



# STEELE COUNTY Times

MURDER ON THE PRAIRIE

SECTION C

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TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2019

Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

## Something for everyone at BP Ed Auction

BY HOWARD LESTRUD  
STAFF WRITER

This is NUMBER 16 and no two Blooming Prairie Education Foundation auctions are alike. After one year's auctions over, planning gets under way for next year's auction. "We always have some surprises," says BP Education Foundation President Julie Noble. "We use our successful items of previous auctions but try to add some new twists," added auction chair Karen Fouarge. Silent and live auctions are scheduled for Saturday, March 30 at the Pizza Cellar and Cue Company. The silent auction runs from 3-5 p.m. at

the Pizza Cellar and the live auction follows at 6 p.m. Last year's auctions brought in over \$68,000. This total was close to the previous year which was \$70,000. The record fundraising total was set in 2016 at \$80,000. More than \$800,000 has benefited Blooming School District kids since the fundraiser was started in 2003 by Sue Zwiener. "We don't set goals each year; we just try to make each event better than the one before," Noble said. "This community truly believes in their kids and with these funds, it is possible to make a brighter future for them with more educational programs,"

she added. The BP Education Foundation is a non-profit organization created by a group of fiscally conservative community members. Mission of the Foundation is "to enhance the educational opportunities for the students of ISD 756." Funding for the Foundation is possible through the generous contributions of community members, alumni, business and other charitable organizations. More than 300 items were donated and auctioned last year. Fouarge believes that total might be eclipsed this year. The Foundation uses its resources to fill voids in

programs by adding to the education experiences of the students of ISD 756. Proceeds from the auctions will be used to fund allocations requested from the BP School District and from teachers. The allocation requests are made twice a year. About 50 are allotted each year, President Noble said. The funds are used to support technology advances, field trips, robotics team at the high school, lego project at the elementary school, purchase of 3D printers for the high school and elementary, etc. A variety of auction items

SEE BP ED AUCTION, A4



SUBMITTED PHOTO

KD and Mrs. Busho created this "Family Activities" cart with lots of goodies plus a "Favorite Activities" class book!

## BP rallies to lift up family of toddler brutally murdered



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

A makeshift memorial with flowers, balloons, teddy bears and a large photo of the victim has been placed along the shoulder of U.S. Highway 218 just north of Blooming Prairie. The memorial remembers Noelani Robinson, 2, who was found wrapped in a blanket and dumped there on March 15. Her father is suspected of killing her prior to pitching her body. The investigation into Noelani's death continues with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension in St. Paul.

### 2-year-old likely killed prior to mother

BY RICK BUSSLER  
PUBLISHER

The emotional and disturbing story of a toddler found in the middle of sex trafficking and murdered and eventually dumped in a ditch outside of Blooming Prairie is tugging at the hearts of the community as a local pastor and police chief are reaching out to help the family. Pastor Heidi Heimgartner of First Lutheran Church, along with Chief Greg Skillestad of Blooming Prairie Police, began a campaign last week to

lift up the memory of Noelani Robinson, who was found wrapped in a blanket and dumped in a ditch along U.S. Highway 218 near Blooming Prairie March 15. Heimgartner and Skillestad invited the community to take part in a group memorial of sympathy cards, notes, drawings and very small tokens. Items for the group memorial will be accepted until Wednesday either at the City Center in Blooming Prairie or First Lutheran Church at 434 First St. SW. The church plans to mail the items to the Robinson family in Mil-

waukee on Thursday. Heimgartner said the memorial was established "to demonstrate our community's support for the tragic loss of Sierra and Noelani Robinson." Sierra was Noelani's mother who was shot to death in Milwaukee just days before Noelani was found by Blooming Prairie. "Thank you to our law enforcement and the community for your prayers, thoughts and gestures of sympathy for

SEE TODDLER, A5

## On the same train going the same way

*New board chair focused on steering county in right direction*

BY CHRIS BALDWIN  
STAFF WRITER

Fifth District Commissioner Greg Krueger has served on the Steele County Board of Commissioners for two years and was recently appointed as Board Chair to start his third year. "I had some people come to me and say that they figured they needed someone with a business background on the county board," Commissioner Krueger said of his decision to seek representation on the board. "The more I thought about, the more I thought I could bring something to the table that hasn't been there before." Krueger owned and operated St. Clair's for Men, a men's clothing store for 37 years in downtown Owatonna, which gave him a wealth of fiscal-oriented experience from which to draw upon in his duties with the county board. "This year we have a lot of projects on the table that are what I would call catch-up projects, projects that should have been done previously

"I think the county is doing well right now. We added more to the reserves in 2018, which has kind of been our goal. We're substantially over what the state recommends for a county to have in reserves."

**Greg Krueger**  
Steele Board Chairman



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

Steele County Board of Commissioners Board Chair Greg Krueger. This is Krueger's third year on the board and first serving as chair. He represents the Fifth District.

that weren't that we're trying to catch up on," he said of what's on the horizon for 2019. "Roads and bridges and projects that are ongoing that were kind of pushed off." Another large project slated for this year is a new courthouse roof. "This is something which is vital, we got to do that," Krueger said of the project, noting that it was something which should have been done five or six years prior. "That has to get done this year." He said that while it will be a major project, it is necessary due to the shape of the roof. Krueger also credited work that was done to repair and renovate the building over the last few years. "We have a building that should last 40 years, and it's a great facility." "Plus, we have all the normal things, the regular road and bridge projects, the

SEE NEW BOARD CHAIR, A5



SUPPORT BLOSSOMS' EDUCATION!

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Blooming Prairie Education Foundation  
**AUCTION**  
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Live Auction- 6 p.m., Cue Company



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#### AREA DEATHS

Lee Folkens, 71, BP  
Carolyn Haubenschild, 78, BP  
Robert Johnson, 84, BP  
Richard Schumacher, 85, Austin  
Madeline Thomas, 92, WC

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OUR VIEW

More mental health support needed in rural areas

It's no secret that there are many professions across rural Minnesota suffering from a lack of qualified workers.

This is especially true when these professions are compared to the metro part of the state.

In a time that mental health services are needed more than ever, our communities have seen less and less professionals, and in return has made it more and more difficult for our population who struggles with a mental health issue in some shape or form.

Over the past several months, our staff has compiled stories about mental health, addiction, gambling and domestic violence for our special section that we hope will serve as a community resource.

It comes as a result of the David Riess tragedy last March that rocked our area as well as the rest of the nation in the weeks after when his wife, Lois, allegedly killed a second person in Florida. We took a hard look at how we can help the residents of our communities in light of some of the issues that surfaced in the Riess case.

During that time, we have come to realize that there are many things that can be improved on when it comes to helping those with mental health issues, but one of the biggest things that needs to be changed is the lack of mental health professionals in rural communities, just like ours.

Inside our special section, we have an entire story dedicated to the lack of mental health professionals, and we hope that our readers will stop to think about what that means for people they care about most.

The reality is that the majority of the population struggles with some type of mental health issue, whether it's big or small. Many of these people can benefit tremendously from professional help.

These people may be our neighbors, our friends, co-workers, teachers, students, family members or any one for that matter. For some we may know the battles they go through, and for others we may have no idea.

The point is the shortage of mental health professionals in our area is something that needs to be taken seriously and a call for action needs to be made with state lawmakers to do something about it. We encourage you to reach out to local representatives and senators about this important issue.

Our hope is that lawmakers will do whatever they can to help close the gap when it comes to the lack of mental health professionals in rural areas compared to the metro.

It's not just something that affects a hand full of people, but rather it's something that affects the majority of our community in one way or another:

YOUR VIEW

It's time to pay it forward

To-the-Editor:

I just got a new phone. I didn't want it. It replaced my old Blackberry Curve that I lovingly used for years and years. I was so excited to have that new smart phone - it was small and I could clip it to my handbags or belt - it wasn't heavy! Wow! It was perfect.

However, as it got older, my family became more and more frustrated with me because they couldn't communicate with me with their newer phones. I still held out. The phone worked for me; why should I replace it with something more cumbersome. I didn't need all those features, even if they provided more conveniences. I was only thinking of myself. Then, a month ago, it happened. My phone lost its voice. It still sent and received calls - I just couldn't hear it happen. Now I had no choice - I got a new phone.

Well, phones aren't built to have a long life. Schools are - we don't replace them on a whim. However, like my phone, they, too, wear out and become obsolete. And, often there are no fixes. I couldn't even get a fresh battery for my old phone, because no one made them anymore. So it goes with putting something new into something old. There isn't compatibility anymore. My old phone couldn't talk to my new phone, so I couldn't even transfer needed information. I had waited too long to replace that phone. Many things changed in a few years - imagine how much has changed in a century. Often we ignore those changes and they become so problematic, that, like my phone, there is no longer a choice.

We do have a choice now. Our high school is like my Blackberry. It has been loved and used for a long time. Sooner or later, there will have to be a change. Let's do it now. Our students need to learn in a space developed for the world that they are living in today, not yesterday. Change is hard. The older I get, the more I realize that. But, as we live in a world of invention and development, we have to be ready to accept that fact, get excited about it, and move on.

We have had four children and four grandchildren graduate from OHS. We really have no attachment to it as a family, but we do, as part of this wonderful community. Past generations provided facilities for us. It's our time to pay it forward.

Marilyn Pedersen  
Owatonna

Facebook ruins man's good deeds during blizzard

By now most of our readers are most likely aware of my disdain for social media, especially Facebook. I'll admit there are some good aspects to it, but more often than not there are horrible things that serve no good purpose for anyone involved.

It's hard for me because of the necessary evil it has become for the media to remain competitive. But I was reminded once again how social media missed the mark with the recent blizzard that crippled Steele County and much of southern Minnesota.

A recent Facebook post I became aware of went on to ruin a person's reputation. I feel it this particular story rises to the level of being noteworthy because of how the blizzard affected so many lives. I know it's a horrifying thought we want to put in our past, but this deserves some attention.

A post during the blizzard featured a man at the Wal-Mart store in Owatonna cooking up and giving out hot dogs to a stranded motorist. Seems like a noble thing to do, right? Well, not quite so fast, at least if you listen to Facebook.

Days later a different post stated that a complaint was filed against the man for giving away the food. The post went as far as naming a person as the culprit to turning in this good Samaritan. As the supposed complaint went, a man reached out criticizing the Samaritan and Wal-Mart for not having a permit to serve food to the public.

It wasn't true. Actually, the Good Samaritan and the hot dogs are true, but the complaint is completely false. And it was verified through the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture. The Department of Health replied in part: "Despite social media rumors to the contrary, the Minnesota Depart-

ment of Health did not take regulatory action against anyone grilling hot dogs outside the Owatonna Wal-Mart during or after the snowstorm of late February... We are uncertain how these rumors arose as we have no record of a complaint being filed."

I think the real issue isn't so much the false complaint, which is problematic enough, but rather the fact that dozens of people blindly shared the false post and the Good Samaritan died the death of 1,000 cuts as well as his reputation.

Facebook can and has provided a platform for made up posts and controversies that divide us rather than unite us. I don't know how many times over the past few years that I have noticed how people have spewed false information out on social media

regarding breaking news stories that we later have to come along and mop up with the correct information.

While I'm not professing that the media always gets everything 100 percent accurate, it certainly is a lot more accurate than the information put out there on social media. Journalists are trained to track down the correct information, and they aim for accuracy in their reporting. That's why I would encourage you to think twice before sharing such posts without knowing if the information is true or not.

Think what you want about Facebook and other similar communications means, but my experience has been that social media is not a reliable source for information. Don't get yourself hooked into the nonsense that Facebook posts often create.

I hope you'll all go in hot pursuit of using Facebook for the right reasons and not as a credible or reliable informational tool.



Hot Pursuit  
RICK BUSSLER

LifeSource gives renewed life

"Don't take your organs to heaven - heaven knows we need them here!"

There's a wonderful organization out there that gives many renewed life.

It's called LifeSource, an organ donation program that is dedicated to saving lives through organ, eye and tissue donation in the Upper Midwest. It serves the 7 million people who live in communities across Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and portions of western Wisconsin.

LifeSource is dedicated to working with hospital and community partners to support donor families, manage the donation process and educate our communities to create a culture of donation. LifeSource saves lives and offers hope and healing through excellence in organ and tissue donation.

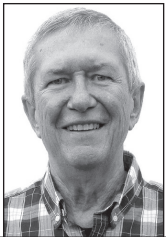
Our daughter Tammi was the beneficiary of two liver transplants made possible by LifeSource. She died in surgery during the second transplant.

Our family is forever grateful for some generous souls willing to give our 22-year-old daughter a second and third chance at living 24 years ago.

Our son Troy and his wife Nancy recently placed personalized Arizona license plates about organ donation. It reads: Donate Life 4 Tammi."

April is National Donate Life Month and it is a time we think about the two people who made it possible for Tammi to have a chance at living longer. Tammi received her first liver transplant on April 15, 1995.

National Donate Life Month is a time set aside to honor the generous gifts of organ, eye and tissue donation. It's also the perfect time to register as an organ, eye and tissue donor and encourage your friends and fami-



Reflections  
HOWARD LESTRUD

ly to do the same.

Since 1989, LifeSource has recorded 4,428 organ donors. During that time, 15,321 organs have been transplanted and 7,846 tissue donors have helped others in need.

Organ donation is a gift and the decision to donate organs is just that, giving of life to someone else.

The gift of organ donation is a wonderful gift, one our family will never forget and a gift our family and friends give some day, or a gift we can convince others to give.

Prior to her first transplant, Tammi said organ donation was something she was committed to, not just as a possible recipient but as a donor. She received that precious gift but was not able to donate her organs due to the nature of her condition.

It seemed very coincidental that Tammi was recovering from her first transplant and we were observing National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week 24 years ago. The special week and month are set aside to create public awareness about donation, and to recognize the shortage of organs, tissues and eyes for transplanatation.

LifeSource reports that approximately 3300 people in our communities are in urgent need of transplant assistance.

One organ donor can help save the lives of many through donation of the major organs. Transplants work. About 85 percent of all transplants result in patients living full and active lives.

Tammi's first transplant was successful with her being released from the hospital 16 days after surgery. "I have never felt this good and had so much energy," Tammi told Judy and me days after surgery.

When a family gives permission for



organ donation, LifeSource inputs medical information about the organ donor into the computer and prints a computerized match list. Matching is based upon medical criteria such as blood type, weight, size of the organ, length of time waiting for a transplant and severity of illness. Genetic (tissue) matching is also a key factor for kidney and pancreas transplants. Sex is not a factor: Transplant recipients may receive organs from either male or female donors. In addition, eligibility to receive a transplant is not determined by a person's financial status.

Donated organs are "matched" with transplant recipients before they are removed for transplant. Extensive tests before surgery determine which organs can be recovered. However, physicians can't always tell if the organ is suitable until surgery takes place.

Go to the LifeSource website and read about 17-year-old Minnesotan Alexis Kretsch, who donated her organs following a fatal car crash in 2015.

Tell your family your decision to become an organ donor. It's that simple.

Think about the gift of life. It is very precious, the life we have and the one we can give.

GUEST COLUMN

A valuable resource for the community

By SCOTT GOLBERG

The Steele County Landfill is situated on approximately 200 acres, 12 miles south of Owatonna along U.S. Highway 218. The official address is: 9420 SE 64th Ave., Blooming Prairie. The landfill is open six days every week, Monday thru Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Management and disposal of solid waste in Minnesota and the United States has undergone many changes over the last 50 years. Essentially, we have moved away from landfilling as the sole means of how to dispose of our waste and have increased efforts in other activities such as recycling, composting, waste reduction, and incineration. Despite implementation of these waste abatement methods, there are still about 20 mixed solid waste landfills like the county landfill left in the state, and they remain a key component of waste management in Minnesota today.

cled, 843 televisions were recycled, and 325 tons of concrete/asphalt was reclaimed.

- The busiest days of the week for the general public are Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays.

- Licensed commercial haulers deliver about 95% of the waste that is disposed of at the landfill.

**Household Hazardous Waste Facility:**

What's that? The Household Hazardous Waste Facility at the landfill site accepts household chemicals and paint from residential county residents at no charge. If these items are still usable, they are offered to the public at the facility product exchange shelf in an effort to utilize them instead of having them processed for expensive disposal at an appropriate facility. So, if you have a project this summer, stop out and see what we have available. The Household Hazardous Waste facility is open seasonally from May thru September during these hours: every Thursday from 9 a.m. to

3 p.m. and the first and third Saturdays of each month from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

In addition to the landfill household hazardous waste facility, the Sherwin-Williams paint store in Owatonna (125 Oakdale St.) is another option for residential county residents to bring their unwanted paint products at no charge year-round. For more details, please contact the store directly at 507-451-1304.

The Steele County Landfill has served the community since 1973 and continues to be a valuable resource for the waste disposal and recycling needs of county residents and businesses.

For more information about the Steele County Landfill, visit our website at: [www.co.steele.mn.us](http://www.co.steele.mn.us) (go to Environmental Services page) or give the landfill a call at: 507-583-7766.

**Scott Golberg is the administrator for Steele County. He may be reached at [sgolberg@co.steele.mn.us](mailto:sgolberg@co.steele.mn.us).**

STEELE COUNTY Times

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**ETHICS:** The Steele County Times editorial staff strives to present the news in a fair and accurate manner. Please bring any grievances against the Steele County Times to the attention of the Managing Editor.

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BLOTTER SPOTLIGHT

BLOTTER SPOTLIGHT: Suspicion: Police responded to suspicious activity in the 100 block of St John Dr NW at 12:07 a.m.

# Lois Riess' sister allegedly runs over son near Byron

**BY ALEX MALM**  
STAFF WRITER

A 37-year-old man received significant lower body injuries March 18, after allegedly being run over by a vehicle driven by his mother, who is a sister to accused Blooming Prairie killer Lois Riess.

According to Capt. Scott Behrns of the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office, at approximately 5:14 p.m., Olmsted County deputies responded to a residence in the 3500 block of County Road 150 SW in Salem Township for an assault complaint.

Upon the deputies' arrival, the located a man that had significant lower body injuries from being run over by a vehicle. The investigation at the scene determined that Cynthia Grund, 58,

from rural Byron, had used a 2004 Ford Explorer to run over the victim, who is her son.

During the investigation, Behrns stated that it was also determined that the victim has a severe alcohol addiction and he was no longer wanted in Grund's residence.

The victim, who was highly intoxicated, began to walk down the rural driveway when Grund went to pick him up and take him to a friend's house. When Grund approached the victim, he refused to get into the vehicle after numerous requests from Grund and made a statement to the effect of "why don't you just run me over," police said.

According to Behrns, the victim then laid down in the driveway in front of Grund's vehicle. Grund then backed the vehicle up and intentionally ran over the

victim. Grund admitted to her actions and at one point made a comment to the effect, "He didn't believe I would. He has been drinking all day. We gave him a chance."

The victim was transported to St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester where he underwent surgery for significant pelvic injuries. His current medical status in not known at the time of publication.

The victim received medical care at the scene from Byron First Responders and Gold Cross Ambulance.

Grund was taken into custody at the scene and is facing the potential of several felony level charges, which will be determined by the Olmsted County Attorney's Office. Grund's initial court appearance was March 20 in Olmsted County District Court. Trinity Lutheran Church in West Concord.

## COURT NEWS Steele County

*The following cases were heard in Steele County District Court the week of March 11 with Judge Karen R. Duncan presiding:*

Nashid A. Abdul-Zahir, 43, Minneapolis, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of marijuana. The defendant was sentenced to \$131 and 21 months in St. Cloud State Prison.

Leah R. Barner, 44, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony offering a forged check. She was sentenced to \$1,351, 30 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, maintain employment, obtain permission to leave the state and 3 years of supervised probation.

Alison M. Johnson, 32, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of 50 grams or more of cocaine or meth. Johnson was sentenced to \$131, 2 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, attend support groups, psychological evaluation, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state, complete drug court, 200 hours of community service and 10 years of supervised probation.

John A. McCollum, 26, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony domestic assault-fear. He was sentenced to \$131, 60 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state and 5 years of supervised probation.

*The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of March 11 – 17:*

**BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Stephon D. Allen, 19, St. Paul, suspended license and no insurance, \$481; Nyakwach T. Gach, 24, Austin, revoked license, no insurance and expired tabs, \$511; Emmanuel Torres Baez, 28, Austin, revoked license, \$281; Michael E. Wilson, 37, Austin, cancelled license, \$381 and 1 year of unsupervised probation.

**MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER**

Daqwon R. Brown, 20, Owatonna, no license, \$181; Carson J. Delange, 20, Kasson, speeding, \$281; Christopher R. Dwyer, 28, Faribault, revoked license, no insurance,

careless driving and seat belt, \$606; Melvin D. Flores, 45, Owatonna, no license, \$181; Autumn N. Garrington, 24, Clear Lake, IA, no license, \$181; Samantha J. Korman, 20, St. James, possession of paraphernalia, \$131; Ruben G. Nores Valdez, 33, unsafe lane usage, \$131; Taras V. Radysyuk, 23, St. Francis, speeding and unsecure load, \$181; Leonte' C. Ray, 26, Albert Lea, suspended license, \$281; Gayflor Somaowolo, 25, Des Moines, IA, texting while driving, \$131; Frank E. Springer, 62, Owatonna, seat belt, \$106.

**OWATONNA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

David Barajas, 26, Owatonna, revoked license, \$281; Beth A. Bogen, 43, Owatonna, failure to stop for traffic control signal, \$131; Samuel C. Bolton, 21, Owatonna, interference with peace officer, 10 days in county jail; Hannah J. Bongers, 28, Kasson, revoked license, \$131, 2 days in county jail and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Peter R. Caudillo, 26, Owatonna, seat belt, \$106; Sean M. Cicero, 38, Albert Lea, restraining order violation, \$1,081, 18 days in county jail, no possession of firearms, no alcohol or controlled substance use, no possession of firearms, obtain permission to leave the state, domestic abuse evaluation and 2 years of supervised probation; Timothy A. Dirksen, 59, Owatonna, DWI, \$181, 2 days in county jail, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, obtain permission to leave the state, no alcohol or controlled substance use and 2 years of supervised probation; Steven C. Dunnum, 57, Owatonna, theft, \$288.50, 2 days in county jail, no trespassing at Mills Fleet Farm and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Jay B. Fuentes, 22, Owatonna, suspended license, \$281; Benny Ledesma, 26, Owatonna, revoked license and possession of paraphernalia and marijuana, \$381; Michael S. Lehnertz, 31, Faribault, false name to peace officer, \$131 and 2 days in county jail; Camille H. Lowell, 18, Owatonna, minor consumption, \$181; Chet A. Masso, 29, Owatonna, improper information on license, \$101; John T. McGuire, 38, Owatonna, revoked license, \$281; Paul M. Newman, 31, Owatonna, stop sign, \$131; Anthony J. Polinder, 25, Owatonna, failure to obey traffic control device, \$131; Charlotte J. Poll, 30, Austin, no insurance, \$281; Olga Sanchez, 34, Owatonna, revoked license and no insurance, \$481; Eduardo G. Santos, 25, Owatonna, no insurance and revoked license, \$481; James C. Schmidt, 23, Waseca, possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, \$181; Hope E. Schumacher, 45, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$111; Lynn M. Smith, 47, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$111; Matthew D. Swenson, 37, Owatonna,

revoked license, \$281; Gwen B. Van Den Broeke, 35, Owatonna, failure to stop for traffic control signal, \$131.

