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We want to Thank You for your continued support of the Goodhue-Bellechester Messenger.

In the continuing era of online everything, your hometown Messenger newspaper continues with an unwavering goal to bring hometown news to you.

(continued on page 4)



Hometown Holiday–Goodhue

By Beth Brekke

The area's 2025 Christmas holiday season kicked off with the Christkindlmarkt on Second Street in Goodhue Saturday December 6th.

(continued on page 7)

Christmas Cheer at Goodhue Living

By Beth Brekke

About 25 members of the local Mennonite congregation shared Christmas cheer with residents of the Goodhue Living community on December 23rd.

(continued on page 9)

Pictured to the right: Bunnell Martin shares his song book with the boys while entertaining the residents and guests of Goodhue Living.



Chamber and community members that spearheaded the 2025 Christkindlmarkt event were (L-R) Abbie Haugen, Carolyn Ryan, Regina Poncelet, Shannon Harrell, Teresa Voth and Peggy O'Connor

Announcements

• **Belvidere Happy-Go-Luckies 4-H Club** (usually) meets the first Monday of each month at 7p.m. at St. Peter's Church, rural Goodhue. New members are always welcome! Contact club leader Michelle Benrud at 651-923-5247 for more information.

• **Three Rivers Community Action** is currently accepting new Meals On Wheels clients in the communities of Bellechester, Zumbrota, Mazeppa, Goodhue, Pine Island, Kenyon, Wabasha and Wanamingo. Receive a hot meal delivered to your home by a volunteer at lunch time up to 5 days per week. To qualify you must be 60 or older, live within city limits, have limited mobility and/or are unable to prepare nutritious meals. The suggested donation is \$5-\$10 per meal. Please contact Three Rivers at 507-316-0610 or email: oas@threeriverscap.org

Do you have an announcement?

Email:

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Hometown Holiday–Bellechester



The Happy-Go-Luckies 4-H club facilitated cookie decorating at the community center preceding the annual lighted parade. Club members also created and entered a float in the parade.

By Beth Brekke

If you didn't want to take the time to search city streets for holiday lights you could stay in downtown Bellechester and wait for them to come to you. The annual lighted parade was held on Sunday December 7th at 6 PM featuring 7 entries. The cold temperature and brisk wind kept the outdoor activities short and sweet but the Christmas spirit was warm and welcoming.

(continued on page 10)

Newly Appointed Council Member

Courtesy of
City of Goodhue

At their December 10th council meeting, council approved the appointment of Eric Brandt to fill the council vacancy.



Happy New Year

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Pastors Corner

By Pastor Robbin Robbert
St. John's Lutheran Church,
rural Goodhue

I Samuel 7:12: Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named that place Ebenezer, saying, "The Lord has helped us this far."

Are you ready to celebrate? Some of our churches in this area have recently celebrated their 125th, 150th, and 175th anniversaries. A lot of planning goes into such celebrations and when it is all said and done it seems quite worth all the time and money spent.

Are you ready to celebrate? 2026 is an anniversary/birthday year for the United States of America. 250 years, Semiquincentennial. I remember July 4, 1776 for the bicentennial, people were asked to ring a bell to represent the Freedom Bell for a few minutes(I was a child who was excessive so I can well imagine we were told to ring for one minute and I would have done five minutes). What are your plans to show your patriotism for this major celebration? I have been seeing 250th hats in blue and red and think that "witness wear" might be a good start along with some patriotic shirts.

Are you ready to celebrate or deflate? In one generation it seems we have gone from being proud of being Americans to tripping over ourselves to apologize for being Americans. I am a Christian and so my citizenship in God's eternal Kingdom is so much more important than my United States citizenship. However, God does not give me the option to be so heavenly-minded that I am no earthly good.

The Bible has examples of people who came along with the Children of Israel when they

came out of Egypt to go to the Promised Land. Occasionally you would read of some of them being grumblers and stirring up discontent among the people. Even in the Bible there are distinctions between the citizen, the resident alien(those who have assimilated to the culture and benefit the citizens and also receive a benefit by their association with the citizens), and the alien who is just visiting and expected to keep moving. I like the saying to people who are not citizens nor resident aliens, "you don't have to go home, but you can't stay here."

From 1795-1952 many people who came to this country had to fill out a "Declaration of

Intention". I have only seen three that my ancestors had a copy but, much like a marriage license, I suppose not every couple gets an extra copy to display and even if they all received one only a small majority probably fill it out and display it or even keep it for their descendants to find. The unmistakable nature of this form was for a person to cut their primary allegiance to their homeland and now embrace the United States and pledge allegiance to her. I have had the privilege to visit Germany twice and have had some awesome opportunities to visit people and hear family history from German relatives from both of my parent's sides. However, my allegiance is

to the United States of America, the Republic. One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all(citizens and resident aliens).

Does this article seems like it would be better suited for July when we celebrate the 250th? Perhaps, but just like all major anniversaries this one takes planning and so if we can start the anniversary year off thinking about this milestone I pray it spurs on a renewed sense of thanking God for all that He has done for this country for 250 years. Are you ready to celebrate? The LORD has helped us this far!!

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(Holy Trinity Parish Office has sacramental records for St. Mary, Bellechester, and St. Columbkil, Belle Creek, since merger in 2013).

