

Home invasion spurs federal indictment

Case involves 2 brothers, woman tied to Steele County

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Three people, including two brothers from Wabasha County, are being held in federal custody in connection with a “home invasion” earlier this year.

Lennie Dwayne Brooks, 33, of Zumbro Falls and Randy Lorenzo Brooks, 23, of Wabasha and Autumn Marie Nichols, 20, of St. Paul, appeared in U.S. Federal Court in St. Paul Friday afternoon. A federal judge ordered them held on no bail. They are being held in the Sherburne County Jail in Elk River.

The three are believed to be responsible for a pair of home invasion robberies in rural Steele County in August and September. However, Angie LaTour, spokesperson for the U.S. Attorney’s Office, could not confirm the location of the



alleged crime or whether there was any connection to the Steele County home invasions other than saying that they are being held “in connection to a home invasion.”

It’s believed the three were involved in numerous home invasions throughout the state.

The suspects have been charged with violating the Hobbs Act, which prohibits actual or attempted robbery affecting interstate or foreign commerce in any way or degree.

Federal authorities accuse the trio of stealing about \$50,000 in cash belonging to the Shaun Hur Asian Markets and as a result, caused the death of a robbery victim. The case highlighted in last week’s federal indictment is not either of the Steele County cases.

Steele County Sheriff’s investigators have been involved in two home invasions this past year. In August, the sheriff’s office handled an armed home invasion robbery at a rural residence southwest of Owatonna. During that robbery in Lemond Township, two unknown men broke into a home and stole cash and jewelry.

About six weeks later in September a second home invasion took place in Berlin Township near Ellendale. Once again two unknown

SEE HOME INVASION, A6

The hunt for drunks

Local trooper helps save lives through DWI enforcement

BY ALEX MALM
STAFF WRITER

Every year the Minnesota State Patrol gives an award called the “Eagle Award” for the top DWI enforcer in the state.

In 2018, for the first time ever a trooper from the outstate, Mitch Elzen, won the award. Elzen, who grew up in Medford and now lives in Dodge County, patrols southeastern Minnesota, mostly Dodge and Olmsted counties.

For Elzen, unfortunately, he and his family know what it’s like to have consequences from someone driving drunk.

In 1982, Elzen’s father, Ron, was looking at the damage from a small fender bender for less than a minute, when he was struck on his left side by a drunk driver.

After being tossed 180 feet down the road, Ron suffered internal bleeding in his stomach, a broken hip, broken back, and a crushed right ankle.

Since then, he has had many different surgeries.

SEE DWI, A3



Minnesota State Trooper Mitch Elzen of Dodge County is considered one of the top DWI enforcers in the state. This year he has an impressive 146 DWI arrests to date. He grew up in Steele County and graduated from Medford.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele pledged law enforcement support when possible while speaking to the Blooming Prairie City Council at a regular monthly meeting Monday night, Dec. 17. Blooming Prairie Police Chief Greg Skillestad, foreground, also spoke to the council, pledging support for police coverage.

Top law enforcers vow to move forward after rocky patch

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Blooming Prairie Mayor H. Peterson urged Blooming Prairie Police Chief Greg Skillestad and Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele to keep a dialogue going in respect to providing public safety for its residents.

Mayor Peterson, attend-

ing his last meeting as mayor of Blooming Prairie, put Chief Skillestad and Sheriff Thiele first on the agenda for a regular monthly council meeting Dec. 17.

The fire seemed to still be burning somewhat in the cinders resulting from a heated political cam-

SEE POLICE, A3

First graduates honored in DWI Track program



STAFF PHOTOS BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Third District Steele County Judge Joseph Bueltel presented graduation plaques to Steele Waseca Drug Court graduates of the DWI Track program. Brandon Oreskovich is at left and Jamison Allen is at right.

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

The first two graduates of the Steele Waseca Drug Court DWI (driving while intoxicated) Track Program were honored at a special ceremony on Wednesday afternoon, Dec. 19.

Graduating from the special DUI track program were: Jamison Allen and Brandon Oreskovich, both of Owatonna.

“I don’t have the words to say how proud I am of you,” said an emotional Dakota Oreskovich when speaking about her husband’s accomplishments.

Third District Court Judge Joseph Bueltel presented each graduate with a plaque and a special coin. The graduation took place in a court room at the Steele County Courthouse in Owatonna.

Allen and Oreskovich became the 36th and 37th graduates of the SWDC program and the first and second of the Track program.

“It was a long and difficult journey and at times I thought we were going to lose him,” remarked Brandon’s mother Sherry Holt.

“As addicts, we skip the thinking process,” Allen spoke in front of a packed courtroom, which featured family of both graduates and also included judicial officials and probationary officers.

Steele County Attorney Dan McIntosh congratulated the graduates.

It was all “thumbs up” for Steele Waseca graduates Jamison Allen and Brandon Oreskovich when they graduated from the DWI track program on Dec. 19. A special ceremony was held in the Steele County Court Room.

SEE GRADUATES, A3



OUR VIEW

Newspapers cannot be allowed to die

Just as many readers of the Star Herald of Dodge Center and Byron Review were devastated to lose their community newspapers a couple weeks ago after they abruptly shut down, we were equally distressed to lose members of our greater family of newspapers.

It's important to point out that the closure of the Star Herald and Review has no connection to this newspaper or its owner. Nevertheless, it's still a loss that will be mourned by everyone, including members of the Steele County Times.

The death of a newspaper has a direct impact on the communities as well as contributing to the decline of democracy. When a community loses a newspaper, such as what happened last week in both Dodge Center and Byron, we all lose.

About 1,800 local papers have closed or merged since 2004, according to data from researchers at the University of North Carolina. The reasons for newspaper closures are well-known: internet advertising destroying the traditional business models; readers moving towards more online and more free news. In the case of the Star Herald and Review, the owners said the newspapers have failed to be profitable for several years.

With the closures of the local newspapers, it's a critical time for self analysis of the local communities involved to understand what has happened and how to prevent it from taking out those newspapers still left to serve their communities.

Everybody wants news coverage. They want their community events covered through stories and photographs. They expect their school activities to be chronicled as well as sports teams followed. People generally love their local newspaper.

What many people don't realize is that coverage comes at a huge expense. It's costly to produce a weekly newspaper and very labor intensive. The major source of revenue for a newspaper is advertising, and to a lesser extent subscriptions. Without businesses supporting the newspaper through advertising, a newspaper cannot exist. There are no government subsidies for newspapers. Media companies can't ask voters to support levy referendums to keep the newspaper going. And there are no taxes available to provide a revenue stream.

When businesses pull back and slash their advertising budgets, not only does the newspaper suffer, but also the entire community is affected. A recent study found cities' borrowing costs to build projects like roads and schools rose after newspapers closed, making those projects more expensive to taxpayers. As similar areas without a newspaper closure did not see those effects, they theorize that the loss of scrutiny on local government led to more mismanagement of public funds.

Communities, and more importantly business owners, control the destiny of their local newspaper. If community members want the newspaper to survive, thrive and grow in importance, businesses need to reevaluate how they are supporting their community paper.

Of all the changes that modern technology has ushered in, nothing is more distressing than newspapers dying. Dodge County has only one newspaper left.

Newspapers cannot be allowed to die like what has happened with the Star Herald and Review. The newspaper business may not be as booming as it once was, but that shouldn't stop any newspaper from ceasing to print.



Takes a village, or at least a family, to keep a tree standing

You've likely heard the phrase it takes a village (the work of many) to raise a child. The other night I felt like it takes a village to keep a Christmas tree standing.

As people were leaving a family Grinch holiday party that I hosted at my house, we looked over at the Christmas tree and nearly all sang in unison, "Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas Tree, You're about to tip over."



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

Before everybody headed out the door, I solicited their help in getting the tree in tall order of standing up straight. It's no fun having a tipsy tree that appears to have sipped way too much spiked eggnog. It's even worse not having hands available at one time to get things back in order.

So I hit the floor to the trunk of the tree to figure out what was the matter. When to my wondering eyes, I found the

tree simply was in the stand crooked and needed some real adjustments. I cranked on the screws to loosen them up, which is never really an easy task.

Once I got things loosened up, my guests stood around the tree and lifted it up in the air. They numbered in five trying to save Christmas at the Bussler house. It clearly takes a village, well, okay maybe only an army.

After numerous attempts at lifting it and redirecting the trunk, we finally got it in a happier place. There were no real causalities as a result of the mayhem—just a few decorations that tumbled onto the carpet. But miraculously, no broken pieces!

Somehow we got things to click in a positive way. The tree hasn't moved since our late-night caper around the tree.

I can once again enjoy my Christmas tree without the worry of it falling over and ruining the holiday spirit for my family.

I'm not the only one who loves the tree without an angel at top. I have found my cat has taken quite a liking to hanging out under the tree. Not sure if she's waiting for Santa or what, but it's cute to have her cuddled under the branches.

The tree is really the only issue I've had so far this holiday season with decorations and other seasonal activities around the house. As you heard a couple weeks ago, I saved my holiday letter from becoming extinct. So life is good.

May the joys of the season shed light, hope and fill your hearts with peace as you go in hot pursuit of enjoying the holidays.

GUEST COLUMN

Chamber's benchmarks highlight economic rankings and workforce challenges

By DOUG LOON

A talented workforce remains a foundation of growing Minnesota companies and the overall state economy, according to the 2019 Minnesota Business Benchmarks report. But the difficulty of finding skilled and qualified workers and our business climate are threatening growth.

The mounting challenge of filling job vacancies is a common thread in the 2019 Business Benchmarks report. It also underscores the importance of strengthening Minnesota's overall business climate, a message that resounds from business leaders highlighted in the report.

The 2019 Business Benchmarks report was released at the Minnesota Chamber's Annual Meeting on November 15. It is produced by the Minnesota Chamber and local Chamber Federation partners, and was distributed statewide as an insert in the December edition of Twin Cities Business magazine.

This annual report compiles key indicators that define our business climate – where Minnesota ranks compared with other states – to identify the state's strengths and areas for improvement for Minnesota to compete in the global economy. Comprehensive, objective data were compiled from sources such as state and federal agencies.

Among the key findings:

- Innovation remains a strength of the state's homegrown economy
 - Minnesota's economy is growing but at a slower pace compared with many other states.
 - Minnesota saw a slight improvement in tax rankings, but it still is in the five highest tax rates for both corporate and individual taxes.
 - Minnesota continues to make progress in infrastructure improvements – an important factor in the ability to compete in a global marketplace.
- The 2019 report tells the story of Minnesota's economy differently, through real business leaders representative of the types and sizes of companies that make up the economic fabric of communities across the state.
- Their voices also help lay the groundwork for the chamber's 2019 legislative agenda.
- Eric Gibson, president of UMC Inc. at Monticello, says an uncertain and uncompetitive business climate kills investment. "We need clarity in the tax code. Conformity to the changes enacted at the federal level would be a great start. Minnesota is one of the top five highest-taxed states. We don't need to be the lowest, but a move toward the middle would level the playing field."
- Deepinder Singh, founder and CEO of 75F in Burnsville, says public policy could help in encour-

aging investment in technology. "People feel the state has decided to invest in innovation. That's a key message."

Shelly Peterson, executive vice president and general manager for Minnesota operations of The Boldt Company in Cloquet, says quality infrastructure looms even more important when combined with other competitive disadvantages facing Minnesota companies. "Minnesota is not known to be business friendly. We need to find a way to figure that out."

This report is a great tool to frame constructive conversations on how Minnesota can remain competitive in today's ever-changing global economy. It's especially timely as Minnesota has elected a new governor. The new administration will lead a state that has tremendous strengths such as a talented and highly educated workforce, high innovation and a diverse economy. We must protect those strengths by addressing public policies essential to growing businesses and the overall state economy.

We look forward to the partnership of Governor-Elect Tim Walz and all lawmakers in enacting public policy to grow Minnesota together.

Doug Loon is president of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

GUEST COLUMN

E-verify: an immigration policy that both conservatives and liberals can get behind

By STACY WASHINGTON

Is there any way to break the policy logjam on immigration?

Most Republicans favor tougher border security measures, while Democrats tend to support a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants. Many progressives, aghast at the separation of parents and children at the border, even want to "abolish ICE" – the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

But conservatives and liberals do agree on one thing: The need to crack down on unscrupulous business owners who hire and exploit illegal immigrants. Fifty-six percent of Democrats, 67 percent of Independents, and 81 percent of Republicans support fining such employers, according to a recent poll from NPR-Ipsos.

There's already a free online system designed to prevent businesses from hiring illegal workers: It's called "E-Verify." Making it mandatory for all employers would humanely deter people from illegally coming to America in search of work, without the need for a border wall or family separations.

E-Verify is easy to use. Employers simply plug in a new hire's name, date of birth, and Social Security number. The system checks that data against records held by the Social Security Administration and Depart-

ment of Homeland Security and determines if the person is authorized to work in the United States.

About a quarter of a million businesses already use E-Verify. And some states – including Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Arizona – require all private and government employers to use E-Verify on prospective employees.

Mandatory E-Verify could dramatically curb illegal immigration. In 2016, economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas and Agnes Scott College analyzed several state-level E-Verify mandates. The study suggested that "having an E-Verify law reduces the number of less-educated prime-age immigrants from Mexico and Central America – immigrants who are likely to be unauthorized – living in a state."

By shutting off the jobs magnet that attracts illegal workers, E-Verify would boost the pay of less-skilled Americans and legal immigrants.

The House of Representatives was poised to consider an E-Verify bill this summer. But agricultural corporations' lobbyists on Capitol Hill distorted the legislation by adding provisions that would massively expand guest-worker programs. Bringing in millions more unskilled workers would cancel out the wage gains

SEE WASHINGTON, A4



DWI: *The hunt for drunks* FROM A1

Ron explained when he found out it was a drunk driver, he was upset. “I was upset that he was on the road,” Ron said, in a video for the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. “I became a state trooper to take drunks off the road, and to help other families,” Elzen said in the same video.

For Elzen’s dad, his success of getting drunks off the road makes him very proud mainly because he’s helping to save families from going through what his family and him have gone through. “I’m proud of him,” Ron said in the video. “He’s getting these drunks off the road so no one has to go through what I and my wife have gone through,” he added. Seeing what his dad has to go through because of a drunk driver fuels Elzen’s passion for being a top DWI enforcer. “I’m very passionate about arrest-ing drunk drivers or impaired drivers because I don’t want to see another innocent family go through what my dad, my mom and all of my siblings had to go through,” Elzen said.

“When you’re hunting for drunks, it takes a lot of patience.”

Trooper Mitch Elzen
MN State Patrol

THE JOURNEY TO STATE PATROL
While Elzen is considered one of the best DWI enforcers in the state, he explained that his journey of becoming a trooper wasn’t a conventional one. After attending Mankato State for an education degree, he began a career as a physical education and health teacher. Subsequently teaching for a year, he was offered to do a ride along with a State Patrol captain, who happened to be the father of some of the athletes that he coached. After doing the ride along, Elzen knew from that moment on that he wanted to be a trooper. “I fell in love with it,” Elzen said. Ultimately, after the ride along, Elzen applied to be a trooper and was one of the few that got accepted from about 1,600 people. Through a new program started by the state, he was able to go through schooling needed without getting a new four year degree, and in 2011 he began his career as a state trooper. Since then, he has done something that many would agree with as being very important: he gets drunk drivers off the road.

THE HUNT FOR DRUNKS
When it comes to enforcing DWIs, Elzen explained that you need to be motivated to do it night after night. For Elzen, he goes out during every shift with the mentality of getting a drunk off the road. “Every night, I hunt for a drunk,” Elzen said. While there are some nights every so often when he doesn’t have any DWI arrests, there are also sometimes when he has “hat trick” nights. This is a term used when an officer makes three DWI arrests in one night. For Elzen so far in his young career he has had five hat tricks in his career. Elzen explained that finding and taking drunks off the road takes a lot of skill. “It’s definitely a skill,” Elzen said. Aside from having the skills of being able to identify signs of possible impairment, Elzen explained that it is also important to be where drunk drivers are at the right time. A perfect example of this came

recently when he was taking a drunk driver to jail when a motorist was driving in the wrong way right towards him. He then pulled the vehicle over and was able to make another DWI arrest and took both of them to jail. “It’s all about being in the right place at the right time,” Elzen said.

PATIENCE
Elzen explained that one of the things that is required in order to get drunks off the road night after night, is a lot of patience. “When you’re hunting for drunks, it takes a lot of patience,” Elzen said. That patience was exemplified during his most recent shift. After a slow night, Elzen stopped a vehicle for speeding. After detecting the smell of alcohol on the woman’s breath, Elzen had her go through a series of field sobriety tests. After the standard tests were performed, she completed the final test, which was the portable breathalyzer test. She was under the legal limit and allowed to continue home.

Then around 1:45 in the morning, on a main street in Rochester, Elzen noticed a vehicle almost go the wrong way on a one way street and continued to fail to stop at a red light. Elzen activated his emergency lights and made contact with the driver. After speaking with the driver, he quickly noticed that the driver was trying to hide her paper ID. After observing signs of intoxication, Elzen had the driver perform field sobriety tests and asked the driver to submit to a PBT. She denied to do this and was placed under arrest.

The two passengers in the vehicle walked home, and the vehicle, which was owned by one of the passengers, was parked in a nearby parking lot. The driver was brought to the station where she was read her rights and the Minnesota Implied Consent Advisory, which means that drivers have to submit to a breathalyzer test if suspected of being under the influence. As part of this, drivers always have a “reasonable” amount of time to contact a lawyer and a phone and phone book are provided. After consulting with a lawyer, the driver refused to take the test, which is a crime in of itself.

For the driver, that means the state will revoke her license for two years because of a previous conviction. She was also charged with third-degree DWI-failing to submit to a chemical test, which is a gross misdemeanor. She was also charged with driving after revocation, which is also a gross misdemeanor. On top of this, because of the previous conviction and new charges, the license plates on the vehicle she was driving were also seized, even though it wasn’t her vehicle. This means that the owner of the vehicle will have 45 days to get new plates. After the arrest, and on the way back to the car to seize the plates off the car, Elzen explained that he was satisfied about taking another drunk off the road. “Who knows what could have happened if I didn’t,” he said. With the arrest made by Elzen he brought his total for the year to 146 DWI arrests. For Elzen, getting drunks off the road is extremely important and he hopes to continue to do so at a high level for many years to come.

GRADUATES: *Track program* FROM A1

ulated both graduates, saying Allen used the power of positive self talk to fight his addiction and Oreskovich rededicated himself to his family. Oreskovich said there were “lots of struggles” during his time in Drug Court. “Without the people who loved me, I would not be alive today,” he confided. “I always had people care for me when I didn’t care for myself,” he added. Allen said he was grateful for the simple things in life: waking up in the morning, having family as support and having Drug Court as a support resource.

“Lots of struggles.”

Brandon Oreskovich
Drug Court Graduate

“You’ve got to change your thinking process” to beat this alcohol addiction, Allen pointed out. “Drug Court was a game changer for me,” he believes. Planning for SWDC began in 2013 and was implemented on July 1, 2014. The program was implemented to respond to high risk/high need substance abusers that continued to cycle in and out of our local justice system and jails. Drug Courts are the most effective response based on research for these particular offenders to reduce recidivism and assist them in their pathway to recovery. Drug courts are constantly seeking to enhance and improve SWDC services, says Drug Court director Nicole Grams. In October of 2016, the program was enhanced with a Bureau of Justice Assistance-Drug Court Enhancement grant to incorporate early mental health evaluations, mental health consultation, defense counsel services, training and continued evaluation.

In January of 2017, SWDC secured a grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety-Office of Justice Program-Community Reinvestment Grant. These funds were used to launch a DWI track that specifically targeted how to best serve high risk/high need DWI offenders based on the highly effective and proven DWI court model. With the addition of this track, SWDC capacity increased by 20 participants for a total of 60 capacity. SWDC has served just 163 participants with 74 that either withdrew-electing to serve their jail/prison time, transferred to another drug court or were terminated based on new criminal behavior or rejection of services. SWDC had its first graduation in April of 2016, Allen and Oreskovich are the 36th and 37th graduates. The program is rigorous. It has four-phases and is a minimum of 18 months.

SWDC requires court attendance ranging from weekly to monthly, contingent on phase. Recovery related programming includes treatment, support meetings, mental health meetings, completion of cognitive skills programs that help to change thinking, which changes behaviors and recovery events. At least three hours of self-help recovery meetings are required weekly. Participants submit to minimum of twice weekly random testing. All participants must complete treatment, make meaningful connections in the recovery community, obtain a valid driver license, GED/Diplo-



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Brandon Oreskovich had his family in the courtroom when he graduated from the Steele Waseca Drug Court on Wednesday, Dec. 19. He is shown with his wife Dakota, daughters Cafourek, 4; Iyoney, 3 and Trieghten, 1 1/2.

ma, employment, compliance with child support and payment of fines, fees and restitution prior to graduation. Allen and Oreskovich are testaments that Drug Courts Work; reduce crime, restore citizenship and save lives!

“Drug Court was a **game changer** for me.”

Jamison Allen
Drug Court Graduate

The combined total amount of sobriety among today’s participants is 14,695 days an estimated average of 40 combined years. Average sobriety per participant is 272 days. Allen started the program on June 5, 2017. He completed 563 days or about 18 months in the program. He entered into the program on a felony-DWI conviction carrying a mandatory prison sentence of 54 months. This was Allen’s seventh DWI conviction since 2000 and his BAC was .20. Based on his ability to participate in a drug court program, he received a downward departure and was placed on probation. At the time of entry, Allen was homeless, unemployed and had a cancelled license. He was given the immediate promise of drug

court. Allen went to residential treatment at Teen Challenge and had to continue to return to court in Scott County to ask again for be given a chance at drug court. Drug Court agreed to allow him to try the program. After Teen challenge, he transferred to West Hills Lodge in Owatonna where he stabilized his ties to the community by seeking employment and at the conclusion of that treatment program, moved into his own apartment. He has continued to thrive in the program and shares stories of focusing on positive thoughts, interrupting negative thoughts and improving his relationship with his son. Allen has logged 668 days of sobriety. He has continued to be connected and utilizes support gained through the recovery community. Oreskovich started the program on May 24, 2017. He was in the program for 575 days or about 19 months. He entered into the program on a gross misdemeanor second-degree DWI conviction that carried a risk of incarceration of 365 days. Oreskovich has totaled 590 days of sobriety. Grams said he has always put his recovery first, which has contributed to improving his relationships with family first and has drawn high regards from his employer.