**STEELE COUNTY ATTORNEY**

Amy J. Manderfeld, 43, Owatonna, possession of marijuana, \$181, mental health evaluation, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, attend support groups, 30 hours of community service and 2 years of supervised probation. Steele County Sheriff's Office

**STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Jamie L. Avery, 41, West Concord, speeding, \$121; Kristie M. Bleess, 29, Waseca, invalid license, \$181; Jacob D. Goerd, 19, Owatonna, stop sign, \$131; Kristine T. Hazelton, 47, Ponsford, theft, \$181, 20 days in county jail and 6 months of unsupervised probation; John F. Martin, 55, Brooklyn Park, passing parked emergency vehicle, \$131; Deanton P. McReynolds, 31, Rochester, permit violation, no insurance and speeding, \$171; Oscar H. Mehus, 48, Albert Lea, invalid license, \$181; Abdullahi A. Mohamed, 25, Faribault, speeding, \$121; Cameron R. O'Connor, 20, Faribault, suspended license, \$281; Steven R. Schwering, 27, Dodge Center, speeding and invalid license, \$241; Ivy C. Wells-Gruke, 20, Blaine, suspended license, \$281; Spencer J. Wentworth, 27, Rochester, revoked license, \$281.

## ARRESTS Steele County

**OWATONNA POLICE**

Robin Denise Scurloch, 58, arrested at 6:37 p.m. March 16, domestic assault, held for court.

Brett Michael Baumgartner, 28, arrested at 7:28 p.m. March 15, warrant arrest, \$2,000 bail.

John Clements Eppel, 51, arrested at 4:25 p.m. March 15, felony possession of child pornography, held for court.

David Alvarez Jr., 28, arrested at 1:24 a.m. March 17, felony assault and domestic assault by strangulation, held for court.

Kiana Rae Louks, 19, arrested at 3:53 a.m. March 17, warrants arrest, held for court.

Adam Hunter Pattishall, 19, arrested at 4:11 a.m. March 17, violation of conditions of release, held for court.

Michael Edward payne, 26, arrested March 20, felony tampering with motor vehicle and possession, held for court.

Nathaniel Thomas Henderson, 32, arrested at 4:08 p.m. March 20, cancelled license, held for court.

Ian Robert Meister, 33, arrested at 6:41 p.m. March 20, warrant arrest, \$20,000 bail.

Jonathan Fredrick Eggers, 32, arrested at 7:05 p.m. March 21, warrant arrest, \$400 bail.

**STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF**

Adam Jeffrey Miller, 26, arrested March 21, DWI, held for court.

## POLICE BLOTTER Steele County

**BLOOMING PRAIRIE POLICE March 15**

**Assist:** Police assisted Steele County Deputies with a death investigation after a body was found at MN Highway 30 W. and Highway Ave. N. at 6:05 p.m.

**OWATONNA POLICE March 15**

**Suspicion:** Police responded to suspicious activity in the 100 block of St. John Dr. NW at 12:07 a.m. They issued a warning.

**Disturbance:** Officers responded to a disturbance in the 1200 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 5:45 a.m.

**Welfare:** Officers arrested a subject during a welfare check in the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 11:53 a.m.

**March 16**

**Thefts:** Police took theft reports in the 1600 block of Eagle Ridge St. NE at 8:27 a.m. and the 2300 block of 43rd St. NW at 8:36 a.m.

**Domestic:** Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 100 block of Rose St. W. at 4:38 p.m.

**Domestic:** At 11:23 p.m., police arrested a subject following a domestic disturbance in the 500 block of Adams Ave. NV.

**March 17**

**Drugs:** Officers responded to a report of drug activity in the 100 block of St. John Dr. NW at 2:48 a.m. They arrested a subject at the scene.

**March 18**

**Shoplifting:** Shoplifting incidents occurred in the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S. at 2:54 a.m. and the 300 block of Park Dr. NW at 8:49 p.m.

**Intoxication:** Officers responded to a report of an intoxicated subject in the 500 block of Grove Ave. N. at 7:15 a.m. They arrested a subject at the scene.

**Crash:** Police responded to a motor vehicle accident resulting in property damage in the 100 block of Broadway St. W. at 4:04 p.m. They issued a citation to one of the drivers.

**Theft:** Officer took a theft report in the 400 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 4:28 p.m.

**Warrant:** Officer made a warrant arrest in the 200 block of Prospect St. E. at 5:50 p.m.

**March 19**

**Shoplifting:** Police arrested a subject for shoplifting in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 10:14 a.m.

**Harassment:** Police responded to a harassment incident in the 500 block of 15th St. NE at 9:55 p.m.

**Theft:** Officer took a theft report in the 300 block of Allan Ave. SW at 10:03 p.m.

**March 20**

**Suspicion:** Police responded to suspicious activity in the

CRIME BRIEF

MAN FACES CHILD PORN CHARGES



JOHN EPPEL

A 51-year-old man faces child pornography charges after a search warrant was conducted by police at his Owatonna house.

John Eppel has been charged by the Steele County Attorney's Office with possession of pornographic work involving minors, which is a felony. He remains in custody in the Steele County Detention Center.

Owatonna Police came across a laptop, cell phones and some electronic storage devices from a known person that were reported to contain child porn. A search warrant was obtained and 23 images of child porn were found on the computer.

On March 15, detectives executed a search warrant at Eppel's house in the 100 block of 21st Street NW. During the search, police uncovered 3-4 drawers of young girls under clothing and other items of young girls clothing.

During an interview with police, Eppel admitted to having images of kids both naked and clothed, according to police. He was arrested and jailed following the search.

100 block of 24th St. NE at 11:02 a.m. They arrested a subject at the scene.

**Fraud:** Police received a report of a fraud incident in the 2200 block of 46th St. NW at 2:52 p.m.

**Suspicion:** At 9:15 p.m., officers responded to suspicious activity in the 500 block of Mineral Springs Road NE. They issued a citation.

**Drugs:** Police responded to drug activity in the 100 block of Landmark Dr. NE at 11:50 p.m. They issued a warning.

**March 21**

**Crash:** Paramedics and officers responded to a motor vehicle accident with injuries in the 800 block of School St. E. at 10:16 a.m.

**Weapons:** Police responded to a weapons-related incident in the 500 block of North St. W. at 2:46 p.m.

**Shoplifting:** At 5:23 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S.

**STEELE COUNTY SHERIFF March 15**

**Crash:** At 1:50 a.m., a motor vehicle accident occurred on Interstate 35 in Summit Township.

**Death:** Deputies began a death investigation after a body was found at MN Highway 30 W. and Highway Ave. N. in Blooming Prairie at 6:08 p.m.

**March 17**

**Arrest:** Deputies arrested a motorist during a traffic stop at U.S. Highway 14 E. and Austin Road in Owatonna Township at 5:32 a.m.

**March 18**

**Warrants:** Deputies made warrant arrests at the detention center at 6:45 p.m. and in the 2600 block of U.S. Highway 14 W. in Owatonna Township at 10:38 p.m.

**Theft:** Deputy took a theft report in the 4100 block of 66th St. NW in Medford Township at 9:11 p.m.

**March 19**

**Crashes:** Motor vehicle accidents occurred in the 200 block of 2nd Ave. SW in Medford at 8:21 a.m. and the 2800 block of County Road 45 S. in Owatonna Township at 12:39 p.m.

**Criminal Sexual Conduct:** Deputies began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct on 2nd Ave. NE in Medford at 9:37 a.m.

**Arrest:** Deputies arrested a motorist during a traffic stop on Interstate 35 in Medford Township at 10:37 p.m.

**March 20**

**Arrest:** Deputies arrested a motorist during a traffic stop at 26th St. NE and Hemlock Ave. NE in Owatonna at 10:50 a.m.

**Warrant:** Deputy made a warrant arrest at the detention center at 5:11 p.m.

**March 21**

**DWI:** Deputies arrested a motorist for driving while intoxicated in the 3500 block of MN Highway 30 W. in Summit Township at 2:06 a.m.

**Arrest:** Deputies arrested a motorist during a traffic stop in the 200 block of Cedar Ave. N. in Owatonna at 6:28 p.m.

## COURT NEWS Dodge County

*The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of March 10 – 17:*

**DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Crystal S. Dahlk, 23, Austin, revoked license, \$280; Joni Z. Garcia, 32, Kasson, DWI, \$405, alcohol assessment, 30 hours of community service and 1

year of supervised probation; Kirissa L. Grams, 31, Winona, speeding, \$220; Octavio Gurrola Silos, 44, Dodge Center, invalid license and no insurance, \$380; Bridget A. Head, 54, Kasson, violation of limited license conditions-license not in possession, \$180; Anika L. Hooyers, 23, Rochester, speeding, \$140; Tamera J. Laqua, 58, West Concord, parking violation, \$32; Maria J. Miller, 53, Vining, parking violation, \$32; Bruce M. Rosenau, 52, West Concord, parking violation, \$32; Jolene K. Schultz, 34, Kasson, invalid license and no insurance, \$380; Brooke L. Sederstrom, 26, Stewartville, revoked license, registration violation and no insurance, \$510.

**KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Jacob B. Antinozzi, 24, Rochester, parking violation, \$32; Ashley R. Askvig, 35, Stewartville, revoked license, \$280; Hailee L. Fate, 26, Kasson, parking violation, \$32; Bridge A. Head, 54, Kasson, violation of limited license conditions-license not in possession, \$180; Jason L. Iverson, 42, Dodge Center, seat belt, \$105; Jeremy P. Keller, 24, Kasson, possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, no insurance, failure to yield and revoked license, \$780; Christi A. Patten, 56, Oronoco, parking violation, \$32; Jon W. Swanson, 44, Kasson, possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, \$180.

**MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER**

Daigo Armando Estrada, 31, Inver Grove Heights, no license, \$180; Brett A. Fuller, 33, Hayfield, speeding, \$120; Zlata Kechely, 42, Shakopee, speeding, \$120; Ricky D. Larson, 64, Medford, speeding, \$120; Bradley J. Smith, 59, Lakeville, speeding, \$140; Dalia Uriarte Lopez, 40, Kasson, suspended license, \$280.

**WEST CONCORD POLICE DEPARTMENT**

James R. Rongve, 35, West Concord, parking violation, \$32.

## OWATONNA FIRE

**March 16**

**Fire:** Firefighters responded to a passenger vehicle fire on Interstate 35 at 10:08 a.m.

**March 18**

**Smoke:** Fire personnel assisted with smoke removal in the 100 block of 24th Ave. at 4:12 p.m.

**March 21**

**Crash:** At 10:23 a.m., a motor vehicle accident occurred in the 800 block of School St.

STEELE COUNTY

Times

Always local,  
all the time.



- Esperanza Pena – drugs – no bail
- Federico Perez – DWI - \$56,000 bail
- Joann Perez – assault - \$500 bail
- Martin Perez – DWI - \$500 bail
- Juan Perez-Torrez – sale to minor - \$1,000 bail
- David Perry – warrant – no bail
- Keith Pittman – DWI - \$1,000 bail
- Juan Placencia-Gonzalez – obstruction - \$1,000 bail
- Darrian Porter – interference with 911 – no bail
- Amanda Portillo – DWI - \$500 bail
- Emmanuel Puentes – theft - \$500 bail

- Tonya Raleigh – DWI, revoked license – no bail
- Erasmo Resendez – assault - \$2,000 bail
- Benjamin Restrepo – theft - \$200 bail
- Juan Reyes – criminal sexual conduct - \$50,000 bail
- Margarito Reyes – criminal property damage - \$3,000 bail
- Bartolo Reyna – theft - \$1,000 bail
- Isidro Reyna – warrant - \$500 bail
- Kelly Reynolds – no license - \$1,000 bail
- Angel Rizo – worthless check - \$5,000 bail

*Disclosing active warrants promotes public safety and aids in the identification and apprehension of wanted individuals*







History from the News Archives

10 Years Ago  
March 24, 2009

DAN EVANS, PUBLISHER

Blooming Prairie mail carrier Ken Esplan was recognized for his 35 years of service with the Blooming Prairie Post Office on March 17. As Esplan was starting his work day, he was surprised by his family, including his wife of almost 36 years, Judy. Postmaster Kathy Foster presented Esplan with a 35-year pin that had some green on it. He is a 1966 graduate of Blooming Prairie.

Gene and Pat Francis of rural Blooming Prairie recently returned from their second mission trip in the last five years. They were part of a team from First United Methodist Church in Austin that flew to Haiti to lend a helping hand.

Blooming Prairie officer Mark Lang and his K-9 partner, Crux, apprehended an assault suspect hiding in a pick-up at a farm southeast of Blooming Prairie in Mower County. Following a brief struggle, the suspect gave up and was taken into custody.

The Blooming Prairie School Board had to make tough decisions as more cuts were announced. Long-time elementary teacher Richard Zaske announced his retirement during the March meeting. Zaske has been with the district for 36 years. The district, meanwhile, is having to cut \$300,000 from the school's budget..

20 Years Ago  
March 23, 1999

ELSIE SLINGER, PUBLISHER

Nearly 90 aspiring track athletes signed up for the spring sport and promptly pushed the school board into hiring another track coach. The board made the decision to go ahead on the same night it was brought up.

Emily Butler, the eighth grade daughter of James and Linda Butler, received notification last week that she will be one of 100 participants in the state level of the National Geography Bee. The high school geography instructor is Paul Sczepanski.

Five Blooming Prairie entries earned gold medals and the right to advance to state participation in Star Event competition at Rochester. Gold medal winners were Katie Johnson, Stacia Waldock, Jasmin Butler, Serena Schewe, Amanda Busho, Jenni Wurst and Lisa Meshke.

Baker Greg Fristedt gave two of the preschool classes at Blooming Prairie Elementary a closer look around at the hometown bakery. Fristedt and co-worker Diane Jensen provided doughnuts as part of their annual grand tour for the children. What a treat!

50 Years Ago  
March 19, 1969

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

Blooming Prairie residents will go to the polls next Tuesday, March 25, to ballot on whether or not to permit the Village Council to borrow funds, not to exceed \$500,000 for the purpose of building and equipping a nursing home. Voting will be at the Community Building during the hours of 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Indications are that a large turnout of voters will cast their ballots on the question and it's hoped that the proposal will receive overwhelming support of local residents.

Seventeen new members were inducted into the Blooming Prairie Chapter of the National Honor Society at an all-school assembly Tuesday. Seniors inducted were Cynthia Brakke, Monica Doocy, Colleen Fieberger, Leslie Hansen, David Herron, Colleen Jones, Greg Olson, Tom Peterson and Elaine Walsh; juniors Douglas Betlach, Paul Brekke, Richard Evenson, Kristi Hoel, Kevin Hranicka, Dale Janke, Susan Johnson and Colleen Tonolli.

75 Years Ago  
March 23, 1944

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

For the first time in its history, Blooming Prairie will have an ladies' VFW auxiliary to the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 878. Thirty-two ladies were signed up as chartered members.

For the first time in the history of Steele County, a woman will act as legal advisor in the handling of the county's business. Appointment of Mary P. Walbran as acting county attorney has been announced by the county board of commissioners. Mrs. Walbran will succeed her husband, John P. Walbran, when he receives his call to active service in the U.S. Navy.

Sgt. Allen N. Thompson was killed in action Feb. 10 at the beachhead below Rome, according to a message received from the War Department by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hans Thompson of Hayfield. Sgt. Thompson entered the army on Feb. 20, 1941.

Naval Aviation Cadet Delbert C. Ingvalson has reported to the U.S. Navy Pre-Flight School at Athens, Ga., where he will receive three months of intensive physical toughening and instruction in advanced ground school subjects. Upon successful completion of the course, he will be transferred to a naval air station to begin progressive flight training preparatory to joining a combat unit. He is the son of Mrs. Lavena Ingvalson, who resides near Blooming Prairie.

TODDLER: Memorial

FROM A1

the Robinson family and friends," Heimgartner said.

Family and friends gathered to say goodbye to Sierra and Noelani in Kansas City, Mo., on Saturday. Pink and white balloons soared above Hibbs Park in honor of both of them.

The exact details of what happened to Noelani still remain unclear, but some of the story began coming together on March 21 when a third woman was charged in Milwaukee with aiding Higgins after the shooting of Sierra. Noelani was likely murdered before her mother and left alongside the Steele County ditch for as long as five days before being discovered.

Deloise Lipsey, 31, of Milwaukee, was arrested on March 13, the same day as Higgins. She may also have been sex trafficked by Higgins.

According to the criminal complaint against Lipsey, she flew from Las Vegas to Minneapolis at Higgins' urging on March 6. She landed in Minneapolis on March 8 and was picked up by Higgins and another unknown man. They drove to a motel in Austin where



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

Over the past week, the memorial along Highway 218 has grown with people adding various items to show their sympathy to the Robinson family. The Robinsons may have never had a prior connection to Blooming Prairie, but that hasn't stopped people from showing their concern and support.

Steele County honored with state history award

A publication detailing the Civil War in Steele County has earned the local historical society a statewide honor.

The Steele County Historical Society and author Barry D. Adams will be honored for their publication, Steele County in the Civil War, by the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums on April 25. Steele County is one of seven local history projects throughout the state that will be recognized at the annual conference of MALHL. The event will be held at Treasure Island Resort & Casino, located just outside of Red Wing. This is the ninth award year.

Award recipients' completed projects or achieved the criteria for lifetime achievement in 2018. "The Alliance is proud to honor this year's award winners," stated Adam Smith, who is the chair of the History Awards Committee and an archives technician with Minnesota State University, Mankato Library Services. "Each project symbolizes the great work being done by local history organizations across the state and each individual's commitment to serving the local history community."

BOARD CHAIR: Greg Krueger

FROM A1

maintenance upkeep, all of those things," he said. "Our main goal is to get everybody in the county, as the analogy I've always used, everybody on the same train going on the same track the same way, and I think we've accomplished that in the first two years that we've been on the board."

He credited those who work with him and in the county for achieving this cohesion. "We have an unbelievable staff, and everybody has a goal of doing the absolute service to the citizens of Steele County with also trying to keep the costs in line."

"I think the county is doing well right now," he said of the financial and infrastructural health of the county. "We added more to the reserves in 2018, which has kind of been our goal. We're substantially over what the state recommends for a county to have in reserves."

He also noted many of the projects which have come to fruition as of late, including the new Public Works building. "A shining star this year is the new Public Works building," he said. "We should take occupancy of that on April 15. It's going to be an amazing facility, its not going to be an overdone facility, but it's going to a great place for our county shop guys and engineers to work in."

"I would hope that the county and the city could work together

"To demonstrate our community's support for the tragic loss of Sierra and Noelani Robinson."

Pastor Heidi Heimgartner  
First Lutheran Church

Lipsey said she spent Saturday alone until Higgins returned alone on early Sunday. They packed up their belongings, including "the trash," to head back to Minneapolis. While driving to Minneapolis, they changed routes and eventually stopped while Higgins "threw out the trash"—believed to be Noelani's bundled body.

After continuing on their journey, Higgins said he needed money in Rochester and they headed there before driving to Milwaukee. They arrived in Milwaukee on March 11, the same day Sierra was killed.

Higgins is being held in jail awaiting charges of murdering Sierra. He has not been charged in Noelani's death.

Sierra's father has said Sierra took Noelani to Milwaukee to meet Higgins for the first time in January and wanted Noelani to know her father. Then Sierra went to visit it family in Las Vegas for six weeks. But when she returned, her father said, Higgins did not want to return the girl.

Minnesota officials still have not released information about an autopsy other than a preliminary finding that Noelani's death was as a result of homicide by blunt trauma. The BCA has taken over as the lead investigating agency with Noelani's death. Authorities still haven't said when, where and how she died, or whether they even know.

Underutilized Palliative Care Services Can Help Relieve Pain



**THE SAVVY SENIOR**

*Brought to you by:*

**Prairie Manor Care Center & Heather Haus**

220 3rd St. NW,  
Blooming Prairie  
**583-4434**

What can you tell me about palliative care? My husband suffers from lung disease and is receiving radiation for prostate cancer but is not terminally ill. I've heard that palliative care can help him with his pain and discomfort. What can you tell me?

Searching Spouse

**Dear Searching,**

Palliative care is a very effective service that can help patients relieve the symptoms and stress that often comes with serious illness. But unfortunately, most people don't know about it, or don't understand how it can help them. Here's what you should know.

**WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE?**

Most people hear the words "palliative care" and think "hospice," but they are different types of care. Hospice is reserved for when curative treatments have been exhausted and patients have less than six months to live.

Palliative care, on the other hand, is a medical specialty that focuses on providing relief from the symptoms such as pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, constipation, nausea, loss of appetite, trouble sleeping and even depression. It can also help patients deal with the side effects of medical treatment.

Anyone with a serious illness can benefit from palliative care, including those with cancer, heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, Alzheimer's, HIV/AIDS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's and more.

Palliative care is provided by a team including palliative care doctors, nurses, social workers and other specialists that work with your doctor to provide an extra layer of support and care. It is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness, and it can be provided along with curative treatment.

Palliative care teams are trained to help patients understand all their treatment options as well as the quality of life ramifications, so they can make informed decisions about what's best for them.

Often patients assume their doctors will take care of their pain and stress, but most doctors in our specialized medical system have not been well trained in pain and symptom management. That's why palliative care is invaluable.

Palliative care was developed in the United States in the 1990s but only became a formal medical subspecialty in 2008. Today, three-quarters of U.S. hospitals with more than 50 beds have a palliative care program, and 90 percent of hospitals with 300 beds or more offer it.

**HOW TO GET CARE**

There are around 6 million people in the U.S. that have a need for palliative care, according to the Center to Advance Palliative Care, but most patients don't know to ask for it. If you feel that a palliative care specialist could help your husband, start by talking to his doctor and ask for a referral.

