all won state titles in their respective weight classes. For Grunwald of Owatonna, she captured the first-ever girls 114-pound title. Johnson, also of Owatonna, claimed his second title by winning back-to-back state championships. Medford's Elwood took home his third state title.

Wrestling wasn't the only sport that grabbed headlines during the March tournament madness. The Owatonna Huskies boys basketball team rocked again this season picking up the Section 1AAAA championship trophy and cruised to a state tournament berth.

Led by the all-conference standouts Ty Creger, Brayden Williams, Blake Burmeister and Evan Dushek, the Huskies lost a nail biter in the opening round of the state basketball tournament after a last second shot went off the rim. Owatonna came back to win sixth place at state. Though it may not have been the desired outcome, the Huskies shined and represented Steele County proudly at state.

Also adding to the excitement was the Huskies adapted floor hockey team, which earned fourth place at state.

We offer our special congratulations to the individual athletes and teams for their accomplishments over the winter sports season. It's invigorating to see young people excel at sports while bringing our communities together as they swell with pride in the achievements of those involved.

YOUR VIEW

Not so fast with salvia testing for DWIs

To-the-Editor:

I read the article ("Legislators consider new DWI test" in Owatonna People's Press March 15) describing how the use of salvia drug testing could help patrol officers as it pertains to impaired driving suspicions.

I enhanced the drug testing operations at Steele County Court Services while working as a probation officer. I have been operating Drugwise Drug Testing Services in Owatonna for 21 years. I continue to research various methodologies to determine reliability, accuracy and cost.

Drugwise does not and will not use saliva drug tests regardless of the manufacturer or the claim of accuracy, ease and cost. I realized years ago that the salvia drug testing process gives the collector little control with the collection process.

For example, the donor can simply manipulate their salvia keeping it from coming into contact with the cotton absorption pad on the testing device. Then I have to ask myself do I have a faulty testing device? Or is the donor refusing to comply?

Some manufacturers of the saliva testing devices suggest having the donor spit into a cup. Do police officers really want to get involved in this manner/process because I don't. Think about salvia from those who "chew" tobacco.

To activate the test, it requires a trained collector, proper documentation such as a Chain of Custody form with tamper seals/labels, collector and donor signatures, secure storage, designated certified lab and secure mailing to the lab. The Chain of Custody forms are generally a five page document that also requires proper handling and distribution of each page.

Drunk driving is centered on blood alcohol concentration levels to determine guilt. What would the Salvia Drug Test be centered on? Medical information is considered extremely confidential. Should citizens be subjected to broad band drug testing up to 10+ drugs?

Nathan Temple
Drugwise Drug Testing
Owatonna



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

Have you ever experienced one of those mornings that just didn't get off on the right track from the start?

I had one of those last week.

After a little more tossing and turning than usual in bed throughout the night, I woke up with a headache. It doesn't happen often, but every once in a while, it strikes.

No biggie, I'll just hop in the warm shower to take the pain away.

Well, that was a big mistake and from there my morning seemed to get even worse.

Once I jumped in the

Off track from the start

shower, I realized there was no hot water.

As I cursed a little under my breath, I cranked the control handle as far as it could go. No luck. Still cold and no hot water flowing out.

I quickly washed up as best as I could. Perhaps it's a psychological thing, but I always feel as if I'm not clean without a warm shower.

So it seemed to set the rest of my day into a tizzy. It really wasn't that bad, but it seems like once I get off track at the start of the day, it's always hard for me to pull the train back on the tracks.

My keen investigative skills quickly led me to the culprit—the water heater. As I running around in a rush to get off to work, I checked the water heater in the basement and found it had gone out. I tried what

I thought was the way to restart the heater, but no luck.

Later in the day I learned from a friend that I wasn't sparking the water heater in the right way to get it going again. Once I got home, I worked some magic and finally got it operating. Hot water is back!

Luckily, I didn't need a new unit.

I was a little surprised to learn that cold showers offer health benefits that last longer than the goosebumps I came out with. Supposedly, benefits from cold showers include everything from improving your circulation to weight loss to ramping up your immune system. Researchers have found that taking icy showers may heighten your immune system and make you more resistant to illness.

I also found cold showers may have benefits for your hair and skin since warm water can strip natural oils away. Studies also show that cold water may stimulate blood flow, boost mood and other health benefits. Research even suggests that a 30-second blast of cold water at the end of a shower may boost immunity.

But I'm not real keen about sticking with cold showers or any hint of them any time soon. What's worse is I think a cold shower shocks your body into stress it doesn't need. My luck it would throw my heart into some irregular heartbeat that I wouldn't be able to recover from.

I guess I won't be in hot pursuit of dipping myself into any polar plunges any time soon. I'll stick with the comforts of my warm shower.



GUEST COLUMN

Make a difference in southern Minnesota

BY TIM PENNY

One of my proudest moments as a congressman was voting to support the creation of the national AmeriCorps program 27 years ago. Little did I know at the time how central this program would become to our culture of volunteerism and giving back to our communities. Even more surprising, and delightful, to me is the fact that I am now president of an organization that has stewarded AmeriCorps programs for the full 27 years. At Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) we place people in service roles across our 20-county region through two AmeriCorps programs.

AmeriCorps, a federal agency, brings people together to tackle the country's most pressing challenges, through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities. These programs help make service to others a cornerstone of our national culture and engages more than 75,000 Americans each year in intensive service to meet critical needs in community. SMIF has placed more than 600 AmeriCorps members throughout southern Minnesota over the past 27 years.

SMIF is the host organization for a

program that focuses on early childhood development called AmeriCorps LEAP (Learning Early Achieves Potential) Initiative. We place up to 20 members in early childhood settings across our region. Members work one-on-one and in small groups with young children, ages three to five, building social and emotional proficiencies to prepare for kindergarten success. We are currently accepting full- and half-time applications for the 2022 – 2023 school year for this program.

SMIF is also the host for the AmeriCorps VISTA program, which helps build capacity for organizations dedicated to providing economic opportunities to citizens in low-income or poverty circumstances. We are proud to work in partnership with Minnesota Farmers Market Association, Renewing the Country-side and Sustainable Farming Association by hosting two VISTAs who are working on a Local Foods Sustainability Project. Maeve Mallozzi-Kelly is in her second year of service, and we recently welcomed Kathleen Rykhus as the second VISTA working on this project. Together they are creating a much stronger trajectory for building farmers' markets and food producers' capacity across SMIF's region. We are also currently hiring three VISTA members to help spur

entrepreneurial activity and create more welcoming communities in the region. These positions are in Red Wing, Blue Earth and here at SMIF.

One of the things that I love about AmeriCorps is that it embraces members from all stages of life. One of our current LEAP members, Katelyn Kruger, is serving in St. Peter at an after-school program called Hikmah and is simultaneously earning her master's degree in nutrition and dietetics. Her experience in the program has influenced her to work more directly with underserved populations in the future. One of our members from last year, Maurya Torgerson, used to own a cosmetology business before she became a parent. Her time in AmeriCorps has been a meaningful stepping-stone as she considers re-entering the workforce and earning a degree in social work.

Many AmeriCorps members are retired professionals looking to give back to their communities. Bruce Boyce served as an AmeriCorps LEAP Initiative member from 2010-2012 after he retired from a 32-year career as the Waseca County administrator. His experience in LEAP influenced him to begin a second career as a paraprofessional for eight years. He recently shared, "I really believe that all citizens should engage in some form of

service to their country and community. In that sense AmeriCorps continued my lifelong pattern of civic engagement."

These positions are paid, and members receive many benefits including an education award, which can be used for paying off student loans or furthering their education. Those members who are 55 or older can gift their award to a child or grandchild.

It has been incredible to see the impact that AmeriCorps has had in our country over the past 27 years. Even more so, it has been wonderful to see the direct result that this program has had on the children, nonprofits and communities in our own backyard.

For questions or to apply for LEAP or for VISTA, contact Barbara Gunderson, AmeriCorps Director, at 507-456-0353 or barbarag@smifoundation.org. Learn more about AmeriCorps at AmeriCorps.gov.

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

Tim Penny is the president and CEO of the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation based in Owatonna. He represented Minnesota's First District in the U.S. House from 1982-94.

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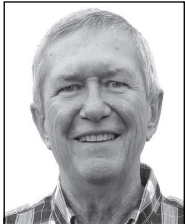
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Reflections

HOWARD LESTRUD

The University of Minnesota is proud of its mascot, Goldy Gopher. I share that pride, but I'm not that proud of Goldy's cousin, the pocket gopher who can cause farmers and land owners lots of headaches. It's nearly spring and that's when this little guy begins moving soil anywhere he can. This little critter can be a real menace in leaving mounds to trademark his/her presence. I was first introduced to this little monster

This gopher does not represent Minnesota

when I was growing up on a small dairy farm in Newry Township. My dad became very disgusted when seeing pocket gopher mounds all over our 80-acre parcel of land. "Can you help your dad out?" my father asked. Accepting the challenge, like Bill Murray did in Caddyshack, I was sure I could help remove this menace from our farm land. A distant relative, Alvin Halverson, lived in the neighboring Moscow Township. Alvin was a self-proclaimed expert at trapping pocket gophers. He said I could follow him on his trapping routes, and he would share tips on how to trap this little varmint. I'm sure there are

different ways to trap or eliminate this pest but trapping was the best solution for me in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Jack Bruns and Carter Bishop are two highly successful trappers. Jack, every year, donates his trapping services to the Blooming Prairie Education Foundation for its annual auction. Alvin met me at our farm, carrying a large "gunny sack" filled with the old style traps. He also brought several stakes to hold down the traps. It's also a must to wear a good pair of gloves when setting these traps. Alvin told me that it was imperative that, as a trapper, you outsmart this sneaky little gopher.

Using one of the stakes as a probe, Alvin began the experience by poking holes into the Earth. As I followed his advice, I poked holes into the dirt until the stake went smoothly into the ground. This meant that we had struck one of the gopher's runways or mode of travel. Next step is to remove some dirt, either by acting like a gopher or by choosing to use a spade to dig down toward the gopher tunnels. After finding the runway, Alvin said it was best to find two intersecting tunnels. Then, dig deep into the two runways and place the trap below them. The next step was the key to my trapping success. Alvin said I

should act like a gopher by covering the hole I made. We did this by finding some weeds or grass and placing that over the hole. After completing that step, Alvin used his hands to place dirt over the hole now covered by grass or weeds. This process had to be delicately done to prevent the traps from being triggered. Oh yeah, it is most important to set the trap gingerly and then placing it carefully by the gopher runways. After setting a series of traps in our farm field, I then had to wait. It's best to set a certain time to check the traps. Give the gopher time to make his travels under ground. I always checked early in the morning.

It was joy when, after removing the dirt and grass, to find a gopher in the trap. It was disappointment when finding the trap set off and nothing in it. Sometimes the runways were plugged by the smart little pocket gopher without even triggering the trap. Upon finding gophers in the traps, I would take part of the dead varmint to the Newry Town Hall where I collected a bounty. I don't know if bounties are currently paid in most area townships. I think I received 25 cents a gopher. That money helped buy me some more baseball cards. I bet I could still successfully trap some gophers but methods have changed. Happy trapping!

Miraculous survival for soldier

◀ **MIRACULOUS** from A1 survival from a bombing that left him severely injured. The bombing also killed two of his buddies. Staff Sergeant Kriesel fits the recipe perfectly, and he shared personal thoughts about fighting adversity. Kriesel was that motivational speaker who addressed about 100 persons attending the annual meeting of the Dodge County Corn & Soybean Growers Association at the Dodge Center American Legion. "Don't feel sorry for me," said Kriesel as he stood on his two prosthetic legs. "Build an attitude that will help you overcome adversity," he said. The audience comprised mostly of Dodge County and Steele County farmers sat spellbound as they heard Kriesel tell the story of dying three times. Using occasional spurts of humor and mixing it with the sheer pain of battle, Kriesel took the audience back to



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Former National Guardsman John Kriesel, staff sergeant, lost both legs in a bombing incident on Dec. 2, 2006 in Fallujah, Iraq. Kriesel, right, is shown with Jeff Tank, president of the Dodge County Corn and Soybean Growers Association. Kriesel was the featured speaker at the association's annual meeting.

Dec. 2, 2006 when Kriesel and four other volunteers went on patrol in Iraq. Kriesel and his crew were investigating suspicious activity when struck by that he called a big hail storm, the remnants of a bomb. "I didn't know what happened, but I did know we had been hit," Kriesel recalled.

During his recall of memories from that fateful day, Kriesel managed to trade thoughts about his love for the Minnesota Vikings. He said that terrible December day of the bombing and the date of Jan. 17, 1999 when the Vikings lost to Atlanta stand out as days of infamy. The Vikings saw

a trip to the Super Bowl fade away. Kriesel outlined his entry into the U.S. Army and said 9/11 caused everything to be changed in regard to Guardsmen being activated to foreign countries. Kriesel underwent five months of training and was then deployed to Kosovo. Kriesel under-

stood that as a member of the military, he was there to protect people who can't protect themselves. Kriesel said having support at home was so important to military service men and women. Even after his tragic accident, Kriesel said he would "go back in a heartbeat." Kriesel chronicled his duty up to that "bad day" on Dec. 2, 2006. He said he did not remember the actual bombing. "I didn't want to know what happened," he said. "I had a warm and itchy feeling. I felt quite certain that this is where my life would end." A helicopter came to he bombing site and evacuated the area. He told of his fellow soldier, Adam, "not sugar coating anything" and said my legs look bad. Another fellow soldier, Todd, had a different outlook and said, "You look great." He was then sent to Walter Reed Medical Center and put in a coma

for five days. "Tell my loved ones I love them," Kriesel told his rescue team. As he was being rushed to Walter Reed Hospital, he said someone asked for his credit card number. "Now, they want to open a credit card," Kriesel laughs. Humor is important in life, Kriesel emphasized as he tried to make his audience laugh. "I got a second chance for life. Inspiring others," Kriesel said. "Today is a gift." "It's up to me to make the world great," he commented. He spoke of watching the news and having a smile put on his face at the end of the newscast. He challenged his audience to write three to five things that make you feel good. "Life is good," Kriesel concluded. Kriesel said after the Vikings lost that critical game on Jan. 17, 1999, he didn't think the sun would come up again. It did, he affirmed. "Thank you for your service!"

GUEST COLUMN

Online platforms help connect Owatonna to the community

BY DEANNA SHEELY

Recently, the City of Owatonna has expanded its use of online platforms to connect with members of the community. Through these platforms, we are providing information as well as opportunities for community members to participate in discussions, provide feedback and just simply to be better informed about City operations, events and other news. I hope you enjoy reading about the results we're already seeing that demonstrate the community's desire to engage with us using these platforms. **City Website** The City's original website domain - ci.owatonna.mn.us - remains in place. However, an easier-to-remember domain has been activated and redirected to our site. Check it out at Owatonna.gov and save it as a bookmark for future reference. **City Facebook Page** Launched Oct. 14, our official City of Owatonna Facebook page already has 905 followers. While that number continues to grow, many of our followers routinely share our posts on their other pages, which greatly increases our ability to reach more community members through Facebook. I hope you will look for us on Facebook and follow our page. These additional City of Owatonna Facebook pages provide a more fo-

cused way for Facebook users to track information about what matters most to them:

- Owatonna Parks and Recreation
- Brooktree Golf Course
- River Springs Water Park
- Owatonna Animal Shelter
- Owatonna Public Library
- Owatonna Public Library Children's Services
- Owatonna Public Works
- Owatonna Fire Department
- Owatonna Degner Regional Airport

 I would like to share a couple of examples that demonstrate the value of this communication channel for two of our departments. **Police Facebook Results** Support from our Facebook followers in sharing our posts has already led to positively impacting our police officers' ability to clear cases within the first week, typically. On Jan. 6, at 10:31 a.m., we posted two pictures referencing a person of interest in a hit-and-run incident at a local gas station. Within five days, the post had reached 20,867 Facebook users and had been shared 297 times. This help from the public created several goods leads for us to solve this crime. On Jan. 11, at 7 a.m., we posted two pictures

of a vehicle involved in a theft. The case had been deemed inactive after the initial investigation conducted due to a lack of leads. Within an hour after our Facebook post, more than 6,000 people were reached and the post was shared 87 times. This resulted in a flood of information being provided and led to the vehicle and its owner being identified and contacted. Thanks, in part to those who provided information and to the vehicle owner's cooperation, this case is still being investigated. Another example of Facebook helping inform the community is regarding the winter parking restrictions and snow removal posts that have been done since mid-November. The Police Department reports a 44.58% reduction in citations on streets where odd/even parking restrictions are in place and a decrease in complaint calls as compared to previous years. The Public Works Department also reported receiving fewer calls regarding sidewalk snow removal complaints and has issued no assessments or invoices for sidewalk snow removal. Police Chief Keith Hiller commented, "I think this data strongly suggests our Snow Removal Communications Plan is working quite well and Facebook is a viable tool for working with our residents to solve the crimes happen-

ing in our community." **Parks, Trails, Recreation & Facilities** Facebook served as an essential communication channel in creating greater awareness about Parks & Recreation program offerings throughout the holiday season. A campaign designed to promote offerings such as water park passes, golf course passes, classes and memberships as holiday gift ideas was launched Nov. 22 and ran through Dec. 25. As a result, we reached 37,306 Facebook users who responded with 483 likes, 780 clicks and 127 shares. According to Parks & Recreation Department Director Jenna Tuma, "This campaign really demonstrated how interested our community members are in the classes and recreational opportunities the City offers." During the campaign period, more than \$1,500 in season passes for River Springs Water Park and nearly \$1,200 in Brooktree Golf Course gift cards were purchased. "Facebook helped us reach people who are interested in these amenities without spending a dime," she continued. "And, helped so many holiday shoppers by providing ideas for giving the gift of recreation." **Deanna Sheely is the communications manager for the City of Owatonna.**

BP Ed auctions set to raise funds

◀ **BP ED** from A1 opportunities for Blooming Prairie students, ranging from new technology and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) experiences to robotics programs and elementary artists in residence. From 2-4 p.m., attendees can bid on items in a silent auction, followed by a live auction at 5 p.m. Here are just a few of the choices:

- A summer barbecue for a group of 10
- Homemade baked goods
- An authentic Mexican dinner for six
- A pizza party with wine and beer for two couples
- Vacations in Fort Myers Beach in Florida and Breezy Point

Resort in Brainerd

- Sports and concert tickets
- Tickets for an axe-throwing experience
- Original artwork

 Also, each elementary school grade will put together a basket with a variety of books. Launched in 1999, the Blooming Prairie Education Foundation began hosting auctions in 2004. Superintendent Chris Staloch says the events bring the community together, and dollars raised help bridge the gap for items and experiences the district general fund won't cover. Last year's silent auction brought in around \$9,000, while the live auction raised around \$51,000.

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What to Do with Cremated Ashes

Dear Savvy Senior,
A while back I saw an article on different ways to scatter a person's ashes after they're cremated, but I've misplaced it. Can you help me with this? I'm preplanning my funeral and would like to include instructions on what to do with my remains that my family will appreciate.
Planning Ahead

Dear Planning,
There's no shortage of options when it comes to handling or disposing of your cremated remains after you're gone. Your family can keep, bury or scatter them in a variety of imaginative ways that reflect your life and personality. Here are some different options to consider.

Scatter them: The most popular option is to have your ashes scattered at a location you loved to be i.e., a favorite fishing spot, camping area, golf course, beach, park or at home. If you choose this route, keep in mind that some places, such as national parks, require a permit. And many public areas, like parks or sports stadiums may prohibit scattering.

Store them at home: Many families choose to keep their loved ones close, by storing them at home. If you and your family choses this option, you can purchase a decorative urn through your funeral provider or online at *Amazon.com*. Or you may want to use an old cookie jar or favorite container that reminds your family of you.

Bury/inter them: The burial option is good if you wish to have a special place for your family to visit. This is also the only option for cremated ashes sanctioned by the Catholic



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Church, which specifies that ashes of the dead should be kept in sacred places like a cemetery or a columbarium and not kept at home or scattered.

Plant them: If you're the environmental type, you can have your ashes planted with a tree. There are companies that offer living urns – like *TheLivingUrn.com* or *UrnaBios.com* – that mix your ashes with other nutrients that can be used to grow a plant or tree in your yard or a place of your choosing.

Scatter them at sea: If you love the water, there are many businesses that offer ash scattering services at sea, especially close to coastal areas, or your family could rent a boat and do it themselves. There are also companies like *EternalReefs.com* that offer reef memorials so your ashes can rest on the ocean floor.

Scatter them by air: This option will scatter your ashes into the sky so the particles can be taken by the wind. To do this, they could hire a private plane, helicopter or hot air balloon service, or use a balloon scattering service like *Mesoloft.com*. Or they could even send your ashes into outer space with *Celestis.com*.

Turn them into a record: If you love music, a UK company called Vinlyly (*Andvinly.com*) will turn

your ashes into a vinyl record. You supply the music (or voice recording) and cover image, and the company creates a memorial that your family can listen to for years to come.

Turn them into jewelry or glass: If you love jewelry or glass trinkets, there are companies – like *CloseByMeJewelry.com*, *SpiritPieces.com* and *ArtFromAshes.com* – that will turn your ashes into wearable jewelry or glass art memorials.

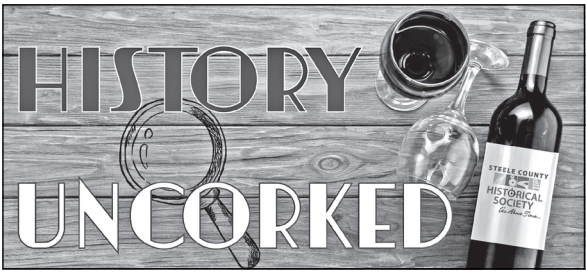
Go out with a bang: If you're a hunter or a gun lover, a company called Holy Smoke (*MyHolySmoke.com*) will create loaded ammunition out of cremated remains. Your family could store the ammo in the engraved wooden box it comes in, or they can send you off in a gun salute.

Turn them into art: If you love art, arrange for an artists or family member to paint your portrait, or a picture, with some of your ashes mixed into the paint. Or, if your family is into tattoos, many tattoo artists will mix some ashes with ink to create a memorial tattoo.

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

History Uncorked returns to History Center

Mystery and intrigue are coming to the Steele County Historical Society this April!
History Uncorked is a unique and engaging program that allows guests to become immersed in the legal history of Steele County. The evening will begin with a brief overview of a local crime committed in the 1870s. Local attorneys will walk



through the criminal case and trial as attendees ponder the evidence. Once all of the facts have been presented, each table becomes the jurors deliberating the case to determine if the accused is to be found innocent or guilty.

On a breezy summer day in 1877, a chance encounter would lead to a confrontation that would end in a stabbing. A family riding on the country roads, a group of intoxicated men, and a hat blowing in the breeze would culminate in a father being led to the very steps of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

What circumstances allow for violent action? What can a father do to protect his child? All will be discussed and deliberated in this exciting story from 150 years in the past.