Sat.: 4:45PM - 5:20PM Confession, 5:30PM Holy Mass (Sunday vigil)

Tues.: 8:00AM Holy Mass

Wed.: 8:00AM Holy Mass, 9:00AM - 2:00PM Eucharistic Adoration

Rosary said 25 minutes before Holy Mass

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Rosary said 25 minutes before Holy Mass

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County Road 47, Goodhue • 923-4472

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Sun.: 10:30AM Holy Mass

Thurs.: 8:00AM Eucharistic Adoration/Confession, 9:00AM Holy Mass

Rosary said 25 minutes before Holy Mass

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GRACE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH (WELS)

Pastor Martin Weigand

39774 Co. 4 Blvd., Goodhue • 651-923-4624

gracelutheranchurch@gmail.com • www.gracepeters.org

Sunday Morning Worship 8:30a.m. with communion

on the second and fourth Sunday of each month.

Sunday School at 9:30a.m., Sunday Bible Study at 9:45a.m.,

Confirmation Class 5:45 on Wednesday at St Peter's.

8:30a.m. Quilting and Bible Study on Wednesday at St Peter's, and

10:30a.m. Midweek Bible Study on Thursday at St Peter's.

AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY

Letting Go of the Old

You were taught . . . to put off your old self . . . and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

— Ephesians 4:22-24

I remember a season where I kept rehearsing past failures, clinging to shame like a heavy coat in summer. I knew God was calling me to move forward, but it felt safer to stay in the familiar—even if it was painful.

Ephesians 4:22-24 hits home here. Paul reminds us that the old self—the habits, thought patterns, and lies we've believed—must be put off. Like clothing that doesn't fit anymore, we're meant to take it off so that we can live in the freedom God offers.

Letting go isn't always a dramatic moment. Sometimes it's just quiet and deliberate. It includes choosing not to respond the way we used to. It means surrendering a mindset that has held us captive. It involves refusing to let guilt define us when grace is freely offered. We can't fully embrace the new if we are still clinging to the old.

What is God inviting you to release today? Whatever it is, trust that his grace is enough to carry you forward.

Dear Jesus, help me to release what no longer serves your purpose in my life. Give me strength to let go of the old and to step into the new with you. Amen.

ST. JOHN'S EV. LUTHERAN (WELS)

Pastor Randall Kuznicki

Minneola Twp. Co. Rd. 7, rural Zumbrota

Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.; Communion 3rd Sunday

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ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, MISSOURI SYNOD

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28961 365th St., Goodhue

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Email: stpeter@sleepyeyetel.net

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10:30a.m. Worship

Email your church announcements,
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Pastor Hannah Bergstrom de Leon

www.minneolalutheranchurch.com

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(Communion on 2nd and 4th Sundays)

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Communion offered on the 2nd & 4th Sundays.

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Pastor Eric Hanson

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6:45p.m. Wednesday Worship

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ST. PETER'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH (WELS)

Pastor Martin Weigand

702 West Third Ave., Goodhue, MN • 715-441-5086

Sunday Morning Worship 10:45a.m. with

communion on the second and fourth Sunday of each month.

Sunday School at 9:30a.m. at Grace.

Sunday Bible Study at 9:30a.m.,

Confirmation Class 5:45p.m. on Wednesday,

8:30a.m. Quilting and Bible Study on

Wednesday, and 10:30a.m. Midweek Bible Class

on Thursday.

LANDS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor: David Krinke, Email: pastordavid@landslutheran.org

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Donald "Donnie" Waynn Kruse

Donald "Donnie" Waynn Kruse, 81, of Zumbrota, passed away on Friday, December 12, 2025, at Mayo Clinic Hospital, St. Marys Campus in Rochester.

Donnie was born on July 26, 1944, in rural Goodhue to Ernest "Pat" and Florence (Sandstrom) Kruse. Following high school, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1964 and served two tours of duty in the Vietnam War, where he was an honor student in the Scout Dog Platoon. After returning from military service, he entered the workforce as a heavy equipment operator. He retired in 2004 from Ames Construction.

On August 5, 1972, he married "his beautiful wife", Judith Kristine Hadler at the Little Brown Church in Nashua, Iowa, where he paid \$5 extra to have "Here Comes the Bride" played as Judy entered the chapel. They made their home in Zumbrota and wintered in Arizona for 18 years. Following his retirement he enjoyed golfing, playing cards and meeting new friends. They had two children, Jason and Jennifer, who blessed them with four grandchildren, Payton, Halle, Paige and Preston.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Judy; son, Jason (Sarah); daughter, Jenny (Eric) Slimmer; granddaughters, Payton (Cole) Haferman, Halle Kruse and Paige Slimmer; grandson, Preston Slimmer; brother, Dale (Jackie); sisters, Elaine Gamst, Barb Paulsen and Carol (Keith) Olson; brother-in-law, Arnold (Dorothy) Hadler; sister-in-law, Doris Helgren and many nieces, nephews and cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents, an infant brother and many cherished loved ones.

Per Donnie's request, no funeral services were held. The family will hold a private burial service at a later date. Arrangements handled by Mahn Family Funeral Home, Larson Chapel.

Donald Hanson

Donald Hanson, age 82, passed away at the University of MN Hospital surrounded by family on Friday, December 26, 2025.

Donald Arthur Hanson, son of Harold and Orella Hanson, was born on April 29th, 1943, in Red Wing, Minnesota.

