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Memories of Christmas Past

Here are some stories told by residents of the nursing homes in our community about their childhood memories of Christmas.

Margaret grew up on a farm close to Nerstrand. Her parents milked cows and it was one of Margaret's jobs to wash the milking machine parts every day. There was lots of work on the farm and she had a younger sister but Margaret did more of the work outside. She had to walk to school in town every morning and would cross the railroad tracks on the edge of town. She would hear the locomotive chugging up the long grade from Dennison as it made its way toward Kenyon, a big city in her young mind. Their neighbor would haul milk to the creamery and drop off their daughter at school on the way each morn-

ing, but Margaret made her way on foot through the cold and quiet December mornings dressed in warm clothes and carrying the lunch that her grandma had made.

As a young girl Margaret believed their family had everything they could want. Nerstrand had a clothing store, a grocery store, a hardware store, the meat market and two cafes. The farm family even had a telephone, a party line. The phone at each house had a special ring that let you know the call was for you, and you always knew when the neighbors got a phone call as well. And if you were real careful you could pick up the receiver and listen in. But that was not nice. They had a piano at their house and she took lessons from a neighbor lady and cultivated a love of music that lasted a



lifetime.

Christmas was a special time in her childhood. Church was important to them and there was always a church service Christmas eve, where the children would put on a program. After returning home the kids were allowed to open their presents. Most were ordinary items like hand made clothes sewn by her mom and grandma. When she was nine years old Margaret recalls receiving a large doll as a Christmas

present along with handmade doll clothes. The girls would play and sing Christmas carols for the family. Her favorite was "O' Little Town of Bethlehem".

Christmas Day was a typical Scandinavian feast with lutefisk and lefse and many homemade cookies and treats. Her two uncles helped with the farm work and would join the family for the big meal.

(continued on page 7)

Blue Jackets Awarded to Local FFA Members



The Minnesota FFA Foundation is pleased to announce the presentation of the official FFA jacket to members of the Triton FFA Chapter. Kiya Avery, Emma Klejeski, Elyssa Robinson, Cadence Spearman, Arianna Thompson, Jasmin Willette, Grant Brown and Breanna Klejeski have been selected to receive their own jacket. 420 students are earning a jacket and 8 are from Triton. That is a record amount for us. The previous high was 6.

As Minnesota FFA welcomes thousands of young people into membership, the Minnesota FFA Foundation has announced the recipients of the Blue Jacket Bright Futures program. The program provides sponsored FFA jackets to Minnesota youth who are starting their FFA career. This is the eighth year the Minnesota FFA Foundation has offered the program.

(continued on page 5)

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Peace During Pandemic



By Pastor Mark Schlasner
United Methodist Church, West Concord

I'm a huge fan of Christmas movies. The day after Thanksgiving I pull out my extensive Christmas movie collection, my favorite Christmas sweater, and have a movie marathon! One of my favorite movies has to be How The Grinch Stole Christmas. The story of a Grinch who tries his best to ruin the spirit of the Whos, but ultimately fails. My heart grows three sizes larger when I see the Whos come together, after losing everything they hold dear, and sing their hopeful song. This year that moment spoke more to me than any other Christmas movie.

I think this moment spoke to me because it's this wonderful image of unstoppable love squashing evil. The Whos were able to come together while not knowing if the person next to them was the evil present stealer. They still sing their song with nonsensical words, but somehow we still hear

those Christmas themes of hope, love, joy, and peace in that nonsensical lyrics of "Fah who foraze" and "Dah who doraze!" This song reminds me of the unstoppable love that Christians find in the coming of Jesus Christ.

The coming of Jesus Christ undoes the evil powers of this world and declares God's peace to all the world. As the Christmas story goes, in the book of Matthew, the three wise men went to find Jesus on behalf of King Herod. Herod was afraid that Jesus was a threat to his power. Can you believe that? A king was threatened by simply the existence of a baby. Jesus doesn't even do anything until after King Herod is dead! It's such a small story in the birth narrative of Jesus, but I find it to speak volumes to God's peace undoing the evils of this world.

One thing I've been hearing from most people is how they ask for God's peace this season. Peace for a country divided by politics and power. Peace during a time where people are struggling to pay the bills. Peace with family who refuse to speak due to some mistake. This is the peace that Jesus

brought so long ago, right? How come we still struggle to find it?

This peace can only come from that unstoppable love of Jesus Christ. It's that unstoppable love that demands us to look at those suffering in the eye and live with them. It's so difficult to recognize suffering, especially when we're the ones who are suffering. When we do and can actually be with those who are suffering, then God's peace comes out of that unstoppable love.

Unstoppable love is when we recognize that our neighbor is celebrating Christmas alone and share some of our dinner. Unstoppable love is when we take that first step to mend a broken relationship. Unstoppable love when we see someone struggling and offer to lend a listening ear. You have no clue how that can bring peace

into someone's life even though nothing has changed. Just knowing that someone cares enough to recognize suffering and offer some empathy and love does wonders. We know it's true because Jesus does that for each and every one of us. Jesus' unstoppable love undoes the evil of apathy and brings peace amidst suffering.

That's why when I see Jesus' unstoppable love in Whoville. The Whos were suffering together! They came together in their suffering and found hope, love, joy, and peace! If we really want peace, then we have to destroy the evils of apathy and help someone who is suffering. Help however we reasonably can. As we look forward to Jesus' coming this Christmas, I pray that you can Jesus' unstoppable love and God's peace this season.

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NOTICE: Due to COVID-19 check your church website or Facebook page for updates.

Area Church Directory The King's Grace

Scripture Reading — Revelation 22:12-21

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen. — Revelation 22:21

It has been said that the last pages of our Bible bend around to touch the first pages. They bring full circle the one big story of God's love and salvation of the world. In the beginning, God the King creates the world and proclaims it good, good, very good. "Good" is the most important word describing God and God's world in the beginning.

But much that unfolds later in this story—and in our world—is not good. There is sinful rebellion, guilt, shame, corruption, violence, injustice, and disintegration. The world is broken, and we feel it in the depths of our souls. The world's history books and the daily news proclaim it unceasingly. But unceasing too in the Bible's big story is something that transforms and redeems all this brokenness: grace.

The King's grace is a phrase often used to refer to a king's favor or presence or to simply a king himself. In the Bible, it is finally the King's grace that gets the last word. Grace comes in the person and work of King Jesus. He is the one who is King of kings and Lord of lords. The first chapter of the Bible proclaims, "Good." The last chapter proclaims what is greater still: "Grace." God's big story moves from good to grace.

Whatever we face in terms of struggle, guilt, or sorrow, the King's grace gets the last word. The King's grace is the world's—and our—great hope!

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Avvy Mathias

Avvy Mathias of Minnetonka, passed away peacefully, with her daughters by her side, on November 28th, 2020. She was born on July 8th, 1937, in Kenyon, the daughter of Gustav and Thelma (Jacobson) Hilling.

After high school, Avvy worked for Farmers State Bank in West Concord as a teller. Avvy loved to drive all of her life and had an interest in cars. Two years after she started working, she was very proud when she bought her first car, a two-toned gray, 1957 Ford. She married soon after that, and had 3 children.

In the early years, Avvy's priorities were being a mom and was very busy supporting her daughters' school activities; serving as the local Girl Scout Leader; and enjoyed sewing her daughter's clothes including Halloween costumes. She taught Sunday School and was involved in a variety of roles at Hegre Lutheran Church, in rural Kenyon, where she and her family attended church. Avvy took every opportunity to travel with her young girls during the summers, driving coast to coast.

Avvy's occupations included: Operating Room Technician for St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester; taxi cab driver for Rochester Cab; and owning her own cleaning business.

Avvy grew-up surrounded by many aunts and uncles, and cousins, and relished attending endless family gatherings and reunions. She developed many deep and meaningful relationships with her relatives as a young person. Her love of family continued throughout her life, especially as her grandchildren came along. She wanted nothing more than to share in the lives of her daughters and six grandchildren. "Loving and adoring" her grandchildren would be an understatement of how she felt about each of them. She loved them unconditionally and never stopped talking about them. Avvy counted it a privilege to be her grandchildren's nanny in her later years.

Avvy leaves behind her family including her children: Kathy and Jim Roberts (Minnetonka) and their children, Sam, Jacob and Grace; Karen and Scott Saboe (Minnetonka) and their daughter Annika;

and Susan and Jerry Walker (Cottage Grove) and their children, Lauren (Walker) and Jeff Bloem (St. Paul); and Andrew Walker (Milwaukee) and fiancé Laura Barron; her sister Reenie and John Spreiter (West Concord); and her niece Sarah(Spreiter) and Bryan Datema (Rochester) and their children Max and Ingrid.

Avvy was preceded in death, by her parents Gustav and Thelma Hilling; and brother, Orlan Hilling.

Over the years, Avvy enjoyed traveling with her adult daughters to a variety of special places. Norway was one of those notable trips where she had the opportunity to meet some of her Norwegian relatives, and learn more about her family genealogy. She enjoyed cooking and baking, and on special occasions, requests were made to "Grandma Avvy" for her sugar cookies, banana bread, lemon bars, and brownies. She loved to host parties for family and friends. Avvy was a collector in general, and was a fan of garage sales; she passionately collected dishes and antique glassware.