POLICE: *Top law enforcers vow to move forward* FROM A1

paign between Sheriff Thiele and challenger Darrin Helget, a Steele County deputy sheriff. Skillestad was a vocal supporter of Helget during the campaign. He and his officers maintained that the Steele County Sheriff’s Office under the leadership of Sheriff Thiele refused backup on a call. Mayor Peterson and City Attorney Jason Iacovino thus thought it would be beneficial for both law enforcement officers to clear the air and look into the future of how to provide the best protection for Steele County and Blooming Prairie residents. The ground rules were immediately set by Mayor Peterson, saying that this meeting was not a public forum. The past campaign for sheriff would thus not be referenced, Peterson explained. “I am only interested on how we can move forward,” Mayor Peterson remarked. Mayor H. asked City Attorney

Iacovino to explain why the two law enforcement leaders were invited to attend a Blooming Prairie City Council meeting. Iacovino said these two primary police officers of the county and city were asked to clarify and to explain how the citizens of the county and city of Blooming Prairie will be safely protected in the future.

“I **love** Blooming Prairie.”

Chief Greg Skillestad
Blooming Prairie Police

Iacovino said he had no issues with police coverage in this geographic area, “for the most part.” Providing background, Iacovino said “things popped up in the media” during the recent campaign that gave pause to conjecture about police protection.

“We want to be reassured that our citizens are protected,” Iacovino said. “These two departments must work together and I would like to put this whole thing to bed,” he continued. Chief Skillestad was given the opportunity to speak first. “I love Blooming Prairie and want the best for this city,” said Skillestad. Skillestad, a former Steele County Sheriff’s deputy prior to becoming the BP chief of police five years ago, said he has worked “hand in hand” with the sheriff’s office for many years. Indirectly referring to an incident of police support from the county, Skillestad said he knew what happened and “it won’t happen again.” He said he was ready to move forward. “We can work together,” Skillestad promised. Sheriff Thiele was next to promise a willingness to work together with

other law enforcement agencies. “We will give 100 percent coverage when we can,” he stated. Thiele pointed out that his sheriff’s department covers 432 square miles. “We are here to work together,” he affirmed.

“We will **give 100 percent coverage** when we can.”

Sheriff Lon Thiele
Steele County

Talking about response to calls and backup, Thiele said his department may have calls for assistance going off at the same time. Council member Bill Neuman asked Sheriff Thiele if he received assistance from the Owatonna Police Department. Thiele answered with a “yes.” Thiele acknowledged that Blooming Prairie was located on the corner of four counties, Steele, Dodge, Mower and Freeborn. “You know where to find me,” Thiele quipped.

He said the sheriff’s department had helped assist Blooming Prairie 178 times over the past two years. Reiterating his promise to work together with the Steele County Sheriff’s Office, Chief Skillestad said, “We are ready to move forward.” Iacovino said “we need these guys in blue and in white.” He said both offices have been very professional in working with him as city attorney over the years. Following the meeting, both Skillestad and Thiele said they would support one another. “It’s the people we are concerned about,” said Skillestad. “We will be glad to give assistance and have been professional in doing that in the past,” Thiele said. “Our aim is to give the best job of public safety possible but I can’t please everyone,” Thiele commented. Thiele said he has “never jeopardized anyone’s safety” during his career. He stated that it was up to the Blooming Prairie Police Department to have a contingency plan for backups “when we can’t be there.”

OBITUARIES

Carol Ann Elizabeth Colee, 76,
Blooming Prairie



Carol Ann Elizabeth Colee, age 76 of Blooming Prairie, passed away Thursday, Dec. 6, 2018 at Prairie Manor Care Center in Blooming

Prairie.

Carol was born on March 20, 1942 in San Francisco, Calif., to Edgar and Doris (LaPointe) Stromberg. She graduated in 1960 from Cubberley High School in Palo Alto, Calif. On March 7, 1964, Carol married Keith Colee in Reno, Nev., and was blessed with a son, Eddie.

After Keith's retirement from the Navy, the couple settled in Blooming Prairie. Carol had various jobs over the years including at PCA/Farm Credit from 1975 through 1988, also First Prairie Bank, U.S. Bank, Security Bank in Claremont, and Steele County Recorder's Office, retiring in April of 2005.

She was a member of the V.F.W. Auxiliary, and St. Columbanus Catholic Church in Blooming Prairie, where she taught CCD classes for over 20 years. Carol loved to camp, play cards, watch TV, going

out to eat and shopping with her lady friends, and loved her cats. She will be missed dearly by all who knew and loved her.

Survivors include her sister, Anne Askew of Santa Cruz, Calif.; and her beloved nieces, nephews, cousin, and Keith's family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Edgar and Doris Stromberg; husband, Keith Colee in 2009; son, Eddie Colee in 1984; stepson, Kenneth in 2008; two sisters, Diane and Doris.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 13, 2018 at St. Columbanus Catholic Church in Blooming Prairie with Father Thomas Niehaus officiating. A CCW Rosary service was held at the church. Interment took place in Blooming Prairie City Cemetery, Blooming Prairie.

In lieu of flowers memorials can be directed to Steele County Humane Society, Blooming Prairie Cancer Group, the St. Columbanus Faith Formation or homeless vets. Services are prearranged and performed by Worlein Funeral Home in Blooming Prairie. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

LIBRARY BOOK NOOK

Living in
a snow globe

This last week has been like living in a snow globe with the trees coated with rime and hoar frost. The contrast of the white frost with the blue sky and sunshine (when we are lucky enough to see them) make a beautiful sight. It's even led me to sing "Walking in a Wonderland" although I've been trying to avoid singing "Let it Snow." (You're welcome)

While winter officially arrived last week on Friday, we know that Minnesota weather doesn't pay attention to the calendar and just does what it wants. Please note that if any inclement weather keeps you from returning library items, just give us a call at 507-583-7750 and

leave a message. We will renew the items to avoid any late fees. If there are blizzard conditions, the library may close early or open late, so on those days please call ahead to make sure that we are open.

Our holiday hours will be: Dec. 31, New Year's Eve, open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; January 1, closed. There will be no story time on Dec. 26 and Jan. 2. We will begin Tale Time again on Tuesday, Jan. 8 and 9 at 10:30 a.m.

From the staff of the Blooming Prairie Branch Library, Laura Thomas, Kisha Aquino, and myself, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Stop by and we will sing that song for you!



NANCY
VAILLANCOURT

WASHINGTON:
guest column FROM A2

American workers would enjoy under a mandatory E-Verify system.

The economy isn't as strong as it appears. Although the official unemployment rate is hovering around 4 percent, that figure doesn't include people who want full-time jobs but can only find part-time work. Nor does it factor in people who have become so discouraged that they've given up looking for jobs. If the government counted those folks, the unemployment rate would be about 8 percent.

In other words, roughly 13 million Americans still can't find full-time work, in part because employers have chosen to hire illegal laborers who accept lower wages.

Universal E-Verify would make it much easier to identify and prosecute businesses abusing immigration laws. It's the cheapest and most effective way to hold corporations accountable and open up job opportunities for Americans and legal immigrants.

Stacy Washington is a decorated Air Force Veteran, an Emmy nominated TV personality, and the host of the nationally syndicated radio program, Stacy on the Right. This piece originally ran in Newsweek.

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Birthdays

December 26
Leah Krell
Diane Lembke
Piper Winn
Lerald Farrow
Owen Brown
Tricia Steckelberg

December 27
Tara Gimbel
Carsten Ingvalson
Jeffry Zimmerman
Macy Lembke
Lydia Brown
Mason Brown

December 28
Joel Burr
Benji Bishop
Carter Bishop
Maya Lembke
Thomas Braaten
Madeline Sorenson
Tyler Watkins
Jakson Vermilyea

December 29
Jack Bruns
Allison Thoen
Seth Peterson

December 30
Kayla McCabe
Jeff Severson
Daniel Rivera-Escandon
Mary Master
Ryan McCabe

December 31
Joshua Shaw
January 1
Jeremy Simon
Elijah Skillestad

Anniversaries

December 26
Paul and Bernice Stender
Wally and Jean Wilke

December 28
Chad and Kari Forystek

December 29
Lee and Mary Morem

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Rev. Lindsay Brennan
RED OAK GROVE LUTHERAN
CHURCH, AUSTIN

Merry Christmas! What are you up to on this special holiday?

Maybe you're meeting up with family or eating a meal with good friends. Maybe you are far from home, visiting people you love whom you don't often see. Perhaps there are hams and gifts and lovely conversations in your plans for this day. Or maybe this is one of those years when those plans didn't quite pan out. One of those years when you find yourself home alone watching Home Alone. (A Christmas must for my siblings and I growing up!)

If you find yourself away from family, not near friends, remember you're in good company. Mary and Joseph traveled from their home, from their people, and spent that

night, those first days, without the familiar family and friends surrounding them. As Jesus was born in that new place, they maybe felt alone. Scared. Unsure. And yet, the baby born to Mary and Joseph that night came with a promise. Emmanuel. God with us.

We all have those times when we're far from home, those moments when we are alone, those days when we're not able to gather with family and friends. In those and every instance, God promises to be near. To be with us. God promises, in a love so deep, that we will never be alone because Jesus was born that night so many years ago.

Emmanuel. God is with us.



AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN

AURORA LUTHERAN
6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna
Pastor Stephanie Wood
507-676-5696
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Worship: Sunday at 10:45 a.m.

COMMUNITY LUTHERAN – ELCA
106 Third St. SE., Geneva
Pastor Kristen Venne
507-256-4288
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.

FIRST LUTHERAN – AFLC
503 Radel Ct., Ellendale
Pastor Richard Sliper
507-684-2451
Saturday: 8 a.m. Men's Bible Study
Sunday: 9 a.m. Worship;
10:15 a.m. Sunday School/
Confirmation
Tues.: 7 p.m. Call to Prayer,
open to all churches
Wed.: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study;
3:30 – 5 p.m. Jesus and Me; 6
p.m.
Call to Prayer: 6:30 p.m.
Youth Group

FIRST LUTHERAN – ELCA
434 First St. SW.,
Blooming Prairie
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Heidi Heimgartner
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mike Walerius
507-583-6621
firstlutheranbp.com
Worship Service- 9 a.m.
Sunday School- 10 a.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN – LCMC
8953 SW 37th Ave., Hope
Pastor Sandy Miller
507-451-3854
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School, Adult Ed: 10:15
a.m. Sun.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN – LCMS
2500 7th Ave. NE., Owatonna
Rev. Mark Rosenau,
Senior Pastor
Rev. Greg Schlicker,
Associate Pastor
507-451-4125
www.goodshepherd
owatonna.com
Worship: 8 a.m., 9:15 a.m.
& 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

MOLAND LUTHERAN – ELCA
7618 NE 84th Ave., Kenyon
Pastor Nancy Edwardson
507-789-6661
Worship: 10:45 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN – ELCA
9651 SW 75th St., Ellendale
Pastor Mike Walerius
507-465-8366
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9 a.m. Sun.

EDEEMER LUTHERAN – LCMS

1054 Truman Ave., Owatonna
Pastor Kirk Griebel
507-451-2720
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Education Hour:
10:15 a.m. Sun.

RED OAK GROVE LUTHERAN – ELCA
30456 Mower-Freeborn
Road, Austin
Pastor Lindsay Brennan
507-583-2038 or 507-437-3000
www.roglutheran.org
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School
(Sept. – May): 10:15 a.m.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN – LCMS
4532 SE 84th Ave., Claremont
Pastor Alan Broadwell
507-528-2404
Worship: 6 p.m. Saturday;
10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN – LCMS
28959 630th Ave., Sergeant
Pastor Collin Duling
507-251-5568
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9 a.m.

ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN – ELCA
30450 570th Ave., Waltham
Pastor Dwight DoBell
507-567-2474
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN – LCMS
202 E. Park Ave., Hollandale
Pastor Jesse Krusemark
507-567-2272
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN – ELCA
2781 SW 92nd Ave., Meriden
Pastor: Rev. Dean Smith
507-451-2165
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.
Worship: 10:30 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN
5881 SE 118th St.,
Blooming Prairie
Pastor Stephanie Wood
507-676-5696
Worship: Sunday at 9 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA
Trinity Lutheran Church
609 Lincoln Avenue
Owatonna MN 55060
507.451.4520
tlcowatonna.org
Worship:
Saturday: 5 p.m.
Sunday: 8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m. &
10:45 a.m.
Sunday School: 8:15 a.m. &
9:30 a.m.
tlcowatonna.org/worshipschedule

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA
104 First St. SE., Hayfield
Pastor Paul Hauschild
507-477-2248

www.trinityhayfield.org
Worship: 8 a.m.
& 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMS
108 Third Ave. SW., Medford
Pastor Mark Biebighauser
507-451-0447
8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Worship Service
9:15 a.m. Sunday School and
Adult Bible Study

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Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

ZION LUTHERAN – ELCA
7126 SW 98th St., Ellendale
Pastor: Rev. Dean Smith
Worship: 8:30 a.m.

CATHOLIC

CHRIST THE KING
203 Second Ave. NW., Medford
507-451-6353
Father James Starasinick
Deacon Patrick Fagan
Sunday Mass: 8:30 a.m.
Monday Mass: 9 a.m.

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS
307 SW First St., New Richland
Father Raul Silva
Fr. Adam McMillan,
Parochial Vicar
507-465-8217
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL
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Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.:
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Second Sunday of month:
Family Faith Formation
Litomysl Finance Council:
2nd Thursday
Litomysl Pastoral Council:
2nd Thursday every other month

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC
150 NE Second St., Hayfield
Father Thomas Niehaus
507-477-2256
Mass: 8 a.m. Sun.
& 8:30 a.m. Thursday
Reconciliation: 7:30 a.m. Sun.

SACRED HEART PARISH
810 S. Cedar Ave., Owatonna
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Fr. Jose Morales, Parochial Vicar
507-451-1588
www.sacredheartowatonna.org
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday;
8:30 a.m. & 10 a.m. Sun.
Spanish Mass: 11:45 a.m. Sun.
Daily Mass: 7:15 a.m.
Reconciliation: 4 p.m. Sat.

Adoration:
8 a.m. – 10 p.m. Thurs.

ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC
114 E. Main St., Blooming Prairie
Father Thomas Niehaus
507-583-2784
www.stcolumbanuschurch.com
Mass: 10 a.m. Sun.
& 8:30 a.m. Friday
Reconciliation: 9 a.m.
First Friday & Saturday

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH
512 S. Elm Ave., Owatonna
Father James Starasinick
Deacon Patrick Fagan
507-451-4845
Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8 & 10 a.m.
Reconciliation:
3-3:30 p.m. Sat.
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Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.
Sunday Connections: 10:15 a.m.

PENTECOSTAL

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Worship: 10 a.m. Sunday;
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Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

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Pastor Randy Cirksema
507-684-2731
www.ellendaleumc.org
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

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Linda Boorman, Associate Pastor
Joyce Parker, Associate Pastor
507-451-4734
www.owatonnaumc.org
Traditional Worship (Pathways): 9

a.m. Sunday

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BRIDGES OF HOPE COMMUNITY
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Pastor Keith Haskell
507-215-2249
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.
Biblestudy: 9 a.m. Sun.
Reformers Unanimous Meetings:
7 p.m. Friday

CEDAR CREEK
30 E. Main St., Hayfield
Pastor Aaron de Neui
507-477-2255
www.cedarcreekchurch.org
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

DESTINY CHRISTIAN
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422 North St., Owatonna
Pastors Tyler & Jessica Braucht
507-254-8514
www.destinycc.org
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

ELEVATION NORTH
2002 Austin Road, Owatonna
Pastor Doug Jones
507-363-3099
www.elevationnorth.blogspot.com
Worship (English): 10 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 10:30 a.m.
Worship (Spanish): 2 p.m. Sun.
Bible Study: 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday
Spanish Evangelism & Prayer:
7 p.m. Friday

NEW BEGINNINGS
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Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

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Pastor Todd Lundgren
507-451-5661
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.
Bible Study: 7 p.m. Wednesday

MENNONITE

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13638 750th St., Blooming Prairie
Bishop Dennis Martin
507-583-7532
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.
Prayer Meeting:
7:30 p.m. Wed.

MORMON

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
404 31st St. NW, Austin
Bishop Rick Bremner
507-433-9042
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

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507-451-1546

www.associatedchurch.org
office@associatedchurch.org
Sunday Worship: 9 a.m.
(Fellowship, Church School, and
Adult Discussions follow)
Wednesday Activities: Sept –
May (see website for schedule)

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
109 E. Main St., Hayfield
Pastor Kirk Johnston
507-477-2631
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
P.O. Box 66, Claremont
507-528-2320
Pastor Douglas Walters
10 a.m. Worship

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SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
2373 Seventh Ave. NE,
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Pastor Brian Beavers
507-340-7143
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sat.
Bible Study: 11 a.m. Sat.

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211 Main St. S.
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Rev. Richard Waters
507-451-4596
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

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702 Third St. S., Ellendale
Pastor Patrick Stitt
507-684-3421
www.vibrantlifeag.com
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Kids Church: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

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FIRST BAPTIST
104 First Ave. NE,
Blooming Prairie
Pastor Matt Fennell
507-583-2673
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.
& 6:30 p.m. Wednesday
Sunday School: 9 a.m.
Bible Study: 11:30 a.m. Sun.

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Pastor Diane Butler
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Church Service: 9:30 a.m.
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BP hires new city administrator

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

On a unanimous vote by the Blooming Prairie City Council on Monday night, Dec. 17, Andrew Langholz, city clerk at Starbuck, Minn., was selected the next BP city administrator.

He will succeed current city administrator Mike Jones. His duties begin on Feb. 4.

Andrew Langholz is 31 years old and has been in his current position for 3 1/2 years. Starbuck is located 20 miles south of Alexandria.

Langholz attended Minnesota State University in Mankato. He is single.

Jones said 35 applied for the job initially. The group was then trimmed

to 11 and finally to four. “Any one of the four could have stepped in and done a good job,” said Jones, who will remain interim city administrator until Langholz arrives.

The interview process was coordinated by Liza Dunbar of David Drown & Associates.

Langholz is a 2006 graduate of New Ulm High School. He completed his under graduate studies at Minnesota State University of Mankato in 2013. He earned his Master’s Degree in public administration in 2015.

Langholz said accepting the Blooming Prairie administrative job will advance his career.

He said the Blooming Prairie job exceeded his expectations. The city has a strong manufac-

turing base and thus can draw more people to the community, Langholz observed. The Starbuck and surrounding communities are more tourism directed, he noted.

The new BP city administrator said he was also impressed with what he has heard about the quality of education in the Blooming Prairie School District.

Langholz said he looks forward to working with current Blooming Prairie City Administrator Mike Jones in his early days on the job. “We will go through the processes in government and see

what projects are ahead,” Langholz said.

“It will take awhile to get up to speed and there is no reason to fix something if it’s not broken,” Langholz remarked.

Langholz said he is “really impressed” with how Blooming Prairie has moved forward in respect to housing. “There appears to be housing for every decade and seems to be no lull,” he continued.

After touring the area, Langholz said there appears to be room to grow in the future. “We can’t be complacent,” he said.

City government definitely has an appeal to Langholz. “I am more of a common sense type of guy who does not have his head in the clouds,” he explained.

“I want to see that tax

monies are used wisely and want to see laws and regulations are being followed. I think I have a good moral compass. A lot of the decisions at the end of the day come down to land use decisions.”

Ideally, Langholz says he hopes to live in Blooming Prairie. “By living in Blooming Prairie, I will have more skin in the game and can thus keep myself more accountable,” he said.

In his spare time, Langholz said he likes to fish, “although not very well,” he laughs. He also likes to hunt. Golfing appeals to him, too, as does bowling.

When advised that Blooming Prairie has a small, four-alley bowling establishment, Langholz said, “I only need one lane.”

HOME INVASION: *federal indictment*

FROM A1

men broke into a home and threatened the homeowners with a gun. Cash and jewelry were also taken in the robbery.

No one was injured in either the Steele County home invasions.

Last week’s federal case is connected to a multi-jurisdictional investigation conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and many city and county law enforcement agencies throughout the metro area as well as western Wisconsin and southern Minnesota, including Steele County. Some of the other agencies were Olmsted County, Winona County, Washington County, Wabasha County, St. Croix County, Eden Prairie, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Cottage Grove and Woodbury.

According to the U.S. Attorney’s Office, this case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, an initiative that brings together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and make neighborhoods safer for everyone.

Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele acknowledged his agency was involved in the investigation and subsequent search warrant last week, but referred any additional questions regarding the case to the U.S. Attorney’s Office.



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Jones reflects on his career of running BP

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

After holding the position for nearly two decades, Blooming Prairie City Administrator Mike Jones will finally get a chance to step away for good next month.

Jones had planned to retire a few months ago, but ended staying on in a part-time capacity as the search to find his successor dragged on. The city finally landed Andrew Langholz of Starbuck last week. He takes over for Jones on Feb. 2.

"I'm happy for him that he is going to get a enjoyable retirement," said outgoing Mayor H Peterson. "But I'm disappointed for the city because he's probably the best city administrator we ever could have had.

"He is so skilled with financial things and beyond that he could handle people extremely well," Peterson continued. "People were hardly ever upset about anything during his time as city administrator."

If you take a look around Blooming Prairie at the businesses, parks and streets, Jones likely had a hand in it.

However, if you ask Jones, he wasn't the one who achieved or accomplished anything during his 18-year tenure.

"The community is the ones that accomplished these achievements," he said. "It's Blooming Prairie that did it. It's the taxpayers and the city council that I've had in those 18 years."

Jones said he is grateful that he always had the support of the city council.

"Over those 18 years, I have probably made some wrong decisions," he said. "But I like to think that I've mostly made the proper decision to advance our community."

Jones was raised in Leroy, and attended Austin Community College (now Riverland Community College) where he earned his degree in accounting.

He retired from the United States National Guard after 20 years of service.

"I was one of the last draftees in 1972," Jones said. "So I got to spend two years in the service and when I came back, after about a year I joined the National Guard."

