



Wednesday, June 9, 2021
www.SteeleCountyTimes.com
Bloomington, Minnesota

CAPTURING THE MOMENT

Bloomington graduate Alex Miller takes a selfie with school counselor Mary Worke during the school's recent graduation ceremonies. Miller graduated cum laude Friday evening. For stories and more photos on area graduations, see Pages B6-B8.

Historic rural schools featured on signs, maps

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

When it comes to local history, Barb Mrotz and Lloyd Kaplan are never sitting idle.

The pair of history buffs recently revealed its latest history venture showcasing historic rural school locations in the Ellendale area. They've posted 15 signs in southern Steele County identifying what once had been one-room schools. All eventually were consolidated into what is known today as NRHEG School in Ellendale.

According to Kaplan, there are at least another half dozen Ellendale schools in Freeborn County that are not part of the current display.

Mrotz and Kaplan are responsible for erecting

"If we don't remember the past, we won't have a cohesive reason to stick together."

Barb Mrotz
Local Historian

metal signs identifying the schools comparable to how a stop sign would be mounted. Sign Pro of Owatonna assisted with the installation of the signs.

The Ellendale Area Heritage Society (EAHS), which Kaplan and Mrotz have been actively involved with since 1989, also created maps showing where the schools are

See HISTORIC on A12 ▶



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Historians Barb Mrotz and Lloyd Kaplan reveal their latest historical venture of showcasing old rural schools surrounding the Ellendale area. They have placed metal signs like this one detailing Cooleyville School on the east edge of Ellendale. There are 15 Ellendale rural schools in Steele County with others in Freeborn County that are not part of this tour.

Bailey named top correctional officer

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

When Rusty Bailey found out he had been chosen as the top corrections officer at the Steele County Detention Center, he became emotional and shed a few tears.

Bailey said that's remarkable in itself because he doesn't cry much.

And why the tears this time around?

"Because I care about this job," said Bailey.

Bailey has served as a corrections officer at the detention center for the past four years. He works the overnight shift from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., watching inmates and dealing with their needs.

Jail Administrator Anthony Buttera said Bailey was selected for the top honor because of his attention to detail

and getting every task done the right way.

"He takes great care in producing a quality product and interacting with the inmates," said Buttera, adding that Bailey takes his job seriously. "He is personable and has the desire to do his job well."

While he may be fairly new to Steele County, Bailey had previous corrections experience at two other

county facilities in Oklahoma. One of the centers housed up to 600 inmates, many of whom were violent offenders and contracted through the U.S. Marshals Service.

Bailey hasn't minded coming to a smaller facility like Steele County, which has averaged about 50 prisoners per day over the past year. No matter what

See BAILEY on A11 ▶



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Rusty Bailey has been chosen as the 2021 Corrections Officer of the Year at the Steele County Detention Center in Owatonna.



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Bloomington brothers Tony, left, and Luke Nelson each received a quilt of valor for their service in the U.S. military following Memorial Day Services in Bloomington.

Bloomington brothers reflect on their service

BY ALEX NUEHRING
STAFF WRITER

Memorial Day is a day to honor those who gave their lives in service to their country. After a ceremony at Bloomington Prairie Cemetery, hundreds gathered at the Servicemen's Club to honor 12 distinguished veterans with quilts of valor.

Among those receiving a quilt of

valor were brothers and Majors Tony and Luke Nelson, who together have served the country for more than 25 years.

Tony Nelson, a 2001 graduate of Bloomington Prairie High School (BPHS), said one of the reasons he enlisted in the U.S. Army was attending Memorial Day and Fourth of July ceremonies every year with his family.

"I think it rubbed off on me a little bit and then seeing some of the events that were happening in the late 90s and early 2000s, that's what really got me interested in looking into going the military route," he said.

Luke Nelson, a 2004 graduate of BPHS, agreed.

"I was a tenth-grader on 9/11 and I would say that was the

most significant influence for me to join and serve was going through that as a teenager," he said.

He said he wanted to serve straight out of high school, but after consulting with his parents, he went to college and then law school before deciding that he wanted to be a military lawyer called a Judge Advocate (JAG).

See BROTHERS on A11 ▶

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INSIDE

Business	AS-B8	Farm Living	A6	Opinions	A2
Calendar	B2	History	A5	Owatonna School Page	A7
Classifieds	B13	Hometown Living	B1	Public Notices	B12
Community	A14	Graduations	B6-B8	Public Safety	A4
Faith	A15	Memorial Day	A10	Sports	B9-B11

AREA DEATHS

Luella Hattberg, 95, BP
Rosalee Underwood, 78, BP
Alfred Propp Jr., 75, Ham Lake
Lana Vincent, 80, Minneapolis

Serving
Bloomington
and Steele County
since 1893

OUR VIEW

Stay hydrated in this hot weather

With blistering, hot weather forecast well into next week, we encourage area residents to listen to the experts and stay hydrated.

Fact is: Extreme heat can be dangerous. Each year, thousands of people suffer symptoms of heat-related illnesses, including heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

That's why medical professionals, the American Red Cross and the National Weather Service advise people to stay hydrated. And water is best.

About 75% of our fluid intake should come from water and the other 25% can come from foods or other liquids. Good choices include:

- fresh fruits and vegetables with high water content like cucumber and watermelon
- 100% fruit and vegetable juices
- milk and milk substitutes
- herbal teas
- coconut water

Caffeine is dehydrating, so drink coffee and other caffeinated beverages in moderation. And, steer clear of beverages with added sugar like lemonade, soda and sweet tea.

The groups also suggest that people who will spend time outdoors during a heat wave eat small meals more often, wear loose-fitting clothing and avoid dark colors.

People who are either overdressed for the conditions or not drinking enough water are especially prone to developing heat exhaustion or heat stroke symptoms.

According to the Mayo Clinic, symptoms of heat exhaustion include headache, dizziness and profuse sweating. Signs of heatstroke include confusion or altered mental status (and) clammy skin. You might even stop sweating.

Should these symptoms develop, get out of the sun, drink water and seek medical help if the symptoms persist.

And let's not forget about our four-legged friends. They also can get overheated and suffer heatstroke. Don't leave them alone in a parked vehicle. Not only can it lead to fatal heatstroke, but it is also illegal in Minnesota.

And when it's this hot, don't let your dog linger on hot asphalt. Paw pads are sensitive and can burn. If you cannot leave your hand touching the pavement for more than 10 seconds, do not go on a walk.

Take the time to keep their water bowls full – they actually need more water than you do in hot weather.



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

There is nothing more beautiful while cruising the countryside than to come across a cemetery filled with real flowers.

That happened to me last week as I ventured around rural Steele County and ended up at Zion Lutheran Church. The cemetery is located next to the church in Lemond Township, north of Ellendale.

Church members have placed 59 red geraniums around the cemetery for the entire summer. This is a marvelous undertaking by the church to honor those who have gone on before us.

As I listened to the church members share about their project,

I couldn't help but remember back to my childhood. One of the greatest memories of my grandfather was planting flowers at his wife's gravesite at a small country church in McLeod County. She died in 1955 at a very young age following a short illness (strep throat).

My grandpa would always pick me up and bring me along to the cemetery to plant real flowers. Unlike the perpetual care offered by Zion throughout the summer, my grandpa would have to transport

Cemetery flowers spur great childhood memory

buckets of water a couple of times a week to keep the flowers alive.

Flowers always bring beauty and peace to the cemetery.

He always took great pride in planting flowers at the gravesite. And for me, it taught me the importance of remembering loved ones who are no longer with us.

I have never forgotten about remembering loved ones, including him. I think about him often and the values he instilled in me. I have always marveled at what he accomplished, especially as a single parent raising a 2 year old. He never remarried. He was a champion for getting things

done while suffering great physical barriers. He had a heart of gold. I try to visit the cemetery at least once a year. I actually did this last Friday night. Much to my surprise, my mother had already placed some flowers at the grave. It warms my heart to see what the church members are doing out at Zion. In Zion's case, they are carrying through on what Jerry Karaus started six

years ago. Last July, the flowers Karaus helped bring to the cemetery surrounded him during his memorial service.

"It was like a Jerry Day with all the flowers," one member said. "It was a nice tribute to him."

Roxanne Underwood even has recruited four of her grandchildren to help with the care



Maryann Woodfill is busy "deadheading flowers" at the Zion Lutheran Church cemetery in Lemond Township. She is one of several church members offering perpetual care of 59 geraniums at the cemetery throughout the summer.

Sadly, I confess I have not been very good with carrying through on my grandpa's legacy of planting real flowers, though I'm not even sure if they are allowed in the cemetery any longer—at least the way he did them. It seems like time and distance get in the way of perhaps things that should matter more than anything.

But I hope my grandpa is looking down at me and realizes that I

have not been very good with carrying through on my grandpa's legacy of planting real flowers, though I'm not even sure if they are allowed in the cemetery any longer—at least the way he did them. It seems like time and distance get in the way of perhaps things that should matter more than anything.

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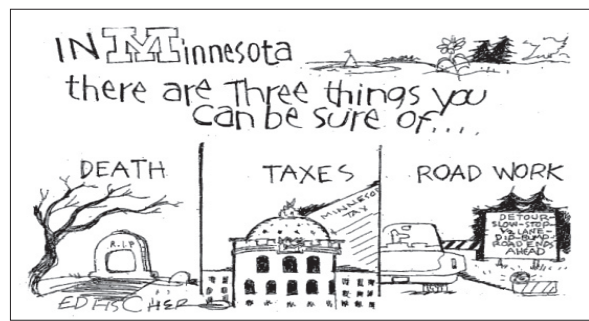
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Reflections
HOWARD LESTRUD

When! It sure is hot out there today. Summer has arrived with temperatures hovering in the 90s and pushing toward three digits in the hundreds.

Judy and I just returned from eight days in Arizona and brought the heat back with us. In fact, temperatures in the 90s started in Minnesota late last week

and moved toward 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperatures in the 100s this time of the year is typical for Arizona. We saw temperatures exceeding 107 degrees in Arizona. It's a dry heat, many westerners claim but I don't care, any temp over 100 is HOT!

Temps actually hit 99 on Saturday and will stay with us for the next five days. Temps return to the 80s on Friday.

Let's take a look at some of our HOT temperatures in Minnesota throughout history. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) says the worst record for a heat wave in Minnesota was marked from July 5-18, 1936.

The state Climatology Office Minneapolis and St. Paul has hit 100 66 times since modern records started in 1873.

Weather maps of the time displayed a sprawling high-pressure area covering the entire U.S. east of the Rockies, and jutting as far north as Hudson Bay at times. This placed the entire Plains and Midwest regions in southwesterly flow, meaning that when the winds blew, they came straight out of the Sonoran Desert. These hot, dry winds primed the entire region for a prolonged and record-shattering heat event.

The DNR records

indicate that Minnesota temperatures were 90 degrees or higher for 14 straight days including eight days with high temperatures at or above 100 degrees

F. That's more than 100-degree days than the state recorded for all of the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s combined.

The all-time heat high was 115 degrees F on July 29, 1917 in Beardsley, which is in Big Stone County.

Remember, the temperatures we are mentioning were recorded during the time when we had no air conditioning. During these heat wave days, we had no rain.

This onslaught of heat in 1936 caused heat exhaustion, heat stroke and up to 900 deaths in Minnesota. This said to be the state's worst weather events on record.

The DNR report says a return to similar conditions in 1936 would increase the likelihood of high temperature extremes.

The Minnesota Monthly magazine has come up with 10 ways to beat the Minnesota heat. Try these suggestions:

1) Visit the Minnesota Zoo.
2) Get some ice cream at your favorite store.
3) Visit an indoor water park in Bloomington, Minneapolis, Alexandria and Duluth.

4) Visit Soak City at Valleyfair.

5) Find one of many beaches in Minnesota.

6) Mall of America has roller coasters, an aquarium, tax-free shopping on clothes and shoes, high-class dining and a great nightlife scene.

7) Museums like the Walker Art Museum, Minnesota Children's Theatre and the Minnesota Institute of the Arts.

8) Go to the movies.

9) Go to a Minnesota Lynx game at the Target Center, Minneapolis.

10) Sip cocktails at your favorite bar-restaurant. Stay cool and have fun this summer!

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2012-2 state awards
2010-6 state and 6 national awards
(Awards presented by the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the National Newspaper Association)

Downtown construction projects to begin this month

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Community leaders, business owners and residents gathered Thursday to celebrate the groundbreaking for the Hamilton Real Estate group's new Marriott Courtyard hotel and new Pearl Street apartment complex in downtown Owatonna.

The projects are scheduled to begin this month and plan to open in June of 2022. "I want to be in Owatonna. This is a great community," said developer Mac Hamilton of Rochester, adding that without the support of Federated Insurance this project would not be happening.

Jeff Fetters, chairman and CEO of Federated Insurance, said the community needs to think about how much it owes the people who came before us. "It's up to us to create history for the next generations," he said.

The redevelopment of the 200 block of North Cedar Avenue will also include a new, upscale restaurant and the expansion of Old Town Bagels.

Addressing the crowd, City Administrator Kris Busse said, "this is a summer of summer transformation in Owatonna."

The city's \$4.5 million streetscape project is also slated to begin this month. The reconstruction project includes replacing the 100-year-old pipes below ground and a new roadway. The sidewalks also will be expanded and updated to create a pedestrian-friendly environment in the 100-300 blocks of Cedar.

Earlier this month, the council awarded the construction contract to JJD Companies of Bloomington, Minn.

Updates for the city's streetscape project can be found at <https://gis.isginc.com/MN/Owatonna/NorthCedarAveStreetscapeProject>.



Chairman and CEO of Federated Insurance Jeff Fetters addresses the crowd gathered at the June 3 groundbreaking ceremony for the new hotel and apartment complex in downtown Owatonna.

Application deadline for Owatonna council seat June 18

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

Owatonna is hoping to fill the council seat left vacant by the death of Council Member Jeff Okerberg by July 6.

Residents interested in filling the position can apply online at www.ci.owatonna.mn.us/664/City-Council. The application

deadline is 4 p.m. on Friday, June 18.

"It's a sad night," said Council Chair Greg Schultz, who represents the city's 2nd Ward, during the June 1 council meeting. "One of our council members' name was not called this evening."

Okerberg, a former Owatonna police officer first elected to the council

in 2014, died May 23 after suffering complications from back surgery.

"This is not the first time this has happened. We've had other council members pass away in office," said Schultz just before the council declared the seat vacant and set in motion the process established in the city charter to fill the vacancy.

Council Member Kevin Raney, who represents the city's 4th Ward, said he'd encourage those considering applying for the vacant seat to contact current council members to discuss the time it takes and what's involved.

"It's not just two meetings a month. All of the council can attest to that," said Raney, adding that

Okerberg did his homework and was extremely thorough. "If you want to be a council member and a good council member, you have to work hard at it and Jeff did that and I think our expectation would be the same for the new council member."

Once the application deadline closes, the city will review submitted applications and contact

applicants to set up interviews.

Owatonna's City Charter requires a majority of the members remaining in office to fill the vacancy. In the event of a tie vote by the council, the mayor shall cast the deciding vote.

The successful candidate's term of office would run through Dec. 31, 2022.

Let's Meet Downtown



The Mark Cameron Band, above, performed at the first of this year's 11 @ 7 concert series in Central Park on June 3. The evening was a busy one for downtown Owatonna with the first of three Downtown Thursdays planned for the summer in full swing. Shops were open, street vendors sold their wares and friends gathered for an evening of fun. Out for a night of music and fun were, from left, Cori Johnson, Emily Pearson and Amanda Maeyaert, all of Owatonna.

STAFF PHOTOS BY DEB FLEMMING

Osterholm: Get vaccinated to protect others

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

As Minnesota's COVID-19 cases continue to fall, health officials remain concerned about the pace of vaccinations.

About 65% of the state's eligible adults have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, according to the Minnesota Department of Health. Of that group, 2,650,061 are fully vaccinated, or about 59.9% of those currently eligible.

According to health officials, at its current vaccination pace, Minnesota isn't likely to meet its July 1 goal to have 70% of its adults vaccinated.

"This isn't like the first days when there were many more people who wanted the vaccine," said Dr. Michael Osterholm, an epidemiologist from Minnesota and member of President Joe Biden's COVID-19 Advisory Board, during an interview with the Steele County Times last week.

"If there was ever a time to be altruistic, this is it," said Osterholm, adding that there are 12 million people in this country who are immune deficient. "If you are vaccinated, you pose much less of a risk to them."

Protect yourself, but more importantly, protect others, said Osterholm, who called the COVID-19 vaccine a "public health miracle."

Asked what can be done to get more shots in arms, Osterholm said: "You



Michael Osterholm

just keep telling the story of the protection these vaccines provide, about their safety and how well they work."

An overwhelming majority of people getting sick from the virus now aren't vaccinated, said Osterholm, adding that the deaths are occurring among people who could be protected had they been vaccinated.

Vaccine hesitancy is real and appropriate for some people, according to Osterholm.

For example, he said it's appropriate for pregnant women to question getting the vaccine because they are unsure about what the vaccine means for their unborn child. But the real risk for both the mother and unborn child, Osterholm said, is getting COVID-19 during pregnancy.

Osterholm also said he supported incentive programs to increase the vaccination numbers and community efforts to encourage vaccinations and make it easier for people to get them.

"We need to do whatever we can," Osterholm said.

**BLOTTER
SPOTLIGHT**

Restraining Order: Police arrested a subject for a restraining order violation in the 200 block of Woodland Dr. SE at 11:31 a.m. on May 22

Police looking for suspect in scrap theft

Police are asking for the public's help in identifying a suspect in a major silver theft from an Owatonna manufacturer. Owatonna Police are investigating the theft of 40 pounds of scrap silver valued at \$18,000 from Viracon at 300 Park Dr.

According to police, a male suspect wearing blue jeans, a Carhartt-style jacket, a blue face mask, a blue t-shirt, black sunglasses and a black beanie-style hat entered a Viracon building around 3:30 a.m. June 2.

Surveillance video captured an image of the suspect.

Anyone who can identify the suspect is asked to contact Sgt. Andy Drenth at 507-774-7207. Police say you can remain anonymous.



Owatonna police are seeking the public's help in identifying the suspect in a scrap theft caught on a surveillance video.

CRIME BRIEF

Traffic stop nets revoked driver, drugs

A traffic stop by an Owatonna police officer has produced a revoked driver and a drug discovery.

Timothy Smith, 46, and Tawna Johnson, 45, both of Owatonna, have been charged with fifth-degree possession of a controlled substance in connection with the May 7 incident.

Police stopped a car for a driver's license violation as the officer knew Smith was driving with a revoked license. The officer saw Smith showing indicia of drug usage and received conflicting



Timothy Smith

stories from him and his female passenger, police said.

K-9 Vegas responded to the scene. According to police, Smith handed them two baggies from his pocket that appeared



Tawna Johnson

to be methamphetamine.

Related to the drug discovery, probation agents responded to Johnson's home for a search. Meth was also located in the house, police said.

**COURT NEWS
Steele County**

The following cases were heard in Steele County District Court the week of May 17 with Judge Joseph A. Buell presiding: Khalid D. Marshall, 27, Chicago, IL, previously appeared and was convicted of felony burglary. He was sentenced to \$1,384.24, 6 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, cognitive skill training, no possession of firearms, no contact with victim and 3 years of supervised probation. Khadar O. Mohamud, 23, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony motor vehicle theft and felony burglary. Mohamud was sentenced to \$10,159.33, 54 days in county jail, maintain employment, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, psychological evaluation, cognitive skill training, obtain permission to leave the state, complete drug court, no possession of firearms and 5 years of supervised probation. Tanya M. Schertler, 33, Owatonna, previously appeared and was convicted of felony DWI. The defendant was sentenced to \$375, 180 days in county jail, electronic home monitoring, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, attend MADD impact panel, obtain permission to leave the state, no possession of firearms and petty misdemeanors were heard in Steele County District Court the week of May 17 – 23.