History Uncorked will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 7 at the Steele County History Center, 1700 Austin Road, Owatonna. Tickets are \$5 for SCHS members and \$10 for non-members. Wine, beer and soda are available for purchase throughout the program. Call the History Center at 507-451-1420 or stop by to purchase your tickets. Seating is limited.

This program is sponsored locally by Einhuas, Mattison, Carver, and Haberman, P.A.

History from the News Archives

Quilting at Red Oak



In March 2002, a group of ladies at Red Oak Lutheran Church of rural Austin gathered to do some quilting. The quilters included: back row, from left: Alice Yanke, Lori Trostern, Lois Falksen, Dorothy Kruger, Gladys Peterson, Bernice Hines, Marjorie Christianson, Ardis Luthe, Wilma Noble, Orlene Peterson, Doris Harber; front row: Dorothy Kittelson, Irene Thompson, Ethel Christianson, Norma Hanson, Dorothy Phipps, Ardell Lindquist and Lorna Hanson.

10 Years Ago

March 27, 2012

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

The Udolpho 4-H members have been working to put together Easter Baskets that will be auctioned off at the BP Ed Foundation auction this weekend. Members of the club include: Luke Larkoski, Paul Sunde, Megan Oswald, Greta Sunde, Will Sunde, Alec Ille, Isaac Ille, Mitchell Oswald, Rachel Oswald, Rachel Peterson and Linnea Sunde.

In a competitive market, one local company's owners and nearly 60 employees have a good reason to celebrate 25 years of successful business. Tandem Products, Inc. of Blooming Prairie officially became a company Jan. 1, 1987 under current ownership and since then the company has been providing service to its customers via three divisions, namely its Rhino Hyde division, which specializes in abrasive resistant products. Another division is Tenderfoot, which manufactures animal friendly flooring and finally Northstar Polymers, which is a manufacturer, formulator and supplier of polyurethane chemicals.

20 Years Ago

March 26, 2002

ELSIE SLINGER, EDITOR

Competing for the second time in three days, the BPHS junior high speech competitors recorded five firsts, two seconds and 13 of the 15 students entered placed in the four-team contest at the Owatonna Invitational Speech Festival. First place winners are: the team of Leah Vaith and Amanda Wroblewski; Sara Romeo, Melissa Trom, Sam Tashima and Alex Johnson. Second place winners are: Malory Macal and Ashley Masching. Placing third is Stacy Gwilt and other students who placed include are Melissa Johnson, Vicky Kollar, Alina Soto, Candace Zak and Laura Williamson. The advisors of the group are Mary Malherek and Peter Jacobson.

A group of six young people and two adult leaders from Red Oak Grove Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie/Austin will participate in the week-long workcamp mission to the residents of Racine, Wis. During their week, the young people will participate in the Lake Michigan Workcamp where they will repair and weatherize homes for elderly, low-income and disabled people. Several hundred others from around the United States and Canada will also be participating. Those attending the camp are Cody Bergstrom, Sandy Wesely, Sam Welkum, Adam Trostern, Derek Kittelson and Laura Hines.

50 Years Ago

March 29, 1972

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

The Blooming Prairie Jaycees held an Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 25. Over 275 children participated from pre-school age to fourth grade. Winners in the event were: \$1.00 – James Gwilt and Reed Miller; \$.50 winners – Carl Strong, Susie Iverson, Belinda VanKampen, Tammy Christianson, Debra Harbor, Paul Pechacek, Stanley Poole and Mark Swenson; \$.25

winners are – Joan Underwood, Kevin Ingvalson, John Brainerd, Carla Eberly, Chris Vaith, Jeff Trotman, Richard Noble, Tome, Trent Mollenhouer, Christy Prehoda, John Jannings, Trent Maxfield, Carl Walters, Tracy Mollenhouer, Roger Noble, Angie Madsen and Jim Trom.

Easter dinner foods on sale at the local Blooming Prairie Super Value include: Whole or half Skinless Ham 69 ¢ per pound, 18 oz. Dulany Sweet Potatoes 29 ¢, Jell-O 10 ¢, Dinner rolls 12 oz. 25 ¢, 17 oz. fruit cocktail 3 for 89 ¢, and last but not least dessert Angel Food cake mix 39 ¢.

75 Years Ago

March 27, 1947

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

From the Red & Black: What did you give up for Lent was the question of the day. Several people interviewed said they tried to give up something, but couldn't keep it. Here are a few answers we received. Carol Mueller – gave up sweets (how does she keep her good disposition?); Phil McDonald – gave up smoking because the doctor said it would be better for him; Merky Snider – gave up dancing; Marion Fjerstad – gave up men – She's already broken that promise; Wally Harding – just gives up; Chuck Herdina – isn't fixing his car during Lent; Pat Schrom – gave up dill pickles. These were just a few of our replies – good luck everyone.

The Missouri Synod has organized another branch church for its ever-increasing membership in the Bixby and Blooming Prairie section, to be established in Blooming Prairie. The mission board has chosen the old St. John's Lutheran Church of Havana Township to supervise the work through their pastor, Rev. W H Schramm. He will be given a full-time assistant. The settlers of St. John's congregation, who arrived in Havana Township in 1857 have in the course of the years branched out for the seventh time. Building operations in Blooming Prairie will no doubt begin as soon as possible.

OWATONNA PHOTO NEWS

31 Years Ago

March 31, 1991

TOM SHEA, PUBLISHER

Jerry and Sharon Katzung, RR #2 Owatonna, were honored as Steele County's Outstanding Farm Family of the Year during a ceremony and banquet on March 14 at the St. Paul Campus of the University of Minnesota. Sixty-two of the top farm families were recognized. The Katzungs were nominated by the Steele County Extension Service for their achievements in farming and for their contributions to local civic and agricultural organizations. Jerry and Sharon along with their son, Kelly, have a 55-sow farrow to finish operation just south of Owatonna. They have always been a family operation and even today, daughters, Christy and Lisa are involved in the family purebred Hampshire sheep flock.

Saturday, April 6 marks the 18th Annual Steele County Dairy Princess Banquet. The 1991 Dairy Princess will be crowned following the banquet. The young women competing are: Vicki Arnold, Medford; Tammy Balzer, Blooming Prairie; Sue Schmidt, Medford; Rachelle Simon, Owatonna.



PANTHER OF THE WEEK



MACI JOHNSON

This week's Panther of the Week is **MACI JOHNSON**. Maci is the daughter of Lance Johnson and Dena Herbst. Maci resides in New Richland and is in Mr. Beynon's third grade class.

Maci has really started to excel in Math after putting a lot of effort and hard work into it. She always has a positive attitude and isn't afraid to work hard and ask questions to help herself in school.

Maci loves math, playing baseball with her brother, and hanging out with her friends. Keep up the great work Maci!



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BLOTTER
SPOTLIGHT

Theft: On March 19 at 9:19 a.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 1800 block of Hemlock Ave. NE. in Owatonna.

Crisis Center advocates for assault victims

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

Inside a nondescript house on North Oak Avenue in Owatonna, a phone rings and child advocate Stacy Burton answers.

That's how it works at the Crisis Resource Center of Steele County, which provides services for those experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault. The office is open regular business hours, but a listening ear and support are available any time.

"Our crisis line is open 24 hours a day," Burton said. "We currently have 10 volunteers, and we are in desperate need of more."

The Center either provides a cell phone or volunteers can use their own to take calls, after they've received

40 hours of training. Requirements are simple: anyone 18 and older with a reliable vehicle can apply.

Burton has been with the Center for 16 years, after getting involved while she was in college. The work, she said, is "an immediate difference that you can make in someone's life."

During April, which is Child Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Owatonna and Blooming Prairie libraries, Steele County Courthouse and Public Health will host a child abuse prevention display with information about how to identify abuse and what to do if you suspect a child is abused or neglected.

"We also do talks about teen dating and violence, sexual assault, healthy relationships,

and bullying for youth groups, churches... anywhere there's a need," Burton said.

Last year, the Center's Abused Children's program served 298 children and 472 parents and caregivers. The Sexual Assault program supported 114 victims.

Services include:
· helping victims define their needs
· referrals to other resources and agencies
· legal advocacy and help filling out restraining orders
· separate women's and children's support groups
· emergency transportation

Owatonna Mayor Tom Kunz last week signed a Child Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault Awareness Month proclamation that will be presented



STAFF PHOTO BY JONI HUBRED

Crisis Resource Center of Steele County Abused Children's Program Coordinator Stacy Burton accepts a proclamation recognizing Child Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault Awareness Month from Owatonna Mayor Tom Kunz.

during the first city council meeting in April.

"Child abuse is getting to be more common, and to have

somebody that can help kids and parents... is very important," he said. "Most important of all is to have a phone number you can call."

To volunteer with the Crisis Resource Center of Steele County, or if you need help, call 507-451-1202 or 800-451-1202.

COURT NEWS
Steele County

The following case was heard in Steele County District Court the week of March 14 with Judge Joseph A. Bueltel presiding: Devin L. Polus, 35, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of cocaine or methamphetamine. Polus was sentenced to \$125 and 95 months in St. Cloud State Prison. The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of March 14 – 30:

BLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Jacob C. Bosshardt, 24, Bloomington, vehicle lighting violation, \$115; Clifford W. Cadwallader, 24, Hudson, WI, speeding, \$215; Steven A. Edwards, 30, Austin, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Heidi Fuentes Lopez, 24, Eagan, invalid license and speeding, \$235; Joseph J. Langu, 20, Byron, no insurance, \$275.

MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER

Dajhon T. Anderson, 30, Waseca, hands free violation, \$125; Nicholas L. Brown, 29, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Mia P. Byers, 30, Waseca, headlights violation, \$115; Kaylee A. Dockter, 29, Minot, ND, speeding, \$125; Bibiana Garces Sandoval, 43, Farmington, speeding, \$135; Dawson D. Gasner, 18, Medford, speeding, \$375; Brady E. Glause, 22, Grand Island, NE, speeding, \$135; Lenny J. Gonzalez Ortiz, 21, Milwaukee, WI, speeding, no insurance, registration violation and no license, \$805; Rosalba S. Gonzalez, 30, St. Paul, speeding, \$115; Kasey A. Grunwald, 28, Apple Valley, DWI, \$400, chemical assessment, attend MADD impact panel and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Blea Htoo, 38, St. Paul, speeding, no insurance and revoked license, \$615; Brandon T. Johnson, 31, Rochester, seat belt, \$100; Dyann Kruidenier, 48, West Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$215; Robbie M. Rosenhaus, 38, Minneapolis, speeding, \$135; Lily A. Schuelke, 41, Mankato, speeding, \$125; Emmy A. Schulz, 17, Madison Lake, speeding, \$125; Emilio D. Silva-Montanez, 24,

Burnsville, speeding and revoked license, \$335; Quinton L. Stone, 32, Albert Lea, no license and speeding, \$215; Ranesha L. Thomas, 35, Hammond, LA, speeding, \$135; Jorge A. Torres, 19, Blooming Prairie, speeding; Nicole E. Volk, 39, Mankato, speeding, \$135; Jared K. Willette, 25, Medford, speeding, \$115.

OWATONNA POLICE
DEPARTMENT

Jesus J. Alaniz, 50, Owatonna, revoked license and open bottle, \$375; Joanne Arroyo, 46, Owatonna, invalid license, \$175; Stuart W. Bethke, 71, Waseca, failure to yield, \$125; Jeremiah K. Billings, 33, Faribault, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Aaron M. Bissonette, 16, Owatonna, speeding, \$215; Matthew J. Blashack, 43, Faribault, revoked license, \$275; Amber A. Breyer, 38, Faribault, speeding, \$135; Ethan J. Butcher, 18, Cloquet, possession of marijuana, \$225; Eric L. Carpenter, 35, Owatonna, possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, \$275; Jose L. Gutierrez, 21, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Jesse O. Halley, 36, Waterville, revoked license, \$275; Margarito Hernandez-Macedas, 41, Owatonna, suspended license and no insurance, \$475; Hassan M. Hussein, 30, Owatonna, permit violation, \$125; Taylor R. Jacobs, 27, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Antonio M. Jandro, 26, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$105; Cole S. Krauth, 27, Waseca, revoked license, \$275; Carson W. Krenke, 16, Owatonna, speeding, \$215; Blake T. Larson, 17, Owatonna, windshield violation, \$125; Nicolas A. Leiven, 31, Owatonna, no insurance, \$275; Jordan D. Nicks, 22, Rochester, careless driving, vehicle noise violation and speeding, \$525; Thania A. Ortiz, 28, Owatonna, window tint violation, \$125; Brock D. Routh, 18, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Charles G. Rubel, 50, Owatonna, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$175, 3 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation; Austin L. Underwood, 22, Owatonna, failure to drive in single lane, \$125; Nayaramis M.

Vazquez, 20, Meriden, permit violation, \$125; Angela M. Vela, 33, Albert Lea, disorderly conduct, \$250, 2 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation; Kaitlyn S. Wold-Breon, 26, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$105; Daniel J. Wright, 27, Owatonna, no insurance, \$275; Jessica J. Zabel, 35, Faribault, stop sign, \$125; Eric B. Zeise, 51, Owatonna, speeding, \$115.

STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Kelly R. Anderson, 43, Ellendale, stop sign, \$125; Scott W. Behne, 48, Owatonna, revoked license, \$275; Joi K. Bishop, 43, Dodge Center, speeding, \$115; Mario Garcia-Ramirez, 24, New Richland, revoked license and lights violation, \$325; Angelica J. Grobe-Larsen, 28, Northfield, speeding, \$215; Melissa M. Gwilt, 43, Ellendale, speeding, \$115; Tory I. Herrlich, 44, Kenyon, seat belt, \$100; Lillian L. Paulson, 56, Ellendale, speeding, \$115; Saige N. Smith, 21, Waterville, speeding, \$115; Jenny M. Strand, 46, Clarks Grove, speeding, \$115; Pedro Tellez, 24, Owatonna, speeding, \$115.

POLICE BLOTTER
Steele County

BLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE

March 18 Domestic: Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 600 block of 3rd St. NE at 7:15 a.m.

OWATONNA POLICE

March 18 DWI: Officers made DWI arrests at Oak Ave. S. and Mill St. W. at 1:40 a.m. and the 800 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 8:09 p.m. Arrest: Police arrested a motorist during a traffic stop at Cedar Ave. N. and 14th St. NE at 6:46 p.m. March 19 DWI: Officer made a DWI arrest in the 100 block of 18th St. SE at 9:23 p.m. March 20 DWI: Police made DWI arrests in the 1300 block of 14th St. SE at 1:15 a.m. and at Hoffman Dr. NW and 32nd Ave. NW in Owatonna Township at 3:23 a.m. Trespassing: Officers responded to a subject

trespassing in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 8:57 p.m.

March 21 Shoplifting: Police arrested a subject for shoplifting in the 1100 block of Frontage Rd. W. at 6:18 p.m.

March 22 Suspicion: Officers responded to suspicious activity at Lincoln Ave. S. and Murray St. SE at 3:35 a.m. They issued a citation.

Child Protection: Police received a child protection report from the 300 block of Jenny Lane SW at 11:17 a.m.

March 23 DWI: Police made DWI arrests in the 1000 block of Butternut Ave. SW at 2:05 a.m. and the 800 block of Oak Ave. S. at 11:01 p.m.

Restraining Order: At 3:09 p.m., a restraining order violation occurred in the 400 block of Academy St. E.

STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF

March 20 DWI: Deputy made a DWI arrest in the 3800 block of County Road 45 S. in Owatonna Township at 1:04 a.m.

ARRESTS
Steele County

Owatonna Police Beth Ellen Ackley, 48, arrested at 9:43 p.m. March 19, DWI, held for court. Jay Duane Brunner, 30, arrested at 1:30 a.m. March 20, DWI, held for court. Julie Lee Steuck, 39, arrested at 3:52 a.m. March 20, DWI and possession of controlled substance, held for court. Shannon Lashea Porter, 37, arrested at 7:50 p.m. March 21, felony theft and possession of shoplifting tools, held for court. Omar Moreno Jr., 24, arrested at 11:07 a.m. March 23, probation violation warrant arrest, held for court. Ariana Lizzette Mata, 33, arrested March 23, DWI, held for court. Lawrence Miller, 60, arrested at 11:30 p.m. March 23, DWI, held for court. Katlynn Renee Swanson, 31, arrested at 2:52 a.m. March 25, domestic assault/assault, held for court.

STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF

Londa Kay Arnfelt, 63, arrested at 11:24 p.m. See BLOTTER on A6 ►

Judge sends man to prison for abusing child

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

An Owatonna man who admitted to sexually assaulting a child nearly two years ago has been sentenced to more than seven years in prison – but with credit for time already served, he could be out in less than four years.

Guillermo Luis Reyes, 25, was charged in July 2020 with two counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and two counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct, all felonies. He pleaded guilty in January to one of the



Guillermo Reyes

second-degree counts; in exchange for the plea, the remaining charges were dismissed. Steele County District Court Judge Karen Duncan on Thursday See JUDGE on A6 ►

Man gets 90 days in drug possession case

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

A Blooming Prairie man has been sentenced to 90 days in jail and placed on five years' probation after being convicted of second-degree drug possession, a felony.

Dylan Jeffery Okorie, 21, was also ordered to complete chemical dependency and psychological evaluations and treatment, and enter Steele/Waseca Drug Court.

He was given credit for 12 days already served and must pay a \$250 fine.



Dylan Okorie

Okorie pleaded guilty in January; in exchange for the plea, an additional count of fifth-degree drug possession, also a felony, was dismissed. See MAN on A6 ►

Ellendale woman hurt in one-car crash

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

An Ellendale woman was injured last week in a crash in Freeborn County.

Shannon Leeann Hogstad, 52, was driving south on U.S. Highway 69 when her car crossed the road, entered the east ditch and struck several trees, according to the Minnesota State Patrol. She was taken to Mayo Clinic Health

System Hospital in Albert Lea with what were described as non-life-threatening injuries.

The report says alcohol was not a factor in the crash, which occurred about 5:30 p.m. March 21.

In addition to the state patrol, crews from the Freeborn County Sheriff's Office, Emmons Fire Department and Mayo Clinic Ambulance responded to the scene.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

◀ **BLOTTER** from A5
March 21, felony DWI, held for court. Joshua Scott Almendinger, 40, arrested at 11:34 a.m. March 23, felony possession of controlled substance, held for court. Macey Eleanor Misgen, 43, arrested at 1:30 p.m. March 24, warrant arrest, body only.

COURT NEWS
Dodge County

The following cases were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of March 6 with Judge Jodi L. Williamson presiding: Chaz J. Beckman, 33, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of narcotic other than heroin.

Beckman was sentenced to \$1,155, 84 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, cognitive skill training, mental health evaluation, 100 hours of community service and 20 years of supervised probation. Phillip P. Drozda, 51, Rochester, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of marijuana. He was sentenced to \$205, 2 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, cognitive skill training, mental health evaluation, 50 hours of community service and 5 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of March 6 – 13:

DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Nathan E. Bennet, 26, Dodge Center, theft, \$205 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Austin A. Kehl, 19, West Concord, tobacco usage in public school, \$130; Jill M. Matthiesen, 62, Hayfield, parking violation, \$32; Logan C. McDaniel, 22, Faribault, speeding, \$140; Joshua S. Phat, 57, Dodge Center, parking violation, \$32; Ray J. Polan, 31, International Falls, revoked license, \$280; Stephen J. Saunders, 28, Stewartville, domestic assault, \$455, 4 days in county jail, domestic

abuse evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation; Mason J. Tripp, 22, Mantorville, speeding, \$120.

KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT
Baylie A. Hearn, 17, Byron, speeding, \$140; Benjamin J. McKee, 47, Kasson, possession of marijuana and obstruct legal process, stay of adjudication, \$1,075, 39 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, mental health evaluation, cognitive skill training, 100 hours of community service and 5 years of supervised probation; Aaron B. Mehling, 29, Kasson, parking violation, \$32; Melissa S.

Mundt, 53, St. Charles, parking violation, \$32; Amanda A. Shepherd, 45, failure to transfer title, \$355 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Terry L. Stackhouse, 34, Dodge Center, hands free violation, \$130; Debra L. Stigen, 64, Medford, theft, \$6,280.34, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, mental health evaluation, no gambling and 2 years of supervised probation; Rachel A. Zahn, 24, Dodge Center, DWI, \$505, chemical dependency evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER
Alfredo Barajas, 48, Owatonna, speeding, \$120; Dawn M. Bros,

52, Austin, illegal u-turn, \$130; Adam D. Labarbera, 25, Waukegan, IL, speeding, \$120; Cassandra D. Mitchell, 30, Savage, speeding and revoked license, \$340; Evlyn L. Stull, 18, Rochester, speeding, \$140; Sara J. Tiedemann, 43, Kilkenney, speeding and revoked license, \$320; Shane R. Walsh, 29, Stewartville, speeding, \$220.
West Concord Police Department
Kiana R. Louks, 21, Owatonna, DWI, \$555, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, 40 hours of community service and 1 year of supervised probation; Terry R. Simcox, 49, Robbinsdale, parking violation, \$32.

Man gets 90 days in drug possession case

◀ **MAN** from A5
The charges stemmed from an incident June 20, when Okorie was caught driving 77 mph in a 65-mph zone on U.S. Hwy. 14. As the deputy approached Okorie's car, he smelled marijuana, the complaint says, and Okorie admitted having it in the car "a few hours ago." Two deputies searched the car, and found a plastic bag of psilocybin mushrooms – which are classified as a hallucinogen, a small black

scale and a small glass jar with a small amount of "a green leafy, substance," the report said. A search of the trunk revealed a hard-sided case inside a backpack; the case contained more than 12 ounces of mushrooms, 22 vape pen cartridges that smelled of marijuana, and a pouch with nine THC pods. According to court documents, Okorie tested positive for THC at least eight times while on conditional release.

Judge sends man to prison for abusing child

◀ **JUDGE** from A5
The criminal complaint says Reyes admitted the abuse to the victim's mother and father; the victim's mother then told her own mother, who "advised she did speak to her therapist about the situation." Court documents reveal at least three other adults knew about the abuse for several days before law enforcement was contacted.

The criminal complaint says Reyes admitted the abuse to the victim's mother and father; the victim's mother then told her own mother, who "advised she did speak to her therapist about the situation." Court documents reveal at least three other adults knew about the abuse for several days before law enforcement was contacted.

termine if it really happened. She said she had walked into a bedroom to find Reyes masturbating on the bed with the child under the covers. The child's father said the victim disclosed to him two separate incidents of Reyes touching her inappropriately; Reyes, too, reportedly told the father he was having "sexual

thoughts" about the child. The father told authorities he'd talked to the child's mother, and "believed that she would handle it." Reyes admitted to several incidents, including touching and penetration, the reports said, as well as showing the child several pornographic photos and videos.

