

Year of Favor



By Colin Rueter

Friends, every year we are reminded through Christmas of the eternal joy through Christ. While we may not always feel the joy of the season, we are reminded that this is why Jesus came in the flesh [I recently wrote about this in a blog]. To summarize: Jesus came veiled in flesh to seek and save the sinner by willingly giving his life as the substitutionary atonement for sin, thus reconciling God and humanity for those who believe in Jesus alone by faith [Isaiah 53; Matthew 1:21; John 1; John 3:16-17; Romans 3:21-26, 4:13-25, 5:1-11; Ephesians 2:1-22]. We cannot understand the glories of Christmas without keeping the cross at Calvary and the empty tomb in view. Friends, we have living hope in this.

So, as we look ahead to 2024, I want to remind you, Christian, and plead with those who have not yet trusted in Christ, to look to Him who is faithful, who died for you, and who sits in the throne of glory with abounding grace in this year of favor.

In Luke chapter four, Jesus has begun His ministry and is teaching by the power of the Spirit (4:14-15). He has returned to His hometown of Nazareth to teach in the synagogue to read the scroll from the prophet Isaiah. He unrolls the scroll and read from Chapter 61:1-2: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's

favor." And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." The people of God knew this passage, along with the passages in Isaiah before and in them created a longing for this day. In this moment, prophecy was being fulfilled! We just celebrated this moment in the season of Christmas, friends.

There have been thousands of babies born who became kings to rule a nation, but only once has a King become a baby to save the nations. Jesus was born into a world of infant massacres, tyrant political leaders, sexual perversion, systematic oppression, a place where outcasts had no voice, and religious leaders were corrupted by power. He came in a very dark time to push back the darkness, to bring light. This same Jesus we need today – thankful that He is the same then, today, and forever. I want to highlight two things from this passage that Jesus fulfills: 1) God's mission and 2) Gives us hope and joy.

God's mission is an extended time of favor (grace) to bring good news through the Anointed One, Jesus. Look at Isaiah 61, verse 1 – there is a coming hope of the Messiah. The One who is to be anointed with the Holy Spirit, bringing good news to the poor, to heal the broken, free captives, and break chains. This chapter comes after Isaiah has spoken of the Suffering Servant (Ch 53), the LORD's abounding compassion (Ch 55), then salvation to all peoples (Ch 56), addressing evil/oppression (Ch 59), and leading into fu-

ture, everlasting glory for God's people (Ch 60). Seeing His plan be accomplished from before time is God's good pleasure. His mission from eternity past delights God, satisfies Him, as He sees the right timing of the Messiah and salvation coming to the nations. This is the gospel and it is our hope and joy.

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. It is beautiful and it will triumph. The gospel is the only cause on the face of the earth that will finally succeed as intended. I want to be a part of that cause, that mission! Every other cause, no matter the impact, is doomed to extinction. This passage, after showing us God missions, gives us hope and joy – real hope, real joy. First, this passage gives us hope because we are the ones being given good news in verse 1. We are poor, broken, lost, chained. We are not just set free though...no, we are planted as oaks of righteousness with beautiful crowns, anointed with gladness, and given a garment of praise to the glory of God. This hope of a Spirit-empowered life will then bring us joy, being happy in God. If we look to Him in promised faith, through the Hope He gives... Joy comes with it! Our joy is not in experiences (though we have some), they are grounded in the Living Savior – no one can take that from me or you! The life saturated in God's truth is a life that is deeply durable in the face of drought and a life that succeeds in God's good purposes into eternity because it is grounded in truth. His objective, never-changing, life-giving, life-sustaining, raise the dead to life, healing all wounds, redeeming the broken, binding the hurting, grace-

abounding, TRUTH through His word, the Bible. This is the truth we look to by faith as we look at the promise of the LORD's favor.

Isaiah speaks about the Lord's time, a time of favor when the Anointed One comes and after this time will be a time of vengeance. We are in the first time of favor and are awaiting the day of fulfillment on the day of vengeance in Christ's second coming. Be assured that this Day is coming. For the follower of Jesus, this day is a great day. We see justice done, wrongs punished, and a life of eternity beginning with Jesus forever. However, if you have not placed your faith in Christ alone for salvation, tremble for this Day. God's wrath will be rightly poured out on you for your rebellion and sin. Turn to Jesus today, friend, and be saved from the wrath to come in order that you receive today hope and joy in Jesus.

So What?

This passage in Isaiah shows God's faithfulness in prophecy fulfilled through Jesus. It reminds us of our greatest need. This season we have been reminded how this need is met. Our need is not a bigger house, a better job, a more loving husband, a more patient wife, or even a spouse, period. It is not better behaving kids, more kids, or even to have kids. It is not the scholarship or acceptance letter to the college of your choice, more money in your budget, a newer car, keeping your lake cabin, getting the tropical vacation, or gaining more friends, via real life or social media. Our greatest need is to be saved from our sin and God's wrath. You are a sinner. God is Holy. *(continued on page 7)*



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— Malachi 3:1*

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When the Israelites, under Moses, set up a tabernacle (a portable temple) in the wilderness, a cloud of glory signaled the presence of God. God was there in the midst of his people. Later, when they built a temple, under Solomon, the cloud of glory filled it to overflowing. God was enthroned in the temple as Israel's true King.

Many years later, the prophet Ezekiel saw God's throne leave the temple—and the cloud of glory with it (Ezekiel 10). Soon the temple itself lay in ruins, destroyed by Babylon. Later the people of Israel returned from exile and built another temple. But this time there was no cloud of glory, no sign that God had come to live in the new temple.

Many more years later, Mary and Joseph came to the temple carrying Jesus. And the Lord, Israel's true King, was in the midst of his people once again. What kind of king will he be? And what kind of kingdom will he bring?

We are faced with those questions to this day. How will we welcome King Jesus and his kingdom? With humility? With joy? With thanksgiving? With hope? With holy obedience? The answer is in our lives and in the life of the church.

Jesus, you came to live among us for a while. And you will come again. We want to welcome you wherever you appear. And wherever you are, your kingdom is. Amen.



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LaVonne Mae Schafer

LaVonne Mae Schafer, 92, died Wednesday, December 6, 2023 at Mayo Clinic Health Systems, Red Wing. She was born April 16, 1931 to Oscar and Myrtle (Nord) Flom of Wanamingo. She was baptized and confirmed at Trinity Lutheran Church in Wanamingo and in 1949, she graduated from Wanamingo High School. After high school she attended Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN, graduating in 1953 with



a Bachelor of Science Degree. She was a Registered Medical Technologist working at Gunderson Lutheran Hospital in La Crosse, WI. She also worked for Dr. Davis, Hanson and Weber in Minneapolis. On September 29, 1956, she married John Schafer at Trinity Lutheran Church in Wanamingo. They lived on a dairy farm in rural Lake City. In 1990 their son took over the dairy farm and they moved to rural Goodhue. John died on February 12, 2015 and for the past five years LaVonne has resided at the Downtown Plaza. LaVonne was a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Hay Creek. She was involved in Ladies Aid, Fellowship Club and choir. She was a member of the Belva-Dears Extension Home Study Group and a past 4-H leader. She enjoyed cooking, knitting and crafts—particularly making jewelry. She always enjoyed spending time with her family, especially her grandchildren.

She is survived by two daughters, Peri Anne (Ray) Williams of Goodhue and Kimberly (Kyle) Gibbens of Tomah, WI; two sons, Todd (Tammy) Schafer of Berlin, WI and Kevin (Carol) Schafer of Lake City; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren and baby Schafer on the way and two sisters-in-law, Margaret and Ruth Schafer of Rochester. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, and an infant son.

Funeral service was at 11 a.m. Monday, December 11, 2023 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Hay Creek. Reverend Lowell Sorenson officiated. Visitation was from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, December 10, 2023, and one hour prior to the service, all at the church. Burial took place at St. Peter's Lutheran Cemetery, Belvidere. Arrange-

ments handled by Mahn Family Funeral Home, Bodelson-Mahn Chapel. Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.mahnfamilyfuneralhome.com

Shirley Mary Healy

Shirley Mary Healy, 88, of Kasson, died Friday, December 15, 2023 at Reflections Hospice in Northfield.



She was born January 10, 1935 in Rochester, Minnesota the daughter of Norman and Margaret (Friend) Hanson. She graduated from Lourdes High School in 1953. She then attended Rochester Junior College where she earned her medical secretary degree.

Shirley married the love of her life, Chris Healy in 1955 at St. Francis Church in Rochester. From there they lived in Mankato briefly, New Ulm for 20 years where they raised their 4 children, Kenyon for 23 years and retired to Kasson in 2005.

She enjoyed gardening, especially her flower beds, camping, showing and raising boxer dogs, and sewing and needle point. Shirley also loved reading, writing letters and singing in the choir.

She is survived by her children, John (Nadia) of Prescott, WI, Denise (Roger) of Dodge Center, Sue (Scott) of Cannon Falls; 10 grandchildren; many great-grandchildren and siblings, John (Ginny) of Kasson, Jim (Bonnie) of Grand Meadow and Eric (Mari-

lyn) of Cornelius, NC.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Chris Healy; son, Joseph; parents, Norman and Margaret and a sister, Maureen.

Mass of Christian Burial was held at 11:00 AM on Thursday, December 21, 2023 at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Kenyon with visitation one hour prior. Father Clayton Forner was the celebrant. Interment was in the St. Michael's Catholic Cemetery in Kenyon.

Douglas A. Erickson

Douglas A. Erickson, age 81, of Minneapolis died on Saturday, January 13, 2024, at North Memorial Medical Center, Robbinsdale.



Private graveside services will be held for the family in the Hegre Church Cemetery, West Concord in the spring.

Douglas graduated from Kenyon High School and University of Iowa. He was a self-employed sales representative for furniture and fabrics. He enjoyed fishing, completing crossword puzzles, playing trivia and watching professional sports.

He is survived by his life partner, Scott Ullman; many cousins and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Arthur and Ruby Erickson.

Visit boldtfuneralhome.com for information and guestbook.

