



# Dundas Messenger™

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## NH+C Leader Tammy Hayes to Retire

Longtime leader Tammy Hayes, RN, MS, CENP, LNHA plans to retire from Northfield Hospital + Clinics in June 2025.

Hayes joined NH+C in 2007 and served as Chief Nurse Executive from 2007-2024.

She stepped into the role of Chief Operating Officer in June 2024 as Jerry Ehn retired.



Tammy Hayes

(continued on page 6)

## Northfield Retirement Community Joins Vivie to Strengthen Mission of Service



Northfield Retirement Community is joining Vivie in its mission to enrich, empower, and elevate people throughout life's journey.

Vivie – formerly Knute Nelson and Walker Methodist – is a leading care provider offering a comprehensive range of services, including home health, care management, senior living, rehabilitation, hospice, and more, across Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin.

This transition ensures that Northfield Retirement Community will continue to serve

aging adults and their families with the same exceptional care and commitment it has provided since its founding in 1969.

Across the care sector, smaller independent organizations like Northfield Retirement Community are proactively seeking partnerships to ensure long-term sustainability. This partnership secures the future of care in Northfield by combining resources, creating efficiencies, and ensuring that the exceptional care and services the community expects will be here for generations to come.

"We are thrilled to welcome Northfield Retirement Community to the Vivie family," said Mark Anderson, CEO of Vivie. "Resi-

dents and families can continue to trust that Northfield Retirement Community will provide the same high-quality care and welcoming environment they've come to know. Together, we're building on a shared mission of service, providing excellent care in all the places people call home."

(continued on page 3)

## Tactical Armored Vehicle Now Part of Sheriff's Office's Fleet



Sheriff Jesse Thomas stands in front of the new tactical armored vehicle which will be available if called upon by the South Metro SWAT. (Rice County photo)

It's a piece of equipment Rice County Sheriff Jesse Thomas hopes never to use in a real-life situation, but if the need does arise, he's glad it's nearby.

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## Announcements

Remember to be Dundas nice.

Please keep your sidewalks  
clear of snow  
and ice!

• The Memorial Park pavilion is available for rent, please contact City Hall at 507-645-2852 for availability. Half day rentals Monday through Friday, or all day rentals any day of the week.

• Winter Parking Ban: The winter parking ban is in effect from October 31st through April 15th between the hours of 2am and 6:30am. There is no parking allowed on any city street. Vehicles in violation will be ticketed. Ordinance §71.06.

Do you have an announcement?  
Email: [hometownmessenger@gmail.com](mailto:hometownmessenger@gmail.com)

## Planning Continues for 2025 Dennison Days June 20 & 21



2024 Dennison Days Pancake Breakfast

The Dennison Lions Club, organizers of the annual Dennison Days town festival are putting together the final schedule for the 2025 festival on June 20 & 21, 2025.

In 2024, event organizers moved the festival date to June, sighting the fact that there are so many more events competing with the August date than there used to be.

The full line up of events and live music will be announced soon. Watch [www.dennisondays.org](http://www.dennisondays.org) for updates to the schedule.

Annual events include the Clutchmen Classic Car Show and Truck & Tractor Pull, Bingo, Pancake Breakfast, kids pedal pull, live music and more.

Anyone with questions or suggestions for events for the 2025 festival should contact Lions Club President Diane Ruddle.



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## Are You Preparing?



By Jon Dudek, co-founder of Isaiah Ministries, bringing Biblical teaching to help overcome life's everyday challenges.  
[www.isaiahministries.cc](http://www.isaiahministries.cc)

Have you ever wondered what was going through the disciples' minds in Matthew 24 (v.3b) when they asked the Lord, "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" Do we ever wonder about Christ's second coming, and are we looking forward to it?

By reading through this chapter, you will see that Jesus went into great detail with what we will see and hear, throughout the earth, before His return. How do we prepare during these challenging and exciting times? Throughout this chapter one of the first things Jesus said is to not be deceived. He repeats Himself multiple times as a warning, to all of us, to not be misled. When the Lord repeats Himself over and over we want to pay close attention, and we should not take this warning lightly.

In Matthew 24, Jesus goes on to talk to the disciples about rumors of wars, Christians being hated for His name's sake, there will be offense, people will betray and hate one another, the abomination of desolation (spoken of by Daniel), and much more. We can learn so much from this chapter, and I recommend everyone read it a few times and even study it. The Lord is painting a picture for us, so we will know what kind of things to expect before His second coming.

After you have taken the time to soak everything in from reading Matthew 24, I want to bring you to the final book of the Bible, Rev-

elation. Of all the 66 books of the Bible, this book says in chapter 1 verse 3, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near."

Every book in the Bible is important to read and study, but the book of Revelation highlights a blessing for all of us who are willing to read, hear, and keep the words of this prophecy and the things written in it. A lot of us might skip this book since it can appear to be very overwhelming. Do not be intimidated. Don't skip it. Some things you will understand, and some things will be confusing. Either way, the reading of it is important, and we can learn so much about the end times and the Lord's second coming by doing so.

Remember, you were born for this specific time. How exciting of a time we live in. God has equipped you for this time in your life. Be encouraged and let's push forward; the victory is already ours because of what the Lord has done for us on Calvary. What's another way to prepare for these challenging and exciting times?

We need to start digging deeper into the Word of God. We need to start studying it more than we have ever done before. Not in a legalistic way, but in a way that will feed our personal relationship with Jesus and help us grow in our faith.

Jesus warns us more than once in Matthew 24 to not be deceived. Why would He caution us so many times if it wasn't important for us to know about this? We need to continue to grow in our faith, our personal relationship with Jesus, and reading the Bible; these things will help us not be deceived. Remember when Satan tempted Jesus three times in the desert (Matthew 4)? One of those times Satan manipulated Scripture to try to trick Jesus. As believers we too are seeing the Bible being corrupted by people in leadership, as they wear sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves (Matthew 7:15). They are not preaching the Word of God but perverting it with their own views. This is a form of deception. We need to not be misled by them, and reading and studying the Bible will help us to know what is of God and what is not of Him.

We can prepare for the end times and the Lord's return by growing our personal walk with Jesus, studying the Word of God, and asking the Lord for an increase in discernment to not be deceived. We can also prepare by coming together as a body of Christ in

unity. Let's put our differences aside and work together. We need everyone to participate, so we can battle our challenges in life together and grow closer to the Lord. As Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (NIV). Let's sharpen each other by encouraging, uplifting,

and comforting one another, a great way to prepare our hearts for the Lord's return. We are not alone; we are one with Christ.

*Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references in the book are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*

## Area Church Directory

### Finish Well!

*No one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel. — Deuteronomy 34:12*

Moses remained committed to the Lord until the very end of his life. He was a child of God, a diligent leader of God's people, a prophet, and much more. Moses is described as a "man of God" and a "servant of the Lord" in the closing chapters of Deuteronomy. He knew who he was and whose he was. That makes a difference in one's life. Moses was faithful. Though he was certainly not perfect, Moses finished well.

When we think about finishing well, we realize it is not a last-minute commitment. We can stay focused even when we must take detours and alter our plans. When we fall, we get up with the Lord's help. When things do not go the way we thought they would, we cannot allow our feelings and thoughts to get in the way of doing God's will. We know we depend on the Lord in all things, and we stand firm in his strength.

When our time comes to leave our home on earth to go to our eternal home in heaven (unless Jesus returns before then), we want to say, "I have fought the good fight . . . I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). And we want to hear our Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21).

*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, help me to be fully committed to doing your will until the very end of my life. May you be glorified! Amen.*

### CANVAS CHURCH

404 Schilling Drive, Dundas

**Lead Pastor: Jed McGuire • [www.canvaschurchmn.com](http://www.canvaschurchmn.com)**

Sunday service 9:00a.m. and 10:45a.m.

YTH Wednesdays at 6:30p.m. Canvas Recovery Group meets Thursdays at 6:30p.m.

### LITTLE PRAIRIE UNITED METHODIST 2980 130th St. E.

**Pastor Penny Bonsell • [pastor@littleprairieumc.org](mailto:pastor@littleprairieumc.org)**

**507-663-6150 church phone • 651-503-4279 Cell**

9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship; Sunday School & Nursery; Adult Group 8a.m.