VFW FISH FRY

Friday, April 1, 2022

5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Adults - \$13.00

5 - 12 year olds - \$6.00

Under 5 - free

VFW Hall - Owatonna

Dodge County crash injures Owatonna driver

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER
The light snow that fell late last week may have been a factor in a crash that sent an Owatonna woman to the hospital. The Minnesota State Patrol report says a vehicle driven by Ma-

ribel Maya Rueda, 19, of Owatonna, spun out – then stopped – in the westbound lanes of U.S. Highway 14 in Dodge County. A westbound semi went around Rueda's vehicle; another westbound vehicle then struck her car. The second car was

driven by Matthew James Fischer, 32, of Rochester. Both drivers were wearing their seat belts; Fischer wasn't injured, and Rueda was taken to Mayo Clinic Health System-Saint Marys Campus with injuries that were described as not life-threatening.

The crash occurred about 5:30 a.m. Thursday; the report says the road was snow- and ice-covered. The state patrol assisted crews from the Kasson Police Department, Dodge County Sheriff's Office, Dodge Center Fire Department and Dodge Center Ambulance.

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12

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Individual Income Tax Return

for the year Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2007, or other tax year beginning on page 12.

Your first name and initial

If a joint return, spouse's first name and initial

Home address

TAX GUIDE

Ways to pay federal taxes

The April 18 deadline for individuals to file and pay their federal income tax is just around the corner. While paying taxes is not optional, the IRS offers a variety of ways for people to pay their taxes. Some taxpayers must make quarterly estimated tax payments throughout the year. This includes sole proprietors, partners, and S corporation shareholders who expect to owe \$1,000 or more when they file. Individuals who participate in the gig economy might also have to make estimated payments. Taxpayers can pay all of their 2022 estimated taxes by April 18, 2022 or in four quarterly

installments due April 18, 2022, June 15, 2022, September 15, 2022 and January 17, 2023. Here are six ways people who owe taxes can pay it. They can:

- Pay when they e-file using their bank account, at no charge, using electronic funds withdrawal.
- Sign into their On-line Account to pay their 2021 balance, estimated taxes, or payment for an extension to file. Taxpayers can also see their payment history, any scheduled or pending payments, and other account details.
- Use IRS Direct Pay to pay electronically directly from their checking or savings account.

Taxpayers may choose to schedule a payment up to 365 days in advance. They can choose to receive email notifications about their payments when they pay this way.

- Pay using a payment processor by credit card, debit card or digital wallet options. Taxpayers can make these payments

online, by phone.

- Make a cash payment at more than 60,000 participating retail locations nationwide. To pay with cash, taxpayers should visit IRS.gov and follow the instructions.
- Pay over time by applying for an online payment agreement.

Once the IRS accepts an agreement, taxpayers can

make their payment in monthly installments.

Source: IRS

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Senior Focus

Health & Fitness
Retirement
Money/Investment
Activities & Hobbies

Travel nurse aims to make a difference

BY JAN MITTELSTADT TIPPETT
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Sharon McLane's life goal is to make a difference. And she has and continues to do so in her so-called retirement.

She continues to work as a traveling nurse manager, sometimes close to home for short periods and as far away as in Alaska for four months during the COVID-19 shutdown.

She grew up in Greenbush in the northwest corner of Minnesota, went to Northland junior college, first earning her licensed practical nurse degree and then an associate degree as a registered nurse. She worked at the Greenbush 15-bed hospital and was later the associate director of nurses at the nursing home.

"It was a great experience. I did all kinds of nursing," she said in a recent interview. The work prompted her to further her education, particularly for management. She earned her Bachelor of Science Nursing (BSN) degree from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks while working full time, raising three sons and commuting to the campus, 90 miles away.

"Classes weren't at conventional times but were in the evenings and weekends I worked at Greenbush from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., changed, drove 90 miles and went to class

from 4 to 9 p.m. and then drove home," she said.

After graduating in three years, she worked as the director of nursing at the Roseau Nursing Home. Her then husband took a job in Dodge Center and the family moved to Kasson. She worked as a director of nursing at a nursing home in Rochester and then at the Zumbrota Health Care Center and nursing home before taking a job in Owatonna with Allina. The hospital then was on Cedar Street.

She worked as an assistant patient care supervisor in labor and delivery and mental health units. And then was the nurse manager in all the in-patient units, medical and surgery, respiratory, intensive care, labor and delivery. The new hospital off 26th Street was built and moved into and the hospital changed from paper to computer records. In 2015, for a change, she said, she took the job as the Koda Nursing Home, the Benedictine Living Community director of nursing.

She retired in 2018 but retirement didn't last 30 days. At her retirement party, she volunteered to be in a movie "Under the Stadium Lights" made in Owatonna and starring Lawrence Fishburne. She played a patient wearing an oversized patient gown with filming from Friday to



STAFF PHOTO BY JAN MITTELSTADT TIPPETT
Despite being so-called retired, Sharon McLane of Owatonna works as a traveling nurse manager.

Monday. Her scene was cut and only her hand appears in the movie.

Benedictine Health System asked for her help in Bismarck, N.D.

"I said I could help," she said, and that was the start of her traveling nurse manager work. Her husband, Rudy, stayed home with the dogs.

That first job lasted five months. She then was at Timberdale Trace in Owatonna, in LaCrescent, and back to Timberdale. When Clinical Resources, the agency that supplies needed help, called her about a four-month job in Alaska, she said yes.

"I really wanted to see Alaska," she said. "I told them, sure, why not, but I didn't ask where I would be working."

It turned out to be Kotzebue, in the Arctic Circle, on the Bering Strait on the Bering Sea. She was there from mid-July to October. (See accompanying story).

Alaska wasn't the end of her traveling nurse manager times. She continues to go out on assignment, just recently on a short-term assignment in St. Peter. She also holds interim positions, often as the director of nursing before the permanent staff arrives.

"I grew up wanting to be a nurse. Health care has gotten so massive and there is so much to learn. Nursing is much more specialized than when I started."



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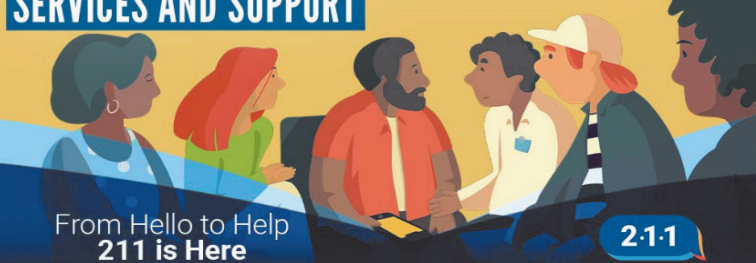
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Healthy Seniors of Steele County is recharged

BY HOWARD LESTRUD

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Edna Ringhoefer, executive director of Healthy Seniors of Steele County, was a guest speaker on March 22 at an Owatonna Parkinsons support group meeting held in the Gainey Room of the Owatonna Public Library.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Edna Ringhoefer, executive director of Healthy Seniors of Steele County, emphasized that Healthy Seniors provides needed support and services to keep seniors in their homes. She spoke at a regular monthly meeting of the Owatonna Parkinsons Support Group.

Ringhoefer said COVID-19 put a hold on many seniors activities, mainly fundraising events.

Healthy Seniors has still been promoting its mission which is to help seniors in need who are 65 and older live healthy, safe and independent in their own homes.

Many volunteers are matched with community members who may be isolated, frail, or simply unable to accomplish a particular task without assistance.

Two of the Healthy Seniors fundraisers return this year. Dancing with the Stars of Steele County returns on Saturday, April 30 at the Medford High School. The 13th annual

Healthy Seniors golf tournament will be Tuesday, July 12.

“It’s fun to bring those fundraising events back,” said Ringhoefer.

She said Healthy Seniors volunteers go to the home of seniors. She reiterated, “We want to keep our loved ones in their homes.” She said Healthy Seniors diverted 450-490 from going to a nursing home.

“We don’t charge,” she emphasized. She said one of three of their healthy seniors have dementia or Alzheimers.

Exercise is very important for seniors, Ringhoefer pointed out.

Following the presentation by Ringhoefer, Bill Owens called the regular meeting to order. He said the April 26 meeting will feature Michelle Olson of Courage Kenny speaking about the BIG program, which is focused on Parkinsons patients.

The group suggested programs continue at the support meetings. A nutritionist and a pharmacist will be invited to speak at future Parkinsons meetings.

Alaskan job starts in quarantine

BY JAN MITTELSTADT

TIPPETT

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Sharon McLane started her traveling nurse manager job in Kotzebue, Alaska, in quarantine for two weeks. That was in July 2020 and the pandemic measures were prevalent.

After that, she lived in a container turned into a studio.

She flew in – over water, along with two other nurses. One nurse, said McLane, turned around and didn’t stay. In July, it is all light all the time. Usual summer high temperatures are 50. The wind blows.

Kotzebue is a native village of Inupiat Eskimos. When Sharon was there in 2020, when Minnesotans were paying \$2 a gallon for gas, gas was \$6. Toilet paper was \$32 for 12 rolls. Everything is flown in or brought in by sea in containers.

The quarantine was at the Nullagvik Hotel, probably the only hotel in town.

“We had to stay in our rooms,” said McLane. “There was no going outside and breathing the air.” She read, did cross stitch, and walked

around in her room. Food was delivered and left outside her door. She never saw the deliverer.

“It was all very strict,” said McLane. “There were no cases of Covid while I was there.”

After the isolation time ended, and she had yet another negative test, she worked a 12-hour shift from 6 to 6, first on days and then nights. She liked nights.

Paved streets are not usual in Kotzebue. There is one at the Northwest Alaska Native Association Museum that was not open while Sharon was there since there were no tourists allowed. Things to do were not numerous.

“One of the other nurses went to hardware store to buy bear spray but bought a four-wheeler instead,” said McLane. The two women toured the area on that four-wheeler. The only other transportation option, other than walking was one taxi.

The village is built on permafrost on the tundra so buildings are secured on concrete piers. The tundra is a rich carpet tightly woven with plants and flowers and berry

plants. It is spongy to walk on as the permafrost is just six inches down. There are not trees – anywhere. The tundra supports about a half million caribou that migrate through in the fall.

See ALASKAN on A11 ►

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Family connections drive innovation for local father-son team

Necessity is often said to be the mother of invention. That was certainly the case for Scott and Isaac Lien when they created GrandPad. Scott Lien was born and raised in Decorah, Iowa, surrounded by family and many relatives. When early career opportunities took Scott and his wife and young son to California, they quickly discovered that keeping in touch with family in Iowa and Minnesota was not as easy as it should be.

Despite the availability of technology that should have made it easy for Scott to send videos and photos of his son

Isaac's school and extra-curricular adventures to his parents and family, he found that these standard devices simply didn't accommodate for the loss of hearing and vision that his mother Marlys and other family members were experiencing. This experience inspired Scott and Isaac to combine their talents in technology and product design to build a device that would address the challenges they saw with their own aging loved ones. The end result was GrandPad, a tablet designed specifically for the needs of people 75 and older.

"Most technology is

designed by 30 years olds and for 30 years olds who don't know what it's like to live with hearing or vision loss, or to have tremors or arthritis that make it difficult to use a small smartphone," said Scott Lien. "From the very beginning, we turned to older adults to guide the design of the GrandPad. To this day, we employ a team of people whom we call our Grand Advisors. They tell us what they want and need, and we build it. The Grand Advisors are our secret sauce and the daily inspiration to our entire team."

Since introducing GrandPad in 2014, the

Lien family has returned from California and put down roots in Wabasha, MN. In the process, GrandPad as a company has grown rapidly and now has offices in Wabasha, Byron, and Hopkins, as well as employees throughout southwest Minnesota and Iowa. The company currently has 170 employees and is looking to add many more in the remainder of this year.

In addition to its senior-centric design, GrandPad's approach to customer support is like no other. The company has built a team of Member Experience Agents



Scott Lien, left, and his son, Isaac, far right, are the founders of GrandPad. They have found a unique way for seniors to keep in touch with loved ones.

who are available 'round the clock, 365 days a year, to answer questions from GrandPad users and to periodically check in with them to ensure they are staying safely connected.

"We see and treat our customers like family. That means seniors never have to wait on hold or navigate a customer service menu or remember their account number. They simply press a large, red 'help' button on the GrandPad tablet and they are directly connected to our customer care team, and talk to someone who knows who they are and who is personally invested in helping them," said Lien.

For people who live in Steele County and who enjoy spending See **FAMILY** on A11 ►

Author explores economic woes facing America in new book

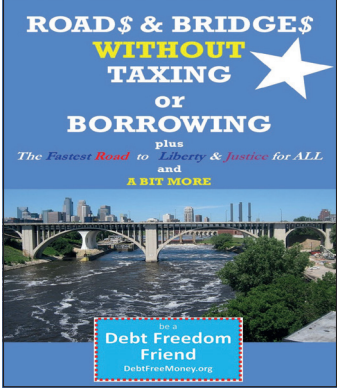
An area author has released a new book exploring the economic problems facing America.

Gregory Soderberg of Austin offers readers an opportunity to learn, understand and push toward a country without debt in his newly released book, "Roads & Bridges Without Taxing or Borrowing."

In the book, which was released last month, Soderberg explains it all, hoping that readers will help in a plan to restore an indepen-

dent and prosperous American monetary policy. The book, Soderberg said, details the root cause of America's economic problems, along with the resulting deceit, corruption, injustices, ever rising costs of living, loss of purchasing power and the inability of most Americans to work, save and take care of themselves.

The book highlights factual sources and historical references. Soderberg said it teaches how special interests over the past 141 years



Greg Soderberg of Austin has written a book, "Roads & Bridges Without Taxing or Borrowing."

switched America's money from a debt-free evidence of wealth owned to an evidence of indebtedness owed.

"Readers will learn of this American monetary principle that once enabled people to buy, sell and save without having to be in debt," Soderberg said. "This allowed Americans to be economically free."

Soderberg is an advocate for a debt-free medium of exchange and to restore freedom, justice and prosperity for Americans.

The book can be purchased for \$21.99 at www.barnesandnoble.com, www.amazon.com or www.writersrepublic.com.

Soderberg, 71, grew up in Austin and served U.S. Marine Corp. in Vietnam from 1970 to 1971. He was honorably discharged and is a Purple Heart recipient. He was a candidate for Lt. Governor in 2006 and 2010. He has co-hosted the Wealth Money Internet Radio Show for six years.

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Dodge County Wind public meetings April 12

BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Applications submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission by Dodge County Wind are complete and public informational meetings have been scheduled for April 12. Public meetings are held to provide information to the public about the proposed project, to answer questions and allow the public an opportunity to suggest alternatives and comment on the impacts that should be considered during preparation of the Environmental Assessment. Two public meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, April 12, at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m., both at the Kasson State Theater, 221 W. Main St., Kasson. A remote access meeting is also planned for Wednesday, April 13. If the Tuesday meetings

need to be cancelled they will be re-scheduled for April 26. Written comments may be submitted to the PUC until May 4. The project will include 79 wind turbines in Steele and Dodge Counties, according to Mark Lennox, project manager for NextEra's wind projects in Minnesota. Dodge County Wind is a subsidiary of NextEra Energy. The turbines themselves will be either 98 or 81 meters tall, Lennox said. That is an increase in height from the original plan, he said, but means that the same number of turbines will be able to produce 259 megawatts of energy as opposed to the 170 megawatts originally anticipated. In addition to the actual turbines, the project includes an approximately 26.8-mile, 161 kilovolt generation line, a project collector

substation, collection lines, an operation and maintenance building, permanent meteorological evaluation towers, aircraft detection lighting system towers and gravel road access. Electricity generated will be sold to Great River Energy to assist them in maintaining compliance with the Minnesota Renewable Energy Standard. Great River Energy is a member-owner cooperative that includes Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric. The Dodge County Wind Project was originally submitted to the PUC several years ago with the exception that the route for the transmission line now goes to the Pleasant Valley substation instead of the Byron substation. There was some opposition to the original route of the transmission lines several years ago, but

the company said at the time it was shelving the original plan because of the costs of connecting to the Byron substation. After the public meetings a full environmental review of the project will be conducted and there will be additional public meetings and an opportunity for the public to submit comments to the PUC. If all goes as expected, Lennox said, the plan could get PUC approval by late 2022. The company would begin construction in the spring of 2023 with an anticipated completion date of December 2023. The project has an expected 30 to 35-year lifespan, he said. Copies of the Dodge County Wind applications are available for the public to view at the Dodge Center Public Library, the Blooming Prairie Public Library, and the Brownsdale Public Library.

Family connections drive innovation for local father-son team

◀ **FAMILY** from A9 time with or who are passionate about improving the lives of elderly adults, GrandPad offers a variety of job opportunities, from product design and support to customer care. For the Lien family, the desire to maintain their Midwestern fam-

ily connections has grown into a company that currently keeps more than 1.3 million people – including seniors and their family, friends, and caregivers – in 120 countries safely connected every day. **To learn more or purchase a GrandPad, visit GrandPad.net.**

Alaskan job starts in quarantine

◀ **ALASKAN** from A8 The health care building includes a hospital, a nursing home, dentist, clinic, a pharmacy and a travel agency. Workers rotate in and out. The Inupiat have worked on retaining their culture. Their

language is taught in schools, as is their culture. The villagers practice subsistence use of fish and game, saying they use every part of the animal. The culture's philosophy is sharing and helping one's neighbor.

Blooming Prairie American Legion celebrates 103rd birthday

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The national American Legion celebrated its 103rd birthday on March 15. The Blooming Prairie American Legion got in on the celebration a few weeks later but still had an inspirational party at the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club on Saturday, March 26. American Legion Post 52 Commander Bob Ingvalson greeted guests and thanked those who support the American Legion. First District Commander Mike Parry challenged those in attendance: "Let's have a party!" Parry, a former state senator, told the story of a girl named Haley Sorenson, who has



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

American Legion Post 52 Vice Commander Ed Scala lights a candle in memory of a recently passed soldier. The ceremony capped a special 103rd birthday celebration for the national America Legion.

autism, and how she was given a surprise birthday party by her cousin Rebecca Lind. Rebecca put a notice on Facebook hoping Haley would have a Happy Birthday. It went viral. Parry asked attendees to reach out and wish all friends a Happy

Birthday. He said it was important to "reach out" and brighten someone's day by wishing them birthday greetings. Parry and all in attendance stood proudly as the National Anthem was led by keyboard artist Pat Motl.

March 15, the designated birthday of The American Legion, is the day in 1919 when the first American Legion caucus, held by members of the American Expeditionary Force, convened in Paris.

The American Legion, the nation's largest wartime veterans service organization, is a non-partisan and non-profit organization that participates in fundraising, activism, and advocacy for veterans, and has a grassroots effort to get the attention of lawmakers in Washington, D.C. It is run on volunteer efforts and its success "depends entirely" on its volunteers. Legion Vice Commander Ed Scala lighted candles for those veterans who recently passed.

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

The Exchange Club of Owatonna recognizes hard-working high school students who attain high levels of scholastic achievement, community involvement, and leadership or who have faced adversity in their lives and have overcome it through using their personal skills.

The Exchange Club of Owatonna congratulates **Emerson Omangi** and **Moriah Noeldner** for their achievements!

Zoe Anderson – February

Zoe Anderson is the daughter of Tanya Anderson. She has been playing lacrosse for nine years. She works at El Tequilas as a busser and future server. She is attending Baldwin Wallace University with a dual major in chemistry and biology, and a minor in art.

Dakota Kath – February

I am a senior at Owatonna High School. I am the Green Team president, I work at Hy-Vee, and I'm a member of Speech, the Gender-Sexuality Alliance, Girls United, Diversity Inclusion Group, National Honor Society, Link Crew, and the District Curriculum Advisory Committee. Outside of school, I am a member of the Youth Leadership Council for OutFrontMN, and I am the Lobbying Team lead for the Minnesota chapter of Youth Against Sexual Violence. In my free time, I enjoy reading, writing, learning, scrapbooking, and watching movies and shows. I'm very interested in foreign languages, and I plan to be a foreign language teacher in the future. I am undecided on a college, but I'm confident that education and Spanish will be a big part of my future major and career.

Zoe Anderson and Dakota Kath are the Students of the Month for the Exchange Club of Owatonna.

The Exchange Club's Youth of the Month is one of the most popular youth projects. The Youth of the Month/Year recognizes hard-working high school students who attain high levels of scholastic achievement, community involvement and leadership.

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Medford student spreads love of ASL

◀ **MEDFORD** from A1

With support from those friends, she brought the idea of forming a club to principal Kevin Babcock. All he asked was that she find a teacher who would oversee the group. He also gave Dziewit some advice about how to recruit new members and run a successful meeting.

While many students come up with ideas like this one, Babcock said, far fewer see them through.

“She kept pursuing it and made it happen,” he said. “She’s passion-

ate about it, and it’s good for her to have a leadership role.”

There’s also a benefit for other students, who are exposed to a new learning opportunity, he added.

Dziewit said she really enjoys teaching ASL to others and even considered teaching as a career path. As she looks toward the future, though, she sees herself as an ASL interpreter, especially after an experience with doing that at her church.

“When you come up to someone and they see you can sign, they’re so filled with joy,” she said. “Seeing their faces light up with a smile makes me so happy.”

The Medford High ASL Club is open to anyone with an interest. Dziewit would love to see it grow and encourages students to think about how learning ASL could benefit them in the future. After putting her ASL training on resumes, she knows employers view it as an asset.

“You can also use it as a secret language with your friends,” she joked.

Dziewit has also set a much larger goal that could lead to a significant change at Medford High School.

“I want to bring it to the school board’s attention to get a class going,” she said.

“ASL is a very fun and loving language,” Dziewit added. “It’s easy to learn and it will benefit you a lot in life.”

Babcock said he hopes more students come forward with ideas the way Dziewit has.

“They really need to come to us so that we know what they want,” he said.

Purple Heart party set for April 9

◀ **PURPLE** from A1

The groundwork for the designation as a Purple Heart City began back in July, when Blooming Prairie Mayor Curt Esplan suggested the city apply.

The paperwork was completed, and last month Esplan – whose brother, Ken Esplan, was awarded the medal during his service in the Vietnam War – signed the proclamation.

Ken Esplan has been working behind the scenes, tracking down other recipients of the decoration to invite them.

He’s found about 30 who he hopes will all attend the celebration. They come from the surrounding area, and include veterans of multiple conflicts.

The event is open to the public, but reservations for dinner are requested. A social hour will run from 5-6 p.m.; dinner is at 6 p.m. and the presentation will follow.

Cost of each meal is \$16.

The Purple Heart status comes at no expense to the city.