Donald was baptized and confirmed at Minneola Lutheran Church and attended grade school and high school in Zumbrota, graduating from Zumbrota High School in 1962. Donald went on to attend Dunwoody Institute in Minneapolis to become a Senior Project Manager and continued to take classes in various community colleges in Dallas, Texas. He went on to teach construction classes in Texas. Donald was also a member of the National Guard during the Vietnam War serving in the

Saigon Replacement Forces.

Donald met the love of his life, Sandra Van Guilder, at the Belle Creek Roller Rink in White Rock while on a hayride. They were married on September 11, 1965, at the Congregational Church in Cannon Falls and celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary this year. Donald and Sandra shared a love that was never-ending, always supporting each other through many accomplishments and challenges throughout their marriage. They always faced their medical challenges together with a positive and optimistic outlook no matter how difficult they became.

Donald began his career first working as a carpenter and later was promoted to Foreman for Kraus Andersen in Dallas, Texas. He then went on to becoming Superintendent, Project Manager and lastly Senior Project Manager overseeing multi-million-dollar projects such as jails, courthouses, high rises, hospitals and a school in Virginia.

Donald and Sandra also shared a deep love for their boys, Christopher Jon Hanson and Randall Scott Hanson. Donald always enjoyed volunteering throughout his life with one of his greatest joys being his boys' soccer coach for eleven seasons. During that time, he was awarded the title of Coach of the Year.

Having spent his entire work career in building, it was no surprise that one of Donald's favorite hobbies was woodworking making furniture, picture frames, and pens to name a few. He also volunteered sharing his many talents with Seniors Helping Seniors in McKinney, Texas. At the same time, he served on his homeowner association Board of Directors in McKinney, Texas. More recently, Donald volunteered in the woodworking shop at Orchard Path where they have resided for the last few years.

Donald had a wide variety of hobbies including biking in the Hotter than Hell bike rides every August, even in the extreme 100+ degree heat. He was also a member of his company's bike team. Donald also loved to run and compete in the White Rock marathon for several years in Dallas, Texas. Donald also loved kayaking/canoeing, hunting, fishing, archery, and traveling the world with Sandra to Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, Budapest to Amsterdam and Norway. Donald and Sandra were especially happy to travel to Norway for their 50th wedding anniversary with their son Randall and family to trace the Hanson family ancestry.

Donald is survived by his loving wife, Sandra, son Randall Hanson, daughter-in-law Carol, granddaughter Emily and step grandson Daniel, sister Sylvia Kidd, brothers Darold and Daniel; sisters-in-law Diane (Darold) Hanson, Heidi (Daniel) Hanson, and Patricia Van Guilder; and many other loving family members and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents Harold and Orella Hanson; in-laws George and Jean Van Guilder; son Christopher Jon Hanson; brothers-in-law Larry and Mike Van Guilder, sisters-in-law JeanAnn (Van Guilder) Hommedahl and Anita (Van Guilder) Budenski.

The family asks that any memorials be donated in Donald's memory to the American Cancer Society or favorite charity of choice.

Burial will be held on Friday, January 9, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. at Minneola Lutheran

Church Cemetery, 13628 County 50 Blvd, Goodhue, MN. The casket bearers will be Jeff Kidd, Steve Kidd, Mike Kidd, Todd Kidd, Brent Anderson, David Hanson, and Larry Ness. The family will host a Celebration of Life Service at 2:30 pm on Saturday, January 10, 2026 in the community room at Orchard Path, 5400 - 157th St W, Apple Valley, MN 55124.

Duane Lemoine Lindstrom

Duane Lemoine Lindstrom, age 86, a longtime Vasa resident, died unexpectedly on Friday, January 2, 2026 at Mayo Clinic Health System - Red Wing.

Duane was born on December 23, 1939 in

Red Wing, the son of Lloyd and Myrtle (Swanson) Lindstrom. He graduated from Central High School in Red Wing in 1957 and went on to serve with the National Guard.

Duane married Gayle Jacobson on June 3, 1961, and they welcomed two children in to their family. They also were foster parents. Duane was a longtime 3rd generation farmer in Vasa, where they made their home. Gayle died on October 11, 1996. He found love again and married Carolyn Alstead on February 14, 1998 at Vasa Lutheran Church. They loved spending time at the cabin in Niswaga and wintering in Arizona for several years. Carolyn died on May 13, 2025.

He was an active member of Vasa Lutheran Church, where he served on the church council and cemetery board. He had also served on the boards of Farmers Co-Op, Hastings Creamery, Vasa-Spring Garden Mutual Insurance, White Rock Bank, and the Red Wing Seminary Home. Duane enjoyed fishing and woodworking.

He is survived by his children, Steve (Dawn) Lindstrom and Bonnie McNamara (Todd Erickson); stepchildren, David (Stephanie) Alstead, Michelle (George) Nusbaum, and Bryon (Sarah) Alstead; grandchildren, Dustin (Megan) Lindstrom, Stephanie (David) Heiden, Courtney (Greg) Hovel, Sydney (Blake) Johnson, George, Jack, and Brett Nusbaum; great-grandchildren, Cash-ton, Caleb, Anders, Sam, Wade, and Mabel; and sisters, Beverly Kelm and Phyllis Kullberg.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Lloyd and Myrtle Lindstrom; his spouses, Gayle Lindstrom and Carolyn Lindstrom; grandson, Derek McNamara; brother Myron Lindstrom; and sister Lois Lindstrom.

