



STAFF PHOTO BY DEB FLEMING
The fighter jets at Owatonna's Degner Regional Airport are getting a good overhaul as workers from Apex Painting in Owatonna have been busy with the maintenance work. The T-38 aircraft display showcases the airport along Interstate 35 for travelers coming into Owatonna. See Page A10 for more details on the project

Blooming Prairie gets a 'present' too

New electric car charging station will be activated soon

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

This month, Santa and his reindeer won't be the only things coming to town. They'll be joined by an electric car charging station, which should be activated in the next week or two, according to BP Public Utilities General Manager Jerry Mausbach.

The self-service charging station will be the first of its kind in Blooming Prairie. It's located in the parking area on the west side of city hall.

Its upcoming activation is significant for those who have an electric vehicle because soon they won't have to leave town just to charge their car.

While gas-fueled vehicles still vastly outnumber electric vehicles in Blooming Prairie, he noted there are a few residents who are anxious for the charging station to be operational.

"We've had a couple people, three to be exact, ask when it was going to be activated. So, there's been a little bit of demand, but there just aren't too many electric vehicles out there yet," Mausbach said.

He anticipates that the charging station will be ready in a couple of weeks.

SEE BLOOMING PRAIRIE, A10

"We've had homicides before, but nothing like this."

Sheriff Scott Rose
Dodge County

RIESS MURDER HAD POLICE PUZZLED

'War Zone' helps solve mystery

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

For more than two years a conference room at the Dodge County Sheriff's Office in Mantorville was turned into "a war zone," as Sheriff Scott Rose describes it.

A war zone doesn't happen unless it's something big. Really big. And that's exactly what Rose and his investigators found themselves tangled into in March 2018, though initially they had no idea just exactly how big it was going to be.

After a welfare check call to a residence in the far south-



Lois Riess

western corner of the county near Blooming Prairie, Rose and his office quickly found itself involved in what would become a case like none other. Rose calls it the biggest case of his 25-plus year law enforce-

ment career and perhaps one that will go down in the history books as the highest profile case to ever exist in Dodge County.

SEE RIESS MURDER, A8

Pencil art honors soldiers

BY DEB FLEMING
NEWS EDITOR

Al Smith spends hours each day sketching photographic images. His tools: pencils and erasers.

"I've done close to 200 drawings the past three years," said Smith. "If I wasn't married, I'd spend all day drawing."

His passion for pencil art was awakened several years ago when a friend who is a Vietnam War veteran asked Smith to create a sketch of him using the famous photograph "Grace (Old Man Praying)" as the backdrop. The ensuing sketch was the first one Smith had created since high school.

"As a kid, I drew everything... cars, trucks, hot rods, cartoon characters, etc.," said Smith, adding that the piece he did for his friend resurrected his love for pencil drawings.

"I started drawing with a passion and fervor," said Smith. "I couldn't stop drawing."

With his friend's sketch behind him, Smith began drawing other soldiers who had served during the Vietnam War - recreating actual photographs using graphite and erasers.

He has since packaged those penciled portraits into a 45-minute PowerPoint presentation titled "The Vietnam Experience."

He's used the presentation to show his art and telling groups in the area about the lives in the faces of war.

Smith said his presentations have afforded him the opportunity to express his respect and appreciation of soldiers in the military. "I don't draw anything violent," said Smith. "I just want to show the boys next door. They aren't special people but they are because they're soldiers."

Smith's collection also includes "War Heroes," "Women of War," and "WWII - Iconic."

While creating each of those collections,

SEE PENCIL ART, A10



STAFF PHOTO BY DEB FLEMING

Al Smith of Owatonna creates his pencil art in the basement studio of his home. He uses pencils and erasers to sketch an image originally captured in a photograph onto a piece of paper to create his pencil drawings.

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AREA DEATHS

Lloyd Mans, 85, Blooming Prairie
Marie Carroll, 89, Medford

Serving
Blooming Prairie
and Steele County
since 1893



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OUR VIEW

Filling the COVID air with holiday cheer

"Twas the month before Christmas when there wasn't much stirring in our communities but a nasty virus attempting to take over the land. Everyone is hunkered down in their homes when what to their wondering eyes appears..."

But Clark Griswold with a large Christmas tree strapped down on his station wagon and Cousin Eddie's RV taking up a portion of the empty lot where the Bakery in Blooming Prairie once stood.

It may be a fun spoof of the National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, but the folks at B to Z Hardware know how to celebrate the holidays. On Saturday, B to Z kicks off with a Christmas wonderland called "Have a Very Prairie Christmas" for the entire month of December.

Cousin Eddie, aka police officer Dan Peach, has been busy decorating the corner lot with lights, decorations, activities, photo opportunity areas and a whole lot more. He's not about to let the COVID-19 pandemic steal Christmas away from area residents.

This has been a tough year with so many activities and events stripped away from people, businesses and organizations. It's a relief to see some joy popping out of all the craziness of the pandemic that basically has people confined to their houses.

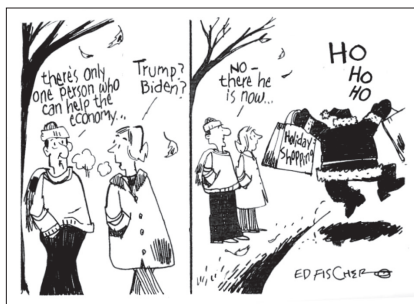
There are other activities to get residents in the holiday spirit. The Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce is hosting its first annual front yard Christmas tree decorating contest. There are several categories, including most creative, best use of a theme and best of the best. The contest is to encourage community spirit and to keep Blooming Prairie on the map as the best little community in Minnesota.

Owatonna is also getting into the holiday spirit. On Friday, there will be a Holiday Cruise beginning at 5:30 p.m. People will be able to cruise in comfort from their own vehicles around Central Park as well as the downtown businesses along North Cedar Avenue.

Downtown businesses in Owatonna are also being encouraged to decorate their storefronts with holiday lights and decorations. Prizes will be awarded to the best decorated businesses.

COVID-19 has disrupted all of our lives in many ways this year. It's comforting to know that people will still be able to salvage a little bit from the holiday season, though it may not be exactly what they had envisioned.

Visions of COVID may be dancing around in people's minds right now, but don't forget to enjoy all the joy and happiness that the holiday season has to offer.



GUEST COLUMN

Coming together is of utmost importance

BY GARY SIGLER

What a world we live in today. I, like you, am wondering where it all will end. It started a long time ago, at least five years ago and without a doubt, even before that. Then, four years ago, Donald Trump was elected and became our 45th President, much to everyone's surprise, perhaps even his own. Ever since then many attempts have been tried to bring this president down, at whatever cost. To this point every attempt has failed, but now bring on COVID-19. We know where it came from, don't we? We know it to be a manufactured virus, don't we? Is the timing of this relevant? Call it what you will, COVID-19 is a potentially deadly virus, not to be ignored, but treated with the respect that it deserves. Whether or not it is deadly is really predicated on the victims that get it. What are the underlying circumstances? Is each individual that

gets it prone to other health issues? If so, these are the issues that we, as individuals, can, or at least should be, aware of. How we deal with COVID-19 should then be dealt with on an individual basis, shouldn't it? It should not be regulated by our government. We should not have to be "dictated" to, but rather, we should have the right to choose how we deal with it. Correct? However, in addition to how we deal with it individually, as a whole, we should be treating one another with the respect that each and every one of us deserves. We should not have to be mandated to wear a mask. We should wear one around others to protect them, not ourselves. Shame on us if we simply put ourselves first and say, "I don't care about the others. I'm going to do what I want." Where is your patriotism? Where is your humanity? Shouldn't we simply practice the "Golden Rule?"

Do you really want to be controlled? Do you really want to let our government tell us what we can or cannot do? If we want to maintain the freedoms that we do have, we need to act responsibly. We also need to vocalize our feelings and beliefs. We need to respect the opinions of the "other side" and work toward a common resolve. That is what a "Democracy" is all about. That is how we have survived all these many years as the greatest of all nations, the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. Let's all work together to get back to where we were before. We are very close to losing many of our freedoms folks. If we are not careful in how we proceed, we will soon be facing the "point of no return." I, for one, do not want that.

May God Bless the United States of America.

Gary Sigler lives in Owatonna.

You provide me with an attitude of gratitude

My mind wandered in many directions (more so than normal) last week as I sat down for Thanksgiving dinner with my family. My mother asked each of us what we were most thankful for over the past year.

For the first time ever, thankfulness centered on something that has become a common household word over the past eight months: coronavirus. Of course, I'm extremely thankful for my health. I have avoided COVID-19 to this point and hope to continue doing so not necessarily for my sake but for those around me.

Beyond health, another big thing on my thankful list is the fact that I still have a business to operate after a tumultuous year for small businesses in light of the pandemic. In many ways, I feel like I have been sucker punched over and over with trying to keep the newspaper going in the right direction. It hasn't been easy, but then what is in this life?

I am grateful for the readers of this newspaper. Within the past three months, we have added more than 200 new readers. That's the most I have ever had in such a short period of



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

time during my 11 years of owning this newspaper. To those who have recently subscribed, thank you for trusting us to be your local source of hometown news. It's a commitment we take very seriously.

Adding so many new readers is especially remarkable for newspapers right now as many around the country have fallen on hard times even before the pandemic hit. I feel very lucky and fortunate to be able to share something that's in big demand. All I ask is that you spread the word and let others know about reading our paper and what they're missing if they don't subscribe.

And, of course, I can't thank enough all of those loyal subscribers who have been with us for years. One in particular comes to mind. A 90-year-old man

recently sent in his renewal for another year with a handwritten note sharing how much he enjoys reading the newspaper every week. In fact, he went as far as to say that reading the Times is the highlight of his week and he can't wait for it to arrive each week. To have that kind of relationship with someone I don't directly know is very gratifying.

The positivity shared by readers about the newspaper is what fuels me to continue doing this even in troubled times. It makes all the late nights and weekend work worthwhile, though I think sometimes my family maybe questions that.

If I've ever had any doubts about people being interested in the newspaper, all I need to do is look at the past month with the postal issues we have experienced. We have fielded call after call from readers inquiring about why the newspaper hasn't reached them. While I don't enjoy taking those calls, it serves as a good reminder to me about how much people value their newspaper.

Having loyal readers has definitely put me in hot pursuit of having an attitude of gratitude this holiday season.

'It's a nice day for a drive' Litany of a truck driver

Craig's day starts early, sometimes in darkness as early as 4 a.m. The work day sometimes lasts into the evening hours of darkness.

Highlight of the first day riding with Craig was to pick up fertilizer in a cave located on the

banks of the Mississippi River. Yes, I did say CAVE.

The cave is the property of Consolidated Grain & Barge. The grain terminal is located near the Mississippi.

We entered the terminal gates on a high grade and wound



Reflections
HOWARD LESTRUD

It's where the rubber hits the road. That's the life of a truck driver.

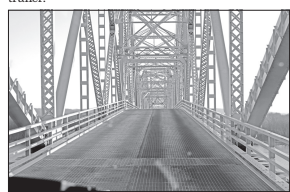
"It's a nice day for a drive," says Craig Mowers of Albert Lea as he begins another long day as a truck driver. It just so happens that Craig is my brother-in-law and drives truck for a living.

Within my early days of retirement, Craig said I now had time to see how the working world spends its day. He invited me to accompany him on two days of hauling freight for a private carrier, Danel Transportation and Logistics of Austin.

Our ride for the day was a 2013 Peterbilt tractor and a 48-foot trailer.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD
Trucking is his life. Craig Mowers, brother-in-law of columnist Howard Lestrud, is a very dedicated truck driver. Lestrud had the opportunity to sample the life of a truck driver by riding with him on his delivery of agricultural products recently. He stands by his best friend, a Peterbilt.



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRUD
This narrow bridge in Lansing, Iowa allowed passage over the Mississippi River. Hold your breath and you will make it across the Great River.

our way toward the area where grain and fertilizers are unloaded from barges and then moved into caves for distribution.

"I didn't know what I was getting into," Craig said about his first trip to the caves. It was kind of scary as Craig piloted his semi-trailer through the darkness and to a point where the product was placed in the truck.

SEE IT'S A NICE DAY, AS

STEELE COUNTY Times

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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 \$49
Elsewhere in State \$52
Out of state \$56

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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
2016-3 state and 6 national awards
2015-7 state and 4 national awards
2014-3 state and 3 national awards
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)

COVID cases surpass 2,000-mark, another death reported

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Over the past month Steele County has added 1,138 new COVID-19 cases as the county topped the 2,000 mark on Monday, Public Health Director Amy Caron reported.

Steele County's new cases increased by 344 over the past week, the second highest total for cases since the pandemic began in March. The county now has 2,019 cases. Caron said the county is averaging 45 new cases every day.

One month ago there were 95 new cases per week.

For the fifth straight week, there was also another death reported in Steele County, bringing the death toll to seven. The most recent deaths include a woman in her 80s in a long-term care facility and a man in his 90s living in a private residence, Caron said.

Freeborn and Mower counties also each reported one death over the past week. Mower County has lost 23 people, while Freeborn has had six deaths. Total

case counts include 2,616 in Mower and 1,533 in Freeborn.

In Dodge County, 101 new cases were reported this past week, bringing the county's total to 886. Dodge is still one of only three counties in Minnesota that hasn't experienced a COVID-related death.

There are currently 21 people from Steele County and eight from Dodge County hospitalized, according to Caron. She noted those hospitalizations are at various hospitals, not just the Owatonna hospital. "This is the most we've ever had hospitalized at one time," she said.

Caron provided a three-month comparison of new COVID cases. In September, Steele County had 136 new cases compared to

October when it more than doubled to 302. November will go down as the worst month yet with 1,138 cases. "Pretty rough," Caron said. "It kind of puts it into perspective how much of a jump we've had."

The impact of the Thanksgiving holiday won't be known for at least another week to two weeks.

The sharp rise in new cases has completely overwhelmed the local public health system, Caron said. In the beginning, her staff was able to notify those who tested positive within 24 hours. Now it's taking five or six days for Public Health to make initial contact outlining essential services available to COVID patients. "People aren't getting contacted right away," she said.

She urges people who test positive to do the isolation period and contact the people who they've had close contact with to let them know about having COVID so they can take precautions.

Caron said the goal right now is to keep healthcare systems from getting overwhelmed. She said the Owatonna hospital has six ICU beds, though she didn't know what capacity they are currently at with those units.

The public health director continues to worry about what the rest of the holiday season will mean for the pandemic. Caron said her department has done what it can until the vaccines arrive.

In the most recent cases, it has been diffi-

cult for Public Health to pinpoint anything other than "wide community spread," Caron said. "It's really coming down to people protecting themselves," she said. "It comes down to personal responsibility."

Caron expects some vaccine to arrive for healthcare workers in December. "People who are working directly with COVID patients will get it first," she said. She noted the CDC and Minnesota Department of Health will provide direction on who will get the vaccine. She doesn't expect it to be available for the general public until at least April.

Vaccine planning for the local area is Public Health's top priority right now, Caron said.

NEW COVID-19 CASES OVER 3 MONTHS

	Dodge	Steele
September	122	136
October	172	302
November	485	1,138

BP schools to get back into in-person classes soon

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

Blooming Prairie students should be back in the classroom beginning next week after the Blooming Prairie School Board OK'd a temporary move to distance learning.

Superintendent Chris Staloch said this week is the only week currently planned for K-12 students to learn virtually.

Though there's been a recent increase in COVID-19 numbers in Steele County, Staloch said that the decision to do distance learning was more proactive than a necessity at this time.

"We've only had a few cases in our schools, and we're trying to keep it that way by taking this measure," he said.

While Blooming Prairie students are distance learning, the school board and Steele County Public Health will closely monitor the situation before deciding how to proceed.

"We want to make sure we're keeping an eye on the COVID-19 numbers in our community and in our schools," he said.

Until the students and staff can safely return to their schools, they'll have to adjust to



Chris Staloch

distance learning.

Across the U.S., many schools have discovered a large obstacle to effective distance learning: not having a computer at home or not having enough devices for each child who is in school.

However, Staloch said that's not a concern for students in the Blooming Prairie School District.

"We've added quite a bit of technology in the past year," he said.

Thanks to that investment, the district has a 1:1 ratio of devices and K-12 students, that means each K-12 student has a school-issued device.

Staloch said Blooming Prairie teachers have been working hard to ensure that their distance teaching is effective. "It takes a lot of planning to do it really well, and I know our staff has been putting in a ton of work to accomplish that," he said. "Our goal is to provide as good of an education as we possibly can. We know it's a change, and we want to make sure it goes as smoothly as it can."

While he and his staff work on creating a smooth transition, his ultimate goal is to get Blooming Prairie students back into their schools as soon as possible.

"We know that when they're in our buildings, that's what's best for all students," he said. "We're going to do everything we can to get them back into our facilities."

The next school board meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m., Monday, Dec. 21.

COVID spike prompts in-person court activity

Citing the increase in COVID-19 infection rates across Minnesota, Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea has issued a state-wide order limiting in-person activity in courthouses. The order goes into effect on Nov. 30, and will remain in effect for the next 60 days.

"The health and safety of our staff and judges and those we serve is our top priority," said Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea. "This order keeps our courts open and accessible to the people of Minnesota in a manner that prioritizes health and safety."

