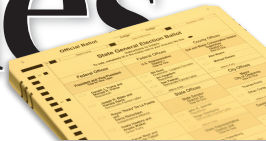




STEELE COUNTY Times



HONORING VETS

1B & 2B

ELECTION FINALITY

A6

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2020

Bloomington, Minnesota

"You don't know if you're around someone who is asymptomatic."

Lori Lysne
Tested for COVID

COVID-19 RAGES

COVID testing draws hundreds

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

So far Lori and Al Lysne's family have not contracted the coronavirus, but the Bloomington couple wasn't taking any chances as they joined hundreds in getting tested for COVID-19 last week in Owatonna.

Even though the Lysnes haven't shown any symptoms, they still decided to come out. "You don't know if you're around someone who is asymptomatic," said Lori as she waited in line to get tested. "It's easy, like nothing. It's a swap up the nose," she said, adding "it's not the brain tickler."

The free tests were offered Nov. 9-10 at the National Guard Armory in Owatonna as members of the National Guard conducted nasal swap tests. A steady stream of people came in to take the test, which lasted less than 10 minutes.

"We're trying to catch those with no symptoms that are positive," said Amy Caron, director for Steele County Public Health. "We hope to reduce the spread so we can do the contact trace and get them into quarantine," she added.

SEE COVID TESTING, A3



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

A health care worker swaps Al Lysne of Bloomington as his wife Lori looks on at the communitywide COVID-19 testing event last week at the Owatonna armory. Both Al and Lori were tested for COVID, even though they hadn't showed any signs of having the virus. About 1,200 people turned out for the two-day testing event.

New cases double in one week

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

For months, Public Health Director Amy Caron has been warning about a surge of COVID-19 cases taking place in fall, but she herself will tell you what is happening is far beyond her expectations.

"This took me off guard. I didn't expect it to rise that quickly," said Caron as she reported a record 384 new COVID cases over the past week. "From one week ago, we have doubled in new cases and from two weeks ago quadrupled."

Steele County has 1,406 positive cases, including 11 hospitalizations. Among those hospitalized are "a few in the ICU unit," though Caron didn't have a specific number.

For the third week in a row, another death has been reported in Steele County, bringing the county's death total to five since the pandemic began in March. The latest victim was a woman in her 80s who was not living in a long-term care facility, according to Caron.

The new cases, Caron said, are showing up in people of all ages from 1 to 90, though the biggest contributor to the new case

Schools shift back to distance learning

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Several area schools are shifting back to distance learning after COVID-19 cases have skyrocketed in Steele County over the past two weeks.

Both Owatonna and Medford schools are moving to distance learning within the next week while Bloomington is also taking similar action at the end of the month.

During a special board meeting Friday,

Nov. 13, the Owatonna School Board unanimously approved going to distance learning in all grade levels in two phases beginning with the first phase on Monday, Nov. 16.

The last day for in-person at the middle and high schools was Friday, Nov. 13. Teachers used Monday to plan for the transition. Early childhood and all elementary schools will wrap up in-person on Thursday, Nov. 19.

The board cited "deteriorating public

health conditions" for its reason to stop in-person learning throughout the district.

In Owatonna's case, there have been 21 new COVID cases since Nov. 5 and 40 staff members are either in quarantine or isolated. The personnel issue has caused major staffing shortages throughout the district.

Superintendent Jeff Elstad said the abrupt increases in school-related cases mirror the dramatic increase in Steele County as well as the rest of the state.

The latest preliminary Steele County two-week case rate per 10,000 residents is 41.99 and is projected to be at 67.66 later this week.

Besides the shift to distance learning, Owatonna Schools are also curtailing school activities. Fall activities are planned to continue through the end of this week. However, the start of winter activities will be delayed until a later date when it is deemed

SEE SCHOOLS SHIFT, A7

SEE NEW CASES, A3

Pandemic throws a curveball in Thanksgiving celebrations

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Kathy and John Muellerleile will be spending Thanksgiving at home this year.

With COVID-19 cases surging, the Owatonna couple is choosing to heed the advice of public health officials, who say the safest way to celebrate the holiday this year is to celebrate with people in your own household.

Traditionally, the Muellerleiles have hosted their family's Thanksgiving celebration. Last year, they traveled to their son's home in Litchfield to celebrate the holiday.

"We are trying to be very careful," said Kathy, adding that she and John haven't hugged their grandchildren since March. "We've seen each other, but we've social

"I'll miss the laughter, the games and the visiting."

Kathy Muellerleile
Holiday Plans Changed

distanced and been wearing masks."

Had they chosen to travel to Litchfield this Thanksgiving, the gathering would have fallen within the new state's COVID-19 guidelines limiting private social gatherings to 10 people in a home from no more than three households, including the host.

Instead, Kathy and John plan to connect with their two sons, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren via Zoom or Facetime on Thanksgiving Day.

"I'll miss the laughter, the games and the visiting," said Kathy. "Talking on the phone

isn't the same as sitting next to someone and visiting with them."

And even though it will just be dinner for two, Kathy said, their Thanksgiving menu will include some of the family's favorites. Kathy is planning to make turkey thighs, stuffing with raisins — like her mother always made — and green bean casserole.

For those planning to spend Thanksgiving with people outside their household, public health officials say its best to keep your celebration small.

Steele County Public

SEE PANDEMIC THROWS, A3



SUBMITTED PHOTO

John Muellerleile and his granddaughter, Antonia Muellerleile played cribbage last Thanksgiving. John is a retired optometrist who practiced in Owatonna for 41 years and in Bloomington for five of those years. He served on the Minnesota Board of Optometry.

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AREA DEATHS

Billie Ulland, 90, Lakeville

Serving
Bloomington
and Steele County
since 1893

OUR VIEW

An election to remember

Minnesota's election results will soon be final.

Countries have tallied their votes, canvassing boards have certified the results and mandated audits of randomly selected precinct are done. Once the state Canvassing Board meets next week to certify those results, the only thing left will be to cast Minnesota's Electoral College votes.

Unfortunately, the divisiveness of this election and questions about the integrity of the election process are sure to linger. But this is not the time to let conspiracy theories, disproven allegations of fraud and an overall distrust in government overshadow what went right in the 2020 election.

Steele County residents have lots of reason to celebrate the 2020 election. Overall 21,253 of our neighbors cast ballots. That's a record turnout of 86.48% in Steele County and tops the previous record of 82.99% set in 2016 when just fewer than 20,000 voters cast ballots.

And more than 200 of our neighbors stepped up to be election judges. They worked tirelessly to help ensure the integrity of the election. Overall, Minnesota has about 3,000 polling places and needed about 30,000 election judges to staff them.

Election officials here and elsewhere couldn't have done it on their own. Their election responsibilities are immense. And this year, their jobs were even tougher because of COVID-19—extra safety precautions were needed at the polls and the increased demand for absentee ballots kept them at work many nights before and after the election.

Yes, this was an historic election.

More Americans voted in 2020—and voted by mail—than in any other election in U.S. history.

Steele County residents were no exception. According to the Minnesota Secretary of State, more than 9,000 registered voters in Steele County requested an absentee mail-in ballot. Of those, more than 8,500 ballots were returned.

For these reasons alone, we must not allow the 2020 election to be remembered for its divisiveness. This isn't our first election... but some are acting as if it is.

The questions themselves aren't the issue. As Ben Franklin said: "It's the first responsibility of every citizen to question authority." The issue is what we do with—and how we respond—to those questions.

Minnesotans are fortunate. This state's election process is built on a system of checks and balances. Here, the integrity of the process matters. Even after the votes are counted and certified, we audit to make sure the machine counts are accurate.

As one first-time election judge who helped with the Steele County audit said: "The whole process makes me believe the system really works."

What a great way to remember the 2020 election.

GUEST COLUMN

Give thanks for our many blessings

BY JAN MITTELSTADT
TIPPETT

Sarah Josepha Hale was on to something.

She was an American writer, a teacher, and an editor whose magazine campaign gave us Thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday of November.

And in a different matter, she was the author of the nursery rhyme, "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Her accomplishments and contributions are not widely known—a shame, in my opinion.

She was the editor of Godey's Lady's Book for 40 years, from 1837 to 1877 when she retired at age 90. In its day, the magazine had influence that we can't imagine today. It had no significant competition and with that it credited for influencing fashion, architecture and promoting literature and poetry.

And in no small matter, her editorials convinced President Abraham Lincoln to declare the last Thursday in November as a federal holiday in 1863. The holiday remained on that date until 1939, 1940 and 1941 when President Franklin Roosevelt changed it to the next to the last Thursday in November in order to perk up the Christmas retail shopping season by adding a week for shopping.

To us, that move forward seems unlikely and unneeded but apparently stores and shops didn't decorate and drag out the Christmas items in September (or before) in those days. In those days, advertising goods for Christmas was believed to be inappropriate.

Although there were certainly more serious matters to consider, FDR's idea was not well accepted and politicians had plenty to say. Some things, dear readers, three, have not changed. Republicans said it was an affront to the memory of President Lincoln and stayed stuck on the last Thursday of November. The next to the last Thursday was called "Franksiving" or the Democratic Thanksgiving. The score in the states was 23 going along with FDR and 22 opposing it. And Texas celebrated both days.

A presidential declaration isn't binding so Congress stepped in and from 1942 onwards, Thanksgiving has been proclaimed by Congress as being on the fourth Thursday in November. If the shopping season could only start with Thanksgiving (just imagine all those racing engines at the starting line), it would be a short season this year.

America didn't invent Thanksgiving. Setting aside time to give thanks for our blessings and for celebrating the harvests are part of many cultures and communities. Days of prayer were familiar to the American colonists.

The event that Americans call the "First Thanksgiving" was between September and November in 1621. The Pilgrims celebrated their first harvest for three days and was attended by 90 Native Americans and 53 Pilgrims. We know about this because two colonists wrote personal accounts that survived over the years, another good reason to admire the written word.

But, Thanksgiving

isn't without its critics. It is considered by some as a national day of mourning for the conquest of Native Americans by the colonists. Our history is complex.

Celebrations—and the time to roast the turkey—were regionally held at different times and dates for several centuries until Sarah Josepha Hale convinced President Lincoln to set the date. Our traditions also varied from region to region. Football came to the holiday when football arrived in the 1880s.

Personally, I'm glad that pigeon pie, popular in the 1600s and 1700s, didn't follow us to today. More than 45 million turkeys will be roasted (or maybe deep fried) this year. There will be mashed potatoes, stuffing (also called dressing in some families), sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, corn, and sauerkraut (in my family). Green bean casserole didn't come along until 1955 and remains a staple for many.

Of course, there's the pumpkin pie. The Festal brand is the best, of course.

Because of the pandemic, the gatherings will likely be smaller this year and the leftovers greater. There probably won't be as many dishes to wash.

Spoken aloud or not, it is important to give thanks—at least one day a year—for our many blessings and gifts. So, from today until Nov. 26, let us do just that.

Jan Mittelstadt Tippett is a retired daily newspaper editor and publisher and a native of Steele County. She can be reached at jmittett@midco.net.



Veteran journalist Howard Lestrud covers the state football championship game featuring the Blossoms of Blooming Prairie last November at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis. Howard always had a camera and notebook in hand to cover events going on around the area. He is retiring after suffering a minor stroke.

STAFF FILE PHOTO

Losing a great community journalist

For almost six years our readers have enjoyed the benefit of a veteran community journalist covering Blooming Prairie and other areas of Steele County.

Whenever I needed something to be covered, I could always count on Howard Lestrud to be there. His work ethic is unmatched as no one I have ever worked with comes close. He is one of the hardest working journalists I have ever seen.

I still remember back to many years ago when I first met Howard at the Minnesota State Fair as he was taking in the great get together with his wife Judy and Darrell and Cindi Hansen. Upon learning of Howard's background and possibly moving to Blooming Prairie, I right away thought it would be a major coup for me to have Howard working for my newspaper.

With Howard soon moving to Blooming Prairie for "retirement," it took a little coaxing and another editor going out on medical leave to get him to at least join us temporarily. I've always heard people say retirement is way overrated any way, right?

And reporting he did. He began reporting again by providing a few stories each week. But that was only the start of what was yet to come.

Howard was a dream to have on staff. He was always kind of in stealth mode uncovering interesting and relevant stories of people and places



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

within the community. I didn't always know exactly what Howard was working on, but one thing was certain. By Sunday nights, I could expect my email inbox to be full of stories and photos from Howard for that week's paper. Quite often he provided too many things that they had to be held for another week. Such a dilemma!

A few years ago Howard shared with me that he would have to cut back because he had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. I'm not sure what happened as he ended up doing the opposite of what he told me he was going to do. He didn't cut back at all, but rather did more than he ever had.

I lost count but there were weeks where he did as many as 12 stories in one week. Keep in mind this was a "retired" journalist working part time. He regularly did more than full-time journalists I have on staff.

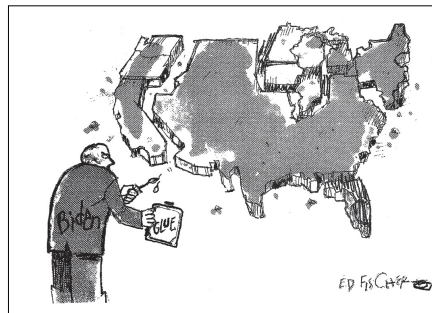
While Howard usually focused on the lighter side of things going on around us, he didn't ignore hard news when

it presented itself. Howard is a bulldog when it comes to exposing the truth and holding government officials accountable. That was no more evident than the recent situation with Blooming Prairie's police chief and city council. He is very passionate about transparency in government.

It goes without saying that I am heartbroken that Howard's journalistic career has come to an end after almost 60 years in the industry. He didn't quite make the length of his close personal friend Sid Hartman, who recently died at age 100 and logged in 75 years with the Minneapolis newspaper. Howard suffered a minor stroke a few weeks ago and is being forced to finally go into retirement on a regular, full-time basis.

It's sad to see Howard go, but I rejoice with him in the wonderful career he had. He has touched so many lives over the years with his writing and photography. I'm just glad that he was able to end his career at my newspaper. I am grateful for what he did for this newspaper, and perhaps most importantly, what he provided our readers with each and every week.

We are losing a great journalist, but he is gaining a well-deserved retirement. I hope you will join me in going in hot pursuit of wishing him the best as he ventures into this latest chapter of his life.



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Publisher.....Rick Bussler
News Editor.....Deb Flemming
Office Manager.....Sherrie Pechan
Sports Editor.....Alex Nuehring
County Writer.....Chris Baldwin

DEADLINES

News: Noon Fridays.
Web: 11 p.m. (Daily)
Advertising: 4 p.m.
Thursdays.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Steele, Dodge,
Freeborn & Mower\$46
Elsewhere
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Out of state.....\$52

A state and national award winning weekly



MINNESOTA
NEWSPAPER
ASSOCIATION

2020—9 state awards
2019—7 state awards
2018—6 state and
4 national awards
2017—2 state and
3 national awards
2016—8 state and
6 national awards

2015—7 state and
4 national awards
2014—3 state and
1 national award
2013—7 state and
2 national awards
2012—2 state awards
2011—4 national awards

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

BP distributes final CARES Act funds

City in talks with Dollar General possibly coming to town

BY ALEX NUHREING
STAFF WRITER

The allocation of the remaining funds from the CARES Act, the possible annexation of Dollar General and a change in the hours of operation at RC Race Track were among the topics the Blooming Prairie City Council discussed on Monday, Nov. 9.

With the deadline to spend the federal Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act funds fast approaching, City Administrator Andrew Langholz said the city addressed the economic impact of COVID-19 by dividing businesses

into two tiers. Tier one businesses were those that were closed by state mandate or had to operate at 50% or less capacity and they could receive a maximum \$15,000, while tier two businesses were those that were negatively impacted by COVID-19 and they could receive a maximum \$10,500.

"Every business that did apply was eligible so we did have seven businesses and we worked with the county, they put forth money as well, so the total grant amount was \$89,267.33 so we were able to distribute that last week," he said. "That was a very good thing. It's

nice to have some good news during this time."

He added that the remaining portion of the CARES Act will be used for payroll reimbursement and about \$10,000 at the most will be earmarked for a new washer-extractor. The motion to approve the remainder of the CARES funding to be allocated to eligible payroll expenses carried unanimously.

Earlier, when asked about the possibility of Blooming Prairie annexing Dollar General, Langholz said, "It's not a done deal by any means. We have the option of annexing, but we absolutely want

to annex them because they're right on the outside of town."

However, he mentioned that the store would not hook up with the city's water or sewer lines because the city has no services that extend that far so the store would have to build its own lines and run it about two blocks to hook up with the city's lines.

Later, the council re-evaluated a conditional use permit for RC-2 Race Track.

"They've abided by all the rules of the track, the fencing, the signage and hours of regulation things like that so there's no problems there," Langholz said.

The city council then got the opportunity to share its concerns about increasing the track's hours of operation.

Nathan Schumacher, a representative for the race track, said racers would like to increase the hours of operation, which currently are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekends and 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays, to give themselves some more wiggle room in case there is a weather delay or they want to test something they've changed after a race.

After some discussion, the council decided to approve a change in the race track's hours of operation to 10 a.m.

to 8 p.m. every day with the stipulation that track managers ask the city for a variance in advance if they want to race later than 8 p.m. during the summer when the sun's out later. The updated conditional use permit will last a year and the city council will re-evaluate it again next November.

Earlier in the meeting, the council approved the closure of Main Street from Second Avenue to Third Avenue beginning at 8 a.m. and lasting until 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5.

The next city council meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 14.

COVID TESTING: draws hundreds FROM AL

Caron couldn't have asked for better timing with the testing event as COVID-19 cases have been exploding in Steele County over the past few weeks. On the day testing began, Caron learned that Steele County had 165 new corona cases within the previous week, a record for the county since the pandemic began in March. The county was on pace to set yet another record last week.

The testing events come as Minnesota Governor Tim Walz has directed increased testing all across Minnesota. There have been previous events in Waseca, Northfield and Faribault. Earlier this month during a testing event in Little Falls, one out of 10 people came back positive for COVID-19, Caron said.

Owatonna expected to test around 1,200 people. The final numbers from last week's event were not available when this edition went to press. However, Caron expects a high positivity rate around 15% in the county. "The positivity rate will point to give us a clue as to how much community spread is out there," she said.

Caron is proud of the people who came out to get tested. Despite the negative comments surrounding COVID and its impact on society, she said the event was "refreshing, motivating and very uplifting," in the midst of the worst health crisis in more than a century. "This is a positive that our residents do care and think



Steele County Public Health Director Amy Caron assists with a shield and mask in place at the communitywide testing event in Owatonna Nov. 10. About 900 people were tested during the two-day event at the armory.

beyond themselves," she commented. "They don't want to spread it to others."

The overall goal of the testing event, Caron said, is to identify who has COVID so that Public Health can gain insight into where people are picking up the virus through case investigations that typically happen after someone tests positive. "If we can connect it to some place, we would know what restrictions to put in place," she said. "We also want to be able to get close contacts in quarantine as quickly as possible so we don't have a ripple effect," she added.

Caron said Steele County's public health system is currently in an emergency crisis. "Our system has been

overloaded for about 1½ weeks," she said.

Public Health usually reaches out to every positive case to do trace investigations and offer advice. But with record numbers coming in every week, the health agency is not able to keep up with the cases and contact people in a timely manner. "We are doing the best that we can, but our staff is overwhelmed," Caron said. "It will take us some time to reach people."

She offers this advice: "If you come out positive, do 10 days of isolation even if you don't get a phone call from us."

Staff members have been putting in extra hours as no staff has been added since the pandemic began. Caron is worried about what

the extra burden the crisis is creating.

"I'm very worried about staff burnout," she said.

As for the communitywide testing event, Caron was responsible for bringing it to Owatonna. Steele County was not initially chosen for the event, but Caron did some advocating starting back in late September to get the testing event in Owatonna.

"I didn't give up," Caron said. "I always advocate for the little guy. I have a real passion for working in rural Minnesota."

For Lori and Al Lysne, they were going to have to wait two or three days before learning if they tested positive. They recommend others to get tested. "It's a no brainer to do it," Lori says.