A memorial service will be held on Monday, January 12, 2026 at 11:00 am, with visitation from 9:30 am-11:00 am, at Vasa Lutheran Church. This service will be live-streamed and available to watch below. Interment will follow at the church cemetery. Urn Bearers will be his grandchildren, Dustin (Megan) Lindstrom, Stephanie (David) Heiden, Courtney (Greg) Hovel, and Sydney (Blake) Johnson.

Bryan Richard Schnirring

Bryan Richard Schnirring, 65, of Kasson, Minnesota, passed away on December 19, 2025, at his home. He was born on December 26, 1959, in Austin, Minnesota to Walter and Constance (Thoe) Schnirring.

Bryan graduated from Hayfield High School in 1978, and later earned his degree from Rochester Community and Technical College. On September 21, 1985, he married Rox Ann Ringeisen, in Goodhue, Minnesota.

Throughout his career, Bryan held a variety of positions. He served as a manager at Fleet Farm and was transferred from the Rochester store to Brainerd, Minnesota, where he managed that location. He also worked at Waltham Equipment, where he had the special opportunity to work alongside his father until Walter's passing. Additional employment included Hayfield Hardware, Benchmark, and Floor to Ceiling, and most recently Pace Dairy, where he worked until his retirement.

Bryan and Rox Ann enjoyed antiques, visiting casinos, and spending time with friends and family. Bryan was known for his quick humor and clever observations, always ready with a perfectly timed remark that could erupt the room with laughter. He enjoyed following the stock market, tending to his yard and was a proud and longstanding member of the Hayfield Fantasy Football league. A devoted Minnesota Vikings fan through every high and heartbreak, he cheered faithfully season after season, believing-often against all odds-that this would be the year.

Bryan is survived by his wife, Rox Ann; siblings, Paula (Dave) Blazing of Racine, Minnesota, Randy (Denise) Schnirring of Eden Prairie, Minnesota, and Sara (Steve) Schnirring of Scottsdale, Arizona. He is also remembered by his nephew, Mike (Maggie) Blazing; and their children, Remy and Neva; niece, Sam Schnirring; nephew, Lucas Schnirring; sister-in-law, Wendie Ringeisen; brother-in-law, Bill (Brenda) Ringeisen.

Bryan was preceded in death by his parents, Walter and Constance Schnirring, and his parents-in-law Arlon and Deloris Ringeisen.

A private family graveside service will be held at a later date. To share a special memory or condolence please visit www.czaplewskifuneralhomes.com, Czaplewski Family Funeral Homes, 801 7th St SE Kasson, MN 55940 (507) 634-6510. Blessed be his memory.

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Michael James Augustine

Michael James Augustine, died unexpectedly, while at work on Monday December 29, 2025. He was born on November 4, 1972, in Red Wing to Jim and Barb (Gorman) Augustine. He graduated from Goodhue High School in 1991, and then attended Mankato Technical College for Farm Business Management graduating in 1993. Michael was an organic crop farmer and also worked for Steve Dankers Trucking and Farm Repair shop. Mike loved being a farmer and farm life. He was always grateful to be able to do the work he loved. He participated in many antique tractor pulling contests and enjoyed his antique tractor collection. He attended many farm shows including the Corn Shredding Autumn Harvest Days in Oak Center. Mike helped to organize this event and participated in the corn shredding contest. He was always grateful that he was able to do the work that he loved. Music was another passion for Michael. He played the trombone for a several years in the Zumbrota Community Band and played in the pit orchestra at the Sheldon Theatre for a couple of different plays. He had a beautiful singing voice which many people were able to enjoy. He enjoyed a good competitive game of cards, a cold Old Milwaukee, and always looked forward being around his family and many friends. He was a kind, humble person



who worked hard and appreciated life.

Michael is survived by his mother, Barb of Red Wing; three brothers, Jeff (Sam) Augustine of Goodhue, Ben Augustine & Nicole Yuen of Colorado and Pete (Nikki) of Cannon Falls; nieces and nephews, Riley (Taylor) Augustine, Devon Hublit, Megan Augustine; Alexis, Sean and Everly Augustine; Hannah (Jerrett) Gangloff, Emily, and Wyatt Betzold; great niece, Ellowyn "Lil Red" Augustine along with many aunts, uncles and cousins. He was preceded in death by his father, Jim on July 28, 2021; his maternal grandparents John and Jeanette Gorman, paternal grandparents, Ray and Marion Augustine, and his uncle, Rev. James Gorman.

Memorial service was at 11 a.m. Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at the Church of St. Joseph in Red Wing. Father Brandon Theisen presided. Visitation was from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Monday, January 5, 2026, at the Mahn Family Funeral Home, Bodelson-Mahn

Chapel in Red Wing and at the church for one hour prior to the service. Private family burial was at St. Columbkil's Catholic Cemetery, rural Goodhue, MN.

Mike would want everyone to come

dressed casually and comfortably in jeans, flannel shirts or bib overalls.

Memorials are preferred to the Goodhue Education Association to be donated for agricultural education or donor's choice.

Serving Our Hometowns

(continued from page 1)

Thanks to local advertisers and your voluntary subscriptions, we are in your mail box each month with your hometown news and information.