If your doctor isn't helpful, go to GetPalliativeCare.org, where you can search for a specialist in your area.

Palliative care can be provided in in a variety of places, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, doctor's clinics and at your own home.

You'll also be happy to know that most private insurance plans, as well as Medicare and Medicaid, cover palliative care services.

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.

an industry that isn't quite right for Owatonna, but it might be perfect for Medford, or Blooming Prairie, or even Hope. If we work together on those types of things, I think it's advantageous for everybody because not only does it help the county tax base, but it would help the tax base of those cities and school districts."

"The city and the county work very well together right now," Krueger said of working closely with Owatonna. "We have everybody going together on that same

train going the same direction and I think the city sees that we want to work together on everything."

With the 2019 year ahead of him, Krueger and his fellow commissioners are looking forward to the future. "I'm excited for 2019, I think the citizens are going to see a lot of positive changes in the roads and the bridges and those types of things," he said. "We had a good budget year in 2018 and I envision 2019 being the same."



**Johnson, Doerhoefer & Miner P.A.**

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OBITUARIES

Madeline “Dolly” Thomas, 92, West Concord

Madeline “Dolly” Thomas, 92, of West Concord, died Saturday, March 16, 2019, at Kenyon Sunset Home.

She was born July 17, 1926, the daughter of John and Elsie (Haberman) Pognes, on a farm in Blooming Prairie Township where she grew up. She attended school through the eighth grade. After her schooling, she lived and worked in Rochester. During this time, she met the love of her life, Ray Thomas, at a dance in Bixby. The couple dated for a few years and were married on Oct. 2, 1947.

They made their home on Ray’s grandfather, J.E. Thomas’ farm in Ellington Township in Dodge County. Ray passed away in 1971, and Dolly continued living on the farm for a number of years before moving to West Concord.

Dolly was an accomplished seamstress. Many of her clients were the doctors and their wives from the



Mayo Clinic as well as local brides for whom she made wedding dresses. She also helped Ray on the farm, raised chickens and had a garden.

She loved to travel. She made many trips throughout the United States and around the world with her good friend of 25 years, John Putta. They also spent winters in Florida for over 20 years. Dolly also enjoyed morning coffee with her friends at Gilbert’s Café. She was known by many as the lady who walked continuously for her daily exercise.

She is survived by her children, Gary (Rita) Thomas of Spring Grove and Bonnie (Sandy) Thomas-Michaud of Visalia, Calif.; brother Ronald (Nadine) Pogones of Austin; grandchildren, Kamie (Ryan) Richardson, Kristina Acosta-Michaud, Ray (Annalee) Thomas, Chad (Laura) Thomas, Daniel (Jessica) Thomas, Amy (Chris)

Freiderich, Faith Solum, Luke Thomas, Jacob Thomas, Neal Thomas, Robin Solum, Kyle Thomas and Dana Thomas and 29 great-grandchild.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Ray Thomas; son, David Thomas; siblings, Gilbert Pogones, Lovirn Pogones, Cecil Pogones and Shirley Sahf; a great-grandchild and close friend, John Putta.

Funeral services will be held Thursday, March 21, 2019 at 11 a.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church, West Concord with visitation at the church one hour prior to the service. Interment will be in the Owatonna Memorial Gardens in Owatonna.

Memorials may be directed to Trinity Lutheran Church in West Concord.

Arrangements are being handled by Michaelson Funeral Home in Owatonna.

Richard Schumacher, 85, Austin

Richard Allen Schumacher, age 85 of Austin, passed away Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at St. Mark’s Living in Austin.

Richard was born on March 12, 1934 in Austin, the son of Lawrence and Mathilda (Kerling) Schumacher. He grew up in Austin and attended St. Columbus Catholic School, graduating in 1952. Following high school, on Aug. 19, 1952, Richard enlisted into the United States Air Force serving four years in active duty, and six years as a reservist. He was honorably discharged on Aug. 18, 1956.

On Nov. 3, 1956, Richard was united in marriage to Ruth Stroh in Bonner, Mont. After their marriage they made their home in Helena, Mont., there Richard worked in the court house. The couple then moved to Missoula, and there he graded lumber. In the 1960s, Richard and Ruth took up residence in Minneapolis, where he worked for a casting company. Later they moved to Austin, where Richard worked at the veteran’s service office and finished his career at Hormel.

Richard served on St. Mary’s church board, calling him the “candy



man” at St. Mary’s. Every Sunday he provided the kids candy and rolls for the adults. He was a life member of the V.F.W. Post 1216, American Legion Post 91, and the DAV, he served as V.F.W. commander. Richard “loved” the lottery and enjoyed baseball, he played semi-pro in his younger years. He will be dearly missed by all who knew him.

Richard is survived by his children, Mark (Dianne) Schumacher of Savage, Calvin (Amy) Schumacher of Elko New Market, Karl (Allamay) Schumacher of Savage, Christina (Michael) Kanne of Austin, Edward Schumacher of San Antonio, Texas, Margaret (Bruce) Grover of Austin, Melissa (Paul) Jacoby of St. James; special friend, Vera Armburst of Austin; 13 grandchildren; one great-grandchild and one on the way; brothers, Roland (Barb) Schumacher of Austin, Ralph

(Kathy) Schumacher of Rosemount, Robert (Donna) Schumacher of Farmington; sister, Delores Norring of Shakopee.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Lawrence and Mathilda Schumacher; wife, Ruth Schumacher in 2007; and brother-in-law, Norm Norring.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, March 30, 2019 at St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Newry Township, Minnesota, with Father Thomas Niehaus officiating. Visitation will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Friday, March 29, at Worlein Funeral Home in Austin with a rosary service to follow at 7 p.m. Visitation will continue for one hour prior to the service on Saturday at the church. Interment will be in St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery, Newry Township.

Memorials can be directed to St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery. Services are prearranged and performed with Worlein Funeral Home of Austin. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at [www.worlein.com](http://www.worlein.com).

Robert Duane Johnson, 84, Blooming Prairie

Robert Duane Johnson, age 84 of Blooming Prairie, passed away Thursday, March 21, 2019 at Prairie Manor Care Center in Blooming Prairie.

Robert was born on Jan. 14, 1935, in Freeborn County, to Ronald and Volberg (Anderson) Johnson. He attended Blooming Prairie High School. In 1955, Robert enlisted into the United States Army serving until his honorable discharge in 1957.

Shortly after his time in the service, Robert married Phyllis Marie Lustig on June 15, 1957. Together the couple raised four children: Jackie, Robert, Lori, and Daniel. Robert worked at a Weyerhaeuser Company for 42 years.

He was a member of the First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie, where he was very active and a lifetime member of the V.F.W. He enjoyed camping, traveling, Via De Cristo, visiting and spending time with family and friends, and playing guitar and country music. Robert will always be remembered as a welcoming, caring and loving husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather. He will be dearly missed.

Survivors include his mother, Volberg Johnson of Edina; wife, Phyllis Johnson of Blooming Prairie; children,



Jackie (Todd Turner) Rathbun of Owatonna, Robert (Eileen) Johnson of Owatonna, Lori (Kurt Sylvara) Nordaas of Bricelyn, Daniel (Norma) Johnson of Austin; 15 grandchildren and 24 great grandchildren; special friends, Scott and Sandy; and special cat, Tag.

He was preceded in death by his father, Ronald Johnson.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, March 27, 2019 at First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie with Pastor Heidi Heimgartner officiating. Visitation will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 26, at Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home and will continue for one hour prior to the service at the church on Wednesday. Interment will be in Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis at a later date.

Memorials can be directed to First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie. Worlein Funeral Home of Blooming Prairie is assisting the family with arrangements. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at [www.worlein.com](http://www.worlein.com).

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Recipe Corner

MEAL IN A BOWL

- INGREDIENTS:
- 1 c. sm. cooked macaroni shells
  - 4 c. torn lettuce
  - 4 med. carrots (2" thin sticks
  - 1 (10 oz.) pkg. frozen peas, thawed
  - 1 sm. red onion (rings)
  - 2 c. cubed cooked ham
  - 1/2 c. shredded Swiss or Cheddar cheese
  - 1 1/2 c. mayonnaise
  - 2 T. snipped fresh dill, or 1 1/2 tsp. dill weed
  - 2 hard-boiled egg wedges

DIRECTIONS:

Layer in 3-quart glass bowl (lettuce, carrots, macaroni, peas, onions, ham). Sprinkle with cheese. Mix mayonnaise and dill; spread over top. Arrange eggs on top. Cover and chill for several hours; toss just before serving.

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Blooming Prairie, 583-2046

Carolyn A. Haubenschild, 78, Blooming Prairie



Haubenschild of Austin, and James (Kim Stollard) of Blooming Prairie; six grandchildren: Annie, Adam, Amanda, Derek, Rebecca and Brandon, and eight great grandchildren;

a sister, Crystal Joan Sellers of Blooming Prairie, and many nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Carolyn A. Haubenschild, age 78 of Blooming Prairie, passed away peacefully Saturday evening, March 23, 2019 at Homestead Hospice House in Owatonna surrounded by her loving family.

Carolyn was born on Jan. 4, 1941, in Albert Lea, to Arthur and Crystal Andersen. She graduated from Blooming Prairie High School in 1959. On June 27, 1959, Carolyn married Paul Haubenschild at the Litomysl Cathoic Church. To this union three children were born: Carol, Michael and James.

Over the next 47 years, she repaired class rings at Jostens in Owatonna. Carolyn was a member of the Trinity Lutheran Church in rural Blooming Prairie. She loved horseback riding and especially enjoyed her horseback riding trips in the Black Hills. She enjoyed camping, traveling, attending auctions, was a dedicated Meals on Wheels volunteer and loved tending her garden. Carolyn will always be remembered as a welcoming, caring and loving wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother. She will be dearly missed by all who knew her.

Survivors include her loving husband, Paul Haubenschild of Blooming Prairie, a daughter, Carol (Cecil Boyd) Simon of Hope, two sons; Michael (Peg)

She was preceded in death by her parents and a brother Jens Andersen.

Funeral services will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 28, 2019 at First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie. Visitation will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 27, at Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home and will continue for one hour prior to the service at the church on Thursday. Interment will be in Union Cemetery near Bixby.

Memorials can be directed to Aurora Lutheran Church or the Steele County Humane Society. Services are prearranged and performed by Worlein Funeral Home of Blooming Prairie. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at [www.worlein.com](http://www.worlein.com).

Lee E. Folkens, 71, Blooming Prairie



Lee E. Folkens, age 71, of Blooming Prairie, passed away suddenly Friday evening, March 15, 2019 at his home.

Lee was born on Feb. 17, 1948 in Clinton, Minn., to Earl and Betty (Sorensen) Folkens. He lived in rural Minnesota in his younger years then moved to Edina and graduated from St. Louis Park High School in 1966. He then went on to attend college at the University of Minnesota, graduating in 1970 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business. Lee served his country by joining the United States Marines, serving during the Vietnam War.

On July 21, 1979, Lee married Pam (Christensen) Kruckeberg in New Ulm.

his big smile and his big heart. He was a mentor and a teacher at heart. He was a member of the American Legion Post 52 and the VFW 878. Lee will be dearly missed by those who knew and loved him.

Survivors include his wife, Pam Folkens of Blooming Prairie; sons, Grant (Michele) Kruckeberg of Rosemount, Chad (Kimberly Bialke) Kruckeberg of Belize, Jed Folkens of Jordan; five grandchildren: Abigail Kruckeberg, Megan Folkens, Joey Folkens, Kate Folkens, and Brittany Hanson; mother-in-law Gwen Christensen of Blooming Prairie; brother-in-law Jeff (Sonny) Christensen of Algona, Iowa; sister-in-law Jennifer Milton of Blooming Prairie, and many other nephews, nieces and special friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Earl and Betty Folkens; father-in-law, M. John Christensen; sisters Donna Bredeson-Penrose and Norma Bedell; brother, Lynn Folkens; and brother-in-law, Philip Milton.

A “Celebration of Life” will be held from 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, May 5, 2019 at the Blooming Prairie Serviceman’s Club in Blooming Prairie. A brief memorial service will be held at 4 p.m. with Pastor Heidi Heimgartner officiating, followed by Military rites by the American Legion Post 52.

Memorials in Lee’s memory can be directed to the Blooming Prairie Ambulance. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at [www.worlein.com](http://www.worlein.com).

### Birthdays

|                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>March 26</b><br>Marty Shaw<br>Cale Braaten<br>Tiffany Peterson<br>Steve Wollenburg                                                         | Elaine Vermilyea<br>John Humphrey<br>Gary Thorson                                                    |
| <b>March 27</b><br>Betty Ingvaldson<br>Chad Klemmensen<br>Val Garcia<br>Lois Friesner<br>MaKenna Brown<br>Becky Masching<br>Fariah Weinberger | <b>March 29</b><br>Emerson Nelson<br>Phillip Ramsey<br>Rhonda McCabe<br>Maisele Holmberg             |
| <b>March 28</b><br>Kevin Eischens<br>Lori Miller<br>Trig Klemmensen                                                                           | <b>March 30</b><br>Krysta Harshbarger<br>Darrell Hansen                                              |
|                                                                                                                                               | <b>March 31</b><br>Robert Salinas, Jr.<br>Alec Ille<br>Oliva Kruger<br>Debbie Schwake<br>Jerry Young |

### Anniversaries

|                                                             |                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>March 27</b><br>Doug & Kim Hillson<br>Dick & Norma Hegal | <b>March 28</b><br>Rick & Lisa Hocking |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|

## Best kept secret!

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|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
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| <b>Wednesday</b> - Turkey | <b>Friday</b> - Beef          |

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**PASTOR'S COLUMN**

## Big reason to celebrate at Trinity in 2019



**Deacon Kris Oppgard**  
TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
OWATONNA

Graduating from Seminary. Back to back OHS State Football championships. My car starting during the polar vortex. Getting this article written by the deadline date. These are things that I celebrate. So many things can be celebrated in our lives, big or small. Celebrate means to “acknowledge (a significant or happy day or event) with a social gathering or enjoyable activity.” Some synonyms include to “commemorate, observe, honor, recognize, acknowledge or remember.” Trinity Lutheran Church in Owatonna has a big reason to celebrate this year. On Feb. 6, 1919, 60 people gathered to commit to forming a new Lutheran church in Owatonna where worship and confirmation would be led in English. Prior to that, worship in the Lutheran Churches in Owatonna was led in Danish, Norwegian or

German. A constitution was drafted, and Trinity English Lutheran Church was formed. In 2019, we celebrate 100 years of ministry in this community. During this Trinity100 year, we will look back at the amazing legacy of God’s grace lived out through the people of this congregation. We will look forward at the next century, as well, reflecting on the questions of ‘How is God calling us to grow, to love and to serve? And, what is God’s vision for Trinity Lutheran Church in the next 100 years?’ On Feb. 9 and 10, we welcomed Steve Delzer, the Bishop of the ELCA SEMN Synod, to preach at all four of our worship services. Guest preachers will return to Trinity throughout the year. The upcoming Pastors to preach are Pastor Orlin Mandsager on May 11 and 12, Pastor Barb Streed on June 15

and 16, Pastor Dean Smith on July 20 and 21, Pastor Christopher Leach on Aug. 10 and 11, Pastor Julie (Malone) Ryan on Oct. 5 and 6, and Pastor John Weisenburger on Nov. 16 and 17. A Festival Worship Experience will happen at 10 a.m. on April 28. Sunday worship services will move from Trinity to a special, single worship service at The Four Seasons Centre, for the entire congregation and surrounding area. Musicians, choirs and instrumentals will debut a choral piece commissioned to celebrate Trinity’s centennial. A reunion luncheon will follow worship at the Four Seasons Centre. More information can be found on the Trinity website at [tlcowatonna.org/trinity100](http://tlcowatonna.org/trinity100) and on social media on Instagram and Facebook at #trinity100 #trinity100tuesday #trinitythrowback

thursday #trinitythrowback Psalm 145: 5-7 says, “On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed, and I will declare your greatness. They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.” God is awesome. God is great. And, God has been good to Trinity. Trinity has been blessed to be a ministry partner in Owatonna for 100 years. The Trinity Mission Statement is “Through Jesus’ love, we Welcome, Connect, Learn and Serve.” And, we hope that this mission continues for the next 100 years. Please know that you are invited to be a part of Trinity as we celebrate this amazing milestone this year!

**AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**LUTHERAN**

**AURORA LUTHERAN**  
6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna  
Pastor Stephanie Wood  
507-676-5696  
Worship: Sunday at 9 a.m.  
Sunday School: 10:15 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. BibleStudy;  
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](http://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.goodshepherdowatonna.com](http://www.goodshepherdowatonna.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](http://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., Sargeant  
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 – ELCA**  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
609 Lincoln Avenue  
Owatonna MN 55060  
507.451.4520  
[tlcowatonna.org](http://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](http://tlcowatonna.org/worshipschedule)  
Pastor Todd Buegler  
Pastor Amanda Weinkauff  
Deacon Kris Oppgard

**TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA**  
104 First St. SE., Hayfield  
Pastor Paul Hauschild  
507-477-2248  
[www.trinityhayfield.org](http://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

**TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMS**  
57043 300th St., Waltham  
Pastor Jesse Krusemark  
507-567-2272  
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.  
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**  
205 Second Ave. NW, Medford  
507-451-6353  
Father James Starasinich  
Deacon Patrick Fagan  
Mass: 5:30 p.m. Sat.  
Mass: 9 a.m. Mon. & Fri.

**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**  
9946 SE 24th Ave. Owatonna  
Father John Sauer, Pastor  
507-451-1588  
[www.litomysl.webs.com](http://www.litomysl.webs.com)  
Sunday Mass:  
9:30 a.m.c with Children’s Church  
Reconciliation:  
8:45 a.m. - 1st & 3rd Sundays  
Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.:  
Faith Formation for  
K thru Confirmation  
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  
Father John Sauer  
Fr. Jose Morales, Parochial Vicar  
507-451-1588  
[www.sacredheartowatonna.org](http://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](http://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.  
Daily Mass:  
8 a.m. Tues., Wed. & Fri.  
(Communion Service  
8 a.m. Thursday)  
Adoration Chapel available  
Mon. – Fri. 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.  
Key fob required after  
hours or weekends

**CHRISTIAN**

**CHRIST COMMUNITY COVENANT**  
540 SE 18th St., Owatonna  
Dr. V. Brent Carlson, Pastor  
507-451-1032  
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.  
Sunday Connections: 10:15 a.m.

**PENTECOSTAL**

**FIRST UNITED PENTECOSTAL**  
230 Locust Ave., Owatonna  
Pastor Eliazar Talamantes  
507-363-2240  
Worship: 10 a.m. Sunday;  
6:30 p.m. Wednesday

**METHODIST**

**BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST**  
43089 180th St., Medford  
(Seven miles west of  
Medford on CR 23)  
Pastors JJ & Stefanie Morgan  
507-835-8726  
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.  
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

**ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST**  
200 Sixth St. NW., Ellendale  
Pastor Randy Cirkseena  
507-684-2731  
[www.ellendaleumc.org](http://www.ellendaleumc.org)  
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.  
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

**OWATONNA UNITED METHODIST**  
815 E. University, Owatonna  
Loren Olson, Pastor  
Linda Boorman, Associate Pastor  
Joyce Parker, Associate Pastor  
507-451-4734  
[www.owatonnaumc.org](http://www.owatonnaumc.org)  
Traditional Worship (Pathways): 9  
a.m. Sunday

**NON-DENOMINATIONAL**

**BRIDGES OF HOPE COMMUNITY**  
130 W. Bridge St., Owatonna  
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](http://www.cedarcreekchurch.org)  
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

**DESTINY CHRISTIAN**  
2515 Harvest Lane NW  
Owatonna  
Pastors Joe & Vicki Braucht  
[www.destinycc.org](http://www.destinycc.org)  
Worship: 6 p.m. Sat.

**ELEVATION NORTH**  
2002 Austin Road, Owatonna  
Pastor Doug Jones  
507-363-3099  
[www.elevationnorth.blogger.com](http://www.elevationnorth.blogger.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**  
332 14th St. NE., Owatonna  
Pastors Scott & Joan Peterson  
507-413-0209  
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

**SIMPLE CHURCH**  
4515 NW 22nd Ave., Owatonna  
(Country Goods building across  
the freeway from Cabela’s)  
Pastor Todd Lundgren  
507-451-5661  
Worship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.  
Bible Study: 7 p.m. Wednesday

**MENNONITE**

**PRAIRIE MENNONITE**  
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.

**PRESBYTERIAN**

**ASSOCIATED CHURCH**  
Presbyterian Church (USA) and  
United Church of Christ  
800 Havana Road, Owatonna 507-  
451-1546  
[www.associatedchurch.org](http://www.associatedchurch.org)  
[office@associatedchurch.org](mailto: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

**SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST**

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

**UCC**

**CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
211 Main St. S., Medford  
Rev. Richard Waters  
507-451-4596  
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

**ASSEMBLY OF GOD**

**VIBRANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD**  
702 Third St. S., Ellendale  
Pastor Patrick Stitt  
507-684-3421  
[www.vibrantlifeag.com](http://www.vibrantlifeag.com)  
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.  
Kids Church: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

**BAPTIST**

**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.

**FIRST BAPTIST (Owatonna’s oldest church)**  
123 E. Main St., Owatonna  
Pastor Cindy  
507-451-2803  
[www.firstbaptistowatonna.com](http://www.firstbaptistowatonna.com)  
Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.  
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

**ASSEMBLY OF GOD**

**VICTORY LIFE**  
105 2nd St NE  
Geneva  
Pastor Diane Butler  
507-402-0960  
Worship on Sundays  
Prayer Service: 7:30 a.m.  
Church Service: 9:30 a.m.  
Children’s Church: 9:45 a.m.

**Minimizer**  
[www.minimizer.com](http://www.minimizer.com)  
**800-248-3855**  
Blooming Prairie

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[www.owatonnagranite.com](http://www.owatonnagranite.com)

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DDS, MBS  
Building Healthy Smiles!  
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FREE CONSULTATION

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After Hours Towing:  
507-456-4158  
111 Front Street  
P.O. Box 282  
Claremont, MN

**Johnson, Doerhoefer & Miner P.A.**  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS  
Certified Public Accountant **Tamzen R. Johnson**  
319 East Main Street, Blooming Prairie; 888-933-4838 / Fax: 507-583-2389

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**507-583-6671**

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# A Grand Birthday



American Legion Commander Karl Luiken and Auxillary President Susie Thorson stand alongside the charter of the Otto T. Lund American Legion charter.

STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

## MARCH MADNESS

### HITS THE STEELE COUNTY FREE FAIR

**CHRIS HAWKEY**  
Thursday, Aug. 15

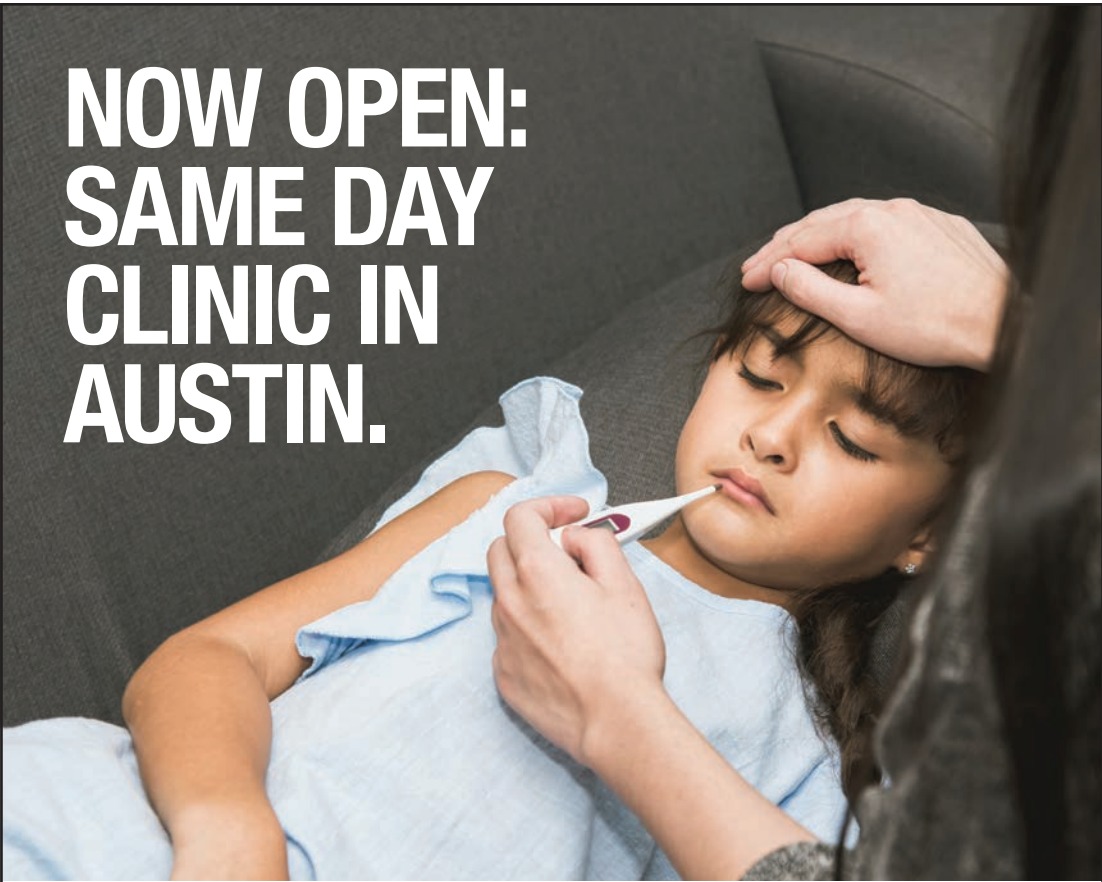
**CHRIS KROEZE**  
Friday, Aug. 16

Take advantage of this **ONE TIME MARCH PROMO** for **BOTH** great shows coming this summer to the fair!

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See other ticket information on our website. [www.scff.org](http://www.scff.org)



Same Day Clinic (formerly Urgent Care) is now open and located on Second Floor Clinic North. Patients can be seen as a walk-in or by appointment. For a list of conditions treated in Same Day Clinic, visit [mayoclinichealthsystem.org](http://mayoclinichealthsystem.org), select Austin and click on Same Day Clinic under Services & Treatments.

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## Excited, but still apprehensive' on Hwy. 14 funding



STAFF PHOTO BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN

Beth Hodgman has been a huge advocate for the Highway 14 expansion funding since 2012, when her husband Scott was killed in an accident, on the two-lane stretch of Highway 14 near Dodge Center.

BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN  
STAFF WRITER

Improvements to Highway 14 in Steele and Dodge Counties have been a personal issue for Beth Hodgman for years.

Hodgman's husband, Scott, and two other people were killed Nov. 6, 2012 in an accident on the two-lane stretch of Highway 14 near Dodge Center. Through the years she has maintained weather played a role in the crash and that her husband would still be alive if the highway had been four lanes.

So when she heard that Gov. Tim Walz signed a bill last week that would ensure the funding for upgrading the 12-1/2 mile piece of road from Owatonna to Dodge Center, she was happy but not ready to breathe a sigh of relief.

"Like everybody else I was excited," she said. But her excitement was tempered by continuing apprehension.

"I'll feel better when I see the dirt flying," she said.

And with good reason.

Hodgman, of West Concord, said that before her husband's death she really had not thought a lot about the highway. She worked in Rochester but traveled the back roads to get there because she did like not driving on it.

"After you lose your husband, you can't sleep," she said. She said people suggested she read on those sleepless nights. What she did was internet research on the highway and traffic fatalities and injuries. One of the pieces of information she found included a newspaper story that called the roadway the Highway of Horrors. Published in 2007, the story said that since the mid-1980s 145 people had been killed on the highway. The number has continued to rise in the years since then.

What she learned turned into her personal crusade to upgrade Highway 14 to four lane status.

In March of 2013, four months after Scott's death, then Rep. Patty Fritz contacted Hodgman.

She said that although she did not know Scott, she had heard about the crash from people in her district who did know him. After talking with Hodgman, Fritz asked her to come to St. Paul and testify about the dangers of the highway.

Although Hodgman said she was not enthusiastic about testifying, she "thought and prayed" about it and decided she should do it.

She made several trips to St. Paul in her push to get funding for the improvements and by late 2013 the project seemed to be on track as it was announced that the project would be funded through the newly passed Corridors of Commerce program. Initially the program was to fund three separate projects on Highway 14, the Owatonna to Dodge Center portion, North Mankato to Nicollet and the Nicollet bypass.

In the six years since then, portions of the projects have been completed but two 12-1/2 mile

segments remain unfinished. Finances have delayed the remaining segments of the highway several times, the most recent when wording of a bill passed in 2018 threatened to delay the Owatonna to Dodge Center portion even longer.

"I don't exactly understand what went wrong," Hodgman said.

She didn't get involved, she said, just because her husband had been killed. When she found out just how dangerous the roadway was, she said, it became something she was doing for everyone who lost someone in a crash, was injured or just travels on Highway 14.

"It's not just for my benefit," she said, "but for every family, every teenage kid who drives to Triton or goes to work in Owatonna. Before Scott died I never realized how bad it was."

"I understand if they don't have the money," she said, but at least the state could have taken some safety measures. On the other two-lane stretch, she said, the state has placed orange markers in the middle of the roadway. Even this would have helped, she said, because often people cross the center line on the local portion of the road.

She wonders, she said, if local officials and representatives lobbied hard enough for the road. There have been more deaths on Highway 14 than were caused by the 35W bridge collapse, she said. The bridge was back up and running 15 months after the collapse, she said.

She also wonders if the project has taken so long because it is in Greater Minnesota and not the metro area. Shut down Highway 14 for a day, she said, and see how that affects the entire state of Minnesota, she said.

So because of all the delays Hodgman remains apprehensive.

After the initial bill providing funding was passed last session, Hodgman said she never felt the champagne-popping euphoria that local and state officials felt.

That is why she will finally feel relief when the dirt is turned and construction finally begins.

## 4-H focuses on agronomy



Steele Talkin'  
MISSY KOCH

The Center of 4-H Youth Development and the University of Minnesota Extension are excited to announce a project focus in 4-H agronomy.

There are many new opportunities for youth to learn about various aspects of agronomy. We have created some great excitement and project challenges in agronomy. We are getting back to some of our roots while providing youth with a 21st Century experience in project learning.

The 4-H agronomy program here in Steele County will have five start-up kits available to help 4-H members learn about growing certain plants, soil types, root structure, and gardening. Project challenges will be Crop Science, Soil Your Undies, Root Viewer, Flower Garden and Herb Garden. Opportunities to be apart of the project will be available in April for youth in third grade to one year past high school. Youth will be able to receive materials, meet local resources, and support of their project. Each challenge kit will include all the supplies to start, maintain, and finish your project to bring to the Steele County Free Fair this coming August. Save the date for a Project Kick off Night on May 22, this date youth will pick up supplies and get help from local experts in the field to start their project.

In addition, other exciting agronomy experience are being planned for 2019. Watch for our July tour for youth to learn hands on how all the ingredients for a classic cheeseburger come from farm to table, at the 4-H Cheeseburger Day Camp. Soil and Sun Fun Cloverbud Day Camp for youth Kindergarten to second grade on June 27.

To learn more about this NEW 4-H Agronomy opportunity or about 4-H in Steele County, contact the Extension Office at 507-444-7685 and be watching for more information to sign up in April.

*Missy Koch is the 4-H program coordinator for Steele County. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various*

## Board learns class sizes continue to swell in BP

BY DENNIS MARSHALL  
SPORTS EDITOR

The Blooming Prairie School Board discussed how larger incoming class sizes will create new areas of needs during its monthly meeting March 19.

Blooming Prairie's current kindergarten class is split into four sections, but many of the other larger classes are in three sections.

"It looks like next year's kindergarten is going to be a four-section class," BP School Board Chair Rodney Krell said. "The numbers are that high. When you look forward even further, next year's preschool is also going to be a four-section class."

Blooming Prairie will likely have to add multiple new teaching positions in the upcoming years as the larger classes influx into the elementary and high school.

"The first-grade and up are in three sections," Krell said. "As the years go on here, we are probably going to be moving all of those up to four sections because of the class sizes coming up."

Voters in the district passed a operating referendum in 2017 that helps limit the number of children per classroom.

In other news, the board:

- Discussed student make-up days, pending legislation and staff make-up days. No additional make-up days were added to school year. "It depends on the weather, but right now, we're good," Krell said. "But who knows what the spring will bring and will have to make decision at that time."
- Approved Anthony Cornell as a special education teacher (pending MDE licensing approval) for the time period of Feb. 26 to May 31. Also approved Cornell as a junior high baseball coach. Approved Justin Kichne as a junior varsity baseball coach. Approved Jenna Volgarino as the science fair advisor. Approved Brynn Rhodes as the school's speech-language pathologist starting with the 2019-20 school year. Approved Tyler Krekling as a volunteer softball coach. Accepted the resignation of high school custodian John Shoden.
- Approved Midwest Sound DJ Entertainment to DJ the 2020 Blooming Prairie Prom.

## Learning through listening

*Speaker tells stories of refugees and builds connections*

BY CHRIS BALDWIN  
STAFF WRITER

When James A. Bowey was first starting out as a photojournalist, he found himself covering the war in Bosnia. The war lasted between 1992 and 1995.

He recalls a time when he and his driver were out scouting the destroyed ruins and came upon an abandoned school, which had been repurposed as a makeshift shelter for displaced citizens. There he met a woman who had a photograph with her.

The photograph was of her husband, and she told Bowey his story, explaining that he had gone missing and was killed and her sons had gone to look for him. "She had me take a photograph of her and the photo of her husband," Bowey recalled.

After talking with the woman, he turned to find a line of similar women who were all clutching photographs and mementos. "They told me, please tell our story so that we will not be forgotten," he said. "It became my mission and the story of my life. My job was to be the shepherd of that story."

During his "When Home Won't Let You Stay" presentation Wednesday night at the Owatonna Public Library, Bowey shared similar stories of displaced people: refugees. Bowey's presentation included minimalist, single image photos of each profile and a brief bit of information and dialogue from his discussion with his subjects.

There was the story of Mohamed from Mogadishu, Somalia, whose father would hug him everyday before school not knowing if his son would return. When a terrorist blew himself up at Mohamed's high school graduation, he stayed behind to console and help his friend who had lost his eyes.

"All those other students had parents just like Mohamed's, wondering if they would return home," Bowey said. This was just one of many stories he shared during the presentation.

Another story involved Yatha from Ka Soe village in Myanmar. Yatha was tortured and attacked by six people who took off his clothes and threw him in the river. His village thought he was dead, but he was



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

Photojournalist James A. Bowey speaks on the value of empathy and the power of stories during his "When Home Won't Let You Stay" presentation at the Owatonna Public Library. During the presentation, he shared photos and stories of refugees.

eventually found the next morning. He can still remember a girl watching him from the river bank, and witnessing the atrocity.

"All of us are like that girl, watching on the river bank," Bowey said. "We are all watching this go by and wondering what we are supposed to do."

While Bowey's presentation was light on politics, he expressed a need for partisan understanding. "If we can't learn to agree to disagree, then our democracy flounders," Bowey explained. "We like to say that the other side is given to tribalism, but the truth is that we all are."

"Tribalism destroys trust and objectivity and replaces them with competing loyalties," Bowey added. He feels that due to social media and a fractured political landscape on television, hate has become frictionless.

The stories he told help to illuminate the plight of refugees around the world and can be understood on a universal level. "There are 68,500,000 forcibly displaced people in the world today," Bowey explained. "There were 16,200,000 people displaced from their home in 2017. That is the most in recorded

history."

"Looking inward to see outward, we allow ourselves the room for reason," he said of the power of empathy in understanding. "We are wired for empathy, but we have to reclaim our empathetic imagination."

He also touched upon the importance of American values. "We cannot have freedom for all unless we understand that liberty has two sides," Bowey explained. "It's not just an individual right, but something you give to others."

Bowey used the story of 8-year old Tanitoluwa Adewumi, a refugee whose family was killed in Nigeria and who lives homeless with his father, who rents a car and works as an Uber driver. Adewumi placed first in his age group at the New York State Scholastic Championship chess tournament and has become a social media sensation.

According to Bowey, it is our country's values and sense of freedom, opportunity, and liberty which allowed young Adewumi to thrive and escape his past hardships. On the reverse he told the story of Behrouz Boochani, an Iranian refugee who won Australia's most coveted literature prize, but is currently detained in a holding camp in Papua New Guinea.

"We don't know where possibility will come from," Bowey said of the two stories. "If we deny others freedom and possibility, we are denying our own freedom and possibility."

There is much value in the stories that Bowey shares, and the lessons they communicate. "When we engage these stories," he said. "We are welcoming hope."

"The hope of each other is intimately connected to the hope of us all," Bowey concluded. "It is the great multiplier of human connection, and it is not a sacrifice."

Bowey's presentation, titled "When Home Won't Let You Stay," is currently touring around the state. On Wednesday, March 20 he gave the presentation at the Blooming Prairie Public Library and the Owatonna Public Library.

Those who wish to learn more about Bowey's project can visit [www.whenhomewontletyoustay.org](http://www.whenhomewontletyoustay.org).



# Cancer Corner

# SOLD OUT!



Cheri Krejci, treasurer of the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group, is hopeful to be a winner one of these beautiful purses to be given as prizes at Purse Bingo on April 6 at the BP Servicemen's Club. (Staff photo by Howard Lestrud)

**Blooming Prairie Cancer Group**

By **HOWARD LESTRUD**  
Staff Writer

Purse Bingo 2019: SOLD OUT!  
A first-time fundraising event last year for the Blooming Prairie Cancer Group is back with a vengeance. It's called Purse Bingo and it drew 233 bingo players last year.

This year's event to be held on Saturday, April 6 at the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club has been sold out since early February, says organizers Cheri Krejci, Lindsey French and Denise Krell.

Bingo starts at 1 p.m. with the doors opening at 11 a.m.

Last year's event raised over \$10,000. This year's event will attract 277 Bingo players. Ticket sales totaled 265 and two head tables of six each were sold at the Cancer Auction last September. The tables were bought by Sara Gillette (Prihoda) and Deb Fuerstenau of Winona.

"Isn't that crazy?" remarked Krejci about the popularity of the Bingo event.

Food will be available for a fee, featuring chicken salad croissants with chips or taco salad. A dessert will also be served, with a free will offering asked.

Loaded Bloody Mary's will be offered during the Bingo event.

Ten Bingo games will be played. Ten purses and six wristlets will be given away. Authentic Kate Spade, Michael Kors and Coach purses will be given to Bingo winners. Door prizes will also be given to lucky players.

Tickets will be sold at \$5 each for a chance to win a mystery prize which is valued at \$1,000. Five tickets can be bought at five for \$20. The mystery box will be full of goodies any woman would like, said Krejci. At least one designer bag and much more will be in the mystery box.

Three other bags will be given.

The final game will be a blackout and is dedicated to the late Philip Milton, an active BP Cancer Group member.

"This whole event is really exciting," said Krejci. "A ton of fun will be had," she guarantees.

Most of the Bingo players will be of the female gender but a couple of men, "brave souls" says Krejci will be there. Rudy Perez of Blooming Prairie, won a purse last year for his favorite lady.

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# AUCTION

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BLOOMING PRAIRIE

**MARCH 28**  
1 p.m. – Movies, BP Library

**MARCH 30**  
Education Foundation  
Auction, Pizza Cellar

**APRIL 2**  
10:30 a.m. – Storytime, BP Library

**APRIL 3**  
10:30 a.m. – Storytime, BP Library



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ELLEDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

**MARCH 28**  
8:20 a.m. – Preschool Screening, Ellendale United Methodist Church  
7:30 p.m. – Ellendale City Council Meeting, Community Building

**MARCH 29**  
10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building  
6 p.m. – ECFE Dino-Mite Dinosaur Day Class, Ellendale Preschool Room

**MARCH 30**  
9 a.m. – Babysitting Training, NR Media Center

**MARCH 31**  
9:30 a.m. – Zion and St.

Paul Youth Group Benefit Pancake & French Toast Breakfast, Zion Lutheran

**APRIL 1**  
10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building  
4:30 p.m. – Kindergarten Orientation, Ellendale Elementary  
6 p.m. – Ellendale Fire Department Meeting, Community Building

**APRIL 2**  
6:15 p.m. – Tae Kwon Do, Ellendale Gym North

**APRIL 3**  
10 a.m. – SEMCAC, Community Building

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

**MARCH 28**  
2 p.m. – Movies at the Library, Owatonna Library  
6 p.m. – Garrison Keillor Live Performance, History Center  
6:30 p.m. – Family Story Time, Owatonna Library

**MARCH 30**  
9 a.m. – Gopher State Archeological Annual Artifact Show, History Center  
10 a.m. – Holistic Healing and Psychic Expo, Holiday Inn  
10 a.m. – Ladies Day Out, Cabela's

**MARCH 31**

2 p.m. – Salam Murtada and Lindsay Schlemmer Concert, Arts Center

**APRIL 1**  
1 p.m. – Senior Place Inc. Board Meeting, West Hills Commons

**APRIL 2**  
9:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. – Tale Time, Owatonna Library  
Noon – West Hills Commission Meeting, City Admin Building  
7 p.m. – Owatonna City Council Meeting, City Admin Building

Kindergarten Open House set for NRHEG

Kindergarten/Bridges Orientation/Open House for NRHEG Elementary School is scheduled for Monday, April 1, at 4:30 p.m. The orientation will be held in the NRHEG Elementary School music room in Ellendale and will last approximately one hour. Please bring your child with you to the

orientation. Both our Bridges (a kindergarten alternative program) and Kindergarten programs will be highlighted at this orientation. If you have questions, please contact Jean Greenwood, administrative assistant, in the school office at 507-684-3181.

Officials review blizzard response

**By DENNIS MARSHALL**  
STAFF WRITER

City and county officials gathered at the Owatonna Fire Station on March 20 to discuss the effects of the region's recent winter storms, especially the blizzard in February. Officials discussed rescue and shelter operations and how the current protocols can be improved.

Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele recounted his experiences during the storm and the issues his office faced. Thiele told a story of how it took more than nine hours to rescue one individual because they kept running into more and more stranded motorists when they were trying to get to him. Thiele said eventually they took two county plows and an Owatonna school bus and worked their way down U.S. Highway 218 rescuing people. It was a mission that took more than 10 hours. Thiele said conditions became hazardous that they had to actually turn volunteers away.

Discounted tickets available for fair concerts

With March Madness sweeping into the Steele County Free Fair, discounted tickets are available for a couple upcoming concerts. Throughout March, the fair is offering special rate tickets for upcoming concerts at the fair in August. Tickets went on sale on March 1 for the Chris Kroeze and Chris Hawkey concerts. Kroeze is a national recording artist from NBC's The Voice, and Hawkey is from KFAN. Fairgoers may purchase tickets on-line at www.SCFF.org throughout March. The fair is offering discounted tickets for both performances. Fair officials say the special rates will only be offered once. Hawkey will perform Thursday, Aug. 15 while Kroeze will take the stage on Friday, Aug. 16.

Dairy Banquet set for April 6

The Steele County Dairy Association's annual Dairy Banquet will be Saturday, April 6 at the VFW Club in Owatonna. Social hour will be begin at 6:30 p.m. with the dinner following at 7:15 p.m. Tickets are available for \$12 and can be reserved at the door by calling Mary Schroeder at 507-213-9394. Children 5 years and younger are free. During the banquet, the dairy ambassadors will be recognized.

AAUW to meet in Owatonna

The American Association of University Women of Owatonna invitea interested guests and potential members to attend its meeting on April 8 at 7 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church Lounge. What is the difference between an immigrant and a refugee? Who qualifies for asylum? Who can enter the US with a travel visa? Why would one become naturalized as opposed to becoming a citizen? These questions, along with other immigration issues, will be addressed by our speaker, immigration attorney Naomi Perman.

Ellendale focuses on Feeding the Community

March Food Share Month is coming to the Ellendale area. On Friday, March 29, the Ellendale Area Food Shelf is hosting a Feeding the Community event at the United Methodist Church in Ellendale. The event will go from 5-7 p.m. The food shelf event will be highlighted with the raffle of a 43-inch LED HD TV and an Ozark Trail Cooler filled with 20 pounds of ground beef. There will also be several other silent auction items. Tickets are on sale at Lerberg's Foods in Ellendale and with food shelf volunteers.

Free workshop to learn about managing falls

Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute – Owatonna is offering a free program designed to help older adults manage falls and increase activity levels. “A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls” includes eight, two-hour sessions for a small group led by a trained facilitator. This class is especially helpful for those concerned about falls, interested in improving balance, flexibility and strength, who've fallen in the past or who've restricted activities because of falling concerns. Participants will learn to view falls as controllable, set goals for increasing activity, make changes to reduce fall risks at home and exercise to increase strength and balance. Classes are held Tuesday and Thursday each week for four weeks, beginning April 2 from 10 a.m. to noon at Owatonna Hospital, 2250 NW 26th St., Owatonna, in Vision Conference Room 1489. Instructors include Heather Lenz, physical therapist, Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute – Owatonna and Sarah Shepherd, program director, Juniper.