In order to continue the operations of the Minnesota Judicial Branch consistent with public health guidance as pandemic conditions evolve, the following will govern court proceedings and services from Nov. 30 through Jan. 31, 2021:

• **Remote Hearings:** Hearings across all case types, including treatment courts, will be conducted remotely until Feb.

1. Exceptions may be granted for in-person proceedings under limited circumstances.

• **Jury Trials:** Jury trials in progress will continue until complete. No new jury trials will commence before Feb. 1. Exceptions may be granted for jury trials under limited circumstances.

• **Grand Juries:** Grand juries that were empaneled and taking evidence on a case will continue until complete. No grand juries will be empaneled, nor will grand jury proceedings commence, before Feb. 1. Exceptions may be granted under limited circumstances.

• **Appellate Courts:** Proceedings in appeals pending before the Minnesota Court of Appeals and the Minnesota Supreme Court will continue as scheduled by those courts.

• **Civil Commitment:** Proceedings that are before the Commitment Appeal Panel shall continue as scheduled by the

SEE COVID SPIKE, A12

Owatonna Schools extend distance learning

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Distance learning in the Owatonna Schools will continue longer than expected.

Last week administrators determined it would be necessary to remain in the distance learning model through at least Thursday, Jan. 7 for the "continued safety of our students, staff and community," said Superintendent Jeff Elstad.

The announcement doesn't come as a complete surprise as COVID-19 has been raging throughout Steele County. There have been several

hundred new cases each week since early November, including a record of 384 cases in one week. There has also been one death in Steele County each week over the past five weeks.

When school officials switched from in-person to distance learning in mid-November, they said the distance learning would go until this Friday unless COVID conditions worsen.

In making the decision to continue with distance learning, Elstad said his team has been consulting with representatives of both Steele County Public Health and the Min-

nesota Department of Health.

"The transition back to the previous learning models (grades E-5 all in person and hybrid for grades 6-12) on Monday, Jan. 11 will be contingent upon improvement of the public health conditions within our community," Elstad said.

As per the order of Gov. Tim Walz, all activities will be delayed until at least Dec. 18 or when it is deemed safe for our students, coaches, and advisors to return. The district will base the date of return to winter activities on COVID-19 data shared by the

local and state public agencies and/or other state agencies.

Meal bundles are available for free for all children ages 1-18 until June 30, 2021. During distance learning, meals can be picked up between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Dec. 2, 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, and Jan. 4, 5, and 7 at Lincoln Elementary, McKinley Elementary, Wilson Elementary, Owatonna Middle School, and Owatonna High School. Visit the school's website at www.isd761.org for more information or call 507-444-8616 with any questions.

SEE OWATONNA SCHOOLS, A12



Wear a mask in public spaces.



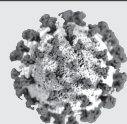
Get tested if you have any symptoms.



Answer if your health department calls.

MINNESOTA

STAY SAFE MN



World.....	62,800,000
Deaths.....	1,460,000
Recovered.....	40,200,000
U.S.....	13,400,000
Deaths.....	267,000
Recovered.....	4,880,000

COVID-19 UPDATE

MN.....	313,000	Steele.....	2,019	Dodge.....	886
Deaths.....	3,637	Deaths.....	7	Deaths.....	0
Recovered.....	94,416	Recovered.....	1,036	Recovered.....	525

Freeborn.....	1,533
Deaths.....	6
Recovered.....	
Mower.....	2,616
Deaths.....	23
Recovered.....	

AS OF NOV. 30, 2020

YET ANOTHER TITLE!



Mitchell Fiebigler (81), Luke Larkoski (60), Levi Ryks (73) and Cole Christianson (17) along with other players relish in the joy of winning yet another football title for Blooming Prairie. This time it's the Section 1A title.

Congratulations to the defending Class A state champions on winning your third straight Section 1A title!



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What You'll Pay for Medicare in 2021



Dear Savvy Senior, I know there will be a small cost-of-living increase in Social Security benefits next year but what about Medicare? What will the Medicare Part B monthly premiums be in 2021, and when do the surcharges kick in for higher income beneficiaries?

Inquiring Senior

Dear Inquiring,
The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recently announced their cost adjustments for 2021, and the increases for premiums and out-of-pocket costs for most beneficiaries will be modest. But if you're a high earner, you'll pay more. Here's what you can expect starting in January.

Medicare Part B

While Medicare Part A, which pays for hospital care, is premium-free for most beneficiaries, Part B, which covers doctor visits and outpatient services does have a monthly premium. Starting in 2021, the standard monthly Part B premium will be \$148.50, up from \$144.60 in 2020. That \$3.90 bump represents a 2.7 percent increase, which is more than double the most recent Social Security cost-of-living adjustment which was 1.3 percent.

But if you're a high earning beneficiary, which makes up about 7 percent of all Medicare recipients, you'll have to pay more. Medicare surcharges for high earners are based on adjusted gross income from two years earlier, which means that 2021 Part B premiums are determined by 2019 annual income.

So, if your 2019 income was above \$88,000 up to \$111,000 (\$176,000 up to \$222,000 for married couples filing jointly), your 2021 Part B monthly premium will be \$207.90, up from \$202.40 in 2020. Monthly premiums for singles with an income between \$111,000 and \$138,000 (\$222,000 and \$276,000 for joint filers) will rise from \$289.20 to \$297. Individuals earning above \$138,000 up to \$165,000 (\$276,000 to \$330,000 for joint filers) will see their monthly premium increase from \$376 to \$386.10.

Those with incomes above \$165,000 up to \$500,000 (\$320,000 to \$750,000 for joint filers), you'll pay \$475.20 per month in 2021. And single filers with income of \$500,000 or more (\$750,000 or more for joint filers) will pay \$504.90 per month next year.

Medicare Part D

If you have a Medicare (Part D) prescription drug plan, the average premium in 2021 will be about \$30 per month for most beneficiaries. But, again for high earner with annual incomes above \$88,000 (\$176,000 for joint filers) you'll pay a \$12.30 to \$77.10 monthly surcharge on top of your regular Part D premiums.

How to Contest Income

Beneficiaries that fall into any of the high-income categories and have experienced certain life-changing events that have reduced their income since 2019, such as retirement, divorce or the death of a spouse, can contest the surcharge. For more information on how to do this, see "Medicare Premiums: Rules for Higher-Income Beneficiaries" at ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/medicare-premiums.html.

Other Medicare Increases

In addition to the Part B and Part D premium increases, there are other cost increases you should be aware of. For example, the annual deductible for Medicare Part B will see a bump from \$198 to \$203 in 2021. The deductible for Medicare Part A, which covers hospital services, will increase from \$1,408 in 2020 to \$1,484 in 2021. There are no surcharges on Medicare deductibles for high earners.

For more information on all the Medicare costs for 2021 visit medicare.gov and click on "2021 Medicare Costs," or call 800-633-4227.

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

Dec. 7, 2010

RICK L. BUSSLER, PUBLISHER

For the third year, the Blooming Prairie Lions donated student dictionaries for the third graders. Paul Dale, Lions president, and Rick Kittelson visited the school last week with enough dictionaries for each student and teachers in the third grade. The students in Angie Avery and Mary Moren's classes got a quick overview of what the Lions Club's do throughout the year. The goal of the dictionaries is help the students become better readers and writers.

Even with the temperatures hovering around eight degrees and the roads covered in ice, the first ever Gobble Wobble race went off without a hitch. Linda Klemmensen was excited to see the 76 people who took part in the event. Each participant received a Gobble Wobble T-shirt for their efforts. The race raised \$1,337 for the Pine Springs Pool.

20 Years Ago

Dec. 5, 2000

ELSIE SUNGER, PUBLISHER

The first week of winter sports at BPHS brought some much different results to the various teams. Great start for the wrestlers. Their three wins bettered last year's start. The boys' basketball team lost a close game

to Kasson-Mantorville by three points. The girls' basketball team had a rough start with losses to K-M and WEM. Their loss to the Bucs was the first conference defeat since the 1997-98 season. It is for sure the conference teams will be out to get them for all the past seasons losses.

Kristi Beckman, a senior at BPHS, was chosen as the first place winner of the local 2000 Voice of Democracy Scholarship contest and will be entered in the district level of competition. Kristi was honored by the VFW Post Auxiliary 88 along with other award winners, Phil Iacovino and Gary Tashima.

50 Years Ago

Dec. 2, 1970

VICTOR, VERNON & VRYLE

KREJCI, PUBLISHERS

The Blooming Prairie Fire Department was called to the Gordon Amundson farm last Sunday afternoon. They arrived to a blaze in a structure, which housed thousands of young chickens. Fire Chief Lloyd Schor reported approximately 6,000 chickens perished in the fire and the building was damaged before the fire was put out.

Austin Area Vocational-Technical School announced the following to the first quarter honor roll. They are: David Nelson, Auto Body Rebuilding; Norman Christianson, Auto Mechanics; Richard Klemmensen, Carpentry; Thomas Swenson, Welding.

75 Years Ago

Dec. 6, 1945

FRANK KREJCI, PUBLISHER

Chrissy Lynard, overseas veteran, recently honorably discharged from the armed service, is a patient at the Veterans Hospital in Minneapolis. Chrissy fractured his knee cap in one of the several European campaigns he took part in and the medics were working to fix him up "good a new."

Owatonna Picture News

31 Years Ago

Nov. 30, 1989

TOM SHEA, PUBLISHER

A number of ex-Owatonna High School athletes got together for an alumni basketball game prior to the regularly scheduled OHS varsity scrimmage last week. Some of the participants were Doug Kradky, 1980; Brad Bulver, 1987; Jim Bohnhoff, 1969; Brad Fisher, KRFO color commentator, 1980.

The 20th Anniversary of Wilson School was marked this week. A number of teachers and staff personnel that have been with the school for at least 13 years. Those honored were: Jan Bergstrom, 17 years; Julie Nessa, 13 years; Bonnie Remford, 13 years; Elaine Hoefner, 14 years; Peggy Falcone, 13 years; Carol Levine, 15 years.

Soft drink law sets off fireworks before council

Editor's Note: Local historian Steve Wencil of Blooming Prairie shared some tidbits about the Blue Hen Cap. Over the past three weeks, we have been reprinting some articles concerning the Blue Hen from 88 years ago in 1932. The stories began in the Nov. 18 edition and wrap up this week.

Reprinted from Thursday, Oct. 6, 1932

NEW DRINK LAW AROUSES FIRE

Blooming Prairie's new soft drink ordinance set off a lot of fireworks at the council meeting Monday night.

A few sparks flared up when the vote was being taken to amend the ordinance by striking out the midnight closing clause, but the scorching blistering

shots came later in the discussion of granting a license to the Blue Hen.

The council chamber was filled with visitors including a committee of three: Rev. Edw. C. Stauffer, Rev. H. J. Rasmussen and another pastor whose name is not known. These men were sent by the Baptist Church whose Sunday night congregation of 225 had voted to fight the granting of a license to the Blue Hen chicken shack unless it closed at midnight.

Lined up on the bench on the opposite side of the room were Harold (Toby) Lynard, Clarence Lynard, George Curtin, Tom Olson, Joe Motl, Paul Coggins and others who had come to hear the action taken on the soft drink ordinance.

The motion to amend the ordinance by striking out the

midnight closing clause was made after Mayor A.W. Simpson announced that this clause was meaningless. The law can require places selling soft drinks to close at midnight, but nothing can prevent the same places from opening 15 minutes later and staying open as long as they wish. The ordinance, drawn up by the Steele County attorney, was passed exactly as he outlined it, and not until after it was published was the midnight closing joker discovered.

There was quite a lot of discussion.

Said Recorder Konard Wold: The teeth are still in the ordinance. It is just as good with that closing clause out, maybe a little better. Now it won't affect the restaurants, which are entitled to the trade they get after midnight.

Said senior alderman A.L. Srsen: We've had lots of trouble with that place (the Blue Hen) but we couldn't do a thing until we passed an ordinance. I think we ought to put the thing through after we have gone this far. The ordinance still provides as we can close the place up if it isn't conducted decently.

One councilman refused to vote on the amendment, which was passed by three ayes and one not voting. Applications for the soft drink licenses were then read and accepted unanimously, one after the other, until Record Wold read the Blue Hen application. Five minutes of silence followed. Then blazed the fireworks which lasted more than an hour.

At the conclusion the license was granted by a unanimous vote along with all the others.

IT'S A NICE DAY: for a drive FROM 62

As we left the cave with our 80,000 pounds of additional weight, we kept an eye on an opening, which proved to be the opening for us to exit the cave.

We were now loaded and ready to depart for our drop-off point at Stacyville, Iowa. The challenge begins as Craig takes the 48-foot trailer on its way up a curving trajectory.

Thanks to a 13-speed transmission, powered by a splitter, our truck groaned a bit as it chugged up the winding road. To be honest, I could see us rolling back down

the steep hill toward the river. Craig wasn't worried, however, and successfully brought us to ground level.

This was our big challenge for the day but our day also included a delivery of wheat to an organic farm near Calmar, Iowa.

A highlight of the second day with Craig was traveling across a very narrow bridge going from Lansing, Iowa into Crawford County, Wis. The bridge is called the Black Hawk Bridge, named for Chief Black Hawk.

This riveted cantilever through truss bridge has one of the more unusual designs of any Mississippi River bridge. Construction started in 1929 and was completed in 1931.

This time of year, Craig is doing most deliveries of animal food. In the summer time, he often drives a dump truck, oftentimes delivering road construction materials.

"I really like my job and I go to towns that I have never heard of," Craig says.

Trucking down the roadway, Craig said cars following him always want to get ahead of him. "I get a lot of fingers waved at me but it's something you get used to," he says.

Driving a truck is not as simple as hanging tightly to a steering wheel. It includes mastering the shifting of gears, becoming familiar with the truck GPS

(which records weight loads and height of bridges) monitoring of the various air gauges and constantly checking water temperatures. "I have made sure my brakes are working at all times," he insists.

Daniel Transportation is a family operation, the name coming from owners Dan and Mel Morium. The company has a fleet of 30-plus trucks. Daniel also owns the Austin Tree Service and does snow removal in the winter time.

Craig's day often totals over 600 miles on the road. He also burns about 900 gallons of fuel on an average day.

Craig's day is not over until he has delivered or picked up his cargo. He then plans his itinerary for the next day.

Just riding along with Craig tired me out. I'm sure glad I am retired.

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**BLOTTER
SPOTLIGHT**
BLOTTER SPOTLIGHT: On Nov. 21 at 8:06 p.m., Owatonna Police began a criminal sexual conduct investigation in the 700 block of Minnesota Ave. SE.

Owatonna Police to send out extra patrols to snag drunk drivers

Holiday enforcement underway statewide

The holidays will look a lot different in 2020. Many people will be staying home, celebrating with immediate family. The holidays often involve drinking during a family dinner, and sometimes people lose track of how many drinks they've consumed. This can often lead to a person unknowingly driving under the influence.

To help keep families together this holiday season, the Owatonna Police Department will be participating with law enforcement statewide in an extra DWI enforcement and awareness campaign running on weekends, which began Nov. 25 and continues through Dec. 31.

Planning Ahead
Motorists need to plan ahead for sober rides, regardless of where they are drinking.

-During 2015 - 2019, 28 people died in drunk driving-related crashes during the holiday DWI extra enforcement period.

-Of the various holiday time periods throughout 2019, Thanksgiving and July 4th tied for the highest percentage of drunk driving-related fatalities.

-Nearly one out of every four deaths (22%) on Minnesota roads is drunk driving-related.

-In the last five years (2015 - 2019), there were 413 drunk driving-related traffic deaths in Minnesota, with 89 people killed in 2019 alone.

-Alcohol-related crashes not only take lives, they change them forever. An average of 357 life-changing injuries (2015-2019) are caused by alcohol-related crashes each year.

The decision to get behind the wheel after drinking is costing too many people their lives. The choice to

drive drunk has contributed to 28 deaths on Minnesota roads from the day before Thanksgiving through Dec. 30 (2012-2017).

DWI Consequences
-Loss of license for up to a year; thousands of dollars in costs and possible jail time.

-Repeat DWI offenders, as well as first-time offenders arrested at 0.16 and above alcohol concentration level, must use ignition interlock in order to regain legal driving privileges or face at least one year without a driver's license.

-First-time offenders arrested at 0.16 and above are required to use interlock for one year. -Offenders with three or more offenses are required to use interlock for three to six years, or they will never regain driving privileges.

A DWI is no Holiday
-Plan for a safe ride - designate a sober

driver, use a safe, alternative transportation option, or stay at the location of the celebration. With bars and restaurants closed due to COVID-19, many people will decide to drink at home. The same rules apply, make sure you designate a sober driver or crash on a couch, not in a vehicle, if you're leaving family gatherings.

Speak up - Offer to be a designated driver or be available to pick up a loved one anytime, anywhere. If you see an impaired person about to get behind the wheel, get them a safe ride home.

Buckle up - the best defense against a drunk driver.

Report drunk driving - call 911 when witnessing impaired driving behavior. Be prepared to provide location, license plate number and observed dangerous behavior.

CRIME BRIEF

Suspicion call turns up stolen gun

A suspicious vehicle report has led to police recovering a stolen firearm in Owatonna.



Dak Ret

Police responded to a report of suspicious men at the Woodbridge Apartments on West Bridge Avenue on Nov. 19. A caller reported seeing the men smoking something, but he did not know what.