**OWATONNA POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

Sierra A. Huisman, 26, Owatonna, possession of marijuana, stay of adjudication, \$100, chemical dependency evaluation, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, 40 hours of community service and 2 years of supervised probation;

Tytiana N. Jackson, 19, Owatonna, theft, stay of adjudication, \$94.26, no trespassing at Walmart and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Collin J. Jacobs, 25, Owatonna, DWI, \$400, do not enter liquor establishments, substance abuse subtle screening inventory and 1 year of supervised probation; Jessenia L. Martinez, 25, Faribault, DWI, \$200, no alcohol or controlled substance use, attend MADD impact panel, substance abuse subtle screening inventory and 1 year of supervised probation; Tonia M. Miller, 51, Owatonna, failure to stop for school bus, stay of adjudication, \$505, 40 hours of community service and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Liban A. Mohamed, 21, Owatonna, stop sign and possession of marijuana, \$90; Stanley Moua, 37, St. Paul, suspended registration, \$375; Chevy H. Reno, 17, Waseca, speeding, \$135; Matthew C. Russell, 20, Owatonna, speeding, \$275; Payton M. Schwartz, 16, Owatonna, invalid license, no insurance and registration violation, \$425; Adam P. Stumpf, 23, Medford, revoked license and no insurance, \$475; Tristan A. Wencil, 18, Owatonna, speeding, \$215.

**STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Juan J. Arevalo-Acosta, 34, Owatonna, use fictitious information on license, 1 day in county jail and 364 days of unsupervised probation; Benjamin J. Austin, 49, Palm Beach, seat belt, \$100; Brooke L. Bojym, 23, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Amanda M. Buzzard, 33, Ellendale, speeding, \$115; Kinzie W. Carlson, 16, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Gage T. Gourhan, 26, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Gerald R. Gruber, 43, Owatonna, cancelled license, \$75, comply with ignition interlock and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Mardelle M. Guse, 53, Owatonna, speeding, \$115; Mohamed H. Jibri, 43, Bloomington, speeding, stay of adjudication, \$50 and 1 year of unsupervised probation; Sander M. Johnson, 29, Inver Grove Heights, speeding, \$115; Zachary A. Kaplan, 33,

Rochester, speeding, \$125; Alexander J. Kendall, 27, Eagan, hands free violation, \$125; Jermale J. Kling, 38, St. Paul, suspended license, \$75 and 60 days in county jail; Mackenzie A. Madsen, 18, Blooming Prairie, speeding, \$135; Dawn M. Mielke, 48, Waseca, invalid license, \$175; Abigail M. Sherman, 16, Lakeville, speeding, \$135; Rhyan A. Smith, 19, Hastings, speeding, \$215; Michael L. Snow, 55, Austin, speeding, \$115; Scott A. Snow, 53, Blooming Prairie, DWI and cancelled license, \$475, 2 days in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, chemical dependency evaluation, ignition interlock program, MADD impact panel and 1 year of supervised probation; Isaac I. Urias, 31, Farmington, DWI, \$400, 1 day in county jail, no alcohol or controlled substance use, do not enter liquor establishments, attend MADD impact panel and 1 year of supervised probation; Nicole G. Weller, 28, Owatonna, suspended license, \$275.

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

May 23 Domestic: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 200 block of 3rd St. NE at 7:30 p.m.

May 26 Theft: Police received a theft report from the 600 block of Highway Ave. S. at 5:09 p.m.

OWATONNA POLICE

May 21 Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 500 block of Adams Ave. NW at 6:45 a.m.

Welfare: Officer conducted a welfare check in the 1900 block of Hartle Ave. SE at 4:22 p.m.

Shoplifting: Officer issued a shoplifting citation in the 2100 block of Bridge St. W. at 7:17 p.m.

Mental Health: Police responded to a mental health incident in the 100 block of Oak Ave. S. at 8:02 p.m.

Noise: Police received a noise complaint from the 200 block of 13th St. NE at 10:05 p.m.

May 22 Theft: Officer took a theft report in the 400 block of Hoffman Dr. NW at 7:29 a.m.

May 23 Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest in the 2600 block of 3rd Ave. NE at 1:20 p.m.

DWI: Police made a DWI arrest in the 700 block of Willowbrook St. NE at 5:22 p.m.

Fight: Officers responded to a fight in the 1100 block of Cedar Ave. N. at 6:43 p.m. They issued a citation.

May 24 Warrant: Officer made a warrant arrest in the 500 block of Crestview Lane NE at 9:15 a.m.

May 25 Hit and Run: At 5:41 a.m., a hit and run accident occurred in the 600 block of Orange St. W.

May 26 Theft: At 7:34 a.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 1500 block of Deer Trail Lane NE.

May 26 Theft: At 9:13 a.m., identity theft was reported in the 500 block of Rose St. E.

Juvenile: Police received a juvenile complaint from the 400 block of 12th St. SE at 5:32 p.m.

Child Protection: Police received a child protection report from the 400 block of Kelly St. NW at 5:29 p.m.

May 27 Suspicion: Officers responded to suspicious activity in the 100 block of Landmark Dr. NE at 9:48 a.m. and the 200 block of South St. E. at 3:21 p.m.

Trespassing: At 12:19 p.m., a subject was trespassing in the 500 block of 15th St. NE.

Property: At 6:29 p.m., stolen property was recovered in the 400 block of Alexander Dr. SW at 6:29 p.m.

**STEELE COUNTY
SHERIFF**

May 21 Theft: At 2:25 p.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 300 block of 1st Ave. NW in Medford.

May 22 Theft: Deputy took a theft report in the 200 block of 1st St. SE in Medford at 11:19 a.m.

May 23 Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 400 block of 7th Ave. W. in Ellendale at 12:13 p.m.

May 24 Suspicion: Deputies responded to suspicious activity in the 2100 block of Field Stone Ave. SE in Owatonna at 4:11 a.m.

Theft: Deputy took a theft report in the 100 block of Beaver Lake Road N. in Berlin Township at 10:44 a.m.

Vandalism: Property damage was reported in the 15400 block of 62nd Ave. SW in Berlin Township at 1:26 p.m.

Animal: At 3:38 p.m., an animal bite occurred at Central Ave. W. and Main St. S. in Medford.

May 25 Child Protection: Deputies received a child protection report from the 400 block of 5th Ave. W. in Ellendale at 7:59 a.m.

Theft: At 11:27 a.m., a motor vehicle was reported stolen from the 2100 block of 50th St. NW in Clinton Falls Township.

May 27 Crash: At 10:03 a.m., a motor vehicle accident occurred in the 2000 block of 52nd Ave. NW in Meriden Township.

**COURT NEWS
Dodge County**

The following case was heard in Dodge County District Court the week of May 16 with Judge Pamela King presiding:

Logan G. Neubauer, 24, Andover, previously appeared and was convicted of felony criminal sexual conduct.

Neubauer was sentenced to \$5,456.86, 90 days of electronic home monitor, no possession of firearms, attend sex offender program, submit to polygraph exams as directed, no contact with victim, no access to internet without approval, no unsupervised contact with minors, no possession of pornography, predatory offender registration and 10 years of supervised probation.

The following misdemeanors and petty misdemeanors were heard in Dodge County District Court the week of May 16 – 23:

**DODGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Vanessa L. Cardenas, 30, Waseca, suspended

license, speeding and no insurance; Lily A. Carstensen, 18, Mantorville, speeding, \$130; Jill M. Jantzen, 43, Pine Island, speeding, \$130; Devin J. Maas, 16, Owatonna, speeding, \$220; Luis A. Macias, 43, West Concord, speeding, \$130; Adrian Martinez, 26, Dodge Center, invalid license, \$160; Philippe Orana Bilega, 39, Rochester, speeding, \$120; Juan Ramirez Jr., 38, St. Paul, receiving stolen property, \$180; Jason J. Rodriguez Cruz, 33, Kasson, littering, \$130.

**KASSON POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

Anne M. Bajzer, 38, Rochester, hands free violation, \$130; Cheri L. Berge, 46, Mantorville, hands free violation, \$130; Hannah R. Clancy, 26, Rochester, hands free violation, \$130;

Katelyn N. Cuthall, 30, Mantorville, hands free violation, \$130; Henry J. Gronseth, 22, Sargeant, hands free violation, \$130; Edgar H. Perez, 43, Kasson, invalid license and registration violation, \$210; Nohe Rojas Herrera, 34, Claremont, hands free violation, \$130; Uvaldo Salazar Gastelum, 19, Mantorville, hands free violation, \$130; Casey G. Skoger, 42, Rochester, hands free violation, \$130; Nicholas J. Wiplinger, 41, Rochester, hands free violation, \$130.

**MN STATE PATROL
ROCHESTER**

Erika E. Bergstad, 26, Hayfield, speeding and revoked license, \$420; Mark W. Clark, 35, Byron, speeding, \$120; Eddie R. French, 50, Byron, seat belt, \$105; Bailey J. Kuball, 20, Pine Island, speeding, \$130; Kevin L. Mitchell, 35, Rochester, revoked license, expired registration and no insurance, \$510; Carlos A. Murrieta, 21, Rochester, speeding, \$120; Nicole P. Salley, 21, Pine Island, speeding, \$140; Andy M. Schultz, 43, Mantorville, revoked license, \$280; Anisha N. Solomon, 37, Mankato, speeding, \$120; John M. Holland, 44, Northfield, careless driving, 1 year of unsupervised probation.

**WEST CONCORD
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Bryan Rodriguez, 19, Kasson, invalid license, \$180.

WARRANTS: The following individuals have active warrants in Steele County. The Sheriff provides this information as a public service

1. Prentiss Boyd – theft - \$40,000 bail
2. Ronnie Boyd – order for protection violation – no bail
3. Shannon Boykin – drugs – no bail
4. Stephen Brandt – stalking, no insurance – no bail
5. Anthony Brown – assault – no bail
6. Isaiah Brownlee – DWI – no bail
7. Jesse Brudelle – violation of domestic abuse order - \$25,000 bail
8. James Campbell – trespassing - \$1,000 bail
9. Jorge Campos Avila – DWI, revoked license - \$500 bail
10. Linda Card – warrant - \$1,000 bail
11. Victor Carrejo – probation violation – no bail
12. Roberto Castilleja – hit and run - \$1,000 bail
13. Coj Castral – domestic abuse - \$1,000 bail
14. Noe Cavazos – DWI – no bail
15. Nathan-Adam Chavez – assault – no bail
16. Brandon Chavez-Salgado – dangerous weapon - \$40,000 bail
17. Thok Chul – drugs - \$5,000 bail
18. Luis Clara – DWI - \$1,000 bail
19. Calvin Collier – assault - \$1,000 bail
20. Marlon Contreras – DWI - \$500 bail

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



On The Farm
MERCEDES MOFFETT

Rains were welcomed with open arms in late May. Plants are starting to take off, and it's refreshing to see some color come through the soil. The plants have really made it feel like summer is here. As an update, corn has reached the two leaf stage and soybeans have begun emerging from the ground. The alfalfa crop is looking very promising, with the possibility of the first harvest coming as soon as next week. Unfortunately, crops

are not the only things that are really starting to grow. The slower start of plant growth has brought forth a nuisance for farmers with pesky weeds. Weeds are opportunists, the slower growth of crops not filling in as fast as we would typically like to see from our lack of moisture, has allowed the weeds to begin to creep in. Common weeds such as lambsquarters, waterhemp, and giant ragweed are starting to pop up in force. Unfortunately, the lack of rain and the heat we have had, made most of any pre-emergence herbicides that were sprayed not as effective as immediately hoped. Pre-emergence herbicides require rain to help

transport the herbicide down into the soil for the roots to absorb. Without precipitation or irrigation, the herbicide has no way to get down to the necessary depth in the soil to be effective. For those who did spray pre-emergence, there is a possibility that the herbicide will now start to kick in. Typically 0.5 inches of rain is required to get the herbicide down to the soil solution level where it is effective. Within the last week the surrounding area has gotten about two inches of much needed rain, certainly enough to activate the herbicides. What is worrisome is that some weed seeds may have started to germinate prior to the rain. The best way for anyone to be assessing



Giant ragweed is one of the many weed sprouting up in area farm fields.

their field needs to be going and scouting each field individually. Any weeds that begin to grow post-emergence to field crops are going to start to grow fast, especially now that we have heat and moisture. It is crucial that weeds

stay within the recommended height listed on herbicide labels, so they can be managed properly. If there was not an application of pre-emergence, post-emergence is going to be recommended. Talking with a local supplier

is going to be the best way to determine what post-emergence herbicide to use. It is always important to be mindful of resistance that certain weeds may have acquired.

All of this revolves around a big "if" factor. If there are weeds, if you can get in the field, if you did or didn't spray. Ultimately the best thing to do is keep an eye out for weed emergence, and check in with a local supplier of herbicides to determine what will work best for the field's needs.

Mercedes Moffett is serving as the interim extension educator for Steele and Rice counties for Claire LaCanne.



Mastering Gardening
LORRIE RUGG

I have been thinking about what I could write about in this month's article. When I was outside watering last night, I thought everyone else was thinking about the same thing I am doing. How am I going to keep my plants alive during this heat wave? This

week looks hot and there is not much rain in the forecast. So what are we to do?

Everyone will be watering, watering and watering some more. But we have to be smart about it. We have to have the right amount of water for a successful garden. The lack of water can have a definite impact on plants, even if it is for just a few days. Plants use the roots to move nutrients through the plant and if there is not sufficient water - no nutrition. The vegetable garden needs an inch of water a week. Check

the soil in the garden by digging down at least 2 inches to see if there is sufficient moisture. If not, time to water. What is the best time of day to water? Watering in the morning prepares the plant for the day and watering the evening cools it off. But it does matter the way you water.

Morning watering is best when using a sprinkler or garden hose, when you wet the foliage. When done watering the foliage has time to dry off to help prevent fungal diseases. Watering in the evening

is best when you use a drip irrigation system or soaker hoses.

Mulching in the garden or even in your containers does help retain the moisture as well as help keep the weeds down. There are many kinds of mulch that you can use in the garden. You can use herbicide free grass clippings, shredded bark mulch and even straw. Shredded newspaper or even cardboard between the rows of your garden. Another reason to keep those weeds out of the garden is that they compete for that moisture,

so get them out of there! Container gardens do tend to dry out fairly quickly in the heat and especially if it is windy. They might need daily attention during this heat. Sometimes they might need watering more than once a day if they are in the hot sun. Avoid letting your containers dry out and stay that way for too long. Plants can become quite stressed and may not recover.

In our zest, to keep things watered keep in mind you can overwater things as well. If you have trays underneath your containers, don't

let water sit in them. You can place a rain gauge in your garden to help measure the water as you water.

Remember an inch a week should be sufficient for your vegetable garden.

And we have to remember we live in Minnesota and this heat wave shall pass! Happy watering everyone!

Lorrie Rugg is the coordinator of the Steele County Master Gardening program. Her column appears in this newspaper monthly.

Plants need to beat the heat, too!

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PANTHERS

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PANTHER OF THE WEEK

This week's Panther of the Week is **Logan Possin**. Logan is the son of Layne and Jillian Possin and they reside in rural Wells. Logan shows his Panther Pride everyday in so many ways! He has a very caring personality and is a helper and friend to all. Logan is also a very hard worker and is eager to learn.

Thank you, Logan, for being such a great example to your classmates and others around you!

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DNR continues webinars on fishing and hunting skills

Anyone interested in fishing, hunting and care for the outdoors can learn about activities like shore fishing, firearms safety, muskie fishing, archery or how to catch catfish during webinars hosted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

"We're excited about reaching people interested in developing their outdoor skills," said Benji Kohn, DNR volunteer mentor program coordinator. "Sometimes all it takes to try something new are a few good tips and some encouragement, and that's what these webinars are all about."

The DNR started the Minnesota Outdoor Skills and Stewardship Series in March to share how-to knowledge relevant to current Minnesota outdoor seasons and activities. Most of the webinars center on fishing or hunting skills, and some have covered other outdoor activities like kayaking or foraging.

The webinars are at

noon on Wednesdays and last less than an hour. The webinar series expands the DNR's online offerings beyond the turkey and deer hunting classes developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Joining the latest webinar lineup are programs on archery, fishing, fish and wildlife biology, and skills taught through the DNR Becoming an Outdoors Woman program.

While DNR will be resuming more in-person classes over the summer, these webinars are short, require no travel and can reach those with limited free time.

"Even as we add more in-person events, we want to keep our webinar series going because it has been a fun and effective way to share information with people," Kohn said. "Much of our audience is made up of outdoor enthusiasts who are interested in trying something new - deer hunters who want to try hunting turkeys or an-

glers who want to catch more bass or walleye, for example."

Recruiting, retaining and reactivating hunters and anglers is one way the DNR is acting on its strategic plan to connect people to the outdoors. The webinars are a way to broaden access to knowledge and information about outdoor opportunities available in Minnesota, primarily related to fishing and hunting. That knowledge has traditionally been shared among family members or friends.

"Say you want to try hunting or go catch your first muskie, but don't know a hunter or how to pick a muskie lure - that's where we can help steer people in the right direction," Kohn said. "People can join a webinar during a lunch hour, and use what they learn to get ready for an upcoming season or simply try something new on the weekend."

Webinars are scheduled every Wednesday

through the summer. Each takes place at noon. The courses are free, but participants are required to pre-register.

Summer series topics are as follows and registration pages for the webinars are available on the DNR website.

- June 2 - Metro muskie fishing basics
- June 9 - Take a kid fishing
- June 16 - Shore fishing 101, simple tips and techniques
- June 23 - Introduction to catfish angling
- June 30 - Basic firearms maintenance
- July 7 - Shore fishing 102, down by the river
- July 14 - Getting started in archery
- July 21 - Finding trout in Minnesota streams and lakes
- July 28 - Bear hunting and biology
- Aug. 4 - How to get certified in firearms safety
- Aug. 11 - Rifle basics
- Aug. 18 - Mourning dove hunting
- Aug. 25 - DNR at the 2021 Minnesota State Fair

Put safety first when boating

With the boating season underway and warm temperatures in the forecast, the DNR is reminding boaters of all experience and skill levels sharing Minnesota's lakes and rivers to take seriously their safety responsibilities.

Following are a few simple safety tips that will help make the start of the boating season fun, memorable and safe.

Life jackets on, all the time. Don't just bring one, wear one. In Minnesota, 90 percent of boating fatality victims are not wearing a life jacket. By law, children under 10 years old must wear one while the boat is underway. Wearing a life jacket is

the easiest step boaters of all ages can take to help ensure they get home safely.

Drinking and boating do not mix. Boating under the influence is illegal and is the single greatest factor in fatal boating accidents. Keep the alcohol on shore for the safety of friends, family and everyone on the water.

Check safety equipment. For those putting their boat in the water for the first time this season, it's important to check all safety equipment. That includes making sure life jackets fit and are in good condition and checking navigation lights, sound-producing device, fire extinguish-

er and carbon monoxide detectors. Also remember to inspect - and use - the engine cut-off lanyard.

Own the wake. "Owning the wake" means understanding that all boats produce wakes, so all boaters need to be aware of the potential impacts of their wake. This includes impacts to others on the water, the shoreline, and equipment like docks and moored watercraft.

Know the rules. Make sure you know Minnesota's boating laws and regulations. An online education course can help increase your knowledge. In addition to helping to ensure safety, boaters

also play a vital role in preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species. Every time their boat comes out of the water - whether an AIS inspector or enforcement officer is present or not - boaters must clean aquatic plants and debris from their watercraft, drain lake or river water, and dispose of unwanted bait in the trash. Boaters must remember to keep their drain plugs out and water-draining devices open while transporting watercraft.

Further details, including boater education requirements and information on safe boating, can be found at mndnr.gov/boating-safety.



OWATONNA PROUD

OWATONNA SCHOOLS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2021 | A7



SUBMITTED PHOTO

During the final week of school, graduating seniors visit their elementary schools decked out in their caps and gowns. In this particular photo, the seniors are outside of Washington Elementary. Congratulations to the Class of 2021!

Omot, Copeland picked to be graduation speakers

BY MARGRET JACOTT
OHS MAGNET WRITER

As the 2021 school year is quickly coming to an end, the commencement speakers tryouts were held on May 13, with Ms. Marcia Anderson, Ms. Holly Jeska, Ms. Jessica Wagner, Mr. Kory Kath and Mrs. Dawn Tuchtenhausen were on the decision board this year. Their final decisions were announced on Friday, May 14 as Wilo Omot and Megan Copeland to be the two

commencement speakers for 2021.

Senior Wilo Omot is involved in student council, DIG, mixed roots, manages boys baseball and football, marching band, concert band and concert choir. Omot initially decided to try out for this speaking position because of a meeting that she attended with Mr. Kory Kath where he talked about finding ways to encourage students to try out. Omot is looking forward to sharing her message of hope to

the senior class. Omot said, "My message is just to have hope in all the things that we've done, and with that hope we can achieve so many things in life." Omot's message is directed towards seniors and having resilience through the crazy year that this has been.