Without this support, we would not be here. We hope you continue to see value in the Messenger and will support the paper with your voluntary subscription.

While there are plenty of social media sources and on line sites out there, most don't deliver the hometown news and message like we try to do here.

Every year, many local newspapers are forced out of business, consolidate, or reduce coverage. We have watched this happen many times in recent years in small rural communities..

With our small staff and some volunteers, we understand this challenge first hand here at the Messenger, which is why we publish the Messenger in its monthly format.

Our goal with the Messenger is to help insure our home towns still have a community voice of its own!

This format allows the community to maintain a local paper, and better connect local residents, businesses and the community. We also continue to understand the need for more timely information between issues, so we will continue expanding our digital and on-line offerings, while maintaining our dedication to our hometowns!

We remain a small family owned business with a goal of supporting our rural communities and businesses. Your voluntary subscription along with our local and area business that advertise on these pages will keep us here for you!

We are proud to continue to offer you this local hometown paper, in your mail box and welcome your comments, suggestions and story ideas. Our future success depends on the support of our local community, and we thank you in advance for your continued support of The Messenger!

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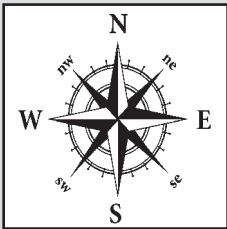
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Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

Menards and Lawyers



By Terry Campbell

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

I have always liked Menards. My favorite lumberyard. Through many remodel jobs and new construction projects, Menards has been my go-to place for just about everything I needed. We all know that if we shop there very often that "Save Big Money" jingle is stuck in our minds forever. Menards is almost a date for most couples. My wife finds things to put in the cart as well and then while I am in search of a few elusive items she will relax

on a sofa or recliner in the home goods section. When I am finished, I will find her there waiting for me.

There have been amusing times at Menards also. I recall when I was remodeling our house in 1999, my daughter Hayley and I witnessed one of the funniest sights of the year. A young boy of about ten years old was following his father into the store and while the dad walked through the gate the boy decided to make a dramatic entrance through the turn style. He planned to hit it at a fast pace and spin it when he went through. The plan went awry because he failed to notice it was intended for exit and not entry guests. When he hit the bar just about belt level, he folded in half and executed a perfect, yet unplanned gymnastic move. A complete summersault in mid-air, wrapped around the shiny chrome bar. Fortunately, he was not hurt because we were laughing to hard to help him in any way. We saw him and his dad a couple times in different parts of the store that night and every time we just looked at each other and began laughing again.

I have saved my store receipts from each visit and mailed them in for the 11% rebate for many years. I understood very well that I would receive a rebate by mail in the form of a post card and it would be clipped to the visor in my pickup truck to be used when I paid for my purchase on the next visit. I have not met anyone that doesn't understand that process. Imagine my dismay when I read this article last week.

Wisconsin-based Menards has agreed to pay a combined \$4.25 million to settle a lawsuit from 10 states related to deceptive mar-



keting for its 11% rebate. The states attorneys argued that the Eau Claire retailer misled consumers in some cases that the 11% rebate would be a discount that customers would receive at checkout instead of a rebate that needed to be mailed in and returned for a later store credit. The company agreed to make payments to Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Arizona, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio and South Dakota.

"Figuring out how much you'll have to pay to buy something should be straightforward," Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul said in a statement. "It shouldn't be an adventure. Menards' deceptive marketing left many customers believing they were getting a discount, when, in fact, the store was only offering an in-store credit for future purchases," Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul said in a statement. "Customers deserve to know what they will be charged when they make a purchase, without decep-

tive deals and fine print. I'm pleased that this settlement requires Menards to end these practices, and I will continue to work to ensure Illinois consumers are treated fairly." Menards agreed to pay Wisconsin \$450,000 and Illinois nearly \$947,000, Iowa nearly \$447,000 while each of the 10 states will receive payments.

The shocking thing about this lawsuit is that no money was paid to the "phantom shoppers" who couldn't figure out the rebate was mailed to them and not deducted at the time of purchase. No, this money was paid directly to the state government, that cares so much about the shoppers. And these attorneys care so much about the deceptive practice that they want Menards to cease from offering savings to customers in the future. Just a shakedown of a business by a government with an insatiable appetite for funds. Pretty evident who the real criminal is.

Happy New Year everybody.

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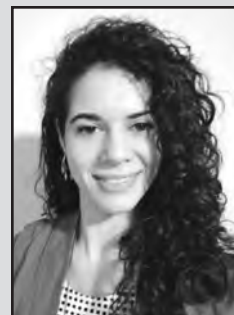
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A Minnesotan: New Years



By RosaLin Alcoser

And five, four, three, two, one... Happy New year's! As we close out 2025 and ring in 2026 I recall what for many of us is a shared childhood experience.

Which would be our parents lying about when midnight is on New Year's. For us the year that we found out about this was our second year in Minnesota. It was New Year's Eve 2001.

For years my parents had my older sister convinced that when the ball dropped in

New York City that it was New Year's. We, however, lived in the central time zone. So while it was the new year on the east coast it was only 11 PM where we were. Which yes is still late for a child, but it's so technically not midnight yet.

My parents kept this up for years. I was four years old the New Year's 2001, and I had learned to tell time and about clocks that year.

