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Volume 19 • Issue 12

Dundas City Council Approves Pay Raises for Police Officers; Aims To Create Longer Retention In the Department

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News



One recent issue that the Dundas City Council has had to confront is regarding the pay of police officers in the city.

(continued on page 19)

Announcements

• If you are home alone this Christmas or just don't want to make dinner, St. John's is hosting the annual Free Community Christmas Day Dinner. December 25th, 11:15 am to 1:30 pm. Everyone is Welcome! (it's dinner not a service). 500 3rd St. W, Northfield. Think turkey, meatballs, lefse, salad and lots of desserts.

• **Reminder to clear sidewalks;** Public sidewalks must be clear 24 hours after snowfall, and snow cannot be deposited into the streets.

• **Winter Parking Ban:** The winter parking ban is in effect from October 31st through April 15th, between 2 am and 6:30 am. Parking is not allowed on any city street. Vehicles in violation will be ticketed. Ordinance §71.06.

Do you have an announcement?

Email:

hometownmessenger@gmail.com

Memories of Christmas Past

Every year we visit with residents of local assisted living homes and hear their memories of Christmas when they were a child. Here are some of the stories from their childhood for you to enjoy.

Anne grew up in a family of eight kids in a small town in Minnesota. She recalls that times were tough and the family did not have a lot of things.

The kids would hang their every day stockings in the living room in anticipation of getting treats on Christmas Eve. She recalls one year how her brother looked out the upstairs window and said he saw sleigh tracks in the yard. They all began to get excited until her dad yelled up the stairs to get back to bed.



The next morning, they came down to find a tangerine, banana, candy and nuts in the stockings.

Christmas was very simple and they usually received one present each from their parents.

Usually, it was a new pair of pajamas. Her oldest brother gave her a present one year she really wanted. It was a copy of the book, Little Women. Even though she couldn't read it by herself yet, it was a treasured gift.

The family would open one present Christmas Day and then they headed off to church. She remembers playing the Virgin Mary, holding a doll in a manger scene when she was about six-years old. The noon meal was usually a goose with all the trimmings.

(continued on page 4)

Time to Make a Resolution?

By Cheri Roshon

Ah, yes, the end of 2025 is in sight, and it is time to decide whether to make a New Year's Resolution...or not!

I would venture to say that not many people know that humans have been doing this tradition for over 4,000 years! The tradition dates back to the Babyonians, who made promises to their gods during the Akitu festival for a prosperous new year. The Romans caught wind of this tradition, and adopted it by making vows to Janus, the two faced god of beginnings, which is where the name for January came from. And it has continued in various ways since then.

It is said that young adults aged 18 to 29 are the most likely to make a resolution, especially concerning their career, while health is a top concern across all ages. Studies show that less than 10% of people keep their resolutions. Many give up quickly; 23% quit the first week, and by the end of the first month, 64% have already abandoned their vision of a better future.



(continued on page 8)

Correction

In the November 19 issue of The Messenger, there was a typographical error in the UTILITY WORK STARTS IN NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP article.

The purchase price was incorrectly reported.

The Northfield city bought 13 acres for the purchase price of \$44,000 (forty four thousand dollars) per acre, (NOT \$440,000.00) We apologize for this error.

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The True Meaning of Christmas



By Ashley Dudek,
founder of Isaiah Ministries, bringing
Biblical teaching to help overcome
life's everyday challenges.
www.isaiahministries.cc

It's that time of year again, can you believe it? Perhaps you feel the pressure of busting out the tangled lights, putting up the Christmas tree, making cookie platters, and checking off that frantic list of all the Christmas shopping you feel obligated to do. Before you know it, it's December 26th and it all felt like a grasping of the wind.

Although some may think Christmas is how the Hallmark movies portray, that is the furthest thing from the truth. So much hype gets put into this season, and to be honest, for what? More clutter, credit card debt, and returns to the store?

I know what some of you may be thinking: "Ashley, you kind of sound like the Grinch." Maybe I do, just stick with me.

Do we honestly stop, pause, and breathe in the true meaning of Christmas? Do we even know what it is? Some of us may, with a twinkle in our eye; others may not, with curiosity on our chest; and for a few of us, Christmas may be all too familiar and we need a fresh, crisp breeze of what this time is truly all about.

"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11)

Savior. Think about that word. What does it mean? Savior means you are saved from something, but what is this something, and who even is this Christ?

Let's start with Christ. This verse and word are indeed talking about Jesus. Fun little fact—Christ is not Jesus's last name! Christ means chosen or anointed one. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the Son of God who is the chosen one to save us! But save us from what?

Jesus saves from hopelessness. Standards of the world. Perfection. Bondage. Turmoil. Dread. He can help save us from the bottle in the hand, the joint in the midst of the fingers, the pictures on the screen, and the despair that wants to take our lives. He saves us from guilt, shame, and that sweet self-critic we can't seem to shake.

Some of you have been in the church your whole life and you can relate to all of the above; no shame, my beloveds. Some of you may have never stepped into that four-wall building and experienced the things previously listed; no guilt there either. Jesus saves

nonetheless.

Jesus loves you. Even in the mess. I promise you.

I have been a follower of Jesus for a good twenty years now, and Jesus continues to save me from regrets of the past, trauma that wants to resurface, self-harm that wishes to penetrate, and depression that hungers to overtake.

I have days when my chest is weighed down with the heaviest of bricks, my heart beats as fast as a hummingbird's wings, and fear wants to spiral me down to despair. But guess what? Jesus rushes in. Jesus consoles me and settles my heart by the Word of God and speaks to me with words and tone that represent the fruit of the Spirit. Before I know it, the darkness has fled, he has saved me from self-destruction of all sorts, and I am back on my feet running the race.

Commercial break: For those who do not know, the Word of God is the Bible, and the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Jesus also saves us from sin, which we all are so guilty of, including me. Pride. Control. Jealousy. Anger. Comparing. Offense. Those are just a few of the sins I have been washed clean from (and some of them I am still working through), thanks to Jesus.

He will meet you, too, in the middle of the rage, in the mix of the fix, the crippling anxiety, the sailor's mouth, the emptiness, and that bed of yours that is drenched with tears. He can save and forgive you.

Consider this Christmas (and all the others) that it is not about the presents, food, peppermint mochas, Santa, or reindeer. It's about the Savior, Jesus, and how He was born, to then die for sin, to soon after be resurrected, all for you.

Jesus does not need you polished or perfected. He does not work that way. He just needs you to cry out to Him, share with Him the mess-ups (aka, confess your sins), accept what He has done for you (died on the cross and rose from the grave), and then talk to Him and never stop. As you confess and believe these things, you enter into the Lord's Fatherhood and become His child.

Perhaps you have been going to church for some time now, but for whatever reason, Jesus has become a little too familiar or has been put on the shelf next to the elf. Bring Jesus down, draw near to Him, and start that dialogue again. For the unchurched, truth remains, talk to Jesus and get to know Him. It is all about a personal relationship, my friends.

The majestic snow will be on its way (per-

haps it has already come as you read this), and as you gaze upon the purest of flakes, know that is how Jesus looks upon all of His children. For a daughter or son of the King, He does not see the crimson-red sin that mirrors the color of Santa's sack, but rather He gazes upon you with starlit eyes and sees you as sweet and tender as a white woolly lamb.

Therefore, rejoice in that, for Jesus is our Savior who saves from hopelessness of all kinds and sin, which is the true meaning of

Christmas. While you are at it, might as well go make a few Christmas cookies, partnered with some hot cocoa and even marshmallows. I can't come across as a complete "bah humbug" now, can I? I might even string a couple lights too!

Verses that inspired the article: Ecclesiastes 1:14, Galatians 5:22–23, 1 John 1:9, Romans 10:9–10, Romans 8:15, Hebrews 10:22, Isaiah 1:8, and Nehemiah 8:10.

Area Church Directory

Let's Go and See!

"Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." — Luke 2:15

The shepherds are relatively obscure actors in this story. We don't know their names. We're not sure if they are hired hands or tending their own flocks. They hear the angel's announcement of Jesus' birth. They run to find Jesus. And after they return to their flocks, we don't hear from them again.

Even so, the shepherds pull me further into this story. They begin in a rather ordinary space, "living out in the fields" with their sheep. When the angel suddenly appears, they are terrified! Who wouldn't be? Nothing could have prepared them to meet angels shining the light of God's glory in the middle of a field at night. Then quickly they move from terror to wonder to delight and finally to joyful worship. By the end of the night, the shepherds are the first human messengers to share the good news of Jesus' birth! Like the people whom the shepherds first told about Jesus, I am amazed at what I hear.

After the angelic choir disappears, the shepherds urge each other: "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." What else could they do? As I read this story again, I find myself responding to the shepherds: "Yes! Let's go and see, looking into the amazing good news of the child who has been born in Bethlehem!"

God, whether we've read this story before or we are hearing it for the first time, awaken in us the joy and wonder of the good news of Jesus' birth! Amen.

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Pastor Penny Bonsell • pastor@littleprairieumc.org

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

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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

10:00a.m. Worship Experience

NORTHFIELD EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH 5600 East 110th Street

Pastor Dan Runke • 663-0133 • northfieldefc.org

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

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

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Shirley J. Shaft

Shirley J. Shaft, 89, passed away peacefully, on November 10th, 2025. She leaves behind a life filled with family, service, and love. She was born on March 22nd, 1936, in Faribault, Minnesota, to Russell and Luvema (Reim) Johnson.

Shirley grew up just across the street from the original Faribault Golf & Country Club, where her passion for golf took root. Some of her earliest memories trace back to age four, riding alongside greenskeeper "Grandpa Ed" and trailing her bare feet through the freshly cut fairways. Her father found a partial set of wooden clubs and carefully shortened them so she could play. She improvised and used a

5-iron as her putter. Once old enough to babysit, Shirley saved to buy her own clubs, while her mother worked extra hours to buy her a golf bag. By her teenage years, Shirley was competing in Minnesota State Championships, a testament to both her talent and determination.