Officers did not initially locate the men in the apartment building. However, they discovered a vehicle in the parking lot that had been previously reported to being involved in drug and prostitution activity. Two men matching the description provided by the caller were in the vehicle.

As officers made contact with the

vehicle, they saw illegal controlled substances. The illegal drugs led to a vehicle search, which uncovered a fully loaded, stolen Taurus 9mm pistol, according to police.

Police arrested Dak Ret, 24, of Waseca. He has been charged with illegal possession of ammunition and a firearm as well as fifth-degree possession of a controlled substance. Both crimes are felonies.

Court records indicate Ret has been previously convicted of a felon in possession of a firearm. He also has been convicted as an extended jurisdiction juvenile for committing second-degree aggravated robbery and ineligible to possess a firearm.

Man charged with sexual abuse in Owatonna

**BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER**

An Owatonna man faces a felony charge in connection with a sexual assault involving a child.

Michael Skalicky, 50, has been charged with a

single count of first-degree criminal sexual conduct. He faces a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison and a \$40,000 fine if convicted on the charge.

According to the criminal complaint, Owatonna Police

received a report of a welfare check on a minor child on Nov. 17. A woman advised that her niece was being sexually assaulted by another family member.

On Nov. 18, a social worker with MN Prairie conducted a

CornerHouse interview with the victim, who is 12 years old. The victim disclosed that Skalicky had touched her inappropriately, the complaint said.

During the interview, the victim told investigators that

Skalicky made her watch porn movies in the past. Skalicky is accused of sexually assaulting the girl while watching porn. She didn't say anything while the incident was going on because she was scared.



Michael Skalicky

**COURT NEWS
Steele County**

The following case was heard in Steele County District Court the week of Nov. 16 with Judge Karen R. Duncan presiding: Mario A. Correa, 27, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony theft. He was sentenced to \$3,821, 5 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, chemical dependency evaluation, obtain permission to leave the state, no possession of firearms, 40 hours of community service and 3 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of Nov. 16 - 22:

**BLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Thomas A. Decker, 28, Blooming Prairie, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Derek A. Drees, 27, Blooming Prairie, DWI, \$975, 30 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, chemical dependency evaluation, 224 hours of community service and 2 years of supervised probation; Bethany A. Nevala, 34, Apple Valley, speeding, \$135; Jordan R. Paulson, 21, Austin, expired registration, \$105.

**MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER**

Mohamed H. Abdulla, 34, Pelican Rapids, speeding, \$125; Cristian Baeza Martinez, 22, Pelican Rapids, speeding, \$215; Jack D. Barclay, 23, Carver, window tint violation, \$125; Amanda M. Baynes, 36, Medford, motor vehicle excise tax violation, \$901, 25 hours of community service and 1 year of supervised probation; Deja D. Bragg, 20, Rochester, speeding, \$115; Trevor L. Buhr, 54, Kingman, AZ, speeding, \$215; Ballam H. Dudley,

34, Plymouth, speeding, \$215; Lar Err, 18, St. Paul, speeding, \$125; Michael A. Fitzherbert, 22, Bagport, no insurance, \$125 and 90 days in county jail; Laurent Hakizimana, 28, Cedar Rapids, IA, speeding, \$115; Nicklaus D. Hanson-Kaufman, 21, Albert Lea, speeding, \$275; Alonzo J. Harmon, 19, Austin, speeding, \$375; Ruby R. Hoffman, 18, Nicollet, speeding, \$115; Alonzo C. Hollie, 22, Minneapolis, speeding, \$125; Cody D. Holm, 30, Bemidji, brakes violation, \$175; Sarah R. Keller, 32, Kanjon, no child passenger restraint system, \$125; Erika K. Krieger, 22, Apple Valley, speeding, \$125; Vincent L. Lopez, 58, Thousand Oaks, CA, speeding, \$215; Amera A. McDowell, 38, Kansas City, MO, no license, \$175; Tiffany R. Mehus, 17, Glenville, speeding, \$275; Maimouna S. Mohammed, 23, St. Paul, speeding, \$275 and 20 hours of community service; Robert L. Morlock, 48, Zimmerman, speeding, \$125; Nathan M. Mueller, 20, Princeton, speeding, \$115; Miguel A. Pelegrin, 19, Shakopee, speeding, \$215; Jahir Perez Cortez, 23, Bloomington, no license, \$175; Rachel R. Schmidt, 37, Ellendale, speeding, \$135; Julie M. Schmidt, 45, Owatonna, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$135 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Drew B. Thibodeau, 37, Monticello, speeding, \$135; Anthony M. Volkman, 20, Stanchfield, speeding, \$125; Jason L. Waite, 40, West Des Moines, IA, speeding, \$135; Taren J. Weise, 22, Owatonna, seat belt, \$100.

**OWATONNA POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

Ross W. Campbell, 49, Owatonna, DWI, \$375, 2 days in county jail, Ignition Interlock program and 1 year of unsupervised probation;

Evangelina Castro, 30, Owatonna, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Amy M. Cookson-Munguia, 37, Owatonna, restraining order violation, \$275, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, obtain permission to leave the state, 10 hours of community service and 1 year of supervised probation; Mario A. Correa, 27, Owatonna, possession of marijuana and no insurance, \$125 and 1 day in county jail; Isaac K. Erickson, 20, Owatonna, careless driving, \$175; Brandon A. Etheridge, 34, Plymouth, possession of pistol without permit, \$375, 1 day in county jail and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Casey A. Gefre, 34, Owatonna, DWI, \$400, 4 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, attend MADD impact panel, do not enter liquor establishments, Ignition Interlock program and 1 year of supervised probation; Dallas A. Jackson, 20, Waukegan, IA, speeding, \$115; Skylar A. Johnson, 19, Faribault, theft, \$125 and 2 days in county jail; Anne M. Malmquist, 30, Owatonna, hands free violation, stay of adjudication, \$145 and 1 year of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Madison W. Rydman, 18, Austin, hands free violation, \$125; Heather M. Trumpold, 19, Welcome, failure to obey traffic control device, \$125; Michele C. Weatherley, 59, Ellendale, theft, \$293.40 and 1 year of supervised probation; Ashley F. Williams, 33, Ellendale, speeding, \$155; Jennifer A. Working, 31, Owatonna, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$1,000, 3 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments,

psychological evaluation, obtain permission to leave the state, no possession of firearms and 3 years of supervised probation.

**STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Matthew J. Bendorf, 25, Owatonna, speeding, \$125; Robert M. Blowers, 19, Waseca, speeding, \$125; Douglas W. Fisher, 59, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Timmarie Forsberg, 42, Blooming Prairie, DWI, \$450, 2 days in county jail, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, attend MADD impact panel and 2 years of supervised probation; Tammie E. Hudnall, 47, Rochester, speeding, \$125; Katrina Hull, 46, Albert Lea, speeding, \$125; Michael W. Kirby, 43, Waseca, speeding, \$115; Keith L. Legeman, 42, Dorchester, WI, speeding, \$115; Maria G. Martinez Sanchez, 32, Austin, speeding, \$135; Michael J. Necharnick, 69, Owatonna, disorderly conduct, \$375, 2 days in county jail, anger management and 1 year of supervised probation; Julie A. Pennoyer, 42, St. Michael, speeding, \$135; Paul Reh, 24, Johnson City, NY, failure to signal, \$125; McKenzie B. Robertson, 24, Owatonna, speeding, \$135; Matthew K. Stempke, 36, Medford, domestic assault, \$581, maintain employment, no possession of firearms, obtain permission to leave the state, domestic abuse evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation; Joel M. Terry, 26, Faribault, speeding and suspended license, \$415; Emma M. Wasieleski, 27, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Audrey C. Williams, 17, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Shane C. Yule, 52, Medford, speeding, \$125.

**POLICE BLOTTER
Steele County**
**BLOOMING PRAIRIE
POLICE**

**Nov. 21
Crash:** At 10:51 a.m., a motor vehicle accident occurred at 1st Ave. NW and 3rd St. NW.

OWATONNA POLICE

**Nov. 20
Fire:** Police responded to a fire in the 500 block of Adams Ave. NW at 12:32 a.m.

Disturbance: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 300 block of Main St. E. at 10:50 a.m.

**Nov. 21
Domestic:** Police responded to a domestic disturbance in the 200 block of Woodland Dr. SE at 3:39 a.m.

Theft: Officer took a theft report at Oak Ave. N. and Rose St. W. at 9:25 a.m.

Assault: At 4:36 p.m., an assault occurred in the 200 block of Pearl St. E.

Criminal Sexual Conduct: Police began an investigation of criminal sexual conduct in the 700 block of Minnesota Ave. SE at 8:06 p.m.

DWI: Officer made a DWI arrest at Hoffman Dr. NW and Ted Ringhofer Dr. at 11:54 p.m.

**Nov. 22
Arrest:** Police arrested a motorist during a traffic stop at Hoffman Dr. NW and Brady Blvd. NW at 1:24 a.m.

Theft: At 1:50 p.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 500 block of Oak Ave. S.

Domestic: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 200 block of 12th St. NE at 4:26 p.m. They arrested a subject at the scene.

**Nov. 23
Fraud:** Officer took a report of a fraud incident in the 600 block of Florence Ave. NW at 1:56 p.m.

Theft: At 5:38 p.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 2600 block of 3rd Ave. NE.

Theft: Officer issued a

**STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF**

**Nov. 21
Domestic:** Deputies responded to a domestic disturbance in the 200 block of 1st St. NW in Medford at 3:34 p.m.

Theft: They took a subject into custody.

Pursuit: Deputies pursued a subject at 168th St. SW and 62nd Ave. SW in Berlin Township at 8:51 p.m. They arrested the subject.

**Nov. 22
Theft:** Deputy took a theft report in the 14200 block of 34th Ave. SE in Summit Township at 9:53 a.m.

**Nov. 24
Crash:** At 9:24 p.m., a motor vehicle accident resulting in property damage occurred in the 8400 block of 128th St. SW in Berlin Township.

**COURT NEWS
Dodge County**

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of Nov. 15 - 22:

**DODGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Tallie R. Bernard, 31, Kasson, speeding, \$130; Jalynn N. Colligan, 17, Kasson, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$100 and 6 months of unsupervised probation; Kaitly A. Delaney, 28, Rochester, disorderly conduct, \$160; Alaina M. Diaz, 30, Mason City, IA, theft, stay of

SEE BLOTTER, A10

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LOIS RIESS MURDER MYSTERY



March 21, 2018
David Riess
found murdered
in his home



April 9, 2018
Pamela Hutchinson
murdered
in Florida

April 19, 2018
Lois Riess
arrested
in Texas



Aug. 11, 2020
Lois pleads guilty
to killing
husband

August 2020
Lois begins
life sentence
in Shakopee

RIESS MURDER HAD POLICE PUZZLED

RIESS
MURDER: FROM A1

"We've had homicides before, but nothing like this," said Rose. "I can't think of another case that has been as high profile other than the Greg Lange shooting (Claremont police chief murdered in 1988), but even then, the suspects were found the next day."

Deputies and investigators found the body of David Riess who had been dead inside in his home for days on March 21, 2018. He had gunshots to his body, but no answers readily apparent as to what happened. Sheriff Rose also responded that evening.

"Initially we didn't know what we had," Rose said. "We had no history and no contacts at the house. We were dealing with a family that we had no history with." And, in law enforcement circles, that is unusual—at least when it comes to something as drastic as a murder investigation.

To complicate matters for police, there was no one at the residence to provide any clues about what took place. Riess had a business partner, but he was in Montana at the time. His wife also was away from the house.

The sheriff's office quickly enlisted the help of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension in St. Paul and teamed up with its lead detective, Ben Bohle. The BCA offers skilled investigators to help local agencies solve major crimes.

THE WAR ZONE

Within days, the conference room became the war zone and investigators were the only people with access. They used the space to piece together their evidence and track tips from all over the country. Rose said it's incredibly helpful to have a dedicated area, especially when working a multi-state investigation.

Early on in the investigation the sheriff's office had information that Lois Riess was at Diamond Joe's Casino in Northwood, Iowa, about 45 minutes south of the murder scene. Rose said that information "seemed odd" when investigators came upon it. "What kill your husband and go gambling," shrugged Rose with a perplexed look.

But the Diamond Joe's connection quickly proved to be a pivotal point in the investigation. Detectives came across a security video at a near-by convenience store in Northwood where Lois Riess was captured on video asking for directions "to get south." At that point, police knew she had left the immediate area.

Asked what kind of lag time there was between police and Lois



Dodge County Sheriff Scott Rose led his office in a two-year murder investigation that ended in August with Lois Riess pleading guilty to first-degree murder and being sentenced to life in prison without parole. She is currently serving the sentence at the women's state prison in Shakopee.

Riess, Rose said. "Not very long."

While David Riess had been dead for a week, Lois Riess did come back to the residence during that time for unknown reasons, Rose said. "It always seemed like we were a day or two behind. It was luck on her part," he said.

Riess eluded capture for almost a month. "We were always trying to play catch up," Rose said.

A short time after getting the Diamond Joe's information, authorities began utilizing the news media to help find her as "a person of interest." Rose said they wanted to get her picture out there right away because "she looks just like anybody." He said there are no unique characteristics of Riess, which added to the importance of getting her photo out there.

The information quickly went nationwide through the media, as well as on billboards along major highways across the country. Besides Riess' photo, police also broadcast her vehicle description along with a license number.

Within no time, tips began pouring in to

the "war zone" at the sheriff's office from all over the country. Rose stressed that three investigators followed up on every tip that came into the sheriff's office even if it was in the middle of the night. In some cases, it meant sending police from the jurisdictions that the tip came from to confirm or deny the information. Most of information proved to be a dead end.

But finally, in early April 2018 police got the break they needed.

Bloomington, Ill., businesswoman Tess Koster reported she came into contact with Lois Riess while vacationing in Fort Myers Beach, Fla. Koster called police to tell them that Riess had just shown up at the Kosters' Florida house, made eye contact and then quickly turned away and left the area.

"With the Kosters seeing her in Florida, that's when everything focused down there," Rose said. It was also the first time state and local officials sought the help of the U.S. Marshal's Service.

Things began falling into place even more quickly after the discovery of Pamela Hutchinson, who had been murdered in a

Fort Myers Beach hotel, Riess was immediately identified as a suspect.

Hutchinson's killing caught Rose and investigators back in Minnesota off guard. "The other body (Hutchinson's) surprised us. Lois assumed her identity. That didn't make any sense to us," Rose said.

After the Florida killing, media coverage intensified as did the desire of authorities to catch Riess. The U.S. Marshal's turned to the national media to find Riess.

And it worked. Rose credits the media with helping find Riess. Someone in a Texas bar recognized Riess from TV while she was sitting in the same bar and tipped off police.

"I don't know how we would have done it without the media," said Rose. "Without the national media, we would have had a tough time finding her."

A TOUGH CASE

For Rose, the hardest part of this mystery was dealing with the family. "One of the toughest things is having this family get torn apart," he said. "They were upset with the circum-

stances, and who can blame them?"

In order to maintain the integrity of the investigation, investigators had to keep silent about everything even with family members. "We couldn't tell the family anything," said Rose said. He added it proved to be his greatest frustration with the case.

Adding to the frustration for both the family and law enforcement were differing state laws regarding the release of evidence. Florida law requires case details and evidence be released throughout the court case, while Minnesota's keeps everything under wraps until the case has been prosecuted. In most high-profile cases, that can be at least a year or two after the crime took place. In the Florida case, details and photos of evidence began coming out within weeks of Riess' capture.

"The family was learning more through the media from Florida than what we could tell them about the Minnesota case," Rose said. "They were just left in the dark for two years as they watched the national media call her 'Losing Streak' and 'Killer Grandma.'"

Asked how his office dealt with the Riess family, Rose said, "Keep talking to them and make yourself available to them. It's tough."

Rose credits investigator Bohle with developing a solid relationship with the family.

The sheriff's other frustration with this case was that there was a second victim. "She (Hutchinson) was just at the wrong place at the wrong time," Rose said.

"We wondered what we could have done differently," Rose said. "Looking back, I don't think there is anything differently we could do."

Rose said the Riess murder was different than anything he'd experienced. "Nothing in this case is normal," he said. "The spouse is a suspect. Someone we haven't had contact with and someone who flees the area."

A RESTLESS PUBLIC

As the case played out in Florida and then again back in Minnesota, Rose found the public getting restless, wondering why things couldn't happen quicker. Riess did not come back to Minnesota until July, nearly 28 months after she killed David. "People started questioning us and why it hadn't gone to court sooner," Rose said. "There were so many circumstances completely out of our control that delayed it."

Rose said this investigation put an incredible strain on his tiny department. "A ton of time" was initially put into the case by nearly every member of the sheriff's office, he said.

Calls like the Riess murder, Rose said, take a toll on law enforcement in a variety of ways. "When you get this call, you drop everything and go. Everything else stops. Personal life, professional life, everything," the sheriff said.

Rose said he is most proud of his office and the investigators who handled the case. He said the fact that this case didn't go to trial speaks volumes to the strong investigation.

"We had a solid case," he said.

A spokesperson for the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension in St. Paul declined to comment for this story because Riess still had an opportunity to appeal her case.

The sheriff said he is glad it didn't go to trial because it would have been "a media circus."