IF YOU GO

What: Purple Heart City Designation

When: 5 p.m. Saturday, April 9

Where: Servicemen’s Club, Blooming Prairie

RSVP requested

Owatonna’s oldest church to close

◀ **OWATONNA** from A1

“The other church is so excited about it,” Hofer said. “They’re glad to have the building, and said if there’s books and things we can’t get rid of, to just leave it. They’ll use what they can.”

True, said Christian Kohs, who leads the Redemption Church congregation,





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and “what I’m most excited about is claiming our name.”

That means not seeing the historic building going to a business or corporation – instead, keeping it “committed to spreading the word of the Lord.”

In what can only be described as divine intervention, Kohs himself grew up attending a Baptist church in Rochester. His new church’s experience during COVID was also a reversal:

“We have to be really thankful, because we tripled (membership) during that time,” he said. They now see about 100 people at weekly services.

The church’s organ will stay with the new owners for now; it was donated by the Pillsbury family, and is one of the oldest organs in the state still in use. The current organist is in contact with someone who may buy it.





Student Name: **JACELYN**
Grade: **2nd Grade**
Nominated by: **MRS. HAARSTAD**
Parents: **Alyssa Hayden and Dillon Dale**

Jacelyn is a great example of a Shining Knight for St. Mary’s. She has worked so hard this year to make incredible progress, and always gave 100%. She has a great attitude, even when things are difficult. She is always an excellent listener and always gives her best effort in all she does. She is a good friend to others and loves giving little notes and surprises to brighten people’s day! She walks in every day with a smile, ready to start the day! Keep up the great work!



Student Name: **GRAYSON**
Grade: **7th Grade**
Nominated by: **MRS. BERKLEY**
Parents: **Dave and Sara Slotsve**

It is a pleasure to work with Grayson! He is a student who leads by example. Grayson is fully engaged during band rehearsal and gives his best effort. Outside of class, he consistently puts in the necessary time to improve as a trombone player and to be prepared for his lessons and rehearsals. He recently participated in the SE Minnesota Middle School Honor Band and is active in Jazz Band. He gives of his talents by being a member of the Liturgy Band. Grayson’s good habits as a musician will help him to continue to grow as a trombone player and will lend to many opportunities in the future. Keep up the good work, Grayson!



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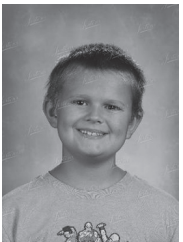
LOOK WHO'S BEING AWESOME!
Blossoms Students of the Week
Blooming Prairie Elementary School



Malaya Miller – KC
Mrs. Voss’ Class
Parents: Eaton & Kalyeena Miller
Malaya is a sweet girl who loves school! She was caught being awesome when she went above and beyond in her journal. She does an amazing job adding extra details in her drawings and taking her time. She is a great leader in our classroom, and she is willing to help with any jobs. Malaya’s contagious smile and amazing effort at school don’t go unnoticed. Keep up the “Awesome” work, Malaya!!



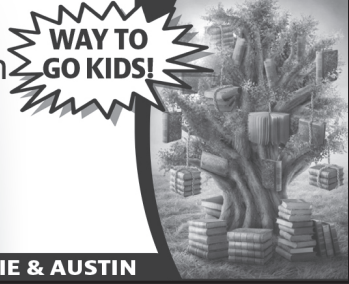
Wyatt Glende – 2B
Mrs. Lea’s Class
Parent: Chelsey Howard
Wyatt is a kind friend and respectful toward others. His smile and personality make our classroom brighter and more fun. He keeps us laughing every day with new jokes and especially likes to share “pawsome” cat jokes and puns with the class. 2B is lucky to have Wyatt in our class.



Quentin Freese – 3B
Ms. Johnson’s Class
Parent: John Freese
Quentin is a kind, sweet, and hardworking student. Quentin just recently passed all of his multiplication facts. He did this with hard work and dedication. He then continued to help his classmates master their facts. Quentin is a true Awesome Blossom, and we are lucky to have him in our 3B classroom community. Keep up the great work, Quentin! We are proud of you!

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Marketplace Delivery fills BP needs - and stomachs

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

Amanda Novak moved to Blooming Prairie less than a year ago, but has already fallen in love with it. The busy mother of three said she appreciates the quality school system and the sense of community she feels – and last week, there was one more reason. Novak was one of a dozen people who signed up for the Marketplace Delivery service from Community Pathways of Steele County, which will be stopping in Blooming Prairie the fourth Thursday of every month.

“We’re branching out,” said Troy Bice, coordinator of Marketplace Delivery. In the past, the service has focused its delivery on people who need food and are unable to access it because of a disability, short-term illness or injury, lack of transportation or inability to afford gas. In Blooming Prairie, that’s meant a monthly delivery for senior citizens who live independently. “We did some dredging,” Bice said, “and found that the poverty level in school-age kids” was significant. So they partnered with the BP

school district, which sent an email to every family, offering the service and providing the registration information. Deciding to expand the outreach was deliberate and timely, said Maurya Torgerson, a social work intern with Community Pathways. They’ve taken note of the increase in the price of everything – including food, “and we’ve also noticed an uptick in the number of applicants,” she said. It’s been, in a word, “massive.” The grocery boost for a working mom like Novak was a relief. “There are resources

out there,” she said, “but someone will always need the help.” The 12 families who signed up for last week’s delivery – which includes three pounds of meat, bread, a dozen eggs, milk and miscellaneous produce for every two people – included one family with 10 people. The amount of food is adjusted per family size, and is designed to offset the recipient’s food supply for a couple of weeks. Pre-registration is required to ensure needs are filled, Bice said, “but we wouldn’t turn anyone away. We’ll bring some extra, just in case.” He and Koby Wright, who was volunteering last week in Blooming Prairie, have both experienced that need. “I grew up in poverty,” Wright said. “I was the oldest of five kids, and I know what that’s like.” He and Bice were both in over-the-road trucking; Bice ended up using the services of Community Pathways after an injury forced him out of work. “I’ve been through the game,” he said. “I’m one of the prodigies of this program, because I came back and wanted to do more.” Wright, too, came



STAFF PHOTO BY KAY FATE

Amanda Novak, of Blooming Prairie, fills out some paperwork while picking up groceries from Community Pathways' Marketplace Delivery service. The organization is expanding its program by adding another delivery day in Blooming Prairie; it'll be in town the fourth Thursday of every month. Pre-registration is required.

to the organization as part of a back-to-work program. “I received some benefit, but I’m just one story,” he said. “It’s an incredible program. Everybody’s always smiling; no one hates what they’re doing. This is definitely going to factor into my future life, no matter what I do.” That’s the goal, Bice said: Making people smile. The trailer that comes to Blooming Prairie every month will be set up for its

users to “shop;” the rear door drops down as a ramp to accommodate for mobility issues. The intent is to provide a sense of normalcy and dignity to its shoppers, Torgerson said. “We’re getting rid of the stigma,” Bice said, while taking care of people. “We’ll see how well it goes over” in Blooming Prairie, he said. “It could work into having a permanent food shelf; we don’t know yet. It’s all based on need.”

NEXT BP MARKETPLACE DELIVERY

When: 10 a.m. to noon, Thursday, April 28
Where: First Lutheran Church parking lot
Pre-registration: Required by April 21
More details: Visit www.communitypathwaysssc.org and click on the Blooming Prairie Pre-Registration tab.
Other: Donations may also be made at this location.



STAFF PHOTO BY KAY FATE

Troy Bice, left, and Koby Wright fill the back of Amanda Novak's van with groceries. It was part of the expanded Community Pathway's Marketplace Delivery service for families in Blooming Prairie. The next delivery is April 28; pre-registration is required.

Weigh in April 4 on Owatonna low bridge projects

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

Owatonna residents can weigh in April 4 on proposals to spend millions of dollars on improving two problematic railroad bridges. City and Steele County officials approved an agreement last year to study Canadian Pacific Railroad bridges on County Road 180 (School Street) and Mineral Springs Road. The latter bridge alone has been hit 30 times over the past decade, city engineer Kyle Skov said. “It’s caused considerable property damage,” he said. “And that’s just the reported cases.” County engineer Greg Ilkka said most of the accidents have involved “amateur” truck drivers, like someone



who rents a U-Haul and may not pay attention to bridge heights. The resulting collisions have “ripped the tops off a number of oversized vehicles,” he said, adding accidents typically don’t involve professional commercial drivers. The County Road 180 project is driven by the need to replace a box culvert under the overpass, Ilkka said. The road may need to be raised, he added, because it’s flooding “more than we’d like it to.” Both Ilkka and Skov

stressed these projects are in preliminary stages. Residents who attend the open meeting will see drawings that show potential solutions for each project, as well as the preferred options. Ilkka said cost estimates for each project start at around \$4 million and run as high as \$8 million, depending on the proposal. “Some alternatives in each case close the existing underpass, so instead of replacing the bridge, we would build a road system that bypasses the bridge,” he said. “There’s a very large cost to those.” Residents who attend the open house will get first-hand information from city and county staff members and consultants. They will

also be encouraged to share their ideas and opinions. “It’s a good opportunity if they have any concerns to come out and express them,” Skov said. Ilkka pointed out that no final solution has been chosen for either project. Getting public input is part of the decision-making process. The feedback will become part of a study reviewed by both Owatonna city council and Steele County board members before any action is taken. “If you have a particular interest in either of those sites, come on out and get more information about them,” Ilkka said. The April 4 public information meeting will be held 4-6 p.m. at the Steele County Fairgrounds Community Center, 1380 South Elm Ave. in Owatonna. For more information, visit steelecountymn.gov or owatonna.gov.

Owatonna district, employees ratify contracts

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

Nearly two months after multiple speakers made impassioned pleas to, as Kerry Koziolk said, “close the equity gap of salary and benefits” of paraprofessionals in the Owatonna School District, Board members on March 21 ratified tentative agreements with the groups. Based on the comments at that January school board meeting, salary, benefits and employee turnover were the main issues. Koziolk, a paraprofessional at Owatonna Middle School with 20 years of experience, said she and her colleagues were among “the lowest-paid people in this organization, who spend more time with these students than any other employee in this school district.” In addition to the special education paraprofessionals and educational assistants, Board members also ratified tentative agreements with non-affiliated employees, non-cabinet district directors, cabinet employees and the master agreement with the Owatonna Education Association. In other business, Superintendent Jeff Elstad reported a “negligible” rise in COVID cases across the district, with four positive cases – up from several weeks of zero cases. “It’s still my recommendation to take down our COVID district tracker until we reach a spot where maybe it becomes more significant again,” he said. “Let’s hope that never happens.” The weekly updates on the district website were removed Friday. If legislators and educators get their way, the taxpayers of Minnesota would get some

relief in the form of two bills moving through the session this spring. The first, a levy equalization bill, would allow for more state aid to assist with local school district needs. “We’re considered a ‘tax poor’ district,” Elstad said, “in that we don’t have a lot of really big businesses that pay taxes like other communities do. Unfortunately, it means that our individual property owners pay more for the same amount of revenue.” The levy equalization bill “would provide tax relief in the amount of \$3.9 million a year,” he said. “It’s a big deal, and taxpayers would see immediate relief.” The second bill would change a process that’s nearly 50 years old. Since 1975, special education has been funded only at a certain percentage from the federal government; state governments were supposed to pick up the remainder. That hasn’t happened in Minnesota; much of the rest of the cost has fallen to taxpayers. The new bill would eliminate the cross-subsidy, which means “taking general fund dollars and putting them toward special education needs,” Elstad said. “This particular bill for (Owatonna) means we would be able to get back about \$5.4 million a year in general revenue,” but the funding would continue. A former special education teacher, Elstad said he believes “whole-heartedly that every student deserves a free and appropriate education. This helps us to fund that from now into the future, without putting the burden on other programming.” The costs would be funded by part of the state’s projected \$9.25 billion budget surplus.

BP district OKs sick leave banking for all

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

A new sick leave policy is in place at the Blooming Prairie School District, and it’s one-size-fits-all. In the past, only teachers were allowed to participate in the sick leave “bank” policy – meaning they could voluntarily donate their sick leave to other teachers. Now, though, it includes all district employees. “I think it’s nice that everyone has the same opportunity in this aspect,” said Superintendent Chris Staloch. “I do think it’s a good thing, and I think it shows our staff that we’re trying to do good things for all of them.” The policy means any staff member can donate time from their own sick leave balance, using full-day increments. It’s intended

to be used by another member of staff who is unable to work because of illness or injury to themselves, spouse, children, siblings, parents or spouse’s parents, after the borrower has used up their own sick, vacation and personal leave. It isn’t allowed to be used for any other type of leave, requires a medical certificate to verify the use, and must be approved by the Sick Leave Bank Committee. The decision to donate sick leave is completely voluntary and confidential; any donated leave will be paid at the recipient employee’s regular rate of pay, no matter the donor’s pay. “We did some research,” Staloch said, “and made sure we weren’t doing anything we couldn’t do.” They spoke with representatives from

the Teachers Retirement Association, the Public Employees Retirement Association and the Minnesota School Board Association, he said. “The one thing

I found fascinating is that it was 100% approval, all across the board,” said Jon Sunde, a Board member who sits on the negotiations committee. “Everybody was all for it.”

Think spring! Winter parking restrictions end

With snow removal season in the rearview mirror, the City of Owatonna’s odd/even winter parking restrictions for residential areas will end on March 31. Restrictions in place since Nov. 15 required street parking on alternate sides of the street daily between 12:01 a.m. and noon. Residents park on street sides with even-numbered addresses on even-numbered calendar dates and

with odd-numbered addresses on odd-numbered dates. The city developed a Winter Parking Map WebApp to remind residents where they can park, downloadable at owatonna.gov. Residents should still watch for year-round parking restrictions throughout the city. In the downtown business district, vehicles must be off the streets between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. daily.

Class focuses on financial literacy

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Finances is an important part of Jeff Hall's every day life as a financial planner. But he also recognizes the importance of finances when it comes to others and has found a unique way to share that with young children.

Hall teaches as part of the Junior Achievement North program at St. Mary's School in Owatonna. For the past five weeks, he has been focused on the second grade class.

"Our mission is to teach financial literacy skills to kids," said Hall, who has been volunteering with the program since 2017. "If they learn financial literacy from a young age, it will make a huge difference in the long run."

Junior Achievement equips students with the skills needed to succeed in school and in life. Posters and

games are utilized to offer practical information about businesses and the many jobs those businesses offer in a community. Kids learn about the variety of careers available, identify how business and government jobs help a community, how taxation supports government services and how the flow of money helps the community's economy.

Hall has found that financial literacy is a lesson that most kids never receive in school. But Hall is a strong proponent that it should be taught along with reading, writing and math.

He believes second grade is a perfect time for children to learn about finances. Hall said he was 7 years old when he became fascinated with finances and began saving money. He later made a professional career of it.

Hall says it's critical



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Junior achievers at St. Mary's School in Owatonna include: back row, from left: Parker Lubich, Alex Sorensen, Mike Koch, Rylan Hodgman, Greyson Herz, Phillip Hall and Jeff Hall; middle row: Anna Zhang, Junior Aguilar, Cole Trom, Mila Ziegler, Laken Ackerson and Jace Dale; front row: Lauren Archambault, Hazel Bell, Lina Flores and Piper Gathje.

that kids learn how to make smart decisions when it comes to money at a young age to avoid problems like credit card debt later in life.

"We're changing the lives of young people," Hall said of Junior Achievement.

He likes the idea of leaving his office at Edward Jones for the classroom, even if it's just for a short time. "I've always enjoyed getting out of my comfort zone," Hall said. "I like to build relationships with the kids and it's fun to see the excitement they have and the energy in their eyes."

Hall hopes his lessons lead the children to spurring conversations at home with their parents about finances.

His advice is pretty straight-forward when it comes to finances. "The top priority should be save first for the long term and live within your means," Hall said, adding people should always focus on maximizing all of their financial strategies.

When it comes to finances, Hall said: "No matter what you do in life, it's something you do every day."

Junior Achievement consists of an advisory board in Owatonna with 14 active members.

During the 2018-19 school year, Junior Achievement served nearly 5,800 K-12 students in the Owatonna area.

Hall said he plans to continue volunteering for Junior Achievement in the years to come.



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Jeff Hall shares donuts with members of the Junior Achiever class, including Alex Sorensen. Phillip Hall, left, is already munching on his donut. The treat was part of the finale of the Junior Achievement class led by Jeff Hall over the past several weeks at St. Mary's School in Owatonna.

New communications manager tells Owatonna's story

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

Last snow removal season, Owatonna police officers issued 1,243 citations to vehicle owners who didn't heed winter parking restrictions.

During the current season, which ends March 31, that number has dropped by nearly 50%. City communications manager Deanna Sheely believes a coordinated plan for reaching more residents with snow removal information spurred that drastic reduction.

And the elements of the informational plan—public access video and slides, public service announcements, social media posts, and the Steele County Free Fair's electronic display board—cost taxpayers almost nothing.

Letters went out to the managers of apartment communities, providing information they could share with their residents. The city also contacted private snowplow drivers with information about city snow removal and working together to improve the process of clearing the roadways.

"I'm leveraging channels we own and haven't used," said Sheely, who was hired last fall. "It makes a real difference."

She already has a few other success stories under her belt:

- A Jan. 6 post on the city's Facebook page, shared more than 20,000 times, drew several leads that helped police solve a hit-and-run case.

- Just five days later, another post that reached thousands of

users helped identify a vehicle involved in a theft.

- Over the holiday season, promoting Parks and Recreation passes, classes, and memberships as unique gifts resulted in the sale of more than \$1,500 in season passes for River Springs Water Park and nearly \$1,200 in Brooktree Golf Course gift cards.

Those examples are just part of an overall effort that started with determining Owatonna's "value proposition," Sheely said.

"Who are we? Who do we serve? What's our personality? What's the City of Owatonna all about?" she said. "That's my job, is to tell the City of Owatonna's story."

Sheely started by asking those questions of everyone who stopped into her City Hall office. Their responses helped form an overall communications plan that will be presented during a future city council meeting.

Sheely is also working on a crisis communications plan, a brand manual that standardizes how the city looks in the public eye, communications templates, an editorial calendar, a library for digital assets like photos and logos, and a feedback mechanism to open two-way communications between city staff and citizens.

It's a large endeavor, but Sheely has help from a task force with members from each city department. Previously, everyone kind of did their own thing, she said. A more unified effort will not only build the city's image, but also help city staff streamline their communications—saving time and energy.

Sheely said she has seen first-hand how coordinated communications can benefit not just the city, but its citizens as well. She held a similar position with the City of Red Wing, where she and her staff won awards

for their work.

During her tenure, Red Wing went from having boards and commissions with so few volunteers some couldn't put together a quorum, to lists of residents waiting to serve. Even voter turnout improved.

"I will use every platform I can get to tell people to get involved... so that they understand what municipal government does and how to influence it," Sheely said. "When people understand the decisions being made and the logic behind them, it makes for a happier community."

Over the coming months, residents will see the next communications initiative, "Summer Fun in Owatonna." Launching April 1, it will promote free, fun stuff to do around the city during the summer months.

Look for information on city's website, owatonna.gov, and on Facebook, facebook.com/CityofOwatonna.



STAFF PHOTO BY JONI HUBRED

Deanna Sheely is the City of Owatonna's first communications manager.

Downtown project to resume in Owatonna

Construction on the 100 block of Cedar Avenue in downtown Owatonna has been moved up a week to April 4.

"This is fantastic news," said Lisa Cochran of the Owatonna Business Partnership. "The earlier they are able to begin, the earlier they will finish."

The major work is proposed to occur between Vine Street and Broadway Street, starting at and closing the intersection of Vine Street and Cedar Avenue. Broadway Street will remain open as long as possible.

In addition, the alleys on the west side of Cedar Avenue will be constructed this year. Amenities and land-

scaping work is expected to occur in certain areas, but the work is not anticipated to cause full street closures.

Crews will begin placing signage and performing vibration tests during the week of March 28.

There will be informational meetings about construction every Thursday beginning April 7 at 11 a.m. in Central Park. The meetings usually last about 15 minutes.

In a note to area businesses, Cochran said: "We encourage you all to have a plan for your businesses, learn into the construction and portray it as a positive thing for downtown because it is."

Soil and Water officials meet with lawmakers

Local conservation leaders advocated for a new state funding initiative for Soil and Water Conservation Districts at a recent legislative briefing and meetings at the State Capitol March 9-10 in St. Paul.

Dave Melby, Dan Hansen, and Mark Ihlenfeld from Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District joined a group of other officials from the state's Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) who met in St. Paul to gather support for conservation district funding from the state. SWCDs are seeking \$22 million per year in local government SWCD Aid through the Department of Revenue. The funding would get SWCDs statewide closer to fulfilling critical conservation needs and increasing the pace of progress toward clean water and healthy soil goals.

"SWCDs are a primary source of conservation information, support, and program management for landowners and other local units of government," said Dan Hansen of Ellendale. The SWCD Aid proposal being considered by legislators this session is absolutely

critical to the future of conservation districts in the state, he noted.

The legislation has received bipartisan support and is also included in Governor Tim Walz's supplemental budget. "We have to work hard to make sure the state's commitment to sharing in the funding needs of SWCDs doesn't fall by the wayside. Soil and Water Conservation Districts play an integral role in enhancing Minnesota's quality of life through conservation on private lands, which yields environmental, wildlife and aesthetic benefits to the public," Hansen said.

During the visit to St. Paul, Melby, Hansen, and Ihlenfeld met with local legislators Sen. John Jasinski, Sen. Gene Dornik and Rep. Brian Daniels.

The event was sponsored by the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

SWCDs fill the crucial niche of providing land and water conservation services to owners of private lands. For more information on the Steele County Soil and Water Conservation District, please call Eric Gulbrandsen or visit www.steeleswcd.org.

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Jack Bulver, 83, Owatonna



Jack Bulver

Jack Bulver, 83 of Owatonna, passed away Friday, March 25, 2022 at Benedictine Health in Owatonna. He was born in Owatonna on Aug. 27, 1938 to John and Hattie (Stancel) Bulver. He graduated from Owatonna High School 1956. He started working right after high school as a press foreman at the Owatonna People's Press. He married Judith Grinnen on July 26, 1965 in Watertown, S.D. Together the couple raised seven children. Jack loved the outdoors especially being on the water fishing.