History Center hosts the largest artifact show in the region



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Copper artifacts from the region represent some of the oldest man-made metalwork in the world.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Pot recovered at the Bryon Site near Red Wing. It is approximately 1,000 years old.

The Steele County Historical Society will host the annual Gopher State Archeological Society show on Saturday, March 30. This is the fifth year for the show at the SCHS and it has grown to become the largest artifact show in the region. This event is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and offers a fantastic opportunity to see many of the region's largest and most complete private collections. Many collections will feature personally found artifacts from Steele County and around the state. There will displays covering all time periods and a wide range of items from Arrowheads to Native American Beadwork and Fur Trade artifacts. This year one of the largest private copper artifact collections will be on display. The abundance of raw copper in northern Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota was harvested by natives over thousands of years and fashioned into a wide variety of finely crafted items. These artifacts are some of the oldest metalwork in the world dating back over 8,000 years. There will be copper knives, fish hooks, harpoons, spear-points, beads, bracelets and more. Our local archeological record spans 11,000 thousand years and items dating back to the Paleo time will be on display at the show. Collectors from around the region will feature items such as stone

arrowheads and knives, stone axes, copper tools and bone tools. More recent historical items such as fur trade artifacts, beadwork, baskets and Native American art will also be on display. “Minnesota has always been a cross-roads of sorts with our lakes, rivers and resources drawing people to the region for over 10,000 years” says Tom Amble of the Gopher State Archeological Society. “We have sites where one day we might find a 5,000-year-old stone point and the next day we might find a 200-year-old trade bead.” The intent of the show is to encourage communication and education among collectors, professional archeologists and the public. “We want to raise awareness among collectors so they know how important it is to share these finds.” Amble explains that other topics such as responsible and legal collecting and identifying fakes are discussed at every show. Anyone interested in artifacts or local history will find the event to be a great way to spend an hour or the whole day. There will be items for sale or trade. If there are items you have found or that have been passed along in your family, bring them to the show. There will be a number of knowledgeable people on hand to give you some opinions as to what you have – is it 10,000 years old, 300 years old or possibly a modern replica?

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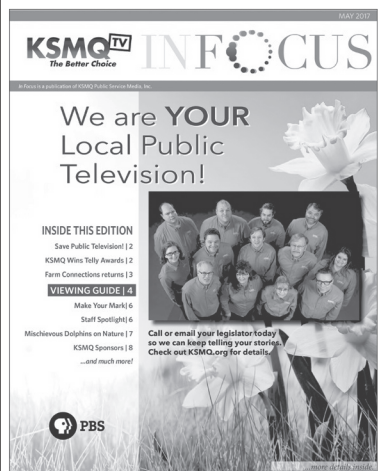
**Panther of the Week**  
**Mikayla Lewer**



This week's Panther of the Week is Mikayla Lewer. She is the daughter of Dan and Amber Lewer and they reside in New Richland. She is in Mrs. Boran's first grade class. Mikayla displays Panther Pride daily in our school and classroom. She is kind and respectful to everyone. Mikayla is a great example of someone who lives by the Golden Rule and treats others the way she likes to be treated. She always has a smile on her face and is willing to help wherever needed. Keep up the great attitude Mikayla! Mikayla loves animals, playing games, reading and taking horse riding lessons!

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Sierra Robinson, mother  
and Noelani Robinson, age 2

Sweet  
Angel  
Noelani Robinson

First Lutheran Church of Blooming Prairie and the city's police chief are requesting the community's support for a toddler brutally murdered last week and dumped outside of Blooming Prairie. Pastor Heidi Heimgartner and Chief Greg Skillestad are inviting the community to take part in a group memorial. Sympathy cards,

notes, drawings and very small tokens will be accepted and forwarded to the family in Milwaukee. Cards and items may be dropped off at the City Administrator's Office in Blooming Prairie or First Lutheran Church at 434 First St. SW in Blooming Prairie. Collection will continue for one week ending on March 27. All items will

be mailed together on March 28. "Thank you to our law enforcement and the community for your prayers, thoughts and gestures of sympathy for the Robinson family and friends," Rev. Heimgartner said.

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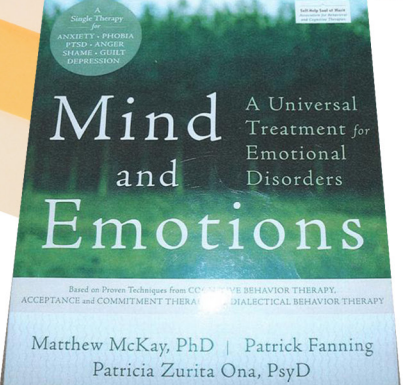
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# MURDER ON THE PRAIRIE

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2019



One year ago the unthinkable took place for the first time in nearly 30 years just on the outskirts of Blooming Prairie. In a dramatic sequence of events, a wife allegedly shot her husband to death in their rural Blooming Prairie home before she took off, generating a nationwide manhunt for her arrest.

Murder is something that seems to seldom happen in this predominantly agricultural community. The last time murder happened in or around Blooming Prairie was in 1989 when Harvey Cole shot and killed his wife, Margaret, near the downtown area.

Early settlers to what is now Blooming Prairie area found a vast prairie covered with tall grass, which was perfect for growing wheat. The railroad, businesses,

schools and a sense of community soon followed.

But as residents were painfully made aware last March, the prairie is not immune to the ills of society and brings with it hardships for families and others.

Murder on the Prairie is more than an isolated case of a family member killing another family member. The Riess tragedy has exposed several key issues that likely played a role in the violent outcome, including gambling addiction, domestic violence, financial difficulties and unstable mental health. In the Riess case, it appears to have been the key ingredients to a perfect storm of Murder on the Prairie.

Over the past several months, members of the Steele County Times and Dodge County Independent have teamed up to tackle the

tough life issues that have become the central focus of the investigation.

Our goal is not to dwell on the specifics of the murder investigation, but rather to expose some of the root causes that may have led to the tragic outcome. Our hope is to help the greater community learn from this tragedy and provide people with resources to help them through difficult times. After all, gambling, domestic abuse, financial woes and mental health affect many people even in ways they may not recognize.

While we understand it's impossible to stamp out the social ills people face, we want folks to know that they are not alone in life's difficulties and together we can build a healthier community with the help of therapists and other professionals.

STORIES BY HOWARD LESTRUD, ALEX MALM, CHRIS BALDWIN,  
DENNIS MARSHALL AND LEMAR NELSON



# Mental illness does not always end in violence

“Sometimes, you need the brain to **slow down.**”

Jaclyn Schlichter  
Family Therapist

*EDITOR’S NOTE: The criminal cases involving Lois Riess have had a profound effect on the nation and especially Blooming Prairie. The Times takes a look at mental illness and its connection with violence.*

By **HOWARD LESTRUD**  
STAFF WRITER

What is mental health?  
It is something we all have and possess in different ranges, says Jaclyn Schlichter, licensed marriage and family therapist for the Fernbrook Family Center of Owatonna.



JACLYN SCHLICHTER

After serving eight years in the United States Army, Schlichter, now a Blooming Prairie resident, said she wanted to help people. “I wanted to learn more about people and wanted to understand people,” she says. She graduated from Grand Meadow High School.

Schlichter molded her career as a family therapist by attending Minnesota State University in Mankato and earning a Bachelor of Science degree. She obtained a master’s degree from Argosy University in Eagan.

She first worked at the Gerard Academy of Austin, a residential treatment center for children and adolescents. She then worked at the Fountain Centers in Albert Lea, focusing on substance abuse.

Searching on the Internet for an answer to the question about mental illness, one finds a response from Yahoo Answers.

“Mental health is a sense of well being, confidence and self-esteem. It enables us to fully enjoy and appreciate other people, day-to-day life and our environment.

“When we are mentally healthy we can: 1) form positive relationships; 2) use our abilities to reach our potential; 3) deal with life’s challenges.”

Schlichter says when someone mentions mental illness, others may think there is something wrong with that someone.

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being, says Schlichter.

Before someone can deal with the Fernbrook center, people must have a mental health diagnosis.

The Fernbrook center is a mental health agency working with kids and adults. Services are offered in the home, community and schools.

Mental illness comes in a wide spectrum including anxiety and sadness. These conditions are good when they come in small quantities.

Schlichter says there are many different variables that could cause a person with mental illness to act violently. It could



be the result of witnessing some sort of trauma and this could lead to aggressive or violent behavior, she said.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is a quality to understand when dealing with mental illness, Schlichter explained. EQ (Emotional quotient) is a measure of a person’s adequacy in such areas as self-awareness, empathy and dealing sensitively with other people.

Types of therapy will be referred based on the systems in which people are involved. For example, there’s family, social, cultural, political and school categories.

Therapy will help individuals to deal with their emotions, Schlichter commented. This can be done in the home, emphasizing skilled-based services. It involves developing different coping skills and working to improve inter-relationships and socializing components.

Empathy is a big part of EQ and it will be understood further by more education and therapy, Schlichter said.

“Sometimes, you need the brain to slow down. This will allow you to learn skills in transition and to find time to practice them.”

Many kinds of therapy are available for a troubled individual. One of the more common ones, Schlichter described, is TFCBT (Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy). This is specifically aimed at people under 18.

Another form of therapy is called dialectic. This involves discussion and reasoning by dialogue.

Freudian therapy, which is evidence based, is also commonly used in therapy.

Other therapies may focus on eye movement, desensitization and reprocessing. “The brain sometimes has to be retrained from a distressing memory,” Schlichter said.

Traditional talk therapy can also be helpful, Schlichter believes.

Therapy can be aimed at the individual and also involve the family. It can be directed to siblings and to couples. Modes of therapy include finding solutions, reframing and re-authoring specialized training.

Schlichter mentioned mindfulness as another process to use. It is the psychological process of bringing one’s attention to experiences occurring in the present moment, which can be developed through the practice of meditation and other training.

Understanding one’s emotions is most important, Schlichter continued. She said there is a stigma often attached to mental illness. When learning of someone’s mental illness diagnosis, people often “think there is something wrong with you.”

Challenge people to find a normal. People can change and grow their EQ, Schlichter said.

Schlichter recommends using awareness and empathy through EQ.

“There will be good days and bad days; try to hold on to nuggets that are good.

“Practice and make feelings part of your every day language,” she said. “When you hurt, what do you need? Something hurt you to cause anxiety and depression. We all have a mental health component to nurture and take care of.”

Schlichter also recommends partnering with other resources in the community, including doctors, psychologists and schools for young people.

“Keep yourself safe and this will allow you to learn more skills because your brain is slowed down.”

Therapists see a wide variety of patients, from youngsters 0-5 to 70-year-old grandparents.

People are talking more openly about mental illness and this is healthy, believes Schlichter.

Schlichter said people “were scared and shocked” to follow the circumstances surrounding Blooming Prairie resident Lois Riess. “Many people said it couldn’t happen here and that’s the invincibility factor,” she said.

Her actions caused many to analyze circumstances that may cause strange behaviors.

Therapists are there to help people become resilient. “I can lead you only so far,” Schlichter concluded.

“I wanted to **learn more about people** and wanted to understand people.”

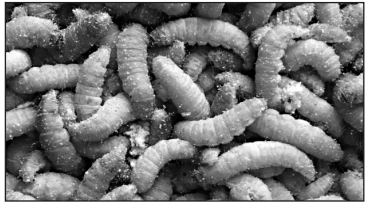
Jaclyn Schlichter  
Family Therapist

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- C8 HELP DIRECTORY/ MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS



SEPT. 17, 1982

David and Lois Riess were married in San Diego, Calif. They later have three children: Bill, Bria and Braden. The children produce five grandchildren.

2005

David and Lois Riess move to the area and begin Prairie Wax Worm Farms.

2015

Court records show several times where Lois Riess spent large amounts of money at Diamond Jo’s Casino in Northwood, Iowa. On one occasion in April 2015, Riess spent \$3,087 at Diamond Jo’s.

MARCH, 2017

A judge awarded Alternative Resolutions, Inc. of Owatonna a \$100,533 judgment against Lois Riess. Just before the judgment, Riess’ guardianship of her older sister had been suspended.



# Discussed in a whisper

Social worker urges people to speak up about mental illness

“It takes a lot of hard work  
to defeat the disease.”

Stephanie Miller  
Social Worker



(EDITOR’S NOTE: The criminal cases involving Lois Riess have had a profound effect on the nation and especially Blooming Prairie and Steele and Dodge counties. The Times takes a look at mental illness and its connection with violence.)

By HOWARD LESTRUD  
STAFF WRITER

It has been said that Stephanie Miller, a Mayo Clinic social worker, has an attitude. That attitude is one of being a fighter in her personal battle with cancer and in her professional life as a social worker dealing with patients who have a mental illness. It has been three years since Miller, a Blooming Prairie resident, began her treatment for breast cancer. She is now considered a cancer survivor, proclaiming that her cancer is “totally gone.”



STEPHANIE MILLER

Now, Miller is worrying less about her personal health and devotes her professional skills toward helping people with their mental health issues. She recently taught classes about mental health, directed toward law enforcement officers and how they might deal with it during their hours as a police officer. Her husband Matt is a licensed police officer. The Millers have two children, Claudia and Landon.

Miller’s work has her performing the role of a social worker for primary care. She deals with triage and with identifying needs for cognitive behavioral therapy.

Her education spanned under graduate studies at Winona State University and graduate work at St. Thomas University and St. Catherine’s College for her M.A. in social work.

More than 10 years of her professional skills have been focused on mental health. She has followed in her mother’s footsteps as a social worker, working at the Prairie Care Center in Blooming Prairie.

During her early studies, Miller said she wouldn’t “touch it” with a 10-foot pole, coining an old cliché.

School shootings and bullying by youths have pushed the need to create an awareness about issues surrounding mental illness, said Miller. She said “so many people” have mental health issues and are unsure of how to deal with them.

Many resources are available through treatment, Miller remarked. Medications and therapy are two ways to tackle mental illness, she said. In the past, there was no effective treatment and people with mental illness “slid through the cracks,” she believes.

Some of the mental illness cases may be linked to children being abused by their parents.

In basic terms, the history of abuse may be traced to an inability to control emotions or to express them, said Miller.

Most people don’t want to talk about having mental illness, says Miller. “It’s usually a condition that is whispered,” she said. It is also connected to shame, she said, adding more education about this disease is paramount.

A stigma is definitely associated with mental illness, Miller feels. “It’s gotten better but many people refer to mental illness as a condition where someone is going crazy.”

Miller said that many people refuse to talk about having mental illness. “They need to reach out,” she insists.

Using the many resources available will help people conquer this taunting condition, Miller continues.

“It takes a lot of hard work to defeat the disease,” said Miller. “When people take control of their lives, they feel good about themselves,” she added.

Referring to the recent headlines surrounding Lois Riess of Blooming Prairie, Miller said she and others were shocked. “How does this happen to someone we know so well,” Miller asks rhetorically. These events have raised “lots of questions,” says Miller.

She urges everyone to carefully manage their mental health. She says mental health patients should stay in contact with their primary physician and they should also utilize the therapy and medications available.

Miller says the rewards for dealing with one’s mental illness are many. “It’s not easy but there is a sense of accomplishment when you take control and feel empowered,” she concluded.



**MARCH 21, 2018**  
Authorities believe David Riess was murdered in his home. (The date was not previously disclosed until March 27.)



**MARCH 23, 2018**  
Police discover the body of David Riess at Prairie Wax Worm Farms at 75859 U.S. Highway 218 just southeast of Blooming Prairie. Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension assists Dodge County Sheriff’s Office with investigation.



**MARCH 26, 2018**  
Autopsy by Southern Minnesota Regional Medical Examiner’s Office reveals David Riess was shot multiple times.

**MARCH 27, 2018**  
A nationwide warrant was issued by Dodge County District Court for Lois Riess for felony theft. She is accused of cleaning out her dead husband’s business and personal banking accounts.



“We care about finding a fix for those who are suffering from mental illness.”

Sgt. Gary Okins  
Sheriff's Investigator

# A crucial path

Law enforcement provides a key link to mental health treatment



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

The Steele County Sheriff's Office has its officers professionally trained in crisis intervention. From left are Sgt. Gary Okins, Sheriff Lon Thiele and Investigator Mary Ulrich.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The criminal cases involving Lois Riess have had a profound effect on the nation and especially Blooming Prairie, Steele County and Dodge County. The Times takes a look at mental illness and its connection with violence.)

By HOWARD LESTRUD  
STAFF WRITER

There are many spectrums of mental health that are dealt with by mental health professionals and by law enforcement authorities.

“Any time we go to a mental health call, our officers are trained how to deal with various crisis situations,” says Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele.

Thiele and two of his officers sat down with The Times recently to talk about mental health and how mental health cases can affect their department.

Sgt. Gary Okins and Investigator Mary Ulrich joined Sheriff Thiele to openly discuss mental health conditions that may affect our daily lives.

Law enforcement professionals nationwide have been watching the developments in the Lois Riess case. She is a suspect in the murder of her husband at their Blooming Prairie area residence. Riess has also been charged with first-degree murder in connection with the murder of Pamela Hutchinson in Fort Myers, Fla.

Acts of murder sometimes involve taking something from someone who could not have had these possessions previously.

In the Riess case, it involved alleged theft of Pamela Hutchinson's car and identity of credit cards and other personal information.

Investigator Ulrich emphasized that a high percentage of mental health cases do not always pertain to serious crimes.

Mental health conditions are often related to alcohol and drug addictions, claims Sgt. Okins.

“Addictions cause altered states of mind,” interjected Ulrich.

Okins said he had a suspect confess to a crime and he didn't care who he affected, family, friends or strangers.

“We care about finding a fix for those who are suffering from mental illness,” said Okins.

People often try to see what they can get away with, says Okins.

“It's often a cry for help,” said Ulrich,

describing instances where law enforcement is summoned.

“Some of our calls involve people having issues but nothing that shows they will harm someone else or harm themselves,” Okins said.

Thiele said his officers face a challenge but with special crisis training under their belts, they can respond effectively.

“The way the world has changed has had an effect on how we are involved,” revealed Okins.

“Those who commit crimes are more mobile these days,” he explained.

Mental therapy is available for cases taken by the sheriff's office. Repetitive mental therapy is limited, the officers informed. Fountain Center of Albert Lea was recently closed.

Other places for help are located, sometimes three hours away. The Human Resource Center and the Crisis Resource Center are two agencies that can be utilized. The Fernbrook Family Center is also used.

Crisis intervention training is mandated by the POST (Peace Officers Standards and Training), points out Sheriff Thiele. “Everyone does their job differently” but the end result is to help everyone involved, he said.

“We are above compliance with the mandate and have the best trainers and instructors available. The Crisis Intervention Team is another tool on their tool belts, he says.

Online help is also available, says Okins, as well as help from local crisis teams including one from the sheriff's office.

Sheriff Thiele said his office always tries to get the trust and respect of people in need. “We want the people to be heard,” he says.

Mental health is talked about more now than ever, says Ulrich.

More help is out there because of the availability of the sheriff's crisis teams and of other crisis team professionals.

Thiele, Okins and Ulrich said that the Lois Riess case has not affected their office. Two men were convicted on murder charges in Owatonna last summer.

These types of cases are getting to be too common, said Okins.

Mental illness has no boundaries, Thiele, Okins and Ulrich agreed. “It affects all ages and there is not one cutout resembling mental health,” remarked Ulrich.

“Addictions cause altered states of mind.”

Mary Ulrich  
Sheriff's Investigator



APRIL 5, 2018

Surveillance footage shows Lois Riess and Pamela Hutchinson talking at the Smokin' Oyster Brewery in Fort Myers Beach, Florida.



APRIL 9, 2018

Pamela Hutchinson of Bradenton, Fla., found murdered in Fort Myers Beach. She suffered fatal gunshot wounds.



APRIL 13, 2018

Lee County Florida authorities announce murder, grand theft auto and grand theft of criminal use of personal identification charges have been issued for Lois Riess in connection with Hutchinson's death.



APRIL 19, 2018

Lois Riess captured by U.S. Marshals in South Padre Island, Texas.



# DUAL DIAGNOSIS

More than just substance abuse issues

BY ALEX MALM  
NEWS EDITOR

Mental health is a topic that has rightfully gotten more and more attention over the past few years.

The reality is many people suffer from some type of mental health illness, in some shape or form.

One area of mental health, which is very difficult for both mental health care providers, and for those struggling, is when someone has a dual diagnosis.

Dan Ryan, a therapist for Rochester Family Services, explained that a dual diagnosis is when someone is diagnosed with two or more mental health problems, or suffers from a mental health problem along with a substance abuse issue.

One big issue that Ryan pointed to is when people with a mental health issue then begin to develop a substance abuse issue.

He noted that someone may start off with just having one mental health problem, and then abuse a substance as a coping mechanism.

“Often times it is a way people cope with things,” Ryan explained.

This is one way that leads someone to having a dual diagnosis.

“Someone can start with just one mental health diagnosis and then develop a substance issue,” Ryan stated.

Ryan discussed that one of the most important things for people to do, especially those who are going through tough times, have a mental health problem, or both, is to find health coping mechanisms to replace negative substance abuse issues.

For Ryan, one of the biggest changes he has seen since he first started as a mental health professional is the fact that mental health issues are becoming a more acceptable part of society.

One of the silver linings that Ryan



points to is the fact that mental health is being talked about at a earlier age, including in schools.

Because the earlier a mental health problem can be identified and intervened for a person, the better the chance, that they have.

“With the no talk rule going away, it

helps students get the resources they need,” Ryan explained.

Ryan discussed that through his more than 30 years of experience, typically people wait eight to 10 years before doing anything about seeking help for a mental health problem.

While it is good that people eventually seek help, the reality is that the earlier someone is able to get the treatment and help they need, the better the chances are that additional problems won't develop, Ryan explained.

Aside from schools breaking the silence when it comes to kids and mental health problems, another good thing that Ryan identified is the fact that more and more famous people are breaking the silence about problems that they have dealt with in the past or are currently dealing with.

“The more people that come out, the less stigma and more accepting it will become,” Ryan explained.

While the stigma surrounding mental health issues is becoming less and less each year, Ryan feels that more people will likely seek help quicker.

One misconception, Ryan indicated, is the fact that sometimes people may think that

having a mental health problem is a permanent thing.

He explained that often times mental health problems are adjustment reactions, which means that someone may be suffering from a problem like depression, anxiety etc., due to a tragic event but that doesn't mean that they will be suffering from it the rest of their lives necessarily.