Our Mom's big laugh will especially be missed. She will be honored, and remembered in our hearts forever. A private service will be held to commemorate Avvy's life. Interment was in Hegre Church Cemetery in rural Kenyon.

Wayne E. McCarty

Wayne Erling McCarty, 73, of West Concord, died unexpectedly Tuesday, November 24, 2020, of natural causes.

He was born May 16, 1947 in Harvey, North Dakota the son of Dale and Ruth

(Strege) McCarty. He proudly grew up on a farm near Drake and graduated from Drake High School in 1965. He was drafted into military service and served in the Marines. After his military service, he worked at Paper Calmenson in Minneapolis. On June 29, 1974, he married Connie Tiegs at Drake Baptist Church in Drake, North Dakota. The couple live in Drake, Grace City and Clyde, ND, Harmony, and West Concord, MN since



1993. Wayne worked at Cenex in Calvin, worked in agronomy and drove truck. In his retirement, he has driven the VA van for Dodge County for 11 years.

Wayne enjoyed hunting, fishing, golfing, bonfires, camping, riding the four wheeler, butchering and processing and made many different kinds of meat products. He loved sports and followed the Twins and Vikings. He was very patriotic and was proud of his military service. He loved giving to people and helping people out as much as he could. He especially enjoyed his family and spending time with them. He was passionate about his faith and shared it with his family and friends.

He is survived by his wife, Connie McCarty of West Concord; children, Eric (Andrea) McCarty of Faribault, Andrea (Erik) Propotnik of Rochester and Brooke (Chris) Moeller of Eyota; grandchildren, Blake McCarty, Bryce McCarty, Grace Liverseed, Charles McCarty, Ava Propotnik, Olivia Propotnik, Jasmine Moeller, Isabelle Moeller and Aubrey Moeller; siblings, Ronald McCarty, Myron (Elaine) McCarty, Peggy (Ron) Kruschwitz, Lynn McCarty, Jay (Barb) McCarty, Roger (Marcia) McCarty, Galen (Sandy) McCarty and Joel (Becky) McCarty and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Dale and Ruth and sisters-in-law, Jean McCarty and Myra McCarty.

Visitation was at Michaelson Funeral Home in Owatonna on Sunday, November 29, 2020 from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. COVID protocol including masks and social distancing was observed. A Private Funeral service was held. Burial will be in the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Preston at a later date.

Florence Lucille Wangen

Florence Lucille Wangen passed away peacefully at Glen Oaks Care Center in New London, on November 29, 2020. Florence was born April 13, 1928, in West Concord, MN to Jacob and Julia (Phillips) Vangness of Iowa. She attended school at #97 in Goodhue County, graduating in 1946 from West Concord High School.



In 1947 she married Gilbert Giesler, to this union two children were born, James and Charles both of West Concord. Gilbert passed away as a result of an automobile accident in 1956.

In 1959, Florence married Robert Wangen of Austin. They farmed for a few years and later moved to George Lake in Spicer where they both worked for Willmar Regional Treatment Center. She retired from in 1991. Bob passed away in 1985.

She was a member of Faith Lutheran Church and Legion Auxiliary Post 545. She enjoyed spending time with family and friends, playing cards, and laughing. Florence was a great cook and loved to host company at their home on George Lake. She traveled often with her sister, Harriet and spoke daily on the phone with her sister, Shirley.

Florence is survived by her sister, Shirley Giesler of West Concord; four sons, Jim Giesler and Charlie (Paula) Giesler all of West Concord, Joe (Le Anne) Wangen of Spicer and Josh (Laura) Wangen of Hawick; two daughters, LaVonne (Terry) Boeder of Tucson, AZ, and Susan (Charles) Ostendorf of Fargo, ND. She was blessed with thirteen grandchildren and twenty-four great-grandchildren.

She is preceded in death by her parents, two husbands, siblings Obert, Alice, Harriet, Jeffery, Irving, Ruth, Harold, Luther, and Kenneth, and daughter-in-law Prudi Giesler.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

(obituaries continued on page 4)

Brian Weber
Melanie Leth
Timothy Woessner

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NOTICE

The Concord Cemetery Association will be having it's annual meeting on **Monday, January 12th** at 6:30pm at the **Concord Church of Christ** 55087 200th Ave. West Concord, MN 55985

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Obituaries

John Svien

John Svien, age 66, of Kenyon, died Monday, November 30 at his home following a long illness.



John Anthony Svien, Jr. was born on June 9, 1954 in Faribault, the son of John A. and Jannes (Hauge) Svien, Sr. He grew up in the Kenyon area and attended Kenyon High School. He worked as a farmer and had various other jobs early in life. John was a self-taught welder and worked in welding for a few years for Cannon Equipment and was a welder for Hancock Manufacturing for 25 years. On March 3, 1997 John was united in marriage to Monica Scheiber in Decatur, IL. He enjoyed going to casinos, deer hunting, and loved farming.

Survivors include his wife Monica of Kenyon, son Johnny (Jennifer) Svien of New Prague, daughter Meghan Svien of Cannon Falls; granddaughters Samantha, Katelyn, and Abigail; sisters JoAnn (Ron) Peterson of Kenyon, and Jeanette (Blair) Baalson of Kenyon; as well as nieces and nephews.

John was preceded in death by his parents John and Jannes, his sister Virginia (Roar) Nesseth, aunts, uncles, a nephew, and his grandparents.

A walk-through visitation will be from 3-5:00 pm, Friday, December 11, at Lundberg Funeral Home, 5839 Hwy 19 Blvd, Cannon Falls, Mn 55009. Masks and social distancing will be required. There will be a private family prayer service following at 5 pm. Interment will be in the Vang Lutheran Cemetery at a later date.

Lorraine Esther Dostal

Lorraine Esther Dostal was called to her Heavenly Home by her Lord and Savior on December 11, 2020.



Funeral services were held at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Owatonna, on Wednesday,

December 16, 2020 at 1 p.m. Reverend Kirk Griebel officiated. Interment was at Meadow Ridge Memorial Park, Faribault.

The service video will be available at the bottom of this obituary on Thursday, December 17.

Visitation will be held at the church one hour prior to the service on Wednesday.

Arrangements are being completed by the Boldt Funeral Home, Faribault.

Lorraine, the daughter of Walter and Esther (Bauer) Schlobohm, was born on December 24, 1928 in Merton Township, rural Steele County. She attended school at District 15 and Medford High School. She married Donald Dostal on April 9, 1947 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Medford. Together they farmed near West Concord. Lorraine liked artwork of drawing, painting and woodcraft. She and Don squared danced for 30 years. She was financial secretary and treasurer for many years at Peace Lutheran Church, Claremont. Her husband Donald preceded her in death on June 15, 2014. Later, Lorraine moved to Owatonna and became a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church.

Lorraine is survived by two siblings, Eleanor Neubert of Sauk Centre and Duane (Diane) Schlobohm of Faribault; one sister-in-law, Louise Schlobohm of Faribault; two brothers-in-law, Clayton Harris of Spring Lake Park and Sherman Harris (Joyce) Benson of Kenyon; and many nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Donald Dostal; her brother,

Donald Schlobohm; three sisters, Arlene (Albert) Ciffra, Valeria Harris, Evelyn Benson; one brother-in-law, Fred Neubert; and all the Dostal sisters- and brothers-in-law, Harry (Margaret) Dostal, John (Elizabeth) Dostal, Josephine (Robert) Panzer, Elsie (Dewain) Baker, Mabel (and

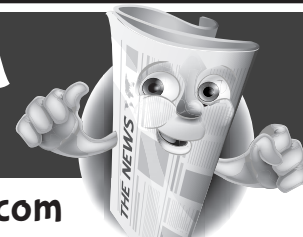
Selmer) Miller and Margaret (and Arthur) Boeke.

Memorial gifts may be directed to Camp Omega or The Lutheran Hour.

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Craig Schlichting
Superintendent

I appreciate the people that have reached out to me for an explanation on “why” we are in a distance learning model. I have also been asked why we chose to continue that model until after the holiday break. I wish there was a simple answer to explain this difficult decision. I am going to explain our decision in this article. **Our first choice would always be to have the students in the building.** I do appreciate knowing how much our families value the in-person learning experience. A large part of what we do in a school setting comes from the individual interactions we have with students each day. As educators, we know the importance of having students in the building. We know that it is difficult for families and students when we have to adjust to a distance learning model. When we have to make the decision to go to a distance learning model, we take that decision very seriously.

We have a number of graphs and charts that help provide information on the trends of the virus in our county. Even though they provide valuable information, nothing was more important than what was happening in our district. At different times during the year we have had staff and students that were considered a close contact. In those situations we are mandated to have those individuals quarantine. Before the decision was made to go to distance learning we had several staff members in quarantine due to the virus or from being deemed a close contact. It was becoming increasingly difficult to cover classes for the students that were in attendance. The difficult thing with a quarantine is the fact that you will have staff out for an extended period of time before they can return. We felt that if we could have a two week window after Thanksgiving to reduce our quarantines we would be in good shape to return to the hybrid model on December 14th. We also felt that we could see a reduction in the number of active cases in the district. At that time, we have had a total of 18 positive cases for the district. When we went to distance learning we were at an all time high of 8 current active cases according to our dashboard data.