A new skill that I applied that New Year's Eve by looking at the clock and informing everyone that it was not midnight. It was 11 PM. My parents' ability to put us to bed, and therefore be there themselves, before midnight was gone. And my nine year old sister realized that she had been bamboozled into going to bed early on New Year's for years.

With that being said we did not get to stay up till midnight every year after that. We did some years, especially when we got to be older, but not every year.



Farm Girl Chatter Winter: The Season that Tests a Farmers Soul

By McKell Lemmerman

Winter arrives the way it always does—overnight, uninvited, and far too proud of itself. One minute the world was brown and sleepy; the next it was swallowed in white. It is like someone upstairs was so excited for a snow globe they had shaken it so hard it had burst and forgot to stop shaking it. The trees were dipped in powdered sugar, like cookies grandma makes for holiday greetings. The fields erased under thick drifts, and the sky was wearing its usual pale gray outfit. The sharp wind whispers “the season is just getting started”.

Most folks enjoy this time of year as it is the cozy season. Fireplace. Blankets. Soup on the stove. Hot cocoa loaded with more marshmallows than liquid. But what about the farmers? We look at fresh snow like work that shows up overnight calculating and questioning every life choice that led us here.

Still, for a moment before the day swallowed me whole; I paused. The snow-covered trees bow down like they were saying thank you to winter; and the barns have a new sparkle in their eye from the newly layered coat of ice. It brought an echo of childhood wonder that hadn’t quite burned out.

Back then, snow didn’t signal work for me; it signaled imagination. School cancellations were practically holy events. Dad would fire up the tractor, not only because he needed to plow and feed the animals, but because he knew us kids wanted giant snow piles. Snow Forts; those forts became entire kingdoms with tunnels. It brought out the rivalry in us too, to see who the king or queen of the hill was. Once we were satisfied with that, we turned our attention to building sled jumps—massive, bone-rattling, sled jumps that launched us into the air like we were going to the moon.

But childhood fades, and adulthood arrives with its handouts of responsibilities.

Now winter means work.

The moment I stepped outside, winter slapped me across the face with a big ol’ “HELLO”. The wind howled around the barns—mocking, relentless—while the snow drifts were just high enough to make every step feel like a weighted workout I never agreed to.

The animals waited, their breath rising in impatient clouds. Frozen waterers greeted us like old enemies. There were days we had to chip away at the ice or clean out bunks with the enthusiasm of someone filing taxes. The cows complained in long, dramatic moos, as though they had trudged through thigh-high snow to make their food. And the horses—



good grief—the horses stared with those judgmental eyes that screamed, “This seems like a you problem.”

Every farmer knows when winter hits chores take three times as long. Frozen latches become a full-contact wrestling match. A broken or frozen water line becomes a crisis of faith. And the moment something finally starts working, the wind kicks up again like winter itself was laughing at you.

But even in chaos, winter has a sense of humor. It is the time of year mice like to host a rave party inside the equipment engines, leaving behind enough chewed wiring to make a grown adult cry. Winter also seems to always have a personal vendetta for sabotaging machinery. You go to turn the key only to hear a pathetic cough followed by metal groaning like the tractor was reconsidering its career path. Cold and rodents—nature’s least helpful duo.

But as the sky softens every evening, something tends to shift. The animals settle into their fresh bedding, and their stomachs are full making not even a sound. The wind—wild and vicious all day—turns gentle. The sky paints a pastel wash of blue, pink, and grey. The fields sparkling like a blanket of diamonds. The trees shimmer in silver. Even the cold feels less cruel in that kind of moment.

That’s the thing about winter farming. It’s brutal. It’s exhausting. It’s sometimes downright ridiculous. It tests your patience, your sanity, your humor, your balance on ice, and your tolerance for frostbitten fingertips.

But it also roots you.

It strips everything down to what matters. It reminds you that you are part of something bigger—tougher than the storms, stronger than the frost, and braver than the winds that scream across the fields. Farmers endure what most people never see: frozen water, cracked hands, stubborn gates, sick animals, machinery that refuses to cooperate, and weather that seems personally offended by

our existence.

Yet we push on because the animals depend on us. Because the land demands us. Because, beneath all the layers of struggle, this life is woven into who we are. Winter tries to break us. But every time the sun rises over the snowy fields and turns the world into a glowing lace, we remember why we stay.

Why we fight. Why we love this life. Year after year, storm after storm, we rise with the snow, push through the cold, laugh at the chaos, and carry on—stubborn, frozen, determined, and proud.

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Hometown Holiday – Goodhue

(continued from page 1)

A chilly but bearable day with a little snow on the ground fostered a festive mood among the many visitors. The Goodhue Chamber of Commerce revamped the former Christmas in Goodhue celebration into the outdoor experience several years ago. A group of volunteers help with the event, planning a variety of activities to entertain all ages.

Between 10 AM and 4 PM the popular horse-drawn wagon rides departed and returned near the fire hall, a short walk to the Bake Shoppe and downtown businesses. Many of the shops offered special deals and activities including 40% off at the Barrel Hut, free wrapping paper from Lana Huemann Real Estate, and cookie decorating and crafts at the Corner Bar.

The Goodhue Sanctuary hosted its monthly open play day for children who could also visit with Santa inside The Third Place. The



A horse-drawn wagon carried riders around Goodhue on December 6th.