### CITY LIGHT CHURCH 2140 Hwy. 3 South, Northfield, MN

**Pastor Pete Haase • 507-645-8829** Call for service times

### LIFE21 CHURCH 2100 Jefferson Road (just north of Target)

**Pastor Brent Bielenberg • 645-7730 [life21church.com](http://life21church.com)**

10:00a.m. Worship Experience

### NORTHFIELD EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH 5600 East 110th Street

**Pastor Dan Runke • 663-0133 • [northfieldefc.org](http://northfieldefc.org)**

9:30 a.m. Worship; 11:00 a.m. Christian Life Classes

### HOSANNA CHURCH - NORTHFIELD 205 2nd St. S., Dundas

**Pastor Dean Swenson • 507-664-9007 • [www.hosannalc.org](http://www.hosannalc.org)**

Sunday: 9am & 10:45am Worship with Hosanna Kids Church ages 3-5th grade and Child Care for ages 6wks-3years at both services

Fellowship time with refreshments between services.

Wednesday: Middle School Ministry - doors open at 5:30; programming 6-7:15;

High School Ministry - doors open at 7pm; programming 7:30-9pm

### MAIN STREET MORAVIAN CHURCH 713 Division St., Northfield

Tel: 507-645-7566 • Worship Services at 10:30a.m.

### GOSPEL OF LIFE FAMILY CHURCH

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[admin@gospeloflifechurch.org](mailto:admin@gospeloflifechurch.org)

[www.gospeloflifechurch.org](http://www.gospeloflifechurch.org)

Sunday 10:30a.m.; Wednesday 6:00p.m.

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## Gary Errington

Gary Errington, age 78 of Dundas, passed away Wednesday evening, January 29, 2025, at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis.

Gary, a Vietnam veteran fought for many years with complications from Parkinson's disease because of exposure to Agent Orange but remained a proud Army veteran. Gary was born on August 6, 1946, in Northfield, Minnesota, the son of Harold and Marian (Johnson) Errington.

Gary graduated from Randolph High School in 1964 and his classmate Phyllis (Nelson) Maercklein created many picture cards of fun

times helping him to remember better days. During Gary's three years in care facilities, many people made his journey easier, especially the efforts of brother Allan (Sheryl), cousin Jane Errington, cousins Doug and Jeff Johnson, brother-in-law Joe Vandenheuvel, sisters-in-law Michelle Murray and Sandy Turner, and good friends Dave Lehmann and Lynn Vigasaa. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Gary is survived by his wife, Nina; daughters Angela (Jessie) Strandberg of Minot, North Dakota and Lindsay (Jason) Swanson of Faribault; grandchildren Tristen and Vivian Swanson; brothers Allan (Sheryl) Errington of Northfield and Donald Errington of Pollock Pines, California.

Gary was a thoughtful, kind and loving man who was faithfully devoted to his family. He was dearly loved and will be greatly missed.

A private family celebration of Gary's life

will be held in the future and he will be laid to rest with Military Honors at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

Arrangements are with the Bierman, Benson & Langehough Funeral Home & Crematory. [www.northfieldfuneral.com](http://www.northfieldfuneral.com)

## Christopher Thomas Thibodeau

Christopher Thomas Thibodeau, 53, of Breezy Point, formerly of Northfield, passed away unexpectedly on February 20, 2025, at his home.

Born on February 6, 1972, in Northfield, MN, to Tom and Sherrie (Schulte) Thibodeau, Chris

embodied the spirit of kindness and generosity throughout his 53 years. He attended Northfield High School, graduating with the class of 1990. His professional journey was diverse, his hands skillfully turning to numerous trades, from welding for Mike Peterson and utility locating to driving trucks for McLane's, and working for H&H Tree Service. Health challenges, particularly with his back, led to four surgeries, yet Chris faced each adversity with resilience and hope.

Life for Chris was significantly enriched by his loving family. Together for 29 years with his wife, Michele, they raised four wonderful children, Taylor, Shelby, Calton, and Riley. They initially made their home in the Northfield area before moving to Breezy Point in 2018.

A man of many passions, Chris had an unstoppable zest for life and adventure. His love for the great outdoors was evident in his enthusiasm for snowmobiling, dirt biking, golfing, skiing, waterskiing, boating, camping,

and motorcycle riding. He especially loved introducing his children to all of these things. His adventurous spirit took him from the powdery snow of Minnesota to the rolling mountains of North Carolina, the rumbling roads of Sturgis, and the glitzy boulevards of Las Vegas.

He possessed a humble heart, and had a profound love for animals, sharing his life with numerous beloved pets, especially his dog, O'Dis, that reflected his compassionate spirit. He was kind, friendly, and generous. Chris never hesitated to extend a helping hand or open his home to friends in need; his house was a refuge for many who found themselves without a place to stay.

Chris's journey on this earth came to an end too soon, but his vibrant spirit and the impact he has had on his family and friends will be forever cherished and remembered.

Christopher is survived by his wife, Michele; children Taylor (Christian) Segerstrom, Shelby (Donavan), Calton and Riley; mother, Sherrie (Rollie Green) of Northfield; brother, Nick (Pauline) of Dundas; sister-in-law Tanya Segerstrom of Northfield; grandmother, Dorothy Thibodeau of Northfield; stepmother, Rise Thibodeau of Castle Rock; and many other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his father, Tom; his grandparents, Albert Thibodeau and Harold and Betty Schulte; and his in-laws, Howard and Violet Segerstrom.

A celebration of Chris' life will be held from 3-7 PM, Saturday, April 26, 2025, at L & M Bar and Grill in Dundas. In lieu of flowers, donations are preferred to the family to help with the unexpected expenses. A GoFundMe has been set up at <https://gofund.me/a9095162>.

Arrangements are with Bierman, Benson & Langehough Funeral Home & Crematory. [www.northfieldfuneral.com](http://www.northfieldfuneral.com)

## Northfield Retirement Community Joins Vivie to Strengthen Mission of Service *(continued from page 1)*

For more than five decades, Northfield Retirement Community has been a cornerstone of the Northfield community, offering innovative living options and services for aging adults in a warm, welcoming environment.

As part of Vivie, Northfield Retirement Community will uphold its commitment to quality care and compassionate service, while benefiting from expanded resources to enhance care and services for residents and families.

"This is an important step forward for Northfield Retirement Community," said Tom Nielsen, CEO of Northfield Retirement Community. "Joining Vivie allows us to build on our legacy of care, strengthen our commitment to residents and families, and support our dedicated team members. The remarkable alignment with Vivie's mission and values will ensure the future success of our community while preserving what makes us unique."

"This is an exciting new chapter," added Mark Anderson. "At Vivie, our mission is to elevate the lives of those we serve, and we are honored to continue the important work of Northfield Retirement Community. Together, we're creating meaningful opportunities to serve more people in better ways, and we are excited for the future we're building."

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## Choosing a Camp: A Simple Guide for Parents



By Brian Kettering, Director of Day Camps at Camp Victory Zumbro Falls, MN

Living in the age of information, it can feel like options for everything are abundant, perhaps even to a paralyzing degree. There are dozens of subscription services you can sign up for, everything from to televisions shows to groceries to coffee to video games, it's all out there. There are different news media outlets all reporting the same event but presenting it in a totally different way. There are different auto parts stores all selling the same parts, often in the same strip mall. Resta-

raunts that both sell burgers but with a little unique twist, within the same driving distance from your house. Public school, private school, or homeschool? What's the difference between pasture-raised and grass-fed? Are they Baptist or Presbyterian? Do you want 1%, 2%, whole milk, or half-and-half in that drink, sir?

If reading those questions got your heart pumping a little bit thinking of all the different decisions you have to make on a daily basis, fear not. When choosing a summer camp for your children, you don't need to be paralyzed by choice. Here are three helpful things to look for in a summer camp to determine whether or not that camp is offering a quality program fit for your family.

The first one is safety. Sending your kids away, whether for a day or for a week, can be a scary thing. Something that helps alleviate some of that anxiety is having a certain level of trust in a camp's policies for hiring, training, program setup, and handling of emergency situations. One thing that can be helpful to look for is certification from accreditation boards. Organizations like the American Camping Association (ACA) have very thorough and often rigid guidelines a camp must live up to in order to maintain accreditation. These guidelines include standards for everything from the kitchen to the waterfront, ensuring that operations at a camp are consistent and safe. Some camps require very thorough background checks and lengthy interview processes for potential

counselor hires, as well as extensive training on camper safety through organizations like MinistrySafe. Camps may also choose to certify their lifeguards through a Bonafide lifeguard training program such as one through the Red Cross. Kitchens at camps may also be licensed by the state, requiring regular inspections from the state Health Department. Certifications from all of these organizations should help ease the mind of a worried parent as it becomes clear that the camp really is concerned about safety. Most camps can explain their processes for all of these things if you simply give their office a call!