At the end of the day, the most important thing for people to remember is that no one is immune from having a mental health problem, and as history and modern day has shown, anyone can suffer from something.

“No one is immune from it,” Ryan said.

# FIRST AID FOR THE BRAIN

MHFA courses help educate local community on mental health

BY ALEX MALM  
NEWS EDITOR

Across the country each year, thousands of people are trained in First Aid and CPR.

The goal of the courses is for people in the community to be trained on what to do if someone has a medical emergency.

For many, this is just a routine part in order to get a job or to continue working in a current job.

When it comes to mental health though, there aren't many trainings which are offered.

That's beginning to change, however.

In Southeast Minnesota, many mental health organizations like Rochester Family Services, offer trainings, which train people in the community in what is known as Mental Health First Aid.

Like a First Aid or CPR course, mental health first aid is an eight-hour course, but unlike CPR or first aid, a person is learning about what to do in a mental health crisis or how to help someone with a mental health issue.

And as research has shown, these courses work to help empower people when they help others with a mental health crisis or problem.

“The evidence behind the program demonstrates that it does build mental health literacy, helping the public identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness,” said Alicia Bartel, the Clinical Academy Director, for Rochester Family Services.

As someone who trains community members on MHFA for youth, some of the main things that people see as a good thing is the fact that they are becoming educated on the varied signs and symptoms of mental health issues.

One of the biggest positives about the training Bartel noted is that it teaches people in the community how to be proactive when it comes recognizing signs and symptoms of mental health.

“Mental health is so prevalent today, and MHFA is much like CPR. People need to know how to notice signs and symptoms, how to reach out using a 5-step action

plan, and get a person connected to appropriate help,” Bartel said.

Another big part of the trainings is that there is a lot of role playing, and different scenarios so people in the community can get confidence and more empowerment when they are helping those in need.

“I think that people feel confident that they can make a difference,” Bartel explained.

Just like CPR and first aid trainings, one of the goals for places like Rochester Family Services and other mental health entities is to teach people in the community how to be a trainer for the MHFA, so more classes can be offered.

“Our vision is to get more and more people trained so we can have more courses,” Bartel said.

One of the biggest positives about the training that Bartel indicated is that it teaches people in the community how to be proactive when it comes recognizing signs and symptoms of mental health.

For Bartel, she feels that it's important that one day, people are required to become

mental health first aid certified, depending on one's job, just like requirements to be First Aid or CPR certified.

“It's a societal shift,” Bartel said, “some jobs require people to be CPR and First Aid trained, my hope is one day that depending on your job you would need a mental health first aid training as well,” she added.

One day, the goal for many in the mental health profession is for MHFA to become as common as CPR or First Aid.

“Our vision is for MHFA to become as common as CPR and First Aid training. That means having regular courses offered in every community across the US,” Bartel said.

Overall, Bartel hopes no matter what people become more educated about mental health and the issues that people face since it's such a big part of society.

To sign up for a course go to <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/take-a-course/> and click on find a course. You can search your zip code and surrounding areas.

### Reasons to Become a Mental Health First Aider

**Be prepared**  
When a mental health crisis happens, know what to do

**You can help**  
People with mental illnesses often suffer alone

Mental illnesses are common  
1 in 5 adults in any given year

**You care**  
Be there for a friend, family member, or colleague

**APRIL 20, 2018**

Authorities execute search warrant on Lois Riess' motel room and find two hand guns.

**APRIL 21, 2018**

Texas judge orders Lois Riess held without bond and to be extradited to Florida.

**APRIL 23, 2018**

Lois Riess signs waiver of extradition to Florida.

**MAY 3, 2018**

One of the sons of accused killer Lois Riess took to the national airwaves on "Inside Edition" to say his mother is a "good lady" with "demons."



# Overcoming domestic violence

## Steele County offers many solutions

By **CHRIS BALDWIN**  
STAFF WRITER

Domestic violence awareness has grown in recent years, although many might still not be aware of the high rate of such cases within the United States legal system.

In 2017, there were 115 criminal cases involving domestic abuse/assault related offenses in Steele County, slightly lower than the 128 cases in 2016. While many in Steele County view the community as an idyllic one, issues such as domestic violence still plague it.

“I think it is more prevalent than people imagine,” said Steele County Judge Karen Duncan, who has done educational work on the subject as court outreach. “In part because we don’t want to imagine it, and in part because it’s a hidden problem,” she explained of the tendency for domestic violence to go unnoticed. “People don’t always want to share what goes on inside their four walls,” she said.

Judge Duncan feels that it’s important for people who may be affected by domestic violence to be able to share and discuss the problem openly. “We need to be able to have open conversations where we’re not judging either the perpetrator or the victim.”

According to Duncan, this type of open dialogue can lead to better relationships and healthy change for both parties involved. But domestic violence doesn’t just affect those directly involved, but others in the household as well. “There are certainly situations where people have developed post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, or depression as a result, whether an adult or child.”

“Children who have witnessed domestic violence can have a higher potential for doing abuse or crimes,” she explained. “Kids use the tools they’ve learned.” According to Duncan, an important step in changing a child’s behavior after they’ve been affected by domestic violence involves building resilience, so that they can deal with problems in a healthier manner.

Through her time as a judge, she has seen many cases and understands the value that such change can bring. “We need to teach children when they’re young how to find other ways to deal with their problems,” Duncan offered. “If we teach them these tools, the safer they will be, and the safer our community will be.”

Samantha Ahrens, a probation officer for Steele County Community Corrections, agrees that the prevalence of domestic violence within Steele County is likely higher than people would imagine. “Given the nature of the crime, it is often under-reported, and people outside of the relationship tend not to get involved because it has long been viewed as a personal or family problem,” she said.

Ahrens echoes Judge Duncan’s sentiments when it comes to the detrimental impact abusive relationships can have on children. “Children learn from their parents what a healthy relationship looks like, and if they are regularly seeing dad beat up, yell at, and disrespect mom, they will likely emulate what they see and hear.”

“Our experiences play a large role in creating the people we become and our attitudes and beliefs toward life,” Ahrens explained. “Boys who witness domestic abuse are twice as likely to abuse their own future partners and children.”

The Crisis Resource Center of Steele County reports that one in four women and one in nine men are victims of domestic violence in their lifetime. Ahrens explained that, “there are many forms of domestic abuse that expand beyond physical violence that people may not be aware constitute domestic abuse.”

“Things such as sexual abuse, reproductive coercion, financial abuse, control over daily activities, stalking, isolation, using children as leverage, threats of violence, name calling, and belittling are just some of the other forms of domestic abuse,” she explained.

Outside of her work as a probation

officer, Ahrens also helps the Steele County Domestic Violence Coordinated Community Response Team. Which, according to her, “is working to bring the Steele County criminal justice system in line with the Blueprint for Safety in our system’s response to domestic violence related cases.”

“The Blueprint for Safety is grounded in how the victim of domestic violence experiences the criminal justice system,” she said of their efforts. “We are there to determine how the system can more effectively aid and protect victims of this type of violence. The goal of our team is to assure offender accountability and rehabilitation, as well as the safety of the victim and the public.”

Although Ahrens thinks that education and awareness can go a long way in helping the victims of domestic violence and those in the community, it does not do much for those who perpetrate domestic violence.

until a perpetrator of domestic violence fully realizes the effect of their behavior, and in Ahrens’ words, “until they can step into their victim’s shoes,” they will not be able to effectively change their violent behavior. “Someone may have to go through domestic violence programming several times before something clicks with them that change is needed.”

“When a perpetrator of domestic abuse can see what they are doing to their victim and genuinely care about the damage they are doing, take responsibility for their actions, accept help, and make changes, it is rewarding and hopefully the cycle of violence can be stopped with them,” Ahrens said.

She also sees a greater reward in the victim’s life improving. “What is truly rewarding is watching the self-efficacy, self-worth, and self-esteem return to a victim who has been beaten, battered, and/or

emails without permission, extreme jealousy, constant belittling or putdowns, isolation from family or friends, falsely accusing, constant mood swings toward the victim, physically inflicting pain or injury, possessiveness, control of daily activities, dictating who they can and cannot talk to, repeatedly pressuring the victim to have sex, threats, and controlling all of the money.”

Domestic violence has been a constant problem within communities, and with rates staying relatively consistent, it is obvious that this problem is not an easy one to remedy. “I’ve been in practice in criminal court since 1987,” Duncan said.

“When I started I thought that as much as we were doing on domestic violence this problem would be solved in 20 years,” she explained. “But it hasn’t been solved, and so I feel that we need to continue to do more educating.”

So where can we turn if our lives are affected by domestic violence, or if we know someone whose life is affected?

“The Crisis Resource Center of Steele County is a great resource for victims of domestic abuse,” Ahrens said. “They offer a 24-hour crisis line and several programs for victims and the children of victims. They offer advocacy to support victims, legal assistance for help filling out protective order applications, and safety planning among other services.”

“For perpetrators of domestic abuse, the South Central Human Relations Center (SCHRC) offers the Men’s Domestic Violence Group, which provides treatment and accountability for the offender.” Ahrens also explained that, “if someone is convicted of a domestic assault crime in Minnesota, state statute requires the completion of such programming.”

“The SCHRC also offers therapy specific to the trauma of domestic violence for victims,” she added. “Fernbrook Family Services is a common resource for children who have experienced the trauma of domestic violence as well.”

The Crisis Resource Center has been in existence in Steele County since 1990, and in those years, it has helped many victims of abuse overcome their issues and return to normalcy. “We present them different options and then help them pick which ones are best for them,” the Resource Center’s domestic violence program coordinator Kali Shea explained.

“I’m fortunate that I get to see people in a vulnerable state and work next to them and see them come out of it with a better life,” Shea said of her work. “They’re really strong people.”

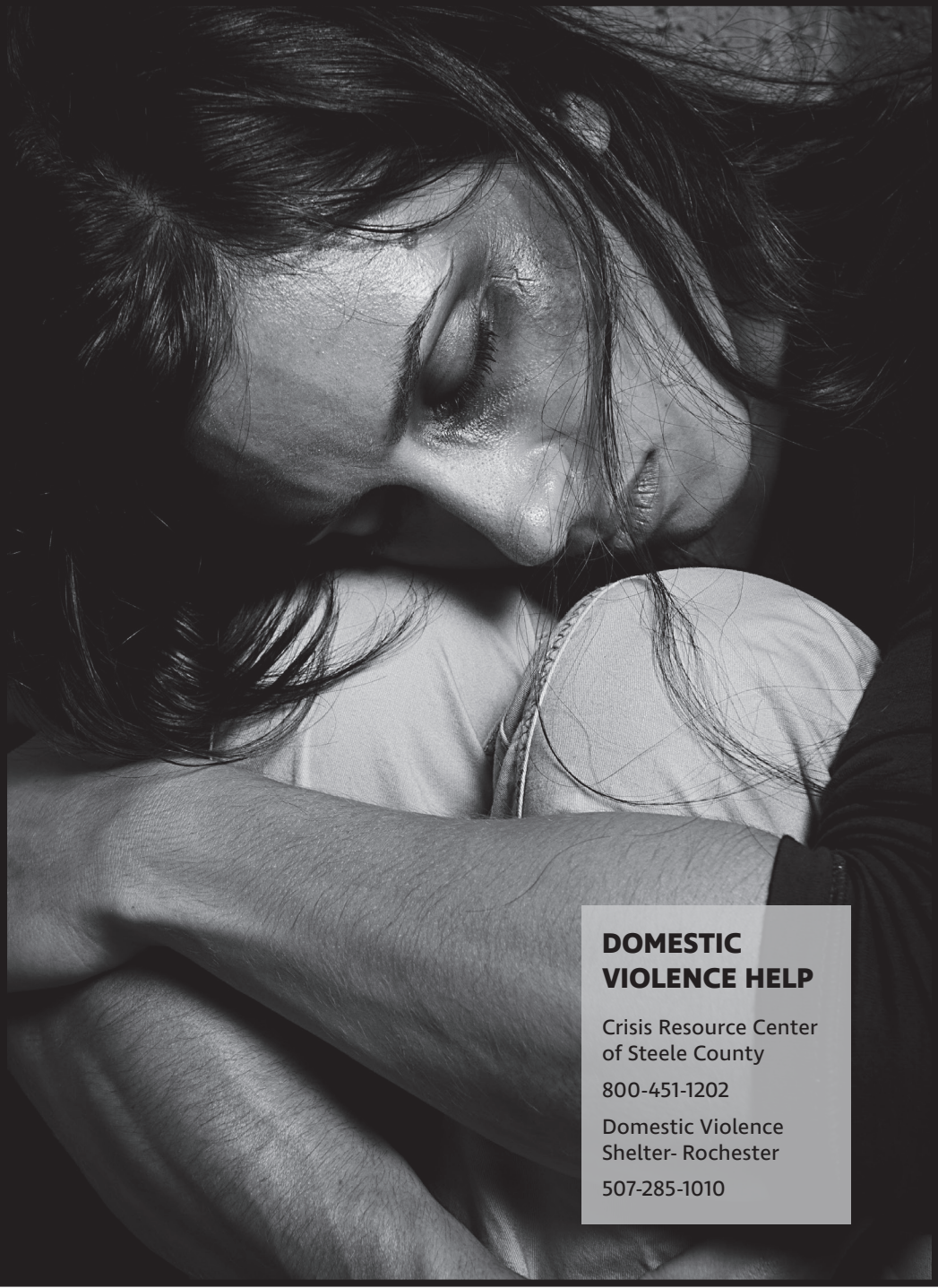
Although she finds her work rewarding, Shea admits that there are still times when it can be difficult to see people in such abusive relationships. “It can be really hard to watch people go back to a dangerous situation,” she said. “We want them to be safe no matter what they choose.”

According to the Crisis Resource center, on average, it takes an individual at least seven times to leave an abusive situation for good. But once they do make that turnaround, it is indeed a very special thing to see.

“That’s huge, to see people come in who have a history that shows that they will never have a healthy relationship with their children or their spouse, and you see them years later and they’re in a loving relationship and their life is completely changed,” Judge Duncan said of the power of witnessing such healthy change.

With so many solutions at hand, and people like Judge Duncan, Shea, and Ahrens working to help build strong resources for those affected by domestic violence, Steele County is working towards creating a safer community one person at a time.

“It’s important that we make sure people know what resources are available,” Duncan explained. “Sometimes, just knowing that others care and that there are solutions at hand can be enough to prompt victims, or perpetrators, of domestic violence to seek a change for the better.”



### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELP

Crisis Resource Center of Steele County  
800-451-1202  
Domestic Violence Shelter- Rochester  
507-285-1010

“The act of domestic violence itself is not an educational or awareness issue,” she said. “Batterers know exactly what they are doing. They are not necessarily attached to the act of the abuse, instead they are attached to what that act gets them; be it power and control over their victim, sexual gratification, money, an adrenaline rush, or any other reward for them.”

Which means that it can be very difficult to change these violent behaviors. Ahrens further explained that, “if they (the perpetrators) do not receive the reward they are seeking, they view themselves as the victim. Batterers lack empathy and lack a caring about how they are making their victim feel.”

This makes treatment a struggle, and

reduced to a shell of their former self at the hands of their abuser,” Ahrens said. “Seeing a victim flourish after escaping domestic violence makes the continued battle against domestic abuse worth it.”

Both Ahrens and Duncan feel that people need to be aware of some of the signs that can lead to domestic violence, and should speak out about it. “We all have a role to play in order to make our community safe and healthy,” Duncan said. “It’s just like airport security, if you see something, say something, and if your worried about someone, let people know.”

On the warning signs of domestic violence, Ahrens explained that there are many. “Some warning signs of domestic abuse include checking cell phones or

“I think it is more prevalent than people imagine. In part because we don’t want to imagine it, and in part because it’s a hidden problem.”

Judge Karen Duncan  
Steele County



MAY 10, 2018

Lois Riess entered a not guilty plea and waived her arraignment hearing in Florida.



JUNE 6, 2018

A Florida grand jury indicted Lois Riess on first-degree murder with a firearm. The more serious charge carries a mandatory life sentence in prison.



JUNE 20, 2018

The Dodge County Sheriff’s Office completed its investigation into the David Riess murder and turned its findings over to the Dodge County Attorney’s Office.

JULY 2, 2018

The State Attorney’s Office in Florida announced it will seek the death penalty against Lois Riess in connection with the Pamela Hutchinson murder.



# Gambling: Why it’s a bet nobody wins

(Editor’s Note: The names in this story have been changed to protect their identities.)

BY DENNIS MARSHALL

Norman is 48 years old and a father to three, who is working to repair his life after his gambling addiction nearly cost him everything.

Norman can’t seem to remember exactly how he got started gambling, but knows his habit began to spiral out of control in his early 30s.

“[My family] was living a fairly comfortable life,” he said. “My wife and I each had great jobs, and I even had small landscaping business of the side.”

Norman said at first, the couple would rarely visit casinos, but could easily purchase more than \$100 of lottery tickets from gas stations and grocery stores in a week.

“They weren’t a huge problem then,” Norman said. “Maybe we were spending more than a responsible amount, but it wasn’t affecting our home life in any way.”

However, at some point in the next five to 10 years, Norman began purchasing more and more lottery tickets. He said it got to the point that he was spending so much money on the scratchers that he told his wife he had received a demotion at work to explain the loss in the income.

“I don’t know what really happened,” he said. “It has to just be the lure of the that jackpot. The crazy thing was that I knew no matter what jackpot I hit, I couldn’t stop and it would only be a matter of time before everything I won was gone.”

Norman said he hit some big winners on lottery tickets, but he believes that only helped to perpetuate his problem.

“There were times when I won thousands of dollars,” he said. “But I was so worried about using that money on my next bet that I never told my wife. She had no idea what was happening behind her back.”

Norman said he won such a large amount one time of a scratcher, he declined to say exactly how much, that he paid a friend to cash the ticket.

“I remember I had one incredible hot streak where I won about half my yearly salary in a month or two,” Norman said. “That’s when I really started to think that something was wrong. Part of me wanted to tell my family, but I was too worried about the questions they may ask.”

It was about this time that Norman began visiting casinos when he had told his wife he was on fishing trips.

“It was just the spur of the moment,” he said. “I stopped once, then I stopped again and again and so on. Before I knew it, I was completely skipping the fishing trips altogether and spending the night at the casino.”

Pretty soon the money Norman was



hiding from his paycheck wasn’t enough to support his all-night gambling parties, so he sold nearly all of landscaping equipment and started taking money out of his savings account.

He told his wife that a previous back injury had progressed, and he was no longer able to complete the rigorous labor required.

In less than a year, Norman had blown through nearly all of his savings account and sold every piece of equipment he had owned.

“Again, it wasn’t like I was losing every time I went,” he said. “The thing is that if I did win, it only made me want to wager more on the next bet.”

However, this was really just the beginning of Norman’s nightmare. He began missing more and more work. He estimated by this point he was visiting the casino at least five days a week.

“There were times where I drove 90 minutes just to bet \$20,” he said. “It had a grip on me like nothing I have ever experienced. I lost myself in it.”

Norman eventually lost his job for a “bad decision,” but did not provide any further details other than he had some unexcused absences.

“I just wasn’t in the right place mentally,” he said. “That’s all I really want to say about that.”

Norman said gambling was always on his mind, he would borrow money to gamble, even though he knew he had no way to pay it back, and he would often feel sick when

he was finished, but it didn’t stop him from going back.

Norman’s wife, let’s call her Lauren, began to grow more and more suspicious during this time. She noticed a change in Norman’s demeanor and couldn’t believe he would just give up his landscaping business.

“She knew being my own boss was my dream,” Norman said. “I think she just started to put everything together. At first, I don’t think she had any clue it was gambling, but she knew something was off. Whether it was drugs, an affair or whatever. I could tell she had concerns and was worried.”

Eventually, Norman shared his problem with his wife.

He said she was understanding and support, for the most part. However, it didn’t help as Norman was hesitant to seek help, and the financial trouble he had cause were beginning to catch up with the family.

“God bless her, she tried to make things work because I believe she really did love me,” Norman said. “But it was hard. We were arguing more because we could barely afford our mortgage. The stress pushed me over the edge and I relapsed for use of a better term.”

Norman used money the couple had saved for one of their daughters to go on a school trip to Washington D.C.

“It was about \$500,” Norman said. “I took it, went to the casino and lost it all in less than three hours.”

Norman said he returned to an empty

house at about 11 p.m., which he knew was strange because it was a school night.

“I knew exactly what was going on as soon as I walked in and everyone was gone,” he said. “I sat and sobbed on the kitchen floor until I passed out.”

The couple divorced a short time later, and that’s when Norman decided it was time to get some help. He began visiting a gambling anonymous meetings and working towards controlling the urges.

He said he eventually overcame his addiction, but not before things got even worse.

“Impulse control is a terrible thing that affects many different people in many different ways,” he said. “Don’t let what happen to me, happen to you. The sooner you reach out for help, the less damage you will have to repair to get your life back.”

Norman said he hasn’t gambled in nearly a decade, and he encourages anyone dealing with any kind of addiction to reach out for help before they suffer the same fate as he did.

“The temptation was and is still there every single day,” he said. “You just have to look yourself in the mirror, ask what is more important and get help if you need it.”

If you or anyone you know is having issues with gambling, you can find help and resources by calling 855-222-5542 or attend a Gambling Anonymous meeting on Monday’s at 6:45 p.m. in Faribault at the Trinity Lutheran Church.

# Destructive gambling a cause?

By LEMAR NELSON  
STAFF WRITER

Society in general has come to accept the fact that any addiction should be classified as a disease and should be treated like any other illness. One of the least recognized or publicized as a disease is the addiction to gambling, but that is presumably one of the major causes for the recent tragedy in the community of Blooming Prairie.

A penchant for gambling may have been an important contributor to resident Lois Riess suddenly transforming from a kindly grandmother into a cold-hearted killer. What could have caused a friendly daycare provider, an accomplished bowler, and a community friend into a completely different individual may never be known for sure, but it seems to be one logical reason for the incident that shocked and dismayed an entire community as well as the rest of the nation for a long time to come.

A gambling addiction is generally defined as an urge to gamble continuously, despite harmful negative consequences or a desire to stop. The American Psychiatric Association long considered gambling addiction to be an impulse control disorder rather than an addiction, but new data suggest a closer relationship between pathological gambling and substance abuse disorders. Problem gambling is therefore an addictive behavior with a high commonality with alcohol problems.