Senior Megan Copeland is involved for the speech because she loves public speaking. Copeland said, "I think sharing messages with people and speaking out is so important. Your voice can take you really far in life." Copeland is looking forward to sharing her message with the rest

of the senior class and hopes that everyone will really find meaning from it and remember, long after graduation. The graduation ceremony will take place on the football field for the first time since the 1980s. Commencement is scheduled to be on Sunday, June 6 at 2 p.m. However, in case of poor weather, the ceremony will be postponed until Monday, June 7 at the same time.

Mr. Kath said, "The goal this year was to make sure the senior

class would be able to be together for graduation and I think we've worked really hard to make that happen. So I think we're definitely hit that goal of having the senior class all together for this ceremony."

At first there was a set limit on the number of guests a student was allowed to bring. Now, because of the recent mask/social distancing updates, there is no limit on the number of guests that are able to attend.

Scholarship night features new format

BY SAM SNITKER
OHS MAGNET WRITER

Scholarship night is a very special event for seniors and their families, as it is a night where students were recognized for all the effort these students have put into furthering their careers. Every year Owatonna High School gives out over \$700,000 in scholarships to well deserving students. With there not being a scholarship event last year due to the pandemic, it was important that this year's event was held in a covid friendly environment, while also effectively honoring students and their accomplishments.

This year's scholarship night event was held in the gymnasium with an open house format. Throughout the night students would say their name, receive their scholarship and then take a picture with the person awarding the scholarship, as well

as their families. This allowed for students to come and go as they please, as well as maintain their social distance and wear a mask if so desired.

In addition to these reasons for the format, OHS Principal Mr. Kory Kath said, "We wanted families to be there and to really connect with their student, as well as the person awarding the scholarship. This event is really important to us, and I believe this format was very successful in making that connection with everyone." This format ended up working out really well, and made for a fun and rewarding event for students and their families. With a large sum of money to be given out to students in scholarships, there was a lot to go around. Scholarship amounts ranged anywhere from \$20 to \$150,000. While all are important, some students went above and beyond to achieve some of the higher

tiered scholarships, which will benefit them enormously in the future.

One of these scholarships includes senior Nolan Burmeister, who was awarded a \$155,838 full ride Army ROTC scholarship to attend Saint John's University. Burmeister said, "I worked really hard to get this scholarship, and it feels really good to finally see all that hard work pay off. I can't wait to see what college as well as the Army has in store for me."

Though everyone didn't get a full ride scholarship like Burmeister, 61 seniors at OHS received scholarship endorsements that contributed to furthering their education.

The senior class at OHS has some really amazing talent. Whether it be academically, creatively, or athletically, the Class of 2021's future is bright, and will definitely see major success down the road.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Nolan Burmeister receives his scholarship check from a representative of the U.S. Army at the recent scholarship ceremony.

Scholarship recipients from Class of 2021 graduates

Hudson Aase-LeRoy and Leona Stockwell-\$500
Shamoo Abdullahi-Owatonna Foundation-\$1,000
Asad Ali-Bruce Larson Memorial-\$1,200
Emma Anderson-Kiwanis Club of Owatonna-\$500 and MN-Dakotas District Kiwanis Educational Foundation-\$750
Ora Barrett-Random Acts of Kindness-\$500
Laurny Bateman-Owatonna Cheerleading Association-\$75
Joseph Bellomy-Kenneth Wilcox-\$600
Jenna Bergeron-Random Acts of Kindness-\$500
Connor Budach-MN Masonic Charities Heritage-\$3,000
Samuel Bugler-Little Theatre of Owatonna Veta Alexander-\$500
Nolan Burmeister-St. John's Advanced Design-\$155,838
Emilia Edel-Owatonna Cheerleading Association-\$225
Elise Egbert-Federated Insurance Business-\$1,000
Mirrah Eichten-Bausch & Lomb Honorary Science-\$10,000/4 years
Parker Erickson-Grandparents for Education-\$500 and Owatonna Foundation-\$1,000
Hailey Fox-HomeTown Credit Union-\$500
Laura Gebur-Owatonna Elks-\$500 and Kiwanis Club of Owatonna-\$500
Jenna Gleason-Federated Employees Credit Union-\$500, Owatonna Lions Club-\$500, Mann Math-\$1,250, Melahn Family-\$1,000/4 years, Red Cross Drive-\$750 and Ted G. Ringhofer-\$1,000
Candace Goodsell-Federated Challenge Big Brother Big Sister-\$2,000
Zander Hamman-Owatonna Cheerleading Association-\$100
Faith Hanson-Owatonna Cheerleading Association-\$200
Brooklyn Houser-Full Circle Counseling & Wellness-\$500 and The Power of One-\$500
Sydney Hunst-Brenda Wilcox-\$600, Gopher Sport/Malcolm Stephens Student Athlete-\$2,500 and Ron Baker Memorial-\$3,500
Gabriel Tratz-Full Circle Counseling and Wellness-\$500
Lane Versteeg-Edward Stepanek-\$10,000/4 years, Mann Math-\$1,250 and Semper Fidelis All-American Academy, Triple A Award-\$1,000/4 years
Abigail Webster-Don Turek Memorial-\$1,000 and From the Heart/Tyler Harlicker Memorial-\$1,000
Angela Zaccaria-Kiwanis Club of Owatonna-\$500
Evan Parker-Rensselaer Medal-\$25,000/4 years
Lauren Phelps-Lee Foundation-\$1,000, Owatonna Lions Club-\$500, MN-Dakotas District Kiwanis Educational Foundation-\$750 and Nancy A. Schrodt Memorial-\$500
Arian Piepho-Owatonna Elks-\$500, Kiwanis Club of Owatonna-\$500, KRFO/KAT Country "Scholar Dollars"-\$500 and Rob Willmott Memorial-\$500
Nicholas Pilcher-Owatonna Elks-\$500, Kiwanis Club of Owatonna-\$500, Lee Foundation-\$1,000 and Mann Math-\$1,250
Alexis Ringhofer-From the Heart/Tyler Harlicker Memorial-\$1,000
Mariah Schrodt-Daughters of the American Revolution Honorable Mention-\$20, Kiwanis Club of Owatonna-\$500 and Random Acts of Kindness-\$500
Caleb Schuler-Becky Hofmann Morris Memorial-\$1,000
Alivia Schuster-Owatonna Foundation-\$1,000
Cheryl Smith-C.P. Mickelson-\$500, Owatonna Elks-\$500, KRFO/KAT Country "Scholar Dollars"-\$500 and Maggie Dizon Honorary-\$500
Grace Smith-Catholic United Financial
Samuel Snitker-Steele-Wasca Cooperative Electric-\$500 and Rich and Judy Strunc Memorial-\$1,000
Abe Stockwell-Gopher Sport/Malcolm Stephens Student Athlete-\$2,500 and Ron Baker Memorial-\$3,500
Gabriel Tratz-Full Circle Counseling and Wellness-\$500
Lane Versteeg-Edward Stepanek-\$10,000/4 years, Mann Math-\$1,250 and Semper Fidelis All-American Academy, Triple A Award-\$1,000/4 years
Abigail Webster-Don Turek Memorial-\$1,000 and From the Heart/Tyler Harlicker Memorial-\$1,000
Angela Zaccaria-Kiwanis Club of Owatonna-\$500
phenom Student Athlete-\$2,500 and Jeff Kath Memorial-\$5,000
Nataly Hurtado Tiza-Owatonna Cheerleading Association-\$125
Kathryn Ihrike-C.P. Mickelson-\$500
Adela Interiano-Hispanic Unidos-\$1,000
Libby Janka-Don Turek Memorial-\$500
Ashton Jensen-Charles and Norma Buxton-\$5,000/4 years, Mann Math-\$1,250 and MN-Dakotas District Kiwanis Educational Foundation-\$750
Tyger Jensen-Federated Challenge Big Brother Big Sister-\$2,500
Courtney Kath-Federated Insurance Business-\$1,000
Bailey Keck-Owatonna FFA-\$1,500 and Steele County Robert Chladek Academic Agribusiness-\$5,000
Rachel Kellar-Owatonna Foundation-\$3,000
Sarah Kingland-P.E.O. Star Chapter 122-\$500
Zachary Kubicek-National Merit Scholar-\$3,000/4 years
Garrett LaPoint-Dave Schroeder Law Enforcement Memorial-\$400
Isabelle Leonard-Andrew Lawrence Memorial-\$1,500
Madison Levy-Owatonna Cheerleading Association-\$175
Zachary Lieb-Andrew Lawrence Memorial-\$1,500, Owatonna Elks-\$500, HomeTown Credit Union-\$1,500 and Rob Willmott Memorial-\$500
Maxwell Liverseed-Federated Challenge Big Brother Big Sister-\$2,000
Elissa Macias-Hispanic Unidos-\$1,000
Lacy Macias-Edward Stepanek-\$10,000/4 years
Jacob Meiners-Class of 1958-\$1,250 and Owatonna Elks-\$500
Abigail Munoz-Federated Employees Credit Union-\$500
Maggie Newhouse-Andrew Lawrence Memorial-\$1,500 and Kiwanis Club of Owatonna-\$500
Hailee Olson-Open Arms Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention-\$500

Owatonna Students of the Week

Elementary School

John Bahe
Fifth Grade
Parents: Chad and Amber Bahe



John has a very fun and positive personality, which is infectious to those around him. It is easy to see that he enjoys learning and working with others, and he loves to be a leader. He is kind, patient, thoughtful, self-motivated, and he constantly strives towards success. He is everything a Lincoln Leader should be!

Jae Herzog
Fifth Grade
Parents: Angela and Paul Herzog



Jae loves learning new things and being challenged. He has a contagious excitement for him we study. Plus, Jae is a kind, personable, and fun kid whom others truly enjoy. Wilson School is proud of Jae and we know he will continue to achieve and inspire!

High School

Sharraf Abdullahi
Sophomore
Parents: Dababo Abdulle and Mohammad Sharraf



Sharraf has two computer graphic classes right now and puts a lot of pride into his work. He is willing to help others around him with different photoshop applications, and to share ideas. Sharraf leads by example and is a pleasure to have in class. Keep up the great work, Sharraf!

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STEELE-DODGE BUSINESS

Keeping a family business legacy

Blooming Prairie couple takes over R&K Electric

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

After being friends with the Kuhn family for decades, Eric Kylo is stepping up to keep a family legacy flourishing — one that has had a strong footprint on the electrical scene across southern Minnesota for a half-century.

Kylo and his wife, Lisa, of rural Blooming Prairie, have purchased R&K Electric in Owatonna from Kerri Kuhn. Kerri had been operating the business since her husband, John, died unexpectedly in 2011.

R&K Electric celebrated its 50th anniversary on June 4. Roger Kuhn and Thomas Rietveld began the business in 1971. Roger took over sole ownership of the company in 1985 before selling it to his son, John, in 2010.

Kylo said he is excited to be taking over the business because of his deep connections with the Kuhn family. "John and I were best friends in high school," said Kylo. "I have a vested interest that it stays R&K Electric."

The two were the top students in their graduating class from Owatonna High School in 1991. When asked who was smarter, Kylo smiled, holding up one finger, and said, "I was."

Kylo was valedictorian, while Kuhn was salutatorian. For the past 11 years, Kylo has been focused on his own company, EK Business Guide, which specializes in helping businesses restructure and develop exit strategies for business owners. He will continue operating the company in addition to running R&K Electric. Kylo also



For a half-century, R&K Electric in Owatonna has been servicing Steele County and the surrounding area. Eric and Lisa Kylo have taken over the business from Kerri Kuhn. Shown with the Kylos are Kerri Kuhn and her three children, Otto, Miles and Harrison and the founders of the company, Bernie and Roger Kuhn. The business began on June 4, 1971.

farms outside of Blooming Prairie.

A year ago, Kerri Kuhn reached out to Kylo for advice in running her company. While talking about her plans, the conversation turned to Kylo purchasing the business.

The Kylos took over R&K Electric on Jan. 1. "It's heavenly God's intervention that it happened," said Bernie Kuhn, who is thrilled about the Kylos taking over. "It's a gift. It was not in the plans. John is looking down at you... it's godly intervention," she said to the Kylos.

Half-century history

As the Kylos take over R&K, Eric Kylo said he believes it's important to recognize the company's 50-year



Eric and Lisa Kylo of rural Blooming Prairie are the new owners of R&K Electric in Owatonna. They take over the business as it celebrates its 50th anniversary this month.

history. "Pat yourself on the shoulder. You've done well," he said to the Kylos during a recent interview with them present. "Roger did a great job. John transitioned it into what this company has been and Kerri kept this a financially sound company," Kylo said.

Roger Kuhn came to Owatonna in 1968 from North Dakota, planning to work for a short time and return again. "I was going to get my license and leave," Kuhn said, adding people wanted him to stay in Owatonna.

He ended up staying and began the company

in 1971 with a partner and two helpers. And it's a decision Roger Kuhn has never regretted. They kept hiring additional electricians every year and grew to about 20 employees by 1989.

In addition to focusing on industrial, agricultural, residential and commercial work, R&K also offers and continues to do service work. "Many companies abandon the service end," Kylo said. "The service work is what keeps our good name out there."

Roger Kuhn said he built R&K's reputation based on hard work and honesty. "Don't come late and just be very fair to people," he said. Running R&K has been "super stressful" for Kerri Kuhn who said she's had everything thrown at her since her husband died.

"She took serious pride in having little to no serious experience and learning the industry," said Kerri's oldest son, Harrison, who currently attends college in South Dakota. "A lot of our identity comes from this place," he said, adding it was never expected of him or his two brothers, Miles and Otto, to take over the business.

Harrison said he is appreciative of Kylo coming along to take over the company. "It's not really leaving the family," Harrison said. He called Kylo a "fantastic businessman."

Bernie Kuhn added: "We needed an Eric. We finally got him."

Kylo, who previously had owned another electric company before selling it in 2012, said he didn't see himself getting back into the business. When asked why he decided to buy R&K, Kylo replied: "The legacy. That's pretty much it. Going back into it wasn't my dream, but the dream part is the legacy. Being able to carry on the family tradition."

Big growth coming

While R&K currently employs 29 workers, Kylo said he plans to grow the company to 50 within the next five years.

R&K won't have much time to wait with growth as the company recently was awarded a \$4.2 million contract to do the electrical work for the new Owatonna High School.

Kylo said the company is not ready today to handle the new high school, but he said they will be by the time the interior work begins in nine months. R&K's growth will be internal as it has "a lot of guys ready to be journeymen," he said, adding the company is positioned with organizational growth to take it to the next level.

While Kylo recognizes the trades industries have been "shamed in recent years," he has developed an internal training program for those interested in the electrical industry. "We have a program that allows them to save money but also make money to become a journeyman electrician," he said. He added journeymen with four years of experience are paid around \$80,000 per year.

R&K focuses on hiring employees based on core values: make things better through self-improvement, appearance and communication, exhibit professionalism, be honest and do the right thing, be a self-starter with a good work ethic and be a team player. "Every employee here shares in those core values," Kylo said. "We don't have employee issues."

With the Kuhn's always being big school supporters and John Kuhn and Kylo being alumni, Kylo said he was determined to get the high school project. "We need the work as it helps our growth model," Kylo said.

Kerri Kuhn is proud of R&K's past support of high school activities. R&K has supported the marching band as well as the Robotics team since its inception in 2012. The company hosted a robot demonstration and fundraiser in 2016.

Besides the new high school, Kylo also expects to be busy with agriculture, especially with the rebound of commodity prices over the past six months. The housing market has also been hot, which will also help the company grow.

Kylo, who will oversee a management team of three other managers, said he is taking over "a very successful business" from the Kuhn's. "I sure hope I don't screw it up," Kylo said, adding it gives him a great sense of pride to own R&K.

BLOOMING PRAIRIE Chamber of Commerce

BUSINESS of the WEEK

SAVINGS ZONE!

BUSINESS of the WEEK

Congratulations to Vandal's Family Market for being recognized as the Chamber of Commerce Business of the Week!

Vandal's Family Market

Vandal's Family Market has been in business in Blooming Prairie and a Chamber Member since 1993. We appreciate Waco Vandal, Brady Holmberg and Brandy Vandal-Holmberg for their continued support of the Chamber and the Blooming Prairie Area Community.

Vandal's is located at **237 Hwy. Ave. S.**, Blooming Prairie and it is celebrating 29 years in business this year. Vandal's takes pride in their customer services: they provide carry-out, free delivery on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and pick-up anytime they are open. They are open every day from 8 a.m.-7 p.m. — give them a call at **507-583-6671**, visit their website <http://vandalsfamilymarket.com/>, or stop in for some groceries!

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Push by realtors to benefit local causes

BY RICK BUSSLER
PUBLISHER

Realtors from the Owatonna area are focused on more than just selling houses this month. They are also teaming up to raise money for a couple of local causes.

The Realtors and their affiliates are hoping to come up with \$10,000 by the end of June by appealing to the public for help. If they accomplish that goal, Southeast Minnesota Realtors will provide another \$10,000.

The money will be donated to Transitional

Housing of Steele County as well as the Movies in the Park offered through Owatonna Parks & Recreation, according to Ryan Gillespie, a member of the donation drive and mortgage banker with Bremer Bank.

"We want to capitalize on the full \$10,000," Gillespie said. "Every little bit will help and know that everything given will be matched."

Gillespie and area realtors hit the streets last week during the first Downtown Thursday in Owatonna. They handed out cards encouraging people to

donate to the drive at www.4giving.com/donation/6D07.

During the first few weeks, the drive has raised about \$3,200. Gillespie said the group is working on a raffle for the next couple of weeks to help push over the \$10,000 mark.

"We are giving a big push to give back to the community knowing there were difficult challenges over the past year with COVID-19," said Gillespie.

The fundraising committee, Gillespie said, brainstormed and came up with two causes that have significant needs within the community. The Movies in the Park did not have a sponsor, while Transitional Housing deals with homeless youth.

"There are families that can't provide the bare essentials," she said. More than 300 people are homeless in Steele County on any given night, including

small children and families, according to Transitional Housing, an interfaith nonprofit organization. Some live in abject poverty and abusive relationships, while others live in their cars or might be fortunate enough to have temporary housing with friends or in shelters.

Besides Gillespie, there are eight other members on the service committee: Michelle Jandt, Janita Paulson, Jen Telchrow, Meghan Malchow, Charlotte McCabe, Jen Fielding, Mark Meier and Jannell Tufte.

Jandt was instrumental in getting together the fundraising campaign. "We were trying to figure out the best way to come together for the community that serves us," said Jandt, who has been a realtor in Owatonna for 21 years. "We are all united in this. We are all in it for our community."



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Area Realtors are teaming up to raise funds for Transitional Housing of Steele County and Owatonna Parks & Recreation. On Thursday, realtors handed out information at Re/Max Venture in downtown Owatonna. Some of them included, from left: Justin Ohnstad, Michelle Jandt, Charlotte McCabe and Ryan Gillespie.

OWATONNA REALTOR DONATION DRIVE

Who: Owatonna area realtors and their affiliates

What: Raise \$10,000

Why: Benefit Transitional Housing of Steele County and Owatonna Parks & Rec

How: Donate at www.4giving.com/donation/6D07

Local hotel manager named GM of the Year

The Baymont by Wyndham Owatonna recently announced that its general manager, Jennifer Martin, has been awarded the annual Baymont Hotels GM of the Year Award for 2020. This award recognizes one general manager from more than 500 who exhibit exceptional leadership and management of their hotel.

In celebration of the achievement, Jack and Diane Spitzack, the hotel's owners, accepted the award from Bay-

mont Hotels and Wyndham Hotels & Resorts leadership.

"Receiving this honor is a testament to our general manager's incredible work in delivering top-notch leadership along with her team's superb hospitality and excellent service day in and day out. This is even more remarkable with all of the challenges the travel industry has faced over the past year," said Jack Spitzack. "We are so proud that despite these challenges, Baymont



Jennifer Martin

Owatonna has won the hearts and loyalty of guests by maintaining a quality hotel. Jennifer's skillful leadership has cultivated a staff that's

passionate about the details of good hospitality. This inspires us to continue striving to set the bar even higher."

To be eligible for the award, the general manager must have demonstrated strong leadership that has gone above and beyond for the hotel.

"What an honor to be nominated and to win the Baymont GM of the Year Award," said Martin. "This past year, complete with a pandemic and full of changes, was not an easy year

for any of us. We were also challenged with a full lobby renovation including a new elevator - which is now complete and beautiful! I know I would not have won this award without great owners and an amazing staff. We did it together."