The next thing to look for is value. "Is my kid going to get my money's worth out of this camp?" This question will almost always come up when considering summer camp options for your children. One of the best things you can do to get a head start on this question is to look at the prices of several different camps within a reasonable driving distance and make some comparisons. However, as with any product, cheap does not always mean good. Scan the website of a camp and see if you can find a sample of a daily schedule anywhere. This may help you determine whether or not a camp offers a reasonable number of the things you care about. If you value an educational camp experience, see how much time a day is spent on educational programming. If you value fun activities, pay attention to the number of activity rotations that are on the schedule. If you value a spiritual or religious experience, see

about chapel, memory verse, or devotional times in the schedule. Once you've determined which camps will offer you the things that matter most at a price you can appreciate, you'll be ready for number three, which is...

Fun. Is my camper going to have fun? Are they going to make friends? Are their counselors going to make them feel welcome? Will they come home singing and dancing and droning on and on about how their day or week at camp was the best time of their lives? While it's nearly impossible to predict exactly what an individual's experience somewhere new will be, there are some signs you can be looking for to determine whether or not a camp's summer programs will be fun. Take a look at a camp's social media page and ask yourself the following questions. Do the staff look excited? Are the children smiling? How much singing and dancing do you see in the videos? Does the property look vibrant, green, and alive? Sure, these things can be easy to capture and edit down to their pinnacle moment in media, but if you're still not sure, see if the camp you're considering has any open house events you can come to. Many camps offer events year-round, some in the spring and some in the fall. Stop by the camp on one of those days and ask yourself the same questions, but in the real setting.

Hopefully once you've considered all of these things, you'll be ready to send your child to camp this year with confidence and peace of mind!

# Camp Victory

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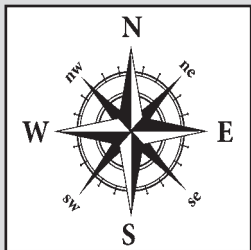
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## Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

### Red Wing Pottery



By Terry Campbell

*This column is written by Messenger editor and Minnesota native Terry Campbell. Terry now splits his time between Minnesota when it's warm here and Tennessee when it's cold here.*

I have had this Red Wing crock around the farm for most of my life. I remember when my parents got it. It was in October of 1968. Our neighbors, Lester & Lillian Derby, had a farm auction since they were retiring from farming and moving into town. I got to skip school and go with my dad to the auction. It was a magical time for an eleven year-old boy, as I always enjoyed farm auctions. Most of the farmers from the neighborhood were there and the mood was quite upbeat and kind of festive. And the Concord Church of Christ

ladies had a lunch kitchen set up in the old tin shed across from the barn, serving sloppy joes, kool-aid and chocolate frosted brownie bars.

My parents bought quite a number of things at the auction that day, and this 15 gallon Red Wing crock was just one of them. But it has stuck in my mind and for some reason has remained on the farm for the last fifty-six years. I was always aware of the town of Red Wing, just 45 minutes to the north-east of the farm because of the Red Wing Pottery and the Red Wing work boots we wore. The town as named after a great Dakota Nation chief who had befriended the first settlers who moved there. The native Indians hunted the bluffs and fished along the shores of what is now Lake Pepin, long before the first French Voyageurs set foot there in 1680.

In 1861, John Paul, a German immigrant moved to Red Wing and discovered a rich pocket of clay on the land that he intended to farm. A potter by trade, he used this clay to make the first Red Wing stoneware. In the early days settlers needed stoneware crocks and jugs for safe food and beverage storage. Large crocks up to fifty gallons were used for storing vegetables and pickling foods. They had wire handles on the sides and a wooden lid with a bail to secure the top.

Every home and business had a water crock for drinking water and crocks of all sizes were used to store lard, butter, eggs, salted meats, eggs and vegetables. Stores and manufacturing businesses used the crocks to hold liquids and chemicals needed for their daily operations. The largest crock known was an eighty-gallon size.

The early stoneware was colored because they were fired by wood and coal and the

soot and ash would discolor the pottery. By 1895 the kilns were converted to oil heat so it was possible to produce white glazed stoneware.

As towns and cities grew and installed sewer systems the demand increased to include manufacturing ceramic drain pipes. The production in Red Wing grew at a rapid rate. By 1906 there were at least four companies producing stoneware and sewer pipes in Red Wing. Over time competition from established eastern kilns and the invention of the refrigerator caused the decline of the Red Wing stoneware. By 1936 there was only one company left producing stoneware in Red Wing and it took the name of Red Wing Potteries. The product line was reduced to flower pots and vases and lunch and dinner ware.

So, the Red Wing crock doesn't hold anything but memories any longer, but when I see it, I am reminded of a wealth of old



friends, family and people from days long gone by.

## A Minnesotan: The Problem With Geese



By RosaLin Alcoser

There is nothing I fear more on this earth than geese... well maybe snakes, but geese are the more immediate threat. Because here in Minnesota geese are everywhere.

Geese are at the park, in the parking lot, on the sidewalks, and even standing in the middle of the freeway in some cases- like they own the place.

It started out when I was a small child and the geese would chase me around the park honking. Since I was about the same size as them I guess it made sense that they were going after me.

Thankfully in response to these attacks my sister would chase the geese away from me so that I was not mauled to death by a goose at age six.

However, it did not stop as I got older. To this day geese will still chase me if given the chance. Now I can out run the geese or avoid them all together.

When I was in community college in Rochester the geese that would hang out on campus would chase me across the campus on an almost daily basis. Which



my mother did not believe was happening until she saw me take off running at the sound of 'Honk! Honk!' and a flock of geese start charging at me.

Don't worry I made it to the car before the geese caught up to me and lived to tell the tale.

My fear is not just limited to geese either. It does extend to water brands as a whole. I have also been attacked by ducks and gulls. The only reason the loons, swans and crane have not gotten to me is because I am not fool enough to go anywhere close to them after the incident with the duck.

A couple years later when I was in University back south I was at the park with some friends. We were sitting on a bench watching the ducks, but not doing anything to the ducks. When a duck walked up to me and bit me on the leg with its serrated beak.

While ducks do not have teeth it does hurt when they bite you with their serrated beaks.

It is because of that duck and many, many geese that I now stay clear of all water birds. As I now live under the belief that if I give them space they just might not try to kill me... or at least not have the opportunity to.

P.S. as I write this two ducks have landed on my patio and taunted me with their serrated beaks.



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## Alcohol Consumption; Vitamin D Essential; Covid Vaccine News



By Shauna Burshem, D.C.

It seems the way we think about alcohol consumption may be on the verge of a major shift. According to U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy and a recently released report, alcohol is now officially linked to seven types of cancer, including breast, liver, and colorectal cancers. Interestingly—and quite frankly, shockingly—around 16.4% of breast cancer cases can be attributed to alcohol consumption. To top it off, alcohol is now considered the third-leading cause of cancer in the United States, trailing just behind tobacco and obesity. Many people will wonder how could something as socially normalized and celebrated as a glass of wine at dinner or a beer at a party carry such a heavy risk, and yet so many of us remain completely unaware? Currently, alcohol labels simply warn about risks like birth defects and impairment, but they completely leave out the potential cancer connection. Surgeon General Murthy and health experts are pushing for new warning labels and updated drinking guidelines to educate the public. Think about it—what if we could save lives simply by adding a line of text on a bottle? It feels like a small change with monumental potential. Women, in particular, face greater risks even with smaller amounts of al-

cohol due to biological factors. The bright side? Experts say cutting back even now could reduce future risks and, in some cases, reverse harmful effects. Personally, I enjoy having a few beers on the weekend. While experts point out that some damage from drinking can be reversible, they also stress that cutting back can significantly reduce future risks. This isn't about demonizing beer or alcohol; it's about being informed and making mindful choices. If updated labels and federal guidelines help create awareness, we all stand to benefit, ensuring that what we enjoy in moderation doesn't silently harm us in the long run. In the last couple years, I have mindfully cut back on my beer consumption, limiting myself to just a few a week. I started doing this as these research reports started to trickle out. Now, with the recent news reports, if you're like me, a little awareness might just change how you approach your next drink.

**Vitamin D deficiency** is an often-overlooked concern that impacts nearly 40% of Americans. Fatigue, muscle aches, frequent colds, and even feeling down can all be signs of low vitamin D, but many misinterpret these issues as something else. These seemingly minor symptoms can point to deeper health challenges if ignored for too long. Keeping vitamin D levels within the ideal range of 60-80 ng/mL is key to staying healthy and warding off chronic conditions.

Getting outside for just 10-20 minutes a day without sunscreen is one of the easiest ways to boost your vitamin D naturally. However, for those who can't spend time in the sun daily, or for individuals with darker skin tones or diets low in fatty fish, fortified dairy, or egg yolks, supplements can be a lifesaver. Adding foods rich in magnesium, like spinach and nuts, can also support how the body uses vitamin D, enhancing its impact. The ideal D3 dose in the wintertime is 35 per units per pound of bodyweight, plus 100-200 units of vitamin K2. For example, a 160lb person should take 5600 units of D3 daily in the winter.