He's also relieved the case is finally being closed after more than two years.

And as for the war zone?

Well, it has been converted back into a conference room waiting for the next big case to come along. And, Rose as well as most everybody else within the sheriff's office is quite fine if the big case never comes along again.

"One of the toughest things is having this family get torn apart. They were upset with the circumstances, and who can blame them?"

Sheriff Scott Rose
Dodge County

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Trees must be ready by December 9th for judging. Judging will take place in the evening after this date so judges can scout out the trees and lights! Trees must be in the Blooming Prairie city limits at individual residences. All entries must include lights/illumination and be in good taste and family-oriented.

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Overhauling fighter jets at airport

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

The T-38 aircraft display at the entrance of the Owatonna Degner Regional Airport is getting some tender loving care.

The planes have been washed from the top down in recent days. In addition, the three support derricks on the T-38 aircraft have been sandblasted and a number of welds on the derricks themselves have been brought up to standard. The derricks will be repainted once the jet engine intakes and exhaust tubes are sealed with plates and caulked.

Birds have been nesting inside the planes and have made quite a mess, according to Kevin Oylo, owner of Apex Painting of Owatonna.

The work is part of a phased maintenance program. Next on the agenda is repainting the fighter jets.

In recent months, the Owatonna Airport Commission has been discussing the project, as well as potential fundraising needs.

Oylo originally painted the derricks when the T-38 display was built for the Heritage Halls Transportation Museum. The three fighter jets on loan to the city from the U.S. Airforce — moved to the airport after the museum closed.

Apex Painting began in 1979 as a local painting contractor in Owatonna Industrial Park.

Today, the company specializes in complex projects and has worked on some of the largest construction sites in the country.

Locally, Apex also handles detailed maintenance work, such as sandblasting and repairs for Minnesota-based government buildings, retail facilities and warehouse locations.



Kevin Krenke, left, and Tony Bain work on a derrick on the T-38 aircraft display located at the Owatonna airport. Apex Painting expects to complete maintenance work on the jets this week.

STAFF PHOTO BY DEB FLEMMING

BLOTTER: FROM A7

adjudication, \$75 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Lequisha L. Edwards, 29, Minneapolis, give peace officer false information and indecent exposure, \$280; Jason E. Hewitt, 35, Owatonna, speeding, \$140; Ian E. Johnson, 20, Dodge Center, \$220; Justin M. Mertins, 45, Owatonna, cancelled license, \$75 and 2 years of supervised probation; Ronnie L. Papenfus, 67, Dodge Center, zoning violations, \$100 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Ashlee M. Ranvek, 28, Rochester, check forgery, \$75, 4 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, chemical dependency evaluation and 2 years of supervised probation; Luke G. Seljeseth, 19, Kasson, speeding, \$140; Tiffany M. Witter, 39, Austin, hands free violation, \$130.

KASSON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Gabriel L. Baron, 17, Rochester, hands free violation, \$130; Antonio Bianquet Jr., 28, St. Paul, no insurance, stay of adjudication, \$150 and 6 months of unsupervised monitoring without conviction; Elijah J. Cyphers, 25, Mantorville, seat belt, \$105; Corey L. Greening, 40, Rochester, seat belt, \$105; Pamela R. Haglen, 60, Kasson, stop sign, \$130; Shina M. Marin Carrasco, 19, Kasson, disorderly conduct, \$75; Mahad M. Mohamed, 25, Rochester, revoked license, \$280; Lydia M. Muselman, 21, Kasson,

speeding, \$380; Brandon M. Ryan, 18, Hayfield, speeding, \$220; Mitchell T. Stenzel, 24, Kasson, DWI, \$505, chemical dependency evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation; Jonathan A. Timm, 31, Kasson, DWI, \$1,005, 30 days in county jail, chemical assessment, no alcohol or controlled substance use and 2 years of supervised probation; Andrew J. Witzel, 33, Kasson, disorderly conduct, 19 days in county jail.

MN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Maddox C. Fritz, 21, Mantorville, deer hunting violation and no blaze orange, \$405; Gary R. Meier, 74, Faribault, discharge firearm within 500 feet of occupied building, \$180.

MN STATE PATROL ROCHESTER

Nathan D. Bredesen, 39, Hayfield, seat belt, \$105; Curtis T. Charfauros, 67, Zumbrota, speeding, \$130; Nathaniel P. Dunsmore, 23, St. Paul, expired registration, \$110; Tanner J. Hellekson, 20, Lake Crystal, speeding, \$130; Jazmine J. James, 17, Rochester, speeding, \$220; Rachel L. Quandt, 22, Austin, speeding, \$140; Naidelun G. Sanchez Soto, 22, Kasson, speeding and stop sign, \$270; Coleen M. Truax, 49, West Concord, speeding, \$130; Trevor D. Twite, 23, New Richmond, speeding, \$140; Robert E. Wood Jr., 47, Rochester, DWI, \$505, chemical dependency evaluation and 1 year of supervised probation.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE: gets a 'present' too FROM A1

The city is waiting on the manufacturer to fully commission it and connect it with local cell phone towers.

Once it's operational, he explained that the charging station will benefit the whole community.

"Naturally, you'd sell a little more electricity, and you keep those funds in your local community [rather than] sending it out to foreign areas," he said.

Mausbach added that selling more electricity would financially benefit Blooming Prairie residents.

"We're a non-profit utility, so the higher volume you sell, the smaller your margins have to be to maintain a higher-quality service," he said.

Another, more global reason to promote the use of electricity is that it's a sustainable form of energy.

"You can draw a lot of this energy from renewable resources and use that for travel. In turn, that cuts down on fossil fuel consumption," Mausbach said.

While there are numerous benefits of using electricity, there is a cost to installing car-charging stations. Fortunately, he noted that Blooming Prairie only had to cover a small portion of the installation cost. The Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Association covered approximately 90% of the cost.

In addition to a reduced cost, the fast charger also reduces the time that electric vehicle owners will have to wait for their car to charge up.

Mausbach explained that the time it takes to charge a vehicle depends on the vehicle and the size of its battery.

"For some of the large-battery vehicles to go from a 20% charge to 80%, it can take about 20 to 30 minutes. For some of the vehicles with a smaller battery, with a shorter range, it can take about 10 to 15 minutes," he said.

Even if electric vehicles may be the wave of the future, Mausbach said he doesn't anticipate Blooming Prairie will add any more charging stations.



Jerry Mausbach, general manager of Blooming Prairie Public Utilities, says the new electric car charging station will be up and running in the next week or two. It's a self-service, fast charger and will be available to the public 24/7. It is located on the west side of city hall.

STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUERHING

PENCIL ART: honors soldiers FROM A1



Smith said he was challenged by something in each piece — the eyes of a soldier, a terrycloth towel worn beneath a helmet, inanimate objects and overall scenes. "Drawing a submarine (floating on the waves of the

ocean) really stretched me," he said. One pencil drawing really stopped him, transferring the image from a picture taken of Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin at the Yalta Conference in 1945.

Smith said he'd figured out the sizes he needed to capture the image of the three men, but every time he'd start to sketch Churchill "something wasn't right." Then it dawned on him. He'd left out a

key component to his working ritual. "I never start drawing unless I pray first," said Smith. "I ask God to combine my mind, my eyes, my hands and my heart (to allow me) to transfer the image I see unto the blank



piece of paper." When he realized he hadn't prayed before starting on the Yalta drawing, he said, he said a prayer and his creativity returned. Smith recently began to shift the focus

of his pencil art. He said he's doing more animals sketches these days than military drawings. He's thrown a wide net over the animal kingdom, sketching both domestic and wild animals — both big and small.

Have a Very Prairie Christmas



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Lloyd Mans, 85, Blooming Prairie



Lloyd Mans

Lloyd R. Mans, age 85 of Blooming Prairie, passed away Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 at Timberdale Trace Memory Care in Owatonna. Lloyd Raymond Mans, the son of George and Bergina (Gjervig) Mans was born on Oct. 13, 1935 in Mankato. He graduated from Nicollet High School in 1953. Lloyd then went on to attend Mankato State Teachers College and graduated in 1957. He taught music at several schools over the years including Cleveland, Cottonwood, Mankato Loyola and Blooming Prairie for a total of 36 years. Lloyd directed church choirs in all four of these communities.

On Aug. 9, 1958, he married Rita Hobday in Le Center. The couple was blessed with seven children.

Lloyd was a member of the Owatonna Knights of Columbus Men's Choir, St. Columbanus Catholic Church, Friends of the Blooming Prairie Library, and the Steele County Historical Society, where Lloyd served on the Board of Directors. He was also a member of the Blooming Prairie Lions Club, Blooming Prairie Knights of Columbus, Catholic Order of The Foresters, and played in polka and jazz dance bands in southern Minnesota for 36 years. One of his greatest accomplishments was becoming an author of two family history books. Lloyd's hobbies consisted of Genealogy, reading, gardening and word puzzles.

Survivors include his six sons, Christopher (Sheryl) Mans of Blooming Prairie; Greg (Mary) (Carol Gontarek) of Minneapolis; Tony (Mary) Mans of Little Canada; Martin Mans of Dallas; Kevin Mans of Blooming Prairie; Vincent (Patty) Mans of Fridley; one daughter, Rosemarie Mans of Richfield; 10 grandchildren, Laura Mans, Tricia (Jeremy) Imker, Sarah (Joshua) Johnson, Jimmy Mans (Grace Gabriel), Joe Mans, John Mans, Jacob Mans, Tim Mans (Rikki Bunyard), Matt Mans (Camryn Kaeder), and Michael Mans; two great grandchildren, brother, Ronald Mans of Eagan.

He was preceded in death by his parents, George and Bergina (Gjervig) Mans; his wife, Rita Mans in 2003; brother, Gerald Mans; and sister-in-law, MaryAnn Mans.

A private Mass of Christian Burial was held at St. Columbanus Catholic Church with Father John Wilmot officiating. Masks, social distancing, and all COVID-19 protocol were enforced. Interment was in St. Columbanus Catholic Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers memorials are preferred to the Friends of The Blooming Prairie Library, Steele County Historical Society, or Blooming Prairie Education Foundation.

Services were prearranged and performed with Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home in Blooming Prairie. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

Marie Carroll, 89, Medford



Marie Carroll

Marie Carroll, 89, died Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2020 at Medford Senior Care. Marie was born Sept. 3, 1931 in Owatonna to Edward, Sr. and Margaret (Kubicek) Haberman. She graduated from Ellendale High School. Soon after, on Jan. 19, 1950, she married Milo "Bud" Carroll and became a housewife. The two shared a long life together, raising four children: Patti, Jackie, Gordy, and Dan.

Marie was very sweet, helpful, and always smiling. No one remembers her ever being mad. Family was Marie's pride and joy; she would do anything for them. She never told her kids "no" and was always there when they needed her. Marie loved babysitting her grandchildren.

In life, Marie enjoyed traveling, snow-birding in Texas, embroidery, Bluegrass festivals, camping, watching TV (game shows, the RFD channel, and Andy Griffith were some of her favorites), and ceramic painting. She was an avid doll collector and had even painted/created her own ceramic dolls.

Marie is survived by her children, Patti (Wendell) Nesse; Jackie (Doug) Boerner; Gordy (Karol) Carroll; and Dan (Renee) Carroll; her grandchildren, Angie (Eric) Behrens; Nicholas (Malissa) Nesse; Bridget (Jerrid) Schindler; Brandt (Rhianon) Boerner; Kara (Ray) Peters; Tony (Tammy) Carroll; Robert Carroll; Jordan (Andy Jensen) Carroll; and Travis (Stephanie) Carroll; 16 great-grandchildren; her sister, Doris (Don) Hunt; brother, David Haberman; brothers-in-law, Lester (Gloria) Carroll and Dick (Carol) Carroll; sister-in-law, Doris Carroll; many nieces and nephews; and her special friend, Alvin Wobschall.

Preceding her in death were her parents; her husband, Bud; and her siblings: Edward Haberman, Jr., Roselyn Blazek, and Eugene Haberman. Funeral Services were held on Saturday, Nov. 28, 2020 at the First Lutheran Church in Ellendale with Pastor Richard Sliper officiating. Public visitation took place one-hour prior to the service at the church. Interment followed services at the First Lutheran Cemetery in Ellendale.

Read a book you enjoy

NANCY
VAILLANCOURT

Do you enjoy reading books? Or does it take you back to school and being forced to read books you would never have chosen for yourself? My high school English teacher, Mr. Peterson, was the hardest teacher I ever had. Now, as an adult, I appreciate the classics that we read in his classes. When I read a difficult book, I sometimes wonder how Mr. Peterson would have interpreted it.

One of our Blooming Prairie Branch Library patrons was happy to offer an article by Daniel Pennac titled "The Reader's Bill of Rights." It states that you have:

1. The right to not read
2. The right to skip pages

3. The right to not finish
4. The right to reread
5. The right to read anything
6. The right to escapism
7. The right to read anywhere
8. The right to browse
9. The right to read out loud
10. The right to not defend your tastes

So, put away your guilt about not reading "worthwhile" books. If you are going to take the time to read, find something that you enjoy, something that really speaks to you. In the past, I have forced myself to finish some really awful books, but no more! If it hasn't gotten better in the first 500 pages, it goes back to the library.

If you need help in finding a book you might enjoy, we are happy to offer suggestions. Plus, at this holiday season, consider getting into the Christmas spirit by reading one of the many Christmas books.

See you at the library!

Funds available for milk, meat and poultry processors

Minnesota milk, meat, or poultry processors can access financial support to provide a safe environment for employees and customers during the COVID-19 pandemic through a new cost-share program from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA).

USDA- and state-licensed processors located in Minnesota with fewer than 200

employees can apply by Friday, Dec. 4 for the Protect Our Milk, Meat, and Poultry Processors (POMMPP) Cost-Share program. Expenses that may be eligible for reimbursement include equipment purchases related to complying with the MDA's COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for Food Processors and Manufacturers (pdf), costs associated with

increased inspections or becoming inspected, and costs associated with consultations to develop COVID-19 operating plans.

Any expenses submitted for reimbursement must be incurred between March 2, 2020, and December 4, 2020. Reimbursement will be based on the number of applications received and the amount of funds available. Payments may be capped

due to limited funding.

Expenses related to processing equipment are not eligible for reimbursement under this program.

Funding for the POMMPP program is available through funds granted to the state of Minnesota through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

OWATONNA SCHOOLS: extend distance learning FROM AS

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COVID SPIKE: FROM AS

Panel. The Panel is instructed to use remote technology for proceedings or hearings to the extent possible.

Case Filings: Courts will continue to accept filings in all case types.

Public Service Counters: At least one public service counter in each county, and one in the appellate courts, will be accessible between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday, excluding court holidays. Counter service can be provided remotely, by

appointment, or in person. Changes to service availability will be at the discretion of the Judicial District Administrator or the Clerk of Appellate Courts, in consultation with the State Court Administrator.

Self-Help Services: Self-Help Services will continue to be conducted by appointment, remotely or by telephone. District courts may be contacted directly by phone or email for more information on their local operations.

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Just as a chain tends to break at its weakest link, we seem to exhibit stress and strain in the weakest areas of our bodies. For some it's an upset stomach. For others, recurring headaches, back pain, or muscle stiffness. Regardless of your response, your nervous system is involved. Our approach to stress is to help normalize the function of your nervous system by finding the "weakest link" in your spine and help restore better function. It may not be possible to remove the stress from your life, however, with our help you can respond better to the unique challenges you face.

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 Chad M. Eichman, D.C. Website: www.drchad.org
 344 East Main Street E-mail: drchad@drchad.org
 Blooming Prairie, MN 55917

Recipe Corner

Salted Nut Roll Bars

1 yellow cake mix
 1 stick butter (1/2 C)
 1 egg
 1/8 C water

Mix well. Grease 12 x 17 cookie sheet. Use floured fingers to spread mixture on pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and spread 1 large package miniature marshmallows top. Put back in oven for 3 minutes. Let cool.

Melt:
 1 stick butter (1/2 C)
 1 12-oz package Reese's peanut butter chips
 2/3 C corn syrup

Melt in saucepan. Take off heat. Add 2 cups Rice Krispies. Spread over marshmallows. Cover with finely chopped peanuts. Press with fingers.

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STEELE COUNTY Times

BIRTHDAYS

Dec. 2
 Fran Coughlin
 Nicole Leigh Greene

Dec. 3
 Jessica Ressler
 Aurora Musel
 Carter Sorenson
 Carl Peterson
 Trent Swenson
 Nora Gardner

Dec. 4
 Judy Johnson
 Diane Nelson
 James Jerdet

Dec. 5
 Brandy Holmberg
 Scott Anderson

Dec. 6
 Harriet Severson

Dec. 7
 Lance Lemcke
 Roger L. Hanson
 Mark Lemcke
 Marilyn Heinz
 Kyle Rossow

Dec. 8
 Devin Thompson

ANNIVERSARIES

Dec. 2
 Mr. & Mrs. Tom Trotman
 Greg & Courtney Hackensmith

Dec. 3
 Brad & Wendy Hines

This weekly feature sponsored by:
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We all face an even more dangerous pandemic



Pastor Matt Fennell
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
BLOOMING PRAIRIE

During these days of COVID-19 contagion there has been an understandably heightened concern in regards to cleaning and disinfecting ourselves and the environment we occupy. People are trying their best to limit the risk of contracting this threatening contagion. It has become so important that many cleaning products that were common

place just a year ago have become difficult if not impossible to obtain. Though these efforts have limited success, there is a sustained urgency and focus on these issues for even an imperfect success is of great value especially to those most at risk.