Once the decision was made to begin distance learning. Our plan was to monitor the cases numbers to make sure we made the best decision to return to our hybrid model on December 14th. Our Incident Command Team meets each week to evaluate the case numbers in our district and the trends that we are seeing in Dodge County and our district. We were told that the projection was to see a spike during Thanksgiving,

and then we would see a decline that would make it safe to return to our hybrid learning model on December 14th. The projection on the spike was accurate. What we did not see was a decline in the numbers that indicated we could make a decision to safely return on December 14th. Each time our team met, we continued to see the high numbers and did not see a decline as we hoped to see. With that information, we needed to make a decision on whether or not to return to the hybrid model on the 14th or to continue with the distance learning model.

The total case numbers for Dodge County in September were 122. In October we saw an increase to 172. The numbers for November ended up at 460. This was a very large increase and we saw the impact of that on our school community as well. This is not a concern if it doesn't impact your school district. In our situation it was. We had to consider the high number of cases that were being reported each day in Dodge County, as well as the fact that Dodge County Public Health was being overwhelmed and reported that they were having a difficult time with contact tracing and keeping up with the positive cases that were being reported. We didn't really know how high or accurate the case numbers were because of this large increase. Knowing that the data was not completely accurate, it made it difficult to make a decision on returning to a hybrid model from the distance learning situation we began after the Thanksgiving Break.

Our decision to remain in distance learning until December 23rd was extremely difficult. We wanted to make a decision that

would lead to having our students back in the building for hybrid instruction for longest and most consistent period of time possible. We were concerned that if we brought the students back to the hybrid model, we may have to switch right back to a distance learning model. We looked at the fact that if we did bring the students back to the hybrid model, the secondary students would only have three to four days of in person instruction and the elementary would have six and a half days. To make any change in our instructional model in that timeframe would have been disruptive to student learning. We wanted to make our decision soon enough to give families time to prepare, but still wanted to use data to make the decision that it was safe to return. The numbers have continued to remain high, and we are currently at a total of 33 positive cases for the district. Our quarantine numbers have dropped significantly due to the fact that we have been in distance learning. The decision was made to set January 4th as our goal to return to hybrid learning.

Please reach out to me with any questions that you may have regarding our school district. You can email me at schlich@triton.k12.mn.us or you can call me at 507-418-7530 to reach me at the district office. I would be happy to set up a time to meet with you or your organization. I believe that communication is an important aspect of my job responsibility, and I welcome the opportunity to learn from your perspective. GO COBRAS!

#WeAreTriton

TRITON CLASS OF 2021



2021 SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Carter Hellevik is a senior at Triton High School. His parents are Jeff and Lisa Hellevik and he has one brother, Tanner.

Carter is active in football and after school works at Kwik Trip.

In his spare time he likes gaming and spending time with family and friends.

Christmas is his favorite time of year and he loves Christmas music.

After graduation he plans to seek an apprenticeship program to be an electrician.



CARTER HELLEVIK

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Blue Jackets Awarded to Local FFA Members

(continued from page 1)

“The Blue Jackets Bright Future program is a valuable program providing students with an FFA jacket to support their FFA involvement. A personalized FFA jacket provides recipients with a sense of pride while giving them ownership of their FFA experiences, said Lavyne Rada, Minnesota FFA Association Leadership Development Coordinator. “FFA plays an important role in developing agricultural and leadership skills in students while preparing them for their future careers.”

“The jacket is a symbol of tradition and pride for those who have worn the official FFA jacket. Many past members have sponsored jackets, but it's not uncommon for individuals and companies to sponsor jackets because they appreciate what the organization does to develop young leaders,” says Val Aarsvold, Minnesota FFA Foundation Executive Director.

The Minnesota FFA Foundation wishes to thank the sponsors of the Blue Jackets Bright Futures program this year. The sponsors of this program are what make it possible for our FFA students to have a successful experience with FFA! Thank you for making a difference in the lives of a student.

For more information about the Minnesota FFA Foundation's Blue Jacket Bright Futures program, contact Program Coordinator, Amanda Sommers, at 507-461-2214 or visit our website at www.mnffaoundation.org.

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Triton High School AAA Award Winners

On behalf of the Triton AAA Selection Committee, we are proud to recognize Alex Kruckeberg and Brenna Essig as the 2020-2021 AAA Award Winners. The purpose of the AAA Award Program is to recognize and honor high school seniors who have excelled in the classroom, on the athletic field, and in the fine arts. To qualify for the AAA Award, high school seniors must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher, participate in league sponsored athletic and fine arts activities and comply with the MSHSL's Student Code of Conduct.

Brenna Essig is the daughter of James and Laurie Essig. Brenna holds a 3.90 GPA. Brenna is very active in school activities participating in volleyball, track and field, student council, Minnesota Honor Society, SADD, concert band, jazz band, and pep

band. Throughout these activities Brenna has earned all-conference honors in volleyball twice, holds school records in the 4X800 and 1600 meter medley relays, was named captain of the volleyball team, and earned academic all-state for track and field multiple times. Brenna has also earned multiple superior and excellent ratings within band showcases. She has been an exemplary example of a positive leader and has embodied what being a Cobra is all about.

Alex Kruckeberg is the son of Randy and Shannon Kruckeberg. Alex carries an impressive 3.75 GPA and participates in varsity football and varsity basketball. In addition, Alex has participated in the concert band earlier in his high school career. Alex was voted most improved for the boys basketball team last year and is a multiple year starter for football. While participating in multiple activities, Alex will graduate with forty-one college credits with his work at RCTC through PSEO. Alex has been a great leader within our school throughout the past four years.



Alex Kruckeberg



Brenna Essig

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Memories of Christmas Past

(continued from page 1)

Her grandma was the official lefse maker, and Margaret couldn't wait to eat lefse fresh of the griddle with butter and brown sugar. And of course there was the famous Nerstrand bologna.

Audrey grew up near Berne where she lived with her brother on her grandparents farm. Christmas Eve they always had oyster stew. Grandpa would always go out to the barn during supper to "help a cow have a calf" and that was when Santa showed up. Santa had a bag with unwrapped presents like cracker jacks and boxes of Lifesavers hard candy.

They would go to Christmas Eve church service at Berne and she remembers how beautiful it looked with candles lighting the windows. There was a Christmas tree at the church with presents underneath from Sunday School teachers and friends. The adults would take communion and then the families would head back home where

there were more gifts waiting to be opened. They would go to Rochester shopping for the holidays at stores like Woolworths, Kreskes and Donaldsons at the Miracle Mile for gifts for her brother and grandparents.

Most years there were games, clothes or a toy like a pair of ice skates, but one year she knew she had a special gift and it was the best ever. It was easy to tell what it was because however you wrap a baton, it still looks like a baton. That gift got twirled a lot long before Christmas Eve arrived.

On Christmas Day it was off to dinner at the other grandparents. The weather was always cold with lots of snow but the house was full with uncles, aunts and family. The meal was full of Swiss goodies like "Big Nothings, Rosettes, pear bread and lots of sweets.

Dale grew up on a farm near Dodge Center where his parents raised crops. There were three boys and one girl in his family and he remembers it as a quiet time. His dad would cut a tree on the farm to decorate in the house.

They family went to church on Christmas Eve and he remembers the service with people standing up to talk and share things that were important to them during that season.

The family celebrated on Christmas Day

and the children opened small gifts that were usually something they needed. Some were purchased and the rest were hand made.

Wanda was an only child and grew up in Texas on a big ranch with her parents and grandmother. She recalls that the farm house was big with lots of stairs and her dad would chop down a tree and bring it in but they didn't have many decorations on it. The elementary school she attended would have a Christmas tree as well. A lot of people worked on the ranch and would come over to the house for the holidays and her mother did lots of cooking.

The one present that stands out in her mind was the year she received a doll. The family would go to church on Christmas Day and the young ones would put on a program which was enjoyed by all the people attending the service.

Barb grew up with a twin sister in the countryside near Danby, New York. As a child the big event was getting the Christmas tree and the two young girls would help put the tree up in the house. Gifts often included dolls but one year her father gave the twins a bicycle. The twins would help their mom make special treats such as cookies and fudge before Christmas.