(obituaries continued on page 4)

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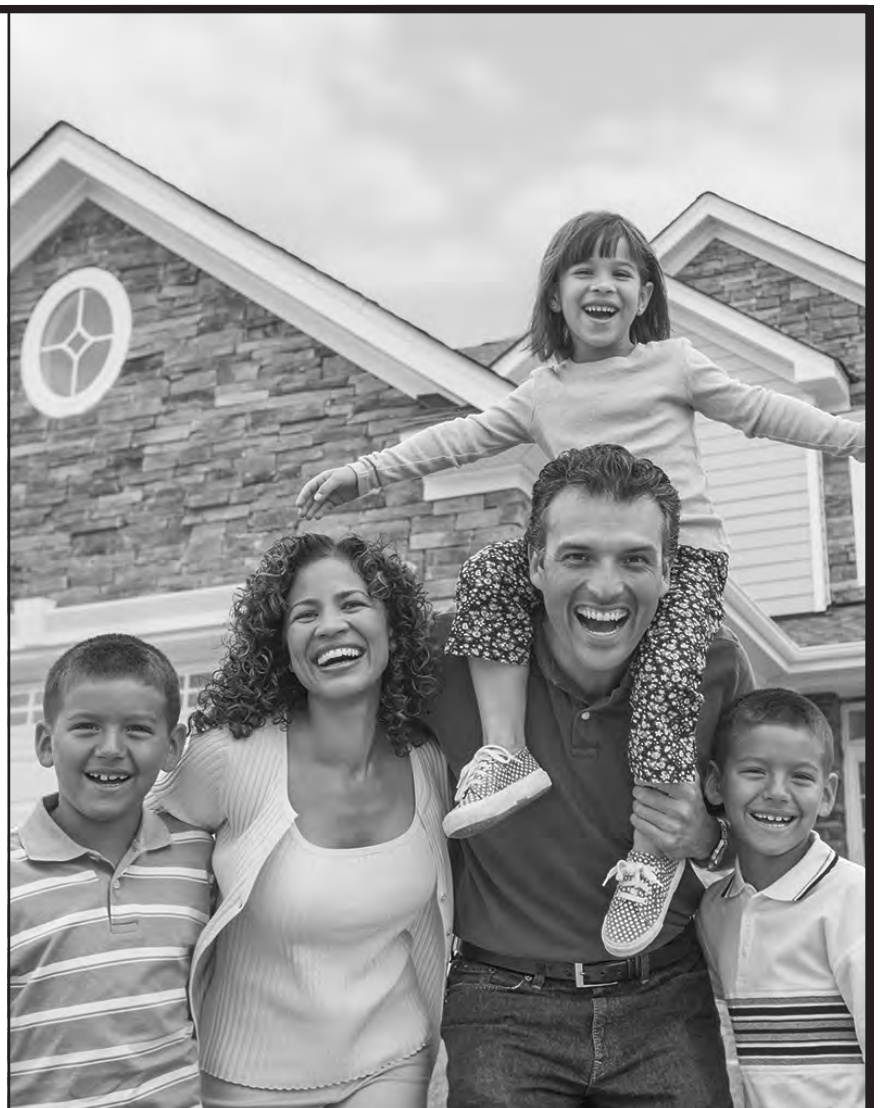
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Wayne Wilson

The funeral service for Wayne Wilson was held Saturday January 6th at 2:00 PM at Trinity Lutheran Church in Wanamingo. The Reverend David Sorenson officiated. Visitation was from 12:00 – 2:00 PM at the church. Burial followed at the Trinity Lutheran Church Cemetery. Mr. Wilson, 73, of Wanamingo, died Saturday December 23, 2023 at Goodhue Living in Goodhue.

A life defined by music, Wayne Everett Wilson was born November 18, 1950 in Bentonville, Arkansas to Everett and Wanda (Rider) Wilson. At an early age the family moved to Plains, Montana and Wayne was raised there. He received a bachelor's degree in music education from Concordia College in Moorhead, and it was there that he met Diane Finley while on a Christian outreach team. The couple married in 1972. In 1978, the couple moved to Caledonia, Minnesota where Wayne worked as an insurance salesman. He would eventually complete radiology training from Western Wisconsin Technical College, and in 1990 he began a career in radiology at Gundersen Lutheran Hospital in La Crosse. He continued at Fairview Hospital in Red Wing until his retirement in 2017.

Wayne and Diane loved singing together, and they often sang at weddings, funerals, church, and community events. He joined the community band in Caledonia, and later in Zumbrota. As a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Caledonia, he was involved in adult bible study, worked with the youth group, taught Sunday school, and chaperoned youth trips. At Trinity Lutheran Church in Wanamingo, he ushered and served on the church council.

Throughout his lifetime, he was an avid reader, enjoyed working on cars, woodworking, bicycle riding, hiking, and camping. He loved traveling, and particularly enjoyed visiting wineries.

He is survived by his wife Diane of Wanamingo; sons, Matthew of Fremont, Nebraska, Marc of Maple Grove, and Luke (Khari) of Chatfield; a daughter Bethany (Josh) Feine of Cazenovia, Wisconsin; 7 grandchildren, Aidan Wilson, Maya Stadler, Claire Stadler, Clara Wilson, Ryan Stadler, Ella Stadler, and Elizabeth Wilson; 2 step-grandchildren, Isabel and Isaiah Feine. Also surviving are his sister Kathleen (Donald) Simmons of Cheney, Washington; as well as nieces, nephews, and other extended family members.

He was preceded in death by his parents. If so desired, memorials may be directed to The Alzheimer's Association at 3261 19th St NW, Suite 201, Rochester Minnesota 55901.



Neil Allen Gullickson

Neil Allen Gullickson, 69, of Wanamingo, passed away at his home on Thursday, January 4, 2024. He was born in Zumbrota on August 31, 1954, to Wilbur and Inez (Reiersen) Gullickson. He graduated from Wanamingo High School in 1973. He worked at Maple Island for many years, in addition to the City of Wanamingo and the City of Cannon Falls in maintenance. Most recently, he drove truck for the Ag Partners Soil Center in Wanamingo. Neil was a lifelong member of Wanamingo Lutheran Church. He loved to be social and never met a stranger in his life. He enjoyed visiting with his neighbors and friends around town. He had a knack for fixing things and restored a 1967 Ford Falcon. He loved classic cars and his Harley-Davidson.

He is survived by his two daughters, Tracy (Chris) Graham and Anna (Sam) Edmunds; seven grandchildren, Rayhan, Marelo, Isla, Hadley, Enzo, Cary, and Palmer; brother, David (Alice) Gullickson; sister-in-law, Barb Gullickson; and nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Eugene and James Gullickson; and nephews, William and John Gullickson.

Funeral service was at 1 p.m. on Friday, January 12, 2024, at Wanamingo Lutheran Church. Visitation was two hours prior to the service at the church. Burial followed in the church cemetery. Arrangements made by Mahn Family Funeral Home, Larson Chapel in Zumbrota.

David L. Isaacson

David L. Isaacson, age 78, of Nerstrand, died on Wednesday, January 3, 2024, at Three Links Care Center, Northfield.

Funeral services were held at Grace Lutheran Church, Nerstrand on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. Interment was at the Nerstrand Cemetery with military rites provided by Rice County Central Veterans Association.

Visitation was held at Grace Lutheran Nerstrand from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday.

A celebration of life was held at the Elks Club 28 3rd Street N. W., Faribault after the interment service.

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

David L., the son of Manford L. and Marlys A. (Rongley) Isaacson was born April 27, 1945, in Faribault. After graduating from Faribault High School in 1963, David proudly served his country in the United States Army from 1963 – 1967. David was called home to start his lifelong passion for Allis – Chalmers and farm machinery when his father got sick. On June 1, 1968, David was united in marriage to Penny (Iverson)



Thurnau at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Owatonna. David served many years on the Nerstrand City Council and was a volunteer firefighter for Nerstrand Fire Department. He was the mayor of Nerstrand for many years and a lifelong member of Grace Lutheran Church, Nerstrand serving on many committees. He was a member of Faribault Elks #1166 and Faribault American Legion Post 43. David along with his parents and brothers owned Isaacson Implement, Nerstrand. David and Penny became sole owners of Isaacson Implement in 1990. They were inducted into the Rice County Historical Society in 2022. He also was a member of the Rice County Fair Board for many years and in 2016 received the Rice County Friend of the Fair award for all his support and dedication to the Rice County 4-H Program.

David enjoyed bowling, fishing, snowmobiling, playing cards and traveling with friends and family. David's most precious time was spent with his family at the cabin.

David was a true salesman. He made many friends wherever he was with his pen and paper in his shirt pocket, and he also knew the prices and was ready for a sale. Many customers became not only friends, but family also. Thank you to our customers that supported our family.

Survivors include his wife, Penny; children, Jeff (and Mary) Isaacson, Anne Gilster (Bryan Lowe), Jill (and Rick) Swenson and John (and Alex) Isaacson; grandchildren, Megan (and Derek) Melhouse, Allison (and Adam) Peine, Paige (and Jake) Gilster, Chelsea (and Kaya) Gilster, Kylie Lowe, Lexi (and Joe) Bauer, Madi Isaacson, Mikaela (and Maxwell) Isaacson, Gianna Isaacson, David Isaacson and Noah Isaacson; great grandchildren, Winslow Melhouse, Luna Melhouse and Beau Bauer; siblings, Betty (and Henry) Hull, Gary Isaacson, Richard Isaacson, Jim (and Marcy) Isaacson; in-laws, Richard (and Joan) Iverson, John (and Lila) Iverson and Peggy (and Curtis) Radtke.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Manford and Marlys Isaacson; father and mother-in-law Mickey and Phyllis Iverson, sister-in-law Peggy Isaacson.

Special thanks to Three Links Care Center and Allina Hospice, Owatonna, for all the love and care they have given to David.

Memorials may be given in memory to Three Links Care Center, Northfield, Allina Hospice, Owatonna, Grace Lutheran Church, Nerstrand, and the Rice County Historical Society.

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Letter from the Superintendent

The Importance of Library Cards and Reading to Children



By Beth Giese MA, Ed.S
Kenyon-Wanamingo Public Schools
District Superintendent

In a world filled with screens and gadgets, one timeless tool remains a treasure trove of knowledge and imagination—the library card. Encouraging children to explore the wonders of literature through the simple act of reading can unlock a realm of possibilities, and obtaining a library card is the first step toward this enriching journey.

A library card isn't just a piece of plastic; it's a passport to worlds unknown. It grants access to a universe of books, stories, and information that can inspire, educate, and entertain young minds. With this magical

card, children can borrow books, explore various genres, and embark on adventures without leaving their neighborhood.

Reading to children is a gift that keeps on giving. It fosters a bond between parents and children while nurturing a love for storytelling and learning. Research consistently shows that regular reading sessions with children from an early age can significantly enhance their cognitive development, language skills, and imagination.