Healthy vitamin D levels do so much more than strengthen bones—they also lower the risk of serious illnesses like heart disease, cancer, and autoimmune disorders. Regular blood tests are the best way to monitor your levels and make adjustments if needed. A combination of sunlight, a nutrient-packed diet, and supplements can make a huge dif-

ference in your health, protecting you from potential long-term problems while helping you feel your best every day.

**COVID-19 VACCINE NEWS:** A peer-reviewed study conducted by high school students at an FDA lab has uncovered some pretty startling details about Pfizer's mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. Yes, you heard that right—high school students. These young researchers, working under the guidance of FDA scientists, took a deep dive into the vaccine and confirmed something concerning. The study, which got published on Dec. 29, 2024, in *The Journal of High School Science*, found that Pfizer's mRNA vaccine contains levels of residual DNA contamination way higher than what's considered safe—6 to 470 times over the regulatory limits, to be precise. The students tested two separate batches of the vaccine and found “residual DNA to a level that exceeds 10 nanograms per dose.” To put it in perspective, anything beyond this limit raises eyebrows, and these results shot way past that threshold. Now, what does this mean exactly? That part is still a bit of a mystery. According to the study, the impact of these leftover DNA fragments on health isn't fully understood yet. But here's where it gets serious—the researchers noted these DNA fragments could cause something called “insertional mutagenesis,” a fancy term for DNA mutations that might lead to cancer. This revelation was first brought to light by Maryanne Demasi, Ph.D., an investigative medical journalist. To me, it's impressive and fascinating that high school students, while under the mentorship of FDA scientists, made such a critical discovery. It just goes to show, sometimes the biggest insights come from the least expected places.

**Keeping our kids healthy and free from injuries while they play winter sports is an absolute must.** Chiropractic care can be a valuable addition to their warmup and recovery routines, offering another layer of protection and performance enhancement for young athletes—and their proud parents. I'd love to share why I personally believe chiropractic care is a game-changer for winter sports. Whether your little ones are zooming down the slopes, gliding gracefully on ice, or powering through cross-country trails, keeping their bodies in top shape matters more than you think. Regular chiropractic care works hand in hand with things like warmups and cool-down stretches to set the stage for fewer injuries, better performance, and faster recovery times. Honestly, the benefits go beyond just the kids—families can see the difference too! Here's why I think incorporating chiropractic care into your winter sports routine is so crucial. Take balance and coordination, for instance. When your kids are on skis or snowboards, the ability to control their movements is everything. That effortless glide? It's no accident. Spinal adjustments, which enhance the body's natural ability to sense its position (proprioception), can really elevate performance in big ways. And let's not forget the importance of injury prevention. When the spine and joints are in proper alignment, the risk of sprains or strains can drop dramatically. Add in faster recovery from falls, improved flexibility, and even better strength, and this is why chiropractic care, kids and winter sports go hand in hand.

*\*Information and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and may not reflect those of The Messenger.*

## NH+C Leader Tammy Hayes to Retire

(continued from page 1)

Incoming President & CEO Zander Abbott will take the lead to fill the role of COO.

“We have benefited greatly from Tammy's talents for many years, and the next few months will be the final chapter in an outstanding healthcare career,” says NH+C President & CEO Steve Underdahl. “Tammy has my personal thanks and admiration for her enormous contributions to NH+C and the community over the years.”

Hayes has been a key contributor to NH+C's growth over the past decade, including the expansion of the Birth Center and the clinics network; the addition of the Wound Healing Center; and the growth of Orthopedics and Women's Health.

Recent highlights:

The expanded Birth Center has become a regional magnet for birth services, with over 600 births in 2024.

Cancer Care received accreditation from the Commission on Cancer, a rigorous process that distinguishes elite cancer care in the U.S.

NH+C has strengthened its workforce by recruiting and retaining excellent staff.

Partnerships in telemedicine have expanded care for strokes, mental health, and infectious diseases.

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## Food and Mood



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS  
Licensed Nutritionist

We are all familiar with the concept of “comfort food.” When you want to celebrate, or you want to introduce some happy experience into a day that has been challenging then you may be choosing a “comfort food” to enjoy. A short list of those items we enjoy may include chocolate, cheese, coffee, alcohol, soft drinks, candy, chips, pie or cake. We each have a deep, emotional connection with food, which can be positive or negative. How

does food affect mood?

In a recent blog post, “Could Diet Alter Your Personality,” Dr. Austin Perlmutter presents some of the current research identifying how the foods we eat can impact how we engage with life. This may not be too hard to understand when you consider how you express yourself when you are not feeling well. You do not have a lot of energy. You do not want to start a new project. You may isolate yourself. So, if a person consistently expresses these traits without a short-term illness, what is influencing how they feel, which results in these personality traits? Perlmutter suggests we take a look at what we eat.

All the food we consume passes through the gut, which is also called “the second brain.” The gut is “the second brain” because many of the proteins and hormones that influence brain activity are produced in your gut. The more quality whole foods you consume, the more helpful hormones are produced. Many of the signals produced in the gut are made by the bacteria that live in the intestines. These bacteria produce chemicals that are associated with reduced anxiety, decreased depression, and less irritability. The connection between the gut and our thinking has been clearly documented by Dr. Natasha

McBride in “Gut and Psychology Syndrome (GAPS).” Dr. McBride has demonstrated with the GAPS protocol how improving the quality of food going into the gut transforms how we think.

Our mind is constantly receiving input from our surroundings. The food we consume is one of those inputs. Headaches, brain fog, and irritability can be signs of inflammation caused by the food eaten. An inflamed brain is not able to process information effectively resulting in poor choices, outbursts, or isolation. A Health and Retirement study published in 2023 evaluated 4,364 participants for inflammation and their thinking abilities. Low levels of inflammation were associated with greater openness, better thinking and more agreeableness. Higher levels of inflammation have been associated with depression and dementia. Consequently, our food choices can greatly affect our thinking and the mood we express.

We can help our brain to function at optimal levels with quality nutrient sources. Wild caught salmon, extra virgin olive oil, cod liver oil, and walnuts are all great sources of omega-3 fatty acids, which the brain uses to make new connections. Decreasing sugar sources like soft drinks, fruit juice, white sugar, and corn syrup will help reduce inflammation so the brain can work more efficiently. High sugar intake is a challenge for many Americans, not only affecting their mood but also increasing the risk of diabetes. The brain functions best with the right balance of proteins, fats, and sugars.

The right balance of nutrients promotes

neuroplasticity, which is the description of how the brain can make new connections and improve physical abilities in the body. The brain is making new connections every time we think through a process, learn a new skill, or make a new memory. Young people make new connections very quickly, which means a quality food plan is especially important in these years. Helping a young person recognize those foods that sustain good brain activity will help them engage in a positive way with their surroundings and help them to thrive for the rest of their life.

As an aid to support your quality food plan, I will host a special series “What Mothers Want to Know” in the month of March focusing on the health questions moms ask most and providing the answers to their questions. An answer to a specific question will be delivered to the participant’s email address each day during the month of March. Thirty questions will be addressed in thirty days. You may send a question to [nutritionproportion@gmail.com](mailto:nutritionproportion@gmail.com). You can register to receive the email series in March by sending me your email address where you want the answers sent.

You can also contact me to discuss your health goals for the coming year. I can help you realize greater health freedom in 2025. You can contact me at [nutritionproportion@gmail.com](mailto:nutritionproportion@gmail.com), or check out my website at [www.nutritionproportion.net](http://www.nutritionproportion.net)

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## The Savvy Senior Driving with Dementia and Knowing When to Stop



By Jim Miller

Dear Savvy Senior,

*When should someone with dementia stop driving? My 83-year-old father has some dementia issues but still drives himself around town pretty well. —Concerned Daughter*

Dear Concerned,

Most doctors agree that people with moderate to severe dementia should never get behind the wheel, but in the early stages of Alzheimer's or other types of dementia, driv-

ing performance should be the determining factor of when to stop driving, not the disease itself.

With that said, it's also important to realize that as your dad's driving skills deteriorate over time from the disease, he might not recognize he has a problem. So, it's very important that you work closely with his doctor to monitor his driving and help him stop when it is no longer safe for him to drive. Here are some additional tips that can help you.

### WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS

The best way to keep tabs on your dad's driving abilities is to take frequent rides with him and watch out for warning signs. For example: Does he have trouble remembering routes to familiar places? Does he drive at inappropriate speeds, tailgate, drift between lanes or fail to observe traffic signs? Does he react slowly or make poor driving decisions? Also, has your dad had any fender benders or tickets lately, or have you noticed any dents or scrapes on his vehicle? All of these are red flags.

If you need some assessment help, hire a driver rehabilitation specialist who's trained to evaluate older drivers. See [Myaota.aota.org/driver\\_search](http://Myaota.aota.org/driver_search) or [Aded.net](http://Aded.net) to locate one in your area.

### TRANSITION TIPS

Through your assessments, if you believe it's still safe for your dad to drive, you should start recommending some simple adjustments to ensure his safety, like driving only in daylight and on familiar routes, and avoiding busy roads and bad weather. Also, get

him to sign a dementia "driving contract" that designates someone to tell him when it's no longer safe to drive. Go to [Alz.org/driving](http://Alz.org/driving) and click on the "Download" button to print one.

You may also want to consider getting a GPS car tracking device (like [Bounce.com](http://Bounce.com) or [MotoSafety.com](http://MotoSafety.com)) to help you monitor him. These devices will let you track where he's driving and allow you to set up zones and speed limits that will send you alerts to your smartphone when he exits an area, or if he's driving too fast or braking harshly.

### TIME TO QUIT

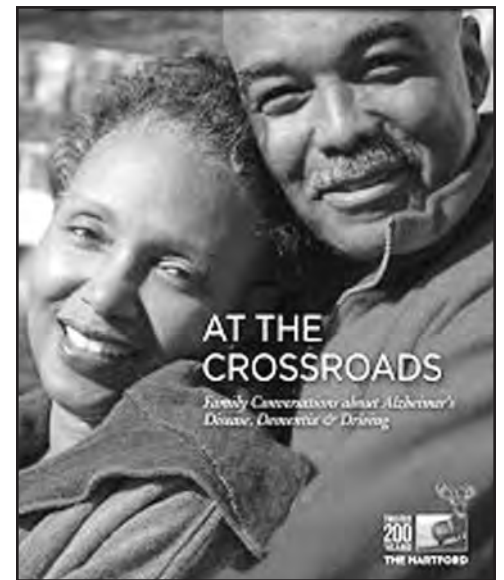
When your dad's driving gets to the point that he can no longer drive safely, you'll need to talk to him. It's best to start having these conversations in the early stages of the disease, before he needs to quit driving so he can prepare himself.

You also need to have a plan for alternative transportation (including a list of family, friends and local transportation options) that will help him get around after he stops driving.

For tips on how to talk to your dad, the Hartford Center for Mature Market Excellence offers a helpful guide called "At the Crossroads: Family Conversations About Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia and Driving" that you can download at [TheHartford.com/Publications-on-Aging](http://TheHartford.com/Publications-on-Aging).

### REFUSES TO QUIT

If your dad refuses to quit, you have several options. First, suggest a visit to his doctor who can give him a medical evaluation, and



prescribe that he stops driving. Older people will often listen to their doctor before they will listen to their own family.

If he still refuses, contact your local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to see if they can help. Some states will automatically revoke a license when a person is diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia, while many others require retaking a driving test.

If these fail, consider hiding his keys or you may need to take them away. You could also disable his vehicle by disconnecting the battery, park it in another location so he can't see it or have access to it, or sell it.

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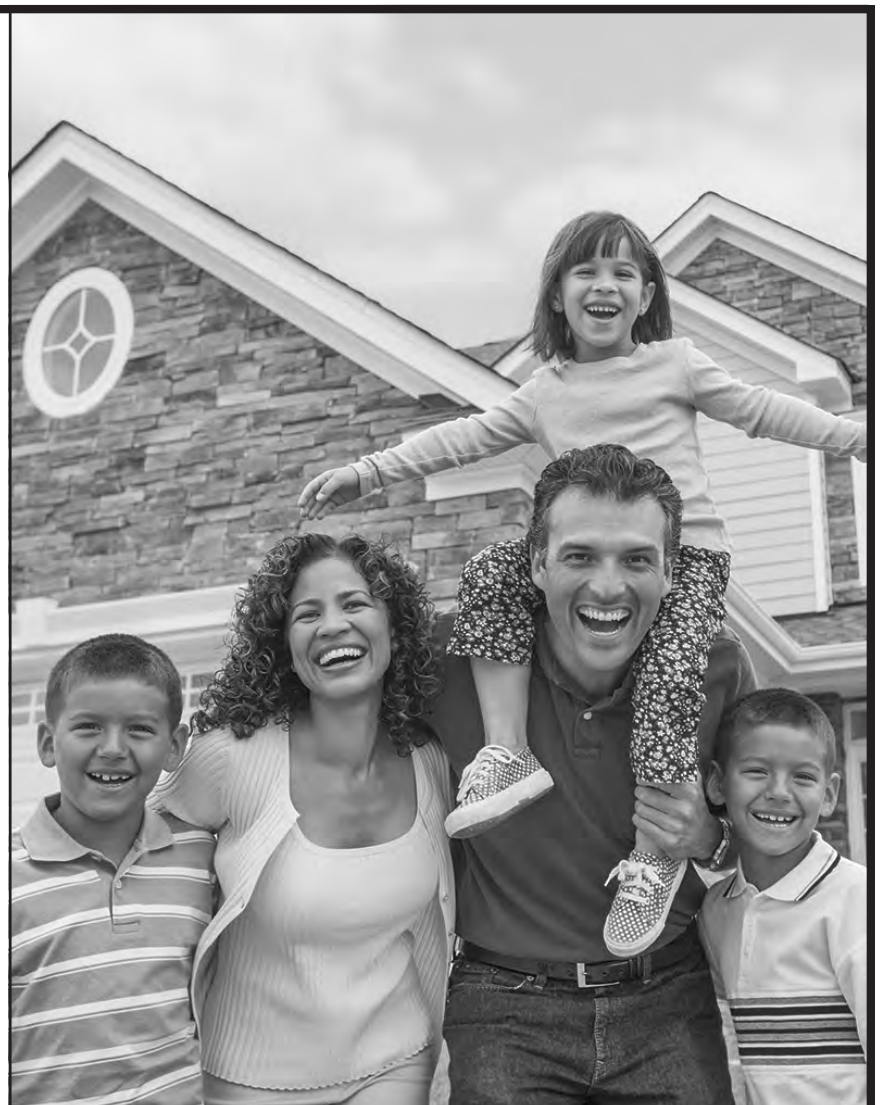
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## Building a Future of Belonging



**Tim Penny**  
So. MN Initiative Foundation

What does it mean to belong to a place? At Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), we know that having a sense of belonging is not merely a sentiment; it is a foundational element that drives economic growth, enhances social cohesion and nurtures a resilient and vibrant region. We have seen, through many examples across our region, that having access to resources can

transform lives and strengthen the bonds that unite our communities, fostering a sense of belonging that transcends cultural, economic and social differences.

In Rochester, The Village Agricultural Co-operative began as an effort to provide gardens for families, most of whom are immigrants, to grow food. As their crops overfilled their freezer, many growers sought to increase their harvest for a profit. With the support of two Inclusive and Equitable Entrepreneurial Communities (IEEC) Grants from SMIF, The Village was able to obtain two greenhouses and double the acreage of their land from five to 10 acres. With an additional grant, The Village was also able to hire a distribution manager to locate markets and sell produce on behalf of the farmers. Farmers like Mi Moua and Pha Lee have been able to earn an income and give back to their community by growing crops at the Village.

“We are so happy and filled with joy to have a plot of land to grow our own food,” shared Mi Moua and Pha Lee. “We just purchased a home for our family in 2022 because we had access to land in Rochester. We are so happy and feel more at home now than before. We will be staying here for a long time.”

In Blue Earth, a group of community members have worked hard to make the community more welcoming. A Small Town Grant

from SMIF supported welcome baskets for new homeowners. A second Small Town Grant supported a Welcoming Week bonfire, a Day of the Dead festival, an authentic Latin American band at Blue Earth’s Giant Days celebration and a program that allows businesses to translate official documents. For students like Briseyda Salazar, this has made a huge difference in helping her, and her family, feel a sense of belonging in the community.

“One of my favorite projects that I got to help with was the Day of the Dead festival,” shared Salazar. “People who don’t know about the Hispanic community got to learn about our culture, and those who do know got to remember all of our traditions so they are not getting lost.”