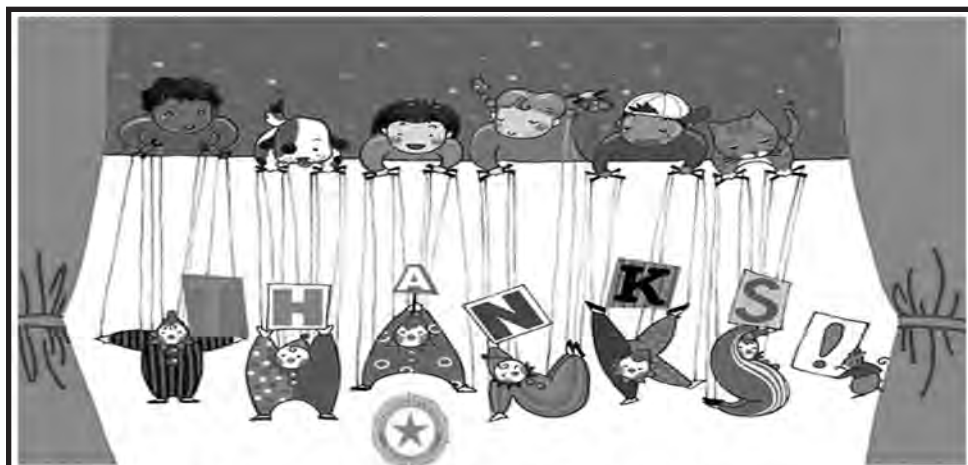
She remembers how pretty the church was for the Christmas service when she was a child. Many of the gifts they wrapped were handmade which they had knitted and sewn for each other. Activities were playing with



the neighbor kids sledding and building snowmen.

George grew up with two brothers and two sisters in the family home and recalls that they lived in a number of houses around Dodge Center, Claremont and West Concord. His father was a carpenter and his mother worked for Bird's Eye Canning Company in Waseca so she wasn't home very much. As one of the youngest in the family he remembers walking to country school when he was a lad. The country school had a Christmas program they participated in and he recalls singing songs but not sure if there were gifts from the teachers. The one thing he remembers about a Christmas when he was a child was the year his dad bought an \$8.00 bicycle for all of his brothers and sisters to share.

Now at Fairview Care Center where he resides the residents get to pick out decorations for their rooms. There are Christmas stockings with their names on them and small snow sleds above the door to their rooms. They put window clings in their windows of trees, bells, Santa Claus and Merry Christmas greetings.



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COVID-19 Vaccination Attitudes



By Ana Nunez, MD, FACP
University of Minnesota Medical School
Vice Dean for Diversity, Equality and
Inclusion

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), initial COVID-19 vaccine roll out and distribution is planned to start before the end of 2020. While challenges exist around the distribution itself, another hurdle is emerging around COVID-19 vaccine attitudes. A Dec. 3 report from the Pew Research Center showed that 39% of U.S. adults would not want to get a vaccine once approved.

University of Minnesota Medical School Vice Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Ana Nunez, MD, FACP, talks

about why these attitudes exist and how they could limit access to certain communities, particularly people of color.

Q: Why is there so much uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 vaccines?

Dr. Nunez: It is complicated. We are trail-blazing as we move forward, and we are discovering and learning in a new and rapid fashion. Instead of different groups — national, academic, and industry — all working separately, it's as if we all got into a race car on a fast track, mobilizing, leveraging, and using the brain trust of scientists and the 'can-do' attitude of those in the U.S. We went from going 40 mph (and having the usual three years to develop a vaccine) to going 100 mph and having it within the next few weeks and months. We're all flooded every day with new information, and it's hard on some days to know what and who to believe. We, as scientists, work in a way to constantly seek to improve on the knowledge that we have by discarding what turns out to be wrong and build on what is right. To an outsider, that can sometimes look like we don't know what we're talking about and that we keep changing our minds. For this reason, people are right to feel hesitant, but they also need to feel open to making informed choices. All of us want a safe way to move forward, but different people have different ideas of how to do that safely.

Every 20-30 seconds (at this writing), someone is dying from COVID-19. We need to equitably figure out how to balance

preventing deaths and the spread of disease with protecting healthcare systems, so that we can work on keeping people well. Achieving equity means we need to first agree on the end goal. To move forward, we need to come together in agreement that a) we are better together fighting this pandemic; b) we value fighting the virus to protect lives; c) we need to achieve and keep safe healthcare systems so people can be and stay well.

Q: How can we achieve this equitable balance — of who is at highest risk to receive the vaccine?

Dr. Nunez: There are several factors: Geography — How likely someone is to come into contact with someone with the virus varies greatly. Do they live somewhere where it's likely that even going to the grocery store will lead to an exposure? Compare that to someone else who would have to be in a crowded bar to be exposed.

Personal risk factors — Do they have medical issues that make them higher risk for severe disease? For example, compare someone in relatively good health with someone with diabetes and hypertension.

Occupational exposures — A paramedic has a much higher risk than a stay-at-home worker.

A lot of other factors are going to be harder to define. For example, should someone who has already had COVID-19 be vaccinated? Probably, yes. Is the answer still 'yes,' though, when there's an early shortage of vaccines? All of these factors will

have to be weighed together and then policies formulated to guide who gets the vaccine first.

We need to make sure that we — and I'm speaking about us as part of a larger system that includes health care workers, large institutions, and governmental agencies — get it right. We need to make it easy for people to get information, have accessible places to be immunized without cost, ideally without having to take off from work and lose pay, and be able to help them keep track of which vaccine they get and when and if they need a second one.

Q: What part of our communities could be most affected by this hesitancy in receiving a vaccine?

Dr. Nunez: Unfortunately, the communities of people who are most affected by the pandemic are also more likely to be the most hesitant about a vaccine. Communities of color have disproportionately been affected by higher rates of COVID-19 and more deaths. Historic issues involving the lack of access and discrimination have led to worse health outcomes in general for those populations, which has been multiplied with COVID-19. Now, that same community has to believe on faith that this vaccine that was developed in record time is a good idea for them.


Q: Why should the public be confident in receiving one of the vaccines when they are available?

(continued on page 9)

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COVID-19 Vaccination Attitudes

(continued from page 8)

Dr. Núñez: Take people who are working as hard as they can to keep their families together and food on the table, who maybe

even lost someone they know and love to COVID-19. They're going to be asked to put their faith in scientists, even when there's a lot of noise out there right now. It's up to us to counter the misinformation by listening to people's concerns and by leading by example. I have to be willing to get the same vaccine that I'm asking them and their families to take.

And, with the rising deaths, we need this as soon as possible. Why I am confident and I think others should be as well is we now have results from this focused work and there are safety steps along the way. One of those steps include the Advisory

Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). This is a group of serious scientists, who have all been cleared for any conflict of interests. Their incredibly important job is to look at the data and evidence and provide a recommendation. This data doesn't just come from the company making the vaccine. It is redone and rerun from the FDA. The ACIP then looks at the FDA's information and makes their recommendation. Once the ACIP greenlights the vaccine, we can be comfortable and confident that they rigorously made sure that it is safe and ready for us.

Q: What else is the University of

Minnesota doing to further public understanding of COVID-19 vaccines?

Dr. Núñez: The University of Minnesota, as well as the U of M Medical School, has many initiatives underway to help further the understanding of COVID-19 vaccines. These include the tireless engagement of health care professionals in our clinics, like the Community-University Health Care Center; the Medical School's Rapid Response Grants to Reduce Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Healthcare; our focus in the new Office of Diversity, Equity and inclusion on vaccine acceptance; our new centers, like NRCRIM in collaboration with our university and public health colleagues to help state and local health departments create culturally appropriate material for refugees, immigrant and migrant communities; and CIDRAP to generate a one-stop resource for the general public to get comprehensive and usable information about the vaccine.

Dr. Ana Núñez is the vice dean for diversity, equity and inclusion and a professor of medicine at the Medical School. She is nationally recognized as a medical education and health services researcher, having developed novel curricula in the areas of sex and gender medicine, primary care, trauma/violence prevention and cultural competence. Dr. Núñez is experienced at speaking to the issues of vaccine and/or inoculation distribution in equitable and fair ways to communities that most need access.

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Talking Local Retail with U of M



By Ryan Pesch
University of Minnesota Extension
Educator in Community Economic
Development

The holiday shopping season is a critical time for American small businesses. According to the National Retail Federation, the holidays generate about 20% of some businesses' annual sales.

With COVID-19 impacting retail at all levels, University of Minnesota Extension Educator Ryan Pesch discusses the importance of supporting local retail this holiday season.

Q: How important is retail to my local community?

Pesch: Retail is an important part of the whole economy, accounting for 5% of Minnesota's total economic output and 7% of the state's employment. The impact is even greater in small towns where locally-owned retail makes for a greater share of stores. Retail sales provide goods and services directly to consumers. Retail stores also add vibrancy to business districts and provide critical products to residents. When Main Street looks active and healthy, it affects the way people feel about their community.

Q: Does it matter where I chose to do my holiday shopping?

Pesch: In short, yes.

In economics, we break up impact into different parts to understand their effects, both how wages paid affect an area and how dollars flow from one business to another to get goods on the shelf. Research shows that independent businesses typically use more local business services such as

accounting, legal and printing. There is a spillover effect to those other local businesses. Whether you are shopping at a national chain or a local independent retailer, wages are paid to workers. However, a family-owned and operated business also supports the income of local business and building owners.

Q: How do I figure out which stores have the biggest impact on my local economy?

Pesch: Imagine two independent gift shops you may visit during the holiday shopping season. One shop carries all local or regional products; it will have a greater economic impact than the other shop that only carries imported products. The supply chain matters.

You can think about your local economy like a leaky bucket. When dollars flow out of your area, whether to another region, state or country, they are lost. Economic development officials like to talk about money recirculating, but that only happens when those dollars stay in your region and aren't lost to an out-of-state wholesaler or international manufacturer.