The Baymont by Wyndham Owatonna is completing an extensive transformation of its public space and back office, including the lobby, fireplace, front desk, breakfast buffet and fitness center. The

renovation includes the addition of an elevator, sit-down bar, market, enlarged kitchen and an outdoor patio with a pergola and fire table.

The Baymont Owatonna is a 93-room hotel offering a variety of guest rooms and suites with complimentary hot breakfast, spacious lobby, large pool/spa, a fitness center, meeting space and a casual Pub 41 with a lounge. Rooms feature expanded cable television, flat-screen televisions and upgraded bedding.

Community Bank announces promotion

Locally owned and operated Community Bank Owatonna and its Board of Directors are pleased to announce the promotion of Steven M. Grams to the position of president/chief executive officer (CEO). Grams will replace Timothy R. Klueder, who recently resigned to accept a president/CEO position elsewhere.

Grams is a native of

Sheboygan, Wis., and is an original founding officer of Community Bank Owatonna. He has served as the bank's executive vice president/senior loan officer and a member of the Board of Directors since 2003. Prior to that he worked for the former Owatonna State Bank, which was acquired in 2002.

Grams graduated from The University of Wisconsin-Madison before earning a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. He also attended the prestigious Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He and his wife, Martha, have two daughters and the family resides in Owatonna.

"Steve was the logical choice for this opportunity due to his loyalty and longevity at Community Bank Owatonna," said David "Ole" Olson, Chairman of the Board of Directors. "No one else knows the customers, employees, shareholders, and community better than he does. Steve has earned this opportunity due to the

outstanding results he has produced over many years. Additionally, this promotion will allow the bank to move forward with a seamless transition for our customers and staff."

"I am honored to have been part of the Community Bank Owatonna team for the past 18 years, and appreciate the confidence placed in me by the Board of



Steven Grams

Directors," said Grams. "I look forward to continuing to serve the customers, staff, directors, and shareholders in the years to come."

New Construction Center



Ambassadors from the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism recently joined city and county officials for the groundbreaking at Morton Buildings' new construction center. Located off I-35 at 3300 Bridge Street West in Owatonna, the center will house construction crews and supporting sales and project administration to service Morton's full line of building projects, including farm, residential, equestrian, and commercial projects. Construction is projected to be completed by the end of the year.

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Remembering and honoring heroes

More than 200 people came together to remember and honor fallen heroes on Memorial Day in Owatonna. Top: Danniel Grabau, almost 2, folds his hands as his mother, Amy, waves a flag during the ceremony at the Four Seasons Centre. Middle left: Dave Thul reads off the roll call of veterans who have died over the past year. Middle right: Jordan Vore fires a rifle during the 21-gun salute following the roll call of deceased. Bottom left: Dan Brewster of the Steele County Honor Guard performs Taps after the 21-gun salute. Bottom middle: The Owatonna High School Concert Band performed several patriotic songs with percussionist Brenden Dreier playing the chimes. Bottom right: Scott Weckman is concentrating on playing the tuba.



STAFF PHOTOS BY RICK BUSSLER



BP honors vets with quilts of valor



The 10 quilt of valor recipients who could attend last Monday's Memorial Day service at the Servicemen's Club came together for a group photo at the end of the ceremony. In the front row from left to right are: Jim Kittelson, Jaclyn Schlichter, Anthony Nelson, Luke Nelson and Ron Stoen. The back from left to right consists of: Mike Ryan, Bob Braaten, Mike Woods, Dustin Doocy and Bryce Schlichter. Not pictured are Shelby and Blake Bruton; Woods accepted quilts on their behalf.

STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING



Dustin Doocy and his wife Mandy Doocy proudly hold up the quilt that Dustin received for his military service.



A large American flag adorns the quilt of valor bestowed upon Mike Woods. On his right are the two quilts that he accepted for Shelby and Blake Bruton.

STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

Patriotic honors



The Blooming Prairie American Legion and VFW and their Auxiliaries sponsored their annual Flag Presentation and Coloring contest in May at BP Elementary School. Pictured are, from left: Sue Thorson, Joe Wacek, Marilyn Witzel, Karl Luiken, Karen Thoen, Gary Thorson, Gerry Berg and Joyce Johns, representing the organizations. The third grade coloring contest winners are in the front row. They are standing in the front row. They are, from left: Jena Lee (second place), Daniel Coleman (third) and Kazayya Miller (first). The winners received a certificate and money gifts from the two auxiliaries. All third graders received Patriotic presidential rulers, U.S. flags and bookmarks.



The fourth grade winner of the 2020 flag presentation and coloring contest from last November are, from left: Andrew Schwarz (first), Emmerson Nelson (second) and Hannah Garcia (third). They are shown with Wacek, Luiken and Thorson. The winners received certificates and money gifts late last year. Marilyn Witzel, youth chairman with the VFW Auxiliary, was the moderator for each session.

Blooming Prairie brothers reflect on their service

▲ **BROTHERS** from A1
Meanwhile, Tony Nelson has spent the last 16 years in the Army. After completing two combat tours in Afghanistan, he was a part of a Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group in the Philippines. His third and current assignment is working at the Pentagon in Washington. He will be promoted to Lieutenant Colonel this summer. "It's an extremely different, but rewarding lifestyle, moving around every three or four years. Being able to see the world has been

one of the primary benefits while still serving the country. Being able to see how different cultures live, how the various challenges that they have in developing countries compared to what we have here. It makes you appreciate a lot [what we have] here back in the United States," he said. Tony Nelson also said the continuing educational opportunities available to active military members and veterans are another reason why he and his wife have decided to stay active in the

military. Luke Nelson is also still active in the military, but five years ago, he decided to scale back; he now serves his country via reserve duty. "I decided to stay in because I feel like if I wasn't putting on the uniform, every so often, there'd be a piece of me that would be missing," he said, adding, "I really wanted to stay in the reserves and serve in a part-time role." Even in a part-time role, he said serving his country is extremely rewarding and honorable.

Bailey named top correctional officer

▲ **BAILEY** from A1
size the facility is, he said he is focused on providing a "safe and humane environment" for the inmates who end up in jail.

What Bailey likes about Steele County is how the center offers direct supervision within some of the pods. "It allows me to directly communicate with inmates," he said. "When you go in there with them, there is less of a chance of something happening. It allows you to hear what's going on."

Over the years, Bailey has found it's important to show inmates that "you are a person, too." He said he strives to treat everyone the same and doesn't favor anyone over another. "It all goes back to respect. We're all people," said Bailey, adding he also wants inmates to realize he has a job to do.

It's not uncommon for Bailey to have conversations with inmates to build rapport with them. "I want to let them know they can talk to me," he said. He added some have opened up to let him know what they are dealing with in their lives.

For Bailey, being a corrections officer is more than just guarding inmates and keeping them locked up. He offers interpersonal skills as a way to connect with inmates personally.

"He takes great care in producing a quality product and interacting with the inmates."

Anthony Buttera
Jail Administrator

"You're a counselor, psychologist, teacher, coach and mentor," he said. "You've got to be everything in one. I want to have a positive influence on them."

He also offers lots of chit-chat as a way to build respect and trust with the inmates. Bailey said he loves sports, so he often finds himself talking about specific basketball or baseball teams and sharing statistics.

"We want them when they go back out into society to be better prepared for what they are walking into," he said.

But Bailey also said he has to remember not to let his guard down and become complacent with the inmates for everyone's safety.

Bailey initially considered going into law enforcement, but after what's happened around the country in recent years, he said he is content with his decision to go into corrections.

Bailey grew up in Hill City, Minn. and received an associate's degree at Grand Rapids. While in college, he worked at a nursing home, which he says

helped develop his interpersonal skills with people of different needs.

As focused as Bailey is on his job, he said he is also well aware of what needs to happen away from work. While there is a high burn-out rate for corrections officers, he finds various hobbies to focus on. He enjoys snowmobiling, camping, traveling and garage sales. He and his wife also have two young children. They live near Dennison.

"Having hobbies outside of work helps you stay in this job longer," Bailey said. "You don't want to think of work outside of work."

Just days after being given the corrections award, Bailey also was notified he had been selected as a training officer, where he will teach new corrections officers how to do the job.

Steele County has been recognizing top corrections officers since 2018. Bailey will be given the opportunity to attend the Minnesota Sheriff's Association annual convention in September.

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

"Home of the Shining Knights" 8TH GRADE GRADUATES

COLE KRUSCHKE

"Grateful my parents chose SMS because I have had a great education with the older kids and the younger ones."

"My favorite tradition at SMS is Masam Vu. (Smiles)"

"I will miss seeing the great teachers."

"I'm most excited for meeting new people at the high school!"

CHLOE WALERIUS

"Grateful my parents chose SMS because of how tight the family is here and how everyone is welcoming."

"Spirit Day is my favorite tradition!"

"I'll miss the teachers and smaller classes."

"I'm most excited to make new friends and meet new people next year."

ELIJAH GROSLAND

"Grateful my parents chose SMS because it helped me develop my faith. They also provide an amazing experience; it is like one big family."

"Dingle Bluff is my favorite memory I built many new relationships there!"

"I will miss the close relationship with my friends."

"I'm most excited for high school sports."

CONNOR WIESE

"Grateful my parents chose SMS because it gave me a way to show my faith without being judged. I also loved the smaller class sizes."

"My favorite tradition at SMS is the game night where we compete for the most poker chips and auction off food and candy."

"I will miss all my teachers and the times we had fun."

"I'm most excited to see my friends in school and have some classes with them at the high school."

GIANA BUTTERA

"Grateful my parents chose SMS because my classmates that I have had since I was 5 are mostly here. This family 8th grade has made great bonds and friendships."

"My favorite in the last day of school traditions like the water park and camps that you go to in 7th and 8th grade."

"I'll miss the teachers because they have known us since we were little and now we won't have that same bond."

"I'm most excited to make new friends and see friends from SMS."

EMMA HERZOG

"Grateful my parents chose SMS because I have had a great time at St. Mary's and I get to learn about my faith."

"My favorite memory is 8th grade math class!"

"I will miss knowing everybody in all of my classes."

"I'm most excited for the new classes and environment at the high school."

HANNAH LEMPIAINEN

"Grateful my parents chose SMS because this school has shown me how to embrace my love for God while learning."

"My favorite tradition at SMS is Spirit Day!"

"I will miss seeing all of the familiar faces in the hallway."

"I'm most excited for all of the interesting classes at the high school!"

HANNAH GRAMS

"Grateful my parents chose SMS because I got to grow in my faith and meet all of these amazing people."

"My favorite memory at SMS is Spirit Day!"

"I will miss seeing all of the teachers and students that have been with us for most of our time at school."

"I'm most excited to meet new people at the high school."

NOTE: There are 34 graduates of the 8th grade class. We will be featuring each of them over the next several weeks.

This feature sponsored by a proud St. Mary's alumnus.

Historic rural schools near Ellendale featured on signs

◀ **HISTORIC** from A1 located and photographs, some showing the actual school buildings and others featuring students.

The maps will be available at a booth featuring EAHS on June 26 during Ellendale Days. There will be a suggested donation of \$5 to help defray the costs of the project.

Kaplan said the signs are all visible from the road between the right of way of the landowner's property and roadway. All the signs are mounted on private property.

"The landowners by these school districts have been very cooperative to put up the signs," said Kaplan, adding they all agreed to have them put up in their yards.

While COVID-19 created challenges for Mrotz and Kaplan, they have been researching the country schools off and on for the past three

years. Mrotz said she wondered more than once why they even started this project.

"I thought it will never get done," she said.

The path to getting the signs for the school project wasn't exactly smooth. While serving on the Steele County Historical Society board, Kaplan got the idea to put a sign at every school in the county. He went ahead to get permission from the county to do the signs, but the former history director felt it would be too much work to take on the project.

"I gave up on the project," Kaplan said. But things didn't stop there.

Soon afterward, Kaplan came across many photographs of rural schools that Ed Jensen of Ellendale area schools had been collecting since the 1990s. "He thought we should mark all the schools where they were located," Kaplan



STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSLER

Station 35, known as Schmanski, once occupied what is known today as the Lemond Town Hall located northwest of Ellendale. The school consolidated in 1954, bringing an end to the country school. Some local historians are unveiling a tour of historic rural schools surrounding Ellendale.

said. "Ed was a big help with the pictures."

The project was soon back on the table—at least in a smaller way. Rather than doing the entire county, EAHS decided to focus on the Ellendale area schools.

"Admittedly, we didn't know what we were doing," said Mrotz.

They found photographs of every school

except for one. Some of the information is sketchy. Mrotz said they weren't able to determine the exact dates of when some of the schools were established. But they did determine all the country schools were gone by 1954 when the state consolidated most schools.

Mrotz said she reached out to the Ellendale School, where information from old school board minutes was located in the attic.

"Hopefully, we are as accurate as we could be,"

Mrotz said, adding "I copied down information in my own sketchy way."

Part of the challenge Mrotz and Kaplan ran into is that many people with knowledge of the country schools are no longer living. "We should have done this 10 years ago," Kaplan said, adding they have run out of sources for information.

For Kaplan, 84, this project is personal. He attended a single-room rural school until the eighth grade. He recalls having eight students

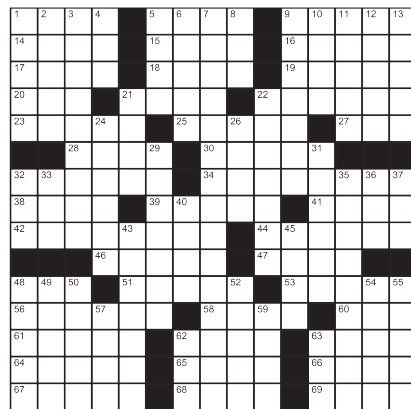
in the entire school covering five grades. "You learned a lot," he said. "The older kids helped the younger ones."

He laughs now about how they got through the school day. The rural schools, Kaplan said, had two outhouses, one for boys and the other for girls. "When recess came, we went to the outhouse even if it was cold weather," he said. "If you told kids to do that today, they wouldn't do it. We had no choice."

Mrotz said doing history projects like this brings the community together and helps people remember the past. "If we don't remember the past, we won't have a cohesive reason to stick together," she said. "There has to be a collective memory to keep communities from falling apart."

Added Kaplan: "There is no greater joy than to help someone find their ancestors or a lost part of history. It makes me happy. To be a depository for history that families can use is priceless."

CROSSWORD PUZZLE OF THE WEEK



ACROSS

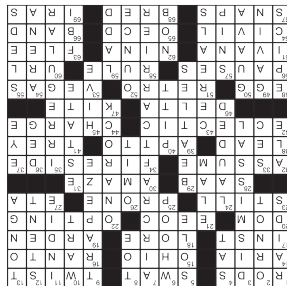
- 1 Pistols
- 5 Police heavy brigade
- 9 Unexpected turn of events
- 14 Long song for one in an opera
- 15 Cairo/Pittsburgh river
- 16 Totaled
- 17 Of the present month (Abb.)
- 18 Traditional knowledge
- 19 Cosmetics mogul Elizabeth
- 20 Monk's title
- 21 Job-discrimination watchdog (Abb.)
- 22 Plumbing
- 23 Moonshine maker
- 25 Lieble
- 27 Journey's end forecast
- 28 Swedish aircraft maker
- 30 Astonish
- 32 Take for granted
- 34 Health
- 38 Radiation absorber
- 39 "I shall not find myself so --- die" (Antony, in "Julius Caesar")
- 41 One up on a device
- 42 Catholic
- 44 Accuse
- 46 Wide river mouth

- 47 Flying toy
- 48 Batter essential
- 51 Fashion reminiscent of the past
- 52 What happens in --- stays in ---
- 56 Short stops
- 58 Decree
- 60 Web site ID
- 61 The first Mrs. Trump
- 62 Singer --- Simone
- 63 Split
- 64 Well mannered
- 65 International trade org.
- 66 Stripe
- 67 Breaks
- 68 Raised
- 69 E.g. Levin, Gershwin and others

- 12 Surgically implanted tube
- 13 A k a the Friendly Islands
- 21 Gunslinger actor Jack ---
- 22 Duck ---, medieval child's game
- 24 Exalted
- 26 Leave out
- 29 Fab Four
- 31 Personal assets
- 32 Top-fermented beer
- 33 Moderately dry
- 35 Unorthodox
- 36 Angular meas.
- 37 Pepper
- 40 British Prime Minister when the Constitution was signed
- 43 Food grasses
- 45 Honey factory
- 48 Sages
- 49 Singer-songwriter --- DeGraw
- 50 Yellow tropical fruit with pink pulp
- 52 Token amount
- 54 Center of an amphitheater
- 55 Snow vehicles
- 57 Saucy girl
- 59 "Shine" star Alan ---
- 62 Tori
- 63 G-men

DOWN

- 1 Short attacks
- 2 Ripley's slogan finishers
- 3 Firing
- 4 Poyed
- 5 Only
- 6 Cry of exultation
- 7 Battle group main feature
- 8 The very end of a golf club
- 9 Swing in a circus
- 10 Skin blemish
- 11 Self-published author



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BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Mark Lennox, senior project manager of development for the Dodge County Wind Project, recently told the Steele County Board that once the Dodge County Wind Project is complete, as many as 80 wind turbines producing up to about 260 megawatts will dot the border of Dodge and Steele counties.

The project, being developed by NextEra Energy, has been in development since 2014 and is expected to be commercially operational in 2023," Lennox said. "We would expect a construction timeline of maybe six to eight months, so if all goes according to that plan, we would be done with construction between October and December of 2023."

PUBLIC RECORD

STEELE COUNTY BIRTHS

July 2020
Hunter Silas Heim, Parents: Kelsey and Aaron, July 1.
Atticus Rae Kennedy, Parents: Roxana and Jesse, July 5.
Beau Raymond Banks, Engstrom, Parent: Katie Felt, July 4.
Wyatt Emre Eppers, Parents: Vicki and Grant, July 7.
Novalee Vivian Paustian, Parent: Amber Schultz, July 8.
Emma Marie Reiter, Parents: Hannah and Jeffrey, July 8.
Colton David Smith, Parents: Rachel and Michael, July 8.
Leopold Alexander Burke, Parents: Heather and Michael, July 10.
Leo Roger Hoebing, Parents: Laura and Benjamin, July 13.
Jack Allen Covert, Parents: Kathryn and Joel, July 13.
Cecelia Rae Wolfe, Parents: Jacklyn and Joel, July 14.
Evelyn Jo Wolfe, Parents: Jacklyn and Joel, July 15.
Adrienne Jane Jrele, Parents: Caitlin and Jacob, July 15.
Raelynn James Bock, Parents: Kaysie and Nathaniel, July 15.
Eve Ann Terprata, Parents: Caitlin and Derek, July 16.
Byron Michael-William Schuna, Parents: Madison Seedorf and Albert Schuna, July 17.
Nolan Harris Whalen, Parents: Emelia and Caleb, July 19.
Weston Michael Spitzack, Parents: Michelle Nelson and Michael Spitzack, July 22.
Savannah Eileen Pederson, Parents: Katie and Christopher, July 22.
Marcella Lashelle Fox, Parents: Shania Garza and Henry Fox, July 23.
Garrett Alexander Ballstadt, Parents: Holly and Nicholas, July 24.
Gavin Ray Ballstadt, Parents: Holly and Nicholas, July 24.
Avi Leslie Butch Hansen, Parents: Kelli Wallace and Dugan Hansen, July 26.
Caiden Lee Jensen, Parents: Breanna and Brandon, July 28.
Ophelia Marie Lynch, Parents: Ashley and Matthew, July 28.
Camila Sophia Torres,

Parents: Emily and Javier, July 29.
Daxton William Bishop, Parents: Kelsey and Andrew, July 31.