In 1957, Shirley married Stewart N. Shaft, and together they began building a life and a family while completing their degrees at Stout State College in Menomonie, Wisconsin. Shirley graduated in 1959 with a degree in Home Economics Education, a fitting foundation for her lifelong commitment to nurturing others. Their family grew to include six children, nine grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. Shirley's calendar was a patchwork of football, basketball, baseball and softball games, track and swim meets, theater, choir, band and orchestra concerts all stitched together by endless miles and unwavering support as she followed the pursuits of her family.

Service wasn't just something Shirley did, it was woven into the fabric of her life. She gave generously of her time and spirit, touching countless lives through organizations that embodied her sense of purpose and personal devotion. Among her favorites were P.E.O. International, North Star Therapy Animals of Pet Partners, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Meals on Wheels, and Scouting. Her dedication to community and care left a lasting impact.

Over the years, Shirley and Stewart shared their home with many beloved dogs. In the 1990s, they discovered their favorite breed, the Bichon Frise. Shirley's enthusiasm for the

breed led them into the world of dog shows, where their cherished Bichon, Marceau, competed at the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show at Madison Square Garden, in New York City. A proud moment. In her later years, the last of their nine Bichons, Brady, was a loving companion and constant comfort.

In addition to her love of golf, Shirley was an avid fan of both college, NBA, and WNBA basketball, cheering on her Golden State Warriors and Indiana Fever, and she absolutely loved March Madness. Sports brought her a special connection with her sister Gwen and nephew Bob, making game days especially memorable.

Shirley's family extends heartfelt gratitude to her extraordinary caregivers: Debb Valenty, the staff of Elysian Senior Homes of Northfield, Minnesota Hospice, Millstream Commons, and all who provided love, care, and support over the past few years. Shirley's life was a beautiful blend of family, faith, friendship, and service. She will be deeply missed.

She is survived by her husband, Stewart Shaft; their 5 children: Michael (Lonnie) Shaft, Marc (Pam) Shaft, Scot (Susan) Shaft, Stewart Shaft, Jr., and Shari (Bart) Sneary. She is lovingly remembered by Tina Abraham, a soul Shirley loved as a daughter. Shirley's spirit lives on through her nine grandchildren: Miranda Shaft, Madison (Justin) Hope, Natalie (Branden) Schorr, Lauren (Michael) Scholl, Grant (Erica) Shaft, Garrett (Emily) Shaft, Katelin Shaft, Elijah Sneary, Parker Sneary, five great-grandchildren: Link Hope, Dean and Claire Shaft, and

Bennett and Theodore Shaft. Fondly remembering her are brother-in-law, Frank Theisen, and sister-in-law, Carroll Springmeyer. She is also survived by nieces and nephews, Bob (Regina) Theisen, Deb (Keith Bengtson) Theisen, Dianne (Patrick Pedersen) Pacolt, Steven Pacolt, Stanley (Gail) Pacolt, and Victoria and Patricia Owusu, who were loved as grandchildren.

Shirley is preceded in death by her parents, sister Gwendolyn Theisen, and her son Martin Shaft.

Shirley loved to throw a party and long expressed her desire that one be held after she passed. In honoring her wishes, a come-and-go Celebration Gathering will be held on Saturday, December 20th, from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 418 Sumner St E, Northfield, Minnesota. This will be a time of food, fun, and fellowship!

Those wishing to honor Shirley may consider a gift to one of the following organizations that held special meaning for her:

Chapter FR, MN Scholarship Fund (P.E.O. International)

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• By mail:
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Des Moines, IA 50312

*Checks payable to Chapter FR, MN Scholarship Fund

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Northfield, Minnesota

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Memories of Christmas Past

(continued from page 1)

Anne hated the stuffing, and her mom would ask her to take the bowl of dressing from the cooked goose to the table and she would cry that she didn't want to eat any of it. Her grandma would stay with them over the Holidays and make steamed pudding. Anne didn't like that either.

They all shared the toys they received. One year her brothers received a set of blocks which resembled buildings and they would all arrange them on the living room floor, setting up a miniature village to play with for hours at a time.

As the family grew her mother talked their dad into buying a small farm in the country so the kids would have room to play. They moved to a forty-acre place in the country and had a cow to milk, a pig to raise and chickens to take care of. The farm had a pond to skate on and a hill to toboggan down. Her dad owned a gas station and a bait shop and she remembers going to the river with him as a young child and helping to net minnows for the customers.

Carole grew up with three sisters in the city and recalls her father would get a tree to decorate a couple weeks before Christmas. They would flock the tree and decorate it with balls, lights and strings of popcorn. After Christmas he would set it outside for the birds to eat for the winter. Carole and her sisters would find the wrapped presents when the parents were not home and open them carefully to snoop at what they were getting. Then re-wrap the packages and act very surprised on Christmas morning when the parents gave them each their gifts.

The Christmas meal was oyster stew and chili. She remembers so much food it was unreal. Her favorite was the milk from the oyster soup. Another favorite was lefse with butter, brown sugar and cinnamon sugar.

One year when Carole was ten years old, she had her eye on a guitar in the Used-A-Bit store in town. She looked longingly at it every day when she walked by and was so disappointed one day to see it was gone. Much to her surprise, her parents had purchased it for her and presented it on Christmas morning.

Shirley grew up outside Claremont on a small farm with three brothers and four sisters. Her childhood was lots of fun and she had a great dad who worked very hard. He would cut blocks of ice and sell them for people with ice boxes for keeping their food cool. Folks would come to buy ice at fifteen cents a block and her dad would give the kids change to run into town to buy candy.

One Christmas Eve her dad went to town and bought lots of nuts. The family would sit

around until late in the night cracking and eating nuts. Christmas morning they would open presents with often included homemade dresses from her mom. One year she received a great big life size doll. Another year the present was a tricycle she had to share with her sisters. When she was twelve, they all received a bicycle which they shared as well.

Dan was raised in a big family of three boys and four girls on the east side of St. Paul. His dad loved Christmas and always made it a big celebration. They had lots of relatives who would come to spend the day at their house. His mom would cook a turkey or a large ham and all the relatives brought side dishes, desserts, snacks and candies. Someone always brought a fruit cake and it seemed that would last until April. He looked forward to Christmas as soon as Thanksgiving was over.

His parents would hide the presents in a locked room until Christmas eve. They would send the kids down to the basement where they waited while hearing people come and go with boots thumping across the floor upstairs. Finally, they were called upstairs where presents were waiting for them. The presents were mostly toys and some clothes. The older boys got tools and one year the best gift was an electric train and tracks. He had one cheap uncle who would always give him a tie. The kids would make presents for their parents at school. He remembers his mom and dad always seemed happy to open them. The evening slipped by fast and then they were sent off to bed to await Christmas Day.

It was during the depression and WWII years and they didn't go many places because

gas was rationed. The street car was the main mode of transportation. He would ride the street car about a mile to school each day. His older sister dropped out of school and got a job as a housekeeper on the other side of town. Marty, one of his older relatives went to college and ended up playing for a pro football team in St. Louis. He was considered quite a celebrity in the family. They lived by Hillcrest Golf Club and the boys would caddy for money. He only knew one uncle who was wealthy enough to play the 18 hole golf course. His dad worked for the Pioneer Press Dispatch and they printed two papers daily, one morning issue and one evening issue. Dan was hired on as an engraver after finishing with school. In the early days they had one color picture per issue.



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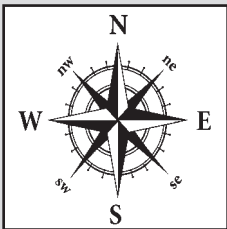
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Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes Christmas



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.

Christmas has always been a favorite time of year for me. The holiday spirit was happy and joyous. Everyone seemed to be of good cheer. I recall walking from store to store on Main Street as a kid and there was music playing everywhere. And the decorations were so festive. Everyone had an expectation of good things. My parents were practical and we had the same small artificial tree every year. It sat on top of round cabinet in the living room with the presents stacked around the bottom. They were green before it was the "in" thing to do.

I used to look through the "wish books" as a kid. They were magical. In the fall we would

get the Christmas catalogues from Sears & Roebuck, Montgomery Wards and J.C. Penney. My sister and I compiled a list for our parents with hopes everything would make the cut. I remember spending hours looking but I cannot recall getting anything we had listed on our want list. I actually can't remember a single gift I received.

As I became older, I lost the excitement of getting something. When you reach to a certain age, you simply buy the things you want and usually don't much care for the things others give you. You have to act thankful for something you know you will never use. We all know what that is like.

In our family growing up we would get each person in the family one gift. That meant I would buy for seven people. I put a lot of thought into what I was going to get each one. I was certain they would love it more than anything else they received. I can still remember those gifts I purchased. One year I bought my older sister a Carpenter's record. It was the "Close to You" album. My sister was five years older than me and so cool. She got tickets to go to see the Carpenters at the Mayo Civic and when her college friend cancelled out, she took me instead. So, I knew that was the perfect gift and she would be thrilled. The last year I lived at home I bought my little brother Aaron a battery powered robot with a voice. The body of the robot was inflatable so we blew it up and pointed it at our cat, Buffy. It said, "I am Marzon" and lumbered toward the cat. Buffy was a monster slayer and took one swipe and Marzon deflated on the spot. Shortest life for a present



ever.

My mother was also special and I wanted to get her something she would really appreciate. When I look back, I realize that a 12 year-old boy has no clue what to get, but I was on a mission. I had searched all the catalogues and came across the perfect thing in my mind. It was a jewelry box that played a tune when opened. And this was not just any music box. It was a Swiss Chalet. There was a water wheel on the side that one would turn to wind the mechanism. They when the roof was lifted where your treasures were kept it would play "Edelweiss". I would give my mom the cash for my purchase and she would write a check out to the mail order company. I quickly wrapped it the day it arrived. I could barely contain myself waiting for her to open

it. I do not remember my mother's reaction to opening her gift that Christmas. My mother was a diplomat. She had six kids and tried to treat each one evenly. I remember she used to say, "I love all my kids". I couldn't understand that, I mean I grew up with the rest of them.