Owatonna replaces parade with Holiday Cruise

While Owatonna's holiday parade has been silenced by COVID-19, the community is still finding ways to bring holiday cheer to folks.

Owatonna will be hosting a Holiday Cruise on Friday, Dec. 4 beginning at 5:30 p.m. People will be able to in their vehicles cruise around Central Park as well as the downtown businesses along North Cedar Avenue, according to Brad Meier, director of the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce.

Central Park, Meier said, will feature new holiday lights

this year and will be on display during the cruise.

The chamber is encouraging businesses to decorate their buildings with holiday lights as well as other decorations. There will be a contest to determine which business has the best decorations. Prizes will be awarded.

Meier said the cruise event will be the largest public event for the holidays this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. "From a communitywide standpoint, there is not much happening," he said. "It's a bummer."



Last Thanksgiving, Kathy Muellerleile and her grandson, Augustin Muellerleile finished a puzzle together. Kathy is a retired teacher and former member of the Minnesota State Board of Education, the Owatonna School Board member and the Owatonna City Council.

PANDEMIC THROWS: a curveball in Thanksgiving celebrations FROM AL

Health Director Amy Caron said that anecdotally she's hearing of people who've cancelled larger events. "People are worried about the rise in cases."

"When we get together indoors, it's pretty difficult to do the social distancing," said Caron.

And keeping at least 6 feet away from people who don't live with you is key to minimizing the risk of infection at indoor social gatherings, according to the Minnesota Department of Health.

Other recommendations include:

- Opening windows and/or doors to allow air to flow, if gathering indoors.

- Wearing a mask indoors and outdoors if gathering with anyone who does not live with you.

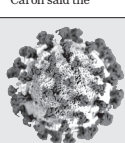
- Encouraging guests to bring their own food, drinks, and treats. Do not share utensils or drinking cups.

Hosts are also encouraged to keep a list of invited guests in case one of them gets COVID-19. The list will be helpful if contacted by a health department case interviewer.

NEW CASES: double in one week FROM AL

load is 20-to-40-year olds. "This is showing we have very wide community spread," she said. She added they cannot attribute the spike to any significant outbreaks within businesses or schools.

Despite the explosion in cases locally, the Owatonna hospital is still not at surge capacity, Caron said. However, she said, the hospital is worried about staffing shortages at the present time. Some staff members have tested positive while others are in quarantine or taking care of their own loved ones who are sick.



COVID surge is also stretching local ambulance crews pretty thin as they are having to take on more transfers between hospitals. "It's overloading the system," she said of COVID.

As the virus spreads rapidly, new restrictions went into place Friday for Minnesota bars and restaurants. They are now required to close at 10 p.m. as officials aim to control the spread of what has been coming from 20-to-30-year-olds most likely to be in those establishments late at night.

"It's worth a shot," Caron said of the new restriction. "There isn't

any great answer to any of this. We hope it will curb some of the spread."

Caron hopes things will settle down in the coming weeks, but she's not overly optimistic. She said her greatest concern is the upcoming holidays beginning with Thanksgiving next week.

Officials are encouraging people to not be in large groups of people. The current recommendation for getting together is for 10 or less from no more than three families. Caron says people should meet in a place where they can spread out more while

COVID-19 CASES

384 New weekly cases in Steele County

1 New death in Steele County

2,961 Total deaths in Minn.

wearing face masks.

"Everyone will have to weigh their own personal risks," Caron said. "We should take the precautions we have been doing all along and do our best."

Caron noted the real impact of the Thanksgiving holiday will not be known for up to two weeks after.

COVID-19 UPDATE

MN 224,000
Deaths 2,961
Recovered 94,416

Steele 1,406
Deaths 5
Recovered 811

Dodge 678
Deaths 0
Recovered 433

Freeborn 1,107
Deaths 5
Recovered 1,931

Mower 21
Deaths 21
Recovered 21

AS OF NOV. 16, 2020

BLOTTER
SPOTLIGHT**BLOTTER SPOTLIGHT: At 12:18 p.m., a hit and run accident resulting in property damage occurred in the 1600 block of Cedar Ave. S.**

MnDOT offers new ways to get winter driving alerts

Motorists are now able to get text message or email alerts for winter driving conditions for state highways in the 11 counties of southeast Minnesota, according to the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

The new alerts are aimed at people who typically drive or want to be aware of situations, such as winter crashes, drifting snow, icy roads or visibility issues, which might significantly diminish conditions or close highways.

"Motorists want information to help them make smart driving decisions," said Mike Dougherty, MnDOT District 6 director of public engagement and communications in Rochester. "People can choose to

sign up for the alerts either via text message or email, which gives them another option from MnDOT to be safe on the roads."

People interested in signing up may go to the MnDOT website mndot.gov/d6 and look for Winter driving updates. Click the link and choose if you'd like text message or email updates. The alerts are for state highways in southeast Minnesota in the counties of Steele, Dodge, Freeborn, Mower, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Olmsted, Rice, Wabasha and Winona.

Motorists will only see alerts when there is significant weather that is likely to affect or is affecting travel in the region. Alerts will also be sent if there are crashes that may delay

or divert traffic for several hours.

On social media, look for information on alerts or winter driving conditions in southeast Minnesota that use the hashtag #SEMN-winter.

MnDOT reminds motorists to not review texts while driving. Minnesota has a hands-free phone law. The law allows a driver to use their cell phone to make calls, text, listen to music or podcasts and get directions, but only by voice commands or single-touch activation without holding the phone. Remember, hands-free is not necessarily distraction-free.

For updated road condition information in Minnesota, call 511 or visit www.511mn.org.

CRIME BRIEF

Man comes up on losing end of silencing act

It was a battle of the silencing act by a motorist against the patience and persuasion act by police.

Just after midnight on Nov. 8, an Owatonna police officer saw a motorist fail to yield and almost strike two pedestrians near Main Street and Cedar Avenue. The officer stopped the vehicle and detected obvious signs of intoxication from the driver, who was identified as Andrew Roseland, 37, of Owatonna, according to police.

When the officer asked Roseland to exit the vehicle to perform field sobriety tests, he refused by rolling



Andrew Roseland

up his window and locking the doors. For about 17 minutes, the officer and Roseland staged a battle of who could outlast the other. The officer used patience and persuasion with Roseland before he finally agreed to shut off and exit the vehicle.

Police said Roseland failed the sobriety tests and was taken into custody. He later provided a breath test, which showed his alcohol level at 18 or twice the legal limit.

Roseland has been charged with two counts of third-degree DWI, which are both gross misdemeanors.

Police to crackdown on seat belt use

Extra seat belt enforcement will be taking place across Minnesota over the next two weeks.

The enforcement known as the Click it or Ticket campaign began Monday and continues through Nov. 29. More than 300 agencies will be enforcing the seat belt

law and reminding motorists to drive smart.

State safety experts say dangerous unbelted choices are leading to increased road fatalities. Between Jan. 1 and Nov. 1, preliminary reports show 85 unbelted motorists died on Minnesota roads compared to 61 this time last year.

The unbelted fatalities are the highest overall year-to-date since 2012 when there were 97.

Of particular concern is what adults are teaching young people. State officials say adults must take the time to correctly use child restraints, teach children the value of buckling up

and model seat belt use.

From 2015 to 2019, 17 children ages 0-7 were killed in motor vehicles. Seven of the victims were properly secured, six were not properly restrained and restraint use was unknown in four fatalities.

"As Minnesotans, we pride ourselves on being

responsible," says Mike Hanson, director of the Office of Traffic Safety.

"The 93.4% of front seat occupants wearing their seat belts in our state is amongst the highest in the country. But for some reason, we're slipping back into deadly, old habits," he said. Hanson said failing to

buckle up, even one time, could lead to a lifetime of regret and heartache.

"A seat belt is your best defense when another driver makes a mistake. Protect yourself and protect your passengers. Drive smart and buckle up so you can come home to your loved ones at the end of the day."

COURT NEWS
Steele County

The following case was heard in Steele County District Court the week of Nov. 2 with Judge Joseph A. Buettel presiding: Nicholas L. Dube, 27, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony possession of firearm and misdemeanor tampering with motor vehicle. He was sentenced to \$382.67, 60 months in St. Cloud State Prison and 30 days in county jail. The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Nov. 2 - 8:

BLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Abdullah Y. Adem, 26, Minneapolis, no insurance, expired tabs, invalid license and possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, \$375; Brooke M. Bigley, 46, Medford, hands free violation, \$125; Eliezer Caraballo, 25, Austin, expired tabs, \$125; Patricia J. Grubish, 60, Owatonna, expired tabs, \$105; Kylie D. Kaplan, 21, Owatonna, speeding, \$125.

MN DEPT. OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

Timothy R. Garbers, 21, Owatonna, take migratory game birds with aid of bait, \$425.

MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER

Zachariah E. Ahrens, 26, Blooming Prairie, seat belt, \$100; Billisha T. Breakfield, 25, Kansas City, MO, speeding, \$375; Allison S. Bruegger, 18, North Mankato, speeding, \$125; Valerie J. Cowan, 55, Blooming Prairie, hands free violation, \$125; Kate R. Hammer-Murphy, 40, Hot Springs in Garland, IA, speeding, \$215; Zamzam B. Hassan, 18, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Renata Kovacevic, 26, Johnston, IA, speeding, \$115; David A. Marder, 24, Palm Beach, FL, speeding, \$125; Rachel N. Miller, 25, Columbia, MO, speeding, \$125; Aymen A. Mohamed, 16, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Ka R. Moo, 26, Albert Lea, no license, \$175; Luke D. Romness, 22, Hudson, WI, speeding, \$115; Wyatt A. Ryan, 24, Rochester,

speeding, \$115; Jeffrey E. Scherer, 43, Prior Lake, speeding, \$215; Burchard A. Smith, 28, New Richmond, seat belt, \$100; Aaron J. Sternhagen, 27, Bloomington, speeding, \$135; Mary B. Stone, 48, Colorado Springs, CO, speeding, \$135; Briana L. Tjan, 24, Omaha, NE, speeding, \$115; Matthew A. Vandenberg, 17, Owatonna, seat belt, \$100; Elizabeth M. Viner, 58, Iowa City, IA, hands free violation, \$125; Melinda D. Wallace, 55, Midlothian, TX, speeding, \$115.

OWATONNA POLICE
DEPARTMENT

Cliff L. Caron, 24, Warsaw, trespassing, \$175 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Kimberly C. Considine, 28, Brahm, revoked license, \$275; Melissa E. Corona, 31, Owatonna, dangerous dogs, \$175; Gavin T. Ellis, 18, Fairbault, speeding, \$115; Robert A. Ellis, 30, Owatonna, DWI, \$406, 4 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance evaluation and 2 years of supervised probation; Vincent R. Gar, 37, Owatonna, financial transaction card fraud, \$1,504.82, 3 days in county jail, no contact with victim or co-defendant, obtain permission to leave the state and 2 years of supervised probation; Cory M. Johnson, 28, Owatonna, seat belt, \$100; Jessica M. Larson, 38, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Diana I. Morales Santiago, 43, Owatonna, school bus stop signal, stay of adjudication, 1 year of unsupervised probation; Leroy C. Newman, 61, Owatonna, right turn violation, \$125; Javier Ojeda, 23, Fairbault, permit violation, \$125; Haley J. Stout, 30, Austin, seat belt, \$100; Jacob S. Sylva, 23, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Nicholas S. Zamora, 33, West Concord, no insurance, \$275.

STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Crystal L. Alonzo, 38, Owatonna, stop sign, \$115; Roxanne R. Aschman, 38, St. Paul, DWI, \$400, 1 day in county jail, chemical assessment, no alcohol or controlled substance

use, do not enter liquor establishments, attend MADD impact panel, 30 hours of community service and 1 year of supervised probation; Jesus Bautista Arenas, 26, Medford, suspended license, \$275; Logan M. Buckles, 17, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Ashley G. Gueth, 19, Ellendale, domestic assault, stay of adjudication, diversion program, domestic abuse counseling and 2 years of supervised probation; Emily A. Carmichael, 23, Lakeville, speeding, \$115; Jason A. Dalbec, 43, Ellendale, speeding, \$115; Keith J. Dodge, 55, Blooming Prairie, speeding, \$115; Brian L. Estey, 48, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Aldo O. Garcia, 50, Fairbault, cancelled license, \$275; Travis M. Gasner, 18, Fairbault, speeding, \$275; Mark A. Hughes, 44, Brooklyn Park, speeding, \$115; Martin J. Klausmeier, 25, Medford, speeding, \$115; Breanna K. Klejnski, 16, Claremont, speeding, \$115; Mercedes T. Kubat, 24, Ellendale, hands free violation, \$125; Justin J. Lacher, 39, Owatonna, burning permit violation, \$125; Cassie K. Meisner, 24, Fairbault, speeding, \$115; Michael S. Myers, 29, Owatonna, speeding and littering, \$265; Scott A. Piper, 51, Zumbrota, speeding, \$115; David J. Steiner, 53, Medford, DWI, \$150, 3 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, substance abuse subtle screening inventory, obtain permission to leave the state and 1 year of supervised probation; Ryan P. Stinnett, 21, Ellendale, fleeing a peace officer, \$75 and 18 days in county jail; Cody J. Tesch, 22, Fairbault, no insurance, \$275; Mark A. Williams, 62, Decorah, TX, hands free violation, \$125; Nicholas S. Zamora, 33, West Concord, no insurance, \$275.

POLICE BLOTTER
Steele CountyBLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE

Nov. 11
DWI: Officer made a DWI arrest at Highway Ave. N. and 5th St. NE at 3:41 p.m.

OWATONNA POLICE

Nov. 6
Identity Theft: Officer took a report of identity theft in the 900 block of 13th St. SE at 8:55 a.m.

Nov. 7
Arrest: Police arrested motorists during traffic stops on Highway 14 in Owatonna Township at 2:23 p.m. and in the 400 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 10:24 p.m.

Nov. 7
Hunting: Police assisted with a hunting complaint in the 400 block of 32nd Ave. NW at 4:43 p.m.

DWI: Officer made a DWI arrest at Murray St. SE and Truman Ave. SE at 11:43 p.m.

Nov. 7
Fraud: Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 500 block of State Ave. NW at 9 a.m.

Nov. 8
Thefts: Police received theft reports from the 1800 block of 4th Ave. SE at 12:13 p.m. and the 1500 block of St. Paul Road NE at 7:16 p.m.

Nov. 8
DWI: Officer made a DWI arrest in the 200 block of School St. E at 12:57 a.m.

Nov. 8
Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 300 block of Rose St. E at 7:30 a.m.

Nov. 8
Assault: Police responded to an assault in the 1400 block of Lincoln Ave. S. at 5:16 p.m.

Nov. 9
Thefts: Police took theft reports in the 400 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 10:13 a.m. and the 100 block of Oakdale St. SW at 10:35 a.m.

Nov. 9
Shoplifting: Officer made a shoplifting arrest in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 1:08 p.m.

Nov. 10
Fraud: At 10:33 a.m., a fraud incident occurred in the 100 block of Park Square W.

Nov. 11
Theft: At 2:26 p.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 1500 block of St. Paul Road NE.

Nov. 11
Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 100 block of 26th St. NW at 2:32 p.m.

Nov. 11
Shoplifting: At 7:52 p.m., a shoplifting incident occurred in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W.

DWI: Officer made a DWI arrest at Main St. E and Grove Ave. S. at 12:59 a.m.

Nov. 7
DWI: Deputy made a DWI arrest at Highway 14 W. and 38th Ave. SW in Owatonna Township at 1:07 a.m.

Nov. 7
Domestic: Deputies responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1800 block of 44th Ave. SE in Havana Township at 7:53 a.m.

Nov. 7
Fraud: Deputy took a report of a fraud incident in the 6800 block of Frontage Rd. W. in Medford at 7:22 p.m.

Nov. 7
Theft: Deputies received a theft report from the 700 block of School St. in Ellendale at 7:35 p.m.

STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF

Nov. 7
DWI: Deputy made a DWI arrest at Highway 14 W. and 38th Ave. SW in Owatonna Township at 1:07 a.m.

Nov. 7
Domestic: Deputies responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1800 block of 44th Ave. SE in Havana Township at 7:53 a.m.

Nov. 7
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Nov. 7
Theft: Deputies received a theft report from the 700 block of School St. in Ellendale at 7:35 p.m.

ARRESTS
Steele County

OWATONNA POLICE
Darren Eugene Morrison, 35, arrested at 12:18 a.m. Nov. 11, warrant arrest, \$40,000 bail.

Nov. 11, warrant arrest, \$40,000 bail.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE
Adam David Wacek, 36, arrested at 5:42 p.m. Nov. 10, probation violation warrant arrest, held for court.

Nov. 10, probation violation warrant arrest, held for court.

COURT NEWS
Dodge County

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Nov. 1 - 8:

DODGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Curtis J. Bigley, 37, Des Moines, IA, theft, 60 days in county jail; Danae M. Forbes, 41, Zumbrota, DWI, \$510, chemical dependency evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation; Samantha

K. Lebaron, 26, Austin, speeding, \$280; Ashley A. Schickling, 33, Claremont, invalid license, \$180; Shadrik R. Skala, 25, Owatonna, speeding, \$120.

KASSON POLICE
DEPARTMENT
Anthony Bermea, 35, Dodge Center, seat belt, \$105; Ashley A. Braten, 28, Kasson, speeding, \$130; Jesus Chacon, 27, Kasson, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$400, 2 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, 40 hours of community service and 1 year of supervised probation; Thearith J. Chhan, 47, Kasson, seat belt, \$105; Courtney E. Giesler, 35, Rochester, no child passenger restraint system and seat belt, \$105; Jeffrey J. Giesler, 48, Mantorville, stop sign, \$130; Timothy A. Moenning, 20, Dodge Center, seat belt, \$105; Chaz A. Strobach, 21, Fairbault, speeding, Steven N. Tripp, 30, Kasson, seat belt, \$105.

Nov. 7
DWI: Deputy made a DWI arrest at Highway 14 W. and 38th Ave. SW in Owatonna Township at 1:07 a.m.

Nov. 7
Domestic: Deputies responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1800 block of 44th Ave. SE in Havana Township at 7:53 a.m.

Nov. 7
Fraud: Deputy took a report of a fraud incident in the 6800 block of Frontage Rd. W. in Medford at 7:22 p.m.

Nov. 7
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Visit federatedinsurance.com for COVID-19 resources.

It's Our Business to Protect Yours

How to Track Down Old Friends Online



Dear Savvy Senior,
I'm interested in tracking down some old friends I've lost touch with over the years but could use some help. What websites can you recommend that can help me find them?

Tracking Tom

Dear Tom,
Thanks to the Internet, tracking down long-lost friends from many years ago is relatively easy to do and, in most cases, it won't cost you a cent. Here are some tips and online tools to help you get started.

Remembering the Details

Before you begin your search, a good first step is to jot down any information you can remember or find out about the people you're trying to locate. Things like their full name (maiden and married), age or birth date, last known address or phone number, old e-mail address, names of family members, etc. Knowing details can help you turn up clues while they search.

Social Media and Search Engines

After you compile your information, a good place to start your search is at social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram. And search engines like Google and Yahoo.

When using search engines, type in the name of the person you're searching for in quotation marks, for example, "John Smith." You can narrow your search by adding other criteria like their nickname or middle name, the city or state they may live in, or even their occupation.

People Search Sites

If your initial search comes up empty, you can also use people searches like *AnyWho.com*, *Intelius.com* or *WhitePages.com*. These sites will provide a list of potential matches from across the U.S.

Because many people share the same name, these sites will also supply details to help identify the right person, perhaps including their age, prior hometowns, names of relatives, colleges attended or employer.

While these sites are free to use at a basic level, they charge a small fee for providing certain details like the person's contact information. WhitePages, however, sometimes provides home phone numbers for free.

Niche Finding Sites

Here are a few other niche people-finding websites to help you with your search.

To look for old high school classmates, try *Classmates.com*. This site has contact information only for people who have registered with it. But even if your friend hasn't registered, it could provide contact info for another classmate who remains in touch with your friend.