This pandemic reminds me, however of an even more dangerous pandemic. An infection that is universal, unavoidable and far more dangerous. The Word of God points out that all man kind was infected with the contamination of sin. It needs not be contagious for we are all carriers. Man tries to the best of his ability to contain it by the use of laws, moral codes, good work, and even religion. Sadly all of this has very limited effect and therefore ultimately is to no avail. The

contamination of sin cannot be rendered powerless by any of the disinfectants of man's invention. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" still remains as part of God's Holy Scripture.

It is more dangerous than COVID. As bad as COVID-19 is, even in the worst scenario, it can only end in physical death. Certainly these deaths are tragic and heart breaking! I by no means intend to make light of the intense suffering that has been caused, however I still would argue that sin is worse for the following reason. At death the COVID, as indeed all viruses loses its power over the individual. Sin, however, is eternal not only causing us peril in this life but costing us our eternal soul. So while we seek to

fight the contamination of COVID-19 in an attempt to make our society safer, what I ask are we doing about our sin? We clean our hands, but how do we clean our hearts?

Thankfully, God has provided us an answer for our direct need. That indeed is what Christmas is all about. God sent His son as the immunizing agent for our sin "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Galatians 4:5-6. 2 Co 5:21 puts it this way, "For he hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. We receive the vac-

cine of Jesus. That which we were powerless to defeat has been destroyed in us by the active grace imparted to us through Jesus Christ.

God did not want us to be destroyed by the devastating pandemic of sin, so He sent His only Son to take care of the issue for us. By Jesus work of intercession all who will receive his free gift receive eternal life. Consider if you will these blessed passages of Scripture where God's plan and purpose is clearly revealed. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In 1 John 1:7 God's word tells us that "...the blood of Jesus Christ his Son

cleanseth us from all sin." Again in 1 Corinthians 6:11 "... but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." We are instructed in Revelation 15 "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

When we are out and about picking up Purl, Lysol and bleach maybe we should pause and give thanks for the purify work of Jesus. Better still let us be certain we have accepted the gift of His great salvation and therefore been vaccinated against the deadly effects of sin.

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN

AURORA LUTHERAN
6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna
Interim Pastor:
Rev. Dale Svendsen
507-451-2819
office@auroralutheran.org

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

FIRST LUTHERAN - AFLC
503 Radel Ct., Ellendale
Pastor Richard Slipper
507-484-2451
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: 5:30-5 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 Hemgartner
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mike Valerius
507-583-6821
firstlutheranbp.com
Worship Service- 9 a.m.
Sunday School- 10 a.m.

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

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN - 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 Edwardson
507-789-6861
Worship: 10:45 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

PONTOPPIDAN LUTHERAN - ELCA
9651 SW 75th St., Ellendale
507-465-8368
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-Freiborn
Road, Austin
Leandra Anderson, Pastor
507-583-2038 or 507-437-3000
www.raglutheran.org
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

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 Collin Duling
507-251-5569
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
507-451-2165
Sunday Worship indoor: 10 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN - ELCA
609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
507-451-4520
tciowatonna.org
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Todd Bugler
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Amanda Floy
Deacon Kris Oppgaard
Sundays 9:30 a.m. - online at
facebook.com/tciowatonna
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(channel 900) (Tuesday-4:30
p.m.; Wednesday-6 p.m.;
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TRINITY LUTHERAN - ELCA
104 First St. SE., Hayfield
Pastor Paul Haschick
507-477-2248

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

TRINITY LUTHERAN - LCMC
109 Third St. 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.

ELCA
7126 SW 98th St., Ellendale
Pastor: Rev. Dean Smith
Sunday Worship indoor:
8:30 a.m.

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN - ELCA
1009 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 Starasich
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
Worship: 10 a.m. Sunday;
6:30 p.m. Wednesday

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF LITOMYSL
9846 SE 24th Ave.
Owatonna
Father John Wilmut
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 Wilmut
507-477-2256
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday
Reconciliation: 3:45 p.m.
Saturday

SACRED HEART PARISH
810 S. Cedar Ave.,
Owatonna
Father Swaminatha
Pothencherry
Parochial Vicar

507-451-1588
www.sacredheartowatonna.org
Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday;
8:30 a.m. & 10 a.m. Sun.
Spanish Mass:
11:45 a.m. Sun.
Daily Mass: 7:15 a.m.
Reconciliation: 4 p.m. Sat.
Adoration: 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Thurs.

ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC
114 E. Main St.,
Bloomington
Father John Wilmut
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 Starasich
507-451-4845
Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8 & 10 a.m.
Reconciliation:
3-5:30 p.m. Sat.
Daily Mass:
8 a.m. Tues., Wed. & Fri.
(Communion Service 8 a.m.
Thursday)
Adoration Chapel available
Mon. - Fri. 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
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or weekends

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

PENTECOSTAL
FIRST UNITED PENTECOSTAL
230 Locust Ave., Owatonna
Pastor Elazar Takemates
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)
Pastor: J. & Stefanie
Morgan
507-835-8726
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

ELLENDALE UNITED METHODIST
200 Sixth St. NW, Ellendale
Pastor Rendi Oksanen
507-451-2731
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.owatonnumc.org

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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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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 Rick Bremner
507-433-9042
Worship: 9 a.m. Sun.

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800 Havana Road,
Owatonna 507-451-1548
www.associatedchurch.org
office@associatedchurch.org
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(Fellowship, Church School,
and Adult Discussions
follow)
Wednesday Activities: Sept
- May (see website
for schedule)
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
109 E. Main St., Hayfield

Pastor Kirk Johnston
507-77-2831
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
651-955-4032
Worship: 11 a.m. Sat.
Bible Study: 9:30 a.m. Sat.

UCC
CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
211 Main St. SE., Medford
Rev. Richard Waters
507-451-4586
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

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VIBRANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD
702 Third St. SE., 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
1811 Hemlock Ave.
Owatonna
Pastor Michael Simmerman
507-451-8548
www.bethelowatonna.com
Worship: 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Sunday

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VICTORY LIFE
105 2nd St NE Geneva
Pastor Diane Butler
507-402-0960
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Church Service: 9:30 a.m.
Children's Church: 9:45 a.m.

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Pictured above left to right, top row: Jennifer Kriesel, Kris Schlaak, Jenny Alwes, Meressia Mullenbach, Pedro Almaraz, Jr., Isabel Paz Hernandez, Javier Reyes Espino, Matthew Montes, Ignacio Santiago Maruri, Juan Campa. Bottom row: Larry Hanson, Tom Jensen, Matt Wilberding, David Healy, Duane Speikers, David Zilm, Sheila Dahle, Lisa Noble, Doug Jax, Justin Hultgren. Not Available for Photo: Mark Boe, Trenneddy Wells, Hser Hla, Keven Nelson, Andrew Maricle, Mark Miller, Brent Weinberger, Jr.

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Pictured below, left to right: Jill Ludahl & Eve Martinez



Pictured above left to right, top row: Cold Malane, Cameron Heard, Nay Moo, Pat Smith, Lah Khu, Brandon Wells, Gar Too. Bottom row: Po De, Sa Lay Moo, Raw Ner, Eh Hla.



Pictured above, left to right: Brian Wendt, Brandon Schmidt, Anthony Santiago Garcia, Andy Cheng, Doug Harris.

Pictured below, left to right: Amber Borland & Emily Howe



This Tandem Products, Inc. facility is proudly located in the Blooming Prairie community.



Pictured below top row, left to right: Jesus Tirado Rosario, Eduardo Lopez, Isidro Alejo Rubio, Victor Hernandez Maldonado, Willie Salazar, Israel Posas, Chad Green, Willy Olson, Daniel Almaraz, Rick Nelson, Isaac Knox, Taylor Jensen. Bottom row: Samantha Weir, Jaime Paulsen, Brian Martin, Wah Moo, Rod Seidel, Curt Smith, McCade Mays, Jason Waters, Joe Underdahl, Bob Slegh, Tom Slinger, Jim Gilbertson, Juan Davila, Marc Horan, Guillermo Garcia, Chris Wisemore, Jon Bain, Hermelindo Gonzalez.



Saga of building ownership has an even bigger surprise ending

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

What had been a surprise for county officials about a year and a half ago regarding a building they suddenly thought belonged to the county turns out to be nothing more than a lesson in property deeds. In the end, it didn't belong to the county.

In early 2019, West Hills Lodge, a long-time abuse recovery organization, ceased operating in a building

located at 545 Florence Ave. on the West Hills campus of Owatonna. Steele County officials were surprised to learn at the time that the building belonged to the county.

For about 35 years, West Hills Lodge utilized the facility to help people recover from substance abuse. West Hills also operates in Northfield under the parent organization of Azule Opportunities.

When West Hills employees vacated the property, everyone

thought it was going back to the county. But after some investigating, attorneys for both sides discovered it in fact belongs to West Hills and not Steele County.

The attorneys found out the property had been deeded to West Hills Lodge in 1981 for the intended use of running a substance abuse recovery program, according to Scott Golberg, county administrator. The

SEE SAGA OF BUILDING, B9



Times File Photo
This vacant three-story building in the West Hills campus along Florence Avenue in Owatonna belongs to Azule Opportunities and not Steele County as previously thought. The complex is currently for sale.



Dale Kloczek

Ankle device helps nab fleeing suspect

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

An ankle monitor helped sheriff's deputies find a man following a high-speed chase that ended outside of Ellendale.

Deputies arrested David Lavern Kloczek, 38, of Ellendale on Nov. 21 after he fled from a truck and went into hiding. He has been charged with fleeing police in a motor vehicle, which is a felony, and driving after cancellation-inimical to public safety, which is a gross misdemeanor.

Kloczek's probation officer used the ankle monitor to track his whereabouts during the pursuit times, according to the criminal complaint. The probation officer made contact with Kloczek, who eventually agreed to meet with deputies. He was taken into custody while on the phone with the probation officer.

SEE ANKLE DEVICE, B9

Seasonal Affective Disorder affects moods



Steele Talkin'
MARK SKRIEN

A few weeks ago, people set their clocks back to Central Standard Time from Central Daylight Saving Time. This annual occurrence allows more daylight hours during the spring and summer. At about the same time, some sufferers of Seasonal Affective Disorder began to experience symptoms of depression that can last throughout the fall and winter months.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a mood disorder associated with episodes of depression related to variations of light. The amount of sunlight that people experience during the spring and summer is greater than in the late fall and winter. It is thought that if sunlight affects the hibernation and other seasonal activities of animals, it may also affect humans. A theory is that when the daylight decreases, it may change our biological rhythms, causing an individual's "biological clock" to be different than their daily schedules.

SEE SEASONAL, B10

Central Park aglow



Staff Photo by Deb Flemming
Central Park in downtown Owatonna is all decked out for the holiday season. The Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism hosted a virtual tree lighting event at the park last week. New snowflakes now decorate the light poles around Central Park and on the streets to the west and east of the park.

Holidays kick off Saturday in BP

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Spread joy and jingle your bells down Main Street.

That's exactly what area residents are being encouraged to do Saturday as Blooming Prairie celebrates Merry Little Christmas on Main. The first-time event will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with the corner lot where the Bakery once stood on Main Street serving as the focal point of the celebration. After the Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce cancelled its annual Holiday

Dazzle celebration because of the COVID-19 pandemic, a few business leaders decided the community still needed a little holiday magic.

Don Peach spent the entire month of November decorating the empty lot next to B to Z Hardware, which is owned by his family. He has converted the lot into Santa's North

Pole and is calling it "Have a Very Prairie Christmas." Saturday's event will be the official kickoff of the Christmas wonderland display, which features many lights, displays, inflatables, Christmas trees and other holiday decorations.

The holiday event also will feature sleigh rides and Santa Claus

is expected to make a stop in Blooming Prairie.

One of the highlights of the event will be eight, large pots bearing Christmas trees and decorations. The trees represent various non-profit organizations in the community. There will be donation boxes available by the trees for people to donate to the organizations. Patty Misen of Blooming Prairie volunteered her time to get the trees ready for display.

Peach is hopeful the celebration will bring in a lot of people from out of town so that they

can see what Blooming Prairie has to offer.

Besides serving the community as a police officer, Peach is also president of the local chamber, though the holiday wonderland and Saturday's event have no ties to either the chamber or police department.

"I want to create a fun atmosphere for families to walk through," Peach said. "I just like to see people happy and bring joy to town. I'm excited about seeing other people excited."

He hopes to make the Christmas display an annual event.

MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS ON MAIN

Saturday, Dec. 5
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Blooming Prairie Main Street

Workers vow to help a boss facing life saving transplant

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

The manager of RJ's Bar and Grill in Ellendale may be out of commission as he awaits a double lung transplant, but his employees are keeping the restaurant operating in his absence.

Diaz left two weeks ago for Pittsburgh where he has been placed on a transplant list. And back home in Ellendale, Ruth Hagen and other workers at RJ's are committed to helping Diaz keep the business going.

Hagen is glad to be helping out a friend whom she has known for decades. "Ralph was in my wedding 30 years ago," Hagen said. She was happy to come back to work for him back in February. And now she is helping to keep the business going while Diaz tries to save his own life.

Besides working at RJ's, Hagen also is one of the organizers of this

weekend's Rally for Ralph, a benefit to help Diaz with medical expenses. He has insurance, but he is expected to have a hefty medical bill after the transplant.

In Diaz's absence, the workers have split up the duties to keep RJ's going. Diaz's brother, Louie, has also stepped in to help with the business end of things.

"We want to keep Ralph proud," Hagen said. "We all love him. It's like one big family here."

For Hagen and others, it has been difficult to see Diaz struggle in recent months with his medical condition. He has been battling pulmonary fibrosis since February 2019. Diaz is such a hard worker,

Hagen said, adding that he hasn't been able to do many things recently because of his lungs. "He gets out of breath and starts to cough," she said. "All he needs is strong lungs."

SEE WORKERS VOW, B8



Submitted Photo
Stephanie Kehne, left, and Ruth Hagen are rallying for their boss, Ralph Diaz, by keeping RJ's Bar and Grill operating in Ellendale while Diaz is in Pittsburgh awaiting a double lung transplant. Shown in the background is Kehne's daughter, Evelyn.

BP's medallion hunt is back again

The snow may be absent and COVID may be running rampant, but the enthusiasm for Blooming Prairie's medallion hunt is heating up.

The Blooming Prairie Chamber of Commerce is hosting its annual Medallion hunt, which begins in earnest this week with the unveiling of the first clue.

The first clue:
**It's that time of year
The colors of Christmas now appear
The Medallion Hunt will give you cheer.**

With activities limited this year because of the pandemic, getting out to search for the medallion may help take your mind off COVID-19.

Like years in the past, the medallion has been hidden within the city limits of Blooming Prairie.

The winner will receive \$50 in BP Bucks and a subscription to the Steele County Times.

Best of luck in your search for the medallion.



Medford prepares for a new year and a new council

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

There will be a few new faces come on the Medford City Council come January. Chad Merritt and Manda Mueller will be replacing Marie Sexton and Matt Dempsey and Danny Thomas will step back into the mayor's chair, replacing Lois Nelson.

To prepare new council members for the new year, the current city

council recently agreed to let City Engineer Joe Duncan meet with the incoming members of the council and current council member Chad Langeslag to review the controversial Main Street project.

The potential project has been a matter of contention among the community and some believe the project should be delayed due to the current financial situation.

"Because it's some-

what time sensitive, I thought we could continue to talk through December," Langeslag said of authorized meeting. "If we are able to come together on something, a month could make a difference."

At a special council session held after the election, the two new council-elect members and the mayor-elect both said that they would take up the Main Street project come the new year. "We could

have an organizational meeting in January and possibly have another public meeting," Langeslag said.

Due to the current administration's reluctance to approve the project, the steps towards finalizing the specifics and approval have been reset. This means that the new council will need to begin the process anew and start at stage one.

"This is just to talk and get them up to

speed," Langeslag told the council.

During last week's regular city council meeting the outgoing council also reviewed CARES expenditures and took a look at the 2021 final budget proposal.

The City of Medford received a total of \$96,737 in CARES Act funding, which had to be spent by Nov. 15. After transferring funds to the school district, awarding relief funds

to local businesses, and using funds for city expenditures related to COVID-19, Medford was left with \$1,032.02, which has been sent back to the county.

The council also reviewed the 2021 final budget proposal. While no official action will be taken on the 2021 final budget proposal until the regular council meeting in December, the proposed tax levy for the 2021 year stands at \$673,978.

Santa Claus is coming to town



STAFF PHOTO BY DEB FLEMING

Santa and Mrs. Claus were spotted driving through the area Saturday. Their sleigh: a red Cadillac bearing a SANTA license plate. The couple said they were taking advantage of the nice weather and doing a last-minute check on who's been naughty-or-nice this year.



MAYOR
LOIS NELSON

This week's COVID numbers locally, statewide and across this country are just plain scary! Wearing masks, minimizing social and family gatherings meant a Thanksgiving like no other! Our family decided some weeks ago that we would not be together with the hope that our family Christmas tradition with all of us together – especially since our grandson graduates from the University of Utah in a few short weeks and is heading back home. Maybe more of you are optimistic too since holiday decorations are appearing with some nice weather days.