In Waterville, Brenda Novack, owner of Little Wonders Child Care, has taken full advantage of continuing education opportunities through SMIF to enhance her child care program. She has applied lessons from S.M.A.R.T. Steps to support body movements for healthy brain development, Conscious Discipline to address challenging behaviors with compassion and another SMIF Early Childhood training to better work with children with ADHD. At the trainings she also connects with other providers in the area and workshops challenges. These SMIF offerings have made her feel valued as a child care provider.

“Having SMIF offer these trainings to us, it shows that our profession is being valued, which is huge,” shared Novack. “It’s something that most people don’t acknowledge. So this is a positive message that says, ‘Hey,



we value you and we want you to be able to fulfill your trainings that the State is requiring you to keep your license up to date.”

We are grateful for the unwavering support of our partners, donors and community members, who share our vision of a more inclusive and thriving region. Together, we will continue to build a future where everyone in southern Minnesota feels they belong, and where our collective success is rooted in the strength of our diverse and connected communities.

I invite you to read the full versions of these stories by reading our 2024 Impact Report at [smifoundation.org/impactreport2024](https://smifoundation.org/impactreport2024).

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



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# Why Youth Language is More Than Just Slang

By  
University of MN Extension

For the last decade, Extension Educator Courtney Johnson has strived to stay connected with youth language. She recently listened to a teen-led conversation that made her feel—well—old! She had no idea what they were saying, and it got her thinking, "Why does youth language exist?" Here's what she found.

## Youth language research highlights

Young people engaged in conversation outside a building.

There is a range of research on youth language, much of it occurring in the latter half of the 20th century.

Some of my favorite research comes from "Research on Youth-Language from Sociolinguistics: An International Handbook of the Science of Language and Society, Volume 2."

Sociolinguists — those who study the relationship between language and society — generally agree that adolescence is the life stage in which language change is most clearly visible.

According to linguist Penelope Eckert,

"Adolescents are the linguistic movers and shakers, at least in western industrialized societies, and, as such, a prime source of information about linguistic change and the role of language in social practice."

Language use in adolescence is also discussed in terms of the structure of adolescent peer-groups and the communicative demands of peer-group interactions.

Virtually all studies of youth language draw on the notion of identity in order to explain why language varies during adolescence.

Youth language potentially linked to at least two aspects of development

As identified in the research, youth language plays a role both in a youth's peer groups (belonging) and within the self (identity).

## Belonging

According to the Forum for Youth Investment, belonging means feeling like you can be your true self in a group or community. Both Gisela Konopka, a youth development pioneer, and Karen Pittman, president and CEO of the Forum for Youth Investment from 1998 to 2021, indicated that belonging is critical to healthy youth development.

## Identity

Identity refers to our sense of who we are as individuals and as members of social groups.

During adolescence, youth seek autonomy, particularly from parents, along with increased commitments to social aspects of identity and a greater need for connection with peers. However, as with all good research, there are conflicting ideas.

Research by Dr. Gordon Neufeld argues that the breakdown of healthy attachment is to blame for youth building their identity



through peers, and that it is not a natural part of development. His book, "Hold on to Your Kids," describes this argument and is worth checking out.

So, the next time you hear "no cap," "sus," "bussin'," "fire," "pressed" or "POV," you can

acknowledge that those words (or the act of creating and using them) may be supporting youth development and likely creating a generation of linguists. And if you are like me, you may also have to Google a few and feel a little old from time to time.

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Cannon Valley Elder Collegium (CVEC), a vibrant learning community for people aged 50+ in Minnesota's Cannon River Valley and beyond, presents fifteen course offerings for Spring Term.

CVEC's successful formula hasn't changed in nearly 30 years:

Thought-provoking courses, engaged elder students

Wide variety of fascinating course topics

Outstanding instructors: retired professors, teachers, community experts

No tests, no grades, no papers to write, no class presentations

Affordable tuition; course books and materials are extra

CVEC's Spring Term 2025 starts March 24, and ends May 16.

Registration for Spring Term is February 10 - March 3.

Registration continues for courses with openings until April 4. Scholarships are available.

In-person Spring 2025 courses will be taught at Northfield MN locations.

Go to [www.cvec.org](http://www.cvec.org) for complete course details and to register.

What's Up with American Higher Education (Part 2)? - issues, disruptions, opportunities

Quantifying Reasoning - human thinking, reasoning, artificial intelligence

Astronomy 101: Introduction to the Sky and the Stars - observing our solar system and beyond

Jane Austen's Persuasion - why are Austen's works so widely read and adapted?

Retirement and the Meaning of Work - why do so many retirees return to working?

Modern Scientific Cosmology - past, present, and future of the universe

Dementia: Biology, Prevention, Treatment, Response - addressing questions about dementia

Scorsese II: Circles of Hell - brilliant cinematic work of the famous film director (online course)

What is our Story? American Civil Religion and the Alternatives - implicit religious values

Minnesota's Severe & Unusual Weather - causes, hazards, and coping with wild weather

The Sins, Glories, and Music of the 1960s - multimedia look at a pivotal decade

French Short Stories - exploring (in English) many stories from France and North Africa

User's Guide to the Immune System - how our immune systems work, or don't work

Literature Inspired by the Pandemic - from plagues of the Middle Ages to today

The Art of the Theatre (and how respond) - hows and why's of play productions

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## Year of the Calendula: Beyond Beauty in Your Garden

By University of MN Extension

Each year, the National Garden Bureau highlights standout crops, and for 2025, Calendula, also known as pot marigold, takes the spotlight as an Annual of the Year. Loved for its vibrant blooms and versatility, this resilient flower is perfect for seasoned and new gardeners alike.

### A bloom with history

Calendula's story is as colorful as its petals. Native to the Mediterranean, this cheerful flower has been celebrated for centuries. Ancient Egyptians admired its healing properties, while Romans introduced it across Europe, where it became a staple in gardens and kitchens. Dubbed "poor man's saffron," calendula petals can be used as a natural yellow dye or to flavor and color recipes.

### How to grow calendula

Calendula thrives in cool weather, making it ideal for early spring and fall planting. Follow these tips for success:

### Planting basics

Direct sow seeds in early spring, even when light frosts are possible. Continue sowing every two to three weeks until early summer for a staggered fall bloom.

Starting indoors? Sow seeds in late winter.

Sow seeds 1/4 inch deep and cover completely; they require darkness to germinate.

After germination, place them under bright lights.

Space plants 6–18 inches apart for healthy growth. Pinch back young plants to encourage branching.

Care and maintenance

Provide full sun and well-drained soil, with a pH between 5.5 and 7.

Water regularly but avoid wetting leaves to prevent mildew.

Deadhead faded blooms to promote continuous flowering.

Why gardeners love calendula

Calendula's beauty comes with added benefits, making it a garden favorite:

Natural pest control: Planted near vegetables like tomatoes and beans, calendula attracts beneficial insects while keeping pests at bay.

Edible and delicious: Its petals add a peppery flavor and vibrant color to salads and soups.

Medicinal properties: Harvest flowers to dry for teas, soothing salves, or fragrant potpourri.

### A bloom for cool seasons

Calendula thrives in cool weather but may pause blooming during hot summers. Don't worry—it bounces back with vivid blooms



Calendula Kinglit from SAHIN, Year of the Calendula, 2025, National Garden Bureau

as temperatures drop, bringing a burst of fall color.

Whether you're brightening your garden, attracting pollinators, or exploring its edible

and medicinal uses, calendula is a plant that truly gives back. Its rich history, ease of care, and versatility make it a must-have for any garden.

## Shielding Woody Perennials: Protect Your Plants from Winter Woes

By University of MN Extension

Winter in Minnesota is tough—not just on us, but also on our trees and shrubs. Snow, ice, and road salt can really take a toll on woody perennials, leaving them bent, broken, or even dead by spring. But don't worry! You can help your plants make it through the cold months in good shape.

### Snow and ice

Snow and ice can pile up on branches, bending or even snapping them under the weight. Evergreens and shrubs with multiple stems are especially vulnerable. Ice can also encase branches, making them brittle and prone to breaking. Here's how to help:

Sweep snow gently: Use a broom to lightly brush the snow from underneath the branches. Don't shake them—this can cause more harm than good.

Let ice melt naturally: Avoid spraying plants with water during freezing temperatures. If ice has already formed, don't try to break it off—it could damage the branches.

For extra protection, wrap delicate plants in burlap or tie branches together with soft ties to help them stay upright through heavy snowfalls.

### Road salt

Road salt may keep sidewalks safe, but it's not so friendly to your plants. Salt can dry out roots, damage foliage, and leave toxic residues in the soil. If your woody perennials are near driveways, sidewalks, or roads, they're especially at risk. To minimize damage:

Go for salt alternatives: Use sand, sawdust, or calcium magnesium acetate instead of traditional rock salt for de-icing.