Looking back, I realize why I can remember the gifts I gave and not the ones I received. The whole spirit of Christmas is giving. It is better to give than to receive. That is even a Bible verse. Acts 20:35 remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive".

I like being an adult. We do not give gifts to each other anymore. If you truly want to do something for someone you love, why wait until an arbitrary date? Just do it now.

A Minnesotan: The Christmas Bat



By RosaLin Alcoser

I absolutely love Christmas decorations and the whole process of decorating for Christmas. Now that I am grown I have my own home to decorate and my own decorations. But there are times when I think back to how my parents house was decorated for Christmas when I was a little kid.

Back when I was a child in the early 2000s a large number of my mom's best friend's, who would always spend at least part of Christmas with us, Christmas decorations made their way into our house. From the Nativity, that still goes up every year, to the mechanical Stantas that used to scare me as a child.

Things from her house just kept turning up at our house; usually the things there were the more kids geared decorations. Including the light up moose that was meant to stand out in the yard. It was only out in our yard one year and did not work very well while it was out there. His head was supposed to move. Except he got broken while being put up that year. We all still maintain that my dad and grandpa broke the moose on purpose.

The Christmas decoration that still stands out to me to this day is the one that never made it to our house. And that would be the Christmas Bat.

One year when I was about six or seven mom's best friend's son, the same one who didn't pay attention to where he hid the six dozen Easter eggs, very excitedly pulled out his favorite childhood Christmas decoration. It was a light up Halloween bat that went in the window. That was flashed to look like it was flying when turned on.

I've been told that the Christmas bat was originally a Halloween bat that just never got put up until way after Christmas. However, when he was a child and asked about it he was told it was still up because it was a Christmas bat. Which led it to becoming the Christmas bat.

While I do know that the Christmas bat did not get put up that year or any other in my memory. I do clearly remember him pulling it out and telling us about how it was a Christmas decoration.



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Farm Girl Chatter The Heart of Agriculture

By McKell Lemmerman

Agriculture isn't easy. It's not just a job — it's a way of life. And it's one of the hardest, most humbling, and most rewarding paths a person can walk.

It's early mornings that begin before the sun even peeks over the horizon — when the rest of the world is still asleep, and you're already knee-deep in work. It's long days that stretch into night, when you collapse into bed with sore muscles and dirt still under your fingernails. It's the kind of tired that runs deeper than your bones — but so does the satisfaction that comes with it.

It's planting with faith, not certainty — putting seeds in the ground and trusting that God will send the rain, the sun, and the right conditions for life to grow. It's watching the weather like your livelihood depends on it — because it does. It's knowing that no matter how hard you work, there are some things you can't control — and choosing to keep going anyway.

But agriculture isn't just rows of corn or fields of hay. It's also the heartbeat of the barn. It's livestock — cattle, horses, pigs, sheep, goats, chickens — animals that rely on you for everything. It's feeding them before you feed yourself. It's bottle calves in the kitchen and heat lamps in the garage. It's standing in freezing wind to pull a calf that wouldn't come on its own, and laying in the dirt beside a sick animal, doing everything you can to give it a chance to live.

It's the quiet trust in a good horse, the soft nudge of a cow who knows you mean well, the flurry of feeding time, and the stillness of the barn at night when everything has finally settled. It's life and death, heartbreak and hope — sometimes all in the same day.

Most people will never understand the weight of this life. They won't know what it feels like to raise something from nothing — to pour your blood, sweat, tears, and prayers into the land and your livestock, and then do it all again tomorrow. They won't see the hard

choices, the long hours, or the sacrifices made behind the scenes. They don't see the birthday parties you miss, the vacations you postpone, or the holidays spent hauling hay or helping a heifer in labor.

But you do — because you were called to this life.

Not everyone gets to live it. And truthfully, not everyone could. It takes a special kind of person to farm and ranch — to care so deeply, work so hard, and live so selflessly. It takes strength. Grit. Patience. Wisdom. And a whole lot of faith. It means trusting God not just with your future, but with every single day.

You get to live a life connected to creation in a way most people never will. You get to witness miracles — new life being born, fields turning green, rain falling on dry ground. You get to see the beauty in hard work, the sacred in the ordinary, and the hand of God in every sunrise.

So be thankful — every single day. Not because it's easy, but because it's real. It's honest. It's good.

In the world of agriculture, nothing ever stays the same for long. Prices rise and fall. Weather patterns shift. Costs fluctuate. Markets for corn, soybeans, wheat, hay, and livestock can change overnight — driven by global events far beyond the fencerow. One year brings record yields; the next, drought or flood. Still, through all of it, farmers keep going.

They plant in the spring not with certainty, but with hope. They work the ground knowing full well that conditions may not cooperate — yet they press forward anyway. From dawn to dusk, and often beyond, their hands work the land while their minds navigate a thousand unseen variables: crop futures, feed prices, machinery breakdowns, trade news, and the forecast that never quite holds.

What sets farmers apart isn't just their ability to endure — it's their willingness to do so again and again, season after season.

While others may measure their days in meetings and minutes, farmers measure in seasons and yields. Their work is physical, yes — but it's also deeply mental and emotional. It's a life built on resilience, on lessons passed down through generations, and on a profound connection to land and livestock.

Technology has changed. Equipment has advanced. Markets have gone global. But the heartbeat of the farm — the people — remains the same: gritty, grounded, tireless.

To the outside world, a dip in soybean



prices may be just a headline. A spike in fertilizer costs may be just a graph. But to a farmer, those numbers mean something real — a decision to replant or not, a loan to carry forward or not, a hope for profit, or just enough to keep going one more year.

And still, they rise before the sun. They walk the rows. They fix what's broken, make do with what they have, and carry the weight of generations on their shoulders.

Because for most farmers, it isn't just business — it's legacy. They keep going not because it's easy, but because it matters: to their families, their communities, and to a world that depends on them, often without realizing

it. In a world of fluctuation and uncertainty, the farmer remains a steady presence — a constant. A quiet, powerful force that feeds not just our bodies, but our sense of what it means to endure — and to do so with purpose.

So, when you're exhausted, when the bills stack up, when the weather won't cooperate or the herd has had a rough week — remember this:

God didn't choose just anyone for this life. He chose you.

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Erosion Control Structures: *Which is the right fit?*



By Emmie Scheffler,
Rice SWCD

Driving by farm fields, sometimes you will see a waterway or terrace breaking up the field. These structures are put into place to help stop soil from leaving the farm field. But how is it decided what kind of structure is put in? Do they just flip a coin or does the landowner decide if one looks prettier than the other on the landscape? There is science behind which type of structure is selected for a site.

When projects are being completed by the Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) or the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), there is a process to deciding on the type of structure that should be designed for a site. To begin, an elevation survey of the site is completed by staff. This survey is either done in topo style or points based off the rows and distances that help capture the topography of the land the structure will be going on. Staff then need to determine the hydrology of the site. The watershed (how many acres of water flow to one point) is calculated along with how long it takes for the water to flow from the furthest point of the watershed. The slope of the watershed also figures into the calculation. Another factor that affects the design is the land use. Some land uses soak in more water and it takes the water longer to reach the point of the structure, as compared to other surfaces like roads, where the water directly runs off.

The two main structures in Rice County that are found in farm fields are Waterways and Water and Sediment Control Basins (WASCOBS). Staff will use the results from the survey and hydrology to then design a structure. WASCOBS needs grade along the channel of the structure to be able to "tie" into hills to hold the water back and force the water underground into tile which then flows to a stable outlet. These structures need to be able to have that water drain into the tile line by 24 hours to prevent crop damage. These structures are used for smaller watersheds where there is adequate topography. Waterways do not need to tie into hills and since they are not holding back water but instead



On the left: a water and sediment control basin. On the right: a grassed waterway. Each practice is designed depending on the survey and hydrology of the site.

controlling the flow, they can be used to handle larger watersheds or areas where there is a flatter topography on the landscape.

Other factors that are taken into consideration when designing an erosion control structure is the outlet and maintenance. The structure cannot outlet somewhere that it will cause further erosion downstream, or there is not enough cover for the tile to be able to outlet. Maintenance is also important during design. These structures are put in place to last ten years or more and adequate maintenance helps ensure that will happen. If a landowner cannot get out to mow a waterway yearly, the site may not be a fit for a waterway.

Staff from the NRCS and SWCD office must design for a standard, however landowners can put structures in without our

financial assistance. Staff are willing to meet with landowners and talk options for structures that may work for their site that they can build on their own. To start the conversation about implementing erosion control structures, contact our office at 507-332-5408.

Emmie Scheffler is a District Technician with the Rice Soil & Water Conservation District and is the Plan Administrator for the Cannon River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. She also assists landowners and farmers with the implementation of soil erosion control practices and tree windbreaks. Contact Emmie with your questions at 507-332-5408.



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SEMAC Announces January 19 Grant Deadline for Individual Artists and Culture Bearers

SEMAC is inviting individual artists and culture bearers in their 11-county region to apply for SEMAC's Individual Artists and Culture Bearers Project Support grant by the January 19, 2026 deadline. These grants provide funding ranging from \$2,000 to \$6,000 to encourage artists to take the next step in their creative pursuits.

The SEMAC Individual Artists and Culture Bearers Project Support grant provides financial support for artists to experiment, take on a challenge, or deepen their practice. Individuals creating new work in all disciplines are encouraged to apply, including painting, photography, printmaking, textiles, music, dance, theater, performance, storytelling, literary arts, intermedia arts, and traditional arts.

There are two categories: Emerging (\$2,000 to \$4,000) and Advancing (\$3,000 to \$6,000). To be eligible for Advancing, applicants must demonstrate regional or national recognition

for their previous work. All grant proposals must support the creation of new work and include an opportunity for public engagement, such as an exhibition, performance, reading, or other in-person activity that meaningfully engages the general public.