He enjoyed watching his children and grandchildren play sports. He is survived by wife, Judy Bulver; six children, John (Vicky) Bulver, Darcy (Eddie) Herrera, Doug (Heather) Bulver, Bill Bulver, Bobbi (Jim) Jorgenson, Becky (Scott) Bangs; 18 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren; one brother, Don (Cheryl) Bulver. Preceded in death by parents, one daughter Susan Radel, two brothers, Jim and Ronald Bulver. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

BRICK-MEGER & MEDFORD
FUNERAL HOME

Sterling Johnston, 64, Owatonna



Sterling Johnston

Sterling A. Johnston, 64, of Owatonna, passed away March 23, 2022 at St. Marys Hospital in Rochester. He was born in Owatonna on Sept. 3, 1957 to Merle and Frances (Wilson) Johnston. He graduated from Owatonna High School in 1976. He was a manager of the Owatonna High School basketball and hockey teams, earning a letter in those sports. He attended the University of Wisconsin, Stout and received a bachelor's degree in engineering. Many years later, he went back to school and attended Mankato State University and received his bachelor's degree in elementary education. After college, Sterling started working at Owatonna Tool Company as Metallurgic Lab Technician. Sterling was also a substitute teacher in Owatonna. After working many years at OTC, he combined both his degrees of engineering and education and started working for Cedar Valley Services as a site supervisor. Sterling loved to be outdoors.

He enjoyed many family trips up north, canoeing and hunting. He also enjoyed Nascar, NHRA racing and Minnesota Wild Hockey. Sterling was a member of the Rochester Carmelites, 3rd Order. He helped at the Catholic booth at the Steele County Fair and also made rosaries. He excelled in arm wrestling and won a championship. Sterling is survived by three brothers: Brent (Linda) Johnston, Mark Johnston, and Boyd (Deb) Johnston; sister, Bonnie Johnston, as well as many nieces, nephews and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, brother Brett and sister's partner Jake. Funeral service was Tuesday, March, 29 2022 at Brick-Meger Funeral Home, with visitation one hour prior to the service at the funeral home. Friends greeted the family Monday, March 28 at the funeral home. For more information or to leave a message of condolence, go to www.megercares.com.

BRICK-MEGER & MEDFORD
FUNERAL HOME

Harlan D. Kern, 67, Waseca



Harlan Kern

Harlan D. Kern of Owatonna died Monday, March 28, 2022, in Waseca. Mass of Christian Burial is set for Friday, April 1, 2022, at 2 p.m. at St. Joseph Catholic Church with Father Jason Kern presiding, along with the Most Rev. John Quinn in choir and concelebrating with the priests of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester. Friends may greet the family on Thursday, March 31, 2022, from 4-7 p.m. at the Brick-Meger Funeral Home. Visitation will continue one hour prior to the funeral liturgy at the church. A Knights of Columbus Rosary will be recited at 7 p.m. on Thursday at the funeral home. Burial will follow the Mass at Sacred Heart Cemetery. Harlan was born Aug. 16, 1954, in Faribault, the son of John and Doris (Chavie) Kern. He graduated from Marian High School in Owatonna in 1973. He was united in marriage to Renee Sorenson on June 4, 1983, at Christ the King Catholic Church in Medford. Renee preceded him in death in 2012, one week before her son Jason was ordained a priest. Harlan worked at NAPA Distribution Center in Owatonna for over 20 years. In the spring of 2022, he celebrated his 31st year of sobriety with AA. Harlan attended all his kids' sporting events while they were grow-

ing up. He was a lifelong member of St. Joseph Church, Owatonna, Knights of Columbus, as a member of the Henry Speck Assembly of the 4th Degree. He was a Cub Scout Leader for many years and enjoyed spending time with his family, especially his boys and grandson. In his spare time, Harlan enjoyed gardening and helping friends and family with their needs. Harlan will be missed by his son Nicholas (Kristi) Kern of New Richland; grandson Grayson Kern, and son Rev. Jason Kern of Winona; his siblings Ralph (Shirley) Kern, Ronald (Peg) Kern, Joyce Sammon, Marge (Ray) Schmidt, Mary (Ed) Zuranski, Sharon (Jim) Gray, Martin (Cindy) Kern and Kenneth (Lisa) Kern. Harlan is preceded in death by his parents, his wife, sister Kathy, and an infant brother. Harlan battled cancer over the last five years of his life, including a bone marrow transplant at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. His family is most grateful for the care he received from the Mayo Clinic, especially Dr. Wang, as well as the Gift of Life Transplant House and, in his final days, Colony Court in Waseca. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to St. Joseph Catholic Church. To leave an online message of condolence go to www.megercares.com.

BRICK-MEGER & MEDFORD
FUNERAL HOME

Arts Center to feature small farm exhibit

The Owatonna Arts Center will be featuring two artists in the gallery in April. "A Mother's Reminiscences" is by artist Lorraine Ortner-Blake and "Agriculture All Around-Agriculture Run Aground" is by artist Roberta Condon. The exhibition is about small farms in the Midwest that are in a period of crisis

and may soon become a feature of the landscape and culture lost to us. Both artists have written books on the subject. There are 52 paintings in the show along with information about each piece. You are invited to meet the artists on Saturday, April 9 from 1-4 p.m. featuring gallery talk, book signing by artists

and reception. Ortner-Blake will be doing a power point in the PA Hall from 1:30 to 2 p.m. From 2:15-2:45 p.m., Condon will be in Gallery Talk with a reception. The exhibits open on Sunday, April 3 and run through April 24. The gallery hours are 1-5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday and closed on Mondays.

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Mike



Brett

Brick-Meger Funeral Home Medford Funeral Home
507.451.1457 | megercares.com

PROUDLY SERVING STEELE COUNTY

Arthur C. Hansen, 74, Queens, New York City

Arthur C. Hansen, 74, of Queens, New York City, died at his home on Tuesday, March 15, 2022. He was born on Sept. 25, 1947, to Carlo J. and Esther Ann (Ingvalson) Hansen of rural Blooming Prairie. He graduated from Blooming Prairie High School in 1965 and attended the University of Minnesota from which he graduated in 1969 with a degree in Electrical Engineering. After college, he was first employed by Honeywell in Minneapolis but later worked for companies based in the Midwest and the East prior to retirement.

Arthur is survived by his son, Reed (Amanda) Hansen, and granddaughter, Ivy Hansen, Meriden, CT; brother Dr. Les Hansen, St. Paul; sister Linda Hansen, Blooming Prairie; brother Brian (Peggy) Hansen, Fridley; brother-in-law David Fierro, Las Vegas; nephew Christopher (Sabrina) Fierro, Buckeye, Ariz.; aunt Lorene Ingvalson, Austin; and many cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents, wife Mary (Varpness) Hansen, sister Betty (Hansen) Fierro, and cousin Harley Janke. No memorial services are planned at this time.

Christian music loving grandmother fears digital "gadgets"

Dear Live Grand:

My Grandma is eighty-four and has lived her life happily without what she calls "gadgets." Lately, she's become phone-shy due to spam calls, so other than when she has visitors she knits, bakes, and listens to Christian music. This is all good, but her life is obviously limited. She doesn't even go out to church anymore. I understand why she's resistant to trying something new because she has no foundation to build on, but the whole family would enjoy video calls with her and we know she'd love that, too. How could we help her overcome her fear of digital devices long enough to start her on a GrandPad? – GK

Dear GK: Your grandma sounds charming as she is, but we agree that she could benefit from the ability to easily connect with loved ones. The first thing to know is that GrandPad tablets are designed to bring the advantages of technology to people like her, so she'd find it easy to use. The tablet is substantial enough to feel comfortable, the screen and apps are sized for easy viewing, and it charges by simply laying it on the supplied cradle. As you noted, convincing her to try the tablet is likely your biggest obstacle. We'd suggest that the family admin prepare the GrandPad for her by



Keeping Seniors Connected



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(800) 704-9412
GrandPad.net

uploading her favorite photos. Then, when you show her the tablet, just have her touch the Photos app. While she's viewing her photos, ask a family member who has been added to her GrandPad Contacts to call her. She'd immediately see that person's image on her screen and all she'd have to do is tap Answer. Emphasize that the only calls she'd receive are from people in her Contacts. We think that by then she'd be fascinated, but to solidify your progress, suggest that she choose someone from her Contacts, tap their image, and press Call. If her church offers online services, another way to convince her would be to add the church website to the GrandPad Internet app. You could explain that when it's time for a service, she'd just tap the app and the website, and she'd be attending church! If she enjoys listening to various church services on the radio, those stations could be added to her Radio app.

Those options may be enough to start but if she's interested in learning more, show her the Music app where again, with one touch, she could listen to Christian music. Give her time to feel comfortable with each step. Eventually, you could show her how to use the Articles app where she could read about religion and crafts and build her own Favorites list, or even play a few games. We have no doubt that from the time your grandma saw the family photos and realized that she could receive and send video calls she'd love her tablet. Envision her knitting and listening to her personalized Music Collection, GK! Her life would be brighter because of your thoughtfulness.

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.

Crisis Center handles child abuse, sex assaults

The Crisis Resource Center (CRC) of Steele County announces April as being Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Every 68 seconds, an American is sexually assaulted. Every 9 minutes, that victim is a child, according to Stacy Burton, abused children's coordinator for CRC. "Crisis Resource Center of Steele County is dedicated to raising awareness about child abuse, child neglect and

sexual assault along with what each of us can do to help keep men, women and children safe," Burton said. Last year, the Abused Children's Program alone provided 3,321 services to 298 children and 472 parents/care givers; the Sexual Assault Program provided 709 services to 114 victims. "We would like to remind everyone of the services the Crisis Resource Center provides," said Burton. "We provide advocacy for

victims by listening and helping victims define their needs, legal advocacy by assisting victims in filling out restraining orders. We offer separate women's and children's support groups, emergency transportation, public education, information and referral and a 24-hour crisis line that is answered by trained staff and volunteer advocates." For more information or to obtain help if you are a victim of abuse, call 507-451-1202 or 800- 451-1202.

America's Farmers awards \$2,500 to 761 Foundation

Local farmer Paul Knutson recently directed a \$2,500 America's Farmers Grow Communities donation, sponsored by Bayer Fund, to the 761 Foundation.

The 761 Foundation was established in 1993 to support students and staff with opportunities and programs not usually funded with tax dollars. Since then, the 761 Foundation has awarded more than \$2 million in mini grants and nearly \$1.5 million in scholarship fund to graduates of Owatonna High School, as well as graduates from Steele County planning to study agribusiness.

The Foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization that provides a way for individuals, community groups and businesses to make contributions. It is a separate legal entity from the Owatonna Public Schools. All donations to the Foundation are tax deductible.

Knutson serves on the 761 Board of Trustees.

Since 2010, the America's Farmers programs have awarded more than \$57 million to nonprofits, aspiring ag students and public schools across rural America. Farmers know the needs of their communities best, so the America's Farmers programs rely on them to help identify the most worthy causes.

The Grow Communities program partners with farmers across the country to provide nonprofit organizations with resources to strengthen their local communities. Each year, farmers can enter for the chance to direct a \$2,500 Grow Com-



Steele County native Paul Knutson recently directed a \$2,500 grant to the 761 Foundation. The grant is sponsored by the Bayer Fund and is part of the America's Farmers program.

munities donation to a local eligible nonprofit of their choice. Farmers have directed donations to food banks, emergency response organizations, schools, youth agriculture programs and many others that reflect the spirit and support the vibrancy of rural America.

"Farmers truly understand the needs of their communities and where

the opportunities to strengthen them exist. We partner with them to identify the nonprofit organizations that benefit from Grow Communities donations," said Al Mitchell, Bayer Fund president. "Each donation shines a light on the organizations that are making a positive difference in rural communities across the country. Bayer Fund is proud to partner with farmers to give back in rural America."

America's Farmers, sponsored by Bayer Fund, is focused on strengthening rural America through three community outreach programs that partner with farmers to make an impact in communities where farmers live and work. The programs have given more than \$57 million to rural America since 2010.

Arts Center seeks artists for upcoming show

Calling all Steele County Artist 18 or older to participate in the 69th Annual Steele County Art Exhibition to be held at the Owatonna Arts Center.

The exhibition opens on May 1 and runs through May 29. Artists can show three original works of art in the following: media, oil, acrylic, watercolor, pencil, charcoal, pastel, clay sculpture. Artist can pick up the entry form at the Arts Center or go to www.oacarts.org to download the entry form.

Entries are accepted April 26-29, during gallery hours, which are 1-5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday and closed on Mondays.

Recipe Corner

ORANGE SALAD

1 small carton cottage cheese
1 small can crushed pineapple, drained
1 carton Cool Whip
1 can mandarin oranges, drained
1 (6 oz.) pkg. orange JELL-O

Mix together, putting the dry JELL-O in last. Can use any flavor JELL-O or dry pistachio pudding mix. Refrigerate.

Sponsored by

United Way of Steele County
507-455-1180
unitedwaysteelecounty.org

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COLLEGE NEWS

2 area students graduate from UW-LaCrosse

A pair of students from Owatonna has graduated from the University of Wisconsin at LaCrosse.

They are Hannah Fisher with a bachelor of science in sociology and Ellie Rohman with a bachelor of science in middle childhood through early adolescence education. Rohman graduated with honors.

Winter commencement took place at the LaCrosse Center on Sunday, Dec. 19.

Owatonna student earns special recognition

Julia Holt of Owatonna has earned Honors Day recognition in the Fine Arts Division during family weekend Nov. 5 at Kalamazoo College in Michigan.

Holt earned the

Brian Gougeon Prize in art. She was also named to Alpha Lambda Delta.

She was one of more than 300 students recognized for excellence in academics and leadership.

Students named to Dean's List at U of M- Twin Cities

Many area students have been named to the 2021 fall semester Dean's List at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

The students include:

Blooming Prairie: William Cardenas, senior, College of Education/Human Development and Jesse Schewe, senior, College of Science and Engineering;

Medford: Kaleb Enter, sophomore, College of Science and Engineering and Zachary Wetmore, junior, College of Biological Sciences;

Owatonna: Noah Budach, senior, College of Education/Human Development, Emma Carroll, junior, College

of Education/Human Development, Victoria Dietz, senior, College of Contin & Prof Studies, Sky Dube, freshman, College of Education/Human Development, Ethan Engel, sophomore, College of Food, Agri & Natural Resources Science, Sadia Fakrudin, sophomore, College of Education/Human Development, Elizabeth Harder, freshman, College of Design, Selena Ong, senior, College of Liberal Arts, Bretton Ruiter, senior, College of Biological Sciences, Aidan Ruiz, freshman, College of Science and Engineering, Brandon Steiger, junior, College of Biological Sciences, Lane Versteeg, freshman, College of Science and Engineering and Jason Williamson, junior, College of Education/Human Development.

To qualify for the Dean's List, students must complete 12 or more letter-graded credits while attaining a 3.66 GPA.

Local students earn top academic honors at Bemidji

Four students from Steele County have earned top academic honors from Bemidji State University for fall 2021 semester.

Asia Buryaska and Rebecca Olson of Owatonna earned President's List honors for fall.

To be eligible for the President's Honor Roll, students must be enrolled for at least 12 credits and earn a 4.0 GPA during the semester. A total of 392 students earned this distinction.

Micalyn Trihus of Blooming Prairie and Joseph Edel of Owatonna were named to the Dean's List at Bemidji for fall semester. They were among 673 students who made the Dean's List.

To be eligible for the Dean's List, students must be enrolled for at least 12 credits and earn a minimum of a 3.5 GPA during the semester.

SCHOOL LUNCH MENU

Blooming Prairie Elementary School

March 31- Chicken and gravy, garlic breadstick, fish sandwich with cheese, mashed potatoes, cucumber slices, canned fruit bar.

April 1- Cheese pizza, pretzel bites with cheese cubes, steamed broccoli, baby carrots, fresh fruit bar.

April 4- Hamburger on a bun, turkey ranch

wrap, golden French fries, romaine lettuce, canned fruit bar.

April 5- Macaroni & Cheese, cheesy ham melt, steamed broccoli, red peppers, fresh fruit bar.

April 6- BBQ pulled pork sandwich, Italian meatball sub, baked beans, cherry tomato, canned fruit bar.

Blooming Prairie High School

March 31- Chicken and gravy, garlic breadstick, fish sandwich with cheese, BBQ chicken sandwich, mashed potatoes, cucumber slices.

April 1- Cheese pizza, pretzel bites with cheese cubes, crispy chicken nuggets, steamed broccoli, baby carrots, fresh fruit bar.

April 4- Hamburger on a bun, turkey ranch

wrap, corn dog, golden French fries, romaine lettuce, canned fruit car.

April 5- Macaroni & Cheese, cheesy ham melt, cheese pizza, steamed broccoli, red peppers, fresh fruit bar.

April 6- BBQ pulled pork sandwich, Italian meatball sub, cheeseburger on a bun, baked beans, cherry tomato, canned fruit bar.

BIRTHDAYS

March 30
Darrell Hansen

March 31
Robert Salinas, Jr.
Alec Ille
Olivia Kruger

April 1
Sam Hinzmann
Roger Anderson
Michael Ressler
Hulio Rivera-Escandon
Nicole Block
Davyll Smith

April 2
Luke Miller
Pat Wehner
Dale Ramsey
Brian Nelson
Naomi Erickson
Mark Thoen
Whitney Ann Farr
Reid Jensen
Isaac Chester Nelson
Harold Ulrich
Brett Motl

April 3
Thomas Schneiderit

April 4
Hannah Garcia
Robert H. Olson
McKenna Hein

April 5
Tamora Klemmenseth
Greg Hackensmith

ANNIVERSARIES

April 1
Pat & Tammy Wehner

April 2
Brian & Lois Nelson
Alicia & Derek Levon

April 5
Sam & Kristen Romeo
Jeff & Becky Severtson

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BLOOMING PRAIRIE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

19TH ANNUAL AUCTION

Come Support Our Kids!

Saturday, April 2, 2022

Where: The Cue Co., Blooming Prairie

Silent Auction - 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Live Auction - Starts at 5 p.m.

To make a donation to the auction drop off at:

Eagle Prairie Insurance
311 NW Highway Ave S
Blooming Prairie



Rev. James Starasinich

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC-OWATONNA
CHRIST THE KING-MEDFORD

We have lived these last two years in an escalation of fear. Perhaps it has subsided a bit as the pandemic begins to wane. Fear is a state of being that brings on anxiety and when it becomes exaggerated, reality is lost. Pursuing facts and

truth can alleviate fear. Worry is closely related to fear. Most of the time worries are simply ghosts in our minds and not objective reality. We fear the outcome of a job interview, failure on a test, defeat, and loss.

This Sunday's Gospel shows another reality of fear: Condemnation. The woman caught in adultery is brought before Jesus by the leading religious authorities, the scribes and the Pharisees. Their intention is to put Jesus to the test: How will he respond to this grave situation? Will Jesus go against the very Law of Judaism? They entrap the Christ, or so they think they have him finally where they want him. They are jealous of

Jesus and would like to condemn him as well. He is not a learned man by their standards. He comes from a place so small that it did not exist on the maps of his day. Even one of his future disciples will remark, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

A double condemnation in the works! How many people today live in fear of condemnation? We witness the faults, shortcomings, mistakes, and sins of others through social media that seems unprecedented. Why is this happening? There is condemnation and yet there is also the lapse of morality, mores, values, and standards that once guided our lives despite

the great diversity of cultures and religions. This can be answered by the attitude of those who seek condemnation. *I am my own authority. I make the rules.* This is known as relativistic thought, where there exists no objective truth, only subjective truth, made by each individual person.

The fear of condemnation. People are afraid to speak or voice their thoughts and opinions for fear of not being accepted. Others feel condemned by those who are not in agreement with their point of view. Where does both fear and division originate?

We find an answer to that question in the book of Genesis. After the fall of Adam and Eve, fear

appears for the first time in the Bible. The serpent, aka the devil, deceives Eve and thus her sin and Adam's divide them from God. They are afraid of God. They fear because they have experienced sin, separation from God.

Paul asks in the letter to the Romans, "What will separate us from the love of Christ?" Herein lies the key to our dilemma of condemnation and fear. Love! Jesus shows immense love to the adulterous woman. "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Love that is mercy, love that is compassion, love that unites, love that is God!

Jesus came to restore what we have all lost

through selfishness, a sin we can all claim to have committed in our lives. Jesus comes to restore our lives through forgiveness. How many times Jesus says in the Gospel: "Do not be afraid." "Have no fear." "Take courage!" There is no condemnation but only love for the sinner through forgiveness. God's greatest gift to the world! We can be freed from fear!

This Lent, let us approach Jesus and experience God's mercy on us sinners! "In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who live in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace." God Love You!

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 Worship 9 a.m.
Sunday School 10 a.m.
firstluthoffice@yahoo.com

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

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

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

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

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

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN – LCMS

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

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN – LCMS

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

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN – ELCA

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

ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN- ELCA

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

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN – LCMS

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

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN – ELCA

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

TRINITY LUTHERAN- ELCA

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

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA

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

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMS

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

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMS

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

ZION LUTHERAN – ELCA

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

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN – ELCA

1909 St. Paul Rd., Owatonna
507-451-4853
Sunday Worship- 8:15 a.m. - Traditional Service & 10:45 a.m. - Contemporary service, also livestreamed on Facebook.
www.oursaviorsowatonna.com

CATHOLIC

CHRIST THE KING

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

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS

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

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL

9946 SE 24TH Ave., Owatonna
507-583-2784
Sunday Mass: 8:15a.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

CHRISTIAN

CHRIST COMMUNITY COVENANT

540 SE 18TH St., Owatonna
507-451-1032
Sunday Worship: 9 a.m.
Sunday Connections: 10:15 a.m.
www.owatonnacovenantchurch.org

CHRISTIAN FAMILY CHURCH

2300 Heritage Pl. NW, Owatonna
507-455-3205
Sunday Worship 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

PENTECOSTAL

FIRST UNITED PENTECOSTAL

230 Locust Ave., Owatonna
507-363-3046
Sunday Worship: 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 Worship: 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
www.bloomingtonumc.org

ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST

200 Sixth St. NW, Ellendale
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507-583-2673

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Sunday Bible Study: 11:30 a.m.
Wednesday Service: 6:30 p.m.
www.fbcbloomingprairie.org

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It's masks off in courtrooms across Minnesota

The Minnesota Judicial Branch has lifted the statewide order requiring face coverings in court facilities effective March 7.

"The Judicial Branch has relied on data and the guidance from state and federal public health experts to inform how the courts manage our operations during the pandemic," said Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea. "In light of declining COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in our state, and consistent with updated mask-related guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we are lifting the statewide requirement for face coverings in Judicial Branch facilities."

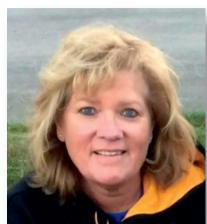
Under current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), wearing a mask indoors in public is a recommended prevention step only for counties at a "high" COVID-19 Community Level.

A new order issued by Chief Justice Gildea lifts the requirement of a face covering for every person entering a court facility beginning March 7. The Chief Judge in each Judicial District is authorized to require face coverings in court facilities in the

districts or counties that are designated as a "high" COVID-19 Community Level by the CDC. Individuals who

prefer to wear a face covering may continue to do so. Face coverings will be provided by court staff upon request.

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OH SO CLOSE



Owatonna senior Ty Creger goes up for a contested layup against Cretin Derham Hall in the team's opening-round game of the MSHSL State Tournament. Creger had 16 points, eight rebounds and three assists in the Huskies' 52-51 loss to the Raiders.