STEELE COUNTY DEATHS

July 2020
Heldi Diana Marie Schmidt, 77, Owatonna, July 1.
Karen J. Fate, 85, Owatonna, July 2.
Peter Gordon Poole, 73, Owatonna, July 4.
Lucille Sophia Peterson, 98, Blooming Prairie, July 5.
Pauline Cora Thornton, 67, Owatonna, July 6.
William Harold Smith, 68, Medford, July 6.
Kelli Jo Nankvill, 58, Owatonna, July 6.
Rosemary Ellen Hollister, 78, Owatonna, July 8.
Carl L. Hanson, 74, Owatonna, July 8.
Larry James Kellum, 60, Bixby, July 9.
Kenneth Willard Carroll, 89, Owatonna, July 9.
Jarrod Bernard Paul, 66, Blooming Prairie, July 10.
Michael Henry Wesely, 64, Owatonna, July 10.
Mohamed Awale Mohamed, 32, Owatonna, July 12.
Barbara Louise Grunwald, 78, Ellendale, July 14.
James Edwin Supalia, 82, Owatonna, July 18.
Christopher Mark Braaten, 34, Owatonna, July 18.
Swarthill E. Anderson, 107, Owatonna, July 21.
David Allen Noble, 81, Blooming Prairie, July 21.
Jean Marie Good, 54, Owatonna, July 23.
Jerry James Karasus, 77, Owatonna, July 23.
Daniel Wayne Severson, 35, Owatonna, July 25.
Ok Sun Nelson, 73, Ellendale, July 24.
Gwendolyn Rae Anderson, 79, Owatonna, July 25.
Ronald Dale Lester, 75, Owatonna, July 26.
Luanne Rita Louks, 84, Owatonna, July 30.
Idella Leroy Hartle, 95, Medford, July 30.
Chuck Thomas Considine, 49, New Richmond, July 30.
Dale W. Hannover, 71, Owatonna, July 31.

STEELE COUNTY MARRIAGES

July 2020
Darius Enrico Murphy Jr. and Kassandra Kristine Beck, July 4.
Christin Ann Hartman and Dean Richard Hinchcliff, July 7.
Summer Kristine Gustafson and Michael Richard Ratcliff, July 8.
Douglas Charles Fong and Kelly Ann Mason, July 10.
James Bash Williams and Jessica Marie Williams, July 10.
Tyler Ward Bergene and Holly Marie Goergen, July 11.
Grace Elizabeth Valen and Wyatt Guy Gattro, July 11.
Courtney Marie Zabel and Jesse Lee Masso, July 11.
Jordyn Olivia Stadler and Gregory Charles Larson, July 14.
Colby James Reich and Destiny Renee Reich, July 18.
Johnathan Joseph Hoehle and Karina Elizabeth Ramirez, July 18.
Michele Elise Lowe and Anthony Edward Schneider, July 18.
Dennis Donald Ferch and Nancy Ruth Jankie, July 21.
Elizabeth Kathleen Evenson and Charles Benjamin Pence, July 25.
Randal Warner Kubal and Marites Prital Reporen, July 25.
Stephanie Marie Butterfield and Walker Allen Darrow, July 25.
Joseph Scott Miller and Madison Jean Dahl, July 26.
Heldi Jo Dirse and Stephen Arthur Palmer, July 27.
Tabitha Kay Benton and Derek Todd Dimmel, July 31.

STEELE COUNTY DIVORCES

July 2020
Melissa Hagen and Jason Richard Hagen, July 7.
Hailey Amber Skiba and Tyler Mark Fossen, July 20.
Jonathan Ross Kohn and Cassandra Kohn, July 23.
Michelle C. Bull and Jeffrey R. Bull, July 27.
Stacie Ann Johnson and Jon Martin Johnson, July 27.
Vanessa Leigh Sorvaag and Christopher Joseph Sorvaag, July 30.

OBITUARIES

Obituaries Sponsor:
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Luella Hatteberg, 95, Blooming Prairie



Luella Hatteberg

Luella Hatteberg, age 95 of Blooming Prairie, passed away Monday, May 31, 2021, at Prairie Manor Care Center in Blooming Prairie. She was born Aug. 14, 1925, in Owatonna to Irvin, Sr. and Myrtle (Ditlevson) Jensen. She grew up on a farm near Hope. A true farm girl she helped milk the cows and did the field work. Luella attended grade school at District 76 Country School, and then attended school in Ellendale. On June 21, 1945, she married William "Bud" Kahne and together had two children, Carole and David. They later

divorced. In March of 1977, she married Kenneth Hatteberg and became stepmom to his eight children. Luella worked as a bank teller, first at the Bank of Hope, and then at Farmers & Merchants Bank of Blooming Prairie. She retired in 1990.

Luella enjoyed bowling league, traveling by tour bus with Kenny and her morning and afternoon "coffee ladies." But most of all she loved spending time with her family and her little dog Buffy. She always tried to attend all her grandchildren's events. She was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church of Waltham, and the American Legion.

Survivors include her daughter, Carole (Wayne) Hertle; son, David (Nancy) Kahne; grandchildren, Josh (Teresa) Hertle, Zach (Kelly) Hertle, and Emily Kahne; great grandchildren, Riley, Allie, and Oliver; eight stepchildren, Deane, Merlyn, Denise, Bruce (Maureen),

Jeanette (Marty), Kurt (Sue), Barry, and Rebecca (Jeff); seven step-grandchildren and 14 step-great-grandchildren; sister-in-law, Kathy Jensen; nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by both of her husbands; parents; brother, Irvin Jensen, Jr.; and sister, Meryl Nuzlock.

Funeral services were held Thursday, June 3, 2021, at Worlein Blooming Prairie Funeral Home in Blooming Prairie. Interment was in First Lutheran Cemetery, Blooming Prairie.

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

Worlein
 FUNERAL HOMES
 BLOOMING PRAIRIE
 AUSTIN

Rosalie Underwood, 78, Blooming Prairie



Rosalie Underwood

Rosalie A. Underwood, age 78 of Blooming Prairie, peacefully passed away surrounded by her loving family on Wednesday, June 2, 2021, at her home. Rosalie Ann was born Sept. 29, 1942, in Winnebago, Minn., the daughter of Leo and Katherine (Warmka) Schmek. She was baptized at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church in Easton, Minn. Rosalie received First Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Waseca. She graduated in 1960 from Sacred Heart High School in Waseca. Following high school, she attended dental assistant training in Minneapolis.

On Oct. 26, 1963, she was united in marriage to Dale Underwood at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Waseca. The couple was blessed with nearly 58 years of marriage and Dale lived his vows to the fullest, becoming Rosalie's devoted caregiver. Rosalie enjoyed her life as a homemaker raising her children and took great pride in all they did. Rosalie was an active and faithful member of St. Columbanus Catholic Church.

She played tennis, loved dancing, and made sure to do a cartwheel every year. Rosalie was the creative mastermind behind neighborhood and family get-togethers and activities. She cherished her annual sister reunions in Oregon, Vermont, and Minnesota. She also loved tending to her flowers, baking for others (especially her famous cream puffs), and attending plays with her grandchildren. Rosalie was a memory maker! And, oh, did she love to drive and find adventure no matter what the weather—from coast to coast, going to grandchildren's events, shopping, and supporting her children's whims.

Rosalie possessed a very caring and giving heart. She always accepted people no matter what and made room in her heart and her home for everyone. She saw everyone through eyes of grace and love.

Rosalie was uplifted by all the many acts of caring and kindness shown to her. She will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Survivors include her husband, Dale Underwood; son, Nathan Underwood; daughters, Rebecca Brudwick, Juliet (Tom) Wanous, and Rachel (Stacy) Aldrich; grandchildren, Lynsee Wanous, Kristina (Collin) McDonald, Thomas Wanous, Macey (Conor) Wanderscheid, Kellen Brudwick, Erin Brudwick, and Casper Aldrich; great grandchildren, Solveig

Mattson, Trygve Mattson, Cash Wanderscheid, and Christian Weedman; sister, Carol (Joseph) May of Eugene, Ore.; sisters-in-law, Geraldine Valth and Charlotte Underwood; sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Audrey (Lee) Bryngelson; foster daughter, Tamara Gehling; many nieces, nephews, godchildren, cousins and so many friends who were family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Leo and Katherine Schmek; sister, Charlotte Delyea; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Gerald and Borghild Underwood; and brothers-in-law, Howard Underwood, Donald Vaith, John Delyea, and Clyde Gresthouse.

A memorial mass was held at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, June 8, 2021, at St. Columbanus Catholic Church in Blooming Prairie. The family wishes everyone attending please wear a mask. Interment will be in St. Columbanus Cemetery, rural Blooming Prairie.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred to Sharing & Caring Hands, Minneapolis, or Brighter Tomorrows, Rochester. Services are prearranged and performed by Worlein Funeral Home in Blooming Prairie. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

Worlein
 FUNERAL HOMES
 BLOOMING PRAIRIE
 AUSTIN

Alfred Procpio Jr., 75, Ham Lake



Alfred Procpio Jr.

Alfred Procpio Jr., age 75, of Ham Lake, Minn., passed away May 28, 2021 at the Owatonna Hospital, from complications of agent orange.

Friends greeted the family on Monday, May 31, 2021 at the Brick Meger Funeral Home followed by a funeral

service presided by Deacon Scot Berkley. Interment took place at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery, Minneapolis the following day.

Al was born to parents Alfred Sr. and Mary Mirarchi July 28, 1945 in Boston. He graduated from Charlestown High School in 1963. After graduation he enlisted in the United States Navy serving on the U.S.S. Intrepid during Vietnam War. Al was honorably discharged after four years of service.

On May 21, 1965, Al married Joan Zeebe at U.S. Naval Chapel in Brooklyn, N.Y. For 31 years he worked at the Milwaukee Road, Soo, Canadian Pacific lines as a railroad supervisor.

Al was an avid fisherman, he was a member of the VFW, and the Silver Rails Association.

Al is survived by his wife of 56 years, Joan; one son, Joe (Jess) Procpio, Owatonna, grandchildren, James on Bryant, Patty Jo Procpio, Rosie Procpio, Samantha Bryant; son-in-law, Rob Bryant; son-in-law, Rob Bryant, St. Cloud, sister-in-law, Mary Ann Gagliano, Cudahy, Wis.

Al was preceded in death by his daughter, Gina Bryant, and his parents, sisters, Marie Green and Janice Herron.

BRICK-MEGER & MEDFORD
 FUNERAL HOME

Lana Vincent, 80, Minneapolis



Lana Vincent

We regretfully announce the passing of Lana Diane (Grunwald) Vincent, 80, of Minneapolis on May 30, 2021.

Our mother, Lana, was one of the strongest and kindest women to ever walk this earth and our family was blessed to have her as the head of the family.

Lana graduated from New Richmond High.

She met Henry Grunwald and together they went on to have four rambunctious boys whom she loved immensely. Lana was a wonderful and loving mother who gave her all to her family. We will never be able to fill the space left behind by her.

Lana was predeceased by her husband Henry Grunwald whom she shared 26 years of marriage; her second husband Walter Vincent whom she shared 19 years of marriage; her oldest son Terry L. Grunwald; her father C. Duane Underwood; her mother Sarah (Haugen) Underwood and many more cherished family

and friends. Lana is survived by her sons Troy L. Grunwald (Bobbie), Travis L. Grunwald (Shelli); Tracy L. Grunwald; brother Lynn Underwood; 11 grandchildren; 18 (and growing) great grandchildren; and many more special family/friends.

Friends greeted the family on Thursday, June 3, 2021 at the Brick Meger Funeral Home in Owatonna.

Memorial service was held on Friday, June 4, 2021 at Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church in Robbinsdale.

BRICK-MEGER & MEDFORD
 FUNERAL HOME

COLLEGE NEWS

ST. SCHOLASTICA

The College of St. Scholastica is proud to announce that Anaka Degner and Robin Starr of Owatonna, made the college's Spring 2021 Dean's List. Dean's List members have achieved a 3.75 grade point average or above on a 4.0 scale. The College of St. Scholastica would like to commend these students for their honorable academic achievements.

St. Scholastica is a 109-year-old private, independent college founded in the Catholic Benedictine tradition. It is nationally recognized for quality and value.

UNIVERSITY OF SIOUX FALLS

Five area students have been named to The University of Sioux Falls' Spring 2021 Dean's List. Earning the honors were Ali Roushar, Danielle Burtis and Madison Roushar of Owatonna and Kiara James Thomas of Medford.

Founded over 137 years ago, the University of Sioux Falls is a transformative Christian liberal arts university serving approximately 1,500 students through traditional undergraduate programs as well as graduate, evening

and online degree programs.

NORTH DAKOTA STATE

Three Owatonna students were among the 3,529 North Dakota State University students to be placed on the spring 2021 dean's list.

Earning the honors were: Patricia C. Biegert, Dawson D. Ringhofer and Tatam Walkingstick. All three are majoring in Exercise Science.

A student must earn a 3.50 grade point average or higher and be enrolled in at least 12 class credits to qualify for the spring list.

Join MnDOT planners for transportation talk

Residents of Southeast Minnesota are invited to join Minnesota Department of Transportation planners online on June 10 to test their knowledge of the state transportation system and share their vision for its future.

Two "Let's Talk Transportation" virtual events will be held Thursday, June 10: one from noon to 1 p.m., and a second from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Topics will include aging infrastructure, climate change, economy and employment, equity, safety and transportation options.

In addition to a trivia competition, these events will feature colorful comics that will encourage people to tell their own stories about how transportation affects their lives. Sign up at: <https://minnesotago.org/stories/#trivia-dates>. The gatherings are part of MnDOT's public outreach for the Statewide Multimodal

Transportation Plan. Public input from these meetings and others being held throughout Minnesota will

help MnDOT better understand the state's transportation needs. Visit minnesotago.org to learn more.

THANK YOU!!

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit #52 and VFW Post 878 Auxiliary Blooming Prairie sincerely thank all that generously donated during their Poppy Day campaign.

Special thanks to all the volunteers who distributed the poppies at the various businesses in Blooming Prairie, The Steele County Times, Emily at the Chamber of Commerce and KRFO for their publicity. The proceeds from the campaign are invested in local programs for the benefit of veterans and their families.

Special thanks to Howard Lestrud for his promotion of Poppy Day. Doris Rasmussen, ALA Poppy Chair And Doreen Blome, VFW Auxiliary Poppy Chair

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BIRTHDAYS

June 9 Clarence Boyd Cheryl Coughlin Bob Nahlovsky Karl Ann Lueh Julie Peterson Becky Braaten Dave Hoffman Allen Vandal Laura Dale	June 12 Suzie Pechacek Jacob Vogt Robert Salinas Addison Doocy Tiffany Thompson	June 13 Jordan Paulson Shelley Prihoda Julie Strand Tim Andrews Tiffany Thompson
June 10 Wyatt Hemann Billy Lindquist Christian Gardner Thomas Rogers David Trihus Morgan Snider	June 14 Buddy Thompson Katie Ingvalson Aden Doocy Alex Hemann	June 15 Tommy Meyer Hailey Hensrud Karen Fougere

ANNIVERSARY

June 9
Heidi & Brett Zimmerman

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GARDENING TIP OF THE WEEK



Mid-June Gardening Tips:

- Avoid creating tree volcanoes when adding fresh mulch.
- Continuing to add mulch on top of mulch each year, higher and higher up the tree, invites fungus and decreased oxygen to the roots, thus harming and weakening the tree.
- Continue harvesting asparagus throughout the month of June.
- Continue planting annual flowers and veggies in June, with the warmer weather the transplants adjust quickly
- June is a good time to plant potted roses.

Happy Gardening!

Julie Wanous, Steele County Master Gardener

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Building Healthy Smiles

Strawberries with a twist



STAFF PHOTO BY HOWARD LESTRID

While the strawberries may be the same, the format in which they are served has taken a different look this year. The festival was held at Red Oak Lutheran on Tuesday with drive-thru service at different times during the day. Prior to the event, it takes a team effort to successfully hold a strawberry festival. Just ask the women volunteers at Red Oak. Helping prepare the strawberries are: Judy Wambeam, Dawn Peterson, Ardell Swenson, Nancy Wesely, Joyce Peterson, Louise Peterson, Doris Draayer, Suzanne Hamersma, Marilyn Helleck, Dorothy Kittelson and Karen Beechie.

Marketplace re-opens its doors

BY LOLA SHAFFER
TIMES INTERN

Community Pathways Marketplace recently re-opened its doors to members for in-store shopping after closing because of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Remaining an available resource during the pandemic was Community Pathways' primary concern, said Co-Executive Director Nancy Ness. During that time, the Marketplace continued to serve local families through curbside delivery and pickup, according to Ness.

However, the experience did not feel the same, said Ness, adding that she missed the conversations with members inside the Marketplace. Now, Ness said that she is excited to reconnect with the families with less distance between them.

Ness and Co-Executive Director Maureen Schlobohm said members should also expect to see some changes from the last time they came to the Marketplace. For one, families are no longer limited to shopping once a month. They now can shop every week, said Ness, adding that this allows greater access to fresher fruits and vegetables throughout the month.



PHOTO BY LOLA SHAFFER

Co-Executive Directors Nancy Ness, left, and Maureen Schlobohm discuss changes at the Community Pathways' Marketplace.

In addition, Schlobohm said that Community Pathways redesigned the Marketplace to create an experience much more similar to shopping in any supermarket. She said that, now, members walk down the aisles unaccompanied by volunteers and choose the groceries they want for the week.

Ness said that Community Pathways Marketplace strives to "alleviate the families' concerns about where

their next meal will come from." People have many other things to worry about, namely their health, and "I want them to be able to focus on that," she said. Furthermore, Ness said that the Marketplace's mission is not only about food but also about creating a healthier and stronger community.

The Community Pathways Marketplace, formerly known as the Steele County Food Shelf, has served the people of this commu-

nity for more than 50 years, said Schlobohm.

According to both Ness and Schlobohm, Community Pathways is always in need of volunteers. Schlobohm said anyone interested in learning about volunteer opportunities can check out the Community Pathways website or give them a call.

Community Pathways accepts food during all business hours and in-season clothes on Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon.

BOOK NOOK



NANCY
VAILLANCOURT

We are happy to announce that the Blooming Prairie Branch Library will now be open over 40 hours per week for the first time since March of 2020! We were closed for five weeks and then reopened in early May 2020 for curbside delivery. The library reopened 32 hours each week at the end of July. Our hours will change slightly from what they had been pre-pandemic. Our new hours will be: Monday, Tuesday,

Open for the summer

Wednesday 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Thursday – 9:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Friday 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

For the summer months, we will be closed on Saturdays. We will re-evaluate Saturday hours as autumn approaches. These changes took place as of June 1.

There have been a few other changes. In line with CDC guidance, fully vaccinated individuals are not required to wear a mask in the library. Children under the age of 12 and others not vaccinated are encouraged to continue wearing a mask inside the library.

We have also eased the time-limit restrictions. Instead of a maximum of 30 minutes on a

computer, patrons may use a computer for up to two hours per day. If someone else is waiting to use a computer, the time limit of 30 minutes will be enforced.

The last change regards unaccompanied children. Now that 12 and older can be vaccinated, they can be in the library without a parent or guardian. However, ages 11 and under must still be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

These guidelines have been set up in collaboration with our main library, the Owatonna Public Library. Please call the library at 507-583-7750 if you have questions. No doubt there will be more changes in the future, so keep being flexible!

It's time to 'Stop global whining'



Pastor Scott Peterson
NEW BEGINNINGS
CHURCH
OWATONNA

Thomas Jefferson was a man of deep religious conviction - his conviction was that religion was a very personal matter, one which the government had no business getting involved in. He was a staunch believer in the separation of church and state.

Jefferson wrote a letter to the Danbury Baptist Association in 1802 to answer a letter

from them written in October 1801. The Danbury Baptists were a religious minority in Connecticut, and they complained that in their state the religious liberties they enjoyed were not seen as immutable rights, but as privileges granted by the legislature - as "favors granted." Jefferson's reply did not address their concerns about problems with state establishment of religion - only of establishment on the national level. The letter contains the phrase "wall of separation between church and state" which led to the short-hand for the Establishment Clause that we use today: "Separation of church and state."

The bottom line is people do not understand this phrase. They turn it around and say the church should not talk

about politics when what it really meant was that the government should not interfere with the church's affairs.

If we want this country to go to hell in a handbasket then I guess the church's members of God's family (Christians) should have nothing to do with politics, but that has been the problem for far too long. The church has stayed out of the political arena by not being involved to influence decisions at the top, and instead they've been influenced by ungodly government mandates and legislation. Maybe it's time we stand up for truth and speak up.

Now, as believers we should have the attitude which says I am not about to allow the wicked ways of the world to creep into my church, my

family, or my children's schools. We should not allow what God has laid out in scripture as the proper teaching for the church, and moral standing, to be shattered by malicious and vindictive legislators and activists who want nothing to do with God.

However, in this life there are things that are outside of our control that happen to us both nationally, familiarly and personally. And you can't always turn those circumstances around. So, it is in these times that God is far more interested in what is happening within you than what's happening around you. How are these things changing you?