Some of our Medford downtown businesses are also trying to take advantage of these milder temperatures.

On the north end moving south – Jeff

Sprucing up Medford

Karow has painted and almost done with new siding and brickwork on his building that is home to the Medford Post Office and A P Insurance. The old lodge building has a new roof and the exterior is to be refreshed as the owner, Jose Herrera has plans there too. Lisa Full at Full Service Station (now, includes a barber weekly) is celebrating her 20th year of operation with a new roof and facelift to the exterior.

We welcome Medford's newest operation Minnesota Autism Center who has leased space from Dan and Mona Kaiser. The Center is officially open. They have a gifted staff who is meeting a critical need in our area in working with this special clientele.

Our EDA and the city council supported distributing CARES monies to these businesses the end of October – both recognition of their efforts in working with the continuing COVID regulations and that they are in our community. Grants were given to: Vicky Deering and

Barry Benjamin, Happy Tails Pet store; Jerrie Wend and Tammy Pumper, Magic Shears Salon; Steve Rieser, Complete Fire Sprinkler Services; John Anhorn, Anhorn's Gas & Tire; Lisa Full, Full Service Station; and Daria and Heather Terpstra, Bella Vista Salon.

Shopping is something we all enjoy! The UltraOutlets of Minnesota Center in Medford has outside entrances to each of the stores. Get in some exercise as you walk from one to the other. You will find something for all ages – infants to adult men and women. If you have not visited in a while, here is a reminder of the stores and staff that are ready to be of service: Bath & Body Works, Bella Vita Salon, Carters/Oshkosh, Christopher Banks, Eddie Bauer, Famous Footwear, Happy Tails, J. J. Jones, Hanesbrands, Maurices, Old Navy, Pendleton, Planet X, VanHeusen/IZOD. If they are limiting the number of customers at any one time, signs are posted or staff greets you outside. All ask

that you wear masks. You can check out their website: ultraoutlets.com and add your name to their email list so you receive up-to-date promotions and specials.

Then visit the RADZoo as they have a number of new creatures to delight and entertain children and grandchildren! Our recent visit including get up close and personal to a four-foot alligator. Jamie and Melissa invite you to their website: <http://www.theradzo.com/> or check them out on face book. Birthday parties can still be scheduled following all current guidelines.

Right now, the UltraOutlets special Santa will be able to visit on Dec. 6 from 12 – 3 p.m. He is certainly the best, jolly elf so keep checking the website for details. From all of us in Medford, have a safe and wonderful holiday season as we wind up a memorable 2020!

Lois M. Nelson is finishing her eighth year as Medford mayor. She can be reached at ldnelson167@gmail.com.

County awaiting results of Detention Center Best Practices study

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Criminal justice is an everchanging field, and as it changes so too does the functionality of jails.

After discussing the possibility of a study reviewing the Steele County Detention Center during a work session earlier last month, the Steele County Board recently commissioned a study to gather information and data about the criminal justice system and the detention center to plan for the most efficient long-term use of the detention center.

There will be two primary components of the study being performed by Justice Planners, a jail and detention planning and consulting firm. The first is to ensure that the design and space use of the detention center fits in with current trends in the criminal justice field. The second is to ensure that the detention center is adequately spaced for the future of Steele County.

Built in 2003, the Steele County Detention Center (SCDC) has 154 beds available, while its operational capacity per Department of Corrections is 138. As of Nov. 20, the detention center had 60 inmates, which is less than half of its capacity.

"When the detention center was built, the landscape of incarceration was different," said SCDC Jail Ad-

ministrator Anthony Butera. "At that time, sentencing laws were more punitive, many counties had smaller detention facilities and there were space shortages at the State Correctional level."

"The creation of drug courts, veterans' courts and the movement to a community corrections probation model has removed detainees with underlying substance issues and placed them in programs to try and address those issues," Butera said. "In addition of these programs, Minnesota Courts are releasing detainees to treatment programs at a higher level than in 2003."

All of these have led to many older detention centers running at lower capacity than they were predicted to at the time of construction. By conducting an outside study, the county will look to adapt for future trends in order to get most out of its current facility.

Last month the county approved a \$1.8 million upgrade project for the detention center, the specifics and final design of which has yet to be determined. At the time, commissioner Greg Krueger was the lone dissenting vote on the project, suggesting that the board should wait until after the study was completed before approving the project.

The jail study is estimated to take anywhere from four to six months before completion.



New Richland • Harland • Ellendale • Geneva

PANTHER OF THE WEEK



LILLIAN SANCHEZ

This week's Panther of the Week is LILLIAN SANCHEZ. Lillian lives in Clarks Grove with her mom, Heather Johnson. She is a fifth grade student in Ms. Erickson's classroom.

Lillian always shows up to work on her reading with a positive attitude, a sense of humor, and she's always ready to do the work.

She enjoys spending time with her three siblings when she isn't at school. A fun fact about Lillian is that she lived in Florida for a year before moving here.

Keep up the great work Lillian!



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12 KIDS OF CHRISTMAS!



MEILANI

Meilani has been waiting for a Big for 2 months. Meilani is an outgoing, energetic and funny girl who loves practicing gymnastics and being outside. She is a very happy and positive person that loves being on the go. Meilani also enjoys bowling, watching movies, making crafts, eating apples and going to McDonalds.

Help end the wait for Meilani. YOU could be the Big who ignites her potential. Become a Big today.



For more information about SHAKHEM or MEILANI, call Megan at 507-414-0308 or visit www.bbbsofsouthernmn.org/beabig.



SHAKHEM

Shakeem has been waiting for a Big for 2 years. He is a bright young boy with a passion for baking, video games, and sports, especially football. He has recently discovered an interest in fishing and would love a Big to help him explore new hobbies. Shakeem is also working on improving his math and reading as he navigates distance learning. The best Big for Shakeem would be someone who is outgoing, dependable, active and enjoys sports.

Help end the wait for Shakeem. YOU could be the Big who ignites his potential. Become a Big today.



STATE PHOTO BY DEB FLEMING

Many farmers in the area took advantage of last week's sunshine and warm winds to get the last of their fall tillage work done. Temperatures pushed into the 50s in Owatonna on Saturday. That is 10 to 20 degrees above average for this time of year. It didn't take long for this soybean field located just north of 26th Street Northwest in Owatonna to be prepared for next year's crop.



On The Farm
CLAIRE LACANNE

As fall fieldwork has mostly wrapped up for the year, farmers are making their plans for next year's growing season. I get an influx of calls about average rental rates this time of year, because agricultural leases play an important role in many farming operations. The number of farm operators who rent land continues to rise as farmland is transitioned to owners who

do not farm. Farmland rental rates are usually the largest input cost a farmer has, and staying informed about the different types of rental agreements and the factors that affect rent is beneficial for farmers and landowners alike.

Agricultural leases are divided into three general categories: cash, crop share, and flexible agreement. A cash lease involves a cash payment of a specified sum in exchange for the use of farmland. This way, the landowner receives a certain amount of rent regardless of the crop yields or prices. In this situation, the farmer gets sole authority for making the management

decisions regarding the production of the land, though terms regarding specific management decisions can be included in the lease. We are seeing an increasing number of rental agreements include terms regarding soil health management.

With a crop share lease, the landowner and farmer each receive a predetermined percentage of the crop based on their contributions to production. With this type of lease, both the landowner and farmer may supply part of the equipment and inputs such as seed, fertilizer, and pesticides. In contrast to a cash lease, the landowner and the farmer may

share management responsibilities regarding crop production.

Flexible agreement leases are also an option, though cash leases and crop share leases are far more common. To counteract the uncertainty of fluctuating markets and variable yields, flexible agreement leases allow rent to be determined after the year's crop is harvested. The final rental rate is based on actual prices and/or yields attained each year.

The benefits of flexible agreement leases are that the actual rent paid adjusts automatically as yields or prices fluctuate, meaning that risks and profit opportunities

are shared between the landowner and farmer.

For guidance in determining what kind of lease works for you and for information about creating an agreement that is fair for both the landowner and the farmer, plan to attend one of UMN Extension's free, online land rent meetings.

Topics covered at the meetings will include local historic and projected farmland rental rate trends, current farmland values and sales, and worksheets that will help determine a fair rental agreement. Input costs for 2020 will be presented along with current 2020 corn and soybean prices. Work-

sheets will examine 2021 costs and affordable rent that farmers will be able to pay in 2021, the rate of return to the landowner at current market values, and will examine flexible rental agreements.

Register for these meetings at: z.umn.edu/FarmlandRentMeetings. Learn more about farmland rental at: z.umn.edu/FarmlandRent or contact me at 507-330-0447 or lacanne@umn.edu.

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

Rice Lake State Park limiting public access during special hunt Thursday and Friday

During a special hunt on Thursday and Friday to control the deer population and protect natural resources, Rice Lake State Park will be partially closed. A day-use area of the park will remain open to nonhunters during the hunt. Visitors are advised to wear blaze orange or blaze pink if they plan

to be in the park while the hunt is in progress. Visitors should also check for hunt-related information on the park website and at the park office, if open, upon arrival. All visitors should follow any hunt-related signage posted in the park.

Hunts also will take place at other Minnesota state parks and recreation areas this fall; access to the parks will vary. Some will remain open to all visitors, some will have limited public access and some will be open only to hunters with special permits. The deadlines have passed for youth and adults to apply for the permits to participate in the hunts, which include regular

firearms, muzzleloader and archery options.

The DNR periodically allows deer hunts in state parks as a way to protect natural resources.

"Too many of one animal or plant species in an area can start to throw off the balance of other species in that area," said Tavis Westbrook, natural resource

program coordinator with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. "When there are too many deer in a park, they feed too much on certain trees and native plants."

For a list of the locations, dates, and access restrictions for state park special deer hunts in 2020 visit the DNR's state parks and

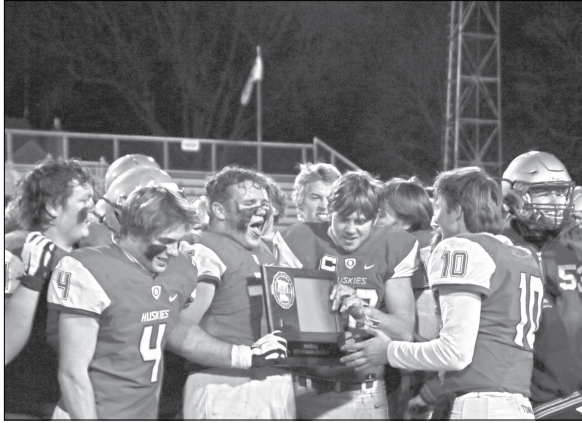
hunting season page or contact the DNR Information Center at info.dnr@state.mn.us or call 888-646-6367 (8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sat.). Details on which areas of each park affected by the special deer hunts can also be found in the "Visitor Alert" boxes on the individual park website pages.

12 KIDS OF CHRISTMAS!

Big Brothers Big Sisters.
OF SOUTHERN MINNESOTA

Follow along leading up to Christmas to find out what makes each of these Waiting Littles so special. Each week, the Steele County Times will publish profiles about each of the Littles. Learn about their hobbies, interests and the type of Big they hope to meet someday.

Make today the day you make a difference. Become a Big today. For more information, call Megan at 507-414-0308 or visit bbbsofsouthernmn.org/beabig.



Owatonna captains Zach Stransky, holding championship plaque, and Brayden Truelson (10) can't wait to celebrate with their prize, especially after having endured a lot of new protocols in order to just have a season. While winning a fifth straight section title is a great accomplishment, they're more thankful for the friendships, fun and memories they created throughout this season.

Huskies thankful for each and every snap

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

This season, the Owatonna football team had to adjust to a multitude of changes in order to abide by COVID-19 protocols and have a season. Those changes included putting their pads on and taking them off in the parking lot or in their car, riding with their parents to road games, no team dinners, virtual game plans and simply not being around either as much.

"Everything besides the actual football playing was different this year," said Owatonna captain Matt Seykora. "When you are playing, you're not thinking about it but when you look over to the sidelines or stands you are reminded of it. It was kind of a struggle to get used to, but the most noticeable was the small number of fans. Since Owatonna is so supportive of the football team, the stands are always packed. I missed the roar and sound of all our fans."

While there were so many differences off the field, the one constant

was getting to play football.

Having a football season, said fellow Husky captain Zach Stransky, was a big deal to a lot of his teammates.

"It has given us a positive thing to look forward to and to be excited about. Everyone seems down about school and not having the freedoms we usually have so this has brought a lot of joy to a lot of the other players," he said.

In addition to joy, quarterback Brayden Truelson said playing football gave the Huskies a distraction from all the worry about COVID-19.

"This fall football season was basically the only normal and positive thing in most of our lives, so it was definitely an escape from everything going on," he said.

Seykora went even further, saying this season was a godsend.

"This season has definitely been a blessing to everyone. At the end of August and beginning of September, no one thought we had a shot of playing in the fall. That was a big

deal to us because we thought it would be like the spring of last year. For most kids, playing is the most important thing to them and for it to be stripped away is devastating. To get away from the craziness of the world for two or three hours a day makes everyone feel better," he said. "We're able to do what we love."

Being able to do what they love for the past two months gives all the Owatonna football players something to be thankful for this Thanksgiving.

Playing football this season also taught them to savor every moment because they never knew what practice or game might be their last.

"We were very thankful for the opportunity we had to play this year," Stransky said.

"It taught us to not take anything for granted. We had a couple cases that could have shut us down, which happened to a lot of other schools, but we were smart and got to keep playing."

Truelson echoed that sentiment.

"It really made me appreciate every moment I had with my team, because I never knew when our last practice or game or time being together could be," he said.

Even though they didn't get to spend as much time together as past seasons and had to deal with all sorts of adversity, Seykora is still taking a lot of positives away from this season.

"I'm glad we got games in and were able to play the game we love. The opportunity to be with the guys and be a part of something bigger than ourselves. It taught me to value the memories and friendships that have been created in Owatonna football. No other program brings people close like ours does. I'm proud to be a part of it and proud I've been able to lead this team," he said.

Both Stransky and Truelson agreed, saying they built friendships that will last forever and had a lot of fun.

They couldn't have asked for much more but winning the Section 1A AAAA championship was the cherry on top of a great season.



2104: Owatonna running back Dylan Maas, center, jumps for joy while his coach, left, raises his arms in elation after the Huskies recovered the Spartan's fumble in the final minute to seal their championship win.

BP sweeps Maple River, ends season by losing to Hayfield

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

The Blooming Prairie volleyball team picked up its third win of the season by beating Maple River 3-0 on Nov. 16, but lost its final regular season game to Hayfield 0-3 on Nov. 18.

Against Maple River, the first set went down to the wire, but the Blossoms prevailed 25-23.

BP Coach Jennifer Wayne said a few reasons her team won the first set was the play of her outside hitters and middle hitters.

"I moved Megan Oswald to outside position and she did very well over there. Micalyn has been playing better recently and our sophomore middle hitters did really well," she said.

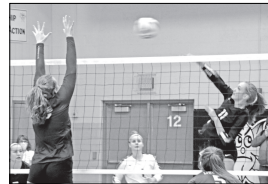
Emily Miller - 5 kills, 4 digs, 2 blocks and 1 ace serve.

Blooming Prairie senior setter Maggie Bruns returned from injury just in time to compete in the Blossoms' last regular season game, which was a road contest against Hayfield.

However, Wayne decided not to use Bruns as a setter. "We hadn't practiced with her so our setter all year so I didn't want to throw something at them at the last minute," she said. Instead, she mostly played in the back row.

Despite Bruns' return, the Blossoms lost the first 18-25.

"We've been working on our serve receive but it just hasn't been perfect and they got four aces in that game plus we missed four serves," she said.



Blooming Prairie sophomore middle hitter Sierra Larson hits the ball past Kinsey Cronin's block attempt during the Awesome Blossoms' recent home game against Medford.

In the second set, the Awesome Blossoms did even better, winning 25-16.

"We were just a little scrappier, we had a few servers that went on some runs and we had more aces that game for serves and when that happens you just need to keep going at them," she said.

The third set was much closer with big momentum swings each way. One server from Maple River brought them back from a 9-14 deficit to leading 19-14, but Micalyn Trihus was Blooming Prairie's next server and she led the Awesome Blossoms on a 5-0 run to tie the game 19-19.

Eventually, Blooming Prairie prevailed 27-25 to win the match 3-0.

Wayne was impressed with her team's resiliency in the third set.

"I'm happy that we were able to come back from being down and win the last game," she said.

BP statistics:
Macy Lembke - 25 assists, 10 digs, 1 ace serve and 1 kill, Micalyn Trihus - 11 digs, 10 kills and 5 ace serves, Sierra Larson - 8 kills, 3 blocks, 2 solo ace blocks, Abby Heffling - 3 kills and 4 blocks, Halle Strunk - 6 digs and 2 ace serves, Maren Forystek - 7 digs and 1 assist, Allison Krohnberg - 5 digs and 1 ace serve and

The second set was much closer, but Blooming Prairie couldn't get the win, losing 25-27.

Wayne said the second set was tightly contested because the Blossoms did a better job limiting their own mistakes, but their freshman setter was called for six lifting errors and that helped Hayfield come out on top.

The third set also came down to the wire.

"It was an exciting game, pretty much point for point the whole game but we just couldn't pull it out," she said.