In addition to serving as the city administrator for the past 18 years, Jones was a member of the Blooming Prairie Fire Department for 22 years and a two-time president of the Blooming Prairie Jaycees, an all-volunteer grassroots organizations that offers opportunities for young people to find their own paths through volunteering and service.

Peterson said Jones said even-keeled person who just has a way of smoothing everything over.

"He doesn't get upset about anything and just runs a nice smooth, steady ship," Peterson said. "It would have



Mike Jones, city administrator for the past 18 years, has been an integral part of Blooming Prairie throughout the years. He is retiring from the city and will be replaced by a new administrator in February.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

been great to serve with him in the military and it's been a pleasure serving with him in Blooming Prairie."

MAKING BP HOME

He started working in Blooming Prairie in 1979 after the accounting firm he was working for in Austin decided to expand its operation and open up some satellite offices.

Jones commuted while he and his wife lived in Rose Creek until 1986 when the pair decided to move to Blooming Prairie after Jones bought out the firm he was working for.

During that time, Jones had been doing the city audit, the utility audit and a variety of other city audits for years.

"When the city was trying to make a transition from paper accounting to computers their first attempt was actually done through my office computer," he said, adding that there was a such of funds at that time that the city administrator actually bought his own computer.

The city eventually changed accounting firms when a new city administrator took over,

"I've tried my darnedest to keep everything reasonable and watch every nickel and dime spent by the city."

Mike Jones

Retiring City Administrator

but the city still hired Jones for various projects.

In 2000, BP's city administrator resigned and Jones was asked if he would be the interim administrator.

"I eventually organized and was involved in the interviews for city administrators," he said. "After the first batch of interviews, we offered the job to one gentleman who was a city administrator at the time, but the city he was with offered him a \$10,000 pay increase to keep him. So we were going to start our second batch of interviews and someone asked me why I didn't just apply for the job.

"Being self employed for 15

years it dawned on me that they would pay my health insurance, give me vacation and sick days and still give me a paycheck," Jones continued. "I talked to wife and we made the decision that I would sell my practice and start this job here."

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

In 2004, the Blooming Prairie community was flooded and designated as a Federal Disaster Area.

"We actually got a extensive amount of rain in a very short period of time," Jones said. "The complete community was equivalently underwater even though there are no streams, rivers or ponds next to us.

"It was the most challenging thing because there was nothing you could do," he continued. "There was no way you could stop the rain and there was no way any of the facilities in this community could handle that much water coming in such a short period of time."

The city did a "Storm Water

SEE MIKE JONES, B2

Medford City Council approves budget, adopts 2019 levy

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

At last week's Medford City Council meeting, the council approved a total budget of \$2,106,802 for the 2019 year.

Included in the budget are \$13,914 for the 2018 Street Project bond and \$20,000 for the 2021 Main Street Project. There were also no expenditures for Capital Projects. "We will not make payments on it this year, but will in the next few years," City Administrator Andy Welti explained.

"We went over this budget a lot and revised and revised it," said council member Marie Sexton before the budget was ratified by the council.

The levy and budget were both discussed during a Truth in Taxation hearing in which members of the public were able to give comments.

At \$644,264 the levy for 2019 carries an increase of 3.8 percent, while the county levy stands at an increase of 5 percent. Last year's levy was \$620,645.

Items on the levy included \$19,250 bond payments for 2014 Central Avenue Project and \$15,924 for the 2018 Street Project. The EDA amount was consistent with previous years, standing at \$13,285 for the levy.

The city's tax capacity increased over the past year from \$1,020,894 in 2018 to \$1,103,444 in 2019. This

resulted in a decrease in the city's tax rate, dropping from 60.79 percent in 2018 to 58.39 percent in 2019.

"It's good news that our tax capacity is growing and our tax rate is declining, however changes in the levy, changes in property values, or the valuation on your property, and then also class shifts from residential to commercial, all of those can result in an increase in property taxes," Welti said.

According to Mayor Lois Nelson, there are currently 486 properties in the city. This past April the county came through and valued properties, adding around on average a 15 percent bump in value across the board which will result in higher taxes come April and October of 2019.

One thing that the levy will do for the city at the amount of \$644,264 is continue to build a reserve. "By building our budget reserves, it builds kind of like a rainy-day fund," Welti added. This will increase the likelihood that the city's bond rating will continue to improve as well as provide a cushion for future cuts in funding or other unexpected financial hiccups.

During the meeting, the council also discussed the ice rink staffing and a Park Board open house that was held on Dec. 12. Council member Chad Merritt

SEE MEDFORD CITY COUNCIL, B2

Examine expectations to cope with perfectionism

Question:

What can I do to deal with perfectionism in my life? It is causing me problems with others, and I don't like myself when everything needs to be perfect.

Answer:

Perfectionism is not a clinical diagnosis, but it is a complex symptom that can interfere with day-to-day functioning. Some people thrive on perfectionistic tendencies; others are not able to cope well with them. Perfectionists have many differing characteristics. A common characteristic is high expectations for self and others. Many perfectionists are hard on themselves and others, especially when the high expectations are not met. Examining expectations can aid one's understanding of perfectionism and its impact on your life.

An individual with all-or-nothing expectations believes they should achieve at the level the expectation is set, and if it is not reached, nothing has been accomplished. If the



Steele Talkin'
MARK SKRIEN

individual sets a high expectation for self and reaches it, they feel satisfied. If the high expectation is not attained, the individual may feel disappointed,

possibly devastated. The belief leaves little room for error. Either

the person achieves the expected outcome and feels satisfied or doesn't achieve at the desired level and is dissatisfied. Underachievement gives a sense of non-accomplishment, feelings of disappointment and inadequacy, and may begin to deteriorate self-worth.

To protect against further loss of self-worth, a new expectation is developed. The new expectation gives the person a new target and purpose, a type of "fresh start." If the new expectation is not reached, the cyclic pattern is repeated. Self-worth may be damaged again. The hope is that each new expectation will bring satisfaction and increase self-esteem and self-worth. However, each expectation

SEE STEELE TALKIN', B4

Mayor H: 'I'm done'

Outgoing mayor brings a gavel to his city career

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

A trademark of Harold (H) Peterson when he was a coach and teacher at Blooming Prairie High School was to say, "I'm done" when he completed another day.

He used that trademark

Monday night, Dec. 17 at a Blooming Prairie City Council meeting to say farewell at his last meeting as mayor of Blooming Prairie.

After serving 16 years as mayor of Blooming Prairie, Peterson must step down to welcome his successor Curtis Explan. Peterson was defeated by Explan in the last city election on Nov. 6.

Calling on city officials and council members to make their monthly reports, Peterson said, "I can't end it like that." He extended thanks to some key people who made his service as mayor a successful one.

First, he tossed a verbal bouquet to his wife Jeanne

(not present) for her support over the years. "She has been my rock," Mayor H. said.

Next, he thanked retiring city administrator Mike Jones for his exemplary service.

"I have been blessed with a great council, and we've always had people dedicated to the community," Peterson said.

The city staff has been "fantastic," Mayor H. said. "These people have made the lives of people in Blooming Prairie much better," he added.

Mayor H. said Mayor-elect Explan "will do the job" and "it's almost a full-time job."

Directing his comments to Mayor-elect Explan, Peterson

said it is necessary to have a sense of humor when being a mayor. "You've got to love your city and I do. I wish you well."

Talking about accomplishments, Peterson said he has tried to establish a positive attitude about the city. "Get people to love their city, that's the important thing and I have worked hard at that."

Peterson said he thought he left the camp site a better place. During his time at the mayor's job, Peterson served as president of the Minnesota Mayors Association.

"I'm done."



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

It was a final council meeting for Mayor Harold (H) Peterson of Blooming Prairie. Peterson has served as Blooming Prairie's mayor for the past 16 years. He was defeated in the last election by Curtis Explan.

Chamber salutes outgoing BP mayor

BY HOWARD LESTRUD
STAFF WRITER

Blooming Prairie's Mayor H. Peterson and A Touch of Charm owner Leanne Hanson were saluted by the Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce at a regular monthly meeting Wednesday, Dec. 19 at the BP City Center.

Mayor H and his wife Jeanne were recognized for their work as mayor and first lady during the past 16 years.

Hanson was thanked for her 30 years as a business owner in Blooming Prairie.

She has sold her business to Jacqueline Reiter Vorlicek. She will take over on Jan. 2, 2019.

Mike Jones, who is retiring as city administrator, introduced Mayor H as an ambassador for the city during his terms as mayor. He also served as president of the Minnesota Mayors Association.

Greg Johnson, president of the BP Area Chamber, introduced Hanson and said, "We will miss that beautiful smile."

Jones said Peterson has

been active in city government since 1974. "He was a man behind the scenes," Jones said. "Big things happened in Blooming Prairie because of H's leadership," Jones stated.

Peterson praised Blooming Prairie and said now that he is retired, he could live any place but he chose to live in BP.

In an abbreviated business meeting, Amanda Schumacher, chamber gambling manager, gave an update on gambling activities at the BP Country Club, Bunkie's and The Cue Company.

Jim Fiebiger supplemented Schumacher's report saying the executive committee recommends a donation of \$15,000 to the local EDA for the betterment of the community. Other ideas for donations will also be studied.

The chamber membership unanimously adopted a motion to donate \$15,000 to the EDA.

Next meeting of the chamber will be Thursday, Jan. 17, 2019 when citizens of the year, Mike and Sandy Jones will be recognized.

Medford School Board certifies levy

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

The Medford School Board certified the 2018 levy to be payable in 2019 during last week's Board of Education meeting.

Prior to this session, the board held a Truth in Taxation meeting on Dec. 3 for public input on the proposed levy.

With a total levy of \$1,692,224.58, the school board went ahead and approved the amount for certification at this week's meeting. This amount is for taxes payable in the 2019 year and the levy form will be submitted to the county auditor and the Minnesota Department of Education.

The 2017 levy totaled \$1,631,852.56. This gives the increase from last year's levy a total of \$60,372.02, or just under a 3.7 percent increase.

During the meeting, the board also reviewed a revised budget for the 2018-2019 year. Revenue stands at \$10,637,651 while expenditures tally slightly over that at \$11,299,962.

The board also approved calendars for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years. Enrollment was also reviewed, and at 884, it is slightly down from last year.

It was also the last meeting for outgoing board member Bill Cronin.

An organizational and regular meeting to start off the new year is scheduled for Jan. 7 at 7 p.m.



Mayor H Peterson and wife Jeanne were recognized for their service to the city of Blooming Prairie the past 16 years. Peterson is stepping down as mayor at the end of the month.



A Touch of Charm owner Leanne Hanson greeted customers during a BP Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours session, Wednesday, Dec. 19.

MPCA to hold public meeting on draft permit for Lansing landfill

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will hold a public information meeting Wednesday, Jan. 2 at Lansing Township Hall, 26938 539th Ave., Lansing, on the draft state permit for the SKB Lansing Landfill.

The meeting will start with an MPCA presentation at 7 p.m. followed by time for questions from the public. Interested parties may submit written comments on the draft permit through 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 7.

The ownership of the SKB Lansing Landfill and the adjacent WCI Austin Landfill merged into one entity in August 2017. This draft permit would cover activities at both the SKB Lansing Landfill and WCI Austin Landfill sites, which operate as a Class 3 and Class 2 demolition landfill, respectively. The sites together encompass 116.1 acres in Section 21 of Lansing Township.

The SKB Lansing Landfill would continue to operate as a Class 3 demolition landfill, accepting all types of construction and demolition waste as well as most industrial waste. A Class 3 facility must have groundwater monitoring, waste screening, a liner underneath the waste, and a system to collect leachate (water such as precipitation that mixes with the waste).

Changes to previous permits for the original SKB landfill would include:

- Making final cover slopes more steep, from 5:1 to 4:1
- Increasing its capacity for buried waste from 1.93 million cubic yards to 2.52 million cubic yards
- Expanding the waste footprint from 29.3 acres to 30.2 acres

The WCI Austin Landfill is a demolition landfill that was formerly operated as Vonco 4 and was owned by Veit Companies. WCI Austin Landfill purchased this site in July 2014. Under the draft state permit, it would continue to operate as a Class 2 demolition landfill, accepting construction and demolition waste, along with non-recyclable packaging such as paper, cardboard and plastic, as well as industrial wastes such as wood, concrete, porcelain fixtures, shingles and window glass. There are no proposed changes to this site under the draft state permit.

The public notice and draft permit for SKB Lansing Landfill are on the MPCA website: Go to www.pca.state.mn.us, click on "public notices" in the right margin, and scroll down to Dec. 7.

Comments on the draft permit are due Jan. 7 to Sherri Nachtigal, landfill engineer, by email to sherri.nachtigal@state.mn.us or by mail to Sherri Nachtigal, MPCA, 18 Wood Lake Drive S.E., Rochester, MN 55904. For more information, call her at 507-206-2600.

STEELE TALKIN': Perfectionism

not reached, can cause significant turmoil.

Goals are similar to expectations, but do not have the all-or-nothing connotation. Satisfaction on goal achievement is similar to meeting an expectation, however a goal that has not been completed is not perceived as nothing. The person is able to credit themselves for the effort made and receive self-satisfaction. Recognition for a job well done is noted, even if the final goal is not completed. A new goal may be developed without loss of self-worth.

A way to reduce perfectionistic symptoms is to examine all-or-nothing expectations. Listen to the messages given to self and others. "Should" and "should not," "must" and "must not" are messages indicating high expectations for one's self. If these messages are present, you may be setting up too high expectations for self. Consider replacing some of them with realistic and workable goals. Goals provide a better sense of accomplishment and reduce the risk of lowered self-worth associated with failure to reach the high expectations.

Mark Skrien is a licensed psychologist, licensed marriage and family therapist, and the recently retired clinical director at the South Central Human Relations Center in Owatonna. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.

MEDFORD COUNCIL: Budget approval

expressed his opinion that both the ice rink staffing and pursuing a Water Tower Park would not be worth the cost.

Administrator Welti reported to the council that the Steele County Board of Commissioners, at its November meeting, approved the Cooperative Agreement between Steele County and the City of Medford for Design and construction of CSAH 45. Resolution 2018-31 was also approved, a resolution certifying unpaid bills to Steele County.

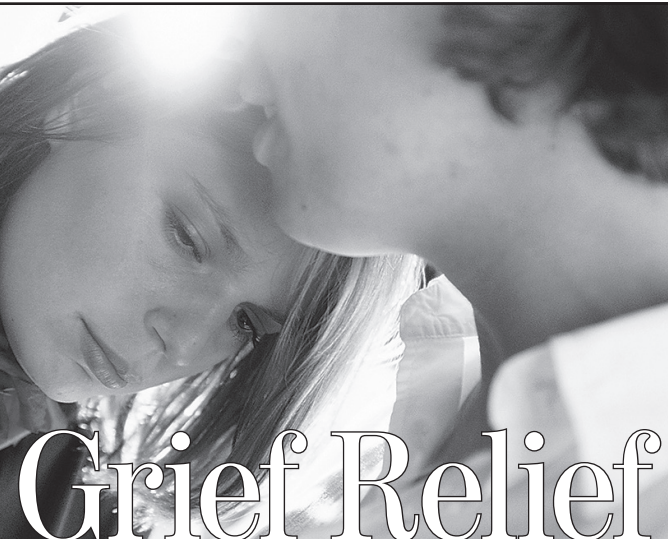
The city's new Public Works Supervisor, Cory Franek, gave an introduction to the council and discussed some of his work since taking on the position on Dec. 10 of this year. Franek helped fill in a vacancy that had continued since last spring, bringing stability to the city's Public Works Department.

Prior to the regular session, the city held a special work session whereby they had preliminary discussions regarding wastewater treatment options moving forward. No decisions were made during the special session.

At the regular meeting's close Mayor Lois Nelson presented outgoing council members Chad Merritt and Keith Maas each with a plaque and thanked them for their service over the years. Merritt served on the council for eight years while Maas held his seat for six.

Chad Langeslag and Grace Bartlett were elected in November to fill both council seats. They will begin at their new positions in January.

Next month's regular city council meeting will be held on Monday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m.



Grief Relief

If a friend is dying, what can you do? Don't avoid your friend by staying away or changing the subject when they talk of illness or death. Follow the normal conversations that are part of your relationship. If your friend wishes to talk further, allow them to; letting them know that you care and will help in anyway you can. Honest conversations are usually most welcome and your presence may be all that is needed.

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Cory Michaelson



BP School approves levy increase

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

There will be an increase in next year's levy for the Blooming Prairie School District.

The levy amount approved was set for \$5,382,912.29. The 5.45 percent increase was approved at the annual Truth in Taxation meeting Monday, Dec. 17, at the regular school board meeting.

The board also approved the 2019-2020 school calendar and designated the Blooming

Prairie Council Chambers located in the City Center as the polling place for 2019.

In other news, the board:

- Approved the resignation of Diane Anderson effective May 31, 2018. Anderson worked for the district for 21 years.
- Approved the resignation of Sandra Barnes effective Dec. 21, 2018. Barnes worked for the district for 17 years.
- Approved Jeremy Hocking as the volunteer boys' basketball coach.

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BP man jailed for failing to stop for school bus

BY ALEX MALM
STAFF WRITER

A 24-year-old Blooming Prairie man was arrested last week in Dodge County after allegedly failing to stop for a school bus.

According to the complaint, on Dec. 18, a Dodge County Deputy Sheriff was dispatched regarding a school bus arm violation that had occurred. The driver of the school bus stated that he activated the red flashing

stop arm and opened the door of the school bus.

As he did this, he noticed a vehicle drive past the stop arm on the left side of the bus. The bus driver was able to get the drivers license plate of the vehicle, along with the description of the vehicle. There was a child exiting the bus as the vehicle passed through the stop arm.



ANDERSON

The deputy made contact with Tyler Paul Anderson, who was the registered owner of the subject vehicle. Anderson stated that he was traveling home from work and came up on the school bus. He did not see any flashing lights on the bus so he began to pass the school bus. As he was passing, he noticed the red

flashing stop arm come out from the bus. Since he was in the oncoming lane of traffic, he continued to pass.

After the statement made by Anderson, the deputy placed Anderson under arrest and transported him to the Steele County Jail.

Anderson was charged with one gross misdemeanor count of failing to stop for a school bus, which carries a penalty of up to one year in jail and a fine of \$3,000.

PUBLIC RECORDS

STEELE COUNTY BIRTHS APRIL 2018

Adrian Ismael Bermudez, Parents: Isela and Silvestre, April 3.

Stevie Michelle Wanous, Parents: Stephanie and Dalton, April 5.

Annabelle Lee Krienke, Parents: Alexis and Justin, April 6.

Kayson King Lee, Parent: Ashlyn Guerrero, April 7.

William Everett Bock, Parents: Kayce and Nathaniel, April 8.

Hadlee Koski Swenson, Parents: Leslee and Tyler, April 8.

Etta Denny Walden, Parents: Jeanne and Andrew, April 9.

David Santiago Barajas, Parents: Dalia and David, April 10.

Owen Edward Lance, Parents: Brittny and Anthony, April 10.

Razaan Shueeb Egal, Parents: Fathia Ahmed Ali and Shueeb Egal, April 11.

Evelyn Mary Klecker, Parents: Lesley and Joshua, April 11.

Asher David Laiho, Parents: Trisha and Devin, April 12.

Parker Allen Schultz, Parents: Ashley and Jeffery, April 13.

Mawaa Abdulkadir Fakrudin, Parents: Shukri Abdirahman and Abdulkadir Sharifali, April 14.

Magdalyon Jo Mosier, Parents: Amy and Jared, April 15.

Quinten Ryder Davis, Parents: Shawna and Michael Dickenson, April 16.

Connor Joseph Holmquist, Parents: Crystal and John, April

16.

Silas Anton Deml, Parents: Meghan and Anthony, April 18.

Hazel Ann Trom, Parents: Mandy and Michael, April 19.

Saachi Sharma, Parents: Sonirani Parivara Janardhan and Subir Kumar Sharma, April 20.

Colton Ray Leavstrom, Parents: Carissa and Seth, April 22.

Lennon David Jay Webster, Parents: Rebecca Peterson and Mathias Webster, April 24.

Brynn Marie Harman, Parents: Eryn and Kevin, April 25.

Garrett David Harman, Parents: Eryn and Kevin, April 25.

Emmalynn Kate Johnson, Parents: Victoria and Eric, April 25.

Elliott Allen Langr, Parents: Kelly and Joshua, April 25.

Bria Lynn Horner, Parents: Kirsten and Jay, April 26.

Sofia De La Rey Mendez, Parents: Jaime and Joshua Sponsler, April 26.

Lincoln Eugene Bishop, Parents: Rae Ann and Aaron, April 27.

Hayden Sue Wobig, Parents: Kayla and David, April 27.

Wesley James Winzenburg, Parents: Sara and Patrick, April 28.

Ryson Albert William Richardson, Parents: Emily and Ryan, April 29.

**STEELE COUNTY DEATHS
APRIL 2018**

Virginia Kuehn, 82, Faribault,

April 1.

Wendell Wilker, 63, Owatonna, April 3.

Rose Halla, 57, Owatonna, April 4.

Donna Horecka, 86, Owatonna, April 8.

Edwin Leibold, 66, St. Charles, April 9.

Faye Dettmann, 80, Ellendale, April 13.

Richard Casson, 67, Faribault, April 14.

James McKenna, 77, Shieldsville Township, April 16.

Helen Finch, 81, Owatonna, April 17.

Angela Langland, 53, Jordan, April 18.

Victor Lansing, 91, Owatonna, April 18.

Janice Svenby, 75, Medford Township, April 19.

Patricia Loftness, 72, Blooming Prairie, April 20.

Charles Anderson, 91, Owatonna, April 24.

Robert Bohlman, 86, Owatonna, April 24.

Richard Clemens, 81, Owatonna, April 25.

Harlan Mussman, 94, Owatonna, April 27.

Francis Fitzsimmons, 93, Waseca, April 30.

**STEELE COUNTY MARRIAGES
APRIL 2018**

Nathaniel Richard Greene and Claudia Patricia Cordova, April 7.

Kalli Miranda Brennan and Jan Cornelius Hinkle, April 14.

Abdirizak Ahmed Abdi and Fatumo Obed Bundit, April 16.