Another option is to check out your high school alumni website. Not every school has its own site, but some do, and you can look for it by going to any search engine and typing in the name of the school with the city and state it's located in. You can also search at *AlumniClass.com*, a huge hosting site for thousands of high schools across the U.S.

If you're looking for old college friends, look for an alumni directory on the school's website. You might be able to access your friend's contact info by completing an online registration. Or, try calling or emailing your alumni relations department and ask them to pass on your contact info to your friend.

If you're looking for someone you served with in the military, *Military.com* offers a free "Buddy Finder" service that has a database of more than 20 million records - visit *Military.com/buddy-finder*. You can also search for free at *GLSearch.com*, *TogetherWeServed.com* and *VetFriends.com*.

If you can't find any current information about the person you're searching for, it could be that he or she is dead. To find out if that's the case, use obituary databases such as *Tributes.com* and *Legacy.com*, which has a newspaper obituary search tool from hundreds of U.S. newspapers.

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

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History from the News Archives

10 Years Ago

Nov. 23, 2010

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

When Travis and Ashley Broskoff of Geneva found out they were having more babies, they were excited. They have one daughter, Presley, and will bring home more babies. On Sept. 28, four new babies arrived - Hattie, Raegan, Lia and Shay, the only boy arrived. They were born eight weeks early, weighing from 3 lbs. 10 ounces to 4 lbs. two ounces and remained in the hospital for five weeks. "We have a lot of help," Travis said. "Without the help of our family and friends we don't know what we would do."

Worlein Funeral Home has once again proven it's a business looking up to. For the third straight year the funeral home has been one of nine in the state and 160 in the nation to receive the Pursuit of Excellence recognition. The award is given by the National Funeral Directors Association. Paul Worlein, owner of Worlein Funeral Home has worked with the business for the past 30 years. He attributed the success of the company to the hard work of employees, who he said have each taken it upon themselves to meet individual goals.

20 Years Ago

Nov. 14, 2000

ELSIE SUNGER, PUBLISHER

Three of four officers of Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA) have been re-elected to one-year terms. The election was held at the board's monthly meeting in Redwood Falls. Re-elected were Thomas A. Kuntz of Owatonna, president; Richard D. Kittelson of Blooming Prairie, vice president; and Jerry McCarthy of Austin, secretary; newcomer to the board, Dennis F. Seurer of New Prague, treasurer.

It seemed like a great turnout for the second annual Holiday Dazzle on Friday night. We must

give the downtown businesses a lot of credit for rejuvenating the holiday shopping season with the great ideas and enthusiasm. It was great to see, despite the cold weather (and snow to get us in the mood). The young kids showing up for their Just for Kix dances, bundled up and breath showing outside their big smiles was a wonderful site. Sleigh rides, food and bonfire were enjoyed by all. Congratulations to downtown businesses for such a great effort.

50 Years Ago

Nov. 11, 1970

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

Members of the Blooming Prairie FFA General Livestock Judging team placed first in Dist. 14 competition at Hormel in Austin. They also had high score of the day in two regions competing in the contest. They swept the "top" individual honors in the competition. Denn Olsen and Gary Schultz were first and second respectively while Ed Butler placed eighth, David Butler (alternate of the team) trailed by only a slight margin. Over 300 contestants were vying for berths in the state contest.

The Blooming Prairie Garden Club held its regular meeting on Nov. 16 at the Community Building. Officers were elected for the coming year as follows: President, Mrs. John Habenschild; Vice-president, Mrs. Frank Thissen; Secretary, Mrs. Clarence Benson; Treasurer, Mrs. Ted Hellick; and Sunshine Representative, Mrs. Grace Morgan. Hostesses were Mrs. Martha Ellinger and Mrs. Marie Fiebigler.

75 Years Ago

Nov. 15, 1945

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

Last Thursday evening was a most eventful one for David Oswald, Bruce Rockne, Lloyd Nor-

man, Edward Riveness, Ronald Johnson and Dean Milton. The formal installation of the local school patrol boys, sponsored by the American Legion, was held. Following dinner, they were duly installed and administered the oath of office. The Legionnaires have sponsored many worth-while projects, but we believe the school patrol is one of the most important ones. Every member of the patrol is properly impressed with the importance of his task and is taught to know the importance of his duties in community welfare.

Lt. Colonel Marion E. Dunn reached her home in Austin last Monday. Dunn is an Army nurse and has been stationed near Honolulu, Hawaii for the last thirty-one months. Before going overseas, she spent six months at the Fitzsimons General Hospital in Denver. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dunn of Austin and the sister of Mrs. Edwin B. Jolson of Blooming Prairie.

Owatonna Photo News -

31 Years Ago

Nov. 16, 1989

TOM SHEA, PUBLISHER

One-hundred high school students from around the country who are mature, senior campaigners with leadership potential and a desire to grow spiritually will meet for Young Life's 50 Year Celebration in San Diego. Three students from Owatonna High School were selected to attend. They are Shane Abraham, Jenny Effertz and Sarah Jensen.

Mayor Klinkhammer assisted with the installation of the newly elected Lincoln Student Council. Students in grades three through six elected the following officers: president, Matt Herzog; vice president, Missy Rue; secretary, Rachel Halverson; treasurer, Robb Tremla. The 32 member student council meets weekly to work on school improvement projects and school spirit events.

Urge council to curb activities of Blue Hen Café

Editor's Note: Local historian Steve Went of Blooming Prairie shared some tidbits about the Blue Hen Café. Over the next three weeks, the Times will reprint some articles concerning the Blue Hen from 88 years ago in 1932.

Reprinted from Thursday, June 9, 1932

Citizens declare roadhouse has become disorderly in neighborhood

COUNCIL TO ACT

Declaring that they had put up with the noise and disturbance as long as they could, E.J. Paulson and R.L. Richardson asked the village council Monday night to take some steps to either have the Blue Hen Café closed or regulated better than it has been during the last few months. According to these men, there is so much revelry out at the roadside cafe that it

is almost impossible to sleep during the night and conditions have been getting worse steadily. Their troubles were climaxed when one of the managers and his wife indulged in a fight on the public highway Sunday morning.

All members of the council expressed themselves as disgusted with the conduct of the place since the present managers took charge last January.

They agreed to take the matter up at once with Harold Nelson, county attorney, to see what legal action could be started.

At present the village has no ordinance covering places such as the Blue Hen and to pass such a regulation would require three months. The council agreed to start the ordinance at their next meeting and to attempt a more direct action in the meantime.



Reflections
HOWARD LESTRUD

Now that I am finally retiring from a busy newspaper career of nearly 60 years, I am taking time to reflect on the many columns I have written the past six years for the Steele County Times.

My column is called Reflections. That's just what it is: reflections on communities, people, farming, education, fund raising, etc.

Oh yeah, I even reflected on Sid Hartman, a close, personal friend... for real.

I have chosen 10 columns that I wrote while a staff writer for the Steele

County Times. Here they are, not necessarily in chronological order.

TOP 10 COLUMNS

1) **Tammi Jo remembered.** Tammi Jo is the loving daughter we lost at age 22. She died in surgery having a second liver transplant. What does Christmas mean to me?

It means gifts, the most meaningful gifts being the birth of Jesus Christ and the birth of my daughter Tammi the day after Christmas. Tammi spells HOPE for all of us, her example of living life to the fullest.

2) **Sid Hartman, my close, personal friend.** He might not know it, but I can claim Sid Hartman as my close, personal friend. Some people call him Sid the Squid and others call him names that cannot be repeated

in a family newspaper. I have known Sid for more than 50 years.

3) **Connie Trom reflections.** If someone would tell her that she is a "mover and a shaker," she would laugh out loud. She's a "mover and a shaker" in the sense that she will accept an assignment, will move it forward and will complete it.

4) **Reflections crash.** A small section of Blooming Prairie was turned into an outdoor classroom on Monday morning, April 4. The classroom setting was a mock car crash involving two vehicles carrying young teenagers. The crash was staged at the intersection of Main Street and SW 4th Ave., just south of Blooming Prairie High School.

5) **Reflections of Darrell.** There are times when I would say he is my favorite brother-in-law and there are other times when he wouldn't even make my top ten. He was about Darrell Hansen, who happens to be married to my wife Judy's sister Cindi. Yes, Darrell is retiring for a second time.

6) **Reflections in a small town.** Blooming Prairie business and industry leader Craig Kruckeberg was so correct when he said not too long ago that it is great to live in a small town. When the chips are down, small town community members roll up their sleeves and help our people in need.

7) **Reflections on Emerson.** It was a smile I will never forget. The toothless smile belonged to Emerson Harbets, 8-year-old daughter of Blooming Prairie Elementary School first grade teacher Rachel Harbets. I am saddened to learn that this memorable smile is gone. Her mother also died of injuries in that crash. Jason, Emerson's brother, and Rachel's son survived the crash.

8) **Reflections on LeMar Nelson.** LeMar Nelson was the heart beat of Blooming Prairie for many years. His heart stopped beating last week with his passing at age 87 but his impact on this small, southeastern

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THE BOLD LOOK OF KOHLER

Audit: One-vote discrepancy found

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Steele County election officials are just about to call the 2020 General Election a wrap.

Overall 21,253 voters cast ballots in Steele County for a record turnout of 86.48%. That tops the previous record of 82.99% set in 2016 when just under 20,000 voters cast ballots.

Unlike the statewide results in the Minnesota's two statewide, national races, Republican candidates carried Steele County. President Donald Trump garnered 4,739 more votes than Joe Biden in Steele County and Jason Lew is outpaced U.S. Senator Tina Smith by 3945. Republican Congressman Jim Hagedorn, who won re-election in the First District, defeated Dan Feehan by 2,823 votes in Steele County.

The county's Canvassing Board certified election results on Friday and election officials conducted a state mandated Post Election Review on Monday. During the review, ballots in two

of Steele County 26 precincts – Owatonna Ward 4, Precinct 1 and Somerset Township – were audited.

Election judges hand counted each of the votes cast in those two precincts in U.S. President, U.S. Senator and U.S. Representative races and compared their results to the tallies that were generated by the voting machines.

A one-vote discrepancy was discovered in the U.S. Senate race in the city precinct. The machine count tallied 542 absentee votes for U.S. Senator Tina Smith, while the hand count found 541 votes.

The Somerset Township hand count and machine tally balanced.

A two-vote discrepancy would have required additional precincts to be hand counted, said Steele County Auditor Laura Ihrke. Additional precinct audits would also be triggered if the discrepancy rate was greater than one-half of 1%. In this case, the error rate was .185% – or below the state trigger.

Monday's audit results will be forwarded to the Secretary of State.



Election judges Barb Wiese, left, and Naomi Uber, sort ballots cast in Owatonna's Ward 4 Precinct 1 during the county's Post Election Review on Monday. Ballots cast in the Presidential, U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representative races were hand counted and compared to the voting machine tallies of those races. Somerset Township results also were audited.

First elected in 1990, Ihrke said she's never had to audit precincts to the audit because of discrepancies.

The hand count and the voting machine tallies matched in the U.S. House of Representatives races in both the city and township precinct audited.

"The whole process makes me believe the system really works," said first-time election judge Cindy Hokanson of

Owatonna, adding that there's a lot of validation built into the process.

"What was shocking to me was how many split tickets there were," Hokanson said. "I always thought that if you voted Red, you voted Red and if you voted Blue, you voted Blue."

Also serving as election judges for the Post Election Review were Brian Jones and Becca Sletten, both members of the Somerset Township Board, and Marcia Dahle,

Barb Wiese and Naomi Uber, all of Owatonna.

Serving on the county's Canvassing Board were Steele County Commissioners James Brady and John Glynn, Owatonna City Council Member Jeff Okerberg, Steele County District Court Administrator Robin Hoesley and Ihrke.

The State Canvassing Board will meet on Nov. 24 to certify statewide results of the Nov. 3 State General Election. The state will cast its

ballots for the Electoral College on Dec. 14. In Minnesota, each party chooses 10 electors. The party that wins the presidential popular vote in the state gets all 10 spots.

Since 2015, state law requires all the electors choose the candidate who won the popular vote.

The audit results, conducted in the boardroom at the Steele County Administration Center in Owatonna, will be forwarded to the Secretary of State.

BP re-elects mayor along with 2 new councilors

BY ALEX NUHRING
STAFF WRITER

Once all the votes were tallied, incumbent Blooming Prairie Mayor Curt Esplan won his re-election bid by receiving 63 more votes than his challenger, Tom Blome, while Greg Johnson received 767 votes and Marcy Sundine received 483 votes to earn spots on the city council.

Esplan said his goals for his second term are repairing and maintaining infrastructure, working on getting the city's water tower up next year and getting the city ready for the Hwy. 218 project, which will take place in 2023, and working getting the city's future water tower erected next year. He added that a committee is already working on logos for the water tower.

He also wants to do major repair on Second Street, but before that happens he wants to get some bonds to help pay for it. Since he doesn't know how long it will take to get any bonds, he doesn't know when construction will begin on that project.

If the city can afford it, he wants to buy more equipment, such as a small paver, for larger street repairs so the city's maintenance crew can work on repairing roads in Spring 2020.

Despite the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in southeastern Minnesota, Esplan hopes more restrictions on businesses won't be necessary. "Small businesses have already been hurt enough," he said.

However, if the surge continues, his advice to Blooming Prairie residents is simple: "Be respectful of others, social distance and don't panic."

In case there is another stay-at-home order, the city has purchased equipment to livestream city council meetings. He hopes it's ready for the next council meeting, but it'll be operational by January at the latest.

In his second term, Esplan hopes more Blooming Prairie residents feel comfortable approaching him directly at any time with any concerns or questions they have about anything city-related. Residents can contact him at bmayoresplan@gmail.com.



Curt Esplan



Marcy Sundine



Greg Johnson

Sundine, a first-time city council member, said she's excited to serve her city starting in January. "I love living in Blooming Prairie and I want to keep it a great place to live and work. I'm excited to be a part of supporting the town's needs and wants," she said.

She explained that she's not looking to make any big changes to the city, but she does want to help bring more businesses to Main Street. Other specific goals Sundine has are building a larger facility to welcome people to town and expanding the youth club. "I want to make sure there's a place for our youth in our community," she said.

Lastly, with COVID-19 having a considerable financial impact on small businesses, she wants to help keep Blooming Prairie businesses going during this difficult time. Johnson could not be reached in time to make our Monday deadline.

Counting absentees

County workers Teresa Clawson, left, and Debbie Pfeifer count absentee ballots at the Steele County Administration Center on Election Day. The county received about 8,500 absentee ballots prior to the election, a record for Steele County.

STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER



Jasinski sweeps all 51 precincts in senate victory

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

What will be remembered as a hard-fought but respectful race ended with the incumbent senator sweeping every precinct as voters returned him to office in District 24.

Senator John Jasinski, R-Faribault, easily defeated DFL challenger Roger Steinkamp, also of Faribault, in the District 24 Senate race. Jasinski had 25,943 votes or 64% while Steinkamp came up with 14,756 or 36%.

"I am honored to have won re-election as state senator for District 24," Jasinski said. "We all know it was an unprecedented year of campaigning in the new environment of social distancing and COVID-19 causing the cancellation of parades, large meet-and-greet events, and, of course, the enjoyable Steele County Fair where I meet so many constituents annually."

Jasinski said he is especially proud of those who helped his campaign win every precinct throughout the district, which spans portions of four counties, including Steele, Dodge, Rice and Waseca counties. "Even though I have run for public office a number of times, the feeling of your neighbors choosing you to represent them never ceases to be anything short of humbling," he said.

Jasinski's opponent, Steinkamp, was new to politics. Steinkamp acknowledged he had an uphill battle going up against Jasinski. Steinkamp said the campaign proved to be a boot camp for him. "It gave me an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the community and the needs," he said.

Name recognition proved to be the greatest challenge for Steinkamp during the campaign. "Nobody knew who Roger was," Steinkamp said. He said he focused on getting some name recognition throughout the campaign as well as getting people to stop and think about the issues.

The political newcomer prides himself on running a campaign focused strictly on the issues. "I intentionally didn't do a character assassination (on

Jasinski) because I think that's a cheap shot," he said. He had his opportunity when Jasinski was arrested for DWI just a month before the election. However, Steinkamp said it was more effective to raise issues about the DWI law itself and the enforcement of it, pointing to other countries that have a far less death rate because of stricter laws.

Steinkamp indicated he would like to have another run at the senate seat in two years after redistricting takes place. "I don't intend to go silent on the issues," he said.

But, he added, if someone younger would like to step up, he would be more than willing to help out. "If there is a fire brand that wants to go for it (in two years), grandpa will be happy to be an advisor," Steinkamp said with a chuckle.

Jasinski said this to say about Steinkamp: "We may have our disagreements on policy, but anyone who steps up to the plate to serve deserves our gratitude and our respect." He added he looks forward to competing with Steinkamp again down the road.

Meanwhile, Jasinski is looking forward to serve on the Senate Republican Leadership Team as assistant majority leader and majority whip.

The biggest item on the legislative agenda next year will be the budget, Jasinski said. Minnesota is facing a projected \$2.5 billion budget deficit mostly because of the coronavirus pandemic and government lockdowns. "Closing this gap will require difficult decisions," he said.

Healthcare, Jasinski said, remains a top concern. "Republicans made it a priority to get health care costs under control after the MNSure/Obamacare debacle, and largely that effort was successful," he said, noting Minnesota now has the lowest premiums in the nation. The challenge is prescription drugs, which remain unaffordable for many, he added.

"When COVID-19 comes under control, I invite you to visit me at the Capitol and sit in on the numerous committee hearings I participate in," said Jasinski. He may be reached at 651-296-0284.

Bennett back in 27A

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER



Peggy Bennett

State Representative Peggy Bennett is ready to serve a fourth term in District 27A after cruising to an easy victory in the general election.

Bennett, R-Albert Lea, snagged 13,416 or 63% of the votes over her DFL challenger Thomas Martinez of Hayward, who earned 7,719 or 36% of the votes. District 27 encompasses the City of Blooming Prairie, southern Dodge County and most of Freeborn and Mower counties.

"I am very grateful and feel honored that people put their trust in me," said Bennett after winning the election. "I will continue to work on their behalf."

Bennett, who is a retired educator from Albert Lea, was first elected to the House in 2014. She is currently the assistant minority leader in the House.

As she heads into another term, Bennett says her goal is to protect "our core government responsibility of K-12 education and nursing homes." She said with a significant budget deficit looming caused mostly by this year's coronavirus pandemic, there will be areas of government that will have to be trimmed back. She expects a budget deficit as high as \$5 billion.

Bennett is focused on people in her duties as a state lawmaker. "I like to serve people and bring their ideas to St. Paul," she said. "I love to listen to people and get ideas from them," she added.

The veteran representative would like to focus on a couple bills that she has championed and push them to the finish line in the new legislative year. One of them is a government reform bill targeting omnibus bills. Bennett said she does not like how so many things get lumped into omnibus bills calling that practice "problematic and not a transparent way to deal with bills." Her goal is to shrink the bills down so they're not so big.

Another bill Bennett is pushing for is accountability with grant spending. She wants "evidence-based government" in which people have to report back how specific grants given out by the state were used in their particular situation. "I want to make sure what we are spending is effective," she said, adding most people are willing to spend money on projects as long as they make common sense.

She would like to get rid of income tax on social security, but highly doubts that will happen next year because of the more pressing issues related to the pandemic.

During her stint as legislator, Bennett has successfully pushed for increased spending for nursing homes. In speaking to nursing home directors, she became flabbergasted that nursing homes were losing \$38 per day per resident. She went to work to find more money for nursing homes. Bennett has also established a law establishing a Bill of Rights for foster siblings, giving foster kids more contact with their siblings. "That touched my heart. It was such a privilege to work with it," she said.

While things are constantly changing with the pandemic, Bennett hopes that the legislature will be able to meet in person instead of remotely next year. She said that if nurses and other essential services must work in person so, too, should lawmakers. But, she quickly added, it will be up to the democratic house to make that call.

Historical director: Future looks bright

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

While the past year has been rocky for everyone, including the Steele County Historical Society, the future is looking bright.