Instead of income only for the shop owners and their workers, now many more businesses in your region are involved. The local supply chain that manufactures a home fixture or food product has a ripple effect throughout a range of industries, from local farms to manufacturers to wholesalers to marketing firms. These industries have their own suppliers and workers and this demand has its own ripple effect.

Q: Does my individual spending really matter much?

Pesch: Certainly, one household's purchase will not float an entire storefront. But, collectively, multiple households directing their spending to local businesses during this holiday season may make all the difference. During COVID-19, some Americans have taken to "adopting a business" to support that one store or business they most appreciate. When you spend at a local business, tell the owner about your commitment. It can give both a monetary and emotional boost when store operators most need it.

Main Streets across Minnesota are more quiet than usual during the pandemic due to executive orders closing businesses and residents changing their shopping patterns. Both residents and economic development officials are concerned these negative

impacts may push retail establishments to close permanently. Small business owners are not simply employers and sources of goods; they're also friends and neighbors.

Q: How does University of Minnesota research help communities figure this out?

Pesch: Our team in Extension helps community leaders learn about and develop their economies, both to improve the quality of life and wealth of their residents. A common hope of residents, business leaders and politicians is a bustling downtown, and we are often asked to research the opportunities to achieve it.

In 2018 we did a study about small retail grocery operations that focused on local, natural and organic foods. We found that for every \$1 of sales at these stores, an additional \$0.60 was generated in the region — three times the economic impact of typical food and beverage chains. The amount of goods stores purchased from local producers explains this higher impact. Additionally, these stores' focus on local foods attracts shoppers and drives customers to spend more.

Our research confirmed the positive economic benefits that those in the local food movement have spoken about for a long time. This is the type of applied research that can support the efforts of economic development leaders to find their focus and provide the type of business development that benefits all of us.

Ryan Pesch is a University of Minnesota Extension educator in community economic development who has worked in West Central Minnesota since 2004. Pesch has



developed and delivered Extension programming in eCommerce, business retention and expansion, tourism development, and retail market analysis. Pesch also pursues work in community food systems, focusing on successful development strategies for direct farm marketing and research on the local foods market.

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Talking Holiday Loneliness and How to Cope with U of M



By Sabine Schmid, PhD, LP
Assistant Professor of psychiatry in the U of M Medical School and a licensed psychologist with M Health Fairview

A national survey shows that loneliness is higher than ever before — of 20,000 U.S. adults surveyed, more than half report they either sometimes or always feel alone. Compound that statistic with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and mental health experts will agree that this holiday season will be the toughest part of 2020 for many Americans.

Sabine Schmid, PhD, LP, an assistant professor of psychiatry in the University of Minnesota Medical School and a licensed

psychologist with M Health Fairview, explains how people can recognize and prepare for social isolation and loneliness during the holidays due to the pandemic or other social factors.

Q: Why is recognizing and addressing loneliness important for those experiencing it?

Dr. Schmid: Social connectedness, a basic human need, is essential for coping with stress and overall well-being. While feeling lonely is simply a signal telling us to connect with others, prolonged loneliness is defined as a distressing experience due to not getting our social needs met for an extended period of time. Clinical studies provide evidence that prolonged loneliness — or what we perceive as social isolation — is detrimental to mental and physical health and, in fact, related to depression, anxiety, substance use, poor sleep, decreased physical activity, impaired cardiovascular functioning, and an overall shortened lifespan.

The pandemic and restrictions for social contact — though crucial for reducing infection rates — have made the problem worse for many. In addition, because loneliness is stigmatized, many may not want to admit, even to themselves, that they feel lonely. In order to overcome loneliness, we must first recognize and understand the problem by identifying our needs, our desires, and whatever is getting in the way. There is no one-size-fits-all approach.

Q: How can people recognize the common behaviors or attitudes associated with loneli-

ness?

Dr. Schmid: While loneliness may be caused by the loss of a meaningful relationship — like the death of a loved one, children leaving home, or job loss — and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the beliefs and behaviors associated with loneliness that keep those affected stuck.

Feeling socially isolated often comes with various thinking patterns, such as over-generalization where people use statements like, “Nobody cares about me. Nobody understands me. I don’t belong.” They can feel helpless, thinking things like, “I can’t do anything about this,” and be hopeless, stating to themselves, “I will feel lonely for the rest of my life.” Behaviors related to social isolation include excessive rumination about the past, worrying about the future and, maybe most importantly, avoidance of anything that might trigger thoughts or feelings about being lonely. Avoidance of distress is generally adaptive. However, lonely people ironically tend to avoid social activities, even with friends, which could actually help with loneliness and disconfirm their helplessness and hopelessness. In other words, the loneliness beliefs contribute to ongoing avoidance of social contacts, which in turn, confirms these beliefs in a self-fulfilling prophecy that becomes a vicious cycle.

Q: How can people cope with loneliness this holiday season due to COVID-19?

Dr. Schmid: Once we figure out what our needs and desires are, it is important to understand what is in our control — only our own actions — versus what is not in our control, which are things like the pandemic, the past, the weather, or what others choose to do. When lonely we tend to dwell on the things we cannot control, which does not change the situation. Understanding this distinction allows us to focus our energy and effort on our actions.

Seven ways to turn your loneliness into action this holiday season:

Express your connection in actions. Engage in activities like cooking a dish for others to pick up or making a craft that symbolizes your friendship.

Send something in place of yourself — a message, a greeting card, a little present, or a photograph.

Virtually celebrate holidays wherever your loved ones may be by joining via a video conferencing program.

Spread kindness. Leave a painted rock on your neighbor’s door, write a message in chalk on your sidewalk, place an uplifting sign or object in your window, volunteer to bring groceries to vulnerable neighbors.

Connect to others in a similar situation as you. This could be a neighbor or friend who is also staying home away from their family this holiday season.

“Buddy up” with distant friends or family and establish activity goals such as physical exercise, reading a book, or learning a new skill.

Exercise gratitude. Find one thing you are grateful for every day.

Q: How can people cope with loneliness this holiday season after the loss of a loved one?

Dr. Schmid: Loss of a loved one may be the greatest stressor of all. From grief experts, we know that grief is “a form of



love” and a natural, universal and complex response to loss. There are no predictable stages, because everyone copes and adapts in their unique way.

Whether we lost a loved one to COVID-19 or to other causes, the pandemic has complicated our grieving this year. Being connected with loved ones makes us feel secure and provides solace when we are grieving. We do not grieve well alone. Even as we need to practice physical distancing, it is paramount to stay socially and emotionally connected.

This year requires additional flexibility in order to connect around our love for the deceased. We may pay tribute to your beloved by doing good deeds in their name, go virtual for gatherings and tributes, or implement additional safety measures when meeting with those who share our loss, values or faith.

Five goals to keep in mind for the process of coping with loss and adapting to a new life:

Connect to meaningful relationships. Allow for feelings when remembering the deceased and share stories of your loss.

Restore well-being by planning and doing simple rewarding activities to balance the emotional pain.

Renew a sense of meaning and purpose in the new life by turning activities into daily rituals or longer-term goals.

If grieving becomes overwhelming or you get derailed, seek out additional support in the community, such as grief support services or mental health professionals.

Q: How can we be celebratory this holiday season, despite the social isolation required due to the pandemic?

Dr. Schmid: This 2020 has been infamously hard. So, what about celebrating love, peace and joy during this holiday season? It is okay to have many intense — even seemingly incompatible — emotions at this time of year. We can acknowledge the stress, fear, and hardship, grieve losses, and give ourselves permission to be celebratory.

Of course, each of us follows a different timeline. Let’s check in with each other and see how everyone is doing rather than assuming that everyone feels the same. Respect different perspectives and preferences for spending the holidays. It does not have to be an either/or scenario. Instead, we can allow for grieving and for positive feelings this holiday season. Voice your desires and explicitly plan for the holidays. Do you want to perform a ritual together virtually like singing, giving thanks, or saying a prayer, simply watch the kids open presents virtually, or do your own thing away from family this year?

This year, we may spend the holidays in a new way. We can do so while accepting this reality, staying flexible in this ever-changing world, and taking an angle of gratitude and compassion for each other.

Brightest WISHES

May joy and contentment light up your Christmas Day and stay with you the whole year through.

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MDA Announces June 30 Cutoff Date of Dicamba Herbicide for 2021

MDA Approves Label with Additional Requirements for Product Makers

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) today announced it will follow federal registration and label usage for the herbicide dicamba on dicamba-tolerant soybeans in Minnesota for the 2021 growing season.

In October, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced it registered XtendiMax with VaporGrip Technology by Bayer (EPA Reg. No. 264-1210), Engenia by BASF (EPA Reg. No. 7969-472), and Tavium Plus VaporGrip Technology by Syngenta (EPA Reg. No. 352-913) with new control measures to curb alleged off-site movement (spray drift and/or volatilization) issues.

From 2018 to 2020, the MDA had placed

an annual June 20 cutoff date on registered dicamba products based on research and pesticide misuse complaints – a cutoff date that was not included on the federal label – to curb off-site movement; however, the EPA has now limited states' abilities to impose further application restrictions.