Every time you go through a circumstance you didn't choose or you didn't like, you're going through a change, and

you will either resent it or you are going to grow from it. You're either going to be a victim or a victor.

Victims are always whiners and complainers. And it might be a terrible situation you find yourself in because of the decisions of others or because of an attitude of indifference on our part, but what ends up happening is you become part of victimhood rather than victorhood. Maybe there should be a bumper sticker that says "Stop global whining." Whining never helped anyone. This is why if we don't do something about the direction this country is going or the direction that you find you and your family going nothing will ever change.

You're either going to be a whiner or a winner in life. If you're always

whining, you're a victim. You're victimized by your circumstance.

Instead we should say, "Lord, what do you want me to learn from this situation?", and "What do you want me to do?"

God would like your attention when you go through tough times. And these difficult times should draw our attention to Him, but not to ask why but what. God doesn't owe any of us an explanation for anything that happens in our lives. In fact, you're not going to get an explanation.

If you had an explanation for everything you wouldn't require any faith. So, what does God want you to do about the situation God has put our country in? Go make a difference for God and remember this, that faith without works is dead. Have a great Summer!

AREA WORSHIP SCHEDULE

LUTHERAN
AURORA LUTHERAN
6329 SE 28th St., Owatonna
Interim Pastor:
Rev. Dale Svendsen
507-451-2819
office@auroralutheranchurch.org
Worship: Sunday at 9 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.

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

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

FIRST LUTHERAN - ELCA
434 First St. SW, BP
Senior Pastor:
Rev. Heidi Hemgartner
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Mike Welterus
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 a.m.
Outdoor 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-Freeborn Road, Austin
Leandra Anderson, Pastor
507-451-0447
www.rogolutheran.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 Colin Duling
507-251-5568
Worship: 10:15 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9 a.m.

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN - ELCA
1301 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
Pastors Dave Klaviter and
Jacie Richmond
507-451-7293
stjohnowatonna.org
Worship: 5 p.m. Th. Thursday 5
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
Vicar Jackie Short
507-587-2474
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN - LCMC
202 E. Park Ave., Hollandale
Pastor Jesse Kruemerk
507-587-2272
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN - ELCA
2781 SW 92nd Ave., Meriden
Interim: Deacon Billie Jo Wicks
507-451-2165
Sunday worship: 10 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN - ELCA
609 Lincoln Ave., Owatonna
507-451-4520
tlicowatonna.org
2nd Thursday
Senior Pastor: Rev. Todd
Buegler, Associate Pastor:
Rev. Amanda Flay
a.m. or anytime on website
facebook.com/ticowatonna
and tlicowatonna.org/
worshiplive
9:30 a.m. - Live broadcast on
KRUE 92.1 FM
Video on Spectrum (Ch.
181), Jaguar TV (Ch. 900)
and owatonna.mlive.com
- Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday at 6 p.m. and
Sunday at 11 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN - ELCA
104 First St. SE., Hayfield
Pastor Paul Hauschild
507-477-2948
www.trinityhayfield.org
Worship: 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

TRINITY LUTHERAN - LCMC
108 Third Ave. SW, Medford
Pastor Mark Bieghausen
507-451-0447
Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday & 6:30 p.m. Wednesday (Outdoors on south side of church)

TRINITY LUTHERAN - LCMC
57043 300th St., Waltham
Pastor Jesse Kruemerk
507-587-2272
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.

ZION LUTHERAN - ELCA
7128 SW 98th St., Ellendale
Interim: Deacon Billie Jo Wicks
Sunday worship: 8:30 a.m.

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN - ELCA
1909 St. Paul Road, Owatonna
Senior Pastor:
John Weisenburger
Associate Pastor: Lisa Carlson
507-451-4653
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 Staresinich
Mass: 5:30 p.m. Sat.
Mass: 9 a.m. Mon. & Fri.

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

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF UTOUMSI
9946 SE 24th Ave Owatonna
Father John Wilmot
507-583-2784
www.utoumscatholic.org
Sunday Mass at 8:15 a.m.
Utoumsi Finance Council:
2nd Thursday
Utoumsi Pastoral Council:
2nd Thursday every other
month

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

SACRED HEART PARISH
810 S. Cedar Ave., Owatonna
Father Swaminatha
Pothenreddy Parochial Vicar
507-451-1588
www.sacredheartowatonna.org
Masses: Saturday 5 p.m.
Sunday 8 a.m., 10 a.m.,
and Noon (Spanish)
Daily Mass 7:15 a.m.
Tuesday through Friday
Reconciliation 4 p.m. Saturday
Adoration - Thursdays 8
a.m.-7 p.m.

ST. COLUMBANUS CATHOLIC
114 E. Main St.,
Bloomington
Father James Wilmot
507-583-2784
www.stcolumbanuschurch.com
Mass: 10:30-7:30 p.m. Sunday
Reconciliation: 9 a.m.
First Friday & Saturday

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC PARISH
512 S. Elm Ave., Owatonna
Father James Staresinich
507-451-4845
Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8 & 10 a.m.
Reconciliation: 3-3:30 p.m. Sat.
Daily Mass: 8 a.m. Tues.,
Wed. & Fri. (contemporary)
Service 8 a.m. Thursday
Adoration Chapel available
Mon. - Fri. 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Key Job required after hours
or weekends

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

PENTECOSTAL
FIRST UNITED PENTECOSTAL
230 Locust Ave., Owatonna
Pastor Elazar Talamantes
507-583-2240
Worship: 10 a.m. Sunday,
6:30 p.m. Wednesday

METHODIST
BLOOMING GROVE UNITED METHODIST
45089 180th St., Medford
(Seven miles west of
Medford on CR 23)
Pastors JJ & Stefanie Morgan
507-835-8726
Worship: 8:30 a.m. Sun.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

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

OWATONNA UNITED METHODIST
815 E. University, Owatonna
Rev. Lisa J. Vick Pastor
507-451-4734
www.owatonnaumc.org
Traditional Worship
(Pathways):
9 a.m. Sunday

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

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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
507-583-3098
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
532 14th St. NE, Owatonna
Pastors Scott & Joan Peterson
507-413-0209
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

MENNONITE
PRAIRIE MENNONITE
13638 750th St., BP
Carlson 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
www.bethelowatonna.com
Worship: 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sunday

PRESBYTERIAN
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Presbyterian Church (USA) and
United Church of Christ
800 Havana Road,
Owatonna 507-451-1546
www.associatedchurch.org
office@associatedchurch.org
Sunday Worship: 9 a.m.
(Fellowship, Church School,
and Adult Discussions follow)
Wednesday Activities: Sept -
May (see website for schedule)

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

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

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
2573 Seventh Ave. NE,
Owatonna
Pastor Brian Beavers
651-955-4032
Worship: 11 a.m. Sat.
Bible Stud: 9:30 a.m. Sat.

UCC
CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
211 Main St. SE, Medford
Rev. Richard Waters
507-451-4588
Worship: 10 a.m. Sun.

ASSEMBLY OF GOD
VIBRANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD
702 Third St. S., Ellendale
Interim Pastor Wendell
Anderson
507-684-3421
www.vibrantlifeag.com
Worship: 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sunday
Kids Church: 9 a.m.

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

FIRST BAPTIST (OWATONNA'S OLDEST CHURCH)
123 E. Main St., Owatonna
Pastor Carla Nelson
507-272-9834
www.firstbaptistowatonna.com
Fellowship: 9:30 a.m. Sun.
Worship: 10:30 a.m. Sun.

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

ASSEMBLY OF GOD
VICTORY LIFE
105 2nd St. NE, Genewa
Pastor Diane Butler
507-402-0960
Worship on Sundays
Prayer Service: 7:30 a.m.
Church Service: 9:30 a.m.
Children's Church: 9:45 a.m.

FREE CHURCH
CORNERSTONE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
1500 18th St. SE, Owatonna
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David Shaw
507-446-5850
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Worship: 9 a.m. Sunday
Sunday School: 10:30 a.m.

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Welcoming new member



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Ambassadors from the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism visit with The Pointe @ Merchant Square; 325 Florence Avenue, in Owatonna, to welcome them as a new member. Darrin Stadheim and Scott Mohs from Redline Development Group were the developers and Shawna Yule from Lasson Management is the property manager. The Pointe @ Merchant Square is a 47 unit complex consisting of one and two bedroom open floorplan units with large living areas, vaulted ceilings and hardwood style flooring. Amenities include a fitness center, lounge and a courtyard area with grills.

LOOK WHO'S BRINGING BACK THE FUN IN 2021!

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AUGUST 20
8PM

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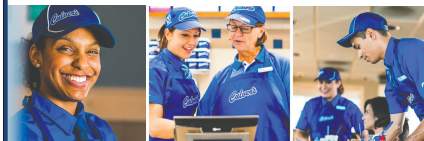


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Straight River Days to celebrate 50th anniversary

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

After canceling last year's events due to COVID, the City of Medford will host this year's Straight River Days on June 17-19. This year will mark the 50th anniversary of the weekend-long celebration.

"It's the 50th anniversary this year and we're really excited to get to do it," said Tonya Miller, who helps plan the event each year as vice president of the Medford civic club. "It's fun, but it is also a lot of work. Each year we try to come up with new ideas and new events."

While each year introduces fun new activities, certain staples remain year in and year-out. The opening ceremony will kick off

this year's events; there will also be the annual medalion hunt, city-wide garage sales, parade, the car show, and the Party in the Park on Friday, June 18.

Some of this year's new events include barrel rides for kids, a maker's market, Bloody Mary bar and beer garden held in the large pavilion, and escape room competition for teams of up to six people. With so many fun activities, Miller said she and the other board members had their hands full with planning this year's celebration.

"We had lots of meetings. We got together and starting planning," Miller said. "Everybody has their own set events they do each year, but we always try to brainstorm



Celebrating its 50th anniversary, Straight River Days will include many activities from past years. Two years ago, the community celebration featured a party in the park, a car show, and a bean bag toss.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

and come up with new ideas."

A native of Medford, Miller and civic club president Erin Sammon helped revitalize the celebration eight years ago. "I remember going when I was younger, and I was talking to Erin at a garage sale and we thought that it would be nice to bring back Straight River Days," Miller said.

"We wanted to bring back Straight River Days for our kids the way we remembered

it when we were kids," Miller said. "It's nice for everyone to get out and meet their neighbors. It's a great hometown celebration."

"I think everyone is eager to get out and see all of their neighbors and friends," said Miller. "The civic club is very excited to get out and celebrate. I'm excited to see everyone's smiling faces this year after the year we've had!"

The celebration owes a lot of its success each year to the sponsors.

"I am very thankful for all our new and exciting sponsors. With their support, we are looking forward to having one of the best years yet celebrating our 50th Straight River Days," civic club President Erin Sammon said. "I hope to see everyone there."

This year's Straight River Days will be held from June 17 to June 19 in Medford. For more information on scheduled events and activities, visit www.straightriverdays.com.

County Hwy 45 resurfacing work underway

Construction work began June 1 on County Highway 45 from the Freeborn County line to County Highway 4 in Somerset and Summit Townships. The project will mill and resurface the bituminous pavement and add a paved shoulder.

While the work is in progress, the highway will be open to traffic but there will be lane closures with flaggers. Expect significant delays during construction operations.

Work is expected to be completed by June 30. All dates are subject to change due to weather or other factors.

Steele County advises motorists to drive with caution and slow down through work zones for their safety and for the safety of the construction crews.

For updates on this or other Steele County Highway construction projects, or to sign up for email updates, visit: www.co.steele.mn.us/highway_construction.

'Because We Care'



Sue Klemmensen, right, and Cindy Nelson recently planted flowers in the downtown planters Ellendale. Cindy waters them throughout the summer.

Panther principal stepping down July 1

BY ALEX NUHRING
STAFF WRITER

After devoting the last 36 years to education, including the past 11 years as NRHEG Elementary Principal, Doug Anderson will retire from his post on July 1.

He said he's been considering retiring for a couple of years but felt this was the right time. "I gave it some thought, and I feel

very good about what's happened here. I'm proud of this district and what we've accomplished at the elementary school, and I think that's a wonderful way to leave, having those feelings and knowing that they're in a good place," he said.

While he's pleased that the elementary school is in a good place, Anderson is disappointed that he's losing the opportunity to interact

with the students.

"Without a doubt, on the top of my list is the kids. That's what I'm going to miss the most. I'm used to every single day being here and having that opportunity to greet those kids as they come through the door and to check in with them to find out how their evening went, find out what they're looking forward to and to just listen to whatever it is they want to

share with me as they arrive at school. I'm just really going to miss our students," he said.

In addition to interacting with the students, he said one of the highlights of his time as NRHEG Elementary Principal is the work the district has done with its literacy instruction.

"We've spent a great deal of time on taking the Minnesota state standards, integrating

them into each grade level and developing assessments," he said.

Anderson has already seen that work pay dividends.

"I've had several teachers that have said because of what we're doing right now with literacy that they've never before known exactly where their students are at with their reading skills," he said.

He said another highlight is the elemen-

Opening back up again



Steele Talkin'
ROBIN STARR

Summer. Its beauty brings about thoughts of sun dappled trees, fragrant flowers, and renewal of life after a long, cold winter. It feels just like that at Community Pathways where preparations have been underway to open back up and have resulted in some exciting changes to our programs.

Still following CDC Guidelines, we are now inviting new and existing members into The Marketplace and everyone into Unique Finds. We are no longer providing curbside-only service or limiting entry into the building. We do still ask for our customers to help follow the guidelines by wearing a mask unless they have been fully vaccinated for more than 14 days as the CDC suggests. We are very excited to have everyone coming back in!

The Marketplace has now fully returned to the Choice Model. This shift allows the needs of our community to be served in a more impactful way. With this modification, shoppers will be able to come in and choose anything they feel will fulfill the needs and wants of their families. Even more wonderful is the fact that shopping can now be done once a week instead of our previous once a month model. This means that families now have the option to do weekly meal planning rather than trying to decide what they need for the entire month. In the first few days of the Choice Model, we have seen a lot of excitement for the change. We look forward to continuing to improve the experience for our members.

In addition, our Marketplace Delivery Program has also been prepped for change. The Marketplace Delivery trailer is being stocked just like our store, allowing customers to enter and choose anything that their households need. This ensures that our mobile members have full options and the same freedom of choice as those who travel to see us in the store.

All these changes do not come without challenges.

See STEELE TALKIN' on B2 ►



Doug Anderson

tary school's new math curriculum this year.

"People are very excited about it. We're seeing fantastic results with our students," he said.

See PANTHER on B2 ►

BLOOMING PRAIRIE

JUNE 15
10:30 a.m. –
Storytime, BP Central
Park/BP Library

JUNE 16
5 p.m. – June

Chamber Meeting,
Brookside
Campground

JUNE 25
NAPA Gopher 50,
Deer Creek Speedway

ELLEDALE/HOPE/GENEVA

JUNE 11
11 a.m. – SEMCAC,
Community Building

JUNE 14
11 a.m. – SEMCAC,
Community Building

9 p.m. – Berlin
Township Meeting,
Community Building

JUNE 16
11 a.m. – SEMCAC,
Community Building

OWATONNA/MEDFORD

JUNE 11
9 a.m. – Bright
Star Theatre Summer
Camp, Little Theatre of
Owatonna

JUNE 12
7 a.m. – Farmer's
Market, Central Park

JUNE 14
4:30 p.m. –
Owatonna Park
Board Meeting, Park
Maintenance Shop
5:30 p.m. –
Moonlighters
Exchange Club of
Owatonna, VFW

JUNE 15
10:30 a.m. – Online

Storytime, Owatonna
Library Facebook
4:30 p.m. – Library
Board Meeting,
Owatonna Library
7 p.m. – Owatonna
City Council Meeting,
City Hall
7 p.m. – Steele
County Board of
Appeal & Equalization
Meeting, County
Admin Building

JUNE 16
4 p.m. – Owatonna
EDA Meeting, City Hall

JUNE 17
7 p.m. – 11@7
Concert Series,
Central Park

LTO announces new season lineup

Little Theatre of
Owatonna (LTO)
recently announced its
2021-2022 season lineup.

FALL 2021:

"The Marvelous
Wonderettes" written
and created by Roger
Bean with musical
arrangements by Brian
Williams Baker and Or-
chestrations by Michael
Borth. Vocal arrange-
ments by Roger Bean &
Brian Williams Baker.
Directed by Bev
Cashman
Tech Directed by
Kathy Purdie
Presented by special
arrangement by Stage
Rights (www.stage-
rights.com)

Dates: Oct. 14-17 &
21-24

HOLIDAY 2021:

"Every Christmas
Show Ever Told (And
Then Some)" by Mi-
chael Carleton, James
Fitzgerald, and John K.
Alvarez
Directed by Zackery
Knagton
Tech Directed by
Kristi Westergaard
Produced by special
arrangement with
Playscripts, Inc. (www.
playscripts.com)
Dates: Dec. 3-5 & 10-
12, 2021

WINTER 2022:

"Blithe Spirit" by
No? Coward

Directed by Kathy
Rush
Tech Directed by
Brenda Hager
Presented by spe-
cial arrangement with
Concord Theatricals
on behalf of Samuel
French, Inc.
Dates: Feb. 11-13 &
18-20, 2022

SPRING 2022:
"Something Rotten!"
book by Karey Kirkpat-
rick & John O'Farrell.
Music and Lyrics by
Karey Kirkpatrick and
Wayne Kirkpatrick
Directed by Jeffrey
Jackson
Tech Directed by
Kathy Purdie
Presented by special

arrangement with Mu-
sic Theatre Internation-
al (MTI). All authorized
performance materials
are also supplied by
MTI. www.MTIShows.
com
Dates: April 21-24 &
28-May 1, 2022

SUMMER 2022:
"The Color of Stars"
by Dwayne Hartford
Directed by Shelley
Fitzgerald
Tech Directed by
Naomi Jirele
Produced by special
arrangement with THE
DRAMATIC PUBLISH-
ING COMPANY of
Woodstock, Ill.
Dates: June 10-12 &
17-19, 2022

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System will launch
a new mobile health
clinic that will expand
services by increasing
outreach and providing
access to health care di-
rectly to patients in ru-
ral communities across
southern Minnesota.
The mobile health
clinic, which will be
based in a large com-
mercial vehicle, will in-
clude two exam rooms,
an on-site laboratory
and pharmacy services.
Patient visits will begin
later this summer, and
specific locations and

dates will be particu-
larly to patients.
"Mayo Clinic Health
System patients will
have the peace of mind
knowing that they are
always connected to the
world's leading medical
experts," says Jennifer
Horn, M.D., regional
chair of clinical prac-
tice, Southeast Min-
nesota Region, Mayo
Clinic Health System.
"Regardless of where
you receive care, your
health information will
be readily available to
Mayo's care teams."
Patients will be able

to receive preventive
health screenings
and manage chronic
diseases.
Services will include:
• Acute illness/infec-
tion.
• Immunizations,
including COVID-19
vaccinations.
• Preventive services
and health care
screenings.
• Medication refills
and checks.
• Chronic disease
checks.
• Warfarin manage-
ment.
• Pacemaker checks

(virtual).
• Specialty consults
and follow-ups (vir-
tual).
• Prenatal visits (vir-
tual).
• Wellness visits.
• Pediatrics.
The mobile health
clinic also has the tech-
nology and equipment
to connect patients
virtually through video
appointments with
Mayo Clinic experts.
Pacemaker checks,
specialty consults and
follow-ups, and prenatal
visits will be conducted
virtually.

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Wine Club: Tuesday 7 - 8:30 PM
May 18th and June 8th
(Masks & Covid protocol will be followed -
Reservations required)

JULY 3RD: Street Dance
"Red Dirt Road"
8 PM - Midnight
\$5 cover charge - 21 and over
Off-Sale open 11 AM - 6 PM
=Bar - Closed

July 4th: Off-Sale open 11 AM - 6 PM
=Bar - Closed

July 24th: B. O. B. Ride "Toys for Tots" - Details Later

Legionville School Safety Patrol Camp re-opens

In 2018, Legionville
School Safety Patrol
Camp in Brainerd was
shut down by a large,
floating bog. In 2020,
the camp was shut
down by the COVID-19
pandemic.
You could say
neither the bog nor
the bug have stopped
the camp from hosting
campers in 2021.
"Everything is a
green light," said Camp
Manager Adam Felten.
"We are excited to
host campers again.