The SCHS hosted its annual meeting last Thursday evening at Torey's Restaurant in Owatonna where they introduced the new executive director, elected board members, and named volunteers of the year to those who did a little extra during the pandemic.

"I was not expecting to take on this new position during a global pandemic," Executive Director Kellen Hinrichsen told the members at the outset of the evening. "But I'm glad that I was able to and I'm glad belong to the Steele County Historical Society. I'm glad to be a part of this organization."

Hinrichsen was announced as the new executive director on Sept. 28. In his speech, he thanked all those who continue to help the society flourish. "We have an amazing staff and an army of volunteers and a community that supports what we do," he said.

"This is all new ground for us," Hinrichsen said of the unique circumstances facing the SCHS. "This pandemic has forced our staff and volunteers to look at new



Steele County Historical Society Executive Director Kellen Hinrichsen speaks to board members and volunteers during last Thursday's annual meeting.

ways to reach out and engage with the community, and I am proud to say that we've done a really good job."

During his speech, Hinrichsen lauded the organization for continuing to operate safely and stay strong

as the pandemic continues to sweep across the globe. "While we're not able to put these events on like we normally

would, we're adapting and we're still providing the opportunities that the public expects from us," he said.

"I see the Steele County Historical Society as an organization with a very strong foundation. We have the resources and infrastructure to continue growing," he said. "We have a community that supports us and shares the belief in the importance of our mission."

Despite the slight snag the pandemic created, Hinrichsen is positive that the future will see the SCHS continue to flourish. "I believe we are in a strong position in the coming years, there are challenges but I am confident that we

will overcome them," he said.

The evening's event also yielded recognition for several volunteers. Sharon Andrews was named the 2020 GAR Volunteer of the Year. The 2020 Volunteers of the Year were the members of Country Schools Committee who helped put together the current exhibit. Members from the American Legion Post 52, 296, and 77 were given the Community Partner awards.

For an organization concerned with the past, the Historical Society will continue to have its eye on the future as they develop new ways of reaching out to the community and sharing its love of the past.

Andrews named 2020 GAR Volunteer of the Year

BY DEB FLEMING
NEWS EDITOR

For the past eight years, Sharon Andrews has spent two afternoons each week at the Steele County History Center in Owatonna documenting items that have been accepted for donation. Last week, she was named the Steele County Historical Society's Genealogical and Archives Research (GAR) Volunteer of the Year.

"I'm truly honored," said Andrews upon learning she had

received the award. "It's something I will treasure because I love working at the History Center. It's a great group of people to work with."

And it all began when she attended a volunteer meeting at the History Center. She'd retired from Federated in 2011, just before the History Center opened. She was curious about the new History Center and was looking for something new to learn.

The PastPerfect archiving software

piqued her curiosity even further. And as she soon discovered there was lots to learn about archiving.

"I'm not a history buff, but the work is very interesting, and very intriguing," she said.

"I like doing the documenting," said Andrews, adding that there is a lot of detail that goes into the PastPerfect computer program she uses at the History Center. The records include a description of the item, its size, age, condition and who donated it.

Andrews also updates the Authority File, which included the names of anyone attached to an item or document donated to the history center. For example, a name listed in a brochure about a donated item would be entered into the Authority File.

In addition, all archived items are scanned or photographed and the images are attached to the searchable record, allowing them to be viewed electronically. The detailed docu-



Sharon Andrews

mentation allows others to search for, review and locate items that might be included in a display at the History Center.

761 Foundation re-elects officers, board members



Officers for the 761 Foundation are, from left standing: Jan Mittelstadt Tippett, vice chair; Greg Stroik, treasurer and Mary Larson, secretary and seated is Bruce Paulson, chair.

The 761 Foundation Board recently re-elected Bruce Paulson as chair of the organization for the coming year. Also re-elected to the executive committee were: Jan Mittelstadt Tippett, vice chair; Greg Stroik, treasurer; and Mary Larson, secretary.

Re-elected to 3-year terms on the board were Stroik, Mark Sebring and George Dow. Paulson, a retired vice president of Evapco and former president of King Company,

has served on the 761 Foundation board since 2012. Tippett, a retired newspaper publisher and editor, has served on the board since 2016. Larson is a founding member of the Foundation board. She served on the Board of Education from 1971-1986. These three officers are all graduates of Owatonna High School.

Stroik has served as the treasurer of the board since its inception. He retired as the CFO of Federated Insurance in 2013.

Representing the Owatonna High School Alumni Association, Sebring has served on the board since 2007. A retired attorney, Dow has served on board since 1992.

Other 761 Foundation board members include: Mark Dietz, Samona Grubish, Paul Knutson, Barbara Judd, Sara McKay, Lucas Arndt and Melanie Sunnarborg.

The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that administers scholarships and funds educational

opportunities and programs in Steele County not usually supported by tax dollars. Since its inception, the 761 Foundation has awarded nearly \$3.5 million for programs and scholarships. Its goal has been, and still is, to provide resources for programs not funded by tax dollars and to provide for post-secondary scholarships.

More information about the Foundation and its grants and programs may be found at 761foundation.com or by calling 507-444-8610.

SCHOOLS SHIFT: back to distance learning FROM A1

safe for students, coaches and advisors to return.

All middle school activities in Owatonna have been suspended until further notice.

"These decisions are the most difficult I have ever had to make in 28 years of education," said Elstad. "It's a very difficult and challenging decision. I have never anticipated making them in my entire life."

Elstad said the switch to distance learning will be "much smoother" than it was last spring when the coronavirus outbreak began and schools had to quickly shut down. The district has utilized the past eight months to prepare for a learning model change. "Last spring it was emergency learning, and now it's distance learning," he said.

The superintendent noted that Michelle Krell, the district's director of teaching and learning, has been the point person behind the scenes with preparing the district for going into distance learning. Elstad said the district has been preparing for the distance learning model since June. While he gives much credit to Krell, Elstad said it has taken everyone within the

district to plan for the transition. "It has been a team effort," he said.

Elstad is happy to have begun the school year with in-person learning and at least make it through the end of the first quarter before being forced to change.

Owatonna's plan right now is to continue with distance learning through Dec. 4, unless current COVID conditions demand a longer period of distance learning. Public Health experts are predicting, however, that the worst is yet to come.

"It's our intention to bring students back when it's safe," Elstad said. "That's my commitment to the community. It's our priority to move students back as soon as we can," he added.

BP SWITCHES NOV. 30

In Blooming Prairie, school officials announced on Friday that they will take a planned distance learning week from Nov. 30 to Dec. 4 for all students in the district. Thanksgiving break is planned for Nov. 25-29.

At this time, Blooming Prairie plans to resume in-person learning on Dec. 7 with Pre-K-6 students being all in-person and 7-12 being in the current hybrid model.

"These decisions are the most difficult I have ever had to make in 28 years of education."

Jeff Elstad
Owatonna Superintendent

"Our goal from the beginning of the school year has been to provide as much consistency as possible for our families, students and staff," said Superintendent Chris Staloch. "We have been fortunate to be able to stay in our learning models from the beginning of the school year until now. That is a testament to all, and we are fortunate to work with great students, staff and families."

Staloch said he understands there are many emotions regarding COVID, distance learning and extra-curricular events. "We know that not everyone will agree with the decisions that are being made, but please know that we are trying our best in a difficult situation," he said. "We care deeply about our kids, their education and all their opportunities to learn and grow."

Rev. Heidi Heimgartner of First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie didn't waste time in voicing her support for the school's decision.

"I fully believe this school decision prevents at least

some further transmission, illness and potentially death in our community," Heimgartner wrote to Staloch. "Leadership requires a hard call sometimes, and yours is a safe and wise one."

MEDFORD CHANGES AS WELL

The Medford school district will begin distance learning on Monday, Nov. 23 through Friday, Dec. 4. The school will have Thanksgiving break Nov. 26-27.

Medford has been operating in a hybrid model at the high school and in-person in the elementary grades.

"After careful consideration and consultation, it was determined that going to distance learning for a short while is the safest for our students, staff and community as a whole," said Superintendent Mark Ristau. "I understand that this will inconvenience many families, and for that I sincerely apologize. We continue to use the recommendations of local health professionals and multiple metrics that are available to schools," he said.

IT'S FUN TO REFLECT: FROM A5

community will be everlasting and has always been positive. LeMar was one of the more recognizable old-timers in Blooming Prairie. He will be remembered as one of the most respected humanitarians in town.

9) The Year 1945 was a monumental one.

Milk cost 31 cents a half gallon. A first-class postage stamp cost 3 cents. Unemployment was listed at 1.9 percent. When in the dark ages did those statistics exist? They actually were the gospel in 1945, my birth year. My daughter Tammi always said to me, "Dad, you lived in the olden days, right? She was right."

10) Reflections on James Leavelle, Dallas

Police Department Detective James R. Leavelle was a good cop and a good friend. Who was James R. Leavelle anyway? Leavelle was the Texas police detective, dressed in a light tan suit and Stetson hat, most recognizable for his stunted look when alleged presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald was shot and killed by Jack Ruby on Nov. 24, 1963. Leavelle died at age 99 on Aug. 29. Take time to reflect on your life. It is fun. That's why I am retiring once again.

Thank you Blooming Prairie.

"We are trying our best in a difficult situation."

Chris Staloch
BP Superintendent

OBITUARIES

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Billie Ulland, 90, Lakeville**Billie Ulland**

Billie Jean Ulland, 90 of Lakeville, died Sunday, Nov. 8, 2020 at Kingsley Shores Assisted Living.

Billie was born Nov. 23, 1929 to Alvin and Clara Bechtie in Valley City, N.D. She graduated from ND State Teachers College and Mankato State College. Billie taught Elementary School in Lancaster, Minn. and Blooming Prairie.

She is survived by her four sons: Mark (Cindy), Paul (Bob), Peter, and Joel (Holly), several Nieces and Nephews and her precious grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband John; Brothers Robert, Raymond and Richard Bechtie; and her Sisters Jane "Sally" Melberg and Nancy McCorkell.

Visitation will be at 10 a.m. and Memorial Service at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 18, at Hosanna Lutheran Church, 9600 163rd Street W., Lakeville.

Johnson joins RE/MAX Venture

Matt Gillard, broker/owner of RE/MAX Venture is pleased to announce Darren Johnson as the newest agent to join the Owatonna RE/MAX office.

"I reached a point in my career when I was looking for new challenges and new opportunities in my work life. Through conversations with realtor friends, and then conversations with Matt and Deb Gillard, I decided that making a career change into real estate was just what I was searching for," said Johnson. "I know that I will draw on my many years in customer service when working with clients and helping them navigate the process of buying or selling a home."

Johnson adds, "I was

**Darren Johnson**

definitely drawn to the team atmosphere at RE/MAX Venture, and their culture of helping and supporting each other, which of course ultimately benefits every client we have."

Gillard said, "Darren cares about our community and has deep roots here, with established relationships among friends, family and work associates. His values align perfectly with our office culture; we are excited to have him on board!"

Located at 118 N. Cedar Ave. in Owatonna, RE/MAX Venture serves Steele County and the surrounding areas, specializing in residential, small acreage, investment and commercial properties.

BOOK NOOK

Libraries encourage education at all levels**NANCY VAILLANCOURT**

Continuing our series about libraries as vital to a city's health, based on the Community Centered article from Public Libraries Online, this week we will look at how libraries encourage education at all levels. Libraries serve as the people's university. In a time when education is increasingly expensive, public libraries provide information and educational opportunities free for all people, regardless of their socioeconomic status. Children can find books at all reading levels. Databases such as LearningZone Express offer interactive tests, tutorials, and eBooks that provide instruction including High School Equivalency (GED), college prep for SAT & ACT, graduate school entrance exams such as GRE, LSAT, & more, and Adult Learning.

Libraries offer opportunities for remote access, making it possible for those who can't get to the library to still access the library's cultural and educational offerings. This includes databases available through home internet, and even a Hot Spot that can be checked out from the library if you do not have internet access at home. At the Blooming Prairie Branch Library we also offer curbside delivery and home delivery within city limits for elderly and those unable to get to the library. Call us at 507-583-7750 to make arrangements.

Libraries go beyond providing content to helping patrons to create their own content. We can offer materials that show how to publish books online, set up blogs or record podcasts. We have offered writing workshops in the past and hope to do so again. Again, just ask if you need help to get started on your special creative projects.

Varied resources are here free for you to use. The staff at the library are ready to help you learn, no matter what stage of life you are in.

**Quilts of Valor**

Blooming Prairie's Quilts of Valor program extends its gratitude through the form of quilts for veterans at a special ceremony Nov. 7 at the BP Servicemen's Club. Top: Eight veterans received quilts. They include, from left: Galen Peterson, Bob Ingvalson, Allen Wilhelm, Doug Miner, Ed Skala, Tony Glynn, Dan Brockmiller and Frank Moon. Right: Doug Miner is shown with his quilt along with his wife, Kristi, and their four children. Bottom: Tony Glynn is shown with his family members. All the veterans received a patriotic quilt stitched together by local quilters. Linda Klemmensen of Sportstitch made a stitched name label for each quilt. These quilts are given out to veterans and it is a way of saying to them, "Thank You For Your Service."



BIRTHDAYS

Nov. 18
 Isabella Heiber
 Rick Swenson
 April Lynn Olson
 Beth Trom

Nov. 19
 Nicholas Bass
 LeMar Nelson
 Shayne Johnson

Nov. 20
 Dudley Smith
 Ethan Johnson
 Pam Ingvalson

Nov. 21
 Abby Wayne
 Alison Mach
 Norma Hegal
 Andrew Wondra
 Jett Swenson

Nov. 22
 Pierce Deyoung
 Joe Morgan
 Shawn Johnson
 Carol Holmes
 Damon Milton
 Donna Maixner
 Kathy Ryks

Nov. 23
 Joseph Schiefert
 Carissa Easton
 Taylor Christianson
 Annette Lindquist
 Amanda Farr

Nov. 24
 Judy Lestrud
 Dave Dahl
 Kara Kubista
 Larry Wurst

ANNIVERSARIES

Nov. 18
 Ron & Marge Schmeling

Nov. 21
 David & Jody Easton

Nov. 19
 Grady & Julie Strand

Nov. 22
 Les & Cathy Shawback

This weekly feature sponsored by:

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 Gene Dornink
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**Recipe Corner****Crockpot French Onion Soup**

4 med sweet onions, thinly sliced
 3 garlic cloves, minced
 4 T butter
 2 T balsamic vinegar
 2 T brown sugar
 3 T flour
 8 oz beer (a little extra doesn't hurt)
 64 oz low-sodium beef stock
 2 T thyme
 1/2 tsp black pepper
 1/2 tsp salt
 French bread
 Mozzarella cheese, sliced

Turn crock pot on high. Add onions, garlic, brown sugar, butter, salt and balsamic vinegar and mix until combined. Cover and let cook for 60 minutes, stirring occasionally, until onions are brown on the edges.

Stir in flour and then let set for 5 minutes. Add beer, beef stock, thyme and pepper. Turn heat down to low, cover and cook for 6 to 8 hours.

Before serving, cut French bread into slices or cubes to serve with (or in) the soup. Once soup is in bowls, sprinkle cheese on top.

Sponsored by

**Legion, Auxiliary to sponsor scholarships**

American Legion Post Commander Bruce Kubicek and Auxiliary President Becky Noble announce that the two organizations will each sponsor a \$500 scholarship again this year.

This will be the 26th year that the scholarships have been furnished by the local American Legion units. Criteria for eligibility include:

- Applicant must have completed at least one semester of their higher education.

- The school they are attending must be an approved institution of higher learning.

- Applicant can be a "traditional" or a "non-traditional" student.

- There are no age limits for these scholarships.

- If you have won one of these scholarships within the past three years (2017-2019) you are then not eligible to win again.

The scholarships are made possible in part by the annual Legion Raffle. "We thank all veterans and others who work on this raffle and also those who support the raffle by purchasing tickets," said Ken Trom of the American Legion.

Scholarship applications may be picked up at the Servicemen's Club, Blooming Prairie Public Library or the Blooming Prairie High School Guidance Counselor office. Applications must be filled out and returned to the club by Tuesday, Dec. 1.



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Prairie Family & Sports CHIROPRACTIC

Faith over fear in a COVID world



Rev. Heidi Heimgartner
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
BLOOMING PRAIRIE

Greetings to God's beloved near and far. A new reality is setting in: community spread of COVID-19 is trending up here in Minnesota. After watching other regions

of the country, now it is our health care workers and facilities that are stretched thin. Businesses, nonprofits, and faith communities need our support. Quarantines at school (yes, even here in Blooming Prairie) are becoming a regular fact of life. My own family has had all of these experiences. I know many of you have, too.

Like you, we don't live in fear. We trust fully in God. And using all the faithful instruments God gives our world in science, medicine, and best practice, it is clear this next chapter is likely to bring larger

challenges than ever. Among the challenges we are realistic about, and faithfully prepared for, continued mask wearing and physical distancing, rescheduling of medical procedures, restrictions on visitors in care settings, changes to work duties, school, and school activities, alternative holiday plans, canceled travel, continued broadcast of worship, online religious education, and more, as together we aim to slow community spread and reverse death rates in our state, nation, world. When I stood at our Servicemen's Club for the

flag raising last week on Veteran's Day, I couldn't help but think of the sacrifices of our servicemen and women, who routinely miss holiday meals during deployments and training. It is what the situation required. And so, I believe my family—as hard as it may feel—is able to forego travel, and one Thanksgiving dinner with multiple extended families, and yes, likely the Christmas ham, too. I have faith that student learning will still happen, wherever and whenever hearts are open to one another. I have faith that we can celebrate the

holidays differently and safely. I have faith that God will comfort us in any loss of tradition. I have faith that we can love our family's elders, who need support and meaningful connection on holidays (but more so, every day). And I have faith that we will gather again, when the time is right. My friends, now is the time for faithful people everywhere to respond with safe actions, humility, and deeper resolve. Remember the greater mission you are serving, and faithfully do whatever the situa-

tion requires. We pastors are truly proud of your faith-in-action these last many months. We know the sacrifices you make are difficult. We know there are weary and sad moments. We experience all of that, as well. And we are committed to support you, pray for you, and reassure you. Safe actions, humility, and deeper resolve is what faith over fear looks like in 2020. *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. -Hebrews 11:1* Be well, and live faithfully.

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN
AURORA LUTHERAN
6329 SE 26th St., Owatonna
Interim Pastor:
Rev. Dale Svendsen
507-451-2819
office@auroralutheranchurch.org
Worship: Sunday at 9 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.

COMMUNITY
LUTHERAN – ELCA
106 Third St. SE, Geneva
Pastor Kristen Verne
507-256-4288
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sunday

FIRST LUTHERAN – AFLC
503 Radel Ct., Ellendale
Pastor Richard Sliper
507-684-2451
Men's Bible Study:
8 a.m. Saturday
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday
Kids church: 9 a.m. and
Confirmation: 10:15 a.m.
Jesus and Me: 3:30-5 p.m.
Tuesday & Thursday
Call to Prayer:
7 p.m. Tuesday
Bible Study:
9:30 a.m. Wednesday
Wednesday School:
6:15-7 p.m. followed by
Youth Group: 7-9 p.m.

FIRST LUTHERAN – ELCA
434 First St. SW,
Bloomington
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Heidi Heimgartner
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mike Valerius
507-583-6821
firstlutheranop.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 – LCMC
2500 7th Ave. NE,
Owatonna
Pastor Greg Schlicker
507-451-4125
goodshepherdowatonna.com
Indoor Worship: Sundays 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Online Worship: Sundays 9 a.m. or anytime on website

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

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

REDEEMER LUTHERAN – LCMC
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-Freeman
Road, Austin
Leandra Anderson, Pastor
507-583-2038 or
507-437-3000
www.ruglutheran.org

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

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

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN – ELCA
1301 Lincoln Ave. Owatonna
Pastors Dave Klaviter and
Jacie Richmond
507-451-7293
stjohnowatonna.org
Worship: 5 p.m.
Thursday & Saturday:
8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Summer Services:
8 a.m. & 9:30 a.m. Sunday

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 – LCMC
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
507-451-2185
Sunday Worship Indoor:
10 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – ELCA
609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
507-451-4520
tclowatonna.org
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Todd Buegler
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Amanda Flay
Deacon: Kris Oppengard
Worship: 5 p.m. Saturday:
8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m. &
10:45 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School:
8:15 a.m. & 9:30 a.m.