Grinch delighted older kids as he strolled the market but the younger kids were wary when he arrived at J-Hill Promotions for photo ops as the event drew to a close there with the announcement of the holiday lighting contest. Chosen for first place was 2nd Avenue resi-

dent, Sara Strusz, the Heintz Family on 180th Avenue and Dean and Connie Staton on North 4th Street.

Within the downtown market The Depot served German food and St. Luke's Care Team offered hot chocolate and raised funds

through donations and soft pretzel sales. 24 Vendors lined the street selling Christmas crafts and wonderful household and gift items.

(continued on page 8)



First time vendor, Glenn Albers was pleased with sales of his birch wood reindeer during the Christkindlmarkt.



The Grinch delighted older children but left younger ones apprehensive during his visit to Goodhue's Christmas events.

Hometown Holiday – Goodhue

(continued from page 7)

Glenn Albers, a Lake City resident who grew up in Goodhue and would sometimes substitute teach at the school during his 37 year career, loved seeing people he knew while manning his booth. Albers has been making birch wood reindeer for the past 7 years and decided to bring his hobby to the market for the first time in 2025. He heard it was a good show and he was not disappointed saying, “It started slow but picked up and I had good sales. I’m glad I came”. He came with 31 reindeer when the market opened and had only 13 left two hours before closing. He picks up the wood pieces wherever he can find them including storm clean-up after a Derecho hit Iowa. He describes the finished products as “Glued, screwed and solid in four sizes—baby, small, large and Bubba”.

Each vendor pays a \$35 fee to offset the chamber’s costs for permits, the horse-drawn wagon, Santa and other expenses. The chamber also uses the \$10 home tour ticket fee to help fund the happenings. Josh and Lindsay Finnesgard opened their 40054 Highway 58 home to visitors from 10 AM to noon. Also on the tour was 101 North 5th Street, purchased by Michael and Kylie Brunkhorst in 2021. Many Goodhue residents remember the former Haas home routinely decorated with 75 Christmas trees. With a nod to that tradition, the Brunkhorsts only displayed 74, which included ornaments and figurines.

Originally from Pine Island, Kylie stages homes for sale as part of her job with Cold-



Michael and Kylie Brunkhorst purchased their home in Goodhue in 2021 as an affordable starting point but fell in love with the community and plan to stay. They opened their 1920 four-square to visitors during the Christmas home tour.

well-Banker Nybo & Associates Realty in Red Wing. Using those skills in her own home, she admits that Christmas is her favorite season to decorate. She and Michael, a Red Wing native and wastewater operator at Prairie Island, love the charm of the woodwork in the 1920 four-square. The couple has worked hard removing carpet, staples and old stain in order to refinish the floors and staircase. They also completely renovated the kitchen and say they have lots of little things to finish both inside and outside of their home.

Recently married when they decided to purchase a home, they looked for something affordable thinking it might just be a starting point, but have decided to stay. The Brunkhorsts describe Goodhue as a small town whose school is a priority and people so willing to help. Michael sees it as a community that likes to be involved, and he jumped right in joining the Volksfest committee and the city council. Citing the feeling of “small town togetherness” as a reason to stay, they agree, “We love it here!”



In the tradition of the home's former owners, the Haas family, two of many tree-shaped props throughout the house create an inviting nook along the refinished stairway.



Kylie Brunkhorst enjoys decorating for Christmas, beautifully staging her own home for the home tour.



Looking to the living room, the Brunkhorsts' dining room table is set for Christmas company.

Christmas Cheer at Goodhue Living

(continued from page 1)

The choir of beautiful voices first sang in The Gardens memory care unit and then in the community room for tenants and guests. The singers of all ages harmonized on some familiar Christmas carols and then presented gifts to each resident.

Susie Matthees, Life Engagement Coordinator at Goodhue Living, facilitated the entertainment and worked with the visiting children to distribute the packages. She recognized the group "put a lot of time and thought into giving gifts to each of our residents". Each bag contained different items such as mugs, T-shirts, music CDs, books and treats. All residents received individualized gifts even if they did not attend the gathering.

Members of the church visit the Goodhue



The many voices of all ages sang acapella Christmas carols for Goodhue Living residents on December 23rd. Members of the Mennonite church visit once a month and also sing at other senior living communities, private homes and other places.

Living community every month, sharing a short Christian message and several songs. Leading the choir at the holiday event, Burnell Martin explained that the group sings

acapella, using no instruments even in church. Their Sunday services act as practice, making it easy for available members to form one or more groups when evangelizing

at private homes, senior living communities or other functions. A group of 35 gave a special 2025 holiday performance at Apache Mall in Rochester.



Members of the Mennonite choir mingle with Goodhue Living residents after singing and sharing gifts.

Hometown Holiday-Bellechester



Members of the Goodhue High School trap team served chili and sweet rolls during the Bellechester holiday event that raised funds for their team.

(continued from page 1)

In previous years, the parade kicked things off and food and kids' activities followed in the Fabtech building. This year the Bellechester Area Lion's Club joined with the Bellechester Clay Diggers non-profit to open the festivities with a chili and sweet roll supper to benefit the Goodhue Wildcat trap team. The fixings were purchased at the Country Station in Goodhue and the meal served by trap team members in the community center from 3-5 PM.