Beyond improving literacy, reading aloud to kids stimulates curiosity, empathy, and creativity. It exposes them to diverse perspectives, cultures, and ideas, broadening their horizons and preparing them to navigate the complexities of the world with confidence.

Choose books that captivate their interests,

create a cozy reading nook, and make reading time an enjoyable and anticipated part of the day. Encourage children to select books they're excited about! I wonder how many times I checked out the book "owning your own horse" from the Pine Island Van Horn Library as a kid?

Libraries serve as vibrant hubs for community engagement, offering not only books but also a variety of programs, events, and resources to support childhood literacy. Librarians, those unsung heroes, are valuable allies in guiding children toward age-appropriate books and fostering a lifelong love for reading.

In a fast-paced digital era, the simple pleasure of flipping through pages and getting lost

in a story holds immeasurable value. A library card is a gateway to a world where imagination knows no bounds, where knowledge is limitless, and where the seeds of a lifelong passion for learning are sown.

So, for 2024 let's take a step back, grab that library card, and embark on an adventure with our children—one page, one story at a time. After all, in the words of Dr. Seuss, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

Storytime in Kenyon resumes on January 10th, at 10:30, hope to see you there. The Kenyon Public Library is open Monday through Saturday, check the website for hours.

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	<p>2021 FORD RANGER LARIAT 4WD</p>		<p>2022 FORD MAVERICK XLT 4WD</p>	<h3>Cold Weather Car Care</h3> <p>At Milo Peterson Ford Co., our highly qualified technicians are here to provide exceptional service in a timely manner. From oil changes to transmission replacements, we are dedicated to maintaining top tier customer service, for both new and pre-owned car buyers! Allow our staff to demonstrate our commitment to excellence.</p> <p>Call our service department to schedule your maintenance needs. Open Monday thru Friday 7:30am to 5pm.</p>			
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Flour Child Creations

(continued from page 1)

Ah-Ha! There is a mystery that must be solved!

Beth Eliason moved to Wanamingo from Hastings, after meeting her "paperless husband" as she likes to call him. Chad Vieths is a local VW enthusiast, mechanic and carpenter who has lived around this area all of his life. Many of you will remember Alvin Vieths from Goodhue County. Alvin was Chad's uncle. They have 6 children in their family, ages 17,19, 20, 21, 23 and 27. They purchased a homestead near Zumbrota in 2021, and have put down roots, literally, by planting fruit trees, and making it their own.

Yes. They still own the bakery...

Maybe you have seen the CakeBus around town, or parked in front of the bakery. How did this come together? Let's go back in time to find answers...

I met with Beth at said bakery, and unveiled my question, "Just what is it that you are doing here when you are not open?" She gave me a mysterious smile, and began her story.

"I grew up in a kitchen surrounded by cooks using real, whole foods (the ones you can pronounce). My high school job was cooking at the local Dairy Queen, flipping burgers, and decorating ice cream cakes.

In 1999, after speaking to dozens of pastry chefs and bakers about my wedding cake, I thought I had found my baker. After attending a friend's wedding, I was so disappointed when the cake from this bakery was so dry that we had to pour a shot of Baileys on it to make it edible. I simply could not find a baker in the Twin Cities area who was artistic AND whose cakes tasted good. A wedding cake is the final presentation of the evening, so it needs to be extra special. Problem solved: I decided to make my own wedding cake. Brides have nothing else to do on the day of the wedding, right? I created a ten-tiered, ten-flavored masterpiece that was beautiful and most importantly, incredibly delicious. My hands were so sore, I could barely hold my bouquet, but I had created a cake beyond my wildest dreams.

That cake led to several cousins asking me to

make the cake for their weddings, which quickly snowballed into more events and serious baking from home while transporting kids to school and activities. It was never planned, but my career led to a commercial kitchen where I get to blend my artistry with my baking skills.

After moving myself and my 4 kids to Wanamingo, I attended Le Cordon Bleu, College of Culinary Arts, Twin Cities, and earned a degree in Baking and Patisserie. Simultaneously, Chad restored a 1958 Volkswagen bus, complete with license plate CAKEBUS. As we started to see our goals of making Flour Child Creations become reality, we were ready for the next step.

Baking from home was no longer an option. We didn't have the space to feed our crew of eight and also fill customer orders. We purchased our current brick-and-mortar building in 2015, a tiny space that started as a canteen at the swimming area on the north side of town, later to be converted into a diner. Chad spent months building a custom kitchen inside the shell of the former Bulldogs Den. We saved the front door and the amazing, old brick. Everything else from the ground up was replaced and brought up to the strict code of the Department of Agriculture.

Wanamingo is a unique place, where women support other women. Marlene supported me in my culinary adventure. The "Marlene Malerich Artists Scholarship Fund" was created to honor Marlene while also supporting future artists. Now that 5 of our 6 kids have graduated high school, we will start having yearly events in the garden behind the bakery. Local young artists in Southern Minnesota in all the creatives: music, sculpture, welding, painting, and design can entertain guests, sell their artwork, enjoy gourmet desserts, while completing for the scholarship.

Everyone has a family member who either needs to (or prefers to) eat a certain way for their health. I have been making gluten-free products for my family for 18 years, long before the ingredients were available in every store. I am starting to create a dairy-free line, but have only perfected one recipe so far: a dark chocolate torte.

My specialty is cake and desserts. Chad brings a different set of skills, allowing the cakes to spin, defy gravity, and sometimes shoot fireworks. He maintains CAKEBUS,

while I fill it with gourmet treats to share at events. You can pronounce and spell every simple ingredient I use in my products: zero preservatives, pounds of butter, and gallons of cream. We make food your grandmother would recognize.

The shelf life is short, so most of my items need to stay refrigerated. I am currently open a few days before each holiday to ensure fresh products. My priority is providing the best-tasting items possible, with the best ingredients available. There is no mass-produced, factory food in my cakery, as everything is made hours before an event. My creativity is a bonus. The dates I will be open for purchasing treats already made, or for picking up your special orders, are February 12, 13 & 14 for that special Valentine, March 27th to the 30th for helping the Easter Bunny deliver delicacies, and May 9th, 10th and 11th for treats your mother will enjoy as you celebrate her day. I will also be open the 4th of July. To place your special orders for pick up at the bakery, you can email Beth at beth@flourchildcreations.com, or if you'd prefer, call her at (507) 824- CAKE.(2253).

Starting January, 2024, Flour Child Creations, 237 Main Street, Wanamingo, will be open on Fridays, 10:00am-4:00pm.

I also love to cook, but that usually consists of me opening the fridge and creating something out of what is on hand that day from my garden and pantry. Cooking is simple, you add items as you go. Baking is different, it is chemistry and control. I weigh each ingredient in every batch, balance the ratio of ingredients, and then complete steps in a precise order. Many of the recipes I have created are unique to Flour Child Creations. No one else has my recipes, because I created them. I use top-shelf ingredients from all over the world.

Some people read romance novels, I read cookbooks. I love to spend the cold winter days curled up in front of the fireplace, paging through the vast collection of 1950/60s church cookbooks I pick up at summer garage sales. My chocolate cake recipe disappeared from my cakery wall during my first year on Main Street. As it was the only copy, I am still perfecting the replication of that recipe.

I often get asked for my award-winning buttercream recipe, which takes 6 hours to complete from start to finish per batch. The recipe cannot be stolen, as it is only in my head.

My website, flourchildcreations.com is currently being updated for 2024 and includes a flavor list and examples of my creations. I struggle with hearing loss, so I prefer to have orders emailed to beth@flourchildcreations.com

ations.com.

I post on FB and Instagram for special events and holidays, but would love to find someone to handle my social media. Weddings and large events, like fundraisers, are my current focus, creating edible art out of the tiniest building in town, so feel free to contact me for your special event. You can be sure it will be unique and delicious.

We host a Volkswagen campout weekend every July. Check out the article on CAKEBUS, where it was featured in a 6 page spread in Hot VW Magazine".

And so now you know the history of the Flour Child Creations bakery, thus far. As for the answer to the mystery of what Beth is doing when she is there, but not open, she is creating recipes, one at a time, by trial and error, to be sold at the bakery, and to be featured in her newest endeavor: a completely unique recipe collection to be enjoyed for generations to come! Other times she is completing orders for wedding cakes, birthday parties, anniversaries, reunions, and all special occasions that need an artistic and delectable cake, cookie, cupcake or special dessert to complete the event, occasionally delivering them in CAKEBUS. Flour Child Creations is a forever-evolving business that embraces change. Future plans, including the cookbook, will be revealed when it is completed.

"Stop in and say hello! We will be open every Friday in 2024. Stay Sweet!"

Year of Favor

(continued from page 2)

His righteous judgment will be seen, yet this righteous, Holy judge is full of mercy and compassion and has a mission to redeem us.

God will exchange your suffering and death for resurrection. He has promised spiritual blessings and an eternal life with Him. Jesus is building His Church – He has commanded and empowered us to join the mission. This is what makes Jesus' coming over 2000 years ago magnificent! Because He came: We were poor, now rich. We were brokenhearted, now rejoicing. We were captive to sin, now set free. We were under God's wrath, now called His sons and daughters. It means we are called upon to display his glory. Show that He's glorious. Act like He's glorious. Make much of him like He's the most valuable, glorious thing in the universe because He is. May this be your life's vision as you look ahead to 2024. As always, if you have questions, need prayer, a word of encouragement, or a cup of coffee, please contact me via my personal email: niloc1214@gmail.com

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THANKS FOR SHOPPING YOUR HOMETOWN!

Growing Your Business with a Mentor

By SCORE



FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR BUSINESS

January is National Mentoring Month, so it is the perfect time to find a mentor for your business. See why other business owners choose to work with SCORE mentors and why you should start working with one today. You can search #MentoringMonth on social media to see more.

If you already work with a mentor, please take a moment to thank them for the time and effort they give to support you in your business journey.

The Benefits of Virtual Mentoring for Small Businesses

Find out how working with a mentor virtually might be the best choice for you and for your business.

Through virtual mentoring, entrepreneurs can connect online with someone who can help guide them in their business journey. Let's explore the big benefits for entrepreneurs.

What is Virtual Mentoring?

Mentoring is a program that brings people with a common background together in a formal or informal partnership where one receives guidance and coaching from experienced professionals to help pursue their goals. Virtual mentoring is typically done via phone, video conferencing or email.

With many professionals working remotely, virtual mentoring creates an accessible space where entrepreneurs can receive strategic support and valuable guidance from business mentors regardless of location.

Knowledge transfer is a great way to pass on valuable strategies, skills and ideas to the next generation of entrepreneurs.