Research by governments in Australia first led to a universal definition for that country, which appears to be the only research-based definition not to use diagnostic criteria to define gambling addiction. Problem gambling is characterized by many difficulties in limiting money and/or time spent on gambling, which leads to adverse

consequences for the gamblers, others, or for the community.

The University of Maryland Medical Center defines addictive gambling as “being unable to resist impulses to gamble, which can lead to severe personal or social consequences.” Most other definitions of problem gambling can be simplified to any gambling that causes harm to the gambler or someone else in any way. It has since been reclassified as a disorder under substance-related and addiction disorders rather than impulse-control disorders.

Several psychological mechanisms are thought to be implicated in the development and maintenance of problem gambling. Reward processing seems to be less sensitive with problem gamblers. Some individuals use problem gambling as an escape from the problems in their lives.

According to Barb Kuhlman, a clinical psychologist with Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota, there are several signs of a gambling problem. Family members may be worried about one’s gambling. The individual starts lying to spouse or significant other about how much he gambles.

The individual starts gambling with money to pay bills, or is using a credit card to get more and more money at the casino. He/she goes right back the next day to recoup losses. All of the plans for leisure activities or vacation time are scheduled around proximity to casinos.

Personality factors play a role in problem gambling, such as narcissism, risk seeking, sensation seeking and impulsivity. And problem gamblers suffer from a number of cognitive biases, including the illusion of control, overconfidence, and the gambler’s fallacy that the outcomes will always balance each other out. Problem gamblers represent a chronic state of behavioral spin process, a gambling spin.

**GAMBLING HELP**  
Minnesota Gambling Hotline  
800-333-HOPE or text HOPE at 61222

In a visit to the Human Relations Center in Owatonna, therapist Dave Moll shared some thoughts on addictive gambling. “Gambling addicts,” he commented, “are very unlikely to admit to a gambling problem or an addiction to gambling. An occasional intervention takes place, but usually the individual must admit that there is a problem. Once that is admitted, several helps to deal with the problem are available.”

The bigger problem surrounding problem gambling is what people can do if they think they have a problem. Kuhlman has some suggestions in that regard as well for possible help.

“If you think you have a gambling problem, you probably do, and you should go to on the Gamblers’ Anonymous website and take their screening test. Get help. Call the MN Gambling Hotline at 1-800-333-Hope or text HOPE at 61222.

Find a Gamblers anonymous meeting near you. They are listed on the Minnesota Gamblers Anonymous website. If the addiction is severe, you may want to seek treatment from MN DHS authorized gambling treatment provider or seek inpatient treatment,” Kuhlman said.

Bringing that back to our local drama, we may never know the exact cause of Riess’ sudden departure from reality, but gambling is just one of the strange string of events leading to the ultimate tragedy for her, her family, and an entire community.

JAN. 29, 2019

BCA completes forensics test on the weapon recovered in Florida and determines it is a match to the weapon used in the David Riess murder.

FEB. 13, 2019

The complete report on the David Riess murder was submitted to the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office for review of charges.





# ON THE BRINK OF A CRISIS



## Mental Health professionals shortage a big issue in rural Minn.

BY ALEX MALM  
NEWS EDITOR

Over the past few years, talking about and seeking mental health support has become much more acceptable in society.

While the majority of people will agree that this is a very good thing, there is one issue that not many people think about.

That issue is the lack of mental health providers, especially in rural areas.

In fact, at any given time, Minnesota can have 2,000 or more mental health professional jobs available.



THAD SHUNKWILER

Thad Shunkwiler, an Assistant Professor at Mankato State University, has been studying this issue extensively and said that this has been a problem that has been a long time coming.

“This problem has been coming for a while,” Shunkwiler said.

One of the biggest issues when it comes to the lack of mental health providers, is the disparity between the amount of providers in rural areas and the metro.

“When examined geographically, this issue becomes more pronounced. According to health department data, the metro area makes up roughly 54 percent of the total state population but currently has 75 percent of all practicing behavioral health professionals,” Shunkwiler wrote in a op-ed.

One of the consequences for not having local providers in the area, is that people who need mental health support, need to drive long distances in order to do so.

Because of this it puts a huge added burden on those who need help, and for some with limited resources like transportation, it can cause a nightmare to seek help that they need.

Because of these burdens, the reality is that some people may just simply not seek help, which causes more issues down the road. As Shunkwiler explained, many mental health issues, are better off when they are addressed as soon as possible.

Those in rural areas, will certainly be the

ones who are most affected by this.

“Rural Minnesota will feel this provider shortage far more than our metro counterparts. What does this mean for those needing mental health care in outstate Minnesota? It likely means delays or long waits for treatment, requirements to travel great distance for care, or people deciding to forgo care altogether,” Shunkwiler stated.

At Mankato State, the university has made a large investment when it comes to training the next generation of mental health professionals.

Some of the ways that they have done this is add more resources to the program, added more faculty among other things.

Shunkwiler, explained that this investment has helped, as the program has grown from about 60 students at a time to 160 students, in just a few years.

One of the selling points, that Shunkwiler uses when it comes to recruiting students, is the reality that there is a guaranteed job out there for them at time of graduation in there field if they want one.

“I tell students there’s 100 percent chance of job after graduating,” Shunkwiler said.

Although, it is important for universities and colleges to provide more opportunities for students to study in the needed area, the reality is that there are many reasons why professionals are leaving the field at a young age, or going into a completely different field all together.

One of the main reasons that Shunkwiler pointed for this, is the fact lack of training opportunities, especially for those in rural areas.

“A number of factors have led to this decline. There are relatively few training programs for behavioral health providers, and even fewer in outstate Minnesota. Enrollment in these training programs is limited, often due to the number of faculty available to teach the required courses,” Shunkwiler stated.

The harsh reality, is also the fact that mental health providers are paid significantly less than those in other health care fields.

“Reimbursement rates for mental health services are lower than when compared to other health-care services. These low reimbursement rates place downward pressure on salaries, which adds another reason for people to choose a health profession outside of behavioral health,” Shunkwiler stated.

Another issue, that Shunkwiler pointed to is the fact that the median age for mental health

providers is increasing.

“Minnesota Department of Health’s Mental and Behavioral Health Workforce Reports indicate the median age of providers is within late 40’s to mid 50’s, depending on the discipline of the provider. According to these current projections, there will be many more providers leaving the profession than entering it in the not too distant future,” Shunkwiler stated. “In 10 years this problem will be much worse,” he added.

There are a number of different things, that could potentially be done, to help fix the problems with the shortage, but Shunkwiler pointed to a couple specifically.

We need to invest in providing grants or allocating funds to the training programs that produce behavioral health providers,” Shunkwiler stated. “Specifically, investing in programs in outstate Minnesota, as we know that students tend to stay in or near communities in which they attended higher education. Academic institutions need to build and maintain partnerships with local agencies to develop and cultivate relationships in an effort to keep graduates in the community,” he added.

Another thing that Shunkwiler pointed to is the state continuing to invest in rural incentive programs.

“Minnesota needs to continue to invest in its rural practice incentives and providing loan forgiveness programs for professionals who practice in Health Professional Shortage Areas. I know all of these things cost money. However, when we hear how important it is to prioritize mental health, it means we must make it a financial priority too,” Shunkwiler stated.

The way, Shunkwiler looks at the issue is simple. At the end of the day it doesn’t matter who is tasked with paying the bill for mental health, if there is no providers to pay.

“While the states administration and legislative bodies will undoubtedly spend this upcoming session discussing health-care insurance, and who should pay for these services, we cannot forget that it doesn’t matter who pays the bill, if there are no providers of the care that is needed,” Shunkwiler stated.

Although, Shunkwiler says he considers the shortage to be a problem right now, he feels as though it will be more than that in the future.

“It will be a crisis in the future,” Shunkwiler said. “We can’t ignore the problem anymore.”

**SELF HELP DIRECTORY**  
**NATIONAL PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE**  
Call: 1-800-522-4700  
Text: 1-800-522-4700  
Chat: [ncpgambling.org/chat](https://ncpgambling.org/chat)  
**MINNESOTA GAMBLING HOTLINE**  
800-333-HOPE

or text HOPE at 61222  
**NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE**  
PO Box 161810  
Austin, Texas 78716  
Office Line: 512-453-8117  
**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELP**  
Crisis Resource Center of Steele County

800-451-1202  
Domestic Violence Shelter- Rochester  
507-285-1010  
**CRISIS INTERVENTION - SUICIDE HOTLINE**  
Serving Steele & Waseca Counties  
24 hours / 7 days  
507- 451-9100

Serving Dodge, Steele & Waseca Counties  
24 hours / 7 days  
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# 2 co-op engineering students study at Arkema

BY HOWARD LESTRUD  
STAFF WRITER

Two University of Minnesota chemical engineering students are interning at the Arkema chemical plant in Blooming Prairie.

Jinbin Chen of Fuzhou, China and Bao Nguyen of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, shared their work on special projects with members of the Arkema Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP). The CAP group met at the Blooming Prairie City Center on Wednesday afternoon, March 13.

Both Chen and Nguyen are part of a one-year cooperative education program that is in its 15th year of existence at Arkema.

The two students live together during the week in Austin. Chen is a graduate of Hutchinson High School. Nguyen earned his high school diploma in the United Kingdom.

Nguyen is married and recently received his United States citizenship.

Chen and Nguyen are both hopeful of becoming chemical engineers. “We will then see how things work

in the real world with more practical stuff,” Nguyen said.

Chen moved to Minnesota in 2011. He is hopeful of earning his chemical engineering degree in 2020. Chen is a fan of television sitcoms and loves “to find problems and fix them.”

Outlining some of the projects he has accepted, Chen pointed to:

- Replace the original stainless steel control valve
- Filter strainer replacement
- Concrete work for loading dock and alley-way stairs
- Cooling jacket/coil cleaning system
- Nitrogen system implemented to control flammable atmosphere in production vessels and the acetec recovery unit
- Re-service TAB 11.o, which had been abandoned for 10 years

Chen also helped resolve Process Hazard Analysis recommendations “Our goal is to make everything safer,” he said.

Chen and Nguyen participated in the Arkema teacher event, shadowed process operators for two weeks and



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD

The Arkema Citizens Advisory Panel invited two University of Minnesota students to speak about their cooperative venture with Arkema. Facilitator Roger Sorenson (center) is shown with students Jinbin Chen, left, and Bao Nguyen.

judged projects entered in the BP Elementary School Science Fair.

Nguyen said most of his assignments were improvement projects.

His projects included:

- Replace agitator in EQ basin
- Fuel oil tank replacement at a cost of \$104,000
- Stripper steam injection

- Dedicated charging line
- Alleyway drainage line repair
- Administrative building repair
- Automatic methane drumming system

Two projects Nguyen is working on for 2019 include replacing SBR lines and replacing spiral heat exchanger for pre-heating raw soybean oil. Arkema employs 45 workers.

CAP members attending the monthly CAP meeting were: Roger Sorenson, Sandi Bass, Betty Behnken, Dawn Gross, Howard Lestrud, Jack Heather, Donna Meixner, Bob Nahlovsky, Julie Peterson, Dave Pfeifer, Ken Vermilyea, Viridiana Villarreal and Riley Millam.

# Taking precautions to head off flooding

Due to the current height of the snow drifts and record breaking snowfall in February, many weather channels are speculating about the possibility of flooding this spring. Homeowners and farmers can take steps to prepare for disasters. In Minnesota, farmers should generally consider having emergency plans in place for tornadoes, floods, severe snowstorms, and fires. Also, find out what alert plans are in place for your community, and figure out the best way to receive notices and alert family members to set your plan into action.



On The Farm  
CLAIRE LACANNE

Create a map of your entire farm site. Include all buildings and structures as well as access routes including roads, lanes, and driveways to the farm site as well as on-farm routes. Other items that are important to include are all fences and gates, locations of all livestock, locations of all hazardous substances, and locations of shut-offs for electricity, water, and other utilities. You certainly already know where everything is, but seeing it drawn out in front of you will help you see the opportunities and challenges when making your plan.

Next, make lists. And more lists. You will want lists for a few different things. One of those is a full list of your farm inventory. Include all livestock on the farm, listing species and number of each species. Also include crop types, number of acres, and whatever crops you have stored on the farm. All machinery and equipment, including serial numbers,

should be on the list as well. Your inventory should also include hazardous substances such as fuel, fertilizer, and medicines.

You should also make an emergency contact list. Include phone numbers for your vet, county emergency management, Extension office, and your insurance agent. One final list to make is all of the businesses that supply services to or for your farm. Include your milk processor, feed and fuel delivery, and anyone else who is on the farm regularly and should be alerted after something happens on the farm.

Fifth, create the action plan. You will most likely have two scenarios to review: one of sheltering in place, and another of evacuation. If are going to be sheltering in place, plan for what to do if resources are cut off. Do you have backup power? Backup fuel? What will you do if an access route gets blocked? Determine what actions will need to be taken and who will need to be contacted if this happens.

Review your emergency plan with your family. Discuss your plans not only with those who are living in the same household, but also adult children or parents who live away.

Make a grab and go file. Gather important items in a waterproof file case or binder. Keep a list of vital information, family member phone numbers, employer numbers, banker, attorney, insurance company, livestock veterinarian, and doctors. Include copies of important papers and documents,

insurance policy information for your home, vehicle and health, birth and marriage certificates, wallet cards- driver's license, social security and credit cards. You may also want to make an emergency CD or jump drive with all of this information to be kept in a safe place.

Take some time to check and stock up your emergency supplies like a first aid kit, cleaning and disinfecting supplies, food and water, along with extra batteries for flashlights and emergency radio.

Contact your insurance agent and review your coverage for emergency and disaster situations. Check what you have for supplies you may need in an emergency, such as tools, fire extinguishers, and generators. Determine what areas you can utilize in an emergency situation for livestock and equipment relocation. This

is also a time to review buildings for any structural compromises or loose materials. Repairing weak areas or cleaning up unused materials laying around could help keep animals and people safe during adverse weather conditions.

Also, make sure you understand your insurance coverage and have a clear understanding of what your policy covers. If you're not sure, it's important to take the time now, before disaster strikes, to review your insurance policies. Start by reviewing what your policies cover. If you have questions or concerns, discuss them with your insurance agent before disaster strikes. You may decide you need additional coverage.

When creating an evacuation plan, look at the map you created. What is the best escape for animals? Which gates need to be

opened? What happens if an identified route is blocked? Also consider where your hazardous materials are stored. If you are dealing with a fire, anything that is potentially explosive should be stored as far away from animals as possible. If you are able to gain access to these materials before they are reached, where should you move them to? Along with your animals, make a plan for your people. Where is a safe place to take shelter? Where should they evacuate to? Make sure these are made clear to everyone working on the farm so that everyone stays safe.

Finally, contact your local fire and sheriff's department. Let them know you have created this plan and ask them if they would like to review it with you or would like a copy. It's a good idea to have the people you may be depending on to help you in the loop.

The University of Minnesota Extension website has a whole host of information on disaster preparation and recovery including how to prepare, how to clean up from flooding and financial recovery. As well as repairing flooded lawns, dealing with damaged buildings and flooded crops.

I hope you and your farm are always safe from disaster, but if bad weather or fire does strike, it's important to be prepared. Having a plan can make the difference between losing it all or saving everything.

*Claire LaCanne is the agricultural extension educator for Steele and Rice counties. Her column appears in this newspaper regularly. She may be reached at lacanne@umn.edu or by calling 507-444-7691.*



### Blooming Prairie FFA Spotlight

## Ethan Grant



*By Mariah Miller*

Ethan Grant, the son of Eric and Kara Grant, is a very active student. He is the acting Officer At Large of the Blooming Prairie FFA chapter. Ethan helps out on his grandparents farm and works for his father's construction company in the summer. He participates on the Junior Varsity General Livestock Judging Team along with other chapter sponsored activities. Besides his involvement in FFA, Ethan is a member of the Cross Country, Golf, and Trapshooting teams.

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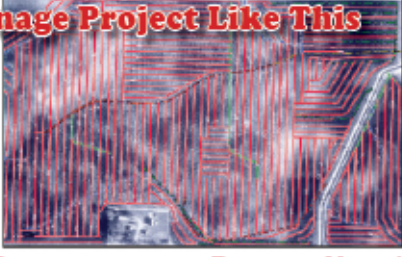
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# Medford board considers enhancing elementary technology

**BY CHRIS BALDWIN**  
STAFF WRITER

At this month's regular school board meeting, Medford elementary principal Josh Carlson detailed a proposal that will lead to several tech changes for students in grades K-5.

The biggest change Carlson proposed involved all fifth graders receiving Chromebooks rather than the iPads they've used in the past. He explained that such a switch would allow them to better prepare for middle school by bridging the gap in technology.

Carlson noted that Chromebooks will allow the students to write, draw, type, and create all on the same device. "Our fifth graders got to try out Chromebooks for a few months," he told the board. "They were obviously

okay making that change, and we felt that switch would be best for our students." A benefit of the switch would be the possibility for increased production due to the devices' versatility.

While all other elementary grades will receive new iPads, kindergarten and first grade would switch from one-to-one to two-to-one, meaning that two students would share the same device rather than each student getting one.

Carlson sees benefits in reduced screen time, especially for those younger students. He cited research which says that limiting screen time to 60 minutes a day is crucial for younger children. "On screen reading is not comparable to traditional style reading," Carlson said. "I feel they need to be exposed more to traditional style reading."

He explained that with traditional reading the students are more likely to go back over sections rather than skim the material and move on. Carlson also felt that students will do better with more face-to-face interactions, imagination, creativity, and physical activity.

The total cost for the tech change under the highest end estimate would be around \$210,000, something which the superintendent said was already considered in the budget. "This would be less than anticipated," he told the board. They will also be able to mitigate any costs with a buyback of older model iPads.

During the meeting, the board also heard from activities director Kevin Werk. He highlighted some of the school's success in winter sports and detailed the upcoming sports season.

Of particular note were the girls basketball team and the wrestling team. The girls basketball team set a school record for wins and went undefeated in the regular season. The wrestling squad went 10-2, including four wins in the conference.

Due to an unusually snowy winter, Superintendent Mark Ristau informed the board of the school's plan for makeup days. The only day it added this year was April 22, and if students do not miss anymore days, they will be able to close out the school year with this one additional day.

Ristau noted that although the additional day was not needed, it will be good to get them more classroom time and help better prepare them for this year's Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments tests.

Finally, the board heard

from choir teacher Benjamin Beaupre and band teacher Brian Gustafson about a possible trip to Chicago during the 2020 spring break. Although only a proposal, the potential trip would allow high school choir and band students to travel to the Windy City and take in some of the sites, scenes, and culture.

Both teachers noted that this would be the first trip of this type for Medford students in more than five years. The students would be accountable for the fees related to the trip. Both Gustafson and Beaupre noted that they have mature and responsible students they would trust wholehearted on a

trip like this one.

Members of the board were excited about the possible trip, and the chance for the students to see Chicago. "I think it's a great opportunity for the kids," board member Anne Hemann said. "It gives them something to look forward to."

At the meeting the board also accepted donations from the Medford Volunteer Firefighters totaling \$3,750 for scholarships, the ELC trip, a Color Run, and after prom activities.

The next regular school board meeting will be held on Monday, April 15 at 7 p.m.

## NOTICE

**REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MN  
February 19, 2019**

A regular school board meeting of the School Board of Independent School District #756, Blooming Prairie, Minnesota, was held in the High School Media Center at 5:15 p.m. (Open Forum at 5:00 p.m.).

**OPEN FORUM** – Patrick Gordon, Executive Director of ZED, gave a presentation.

**I. CALL TO ORDER –CHAIRPERSON**  
**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**  
**III. ROLL CALL - CLERK**  
Dean Meshke, Jenny Thurnau, John Sunde, Steve Ille, Kelly Braaten, Pam Hameister  
**ALSO PRESENT:**  
Superintendent of Schools, Elementary School Principal, High School Principal, Associate Principal, BPTA Members  
**MEMBERS ABSENT:**  
Rodney Krell

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**  
Motion by Pam Hameister and seconded by Steve Ille to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)  
**V. PRINCIPAL REPORTS**  
Principal reports were given by Mr. Staloch, Mr. Worke, and Ms. Mach.  
**VI. ITEMS ON WHICH BOARD ACTION IS REQUESTED**

**A. Minutes, Bills, Treasurer's Report, Resignations, Donations**  
Motion by Pam Hameister and seconded by Jon Sunde to approve the minutes, bills, treasurer's report, resignations, and donations as presented. (6 Aye/0 Nay)  
**B. Employment**  
Motion by Kelly Braaten and seconded by Steve Ille to approve the employment of Brittany Hoban as a junior high softball coach with placement on step 0 of the prevailing extra-curricular schedule. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)  
**C. Volunteer Coaches**  
Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Dean Meshke to approve Ali Mach and Lonnie Lembke as volunteer varsity softball coaches along with Mark Larkoski as volunteer varsity baseball coach. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)  
**D. Final Seniority List for Teachers**  
Motion by Kelly Braaten and seconded by Steve Ille to approve the "final" seniority listings which did not contain any changes since the preliminary listing was posted. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)  
**E. Pay Equity Implementation Report**  
Motion by Pam Hameister and seconded by Steve Ille to approve the Pay Equity Implementation Report which has met compliance. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)  
**F. Resolution Discontinuing and Reducing Educational Programs and Positions**  
Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve a resolution discontinuing and reducing education programs and positions. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)  
**G. Special Meeting Dates for Superintendent Interviews**  
Motion by Kelly Braaten and seconded by Dean Meshke to approve tentative interview dates/times as potential "special" meetings. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)  
**H. Verizon Wireless Agreement**  
Motion by Steve Ille and seconded by Pam Hameister to approve a "Verizon Wireless Small Cell Lease and Pole Attachment Agreement" for a period of five years along with authorizing Superintendent Olson as the signer. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)  
**I. Calendar Change/Snow Days**  
Motion by Steve Ille and seconded by Jon Sunde to approve changing the last day of school for students from May 30, 2019 to May 31, 2019. April 22, 2019 will also be a regular student contact day rather than a day of Easter/Spring break. Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)  
**VII. ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND/OR DISCUSSION ONLY**  
**A. Class Sizes**  
The administration will present updated information at the regular March meeting. Hopefully ADSIS grant information will also be available at that time.

## B. Committee Reports

A report update was given on the following committee: Education Foundation and ZED.

## C. Enrollment Data

Enrollment for the 2018-19 school year as of February 13, 2019, was 417 at the elementary school (grades K-6) and 339 at the high school (grades 7-12) (334 attending BPHS and 5 attending PSEO). The PSEO number consists of 3 seniors and 2 juniors with attendance being full-time.

## D. Dates to Note

The Board noted dates of importance.