The application opened on December 15 with a deadline of January 19, 2026 at 11:59p, with the earliest project start date of April 18, 2026. Recent grantees must wait one year before reapplying. For complete eligibility requirements and application instructions, visit semac.org/grant-programs/.

SEMAC serves Region 10, which includes Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Winona Counties, including the Prairie Island Indian Community.

SEMAC's activities are made possible by the voters of Minnesota through grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

For more information, visit semac.org or contact the office at 507-281-4848.

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Time to Make a Resolution?

(continued from page 1)

I wonder how these statistics are gleaned? And how do they know how many people actually do keep those promises?

I think New Year's resolutions can be described as personal goals made at the start of a new year for self improvement. Focusing on things like health, finances, relationships or learning new skills, many fail due to being too ambitious, or lacking in a plan as to how to achieve the goal. But I do believe that the goals we create can be accomplished with dedication to the end result. Small steps, regular reviews, and a focus of building a new habit can go a long way toward making those dreams come true!

Since it is time to start thinking about what your resolution may entail, I will give you a few ideas of how to focus on that end result.

If your plan is Health & Wellness, some things to incorporate into your new year are exercise appropriate to your age and skill level, balanced diet, better sleep, being mindful, and managing stress through relaxation, meditation, or just taking time to "watch the river flow".

How about increasing your financial picture? Making a budget and sticking to it, saving money with intention, and focusing on paying off outstanding debt will be small steps with a big reward.

And relationships? We all know no matter what kind of relationship we are talking about, improving clear communication is key. Also, building a good relationship takes spending quality time with those you want to become closer to.

Personal growth can be accomplished by learning new skills that interest you, exploring new places, reading more, and new hobbies.

So, be specific, realistic, and start small. Write down your goal so you are reminded of what you are doing, and why. Build your new habits into a daily routine to incorporate them into every day. Remember to take time to review your progress and be flexible with yourself so you are not discouraged. And maybe the most important one, share your goals out loud with friends and family to make you accountable!

So, I am wishing you a Happy New Year! May your resolutions be realistic, and your dreams come through!

Merry. Bright. Just Right.

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That's the Latest Roadkill Report



By Emery Kleven

Emery is now a retired farm broadcaster after starting at KDHL in Faribault in 1987. You can view past columns at his website RoadFarming.com. You can email him at emery@roadfarming.com.

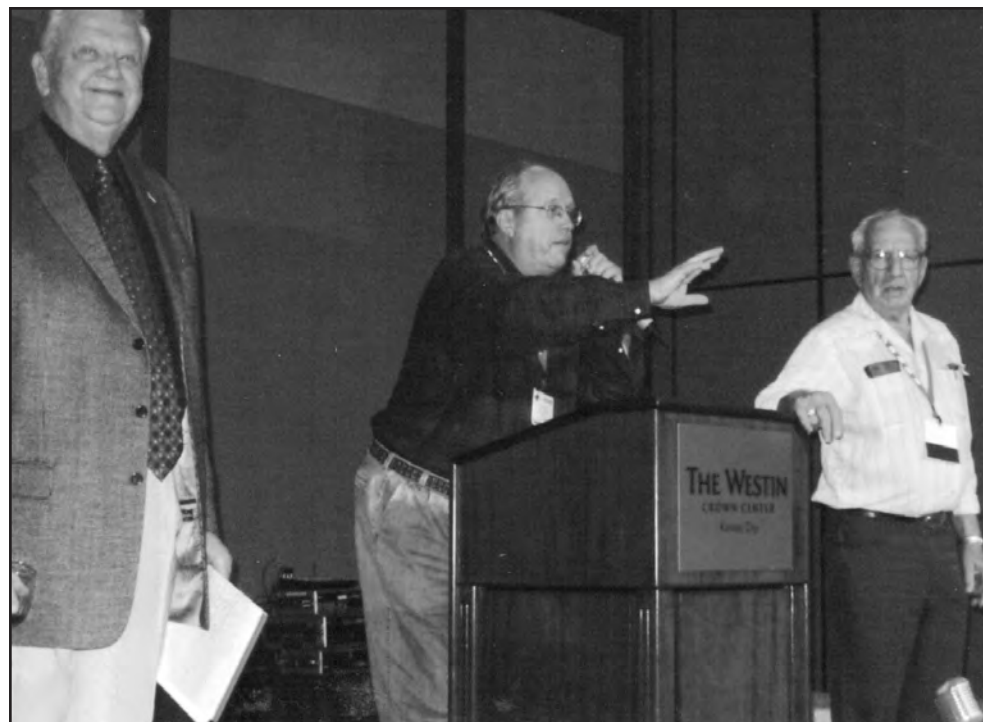
I was driving down a couple of county roads the other day when, in the first few miles, I saw a couple of dead raccoons. A little later on I spotted one on the side of the road, a deer that had met its demise. It reminded me of my fellow farm broadcaster friend, Cliff Mitchell.

Cliff, who passed away in 2017, was the voice of KASM Radio in Albany, MN for over 50 years. He was also an auctioneer.

I would see Cliff every October in Madison, WI at the World Dairy Expo. Many of the farm broadcasters would do our reports and interviews in the media room. We would all wait for Cliff, when he was on the air, to give the roadkill report on his drive from Albany to Madison, which was about a 350 mile trip. His report would go something like this: The KASM Roadkill Report on my trip to World Dairy Expo included 5 raccoons, 3 deer, one goose, one woodchuck and 3 unidentified. Now the unidentified meant that the animal that got struck by a vehicle was so flattened out and was nothing but a flat furry blood spot along the road. And driving by it at 60mph, it was impossible to identify, thus the name.

Cliff was well known for this report as he would give it on any trip he took. If his trip did not include broadcasting, which was rare, he would give the report the next day in the studio. His reports were much anticipated at our annual Farm Broadcasters meeting in Kansas City every November. The counts of roadkill were always higher as Cliff drove about 525 miles to get there. He'd have another report after he drove back home.

Cliff had us all believing that he was the youngest of 19 children and the only boy in



In this 2005 picture on the far right is Cliff Mitchell, KASM radio who was helping with a farm broadcasting benefit auction in Kansas City. On the far left is Orion Samuelson, emcee for the event. In the middle is Col Jon Phillips, farm broadcast partner of Emery for many years in Iowa and Nebraska.

the family. He had his bosses at KASM believing that too. He needed some days off and when one of his two sisters, not 18, passed away, he made up the story and he received a number of paid days off. Now it was true that he was the only boy in the family but beyond that, well let's just say it was a bit of a stretch. He always made sure that there was not much going on at the station when one of his fictitious sisters died. Many of us farm broadcasters expected to read a long list of sisters in his obit when he passed away but there were only two. Now his bosses I'm sure finally figured it out after the 10th or 11th sister's funeral but they always gave him the time off. They couldn't fire him; he was an institution and a Hall of Fame Farm Broadcaster.

Speaking of World Dairy Expo, Cliff and a few other broadcasters would help me with my top 5 or top 10 lists. One top 5 list that I happened to find in a folder the other day amongst my radio memorabilia was the top 5 things you can say at World Dairy Expo and not get slapped. As I recall, I think 4 of these came from Cliff in not all 5. So here it is, the Top Five Things You Can Say at World Dairy Expo and not get Slapped. #5. Look at the body on that one. #4. Yeah, but look at her rear end. #3. Boy, is she set firm and high. #2. Look at that fat heifer! And #1. What a Cow!!

In the same folder of memorabilia was a list that I believe Cliff and a couple others helped

me write as well. Top 10 Agricultural Adages that you can use 'Til the Cows come home! #10. Knee high by the 4th of July. #9. Sweat like a pig. #8. Were you born in a barn? #7. When pigs fly. #6. In a coon's age. #5. Since Hector was a pup. #4. You can lead a horse to water. #3. Running around like a chicken with my head cut off. #2. Stubborn as a mule. #1. Ain't worth a hill of beans!

I came about writing these because, first, David Letterman did them and secondly, I worked with a guy in Sioux City radio that would come up with top 5 lists that were based on local events and I thought I can do this with an agriculture theme to them. I have one more...for now. There's more where these came from.

There was a story several years ago now that North Carolina had the most outhouses of any state, possibly numbered around 200,000. State officials were concerned about environmental factors and wanted to eliminate as many as possible. So with that, the top 5 reasons North Carolina has the most outhouses in the country. #5. They have the most Sears catalogs of any state, so it stands to reason. #4. They double as a spare bedroom for visiting relatives or farm broadcasters. #3. They don't all 'smoke' that tobacco, so they need a place to spit. #2. With another election year, state officials said they needed all the crapholes they could find! And the #1 reason NC has so many outhouses...Two Words...Hurricane Bunkers

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Not Only Serving, But Seeing Our Neighbors



By Benya Kraus, president & CEO
Southern Minnesota Initiative

This holiday season, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) has teamed up with the McKnight Foundation to distribute \$100,000 in rapid response "Good Neighbor" grants to support immediate needs like heat assistance, food and other essential supplies. We are doing this through a group of small town Community Foundations and our region's two community action agencies, knowing that it often takes a neighborly connection to understand what a family may be going through and to get them the support they need.

As such, I've been reflecting on how neighborliness is not only the critical ingredient to effective service, but also the antidote to forces that seek to divide us.

Four decades ago, a locally fundraised Waseca Rotary scholarship sent my farm boy father overseas to study tropical medicine so he could treat those infected by leprosy, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS along the Thai-Cambodia refugee border. Those refugees were escaping the violence of the Khmer Rouge at the height of the Vietnam War, and my dad boarded his first international flight in his twenties to serve with Catholic Relief Services. Nearly fifty years later, I buy my Thai groceries from a store in Albert Lea, owned by one of the refugees who lived in the same camp where my father worked. She now runs the nearest Asian grocery store to me for miles. It's where I get the curry paste I need to invite my next-door neighbors in Harmony over for their first homecooked Thai dinner. Around that table, we learn the details of each other's lives — the quirks and stories that defy stereotypes of "Young, Asian Woman" or "Rural, White Schoolteacher."