A well-organized virtual program serves to benefit both mentees and mentors by empowering them with resources such as forums, mind-mapping techniques, plan templates, online courses and an accessible platform to reach out to mentors situated anywhere in the country.

For instance, you might have heard inspiring success stories of other small business owners and want to follow in their footsteps.

Take Damian Sanchez, for example, who started up the D.C. Mosquito Squad as a part-time venture. He then grew the business exponentially and now has over 40 employees, serving 3,500 customers across the city. This doesn't mean you must drop everything, move to D.C., and start your mosquito-treatment home service agency. You can learn from the experiences of small business owners and entrepreneurs like Damian by signing up for a mentoring program.

Benefits of Virtual Mentoring

Setting up a business can be an isolating experience where you might feel like a lone sailor on a treacherous expedition. A business mentor can help empower you in your entrepreneurial journey. And the mentor doesn't even need to meet you in person. There are many benefits to getting guidance virtually.

Flexibility and Convenience

Thanks to video conferencing technology, you can meet business mentors at a time convenient to everyone involved. This is an excellent benefit for startup business owners who may also be juggling another job or family caretaking responsibilities.

A tremendous upside of virtual mentoring is that it is not restricted to a specific location. Many people have relocated from urban cities to the suburbs or rural communities in the past few years. If you are one of them,

virtual mentoring can provide greater flexibility in accessing leadership and business-building advice, making location no longer a factor.

Accessibility to More Mentors

Virtual mentoring also encourages more mentors to sign up for business mentoring programs. That's because while mentoring requires a commitment of time and energy, business experts who are still working professionals or busy in retirement can better manage their time with a flexible virtual program. More mentors mean more experts for you to work with.

You may have several mentors. Perhaps you work with one mentor on starting your business and general business questions. You may also want to work with an expert in your particular industry, one who knows the licenses you need or effective marketing campaigns for your type of business.

Builds Relationships and Networks

A remote setting provides a sanctuary to participants that helps foster quality relationships, underscoring honesty and trust. This inspires authentic relationships between mentors and mentees, creating an environment conducive to open communication and building mutual trust.

(continued on page 9)



Flake Out Festival & Winter Parade

Saturday, February 3, 2024

9:00 AM Euchre at Fireside on the Patio, 100% Payout
Bring partner if possible, not required. \$20 team entry.
Questions contact Jen at 507-649-0602

ANNUAL CHILI COOKOFF CONTEST

\$5.00/entry. Tasters will pay \$5.00 to taste all entries/vote.

12:00 PM Bring Entry to City Hall

12:30 PM-1:30 PM Tasting/Voting

2:00 PM Cookoff Winner Announced (1st & 2nd Place Payout)

3:00 PM Designer Purse & Gift Card Bingo at City Hall
\$30/packet, 10 games, designer purses and \$150 gift cards

6:30 PM 9th Annual Denni Dazzle Parade
\$150.00 Prize for Best Float!
Hosted by the Dennison Lions. Call or text Diane at 612-532-0268

7:00 PM Live Music from Bryan Anderson at 625 Bar & Grill

8:00 PM LIVE MUSIC AT THE FIRESIDE "Wreckless"

9:00 PM Raffle Winners Announced at Fireside

Flake Out Festival Raffle Saturday, February 3
Buy a Raffle Ticket from any Lions Member, Fireside Lounge, Dennison Depot Gas Station, 625 Bar & Grill or Heritage Bank in Dennison for \$5.00 for your chance to win!

Grand Prize - \$500.00 Cash

2nd Prize - \$250 Cash 3rd Prize - \$100 Cash

Plus Many Additional Prizes from Local Area Businesses



Raffle Drawing held at 9p.m. at the Fireside Lounge. Need not be present to win.
Winner is responsible for any taxes or fees. Complete list of additional prizes available upon request.

SPONSORED BY DENNISON LIONS CLUB CHARITABLE GAMBLING PERMIT #2762. MUST BE 18 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER.

1st Prize \$500!



Proceeds Benefit Local Lions Club Activities!

Dennison Lions Flake Out Festival Raffle

Saturday, February 3

Buy a Raffle Ticket from any Lions Member, Fireside Lounge, Dennison Depot Gas Station, 625 Bar & Grill or Heritage Bank in Dennison for \$5.00 for your chance to win!

Grand Prize \$500.00 Cash!

2nd Prize - \$250 Cash

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Plus Many Additional Prizes from Local Area Businesses

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SPONSORED BY DENNISON LIONS CLUB CHARITABLE GAMBLING PERMIT #2762. MUST BE 18 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER.



Flake Out Festival Planned for February 3rd



The Dennison Lions Club is planning the 2024 Flake Out Festival & Winter Parade for Saturday, February 3rd, 2024.

The club is holding a raffle in conjunction with the days events to raise funds to support Lions Clubs activities and help support other area non-profit entities and those in need that the club donates to and supports throughout the year. A \$500 1st Prize, plus other cash prizes will be given away.

The Annual Lighted Parade will take place at 6:30 PM, and anyone can participate. A Cash Prize will be given to the best float.

Other returning favorites include Euchre at Fireside, beginning at 9 AM with 100% Prize Payout and Designer Purse & Gift Card Bingo at City Hall at 3 pm. Returning



2023 parade

this year will be a Chili Cookoff Contest. Cook up your best chili recipe and bring it down to city hall at 11 AM. Tasting and voting will be from 11:30-12:30 with a cash prize for 1st and 2nd place. If you have any questions, contact Lion President Diane at 612-532-0268.

Growing Your Business with a Mentor

(continued from page 8)



Mentors have often amassed a network of essential business connections--investors, suppliers, industry experts--who can help open doors for you. Build a relationship with your mentor, and you could be introduced to their network of movers and shakers in the business world.

Solves Traditional Challenges

The nature of products or services might

have changed, but the path to business ownership has some of the same challenges from decades ago:

What goes into a business plan?

How should I attract investors?

How do I set up a sales pipeline?

How do I perform a vendor review?

What are effective PR tactics for a startup?

Consulting with a business mentor can be an effective way to learn tried and tested strategies to resolve these traditional challenges of becoming an entrepreneur. It's easy to get caught up in your head. A business mentor helps you get out of the rut and gain a fresh perspective by being a sounding board for ideas, questions, doubts and concerns.

Free or Low Cost

Through many local communities and leadership organizations, like SCORE, business mentorship services are usually free, so cost is not usually a barrier.

Virtual mentors can be a valuable part of your support system--whenever and wherever you need them. Whether you're just starting, growing or ready to exit a small business, explore SCORE's mentor program today.

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Flake Out Festival ANNUAL CHILI COOKOFF CONTEST

Saturday, February 3

\$5.00 Entry Fee

Tasters will pay \$5.00 to taste all entries/vote.

- 12:00 PM Bring Entry to Dennison City Hall
- 12:30-1:30 PM Tasting/Voting
- 2:00 PM Cookoff Winner Announced
(1st & 2nd Payout)

Questions?

Contact Lion President
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THURSDAY \$3.50 All Taps, Domestic Bottles, Rail Drinks! 16oz. Margarita Special!
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Growth Continues for Minnesota FFA

By Minnesota FFA



The Minnesota FFA Foundation continues the important work supporting the development of young people through Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) programs and the

FFA.

Minnesota FFA continues to grow both in the number of schools offering AFNR/FFA programs and the number of students enrolled. Thirty new programs have been added in the past four years, bringing the number of Minnesota schools that offer AFNR/FFA programs to more than 220. The growth doesn't stop there, as numerous schools are actively

engaged in the chartering process to add an AFNR/FFA program for the upcoming school year.

"We invite individuals and businesses to make a start-of-the-year donation for 2024, supporting the development of students through the Minnesota FFA Foundation. Donors play an important role, in removing barriers so that the more than 40,000 Minnesota students enrolled in AFNR classes have the opportunity to prepare for careers in agriculture and develop the skills to be leaders for their local community," shares Val Aarsvold, executive director, the Minnesota FFA Foundation.

Support provided to the Minnesota FFA Foundation is directed toward four main areas, including Youth Leadership, Teacher Preparation, Scholarships, and the Minnesota FFA State Convention.

One-time gifts, as well as ongoing and planned gifts, are welcome. If you would like to discuss giving options, contact Val Aarsvold at 507-259-3586 or visit www.mnf-foundation.org.



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BBQ Rib Dinner - 1/2 or Full Rack (begins at 4:00pm.)

THURSDAY \$3.50 All Taps, Domestic Bottles, Rail Drinks!
Taco Specials! Fajita Specials! 16oz. Margarita Special

FINALLY FRIDAY All You Can Eat Fish Dinner

SATURDAY Hand Battered Jumbo Shrimp or Slow Roasted Prime Rib

SUNDAY Enjoy Our Sunday Breakfast Beginning at 9a.m. and Sunday Pasta Features

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Healthy Sugar?



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist

In this past season you probably noticed that “sweet tooth” become extra active. The holiday season is filled with opportunity for sweets of all different kinds. For many the holiday would not be complete without a particular candy or cookie or dessert being present. Now as the new year takes hold many resolve to do a better job of self-discipline in choosing what to eat. Let me suggest you direct your effort to improve the quality and decrease the quantity of sugar you consume this

year.

There is no question that sugar has a strong hold on our community. From government data we can find that the average American consumed less than 10 pounds of sugar a year back in 1880. More than 100 years later, the average American consumes about 2 pounds of sugar each week. Not only has the quantity increased more than 10-fold, but this sugar is processed to the point of pure energy with no additional mineral or vitamin content attached to it.

Go back to 1959 and less than one percent of the American population was diabetic. Today more than 30 percent of the American population is identified as pre-diabetic or diabetic. The greatest increase in diabetes is occurring among the young Americans. Those managing diabetes will have more significant medication costs, more doctor visits, and twice as long hospital stays. New medications are coming out promising to control the downward spiral of disease, but the cost of these medicines continues to increase.

There is a better solution. You can choose healthy sugars to replace the pure energy of the white sugar and corn syrup you currently have in the cupboard. As you start this new

direction, I encourage you to throw out the white sugar and corn syrup and select healthy sugars that contain minerals and enzymes that will aid digestion and help to keep your health.

These healthy sugars have a variety of flavors. You are familiar with them, but probably have not used them as well as they can be used. So let’s review some of these options:

Whole Fruit – a piece of whole fruit at the end of a meal, or as part of a meal is an excellent way to satisfy the sweet tooth and get vitamins and minerals as well. In a previous article, I spoke on the benefit of an apple each day. Make whole fruit a priority in your meal planning and you will be healthier for it.