New federal label requirements for the products include:

An application cutoff date of June 30 (unless growth stage cutoff comes first)

Requiring an approved pH-buffering agent, also known as a volatility reducing agent, be tank mixed with dicamba products prior to all applications.

Requiring a downwind buffer of 240 feet and 310 feet in areas where listed endangered species are located

Additional recordkeeping items

In addition to the June 30 cutoff date, Xtendimax and Tavium have crop growth stage cutoffs.

The MDA is also requiring product makers provide approved education and training of applicators and provide more Minnesota-specific data on the use of dicamba to inform future department decisions.

"Dicamba is an important tool for combating herbicide-resistant weeds in dicamba-tolerant soybeans," said Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen. "However, it's also important to limit impacts on neigh-

boring homes, farms, and gardens. It will be necessary for applicators to understand and follow new label language including complete record-keeping requirements."

Since dicamba was first registered for use on dicamba-tolerant soybeans in the 2017 growing season, the MDA has fielded complaints each year of alleged off-site movement onto neighboring property. The annual totals of complaints were:

2020: 124 reports

2019: 22 reports

2018: 53 reports

2017: 253 reports

"It is important for farmers and applicators to understand that we will increase our enforcement of the use of these products by examining application records. We believe that additional training will help ensure the label is being followed," said Commissioner Petersen. "We also look forward to working with the University of Minnesota on research to better understand how these products can move off target. Our ability to gather as much data as we can on these products is critical for their continued use in the future."

In Minnesota, the XtendiMax, Engenia, and Tavium formulations of dicamba are approved for use on dicamba tolerant soybeans only and are "Restricted Use Pesticides" for retail sale to and for use only

by certified applicators.

Pesticide product registrations are renewed on an annual basis in Minnesota.

Background Information

Dicamba is used to control weeds in cotton and soybeans genetically engineered to tolerate over-the-top use of the herbicide. The chemical is highly volatile and can damage non-target plant species through spray drift and/or volatilization. Volatility is influenced by several factors including temperature, relative humidity, rate of application, and crop stage.

On June 3, 2020, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued an order vacating EPA's pesticide registration of three products containing the active ingredient dicamba: Xtendimax with VaporGrip Technology (EPA Reg. No. 524-617), Engenia (EPA Reg. No. 7969-345), and FeXapan (EPA Reg. No. 352-913).

The MDA, citing state law, allowed for the continued use of the three products, along with the dicamba product Tavium (EPA Reg. No. 100-1623), until the Minnesota required cutoff of June 20, 2020. A cutoff date has been in effect each growing season since 2018.

On October 27, 2020, the EPA announced it was approving new five-year registrations for Xtendimax and Engenia and extending the registration of Tavium.

Museum Musings

What a Merry Christmas!

By Colleen Sathrum Hayne

I was more than a little surprised when I saw the cover and back page of the December 17, 1936 West Concord Enterprise, the Christmas issue. The pages were tri-colored with festive borders in red and green ink and print in black. That was extravagant for the times. The issue was also much longer than usual. I came to the conclusion that West Concord had "Depression Fatigue" and was in the spirit to make the most of Christmas 1936. There was much discussion in the paper about the yuletide, "Christmasy" spirit around town. Stores were decorated and shop windows full of enticing gift ideas. It was promising for businesses that the State Administrator of the WPA had ordered that Dodge County WPA workers get paid before Christmas—a good thing for families and merchants alike.

The Enterprise was chock full of holiday activities in which the community could participate. The coming event that most amazed me was to happen on Saturday, December 19th at approx. 3:00 p.m. Believe it or not, a large number of turkeys, geese, ducks, and chickens were going to be thrown off the roof of a town building. Anyone lucky enough to catch a bird would have a free Christmas dinner. Just imagine the scene! It must have been boisterous with feathers flying everywhere!

On Christmas Eve afternoon Santa was arriving to give candy and nuts to the children in town. There was also a program at City Hall that afternoon, organized by Study Club, that included community singing, musical guests, and a message from the Methodist church's Rev. Humrin about Christmas. After the program, cash prizes were going to be awarded by the 34 participating West Concord businesses. Just think—34 merchants! \$10, \$5, \$3, \$2, and \$1 prizes would be given out. During Christmas 1936 there were 7 food businesses in West

Concord: Amundsen's Mercantile, Home Bakery, Johnson's Food Market, McCarthy's Food Store, Maricle Fairway Market, Newell's Meat Market, and Speckeen's Store.

The Concord Theater was showing two movies during Christmas week: "Rhythm on the Range", a cowboy musical featuring Bing Crosby, and "White Fang." If you wanted to go to a play, the Concord Opera House was presenting a 3-act comedy, "She Married Her Doctor", preceded by a 30 min. vaudeville presentation. Tickets were 25 and 35 cents each. Country School District 79, the Cullip School, was having a Christmas program and awarding a free turkey to an attendee with the lucky number. Admission for the program was 10 or 15 cents. The Methodist Church performed a Christmas Cantata and all were welcomed to attend. The local chapter of the DeMolay's (youth group of the Masons) met and initiated several new members.

Those in need were being thought of. The local Red Cross was asking for donations of good second hand shoes, especially men's. The Sewing Circle of the Legion Auxiliary made mittens for the children of veterans in the hospital.

They also sewed quilts, a layette, knitted caps and more to help.

There were a few other things besides Christmas on people's minds. A banquet was held in honor of the West Concord High School's Dodge County Champion Football team. In the Rochester Post-Bulletin's poll of southeastern MN coaches, West Concord was declared the top team in the area. Gale Callister was the Captain that year. The Buchanan Co-operative Dairy Association of Berne was formed and incorporated by Jacob Zeller, Fred Nobs, Louis Stucky, John Kublie, Jr. and Ed Bucher. The annual meeting of the Concord Dairy Association was held at the cheese factory. The Town and Country Club, membership fee required, opened new headquarters in the old stock pavilion building on Main Street. Uleberg's garage unloaded a whole traincar of Chevrolets—and all, except for one pickup, were sold immediately. And . . . electricity was coming to farms in eastern Dodge County. Farmers were urged to try feeding their hogs molasses if they were short on corn.

The West Concord Enterprise wished everyone a joyous Christmas in 1936 and that's just what I wish for you. It will be a Christmas like no other yet we know we will find blessings wherever we look. May 2021 bring health and happiness to you.



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Stir Up a Recipe for Success



By Harvey Mackay

A sixth-grade girl was running for the post of secretary of her elementary school class. A major part of her campaign was a speech to be given to her classmates, but she had no idea what to say. So she asked her mother for ideas.

"Well, you love to cook," her mom said. "Why don't you look in a cookbook?"

It was the stupidest idea she'd ever heard, but, desperate, the young girl followed her mother's advice. Then, flipping through the pages, it hit her: Why not write a recipe for what would make a good class secretary? Two cups of good handwriting, one cup of dependability, and so on.

Jan Bolick, now a management coach, won the election. But she also learned to look in unusual places for creative solu-

tions. As it turns out, creativity is part of the "recipe" for attaining success.

What is success? The answer might depend on whom you ask and the particular stage of their own journey. Yet no matter your age, occupation or dream for the future, achieving success comes down to a few basic factors that will likely shape your future.

Know what you want. Build your dream, craft your vision, write down your goals and then create a plan. Whether you ask for advice or not, never let someone talk you out of something that you have your heart set on doing. As I always say, believe in yourself even when no one else does.

Search for creative approaches. Sticking to the old formula will produce old results. If you can find a new or better way to build the proverbial mousetrap, more power to you. Even little tweaks and bright ideas can make the difference.

Avoid comparisons. You have goals and aspirations that have little to do with what your friends, neighbors or colleagues are doing. Focus on what you are trying to accomplish and your plan for making that happen.

Cultivate patience. Worthwhile success takes time. If you're in a rush, you'll cut corners and ignore warning signs. Take a step-by-step approach that's focused on long-term results. Go for quick wins only when they're realistic and valuable.

Cut out negative self-talk. Perfection often gets in the way of achievement.



Successful people stick to a path of continual growth and self-improvement so they are constantly working to become a smarter, better version of themselves.

Admit your mistakes. Failure/mistakes are not fatal. When they happen, learn from them. Figure out what went wrong, if you can. Then pick yourself up, get back on your feet and keep moving forward.

Don't go it alone. Network. Get involved with a group or professional organization of individuals in your field. Include people at all stages of their careers.

Stay connected through social media channels, and make an effort to meet in person regularly. Don't take these relationships for granted.

Mackay's Moral: Success is the difference between jumping on the bandwagon and leading the band.

Reprinted with permission from nationally syndicated columnist Harvey Mackay, author of the New York Times #1 bestseller "Swim With The Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive."

Merry Christmas

Thanks so much for your business at the holidays and all year.

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Happy Holidays!

The holidays are a special time, full of love and laughter, family and friends. I'd like to wish you and your family peace and prosperity now and in the months ahead. May this holiday season be your best one yet and may your home and our community be blessed with all that Christmas brings.