Huskies eliminated from state title run by a whisker

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna Huskies were bounced from title contention at the MSHSL State Tournament this past week when the team lost 52-51 to Cretin Derham Hall (CDH) in the opening round.

Owatonna and CDH played the entire game without either side growing a lead to more than nine points.

"I thought we competed our tails off every possession — which is a key that we talk about. In 36 minutes you have to battle and we did that tonight. Our execution and just battling hard... we did a lot of things right," said head coach Josh Williams. "We had to make a couple more plays offensively. It didn't feel like we were as efficient as usual, but [CDH] is a good team so that might have had

something to do with it as well."

After being tied at 2-2 in the opening two minutes, Owatonna opened up the first lead of the game by going up 11-2 at the five-minute mark after a 9-0 run.

However, CDH managed to close the nine-point gap back to a tie at 15-15 with 9:20 remaining in the first half thanks to a 6-0 run of its own after being down 15-9.

The remainder of the first half saw neither team lead by more than two points, with Owatonna taking a slight 27-25 lead into halftime.

Owatonna's edge against CDH in the first half was its three-point shooting.

The Huskies finished three of seven from beyond the arc while CHD was held to just one of nine shooting from three — good for just 11.1% of their shots.

As play resumed in the second half, both teams found themselves in gridlock again for the first three minutes with neither side able to establish a comfortable lead.

CDH went on the first major run of the half at the 14:39 mark when the Raiders began a 5-0 run to lead 38-31 with 12:45 remaining.

Owatonna was forced to chip away at the lead and managed to tie the

game at 44-44 with 5:24 remaining, thanks to a three-point play by senior guard Ty Creger.

Huskies fans roared as Creger drove the lane and finished his shot while drawing a foul; his free throw attempt was successful to bring the game back to even.

After the play, Owatonna scored again to go up 46-44 and managed to hold a lead through the last few minutes

See **HUSKIES** on B2 ►



Owatonna senior Evan Dushek works the ball in the post against Cretin Derham Hall in the opening round of the MSHSL State Tournament. Dushek had a team-high 17 points in the Huskies' 52-51 loss to the Raiders.



Owatonna senior Nick Williams sits on the court after the Huskies' last-second shot to win the game fails to drop against Cretin Derham Hall. The Huskies' opening-round loss to the Raiders sent the squad to the consolation rounds of the MSHSL State Tournament.

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Owatonna's season ends with sixth place finish at state

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna Huskies took sixth place at the MSHSL State Tournament last week after losing its final matchup 72-69 in the fifth-place game against Andover High School.

Owatonna led for the majority of the game; however, a late

push by Andover saw the team take over the lead and hold it until the final buzzer.

Head coach Josh Williams's squad came out firing early again in the fifth-place game by jumping ahead 18-9 just 5:44 into the game.

Owatonna was its usual hot-shooting self and saw success from two-point and three-

point ranges, shooting 50% or better in each category.

The Huskies managed to extend their lead to 13 points at 30-17 with 7:48 remaining in the first half, however, Andover was not going to be put away easily.

Andover found consistent offense in the last seven minutes

of the half and brought the score to 41-37 at halftime as Owatonna began to lose its scoring rhythm.

After the half, Owatonna kept its lead for the first five minutes, until Andover sank a three-point shot at the 11:47 mark to go ahead 50-49.

Unfortunately for the Huskies, this lead change went on to be the last of the game as Andover managed to hold its lead despite the Huskies bringing the game to within one point on three occasions afterward.

Free throw shooting in the second half was key to Andover's win as the squad finished on 10 of 13 attempts while the Huskies scored on just three of six attempts.

Leading the Huskies in scoring was junior Blake Burmeister who scored a season-high 22 points.

The loss to Andover cemented Owatonna in sixth place for the tournament and officially ended the team's 2021-2022 season.

"I've been on the seniors a bit over the course of the tournament as we go through these games, but it's going to be hard to see them go. More so just because of the relationships they have with each other — and they're pretty good basketball players to go with that too," said Williams.

The day before the Andover game, Owatonna earned a win to continue competing in the tournament by beating Moorhead High School 63-45.

Owatonna won this game in a one-sided affair with only one lead change in the whole game.

Moorhead came out quick with an opening three-pointer, however, Owatonna managed to score on back-to-back possessions to take the lead 2:49 into the first half.



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Owatonna senior Brayden Williams goes for a driving layup against Moorhead in the Huskies' first consolation game. Williams had a team-high 26 points in the game to help the Huskies advance to the fifth-place game against Andover.



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Owatonna senior Evan Dushek shoots a fade-away jumper in the Huskies consolation game against Moorhead. Dushek had eight points in Owatonna's 63-45 win against Moorhead.

The Huskies never relinquished the lead after initially gaining it and lead 32-19 at halftime before winning 63-45.

Moorhead held its lead for a total of 15 seconds while Owatonna managed to accumulate a 21-point lead at its height and finished the game having had the lead for 33:11.

Leading the way for the Huskies in the win was senior Brayden Williams with 26 points.

Player Stats vs. Andover			
	P	R	A
Burmeister	22	2	1
B. Williams	21	5	11
Dushek	16	3	2
Creger	10	7	2
Vick	0	6	0
Ginskey	0	4	0
N. Williams	0	2	0

vs. Moorhead			
	P	R	A
B. Williams	26	5	7
Creger	16	5	6
Dushek	8	4	3
Hartman	8	4	1
N. Williams	3	1	0
Vick	2	3	0
Burmeister	0	2	0
Ginskey	0	0	1
Hodgman	0	1	0

Huskies eliminated from state title run by a whisker

◀ **HUSKIES** from B1

until the 22-second mark when CDH drilled a three-point shot to go up 52-51.

Owatonna was forced to foul CDH after a Huskies jump shot attempt failed to fall, giving CDH the chance to make it a three-point game with just three seconds left.

The Huskies got the result they hoped for when CDH missed both free throws and junior Collin Vick came down with the defensive rebound to give Owatonna possession with two seconds remaining.

Williams called a timeout promptly after the rebound to be able to draw up one more play as Huskies fans stood on their feet in anticipation.

After the timeout, Vick managed to find Creger at half court for the final shot attempt.

Creger put the shot up after shaking his defender and the attempt hit the backboard and front rim before bouncing out, ending the game at 52-51 in favor of CDH.

The loss ended Owatonna's state title hopes and sent the Huskies to the consolation rounds where they first met Moorehead High School.

Player Stats vs. Cretin Derham Hall			
	P	R	A
Dushek	17	8	2
Creger	16	8	3
B. Williams	13	3	2
N. Williams	3	0	0
Burmeister	2	2	1
Vick	0	6	0



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Owatonna's Ty Creger shows off some swagger after finishing a layup and drawing a foul against Cretin Derham Hall to potentially tie the game. Creger sank the free throw to tie the game at 44-44 with 5:24 remaining.

Owatonna's Ginskey wins Triple "A"

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

Owatonna senior Connor Ginskey won the Class AAA Triple "A" award this past week after being selected by the MSHSL for the honor.

Ginskey was chosen as Owatonna's male representative last December and advanced through the regional selection process to be a Triple "A" finalist. The senior became

eligible for the award after showing exemplary commitment and participation in academics, arts and athletics for Owatonna High School.

Aside from being a National Merit semifinalist, Ginskey also played the trumpet in the band for four years while also singing in the school's solo ensemble and choir.

Athletically, Ginskey was a part of the Owatonna cross-country team



Connor Ginskey

and was an individual participant at the MSHSL state meet.

More recently, Ginskey competed for the Owatonna basketball team and helped his squad reach a sixth-place finish at the MSHSL State Tournament.

In winning the Triple "A" award, Ginskey will receive a four-year \$1,000 scholarship as he prepares for college.

Ginskey is Owatonna's second male winner in the past two years after Lane Versteeg won the award last March.



Steele Sports
JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Twins add serious power

Since the MLB announced that it and the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) agreed to end the lockout that had held the league stagnant, no team has impressed me more with its player transactions than the Minnesota Twins.

As a longtime Oakland Athletics fan who watched the majority of the franchise be dealt off in a fire sale, it was refreshing to see the local team move in the opposite direction and push toward building a World Series-winning roster.

Familiar faces like Byron Buxton, Max Kepler and Miguel Sano will still be wearing Twins colors this season, however, they will be accompanied by a new set of star power reinforcements thanks to manager Rocco Baldelli and general manager Thad Levine.

Dawning the Twins navy blue, scarlet red and Minnesota Kasota gold for the first time this season will be shortstop Carlos Correa, catcher Gary Sánchez and third basemen Gio Urshela amongst other additions.

For those unfamiliar with the names listed, if I had to describe the three athletes in one word it would be "reliable."

All seasoned veterans in the MLB, each athlete has proven themselves to be reliable day-to-day starters — a quality that the Twins were lacking in multiple positions.

Twins fans have been quite used to the carousel that has taken place in the catcher and infield positions over the past few seasons.

Names such as Willy "La Tortuga" Astudillo, Mitch Garver, and Andrelton Simmons all saw time at their respective positions; however, the team was not able to benefit from the consistent play of one athlete over the course of the season.

This is the missing piece of the puzzle that Baldelli and Levine were working to solve and have seemingly found the answer to.

Easily the biggest signing of the bunch is Correa, a superstar shortstop who comes to the Twin Cities after a seven-year stint in Houston that saw him win a World Series title in 2017 with the Astros.

Twins fans can expect to see a resurgence of the "Bomba Squad" once Correa comes to town.

The Puerto Rican superstar has hit 133 home runs since entering the league in 2015 and averages a steady 19 home runs a season.

The front office staff has put a great deal of faith in Correa shifting the Twins' culture to being a perennial contender by signing him to a three-year, \$105.3 million contract.

Also looking to contribute to the culture change are Sánchez and Urshela, whom both came to the Twins after the team sent Josh Donaldson, Isaiah Kiner-Falefa and Ben Rortved to the New York Yankees in a trade.

Sánchez will bring his power to the lineup, adding yet another deep ball threat to the squad, while Urshela will serve as a solid defensive piece on the hot corner for the team.

Minnesota has proven through its off-season moves that the time in Minnesota to win a World Series is now.

After putting together multiple competitive seasons over the course of the past few years, it appears the Twins have decided to go all-in in 2022 and bring home the team's first World Series trophy since 1991.

NRHEG girls track captures Mankato Invitational

NRHEG's boys and girls track and field teams competed at Minnesota State University-Mankato last week where the Panthers' girls team took home first place and the boys team took third.

Spearheading the way for the team were Quinn VanMaldeghem, Torri Vaale and Annabelle Petsinger.

The three Panthers had the team's best finish of the day in the 1,600-meter race where VanMaldeghem took first, Vaale took second and Petsinger took third.

The finish earned NRHEG 24 of its 129.5 team points.

Also winning for the girls side were Evelyn Nydegger in the 400-meter and triple jump, Natalie Johnson in the 55-meter low hurdles and the team's 4x800 squad.

The boys side took third place with 78 points behind the 82.6 points of Medford.

NRHEG's boys squad saw one win on the day with Sawyer Prigge taking home first in the high jump with a height of five feet and 10 inches.

NRHEG will next compete at the Hayfield Invitational on Thursday, April 5 at 4:30 p.m.

Robb brothers earn a pair of podiums

BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS
SPORTS EDITOR

Ever since they were young, Peyton and Cael Robb have had a passion for wrestling; this March, both athletes made wrestling dreams become reality.

The elder Robb, Peyton, made his mark at the NCAA Tournament in Detroit on March 19 by taking fourth place at 157 pounds to earn his first-ever All-American honors, while younger brother, Cael, earned his career-best podium finish at the MSHSL State Tournament by taking third place.

"It's just cool that some of the guys that I came into the team looking up to — guys who had their names and pictures on the wall outside the Nebraska wrestling room — now I'm one of those guys. It's just cool to see that transition from looking up to those guys to now being one of them," said Peyton Robb.

Peyton Robb earned his spot amongst Nebraska wrestling royalty by winning five straight matches in the consolation side of the 157-pound bracket after a loss in the second of the tournament.

Ranked as a No. 10 seed in the tournament, two of Robb's five wins came over lower-seeded opponents, with one coming against North Carolina State's No. 4 seed Ed Scott and the other against Arizona State's No. 3 seed Jacori Teemer.

Peyton Robb's 6-4 decision win over

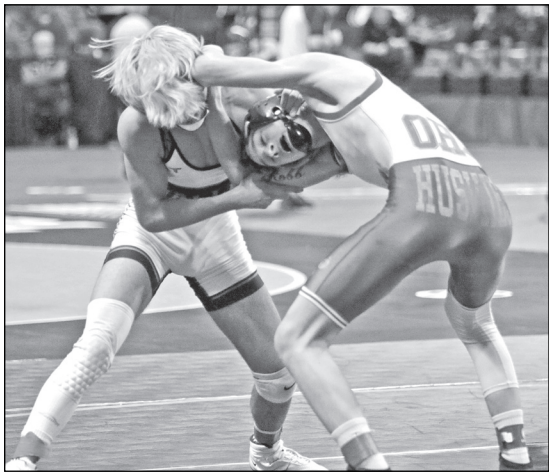
Teemer in the "blood round" — commonly referred to as such because the winner will make the podium and the loser will not — earned him a spot in the third-place match and a guaranteed place on the podium.

While Peyton Robb was beaten 7-2 by Iowa State's No. 1 seed David Carr, the wrestler's run to the podium was nothing short of spectacular.

"It was so incredible. He's a huge inspiration to me. We've always watched the NCAA championships on TV when we were in grade school, so for him to be able to wrestle at the NCAA tournament and get an NCAA All-American fourth-place finish... it's what people dream of. I know it's been what he's been dreaming of these past few years at Nebraska. For him to be able to reach that goal and accomplish it, it was an amazing experience," said Cael Robb.

Peyton Robb was greeted with hugs aplenty after his blood round win over Teemer, and could be seen running off the mat directly to his mother, Carrie, and girlfriend, Taylor Kroe, who waited with arms wide open for a celebratory hug.

"They both support me like no other. They always say that it almost feels like they're out on the mat with me when they watch me. It was special to have them there



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHNNIE PHILLIPS

Owatonna junior Cael Robb grapples with his opponent in the third-place match at the MSHSL State Tournament. Robb won the match and took home third place — his best career finish at the tournament.

"It's just cool that some of the guys that I came into the team looking up to — guys who had their names and pictures on the wall outside the Nebraska wrestling room — now I'm one of those guys."

Peyton Robb
Nebraska Wrestler

to share that moment with me."

Peyton Robb's run at the NCAA tournament was almost a mirror image of Cael's journey at the MSHSL State Tournament where the Owatonna Huskies junior took third place by winning four consecutive matches in the backside of the bracket after a second-round loss.

The two brothers said that they didn't give much thought to the coincidence that their runs were similar, but both acknowledged the same mindset of resilience and discipline that they learned from their father, Tracey, as young wrestlers.

"Once you lose, you're not safe. I just wanted

to go out there [in the consolation matches] and score as many points as possible to feel safe. I wanted to dominate those matches on the backside to let everyone know that I shouldn't have lost on the front side," said Cael Robb.

As another wrestling season officially comes to a close for both of the brothers, both took time to reflect on lessons learned over the course of their careers.

"It's taught me so many different lessons that it's almost hard to pick which one is the most important. I think a huge one is just respecting others and the respect that I think wrestlers carry for one another. It's also taught me that I have to be courageous. My coaches always say, 'You have to beat fear with courage.' I think it's taught me how to put fear aside and keep my emotions in check," said Peyton Robb.

Peyton Robb will compete for the University of Nebraska, Lincoln again next year with two more seasons of eligibility available to him, while Cael Robb will continue his journey with the Owatonna Huskies wrestling team as a senior.

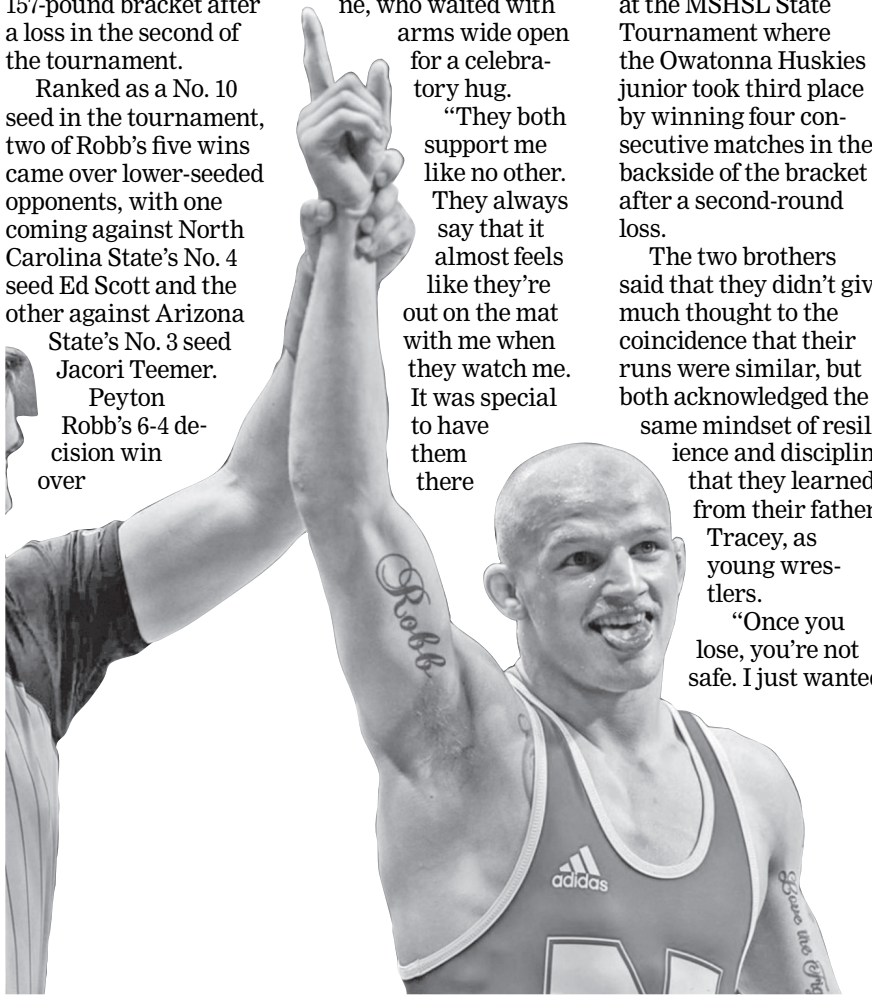


PHOTO FROM INSTAGRAM

Nebraska's Peyton Robb gets his hand raised after a win at the NCAA Tournament on March 19 in Detroit. Robb won five straight matches in the consolation bracket at the tournament to make it to the third-place match, where he earned a fourth-place finish and All-American status after losing to Iowa State's David Carr by a 7-2 decision.

Medford track kicks off season by placing at Mankato

The Medford Tigers boys and girls track teams finished in second and fourth place respectively at Minnesota State University-Mankato last week to kick off the 2022 season.

Medford's boys team had a strong outing and won five races at the meet, while the girls team added two wins of

its own.

Leading the boys team were Henry Grayson, Jesse Ortiz and Paul Cole, who all finished first through third in the 55-meter race to earn Medford 24 points and the team's best finish of the day.

Grayson recorded the team's most wins by winning the 55-meter

and 400-meter races.

Also winning for the Tigers were Cohen Stursa in the 1600, Ortiz in the 200, and the team's 4x800 squad.

The boys squad was second only to Maple River who tallied a blistering 184.5 points while Medford took second with 82.6

As for the girls, Jackie

Cole recorded both of Medford's wins by taking first in the 55-meter race and the long jump event.

The girls squad took fourth in Mankato with a total of 68.3 points and finished behind WEM's 95 points in third.

The Tigers will next compete at Plainview-Elgin-Millville on Friday at 4:30 p.m.



OWATONNA PROUD

B4 | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2022

OWATONNA SCHOOLS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

NHS Talent Show raises funds for Big Brothers Big Sisters

BY ANNIKA WIESE
OHS MAGNET WRITER

Annually, Owatonna students and staff have the opportunity to showcase their fun and unique talents at the National Honor Society Talent Show. The talent show is an exciting and meaningful event for the Owatonna community to come together to raise money for this year's elected cause, Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Southern Minnesota.

As the nation's largest donor and volunteer supported network, Big Brothers-Big Sisters makes genuine, sincere matches between adult volunteers and children all across the country. The one-on-

one relationships work to mentor and support the children involved to reach higher aspirations, greater confidence, better relationships, avoidance of risky behaviors and educational success.

National Honor Society has the power to impact not only the high school but the community too. Senior and NHS President Daniela Ortiz said, "We stand behind the four pillars and we work hard to reflect this influence onto our school and community through these pillars. Whether this is through tutoring for OHS students, community service around town or even fundrais-

ing for our local Big Brothers-Big Sisters."

Owatonna's NHS chapter honors students for their scholarship, leadership, character and service. The talent show is their annual large group service project that would not be possible without the help and support of NHS officers and members here at OHS.

The show has been an Owatonna High School tradition since 2002. Students audition weeks prior to the event for a chance to compete in the final show to be awarded recognition and a cash prize. The winners of the show were decided by judges and OHS teachers Mr. Doug Wanous, Mr.

Pat Churchill and Mr. Adam Woitalla. The talent show gives participants the opportunity to show off their natural born gift or a skill they've discovered over the years. This night makes way for student's hidden talents to be made known.

The show was filled with students braving the stage with acts from anything from music to dancing to comedy. The top three finishers were senior Jacob Wieman in third place who sang "Mr. Jones" by Counting Crows, senior Lainie Rahn in second place who danced a contemporary solo to "Goodbye" by NF and junior Cali Hedlund who performed a vocal



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Winners from the NHS Talent Show include, from left: Cali Hedlund (first place), Lainie Rahn (second place) and Jacob Wieman (third place). Hedlund performed a vocal and piano solo while Rahn danced a contemporary solo and Wieman sang a solo.

and piano solo to the song "Almost There" from The Princess and the Frog.

The NHS 2022 Talent Show winner is Cali Hedlund. After the show, Hedlund said, "I've been singing for as long as I could remember and the

highlight of my night was being awarded by Mr. Wanous." A total of \$2,300 was raised from this year's ticket sales, donations and raffle tickets and will be going towards NHS and the Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Southern Minnesota organization.

Big 9 Conference champs



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The speech team from Owatonna High School came away as champions of the Big 9 Conference. Congratulations to all the team members.

Intern programs expands to 8 students

Federated Insurance is in its fourth year of partnering with Owatonna High School to provide students paid internship opportunities. The program has expanded from four students the first year to eight students during the spring semester this year.