Raw Honey – organic raw honey contains enzymes that will help aid digestion and additional nutrients that benefit health. Raw honey will contain active enzymes and unfiltered honey will contain additional bee propolis and pollen that can help reduce some allergies and improve digestion. Less honey will be required in recipes because it tastes sweeter than sugar.

Black Strap molasses – molasses is a by-product of the sugar refining process. Molasses contains all minerals that are removed from refined sugar. Rich in iron, calcium, potassium, and copper, this addition to recipes is always noticed. Often associated with gingerbread flavors, but molasses can also be used in many other recipes.

Maple Syrup – the sap of the maple tree collected in early spring contains minerals and nutrients essential for the new life of the spring leaves. Grade C maple syrup contains the most vitamins and minerals and is the strongest flavor. Grade A maple syrup also contains minerals and is a good substitute for white sugar in any recipe.

Rapadura or Sucanat – these two products

are made from sugar cane juice. The juice does not go through the extensive processing required for white sugar. Therefore, there is still some mineral content remaining with these sweet products. There is a slight molasses or caramel flavor that is pleasant to taste.

Make your health a priority in 2024. There will be change that is required. Little changes can make a big difference over time. Changing your sugar choices can be one of those little changes. If you would like to reverse diabetes or prevent diabetes, I can help you start a plan.

Contact me to discuss your health goals for 2024. I can help you reach those health goals with whole food plans customized to your specific needs. You can contact me at nutritionproportion@gmail.com, or check out my website at www.nutritionproportion.net Start this year with a new plan. Foundation to Thrive is a 16 week lifestyle transformation to help you reach your health goals in 2024.

Merry Musings in 2024

(continued from page 1)

My client looked at me with a sort of startled expression, and said, "No! Why would we DO that?", and I began to wonder.....

So I was with my cousin Tammy Lexvold a few days later, and I asked her the same question, and she laughed at the memory and said Yes! More perplexed than ever, I asked her, "Why would we say such an awful thing?" and she did not know. It was just one of those funny (?) things we said as a kid. So I began down the rabbit hole of strange sayings, to uncover more of these things we don't know where they came from, or even what they mean??

Starting with "Sick as a dog". Why were only DOGS sick? I never heard Sick as a Cat. Or a Fish..... Why did the Dog get the notorious honor? It came from the early 1700's, when dogs ran free and carried diseases, and weren't like the companions they are today. Being on their own, they ate rotting food, and carried the Plague and other diseases, and could become very ill. The phrase is said to have been coined in 1705, meaning "Very ill, from a stomach point of view".

Ok, this search was becoming more interesting, so I looked up another. Where were you if you were "Up a Blind Alley?" This phrase was coined in about 1874, used to describe someone that was following a course of action that leads nowhere, like the first alleys that only went so far, and you'd hit a wall, or an undesirable outcome.

How about "Long in the Tooth"? Well, back in the horse-trading era, when someone went to purchase a horse, their old age was determined by the length of it's teeth. So, if someone says you are long in the tooth, it is not a compliment!

"Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining" was first coined by John Milton in 1634 in his masque called Comus, when he penned, "Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud Turn forth her silver lining on the night?" Meaning? You can derive some benefit from every bad thing that happens to you. A lesson to cling to!

"Hold your Horses" was an early 19th century entreaty to be patient, and just hold on and see what happens. Not bad advice there, either.

"At the Drop of a Hat" means something that will happen immediately, as in, "we can leave at the drop of a hat".

"A Shot in the Dark" describes a situation where there will be little chance of success, like a wild guess. It was coined in 1841, but wasn't seen in print until 1895 in The Saturday Review, where George Bernard Shaw used it in a article that read, "Never did a man make a worse shot in the dark."

Ok, here's a good one. "Watch your P's and Q's!" Well P stands for pints and Q stands for Quarts in this one. In the old Irish pubs, the bartender would tell his patrons to watch so their Pints and Quarts of beer didn't run dry, and if they did? Why then, old chap, "Wet your Whistle". Yep! The handles of the mugs used to serve spirits to the customers had a whistle built into the handle so you could let the barkeep know to bring another!

Well, I bet now you are thinking up your own sayings that make no sense, and believe me, there are hundreds out there! Google is a great resource for things you never knew you wanted to know, and you will find many sayings there. However, in my research, I never did find what that dandelion one meant! So, if you used to say that, or you run across the meaning, please let me know!

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Down on the Farm/ Up at the Cabin

How to Make Friends in a New Community: Being Helpful

By Claudia Vanderborght

When all is said and done, it still takes time for a home purchase to close. Monica finally had a purchase agreement on a small farm: 20 acres with rolling topography and some fenced pasture, a barely nice four-bedroom home with attached garage, and a huge 40' x 90' pole barn. And still some summer remained to make local friends before her teaching job began in September.

Monica's daughter was grown with a family of her own – it's difficult to make friends when your kids are adults. But church would be a key to meeting some local folks and maybe some farmer friends. (Farming sounded like fun, but Monica realized that she knew nothing and would have a lot to learn.)

Monica settled into a local community church. Although the congregation was small, it was welcoming. With instant friends: there were two female veterans, a single middle-aged teacher, and a few families who farmed. Having time on her hands before house closing and school starting, Monica offered to help her new friends with whatever was needed. One family invited her to help trim grape vines in their vineyard; it was hot, sweaty work, standing on a steep hillside -- but Monica liked being outdoors and loved learning new skills.

One Sunday, Monica listened to the teacher exclaiming frustration about her basement renter: the gal was behind on rent, causing problems, and refusing to leave. Monica had heard many stories from her dad about how difficult it was to evict tenants, usually costing thousands of dollars and causing months of frustration. Monica is a problem solver, had experience with renters, and loves to help

others; she offered her new friend help in evicting the tenant.

"Let's make this official," Monica suggested. "Write up a lease and I will pay you \$1 in rent to make the contract legally binding."

Contract in hand, Monica packed a few clothes, her cooler and grill, the air mattress, a few miscellaneous essentials, and moved into the other basement bedroom. The difficult tenant had gone away for the weekend, so while she was gone Monica helped pack her belongings.

Anything that might be used as a weapon (knives, tools) were stored at the bottom of the box, clothes and dishes on top. Two days later, the delinquent renter returned and discovered Monica -- her new, helpful roommate.

The shouting and cursing began, including pleas like, "Where I am supposed to go? I have nowhere to live! How am I supposed to move? I have nowhere to go..."

After pointing out that this was not the homeowner's or Monica's problem, Monica ignored her. The homeowner simply repeated her requests for rent owed.

Knowing that possession is nine-tenths of the law, Monica was careful not to leave the apartment. When dinner time came and she wanted to use the grill, Monica simply locked the bedroom door and climbed in and out of the window!

The tenant was – of course – furious and threatened to call the police. Both the homeowner and Monica agreed that was a wonderful idea (much to the chagrin of the apartment squatter). A very nice officer came to the home, understood the dilemma, and asked to speak with each person individually.

When it was her turn, Monica presented her driver's license and military identification (knowing that many officers had served in the military).

"I have my own home," Monica explained, "but I am just trying to help my friend, the homeowner."

"You know this isn't the normal way of doing things," the officer said.

To which Monica completely agreed. So the officer phoned the chief for advice on the legalities of the situation.

"Good news and bad news," the officer told the young lady. "No, the homeowner cannot force you to move out. You have a legal right

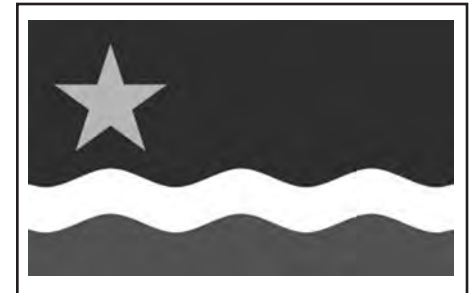
to stay and make the homeowner go through the normal eviction process. The bad news is that Monica, having a legitimate lease, also has a legal right to stay."

Within 24 hours, still shouting and cursing, the delinquent renter packed up the rest of her belongings and moved out. Monica left a day or so later.

Minnesota's New Flag

The Minnesota state legislature has plans to approve the new design for the state flag and seal of Minnesota on May 11, 2024. It is a radical departure from the existing flag which was adopted in 1893. There were a few small changes over the years. In 1957 the design was tweaked in anticipation of the statehood centennial the next year. The nineteen stars, signifying the 19th state of the Union, were moved inside the emblem and the red sash removed from the bottom of the design. Again in 1983 the color of the flag was changed from royal blue to medium blue. In 1989, Lee Herold, of Rochester designed and proposed a new design he called the North Star flag, but the legislators declined to act on it.

In the current design of the Minnesota state seal and flag a Native American rides on horseback in the background, symbolizing Minnesota's Native American heritage, while a pioneer uses a plow in the foreground. There is a sunset on the western horizon. The straight horizon line reflects the plains covering much of Minnesota. The Native American is riding southward. The native's horse and spear and the pioneer's ax, rifle, and plow represent tools of daily life. The only interaction between the figures is one observing the other. The tools used by the Native Amer-



ican and the farmer represent the tools used for labor and hunting, while the stump symbolizes the taming of the land and the importance of the lumber industry to Minnesota in 1858. The Mississippi River and St. Anthony Falls are depicted in the revised seal to note the importance of these resources in transportation, industry, and the settling of the state. The furrowing of the ground by the plow represents the submission of the land to the pioneer. The plow also symbolizes agriculture's importance to Minnesota and its future. The waterfalls are not on the original state seal. Beyond the falls on the seal are three pine trees representing the state tree (the Norway pine) and the three pine regions of the state: the St. Croix, Mississippi, and Lake Superior.

Certain individuals take issue with the current flag over social complaints. Some believe a flag should be very basic and easy to read design. Others feel that the existing design is fine and not to be messed with. Feel free to contact us and express your opinions on the subject.