Neighborliness made that possible. Neighbors invested in my father's dream to live out his faith through service. His service gave me a neighbor who found new life in America — and a chance to feed and know my own next-door neighbors. Those same neighbors now snow blow our driveway and watch over our house when we're gone.

When we are neighborly, the world opens up. We see big issues through the lens of human lives, and our understanding becomes richer and more complex. This deepened un-

derstanding makes us attentive to the specific needs of those around us — and what we can do to serve.

That attentiveness matters now more than ever. Across the country, headlines seek to use the criminal acts of a few to paint a sweeping, negative narrative about immigrants as a whole — most recently our Somali population — fostering fear in communities that have long been part of our shared life, including here in southern Minnesota. These neighbors own businesses, start child care centers, teach our children and volunteer in ways that strengthen our towns. They are not statistics or stereotypes; they are people whose hopes and contributions make southern Minnesota vibrant. And yet, despite the fact that 95% of Somali people in Minnesota are US citizens, today's national tone and ethnically targeted deployment of federal immigration raids cause many of our Somali neighbors to wonder whether they truly belong here.

At a time when we might feel influenced into "either/or" camps, let's lean into our rural sensibility: practical, relational and rooted in care. Immigration reform may not be within SMIF's purview, but fostering neighborliness is.

A group of us at SMIF went to a local Somali restaurant in Owatonna and were pleased to see tables full of community members across racial identities enjoying saffron rice and the world's best beef sambusas. As we enjoyed our meal, the owner — a man who grew up in the refugee camps of Kenya and resettled to America as a teenager — warmly greeted each person who entered, running between

the Somali grocery store next door, after school youth and adult learning center and co-located business space he runs in what were previously vacant, old buildings in downtown Owatonna. When I ask him what keeps him going, his eyes twinkle with gratitude: "The people of southern Minnesota welcomed me when I had no money, little education, but a dream for a better life. It's my responsibility to pay that kindness forward."

His story reminds me that being neighborly has a rippling effect. Neighborliness calls us to cut through stereotypes and choose to see the individual in the fullness of who they are — not what national narratives tell us to believe.

For when we are fully seen by those around us, we, too, can fully give of ourselves to the fabric and wellbeing of our communities. To our Somali and other immigrant neighbors, please know we see you and the many ways you contribute to our shared home. To all of us as southern Minnesotans, this holiday season may we give the gift of not only serving our neighbor — but also seeing our neighbor. It's the simplest gift — and the one that keeps on multiplying.

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

About Benya Kraus

Benya Kraus is the President & CEO of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. Benya is the co-founder of Lead for America and served as the Network Advancement Director at Resource Rural.

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More Egg Stuff + Cold and Flu Season



By Shauna Burslem, D.C.

For years, eggs were painted as “cholesterol bombs,” but newer research shows that dietary cholesterol from eggs has little effect on blood cholesterol for most people. In the right dietary context, eggs can actually support healthier cholesterol profiles and heart health. The key is differentiating cholesterol from saturated fat: they don’t behave the same in the body, and food context matters.

A recent American Journal of Clinical Nutrition study tested three diets varying cholesterol and saturated fat. Participants following

a high-cholesterol, low-saturated fat plan that included two eggs per day lowered their LDL cholesterol over five weeks, while groups eating higher saturated fat saw LDL rise. The takeaway: cholesterol from eggs didn’t raise LDL; saturated fat did.

Mechanistically, saturated fat impairs the liver’s ability to clear LDL efficiently, increasing circulating LDL. Eggs provide cholesterol without burdening the system with saturated fat, allowing normal LDL clearance and helping prevent artery buildup. It’s not the eggs at breakfast that pose the problem—it’s typically the bacon and sausage alongside them.

Observational data echo these findings in older adults: weekly egg intake was associated with a 29% reduction in heart disease deaths and a 17% reduction in all-cause mortality. Moderation appears to be protective, aligning with the idea that eggs can fit into a cardiometabolic-friendly diet when the rest of the plate is thoughtful.

To maximize benefits, choose pastured eggs, avoid cooking with high-omega-6 vegetable oils, and pair eggs with nutrient-dense whole foods like greens and avocados. This keeps saturated fat and linoleic acid in check while leveraging eggs’ nutrients—supporting heart health and overturning outdated guidance that unfairly cracked the humble egg.

As many of you know, I am a passionate advocate for optimizing your vitamin D levels. The best way to do this is through sensible sun exposure, but as we get into fall, that becomes much trickier. The days get shorter, and the sun sits lower in the sky, meaning we get less of the essential UVB radiation



needed to produce vitamin D in our skin. This is especially true for those of us living in northern states, where the change in seasons significantly reduces our ability to make enough of this crucial vitamin.

When sunlight isn’t enough, we must turn to our diet. I always tell my patients to look for foods rich in vitamin D to bridge the gap. Some of the best sources are fatty fish like wild-caught salmon, which can have between 383 to 570 IU per serving, and rainbow trout, which offers around 645 IU. You can also find it in herring, tilapia, and fortified dairy products like plain yogurt or kefir, which typically provide around 100 to 116 IU per cup.

Supplementation is another key strategy, but it’s important to do it right. I always advise starting with a 25-hydroxy vitamin D test to know your baseline. The goal is to reach a blood level between 60 and 80 ng/mL, which is where the real protective benefits are seen. When choosing a supplement, go for vitamin D3, which comes from animal sources and is much more effective than the plant-based D2. Since D3 is fat-soluble, be sure to take it with a meal containing healthy fats like grass-fed butter or egg yolks to ensure your body can absorb it properly.

Chiropractic care during cold and flu season: The spine and nervous system are at the very core of how our bodies manage health, and their communication pathways have a direct influence on immune system function. When spinal joints lose their mobility or become misaligned—what chiropractors refer to as vertebral subluxation—this communi-

cation gets disrupted. Left unchecked, these interruptions can throw the autonomic nervous system off balance, impacting not only stress responses but also the body’s capacity to mount a strong immune defense. Chiropractic adjustments directly address these spinal issues, working to restore that critical nervous system connection so your body can handle stress more effectively and maintain resilience against illness. From what I’ve witnessed in my own practice, and what’s being shown in studies over the years, chiropractic care produces positive changes in immune markers. Adjustments have been linked with increases in protective immune cells and antibodies such as cytokines and salivary IgA—key players in how your body fights off threats. There’s also solid evidence showing that chiropractic care can lower stress hormones, which otherwise suppress healthy immune activity. Instead of a passive approach to health, chiropractic offers a proactive and hands-on way to support and even strengthen your immune system.

Making chiropractic care part of your personal wellness routine just makes sense if you want to optimize your body’s ability to stay well. Of course, habits like regular movement, getting enough sleep, good hydration, and even workstation ergonomics matter too. But if you truly want to give your immune system that extra edge, chiropractic should be at the top of your list.

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

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Left to right: Steve King, Jeff Amy, Tige Walker



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Alzheimer's



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist

In the early 1900s, Dr. Alois Alzheimer performed an autopsy on the body of a patient who had died after symptoms of dementia. In his investigation, he observed formations in the brain tissue that have become known as "amyloid plaques," and the condition received his name. This plaque buildup has been the focus of research and proposed medications

for decades. In more recent years, the urgency to understand this disease has become more obvious as a 2023 article in the Alzheimer's and Dementia Journal reported a 145% increase in deaths from Alzheimer's between 2000 and 2019. Although billions of dollars have been applied in researching medications to stop or reverse the progress of Alzheimer's, a medical solution has not been found.

In 2017, Dr. Dale Bredesen, published "The End of Alzheimer's," which has become a New York Times Bestseller, and Dr. David Perlmutter describes as "a monumental work." Dr. Bredesen not only describes the discovery of the cause of Alzheimer's, but also presents the solution, which his team has effectively used to help hundreds of clients stop the progress of Alzheimer's and in many cases reverse the symptoms.

Dr. Bredesen describes the discovery of the amyloid precursor protein as the key to understanding the progress of cognitive decline. Every human being produces amyloid precursor proteins in various cells of the body including brain cells. How your body

processes these precursor proteins determines whether amyloid plaques develop or not. Dr. Bredesen presents four primary causes for amyloid plaques to develop: 1) Inflammation, 2) Glucose toxicity, 3) Nutrient deficiency, and 4) Environmental toxicity. When one or more of these causes become predominant in your body, then amyloid plaques will begin to build up. When you make a priority to remove these causes from your body, the brain can return to clarity and health.

In other words, Alzheimer's disease can be described as a metabolic disorder, which can be addressed with dietary changes and nutrition. Inflammation can be addressed with whole food sources and healthy oils. Glucose toxicity, often associated with diabetes, can be reversed by consuming foods that have a low glycemic index. Nutrient deficiencies can be identified with proper blood tests and whole food choices, and environmental toxins can be removed from your

body through guided detoxification protocols. Dr. Bredesen presents testimonials from clients who have followed these steps to return to active lifestyles.

Adding quality fats, fermented foods, fresh vegetables and fruits, and removing quick, processed foods from your lifestyle can make a significant difference in your brain activity.

According to the Brain Health and Alzheimer's Prevention Program at Loma Linda University over ninety percent of Alzheimer's cases can be prevented with simple changes in diet and lifestyle. Contact me to discuss your health goals for the coming year. Nutrition is designed for healing. I can help you reach greater health freedom in 2026.

Contact me at nutritionproportion@gmail.com, or check out my website at www.nutritionproportion.net

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



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The Savvy Senior How to Make a Home Safer and More Accessible as You Age



By Jim Miller

Dear Savvy Senior,

What simple tips can you recommend for making a home age friendly? My husband and I are in our late-sixties and want to remain living in our home for as long as possible.