Interns work two hours each afternoon, Monday through Friday, from the end of January through May. The opportunities include positions in Life Operations, Property & Casualty Services, Custodial Services, Print Center, Stockroom/Mailroom, Information Technology (IT) - PC Tech, and IT - Security. Each student has an internship supervisor who oversees their work. Interns learn a wide variety of work skills, relating to their department.

Interested students work through Megan Horton, SteeleCoWorks workforce coordinator, Brian Coleman, OPS Career Pathways Navigator, and



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Students receiving paid internships through Federated Insurance include: front row, from left: Guillermo Barajas (Print Center), Madison Voracek (Life Operations), Olivia Shaw (P&C Services- Business Coordination Center), Ethan Claeys (Custodial); back row: Niveah Welch (Stockroom/Mailroom), Cassandra Thul (IT- PC Tech), Christopher Goodpaster (Custodial), Brayden Hansen (IT-Security).

Tate Cummins, OHS Business Internship teacher, to secure the positions. Students from Owatonna High School, Owatonna Area Learning Center (ALC), Choice Academy, Medford

High School, and Blooming Prairie High School are eligible to intern during the spring semester of their senior year.

Students currently interning at Federated In-

surance include: Guillermo Barajas, Ethan Claeys, Christopher Goodpaster, Brayden Hansen, Olivia Shaw, Cassandra Thul, Madison Voracek, and Niveah Welch.

Students of the Week

Elementary School



Secily Conner
Fifth grade
Parents: Forrest and Tiffany Conner
Secily is a shining light in our 5th grade classroom. She is hardworking and excels in all her work. She is also a leader in our classroom and school. She always sets an example with her good behavior. Secily works well with others and adds such joy to our classroom community!

Middle School



Kai Castellano
Seventh grade
Parent: Kelly Castellano
Kai has really made great strides in the last month! Each day, she shows determination and enthusiasm to learn, especially about American history. Kai shows confidence at school and has been growing positive friendships. Keep up the great work, Kai!

United Way
of Steele County

Steele County Free Fair

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Steele Talkin'
KRYSTAL VIKTORA

4-H activities blossom

Spring is here and 4-H continues to blossom!

What has 4-H been up to this year, you ask?

In February, we hosted our annual pasta dinner and silent auction. We thank everyone who came out and supported 4-H.

Throughout the school year, 4-H has been popping into NRHEG Elementary school to facilitate engineering lessons to the second and fourth graders. Students have had the opportunity to learn about 4-H and conduct monthly engineering challenges. Youth have created egg drops, welded with chocolate, and made roller coasters to name a few.

Our Shooting Sports and Wildlife groups are active each Saturday this spring practicing archery and BB. This program continues to grow and thrive. If you have an interest in the shooting sports project area, we are always looking for more trainers to help grow our program.

Looking to summer, we are excited to have our regional 4-H camp back in full swing. We invite all area youth grades 3-8 to attend summer 4-H camp with us at Camp Victory in Zumbro Falls. Camp will be held June 21-23. If you are interested contact our office or visit our website for more information.

Summer will be here before we know it. We anticipate a great summer ahead and look forward to growing and learning together.

Krystal Viktora is a 4-H program coordinator for Steele County. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Fun at the Home Show

Hundreds of people enjoyed the annual Home & Recreation Show sponsored by KOWZ Radio of Owatonna this past weekend at the Four Seasons Centre. One of the attractions for children was an oversized Connect Four game. Clara Ebenhoeh, 6, of Owatonna, left, and Jackson Wilson, 2, also of Owatonna place checkers into the slots. Jackson is being held by his father, Mike Wilson.

Bennett seeks new house district

State Representative Peggy Bennett, R-Albert Lea, will seek re-election in the new House District 23A, which includes southern Steele County.

The new district announced in February's redistricting plan also consists of most of Freeborn County, the eastern two-thirds of Faribault County, along with parts of Waseca County.

"It has been an honor to serve the



Rep. Peggy Bennett

people of this district as their state representative. There is more work to be done, especially in the area of education and

government reform," Bennett said.

Bennett is finishing her fourth term as a state representative, and for two terms served as the assistant minority leader of the Minnesota House Republican caucus. She is a retired elementary school teacher, having served in that capacity for 33 years.

With her background, education continues to be a great passion for

See BENNETT on B6 ►

Strike up the band

Concert benefits Owatonna music programs

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

Scott Weckman and Julia Christenson have plans to study math and/or data science in college, but both say they'll keep making music after leaving Owatonna High School.

The seniors credit Owatonna Public Schools music programs and Music Boosters of Owatonna with fostering their talents. Weckman took up the baritone in fifth grade and switched to tuba in seventh grade, while Christenson has played viola since fourth grade.

The Boosters, who will host an annual benefit concert April 9 at Trinity Lutheran Church, raise funds that go directly into the district's music programs. Each concert has a specific goal, and this year's is to purchase a baritone saxophone for Owatonna Middle School.

Weckman will be part of a tuba ensemble playing "Power," composed by University of Wisconsin professor John D. Stevens.

"I just love playing the tuba," he said. "It's something I can keep

challenging myself at. I can just keep pushing myself to get better."

Both students say music has influenced their education outside the band or orchestra room. Playing the tuba gives Weckman confidence and helps keep him focused. He said it even helps him in his math classes.

For Christenson, the friendships made in orchestra have led her to get involved in other activities—color guard, the school musical, speech, National Honor Society, and women's empowerment, environmental, and diversity and inclusion groups.

"I'm very thankful for the Music Boosters of Owatonna because music is such an important piece in my life," Christenson added. "I'm lucky to have grown up in a school district that values music and funds music programs."

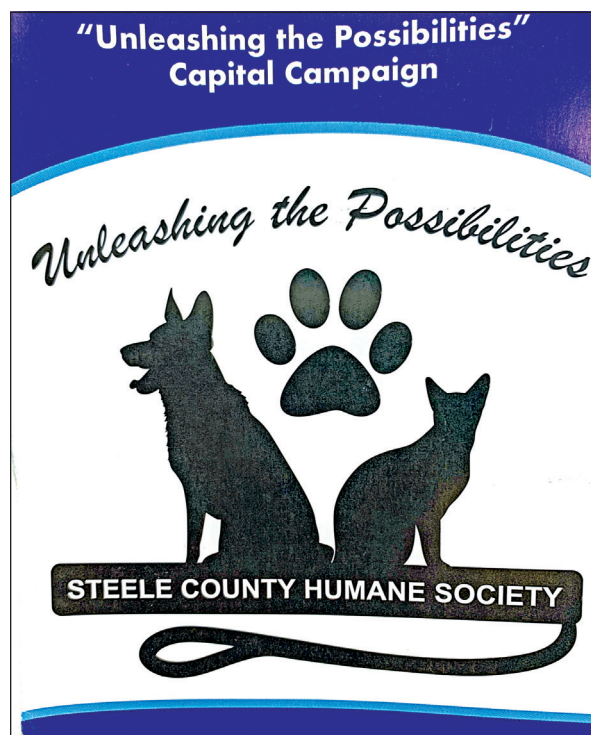
Music Boosters co-president Dawn Phelps said the organization buys instruments, provides scholarships, covers fees for festivals and conventions, and will pay the extra cost to transport

See STRIKE on B6 ►



STAFF PHOTO BY JONI HUBRED

Scott Weckman will be among the students who perform during the April 9 Music Boosters of Owatonna Benefit Concert. He purchased his own tuba last year and plans to keep playing at Augustana College this fall.



Humane Society reboots capital campaign

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

Two years — and \$100,000 — after the Steele County Humane Society first organized its capital campaign for a shelter, the push is on again.

The goal of building, furnishing and equipping an animal shelter, like many other things, paused when COVID-19 hit.

But in that time, do-

nations and money market investments moved the needle on the \$2.5 million goal, which the group estimates would cover not only start-up costs, but operating expenses for five years.

That leaves about \$1.8 million yet to be raised in order to meet a planned ground-breaking this fall.

"Unleashing the Possibilities" begins with a silent auction from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday

at Sparetime Entertainment in Owatonna.

"We sent out our first batch of letters the week the state shut down" in March 2020, said Karen Thompson, a SCHS Board Member and volunteer.

That's confirmed with a quick glance at the pamphlet explaining the capital campaign: The dates and dollar amounts have all been updated by hand with a black pen.

"It was too wasteful" to reprint them, Thompson said. "It's donor dollars that pay for everything."

The SCHS, founded in 1989, has never had a shelter; it's a foster-based humane society.

"The goal has always been to have a building," Thompson said, "but it's always more expensive than you think," thanks to spe-

See HUMANE on B6 ►





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Don't be surprised by Social Security taxes

When you reach the appropriate age, it's easy to apply for Social Security retirement benefits – just go to Social Security's website, fill out the online form and you're essentially done. But many people overlook the next step – completing Form W-4V, which asks you how much federal income tax you want withheld from your benefits. And if you skip this step, you could face an unpleasant surprise when it's tax-filing time, because Social Security benefits can indeed add to your taxable income.

Here are the details:

If you're a single filer... If your "combined" income is between \$25,000 and \$34,000, you may have to pay income tax on up to 50 percent of your Social Security benefits. ("Combined" income includes your adjusted gross income, non-taxable interest, and one-half of your annual Social Security benefits.) If your combined income is more than \$34,000, up to 85 percent of your benefits may be taxable.

If you're married and file jointly... If you and your spouse have a combined income between \$32,000 and \$44,000, you may be taxed on up to 50 percent of your benefits. If your combined income is more than \$44,000, up to 85 percent of your benefits may be taxable.

These numbers might seem high, but they don't mean you'll lose 50 percent, or 85 percent, of your benefits – they are just the percentages of benefits you may be taxed on, at your personal income tax rate.

To help avoid a big tax bill or an underpayment penalty, you can file Form W-4V with the Social Security Administration and request to have 7, 10, 12 or 22 percent of your monthly benefit withheld. Your tax advisor can help you choose the withholding percentage that's appropriate for your situation.

The amount of taxes you may need to pay will also depend on when you start taking Social Security. The earlier you take benefits, the smaller your monthly checks, and the smaller the taxes. But taxes should not be a key issue in deciding when you need to begin collecting your payments. Rather, you should consider other factors, such as your anticipated life expectancy, your employment situation, your spending needs and the benefits for your spouse.

Here's something else to keep in mind: Because Social Security taxes are based on your overall income, as described above, the amount of money you withdraw during retirement, and where that money comes from, can also affect your tax situation. For example, withdrawals from a traditional IRA are taxable and will increase your adjusted gross income, but withdrawals from a Roth IRA will be tax-free, provided you've had your account at least five years and you're over 59 1/2, so this money won't enter into your taxable income calculations and it won't increase the tax you owe on your Social Security benefits. Similarly, withdrawals from health savings accounts (HSAs) used for qualified health expenses also won't count toward your taxable income.

By knowing exactly what to expect from Social Security, including the tax effects, you can more effectively incorporate your benefits into your overall retirement income planning – and the better your plans, the more you'll be able to enjoy your life as a retiree.

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STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Pipers at St. Mary's in Geneva

Rochester's Caledonian Pipe Band played at a St. Mary's Church Fish Fry in Geneva on March 11. Hundreds of fish lovers turned out for this special event.

Concert benefits Owatonna music programs

◀ **STRIKE** from B5 students to events in a larger coach, rather than a school bus.

Most of all, she said, "We want to make it so nobody says they can't participate because they can't afford it."

The benefit concerts that provide funding are typically held in January at the high school auditorium. Phelps is excited about this year's COVID-driven changes, particularly the new venue. An early spring date also promises better weather.

"The music selections are always

amazing," she said, adding students of all ages play during the evening. "It's just a really diverse group of musicians, and it's a lot of fun."

Attendees will have time to browse a silent auction with items like craft beer, an iPad music stand, spa-themed baskets, passes to a local axe throwing venue, and more.

A Boosters member for more than six years, Phelps understands well the benefits of school music programs. Daughter Lauren is a freshman member of the Concordia College

band in Moorhead. Son Carsen, an Owatonna High sophomore, plays with a range of musical groups.

"Every single thing they've been involved in has been supported by the Boosters," she said. "It's been such a huge part of our family."

The Music Boosters of Owatonna Benefit Concert starts with the silent auction at 6 p.m.; the concert follows at 7 p.m. Tickets at the door are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students. You'll find Trinity Lutheran Church at 609 Lincoln Ave. S. in Owatonna.



STAFF PHOTO BY JONI HUBRED

Julia Christenson has played viola since fourth grade. She hasn't chosen a college yet, but plans to pursue music as a minor or part of a double major in data science.

Bennett seeks new house district

◀ **BENNETT** from B5 Rep. Bennett. She believes our school districts need fewer statewide mandates and more local control with public transparency.

"Teachers need good parents, and parents need good teachers to create the teamwork necessary for kids to be successful in school,"

Bennett noted.

Bennett has also been known as an advocate for tax relief, your Second Amendment rights, and pro-life initiatives. She also prioritizes government reform, as she understands government must be less invasive and more functional for the people it serves.

Bennett said she is looking forward to hearing from residents in the new House district and learning about their concerns.

"I always enjoy getting around to the various communities in our district to listen and learn and have greatly valued the input and expertise of

those who have shared their thoughts with me," Bennett said. "My thanks to the people of this district for giving me the opportunity and privilege to serve this wonderful area. I would be honored to have their continued support to represent their interests in the Minnesota House of Representatives."

Humane Society reboots capital campaign

◀ **HUMANE** from B5 cialized ventilation and disposal requirements.

In November 2016, the group bought land near the Chase Lake Dog Park, off State Avenue, where the new facility will be built.

Of course, construction prices have also gone up in the past two years.

"We're looking at alternative building materials," Thompson said, "and it may not look like our original plan."

In addition to providing a safe haven

for animals, the group hopes to partner with schools to educate the students about animals and their care, in addition to providing opportunities for volunteer hours.

The plan is to also partner with local law enforcement to provide a place for domestic animals that have been in traffic crashes, until they can be reunited with their families.

The non-profit has one paid employee and more than 25 community volunteers.

In addition to this

IF YOU GO

What: SCHS Silent Auction

When: noon-3 p.m. Saturday

Where: Sparetime Entertainment in Owatonna

Why: Fundraiser for the society's first shelter

weekend's fundraiser, there are also naming and sponsoring opportunities for significant donors, as well as options for a brass "memory pawprint" to be displayed in the lobby for a \$100 general donation.

The auction will feature kitchen and

spa baskets, as well as multiple pet-oriented baskets. There will be several hand-made items, including stained-glass art and a lap quilt.

Sparetime Entertainment will donate \$1 from every burger basket they sell that day to the SCHS.



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Lessons from kids on a hobby farm

BY KAY FATE
STAFF WRITER

The similarities between baby goats and their human counterparts — both called “kids” — is hard to miss.

Never is that more apparent than in a conversation with Sean Hughes, a hobby



STAFF PHOTO BY KAY FATE

Sean Hughes, who owns a hobby farm with his wife, Tami, east of Pratt, holds one of the Nigerian Dwarf kids that was born in early March. The babies weigh less than 5 pounds at birth.

farmer east of Pratt who also happens to be the activities director at Owatonna Middle School and the facilities scheduler for the entire district.

Hughes grew up on a dairy farm; his stepfather was a county extension agent.

“Originally, I wanted to get into extension work, 4-H,” he said, but

after high school, he spent six years fitting dairy cattle for shows and sales.

He eventually graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in animal science and found a job in the swine industry.

It was a conversation with the director of community education in Owatonna that brought Hughes back to his original goal of working with kids. There was an opening in extension, and Hughes got the position.

“That’s how I got started in the school district,” he said. His love of sports then lent itself to the role of activities director.

Hughes smiles at the obvious joke that he’s still around animals all day.

“A lot of things the goat kids do, you see the human kids do, too,” he said.

For example, the yearling goats — those born last year — have to be separated from the newest batch, born just three weeks ago.

“There’s a pecking order, just like middle school kids going to the high school,” Hughes said.

He and his wife, Tami, met at the University of Minnesota-Waseca, where she was majoring in equine management.

So how did the couple — who grew up around cattle, swine and sheep, as well as horses — end up on a hobby farm with 45 does and eight Nigerian Dwarf goats, not to mention the assorted babies?

“It was one of those spur-of-the moment deals,” Hughes said. “When we were cutting back on horses, we went to an auction one November, looking for hay. We went back to an animal shed, and they had a bunch of baby goats — really young ones.”

Someone else bought the males, so the



STAFF PHOTO BY KAY FATE

From left, mama goats Saffron, Peppermint and Paprika keep an eye on their kids after owner Sean Hughes opened the gate of the pen. Now three weeks old, the babies are very active. Hughes and his wife, Tami, own a hobby farm east of Pratt.

“These kids don’t talk back.”

Sean Hughes, Referring to Goats
Teacher/Goat Farmer

Hughes bought five females.

“We had this barn,” he said, “but we weren’t ready for goats, so the first two days we kept them in the basement of the house — that’s how small they were.”

They had a friend with Boer goats who told them they might as well come get a buck for their females.

“We thought we’d stay at about 10 does,” Hughes said, “but it kept growing.”

That was about 13 years ago.

“It’s getting out of hand to be a hobby farm,” Hughes said, “but we’re down to three horses.”

They sell the goats to Geneva meats, which supplies several halal markets in the Metro area.

“We sell them at 70 to 80 pounds,” Hughes said. “It’s where the halal market wants them, and you always try to get what the market wants.”

That takes about five months: “If they’re a single kid and mom’s a good milker, they’ll grow fast,” he said.

There were babies born in December, January and February; three does delivered in early March and two more are due in May.

The Nigerian Dwarf kids weigh between two and four pounds at birth, five at the most.

The move to the smaller breed came “because we always got asked to bring goats to petting zoos,” Hughes said, and the regular goats are simply harder to handle, especially in a crowd.

In addition, his wife would like to get into goat yoga.

But it’s morphed into something else, something that combines Hughes’s vocation and his avocation.

“We started taking them in for the special ed kids — but it’s never been just special ed. Everybody wants to see them,” he said.

In fact, he’d love to see them used as therapy animals.

“The first time I took them in (to school), one of the social workers came and got one of the babies right away, and a half hour later one of

the students brought it back,” Hughes said. “He’d had a meltdown that morning — and she gave him the goat, and it calmed him down.”

He gets a little emotional, thinking about how meaningful animals can be for the students, and is thinking on an even larger scale.

“We’re kind of hoping with the new high school, if we could have (some type of farm facility) on the property” it would be beneficial, Hughes said.

In many southern states, schools have programs that allow the students to “have animals for show, and they have to do all the chores, and have all the responsibilities.”

He knows all about that: Hughes typically begins his day at 6 a.m. with 90 minutes of chores, then heads to OMS for “my 8 or 10 hours, then I come home and do it all again. To me, this is my relief from the stress of the day. It’s relaxing, to let them out and watch them play.”

See **LESSONS** on B8 ►

Make your lawn do double duty by planting a bee lawn

Are you interested in doing more to help our native pollinator insects? You can make your lawn do double duty! A flowering lawn can provide much-needed food resources for bees and other beneficial pollinators in addition to being a place for recreation.

One way to provide resources for pollinators while keeping the function of a lawn is to incorporate other plants such as dutch white clover, self-heal and creeping thyme. These plants have the right type of flowers for bees, are low growing, can be mowed, and can tolerate foot traffic. They are also moderately competitive — they can hold their own with turfgrasses without taking over.

When you read “dutch white clover” you may think — hey

that’s a weed! It is unfortunate that white clover is often thought of as a weed in home lawns, because it has many positive traits that make it ideal for a bee lawn. It is tolerant to some shade and is adaptable to different soil types. White clover also has one particular trait that the other two bee lawn flowers don’t have. As a legume, it has the ability to fix nitrogen. This means that white clover doesn’t need to be fertilized with nitrogen, making it a good part of a low-input lawn.

Along with thinking about which species of flowers you might add to your lawn, you’ll want to think about which turfgrasses will be compatible with added flowers. Studies by UMN researchers have identified a few species of cool-season grasses that perform

better in bee lawns in Minnesota.

A mix of fine fescues is considered the best option for bee lawns because fine fescues do well with little to no inputs of fertilizer, irrigation, or pesticides for weed control. Plus they are compatible growing together with bee lawn flowers. Fine fescues are a group of five different species that include:

- Strong creeping red fescue
- Slender creeping red fescue
- Chewings fescue
- Hard fescue
- Sheep fescue

The popularity of bee lawns has led to the availability of pre-mixed seed blends. As a



On The Farm
CLAIRE LACANNE

general rule, per 1,000 square feet, we recommend a seeding rate of:

- Fine fescue — 4 lbs.
- Dutch white clover — 1.1 oz.
- Creeping thyme — 0.16 oz.
- Self-heal — 1.2 oz.

You don’t need to convert your entire lawn. It’s okay to convert only a particular

are or tackle one area at a time. Consider how much your lawn is used. Lower traffic areas are good choices for a bee lawn to give pollinating insects space to forage. If you have a sloped area, that could be a good option. Whoever mows the lawn may appreciate mowing that part of the yard less frequently — bee lawns are designed to be low input and don’t need as much mowing.

Once you’ve established your bee lawn,

you will need to care for it moving forward. If you have already been maintaining a lawn, it really isn’t much different. Potentially, your bee lawn will become less work, but with more insect wildlife enjoyment.

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



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Time to Think Spring

GARDENING TIP OF THE WEEK
LATE MARCH GARDENING TIPS

- Prune trees and shrubs to remove damaged and broken branches, before they leaf out completely.
- Clean up perennial beds, with an eye on the forecast.
- Leave a bunch of hollow stemmed perennials lay on the ground for our native nesting bees.
- Clean up old bird seed under feeders.
- Scrub bird baths and disinfect with a drop of bleach.



COURTESY: Julie Wanous • Steele County Master Gardener

BLOOMING PRAIRIE

APRIL 5
10 a.m. — Online Storytime, BP Library

ELLENDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

APRIL 1
11 a.m. — SEMCAC, Community Building

APRIL 2
9 a.m. — Ellendale Heritage Society, Community Building

APRIL 4
11 a.m. — SEMCAC, Community Building
6 p.m. — Ellendale Fire Dept. Meeting, Community Building

APRIL 6
11 a.m. — SEMCAC, Community Building

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

APRIL 2
11 a.m. — Ducks Unlimited Bingo, Owatonna Eagles

APRIL 4
6:30 p.m. — Open Arms Suicide Monthly Meeting, Owatonna VFW
6:30 p.m. — Garden Talk, Owatonna Library
7 p.m. — Steele County Planning Commission Meeting, County Admin Building

APRIL 5
10 a.m. — Genealogy Club, History Center

10:30 a.m. — Online Storytime, Owatonna Library
Noon — West Hills Commission Meeting, Arts Center
7 p.m. — Owatonna City Council Meeting, City Hall

APRIL 7
SCFF Board Meeting, Mother's Rest

APRIL 8
10 a.m. — Past & Present Antiques & Gifts Open House, Waseca

Lenten benefit fish dinner announced

The Knights of Columbus Lenten benefit fish dinner will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, April 1, 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 4th Degree Knights of Columbus, (Duane Ludewig 507-676-470, Greg Nelson 507-676-1748, Laverne Klecker 507-456-6738), or at the KC Hall, 820 S Elm Ave.