Blooming Prairie lost the third set 22-25 and lost the match 0-3.

Despite the loss, Wayne said she was happy with how her team competed throughout the game.

The loss dropped the Blossoms' record to 3-8.

BP statistics:
Macy Lembke - 27 assists, 4 digs and 1 ace serve, Micalyn Trihus - 14 kills and 3 blocks, Sierra Larson - 5 kills, 2 kills, 1 assist and 1 ace serve, Abby Heffling - 4 kills and 4 blocks, Maren Forystek - 11 digs and 2 assists, Allison Krohnberg - 9 assists and Megan Oswald - 7 kills and 2 blocks.

Unfortunately, that ended up being their last game of the season.

SEE BP SWEEPS, B10



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Winning streak snapped for Panthers

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

The New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) volleyball team was hoping to extend its winning streak to four games when they went on the road to face Hayfield (5-5), but the Vikings had other plans, beating the Panthers 3-0 on Nov. 13.

Hayfield got off to an early lead and by the time NRHEG got into any rhythm it was too little, too late.

Panthers' Head coach Onika Peterson explained that her team struggled to get going against the Vikings due to unforced errors.

"You could tell that we hadn't played in a week. We had a lot of mental errors where we gave them too many points, from missed serves, hitting/blocking errors, etc. It took us until midway through the first set before we started looking more like us," she said.

After losing the first set 18-25, NRHEG

looked more like themselves throughout the second set.

"We lost the first set but were playing much better at the end of the set, so I think that gave us the confidence going into set two. We cut down on our errors and played more aggressively placing our hits rather than tipping everything," said Peterson.

Despite their improved play, the Panthers lost the tightly-contested second set 24-26.

Trailing two sets to none, NRHEG had to win the third set to keep the game going. However, they couldn't replicate their second-set performance.

"Unfortunately, I think we came off the set two loss a little defeated and couldn't pick ourselves back up. Hayfield used that to their advantage and we never seemed to be able to catch up," she said.

Even though they lost 0-3, there were several student-athletes who had a good game, including Cambria Nissen who led the



Panther senior Kendall Johnson hits the ball to the right of Viking senior Maryx Young's block attempt. Despite Johnson and her teammate's best efforts, the Vikings won 3-0.

Panthers with 16 digs and Sidney Schultz who led her team with three ace serves and tied for second with 11 digs.

Peterson noted that Schultz has been a pos-

itive force for NRHEG throughout the season.

"Sidney is extremely competitive, hardworking, and consistent for our team. This is her second year on varsity;

her experience and leadership will help us next year," she said.

NRHEG statistics: Anna Jacobson - 1 kill and 2 block kills, Raquel Fischer - 1 kill, 2 assists

and 1 dig, Grace Tuft - 2 kills, 10 assists and 9 digs, Kendall Johnson - 8 kills and 11 digs, Bree Ihrike - 1 kill, 1 dig and 1

SEE WINNING STREAK, B9

BA hands NRHEG a loss in season finale

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

After losing its previous two games, the New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva (NRHEG) volleyball team was looking to end its season on a high note, but the 9-1 Bethlehem Academy Cardinals were just too strong, winning 3-0 on Friday, Nov. 20.

Even though they were facing a tough opponent, the Panthers didn't back down. In fact, NRHEG Head Coach Onika Peterson said her team performed well in the first set by being the aggressor.

"Our team tried to stay as aggressive as possible in the first set. The girls were looking to hit as much as possible; trying to make their defense work. If they did have to tip the ball, they tried to be strategic by hitting an open area or hitting a deep corner," she said.

Despite their aggres-

siveness and strategic tips, the Panthers lost the first set 15-25.

In the second set, NRHEG had a harder time scoring points.

A couple reasons the Panthers didn't do as well in the second set, Peterson said, are their defense had a hard time with their serve receive and Bethlehem Academy executed its offense.

"We were a step behind defensively. We struggled with getting touches on their hits which didn't help our back-row players. Faribault BA is a tough team—they might not do anything super flashy but they are so strong in their fundamentals they don't have to be. There is a reason that they finished in the top 10 ranked in Class A. They are a good team that does things very well," she explained.

Thanks to their strong offense, the Cardinals won the second set 25-11.

Even though the Panthers didn't win either

of the first two sets, she noted that senior Kendall Johnson had a stand out performance.

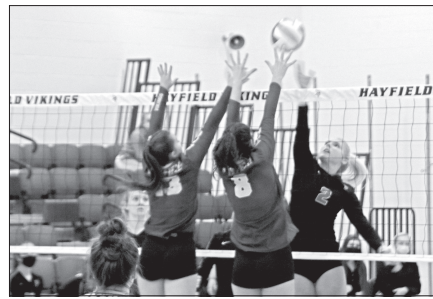
"Kendall was a spark plug all season long. She always gave it 100%, and was all over the court offensively and defensively doing whatever she could for her team," Peterson said.

Despite Johnson's and her teammates' best efforts, NRHEG lost the third set 11-25 and therefore lost the match three sets to none.

The 0-3 loss meant the Panthers' record fell to 3-9.

Unfortunately, due to Governor Walz's recent executive order, this was the last game of the Panthers' season and the last game of their five seniors' high school volleyball career. NRHEG's five seniors are: Johnson, Anna Jacobson, Grace Tuft, Elli Baker and Cambria Nissen.

"I appreciate all that hard work and dedication these five girls have



NRHEG senior Anna Jacobson tips the ball over the outstretched arms of Hayfield blockers Haeven Skjervem, left, and Gigi Galdamez during the second set of the Panthers' road game on Friday, Nov. 13.

put into the NRHEG volleyball program after the last four years. This was not a season that they could have predicted to have as their senior year but they took it in stride and tried to stay positive with the ever-changing schedules," Peterson said.

"I wish them nothing but the best and I can't wait to see what they all accomplish in the future."

NRHEG statistics: Kendall Johnson - 14 digs, 5 kills, 3 assists and 1 block, Grace Tuft - 12 digs and 9 as-

ists, Erin Jacobson - 2

digs, 6 kills and 1 block, Anna Jacobson - 3 kills, Bree Ihrike - 2 kills and 1 block, Cambria Nissen - 9 digs and 1 assist, Elli Baker - 3 digs, 1 kill and 3 assists, Hallie Schultz - 5 digs and 2 assists, Sidney Schultz - 3 digs and Raquel Fischer - 1 kill.

ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS
By Shannon Nordstrom and Russ Evans

Dear Motor Medics, I have a 2003 Chevy Tahoe with 80K miles. I have had the truck since new and since about 40K miles it has had a rattle when cold. The noise starts right when I fire it up and continues for about ten minutes if the outside temperature is 70 or above. If the temperature is below 70 the noise is louder, and it takes more time for it to go away. The colder it is, the longer the noise. I have had it to a few shops over the past few years and none of them can give me a definite answer and only tell me "it should be ok" and so far for 40K miles it has been this way. Do you have a better idea of what is going on and if it is serious?

Scott in Lake Park Iowa
Scott, it sounds like you may have what is called, piston slap. This noise comes from pistons that are slightly smaller than their bores and when cold they make a knocking sound as the piston rocks back and forth in the bore. As the piston metal warms up, the slack is taken up and the noise goes away. Many of these engines in your year range had this issue and we have seen many last for well over 100K miles once the noise starts. The only way to cure it would be a rebuild. Check the exhaust for leaks that could be similar.

Take care, The Motor Medics

Dear Motor Medics, My question is about my newly acquired Chevy Cruze and what octane fuel to run in it. The manual says 87 octane fuel, but I hear on both your show and others on the internet that it could perform much better if I use higher octane fuel. I am open to changing the fuel I accustomed to running in the car but using premium is more than a dollar higher per gallon and I purchased the car to save on fuel costs. Can I use ethanol in the car with a higher octane? A local station carries 91 octane ethanol here. Some of my friends say ethanol will ruin my car but they are not mechanics and when I asked them why they could not tell me.

Herbert in Bottineau North Dakota
You are correct, these engines do tend to run much better when using a higher-octane fuel. We have had some of our own customers report much better fuel economy and performance when using 90 or better. These engines may say 87 in the manual and that's the minimum recommended but when they get higher octane, they can take advantage of a higher spark and fuel curve in the computer and be more efficient. Ethanol fuel would also be a good choice for higher octane and better economy. We have never seen any damaged caused by it in our own shop of over thirty years when used properly.

Take care, The Motor Medics

12/3

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OWATONNA PROUD

OWATONNA SCHOOLS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2020 | B7

Huskies finish victorious

BY ZACH STRANSKY
OHS MAGNET WRITER

The Owatonna High School Football team finished off an odd unique season with its fifth consecutive Section 1AAAAA championship. The Huskies hung on long enough to defeat the Mayo Spartans in a 30-28 victory at home on Tuesday, Nov. 17.

The game was cold and there was a slight breeze, but that has been the case for almost every game this season for football teams across the state of Minnesota. The MSHSL originally postponed football until March and then later decided midway through September that they would end up going forth with the season. Which in sense moved their schedule a month back leaving the team no choice but to play in colder weather. Captain Brayden Truelson said, "It didn't affect us very much because we are used to playing late and in cold weather. It actually stayed pretty nice for us, so the weather wasn't too bad."

The Huskies took off with a good looking 14-0 lead after Truelson connected with Pay-

ton Beyer for a 17 yard completion into the end zone. Owatonna then kicked an onside kick that ricocheted off of a Mayo front lineman and was picked up by junior Tanner Stendel which would return position to the Huskies, then lead to a one yard rushing touchdown by Truelson with 1:22 left in the first quarter.

Mayo struck back early in the second quarter with their arsenal of weapons and scored 21 unanswered points leaving the Spartans ahead 21-14. Owatonna answered back with a ESPN Sports Center top 10 touchdown after a pass from Truelson was tipped by a Mayo defender in the endzone and senior Connor Budach still managed to haul it in.

First possession of the second half Spartans Quarterback Bennett Ellsworth found wide open Demonte Simmons who used his explosive track speed to sprint in a 55 yard receiving touchdown giving Mayo their last lead of the game at 28-21.

Right away the next series, the Huskies drove the field and the senior heavy offensive

line consisting of Tad Johnson, Gavin Rein, Nate Smith and Abe Stockwell, as well as junior Eli Spurgeon got a huge push for Truelson to dive in his second touchdown of the game. The score 28-28 with 6:07 left in the third quarter. Smith said, "We played our hearts out and each and every one of us had a part in our success. Our scouts gave us the best possible looks and nobody on the field could feel disappointed in how they played."

With 4:22 left in only the third quarter the Huskies defense forced the Spartans to punt from their own 15, but turned into a botched snap and the Mayo punter stepped out of the back of the end zone turning the play into a safety. Giving the Huskies a final leading score of 30-28 after neither team reaches the end zone for the rest of the game.

Being a senior on the OHS football team is an important role, they are in control of keeping the culture going that has been built here for the last 24 years. They are also relied on for bringing energy to practice and stepping up in games not only to make



PHOTO COURTESY BRODY WOMAN, OHS MAGNET

Tanner Hall carries two Mayo defenders to finish off a long run.

plays, but also motivate their teammates to do the same. The Huskies will be graduating 22 seniors this year, 10 of them being starters from this year's team. Mason Saufferer and Jack Titchenal would have also been on the list of starters, but both had their seasons cut short after suffering injuries against Mayo in the Huskies home opener.

Senior running back Tanner Hall ended his best game of the season with 195 yards on 43 carries. That is the second most carries by an Owatonna running back in school history. Jason Williamson had the most.

Junior linebacker Grant Achterkirch was a key player on the Owatonna Defense this year. He made one of

the biggest plays of the year when he forced a fumble that would end up being recovered by Budach with less than a minute left in the game, securing the Owatonna Victory. Achterkirch said, "I knew the play they were going to run and knew what the back was going to do, so when he showed in the hole I wasn't surprised." The junior linebacker would also go on to lead the team with 50 tackles on the season.

Beyer, who was easily Owatonna's most targeted receiver this year, did not disappoint either. Completing the game with 110 yards on 10 catches and one touchdown. The star receiver also led the district with 703 yards and seven touchdowns in 2020.

For the seniors they will be only the fourth OHS Football team to end their careers with a win, and the only class ever to do it on their home field. They were all very grateful to go out this way. Hall said, "It feels amazing because not everyone can say they won a section title at their home field."

The OHS football team had a great season overall. Head coach Jeff Williams said, "It's pretty amazing to think that we've won the section for five straight years, especially when you consider the change over in players during that time. The one thing that has been consistent is the leadership of our seniors, both on and off the field. They have always made the difference."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Mrs. Melgaard's Husky Connections class at Owatonna Middle School was recognized at last week's school board meeting for its efforts in raising funds for trees around the nation.

A better world thanks to these youth

Each month at its regular meeting, the School Board of Owatonna Public Schools recognizes individual students and/or staff members who exemplify the district's mission of inspiring excellence - every learner, every day. At the Nov. 23 meeting, Superintendent

Jeff Elstad recognized Mrs. Melgaard's Husky Connections class at Owatonna Middle School that raised funds last school year for TeamTrees by making acrylic pour magnets and selling them



during their lunch periods. The proceeds from their sales and free-will donations helped to plant 400 trees around the nation, some of which were recently planted in our own

backyard in the Chippewa National Forest. The class was featured in the TeamTrees K-12 newsletter. The article noted that the "world is a better place because of these youth tree planters."

Owatonna Public Schools staff and students inspire excellence, every day!



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Matt and Kristin Skala are both educators in the Owatonna school system. Shown with them are their four daughters.

Husband-wife team devoted to educating Owatonna youth

Matt and Kristin Skala have been educators for 15 years. They love living in Owatonna and are proud to be raising their four daughters as Owatonna Huskies!

Matt is an Owatonna native and has taught all 15 years in Owatonna at OHS. Fourteen of those years were spent as a special education teacher, and last year he took on a new position as the REACH teacher. Matt also coaches varsity football. Outside of school, his hobbies include coaching his daughters, golfing, fishing, and cheering on all Minnesota sports teams.

Kristin is originally from Pulaski, Wis. and is a third grade teacher at Washington Elementary. She loves her time in the classroom and couldn't imagine doing anything else! Outside of school she is a busy mom! Kristin loves attending her daughters' events, traveling, cooking, and cheering on all Wisconsin sports teams.

They are both invested in the community of Owatonna and are proud to be serving as educators in an amazing school district! They believe in public education and know that their students are receiving high quality instruction. They are #owatonnaproud!



Middle School

Hasan Mohamed
Eighth Grade
Parents: Rahma Sheikhamin & Abdirashid Omar

Hasan is a conscientious student and positive light in Spanish class. His hunger for learning inspires his peers to always try their best, and his openness to making mistakes make him an amazing learner. He is caring and kind to all his peers, and is an exemplary leader for all at OMS.



High School

Dylan Roush
Junior
Parents: Jim Roush and Tracy Cobban

Dylan is a very bright and engaging student. He challenges himself with rigorous coursework and excels in all he does. His hard work, attention to detail, and problem-solving skills allow him to master complex topics. He works well in laboratory settings and often takes the lead in his group. Dylan is a great kid and has a bright future!



THANK YOU
RICK
GNEMI
Steele County District 3 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.

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

BLOOMING PRAIRIE

- DEC. 8**
10:30 a.m. – Online
Storytime, BP Library
- DEC. 9**
4:30 p.m. – EDA
Meeting
- DEC. 14**
7 p.m. – City
Council Meeting
- DEC. 15**
2:30 p.m. – BPPU
Meeting
- 4:30 p.m. – Fire
Commission Meeting
- 5 p.m. – Ambulance
Commission Meeting
- DEC. 16**
4 p.m. – Police
Advisory Commission
Meeting

ELLEDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

- DEC. 4**
10 a.m. – SEMCAC,
Community Building
- DEC. 6**
11 a.m. – Ralph
Diaz Benefit, East of
FNB on Main Street,
Ellendale
- DEC. 7**
10 a.m. – SEMCAC,
Community Building
- 6 p.m. – Ellendale Fire
Department Meeting,
Community Building
- DEC. 9**
10 a.m. – SEMCAC,
Community Building
- DEC. 10**
7:30 p.m. –
Ellendale City Council
Meeting, Community
Building

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

- DEC. 4**
Christmas in the
Village, History Center
- 4 p.m. – Soup
Supper Fundraiser,
History Center
- 5 p.m. – Lighted
Village Walk, History
Center
- DEC. 5**
Christmas in the
Village, History Center
- DEC. 7**
7 p.m. – Steele
County Planning
Commission Meeting,
County Admin Building
- DEC. 8**
9:30 a.m. – Garden
Time, Owatonna
Library
- 10:30 a.m. –
Storytime Online with
Daria, Facebook Live
- 5 p.m. – Steele
County Board
Meeting, County
Admin Building
- 5:30 p.m. –
Owatonna Human
Rights Commission
Meeting, City Hall
- 5:30 p.m. –
Owatonna Planning
Commission Meeting,
City Hall
- DEC. 9**
5:30 p.m. –
Medford EDA Meeting,
City Hall
- DEC. 10**
10:30 a.m. –
Storytime Online with
Daria, Facebook Live
- 5 p.m. – Airport
Commission Meeting,
Airport Lounge

Fair cancels
December
board meeting

The December meeting for the Steele County Free Fair has been cancelled. Fair manager Scott Kozelka said the next regular meeting for the fair board will be Jan. 7. The fair is still planning on "Bringing Back the Fun in 2021" from Aug. 17-22.