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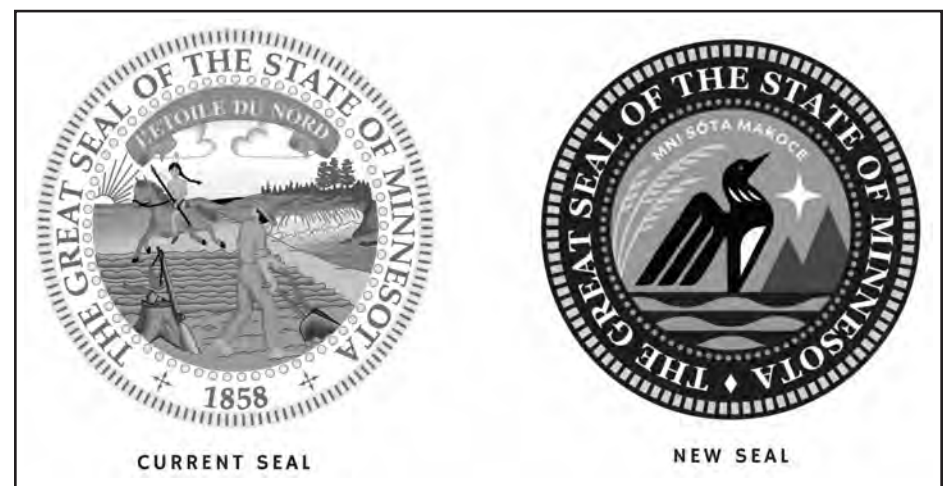
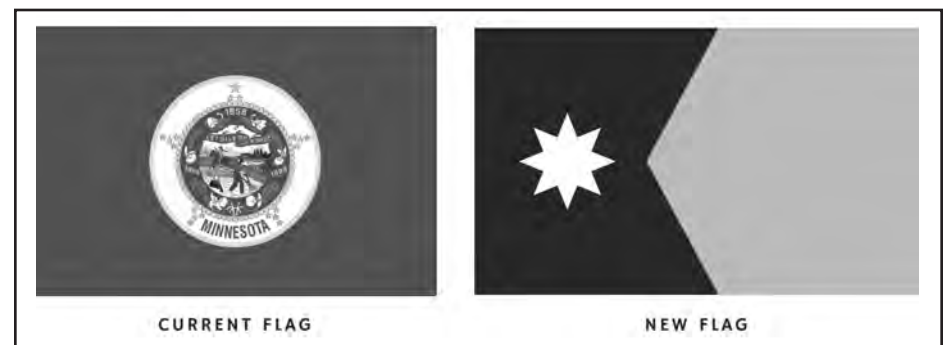
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Vitamin D more effective than flu shot!



By Shauna Burshem, D.C.

11% of U.S. Children are diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ADHD is characterized by patterns of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity that interferes with daily living and learning. Recent research has shown that aromatherapy may be a potential helpful tool for children with ADHD. The essential oil vetiver shows the most promise as it showed changes in brain activity when inhaled. Children who inhaled vetiver three times day for 30 days showed improved brain wave patterns and behavior and did better in school. When the oil is inhaled, microdroplets are carried to an area of the brain that is the center for reason, emotion and smell. The droplets also make their way to the lungs where they enter the

circulatory system. Brain activity improvements were measured via EEG (electro-encephalograph) scans.

Studies are showing the link between refined sugar intake and cancer risk. All dietary carbohydrates are digested into sugars called glucose. Compared to natural sugars, the fructose found in fruits and honey, refined sugars and many carbohydrate starches cause an issue in the gut where an endotoxin is produced. The endotoxin destroys mitochondrial cell function which then results in cancer metabolism. This backs up the claim that cancer cells feed on sugar. But, now we know not all sugars, just the refined ones. These are the sugars that are added to foods. For example, candy, chocolate, ice cream, soft drinks, etc. A study published in 2014 showed that cancer patients that drank two or more servings of sugar-sweetened soft drinks had a 67% chance of cancer recurrence and death compared to those who drank less than two servings per month. All cancer patients should avoid all refined sugars and only satisfy their sweet tooth with fruits and honey.

A consistent review of past and current research is providing evidence that vitamin D deficiency may actually be a cause of colds and flu. Science is now confirming that vitamin D optimization boosts immunity and cuts the rate of colds and flu. Vitamin D supplementation is actually more effective than the flu shot. Studies show that if a person is severely vitamin D deficient (if you are never exposed to sunshine and you do not take a vitamin D supplement, you more than

likely are), vitamin D supplementation is 10 times more effective than a flu vaccine. A recent scientific review of randomized clinical controlled studies confirmed that vitamin D supplementation boosts immune system function and cuts rates of cold and flu. People who took vitamin D daily were less likely to report acute respiratory infections like influenza or the common cold.

Chiropractic for kids! Chiropractic care is a 100% all natural approach to building and maintaining your child's health from birth to adulthood. Here are just a few reasons why chiropractic care makes perfect sense for kids. The number one reason is immune system health. Periodic spinal check-ups remove neural impulse blockages that come from fixated or stuck spinal bones. This decrease in nerve impulses inhibits function and performance of the immune system. Many studies show that spinal alignment issues contribute neural factors that influence immune system function. The number two reason is spinal curvature problems. As a small toddler learning to walk, many bumps and

falls are taken. These bumps and falls can cause spinal bones to become fixated in the wrong position. Once the spinal bones are not aligned properly and the child continues to grow or has growth spurts, the spine can grow crooked which causes a curvature issue like scoliosis. Once children become older and even more active (think sports, bike riding, skateboarding etc.), alignment issues from these activities are even more common. In today's society, what child does not spend a lot of time on their phone, tablet or video games? This forward slumped posture not only causes postural issues, but tension on the spinal muscles which then causes misalignment leading to further curvature problems, not to mention neck and back discomfort or headaches.

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Once again the net proceeds from this years Minnesota Country Salute CD will go to the Minnesota Military Family Foundation and Minnesota Wheels of Honor. Starting Veteran's Day you'll be able buy your copy at any one of these locations and make sure the service men and women and first responders of Minnesota have the support they need.

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About the Minnesota Country Salute CD Project:

A decade ago while sitting on his porch, Neil Freeman came up with the idea of tying together two groups that BOB FM supports. The Homegrown artists of Minnesota and the military member support organizations.

By creating a compilation CD to sell across Minnesota, he nailed it. With the help of many sponsors and listeners who went out and purchased these CDs over the years, BOB FM has donated over \$235,000 to the Minnesota Military Family Foundation, Minnesota Wheels of Honor, and Tribute to the Troops.

If you or your business would like to help further this mission, or help distribute the CD, please contact Neil Freeman, neil@mybobcountry.com.



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That's the Latest Farmwork



By Emery Kleven

Emery is now a retired farm broadcaster after starting at KDHL in Faribault in 1987. He's a 1971 graduate of West Concord High School. You can view past columns at his website RoadFarming.com. You can email him at emery@roadfarming.com.

I have written about and I tell people my background of growing up on the farm 2 miles north of West Concord and eventually taking over the farm from my parents before leaving for the world of farm broadcasting. I have over the years, gotten the question about if I miss the farm and do I miss any certain as-

pects. The short answer is yes...and no.

I do miss the rural life and small town living but I get back to visit enough to get over that. I do, in the fall, walk out in Keiven's field to see how the corn or beans look up close. The corn this year looked very good considering we had a dry year. I've not heard the official yield from this past growing season but I'm sure it's upwards of 200 bushels per acre.

I don't miss the long hours spent at planting season or harvest season. I certainly don't miss picking rock out of the fields. Nowadays they just replant the rocks by running a big roller over them. Where was this technology back in the day? I also don't miss walking the soybean fields to pick or cut weeds, in particular the buttonweeds, sunflowers, giant ragweed and the occasional volunteer corn. I had a broadcasting friend who used buttonweed as a front of the house decorative plant. He asked if I knew what this plant was. I said, 'yes, would you like me to yank it out for you?' 'No, I kind of like it', he said. I don't need to tell you he was a city kid having grown up in the Twin Cities.

I see sunflowers planted on purpose in gardens. And yes, I realize that the high plains states grow acres upon acres of it, but for me, it was a weed that did not belong in the soybean fields. Sunflowers aren't as bad as velvetleaf but for me, it stirs up those weed pulling days. I am surprised that some of these city folks don't use the giant ragweed for a hedge. Kingweed as I called it, grows fast and very tall. It's a hardy and sturdy plant too. In the fall, you can chop them down and burn them in the outdoor fire pit.



The old New Holland 270 baler made a lot of 'rectangular' square bales on the Kleven farm with lots of sweat equity put into each bale.

One thing I do miss, kind of, is the baling hay in the small square bales. They're actually rectangles but they ended up being called small squares. That's why geometry was hard for farm kids. I couldn't do it for a full afternoon anymore like I used to, but it was a good exercise program. I've written before how Coach Lorry Gunhus would make a visit to the farm during the summer to see if I was baling enough hay and if I'm sure I picked up every last rock in the bean fields. I assured him I was and I did.

More than the work of heaving bales of hay

5 high on the rack against the wind, where the chaff blows right back at you, I miss the smell of alfalfa drying in the sun. I will still occasionally pass a field with that very smell and I have to stop and reminisce about years gone by. Then I start to sweat in the heat and decide I don't miss all of the work associated with that great smell.

I often think of the line that it'd be nice to know you're in the good ole' days while you're actually in them. I think I've done that a lot but not as much as I probably should have.

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Happy New Year!

(continued from page 1)

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Without this support, we would not be here. We hope you continue to see value in the Messenger. While there are plenty of social media sources and on line sites out there, most don't deliver the hometown news and message like we do here.

Every year, many newspapers have consolidated or gone out of business.

We have watched this happen many times in recent years in small rural communities, and especially the past several years.

With our small staff of 2.5, we understand this challenge first hand here at the Messenger, which is why we publish the Messenger in its monthly format and update you as needed throughout the month on our web site.

Our goal with the Messenger is to help insure our home towns still have a community voice of its own, direct mailing to all residents in the zip code as well as many out of town subscribers. This format allows your hometown to maintain a local monthly paper, and better connect local residents, businesses and the community. We also understand the need for more timely information within the month, so check out the web site for important news that happens between print issues. We continue to expand our digital and on-line offerings while still maintaining our dedication to our hometowns!

We remain a small family owned business with a goal of supporting our rural communities and businesses. As always, if you have news, information or story ideas, please reach out to us. Again, Thank you for your readership and support.

Thank you

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a City Council Meeting was duly held in the City Council chambers at 7:00 p.m. on the 12th day of December 2023. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Henke.

The following members were present: Mayor Doug Henke, Council Members Kim Helgeson, Lee Sjolander, Molly Ryan

Absent: Mary Bailey

Also, present: City Administrator Mark Vahlsing, Attorney Scott Riggs, Public Works Director Wayne Ehrich, City Engineer Derik Olinger, Police Chief Jeff Sjoblom, Finance Director Whitney Kylo, Police Officer Brian Homeier

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZEN COMMENT

None

ADOPT AGENDA

Motion by Ryan second by Henke to approve the agenda. Motion carried 4-0-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Helgeson second by Sjolander to approve the Consent Agenda, which includes payment of check numbers, 75474 through 75570; 4780E through 4808E.