Set up barriers: Burlap screens or snow fences can block salt spray and runoff from reaching your plants.

Flush the soil in spring: After the snow melts, give the soil around your plants a deep watering to wash away any salt buildup.

### Winter burn

Evergreens can suffer from winter burn when cold winds pull moisture from their leaves or needles faster than their roots can replace it. This can leave your plants browned and dried out—especially on the windward side. To prevent winter burn:

Water well in fall: Make sure your plants are well-hydrated before the ground freezes. Moisture in the soil helps them stay healthy through winter.

Apply mulch: A 2–3-inch layer of mulch around the base of your plants insulates the soil and protects their roots.

Create windbreaks: Burlap screens or hedges can shield your plants from cold, drying winds.

### Spring recovery

Even if you've taken precautions, winter can leave its mark. In spring, inspect your plants for broken or damaged branches and prune as needed to encourage healthy regrowth. If salt has caused issues in the soil, amend it with compost to restore health and balance.

By taking these simple steps, you can protect your woody perennials from the harsh realities of winter. Not only will your plants thrive, but your landscape will also look great year-round. A little effort now goes a long way when it comes to keeping your garden healthy and beautiful!

Mark Your Calendar!

**Dennison Days**  
June 20-21, 2025

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Watch for updates at [www.dennisondays.org](http://www.dennisondays.org)

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*'They provide hope for the future'*

## Probation Officers Honored for Work with Female Clients

By Rice County

Two Rice County Probation Officers who work with justice-involved women were honored last week by their professional organization.

Agents Kelli Cline and Willow Schafer "do an outstanding job supervising justice-involved women in Rice County," said Community Corrections Supervisor Tracy Zabel, who nominated them for the Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Aid Counties President's Award.

Cline and Schafer lead Rice County Community Corrections' Gender Responsive Unit, work which they say is especially meaningful. Often their clients aren't aware of or have never tapped into their strengths, which makes sharing their journey of self-discovery, growth and success so satisfying.

"It's very rewarding that we have the opportunity to build relationships with our clients

to aid in their success outside of the justice system and beyond," said Schafer.

Relationship building is key.

Gender-responsive and trauma-informed policies, practices, and programs like the ones used by Rice County Community Corrections "recognize that women have distinct histories, pathways to offending and experiences in the criminal justice system," according to a resource guide from the Council of State Governments. "These approaches address issues that may contribute to women's involvement in the justice system, such as domestic violence, abuse, and victimization; family and relationships; trauma; and poverty, mental illnesses and substance use disorders."

Cline and Schafer lead with compassion, says Zabel, while incorporating evidence-based practices and a trauma-informed approach, empowering women to make change, including them in the case planning process and identifying their strengths.

Client risks and strengths are determined using an evidence-based assessment tool. This allows supervision, interventions and strategies to be tailored to each individual's needs. They're keenly aware of ensuring clients' basic needs – housing, finances and relationships – are met. If they're not, Cline and Schafer aim to connect clients with the resources and/or services that can help.

They also facilitate two gender-responsive, cognitive behavior-based and trauma-informed programs for small groups of female clients who meet regularly, which further enhances relationship building and covers specific topics for women with similar needs.



Probation Officers Kelli Cline and Willow Schafer received the MACCAC Presidents Award for their work with justice-involved women. Their supervisor, Tracy Zabel, right, nominated them for the award. (Rice County photo)

"They provide hope and accountability with compassion. They consistently go the extra mile," Zabel said of agents Cline and

Schafer. "They are committed to this work and dedicated to the women they serve. They provide hope for the future."

## Tactical Armored Vehicle Now Part of Sheriff's Office's Fleet

(continued from page 1)



This month, the Sheriff's Office officially made space in its garage for a tactical armored security vehicle commonly known as a BearCat.

Prior to its arrival, the closest BearCat was an hour away. When a situation calls for this type of machinery, an hour can be too long to wait, said Thomas.

The new BearCat will be available during any call outs of the South Metro SWAT, a unit comprised of officers from Rice and Dakota County law enforcement agencies.

In 2024, South Metro SWAT called out its existing BearCat 15 times, including the Feb. 18 incident in which two Burnsville Police officers and a firefighter/paramedic were killed by a suspect holed up inside his home. And though the BearCat took 41 rounds that day, none of the officers inside were harmed.


Thomas says the vehicle allows officers, in-

cluding crisis negotiators, to get close to dangerous situations and reduce the likelihood that they're injured or killed, allowing them to more effectively de-escalate crises.

To say the vehicle is heavy duty would be an understatement. Each BearCat is custom-made by Lenco Armored Vehicles in Pittsfield, Mass. It has seating for 10 and includes emergency lights, a PA, a turret up top and graphics that thank those who've served in the nation's military.

The vehicle, which cost \$338,000, is expected to last for at least 20 years, said Thomas. At that point it could be sold, he said, or refurbished.

"The world we live in is more violent than it used to be, said Thomas. "The BearCat will give us the ability to quickly respond to high-risk situations, de-escalate whenever possible and protect any victims."



**FOR COMMUNITY RELEASE**

**Dakota County Sheriff's Office**

Joe Leko, Sheriff

---

Bulletin #24-4  
10/01/2024

# REWARD OFFERED

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**ENDANGERED MISSING PERSON**

**Nicole "Nikki" Anderson**

- 5' 10"
- 135 lbs
- Last seen wearing a long grey sweater and camouflage pants.

Nicole Anderson was last seen in Randolph Township in Dakota County the morning of Saturday, July 6, 2024.


She was on foot and does not have her cell phone, wallet, or medications.



Last known image of Anderson ^ on 7/6/2024 at 08:54 hours.

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The Dakota County Sheriff's Office is offering a reward of \$5,000 for information regarding Nicole Anderson's whereabouts or the prosecution of those involved in her disappearance. Private parties have pledged an additional \$40,000 reward to be distributed independently of the Sheriff's Office. Only tips received through the Dakota County Sheriff's Office or Crime Stoppers that lead to the location of Nicole Anderson or the prosecution of those involved in her disappearance are eligible for the reward.



**1-800-222-8477**

Anyone wishing to provide a **completely anonymous** tip may contact Crime Stoppers at, **1-800-222-TIPS**, or [www.CrimeStoppersMN.org](http://www.CrimeStoppersMN.org)

**Reference DCSO Case # 24-000819**

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Vol. 1 Now





## Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,  
Minnesota State Patrol



**Question:** I have seen numerous times where a bicyclist will not stop at a stop sign, if they are sharing the road with automobiles. I have seen a couple of close incidents where the bicyclist is almost hit as well. Are bicyclists under the same rules if they are sharing the road with automobiles?

**Answer:** There was a state law change back in August of 2023. It states, "a bicycle operator who approaches a stop sign must slow to a speed that allows for stopping before entering the intersection or the nearest crosswalk. If there is not a vehicle in the vicinity, the operator may make a turn or proceed through the intersection without stopping." Nothing in this subdivision changed the right-of-way requirements. It is important to note that bicyclists must still stop at intersections controlled by a red light, a peace officer, or a person authorized to control traffic.

Essentially, the bicyclist can yield or per-

form a "rolling stop" at a stop sign if they don't violate anyone else's right of way. When approaching a stop sign, the bicyclist should be traveling slow enough to stop before the crosswalk if necessary. However, after yielding, if there is not a pedestrian crossing in front of them or other traffic approaching near enough to constitute an immediate hazard, they may continue without making a full stop.

**Question:** What allows private for-profit ambulance companies to run tax-exempt license plates on their vehicles?

**Answer:** Vehicles owned by ambulance services specifically intended for emergency response or providing ambulance services are exempt under the Minnesota State statutes. All services must have a valid license issued by the board. The license shall specify the base of operations, the primary service area, and the type or types of ambulance service for which the licensee is licensed. The licensee shall obtain a new license if they wish to expand their primary service area, or to provide a new services.

**Question:** Can you talk about railroad crossing safety and the laws that cover it?

**Answer:** I have responded to and investigated a number of train/vehicle crashes in my career. A majority of them resulted in fatal or serious injuries to the vehicle occupants. In Minnesota, failure to yield the right of way, disregard of a traffic control device, improper turn and inattention and impatience are cited as the most common factors contributing to motor vehicle/train crashes.

The Minnesota Department of Transporta-

tion (MnDOT) has worked to share the following rail safety tips:

- Yield the right-of-way to trains at highway-rail crossings. It's the law.

- Never drive around lowering gates, it's illegal and deadly.

- Never race a train to the crossing; even if it is a tie, you lose.

- Always expect a train on the tracks; trains do not follow set schedules.

- Look for a second train when crossing multiple tracks.