## VIII. SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

- Staffing openings.
  - Thank you to the School Board for their dedication to our school community. They are constantly making decisions that are "best for kids".
- IX. ADJOURNMENT**  
Motion by Jon Sunde and seconded by Steve Ille to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 p.m.  
Motion carried. (6 Aye/0 Nay)

**Tentatively, the next Regular School Board Work Session will be held on Thursday, March 14, 2019, at 6:00 a.m. in the Board Room at the High School. Tentatively, the next regular meeting of the School Board will be Monday, March 18, 2019, at 7:15 p.m. in the High School Media Center (Open Forum begins at 7:00 p.m.).**

**A complete copy of the official minutes may be found in their entirety in the official minute book located in the superintendent's office at the high school; however, they will not be available until approved by the School Board.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pam Hameister  
Clerk of the School Board  
Independent School District #756  
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

## NOTICE

**STATE OF MINNESOTA  
COUNTY OF STEELE**

**DISTRICT COURT  
CIVIL DIVISION  
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

**Case No.: 74-FA-19-384**

**Notice of Issuance of  
Emergency (Ex Parte) Order  
for Protection by Publication  
(Minn. Stat. § 518B.01, subd. 8)**

JORDAN ANTHONY KANE

**In the Matter of: Krystal Rae Laroque On the Behalf of  
Minor Child(ren) vs. Jordan Anthony Kane**

**To Respondent:**

**YOU ARE NOTIFIED** that an Ex Parte Order for Protection has been issued in this case. You may request a hearing if you contact the court administrator's office within 12 days of the date of publication of this notice. You may obtain a copy of the Ex Parte Order for Protection and the form to request a hearing from the court administrator's office at the following address:

**Steele County District Court  
111 East Main Street  
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Failure to request a hearing or to obtain a copy of the Ex Parte Order will not be a defense to prosecution for violation of the Court's order.

Dated: March 20, 2019

Robin Hoesley  
Court Administrator

## NOTICE

**REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION  
BLOOMING PRAIRIE, MINNESOTA  
February 14, 2019**

A regular school board work session was held at 6:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 14, 2019, in the Board Room at the High School.

## MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dean Meshke, Jenny Thurnau, Jon Sunde, Steve Ille, Rodney Krell, Kelly Braaten, Pam Hameister

## MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

## ALSO PRESENT:

Superintendent of Schools  
**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**  
General review and discussion was held on agenda items for the February 19, 2019, regular school board meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pam Hameister  
Clerk of the School Board  
Independent School District #756  
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota

3/26

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**STEELE COUNTY Times**  
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The Union Cemetery Association of rural Blooming Prairie will hold their annual meeting on

Tuesday,  
April 9, 2019  
at 6:30 pm

at the Craig & Jan Nelson residence.

Gary Hansen,  
President

## BOOK NOOK

# Dairy Banquet set for April 6

A great benefit that the Blooming Prairie Branch Library has is our membership in SELCO (South East Libraries Cooperating).

In addition to providing technological and professional services, SELCO also coordinates many of the Library Legacy programs given through the Clean Water Land & Legacy Amendment. Thanks to the annual SELCO Author Tour, Nicole Helget will be speaking at the library on Thursday, April 4 at 7 p.m. The Friends of the Library will provide refreshments.

Nicole Helget is the acclaimed author of the middle grade novels The End of the Wild and Wonder at the Edge of the World, and Horse Camp. The End of the Wild won the 2018 Minnesota Book Award for Middle Grade Literature. The book



NANCY  
VAILLANCOURT

deals with fracking, but also with how one girl deals with the conflict around her.

Helget has also written three adult novels, The Turtle Catcher, The Summer of Ordinary Ways, And Stillwater. Please call the library at 507-583-7750 if you would like to read some of her books before the visit.

Growing up on a farm in Southern Minnesota, Helget received degrees from Minnesota State University, Mankato. She is a professor at South Central College in Mankato.

Each author has their own story to tell and their own perspective to share. Please spread the word and join us next Thursday. See you at the library!

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TRACK AND FIELD

NRHEG boys, Maple River girls claim indoor conference meet

BY DENNIS MARSHALL  
SPORTS EDITOR

It was an enjoyable ride home from Minnesota State University-Mankato on Saturday for the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva's track and field teams after they fired out of the gates at the Gopher Conference Indoor Meet.

The Panthers boys' won the meet by a dominant margin for the second straight year with eight individual winners.

"The boys looked solid," NRHEG head track coach Duane Ferber said. "We are definitely going to be a strong team in the Gopher Conference. We have a lot of strong individuals both on the track and in the field."

Waterville-Elysian-Morristown and Medford rounded out the top three.

The Panthers hope that Saturday foreshadowed the rest of the Gopher Conference season, and there is plenty to be encouraged by with their overall times being slightly faster compared to last year.

NRHEG's Brady Agrimson won the 55 and 60-meter hurdles in 8.33 and 8.36 seconds, respectively. He also won the high jump (5-foot-6-inches) and finished fourth in the triple jump. Agrimson scored 34 of the Panthers' 152 team points.

NRHEG's Daniel Nydegger also had a great meet. He won the 800 in 2:18, the 1,600 in 5:16 and was a member of the winning 1,600 relay team.

Ferber said Nydegger looked healthy and really strong.

Lonnie Wilson also won a pair of events for the Panthers. He finished first the 200 and 400 in times of 25.59 and 55.97, respectively.

Ferber said Wilson looked a lot better coming out of the blocks performed as if he was in midseason form.

"Overall it was really balanced performance," Ferber said.

Maple River claimed gold in the girls' division, but the Panthers finished third and showed a lot of improvement from last season in the tightly contest meet where just 2.5 points separated first and fourth-place.

"To see us up there at the top of conference this early in the season with some young kids is definitely encouraging," Ferber said, adding some of the other teams have superstars, while the NRHEG has more of win by committee attitude.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAM AGRIMSON

NRHEG's Brady Agrimson runs away from the competition in hurdles during the Gopher Conference Indoor Track and Field Meet at Mankato on Saturday.

The Panthers had two individual first-place finishers; Evelyn Nydegger in the 400 (1:11.42) and Natalie Johnson in the 55 hurdles (10.32).

"We had a few things where we definitely didn't load up on during this meet," Ferber continued. "If we had a few more people run a few more events, but then it goes the same way with all the other teams. I assume the [outdoor] conference meet going to be a lot tighter this year than it was last year."

**RESULTS**  
(Includes overall team standings, individual winners and complete results for NRHEG, Blooming Prairie, Medford and Hayfield.)

**BOYS**  
**Team Results:** NRHEG 152, WEM 94, Medford 64.5, Maple River 57, Hayfield 39, USC/AC 28, Blooming Prairie 20.5, Bethlehem Academy 5.  
**60-meter dash:** 1, Isaac Pratt (WEM) 7.11; 2, Lonnie Wilson (NRHEG) 7.29; 4, Jerone Chavis (Medford), 9, Alexander Heins (Hayfield); 13, James Wohlfred (BP), 16, Charlie Nissen (NRHEG); 17, Porter Peterson (NRHEG); 18, Max Seltun (NRHEG); 20, Brayden Beede (Medford), 21, Samuel Smith (Blooming Prairie); 22, James O'Malley (Hayfield); 23, Carson Brennecke (BP); 25, Isaiah Chavis (Medford); 27, Diego Galdamez (Hayfield); 28, Malsion Johnson (Blooming Prairie).  
**200 dash:** 1, Wilson (NRHEG) 25.59; 3, Gunner White (Medford) 26.46; 5, Steele Tebay (Hayfield); 6, Smith (BP); 10, Ezra Kiley (BP); 12, Xavier Rennie (BP); 13, Nissen (NRHEG); 14, Cohen O'Conner (Medford) 28.51; 15, Matthew Mueller (NRHEG); 18, Isaiah Chavis (Medford) 30.63; 18, Julian Cortez (Hayfield); 22, Graden Karl (NRHEG); 23, Warren Garza (Medford).  
**400 dash:** 1, Wilson (NRHEG) 55.97; 2, Agro Gushwa (NRHEG) 57.68; 3, Samuel Skillestad (BP) 59.64; 4, Samuel Tempel (Hayfield); 8, Henry Grayson (Medford); 10, Galdamez (Hayfield); 12, Tanner Barbeau (Medford); 14, Jaxon Beck (NRHEG); 15, Braden Barbeau (Medford); 16, Samuel Christianson (NRHEG); 17,

Ernesto Lazaro (Medford).  
**800 run:** 1, Daniel Nydegger (NRHEG) 2:18.00; 2, Cohen Stursa (Medford) 2:21.00; 8, Ralph Roesler (NRHEG); 13, Connor Davis (Medford); 15, Brody O'Malley (Hayfield); 16, Alexander Riley (BP).  
**1,600 run:** 1, Nydegger (NRHEG) 5:16.00; 6, Hosea Baker (BP); 7, Dakota Robinson (Hayfield); 8, Garrett Fitzgerald (Medford); 9, Austin Erickson (Medford); 10, Tyler Forystek (BP); 11, Conner Nelsen (NRHEG); 12, Gavin Anderson (NRHEG); 13, Patrick Reynolds (Hayfield); 14, Eric Arvis (NRHEG).  
**55 hurdles:** 1, Brady Agrimson (NRHEG) 8.33; 2, Mason Ferber (NRHEG) 8.83; 6, Kiley (BP); 8, Mason Brown (BP).  
60 hurdles: 1, Agrimson (NRHEG) 8.36; 4, Ferber (NRHEG); 6, Rennie (BP).  
**800 relay:** 1, WEM 1:39.90; 2, Medford 1:43.71; 3, NRHEG 1:45.42; 5, Blooming Prairie.  
**1,600 relay:** 1, NRHEG 3:54.01; 2, Blooming Prairie 4:12.67; 3, Hayfield 4:12.82.  
**3,200 relay:** 1, Medford 9:29.40; 3, Hayfield 10:08.10; 4, NRHEG.  
**High jump:** 1, Agrimson (NRHEG) 5-foot-6-inches; 2, Gushwa (NRHEG) 5-4; 3, Beck (NRHEG) 5-2; 4, Tebay (Hayfield); 7, Seltun (NRHEG).  
**Pole vault:** 1, Jaden Taylor (WEM) 12-6; 2, Brett Johnson (Medford) 11-6.  
**Long jump:** 1, Ben Trio (Maple River) 18-2.75; 2, Wilson (NRHEG) 17-5.75; 4, Chavis (Medford); 6, Wohlfred (BP); 6, Devan List (Medford); 9, Galdamez (Hayfield); 10, Beede (Medford); 11, White (Medford); 12, O'Malley (Hayfield); 13, Thoe (Hayfield); 18, Parker Bunn (NRHEG).  
**Triple Jump:** 1, PirkI (Medford) 39-9.50; 4, Agrimson (NRHEG); 5, Tebay (Hayfield); 8, Ryan Hermanstorfer (Medford); 9, Tanner Bareau (Medford); 11, Thoe (Hayfield); 11, Lazaro (Medford); 14, Wohlfred (BP).  
**Shot put:** 1, Alexander Heins (Hayfield) 42-7; 2, Alex Buckmeier (NRHEG) 41-2.5; 3, Kael Hermanstorfer (Medford) 39-0.5; 7, Mason Nagel (Medford); 8, Dawson Andree (Hayfield); 9, Jacob Gasner (Medford); 11, Jack Matson (BP); 12, Michiah VanSyckel (NRHEG); 16, Julian Cortez (Hayfield); 17, Alex Oatway (Medford); 19, Jacob McHenry (BP); 20, Brandon Howieson (NRHEG); 21, Isaac Borchert (NRHEG).  
**Shot put (wheelchair):** 1, Luke Johnston (Medford) 18-1.5.  
**GIRLS**  
**Team Results:** Maple River 76.5, WEM 76, NRHEG 74, Hayfield 74, Medford 56.5, USC/AC 47, Bethlehem Academy 31, Blooming Prairie 28.  
**60 dash:** 1, Maelea Harmon (WEM) 7.48; 4, Jenna Jacobsen (Hayfield) 7.97; 5, Brooke Purrier (Medford); 9, Josie Strom (NRHEG); 10, Jalene Chavis (Medford); 11, Haley Hayden (Hayfield); 13, Madison Lea (BP); 14, Abby Braaten (BP); 16, Anna Reese (BP); 18, Ashley Wobschall (NRHEG); 19, Kaitlyn Hatch (Hayfield).  
**200 dash:** 1, Kyllah Curry (USC/AC) 29.04; 2, Caitlin Goette (NRHEG) 30.50; 4, Rachael Luebbe (Medford); 5, Sierra Larson (BP); 7, Mackenzie Kellen (BP); 8, Elsa Gushwa (NRHEG); 9,

Evelyn Nydegger (NRHEG); 11, Strom (NRHEG); 13, Sophie Thomas (BP); 14, Jordyn Sanchez (BP); 17, Rosie Radford (Hayfield); 18, Abigail Hefling (BP); 21, Kerstin Lindquist (Hayfield).  
**400 dash:** 1, Nydegger (NRHEG) 1:11.42; 2, Anna Kittelson (BP) 1:12.33; 3, Grace Walker (Hayfield) 1:12.44; 5, Jenna Finseth (NRHEG); 8, Taylor Wurst (BP).  
**800 run:** 1, Victoria Barkosky (Maple River) 2:40.00; 2, Maryx Young (Hayfield) 2:48.00; 3, Journey Utpadel (NRHEG) 2:49.00; 4, Clara Kniefel (Medford); 6, McKenna O'Connor (Hayfield); 7, Tori Vaale (NRHEG); 8, Abby Smith (BP); 9, Micaela Vaale (NRHEG); 11, Grace Becker (Hayfield).  
**1,600 run:** 1, Ryann Klammer (Maple River) 6:10.00; 3, Tori Vaale (NRHEG) 6:43.00; 5, Micaela Vaale (NRHEG); 9, Ashleigh Alwes (BP); 10, Olivia Kofstad (NRHEG).  
**55 hurdles:** 1, Natalie Johnson (NRHEG) 10.32; 2, Lila Gronseth (Hayfield) 11.01; 4, Caitlyn Lundquist (Hayfield); 5, Kathryn Kofstad (NRHEG); 6, Lillie O'Connor (Hayfield); 7, Olivia Kofstad (NRHEG); 8, Ava Krejci (BP).  
**60 hurdles:** 1, Brianna Radatz (Bethlehem Academy) 9.74; 2, Lundquist (Hayfield) 11.24; 3, Kathryn Kofstad (NRHEG) 11.63; 7, Johnson (NRHEG); 7, Olivia Kofstad (NRHEG).  
**800 relay:** 1, WEM 1:58.15; 2, Medford 1:59.18; 3, NRHEG 2:00.90; 4, Hayfield; 5, Blooming Prairie.  
**1,600 relay:** 1, Hayfield 4:51.19; 3, NRHEG 5:03.04; 4, Blooming Prairie.  
3,200 relay: 1, USC/AC 11:38.50; 2, Maple River 11:41.50; 3, Hayfield 11:48.22; 4, Medford.  
**High jump:** 1, Toryn Richards (WEM) 5-0; 3, Goette (NRHEG) 4-8; 4, Luebbe (Medford); 7, Isabel DeLeon (Medford); 8, Finseth (NRHEG).  
**Pole vault:** 1, Richards (WEM) 9-6; 3, Gemini Johnson (BP) 7-6; 5, Kellen (Medford).  
**Long jump:** 1, MaeLea Harmon (WEM) 15-3.75; 2, Kiley Nihart (Medford) 15-1.5; 3, Johnson (BP) 14:3.25; 6, Purrier (Medford); 8, Gushwa (NRHEG); 9, Hannah Budach (NRHEG); 10, Raquel Fischer (NRHEG); 11, Hayden (Hayfield); 14, Kittelson (BP); 17, Lundquist (Hayfield); 18, Reese (BP); 20, Lea (BP); Lorelei Strom (NRHEG).  
**Triple jump:** 1, Brianna Radatz (Bethlehem Academy) 31-2.25; 2, Luebbe (Medford) 30-0; 3, Emma Kniefel (Medford) 29-11.50; 5, Hayden (Hayfield); 6, Gronseth (Hayfield); 7, Kellen (Medford); 10 Nydegger (NRHEG); 12, Lindquist (Hayfield).  
**Shot put:** 1, Madi Schirmer (Maple River) 36-7.50; 2, Gronseth (Hayfield) 33-0; 3, Kinsey Cronin (Medford) 32-10; 4, Darian Pearson (NRHEG); 6, Madison Johnston (Hayfield); 7, Micalyn Trihus (BP); 9, Jenna Berg (Medford); 10, Budach (NRHEG); 12, Diamond Woollard (NRHEG); 13, Anna Paulty (BP); 16, Lindquist (Hayfield); 23, Sophie Thomas (BP); 24, Grace Brekke (BP); 24, Calli Collidge (Hayfield).  
**200 run (wheelchair):** 1, Lilly Stiernagle (Maple River) 54.16.  
**Shot put (wheelchair):** 1, Stiernagle (Maple River) 12-10.50.

ATHLETICS

Multiple area schools well-represented on All-Gopher Conference teams

STAFF REPORT

The Gopher Conference released it winter sports all-conference teams this past week.

Hayfield's Mason Tapp was named the 2019 Player of the Year for boys' basketball. Tapp led the Vikings to a share of the Gopher Conference title with 21 points per conference game. He was three-time letter winner and one of 40 seniors to make the MBCA All-Star Series.

First team All-Gopher Conference honors went to Gabe Hagen (Blooming Prairie), Brady Agrimson (New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva), Luke Dudycha (Hayfield), Mason Sohre (Maple River) and Grant McBroom (Waterville-Elysian-Morristown).

BP's Kaden Thomas and NRHEG's Jacob Schuller were selected to the second team. Medford's AJ Vandereide, Hayfield's Patrick Towey and the Awesome Blossom's Karson Vigeland were honorable mention.

BP's Zach Archer, Hayfield's Brady Nelson, Medford's Noah PirkI and NRHEG's Blake Ihrke received the Sportsmanship Award.

Medford's Emma Kniefel was selected as Player of the Year for girls' basketball. Kniefel led the Tigers to a 23-0 regular season and a conference championship while averaging 19.6 points, 4.0 rebounds, 4.0 assists and 4.0 steals per game.

First team All-Gopher Conference selections were Megan Oswald (BP), Kiley Nihart (Medford), Emma Holt (Hayfield), Shelby Hermel (WEM) and Madison Schirmer (Maple River).

Blossom Bobbie Bruns, Panther Sophie Stork and Vikings Elecia Brown and Abby Stasko were selected to the second team. Izzy Reuvers (Medford), Maggie Bruns (BP) and Payton Slaathaug (Hayfield) were honorable mention.

Sportsmanship Recipients were Maggie Bruns, Jordyn Stadler (Medford) and Kendall Johnson (NRHEG).

United South Central's Blake Legred was the Wrestler of the Year. He will graduate as one of the most decorated athletes within their sport for Rebels. Legred is a state champion and three-time finalist.

Westfield's Colton Krell (170-pound weight class), Dylan Nirk (220) and Tristan Rieken (285); Medford's Charley Elwood (113) and Willie VonRuden (145) and NRHEG's Quinten Arndt (285) were selected All-Gopher Conference. Tyler Jacobson (NRHEG) was honorable mention.

Medford's Zach Wetmore, NRHEG's Andrew Reich and Rieken were the Sportsmanship Recipients.

BP, Medford and NRHEG each had two all-conference selections for their one-act play festival. The Blossoms had Courtney Espe and Rachel Oswald, the Tigers had Brandon Sissler and Garrett Fitzgerald and the Panthers had Mia Williams and Lexi Combs.

Kisha Aquino (BP), Bailey Duchene (Medford) and Madie Denherder (NRHEG) were honorable mention.

BP's Kisha Aquino (Prose Reading), Medford's Jason Domstand (Poetry Reading) and Anthony Manderfield (Humorous Interpretation) and Hayfield's Anikka Bjornson (Creative Expression) and Paetyn Stadler (Discussion) were all-conference in speech.

IT'S AN EXCITING TIME

For my money, the most exciting thing last week was Blooming Prairie's own and Northern Iowa forward Taylor Hagen taking on the University of Minnesota in the first round of Women's National Invitation Tournament.

It was a real thrill to note the play of the team against a team coached by the famous Lindsay Whalen.

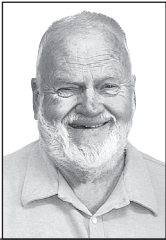
Although Minnesota put the game out of reach quite early in the contest, Hagen and her teammates continued to play hard and actually made a little run to cut the margin late in the game. Hagen's play duplicated her play in most of the season, as she scored eight points, pulled down four rebounds and played 28 minutes of the game.

It was a good effort, and Hagen deserves another great big tip of the hat for an outstanding career.

She worked hard to become a very good basketball player, playing just as few minutes a game as a freshman, but working up to be an integral cog in the Panther team. Well done, Taylor

AWAITING SPRING SPORTS

With weather again dictating the beginning of spring sports, the



Outside the Lines  
LEMAR NELSON

teams are working hard, mostly indoors, to get ready for the season. And while the teams are preparing for the season, The Times reporters are busy compiling preview articles to be included in the annual spring sports tab.

Information is sometimes slow to come in, but we are confident that an interesting publication will come off the press. Look for the tab in your copy of the paper in the next two or three weeks.

CONCERN FOR OTHERS

When one lives in a caring and warmhearted community like Blooming Prairie, as we do, almost every week offers occasion to show concern or sympathy for others less fortunate. Last week brought the discovery of a two-year old girl who had been murdered and her body left by the highway just north of town.

It brought exclamations of dismay and concern from local citizens that another tragedy could take place in our peaceful community and brought vile disruption to many. Concern became evident to the local citizenry, as we dealt with another nefarious event.

Thanks to our Police Chief and Pastor Heidi Heimgartner of First Lutheran, they organized an opportunity for residents to show compassion and sympathy for the little girl and her family back in Milwaukee. Residents were encouraged to bring small items, such as flowers, books, or notes to honor the girl's memory, which they did. It was no big thing for residents, but it may have helped give some closure to a family. Our small town thus honored the memory of a little girl a state away.

AWAY FROM HOME

I would guess that most of my regular readers are aware that since December I have been writing my column as an apartment dweller. My three daughters have prevailed on me that giving up my home, even on a temporary basis, would be a wise thing to do. My physical condition has limited my mobility to a great extent.

I thank my publisher for allowing me to continue writing my column and the sports results at the local school, and I still am debating a permanent move. I will probably make a final decision in the next month. In the meantime, thanks to faithful readers for the continued support. It has been an interesting 27 years.

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