Motion carried 4-0-0.

**PRESENTATIONS/
PUBLIC HEARINGS/
RECOGNITIONS/PROLAMATIONS**

None

ENGINEERING

**2023 Street Improvements
Project Update**

Engineer Olinger stated that the majority of the work is now complete with some small repairs remaining to be completed.

**Approve Pay Request #3 – BMI Inc -
\$11,450.47**

Motion by Ryan second by Helgeson to approve pay request No. 3 to BMI Inc in the amount of \$11,450.47 for work completed through November 9, contingent on submittal of closeout documentation.

Motion carried 4-0-0.

**Pearl Creek & Gates Avenue Utility
Improvements Update**

Engineer Olinger updated the Council on the Pearl Creek Sanitary Sewer project. He stated that BCM was wrapping up work for this year. Water and electrical utilities west of Gates Avenue have been installed. Ellingson Drainage installed forcemain in this area. The remainder of the project will be completed next spring.

LEGAL

No items

OLD BUSINESS

2024 Budget and Levy

Approve Increase \$2.00 per hour (plus 3% Cola) Increase for Manager and up to \$3.00 per hour for PT Staff.

Motion Ryan, Second Henke to approve \$2.00 per hour raise for manager and up to \$3.00 per hour for part-time Muni staff. Motion carried 4-0-0 Eliminate Admin Assist Position. (Funding moved to full time officers in 2024 Budget)

Chief Sjoblom requested that the council eliminate the administrative position and move funding to full time police officers in the 2024 budget.

Motion by Henke, second by Ryan to eliminate the full-time administrative position and move funding to full time police officers

in the 2024 budget.

Ayes: Henke, Ryan and Helgeson

Nayes: Sjolander

Motion carried 3-1-0

**Resolution 2023-29: Adopting the 2024
Budget and Establishing the Tax Levy
for Payable 2024**

Administrator Vahlsing stated that the Truth in Taxation meeting was held on December 5. No public comments were received at the meeting. The final budget shows a maximum proposed levy increase of 8% for 2024.

Motion by Sjolander second by Helgeson to adopt Resolution 2023-29 adopting the 2024 budget and establishing the tax levy of \$1,277,965 payable in 2024. Motion carried 4-0-0.

**Purchase of SCBA equipment and
Compressor - Fire Department**

Administrator Vahlsing stated that the Fire Department is seeking approval to purchase SCBA Equipment and Compressor. Based on the attached quotes the SCBA Equipment would cost \$116,805. The cost of the compressor would be \$39,640. Total cost: \$156,445. The fire department is requesting to use half of the Public Safety Aid which is \$42,000. and \$37,000 in donations toward the purchase. The remaining amount of the purchase price (\$77,445) could come out of the FD capital fund which currently has an approximate balance of \$255,000.

Motion by Sjolander, second by Ryan to approve the purchase of SCBA equipment and compressor.

Motion carried 4-0-0

Community Entrance Sign Final Design
City Engineer Olinger provided an update

on the Community Entrance Sign project. The final design has been submitted to Precision Sign and MNDOT. The City is waiting for final approval of the sign right-of-way permit from MNDOT.

Muni Roof and Flooring Replacement

Administrator Vahlsing stated that he was continuing to get quotes for roofing and flooring replacement for the Muni. He is hoping to have additional quotes for the January Council meeting to approve.

OLD BUSINESS

**Resolution 2023-30: A Resolution
Committing Capital Fund Balance**

Administrator Vahlsing stated that the general accounting standard (GASB 54) requires all public entities to set year end Capital fund balances before the end of the current year contingent on audited final numbers. The final year-end capital fund amounts will not be known until the 2023 audit is completed.

Motion by Helgeson seconded by Ryan to adopt Resolution 2023-30 committing capital fund balances.

Motion carried 4-0-0.

**Approve Transfer of Fire Department
Year End Remaining Funds to
Capital Fund**

Administrator Vahlsing stated that council approval is needed to move the year end Fire Department budget balance to the capital fund. The actual transfer amount will be determined by the auditors as part of the 2023 audit.

(continued on page 17)

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Kenyon City Council Meeting

(continued from page 16)

Motion by Ryan seconded by Helgeson to approve the transfer of fire department year end remaining funds to capital funds. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Approve Transfer of Street Maintenance Year End Remaining Funds to Capital Fund

Administrator Vahlsing stated that council approval is needed to move the year end Street Maintenance Department budget balance to the capital fund. The actual transfer amount will be determined by the auditors as part of the 2023 audit.

Motion by Ryan seconded by Helgeson to approve the transfer of public works year end remaining funds, including street maintenance, pool, and parks, to capital funds. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Administrator Vahlsing stated that during the November 28 special council meeting, discussion was held on possible increases to sanitary and storm water rates. After further review, staff would recommend increasing the Sanitary Sewer Fund increase rate from \$6.61 per thousand gallons to \$7.40 per thousand. The residential sewer base rate would also increase from \$23.44 to \$26.25 per month. For storm sewer the recommendation would be to increase the maintenance fee from \$4.03 per month to \$9.00 a month for residential customers. The increases are needed to offset upcoming project costs and reflect recommendations from the utility rate study.

2024 Sanitary and Storm Sewer Rates

Administrator Vahlsing stated that Prosecuting Attorney Jacobson requested a \$250 monthly increase to their contract effective January 1, 2024. The annual cost would increase from \$13,800 to \$16,800.

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Helgeson to approve a rate increase of \$100 per month for Jacobson Law effective January 1, 2023.

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Henke to approve rate increase for Jacobson Law office effective January 1, 2024. Motion carried 4-0-0.

2024 Tobacco License Renewals

Administrator Vahlsing stated that Prosecuting Attorney Jacobson requested a \$250 monthly increase to their contract effective January 1, 2024. The annual cost would increase from \$13,800 to \$16,800.

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Helgeson to approve a rate increase of \$100 per month for Jacobson Law effective January 1, 2023.

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Henke to approve rate increase for Jacobson Law office effective January 1, 2024. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Helgeson to approve a rate increase of \$100 per month for Jacobson Law effective January 1, 2023.

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Helgeson to approve a rate increase of \$100 per month for Jacobson Law effective January 1, 2023.

Adopt State Earned Safe and Sick Time Policy

Administrator Vahlsing updated the Council on a new law requiring sick leave that was passed by the legislature earlier this year. Beginning January 1, 2024, earned sick and safe time is available for full and part time employees that work at least 80 hours in a year for an employer in Minnesota. Employees must accrue at least one hour of earned sick and safe time for every 30 hours they work, up to at least 48 hours in a year. Currently, City of Kenyon / KMU allows a full-time employee to accrue 12 working days during the full year (365 days) of employment. City of Kenyon / KMU's current sick policy supersedes the law and will not change sick time accrual for full-time employees.

Motion by Ryan, Second by Helgeson to approve Adopt State Earned Safe and Sick Time Policy. Motion Carried 4-0-0

Holiday Office Closings

Administrator Vahlsing requested approval for City Offices/Library to close at noon on Friday, December 22 and for the library to be closed on Saturday, December 23.

Motion by Bailey seconded by Ryan to close the City Office and Library at noon on Friday, December 22 and close the library on Saturday, December 23.

Motion carried 4-0-0.

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings

KMU Meeting: Tuesday, December 19th @ 4:00 p.m.

City Council Meeting: Tuesday, January 9th @ 7:00 p.m.

COUNCIL AND STAFF GENERAL COMMENTS

Administrator Vahlsing thanked everyone for their hard work in making Christmas in Kenyon successful. (Especially Kim and the Park Board)

Mayor Henke stated that this has been an exciting year with many challenges. He thanked everyone for their hard work.

Council member Helgeson thanked everyone involved in Christmas in Kenyon.

Council member Sjolander wished everyone a Merry Christmas and thanked City Staff for their continued hard work.

Council member Ryan wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Police Chief Sjoblom wished everyone Happy Holidays

Motion by Helgeson second by Ryan to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Motion carried 4-0-0.

Mark R. Vahlsing, City Administrator
Douglas Henke, Mayor

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Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson of the Minnesota State Patrol

Question: I have a question about people who are driving for food deliveries and ride-hailing app services using their personal vehicle. Are they supposed to have commercial insurance or any other special type of insurance? Back in the '80s, I was working as an owner/operator using my personal vehicle and was told that I needed commercial insurance.

Answer: Minnesota requires that every vehicle on a public road or street has auto insurance. Under most circumstances, a licensed vehicle in the state of Minnesota must have liability, personal injury protection, uninsured motorist and underinsured motorist coverage.

Some vehicles, such as those for commercial use and limousines, have other requirements that are above the minimum standards for a personal vehicle.

Drivers should contact their insurance agent to talk about the proper auto insurance coverage. It is also a good idea to talk to your agent about coverage when renting a vehicle, loaning out your vehicle or borrowing someone else's vehicle.

The proof of insurance card or electronic format should include:

- The insured's name.
- The policy number.
- The policy dates of coverage.
- The make, model, and year of the vehicle being covered.
- The vehicle identification number or at least the last three digits of that number.
- The name of the obligor providing coverage.

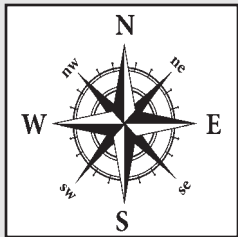
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If you have any questions concerning traffic related laws or issues in Minnesota send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson – Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901-5848. (Or reach him at, Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us)



Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes Back Home on the River



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.

This is a picture of the Paris Landing bridge. It connects the Land between the Lakes area with the western part of the state of Tennessee. The bridge spans a mile over the Tennessee River and the widest point of Kentucky Lake. It is beautiful on a sunny day and so impressive to see all that water in both directions. This is where we live in Tennessee. Every time I come home down here, I love to look out over the bridge and take in the sight.

One afternoon as we were driving home over the bridge we saw something startling appear beside our car. A Blackhawk helicopter began rising above the bridge to our left. There were two military UH-60's flying at water level beside the bridge. We watched as they landed in an open field in Paris Landing state park. Being curious we turned in and parked in the lot. It was some kind of family of servicemen gathering and lots of kids were waiting to see their dads get out. Fort Campbell, home of the 101st Airborne is only thirty-miles away.