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Support Local Businesses this Holiday Season



Tim Penny
So. MN Initiative Foundation

This time of year is traditionally a time of giving. Minnesotans in particular are known for their charitable contributions – a fact that was solidified recently during Give to the Max Day when Minnesotans set a record by giving more than \$30 million to local schools and nonprofits. In addition to

November being a charitable time of year, it is also the launch of the holiday shopping season. At Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) we know that Minnesotans will extend their generosity by supporting local businesses during this particularly difficult year.

At SMIF, we know that small businesses are the backbone of our communities and local economy, and for many of them, this is a critical time to help keep them afloat. In addition to safely shopping at retailers that are still open, we know that many people will be buying gifts online. While online shopping has historically been an easy way to purchase items that are not available locally, this year it will be important to find ways to use that platform to purchase gifts from local places. Buying gift cards from places like restaurants, breweries and fitness or yoga studios that are currently closed to the public is a great way to support them during this time. Many local retailers also have gift cards, online stores and curbside pickup as an option this year for those who would prefer to shop from home.

Local foods businesses are another dynamic sector that rely on the holiday



shopping season as an important source of income.

This holiday season looks different for everyone in a lot of ways. When it comes to holiday shopping, please consider shopping local. These entrepreneurs are our friends

and neighbors and we give thanks to them as they continue to contribute to the vibrancy of our region during this difficult time.

As always, I welcome your comments and questions. You can reach me at timp@smifoundation.org or 507-455-3215.

Keep Pets Safe From Holiday Hazards - Most Problems Can Be Prevented



No one knows better than a veterinarian who staffs the emergency room that the holidays can be fraught with hazards for pets. Luckily, most of the dangers can easily be prevented with some foresight and good advice.

Dr. Yanshan Er, a veterinarian at the University of Illinois Veterinary Teaching Hospital who is pursuing specialization in emergency and critical care, shares her top tips for keeping your pets safe during the holidays.

While you are enjoying your Thanksgiving feast, you may be tempted to slip your pet some table scraps. It is important to remember many of the things we enjoy are not appropriate for our furry friends.

Chocolate – Chocolate, especially the dark and baking varieties, contains toxins called methylxanthines, which may cause tremors, seizures, and fatal arrhythmias at high doses. Lower doses may cause vomiting and diarrhea. Solution: Keep chocolate away from your pets!

Bones – Leftover bones from that turkey or ham may seem like a treat for your pet, but Dr. Er says that's not true. "Bones pose several dangers: cracked teeth, a blockage in the esophagus, constipation, severe gastrointestinal inflammation or even perforation of the gastrointestinal organs," she says. "There are so many great ways to offer a treat, bones are definitely not worth the risk."

Alcohol and bread dough – Make sure to keep your alcoholic drinks and baking supplies out of reach of your pets. If a pet eats raw yeast-containing dough, the dough will ferment in the stomach, producing ethanol, a form of alcohol. The expansion of dough in the stomach can cause a mechanical obstruction. The ethanol gets absorbed systemically and causes blood acidity and low blood sugar. "These complications can ultimately result in a coma and even death," warns Dr. Er.

Grapes, raisins, and currants – The exact causative toxin is currently unknown, but the fact that consuming grapes, raisins, and currants may result in acute kidney injury in dogs is well documented. Toxicity from these fruits may also lead to vomiting, diarrhea, and lethargy. Dr. Er advises pet owners to tell guests these items, especially baked goods like Christmas cake with raisins, are no-nos for pets.

Christmas tree safety – "Make sure to secure your tree so that it can take bumps or tolerate your pet's zoomies," says Dr. Er. Trees with shiny ornaments are a magnet for curious cats. If the tree is not securely anchored, it may fall over easily when kitty starts to climb. Inquisitive pets are also drawn to strings of lights and other electrical wires. Chewing on these wires may result in electrocution, painful burns in the mouth, and fluid in the lungs.

Tinsel and candles – Shiny, reflective tinsel also attracts cats. If swallowed, tinsel, yarn or other stringy objects wreak havoc on a cat's digestive tract. This problem, called a "linear foreign body," must be treated with emergency surgery. Candles also fall into the "shiny danger" category. Pets aren't aware of the danger fire poses, so never allow pets to remain unsupervised in a room with lit candles.

Poinsettias, mistletoe, and lilies – If you own a pet that eats anything and everything, it is important to know that poinsettias and mistletoe can result in an upset stomach for your pet. In very rare cases, mistletoe can also affect the heart. While not typically a winter holiday decoration, lilies are very toxic to cats, and result in acute kidney injury. "All parts of the lily plant are toxic, so remember to keep them out of reach of your kitties," says Dr. Er.

While they're probably not dreading crowded shopping malls or discussing politics with that one uncle, many pets do find the holidays stressful. Strange people, smells and loud sounds may be overwhelming for your pet. Make sure it has a safe, quiet, and escape-proof room to provide a safe retreat when needed.

Don't forget that Christmas poppers and fireworks can be terrifying for pets with noise aversion. Dr. Er suggests talking to your veterinarian about anxiety medication and sedatives if your pet might benefit from those during high-anxiety situations.

In closing, we know 2020 has already been an extremely challenging year, and we wish you and your pets a safe holiday season. Take precautions to avoid the common veterinary emergencies described above. If a problem arises, call your local emergency veterinarian.

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City Highlights

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- WEST CONCORD MESSENGER -



The West Concord Historical Society's Blood Mobile was on Friday, December 4, 2020. We were able to go over our goal for units of blood on this day thanks to a very "civic minded" family from Waseca who felt the need to find a local blood mobile where they could donate for their Christmas gift to the community. It was very heart felt from myself and the Red Cross people that a family would search in such a large area where they could donate instead of "just forgetting it". Please if you have not donated lately or never donated it is such a wonderful feeling to give others the gift of life. The next local Red Cross Blood Mobile will be at the American Legion in Dodge Center from 1pm-7pm on January 6, 2020. For any questions please call the Red Cross in St. Paul or locally Mary M Gillard at 507-527-2505. Thank you



City Council Special Meeting November 23, 2020 at 6:00pm

(These minutes are unofficial until approved by the City Council at the next meeting)

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Jeffrey McCool at 6:00PM; everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present were Mayor Jeffrey McCool; Council Members Karen Peterson, Jeff Burse and Sam Schollmeier.
City Employees: Administrator Mike Plante

Additions to the Agenda:

None

Consent Calendar was presented as follows:

• None

Public Comment

None

City Business:

Mayoral Proclamation Declaring Public Health Emergency: Mayor Jeff McCoolThe Mayoral Declaration found the following: COVID-19 is present in the State of Minnesota, Dodge County, and is rapidly spreading to other areas of the State. That significant community spread of COVID-19 is now a very high risk based on data from the Minnesota Department of Health and confirmed by the Minneapolis Department of Health and federal health authorities. This risk has resulted in specific recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health regarding sizes and formats of public gatherings. That recent Data provided by the Minnesota Department of Health shows a positivity rating above 5%, and closer to 10%, which means the spread of the virus has reached a “concerning level” which increases the risk for all members of our community, including residents and staff in long-term care facilities. That the presence of COVID-19 may have the potential to compromise the provision of essential City service. And that the Mayor for the City of West Concord has determined that an in-person meeting or a meeting conducted under section 13D.02 is not practical or prudent because of the continuing health risks posed by the health pandemic resulting from COVID-19 and the peacetime emergency declared by the Governor of Minnesota on March 13, 2020, under Executive Order 20-01.

Council Extending Mayor Declared Local Emergency: Mike Plante, Administrator

A motion was made by Councilmember Schollmeier, seconded by Councilmember Peterson, to ratify the Mayoral Proclamation and determined that it shall remain in place until rescinded by an official act of the West Concord City Council. 4 yeas. 0 Nay. Carried.

Determine the Date of the Municipal Liquor Store Public Hearing: Mike Plante, Administrator

The City of West Concord municipal liquor store has shown a net loss prior to interfund transfer for at least two of the past three consecutive years. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 340A.602, the City Council must hold a public hearing on the question of whether the City shall continue to operate a municipal liquor store. A motion was made by Councilmember Peterson, seconded by Councilmember Schollmeier, to hold a public hearing on December 15, 2020 at 6:00pm, at 180 Main St., West Concord, MN 55985, to consider the question of whether the City should continue to operate a municipal liquor store. 4 yeas. 0 Nay. Carried.

Canvassing November 3, 2020 General Election Results: Mike Plante, City Administrator

That the results of the canvass of votes in the City of West Concord, Minnesota, where a General Election was held on Tuesday, November 3, 2020 and the results of said election for local Mayor and Council seats are as follows:

Mayoral Election	
Jeffrey McCool	345votes
Write In	34 votes
Council Member – 2 Elected	
Jeffery Burse	241 votes
Collin Ripley	201 votes
Nick Kilen	150 votes
Write In	11 votes

The City Council finds from said canvass that the following candidates have received a plurality of votes, and finds that and declares the following candidates to be elected to serve the following positions for the City of West Concord:

Mayor – Jeffrey McCool
Council – Jeffery Burse and Collin Ripley

A motion was made by Councilmember Peterson, seconded by Councilmember Schollmeier to approve the above listed results. 4 yeas. 0 Nay. Carried.