Allyson K. Becker and Joshua Scott Jensen, April 21.

Debra Kay Van Esch and Mark George Ladika, April 21.

Thomas Andrew Wojtowicz and Samantha Dene Humphrey, April 27.

Randy Lee Ulrich and Sherry Lee Norte, April 28.

**STEELE COUNTY DIVORCES
APRIL 2018**

Jennifer Marie Rions and Justin Todd Rions.

Catherine Suzanne Manchack William Don Manchack.

Kyle Michael Halla and Suzann Lee Halla.

Scott Jeffery Grunklee and Lana Jean Grunklee.

Nancy Jean DeCoux and Larry George DeCoux.

Ashley Lynn Gilchrest and Corey Lee Gilchrest.

Sheila Ann Sage and Jason Lee Sage.

Crystal LeeAnn Alcaraz and Juan R. Alcaraz Juarez.

Randy Stephen Carlson and Jacqueline Marie Carlson.

Michael Norman Froisland and Sara Marie Froisland.

Paul LeRoy Voxland and Rebeca Voxland.

Damon Scot Recore and Amanda Marie Recore.

Brian Jacob Bronner and Denise Elaine Briggs-Bronner.

Melissa Dawn Nichols and Amanda Marie Nichols.

CRIME BRIEF

POLICE SNAG A REPEAT VIOLATOR WITH METH



ROBERTS

An alert officer snagged a repeat violator after seeing a vehicle operated by the man known to have a revoked driver's license.

On Dec. 5, Owatonna Police stopped a vehicle operated by Zane Roberts, 27, of Austin. The officer confirmed Roberts had a revoked license. Police also discovered Roberts was driving the vehicle with no insurance.

Police arrested Roberts for being a habitual violator with nine insurance violations in 10 years, three revocations within the past year and two other cases pending from last month.

A search of the vehicle uncovered a plastic bad with a white powder believed to be methamphetamine. During the booking process, another plastic bag containing meth fell from Roberts, police said.

Roberts has been charged with fifth-degree possession of a controlled substance and driving after revocation.

During an interview with police, Roberts indicated he would fail a drug test if he were to take one. Police got a search warrant for a blood sample to determine if he was operating under a controlled substance.

After three recent work zone crashes, MnDOT reminds motorists to pay attention

With three recent work zone crashes in southeastern Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Transportation reminds drivers to slow down and pay attention.

MnDOT crews have been out in the warmer winter weather doing maintenance work on the roads and repairing damage caused by drivers. Drivers have crashed into work zones, damaging equipment, and created some close- calls for workers. More maintenance work may occur on roads while warmer winter temperatures are present, so motorists should be alert for workers and more work zones than they might encounter when winter temperatures are colder.

“In each case, the work zones were signed and marked, but it appears drivers did not heed the warning signs to move over or slow down and prepare to stop,” said Tim Zierden, MnDOT District 6 west maintenance superintendent. “We’re thankful our workers were not injured and the drivers and others were not killed.”

On Tuesday, Dec. 18, a crash occurred on Highway 61 north of Lake City at 9:05 a.m. MnDOT crews were in a work zone sealing cracks in the pavement when a rear-end crash took place. One vehicle was stopped for a flagger controlling traffic. Another southbound vehicle was slowing for the stopped vehicle when a minivan behind the slowing vehicle crashed into it. The crash forced one of the vehicles up an embankment and it rolled

down, coming close to hitting the flagger. The driver of the vehicle that was struck had non-life threatening injuries. The driver and the passenger in the minivan that caused the crash did not report injuries.

On Friday, Dec. 7, crews on Interstate 35 north of the Highway 19 exit were repairing damaged cable median barrier. MnDOT snowplow trucks with crash cushion trailers and arrow boards on the back were directing traffic away from the left lane shortly after 1 p.m. when a van sideswiped the plow truck and rolled. The van's driver was injured.

Also in December, crews were doing work on Highway 58 near Hay Creek in Goodhue County when a northbound vehicle swerved around a vehicle stopped by a MnDOT flagger and lost control before striking a guard rail near the flagger. No significant injuries were reported.

MnDOT urges motorists to always be attentive, drive with caution, slow down in work zones and never enter a road blocked with barriers or cones.



MIKE JONES: Retirement FROM B1

Study” in 2005 to figure out what was causing the problems and came up with some solutions.

Jones, Mayor Peterson and the city’s engineers had to go before and make two presentations to the state’s Legislative Finance Committee to try to get some funding to help resolve some of the issues.

“It was unique for a small-town boy out of Leroy to be sitting in front State Legislators and be making a plea for funding,” Jones said.

“It was kind of trying time. We knew that as a city we couldn’t afford to take care of this problem. So we were looking for some state funding. We didn’t really get much. It ended up costing the city over \$2 million to eliminate the north end problem.”

The city acquired some property on the northwest end of town and put in some retention ponds to catch the water coming out the rural area before it came into the city’s system.

PROJECT LOOMING

Jones helped the city resolve many of its street issues around town, but he said there is another big project out there looming where 2nd Street will need to be completely torn out and the storm sewer, sanitary sewer and water main will all need to be replaced.

Jones said he estimates the project will cost approximately \$3.4 million and the city is currently on the state’s Public Priority List.

“In other words, we are telling the state that we need this project and we don’t have the funds,” he said. “We are slowly working our way up the list as other projects are getting done.

“It’s kind of scary to know we have \$3.4 million project out there with the debt that we have incurred in the last five years,” Jones continued.

Next legislative session, the new city administrator will get to gain some experience by going in front of the state’s Legislative Finance Committee and requesting

those funds.

BP’S FUTURE

Jones reiterated many times that what made his time as city administrator so enjoyable was having the support of the city council and community.

“It’s my nature to be conservative,” he said. “I’m an accountant by trade and accountants are conservative. I’ve tried my darnedest to keep everything reasonable and watch every nickel and dime spent by the city.”

Jones said are some bucket list items he wishes he had seen completed during his

tenure.

“I would have liked to seen new bathrooms and changing rooms installed at Pine Springs Pool,” he said. “I would have also liked to seen a bathroom installed at Central Park. We tried to make some improvements to Central Park about the bathroom, but I just think it’s rude that you have to use those porta-potties.

“I have operated using what I felt was common sense,” Jones said. “I like to think that I made most of the correct decisions for our city over the years.”

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How to Cope with Seasonal Affective Disorder

Dear Savvy Senior,
What can you tell me about seasonal affective disorder? I have always hated wintertime, but since I retired and am home a lot more, the dark and cold winter months make me depressed and lethargic.

Fighting the Blues

Dear Fighting,
If you get depressed in the winter but feel better in spring and summer, you may indeed have seasonal affective disorder (or SAD), a wintertime depression that affects roughly 6 percent of Americans.

In most cases, SAD is related to the loss of sunlight in the winter months. Reduced sunlight can upset natural sleep-wake cycles and other circadian rhythms that can affect the body. It can also cause a drop in the brain chemical serotonin, which affects mood, and can increase the levels of the hormone melatonin, which can make you feel more tired and lethargic.

If you think you may have SAD, a trip to your doctor's office is the best way to diagnose it or you can take a SAD "self-diagnostic" test at the Center for Environmental Therapeutics website at CET.org/self-assessment. In the meantime, here are several treatment options and remedies that can help.

LIGHT THERAPY: The most effective treatment for SAD is sitting in front of a specialized light therapy box for 15 to 20 minutes a day. Light therapy mimics outdoor light to cause a change in brain chemicals linked to mood. It's most effective when timed to fit a person's individual circadian rhythm, which varies widely from person to person depending on whether they're a night owl or a morning lark. You can calculate the proper time for doing light therapy by taking the circadian rhythm test atCET.org/self-assessment.

The best light therapy lamps provide 10,000 lux of illumination, many times stronger than typical indoor light, and have a diffuser screen that filters out ultraviolet rays and projects downward toward the eyes.

Some top-rated products as rated by Wirecutter.com include the Carex Day-Light Classic Plus Lamp (\$115), Verilux HappyLight Deluxe 10,000-Lux Sunshine Simulator



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(\$160), and the Northern Light Technology Boxelitte Desk Lamp (\$190), all of which are available at Amazon.com.

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY: Even though SAD is considered to be a biological problem, identifying and changing thought and behavior patterns can help alleviate symptoms too. To help you with this, choose a therapist who specializes in cognitive behavioral therapy and who has experience in treating SAD. To locate someone in your area, check with the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (FindCBT.org), or the Academy of Cognitive Therapy (AcademyofCT.org).

ANTIDEPRESSANTS: Some people with SAD benefit from antidepressant treatment, especially if symptoms are severe. Some proven medications to ask your doctor about include the extended-release version of the antidepressant bupropion (Wellbutrin XL, Aplenzin), and antidepressants selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (S.S.R.I.s), sertraline (also known as Zoloft) and

fluoxetine (also known under the brand name Prozac).

But keep in mind that it may take several weeks to notice full benefits from an antidepressant. In addition, you may have to try different medications before you find one that works well for you and has the fewest side effects.

LIFESTYLE REMEDIES: Some other things you can do to help alleviate your SAD symptoms include making your environment sunnier and brighter. So, open up your blinds, sit closer to bright windows and get outside as much as can. Even on cold or cloudy days, outdoor light can help, especially if you spend some time outside within two hours of getting up in the morning. Moderate exercise such as walking, swimming, yoga and even tai chi can also help alleviate SAD symptoms, as can social activities.

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.



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10 Years Ago Dec. 23, 2008

DAN EVANS, PUBLISHER

The Winona Diocese will have a new bishop in the next few months. Bishop John Quinn comes to the area from Detroit where he was an auxiliary bishop. The bishop visited St. Columbanus Church in Bloomington Wednesday afternoon where there was a welcoming mass for him.

Bloomington business owner and talented floral designer, Tina Bush, lent her skills to decorate Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty's office and the Christmas tree at the State Capitol. Bush is the owner of Bush Garden Gladiolus in BP.

A twosome has found the Medallion hidden in Bloomington for the holiday season. Dennis Hedberg and Amber Brandt found the Medallion on the west end of town by the Pavilion under the seat of the digger.

20 Years Ago Dec. 22, 1998

ELSIE SLINGER, PUBLISHER

Loretta Ingvalson, Bloomington's librarian for the city, has decided to try other endeavors. She will leave behind an ever-changing atmosphere at the City Center. She has been with the library for 10 years.

A donation has bought a server for Bloomington Elementary School. Kim and Steve Habberstad and Farmers and Merchants Bank of Bloomington made the donation of money toward the server. In all, the server costs about \$4,000.

The Board of Directors of the newly formed Bloomington Education Foundation held its first meeting Thursday night at the high school library. The Foundation was officially incorporated Dec. 15, 1998, when the Articles of Incorporation were filed in the office of the Secretary of State. Becky Noble has been elected the first president of the group.

50 Years Ago Dec. 19, 1968

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJC, PUBLISHERS

"We just keep praying" is how Mrs. B.I. Ingvalson, who resides south of Bloomington, sums up her reaction about the possible release of her son, Major Roger D. Ingvalson, from a North Vietnam prisoner of war camp. The hopes of Mrs. Ingvalson and other relatives in the BP-Austin are considerably brighter today following an announcement that some American prisoners would be released for Christmas.

Lawrence E. Agarter, attorney associated with the Walbran & Walbran Law Office in Bloomington, was appointed assistant Steele County Attorney by the Board of Commissioners at their regular monthly meeting Dec. 10. The new assistant will be paid \$200 per month.

Frank H. Ruzek was honored at a retirement dinner by the Bloomington Fire Department last Saturday night, Dec. 14., in the Servicemen's Club rooms. Mr. Ruzek just recently retired as a volunteer fireman after 35 years of faithful service to Bloomington.

75 Years Ago Dec. 23, 1943

FRANK KREJC, PUBLISHER

Word has been received by officials of Bloomington Cooperative Creamery Association that Washington officials have given them the "Green light" signal for equipment that will enable them to install machinery for processing raw milk.

A district court jury failed to end the litigation started after the death of Patrick J. Meehan, Bloomington, by his son residing in Minneapolis. The case has been on the court docket nearly two years. Last Thursday at Owatonna, the jury found that the late Patrick J. Meehan was mentally competent to make a will, but that he was influenced in making it.

At a recent election of officers of Prairie Lodge, A.F. and A.M., the following officers were elected for the coming year: E.T. Thompson, worship master; Oscar Bakke, senior warden; Norman Peterson, junior warden; R.J. Whipple, treasurer; Palmer Peterson, secretary; Jay Beal, senior deacon; George Day and Arthur Olson, stewards and Jacob Broulik, tyler.



Kaden Thomas, Bloomington basketball
The Blossoms' forward has made quite an impact this season in helping BP start 6-0. Thomas scored 12 points against Maple River on Dec. 11 and Southland on Dec. 18. The junior dropped 19 points against NRHEG on Dec. 14 and made some impressive plays on defense too.



Lindsay Bangs, Owatonna gymnastics
The sophomore is a pivotal member of the Huskies' gymnastics team, which is ranked No. 2 in Class 2A. Bangs was the top individual on the bars with a score of 9.275 in Owatonna win over Rochester Century, Rochester Mayo and Rochester John Marshall on Dec. 7.

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Farewell to 2018



As 2018 comes to an end, we look back on our triumphs and troubles, our success and failures, our gains and our losses.

This past year has been a tumultuous one. It's brought regime changes, famines, landscape altering storms and unforeseen fluctuations in the global economy.

But it's also brought us new champions to admire, advancements in science, medical miracles and, ultimately, hope for a future our children can thrive in.

Through it all, we've been proud to be your number one source for local news and to share the stories that shape our lives and our community.

As we look towards the new year, it's with the absolute certainty that we'll continue to be there for you, delivering the stories that matter to us all.

Happy
New Year!

May 2019 bring us achievements and victories that we can share with each other and with the world.

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Associated Church marks Christmas Eve

The arrival of Saint Nicholas and the retelling of the Dutch saint's story gave a special twist at the annual Children's Program at Associated Church in Owatonna. The program featured Christmas Around the World, which was the 2018 theme for special services celebrating Christmas. The theme carried through the children's program featuring songs from around the world, the choral music service, and upcoming Christmas orchestra Dec. 23. The universality of the Christmas story flavored Christmas Eve services on Dec. 24. The sanctuary was decorated with wreaths, each one featuring ornaments from different countries, and a tree festooned with favorite ornaments of church families.

The 5 p.m. service on Christmas Eve included children and families in retelling the story of Jesus' birth. The congregation sang many favorite Christmas carols and hymns to celebrate Jesus' coming.

The 11 p.m. "Lessons and Carols" format of the 11 p.m. service interspersed biblical readings, secular readings, and Christmas carols to tell the birth story. Communion was offered for everyone. The traditions of Candlelight and Silent Night welcomed a new day.

This fall Associated Church celebrated its 100th anniversary as a federated congregation of Owatonna's two former churches established in 1857: First Presbyterian Church (USA) and Congregational/United Church of Christ (UCC). The Rev. Coqui Conkey is pastor.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Saint Nicholas arrived at Associated Church in Owatonna to retell the Dutch saint's story as the congregation celebrated Christmas Around the World during the Christmas holiday season.

A little jingle before the holiday



STAFF PHOTOS BY HOWARD LESTRUD

A little extra jingle came to Blooming Prairie through the Owatonna High School Dinner Ensemble, which performed at the Blooming Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours Wednesday, Dec. 12 at Farmers & Merchants State Bank. Shown from left are: Kaitlynn Paulson, violin; Evan Krueger, violin; Brooke Schwartz, viola; Peter Fast, cello and Abbigail Moran, bass. Left: Jan Anderson and Austra Hanson pick up some snacks at the event as they enjoyed company with each other.

STEELE COUNTY

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Owatonna Winter Weekend Out planned in late January

The Owatonna Parks and Recreation has a fun-filled, snow fun, weekend planned! Take a look at the weekend's activities and like our page on Facebook to stay updated on the weekend's activities.

Snow Sculpture Competition – get your team together and register for the first annual Snow Sculpture Competition in Central Park! Register on the Park & Rec website.

- Carving will take place Jan. 17-20. Spectators are welcome to watch teams carve their sculptures!
- Carvings will be done by 10 a.m. Jan. 20. Come and view the finished sculptures! Sculptures will be available for viewing until they melt.
- Prizes for first and second places!

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25: Sledding at West Hills
Time: 5 p.m.
Sledding on the Hill- decorate your sled with lights and glow sticks!
Free Admission to West Hills Tennis and Fitness Center
Time: 5-7 p.m.
Gym, walking track, cardio room, and weight room is open for use. Swimming will also be available from 6-7 p.m.. The tennis courts will also be open for beginner, intermediate, and advanced players, with games, drills, and prizes hosted by tennis pro Kelly Baker and the Owatonna Tennis Association. (Space is limited)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 26: Icicle Dive
Time: 11 a.m.
Are you brave enough to jump into a frozen lake to raise money for We All Play Owatonna? We are hosting our first-ever Icicle Dive at Lake Kohlmier. Along with the chilly swim we will have frozen lawn games and treats to keep everyone warm.

Fat Bike Demo
Time: 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Have you ever wanted to try fat tire biking? Now's your chance! Straight River Sports will be at Kaplan's Woods, providing fat tire bikes for you to give it a try.

Sled Dogs
Time: 2-5 p.m.
Come and meet real working sled dogs at Morehouse Park! Learn about the equipment, lingo, and history of the dogs while playing games!

Rock on Ice
Time: 6-8 p.m.
Music, lights, fun...we'll be Rockin on Ice! Bring the whole family down, warm up by the bonfire and enjoy a night skating to the music!

Kids Games/Activities/ Rec on the Go
Time: 6-8 p.m.
Bring your own props and decorations for a Build Your Own Snowman Competition. Judging will begin at 7:30 p.m. Additionally we will have snow paint to create your very own snow art, plus winter lawn games and other fun snow games!

Ice Bocce Ball
Time: 6-8 p.m.
Get Your Roll On, It's Bocce Time!
Get your team of two to four together and join us at Morehouse Park, on the Bass Pond, for Bocce on ice! Discover the sport you can enjoy year round! This FREE event is open to all who want to experience this game on ice.

SUNDAY, JAN. 27: Family Ice Fishing at Lake Kohlmier
Time: 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Join us on Lake Kohlmier for an afternoon of ice fishing. Limited equipment and bait will be provided -- holes will be pre-drilled for fishing. Prizes for kids 15 & under who catch the top three longest fish. This is a FREE event for everyone to attend. Look for more information to come.



Taking orders for Christmas

Siblings Mavrick and Haley Schlichter told Santa Claus their wishes when he visited the Blooming Prairie Police Department Thursday night, Dec. 13 on a long trip from the North Pole.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Be a holiday hero – give the gift of life

Red Cross urgently needs blood donations

Emergencies don't take a holiday. The American Red Cross urgently needs blood donors to make an appointment now to give and help ensure patients can get the treatment they need at a moment's notice.

In November 2016, a 100-foot maple tree fell on Mike McMahon, causing life-threatening injuries. He needed 11 units of blood during emergency surgery and another seven units to treat complications after. Six weeks following the accident, McMahon was released from the hospital – just in time to spend the holidays with his family.

“I'm grateful for the donors who gave me such an amazing gift – the gift of life,” said McMahon. “I was an occasional blood donor before the accident. Today, I donate as often as I can to help ensure others receive blood when they need it most.”

Now is an important time to give blood. A seasonal decline in donations occurs from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day when donors get busy with family gatherings and travel. In addition, severe winter weather can cause

blood drive cancellations and negatively affect the blood supply. Patients like McMahon can't afford for there to be a shortage of blood.

Give the gift of life – make an appointment to donate blood by downloading the free American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

As a special thank-you for helping meet the urgent need, those who come to give Dec. 26 through Jan. 6 will receive a long-sleeved Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities Dec. 26-Jan. 15:

STEELE Owatonna
Dec. 27: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Famous Dave's, 4355 W. Frontage Road
Jan. 3: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Buffalo Wild Wings, 1100 Frontage Road
Jan. 10: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m., St. Joseph's Church, 512 S. Elm Ave.

FREEBORN Albert Lea
Dec. 28: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Mayo Clinic Health System,

404 Fountain St. and 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., North Bridge Mall, 2510 Bridge Ave.
Jan. 2: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., National Guard Armory, 410 Prospect Ave.
Jan. 3: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., National Guard Armory, 410 Prospect Ave.
Jan. 4: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., National Guard Armory, 410 Prospect Ave.
Jan. 9: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Freeborn County Sheriff's Office, 411 S. Broadway Ave.

HOLLANDALE
Jan. 2: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Hollandale Reformed Church, 101 Park Ave.

MOWER Austin
Jan. 10: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m., Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 1600 W. Oakland Ave.

How to donate blood
Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to make an appointment or for more information. All

blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass® to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at RedCrossBlood.org/ RapidPass or use the Blood Donor App.

Service Enterprise Training coming to Owatonna in March

HandsOn Twin Cities (HOTC) and Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) have partnered with Points of Light, the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service, to offer Southern Minnesota organizations access to the Service Enterprise Initiative. The Service Enterprise Initiative is a national change management program that helps organizations gain a greater return on volunteer investment to better achieve their mission.

Achieving Service Enterprise certification is a very prestigious accomplishment for an organization. In fact, organizations that certify join the top 11 percent of nonprofits nationwide in volunteer management and organizational performance. Certification signifies that organizations have the capability and management expertise to strategically use volunteers to improve the performance of their organization. By becoming a Service Enterprise, you will be uniquely positioned to engage the time and talent of volunteers to expand program operations and revenue, realize higher programmatic impact and better achieve your mission.

In fact, research conducted by the TCC Group found that Service Enterprises are equally as effective as their peers without volunteers, at half the median budget. Service Enterprises experience a proven return on volunteer investment, and research shows that they are significantly more adaptable, sustainable and better resourced to do their work.

Through Service Enterprise, organizations will have access to:

- A research-based program to transform your organization into one of the top 11 percent of nonprofits in volunteer management and organizational performance;
- A diagnostic evaluation of current volunteer engagement practices and tailored recommendations for improvement;

- Sixteen hours of training focused on change management and volunteer engagement strategies and best practices;
- Individualized coaching and the support;
- A nationally recognized certification, with access to volunteer engagement networks, resources and communities.