—Home Body Hanna

Dear Hanna,

Many older adults, like you and your husband, want to stay living in their own home for as long as possible. But being able to do so

will depend on how easy it is to maneuver your living space as you get older.

There are literally dozens of simple adjustments and modifications you can do to help make your home safer and more accessible for aging-in-place. Here's a summary of tips from the National Institute on Aging and AARP, which offers a free room-by-room guide with practical suggestions for older adults living independently.

ENTRANCE WAY:

Have at least one exterior doorway with step-free access. If not possible, consider a ramp.

Add a bench in the foyer to sit on when removing shoes or to set down items while locking or unlocking the door.

BATHROOM:

Install a walk-in shower with a bench and nonskid decals or mats to prevent falls.

Add a hand-held nozzle to the shower head to facilitate rinsing off while seated.

Install grab bars on the shower wall and near the toilet

Put in a taller toilet or add a toiler riser.

Consider plugging in a nightlight.

BEDROOM:

If stairs are too difficult to manage, create a bedroom on the main level by transforming a den or an office.

Make sure the bed is easy to get in and out of. Purchase bed risers, if needed.

Invest in an adjustable bed for extra comfort.

KITCHEN:

Purchase a stove with safety features that



alert the resident when a burner is on or have automatic shutoffs.

Relocate major appliances to make them easier to reach.

Add slide-out drawers or trays to existing cabinets for better access.

Install a lever-style, light-touch or sensor faucet, which is easier to use than a faucet with turn-style knobs or handles.

FURNITURE & RUGS:

Get rid of furniture and clutter to make rooms easier to move around in.

Use chairs with armrests, which makes sitting and standing easier.

Avoid furniture with sharp corners, which can cause bruises and cuts when bumped up against.

Hide cords out of pathways — but don't put them under rugs.

Area rugs, if used, should be secured to the floor with a nonslip mat or anti-slip rug tape.

For more tips, get a copy of AARP's "HomeFit Guide" which is a 36-page fully illustrated guide and has more than 100 aging-in-place tips and suggestions that can be made to an existing house or apartment or incorporated into designs for a new residence.

It explains how a smartly designed or modified home can meet the varied and changing needs of its older residents. It also features



easy-to-do, low-cost and no-cost fixes that lessen the risk of trip hazards and increase the safety of high-use areas like the bathroom, kitchen and stairway.

In addition, AARP also offer videos and a HomeFit AR app (available for iPhone and iPad) that can scan a room and suggest improvements to help turn your house into a "lifelong home," free from safety and mobility risks.

Visit AARP.org/HomeFit to order or download a free copy of this guide, or to watch their videos. You don't need to be an AARP member to access this content.

If you'd like more hands-on help, you could also hire an occupational or physical therapist that works with older adults. He or she can come in, evaluate your home and recommend aging-in-place solutions. And if you get a referral from your doctor, Medicare will usually cover a home walk-through.

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Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



Question: *At a 4-way stop, when 2 cars stop at exactly the same time, which one has the right of way? Is it the car on your left? It seems like no one knows what to do these days and everyone just sits there.*

Answer: That is a good question for a good topic. Right-of-way and yielding laws help traffic flow smoothly and safely. They are based on courtesy and common sense. Violating these laws is a leading cause of traffic crashes.

- Intersections without traffic lights or signals: When you reach an intersection at the same time as another driver, the driver on the left must yield to the one on the right.

- All-way stops or flashing red traffic lights: When you reach an intersection at the same time as another driver, the driver on the left must yield to the one on the right.

- Left turns: When you want to make a left turn, you must yield to vehicles approaching from the opposite direction that are in the intersection or close enough to pose a risk of a crash.

- Green arrow signal for left turn: When a green arrow signals that you are allowed to turn left, you must yield to other vehicles or pedestrians already in the intersection. After yielding, you may continue in the direction of the arrow.

- Uncontrolled "T" intersections: When you approach an uncontrolled "T" intersection, you must yield to all cross traffic if you are the one turning.

- Entering a public road from a private road or driveway: You must stop and yield to pedestrians and traffic.

- Transit and metro mobility buses: When driving in the right lane, you must yield to transit and metro mobility buses merging from a bus stop or shoulder. This includes yielding to any school bus trying to enter the lane from a shoulder, a right-turn lane, or other location where the school bus has stopped to load or unload passengers. The school bus must use the left turn signal to in-

dicade intent to move into the right-hand lane.

- Funeral processions: When a funeral procession identifies itself with headlights or hazard warning lights, you must yield to the entire procession.

- Pedestrians: You must yield to pedestrians crossing at intersections and crosswalks, whether marked or unmarked.

Question: *Can I get some clarification on stop signs. I always wonder where to stop. Is it at the stop sign or at the stop line I sometimes see on the road. Thank you.*

Answer: This is a good question that I do get fairly often. Here is what you need to know and do when it comes to stopping.

Stop signs:

- Come to a complete stop at stop signs.
- If there is a marked stop line, stop before the line.

- If there is a pedestrian crosswalk, stop before entering the crosswalk.

- Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians, bicyclists and traffic before proceeding.

Obstructed view: If your view of the intersection is obstructed, be prepared to stop again for traffic or pedestrians in your path.

You must also come to a complete stop:

- Before entering a road from an alley, private driveway, parking lot or parking ramp. Always stop before crossing a sidewalk or crosswalk.

- At an intersection or crosswalk with a traffic signal displaying a red light. Wait until the light turns green and your path is clear before proceeding.

- At any intersection or crosswalk, marked or unmarked, where a pedestrian or bicyclist is crossing the road. Stay stopped until they have passed your lane.

- At a flashing red traffic light. Treat it as you would a stop sign.

- At a freeway ramp meter when the light is red.

- At a railroad crossing with a stop sign.

- When a flag person or traffic device directs you to stop.

- At a bridge that has been raised to open a path for boats.

Question: *Hi. I have two grandsons, one 17 years old with a driver's license the other is 15 with a permit. They both have a bad habit of driving with one hand on the wheel. I stress how dangerous this is and both hands need to be on wheel all the time. I drive at the 9 and 3 position and try to have them do the same. Any suggestions?*

Answer: When it comes to driving try to keep at least 10 inches between yourself and the steering wheel. When it comes to hand placement, keep your hands at the 8 and 4 o'clock or 9 and 3 o'clock positions on the steering wheel. Avoid the 10 and 2 o'clock

position. Keep your thumbs turned out on the steering wheel.

Question: *I want to make sure my child is safe in the car, but I've heard that some car seats sold online are fake or don't meet U.S. safety standards. How can I tell if a car seat is unsafe?*

Answer: Good question. I reached out to the expert who is the Community Programs and Occupant Protection Manager for the Minnesota Safety Council and here is what I found out.

Fake, counterfeit, or non-compliant car seats can look real, feel sturdy, and even have labels—but they may break in a crash or miss critical safety features that keep children safe. Some of these car seats are being sold online and may even look like a real car seat, but they aren't made to save lives. If you look closely, some may say they were made for dolls or have labels in broken English like: "Never leave child unattended."

What to look for in a legitimate U.S. car seat:

- Safety labels written in English
- Chest clip as part of the 5-point harness
- Manufacturer name, model number, and weight/height limits
- Registration card and owner's manual
- Statement that it meets all U.S. federal safety standards (FMVSS)

Red flags for fake, counterfeit or non-compliant seats:

- No U.S. safety labels, or labels only in other languages
- Missing chest clip, registration card, or manual

- Unknown manufacturer

- Very low prices or sold by unknown online sellers (avoid buying car seats from third-party sellers)

Important note: Some car seats may be legitimate and crash-tested in other countries (like European models) but do not meet U.S. safety standards. For example, many European car seats do not have a chest clip, which is a required feature for U.S. seats. Even if these seats are safe elsewhere, they are not compliant for use in the U.S.

Need help?

You can always contact your car seat manufacturer or a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST) if you have questions, want to verify a seat, or need help with installation. A one-pager on compliant car seats and a list of all U.S. car seat manufacturers and their contact info is available here: <https://buckleupmn.org/infants-children/finding-the-right-car-seat/>

If you buy a car seat online and the deal seems "too good to be true," it might be!

For more information and guidance, visit: <https://buckleupmn.org/>

You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and always 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)

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Officers Welcome Drop in DWIs as Enforcement Campaign Launched



Jesse Thomas
Rice County Sheriff

The continued drop in the number of DWIs countywide is a positive sign, according to Rice County law enforcement.

While the evidence is mostly anecdotal, Northfield Sgt. Kevin Tussing, who coordinated the county's Toward Zero Deaths grant for the last two years, believes that if the "drive sober" message wasn't getting out, there would be a lot more drunken driving crashes.

Alcohol isn't suspected in four of the five fatal crashes so far this year. The cause of the fifth, which took place Nov. 22 in Faribault, hasn't yet been determined.

After a spike in the number of DWIs in 2021 and 2022, those numbers dropped in both 2023 and 2024.

Despite the positive data, law enforcement isn't about to stop spreading safe driving messages or participating in extra enforcement.

According to figures from the Rice County Safe Roads Coalition, county law enforcement officers issued 238 DWI citations in 2024. That's slightly more than 4.5 per week.

The coalition, which includes the Rice County Sheriff's Office; Faribault, Lonsdale

and Northfield Police departments, the County Attorney, county Public Health and Highway department staff and concerned residents, met Wednesday, kicking off the annual holiday enforcement campaign which runs weekends through New Year's Eve. The campaign is part of a statewide effort to keep Minnesota roads safe.

As of Nov. 24, preliminary data shows that 342 people have died so far this year on Minnesota roads. From 2020-24, there were 668 alcohol-related driving deaths in Minnesota and 1,926 serious injuries from alcohol-related crashes.