Rally for Ralph features on-line auction



SUBMITTED PHOTO

This kids 4x4 is just one of many items available during the on-line auction to benefit Ralph Diaz of Ellendale. Friends and family are holding the auction as part of the Rally for Ralph fundraiser to help Diaz with medical expenses related to an upcoming double lung transplant he will receive. Sandy Jensen of Farmers Insurance donated the black jeep. People interested in bidding on the auction items can do so on Facebook at Rally for Ralph.

WORKERS VOW: to help a boss facing life saving transplant FROM B1

During this interview, Hagen fought back tears in describing what Diaz means to her: "I'm sorry I'm getting emotional, but we just all want to help him," said Hagen. "It brings him comfort that everyone has his back," she added. Hagen described Diaz as a humble person. She said he doesn't want all the fuss going on for him. "He told us he couldn't believe people like him. I told him they don't like you... they all love you," Hagen said.

At one point Diaz told Hagen and others that he doesn't want people to spend money on him because "there is no hope for me." Ha-

"He (Ralph Diaz) told us he couldn't believe people like him. I told him they don't like you... they all love you."

Ruth Hagen
R/S Bar Worker

gen said, "He is forever about everybody else... never for himself."

Workers like Hagen were saddened when Diaz left for Pittsburgh as he could be gone anywhere from six months to two years. "We hate to have him go, but it is his only chance to live," she said.

Joining the trip

to save Diaz's life is his sister, Rose, who recently retired as a nurse in Sioux Falls. Diaz couldn't be on the transplant list without a caregiver, and Rose stepped up to help out her brother who is not married and has no children. They are currently living in the Pittsburgh area, as Diaz

has to be within four hours of the hospital once a transplant becomes available. "She retired to be his caregiver," Hagen said. "They are a very tight family."

Hagen said everyone knows they have no control over Diaz's health, but they are all willing to step in and help by easing the financial burden with a benefit and keeping the restaurant going.

"I really love Ralph," Hagen said. "He is a wonderful caring person. It's time for him to let people help him," she said. She added they can't wait to get him back healthy again with new lungs.

Historical Society cookie sale ends Friday

The Steele County Historical Society's Carry-out Fancy Cookie Sale ends Friday. Cookies will be pre-plated and sold for \$5 per dozen from the

Wenger room on today from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.; Thursday from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m.; and Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Steele County Historical Society is located

at 1700 Austin Road in Owatonna. Cookie buyers have the option to call ahead of when they plan to arrive and the historical society will deliver

cookies to the buyer's vehicle. Those who request door dash delivery are asked to have cash for their purchase. For more information, call 451-1420.

Steele County Historical Society gift shop open

The Steele County Historical Society County Junction Gift Shop will be open to the public for holiday shopping each day at 10 a.m. through noon Christmas Eve. This holiday season, the gift shop is participating in the Owatonna Business

Partnership Program, Shop Owatonna for the Holidays 2020! Anyone who is carrying a shop local cloth bag or is wearing a shop local t-shirt will be able to register for a chance to win \$2,000. In addition, the gift shop will be giving away free historical

society key chains to those who purchases a shop local t-shirt or cloth bag and you will be able to enter into the prize drawing. County Junction Gift Shop features a wide array of locally crafted gifts, in all price ranges. New this year, we have hand-made jew-

elry and cards crafted by Owatonna High School student entrepreneurs, as well as baskets, Nam-arya soaps, Christmas ornaments and decor, wooden bowls, mittens, scarfs, quilted table runners, fancy dish towels, and paintings by local artists.

'Havana Lights' to benefit Helping Paws

This year's drive-thru holiday light display at 2048 Havana Road in Owatonna is up and running. The display will take place every day from dusk until

10 p.m. through New Year's Day. Called "Havana Lights," the drive-thru display features blow mold decorations of all kinds and more than 40

snowmen. There also are two light displays that dance to music. The event is free and open to the public. Free-will donations of money, cat or dog food, or kitty

litter are being accepted and will benefit the efforts of Helping Paws of Southern MN, a 501(c) non-profit organization working to help the animals of Steele County.

Sudoku Corner

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1	5	1	9	2	7	9	6	8
9	2	9	8	1	6	5	1	7
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5	9	9	7	6	2	1	8	1

HIGHS TUESDAY

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Owatonna hosts its own virtual college and career fair

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Virtual learning isn't limited to classroom learning at Owatonna High School. Interested students recently attended an OHS-hosted college and career fair via the internet.

"In the past, we would bring in colleges and local businesses to connect with students, but we knew that we couldn't do it in-person this year we looked at some opportunities available to us," OHS Principal Kory Kath said. "What our COMPASS team came up with was this virtual opportunity."

The online event provided students access to colleges and businesses throughout Minnesota and within the local community. It also provided students with help on financial aid and

college applications.

Around 30 colleges and 20 businesses participated with the college and career fair and each designed an interactive slide for the event.

"Many colleges and universities have been connecting with students virtually but what we really liked about this was that it was designed personally for our students," said Kath.

The COMPASS team is made up of many individuals within the district, including the school's counselors, the school's career counselor, the business internship teacher, and assistant principal. Throughout the year the district has found many different ways to connect students to post-high school opportunities.

"Anisha Zak put together an interactive

piece to link students to job openings and internships within the community," Kath said. During this pandemic Zak, the school's Workforce Entry coordinator, has been instrumental in presenting students with local workforce opportunities.

Although this year has been a challenging one for the district, Kath said, that the staff has had some fun thinking up new ways to connect and educate their students.

"There were good things that came out of this, such as we were able to archive this information for students to access at any time," he said. This means that a student who was unable to attend the virtual fair can still have access to those presentation, or if a student changes their mind on their post-high school plans they can go



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Owatonna High School recently hosted a virtual college and job fair for its students. The district also livestreamed a World's Best Workforce Annual Meeting. Participating in the meeting and pictured, from left, are Ann Mikkelsen, teaching and learning coordinator, Michelle Krell, director of teaching and learning and Dr. Martina Wagner, equity coordinator.

back over all the information presented.

Events like this one help to remind students that the district is still there to educate them and guide them, Kath said. "Right now, this is our normal and we have to adapt."

"Those students who are looking for the virtual college and career fair, Kath said, "Right now, this is our normal and we have to adapt."

"I want to give a shoutout to our local business and the colleges and universities that participated," he

said. "Anytime we can make a real connection with our students that's great and we feel very blessed for them to reach out to us."

The Owatonna School District also recently livestreamed a World's Best Workforce Annual Meeting as another approach aimed at offering students tangible connections with local career opportunities.

WINNING STREAK: snapped for Panthers FROM B5

ace serve, Erin Jacobson - 2 kills, 1 assist and 2 digs, Hallie Schultz - 2 assists, 4 digs and 1 ace serve, Sidney Schultz - 11 digs and 3 ace serves, Elli Baker - 3 kills, 3 digs and 1 block kill and Cambria Nissen - 16 digs.

The Panthers looked to get back on track on Tuesday, Nov. 17, but in order to achieve its fourth win of the season they'd have to pull off a major upset by beating the Waterville-Elysian-Morristown (WEM) Buccaneers, the

#2 team in the state in Class 1A.

NRHEG saw right away why its opponent is ranked so highly as WEM cruised to a 25-8 win in the first set.

Peterson explained that the Buccaneers are such a strong team because they work together like a well-oiled machine.

"WEM has been an absolute powerhouse these last couple of years. This year is no different. There are so many reasons why they

are so hard to compete with let alone beat.

Their defense-how well they move as a team, how much they talk, and work as one is very impressive. Their game tempo is the fastest we have competed against all year, along with their aggressive servers," she said. "The final nail in the coffin is their outside hitters, Torny Richards and Kylie Pittmann. They are a dominant force that are very hard to compete with. I'm sorry

for them that playoffs won't be happening. It's always fun to support the conference teams during playoff time."

The Panthers did a little bit better in the second set, but still lost handily 10-25.

In the third set, the Buccaneers brought their "A" game, winning 25-6 to win the match 3-0.

Peterson said her defense struggled to keep up with WEM's quick offensive tempo.

"Our blockers had a hard time getting to

their hitters, and when they were there their hitters would adjust and hit around us. This then hurt us defensively that we didn't have a touch to slow down their hits so we could have some time to get our feet under us to get a good pass up to our setters," she said.

Due to the Buccaneers' fast offense and coordinated defense, the scores of each set were one-sided. Despite that, she's glad that the Panthers got to play one of the best teams in the state.

"One take away from playing WEM twice this season would be most

teams don't get to face a top state ranked team and we had the opportunity to play them twice," said Peterson.

The 0-3 loss causes the Panthers' record to fall to 3-8.

NRHEG statistics: Anna Jacobson - 4 kills, Raquel Fischer - 1 dig, Grace Tufte - 4 assists and 1 dig, Kendall Johnson - 3 kills, 2 assists and 7 digs, Bree Burke - 1 kill, Erin Jacobson - 3 kills, Hallie Schultz - 5 assists and 4 digs, Rhys Martin - 1 assist, Sidney Schultz - 1 dig, Cambria Nissen - 5 digs and Elli Baker - 1 kill.

ANKLE DEVICE: helps nab fleeing suspect FROM B1

The incident began around 8:51 p.m. on Nov. 21 when a Steele County deputy was running radar in the Ellendale United Methodist Church parking lot. The deputy saw a Ford F150 traveling without functioning taillights. As the deputy tried to stop the vehicle, he clocked the truck going 85 to 95 mph, the complaint said.

As the chase continued, the Ford pulled through the ditch and bean field near 52nd Avenue and 168th Street Southwest. The

deputy lost sight of the truck as it went over a hill.

A short time later the deputy found the Ford parked near a residence on 168th Street in the field. The vehicle was unoccupied. The deputy found a bottle of Vodka and a BB gun in the vehicle.

Deputies discovered the vehicle was registered to a person from Rochester. They spoke with the owner who indicated he had dropped the truck off in Ellendale to be worked on. Based on a description pro-

vided by the owner, the deputy identified Kloeck as the possible driver.

The deputy made contact with Kloeck's probation agent to advise him of the situation. The probation agent made contact with Kloeck and convinced him to surrender to police. Kloeck provided a breath sample of 192, which is more than twice the legal limit, the complaint said.

Kloeck told the deputies that he was sorry for taking off. Kloeck said he thought the

deputy was in a squad that wouldn't be able to follow him. He also said he relapsed because he was having a tough time.

Driving records show Kloeck's driving privileges have been cancelled since April 2010 for a DWI offense.

Kloeck faces a maximum of three years in prison and a \$5,000 fine if convicted on the felony charge.

He is currently being held in the Steele County Detention Center on bail as he awaits his first court appearance on Thursday.

SAGA OF BUILDING: ownership has an even bigger surprise ending FROM B1

deed carried a clause that stated when West Hills discontinued programming, the property would revert back to the county.

However, the deed restriction expired in 30 years, which in this case was 2011. That means the property stays with West Hills, Golberg said.

"It's a lesson learned," said Golberg. "It's an easy one to miss when someone operates

for decades in the same place," he added.

The building has been vacant since West Hills moved out in early 2019. Azure Opportunities is actively trying to sell the property, Golberg said.

The three-story building is about 13,000 square feet with about 4,000 square feet on each floor. Golberg said he believes the building once served as a hospital for the state school property.

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2018 AWARD RECIPIENT

Churches fill gap, feed nearly 1,200



Joey Gleason adds a serving of green bean casserole to the to-go dishes prepared at Bethel Church. He and his wife, Debby, were among the scores of volunteers to help prepare and package the meals.

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Nearly 1,200 people received free Thanksgiving Day dinners prepared and distributed by two churches in Owatonna last week. Bethel Church and Trinity Lutheran Church teamed up to provide the meals after learning that the VFW would not be able to host its Community Thanksgiving Dinner because of COVID-19 restrictions. The VFW had hosted the event for the past 15 years. Organizers at both churches and scores of volunteers set out to fill the void — offering fully prepared turkey dinners that turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing, green bean casserole, salads

and dessert. Bethel Church prepared 800 meals that were delivered to homebound individuals on Thanksgiving Day and Trinity Lutheran Church distributed 366 meals to those who were unable to make the meal on their own but could drive to the church to pick the meal up. Bethel church member Colleen Barrett, who helped coordinate the volunteers working to prepare, package and deliver the meals from Bethel, said the response from volunteers was “overwhelming and encouraging.” “It’s not about food,” she said. “It’s about being connected with people who are famished for fellowship and companionship.”



Thanksgiving Day dinners prepared and distributed by Bethel Church and Trinity Lutheran Church included a full array of traditional Thanksgiving dishes, including turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing, green bean casserole, salads and dessert.

SEASONAL: Affective Disorder affects moods FROM B1

Symptoms of SAD are depression (including excessive eating and sleeping), weight gain, loss of energy, decreased activity, general sadness, and craving for sugary and starchy foods. Some sufferers are described as sluggish and lethargic. These symptoms can impact marriages, other relationships, and work-related activities. Most SAD symptoms subside in spring as daylight hours begin to stretch by a few minutes each day. The most difficult months for SAD sufferers are January and February. The most common theory about the cause

of the disorder is the increased level of melatonin, a sleep-related hormone secreted by the brain. In the dark, it is produced at increased levels. When the days are shorter and darker, the production of the hormone increases, thus giving the body messages about sleep, slowing down — messages that are similar to the symptoms of SAD. Seasonal Affective Disorder should not be confused with “holiday blues,” although they share some of the same symptoms including sadness, weight gain, and lower energy. The latter is the result of

increased stress during the holiday season. Phototherapy or bright light therapy suppresses the brain’s production of melatonin, thus informing the body not to go to a sleep mode. Many individuals respond well to phototherapy. A phototherapy light box uses white fluorescent lights and a metal reflector. The person turns the light on and sits in front of the light for a period of time (about a half hour) each day. Bright light therapy has proven to effectively reduce the intensity of the SAD symptoms. Anti-depressant medication and brief therapy for support

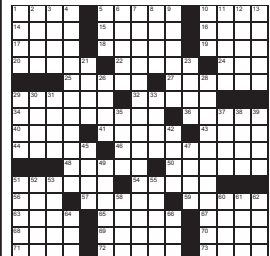
can also be effective treatments for some sufferers of SAD. A mental health professional can correctly diagnose and offer suggestions for treatment of Seasonal Affective Disorder. **Mark Skrien is a licensed psychologist, licensed marriage and family therapist, and the retired clinical director of the South Central Human Relations Center in Owatonna. Steele Talkin’ is a regular column featuring authors representing various organizations throughout Steele County.**

BP SWEEPS: Maple River, ends season FROM B4

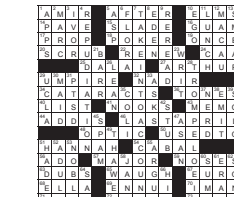
son because Blooming Prairie had a girl who tested positive for COVID-19 so the whole team is quarantining for two weeks. With the game against Hayfield being the last game of the Blooming Prairie seniors’ high school career, Wayne said they’ve had a big impact on this year’s team. “I’m really proud of the seniors, Allison Krohnberg we had her in the back row all season and she did really well there and she passed really well. Micalyn struggled early but she finished up the season pretty well,” she said. “I thought the seniors did a good job of rolling with all the adversity. I thought they were good leaders and showed the younger girls how it’s done. Obviously, we’re going to miss them a ton.” While the Awesome

Blossoms finished with a disappointing 3-8 record, Wayne said that record is a bit misleading. “We play in probably the toughest conference in the state. WEM and Medford both went to state last year and Bethlehem Academy has traditionally been very good and we were supposed to play every team twice. Also, both our games against United South Central, one of the weaker teams in our conference, were canceled,” she said. “I think you have to take those things into consideration.” Even though they didn’t get the record they may have deserved, Wayne is pleased with how her team progressed since the beginning of the season. “I think we made some pretty good improvements throughout the year.”

Crossword Puzzle of the Week



- ACROSS**
- 1 Arabian ruler
 - 2 Brandy made from pressed fruit
 - 3 Matinee idol — Novello (d. 1951)
 - 4 Disavowal
 - 5 Egyptian cobra
 - 6 Roman flower goddess
 - 7 Consider
 - 8 Garden west of Nod
 - 9 Go over again
 - 10 Self-esteem
 - 11 Middle meal
 - 12 Former Portuguese territory in China
 - 13 Slander
 - 21 Comedian Roseanne ---
 - 23 Warrant
 - 26 Bony
 - 28 Deceptive decorative
 - 29 Where the Wizard of Oz
 - 30 One of three in “The Mikado”
 - 31 Formerly known as shell-shock
 - 33 Inquires
 - 35 Escherichia ---, potentially dangerous bacterium
 - 37 Dweeb
 - 38 Give off
 - 39 Alone
 - 42 Counterfoil
 - 45 Intriguing email
 - 47 Straight --- arrow
 - 49 Melted
 - 51 Underworld
 - 52 No longer a minor
 - 53 Type of metal or gas
 - 55 Debate
 - 58 Country singer and actress
 - Kramer
 - 60 Japanese heavyweight contest
 - 61 Subdivisions of eons
 - 62 Male heirs
 - 64 Plant juice
 - 66 Not hers
- DOWN**
- 1 Smartphone programs



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