HOTC and MAVA have certified more than 50 Minnesota organizations since 2015. Each organization identifying key takeaways from the SEI process include: realizing the importance of taking a strategic planning approach to volunteer engagement; recognizing that there are systems and processes for volunteer engagement that require updating as trends change; and building an understanding that change management processes strengthens volunteer involvement.

Olmsted Medical Center and the Rochester Public Library are two of the 50 certified organizations in Minnesota. Here is what their representatives had to say about Service Enterprise: “It was time to move our volunteer program to the next level. We were all volunteering for the same mission, yet we were separate and not working together. As a healthcare organization, we all needed to be on the same page and work as a cohesive team and SE allowed us to merge our volunteers under one umbrella

for the same mission. The consistency throughout the organization has been rewarding. We now have a streamlined process for interviews, onboarding, and structure. We are able to tap into best practices and not re-invent the wheel, but yet do what works best for us. The networking among other SE organizations has been great.”

~Kelly Owens, Olmsted Medical Center

“In a survey taken in early 2018 volunteers indicated that they felt that volunteering at the library was a valuable use of their time, they felt more connected to others in the community, and have a greater understanding of library services. Since becoming certified the importance of volunteers has been built into our culture, staff members are more vested in utilizing volunteer help, and the library is better positioned to respond to the needs of a changing community.”

~Marilyn Campbell, Rochester Public Library

Ready to get started?
If anyone is ready to get started, they can apply online at https://survey.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8iHjn9MwNxVZp5P. Applications are due Jan. 30.

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Dec 27 Pork Steak & Dressing, Oriental blend Vegetables, Romaine Lettuce Salad, Dinner Roll, Peanut Butter Cookies

Dec 28 Navy Bean Soup, Egg Salad Sandwich, Carrot Coin Salad, Oatmeal Cookie

Dec 31 Ham Balls **Alt:** Ground Beef Patty, Fresh Sweet Potatoes, Broccolim, Flavored Ice Cream

Box Lunches will be available for January 1, 2019

Recipe Corner

BUTTERSCOTCH LAYER DESSERT

FIRST LAYER:
1 c. flour
1/2 c. margarine
1/2 c. chopped nuts

Mix and pat in a 9x13-inch pan. Bake 15 minutes at 350°. Cool.

SECOND LAYER:
1 c. powdered sugar
1 c. Cool Whip
8 oz. softened cream cheese

Spread on the first layer.

THIRD LAYER:
2 sm. pkg. instant butterscotch pudding
3 c. milk
1 tsp. vanilla

Mix together. Spread over cream cheese layer. Chill.

FOURTH LAYER:
Cool Whip, as desired

Also decorative sprinkles of chopped nuts or colored sugar crystals.

Note: Other flavors of pudding such as pistachio or chocolate can be substituted instead of butterscotch.

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Tips for a Healthy Diet After Age 50

Diet Matters: It’s often difficult to understand why some people pass away at a young age and others live well into their nineties. The body works in mysterious ways but being proactive at *any* age is key.

Make Dietary Changes: Some older adults can have trouble understanding and accepting the need for change, so it’s best to introduce new ideas gradually rather than all at once. Working towards a healthier diet in increments can make the overall change seem less overwhelming and painful. Try to share meals with your aging loved one as often as possible. You are not just making sure they eat their vegetables without dousing them in salt; you are also keeping them company. Meals are best enjoyed with other people, and seniors often eat better when they are not dining alone.

Protect Your Bones: As we age, our bones weaken due to decreased mobility and mineral loss. Increasing Vitamin D and Calcium intake to three times per day is appropriate to prevent osteoporosis or to keep the condition from worsening. Many foods, such as cereal, bread and juice, are fortified with both these important dietary components to promote bone health. The National Osteoporosis Foundation also recommends enhancing the calcium content of recipes by adding two to four tablespoons of nonfat powdered milk. Each tablespoon contains 50 mg of calcium, which can help you reach your total daily recommendation.

Boost Energy Levels: When we reach our fifties, it’s common to notice a change in daily energy levels. This is normal to an extent, but a vitamin B12 deficiency may also be to blame. If a person tests as B12 deficient, daily supplementation is key. Feeling lethargic obviously isn’t ideal, but accepting a slump in energy can lead to decreased mobility and activity, which contribute to osteoporosis, heart weakening and alterations in bowel movements. Overall health is all one big, interconnected circle, so it’s important to do what’s needed to stay active and maintain a high quality of life. Dietary sources of B12 include beef liver, mackerel, sardines, red meat, yogurt and fortified cereals.

“Hide” Nutrients in Smoothies: Smoothies are a very useful vehicle for adding more fruit and vegetables into a person’s diet. They are very easy to make and digest and ingredients can be added to customize the nutrition content of each frozen drink. The possible combinations are limitless and can be customized to suit any palate and dietary requirements.



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Call Natalie at 507-413-6783 or email natalieb@birchwoodcottagesmn.com; to check availability and set up a tour.

Visit our website for more information about Birchwood Cottages Assisted Living in Owatonna
www.birchwoodcottagesmn.com

Feel free to contact Birchwood Cottages with any questions

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FOOTBALL



2018 Minnesota Mr. Football Jason Williamson shakes hands with Everson Griffen (97) as he serves as honorary captain during before the Vikings 41-17 victory the Miami Dolphins on Sunday, Dec. 16. Watching is Kyle Rudolph (82).

Williamson serves as Vikings honorary captain

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

The awards and accolades continue to roll in for Owatonna senior running back Jason Williamson.

In addition to earning the trifecta of Minnesota's high honors (Mr. Football, Gatorade POY and AP POY), Williamson served as honorary captain for the Minnesota Vikings on Sunday, December 15 in the team's 42-17 victory over the Miami Dolphins.

In addition to three major awards Williamson also earned AP first team all-state selection (2017 and

2018), member of the 5A state championship team (2017 and 2018) and a member of the Minnesota Showcase participant.

Williamson rushed nine times for 64 yards and a touchdown during the all-star game. He also completed a pass for a 2-point conversion.

"Jason is an outstanding student (3.69 GPA) and a role model and leader in our hallways," Owatonna head coach Jeff Williams said. "He is held in the highest regard by teachers and students alike. He is a favorite at our Youth Camp and in our elementary cafeterias.

He is always willing to give of his time to work with the young kids in our District.

"Jason is a leader on our football team and was selected captain for the 2018 season," Williams continued. "He is the kid that the others look to, is a vocal leader and a leader by example. He is the hardest worker on our team.

"Jason does not talk a lot, but when he does, his words have tremendous impact. If a session is not going well, Jason will say something before the coaches do. He is the heart and soul of our team. Jason has led our team to the State Playoffs in

each of his three years as a starter, and was the MVP of the Class 5A State Championship game in 2017.

"Jason is the finest athlete and football player I have ever coached. In my time in the Big 9 Conference, only Darrell Thompson compares to him. He is a truly special athlete with a very bright future ahead of him."

Williamson will play for head coach PJ Fleck at the University of Minnesota next season.

Williamson finished his high school career with 7,009 rushing yards on 923 attempts and 102 touchdowns.



2018 Minnesota Mr. Football Jason Williamson serves as honorary captain during before the Vikings 41-17 victory the Miami Dolphins on Sunday, Dec. 16.

BASKETBALL

BP boys still unbeaten

BY LEMAR NELSON
STAFF WRITER

Despite staying unbeaten in a non-conference 56-46 victory over a visiting Southland team on Tuesday, December 18, Blooming Prairie head boys' basketball coach Nate Piller expressed some disappointment at the play of his Blossoms.

Piller bemoaned an inordinate number of turnovers and some sloppy floor play as a concern going forward.

Once again a stout defense sparked the team with an aggressive pressure on the Rebels. The disappointment resulted when the locals raced

to a 20-point margin early in the second half and then allowed the Rebels to get within nine points late in the game. "Turnovers continue to be a big problem," Piller said. "We will run into a lot of trouble in our next game, if we don't clean up our floor game and play with a little more consistency. Our strong point continues to be a balanced offense and a good defense. I guess we will see what happens down the road in our tougher contests."

Gabe Hagen led four players in double figures with 17 points, but Kaden Thomas had 12, and Zach Archer and Trenton Swenson contributed 10 each.

Blossom girls down Rebels

BY LEMAR NELSON
STAFF WRITER

Head coach John Bruns' Blossom girls won another tough game on the road Tuesday, December 18, in a 53-43 victory over Southland.

BP jumped out early, but had to hang on later in the game. BP led 11-0 and seemed on the way to an easy win and was up 27-19 at the break.

Southland kept putting pressure on, however, and trailed just 43-41 with five

minutes left in the game. Steady floor play, good care of the ball and good late free throw shooting enabled the winners to keep command of the game. Allison Krohnberg made 6-of-8 free throw attempts in the last minutes, and Julia Worke went 2-for-2 at the end.

Megan Oswald kept her double-double record clean with 20 points and 12 rebounds, and Worke contributed 14 points. Krohnberg's free throw shooting enabled her to add 11 points.

Bluejays fly over Panthers

BY LEMAR NELSON
STAFF WRITER

It was a different ball game for New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva boys basketball at Waseca Tuesday December 18, as the hosts more than doubled the Panthers 89-40 in a non-conference battle.

Waseca tallied 59 points in the first half on the way to a easy rout.

"They are a very good team," NRHEG head coach Isaiah Lundberg said. "Their strength, length and all-around athleticism make it nearly impossible to do much of anything against them. Add to that good shooting, and there is a the making for a rout."

Waseca jumped to an 8-0 lead, but the Panthers righted themselves to climb back to 18-9, but then the roof fell in. Turnovers led to easy transition baskets for the Jays, plus the Waseca shooters waxed hot from the field.

The Bluejays shot 64 percent, including 8-of-14 from 3-point range. NRHEG managed just 32 percent from the field.

Waseca had good balance on offense, with Ryan DuFault counting 17 and Malik Willingham adding 13, as every Jay scored. Brady Agrimson

had his usual leading count for the Panthers, with 18 points.

Playing with good energy and employing a good defense enabled the NRHEG boys to defeat Fairmont 46-43 at Fairmont Saturday, December 15.

It marked the fourth game of the week for the team, and the third in three days.

"I was worried on how we would respond since it was the fourth game of the week," Lundberg said. "But we jumped out early and led 28-12 at the half. The energy was good, and holding any team to 12 points in a half is an accomplishment."

The second half was more of a struggle, as Fairmont played more zone. The Panthers still had chances to put the home team away, but some missed free throws and a couple of late turnovers kept the game close. Ultimately, the winners made enough plays to declare the victory.

NRHEG shot 60 percent from the field on 17-of-28 attempts and made 12-of-20 at the free throw line.

Agrimson counted 21 points for the Panthers, and Jacob Schuller and Kordell Schlaak each contributed six. Wyatt Frank had 16 points to lead the home team.

Waseca overpowers NRHEG girls

BY LEMAR NELSON
STAFF WRITER

New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva head coach Onika Peterson summed it pretty succinctly, when she commented, "Waseca is a very good team and their height alone makes it tough to handle. Throw in excellent shooters and clean floor play, and there is no room for error."

The Blue Jays jumped to an early advantage and raced to a

44-13 halftime lead and an easy 68-28 victory at New Richland Tuesday, December 18.

The Panthers never were able to get anything going on offense and struggled on defense as well.

Sophie Stork counted 11 points and five rebounds for the Panthers, and Sidney Schultz added five points and three rebounds.

"It will take time," Peterson concluded "We are a work in progress."



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Youth tractor safety certification required

We tend to give “farm kids” relatively advanced tasks on the farm. We assign them chores that we might not typically entrust to youth. Keeping this in mind, there are formal requirements regarding some of the tasks youth can perform on the farm. According to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Hazardous Occupations Order in Agriculture (AghOs) law, youth aged 14-15 years old are required to earn tractor safety certification if they wish to drive tractors off their family farm.

Tractors are an essential piece of equipment on most modern farms. Although tractors have become much safer with the addition of guards, rollover protection structures, and lights, there are still hazards associated with driving tractors. Common hazards include collisions, roll-overs, exposure to moving machinery, and run-overs. A tractor operator needs experience to safely control a tractor and properly respond to road hazards. Youth workers

(even those who are 16 or older) may not be experienced enough to safely operate this equipment. For youth who wish to work with equipment with over 20 horsepower off their family farm, tractor safety training is recommended – and for those under 16, required.

University of Minnesota Extension is offering a youth tractor and farm safety certification course that meets the training requirements for this certification. The program is designed to provide youth 14 years and older the opportunity to learn about safe equipment operation and general farm safety. The intention of this program is that youth will learn how to safely accomplish farm work; not just to avoid hazards but work effectively despite the various dangers that agricultural production can present.



On The Farm
CLAIRE LACANNE

Participants work hands-on with full sized tractors and implements and learn about different aspects of farm safety from experienced community members. Students who complete this program will receive a U.S. Department of Labor certificate of

training.

Extension’s program offers a hybrid curriculum, which includes both an online learning experience and two days of in-person training in the summer. After the online course, students take a written exam followed by a two-day period of interactive instruction, time to practice driving, and time to take the driving exam. During the in-person portion, students learn about general farm safety from various local experts. They learn attach and detach skills, as well

as learning to pass a driving course with an implement attached to a tractor.

The course is coming to our area! Rice and Steele County Extension will hold the Tractor Safety Certification course in Owatonna this June 2019, with support from Kibble Equipment of Owatonna. We are looking for local farmers and various collaborators to assist with the educational portions. A project of this scale benefits from a community effort, just as the effort will benefit the whole local community by ensuring that tractor drivers behave safely on the roadways. Dates for 2019 are to be determined, but anyone interested in collaborating, sharing their safety stories, or enrolling in the course is asked to please contact me at 507-444-7691.

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

MPCA denies permit to proposed feedlot in Fillmore County

Citing the need to address elevated levels of nitrate in drinking water in the karst region of southeast Minnesota, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Commissioner John Linc Stine is announcing his decision to deny a general permit for the proposed Catalpa swine facility in Fillmore County near Mabel, Minn. Because of the permit denial, a related decision, whether to deny or approve requests for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this specific project is not needed at this time.

“The Catalpa project is the first big new feedlot application we’ve had in Fillmore County since extensive data on nitrate contamination of drinking water wells has come out,” Stine said, referring to new well sampling data produced by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. While hundreds have supported an EIS, an in-depth environmental study, for the proposed Catalpa Ag swine facility in Fillmore County, Stine says the issue is bigger than any one feedlot or farm, saying it would be unfair to put the responsibility for the broad issue of existing nitrate contamination of groundwater onto one farmer.

Catalpa Ag proposed to build a new 4,890-head swine farrowing facility that would have generated an estimated 7.3 million gallons of liquid manure annually. More than 700 people attended two public meetings held by MPCA on the proposal in June and December. The MPCA received 771 comments on the project.

Based on the feedback received on this project, Stine is recommending that the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) conduct a regional environmental study of groundwater pollution for the geologically sensitive karst region of southeast Minnesota.

“The karst region is subject to rapid seepage of contaminants from the land and overlying soils, making the groundwater of this region very vulnerable,” Stine said. A Minnesota Department of Agriculture study found that 19 of 24 townships in Fillmore County have private wells at or above the health risk limit for nitrates, which is 10 milligrams per liter. Nitrates in drinking water can pose a health risk to people, especially infants and the elderly.

If the recommendation to conduct the regional environmental impact study is approved, it would be paid for by the State of Minnesota, not producers, and would include a public process with opportunities for comment and citizen input. Stine said his recommendation for a larger regional study will be more beneficial for farmers, businesses and area residents, as it will provide an overall picture of sources of nitrate contamination in groundwater.

If the EQB accepts the MPCA recommendation, it would engage the public during a scoping phase to further define the area to be studied and other parameters. The karst region is an area of southeast Minnesota covering roughly six counties.

Catalpa Ag may still apply for a customized permit, known as an individual permit. The individual permit process is a more in-depth and tailored analysis that is more rigorous than the general permit Catalpa Ag had applied for. Farmers and producers in the region seeking permits for new or expanded feedlot operations could continue to seek individual permits while a regional study is underway.

Jan. 18 deadline announced for federal program seeking to help farms

Mower County agricultural producers and landowners seeking to solve natural resource problems on their farms should contact local conservation staff in advance of a mid-January deadline.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) accept applications year-round for the federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) but have set Jan. 18 as a deadline by which producers or landowners must submit a signed application to their Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office to be considered for funding in fiscal year 2019.

EQIP is a voluntary program providing financial and technical assistance to ag producers and landowners. These contracts give financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air, and related resources on ag land and non-industrial private forestland.

Ag producers and landowners in Mower County interested in EQIP should contact Mower Soil & Water Conservation District or the USDA-NRCS office for Mower County in advance of the deadline to start the application process. Both offices are located at 1408 21st Ave. N.W. in Austin.

“EQIP provides Mower County with a significant amount of funding for conservation projects,” said Brian DeVetter, district conservationist for USDA-NRCS in Mower County. “We hope local producers and landowners consider the program as part of their farm management and make sure to apply early.”



A Conservation Corps apprentice for Mower Soil & Water Conservation District checks during summer 2017 on an erosion issue on a Mower County farm field to be addressed through the federal EQIP program.

Conservation practices installed by producers serve to avoid, control and trap nutrient runoff, prevent erosion and provide essential wildlife habitat.

EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to help producers and landowners voluntarily implement conservation practices to improve natural resources. Payment is provided for a variety of practices to address resource concerns related to water quality; grazing land health;

soil erosion and health; wildlife habitat; and others.

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis for EQIP but applications grouped for ranking and processing. Contracts will be awarded to producers with the highest rankings until funds are exhausted.

To learn more about EQIP in Mower County, contact Brian DeVetter of NRCS-Mower County at 507-433-8429.

Pollinator grants offered to Minnesota Schools

Minnesota high school students can help establish habitat for imperiled insect pollinators and monarch caterpillars.

High school agriculture and science educators in 20 Minnesota counties, including Steele and Dodge counties, are encouraged to apply for \$1,000 grants to raise and transplant native wildflowers in rural areas.

Insect pollinators and monarch caterpillars are essential for crop pollination and ecological diversity. In recent years their numbers are low partly due to loss of native wildflower habitat near farmland.

In response, Sand County Foundation and Enel Green Power North America Inc. are offering a pollinator habitat grant program for high schools. The program supplies plants, growing materials and \$1,000 grants to high school agricultural and science departments.

Successful applicants will receive about 600 seedlings of five native wildflower species in March. Students must raise the

plants in school greenhouses, transplant them to appropriate sites in the spring, and maintain and monitor the plants through the summer.

“The objective of the grants is for students to add native wildflower diversity to agricultural settings for the benefit of pollinators,” explained Craig Ficenece, Sand County Foundation program director.

“For transplanting, we encourage applicants to find nooks and crannies within the working landscape. This could be a field buffer, a private roadside, open space around agricultural facilities, or other uncultivated areas,” he added.

The deadline to apply is Jan. 18. To apply, visit www.sandcountyfoundation.org/SchoolGrant.

Teachers will receive a training webinar, remote consultation from a private native plant nursery, and a \$1,000 cash award paid to school districts or FFA chapters to offset project expenses.

This opportunity is made possible to Minnesota schools in Enel Green Power’s 20-county

service area: Steele, Dodge, Blue Earth, Carver, Chisago, Clay, Goodhue, Kandiyohi, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Meeker, Olmsted, Pipestone, Rice, Rock, Sherburne, Stearns, Waseca, Washington and Wright counties.

Enel Green Power North America Inc. operates the 150 MWdc Aurora Solar project in Minnesota.

Sand County Foundation is a national non-profit that champions voluntary conservation practices by farmers and ranchers to improve soil, water and wildlife habitat.

Steele County seeks Century Farm

Applications for the recognition of 2019 Century Farms in Steele County are now available at the office of the Steele County Free Fair. Century Farms will be recognized during the Steele County Livestock Hall of Fame program on Tuesday, Aug. 13.

Farms that qualify for the Century Farm recognition are those that are at least 100 years old in 2019 according to abstract of title, land patent, original deed, county land records, court file in registration proceedings or other authentic land records. The family must have owned the farm for 100 years or more. Ownership must be continuous.

To obtain application forms on line go to MNstatefair.org. Deadline for applications is Feb. 26.

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Kids bring Christmas story to life at First Lutheran



PHOTOS COURTESY SARAH ESPLAN

The fourth grade portrayed nativity roles during the program. They included: back row, from left: Zachary Holtberg, Jasper Doocy, Evan Westphal, Riley Johnson, Caleb Peterson, Zachary Green, Maeve Nelson, Aubrey Klocke and Eliot Gimbel; front row: Sophia Esplan, Madyson Slowinski, Neila Nelson, Daisy Heimer, Jaxon Studer, Wyatt Rafadal and Gabe Staloch.

The Christmas Story came to life at First Lutheran Church with 130 youngsters in grades 1-6 participating on Sunday morning, Dec. 9. The program was coordinated by director of children's ministry, Kristin Romeo.

Sixteen teachers helped with the program and 12 helpers worked behind the scenes in the classrooms. The Rev. Heidi Heimgartner, senior pastor, and the Rev. Mike Walerius, associate pastor, praised the involvement of the young and adult.



Top: Third graders at First Lutheran acted as sheep and animals during the Christmas program. They were back row, from left: Jakson Vermilyea, Talon Arndt, Isaac Fort, Braxton Lee and Britt Lynch; middle row: Bella Romeo, Bentley Miller, Parker Blume, Derek Miner and Raylee Miner; front row: Evan Halverson, Ryder Smith, Haley McIntosh and Haley Schlichter.

Left: The first grade at First Lutheran portrayed angels during the annual Christmas program on Dec. 9. The angels included: back row, from left: Kazaiya Miller, Isaac Stoen, Gracie Heimer, Easton Valek, Ashton Studer and Brody Bishop; middle row: Ava Lea, Ava Bergeron, Shelby Kasperek, Abbey Johnson, Savanna Zylstra and Maverick Schlichter; front row: Daniel Coleman, Payton Esplan, Claire Klocke, Harlee Doocy and Shelby Schultz.

Beef Quality Assurance trainings set to help producers earn certification

U of M Extension is hosting a local Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) training session. Farmers who attend one of these workshops earn a certification, which is good for three years. A BQA certification is being required by many major industry buyers and processors.