During the kickoff, the coalition recognized three officers:

- Faribault Police Officer Billy Madson issued 14 DWIs, the highest number of all Rice County law enforcement in the 2024-25 grant year, which earned him a 2025 DWI Enforcer All-Star honorable mention from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

- Rice County Deputy Sheriff Benjamin

Borash issued 12 citations for violating the hands-free driving law in four hours during the April 29 extra enforcement wave.

- Rice County Deputy Sheriff William Dopp issued 16 speeding citations and one no seat belt citation in five hours during the Aug. 20 extra enforcement campaign. He was also recognized as having issued more than 2,000 citations in the prior year

Both Borash and Dopp both received Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety challenge coins which signify honor, respect, loyalty and integrity.

Sheriff Jesse Thomas welcomes the activity by law enforcement.

"I encourage my patrol deputies to make traffic stops, he said, seeing the effect as two-fold. "One, it helps keep drivers safe when they are stopped and allows us to point out their violations so they can correct bad driving habits. And two, it helps prevent crime in our communities by being visible to those who may be up to no good."

Rice County Family Services Collaborative Accepting Grant Applications

[Rice County, MN] – The Governing Board of the Rice County Family Services Collaborative is accepting grant applications for its upcoming two-year grant cycle (July 1, 2026-June 30, 2028). The mission of the Rice County Family Services Collaborative is to support the availability of comprehensive services designed to enhance and strengthen functioning for families with children ages 0 to 18. The Collaborative Board is accepting proposals to fund projects congruent with its mission and will entertain proposals in the following five areas:

- Parental Resilience
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children
- Support to Families with Young Children
- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Applicants are required to submit a proposal that details a plan to address the identified issue within the mission of the Collaborative. Successful applications will: be based on collaboration with identified partners; detail how the work will address an unmet need or fill a gap in services for Rice County children and their families; and engage program participants in driving the work. Applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026. For more information or to obtain an application, please contact the Rice

County Family Services Collaborative at rcfsc@healthycommunityinitiative.org.

Rice County Family Services Collaborative Governing Board members include representatives from Rice County Community Services, Rice County Public Health, Rice County Community Corrections, Faribault Public Schools, Northfield Public Schools, Cannon Valley Special Education Cooperative, and Three Rivers Community Action, in addition to community members. Find more information about the Rice County Family Services Collaborative here: www.ricecountymn.gov/358/Rice-County-Family-Services-Collaborative. The Board seeks members who represent broad community interests and are committed to supporting its mission.

Community members interested in serving as part of the Governing Board are encouraged to contact rcfsc@healthycommunityinitiative.org for more information or apply directly at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSczFrXq6KSoJFOfnJ_WfWQkwNDQ93_mIELt5sNqMC7W07yfjQ/viewform?usp=header

Questions can be directed to Kelsey Duffy, Rice County Family Services Collaborative Staff Support – (507) 226-7694, rcfsc@healthycommunityinitiative.org.

Where to put all that snow? State law says not in the road

Rice County Highway officials remind residents that it is illegal to deposit snow on or next to a public highway or street.

Pushing snow or other debris onto the roadway creates hazards that can lead to drainage problems, drifting, unsafe access and sight obstruction which can lead to a crash, especially for plow drivers operating a vehicle that is 15x heavier than the average car.

For everyone's safety, it's important to keep crosswalks, intersections, entrances and exits clean and unobstructed.

Minnesota law prohibits the plowing, blowing, shoveling or otherwise placing of snow on to public roads. This includes the ditch and right of way area along the roads.

Violations are considered misdemeanors, but civil penalties also apply if the placement of snow creates a hazard, such as a slippery area, frozen rut or bump that contributes to a motor vehicle or pedestrian crash. The civil liability can extend to both the property owner and the person who placed the snow.



Important Property Tax Homestead Notice

This will affect your 2026 property taxes and eligibility for Property Tax Refund.

Have you purchased or moved into a property in the past year? Contact your county assessor to file a homestead application if you or a qualifying relative occupy the property as a homestead on or before Dec. 31, 2025.

Having a homestead classification may qualify your property for a reduction in property taxes.

What is a qualifying relative?

For occupied agricultural or residential property, a qualifying relative includes parents, stepparent, child, stepchild, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece of the owner by blood or marriage.

For unoccupied agricultural property, a qualifying relative includes a child, grandchild, sibling, parent or spouse of the owner. This relationship may be by blood or marriage.

When do I apply?

You must apply on or before Dec. 31, 2025.

Once homestead is granted, annual applications are not necessary unless they are requested by the county assessor.

Contact the assessor by Dec. 31, 2025, if the use of the property you own or occupy as a qualifying relative has changed during the past year.

If you sell, move, or for any reason no longer qualify for the homestead classification, you are required to notify the county assessor within 30 days of the change in homestead status.

The Rice County Assessor's Office is on the second floor of the Rice County Government Services Building, 320 Third St. NW, Faribault. It can be reached at 507-332-6102 or via email at RCAssessors@ricecountymn.gov.

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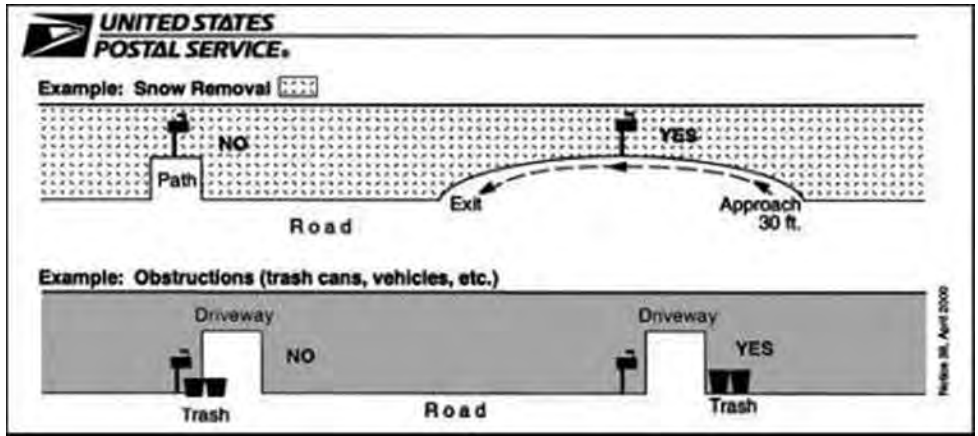
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Snow and patches of ice in front of mailboxes can make it difficult for letter carriers to safely deliver the mail. Residents maintaining a clear path to the mailbox - including steps, porches, walkways, and street approach - will help letter carriers maintain consistent delivery service. Customers receiving curbside delivery should also ensure clear access to their mailboxes for letter carriers who deliver from the street.



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Lieske statement on looming \$3 billion deficit

The office of Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) on Thursday released its annual November economic forecast, which provides a picture of the state's budget picture. According to MMB, the budget for fiscal year 2026-2027 includes a \$2.465 billion surplus, even while spending outpaces revenues. However, looking to 2028-2029, the deficit balloons to \$5.4 billion as spending is projected to outpace revenues. Only by not spending the surplus would the 2029 deficit projection reduce to \$2.960 billion.

"They are calling this budget situation stable, but to me it's really concerning," Senator Bill Lieske (R-Lonsdale) said. "A short-term surplus driven by higher tax collections on Minnesotans and a long-term, large structural

deficit on the horizon are not healthy. We're asking taxpayers to shoulder a very heavy burden to keep up with the state's unsustainable spending problem and out-of-control fraud.

Remember that just two short years ago we had an \$18 billion surplus that we could have used to provide people with relief," Senator Lieske added. "Instead of putting Minnesotans first, Democrats and Gov. Walz used their complete control of government to put their allies and special interests first. They spent the entire surplus, raised \$10 billion in taxes, increased spending by a reckless and unsustainable 40%. And fraud is running rampant, with Gov. Walz being unwilling or unable to stop it. We have to get our spending problem under control, provide people with relief, and stop the fraud for good."

Slow economic growth is a major factor in revenue losses. This underscores concerns raised from a Minnesota Chamber of Commerce Business Benchmarks Report released two weeks ago, ranking Minnesota 38th with 1% GDP per capita annual growth, 40th for labor force growth, and 41st in net domestic migration. Between 2019 and 2024, key economic statistics slowed to nearly stagnant or negative levels, reversing previous trends,

and impacting the state's overall economic climate.

Additionally, increased spending on health care puts pressure revenues. This is notable as Minnesota has seen significant fraud in health care services. Efforts to reduce fraud and verify eligibility will be necessary to ensure these funds are available for those who actually need it.

Dundas City Council Approves Pay Raises for Police Officers; Aims To Create Longer Retention In the Department

(continued from page 1)

A recent wage analysis showed Dundas officers earn significantly below market rates—4.2% under the average minimum and 16% under the maximum in 2025, with gaps widening in 2026 despite a planned cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

To address retention concerns, the City's Human Resources Committee directed staff to propose a new wage schedule that sets starting pay at \$34.79 and a top step of \$48.71, aiming to exceed market maximums by 10%. Here's Jenelle Teppen, the City Administrator of Dundas:

"They gave me direction to set the top wage a little above the average, like 10% above the average, in an effort to incentivize some of our longer-term police officers to stay, to stick around a little bit." — Jenelle Teppen, Dundas City Administrator on KYMN In the Morning

Under the agreement, officers will receive a 4% COLA on January 1, 2026, followed by placement on the new wage scale on July 1, 2026. The cost to implement these changes for three full-time officers is estimated at \$12,158, which will be funded from an anticipated \$90,000 year-end surplus.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are not necessarily those of The Messenger.*

To the Editor:

City officials also are not thinking on a regional level when they need to be regarding data centers. The Prairie du Chien and Jordan aquifers are two prominent aquifers for the SE Minnesota region. For a brief perspective of just who relies on these 2 aquifers in some capacity for private wells and municipal water: Rice county has 7 cities. Dakota county has 34 cities. 8 out of 10 cities in Goodhue county connect to at least one of them. That's 49 communities so far. Olmsted County, Winona County, Dodge County also connect to them in varying capacities and the list goes on since the Jordan aquifer touches 7 states. 6 hyperscale data centers (Pine Island, Apple Valley, Cannon Falls, Farmington, Faribault, Lakeville) are currently proposed to draw from these 2 aquifers alone. 4 of them are being sued by the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy. None of them have done full environmental assessments. Not a single one. Being in the karst region our aquifers are at the highest vulnerability risk for being compromised by human activities and remediation efforts are also harder to do. These 7 cities are intentionally and wantonly jeopardizing the entire region's groundwater supply and they need to be taken to task and held accountable. Residents of SE MN should be infuriated by the complete lack of regard these 7 cities have for the most basic element needed to survive: water. Let them know it before it's too late.