Tickets on sale for Book of Golden Deeds

The biannual Book of Golden Deeds tickets are now on sale at Kottkes and Ins-tyPrints in Owatonna.

There are five great candidates that have been nominated for this honor and all are very worthy of this award. The candidates will be announced in the near future.

The event will be held Thursday, April 21 starting at 6 p.m. at Torey's in downtown Owatonna. Tickets are \$25 and must be purchased by April 14.

This event is sponsored by State Farm Insurance-Steve Carroll and Berkshire Hathaway Advantage Real Estate.

Sudoku Corner

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

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

Sample craft brews and help build homes

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

If building new homes for Steele County neighbors in need isn't enough to get you to Two Rivers Habitat for Humanity's April 9 Hops for Habitat event, consider this observation from agency spokesperson Ken Quattrin:

"We have 30 breweries under one roof. Think how much money you would spend just in gas to visit all those breweries!"

The annual fundraiser, launched in 2018, will showcase local brewers, many from around Minnesota, and—new this year—Stone Brewing, based in Escondido, Calif., and Downeast Cider House, coming in from Boston.

"When you start seeing these opportunities show up, you know you're growing your platform," Quattrin said. "It's been great to see this thing take off."

He also expects ticket sales to grow this year. VIP passes, which include early entry and exclusive tastes and perks, have already sold out. Based on the number of tickets sold already, organizers expect more than 300 people at the Four Seasons Centre in Owatonna.

Quattrin hopes the



Working on the Hops for Habitat April 9 event are committee members, from left: Ben Merritt, Derek Delaney, Curt Orchard, Taylor Herman, Tom Tuma and Shelby Duckworth.

event will raise at least \$20,000, all of which goes toward building houses in Steele, Waseca, Dodge, Olmsted, and Wabasha counties.

"But knowing the generosity of Owatonna and the surrounding communities, I'm sure we'll go way over that," he said. "They see the homes we're building... You know you're helping our mission to provide affordable housing while sipping some great brews."

Attendees can grab a bite at Evan's Eatery food truck out of New Richland, which serves up tasty burgers and fries. Singer/songwriter Travis Thamert, an Owatonna native who appeared on The Voice, will perform during the evening.

Quattrin pointed out

HOPS FOR HABITAT

- Saturday, April 9
- Four Seasons Centre- Owatonna
- \$40- Advance; \$50- At Door; Designated Drivers- \$5
- Go to www.tworivershabitat.org for advance tickets
- Featuring 30 breweries
- Proceeds benefit Habitat for Humanity

that anyone who acts as "designated driver" for friends can purchase a discounted ticket and still take part in the non-alcoholic fun.

"We're really promoting everyone to have a good time," Quattrin said. "We want to put the 'fun' back in fundraising, but we also want everyone to be safe."

Hops for Habitat wouldn't run at all, Quattrin said, without the 40 volunteers who help organize and work

the event. Also, Two Rivers Habitat for Humanity relies on volunteers who work with the Rochester-based non-profit to build homes for those who want and are willing to help build a better place to live.

"Volunteers are the backbone of our organization," Quattrin said.

The organization tries to build two homes per year, but this year has set an aggressive goal of four, including one "recycled" home and a two-unit duplex.

Stories of hope by Congolese women is WCO April program

The Woman's Club of Owatonna will meet at 1 p.m. Thursday, April 7 at St. John Lutheran Church, 1301 Lincoln Ave.

The program is "Congolese Women's Stories of Transformation and Hope."

Guests are invited to attend. Greeters are Audrey Holland and Audrey Parker. Co-chairs of the tea committee are Marlene Camilli and Nijole Aaseth. They are

being assisted by Sandy Boss, Linda Garady, Sandy Muir, Nancy Fichten-Rucks, and Jane Middlestadt.

Owatonna has connections with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) despite it being halfway around the world. The DRC has incredible mineral riches and those resources have not led to wealth for local communities but instead to on-going armed conflicts for the

minerals that have ended up in our cell phones and electric vehicles. Women are often victims of sexual violence in this conflict.

There are stories of transformation when the young women enter the programs of Let Africa Live, a Congolese-lead organization that provides job skill training and trauma healing.

A partner with Let Africa Live is Mwendo

Congo, a Minnesota-based non-profit. Two leaders from the DRC, Pastor Kubisa Muzenende and Dr. Edwige Mubonze, inspired forming Mwendo Congo. Amy Chatelaine of Owatonna became friends with them and invited them to share their story at Trinity Lutheran Church, resulting in Owatonna support of the organization. Amy and her father, Dave Chatelaine, both serve on the Mwendo Congo board of directors.

A presenter on April 7 will be Elizabeth Andress, co-founder and now secretary of the Mwendo board. She lives with her spouse in Golden Valley and holds an MA in education. She recently retired.

She met Kubisa and Edwige in 2014 when they were students in her English class in St. Paul's community education program. Their stories moved her to invite others to hear about the people of DRC that resulted in forming Mwendo Congo, still an all-volunteer organization.

Joining her will be Wema Kusisa, a volunteer at Mwendo Congo. She lives in Minnetonka. She grew up in Bukavu in DRC. She holds a bachelor degree in public health and is now pursuing her masters in global health.

Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree

Fish Dinner

Friday, April 1st

5 to 7 PM

TICKETS

\$13 in Advance
at KC Hall or Beneficiary
\$14 at the Door

Kids under 6 eat Free

ALL YOU CARE TO EAT

MENU

Fried or Baked Fish Plate

Vegetables
Mashed Potatoes with
Country Gravy

Coleslaw, Roll, Milk Coffee

Please join us for dinner and support the

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Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333

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

ASSUMED NAME: **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.

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Work Item
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Original File Number
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STATE OF MINNESOTA
OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF STATE
FILED
12/31/2021
/s/ Steve Simon
Secretary of State

3/23T2

NOTICE
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

3/23T2

NOTICE
State of Minnesota Steele County
District Court
Judicial District: THIRD
Court File Number: 74-Jv-22-133
Case Type: Juvenile

In the Matter of the Welfare of the Child(ren) of: Shannon Marie Huinker, parent

Summons and Notice Child in Need of Protection or Services

Matter

NOTICE TO: Willie Aytch Gray Jr., above-named parent(s) or legal custodian(s).

1. A Child In Need of Protection or Services Petition has been filed in the Office of the Clerk of Juvenile Court located at **111 East Main, Owatonna, Minnesota**, alleging that the child(ren) of the above-named parent(s) or legal custodian(s) is/are in need of protection or services.
2. **Notice is hereby given** that the matter of said Child In Need of Protection or Services Petition will be called for hearing before the Juvenile Court located at **111 East Main, Owatonna, Minnesota**, on **May 04, 2022 at 2:00** or as soon after as the Matter can be heard.
4. **YOU ARE ORDERED** to appear before the Juvenile Court at the scheduled time and date.
5. You have a right to be represented by counsel.
6. If you fail to appear at the hearing, the Court may still conduct the hearing and grant appropriate relief, including taking permanent custody of the child/ren named in the Petition.

WITNESS, the Honorable
Karen R. Duncan
Judge of District Court

BY:
Robin Hoesley
Court Administrator
3/30



ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS®
From the Hosts of the Under The Hood radio show.
By Shannon Nordstrom and Russ Evans

Dear Motor Medics,
I have a question about antifreeze. I have not owned a car more than 7 years until now and I would like to know if I need to do something with my coolant. The shop I have gone to for the past two years has been trying to get me to flush the system, but they are not really giving me a reason other than it's time due to miles and age. I did have it checked to make sure it won't freeze up in the winter and it looks clean so why would I need to change it?

Thank you, Devon in Larchwood Iowa.

Dear Devon,
We are so glad you asked this question because many people are unaware of how to take care of their cooling systems and that can lead to very expensive repairs. The antifreeze serves several purposes. It is there to prevent freeze-up, boil-over, and to assist in the prevention of extremely damaging rust and corrosion in the cooling system. Even though coolant looks good and passes a freeze test it may fail a PH test. If the coolant does not have the proper PH rust and corrosion can damage gaskets, the radiator, and heater core, or scale can form in the passages. Test strips used during yearly checkups at a shop will verify the PH and need for changing which usually falls somewhere in the two-to-five-year range. Changing it can save you money.

Take care, the Motor Medics

Dear Motor Medics,
I'm ready to buy a new car and I could do it at any time, I'm kind of an impulse buyer. My car is about 8 years old and needs a little work and I have the cash so I may stop by a lot and just buy something that catches my eye. I will likely look for something in the two-year-old or so range with 50k miles or a little more to keep the cost down which probably means no warranty. Since I usually buy on impulse, I'm not likely to get a pre-purchase inspection done and I know you guys strongly suggest one. What can I do to make sure I get a good car?

Thank you, Tanner in Garretson, South Dakota.

Dear Tanner,
Without the inspection you have no guaranty as to what you are buying. While no inspection can guaranty a trouble-free car, it can eliminate many commonly found money robbing issues that consumers could possibly get stuck with when buying a used car. I would suggest that if you don't get the inspection try to buy from a reputable lot that may offer at least a short-term warranty or sale contingent on a passing inspection. Also look for lots offering pre inspected cars. Many of the credible lots do an outstanding job of pre-inspecting vehicles to keep their customer satisfaction high and will be able to tell you what they have checked over.

Take care, the Motor Medics

WESTFIELD TOWNSHIP
IMPORTANT INFORMATION
REGARDING PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

This may affect your 2023 property tax payments

The Board of Appeal and Equalization of the Township of Westfield will meet:

Date & Time: Tues., April 26, 2022, at 10:30 a.m.
Location: Town Hall

The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether taxable property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor.

If you believe the value or classification of your property is incorrect, please contact your assessor's office to discuss your concerns. If you disagree with the valuation or classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may appear before the local board of appeal and equalization.

The board will review your assessments and may make corrections as needed. Generally, you must appeal to the local board before appealing to the county board of appeal and equalization.

3/30

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LEGAL NOTICE
COST-REIMBURSABLE RFP FOR FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Attention: Food Service Management Companies

Blooming Prairie School District #756 is requesting proposals for school food service management services. The Food Service Management Company would provide management services according to requirements of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Minnesota Department of Education.

To obtain a copy of the Request for Proposals, contact: Nancy Clark at 507-583-4426 x431 or nclark@blossoms.k12.mn.us

Food Service Management Companies may submit proposals to:

Mr. Christopher M. Staloch, Superintendent
Blooming Prairie School District #756
202 4th Avenue NW
Blooming Prairie, MN 55917

Blooming Prairie School District #756 reserves the right to reject any proposal for a sound, documented reason or to reject all proposals if there is an insufficient number of proposals.

A mandatory pre-proposal meeting is scheduled for **April 19, 2022 at 10:30 a.m.** at Blooming Prairie High School, 202 4th Avenue NW, Blooming Prairie, MN.

All proposals must be submitted no later than **3:00 p.m. on May 10, 2022**. All proposals should be delivered in a sealed envelope and addressed to Blooming Prairie School District #756 and be clearly marked: Food Service Management Proposal.

3/30T2



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UNION CEMETERY ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

The meeting will be held on April 6th at 6:30 pm at the Ronald and Diane Nelson residence, 5473 108th Street SE, Blooming Prairie.

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Hayfield, Mn. 55940

Thursday, March 31st, 9-5

Friday April 1st 9-4

Saturday April 2nd 9-4

Remington Model #550.1 OC27, Marlin Lever Action 338 Caliber #92050942 with Nikon Scope, 22 250 Caliber Browning 81 BLR with Burris Scope, Beretta 9mm model 92FS never fired, Beretta 380 Caliber 1839 XV 596502, Smith and Wesson 45 Caliber model 1745 7881042, Connecticut Valley Arms Black Powder 45 Caliber, High Standard 22 Caliber 370054, Smith and Wesson Revolver 38 Caliber Special, Beretta 40 Caliber A23870M, CVA Accura 50 Caliber Muzzle Loader with Conus Scope, Winchester model 1890, Pump 22 Caliber Short patent date Nov 27, 1903, Several Antique Beer signs, Railroad signs, Soda signs, Seed Corn signs, large collection of old license plates, lots of old Shabby Sheik furniture, Red Wing Crocks and water coolers, old hardware, Jiffy Ice auger, Very nice working antique Midland Gas Pump, Old barber pole, barber chairs and barber sink came out of Sam's Barber Shop in Hayfield, several vintage outboard motors, 36 inch Muler Power Trowel, Muler Mud Mixer, antique Harley Davidson Display table, 35ft WindMill, Rare Squirrel windmill weight, Rare Horse #58 windmill weight, T posts, several wagon wheels, Old hardware, John Deere Rotary Mower, 2- 12gauge extension cords 50ft long, Woods 3 point Lawn mower Model RM306 6ft wide, 4 wheel trailer 13ft long 7ft wide, Log chains, old Church pew, Lundell one stage 3pt Snow Blower model #3600 made in Cherokee, Iowa, fishing poles, fishing lures, Heywood Wakefield kidney shape desk, old metal lawn chairs, old pumps, glassware, Amber Depression Glass dishes, Steil chain saw, Dewalt table saw, lots and lots of misc.

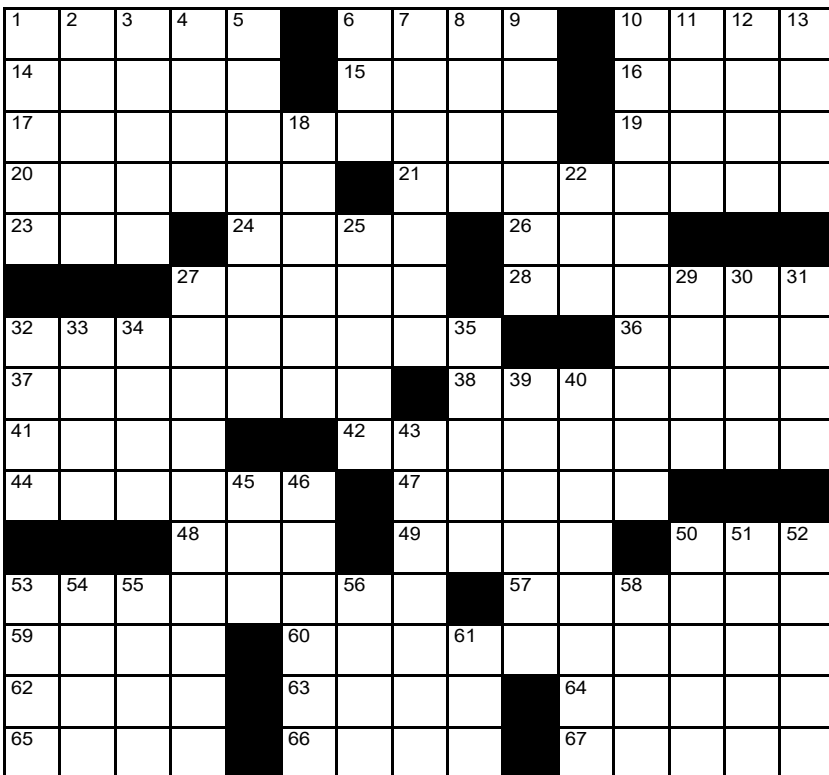
Sale conducted by Joy's Estate Sales and More
507 391 1821

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Worked for Uber
- 6 Baker's supply
- 10 S.A.T. section
- 14 Sound studio work
- 15 Drawn tight
- 16 Spicy stew
- 17 Sure to happen
- 19 Holiday tune, "The First ____"
- 20 Musically connected
- 21 It will get you nowhere
- 23 Shepherd's locale
- 24 Like driven snow
- 26 Fireplace fodder
- 27 Gives the slip
- 28 Newspaper section
- 32 Excite
- 36 Meadow mom
- 37 Paved the way for
- 38 Artless one
- 41 Something to build on
- 42 Fries, perhaps
- 44 Tennis garb
- 47 Like some divorces
- 48 "I knew it!"
- 49 Star anagram
- 50 Resinous deposit
- 53 Having little elevation
- 57 Salma Hayek, for one
- 59 VIII less than XXX



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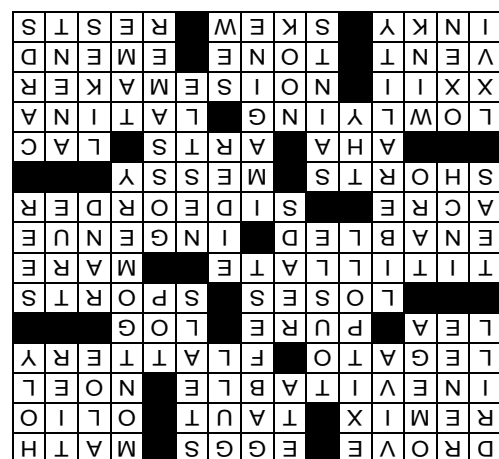
- 60 New Year's Eve gadget
- 62 Blow off steam
- 63 Color quality
- 64 Edit
- 65 Deep black
- 66 Slant unfairly
- 67 Takes a breather

DOWN

- 1 Practice
- 2 She played Judy in "Judy" in 2019
- 3 Last Greek letter
- 4 "____ Las Vegas"
- 5 Election predictor
- 6 Flight board abbr.
- 7 Chatty gathering

- 8 Seaside soarer
- 9 Takes the wrong way?
- 10 "Bewitched" star
- 11 Cream additive
- 12 Wedding cake layer
- 13 "____ cow!"
- 18 Muss, as hair
- 22 Lonely place?
- 25 Enjoys a book
- 27 Generosity
- 29 McNally partner
- 30 Wayne's 1969 film, "____ Grit"
- 31 Clairvoyant
- 32 Pekoe and oolong
- 33 Creep along

- 34 Edible root
- 35 Comforter filling
- 39 Hershey rival
- 40 Sheer fabric
- 43 Lennon classic
- 45 Your, biblically
- 46 Superdome team
- 50 Social media metric
- 51 Concerning
- 52 Asks for ID
- 53 Caesar's 66
- 54 Plow-pulling team
- 55 Sly signal
- 56 Cozy corner
- 58 Break, as a horse
- 61 Mend a hem



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Stylist Roberta Jensen snips away at Brad Kubat's long hair that has been two years in the making. Kubat donated nine inches of hair to Maggie's Wigs 4 Kids during the Home & Recreation Show in Owatonna.



CUTS FOR LOVE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RICK BUSSLER

There is an old saying that radio hosts often have a face for radio where they can't be seen. Popular KOWZ/KRUE Country radio personality Brad Kubat took advantage of that by hiding his shoulder-length hair that has grown out over the past two years. But on Friday night Kubat took center stage at the Home & Recreation Show in Owatonna with a pair of area hair stylists shearing off nine inches of his hair as part of a radio promotion to benefit children who have no hair.

With a large crowd looking on, stylists Roberta Jensen and Sue Wavrin of Gillespie's Beauty Saloon in Owatonna separated Kubat's hair into ponytails before finally making the cuts. In the end, they had eight bands of hair. Kubat's hair was put into a plastic Ziploc bag in preparation to be shipped to Maggie's Wigs 4 Kids, a nonprofit organization in Michigan that helps children experiencing hair loss as a result of cancer treatments, alopecia, trichotillomania, burns and other disorders. Throughout the haircut, Kubat took a little ribbing from his colleagues as well as guests at the show.

"How does it feel, naked?" one guy asked as Kubat was under the scissors. Kubat dished it right back by making a few wisecracks of his own. "What's under every pony tail? A horse's ass," Kubat said referring to himself. Once the cut was complete, Kubat stood up from the beauty chair and the crowd erupted into a big applause for his efforts. "We should have brought in a chainsaw when we did Brad's," Jensen joked. All kidding aside, Kubat was overcome with emotion when it was all over.

"I just love it," Kubat said with tears in his eyes. "When I think of what this does for kids... it makes them feel good about themselves and not worry about being picked on. It warms my heart." Kubat nearly went into a panic a few months prior to the Home & Recreation Show when his station manager challenged each of them to come up with something to do for the show. "The big joke at the radio station with me was 'what's your plan,'" Kubat said. "I had no plan." He eventually stumbled across Maggie's Wigs 4 Kids on the internet. Kubat found that Maggie's is one of



Brad Kubat sports a new look after getting nine inches cut off Friday.

"When I think of what this does for kids... it makes them feel good about themselves and not worry about being picked on. It warms my heart."

Brad Kubat
Radio Personality

very few organizations that don't charge for a prosthetic wig and no one is ever turned down. With hair reaching his shoulders, Kubat thought what a better idea than to turn it into a promotion for the Home & Recreation Show. And just maybe he'd get a little reprieve from his colleagues nagging at him about coming up with something. Kubat set the wheels in motion with the

promotion. He interviewed Maggie Varney, the founder and CEO of Maggie's on the radio prior to the show. Within five days, their efforts landed them eight other people who registered to donate their hair at the show. When others heard about what Kubat was doing, they also wanted to jump on board. One of them was Sean Benz of Owatonna. "He said if Brad is doing it, I'm going to do it, too," Kubat said. Connie Mulcahy of Waseca also donated 12 inches of her hair. "I thought it would have been longer than that,"

Mulcahy said. "I'm glad you donated... every little bit helps," Jensen responded back to Mulcahy as she cut her hair. "Some lucky girl is going to get your beautiful red hair." This is the second time Mulcahy has donated her hair with the first time being six years ago. "I want to do my part to help the poor little children. They are all so brave," Mulcahy said. Two-year-old Kash Kramer of Owatonna came by to get his first haircut ever. He ended up donating seven inches of hair.

Besides people getting their hair cut at the show, others showed up with hair they wanted to donate. One woman donated 24 inches of hair for this event, bringing her lifetime donation total to 100 inches. Some had to be turned away from the show, but Kubat said they can still donate. For more information, go to www.wigs4kids.org. Maggie's requires a minimum of seven inches. In Kubat's case, it took two years to grow out his hair, and he admitted he would have hated to waste it by throwing it out. "I had no plan to grow it out," Kubat recalled. "The only reason I decided to grow it out was because I had one cut during COVID-19 and that one cut was enough for me. I was miserable with wearing a mask while getting cut." Kubat likes the idea of having to take care of less hair. "I'm looking forward to waking up in the morning without hair in my eyes and mouth and not having to take all the snarls out of my hair," he said. "I'm a wash and go kind of guy." While Jensen and Wavrin complimented Kubat on the upkeep of his long hair, Kubat is quite content with his new hairdo. A friend came by and asked if Kubat had plans to grow it out again. "No, I don't think so," Kubat responded.



Sue Wavrin, left, and Roberta Jensen cut Sean Benz's hair Friday during the Home & Rec Show. Benz was one of nine people to donate his long hair for a worthy cause.