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

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

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMC
108 Third Ave. SW, Medford
Pastor Mark Biebighauser
507-451-0447
Worship: 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.
Education Hour: 9 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN – LCMC
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
Sunday Worship Indoor:
8:30 a.m.

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN – ELCA
1909 St. Paul Road,
Owatonna
Senior Pastor:
John Weisenburger
Associate Pastor: Lisa Carlson
507-451-4853
oursaviorsowatonna.com
Worship: 8:15 a.m. –
Traditional: 9:30 a.m. –
Sunday School/Adult
Education
10:45 a.m. – Contemporary

CATHOLIC
CHRIST THE KING
205 Second Ave. NW,
Medford
507-451-4845
Father James Stasienich
Mass: 5:30 p.m. Sat.
Mass: 9 a.m. Mon. & Fri.

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS
307 SW First St.,
New Richland
Father Brian Mulligan
507-234-6244
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL
9946 SE 24th Ave
Owatonna
Father John Wilmot
507-583-2784
www.litomyslweb.com
Sunday Mass at 8:30 a.m.
Litomysl Finance Council:
2nd Thursday
Litomysl Pastoral Council:
2nd Thursday every other
month

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC
150 NE Second St., Hayfield
Father John Wilmot
507-477-2256
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday
Reconciliation: 3:45 pm
Saturday

SACRED HEART PARISH
810 S. Cedar Ave.,
Owatonna

Father Swaminatha
Pothreddy
Parochial Vicar
507-451-1568
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.,
Bloomington
Father John Wilmot
507-583-2784
www.stcolumbanuschurch.com
Mass: 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Reconciliation: 9 a.m.
First Friday & Saturday

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH
512 S. Elm Ave., Owatonna
Father James Stasienich
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. Thurs.)
Adoration Chapel available
Mon. – Fri. 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
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or weekends

CHRISTIAN
CHRIST COMMUNITY COVENANT
540 SE 18th St., Owatonna
Dr. Vincent Castor, 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 J. & Stefanie
Morgan
507-935-8726
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST
200 Sixth St. NW, Ellendale
Pastor Randy Christensen
507-684-2731
www.ellendaleumc.org
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

OWATONNA UNITED METHODIST
815 E. University, Owatonna

Rev. Lisa J. Vick Pastor
507-451-4734
www.owatonnaumc.org
Traditional Worship (Pathways):
9 a.m. Sunday

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

DESTINY CHRISTIAN
2515 Harvest Lane NW,
Owatonna
Pastors Rich and Amy Pettet
507-456-4775
www.destinycc.org
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday
6:30-7:30 p.m. 1st and 3rd
Wednesday

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

NEW BEGINNINGS
332 14th St. NE, Owatonna
Pastors Scott & Joan
Peterson
507-413-0209
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

MENNONITE
PRAIRIE MENNONITE
13638 750th St.,
Bloomington
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 Kirk Bremner
507-433-9042
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

PRESBYTERIAN
ASSOCIATED CHURCH
Presbyterian Church (USA)
and United Church of Christ
800 Havana Road,
Owatonna 507-451-1548
www.associatedchurch.org
office@associatedchurch.org
Sunday Worship: 9 a.m.
(Fellowship, Church School,
and Adult Discussions
follow)
Wednesday Activities: Sept
– May (see website
for schedule)

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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
651-855-4032
Worship: 11 a.m. Sat.
Bible Stud: 9:30 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
Interim Pastor Wendell
Anderson
507-684-3421
www.vibrantlifeag.com
Worship: 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday
Kids Church: 9 a.m.

BAPTIST
FIRST BAPTIST
104 First Ave. NE,
Bloomington
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 Carla Nelson
507-272-9834
www.firstbaptistowatonna.com
Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

BETHEL BAPTIST
1611 Hemlock Ave.,
Owatonna
Pastor Michael Simmerman
507-451-8548
www.bethelowatonna.com
Worship: 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday

ASSEMBLY OF GOD
VICTORY LIFE
105 2nd St NE Geneva
Pastor Diana 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.

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Shrek on stage



STAFF PHOTOS
BY RICK BUELLER

Blooming Prairie High School performed its fall musical, *Shrek*, over the weekend. *Shrek* featured 27 cast members in grades 9-12. Charlie Helmerman shown in the bottom photo holding a flower starred as *Shrek*. The director of the musical was Tamzen Johnson.



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11/18/20

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Noble: Veterans kept America free

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Jack Noble knows from first hand experience what's responsible for keeping America a free country.

Noble, 84, served in the U.S. Air Force from 1955 to 1957 in California. He was a member of a utility squad where he took care of parts. "I was

lucky to get in the Navy Air Force. It was great duty," he said. He especially liked the terrain of southern California, which he calls "beautiful."

While a draft was in place in the mid-1950s, Noble actually volunteered for service before he would have been drafted. "A lot of us young 18 to 20 year olds volunteered

and enlisted," he said, noting most of those drafted in those years were 24 to 25 year olds. "We knew we would be drafted when we were older so we thought we would go in (early) and serve our time. It was not hard to decide to do this," he added. Asked what he enjoyed most about his military service, Noble said, "Meeting

a lot of people and being able to serve our country."

Last week during a Veteran's Day ceremony at the Blooming Prairie Veteran's Memorial, Noble joined other veterans and fourth graders from Blooming Prairie

SEE NOBLE, B8



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

With patriotic face masks, Jack Noble and his wife, Darlene, of Owatonna honor veterans on Veteran's Day, Nov. 11 at the Veterans Memorial in Blooming Prairie. Jack served in the U.S. Air Force from 1955 to 1957.

Top firefighter loves community involvement

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Monday night Owatonna firefighters gathered in their hall as sleet rained down outside to honor one of their own. Ryan Seykora was named Firefighter of the Year by the Exchange Club of Owatonna, an award that has been given out since 2003.

Seykora has been with the Owatonna Fire Department for seven years, and for two and a half of those years he has served full-time protecting his hometown. "It's a town that's given me a lot," he said of Owatonna. "I grew up here and I have a lot of relationships here, and I've met a lot of great people here."

"My fellow firefighters challenge me, they teach me, we work together, and we've built good relationships," he said while recognizing the other members of the department. "The fact that they drive me to improve myself and to be the best at my job is what I appreciate the most."

There's more to being a firefighter than serving public safety. They also have to be involved in the community, something Seykora relishes. "I like the community side and I like being involved in the community. I really enjoy the teaching aspect and trying to develop the next generation of firefighters and keep the proud legacy that we have here at the fire department and pass that on," he said.

"Unfortunately, we've narrowed down our community events due to COVID. What we're concerned about is if COVID comes through



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

This year's Owatonna Firefighter of the Year is Ryan Seykora. He received the recognition on Nov. 9 at the Owatonna Fire Hall with members of his family and fellow firefighters in attendance.

the fire department and one of us gets sick and we have to quarantine and then we can't respond, we can't provide our mission to the community and the surrounding areas," he said while explaining how the current situation has altered the department's practices.

When asked how he felt about being honored Seykora was humble. "It's very difficult to be singled out individually, especially in a job where you have fellow firefighters," he said. "It's humbling, but it's a good thing that the Exchange has honored firefighters for all these years."

"It makes me look back at my seven years and understand that there's a lot of honorary firefighters in my life. They're the people who allow me to do this job," he said. "My family who makes sure the home life is taken care of and my kids are taken care of."

According to Seykora, he was never one of those kids who dreamed of growing up to be a firefighter. "It was never one of those jobs that I said I wanted to be when I was 5 years old. I wanted to be a pro athlete back then," he said with a smile.

"It was always there in my head that I wanted to do that job, but I just never had the opportunity," he explained. "Then I guess the timing was correct and I had the opportunity to get paid on call and then another good opportunity to apply for a full-time position. I'm very grateful for this opportunity to work here and I love being involved and giving back."

Seykora was informally recognized by the Exchange Club of Owatonna and his fellow firefighters during the department's monthly training Monday night, with an official ceremony held Thursday morning.

"This is not just about one firefighter. It's a way to say thank you to all firefighters," OFD Chief Mike Johnson said as the department gathered around its garage. "But in appreciation for outstanding service we recognize one firefighter each year."

Each year the firefighters cast votes for the award, making the recognition even more special. "This year some of the comments I got about Ryan - and I agree with these - is that he excels at training firefighters, and he's very passionate about the fire service and very passionate about training," Johnson said.

Upon receiving the award before his fellow firefighters, Seykora thanked the Exchange Club and all those who help him at his job. "Thanks for always challenging me, for teaching me, and for always working with me on any calls we go on and any training that we do," he said.

Federated appoints new leaders



Michael Kerr



Nicholas Lower

In a significant step forward in planned efforts to develop and install the next generation of strong executive leadership at Federated Insurance, Chairman and CEO Jeff Petters has announced that Michael G. Kerr has been appointed the organization's president and chief executive officer, and Nicholas R. Lower its executive vice president, chief operating officer.

SEE FEDERATED, B2

Flemming named news editor of Steele County Times

Deb Flemming has been named news editor of the Steele County Times.



Deb Flemming

A native of Waseca and graduate of the University of Minnesota, Flemming has spent most of her career reporting for and editing community newspapers. In her new position, Flemming will be responsible for news coverage throughout Steele County. She will also assist Publisher Rick Bussler in editing stories and laying out each week's newspaper.

Flemming's arrival at the newspaper coincides with the recent retirement of Howard Lestrud, who had been at the paper for about six years. The Times is also looking for additional editorial support to continue the strong coverage of Blooming Prairie that Lestrud has provided in recent years.

"Deb is a true community journalist who has a passion for the hometown news that our readers have come to know and expect from our newspaper," said Bussler. "Unlike many newspapers around the country, our read-

SEE FLEMING, B3

How about looking at things with glass half full?



Steele Talkin'
STEPHANIE KIBLER

Once again, we are seeing a rise in COVID cases and pleas to mask-up, wash our hands, keep our distance. As I was listening to the news updates and talk radio it occurred to me that I view the world with my glass half full. All of the conversations seem to be around the negative impact of COVID. And believe me, I realize that many are struggling. As a director of a nonprofit, we have definitely felt the financial impact of the virus. The Museum has

SEE HOW ABOUT LOOKING, B3

NRHEG cheerleaders head to Florida

Do you have spirit? For four cheerleaders from NRHEG High School, they certainly have lots of spirit, and they will be displaying it by performing in the Varsity Spirit Spectacular in the Universal Orlando Resort.

Avery Hill, Eva Wayne, Isabel Stadheim, and Payton Bunn from NRHEG in New Richland will travel to Orlando, Fla. from Nov. 22 - 25 with high school cheerleaders and dancers from across the country to represent the camp brands of Varsity Spirit in the Varsity Spirit Spectacular.

The individuals invited to perform are part of the All-American program at Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) and National Cheerleaders Association (NCA) summer camps across the country. All-Americans are chosen based on superior athletic and leadership skills. Only the top 12% of athletes who attend camp earn the chance to perform in the holiday spectacular.

They will perform in an exclusive performance at the Universal Orlando Resort. Besides enjoying a sunny trip to Orlando, performers will have the opportunity to meet cheerleaders and dancers from across that nation and enjoy a magical holiday season at the Universal Orlando Resort parks.

"I am so excited to have the opportunity to be a part of this event," said Hill, a senior at NRHEG. "I was fortunate enough to travel to London to cheer in the New Year's Day parade in 2018 with this organization and it was amazing! This event provides a great opportunity to represent our school and meet other cheerleaders from all over the U.S."

NRHEG sophomore Wayne says, "I am so incredibly thankful for this amazing opportunity that I have received and cannot wait to perform with my All-American Team in Orlando!"

Bunn, a freshman, said: "I am so excited to perform as a member



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Four cheerleaders from NRHEG High School will be traveling to Florida to take part in the Varsity Spirit Spectacular in the Universal Orlando Resort. The cheerleaders are, from left: Evan Wayne, Avery Hill, Isabel Stadheim and Payton Bunn.

of UCA, All-American Cheer team and am grateful to have this amazing opportunity!"

Added Stadheim, a

NRHEG freshman, "I'm excited about the whole experience, but especially meeting other cheerleaders from all over the U.S.!"

South Country Health Alliance rebounds after huge losses

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

After huge losses in 2019, the South Country Health Alliance rebounded back strongly in 2020. That was the message Leota Lind, CEO of the alliance, delivered to the Steele County Board during its regular meeting Nov. 10.

According to Lind, SCHA finished 2019 with a net gain of \$1.8 million. This comes as a much more positive result for the program following on 2018 huge net loss of \$12.8 million.

"There was definitely a turnaround in 2019,"

Lind said. "Really what drove that is we had favorable revenue due to membership being above budget, and we saw significant improvement in our risk score accuracy."

Lind said that a lot of work went into insuring risk score accuracy. Another significant influence that contributed to 2019 being positive was the application of Medicare frailty factor. "It actually accounted for \$120,000 a month for us," Lind said of the frailty factor. There was also a significant reduction in medical claims throughout 2019 which

helped to contribute to the positive net gain.

"We went into 2020 with a budget of a projected \$870,000 net income," Lind said of this year's finances. "In studying the budget, we knew that we would have a significant decrease in membership down about 37 percent as a result of the exit of the three northern counties."

In fall of 2019 Wade, Todd, and Morrison County all voted to exit the alliance which is now comprised of Steele, Waseca, Sibley, Kanabec, Dodge, Brown, Goodhue, and Wabasha County. Due to this

SCHA cut administrative costs in order to balance the budget.

"We are currently sitting at a reported net gain of \$6.2 million for the year," Lind told the board. The most current financial results were reported on Sept. 30.

"We're seeing increased membership over what we had budgeted largely due to the result of the COVID-19 pandemic." The increase in membership has resulted in favorable revenue, according to Lind.

Looking ahead to 2021, Lind said that there will be rate increases for Medicaid,

PMAP, Medicare, and Abilitycare. "We did see some significant rate increases in 2021," she said. Lind also mentioned the uncertainty of increased claims in 2021 due to COVID-19 which has affected Minnesota DHS policy.

"We have a little of 7,000 COVID-19 tests that have been completed on our membership," Lind explained. "Through claims we have identified 323 members that have had a COVID-19 diagnosis."

There have been 38 hospital admissions through SCHA as a result of COVID-19.

Of the nine member counties, Steele has had the highest rates of testing as well as the highest rates of diagnoses for COVID-19 amongst SCHA members, according to Lind. This has added around \$2 million in expenses in addition to over \$640,000 in expenses for inpatient stay costs.

With the winter season looming on the horizon, and the COVID-19 pandemic showing no signs of slowing down, regional healthcare providers will continue to play a crucial role in greater Minnesota health.

Hy-Vee serves 500 complimentary Veterans Day breakfasts

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Hy-Vee Store Manager Justin Lower was beaming on Veterans Day.

He and his crew had served 500 breakfasts to Owatonna area veterans, active-duty military members and their families that morning.

Cars were lined up at 5:45 a.m., for a breakfast that started at 6 a.m., said Lower, adding that 24 went out the door at 6 a.m.

Due to COVID-19 safety precautions, each breakfast was individually packaged and available via drive-thru in the store parking lot. In the past, the breakfast has been set up as a buffet and served inside the store.

Each breakfast included eggs, bacon, sausage, hash browns,

cinnamon rolls, biscuits and gravy, coffee and orange juice.

"A lot of the younger veterans came in before work," said Lower, estimating that about three-quarters of those who stopped for breakfast were retired military.

That was the case of Mitchell and Lynn Rhodes. Both are retired Air Force. "I'm honored that they do it," said Lynn Rhodes.

The couple met while stationed at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss., on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Mitchell was a mental health tech. He entered the Air Force as the Vietnam War was winding down.

He served 21 years. Lynn was a pharmacy tech and served for four years. Both are members of the VFW in Owatonna.

Lewer said the store's kitchen crew cooked the food and department heads dished up and delivered the breakfasts to the veterans and active duty member in their cars.

There were a few large orders: The VFW Color Guard picked up 25 meals to have at the VFW and a few nursing homes came to pick up meals for their residents who are veterans.

In addition to the free breakfast, veterans also received 15% off their grocery bill when they shop at Hy-Vee on Veterans Day.

And the veterans who work at Hy-Vee – six in Owatonna – got the day off with pay.

"Today is about recognizing and thanking veterans and active-duty military members for their service," Lower said.



Hy-Vee Store Manager Justin Lower and Starbucks Manager Beth Smith deliver breakfast to veterans Mitchell and Lynn Rhodes of Owatonna.

FEDERATED: appoints new leaders FROM B1

These leadership changes will be effective January 1, at which time Feters will voluntarily relinquish his role as CEO while retaining his duties and responsibilities as chairman of the Federated Mutual Insurance Companies.

Feters' duties will include active management of the business of the company and working with the CEO and Board to develop long-term strategy and vision for the company. He will also continue overseeing Federated's Investment and Legal Departments, and remain a steadfast proponent of Federated's four cornerstones and core principles and values.

Additionally, Feters and his wife Marty will continue their active support of the Owatonna community and remain co-chairs of the Federated Challenge for Big Brothers Big Sisters.

"As president and CEO, Mike Kerr will continue to champion Federated's culture and core principles and values," Feters said. "He is uniquely qualified to guide our organization forward, having achieved great success in every leadership role he's been assigned throughout the company during his 39-year career. Mike is blessed with a natural ability to move hearts and inspire those around him to reach their highest potential. He cares deeply for the well-being of Federated clients, employees, and his community."

Kerr hails from northern Michigan and is a Central Michigan University graduate. Following successful tenures as a marketing representative, district marketing manager, and regional marketing manager in Michigan and Indiana, Kerr and his wife Joanne relocated their family to

Owatonna, where he has served in various leadership roles in Federated's Home Office. He has been director of marketing, director of Association Risk Management Services, and overseen Home Office Marketing, Property & Casualty Claims and Underwriting, Field Services, Life Operations, Learning Center, Advertising, Human Resources, Property & Casualty Services, and Office and Physical Services. He has also chaired Federated's Operations Team, Commercial Health Team, and Commercial Lines Team. As president and CEO, Kerr will oversee Federated's Property and Casualty and Life Insurance Operations, as well as its Actuarial, Information Services, and Human Resources Departments.

"Nick Lower will bring tremendous passion for Federated and client success to his role as COO," Feters said. "He is a driven individual who sets a high bar for himself and all those around him. He tackles challenges head on, with a directness and sense of urgency that has earned the respect of his colleagues here at Federated. He is a tremendous coach and mentor, who models integrity, dedication, and a tireless work ethic."

Following graduation from Muskingum University, Lower joined Federated Insurance in 1999 as a marketing representative in Ohio. Over the years, he has taken on several leadership roles in the company's marketing function, culminating in being named director of marketing in 2017. He has also overseen Fed-

erated's Association Risk Management Services Department, as well as its Marketing Administration and Incentives areas. In recent years, Lower has served as Chair of Federated's Operations Team, which helps oversee the company's overall financial results.

"It is with tremendous pride and complete confidence that we announce these important leadership changes," Feters said. "Mike Kerr and Nick Lower are proven leaders who breathe life into our organization's mission each and every day. We have been tremendously fortunate to benefit from their contributions over the years and look forward to the future they will help shape for our company and clients."

In honor of vets



Members from the American Legion Post 77 and the Owatonna Veterans of Foreign Wars held a flag-raising ceremony at the Steele County Courthouse on Wednesday in honor of Veterans Day. Dan Brewster played "Taps."

BLOSSOMS OF THE MONTH

Jessica Ressler • 12th Grade



The senior high student of the month is JESSICA RESSLER, who is senior. Her favorite class is contemporary literature with Mr. Foster. "It is a very engaging class," she says, adding she can relax and read a book.

"Jessica is a smart young lady," said one of her teachers. "She is considerate and appreciative. Jessica will be very successful in the future."