Aubree Derksen
Pine Island, MN
612-709-8331

DUNDAS CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 24, 2025

7:00 p.m. City Hall

Present: Councilors Grant Modory, Luke LaCroix, Ashley Gallagher, Luke Swartwood

Absent: Mayor Switzer

Staff: City Administrator/Clerk Jenelle Teppen, Finance Director Jessi Sturtz

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Modory called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

PRESENTATION – Dundas Oktoberfest

Members of the Dundas Oktoberfest Board thanked the City Council for sponsoring the 2025 Dundas Oktoberfest event, touted the success of this year's event and said they are looking forward to the 2026 Dundas Oktoberfest event scheduled for Saturday, September 19.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- Regular Minutes of November 10, 2025

- Disbursements - \$510,122.14

Motion by LaCroix, second by Swartwood to approve the Consent Agenda. MCU

REGULAR AGENDA

There were no Regular Agenda items.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Work Session

- 2026 Proposed General Fund and Enterprise Fund Budgets

The City Council reviewed and discussed the proposed 2026 General Fund Budget and Property Tax Levy. Staff recommends transferring \$100,000 from the Refuse Fund to the Parks and Rec Capital Outlay Fund in order to lower the levy to 10.46%.

ADJOURN

Motion by Swartwood, second by Gallagher, to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 PM.

Minutes prepared by Jenelle Teppen, City Administrator/City Clerk

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MESSENGER CHRISTMAS RECIPE CONTEST WINNERS

Congratulations to The Messenger Recipe Winners:

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Samantha Johnson • Lois Nolt**

They each received a
\$25 restaurant gift card
for their entry.

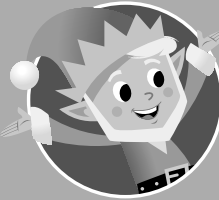
MAPLE CUSTARD PIE

Ingredients:

- 3/4 Cup maple syrup
- 2 1/4 cup heavy whipping cream
- 4 egg yolks
- 1 egg
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp white vinegar

Boil syrup over medium heat, cook until reduced by 1/4. (5 to 7 minutes). Stir in cream, bring to simmer, remove from heat. Whisk ion egg yolk and 1 egg in a large bowl. Slowly add maple cream mixture, whisking constantly, to eggs. Add salt, vanilla and vinegar. Pour into pie crust. Bake at 300 degrees for an hour. Pie will be set up but a little jiggly.

- Submitted by Billie Cowell



MOM'S CHRISTMAS DIP

- 1# Jimmy Dean ground sausage (mild or hot)
- 1/2 cup diced onion
- 1/8 tsp garlic powder
- 2# Velveeta cheese
- 1 -10.5 oz can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 -10 oz can Rotel tomatoes

Directions:

Add onion and garlic to sausage and brown in a skillet. Drain and then add to a crock pot or large pot. Add Velveeta cheese, cream of mushroom soup, and Rotel tomatoes to pot and melt slowly on the stove or in crock pot, stirring occasionally. Once warmed and melted serve with tortilla chips.

Submitted by Samantha Johnson

CHRISTMAS CASSEROLE

- 10 ounce package egg noodles
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup celery, chopped
- 1 pound hamburger
- 1 10.75 ounce can mushroom soup
- 1 4 ounce can mushrooms, undrained
- 1 beef bouillon cube
- 1/2 cup sliced black olives
- 8 ounce cream cheese, cubed
- 1 cup shredded cheddar
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 tablespoon white wine (optional)
- 1 cup cashews
- 1 12 ounce bag chow mein noodles

Grease a 9x13 pan. Cook egg noodles until tender. Drain and keep warm. Brown hamburger, onion and celery. Drain off any grease. Add soup, mushrooms, bullion, and olives to meat, cook until bullion is dissolved. Add cheeses, sour cream and wine. Mix in noodles. Pour into 9x13 pan. Top with chow mein noodles and cashews. Bake 35-45 minutes until bubbling.

- Submitted by Cindi Nosek

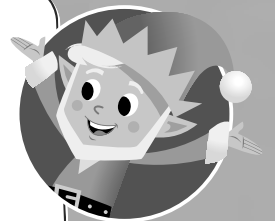


\$25,000 MEXICAN DISH

- 2 cups Bisquick mix
- 1cup water
- 2-15oz. Cans refried beans
- 2 lbs. Hamburger, fried and seasoned
- 16 oz jar salsa
- 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 16 oz. Sour cream
- Chopped lettuce and tomato

Mix Bisquick, water, and beans. Spread in greased 9X13 pan. Put hamburger on top. Spread salsa and cheese on top. Bake at 350 for 30 minutes. Top with sour cream, lettuce, and tomato just before serving. Delicious!

- Submitted by Lois Nolt



NUT GOODIE BARS

- 12 oz. semi sweet chocolate chips
- 12 oz. butterscotch chips
- 2 cups creamy peanut butter
- 1 cup butter - 2 sticks
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk
- 1 bag powdered sugar - 2lbs
- 1 tsp. maple flavoring
- 1/4 cup vanilla (heat and serve pudding) must be heat and serve
- 16 oz jar dry roasted peanuts, I like to use sea salt or regular is fine too.

Melt together the chocolate and butterscotch chips and peanut butter. Pour 1/2 of the mixture into a lined (parchment paper) jelly roll pan. Approx 12x17 pan and cool in refrigerator for about 20 minutes or so. Reserve the other half for the top layer. Melt butter, add pudding mix and evaporated milk over low heat, do not boil. When it starts to get thick remove from heat and add powered sugar and maple flavoring. Hand mix well and add to your first layer. Put in refrigerator and cool for 20 or 30 minutes. Warm up the reserved chocolate mixture and add the jar of dry roasted nuts (I use the ones with sea salt) Mix well and pour over top for your 2nd layer. Cool well, about 2 or 3 hours. This makes a lot so I cut into 6 sections and individually wrap each one with Saran wrap. Store in the refrigerator then take out and cut into bit size pieces.

*note - you can use mixer but it does make a mess with the powdered sugar mixture. Either way works. Enjoy

- Submitted by Pam Thomas



BROCCOLI SIDE DISH

- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 - 10.75 ounce can mushroom soup
- 1 - 4 ounce can mushrooms, undrained
- 2 cups medium Cheddar, shredded
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon parsley flakes
- 10 ounce bag frozen broccoli, thawed
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 10 butter flavored crackers, (Ritz) crushed

Butter a 2 quart casserole. Saute onion and celery in butter until soft. Fold in soup, mushrooms, cheddar, garlic powder, parsley, broccoli, salt and pepper. Pour in prepared casserole. Top with crushed crackers. Bake at 325 degrees for 30 minutes.

- Submitted by Cindi Nosek



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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

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- THEME: HAPPY HOLIDAYS
- ACROSS
1. Shapeless form

5. Hot springs resort

8. Not square

11. Private theater box

12. Relating to ear

13. Rome's Colosseum, e.g.

15. I ____ you so!

16. *The opposite of a store the day before Christmas?

17. *"Auld Lang Syne" poet

18. *Partridge's perch (2 words)

20. Vegas numbers

21. New Zealand's indigenous people

22. Fuss

23. Tabby's favorite herb

26. More so than swell

30. Big-headedness

31. Resembling an ape

34. John Wayne Gacy's ____ the Clown

35. Photographer Dorothea of "Migrant Mother" fame

37. Type or kind

38. Like a sheep after a haircut

39. D'Artagnan's weapon of choice

40. Superlative of #33 Down

42. U.S. central bank

43. Wilma and Fred's hometown

45. *Latke's main ingredient

47. Word of possibility

48. Turning token taker

50. Exclamation of sorrow

52. * ____ Odbody of "It's a Wonderful Life"

55. Raspberry drupelets

56. Sainly glow

57. Letter opener

59. Hunts for food

60. Banana leftover

61. Guesstimate phrase

62. *Color on a Kwanzaa flag

63. Not divisible by two

64. Scholarship criterion
- DOWN
1. Deli acronym

2. Chicago's central district, with The

3. Gawlk at

4. Wish harm upon, arch.

5. One of The Beatles

6. Pileus, pl.

7. "The Road Runner" corporation

8. Group of cows

9. Bed-and-breakfast alternative, pl.

10. *"The Nutcracker" step

12. Certain cephalopod, pl.

13. It's sometimes humble

14. *Chuck Berry's "Run, ____, Run"

19. Reason to strike

22. Grass bristle

23. Famous one, slangily

24. Open-mouthed

25. Like a well-defined muscle

26. Hot alcoholic beverage

27. Washing sponge

28. Type of heron

29. Rondeau, alt. sp.

32. *Santa's beverage of choice

33. Not well

36. *Original home of Christmas tannenbaum

38. Fur shawl

40. Extremely unfriendly

41. Plane trick

44. Reprieve in a desert

46. Muscle to bone connector

48. Skidded

49. Weighed

50. 4,840 square yards

51. Told an untruth

52. Head of family

53. Wrap in waxy cloth

54. Comfort

55. Financing acronym

58. Stewart of "Maggie May" fame



Merry Christmas

and Happy New Year

Very best wishes to everyone we know
for a beautiful holiday season
and a wonderful new year.

We will be closed Thursday, December 25, 2025 and Thursday, January 1, 2026 so our employees can enjoy the holidays.



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