The bridge has quite a rise to accommodate the daily barge traffic and the kid in me couldn't resist the urge to accelerate the Corvette every time we approached the bridge. If you exceed 100 mph it feels like you are in a plane taking off when you reach the top of the bridge. I must not have been the only one doing that because one day I saw a Tennessee Highway Patrol parked by the marina side of the bridge. Nothing like the sight of a squad car to slow you down.

About ten miles upstream is the Danville transfer elevator. We enjoy boating to the site

and the bridge can still be seen in the distance for almost the entire trip. The Danville elevator was a five-story concrete structure that transferred cargo from rail car to paddle wheelers over a century ago. When the lake was formed by the construction of the dam in 1941, the elevator was abandoned and left to stand in the middle of the lake. The arial lift bridge was also removed at that time and a ferry provides passage for automobile traffic across the river there for one dollar per trip.

Twenty-four hours each day barges travel under the bridge as they haul grain, coal and gravel up and down the river. One learns to stay between the green and red buoys on the river, just like the barges do. The dam controls the water level and at winter pool it is six feet lower than summer pool. Unsuspecting boaters during the cold months can suddenly find the bottom of the river in the middle of the lake, and run aground if not careful. We had that happen one fine afternoon last winter as we were exploring the cove near Cypress Bay Marina. We were at least 200 feet from shore as we came around the bend and suddenly we were looking at the rocky floor of Kentucky Lake. I hit the trim and raised the prop out of the water and after further investigation reversed the boat and backed out to deeper water.

The wind coming off the nearly two-mile wide lake can create some substantial waves crashing into the bridge pilings and there is a breakwater at the entrance of the Paris Landing marina to calm the waters. On a windy day there will be over two-foot swells to contend with heading into the marina. The first day we used the boat launch there we encountered quite rough water returning to dock. I rode a wave in looking at the trough and thinking it could easily swamp us. While I tried to keep the bow straight, I could hear my wife yelling "Woo Hoo". She was enjoying the adventure much more than I was. After that we started using Gray's Landing on the other side of the Lake where the water was much calmer.

When we first moved here the Paris Landing Lodge was being demolished to make way for a new facility. The locals were up in arms because the 70 year-old lodge and restaurant was a sentimental place in their hearts. It took about five years to complete the new one but it is a beautiful resort on the lake with a restaurant which is our favorite place to eat and just down the road from our home.

A Minnesotan: Epiphany



By RosaLin Alcoser

And once again it's a new year. I could talk about something along the lines of it being New Year's, however, I did that last year. Instead let me tell you all about the much more existing holiday that comes right after the New Year which would be Epiphany otherwise known as Kings Day or the 12th day of Christmas.

As I've mentioned before my transplanted hispanic family from the south celebrates Christmas from start to finish. Meaning that starting on Christmas day we celebrate the 12 days of Christmas until January 6th when we celebrate the Epiphany.

Epiphany is when the three kings, or three wisemen, arrive to see baby Jesus and present him with the gifts.

Growing up this meant that my family spent those 12 days playing games and enjoying a much needed break after the rush of getting everything ready for Christmas Eve services, and some years Christmas Day services, in addition to all of the extra things at the church leading up to Christmas.

In my Belizean father's traditions Christmas is when the big Christmas dinner is had and stockings appear, however, presents don't appear until Epiphany when the three kings bring them.

When my older sister and I were children we would often get some presents on Christmas Day and the rest on Epiphany. Or in years where our parents worked a lot on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day nearly everything would be saved for Epiphany.

For us this was also a day for spiced cookies in the shape of a star, to represent the star that guided the Three Kings to Bethlehem. We didn't make them every year and often we would make a pan of ginger bread instead. However, I remember these cookies being a type of crisp ginger cookie.

Now that we're adults and our family is spread out we don't celebrate in the same way as when we were children. However, we do still celebrate the 12 days of Christmas and always make sure to do something individually while wishing one another a Happy Epiphany.

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THEME: WINTER FUN
- ACROSS**
1. Mulligatawny and gazpacho, e.g.
 6. Half of NFL
 9. "Oscar" of sports
 13. Relating to sight
 14. Sargasso _____
 15. Dugout glider
 16. Not fresh
 17. First H in HRH
 18. Face-to-face exams
 19. *Ice fishing shelter
 21. *"Polar" activity
 23. *Type of Christmas tree
 24. Diagonal
 25. Tax return professional, acr.
 28. Kind of cola
 30. Diaphragm spasm
 35. Scepters' partners
 37. Of two minds
 39. _____ Jean Baker
 40. *Rabbit's winter one is white
 41. Sheik's bevy?
 43. Type of dam
 44. Butcher's refuse
 46. Etna's emission
 47. Secret disclosure
 48. Stellar
 50. Chap or fella
 52. Diabetic ketoacidosis, acr.
 53. A or O, to blood
 55. Unit of electrical resistance
 57. *Finger warmers
 60. *Certain sleigh ride
 63. Courtroom excuse
 64. Gobbled up
 66. Train runners
 68. Land of taekwondo
 69. "Caroline in the City" Thompson
 70. Relating to Scandinavia
 71. Not home
 72. *Last winter mo.
 73. Klondike river
- DOWN**
1. Acronym in a bottle
 2. Chooses
 3. Colorado's neighbor
 4. a.k.a. pilau
 5. Like a longer route?
 6. Grayish
 7. ATM extra
 8. Carpus, pl.
 9. Bring home the bacon
 10. Unforeseen obstacle
 11. *Skier's aid
 12. Da or oui
 15. Jenny McCarthy to Melissa McCarthy
 20. Engagement, archaic
 22. _____-di-dah
 24. Onslaught
 25. *Warming drink
 26. Faculty members, for short
 27. Behind a stern
 29. *Frosty's eyes
 31. Type of hood
 32. Apollo of "Rocky"
 33. Inuit skin boat
 34. *a.k.a. anorak
 36. *Betelgeuse, e.g.
 38. *Snow, in Italy
 42. Lord's estate
 45. Lithuania's neighbor
 49. NaOH
 51. Like a rosebush
 54. Church song
 56. Meow, alt. sp.
 57. _____-in-the-dark
 58. Milano moolah
 59. Toe the line
 60. Product of laceration
 61. Michael Douglas' dad
 62. "The Sun _____ Rises"
 63. *What clues #4 and #34 Down have in common
 65. High affair
 67. Barack Obama, pre-pres.

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A Few of My Favorite Things from 2023



Tim Penny
So. MN Initiative Foundation

As the holiday season winds down and we start to look ahead to the new year, I always like to take this time to reflect on, and celebrate, the accomplishments from this past year. At Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), this means thinking back on the ways that our partners helped to build a stronger southern Minnesota. In no particular order, here are my top ten favorite things that happened in 2023:

1. Small towns were inventive: SMIF's Small Town Grant program surpassed a milestone this year by awarding our 113th project since the program began six years ago. From a National Ruby-Throated Hummingbird Center in Henderson, to an Oktoberfest event in Dundas, the small towns in our region are always coming up with innovative ways to enhance community vitality.

2. Solutions to the child care challenge moved the needle: Through SMIF's technical assistance, we have been able to grow and retain child care options in the region. In St. Peter, a new nonprofit community coalition that includes a child care program is opening. In Northfield, a new business model allowed two new family child care providers to open their businesses in a city-owned building. Additionally, SMIF launched a new "whole community" approach to child care which will provide a network of support for up to four communities as they develop solutions to child care challenges this next year.

3. The regional foods system was strengthened: This year we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace, an event held in Rochester for the public to shop from vendors based in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa. More than 1,400 people attended this year's event – the largest on record. The marketplace has had such an impact on the region that Kim Norton, mayor of Rochester, declared the first Saturday in November as Local Foods Day in Rochester.

4. Local wealth was retained: We were delighted to welcome our 32nd Community Foundation under SMIF's umbrella. Southland Community Foundation supports several small towns in Mower County – Adams, Rose Creek, Elkton, Dexter, Taopi and Johnsburg. They have joined a strong cohort of Community Foundations run by volunteer boards that have granted out more than \$7 million to benefit the future of their communities.

5. Early childhood professionals received



continuing education: More than 1,100 early childhood professionals attended the trainings that SMIF offered this year. Topics that are geared toward educators and child care providers focused on the social emotional development of young children and tips on how to grow a child care business. The support we can provide to early childhood professionals creates a better future for southern Minnesota's children and families.

6. Rural communities committed to economic growth: Six communities were recently selected for the 2024 -2026 Rural Entrepreneurial Ventures (REV) cohort: Caledonia, Kasson, Plainview and collectively the communities of Gibbon, Fairfax and Winthrop. REV is a long-term program that focuses on economic growth in small towns by providing planning, coaching, resources and connections.

7. Paint contributed to community vitality: More than 260 gallons of paint were awarded to communities across the region through SMIF's Paint the Town Grant. Since the grant was awarded in May, it has been exciting to see these projects come to life across the region – from a Main Street mural in Elgin, to a paint refresh on historic buildings in Mantorville.

8. Books supported literacy in young children: This year marked 230,000 books that have been distributed across the region through grants and programming over the past 15 years. We were honored to support 53 organizations through SMIF's Early Literacy Grant, which provides children birth to age eight with books.

9. Entrepreneurs flourished: Between providing loans to businesses and working with entrepreneurs directly on growing their businesses, we were excited about the economic activity that we saw this past year. Additionally we were excited to see some of our partners receive awards including West Oakland Auto, a loan client, who was named SBA's Minnesota Minority-Owned Small Business of the Year. The owners of Angie's BOOMCHICKAPOP, another loan client, who were honored by the SBA as a legacy business. They were not the only loan clients with good news. Beth Fynbo, owner of Busy Baby, was written about in a book about successful women inventors, and one of her products was named a Good Housekeeping 2023 Best Parent Award Winner. The Greensted became GAP Certified so that they can distribute their microgreens and salad greens

wholesale.

10. Partnerships grew: None of the above accomplishments would have happened without our partners. Some of these collaborations have been around for many years, such as the books that local publishers Capstone and ABDO provide for the Early Literacy Grant program. Other partnerships stem from a history of collaboration that are growing in new, exciting directions, such as Compeer Financial's commitment to supporting and expanding SMIF's REV program. And we are grateful for the new partnerships that will strengthen our pro-

gramming, such as Glen Taylor's recent announcement about leaving a legacy for southern Minnesota.

I can't talk about my favorite things from the year without mentioning how grateful I am to our donors and staff. Without their support, we would not be able to make an impact on southern Minnesota's future. We look forward to working with our regional partners again in 2024 to continue investing in the vitality of our region.

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

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