Authorization to Hire an Assistant Librarian – Mike Plante, City Administrator and Nancy Schollmeier, Head Librarian

Head Librarian Schollmeier and Administrator Plante informed the Council that after conducting interviews with two applicants for the position that it was their recommendation to hire Donna Klapperich as the Assistant Librarian at the starting rate of pay for the position. A motion was made by Councilmember Peterson, seconded by Councilmember Burse, to offer the position to Ms. Klapperich. 4 yeas. 0 Nay. Carried.

Discuss and Determine City Hall and City Operations: Mike Plante, City Administrator

Administrator Plante provided the Council an update on various topics of City affairs. The Council determined that City Hall will remain staffed but that City business should be conducted remotely when possible. The Council also determined that the Municipal Liquor Store will have reduced hours and that the Library will continue with their normal hours of operation. The Council also determined that Christmas in West Concord activities would need to be modified to ensure compliance with the Governor’s Executive orders related to COVID.

Department Report Review

The Council received the reports that were provided by the Library, Maintenance and Police Department.

Motion by Councilmember Schollmeier, seconded by Council Member Peterson upon seeing no other business to adjourn the meeting of the West Concord City Council . 4 Yeas. 0 Nays. Carried.

Attest:

Jeffrey McCool, Mayor
Mike Plante, City Administrator

WEST CONCORD LIBRARY NEWS

The library has over 50 Christmas DVDs and more than 75 children’s Christmas books to enjoy for the season, as well as adult and juvenile Christmas books. Call to order your favorites or something new, or schedule a time to come in to browse.

As the weather gets colder, remember that the library offers curbside pickup of materials. All you have to do is call to order your materials and we’ll call you back when the materials are ready for pickup. You don’t even have to get out of your car. Just call the library when you arrive and we will bring the materials to your vehicle.

The library will be closed Thursday, December 24th and Friday December 25th, for Christmas. We will also be closed New Year’s Day, Friday January 1st.

The library is open by appointment only Monday and Thursday from 1:00 until 7:00, and Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday from 10:00 until 5:00.

The library phone number is 527-2031.

Happy Holidays!

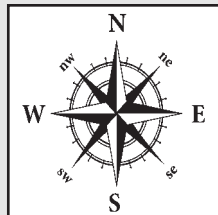


Even though a few of the usual Christmas in West Concord events were cancelled this year due to COVID, the City still managed to have some holiday fun in 2020!

As usual, the event could not have gone on without the help of a number of citizens and businesses who helped out greatly with brainstorming safe events and helping to ensure that the events that were planned went off without a hitch. With the help of our wonderful citizens we were able to raise funds for the park project, deliver approximately 35 meals to area residents, and provided over 60 gift bags to children and other residents! While COVID may have changed the nature of our annual Christmas Celebration, it certainly didn’t take away from our giving spirit!

Thank you from everyone at City Hall and Merry Christmas!

Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes Fiber Optic in the Backwoods



By Terry Campbell

This column is written by Messenger editor and Minnesota native Terry Campbell.

Terry now splits his time between Minnesota when it's warm here and Tennessee when it's cold here.

I lived in the country in Minnesota all my life. It would take both hands to count the number of Internet providers I have had in Minnesota over the years. Some started out good and then fizzled as more customers ate up the bandwidth. Some under-performed as soon as they were installed. One would think that 17 miles from Rochester would deliver better Internet. My last experience in Dodge County was with Minnesota WiFi and I have to say that they were consistent and delivered what they promised. The \$130 per month for 30mbps down and 10 mbps up seems a little steep though.

So, after moving to Tennessee I needed to have a reliable Internet provider since I work online for a living. In 1933 the Tennessee Valley Authority was commissioned to provide electrical power to the rural areas in the state as a way to increase the standard of living. Fast forward to the 21st century and the Cumberland Cooperative produces hydro-electric power as well as coal fired electrical power to all citizens. There is a power line to every rural address in the state and they decided to string the Internet to every home as well. And not just Internet, but high-speed fiber optic Internet.

So I live five miles out of town and High Speed Fiber Optic Internet is at our door. \$50 per month and no connection fees or modem and router deposits for 250mbps up and 250mbps down. Internet so fast it will make your head spin and priced lower than any slow provider back in the snow state. I am often asked how I manage to put ten newspapers together each month while living 800 miles from Minnesota. High quality Internet is the answer.

So in Minnesota you have cold weather, 10X higher property taxes, a state income tax, poor Internet service, and a city which wants to defund the police while rioters burn it down in the summer. And in Tennessee you have great Internet at a low cost, no county planning and zoning departments, low real estate taxes and no state income tax and the people love their law enforcement departments. You might have figured out why I moved here.

coming over that evening for dinner and presents; in the meantime, we watched Christmas movies and worked on Christmas dinner.

I think it was a pretty normal Christmas that year... or at least it was until the dishwasher shorted out before dinner causing it to fill up with water. It was all going to be OK though because Grandpa, who had been a Navy Electrician, was going to fix it. All he needed to do was cut off the power to the dishwasher and take care of the problem.

Now the breaker box was in the garage, and I do not remember exactly how but the wrong breaker got turned off. So instead of turning off the power to the dishwasher the power to the oven got turned off instead. Which not only left Grandpa working on a live dishwasher, where thankfully nothing happened but stopped the oven.

The oven where the Christmas ham, that my mother had rubbed down with brown sugar and poured Coca-Cola over, had been baking. The oven that no one noticed was off until after the dishwasher had been taken care of.

I was eight that year so I don't rightly remember if we even ended up eating the ham that day once the power mixup was noticed. But I will never forget the Christmas dishwasher disaster of 2004.



A Minnesotan in the North: Christmas



By RosaLin Alcoser

Not all but many holidays over the course of my childhood are marked with some kind of minor disaster. Like the Thanksgiving table fire, or the Christmas Eve were my sister and I accidentally did a 360 on the highway in between the fifth and sixth Christmas Eve service of the night. No one ever gets hurt in these minor disasters but they make the holiday memorable and make for a good story. One that came to me this year was the Christmas that the dishwasher shorted out.

It was the Christmas of 2004, I was eight-years-old that year. Honestly, I cannot for the life of me remember what I got for Christmas that year. What I can remember is the events of the day.

It was a typical Christmas of my childhood. We got up had breakfast and did stockings before Dad went off to work to do Christmas day services at the Medical Center in Rochester. The family would be



By Jim Miller

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Dear Savvy Senior,

What exercises are best suited for seniors with arthritis? I have osteoarthritis in my neck, back, hip and knee and have read that exercises can help ease the pain and stiffness, but I don't know where to start, and I certainly don't want to aggravate it.

—Stiff and Achy

Dear Stiff,

Many people who have arthritis believe that exercise will worsen their condition, but that's not true. Exercise is actually one of the best treatments for osteoarthritis.

Proper and careful exercises can help reduce joint pain and stiffness, strengthen muscles around the joints and increase flexibility. It also helps manage other chronic conditions that are common among seniors with arthritis, such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity. Here are some tips to help you get started.

Recommended Exercises

Determining exactly which types of exercises that are best for you depends on the form and severity of your arthritis, and which joints are involved. It's best to work with your doctor or a physical therapist to help you develop a personalized exercise program. The different types of exercises that are most often recommended to seniors with arthritis include:

- Range-of-motion exercises: These are gentle stretching exercises that can relieve stiffness as well as improve your ability to move your joints through their normal range of motion. These exercises should be done daily.
- Strengthening exercise: Calisthenics, weight training and working with resistance bands are recommended (two or more days a week) to maintain and improve your muscle strength, which helps support and protect your joints.
- Aerobic exercises: Low-impact activities like walking, cycling, swimming or water aerobics are all recommended three to five times per week to help improve cardiovascular health, control weight, and improve your overall function.

It's also important to keep in mind that when you first start exercising, you need to go slow to give your body time to adjust. If you push yourself too hard you can aggravate your joint pain. However, some muscle soreness or joint achiness in the beginning is normal.

To help you manage your pain start by warming up with some simple stretches or range of motion exercises for five to 10 minutes before you move on to strengthening or aerobic exercises. Another tip is to apply heat to the joints you'll be working before you exercise, and use cold packs after exercising to reduce inflammation.

If you're experiencing a lot of pain while you exercise, you may need to modify the frequency, duration, or intensity of your exercises until the pain improves. Or you may need to try a different activity, for example, switching from walking to water aerobics. But if you're having severe, sharp or constant pain, or large increases in swelling or your joints feel hot or red, you need to stop and see your doctor.

Exercising Aids

To help you exercise at home, the Arthritis Foundation offers a variety of free online videos to guide you through a variety of exercises. Or there are arthritis exercise DVDs you can purchase for a few dollars through Collage Video or the Arthritis Foundation Store.

Also see Go4life.nia.nih.gov, a National Institute on Aging resource that offers a free exercise guide that provides illustrated examples of different exercises.

If you need some motivation or don't like exercising alone, ask your doctor about exercise programs in your area for people with arthritis. Hospitals and clinics sometimes offer special programs, as do local health clubs and senior centers.

The Arthritis Foundation also conducts exercise and aquatic programs for people with arthritis in many communities throughout the U.S. Contact your local branch to find out what may be available near you.

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