Other teachers commented about Jessica:

- "Jessica is a fantastic student to have in class. Her kindness, work ethic, and positive attitude are contagious and because of this, people enjoy being around her."
- "Jessica is an amazing student. She works hard, she is considerate of others, and she is always prepared for class. She is insightful and kind, and it is a privilege to have her in the classroom at PFHS."
- "Her special interests are golfing, longboarding and drawing. Jessica's hobbies are hockey, 12, hockey, 15, hockey, 18, and 20 and Jordan (1994-2010). She also has a pet dog, Bailey."



Cooper Cooke • 8th Grade

The junior high student of the month is COOPER COOKE, who is in eighth grade. His favorite class is gym because "I like being active."

Some comments shared by his teachers include:

- "Cooper is an outstanding student and leader in class. He is also very polite and responsible."
- "Cooper is always respectful. He works very hard academically and works toward his long-term goals. He is also very kind and helps his classmates when asked."
- "Cooper is a model student every day. He is courteous, polite, works hard without complaining, and helps keep his classroom on track when working in groups. He always does high quality work and gets it done on time."

Cooper's special interests are sports, including football, basketball and baseball.

His siblings are Laila, 13; Connor, 11; Paisley, 11; Martin, 10; Shannah, 8; Maverick, 5 and Cruz, 3. He also enjoys the company of two dogs, Bear and Coco and three cats, Pumpkin, Pash and Maria Cat.

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PANTHER OF THE WEEK



WYMAN FOLLEN

This week's Panther of the Week is WYMAN FOLLEN of Ellendale. Wyman is the son of Kristina Follen and his grandparents are Terri and Steve Engel. Wyman is in Mr. Beynon's third grade class.

Wyman has met every challenge presented to him. He is always looking to improve and impress and wants to learn more. He's eager and willing to help anytime he can. He's very respectful and considerate to his teachers and peers. Wyman is also very empathetic towards his classmates.

Wyman loves to play with his friends, play football, and he enjoys math. His favorite food is steak. **Keep up the great work Wyman!**



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On The Farm
CLAIRE LACANINNE

Tar spot of corn was found last fall for the first time in Minnesota. Several counties had occurrences of tar spot this year: Steele, Dodge, Goodhue, Le Sueur, Olmsted, Fillmore, Houston, Winona, Wabasha, Mower, and Freeborn counties all had instances. The only documented occurrences confirmed in

2019 were in Fillmore, Freeborn, Faribault, and Winona counties.

Corn tar spot is caused by the fungus *Phyllachora maydis*. The tar spot fungus infects leaves – and sometimes husks – and produces raised, small (0.1"–0.2") raised black structures on the leaf surface. The black structures are firm and appear smooth on the surface. Corn tar spot can look somewhat similar to common rust on corn, but the spots do not rub off or break open like rust pustules. Tar spot can also produce fisheye symptoms

that appear as black spot surrounded by tan lesions with dark borders. Tar spot has been observed most often during mid to late grain fill (growth stages R3–R6) and usually shows up on leaves below or near the ear leaf.

Though we've seen mostly mild cases in Minnesota, corn tar spot can become severe in the right conditions. Severe tar spot outbreaks can reduce yield by more than 30 bushels per acre. Yield losses are mostly a function of reduced ear weight, poor kernel fill, loose kernels, and vivipary (a

condition in which the seed germinates while still on the cob).

Again, whether tar spot results in significant corn yield losses depends on weather, severity, and timing of disease development. The disease favors cool temperatures (60–78 degrees F), heavy dews, about six hours of leaf wetness, and relative humidity greater than 95%. Temperatures above 90 degrees F suppress disease development and inhibit the spread.

The risk of disease is highest where the disease has previously

occurred. *Phyllachora maydis* can overwinter and thus can occur in nearby fields from one year to the next. So, even if the levels of disease are low and don't impact yield, keep an eye on the area for future years.

Several management practices may help reduce tar spot development and severity. As of now, it seems that the best management practice is to use resistant corn hybrids and stay away from highly susceptible hybrids.

Also, be sure to manage residue the best you can. Tilling

fields buries infected residue and encourages it to decompose, which may help reduce the amount of overwintering tar spot. Rotating to other crops will allow residue to decompose and reduce the primary inoculum, though it is not known how many years it might take to sufficiently reduce the pathogen.

There are some fungicides that can be used to manage tar spot. However, there is little data about application timing that will provide an effective and economic

SEE TAR SPOT OF CORN, B8

HOW ABOUT LOOKING: at things with glass half full?

FROM B1

been lonely these past nine months. However, it has also caused us to get more creative and think outside the box. We are working more collaboratively than ever.

For me personally, it has helped me to recognize that others are equally as important as myself. I am wearing a mask, as uncomfortable as I find it, to ensure not my safety but the safety of those I am coming into contact with. I know many feel this is a violation of their civil liberties. I see it as an act of kindness.

COVID has pushed us to recognize the importance of supporting our local economy. We are fortunate to have a number of local businesses that offer food, gifts,

clothing and more. I am so grateful for them and the services they offer. They are the cornerstone of our community. I am shopping locally more than ever before.

This virus has allowed me to slow down and take a hard look at what is truly important. It caused me to recognize how valuable time is.

During the past nine months, I am more present when visiting with people – both in person and virtually. I am so grateful for technology and the ability to connect with people not only in my community, but across the world. We literally have the world at our fingertips. I am reminded daily how fortunate I have been to

spend time with friends and family any time I chose.

As the holiday season approaches I am looking a new way to celebrate.

Taking a closer look at all that I have, holding those that I love closer than ever before. And, counting my blessings. I hope everyone of us can find things to be grateful for and take the time to celebrate them.

Stephanie Kibler serves on the Ellendale City Council and as the director of the Freeborn County Historical Society in Albert Lea. Steele Talkin' is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.

FLEMMING: named news editor of Steele County Times

FROM B1

ership continues to grow in ways I never envisioned, and Deb will be a great asset to provide what our readers want from their community newspaper."

Bussler pointed out that in unprecedented times like now, it will be important to be working for an independently owned newspaper that's committed to producing a quality, local news product for its readers each and every week.

"I'm thrilled to be working for an independently owned newspaper that's committed to producing a quality, local news product for its readers each and every week," Flemming said.

Flemming began her journalism career at her hometown newspaper, the Waseca Daily Journal, first as a reporter and then editor. She began writing for the Steele County Times as a freelancer this past summer.

Flemming is a former editor of the Owatonna People's Press (1985-1992) and the Mankato Free Press (1995-2005). After leaving the Free Press, Flemming served as the executive director of the Minnesota Newspaper Foundation and was an adjunct professor for the St. Cloud State University's Department of

Mass Communication. She moved to San Diego in 2010, where she worked as a media advocacy specialist for the Institute of Public Strategies, a non-profit organization committed to implementing long-term, sustainable social change in a range of public health and safety issues.

The past few years Flemming has worked as a freelance writer and editor and communications consultant. Her writing and editing work includes newspapers, trade publications, trade associations and book publishing.

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ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS
By Shannon Nordstrom and Russ Evans

Dear Motor Medics,
I just bought my newest car ever which is a 2020 Ford Expedition. I will be making payments on it for the next six years. I have heard that changes may be coming in fuel as the world may possibly move away from gasoline vehicles. Will gasoline just disappear someday where I cannot drive my car anymore?

Alex in Sioux City Iowa
Alex, you probably do not need to get to worried right away. We have seen a shift over the past few years from automakers to manufacture more electric vehicles. As time moves on you can expect to see a mostly electric vehicle future unless something changes with the fuel and it is a possibility that fossil fuels will be phased out someday. So, what is one possibility? Auto manufacturers have been pressed by the government to build cleaner burning vehicles that get better fuel mileage. To make cars that conform they either need to move to electric or find a way to make them cleaner. Fuel is a key factor. One possibility is a move to ethanol fuel. Ethanol is renewable and super clean, and it can be used to make high octane fuel which can make for better fuel mileage. Down the road conversion kits for older cars and new ones made to run on high blends of ethanol may be what keeps internal combustion engines on the road for a longer period of time and keeps fuel costs down.

Take care, The Motor Medics

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STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING
Micalyn Trihus and her parents, Mike and Melissa Trihus, are all smiles after Micalyn signs her national letter of intent to play volleyball at Bemidji State University.



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING
Megan Oswald poses with her parents, Phil Oswald and Kathy Paukner, after she makes her commitment to play basketball at the University of Jamestown official.

Pair of Blossoms pursue collegiate ball

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

Blooming Prairie seniors Megan Oswald and Micalyn Trihus had already done the hard part by deciding where they wanted to continue to play collegiate basketball and volleyball, respectively, and on Wednesday, Nov. 11, they did the easy part: signing their national letter of intent to make their decisions official.

Oswald will continue her basketball career at the University of Jamestown in Jamestown, N.D., and Trihus will continue her volleyball career at Bemidji State University.

"I loved the pace of the game Jamestown plays because they like to push the ball."

Megan Oswald
Basketball Standout

Oswald, who has been playing on the varsity basketball team since she was an eighth grader, said playing collegiate basketball has long been her goal. "Playing basketball in college has always been a dream of mine. I love the sport and all the memories and relationships it offers and helps build throughout the years. So many good memories were made in high school and I just wanted to continue to develop my skills in college. I think there is always room for improvement, so I am looking forward to playing as a Jimmie," she said.

A couple reasons she's anxious to play for the Jimmies are their up-tempo playing style and getting to play with other talented and competitive players. "I loved the pace of the game Jamestown plays because they like to push the ball. Everyone I met was already a good player, but you can tell that they had the desire to win and get better as a basketball program, so I was very drawn in by that," Oswald said.

Despite everything the Jimmies' basketball program offers, she said committing to them wasn't an easy decision. "It was a very difficult decision for me because it is far away from home. I realized in the end that I could come home if I needed to, but Jamestown would take care of me and would have everything I

need," she explained. In addition to basketball, Jamestown will also take care of her academically. She has already been accepted into their nursing program and she hopes to become a traveling nurse, an ER nurse or a flight nurse after graduation. Trihus, a four-year starter for the Awesome Blossoms' volleyball team, said Bemidji State is the right school and volleyball program for her because, "They have a great nursing program and I love the people."

Some of the people she's grown to love are her future coaches. "The coaches built relationships with me and I knew that even if I didn't choose Bemidji they would still be happy for me and want the best for me," she said. Other reasons

"The Northern Sun Conference has such a high level of play, and I knew that I wanted to be in a competitive program."

Micalyn Trihus
Volleyball Standout

Bemidji State appealed to Trihus are because she'd get to stay somewhat close to home and play in a competitive Division II conference. "Staying close was a big deal to me. I am very close with my family and it was important to me that they would be able to come to some of my games," she said. "The Northern Sun [Intercollegiate] Conference has such a high level of play and I knew that I wanted to be in a competitive program."

She noted that the Bemidji State coaches believe she can compete at such a high

level thanks to her leadership qualities and work ethic. Her strong work ethic will also come in handy academically. She plans to major in nursing and hopes to become a nurse practitioner. However, before she graduates and begins her profession, she has two goals she hopes to accomplish during her time at Bemidji State. "I would love to help Bemidji State continue to improve and become a really competitive program. I would also like to graduate with honors."

Huskies rout the Raiders

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

After losing back-to-back games for what seems like the first time in ages, the Owatonna football team got a much-needed win when it throttled the Northfield Raiders 42-0 on Wednesday, Nov. 11.

The Huskies took an early 6-0 lead when quarterback Brayden Truelson threw the ball to running back Tanner Hall who found his way into the end zone for a 34-yard touchdown. The extra-point attempt was unsuccessful so the Huskies' lead stayed at six points. Owatonna quickly added to their lead when Truelson connected with wide receiver Nick Williams for a 12-yard touchdown. Lane Versteeg's extra point was successful so the Huskies led 13-0 at the end of the first quarter.

Early in the second quarter, the Owatonna's defense got in on the scoring when they overwhelmed Northfield's offensive line and recorded a safety to give the Huskies a 15-0 lead. Not to be outdone, Owatonna's offense scored its third touchdown of the first half when Hall ran it in from 15 yards out. The extra-point attempt was not good and the Huskies took a 21-0 lead into halftime. In the third quarter, Truelson threw his third touchdown of the game with each one going to a different receiver. This time it was Payton Beyer whose 20-yard touchdown reception put the Huskies up 27-0. Versteeg redeemed himself by drilling the extra-point attempt to make the score 28-0. Leading by four possessions at the beginning of the

fourth quarter, the Huskies started to pound the rock to run out the clock. That approach yielded two more touchdowns, the first was a 10-yard run by Dylan Maas and the second was a one-yard plunge by backup quarterback Tabor Bogen. Both extra-point attempts were successful so the Huskies' winning margin was 42-0. Due to this win and COVID-19, Owatonna advanced straight to the Section 1A AAAA Championship. The Huskies hosted Rochester Mayo on Tuesday, Nov. 17. Owatonna's offensive statistics: Passing - Truelson completed 16 of his 25 attempts for 184 yards and 3 TDs while Bogen completed 2 of his 2 attempts for 15 yards. Rushing - Hall carried the ball 18 times for 67 yards and 1 TD, Maas carried the ball 10

times for 46 yards and 1 TD. Connor Grems carried the ball 1 time for 7 yards, Truelson carried the ball 3 times for 6 yards, Bogen carried the ball 2 times for 5 yards and 1 TD. Williams carried the ball 3 times for 2 yards and Drew Kretlow carried the ball 1 time for 0 yards. Receiving - Beyer caught 8 passes for 125 yards and 1 TD, Hall caught 2 passes for 37 yards and 1 TD. Williams caught 4 passes for 22 yards and 1 TD, Kretlow caught 2 passes for 15 yards, Tyrel Creger caught 1 pass for 11 yards and Maas caught 1 pass for -1 yards. Owatonna's defensive statistics: Zach Stransky recorded 4 total tackles and 2 sacks, Grant Achterkirch recorded 5 total tackles and 1 sack and Connor Budach and Cole Earles each recorded 3 total tackles.

HUSKIES SOCCER HONORS TOP PLAYERS

Team Awards:
Best Newcomer Award: Hillary Haarstad
Unsung Hero Award: Sarah Kingland
Most Versatile Player Award: Lily Sampson
Offensive MVP: Hillary Haarstad
Defensive MVP: Emma Dahmert
Coaches Award: Sydney Hunst

All-Conference:
Ezra Oien (Voted No. 3 player in Big 9)
Abby Vetsch
Anna Herzog (Voted No. 10 player in Big 9 and just committed to play at UW Stout next year)
Lily Sampson
Hillary Haarstad

All-Conference Honorable Mention:
Emma Dahmert
Arianna Shornock

Conference Scholar Athletes:
Lauren Borgerding
Emma Dahmert
Anna Herzog
Sydney Hunst
Libby Janka
Sarah Kingland
Lily Sampson
Greta Korbel

2021 Captains:
Arianna Shornock
Taylor Schlauderaff
Hillary Haarstad

Tigers snake bitten by Cobras

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

The Triton football team scored 22 first-half points and Medford was never able to catch up, losing 15-30 on Wednesday, Nov. 11. The Cobras took the lead before some fans even got to their seats thanks to Jaxon Sackett, who took the opening kick-off roughly 80 yards to the house.

Triton tacked on another touchdown and led 14-0 at the end of the first quarter. In the second quarter, Medford got on the board when Josiah Hedensten scored a touchdown, but the Cobras answered with a touchdown of their own and a two-point conversion to take a 22-7 lead into halftime. Hedensten scored another touchdown in the third quarter and Med-

ford ran a successful four-point conversion to trim their deficit to just seven points, 15-22. However, once again, Triton responded with a touchdown and a two-point conversion to extend its lead to 30-15. Despite the Tigers' valiant efforts, the Cobras' defense held firm and prevented Medford from making any sort of fourth-quarter comeback.

The 15-30 loss means the Tigers finish the regular season with a 4-2 overall record, but their 3-0 sub-district record means they're sub-district champions! Medford earned three seed in the Section AA playoffs and faced NRHEG at on Nov. 17. Tigers' offensive statistics: Passing - Justin Ristau completed 6 of 8 attempts for 105 yards and 1 TD. Rushing - Josi-

ah Hedensten ran the ball 11 times for 41 yards and 1 TD while Garron Hoffman ran 7 times for 28 yards. Receiving - Hedensten made 5 receptions for 91 yards and 1 TD while Kael Hermansdorfer made 1 reception for 15 yards. Tigers' defensive statistics: Hedensten recorded a team-high 20 total tackles and Medford held Triton to just 21 total passing yards.



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Blossoms ground the Falcons

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

Drew Kittelson threw for five touchdowns and Blooming Prairie's defense held Fillmore Central to just one fourth-quarter touchdown in the Awesome Blossoms' dominant 47-6 win on Wednesday, Nov. 11.

Blooming Prairie's offense struck early and often, scoring two touchdowns in the first quarter and three in the second quarter. One of the extra-point attempts was unsuccessful, but the Awesome Blossoms led 34-0 at halftime.

In the second half, Blooming Prairie's defense picked up where it left off by holding the Falcons scoreless in the third quarter.

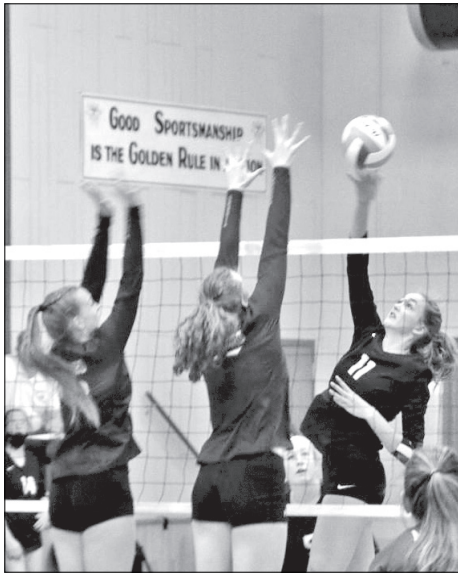
After not scoring any points in the third quarter, the Awesome Blossoms' offense found its groove again and scored two more touchdowns. One of the extra-point attempts was unsuccessful so Blooming Prairie led 47-0. Near the end of the game, Fillmore Central scored a touchdown, but missed the extra-point attempt, to prevent the shutout.

The 47-6 win improves the Awesome Blossoms' record to 4-0.

Thanks to its perfect record, Blooming Prairie earned the No. 1 seed in the Section 1A Championship. The Awesome Blossoms will host the winner of Goodhue/Randolph at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 21, at McFarlin Park.

Blooming Prairie offensive statistics: Passing - Drew Kittelson completed 24 of 30 pass attempts for 341 yards and 5 TDs while Cade Christianson completed 0 of 1 pass attempt for 0 yards. Rushing - Tyler Archer carried the ball 15 times for 93 yards and 1 TD. Drew Kittelson carried the ball 8 times for 77 yards and Cade Christianson carried the ball 2 times for 15 yards. Receiving - Mitchell Fieberger caught 6 passes for 104 yards and 2 TDs. Bradley Simon caught 5 passes for 87 yards and 1 TD. Colin Jordison caught 5 passes for 65 yards. Cole Christianson caught 3 passes for 44 yards and 1 TD. Carson Brenneke caught 3 passes for 23 yards and 1 TD. Drew Kittelson caught 1 pass for 7 yards. Tyler Archer caught 1 pass for 6 yards and Jett Swenson caught 1 pass for 0 yards.

Blooming Prairie defensive statistics: Cole Christianson and Colin Jordison each recorded 5 total tackles. Tyler Archer recorded 2 total tackles and 1 sack. Ezra Riley recorded 2 total tackles and 1 sack and Tim Lovernink recorded 1 total tackle and 1 sack.



Blooming Prairie's Sierra Larson keeps her eyes on the ball as she hits it to the left of Medford's two blockers.

STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Cardinals soar past Blossoms in volleyball

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

The Blooming Prairie volleyball team became more and more competitive each subsequent set, but it was enough to prevent Bethlehem Academy from beating them 3-0 on Thursday, Nov. 12.

The first set was pretty

one sided as the Cardinals cruised to a 25-11 win.