When they arrive, they
will see that we made
significant upgrades
while they were away."
Dorms were painted
inside and out. The
Dining Hall has a new
ceiling, and it was
painted inside and out.
The Education Center
was repainted on the
inside. A house at the
camp was donated to
Habitat for Humanity.
Trees were trimmed.
Flowers were planted.
The beach has been
groomed, and the wa-

ter is ready for swim-
ming.
As of today, there
is a new dock for the
swimming area. The
dock was the result of
Minnesota American
Legion Commander
Mark Dvorak's fund-
raising project for the
past year. He asked for
\$40,000 and got more
than \$65,000.
So far, 335 campers
are set to attend seven
sessions that begin
June 13 and end Aug. 6.
Each session lasts six

days. More registra-
tions come each day.
Legionville School
Safety Patrol Camp is a
program of The Ameri-
can Legion Department
of Minnesota. The
department has worked
with police to teach
school intersection
safety and bus safety
dating back to 1921.
While school patrol
safety continues to be
part of the camp, the
camp is evolving into
an overall youth safety
camp, not just patrol.

Opening back up again

◀ **STEELE TALKIN'** from B1
With the reopening of
our building to the pub-
lic and the change to the
Choice Model, we are
in need of volunteers to
help us in our mission
to serve the community.
We have openings in
both the Marketplace
and Unique Finds. You
can get detailed infor-
mation on days, times,
and job functions on
our website at www.
communitypathwayscc.
org under the Volunteer
Opportunities section.
We are always happy to
discuss these opportu-
nities in-person or over
the phone as well, so
don't be shy!
Keep an eye out for
posts on our social
media pages for an
exciting event coming
in July! Fundraising
efforts are currently
underway, and we will
be excited to make

announcements in the
near future. What we
can tell you right now
is we are very grateful
for the partnership
from Mineral Springs
Brewery and Foremost
Brewing Cooperative!
Our event committees
are hard at work to
finalize the plans. Keep
your calendars open
for July 17 from 6-11
p.m. There will be beer,
music, food, and games
going on at the Steel
County Fairgrounds
with the proceeds going
toward the Community
Pathways Capital Cam-
paign.
Robin Starr is the
marketing and out-
reach coordinator for
Community Pathways
in Steele County. Steele
Talkin' is a regular col-
umn featuring authors
representing various
organizations through-
out Steele County.

Panther principal

◀ **PANTHER** from B1
The new math and
literacy curriculum
will impact hundreds
of students. Still,
Anderson believes
the most meaningful
progress during his
tenure as principal
has been developing
relationships and
the district's and the
elementary school's
foundation.
"I think without a
doubt our school
works very hard at
building positive rela-
tionships and having
positive communica-
tion with our fami-
lies and I think that
because we've been
successful with that,
we have unbelievable
parent support for
our school and for
what happens within
this school. I think
that definitely has
been the highlight is
the way that we've all
come together and our
families are behind
us, our four commu-
nities and our very
giving and supportive
parent-teacher orga-
nization. There's a lot
of strong support for

what happens here,"
he said.
After helping bring
the NRHEG com-
munity together in
support of its school
district, his retire-
ment gives him time
to focus on himself
and find a new chal-
lenge.
Still, Anderson isn't
sure yet what that new
challenge will look
like.
"I'm going to take a
couple of months to en-
joy the summer, which
typically I've not had
that opportunity
because I'm a year-
round employee. I
will do that and then I
have some options and
possibilities of things
that are available to
me, but I haven't made
any final decision yet
as to exactly what it
is that I'm going to do.
I'm definitely going to
be working. I want to
be working," he said.
"Right now, I'm open
to possibilities wheth-
er it's public sector
or private sector. I'm
excited about what
maybe is out there for
my next opportunity."

Sudoku Corner

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

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Answers

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

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If interested, please email
Rick Bussler at bprick@frontier.com.



Way to go Huskies Honor Grads!

Congratulations to these Owatonna graduating seniors for their academic achievement in qualifying as honor graduates with the Class of 2021!

High Distinction Honors

Emma Anderson
Lindsay Bangs
Cora Barrett
Joseph Betti
Alix Bettin
Lauren Borgerding
Samuel Buegler
Nolan Burmeister
Emma deBruin
Julia Dietz
Sky Dube
Elise Egbert
Laura Gebur
Jenna Gleason
Emily Hagen

Faith Hanson
Anna Herzog
Sydney Hunst
Ethan Hunt
Nataly Hurtado Tiza
Kathryn Ihrke
Libby Janka
Ashton Jensen
Lydia Kath
Rachel Kellar
Zachary Kubicek
Gannon Kuehn
Mason Kunkel
Anastasia LaDuke
Zachariah Lenz

Isabelle Leonard
Zachary Liebl
Lucy Macius
Lincoln Maher
Jacob Meiners
Al Moran
Abigail Munns
Maggie Newhouse
Brianna O'Connor
Hailee Olson
John Pfeifer
Lauren Phelps
Arian Piepho
Nicholas Pilcher
Maya Ratloff

Frija Reinert
Wendell Relacion
Alexis Ringhofer
Aidan Ruiz
Lillian Sampson
Lanie Schuster
Matthew Seykora
Cheryl Smith
Samuel Snitker
Jenna Spatenka
Ella Stockwell
Nora Thompson
Lane Versteeg
Grace Wolfe

Distinction Honors

Hudson Aase
Shamso Abdullahi
Asad Ali
Isabella Anderson
Annika Andrix
Grace Arthur
Brianna Bailey
Laurny Bateman
Chloe Beede
Caleb Belting
Jenna Bergeron
Klara Blacker
Annika Brown
Madelin Bruessel
Evan Buck
Megan Copeland
Katie Cottingham
Abbey Crandall
Emma Dahmert
Joseph Earl

Emilia Edel
Parker Erickson
Brody Erola
Brent Fischer
Elizabeth Fischer
Hailey Fox
Tristan Groh
Oliver Hansen
Elizabeth Harder
Hayli Hausen
Adela Interiano
Leone Jacobson
Margret Jacott
Tara Kack
Jorden Kalbach
Courtney Kath
Bailey Keck
Allison Keller
Sarah Kingland
Kailee Kleeberger

Emma Klemmensen
Greta Korb
Justin Kraus
Zachary Langager
Thomas Leon
Madison Levy
Grace Linders
Sabella Maas
Haylee Mullenbach
Dominic Nelson
Kaden Nelson
Mason Piepho
Calbey Podein
Danielle Robertson
Samuel Sampson
Sara Sangare
Mason Saufferer
Isabella Schroeder
Mariah Schroht
Caleb Schuler

Fletcher Schulz
Alivia Schuster
Abigail Schwartz
Alexis Smith
Grace Smith
Nathan Smith
Jacelyn Stenzel
Abe Stockwell
Jack Tichenal
Gabriel Tratz
Brayden Truelson
Calishia Vang
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Valedictorian
Kendall Johnson

*Congrats to the honor graduates
from the Class of 2021
at NRHEG High School*



Honor Graduates

Salutatorians
Grace Tufte | Anna Jacobson



Chloe Arndt



Elli Baker



Morgan Besser



Isaac Borchert



Caden Riewer



Tory Christensen



Hanna Crabtree



Kelly Dobberstein



Aubrey Fischer



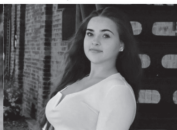
Tewodros Gushou



Zachary Hagen



Avery Hill



T'Shayla Hinderscheit



Hannah Huisman



Ashton Johnson



Kendall Johnson



Sarah Johns



Julia King



Madison Knudson



Katie Lee



Dylan Loken



Cassidy Martin



Josh Martin



Cambria Nissen



Daniel Nydegger



Christopher O'Brien



Charles Pittman



Caden Riewer



Kordell Schlaak



Jonah Stafford



Nicklas Staloch



Carter Stencil



Lorelei Strom



Courtney Techau



Grace Tufte



Bridgette Blowers



Anna Jacobson



Amy Shaw

Not pictured:
Luisa Gaona Quezada

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of your remarkable
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CONGRATULATIONS

Blossom Honor Graduates

You've done it! Congrats on your hard work in becoming honor graduates with the Class of 2021 at Blooming Prairie High School!

Honor Students- Summa Cum Laude (4.0 GPA) and Distinguished Honor:



Maggie Bruns

Emily Kubicek

Joseph Pirkel

Rachael Riley

Maren Forystek

Luke Larkoski



Megan Oswald

Micalyn Trihus

Way to be shining examples
in our community.

Honor Students-

Magna Cum Laude (3.8-3.99 GPA) and Distinguished Honor:



Dylan Johnson

Reese Millam

Halle Strunk

Wyatt Voss

Taylor Wurst

Ashleigh Alwes



Charlie Heimerman

Shyane Jorgenson

Jessica Ressler

Gretchen Sunde

Isabella White

Honor Students- Cum Laude (3.5-3.79 GPA):



Grace Magnuson

Christopher Naatz

Rachel Thompson

Adrianna Bermea

Cole Graves

Brian Jimenez



Allison Krohnberg

Rose Michaud

Alexander Miller

Jacob Naatz

Kiya Thompson

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Graduation D

67 graduate from NRHEG with pomp and circumstance

BY DEB FLEMMING
NEWS EDITOR

After declaring 67 seniors graduates of the NRHEG school district on Sunday, Principal David Bunn challenged them to think of their diploma as learner's permits for the rest of their drive through life.

The hour-long commencement ceremony took place before a large crowd of family and friends in the air-conditioned high school gymnasium, which provided respite from the 90-plus degree temperature outside.

Earlier, Bunn said the commencement ceremony was a milestone event in the lives of the graduating seniors – an event that included music, speeches, awards and the presentation of a flower from the graduates to their parents in attendance.

Graduating seniors Kendall Johnson, Caden Riewer and Ashton (A.C.) Cords, this year's commencement speakers, shared memories, challenges faced and some pearls of wisdom with their classmates and guests.

Recalling events from their 13 years

together, Johnson said she wouldn't trade it for "an 'A' on every single Mrs. [Deb] Bentley's paper."

"Today, if there is one word that can accurately describe how I feel – it's grateful," said Johnson.

"Grateful for the teachers and staff who pushed us for our own success; grateful for our families that supported and stood with us every step of the way; and grateful for the community that surrounded us and watched as we grew into the people we are now. But above all, I'm

most grateful for the people who are with me on this stage – my classmates. They were my greatest supporters, my fiercest competitors and as cheesy as it may sound, my second family."

Caden Riewer tackled the challenges he and his classmates faced due to COVID-19, including distance learning, hybrid learning, masks and quarantines.

"It's not about what we did or what we've survived," said Riewer. "It's about how we did it."

"We made it here,"

he said. "This moment, right now, is a huge milestone in our lives."

As for the future, What you want isn't the issue, said Ashton (A.C.) Cords. "I hate that question. It's a waste of time."

The most important question, he said, is what are you doing with your life?

During the ceremony, senior Aubrey Fischer performed a piano solo titled "Hall of Fame." A pre-recorded performance of "I'll Always Remember You," featuring seniors Ashton Johnson, Katie Lee, Dylan Loken and

Amy Tasker, was played through the sound system during the ceremony.

Earning the Valedictorian Award was Johnson, who ended her high school career with 4.00 grade point average. Co-Salutatorians were Grace Tuttle and Anna Jacobson, who each earned 3.99 grade point averages.

The NRHEG Class of 2021 included 33 honor students.

Official diplomas will be available to the graduates at the NRHEG high school in New Richland on June 11.



NRHEG graduates laugh at one of their classmate's jokes during graduation ceremonies held in the high school gymnasium.

STAFF PHOTO BY DEB FLEMMING

OHS graduation held outdoors

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

On a warm, sunny afternoon, Owatonna's class of 2021 were able to bask in the sunshine before receiving their diplomas. It was the first time the ceremony was held outside since 1995, except for last year's drive-in commencement.

Owatonna's graduating class of 300 students listened to two speeches by their fellow graduates, Megan Copeland and Willow Oman before lining up to receive their diplomas. Family, friends, and educators packed the bleachers showing their support.

Copeland, who's been blind since birth, excels on her speech team, is involved in Young Life and volunteers at senior living centers. She began her speech by looking back at their freshmen year. "It seems like only yesterday we were all sitting in the gym for that first pep fest," she said. "Senior year seemed so far off that we might as well have been reaching for the stars, but now here we all are."

"The point is that we made it," said Copeland. "There were good, bad, happy, sad, and exciting times, but now those times are at their conclusion. We will never get this time back. With that in mind, I wanted to ask each of you here a question: how would you spend your time over the past four years?"

She talked about the change in perspective over time and the importance of looking at the inherent essence of life. "Do you view things from a surface level, or have you tried looking deeper? I encourage everyone to always enjoy the present moment they are in because there is beauty in everything," she said. "Sometimes, you just have to dig deeper to find the true beauty."

See OHS on B8 ►



OHS students sat on the football field as parents and friends look on from the bleachers.

ay - June 2021



Blooming Prairie senior Maren Forystek smiles after receiving her diploma Friday evening. She graduated summa cum laude as a distinguished honor student, and was one of the student speakers.

STAFF PHOTO BY KAY FATE

BP graduates 'prepared for everything new'

BY KAY FATE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Graduations are usually hopeful celebrations – the very definition of closing one chapter and opening another. But when it comes after more than a year of navigating high school life during a global pandemic, the pomp and circumstance take on a whole new level of significance.

That was the case for the 63 graduates in Blooming Prairie High School's Class of 2021, and the word for the night was "challenges," as the students sat together without masks in a gym filled with friends and family.

If nothing else, that in itself felt like a celebration.

"You have experienced more challenges than any junior and senior classes in the history of Blooming Prairie," Supt. Chris Staloch said Friday evening during his presentation of the class, "but the past year and a half has prepared you for everything new" that will come along.

"You learned how resilient you are, and you have the ability and determination to take things on," he said.

Senior Maren Forystek challenged her classmates to "make interesting and amazing mistakes, maybe break a rule or two ... and leave the world a more interesting place."

Other student speakers included Maggie Bruns, Luke Larkoski, Megan Oswald, Rachael Riley and Charlie Heimerman.

Nearly half of the class – the 119th graduating class in the school's history – carried a GPA of 3.5 or higher. That comes with a little personality: Two of the graduates cartwheeled across the stage to accept their diplomas.

Casey Lyman's path to his diploma came with additional challenges in the form of a two-week hospital stay every six months to treat his cystic fibrosis, a genetic disease that affects the lungs.

The hospitalizations, as well as the medications he takes, made school difficult sometimes, he admitted.

Lyman smiled when asked what he'd tell other students who balance health with academics. "You just gotta stay strong," he said.

And while last year's graduates didn't have a typical commencement, they did start what may become a new tradition: a parade through town.

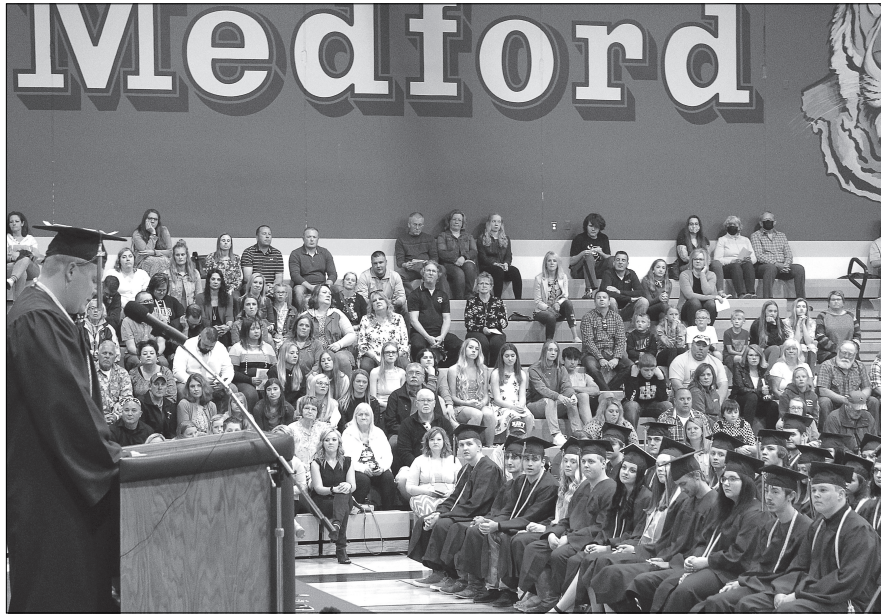
In a town known for its Fourth of July parade, Blooming Prairie residents appeared to embrace the more informal recognition of their high school graduates. Blankets and lawn chairs lined the streets as the Class of 2021 left the high school for the last time as students.

Many still wore their caps and gowns as they waved from the back seats of classic cars and the beds of polished pickups as the parade wound through town, led by a police escort.

It seemed clear that if the past year taught them anything, it was to take celebrations wherever you can find them, even – maybe especially – on the streets of your hometown.



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN



Medford senior Gavin Hermes delivers the student welcome address to his fellow students.

STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS BALDWIN

From caterpillars to butterflies

Medford seniors celebrate commencement

BY CHRIS BALDWIN
STAFF WRITER

Medford seniors celebrated their graduation Friday, May 28, with family, friends, and teachers looking on proudly. The event was held in the school gymnasium.

"Thank you to all of our parents and coaches who have helped us over the years accomplish our goals in all of our activities," Gavin Hermes said in the student welcome address. "We would not have been here without your constant support."

Hermes shared some of the class's many memories, including an epic snowball fight and the fun they had growing up together. "Even though many of us are sad our high school days are over, we can always cherish these memories we have created over the years."

"Many of them we will never forget, which is why I am thankful I get to walk across the stage with my fellow classmates of 2021 to represent Medford in a great way in our future," Hermes said. "Go Tigers, and congratulations class of 2021!"

The commencement address was given by Jeannie Ness, who has taught at Medford school for 20 years. Ness compared the graduating students to caterpillars and spoke about how fun it was for teachers and parents to watch them grow into butterflies.

"Your class will always hold a special place in my heart. We spent two years together growing and learn-

ing," said Ness, before remembering her time teaching the class of 2021 during first grade. "You're a lot like those little caterpillars that we welcomed into our classroom that fall."

"You were small and you were wiggly and you were hungry; you were ready to soak up everything that we could give you, so we fed you," Ness said. "You ate it all up and so we fed you more and you grew and you changed and you learned."

"We patiently watched as you became who you were to be, standing back confident that we had done all that we could do to make this successful," she said.

"We will secretly want to keep you here in this safe environment that we have created, but it's time for you to go to soar high and fly far and find places and people that will feed you and nourish your soul and make your life complete," Ness told her former students. "We know that you must fly,

but remember that a monarch butterfly never forgets the place it comes from, and neither should you."

The student farewell address was given by Lily Roehrick, who used the metaphor of auditioning for a role in her speech. "I like to think of life as one big production, and high school is like the audition process; you're trying to figure out who you want to be and, in the meantime, you're trying to impress and gain approval of those around you."

"Your audition was phenomenal," Roehrick said after detailing how the students prepared for this moment. "You were cast as the class of 2021. Now it's time to hit the big stage, you have your role and now it's time to learn your lines."

"You have a bigger purpose. Don't let the hard days slow you down and don't let others slow you down," Roehrick said. "The show must go on, and you must make

decisions that reflect your character. You must present yourself respectfully to the attention of those around you."

"Class of 2021, it was a pleasure to grow up with you and create the most beautiful memories," she said. "I have no doubt that each of you will find your way and congratulations on your amazing audition."

Their audition over, the seniors each took the stage to receive their diploma from the Medford Board of Education members, including Superintendent Mark Ristau and school board members Jackie Berg and Allison Janke.

After the ceremony, the students got into their vehicles with an unknown future in front of them, full of possibilities and success, but first, they took one last drive around the city they call home, winding down the streets of Medford with their eyes on the horizon.

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The COVID-19 pandemic was a topic touched on in both speeches. "This past year was probably the toughest, most stressful year we'll ever live through, that is if we only skim the surface of the situation," Copeland said. "We had to keep our distance from our closest friends when all we wanted to do was hug them."

"However, if we look beneath all of the pain and suffering, we can find joy in the simple things," she said. "We learned to enjoy simple things like going for a walk with the family. There is light at the end of the tunnel, so keep holding on a bit longer, and keep finding the simple beauty under the surface of the situation."

Due to her unique perspective on life, Copeland is not limited by a shallow outlook.

"The idea of looking beneath the surface applies in other situations as well," she said. "So often it seems we are so quick to make a decision on whether we like someone based on hair color, race, what people are wearing, or who they hang out with."