- Exit your vehicle immediately if it stalls on the crossing, get clear of the tracks and call 911.

- Always stop your vehicle, behind the white line when crossing gates are down or lights are flashing. Wait for the crossing gates to rise and lights to stop flashing; look both ways, listen and proceed with caution.

The chance of death or serious injury from a motor vehicle/train crash is 11 times greater than for other highway collisions. At 50 mph, it takes a fully-loaded freight train 1.5 miles to come to a full-stop. By the time the train engineer sees a vehicle or pedestrian on the tracks, it is often too late.

Because of their size, approaching trains may appear to be traveling at a slower speed therefore drivers often misjudge the distance of the train.



As a bicyclist or pedestrian you must always look both ways before crossing railroad tracks, cross only in designated areas and never cross when gates are down. Railroad tracks and property close to the tracks (railroad "right-of-way") belong to the railroad. People who don't have permission to be on railroad property are trespassing. Even if there is not a "No Trespassing" sign, it's still illegal and dangerous to be on the property.

You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and of course, drive sober. Help us drive Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths.

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](mailto:Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us))

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## DUNDAS CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES Monday, December January 27, 2025 7:00 p.m. City Hall

Present: Mayor Glenn Switzer Councilors Luke LaCroix, Ashley Gallagher, Grant Modory, Luke Swartwood

Staff: City Engineer Dustin Tipp, City Administrator/Clerk Jenelle Teppen

### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Switzer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Gallagher, second by LaCroix, to approve the agenda. Motion Carried Unanimously (MCU)

### CONSENT AGENDA

- Regular Minutes of January 13, 2025
- Disbursements - \$112,991.87

Motion by Swartwood, second by LaCroix,

## to approve the consent agenda. MCU REGULAR AGENDA

- Consider Providing Direction to Staff Regarding Additional Kayak/Canoe Landing Site on West Side of the Cannon River

Administrator Teppen briefly reviewed the materials in the City Council agenda packet regarding the above item. Staff is seeking direction from the City Council on the installation of a boat (canoe/kayak) landing on the west side of the Cannon River between the pedestrian bridge and the Hester Street bridge and where it might fit in the City's Capital Improvement Plan.

Staff was approached by three individuals who are advocating for an additional landing as the current landing on the island can be difficult to maneuver for anyone but very experienced and nimble paddlers.

Included in the materials were two options for consideration that fell within the minimum standards for boat launches imposed by the DNR. Option 1 is closer to the Hester Street Bridge and Option 2 is nearer to the pedestrian bridge from Mill Park to Memorial Park.

The owners of Farmstead Outdoor Adventures, Greg Neis and Brianna Lane were in attendance. They currently lease the City's Engine House and rent kayaks out of the location. They expressed their support for an additional landing, indicating that they would like to expand their presence at the Engine House and provide bike rentals and other

amenities to bikers who use the Mill Towns State Trail, noting that other communities on regional bike trails have seen positive economic impacts from trail users who stop to eat, drink or shop in places that are adjacent to a regional bike trail.

Margie O'Loughlin, 412 Manitou St, Northfield and Clean River Partners Board Member and avid paddler spoke to the City Council about how the current landing can be treacherous and supports a second landing.

Pat O'Loughlin, 412 Manitou St, Northfield also spoke and voiced support.

The City Council indicated that they would like written communication from the DNR that a landing on the Wild and Scenic designated Cannon River is permissible and directed staff to bring the item to the Park Board for their review and comment. Council member Modory suggested that the City Council discuss the current use and long-term plan for the Engine House as well.

- Consider Recommendation Regarding Pedestrian Crossing at Hester Street

City Engineer Dustin Tipp presented the item and noted that the feasibility of a pedestrian crossing at Hester St, across the railroad tracks, down the hill to Railway St was explored.

He further noted that there are several challenges and requirements to complete the sidewalk connection across the railroad including; permitting and approval from the UPRR for all work within the railroad easement, retaining wall and sidewalk improvements within that easement to mitigate the steep slope, additional concrete sidewalk along Hester to Railway St, removal and replacement of a portion of the existing retaining wall at Railway St and Hester to install that sidewalk.

With all of those improvements the sidewalk would still not be ADA compliant due

to the grades on Hester St. The maximum allowable grade is 8.33% and a sidewalk along Hester would be 11.5%.

Staff met with the Public Works Committee to review the item the Committee members recommend the following to provide a safe crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists at the railroad crossing that includes: keeping the sidewalk on the south side of Hester St until a new sidewalk on the north side the road would be necessary due to development, install signs to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to use the existing railroad crossing on Mill Street, contact the UPRR to discuss improving the railroad crossing at Mill St.

The City Council discussed and supported the recommendation from the Public Works Committee.

## REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

City Engineer Tipp reported that the construction plans for the County Road 1/Trunk Highway 3 project are at 60% completion and are under review. The excavation on the 2025 pond maintenance project is complete while grading and restoration is still outstanding. Draft plans for the 2025 Schilling Drive Sewer project are complete and a meeting with Menards on access and schedule is scheduled.

The City Administrator reported that Council member Swartwood reached out with a question about the Northfield Water Treatment Plant and if or how that project might impact Dundas. The Administrator answered that there is no impact to Dundas, the two cities water systems are not connected.

### ADJOURN

Motion by Swartwood, second by Gallagher, to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 PM. MCU

Minutes prepared by Jenelle Teppen, City Administrator/City Clerk

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# RANDOLPH RAILROAD

## DAYS! (19<sup>th</sup> annual) \*

Randolph Area Historical Society

MARCH 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, Saturday 9-3, Sunday 10-2

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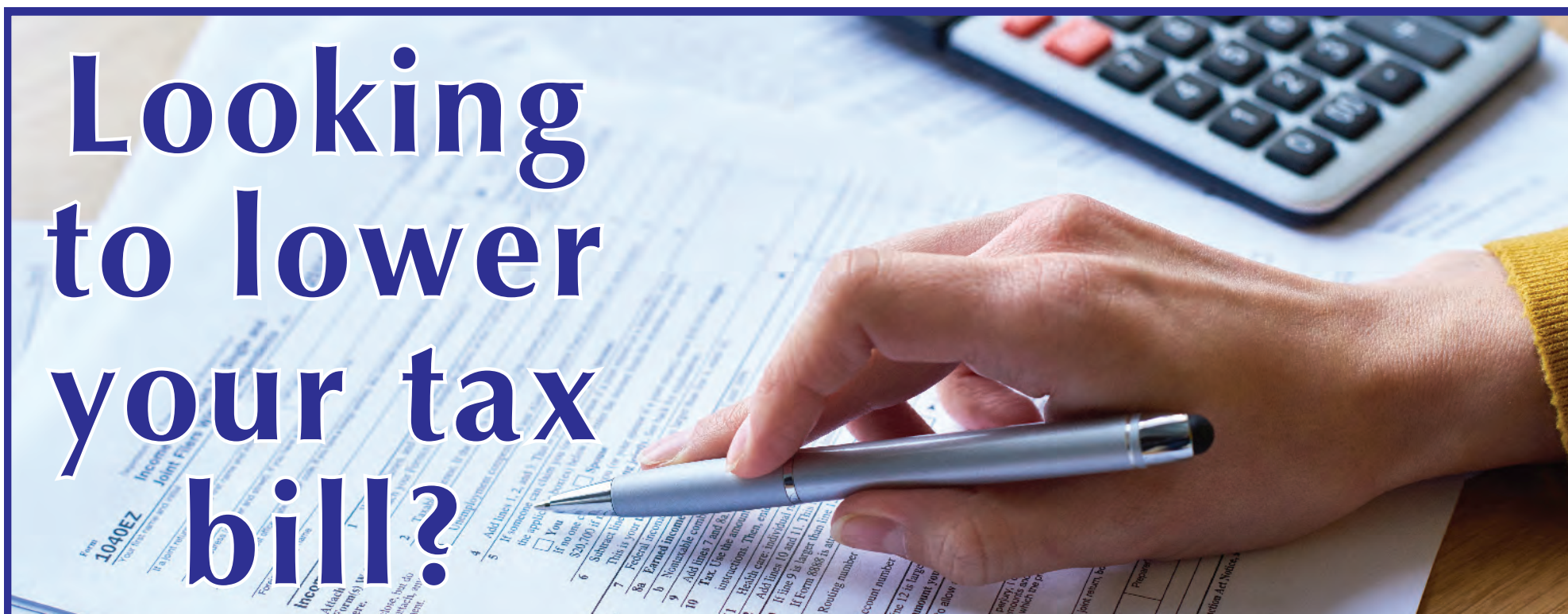
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