In the second set, the Awesome Blossoms did a little bit better and lost by 11 points, 14-25.

The third set was the closest of them all, but Blooming Prairie just made too many mistakes

to force a fourth set, losing 18-25.

Blooming Prairie statistics: Macy Lembke - 10 assists, 16 digs and 2 ace serves. Micalyn Trihus - 12 digs, 6 kills and 6 blocks. Sierra Larson - 1 kill, 7 blocks and 3 digs. Abby Heffling - 3 kills and 3 blocks. Halle Strunk - 6 digs, and Maren Forystek - 6 digs.

JV Blossoms earn split

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

It has been mixed results recently for the Blooming Prairie Junior Varsity volleyball team.

The BP team defeated New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) 25-15 and 25-19 on Monday, Nov. 2, but lost to Medford 23-25 and 16-25 on Thursday, Nov. 5.

Against NRHEG, set one was really close until Blooming Prairie's Anna Pauly served eight straight points at the end of the game.

The Awesome Blossoms didn't score the same kind of run in the second set, but they still won handily.

"This was probably our best performance of the year. We passed the ball well and played really solid defense," said Head Coach Cory Hendrickson. "NRHEG had beaten us easily the first time, but we really came to play."

Against Medford, the Blossoms had a chance to win the first set, but made some costly mistakes.

"We missed six serves in the first game and that really hurt us," he said.

The second set was less competitive as the Tigers cruised to a nine-point win.

"We really competed well, but we just couldn't make enough plays to get the win. In the first game our serving hurt us and in the second game it was our passing," Hendrickson said. "We are definitely getting better, though."

The win and loss means the Awesome Blossoms' record is now 3-6.

Rebels no match for Tigers

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

After back-to-back losses, the Medford volleyball team has bounced back in a big way by beating its last two opponents 3-0, including their home game against United South Central (USC) on Thursday, Nov. 12.

The Tigers got off to a strong start by winning six of the first eight points in set one. Medford's offense kept the pressure on USC's defense and extended its lead to 15-4 midway through the first set. A little bit later, Medford

led 18-8, but then the Tigers won seven of the last 10 points to win the first set 25-11.

The second set started in a similar fashion as Medford won four of the first five points to take an early lead. The Tigers continued to ramp up their lead, leading 9-3 and extending their lead to 15-7 midway through the second set. Then, Medford went on another 4-1 run to increase their lead to 19-8 and they ended up winning 25-12 to take a 2-0 set lead.

In the third set, the

Tigers started strongly once again by winning four of the first five points. Medford repeated that 4-1 run again to extend their lead to 8-2. The Tigers kept their pedal to the metal and increased their lead to 10 points, 14-4. They then went another 6-2 run to increase their lead to 20-6. From there Medford cruised to a 25-10 win to complete the 3-0 sweep.

The Tigers' (5-3) next home game is against Maple River (1-7) and it starts at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 20.



Medford senior Kinsey Cronin goes up high for a kill during the first set of Medford's 3-0 win over United South Central.

STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

GARDENING

How to make yourself a happy gardener for next spring



Mastering Gardening
LORRIE RUGG

"Tools of many kinds and well-chosen, are one of the joys of a garden." - Liberty Hyde Bailey

I am amazed at the end of the gardening season, what new tools I have managed to add

to my collection over the summer. There is always that new tool, that promises to be the best ever. Some are duds, but sometimes there is one that surprises you and you can't imagine how you got along without it. Over the years I have acquired quite a collection, and I want to be able to keep them around for years to come. I will give you some great tips on how to make that happen.

Plant pathogens like bacteria, fungi, and viruses can linger on those tools. They can be transferred to and infect plants through tiny

bits of soil left on your tools. So getting them cleaned up will help prevent the spread of disease between plants by thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting them.

Once the season is done, it's time to get those tools cleaned up, sharpened, and stored for the season. The easiest and first thing to do is simply to clean the soil, sap, and other residues off them. Wash them off with soapy water and a stiff brush for a more thorough cleaning and then dry the tools to prevent rust.

Make a 10% bleach solution, one part

bleach with 9 parts of water in a container large enough to immerse your tool. This is best used for large hand tools, like shovels, spades, and rakes. The bleach solution can corrode metal and it is not recommended for pruning and cutting tools that require a sharp edge, as it can create pits and nicks in the metal.

An alternative to use is Lysol All-Purpose Cleaner, research has shown that this formulation will eliminate bacteria, fungi, and viruses from tools. This is best used on small hand tools,

like pruners, loppers, trowels, and tree saws. Sharpen tools if the blades look like they need it. You can use a mill file if you don't have access to a grinder to get new edges on those blades. If there is rust on your tools, use a steel wool pad or wire brush before sharpening. Remember to sharpen only on the beveled side.

Finally, wipe the metal components of the tool with a lubricant such as a linseed oil, mineral oil, or Tung oil. You can also wipe down any wooden handles as well. Store your tools

by hanging them up. Don't let them rest of your garage floor as there can still be moisture on the floor.

Taking the time to get this chore done this fall, will make you a happy gardener come next spring. You will be ready to hit the ground running and we are always ready and anxious in the spring to get those hands dirty!

Lorrie Rugg is the coordinator of the Master Gardener program for Steele County. She writes regularly for this newspaper.

WHAT MAKES AMERICA GREAT?

Just ask Blooming Prairie area teenagers and you'll find out the answer to that question. This week we share with you the winning essays from the VFW Auxiliary's Voice of Democracy contest. Abby Smith earned first place while Chloe McCarthy received second. They are sophomores at Blooming Prairie High School. Abby Hefling was honored with third place.

Abby Smith, left, and Chloe McCarthy are the winners of the 2020 VFW Voice of Democracy contest sponsored by the Blooming Prairie VFW Auxiliary. They were given their award certificates on Veteran's Day, Nov. 11, at the BP Servicemen's Club.



Staff photo by Rick Busler

By CHLOE MCCARTHY

America is my home. It is where I have lived my whole life. I grew up here, I learned how to read and write here, and I visited some of the most beautiful places I've ever seen here. I am the person I am today because of where I live and the experiences I have made here in America. America is a great country because it is a free country, it has good education options, and it has amazing places to visit.

America is a free country. I can express what I believe (as long as it follows the law) and not have to worry that the government might punish me for it. I have been a Christian my whole life and since I live in America, I do not have to worry about what the government might say or do because of where I live and the rights that I have. Which is honestly one of the biggest blessings of my life. Living in a free country also means freedom. And freedom to me means disagreeing, believing, and not regretting. When the government makes a decision, and someone does not agree with it, they have the right to peacefully protest. Like for example, many people have been protesting recently about gun laws, and how they think guns should be banned. They would not have been able to do that if we did not all have freedom. But because we do, we have the right to stand up for what we believe and have no shame in it, because of the rights we have.

America is also a great place for a good education. I have had an amazing education my whole life. I went to a small private school from kindergarten till 8th grade, and now I am at a public school. The private school had an amazing education. We learned certain things that kids at another school, in our grade, might not have learned quite yet. And now at the public school, the education is just as great. So I have never even had the thought of moving out of the country for a better one, to be a foreign exchange student. Many of my friends have had foreign exchange students which means students from another country came to America for a better education because their country doesn't have a good one. Thankfully, I do not have to worry about not having a good education because America has amazing schools everywhere.

Another thing that makes America great is the all places I can go. I love traveling to new states. Although I have not been to all of them yet, it is still a big goal of mine. Many other people have goals to visit all 50 states as well. That is because every state has something different, and is unique and beautiful in their own way. For example, Florida has Disney world, Colorado has mountains, Minnesota has the Mall of America, Texas has amazing food, Michigan has a lake that looks like it could go on forever, and Washington has the White House. All totally different experiences in totally different states, and all experiences you couldn't get from visiting just one state. So nobody could ever get bored from seeing every state. People may think the state has nothing, but all states have something. Whether it is a state park, a beautiful sight to see, or a famous restaurant, something is always available for you to do.

So what truly makes America great? Is it the state fairs and the all of the people? Is it the president or the White House? Is it the good food or the amusement parks? Yes. But more importantly it is the equal rights and free country, it is the good educations, and it is the beautiful land that I call home. It is America, the beautiful.

By ABBY SMITH

When we think of America we think of a home. Other people see America as a place to start new. People come from all over the world to live in a place to thrive, be free, and offer a promising future for their children. Someone from the lowest level of society could rise to become one of the wealthiest with some determination. People already living in America don't often realize how fortunate we are. America is great because we are granted freedom, equality, and there is peace within our country.

Starting new in America, someone might start at the lowest level of society and might even be living in poverty. With hard work, it is simple for the person to thrive and become lucrative. So many opportunities for success are always available. Living in America the poorest person could climb to the top and become one of the wealthiest. Every person has the chance to grow into a successful individual. America provides many educational resources for anyone to easily take advantage of. Numerous universities and schools in America are accessible to help someone succeed. The way America is structured creates a great place to be prosperous. What other countries can you start in poverty and become wealthy? None.

We often take for granted our freedom. We take for granted those people who risk their lives every day and have sacrificed their lives for our freedom. To prove their loyalty, respect, and other reasons to America the soldiers and all other people in the service fight every day for our freedom. Even ones with family and loved ones fight for freedom and some still do today. The people of America are like a big family, we would do anything for one another. We have been given so many rights, we are granted freedom, and there is equality. As a female, being born in America is one of the greatest things. In other countries females aren't granted as much equality and freedom as we are. With freedom and equality we are unified into one nation. America is a perfect example of national unity, without separate groups. Being unified and having amazing people willing to sacrifice their lives for our freedom and well-being makes America great.

America is a capitalist country, which offers enough space for us to be able to succeed on our own and earn what we deserve. We are able to prosper, become wealthy, and strive in the free market. The way our country is structured makes it possible for citizens of America to not be controlled by the government and live freely. Every day we are able to work as hard as we can to earn our pay and everything we have available to us. America is great because of the way our country is run.

America is so full of positive things we are loyal to our country and a ton of the people prove their loyalty every day. The way America is structured creates a perfect place for us to prosper and be successful. Our government system makes it possible for our country and citizens of our country to thrive. America isn't great, America is amazing!

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NOV. 20
10 a.m. - SEMCAC,
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NOV. 25
10 a.m. - SEMCAC,
Community Building

NOV. 25
10 a.m. - SEMCAC,

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

NOV. 21
10:30 a.m. & 2
p.m. - Victorian Tea,
History Center

NOV. 22
6 p.m. - Virtual
BINGO Fundraiser
for Moonlighters
Exchange Club of
Owatonna

NOV. 23
4 p.m. - Owatonna
HRA Meeting, Virtual
7 p.m. - Medford
City Council Meeting,
City Hall

NOV. 24
9:30 a.m. - Garden
Time, Owatonna
Library
10:30 a.m. -
Storytime Online with
Darla, Facebook Live
4 p.m. - OPU
Commission Meeting,
Virtual

NOV. 26
10:30 a.m. -
Storytime Online with
Darla, Facebook Live
5 p.m. - Holiday
Lights Cruise

Holiday Train goes virtual this year

COVID-19 has wiped out the annual Canadian Pacific Holiday Train this year, but CP is offering something in its place. CP will be hosting a virtual concert on Saturday, Dec. 12 at 6 p.m. Serena Ryder and The Trews will headline the CP "Holiday Train at Home" concert, which will also feature performances by JoJo Mason, Logan Staats and Kelly Prescott.

Like the in-person concert that has been held in Owatonna in the past, this year's event will still raise money and awareness and help local food banks collect much-needed donations. CP plans to make a donation to the local

food bank that it funded last year when the train came to Owatonna. "With the Holiday concert, CP also hopes to inspire donations even though local shows won't occur," said Andy Cummings, spokesperson for CP. "Viewers looking to donate will be directed to Food Banks Canada and Feeding America, the national organizations that support community food banks in their respective countries." The concert can be found at facebook.com/CanadianPacific or CanadianPacific on Facebook. An archived version of the show will remain on the page for later viewing.

Holiday Lights Cruise list available

Are you wondering where the lights will shine brightly this holiday season? The Steele County Historical Society has prepared a list as part of its holiday lights cruise, which begins on Thanksgiving, Nov. 26. The lists are available for \$10 at the

following locations: Owatonna - History Center, Tri M Graphics and Kottke Jewelers; Blooming Prairie - Prairie Home Floral and Ellendale-Lerberg Foods and Steve's Meat Market. Homes will be lit daily at 5 p.m. throughout the holiday season.



Members of the Knights of Columbus in Owatonna distribute coats for needy families throughout the area. Helping with the local initiative through the Knights of Columbus are, from left Maureen Schlobohm, Duane Ludewig, Dakota Oreskovich, Dean Schuette, Jerry Gunderson, Jackie Ostlund, Lee Jardine, Tina Zimmerman and Jerry Atkinson. Schlobohm, Oreskovich, Ostlund and Zimmerman represent Community Pathways. Not present were Greg Lenz and Dan Wolfe.

Extra warmth coming thanks to KCs

Children from around the area will have an extra layer of warmth this winter thanks to an Owatonna community organization. On Oct. 24, Council 945 and the Msgr. Henry Speck Assembly distributed 144 new coats to families in need. This was conducted as a part of the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council's "Coats for Kids" pro-

gram. Coats for boys, girls and some adults in various colors and sizes were available. The KCs coordinated the distribution with the help of Maureen Schlobohm, executive director, and her staff at the Community Pathways.

Duane Ludewig, who serves as the project chair for the KCs, said many children through-

out the United States and Canada go without a coat each winter. Many low-income families use their scarce resources to meet the most basic essentials, and they need help to provide this vital winter necessity, he noted. Ludewig went on to say that's why the Knights of Columbus developed the "Coats for Kids" program,

which allows councils across North America the opportunity to purchase new winter coats for children at a discount and to distribute them to children in need in their local communities. Since the program's launching in 2008, nearly 500,000 coats have been distributed in 49 states and all 10 Canadian provinces.

Toys for Tots kicks off annual drive

The Steele County Toys for Tots Program kicked off its annual Toy Drive on Nov. 1. Volunteers delivered Toy Collection boxes to more than 50 participating businesses in Steele County. New unwrapped toys may be placed in the boxes through Thursday, Dec. 10. For a full list of Steele County Toys for Tots Toy Donation Sites check the Steele County Toys for Tots website: <http://owatonna-mn.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/donate-toys.aspx>

If you are interested in being a Steele County Toys for Tots Donation-Site please contact Mike, Toys for Tots drop-site manager, at 507-774-9094. If you need to request toys for your

child, applications for the Steele County Toys for Tots Program are available online at the Toys for Tots Website and also in Blooming Prairie, Ellendale, Hope, Medford, and Owatonna following locations:

- BP Public Library
- Ellendale Food Shelf
- Lerberg's Foods
- First National Bank - Hope
- State Bank of Red Wing - Medford
- Tone Music in downtown Owatonna
- Minnesota Prairie County Alliance
- Owatonna Public Library
- Salvation Army
- Steele County Employment Services
- Community Pathways of Steele County
- Steele County Public Health

Toys will be distributed to children ages 0-15 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Owatonna on Dec. 14-17. All recipients are required to wear a mask to pick-up their toys. Parents/guardians must complete an application and drop it at Steele County Community Pathways, or put in the drop box at Minnesota Prairie County Alliance, or mail to Steele County Toys for Tots at P.O. Box 199, Owatonna, MN 55969. Emailed applications will not be accepted. Because of COVID-19 Steele County Toys for Tots will select and bag your gifts. Recipients will not be selecting their own toys as they have in the past. Please print clearly and accurately and include the type of toys your

children would like on your application. Toys for Tots of Steele County has been in existence for more than 30 years. It operates within the national U.S. Marine Corp Reserve Toys for Tots program, which began in 1947. Its objective is to collect and distribute NEW and UNWRAPPED toys to Steele County needy children at Christmas. Cash and gift cards received are used to purchase toys as per directives from our national organization. For more information about Steele County Toys for Tots visit their website <http://owatonna-mn.toysfortots.org> or check for updates on the Steele County Toys for Tots Facebook page.

Blood donations urged amid COVID-19 pandemic, upcoming holidays

The American Red Cross is urging healthy donors of all blood types to band together to give blood and help ensure a stable blood supply for patients this holiday season. The traditional slump in blood donations between Thanksgiving and New Year's comes as the blood supply already faces challenges created by the coronavirus pandemic. Required medical treatments and emergencies don't pause for the holidays or a widespread coronavirus outbreak. Make your appointment to give blood with the Red Cross by downloading the Red

Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device. In thanks for making time to donate around Thanksgiving, those who come to give blood Nov. 25-28 will receive an exclusive Red Cross long-sleeved T-shirt, courtesy of Suburban Propane, while supplies last. The Red Cross is testing blood, platelet and plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies. The test may indicate if the donor's immune system has produced antibodies to this coronavirus, regardless of whether an individual

developed COVID-19 symptoms. Red Cross antibody tests will be helpful to identify individuals who have COVID-19 antibodies and may now help current coronavirus patients in need of convalescent plasma transfusions. Convalescent plasma is a type of blood donation collected from COVID-19 survivors that have antibodies that may help patients who are actively fighting the virus. Upcoming blood donation opportunities Nov. 18-30: Freeborn Albert Lea Nov. 20: 1 p.m. - 7 p.m., United Methodist Church, 702 Highway 69 S. Nov. 25: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.,

North Bridge Mall, 2510 Bridge Ave. Geneva Nov. 30: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Geneva Community Center, 314 1st Ave SE Mower Austin Nov. 23: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m., Austin Eagles Lookout Arlie 703, 107 1st NE Steele Blooming Prairie Nov. 30: 1 p.m. - 7 p.m., Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club, Blooming Prairie High School Medford Nov. 27: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Medford Outlet Center, 6750 W. Frontage Road Owatonna Nov. 20: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m., Associated Church, 800 Havana Road

Sudoku Corner

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

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



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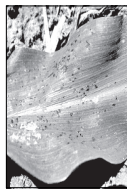
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TAR SPOT OF CORN: found in the area this fall

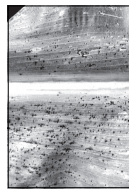
FROM B3



Tar spot of corn.

ical response. It seems that fungicides may be more effective if applied early when few spots have appeared on the leaves.

To learn more about corn tar spot, visit: z.umn.edu/CornTarSpot.



PHOTOS COURTESY UMN EXTENSION

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

NOBLE: Veterans kept America free

FROM B1

to pay tribute to veterans at a flag raising ceremony. "It's very nice to honor our veterans," he said. "That's what has kept our country free."

Noble is especially grateful for the sacrifices made by veterans who served in World War II. The men and women who fought and won the great conflict are now in their late 80s and 90s with even a few in their 100s. They are dying quickly. According to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs statistics, about 325,000 of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II are still alive. As a veteran, No-

ble has some strong feelings about the kind of experience he gained while serving in the military. "Every boy and girl should have two years in the army," he says. "It is a good education," he said.

He also knows the personal sacrifices made by veterans as he lost a cousin, Bill Seykora, in conflict during the Vietnam era.

Noble keeps in close company with veterans as a member of the Blooming Prairie American Legion and Honor Guard.

He is a retired dairy farmer and still helps out his sons with some of the farm work.

State aid set for Minnesota turkey farmers

The Minnesota Turkey Growers Association has been working for months with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to secure financial assistance to Minnesota turkey farmers impacted by the COVID pandemic. This week, MDA unveiled the Turkey Market Loss Cost-Share Program to help turkey farmers and the industry weather what has been a challenging time for farm families.

"As a third-generation turkey farmer, you think you have seen it all. However, COVID has put a strain on farmers that no one could have prepared for and we are grateful for this aid," said Paul Kvistad, Minnesota Turkey Growers Association President and farmer from Wood Lake.

MDA's Turkey Market Loss Cost-Share Program provides financial assistance to farmers who marketed fewer live weight pounds during March - September 2020 due to COVID-19. To mitigate losses during the pandemic, the industry pivoted quickly and utilized several different options. These decisions meant farmers saw a loss in production - putting a squeeze on farm families.