"The exterior of a person doesn't tell us what they are really like on the inside and this prevents us from truly getting to know a person. There is so much more to a person than what you can see on the outside," Copeland said. "I cannot see people on the surface level, because of this, I get a crystal-clear image of peoples' character."

Copeland finished her speech to a rousing applause by inspiring those in her class to approach life as she has. "I get to know who people really are. I encourage you all to do the same. True beauty really lives

inside us," she said. "Remember to always be in the present and look beneath the surface."

Willow Oman delivered the second student address, beginning by thanking all those in attendance and all who have shaped each student's life. "Thank you all for being here and showing your support; without you all, we would not be here today," she said.

In her time at OHS, Oman was involved in student council, mixed roots, band, and choir. "I'm honored to be here and look back on our four years legacy that we have made together," she said. "We have arrived in the midst of a global crisis, racial strife, and expression of outrage, and we still made it."

"Things can change, but we were able to adapt to them very well, even when Zoom links failed or we forgot our

mask at home," Oman said. "Over this year, I not only saw individual growth but universal growth across our class, universal growth that was not only influenced by our classmates but also by our adult mentors and parents."

She talked about how fast the years have gone by for parents. "For us, those years seemed like an eternity," she said. "People might say that this is where our journey begins, but I completely disagree. Our journey as students started a long time ago. Today is just the day where it slips into 300 different paths. Beneath sunny blue skies and the occasional gust of wind, the graduating class of 2021 proudly marched on stage one by one to receive their diplomas but not before one last reminder from Oman. "For the last time, OHS students. Make it a great day!"

3 Blossoms qualify for state golf



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Blooming Prairie's three state qualifiers, from left to right, are: Maggie Bruns, Jessica Ressler and Halle Strunk.

BP girls team earns second place, boys finish in third at sections

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

The Blooming Prairie girls and boys golf teams each finished in the top three at the section tournament on Tuesday, June 1, but it was the trio of Jessica

Ressler, Halle Strunk and Maggie Bruns that stole the show as they all advanced to the state tournament, which will be held at Pebble Creek Club in Becker on June 15 and 16.

Ressler, a senior, tied for medalist, or first

place, with Fillmore Central's Courtney Hersberger with a two-day score of 186.

Seniors Strunk and Bruns were also among the top 10 individual performers. Strunk earned fifth place with a score of 205 and Bruns, who was competing in varsity golf for the first time this season, shot a 217, which landed her in ninth place.

Seventh-grader Ella Farr rounded out Blooming Prairie's team score with a 247. Collectively, the girls team finished with an overall score of 885 and comfortably achieved second place in the tournament.

Eighth-grader Caitlyn Stangl shot a 270 and seventh-grader Aubry Alwes, who was also competing for the varsity team for the first time this year, finished with a 276.

Meanwhile, the boys team finished in third

place, just one stroke behind the second-place Bethlehem Academy Cardinals and just three strokes behind the section winners, the Lanesboro Burros.

Coach Carl Peterson said the lead bounced back-and-forth between those three teams until the very last hole when the Burros edged the

Cardinals.

The Blossoms were able to keep up with the Burros and Cardinals because Blooming Prairie's top four golfers, whose scores are combined to form BP's team score, all finished in the top 15 individual golfers. Junior Colton Jordison was the top-performing Awe-

some Blossom with a score of 180, which landed him in eighth place. Junior Garrett Farr was just two strokes behind with a 182, good for 11th place. Senior Kollin Alwes shot a 183 and earned 13th place, while freshman Kaiden Alwes was just one stroke behind with a 184 and finished in 14th place.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Awesome Blossoms' girls golf team finished in second place at the section tournament on Tuesday, June 1. The team, which includes from left to right Ella Farr, Aubry Alwes, Maggie Bruns, Halle Strunk, Jessica Ressler and Caitlyn Stangl, posed with their runner-up plaque after the tournament concluded.

Panthers keep their Cinderella run alive

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

Winning in post-season play is becoming contagious for the NRHEG baseball team.

The Panthers entered the section tournament as the No. 12 seed but have kept their season alive by beating No. 5 seed Minnesota Valley Lutheran, No. 8 seed Medford and most recently the No. 2 seed Blue Earth Area who they beat 5-2 on Saturday, June 5.

In the top of the fifth inning, the Panthers tied the game when Andrew Phillips hit an RBI triple.

The game was tied 2-2 in the top of the seventh inning but Ben Schoenrock brought in what ended up being the game-winning run with an RBI single.

Senior Kordell Schlaak was the winning pitcher. He struck out one, walked one and gave up just four hits and two runs over seven innings.

NRHEG's offense was led by George Roesler and Phillips who each tallied two hits.

In addition to collecting twice as many



STAFF PHOTO BY JOEY BUNTON

NRHEG freshman pitcher Dexter Lee throws home during the Panthers' 4-0 road win over Medford on Thursday, June 3.

hits as Blue Earth Area, the Panthers didn't commit any errors and stole seven bases. Clay Stenzel led NRHEG with two stolen bases.

The Panthers got to the quarterfinals of the elimination bracket by defeating Medford 4-0 on Thursday, June 3.

The key to NRHEG's win was the dominant pitching performance by Dexter Lee who struck out 13 Tigers and gave up just one hit and two walks in seven shut-out innings.

Thanks to Lee, the Panthers needed very little offense and they got enough in the first inning alone when Schlaak hit an RBI single to give NRHEG a 1-0 lead.

Overall, the Panthers accumulated eight hits. NRHEG's offense was led by Andrew Phillips and Schlaak who each recorded two hits.

Editor's note: The Panthers faced Sibley East on Monday, June 7, but given the Times' Monday deadline we don't yet know how NRHEG fared in that game.



STAFF PHOTO BY JOEY BUNTON

The Medford catcher gathers the ball after NRHEG's base runner slid across home plate and scored one of the four runs it scored in last Thursday's first round of the consolation bracket. The Panthers advanced to the consolation quarterfinals where they beat Blue Earth Area 5-2 and advanced to this Monday's consolation semifinal matchup against Sibley East.



STAFF PHOTO BY JOEY BUNTON

NRHEG's base runner dives back to first base as Medford's first baseman receives the pick-off attempt from his pitcher.

Panthers' softball stays alive

NRHEG bounces back in consolation round

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

After a tough 11-0 loss to Le Sueur-Henderson sent the NRHEG softball team to the consolation bracket of the double-elimination section tournament, the Panthers bounced back and advanced to the consolation semifinals with a 7-1 win over the Maple River Eagles on Saturday, June 5.

The biggest difference between NRHEG's game versus Maple River and its previous game versus Le Sueur-Henderson is the Panthers were able to get their offense going right away in the first inning.

Sidney Schultz got it started with a single and

then got into scoring position by stealing second base on the next pitch. Sophie Stork then drove Schultz with an RBI double. Grace Tufte followed with a single, which drove in Stork.

NRHEG added two more runs in the second inning and one in the fourth to give itself a 5-0 lead before Maple River scored its lone run.

Head Softball Coach Wendy Schultz said the Panthers as a team hit much better than they did against Le Sueur-Henderson.

Faith Nielsen had the biggest hit of the game with a triple and Stork and Knudson each hit a double.

In addition to their strong offense, she was also proud of how NRHEG's defense played. "The girls had many balls hit to them defensively and they made the plays. I'm so proud of the way they played in the oppressive heat conditions," Schultz said.

On the mound, Stork was named the winning pitcher. She tallied four strikeouts, one walk, gave up seven hits and just one earned run.

Since the Panthers showcased strong hitting, fielding and pitching, Schultz called it a complete team win.

By beating Maple River, NRHEG advanced to the consolation semifinals

where it'll face Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial (LCWM), which boasts a 20-2 record.

Editor's note: The Panthers played the LCWM Knights on Tuesday, June 8, but since the Times has a Monday deadline, we don't yet know how NRHEG fared in that game.

NRHEG stats: Brenlee Knudson - 3/3, double and 2 runs scored; Sophie Stork - 2/3, double, 1 run scored and 2 RBI; Sidney Schultz - 2/4, 2 runs scored and 1 stolen base; Faith Nielsen - 1/3 with a triple; Bree Ihrie - 1/3, 1 run scored and 3 RBI; Grace Tufte - 1/3 with 1 RBI and Hallie Schultz - 1 hit, 1 RBI and 1 stolen base.

SPRING SPORTS ROUNDPUP

Hayfield knocks Blossoms out of softball playoffs

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

Softball
Blooming Prairie 13, United South Central 3

After a tough 11-1 loss to Waterville-Elysian-Morristown, the Blossoms kept their season alive by beating the United South Central (USC) Rebels by 10 runs on Saturday, June 5.

Blooming Prairie took a commanding lead by scoring six runs in the bottom of the first inning.

USC scored two runs in the fourth inning and one in the fifth, but the Blossoms responded with one run in each of those innings before erupting for five runs in the sixth inning.

Allison Krohnberg was named the winning pitcher. She struck out six Rebels and gave up just three hits and one earned run in five innings. Macy Lembke came in in relief and struck out three Rebels in a scoreless top of the sixth inning.

Blooming Prairie's offense was led by Rachel Winzenburg who hit a three-run triple, Lauren Schammel who went 2-for-3 with two RBI and two runs scored and Shawnee Snyder who went 2-for-4 with one RBI and two runs scored.

Later that day, the Blossoms saw their season come to an end when they suffered a 2-0 loss to Hayfield. Blooming Prairie ended the season with a 10-14 record.

Fairmont 11, Medford 3
The first round of the Section 2AA softball tournament pitted the 6-13 Tigers against the 6-12 Fairmont Cardinals so despite both teams having below .500 records one of them was going to advance to the quarterfinals. Unfortunately for Medford, Fairmont was the team that cruised to an eight-run win on Tuesday, June 1.

This loss ended the Tigers' season. They finished the season with a 6-14 record.

Baseball
New Prague 17, Owatonna 8

The Owatonna baseball team came into the playoffs with a 12-7 record and it was looking to achieve more success in the playoffs, but it just couldn't limit the damage done by New Prague's offense so the Huskies lost by nine runs on Saturday, May 29.

The Huskies took an early 2-0 lead when Nick Williams' hit a bases-loaded, two-run RBI single in the first inning.



A couple of Medford fielders scramble to find the softball as a Fairmont base runner puts down her hand to reach the base in Section 2AA playoff action June 1. Fairmont easily defeated Medford 11-3.

However, in the second and third inning, the Trojans scored a combined 10 runs and despite Williams hitting another two-run single, New Prague still held a commanding 10-4 lead after three innings.

The Trojans tacked on two more runs in the fourth inning, but the Huskies responded with three runs in the fifth so the score was 12-7 after five innings.

New Prague sealed its win by scoring five runs in the sixth inning.

The Huskies' offense was led by Williams who went 3-for-4 with 4 RBI and Taylor Bogen and Matt Seykora who each went 2-for-4.

After this game, Owatonna faced Rochester John Marshall in the consolation bracket and lost 9-1 so the Huskies finish their season with a 12-9 record.

W-E-M 9, Blooming Prairie 1
After going 1-1 against Waterville-Elysian-Morristown (W-E-M) earlier this season, the Blossoms had the chance to win the rubber match and advance to the quarterfinals when they faced the Buccaneers in the first round of the Section 1A tournament. Unfortunately, it was the Buccaneers who took advantage of that opportunity and handily won on Monday, May 31.

The game was tightly-contested for the first three innings with W-E-M holding a 2-0 lead at the beginning of the fourth inning. However, the final four innings were an entirely different story - with the Buccaneers' offense erupting for seven runs to win the game in convincing fashion.

With this loss, the Blossoms' season came to an end. They ended the season with a 6-12 record.

Medford 2, Le Sueur-Henderson 1

Whenever a team has great pitching, they have a chance to win the game and Medford had just that with AJ Vandereide who pitched a gem to lead the Tigers to a one-run win on Saturday, May 29.

Vandereide pitched all seven innings, struck out nine Giants and gave up zero earned runs.

Meanwhile, Medford's offense provided just enough run support. The Tigers collected six hits with Casey Chambers leading the team with two.

The Tigers advanced to the section quarterfinals where they lost to Belle Plaine 10-0. Then, in the first round of the consolation bracket, their season came to an end when they lost to NRHEG 4-0.

Medford ends the season with an 11-9 record.



Blossoms pitcher Allison Krohnberg fires in a pitch against WEM Thursday in Waterville. The Blossoms came up on the short end by losing 11-1. BP came back on Saturday to smoke USC 13-3, but the season came to an end later that day when the Blossoms lost a 2-0 heartbreaker to Hayfield.



Shortstop Macy Lembke puts down the tag during the softball playoff against WEM Thursday afternoon. After losing the game, the Blossoms came back to win a game

One goal short, Huskies lacrosse teams fall in playoffs

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS WRITER

The Owatonna boys and girls lacrosse teams each entered the section tournament as the four seed and faced the fifth seed in the section quarterfinal; given how close the seeding was for Huskies and their opponents, it's no wonder that both games were decided by one goal.

The boys team won its quarterfinal game against Northfield in thrilling fashion when Fletcher Schulz scored in the third overtime to give the Huskies a 10-9 win. The Huskies advanced to the semifinals where they faced the top-seeded Lakeville North Panthers. The Panthers proved why they're seeded so highly by cruising to a 20-6 win.

Meanwhile, the girls team faced a familiar foe, the Century Panthers, in the quarterfinals. The Huskies beat the Panthers 5-2 in April, but lost 5-4 in May so the playoff matchup represented the rubber match and Century came out on top 11-0 after Annie Moran's shot at the buzzer was just wide of the net.

Against Northfield, the Huskies took a 2-1 lead after Caleb Belting and Wyatt Oldefendt each scored in the first quarter, but the Raiders responded with back-to-back goals and took a 3-2 lead into the second quarter.

Northfield doubled its lead by scoring the first goal of the second quarter, but Preston Meier's goal trimmed Owatonna's deficit to one goal and Oldefendt's second goal of the game tied the game at 4-4.

However, the Raiders scored one more goal before halftime and led 5-4 at the break.

In the third quarter, Husky midfielder Casey Johnson scored, but besides that it was all Northfield, which scored three goals and took an 8-5 lead into the final quarter.

Belting made it a two-goal margin with his second of the goal. Owatonna's offense kept attacking and Schulz and Zack Kirsch scored back-to-back goals to tie the game at 8-8.

Just 40 seconds later, Northfield re-took the lead, but Belting's third goal of the game tied the game up again and forced overtime.

After no score in the first two overtimes, Schulz received a pass right in front of Northfield's goal and quickly deposited it in the back of the net to give the Huskies a 10-9 win in the third overtime.

Owatonna Head Lacrosse Coach Scott Seykora reported that the players of the game were goaltender Korban Stricklin, defender Dom Valento, midfielder Caleb Belting and Schulz.

For all their work defeating the Raiders, the Huskies were rewarded with a matchup against the number one seed in the section tournament, the Lakeville North Panthers.

The first quarter went back-and-forth until the final two minutes when the Panthers scored four goals and took a 7-3 win into the first break.

Lakeville North's momentum continued in the second quarter when it scored another seven goals all while holding Owatonna scoreless so the score was 14-3 at halftime.

In the third quarter, Preston Meier recorded a hat trick with his third goal of the game, but the Panthers scored two more goals and took a 16-4 lead into the last quarter.

The Huskies scored two goals, the first by Joe Bellomy and the second by Joe Webster, but it was much too little, much too late as they ended up losing 20-6.

Seykora said Bellomy and Webster were the players of the game because they each scored their first varsity goal.

Girls fall in quarterfinals
Despite an 11-2 regular season record, the Owatonna girls team faced one of the two teams it lost to, the Century Panthers, in the section quarterfinals.

The Huskies got two first-half goals from junior attacker Audrey Simon and one from senior attacker Allie Keller, senior midfielder Elizabeth Harder and sophomore midfielder Annie Moran but were tied with the Panthers 5-5 at halftime.

In the second half, Moran scored two goals and Simon scored one more so they each recorded a hat trick. Additionally, senior defender Grace Smith and junior midfielder Karmen Eaton also scored in the second half, but Moran's shot at the buzzer was just wide and Owatonna lost 11-10.

The Huskies finish their season with an 11-3 record.



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Members of Zion Lutheran Church, along with other family members, have teamed up to take care of the flowers at the cemetery in Lemond Township. They include: front row, from left, Halle Underwood, Roxanne Underwood, Tess Underwood, Judy Karaus, Nadine Strengre and Mary Sommers; back row, Linda Wiesjhan, Denis Woodfill, Maryann Woodfill, Wayne Sommers and Glenn Wiesjhan.

'It's just so peaceful'

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RICK BUSSLER

Rural church members decorate cemetery with flowers

They come with one thought in mind. They want to decorate and maintain a legacy of honoring loved ones and keeping memories alive. And they have found the perfect location to showcase breathtaking beauty.

Just days before Memorial Day, 11 members of Zion Lutheran Church in rural Ellendale came together with golf carts to place 59 bright red geraniums in pots with stands around the cemetery for the sixth year.

"It's just so peaceful," said Judy Karaus as she touched her husband's gravestone with one of the geraniums. Jerry Karaus was buried at Zion cemetery last July.

The idea of putting flowers around the cemetery came from Jerry, who had maintained the cemetery for years before his death. He noticed the flower concept being offered at a cemetery in Albert Lea.

"He had the vision and could see it (for Zion)," Glenn Wiesjhan said of Jerry. Wiesjhan has taken over as coordinator of the project. "He thought it would be pretty."

Jerry purchased all the stands for the pots and got the rest of the project rolling at Zion, which has been serving the rural countryside since the late 1800s, with the first burial taking place in 1906. The original church burned down on Father's Day in 1990. A new church was quickly built and opened later that year on Thanksgiving.

The geraniums that decorate the cemetery are ordered from nearby Hilltop Nursery, a family-owned business.

Asked about why geraniums, a group of ladies chimed almost in unison, "Just that they are hearty, they withstand the wind and the red really shows beauty."

Church members switch off taking turns with the perpetual care of the cemetery. They wa-



Glenn Wiesjhan waters the flowerpots at the Zion Lutheran Church cemetery near Ellendale Thursday afternoon. A group of church members has placed 59 geraniums around the cemetery. This is the sixth year of having flowers provide beauty at the graveyard.



Judy Karaus tends to the geranium flowerpot by deadheading the flowers at her husband's gravesite at Zion Lutheran Church in rural Ellendale. Jerry Karaus started the flower project at Zion six years ago. He died last July.



"I feel strongly about continuing this. We hope to continue to keep this and to grow and reach out to more people."

Glenn Wiesjhan
Zion Flower Coordinator

"The more deadheads you have, the more flowers you will have," Maryann Woodfill said. "Those flowers go through a lot. It's always windy."

But the members aren't worried about the weather causing havoc with the flowers. "The Lord takes care of them when we're not here," said Woodfill. "It's nice, peaceful and quiet when you are out here," she added.

Woodfill and the others share a close connection with those buried in the cemetery as they knew all of them. "It's just a way to show love to all the people that have been in our church," she said.

For some, the flowers remind them of their childhood. They recall 60 years ago when they came out to the cemetery with jars of lilacs to put by the gravesites. "No

matter what the flower was, it was special because somebody cared," Woodfill said.

Tending to the flowers has become a family affair for Roxanne Underwood, who regularly brings her four granddaughters to assist. Last week, she brought Halle Underwood, 18, and her sister Tess, 10, to help out.

Roxanne said she never has any problem getting her grandchildren to help. "I remind them that they have to come help grandma because grandma does a lot for them," she said, adding they need to learn at a young age the value of volunteering.

Wiesjhan, who grew up by Hope, left the area for 40 years before returning in 2007. He said it was important for him to get involved at Zion, where four generations of his family are buried. He has been helping with the flower project for the past three years.

"I feel strongly about continuing this," Wiesjhan said with tears in his eyes. "We hope to continue to keep this and to grow and reach out to more people."

Besides Wiesjhan, Denis Woodfill, Wayne Sommers and Nadine Strengre all serve on Zion's cemetery board. They send out a letter typically in February requesting people to place flowers for their loved ones. A small fee of \$40 is charged for the flowers. They later send a personal thank you to those who contribute to the project.

In September, the flowers come out and the pots and stands are all washed up and stored away for another season.

Looking out at the cemetery with flowers blowing in the wind, Wiesjhan said: "It says a lot for the people who have passed. It's a nice remembrance for them."

Added one member, "They are all like family. You knew everybody by name. You don't want to leave."