The two to three hour training and certification sessions are free. Only one person from each operation is required to be certified to ensure the entire operation follows the BQA standards. However, everyone who handles and manages fed cattle is encouraged to become BQA certified. In response to the large number of producers still in need of BQA Certification, U of MN Extension is providing a modified online/in-person training. The group will be guided through the online modules, and there will be a quiz at the end of class. Attendees will then receive their certification in the mail.

Those unable to attend an in-person session can also earn certification online at www.BQA.org. Farmers have the option of taking an in-person training, which is a modified version of the online course:

Faribault: Jan. 3 at 12:30 – 3:30 p.m., Rice County 4-H Building.

Walk-ins are welcome; however, RSVP's are appreciated. Please contact the Rice County Extension Office at 507-332-6165.

BQA is a nationally coordinated, state implemented program that provides information to beef producers and consumers on how common sense husbandry techniques can be paired with scientific knowledge to raise cattle. Its programs include best management practices around ensuring end-product safety and wholesomeness, protecting herd health and animal well-being, and good recordkeeping.

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Minnesota Classified Advertising Network

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Panther of the Week

Sponsored by:

Bianca Mattson

This week's panther of the week is Lyric Morgan. Lyric lives outside of New Richland with her parents Jon and Aya. She has one older brother Patrick, one younger brother Landon, and one younger sister Kyla. Lyric is in Ms. Beenken's 2nd grade class at NRHEG.

She is a very creative student with a kind and giving heart. Lyric loves to help out and she is a wonderful friend! She's also a great role model for others because she is always showing her panther pride. She is very respectful to her teachers and works very hard in school. You can always find Lyric wearing a friendly smile, way to go Lyric!

Lyric's favorite books are Dr. Seuss books. Her favorite movie is the Grinch! Lyric's favorite foods are spaghetti and cookies. She also enjoys to draw, color, and play outside on her sled. Keep up the great work Lyric!

NOTICE

18-110344

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: April 16, 2012

ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$143,698.00 MORTGAGOR(S): Cindy L. Thorn, an unmarried woman

MORTGAGEE: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc.

TRANSACTION AGENT: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. MIN#: 10084811700991861

LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON THE MORTGAGE: Mortgages Unlimited, Inc.

SERVICER: JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.

DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Filed May 8, 2012, Steele County Registrar of Titles, as Document Number T000068570

ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association; Dated: February 26, 2014 filed: March 4, 2014, recorded as document number T000071265

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot 1, Block 1, Brindmore Addition

REGISTERED PROPERTY PROPERTY ADDRESS: 650 Allan Ave, Owatonna, MN 55060

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 17-445-0101 COT# 19194

COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele

THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$131,347.42

THAT all pre-foreclosure requirements have been complied with; that no action or proceeding has been instituted at law or otherwise to recover the debt secured by said mortgage, or any part thereof;

PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows:

DATE AND TIME OF SALE: January 22, 2019, 10:00am

PLACE OF SALE: Sheriff's Main Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, MN 55060

to pay the debt secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any, on said premises and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys fees allowed by law, subject to redemption within 6 months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor(s) the personal representatives or assigns.

TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: If the real estate is an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling, unless otherwise provided by law, the date on or before which the mortgagor(s) must vacate the property, if the mortgage is not reinstated under section 580.30 or the property is not redeemed under section 580.23, is 11:59 p.m. on July 22, 2019, or the next business day if July 22, 2019 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

"THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 582.032 DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN 5 UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED."

Dated: November 30, 2018

JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association Assignee of Mortgagee

SHAPIO & ZIELKE, LLP

BY

Lawrence P. Zielke - 152559
Melissa L. B. Porter - 0337778
Randolph W. Dawdy - 2160X
Gary J. Evers - 0134764
Tracy J. Halliday - 034610X

Attorneys for Mortgagee
Shapiro & Zielke, LLP

12550 West Frontage Road, Suite 200
Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 831-4060

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR

12/4,12/11,12/18
12/25, 1/1, 1/8

NOTICE

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: August 25, 1999

ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$60,750.00

MORTGAGOR(S): Robert M. Sikel and Angela J. Sikel, husband and wife

MORTGAGEE: Voyager Bank, a Minnesota banking corporation

DATE AND PLACE OF FILING: Recorded on August 30, 1999 as Document Number A277326 (labeled as T277326) in the Office of the County Recorder of Steele County, Minnesota.

ASSIGNMENTS OF MORTGAGE: Assigned to: Norwest Mortgage, Inc., a California Corporation n/k/a Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. successor by merger to Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Inc. by assignment recorded on August 30, 1999 as Document Number A277327 in the Office of the County Recorder of Steele County, Minnesota.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot 14, except the South 5 feet thereof in Block "E" in Creamery Addition to the City of Ellendale.

ALSO: Beginning at NE corner of Lot 14, in Block "E" in Creamery Addition to City of Ellendale, thence East 30 feet, more or less, to the East line of said addition, thence south to a point 33 feet North of SE corner of said addition, thence West 38 feet more or less, to the SE corner of Lot 19 of said addition, thence North to the place of beginning.

EXCEPTING: That portion of said tract lying East of the South 5 feet of Lot 14, and

EXCEPTING: That portion of said tract lying East of Lots 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 in said addition, the foregoing described tract or tracts being situated in the Creamery Addition to the City of Ellendale.

STREET ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: 609 SCHOOL STREET, ELLENDALE, MN 56026-1000

COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele County, Minnesota.

THE AMOUNT CLAIMED TO BE DUE ON THE MORTGAGE ON THE DATE OF THE NOTICE: \$41,752.70

TRANSACTION AGENT: None

NAME OF MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR: Voyager Bank, a Minnesota banking corporation

RESIDENTIAL SERVICER: Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.

TAX PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 15-104-0514

TRANSACTION AGENT'S MORTGAGE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: None

THAT no action or proceeding has been instituted at law to recover the debt then remaining secured by such mortgage, or any part thereof, or, if the action or proceeding has been instituted, that the same has been discontinued, or that an execution upon the judgment rendered therein has been returned unsatisfied, in whole or in part.

PURSUANT, to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows: DATE AND TIME OF SALE: January 29, 2019 at 10:00 AM.

PLACE OF SALE: Steele County Sheriff's Office, Law Enforcement Center, 204 Pearl Street East, Owatonna, Minnesota.

to pay the debt then secured by said mortgage and taxes, if any actually paid by the mortgagee, on the premises and the costs and disbursements allowed by law. The time allowed by law for redemption by said mortgagor(s), their personal representatives or assigns is six (6) months from the date of sale.

TIME AND DATE TO VACATE PROPERTY: Unless said mortgage is reinstated or the property redeemed, or unless the time for redemption is reduced by judicial order, you must vacate the premises by 11:59 p.m. on July 29, 2019.

THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 582.032, DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED.

MORTGAGOR(S) RELEASED FROM FINANCIAL OBLIGATION ON MORTGAGE: None

Dated: November 30, 2018

WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A. Mortgagee

THE ACADEMY LAW GROUP, P.A.

By: /s/

N. Kibongni Fondungallah, Esq.
Samuel R. Coleman, Esq.
Corbin C. Smith, Esq.
Attorneys for Mortgagee
The Academy Professional Building
25 Dale Street North
St. Paul, MN 55102
(651) 209-9760
(18-0902-FC01)

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR.

12/11, 12/18, 12/25
1/8, 1/15, 1/22

NOTICE

Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State Certificate of Assumed Name Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333

The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable customers to be able to identify the true owner of a business.

ASSUMED NAMED: R.W. Draeger & Company

PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: 600 Oakwood Lane Owatonna Minnesota 55060 USA

NAMEHOLDER(S): Name: Draeger Organ, LLC

Address: 600 Oakwood Lane Owatonna MN 55060 USA

By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the

person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

SIGNED BY: Russell Draeger

MAILING ADDRESS: None Provided

EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES: draegerr@gmail.com

12/11, 12/18, 12/25

NOTICE

Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State Certificate of Assumed Name Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333

The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable customers to be able to identify the true owner of a business.

ASSUMED NAMED: Disraeli Books

PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: 2431 NE 50th St. Owatonna MN 55060 USA

NAMEHOLDER(S): Name: Jennifer Ann Parsons

Address: 2431 NE 50th St. Owatonna MN 55060 USA

If you submit an attachment, it will be incorporated into this document. If the attachment conflicts with the information specifically set forth in this document, this document supersedes the data referenced in the attachment.

By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

SIGNED BY: Jennifer Parsons

MAILING ADDRESS: None Provided

EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES: jenniferpars@gmail.com

12/11, 12/18, 12/25

FORECLOSURE

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE THE RIGHT TO VERIFICATION OF THE DEBT AND IDENTITY OF THE ORIGINAL CREDITOR WITHIN THE TIME PROVIDED BY LAW IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS ACTION.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That default has occurred in the conditions of the following described mortgage: DATE OF MORTGAGE: October 16, 2008

MORTGAGOR: Pamela S. Ingvalson, a single person

MORTGAGEE: Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union, a credit union organized under the laws of the United States of America

DATE AND PLACE OF RECORDING: Recorded October 24, 2008 in the office of the County Recorder, as Document

No. A000360304, Steele County, Minnesota.

TRANSACTION AGENT: None

TRANSACTION AGENT'S MORTGAGE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER ON MORTGAGE: None

LENDER OR BROKER AND MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR STATED ON MORTGAGE: Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union

RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE SERVICER: N/A

MORTGAGED PROPERTY ADDRESS: 455 Main Street West, Blooming Prairie, Minnesota 55917

TAX PARCEL I.D. NO. 14-111-0107

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: Lot 7, Block 1, Prairie Villa Addition to the Village of Blooming Prairie, Steele County, Minnesota.

COUNTY IN WHICH PROPERTY IS LOCATED: Steele

ORIGINAL PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF MORTGAGE: \$89,240.00

AMOUNT DUE AND CLAIMED TO BE DUE AS OF DATE OF NOTICE, INCLUDING TAXES, IF ANY, PAID BY MORTGAGEE: \$84,731.06

INTEREST RATE AND PER DIEM: Current interest rate is 3.500%, with a per diem of \$7.64.

That prior to commencement of this mortgage foreclosure proceeding Mortgagee complied with all notice requirements by statute; That no action or proceeding has been instituted at law or otherwise to recover the debt secured by said mortgage or any part thereof;

PURSUANT to the power of sale contained in said mortgage, the above described property will be sold by the Sheriff of said county as follows:

DATE AND TIME OF SALE: February 14, 2019, at 10:00 a.m.

PLACE OF SALE: Steele County Sheriff's Office, 204 East Pearl Street, Owatonna, Minnesota 55060, to pay the debt then secured by said Mortgage, taxes,

if any, on said premises, and the costs and disbursements, including attorneys' fees allowed by law subject to redemption within six (6) months from the date of said sale by the mortgagor, their personal representatives or assigns.

DATE AND TIME MORTGAGOR MUST VACATE THE PREMISES: Unless said mortgage is reinstated or the property redeemed, or unless the time for redemption is reduced by judicial order, you must vacate the premises by August 14, 2019, at 11:59 p.m.

"THE TIME ALLOWED BY LAW FOR REDEMPTION BY THE MORTGAGOR, THE MORTGAGOR'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS, MAY BE REDUCED TO FIVE (5) WEEKS IF A JUDICIAL ORDER IS ENTERED UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 582.032, DETERMINING, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE MORTGAGED PREMISES ARE IMPROVED WITH A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OF LESS THAN FIVE UNITS, ARE NOT PROPERTY USED IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ARE ABANDONED."

Dated: December 20, 2018

MESSERLI & KRAMER P.A.

By: /s/ Jonathan R. Septer (Lic. #390506)

1400 Fifth Street Towers
100 South Fifth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402-1217
(612) 672-3600

Attorney in Fact for Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union

15845-928

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This communication is from a debt collector and is an attempt to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

12/25,1/1,1/8,
1/15,1/22,1/29

Blooming Prairie Township Election Notice 2019

Filings for Office of Treasurer -- 2-year term

Filings for Office of Supervisor -- 3-year term

Will be open to file for office January 1st through January 15th

Applications for Candidacy can be picked up and returned to the Clerk's Office along with the \$2 filing fee.

Missy Anderson- Blooming Prairie Township Clerk.

12/25

NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND CLAIMANTS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by Trinity Lutheran Church of Blooming Prairie that:

1. The Corporation, whose principal office is located at 5881 SE 118th Street, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917, is in the process of voluntary dissolution.

2. The Corporation has filed with the Minnesota Secretary of State a Notice of Intent to Dissolve.

3. Such Notice was filed with the Minnesota Secretary of State on the 30th day of October 2018.

4. All claims by creditors or claimants must be in writing and must be presented to: Michael Rodning Bash Attorney at Law 400 South 4th Street #1025 Minneapolis, MN 55415

5. All claims by creditors or claimants must be presented by the 16th day of March 2019.

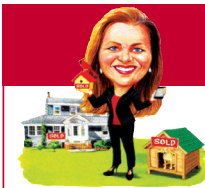
ss/ LaRae Hansen, Secretary

12/18,12/25,
1/1,1/8

Weekly crossword

	D	E	L	O			E	L	S	I	N	E		
H	E	A	V	H	d	V	d	N	V	g	N	I	M	V
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L	V		G	N	I	H	I	V	d	W	I		V	B
S	E	I	H	H	E	H	C	J	O	T	M	O	B	V
S	H	V	E	W	S				S	E	S	d	V	

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NOTICE

Minnesota Secretary of State Certificate of Assumed Name Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333

The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable customers to be able to identify the true owner of a business.

ASSUMED NAMED: Central Park Coffee PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: 113 North Cedar Avenue, Owatonna MN 55060 USA NAMEHOLDER(S): Name: Vision Force, LLC Address: 17545 295th Avenue Waseca MN 56093

If you submit an attachment, it will be incorporated into this document. If the attachment conflicts with the information specifically set forth in this document, this document supersedes the data referenced in the attachment.

By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/ her behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

SIGNED BY: Charlene J. Esch President Date: November 27, 2018

EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES: the_momin8tor@hotmail.com

12/25, 1/7, 1/14

NOTICE

Minnesota Secretary of State Certificate of Assumed Name Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333

The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable customers to be able to identify the true owner of a business.

ASSUMED NAMED: Horizon EyeCare Professionals

PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: 2560 Street Harvest Lane, Owatonna, MN 55060 USA

NAMEHOLDER(S): Name: Gilthvedt EyeCare Clinic, Inc

Address: 2560 Harvest Lane Owatonna, MN 55060

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TO PLACE AN AD

Steele County Times 507-583-4431 bptimes@frontiernet.net 411 E. Main St., Blooming Prairie, MN 55917

be incorporated into this document. If the attachment conflicts with the information specifically set forth in this document, this document supersedes the data referenced in the attachment.

By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/ her behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

SIGNED BY: Elizabeth M. Gilthvedt, OD Date: December 19, 2018

EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES: ncvoptomtry@gmail.com

12/25, 1/7

LAND FOR RENT

DAVID AND PAUL STANTON FARMS are looking to expand existing corn and soybean operations in Hayfield and surrounding areas. Call Paul Stanton at 507-951-0914 or David Stanton at 507-951-0915 (51 chg tfn)

Farmland for Rent

354 tillable Acres in Westfield Township

Taking bids till the end of December

Gary Trom 507-456-2957

Public Notice NOTICE OF FILING WESTFIELD TOWNSHIP

Notice is hereby given to the citizens of Westfield Township that affidavits of candidacy may be filed with John Fouarge Township Clerk at his home starting January 2nd 2019 and Closing January 16th at 5pm for the office one Supervisor for a three-year term and one Treasurer for a two-year term.

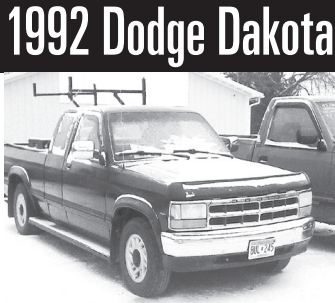
John Fouarge (Clerk) Westfield Township C/O 75020 118th Ave Blooming Prairie, MN 55917



2000 Ford F250 7.3 diesel/ Many new parts.

Asking \$9000 OBO.

call 507-261-2884



1992 Dodge Dakota 318 V8, Black, 192,000 miles, Fair condition, Running Boards, Ladder Rack, Tool Box \$1,500 OBO 507-455-9662 or 507-390-2626 Ask for Stephen

DEALS ON WHEELS



Electric Bicycle (needs nothing)

Asking \$700. (retail \$1700)

507-279-4103 cell or 281-4040.

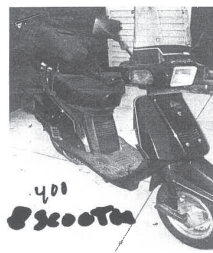
2003 SPORTSMAN 5TH WHEEL CAMPER

- 26FT W/AWNING
- SLEEPS 5 - BUNK BEDS IN REAR
- QUEEN BED IN FRONT, COUCH/BED
- SUPER SLIDE (LIVING ROOM & DINING AREA)
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CALL TO MAKE APPOINTMENT GENE FRANCIS 507-583-2331



\$8,000



Motor scooter 5000 mile, Yamaha model Royal.

Asking \$600. (new #3,500)

Call 507-279-4103 cell or 281-4040

FOR SALE

FOR SALE: BORDER COLLIE / BLUE HEELER cross Puppies. Born 10/30/18. 3 males, 4 females. Asking \$250.00 each. Call 507-383-6701. (wk 1,2, and 3 No charge)

FOR SALE: New Waste Oil Furnace w/ 200-gallon underneath Tank \$450.00. Call 507-383-9024.

EMPLOYMENT

DODGE CENTER AMERICAN LEGION looking for a part time bartender. If interested, please contact Melissa at 507-380-0983 (wk 1,2,3 chg)

FOR RENT

APARTMENTS FOR RENT, 1, 2 & 3 BR, gas & elec. Included. 507-273-7386. 44tfc

DODGE CENTER 2-bedroom, 2 bath split level home. Stove and refrigerator furnished. Full partially finished basement. Rentor pays all utilities. Non-smokers only apply. \$995.00 deposit and \$995.00 rent. Call 507-250-3238 or 507-374-6747 (51 chg-tfn)

1 BD APT-KASSON for 62+ or disabled persons. Smoke free, month to month leases and deposit payment plans. 507-398-6027 or 507-451-8524 www.lifestyleinc.net tdd 507-451-0704 Equal Housing Opportunity. (51,52,1,2 chg)

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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2019 MINNESOTA CITY SUMMARY BUDGET DATA

The detail of the City budget is on file in the City Administrator's Office at the City Center 138 Hwy 218 South, Blooming Prairie, Minnesota, and may be reviewed during normal business hours.

City of Blooming Prairie Budget Summary Statement

	2018 Budget	2019 Budget
2019 Budgeted Governmental Funds		
Revenues		
Property Taxes	\$ 713,925.00	\$ 734,189.00
Delinquent Property Taxes	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,600.00
Tax Increments	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 1,600.00
All Other Taxes(franchise fee)	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
Special Assessments	\$ 36,609.00	\$ 30,981.00
Licenses & Permits	\$ 10,400.00	\$ 9,000.00
State General Purpose Aid(LGA)	\$ 715,803.00	\$ 716,481.00
State Categorical Aids	\$ 69,700.00	\$ 74,400.00
County Aids	\$ 21,600.00	\$ 22,200.00
Charges for Services	\$ 39,300.00	\$ 40,000.00
Ambulance Building Lease	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
Fines & Forfeits	\$ 11,200.00	\$ 11,200.00
Interest on Investments	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 11,720.00
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 20,500.00	\$ 17,450.00
Lieu of Taxes	\$ 58,670.00	\$ 58,670.00
Township Fire Equipment	\$ 68,070.00	\$ 68,070.00
Transfers from Other Funds	\$ 203,148.00	\$ 214,759.00
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 2,046,925.00	\$ 2,067,320.00
Expenditures		
General Government	\$ 338,690.00	\$ 329,000.00
Public Safety	\$ 591,825.00	\$ 618,900.00
Streets & Highways	\$ 267,700.00	\$ 268,150.00
Culture & Recreation	\$ 241,970.00	\$ 248,880.00
Economic Development	\$ 39,900.00	\$ 38,890.00
Miscellaneous Current Expenditures	\$ 7,550.00	\$ 7,550.00
Debt Service - Principal	\$ 260,000.00	\$ 270,000.00
Debt Service - Interest & Fiscal Charges	\$ 86,914.00	\$ 78,778.00
Capital Outlay	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 90,000.00
Other	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 4,340.00
Transfers to Other Funds	\$ 119,000.00	\$ 124,000.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 2,052,549.00	\$ 2,076,488.00
Fund Balance		
Increase (Decrease) in Fund Balance - Budgeted Governmental Funds	\$ (5,624.00)	\$ (9,168.00)

12/18/2018 (507)-583-7573

City Administrator Michael G Jones

Expecting a special delivery on or around January 1, 2019?

If so, you and your new arrival could be the lucky recipients of great gifts in our First Baby of the Year Contest. The first baby to be born in Blooming Prairie in 2019 will be showered with the following gifts from these generous contest sponsors:

Haberman's Gallery
208 Mineral Springs Rd
Owatonna
507-451-6565
Framed Letter Mat with baby name
(\$100-\$150 value)
Expires June 30 2019

The Willows
100 State Hwy 13
New Richland
507-463-1000
\$25 Gift Cert. to Willows

Hometown Insurance
348 Main St. E
Blooming Prairie
\$25 B.P. Chamber Bucks

Dairy Queen
317 Hwy 218 S.
Blooming Prairie
507-583-2296
Gift certificate for a free ice cream cake

Vandals Family Market
237 Hwy Ave. S.
Blooming Prairie
507-583-6671
We will give a coupon good for \$10 in baby products

Farmers & Merchants
245 E Main St.
Blooming Prairie
507-583-6688
Will open a new account for baby and provide the first \$25!

Sportstitch
341 E Main St.
Blooming Prairie
507-583-7001
Certificate for a free personalized baby blanket

The Cutting Edge
128 3rd St SW
Blooming Prairie
507-583-2304
Gift certificate for Baby's First Haircut

Steele County Times
411 E Main
Blooming Prairie
507-583-4431
We will give a free one-year subscription!!