"While our farmers live with risk every day and roll with the punches, this aid from Governor Tim Walz and Ag Commissioner Thon Petersen is the shot in the arm we needed heading into our most important season - Thanks-

giving," said Sarah Anderson, executive director of the Minnesota Turkey Growers Association.

Turkey farmers are uncertain of whether they qualify for funds should first review the application on the MDA website at: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/turkey-market-loss-cost-share>. Questions about securing the necessary live weight pounds statement from the Minnesota Turkey Research and Promotion Council should be directed to: info@minnesotaturkey.com or call 763-682-2171.

All applications must be received by Dec. 1 at 4 p.m. Funding for the cost-share program was made possible by the federal CARES Act provided to Minnesota by Congress and distributed by Governor Tim Walz.

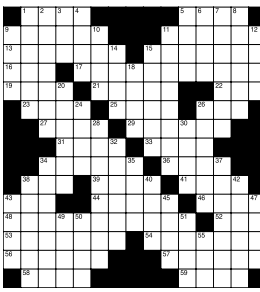
The Minnesota Turkey Growers Association (MTGA) is a trade group representing over 450 turkey farmers across the state. Many of our farmers come from multi-generational family farms. Our organization also represents turkey processors and industry stakeholders. Together, we advocate for the interests of the Minnesota turkey farmer and industry as a whole.

To learn more about MTGA visit <https://minnesotaturkey.com/>. Find us on Facebook (@MinnesotaTurkey), Twitter (@MinnesotaTurkey), Instagram (MinnesotaTurkey) and YouTube (MinnesotaTurkey).

CLUES ACROSS

1. Methuselah pill (slang)
5. Religious service
9. Woodland gods (Greek myth.)
11. "Where Is My Mind?" rosters
13. Deliberately contrary states of affairs
15. Inflection of the voice
16. "Great Expectations" character
17. Becomes a butterfly
19. Spoke
21. Tennis player Sharapova
22. Midway between northeast and east
23. Africans
25. No instruction set computing
26. Pacific Standard Time
27. Relaxing places
29. Confronts
31. Gladys Knight's fellow performers
33. Witnesses
34. Taking place in a series
36. Satisfy
38. Freshwater fish of N. America
41. Laments
43. "Goli" creator Durkheim
45. Indian title of respect
46. Cocoa plum
48. Network of nerve cells
49. Link together in a chain
52. Cool 70s crew "The ___ Squad"

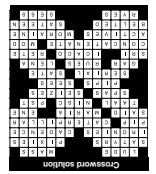
WEEKLY CROSSWORD



CLUES DOWN

1. Rope used to lasso
2. Idyllic places
3. Field force unit
4. Guitar great Clayton
5. Slang for type of skirt
6. Figure skating jump
7. Innocent
8. Mathematical ratio
9. Slowly drinks
10. Line where edges meet

11. Offices of the pope
12. Dry or withered
14. "___ the Man" Musical
15. Difficult situations
18. Greek goddess of discord
20. Marked by smartness in dress and manners
24. Habit
26. Annoy constantly
28. Full of life
30. Great energy
32. BBQ and soy are two
34. Virtuoso
35. Not fatty
37. Foes
38. Merchandiser
40. Dishonest scheme
42. Reports
43. Protective crust
45. Native American people
47. Any place of bliss or delight
49. Bring up
50. Birds
51. Geological times
55. Consumed



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Office & Cancellation Line 507-444-4321 • FAX 507-444-4299 • West Hills Social Commons 507-444-4280 • River Springs Water Park 507-774-7370
Park Maintenance 507-774-7086 • Brooktree Clubhouse 507-444-2467 • Email Address parkrec@ci.owatonna.mn.us • Facebook [Owatonna Parks and Recreation](https://www.facebook.com/OwatonnaParksandRecreation)

OUR MISSION

The city of Owatonna Parks and Recreation Department provides a diverse system of green spaces, trails, facilities, programs and services to enhance the quality of life for the community.

NEW REGISTRATION SYSTEM

We are excited to announce our new software registration system, CivicRec, is now available at Owatonna Park & Rec. Our project team has been working for several months on the launch of this new registration system with the goal to better and more efficiently serve you, our customers. The CivicRec solution is designed to be intuitive to navigate and easy to use. It is mobile-friendly, allowing you to search for community activities and events, register, and even payment over from a smart phone or tablet.

Creating your new account:

- Visit the Owatonna Park & Rec website: <http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/parksrecreation>
- Click on the Register Now button.
- On desktop, select Log in/Create Account in the upper right corner, then select Create your OWAMPAR Account.
- On a mobile device, select Account in the upper right corner and then select Sign up.
- Fill in the required information.
- In receive text alerts (i.e. activity cancellations, facility closings), indicate your mobile carrier next to your cell number.

That's it! You're ready to register for our programs. Add additional members (spouse, children, etc.) at any time in your account settings. Keep your entire household on one account! When you've found a program, make sure to select the correct account member before adding it to your cart.

LETTERS TO SANTA - HE'LL WRITE BACK!

Santa is accepting letters November 18th through December 11th and he will write back! His mailbox will be available outside the Park & Rec Office, 540 West Hills Circle, Owatonna, during office hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm). Simply drop your letter in his mailbox and he'll write you back. Don't forget to include your address with your letter!

THANK YOU PARK BOARD MEMBERS!

Greg Posch, Angie Malo, Greg Louis, Nicholas Elsner, Jonathan Thiel, David Christianson, and Andi Arnold

WINTER SWIMMING LESSONS - REGISTRATION BEGINS DEC 3 (NEW DATE!)

American Red Cross Learn to Swim Programs are held at the Owatonna Middle School and West Hills Pools. Sessions are 5 weeks and begin early January and go through early March. Check our website for Winter Swimming lesson options.

Please note the following regarding the Youth Swim Lesson program this year:

- Only instructors and students will be allowed inside at OMS for swimming lessons. This applies to all grades, K-12.
- Only ISO 751 (Owatonna School District) participants are allowed to participate in swimming lessons at OMS. This does not apply to classes offered at the West Hills Pool.
- All classes (level 3 and under) require a parent in the water with the student at all times. (Small Group and Private)
- Level 3 classes will take place at the West Hills Pool instead of OMS this season. Due to level 3 being moved to West Hills, the timing portion of the class will not be taught.

Private Swimming Lessons

**All Classes (level 3 and under) require a parent in the water with the student. Private swim lessons with a certified Water Safety Instructor. Each class meets 5 times with each class lasting 1.2 hour. Cost is \$105 for one student and \$160.00 for two students (scholarships are not available for private lessons). Class level of no more than 2 students per class. If there are 2 students in a class, the students must be within one level of each other. You may not sign up for two classes for the same person until a week after the first registration day.

Small Group Lessons

**All Classes (level 3 and under) require a parent in the water with the student. Cost: \$42.00 (Max of 4 participants).

www.ci.owatonna.mn.us/parksrecreation

STUDIES HAVE SHOWN

that exercising in cold weather makes you burn more calories, strengthens your heart and boosts your mood. The Owatonna Park & Rec department makes it easy for you to exercise outdoors in the winter by clearing and maintaining hard surface trails year-round.

WEST HILLS SOCIAL COMMONS

is open to members. Current hours: Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:00am-4:00pm. We are offering a limited amount of programming for our Adult Leisure Pursuits members. Please check the website, Facebook page and the newsletter. If you have any questions, please call Dan Bakken at 507-774-7110.

WEST HILLS TENNIS CENTER

is open the following hours: Monday/Thursday 3:00pm-9:00pm, Tuesday/Thursday 8:00am-11:00am, Friday 3:00-7:00pm, Saturday 8:00am-12:00pm, Sunday 12:00pm-4:00pm. For information call the Tennis Center at 507-444-4290.

HOLIDAYS

- Thanksgiving, 11/26: Park & Rec Office, Tennis & Fitness Center and West Hills Social Commons closed.
- Day after Thanksgiving, 11/27: West Hills Social Commons closed.
- Christmas Eve, 12/24: Park & Rec Office, Tennis & Fitness Center and West Hills Social Commons closed.
- Christmas Day, 12/25: Park & Rec Office, Tennis & Fitness Center and West Hills Social Commons closed.
- New Year's Eve, 12/31: Tennis & Fitness Center closes at 11:00pm.
- New Year's Day, 1/1: Park & Rec Office, Tennis & Fitness Center and West Hills Social Commons closed.

STAY CONNECTED

We offer a variety of ways for you to stay updated and connected. Follow us on Facebook on the following pages:

- Owatonna Parks and Recreation
- West Hills Social Commons
- River Springs Water Park
- West Hills Tennis and Fitness Center
- Owatonna Dog Park

Stay Happy. Kappys See Kappy!

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OWATONNA'S COLLISION SPECIALIST

www.kappysauto.com Charlie and Al Kaplan
kappysauto@gmail.com 507-451-8989

rick GNEMIFOR

Steele County Commissioner

I would personally like to **THANK YOU** for your support and encouragement these past four years. I look forward to serving all the citizens of Steele County. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

I look forward to fighting for YOU and Steele County to protect your tax dollars and to build unity within the county.

RickGnemiforCommissioner.com
Prepared and Paid for by Rick Gnemifor for County Commissioner

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STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

SAMANTHA UPHAM'S BABYSITTING/NANNY services I'm a 15-year-old honors student entering my sophomore year at Kasson High School. I have babysitting experience and have been through a class specific for caring for young children. I am best suited to care for toddlers through young teens. Available 7 days a week and can be very flexible with times. I will ensure a summer full of fun! (references upon request) 507-358-3415 10/28/20

TWO BROTHERS looking to mow lawns. \$20 depending on lawn size. Please contact Hayden or Russell at 507-923-3277. 11/12/20

BRIANNA'S LAWN CARE SERVICES. Mowing, trimming, complete yard cleanup. Weekly or on call. Satisfaction guaranteed. FREE estimates. Call 507-421-7945. 11/18/20

CALEB'S PET SITTING, Cats and Dogs, please call me at 507-634-7907. 11/18/20

VICTIM SERVICES

A service of OFO
Community Corrections
Sexual Assault Program & Victim Witness Assistance Program
Advocacy, information and assistance for victims/survivors of sexual assault and other crimes. Community and professional education and consultation. All services free and confidential. Located in Courthouse, Mantorville.
Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
635-6266
or call collect 24 hours
289-0636

LOOKING FOR FALL CLEAN-UP? Nick's Lawn Service does it all. Bags leaves, clean-up landscaping, pickup sticks. Mower has a bag. Call Nick's Lawn Service. 507-696-3849. 10/18/20

FOR SALE

AGED HORSE MANURE for the garden connoisseur. Courtesy of Lady Maggie. Call Madeline to place your spring order. \$4 for 5-gallon bucket or \$9 for a 13-gallon bag. Customers must provide bucket or bags. Call 507-634-6293. 11/18/20

FOR SALE: Ammo: .45 acp, 300 Win. Mag., 22-250. Hard to find ammo readily available. Private party. 763-226-977. 11/12/20

FOR RENT

BLOOMING PRAIRIE RENTALS 1 bd smoke free apt for 62+ or disabled persons. Rent based on income & all utilities included. 507-438-7935 or 507-451-8524 www.lifestyleinc.net

GOT NEWS?
editordci@kmtel.com

1dd 507-451-0704 Equal Housing Opportunity 11/18/20

FOR RENT: Large Apartment on Main Street, Kasson. Call 507-319-6762. 11/18/20

1 BD IN CLAREMONT Wheelchair accessible with rent based on income! Open Jan. Month to month leases and deposit pay plans. 507-398-6027 or 507-451-8524 www.lifestyleinc.net 1dd 507-451-0704 Equal Housing Opportunity 11/18/20

GARAGE SALE

HUGE PRE-CHRISTMAS SALE 50% off most house items and 25% off all consignment items! Lots of brand-new items! Great for Christmas gifts!

Including new jerseys, new clothes, new shoes plus lots of new toys. Stop in at Dano's Consignment Store, 32 E. Main St., Dodge Center. Nov. 20, Friday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Nov. 21, Saturday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Lots of Free Items! 11/18/20

ESTATE SALE Maxine Huinker and others. Thursday, Nov. 19, 5 to 8 p.m., Friday, Nov. 20, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 21, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. 1608 3rd Ave. SE, Austin. Check us out on Facebook. ADS Auction & Appraisals 507-219-9762. 11/19

BARGAIN FINDERS

DODGE COUNTY old plat and history books. All 75 to 100 years old.

Good condition. Asking \$25 to \$100 OBO. 507-450-5395. 10/28/20

BLACK AND DECKER cordless hedge trimmer. Only used twice. \$25. Call 634-7788. 10/28/20

SKILLSAW with two extra blades. \$10. Call 634-7788. 10/28/20

SHEET MIRROR approximately 40-inches by 48-inches. \$5. Call 634-7788. 10/28/20

COINS

NEED CASH? I give free appraisals of your older coins from 1964 and older. I am also looking to buy older coins such as silver dollars, halves, quarters, dimes, wheat

and Indianhead cents. Please call Ron from Hayfield at 507-477-2427 or 507-259-6460. 10/18/20

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED: Dairy farm looking for milkers. F/T, P/T, evening shifts. Every other weekend required. Call Heather at 507-481-4292. 10/28/20

BARTENDER needed at the American Legion in Dodge Center. Call 507-259-7241. 10/29/20

CAREGIVER NEEDED for disabled female. Every other Saturday days, or every other Saturday overnight. 9-12 hour shifts. \$13.25 per hour. NW Rochester. Will train. 507-289-2756. 11/12/20

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Resident Assistant
• FT 6 a.m. - 2 p.m.
• FT & PT 2 p.m. - 10 p.m.
• PT 10 p.m. - 6 a.m.

Registered Nurse
• Part-Time

Apply on Indeed or 800 5th Ave. NW, Kasson, MN - EOE

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Citizens State Bank - Hayfield Branch has a full-time teller position opening.
Must be motivated, friendly, and a team player. Minimum requirement one Saturday a month. Benefits apply.
Pick up an application at Citizens State Bank, 216 1st Ave NE, Hayfield, MN.
For more information call 507-477-2212.
Citizens State Bank is an EEO employer. 11/12

Rolling Hills Transit
Are you friendly and have excellent customer service skills?
Rolling Hills Transit is looking for a Full time Dispatcher (35 hrs/wk) for the Dispatch Center in Kasson.
Position requirements include:
• Excellent computer skills, including experience with Microsoft Excel and Word.
• Ability to multi-task in a very fast-paced environment.
• Must be a team player with a positive attitude.
More information & application available at
www.semccac.org or contact Barb Thompson at **barb.thompson@semccac.org** or 507-864-8202.
Applications must be received by **Nov 27, 2020** E.O.E. 11/12/20

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KASSON-MANTORVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL
is seeking a long-term substitute for a **GRADE 5 ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS INSTRUCTOR** from approximately 12/14/2020 to 2/12/2021.
Please complete an application online at **www.komets.k12.mn.us** and include a resume and letter of application. 11/19

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OWATONNA PROUD

B10 | WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2020

OWATONNA SCHOOLS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



Wold Architects and Engineers have released images of renderings of what the new Owatonna High School will look like. In addition to the outside of the building, the renderings also show the new auditorium, learning community and commons area.

Architects unveil new high school's design

At the school board work session on Monday, Nov. 9, Wold Architects and Engineers provided an update on plans and progress of the new high school, which is still on track to open in the fall of 2023.

A core planning group consisting of parents, community members, staff, students, and other local stakeholders helped develop the planning criteria. The group's project commitments were to put students first and have a building and design that would:

- be welcoming and inclusive while providing a safe environment.

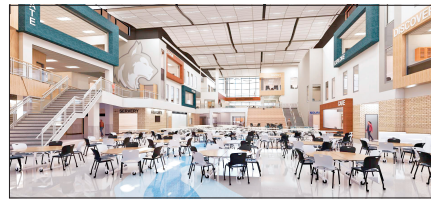
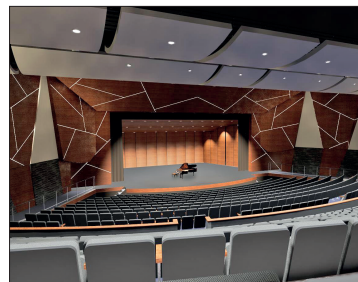
- be efficient and enduring and demonstrate the fiscal responsibility of our community.
- be a vibrant learning environment.
- be a source of excitement and pride for Owatonna.
- support learning during the school day, evenings, and weekends.
- create opportunities for all to succeed including support for college and career programming and community partnerships.
- include flexible learning spaces.
- maximize spaces to be used by the community.
- accommodate modern

technology while remaining flexible and adaptable.

- incorporate natural light wherever possible.

Owatonna Public Schools staff and students are incredibly grateful to the community for its continued support. In November 2019, Owatonna voters approved bond funding to build a new Owatonna High School. Bond funds can only be used to build or repair buildings; by law they can not be used to pay for school or district operating costs.

For more information and to view the slides from the presentation, visit www.owatonnaproud.org.



WBW annual meeting and district dashboard

The Owatonna Public Schools' World's Best Workforce annual meeting will be held on Monday, Nov. 23 at 5 p.m. This meeting will be live-streamed on the district's YouTube channel, and it provides an opportunity for the community to hear a status report and focused action steps as to how the district is addressing these goal areas set by the Minnesota Legislature:

- All children are ready for school.
- All third graders can read at grade level.
- All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
- All students are ready for career and college.
- All students graduate from

high school.

The community can also find the school district's dashboard on the district's website, which highlights data supporting efforts in the four commitment areas of 21st Century Learners, Safe & Caring Community, High Quality Teaching & Learning, and Equity as aligned with the district's mission, vision and core values. The dashboard is revised and updated frequently as the OPS community tracks work and progress.

For more information, or to find the live-stream video link for the World's Best Workforce Annual Meeting, please visit the school district website: www.isd761.org.

Free meals for students

Owatonna Public Schools' Nutrition Services department began offering meals at no cost to all children ages 1-18 regardless of income on Sept. 14.

These meals have been offered to all students in our schools as well as students who are participating in distance learning. The USDA recently announced that this plan has been

extended through the rest of the school year and meals will now be available at no cost through June 30, 2021. For more information on meal bundles and picking up meals, please contact the Nutrition Services department by calling 507-444-8616. More information is also available on our website: www.isd761.org under "District Services."

Owatonna Students of the Week

Elementary



Danielle Coan
Third Grade
Parents: Warren and Erica Coan

Danielle is a fantastic leader! She works hard in all she

does and is always up for a challenge. She is also kind and respectful to everyone around her. She follows the Washington Way each and every day!

Middle School



Norah Kath
Eighth Grade
Parents: Kory and Melissa Kath

Norah is a bright ray of sunshine. Kindness for those around her radiates

out of Norah. She is always respectful, and leads her classmates through her responses in discussions that are inclusive of all thoughts and ideas. We all could use a little dose of Norah in our lives.

High School

Wyatt Newkirk
Ninth Grade
Parents: Jean and Daniel Newkirk



Wyatt shows attentiveness, internal drive, focus, and he has a strong, consistent

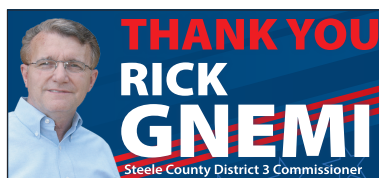
work ethic. His artwork creations demonstrate unique, individual creativity that is a joy to see. Additionally, Wyatt is easy going, thoughtful, kind, and sensitive to others. He is a pleasure to have in class!

Griffin Flemming
Senior
Parents: Selena Smith-Flemming and Bradley Flemming

Griffin exudes positivity and determination every day at the ALC. He goes above and



beyond to help students and staff, and he demonstrates exceptional leadership skills. Griffin is a hard worker in the classroom, he is kind to all, and he has a positive attitude in all that he does.



I would personally like to thank you for your support and encouragement these past four years. I look forward to serving all the citizens of Steele County. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Home telephone: 507-451-3813
Steele County phone: 507-444-7427
Email: rick.gnemi@co.steele.mn.us

I look forward to fighting for YOU and Steele County to protect your tax dollars and to build unity within the county.

Prepared and Paid for by Rick Gnemi for County Commissioner