Confections by Karen
118 2nd St NW,
Blooming Prairie
(507) 340-0171
Purchase 1 dozen decorated Sugar Cookies get 1/2 dozen FREE

Dr. Deborah Lien
132 2nd Ave. NE
Blooming Prairie
507-583-6613
We will give a free dental care kit for newborn-toddler!

First Baby of the Year Contest Rules

1. Baby must be born after 12 a.m. January 1, 2019 or after.
2. Parents must live within the Blooming Prairie Independent School District area.
3. Baby's birth must be reported to the Steele County Times within three business days.

The Times will annouce the winning family.

BP BOYS' BASKETBALL

Date	Opponent	Time
DEC. 21	HAYFIELD	7:15 P.M.
JAN. 4	@ CHATFIELD	7:30 P.M.
JAN. 8	@ W-E-M	7:15 P.M.
JAN. 11	MEDFORD	7:15 P.M.
JAN. 14	@ HOUSTON	7:30 P.M.
JAN. 18	USC	7:15 P.M.
JAN. 22	@ BETHLEHEM	7:15 P.M.
JAN. 24	MAPLE RIVER	7:15 P.M.
JAN. 25	KINGSLAND	7:15 P.M.
JAN. 29	LYLE-PACELLI	7:15 P.M.
JAN. 31	GRAND MEADOW	7:15 P.M.
FEB. 1	NRHEG	7:15 P.M.
FEB. 5	NRHEG	7:15 P.M.
FEB. 8	W-E-M	7:15 P.M.
FEB. 11	@ GOODHUE	7:15 P.M.
FEB. 15	@ MEDFORD	7:15 P.M.
FEB. 22	@ USC	7:15 P.M.

BP GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 20	Triton	7:15 p.m.
Dec. 27	@ Hayfield	3 p.m.
Dec. 28	@ Hayfield	6 p.m.
Jan. 4	Chatfield	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 8	W-E-M	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 11	@ Medford	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 15	@ Kingsland	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 18	@ USC	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 22	Bethlehem	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 25	@ Maple River	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 28	@ Grand Meadow	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 31	@ Cleveland	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 1	@ NRHEG	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 5	Hayfield	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 7	P-E-M	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 8	@ W-E-M	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 12	Randolph	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 15	Medford	7:15 p.m.

WESTFIELD WRESTLING

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 22	@ P-E-M	Noon
Jan. 3	Blooming Prairie	5 p.m.
Jan. 10	@ Hayfield/Maple River	5 p.m.
Jan. 15	@ Grand Meadow	5 p.m.
Jan. 17	Blooming Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 19	@ Hayfield	10 a.m.
Jan. 24	@ Wabasha Kellogg	7 p.m.
Jan. 26	@ Lake City	10 a.m.
Jan. 31	@ Hayfield	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	@ Kenyon-Wanamingo	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	@ USC	7 p.m.

NRHEG BOYS' BASKETBALL

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 21	@United South Central	7:15 p.m.
Dec. 27, 28/29	@ Bethany Lutheran	TBD
Jan. 3	@ Tri-City United	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 5	@ Cedar Mountain/Comfrey	11 a.m.
Jan. 8	Bethlehem Academy	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 11	@ Maple River	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 18	@ Medford	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 22	Hayfield	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 25	@ W-E-M	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 1	@ Blooming Prairie	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 5	United South Central	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 8	@Bethlehem Academy	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 12	Maple River	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 15	LeSueur-Henderson	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 16	Redwood Valley	6:15 p.m.
Feb. 19	@ Blue Earth	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 22	Medford	7:15 p.m.

NRHEG GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 20	@ Tri-City United	7:15 p.m.
Dec. 21	United South Central	7:15 p.m.
Dec. 27/28	NRHEG Holiday	5 p.m.
Jan. 3	@ Triton	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 8	@ Bethlehem Academy	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 10	Maple River	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 12	Grand Meadow	7:15 p.m.
	@ Kasson-Mantorville	11 a.m.
Jan. 17	St. Peter	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 18	Medford	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 22	@ Hayfield	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 25	W-E-M	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 29	LC-WM	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 31	J-W-P	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 1	Blooming Prairie	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 5	@ United South Central	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 8	Bethlehem Academy	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 15	@ Maple River	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 19	Blue Earth	7:15 p.m.



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NRHEG WRESTLING

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 21/22	@ Redwood Riot	4 p.m.
Jan. 1	M/T/ML Jayhawks	5 p.m.
Jan. 10	WEM/JWP	7 p.m.
Jan. 12	@ Stewartville Invitational	10 a.m.
Jan. 17	@ Blooming Prairie	7 p.m.
Jan. 19	LC-WM Invite	9 a.m.
Jan. 24	@Rochester John Marshall	5 p.m.
	Faribault	7 p.m.
	St. Charles	8 p.m.
Jan. 26	@ Panther Invite	10 a.m.
Jan. 31	@ Medford	5 p.m.
	LeSueur-Henderson	6 p.m.
Feb. 7	@ NHREG	5 p.m.

MEDFORD BOYS' BASKETBALL

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 20	@ Randolph	7:15 p.m.
Dec. 21	@ W-E-M	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 3	@ Lyle/Austin Pacelli	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 8	Maple River	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 10	Triton	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 11	@ Blooming Prairie	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 15	@ Tri-City United	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	NRHEG	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 22	United South Central	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 24	@ Kenyon-Wanamingo	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 25	@ Hayfield	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 28	J-W-P	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 31	@ St. Clair	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 1	@ Bethlehem Academy	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 5	W-E-M	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 7	@ Maple River	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 11	Schaeffer	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 14	@ Glenville-Emmons	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 15	Blooming Prairie	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 21	@ NRHEG	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 25	Nicollet	7:15 p.m.

MEDFORD GIRL'S BASKETBALL

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 20	Randolph	7:15 p.m.
Dec. 21	W-E-M	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 3	Mabel-Canton	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 7	Tri-City United	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 8	@ Maple River	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 11	@ Blooming Prairie	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 14	@ Schaeffer Academy	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 18	@ NRHEG	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 22	@ United South Central	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 24	Hayfield	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 28	@ J-W-P	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 29	@ Blue Earth	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 1	Bethlehem Academy	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 5	@ W-E-M	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 7	Maple River	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 11	@ Byron	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 14	Dover-Eyota	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 15	@ Blooming Prairie	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 19	Cleveland	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 21	@ Jordan	7:15 p.m.

MEDFORD WRESTLING

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 1	St. Agnes	W, 61-6
	Benilde St. Margarets	W, 59-24
	@Cretin-Derham Hall	W, 44-36
Dec. 6	Westfield Razorbacks	W, 33-26
Dec. 15	Kenyon-Wanamingo Invite	5th/10
Dec. 20	@ LCWM	7 p.m.
Jan. 5	Buffalo Invite	9:30 a.m.
Jan. 10	@ United South Central	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Maple River	4:30 p.m.
	@ Minnesota State Mankato	10 a.m.
Jan. 19	@ LC/WM	5 p.m.
Jan. 24	@ Wabasha-Kellogg	10 a.m.
Jan. 26	@ Lake City	5 p.m.
Jan. 29	@ St. Clair	5 p.m.
Jan. 31	NRHEG/LeSueur	5 p.m.
Feb. 7	@ J-W-P	7 p.m.

OWATONNA BOYS BASKETBALL

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 18	Red Wing	W, 70-62
Dec. 21	@ Rochester Mayo	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 3	@ Austin	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 8	Faribault	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	@ Winona	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 12	Rochester John Marshall	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	@ Mankato West	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	@ Mankato East	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 25	@ Rochester Century	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 26	Northfield	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 29	Mankato East	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31	@ Albert Lea	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 1	@ Red Wing	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	Rochester Mayo	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 8	Austin	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 12	@ Faribault	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 15	Winona	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 19	@ Rochester John Marshall	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 22	Mankato West	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 26	@ Northfield	7:30 p.m.
March 1		

OWATONNA GIRLS BASKETBALL

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 18	@ Red Wing	L, 72-51
Dec. 21	Rochester Mayo	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 27	@ Tartan	3 p.m.
Dec. 28	@ Buffalo	noon
Jan. 3	Austin	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 5	Farmington	3 p.m.
Jan. 8	@ Faribault	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 11	Winona	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 12	@ Rochester John Marshall	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	Mankato West	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 24	Rochester Century	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 26	@ Northfield	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 29	@ Mankato East	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 1	Albert Lea	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 5	Red Wing	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 8	@ Rochester Mayo	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 12	@ Austin	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 15	Faribault	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 19	@ Winona	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 22	Rochester John Marshall	7:30 p.m.

OWATONNA BOYS HOCKEY

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 18	Northfield	L, 4-3
Dec. 22	North St. Paul	3 p.m.
Jan. 3	Austin	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 5	@ Hastings	2 p.m.
Jan. 10	@ Rochester Century	7 p.m.
Jan. 12	Rochester Mayo	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 19	@ Faribault	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	Rochester John Marshall	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	@ Austin	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	@ Northfield	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	@ Mankato West	7:30 p.m.
Feb. 7	Rochester Century	7 p.m.
Feb. 9	@ Rochester Mayo	7:15 p.m.
Feb. 12	Mankato East	7 p.m.
Feb. 16	South St. Paul	1 p.m.

OWATONNA GIRLS HOCKEY

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 11	@ Faribault	L, 4-0
Dec. 13	Rochester John Marshall	W, 6-1
Dec. 26	@ Cap City Cougars	2:30 p.m.
Jan. 3	@ Austin	7:15 p.m.
Jan. 4	@ Proctor/Hermantown	7 p.m.
Jan. 5	@ St. Francis/North Branch	2 p.m.
Jan. 8	Mankato East	7 p.m.
Jan. 10	Rochester Century	7 p.m.
Jan. 12	@ Rochester Mayo	7:30 p.m.
Jan. 19	Faribault	7 p.m.
Jan. 24	@ Rochester John Marshall	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	Austin	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Northfield	7 p.m.

OWATONNA WRESTLING

Date	Opponent	Time
Dec. 20	Rochester Century	5 p.m.
Dec. 28	Rumble on the Red	10 a.m.
	@ Fargo Dome	
Jan. 5	The Clash	10 a.m.
	@ RCTC	
Jan. 10	@ Albert Lea	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Rochester John Marshall	7 p.m.
Jan. 19	@ Zumbrota-Mezappa	10 a.m.
Jan. 24	@ Austin	5 p.m.
Jan. 26	@ Bloomington Kennedy	10 a.m.
Jan. 31	@ Rochester Mayo	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	@ Faribault	7 p.m.

Owatonna girls aim to gain experience for young contributors

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna girls basketball team is also expected to experience some growing pains this season with just one player returning with varsity experience.

Huskies' head coach Lindsey Hugstad-Vaa has the tall task of replacing nine seniors, including the program's all-time leading scorer Syd Schultz.

Seniors McKenna Schrodt, Molly Hawkins, Annika Harper, sophomores Sarah Kingland, Emma Dahnert, Maggie Newhouse, Alivia Shuster and freshmen Lexi Mendenhall and Ari Shornock are expected to see significant playing time.

Hugstad-Vaa said the team will continue to play a fast-paced, high scoring style that led to many players in double digits.

"We want to gain valuable experience from all grade levels, improve every week and be competitive in the conference," she said. "We have a young, athletic team. We have a lot of combinations of players to try to see who plays best with whom. Being aggressive and playing like we have nothing to lose, but we just need to get experience and become comfortable playing with each

Owatonna boys exceeding early season expectations

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna boys' basketball team's goal are pretty much the same after replacing nearly everyone from a season ago: "Work hard and get better everyday."

"Last year was the most talented and athletic team I have coached in 20 years," Owatonna head coach Josh Williams said. "We just don't have those same athletes this year. As an example, there are six guys who we do not have back this year...all 6 are college level athletes playing at the D1, D2 or D3 level. That is rare."

However, the Huskies have started the season with a 3-1 record and shown an ability to close out tight games. Williams said the team is talented, but inexperienced and its still too early in the season to truly gauge this team's potential.

Seniors Steven Eckard, Jared Fett, Isaac Opegaard, Jack Hanson, juniors Sol Havelka, Carson Dekam, sophomore Bradyn Larson, Nolan Burmeister and freshman Evan Dushak are expected to be key contributors.

Jared Fett is more of a forward who is very efficient around the basket. he shot 67 percent from the field last season.

Eckard is a combo guard (PG/SG) with great range and can really shoot it.

"Defensively is the biggest concern," Williams said. "A lot of areas we must get better at. Transition O and D, figuring out who will be our scorers, roles, etc.

"We have always hung our hat on being a strong



other. That will come as the season progresses."

The Huskies have a strong freshmen class of 15 athletes, most of whom will be brought up to gain some junior varsity and varsity experience this year.

"We have a great group of kids who work hard and want to play an up-tempo style of game," Hugstad-Vaa said. "We should improve every game." With a new group of girls, the skills and chemistry of the team will start to develop over time. We will have to see who steps up into different roles this

year. Nothing is guaranteed and many girls will get an opportunity to play, so we will have to determine roles as the season progresses.

"Basketball is a wonderful team sport where they learn how to communicate, work hard, and play together to reach a common goal. It is a long, strenuous season that teaches the girls to have perseverance and grit as well as make lifelong friends."



pressure defensive team," he continued. "We have some work to do to get to the level we need to be at though. Offensively like to play a faster, high possession game. We will have to see though how this year plays out and how effective we are at."

The Huskies are expected to experience some growing pains this season based on lack of returners, but the team's learning curve is great and Williams expected the team to make leaps and bounds by the end of season.

"Basketball is a high skill sport that requires a lot of dedication and work to become good," Williams said. "A kid can't just 'show up' as an athlete and expect to be a player. So individually it teaches kids about commitment, work ethic, dedication and patience as it takes time to become re-

ally good. Being a team sport it incorporates so many other things like how to work collectively with others to achieve similar goals. Great teams and 'units' can often nullify more talented teams that play as individuals which is a very cool thing.

There will also be adversity throughout the season and thus teaches kids to show some grit and mental toughness and persevere through those difficult times to still attain the goals they may set out to accomplish as both an individual and as a team. With that being said these are all skills that are hugely important skills that kids need to learn and develop that will help them in so many facets of life not just on the court, but in high school, academics, relationships, college, the workplace, etc."



Panther girls return eleven

BY LEMAR NELSON

Replacing Miss All-Everything Betsy Schoenrock is an almost Herculean task, but New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva girls' basketball has a number of girls returning who will make that effort transform into another winning season for the Panthers. Schoenrock and All-Conference guard Kelly Harden are the only two that graduated from the program.

Head coach Onika Peterson begins her fifth season with two all-conference and two All-Conference Honorable Mentions, plus seven other letter winners around which to build a successful team.

Peterson is 81-35 in her tenure as the team mentor, and the team won the Gopher Conference title last year with a 10-2 record and an overall mark of 17-10. Drew Paukert will assist Peterson this season.

Senior Olivia Christopherson and freshman Sophie Stork, both All-Conference picks, lead the way for the eleven girls reporting for basketball this season. Christopherson scored 248 points, pulled down 83 rebounds, handed out 52 assists, and had 42 steals. Stork had 209 points, 104 rebounds, and 90 assists.

The other seniors joining Christopherson include guard Alexis Anderson (60 points and 73 rebounds), forward Caitlin Goette (48 points and 77 rebounds) Hannah Budach (41 points and 22 rebounds, Lexie Ignaszewski (four points and eight rebounds) and Jayna Finseth (10 points and 23 rebounds).

Other hopefuls vying for playing time will be junior Jayna Domeier, sophomores Cloie Arndt and Sarah Johns and eight grader Sidney Schultz.

Schultz counted 83 points and 47 rebounds last season and earned an honorable mention All-Conference honor.

In her storybook career, Schoenrock scored a total of 1,114 points and pulled down 622 rebounds. Last season she counted 575 points, had 333 rebounds, and blocked 123 shots. She had 10 double-doubles and two triple-doubles and was named the Panther MVP.

If past indications hold true, Peterson will orchestrate a running offense and a sticky man-to man defense.

"We have enough talent to make the season interesting and provide some high-caliber play for Panther fans," Peterson concluded.

The Panthers have started the season 2-4.



New coach for NRHEG boys

BY LEMAR NELSON

After coaching the Panthers' junior varsity team for seven years and counting 15 years of service in the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva school system, Isaiah Lundberg steps into a new role as the coach of the boys' basketball team. He replaces the successful Pat Churchill, who guided the team to a 22-4 record last season, a perfect 12-0 conference mark.

The best finish in the last five years was a 30-4 mark and a consolation championship in the Class 2A state tournament.

"This is my first year as head coach so it will be a learning experience for both the players and myself, as we work to continue to build on the success coach Churchill established," Lundberg said. "I hope to continue with some of the things we have done the past years, but also add some new wrinkles to the team."

Ryan Evans and Tyler Schlaak will assist Lundberg in reaching that goal.

Four seniors return to lead the 2018-19 version of the Panthers, including All-Conference pick Brady Agrimson, the 6-foot-5-inch forward who averaged 11.5 points a game last season and is a versatile, athletic player who will be relied on to defend, rebound and score.

Jacob Schuller is a letterwinner who made the Gopher All-Conference team a year ago and averaged seven points per game. He is also 6-foot-5-incher with a lot of versatility and an aggressive attack at the basket, and an adequate shot blocker.

Devin Buendorf is a senior guard who does a lot of the little things that helps a team win.

He takes a lot of charges and always seems to be in the right spot on defense. The fourth senior letter winner, guard Peyton Castle, is a good outside shooter and is very competitive on defense. He also has the potential to be a very good offensive player.

Two juniors and a sophomore also return as letter winners. Junior Lonnie Wilson puts pressure on the defensive end, has excellent speed, and is able to harass ball handlers. The other junior, Blake Inrke, is a good outside shooter who helps out on defense and will be counted on to play several positions. Finally, Kordell Schlaak is a sophomore who is athletic and able to shoot from the outside.

Two other juniors and seven sophomores will also be vying for time on the varsity team. Among the losses from last year, Benji Lundberg earned MVP honors and entered the 1,000 career point club. Jerrett Updadel made the All-Conference team and earned defensive MVP honors, and Nathaniel Techau made an All-Conference Honorable Mention.

Perry Peterson and Ryan Hannegrafs also graduated.

"We started well last season," Lundberg said. "And finished the regular season 23-3 and perfect in the conference. We defeated a strong Blue Earth team in the sub-section, but then lost the title to Maple River by four points.

"I look for us to be a strong contender in the conference and the sub-section," he continued. "We will have to replace some key leaders, but there is a lot of potential, and it will be fun to watch this group progress. We have the ability to get up and down the court quickly, but a lack of depth is a weakness we will need to overcome. Hopefully, we can be playing our best basketball at the end of the season."

Lundberg looks for Blooming Prairie and Maple River to be strong in the conference. Panther hopes are high as they continue to enjoy success on the basketball court. NRHEG had taken some lumps starting the season 2-4.

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Blossoms reload and start strong

BY LEMAR NELSON

Numbers are not a problem for the Awesome Blossom boys' basketball, as 18 upper class players reported for basketball, and fourth year head coach Nathan Pillier is hopeful that improvement and attitude are earmarks of the 2018-19 campaign as well.

Seven freshmen also reported for the season. "Because of the length of the football season there has not been much emphasis on basketball," Pillier said. "Participation in the summer speed, agility, conditioning and strength program was rather hit or miss. Personally, I was disappointed in last season's record, although we did finish with a 13-12 overall record and a 6-6 mark in the tough Gopher conference."

Six players from last year's squad graduated, including second leading rebounder Jake Ressler and second leading scorer Cameron Kubista. Also graduated were Jeremy Hocking, Max Romeo, Brad Staska and Cody Waganman. Six letter winners do return.

Trenton Swenson is the only senior on the squad, and his size and strength will provide good interior defense for the team. He can also score and was the team's second leading two-point percent shooter last year. Included in the five juniors returning is Kaden Thomas, who has been at or near the top in every major category for the last two seasons. Thomas loves basketball and invests a great deal of time in honing his skills. He is a consistent scorer, and was named to the Gopher All-Conference team and the team MVP.

Junior Gabe Hagen suffered an injury and did not begin his season until February, despite earning team MVP honors as a freshman the year before. Even so, he led the team in scoring in the conference, had the highest average points per game, and earned conference honorable mention. Junior Karson Vigeland continues to show excellent growth and development physically and as it relates to basketball skills. He was a conference honorable mention, was first or second in almost all major categories last season one would expect from

BP BOYS BASKETBALL



a forward.

Zach Archer and Isaac Ille fill out the returning letter winner positions, Archer as a forward, and Ille as a guard. Ille filled in for injured players early last season and proved a good defender, while Archer is quick, athletic, and plays a good defense. Garrett Larson, Zach Weber, Matthew Pryor, and Parker Vaith are all junior contenders for spots, and senior Tim Wolf will also be striving for playing time.

"With the new season comes a new culture," Pillier said. "We have got to reenergize the importance of hard work, as that is the most important lesson I can instill in these boys. I think we have a high ceiling, with several returning players having highly notable basketball experience, good size

and a lot of athleticism.

"We also have a high floor, and I take partial blame for that," he continued. "We will need to guard against complacency and bring desire and intensity to the court each time out. Defense will have to be tenacious and well planned, and it should be good enough for the boys in which to take pride."

Andrew Hardecoff will again handle the JV team, with Tanner Kramer also on board to assist. The team has started the season 5-0.

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BP girls miss scorers

BY LEMAR NELSON



Going into the 2018-19 basketball season, Blooming Prairie headcoach John Bruns knows that finding scorers will be a prime concern.

Both leading scorer Sam Wurst and second leading scorer McKenna Hein graduated, after both earned team Co-MVP awards and All-Conference honors.

Along with graduate Ayren Ingvalson, they will be three players who will be greatly missed.

Wurst averaged almost 14 points per game and 10 rebounds and is number three in career rebounds with 600 and fifth in career scoring with 820 points. She was a two-time All-Conference pick. Hein averaged 11 points a game, 3.8 steals, and 3.7 assists. Her 100 steals and 95 assists last year rank her second all time for steals and fourth in assists. Ingvalson earned All-Conference Honorable Mention, was a determined defender, and piled up 92 assists last year.

"We have a lot of question marks as we begin the season," Bruns said. "A lack of depth and a lot of inexperience will be an issue early, but as the players gain confidence, we should become competitive. Early practices have been great, and we will continue to get better."

The team does have eight letter winners returning, and a couple of them had extensive playing time last season. Juniors Julia Worke and Maya Lembke will lead the way for three sophomores and a freshman, and they will be counted on heavily for their guidance.

Worke started all games last year and led the team in three-point shooting. She is a versatile player who most likely will be called to play every position on the court. She is already a two-year letter winner and will be a key player this year. Lembke also played in every game last year and is an aggressive player who rebounds very well for her size.

Sophomore Megan Oswald earned All-Conference honors, while averaging a double-double. She is a great player with a motor that never quits, and she led the team in rebounds last year at 10.2 per game. Maggie Bruns, another sophomore, saw action in every game last year as a freshman and was second on the team in 3-point shooting.

The third sophomore, Maren Forsytek, played in 75 percent of the games last year and has already improved her defensive skills over the summer. She will be counted on more heavily on defense his season. Freshman Bobbie Bruns rounds out the letterwinners returning. She made great strides from the first game

last season and has continued to work hard on her game, and she will be counted to step into a bigger role this season.

Three other sophomores and a junior round out the roster for the girls and will be vying for playing time on the team. Sophomores Allison Krohnberg, Ashleigh Alves, and Anna Kittelson and junior Baylee Sorenson all were on the varsity, but did not see much playing time.

"Our keys to success will focus on building a cohesive system that will allow all of our girls to contribute in many ways," Bruns said. "We don't have huge numbers, but the girls we do have are committed to getting better every day. With the youth and inexperience, there will be some tough

stretches, but the goal is to improve from week to week and game to game."

Bruns begins his sixth season as the coach, but he has a plethora of experience at many levels on which to rely. He coached the basketball boys for 16 years and has been the BP cross-country coach for 20. Cory Hendrickson, Dean Meshke and Jennifer Johnson will again assist Bruns in the program.

Bruns looks to Medford and Waterville-Elysian-Morristown as conference favorites, and Grand Meadow and Goodhue as the toughest competition in the sub-section. The Blossoms have started the season 4-1.



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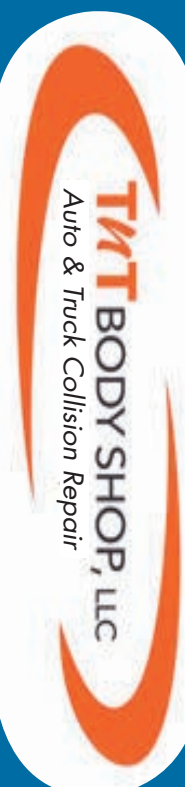
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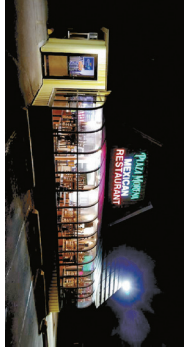
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WESTFIELD WRESTLING



THE TEAM THE TEAM THE TEAM LOSE STATE PLACERS

BY LEMAR NELSON

The shared Blooming Prairie-Hayfield wrestling program lost three wrestlers who placed at the state meet a year ago, but the team returns nine wrestlers with some experience from last season.

Gone are Ethan Arett, Morgan Moreno and Mitchell Oswald.

Arett went 32-10 last year and placed fourth in the state, Moreno had a 36-7 record and finished fifth at state and Oswald wrestled to fourth place with a 35-7 season mark. Those three will be difficult to replace with their 103 dual meet wins.

Chad Gimbel and Shane Masching will share coaching duties for the nicknamed Westfield Razorbacks, with able assistance from Karl Steckelberg and Brad Heydt.

Gimbel starts his ninth season at the helm, and Masch-

ing is in his second season.

Two juniors who earned trips to the state meet last season return to lead the team. Colton Kreil recorded a 38-4 dual mark and captured the runner-up spot at state, and Dylan Nirk won 30 and lost 8 and also wrestled at state. A senior, a junior, 3 sophomores and a freshman are the other returnees.

As Coach Gimbel assessed the team, "We have some top end talent and good leadership, with some good balance, but a weakness is our youth and inexperience. Injuries to Seth Peterson and Riley Schultz, a move for Danny and Isaac Fernandez, and a couple of other wrestlers opting out of the program this season certainly hurts, and younger wrestlers will have to fill some holes."

Senior Tristan Riekenes went 7-7 in dual bouts last season and will compete in the 220-285 range, and junior Joey Meyer had six wins last year at 152.

Sophomore Dylan Elnkie went 65-8 last year, and Lane Lembke, and Carl Becker will compete at 113 and 126. Freshman Tyler Archer will wrestle at 145.

"We feel we should finish in the top three or four in the conference and section," Gimbel said. "With a balanced lineup in the lower weights and also being strong in the upper weights. The injuries and wrestlers, moving have hurt this year's depth, and the younger competitors will have to fill some positions and show growth from last season."

The Razorbacks compiled an 11-8 meet record last season, and advanced to the section semi-finals where Kenyon-Wanamingo defeated them. It will be interesting this season to mark progress by the younger wrestlers.

Health, leadership key for Owatonna boys hockey

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna boys' hockey team has started the season 3-3 with wins over Albert Lea, Winona and Rochester. John Marshall and losses to East Ridge, Mahtomedi and Northfield.

The team is led by seniors Luke Kubicek, Drake Gieseke, Evan Steinberg, Andrew Munns, Jacob Stoykovich, Mason Oland, Matthew DeHaan, Tommy Lehner and Easton Sletten.

Kubicek leads the Huskies in goals with four. He has also dished out two assists.

Owatonna head coach Josh Storm has praised the play of Sletten, the team's goalie.

"He's played really well," Storm said. "He played dynamic honestly. We're really happy for him."

Storm said he was really impressed by how intense and physical his team has played.

Sophomore Dominic Valento has two goals and four

Owatonna girls hockey team excited to build onto talented youth

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna girls' hockey team has started the season 4-6-1, however, there are many reasons for positively because the Huskies are an extremely young team with many eight graders, freshman and even one seventh grader contributing to varsity squad.

"It's really awesome," Owatonna head coach Sarah Murray said. "We are doing really well with the amount of seventh and eighth graders we have brought up."

The team is led by seniors Maylynn Prokopec and Kiley Friedrichs.

"Prokopec is very talented player," Murray said. "She's really sneaky, smooth, has really good hands and a nice quick shot. She is very deceptive in a small space."

Prokopec leads the Huskies with eight goals so far this season. She also has an assist.

Friedrichs has dished out five assists and scored a goal. Eight-grader Ezra Olen has proven to be threat on the offensive end of the ice.

She's scored six goals and dished out a pair of assists. Sister Olivia and Anna Herzog are also expected to be key



OWATONNA HOCKEY

assists on the young season and figure to factor heavy into the Huskies plans for success this season. Junior Collin Pederson and sophomore Casey Johnson have each score two goals.

learn from and we have to understand that we are athletes and we have to bounce back. I think our guys kind of see that. We will get after the conditioning side of things over the next couple of weeks and we will make sure that we are in better shape."



members of the team, as is Chloe Schmidt, Sydneey Hunst, Molly Achterkirch, Abby Veisch, Madelyn Simon, Sarah Snitker, Abby Munns, Aleah Anderson, Anna Holcomb, Calbey Podien, Emily Schmidt, Gabi

Lamont, Grave Wolfe, Kaelyn Fear-Boerner, Kaitlyn Grandia, Kylie Rumlir, Lauren Borgeing, Macy Stanton, Maddy Wilker, Ava Wolfe and Asia Buryksa.

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NRHEG WRESTLING



Half dozen return at NRHEG

BY LEMAR NELSON

New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Genewa's Shawn Larson begins his sixth season as the Panthers' wrestling coach and is hoping that a building program started last year will translate into more success this season.

Nate Jensen, a 22-year veteran assistant, will assist Larson, with six letter winners that are back for another year.

The best finish for the Panthers in the last five years included a section 2A runner-up spot in 2015. Last season the team had a 4-8 record overall and were 0-5 in the conference. Larson has a 49-59 career record to his credit. Two seniors, two juniors and two freshmen return for the Panthers, with approximately 15 boys reporting to the team last week.

Heavyweight Quentin Arndt returns with more confidence and experience, and Tyler Jacobson will wrestle between 170 and 182 pounds after earning a trip to the state meet this past season. The juniors include Andrew Reich, who will compete at 120 or 132 and Agro Gushwa, who will fluctuate between 245 and 152. Ralph Roesler is one of the freshmen back, and he will wrestle between 152 and 160, and Nikolas Pelsinger will compete at 113 and 120.

NRHEG CHEERLEADING



Owatonna gymnasts striving for state championship

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna gymnastics team have incredibly high expectations for this season after finishing third at this past season's state meet.

The Huskies are currently ranked No. 2 in Minnesota's largest gymnastics classification, Class 2A.

Seniors Ali An, Sydney Kretlow, sophomores Lindsay Bangs, Lucy Macius and freshman Janessa Moore are strong on every event and are expected to be the most vital members to the team's success.

Bangs is great all around gymnastic who can do a little bit of everything.

She finished sixth on the uneven bars, seventh on the vault, ninth on

floor exercise, 39th on the balance beam and fifth in the all around competition at last season's state meet.

Kretlow was 15th on the vault and An finished 13th on the uneven bars and 31st in the floor exercise at the state meet.

Owatonna head coach Tom Smith said the team's goal are to break the 150 points barrier, repeat as Big 9 Conference and section champions and place higher than third at the state meet.

Smith said the team is very strong on the vault, balance beam and floor exercise with five consistent and solid athletes, but the team needs to increase their skills on the uneven bars.

Optimism surrounding OHS swim and dive team

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna Huskies boys' swimming and diving team has 11 new athletes who joined the team this season and coach Peter Rhodes believes the team has some strong seasons on the horizon.

"There is a lot of unknowns," Rhodes said. "We will work on getting better everyday. These next two or three years are going to be our strongest that we have had in the last five years."

Seniors Payton Jorgenson, juniors Colten Kamholz, Logan Steckelberg Payden Foster-Erickson and sophomores Fletcher Schulz and Caleb Belting are expected to team's top performers and leaders this season.

Kamholz is the team's top diver and also a top three sprinter.

"He's very willing to do anything you need him to do," Rhodes said.

Jorgenson, the team's only senior, is very versatile and can swim any event well.

Steckelberg is probably the team's strongest back-stroker, a top three sprinter and fills major spots on relay teams.

Schulz can also swim any event and do it well. Rhodes said Schulz will try to break some school record this season.

Belting is the team's top breaststroker, sprinter and big part of relay teams.

"We have a lot of hard workers and some talented swimmers," Rhodes said. "But we always need more athletes in the pool."

Rhodes said he's also very excited to see how eight grader Ryan Peterson progresses through the year.

"He had a very good rookie year and looks to have grown a few inches and has gained some good experience," Rhodes said. "We also have so many new swimmers that it will be exciting to see what comes out of that

OWATONNA GYMNASIJS



OWATONNA SWIMMING



group." The Huskies are expected to improve from last season.

"We lost one top swimmer and the rest of the guys have grown and improved this year," Rhodes said. "The next two or three years are going to be really good. This next year we will lose one senior as well. If we can keep getting athletes in the pool we will be as good as we have been since I've been coaching."

Rhodes said there is a place for everyone on the team and each swimmer competes in at least three races at every dual meet.

"We work hard and we have fun doing it," he said. "We have so many new swimmers so it will be exciting to see what happens as they develop.

We also have a couple of really good divers, that makes it fun to see what they can do.

"Swimming is the greatest form of exercise," Rhodes continued. "It provides total body conditioning while being very low impact of the joints. This is a great sport to do if you are trying to get in shape or stay in shape for other sports as well. The camaraderie of swimming is like no other sport. The friendships that you build in this sport last a lifetime. There is nothing like suffering together and overcoming obstacles to bring people together. Swimming and all sports teach the benefit of hard work, perseverance and discipline."

MEDFORD BASKETBALL



Tigers boys look to take next step

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

The Medford boys' basketball team continues its mission to change the culture of the program while also replacing several key contributors from this past season's team that finished 3-23.

Senior guard Noah Pirkl is the Tigers' top returner and has the ability to play at all-conference level.

"Noah Pirkl is a great all around player," Medford head coach Todd Schneider said. "He can handle the ball, shoot and is one of our top defenders. He is not that big of a player but surprises us almost every day with his athletic ability."

Ryan Hermanstorfer, McKinley Schneider and Brett Johnson are also returning seniors who are expected to see significant playing time this season.

"Most of our current seniors got a fair amount of minutes last year on varsity," Schneider said. "We are hoping to get more production out of senior Brett Johnson. If [Johnson] can reach his potential it would make a huge difference in our season. Our other seniors are blue collar guys. They play physical and can really get after it."

Medford has extremely deep bench and the junior class of Zach Finholdt, Jerone Chavis, Jeremiah Sutcliffe and Jordan Edel are very athletic and expected to contribute. Schneider said he anticipates Edel and Chavis playing particularly important roles on offense.

"They are both very athletic and are going to have to step up their of-

fensive production this year," he said. Sophomores AJ Vandereide, Gunner White and Kaeli Hermanstorfer may also play some important varsity minutes.

"We are very excited about the guys that played JV last year," Schneider said. "They had one of the better records we have seen in our program for a while and showed they can really press and play defense. We need sophomore AJ Vandereide to have a break out year."

Schneider said he expected the team to be much more competitive season this year.

The team has set a goals of winning 75 percent of their non-conference games and 50 percent of their conference matches.

"Which if accomplished, we would finish with a 16-10 record," Schneider said. "That would probably put us in the top half of the section. Pretty lofty goals considering where are program has been the last 6-7 years, but we think we have things headed in the right direction. I would be disappointed if we don't finish with an overall record over .500."

Schneider said everyone has been working very hard to create a new environment and culture in the program.

"This program has been down for a number of years," he said. "We definitely saw improvement last year and got things pointed in the right direction. We were extremely competitive in some big games last year but just couldn't finish. This will be the year these guys turn the corner and start getting some results. They will be a fun team to watch play."



Sky is the limit for Medford girls

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

The Medford Tigers girls basketball team have gotten off for a nice 6-0 start and are looking to make some noise in Class A this season.

Medford finished last season 18-8, but expected to greatly improve this year with most of the team returning. "We are a year older and virtually the same team," Medford head coach Mark Kubat said. "We expect to improve from last season>"

The team is extremely talented and is fun to watch with its speed and scoring. Medford returns many of the same athletes who guided the Tiger's volleyball team to the Class A volleyball state championship game.

Medford is led by junior Emma Kniefel, who broke the school's all-time scoring record just six games into her junior season.

Kniefel is the Tigers' top returning scorer after she averaged 24 points per game as a sophomore and her length causing a lot of problems for opponents.

Junior Kiley Nilhart averaged 15 points per game last season and it appears she has greatly improved her 3-point shot.

Nilhart, the team's point guard, is also a good defender with excellent quickness.

Sophomore Kinsey Cronin is strong post player who looks to have a breakout year, just like she did on the volleyball court. She has developed confidence in her post game and is the Tigers' top returning rebounder.

Senior Bailey Purrier is a defensive and rebounding specialist who runs the court very well and junior Izzy Reuvers is a true utility player who can nearly any position.

Junior Jordan Stadler, sophomores Jenna Berg and Isabella Steffen and freshman Clara Kniefel are also expected to contribute.

The Tigers should compete for a conference and section championship with their great team speed, multiple scorers and veteran roster.

"I'm looking forward to watching how our young team keeps improving everyday," Kubat said.

Tigers have holes to fill in quest for success

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

The Medford Tigers wrestling team has some great top-end talent, but it also has some big holes to fill in its lineups in order to have a competitive season as team.

"We are a super young team," Medford head coach Dennis Whitman said. "Seventh and eighth graders are making contributions. We have some young talent, but might struggle at times."

"We lost seven seniors off last years team and will be pretty young," he continued "Our younger wrestlers are very talented, but it may take a bump or two this season."

The Tigers do return two state place winners in eighth grader Charley Elwood and Junior Willie VonRuden.

VonRuden is currently ranked No. 2 in Class A at the 145-pound weight class after placing third at 138 during last season's state meet.

VonRuden has started the season wrestling up at 160 after having a breakout season playing quarterback for the Tigers' football team.

Elwood s ranked No. 1 at 120 after finishing second at

Owatonna wrestlers hungry for championship

BY DENNIS MARSHALL
SPORTS EDITOR

The Owatonna Huskies wrestling team is currently ranked No. 3 in Class 3A and many around the program are expecting one of top season in recent memory.

The Huskies have an extremely depth roster.

"Highly competitive wrestling room of more than 40 athletes," head coach Adam Woiatalla said. "We have ton of wrestle-offs every week for these varsity spots.

We could see our lineup changing constantly. I think our rankings speaks more for our depth than our individuals."

However, Owatonna does have some of the top individuals in the state, including a defending state champion in senior Cade King.

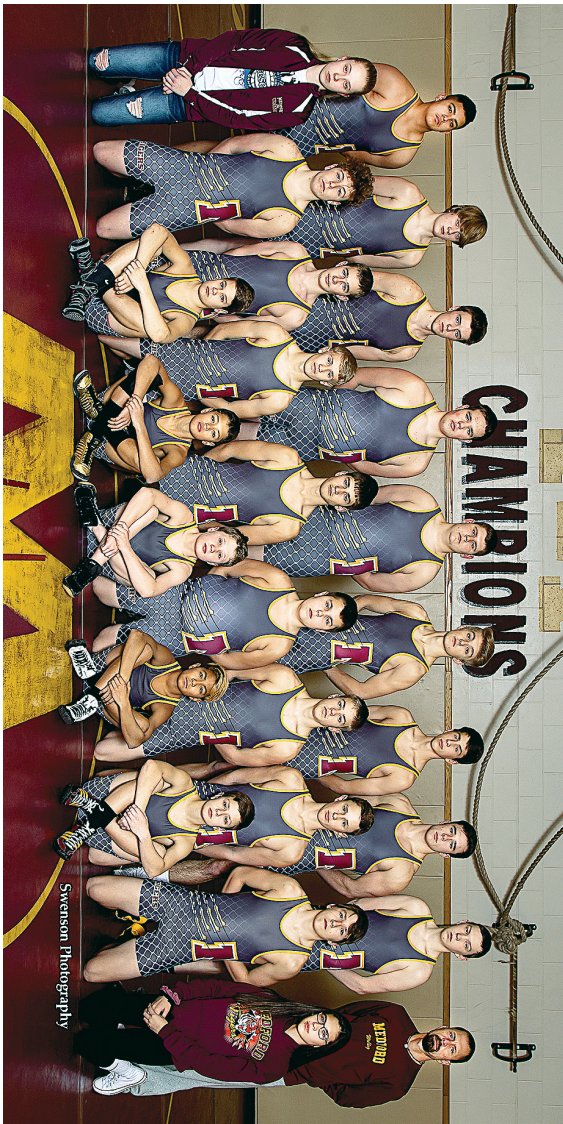
King won the Class 3A title at 182-pound weight class and finished the season with overall record of 44-0.

"I have said it ever since I first met [King], he has unbelievable talent," Woiatalla said. "The scary thing is a lot of it is raw talent that is still being developed. That has to be frightening for our opponents that he is already a state champion and he still has some much room to get better."

"[King] is just like everyone else that he has things he can work on and improve on," he continued. "Our goal is to get him as ready as possible for South Dakota State and have him win another state title."

Sophomore Blake West is currently ranked No. 1 at 106 after finishing fifth at the state meet and with a record of 46-5 a season ago

"I doubt anyone worked harder than [West] this off-season preparing for the this year," Woiatalla said. "He's coming into the season preseason ranked No. 1. It puts a large target on his back, but if any kid in our program can handle a target on their back, it is [West]. He's always cool, calm and collective and nothing ready rattles him. He just keeps going. It's that type of leadership we are looking for and we can already that from him."



the state meet last season while wrestling at 106. Elwood has shown incredible promise and it would be shocking if he doesn't capture at least one state championship before his high school career is complete.

Other Medford wrestler who are expected to

see significant varsity time are eight graders Alex Helgeson, Garron Hoffman, Dylan Heiderscheidt and Curtis Fitch-Babcock, ninth grader George McCarthy, sophomore Brennon Hoffman and junior Zach Wetmore.



Senior Nick Skaska is also poised for another great season wrestling 195.

"Up until last year, [Skaska] always saw myself as football player that wrestled," Woiatalla said. "Then he had a huge breakout season wrestling and I think that kind of opened his eyes to the fact that he could wrestle in college."

Skaska qualified for the state meet last season, but failed to place, he finished the season 36-12.

A number of Division-2 and Division-3 schools have already reached out to Skaska about possibly continuing his wrestling career at their institution.

"Nick could really be college wrestler," Woiatalla said. "He's put in a lot of time this offseason getting ready and I know he has the goal of podium finish this year."

Sophomore Kaden Nelson and freshman Landen Johnson are also returning state qualifiers.

However, they didn't qualify last year, they qualified two years ago.

"[Nelson] had a heartbreaking moment last year when he didn't qualify, but it really motivated him," Woiatalla said. "He looks like a different athlete this season. He has dedicated himself to weight room. He's gotten a lot stronger and matured. It is impres-

sive to see what he has done."

Nelson jumped to 145 after wrestling at 120 last season and is ranked No. 5 in the state. Johnson qualified for state as an seventh-grader wrestling at 106.

He at 138 this season and is ranked No. 9 in the state.

"[Johnson] is another kid who has dedicated himself to sport of wrestling and wrestles year-round," Woiatalla said. "He wants to get better every single day and he has some high goals for this season."

Owatonna also has a lot of other freshmen and sophomore who are expected to contribute this season.

"We have a lot of depth that adds a lot of flexibility in trying to get the right matchups," Woiatalla said. "This team is talented enough to make the state tournament and compete really hard. We really bring in a young team, but we are led by very talented seniors. Whenever you have that dynamic of strong senior leadership and young kids that are dominating our program, you can have some real success if those kids buy in."

OWATONNA WRESTLING

MEDFORD WRESTLING