Also in the community center, the Happy-Go-Luckies 4-H club sponsored cookie decorating for kids. The club also supported local business by purchasing the cookies from Goodhue's Bake Shoppe. The 4-H club took a "divide and conquer" approach to the evening's events with some working the community center, some providing gift wrapping and others creating and riding on the lighted parade float.

As the parade floats lined up in Ag Partner's parking lot, spectators filtered in from the community center and tavern and lined the street to cheer on their favorites.

(continued on page 11)

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Hometown Holiday—Bellechester



The Keller family lighted tree, gifts and reindeer entry was voted first place in the lighted parade.

(continued from page 10)

The Goodhue Fire Department led participants representing the 4-H club, Goodhue Lion's, Darn Good Vittles, Miss Goodhue, the Keller family and Lodermeiers, Inc. Proceeds of the \$10 parade entry fee was divided between second, third and fourth place winners. Timberwolves tickets were given to the Keller family's winning entry.

To learn more about the non-profit Clay Diggers, call Emily Schmidt at 651-408-4447.



Santa and Rudolph arrived in Bellechester on a utility tractor from Lodermeier's Inc.



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Healthy Weight



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist



With the New Year starting, many will take this time to set some goals for the year ahead. A frequently mentioned goal is to improve health, reduce weight, and make better

lifestyle choices. Current records at the Center for Disease Control state that more than 70% of the adult population is overweight or obese. So what is a healthy weight and what are the best principles for maintaining or achieving a healthy weight?

A healthy weight may be evaluated by body mass index (BMI) or by waist to height ratio. A person's BMI is a calculation based on current weight and height. This is a common measure used by insurance companies and medical professionals. A person with a BMI between 18.5 and 24.9 is considered to have a healthy weight. The overweight category is BMI between 25 and 29.9, while the obese category begins at a BMI over 30. Higher BMI values are associated with greater health risks, but do not specifically identify a health condition. The waist to height ratio is a simple calculation taking your waist measurement from around your bellybutton and dividing that measure by your height. An individual with a 40 inch waist and a height of 6 feet would have a weight to height ratio of 0.55. ($40 / 72 = 0.55$) A ratio greater than 0.49 is

defined as overweight, and a ratio greater than 0.59 is defined as obese in a report from the JAMA Network Open issue October 15, 2025. The waist to height ratio may be a more accurate measure because it measures fat stores that can increase around the mid-section of the body. A healthy weight would be defined as a BMI below 24.9 with a waist to height ratio less than 0.49.

In order to achieve that healthy weight in the coming year, there are some key principles that should be practiced consistently. Some of these principles may be common sense to you. When these principles are applied together there can be great advances in your health. These key principles include:

- 1) Eat three meals each day. Each meal should include a protein source.
- 2) Keep a 5-hour break between meals. No snacks. Allow the digestion to complete from one meal before another meal is consumed.
- 3) No meal should be longer than 60 minutes.
- 4) Begin each meal with one or two bites of protein. Start with protein to help initiate the satisfaction signals that will help to limit overeating.
- 5) Eat only one protein with each meal, and do not repeat that protein the rest of the day. Select a different protein with each meal to avoid repetition, improve variety, and reduce inflammation from repeated proteins.
- 6) No eating after 9 pm. If you can stop earlier in the day, it's even better.
- 7) Drink the quantity of water calculated for you. (Half your body weight in fluid ounces.) Your body is dependent on quality water. Make sure you get enough each day.
- 8) Eat an apple each day. One medium sized, tart, non-sweet apple each day with one of your meals.

Perhaps applying these principles seems like too much of a change, but let's make this more fun with a challenge. You can receive support and direction establishing these practices in your own life by taking on the Healthy Weight Challenge, a 60-day challenge from January 17 – March 17 to improve lifestyle habits and see real change. Local businesses are sponsoring the challenge with gift certificates, educational videos, and online support. You can find out more information about the Healthy Weight Challenge by scanning the QR code or contacting me by email.

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.*

Goodhue County Health and Human Services Maintains National Accreditation Status through the Public Health Accreditation Board

Maintaining Accreditation through PHAB Ensures Goodhue County Health and Human Services Department's Capacity to Continue to Evolve, Improve and Advance

Red Wing, Minnesota—Goodhue County Health and Human Services announced it has successfully completed a review process to maintain national accreditation status through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). In maintaining its accreditation status for another five years, Goodhue County Health and Human Services has demonstrated that it meets PHAB's quality standards and measures and has the capacity to continue to evolve, improve and advance to continue improving the health of the residents of Goodhue County.



The non-profit PHAB works to advance and transform public health practice by championing performance improvement, strong infrastructure, and innovation. PHAB's accreditation program, which receives support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, sets standards against which the nation's governmental public health departments can continuously improve the quality of their services and performance.

"We are so proud to again be recognized by PHAB for achieving national standards that foster effectiveness and promote continuous quality improvement," said Nina Arneson, Goodhue County Health and Human Services Director. "Our agency has done an outstanding job utilizing the PHAB accreditation tools and processes as our agency's roadmap for improved operations, accountability and outcomes as we carry forward our mission to Promote, Strengthen, and Protect the Health of Individuals, Families and Communities."

Goodhue County Health and Human Services achieved national initial accreditation status through PHAB in June 2019, after undergoing a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it met a set of quality standards and measures. Today's announcement goes a step further by demonstrating that Goodhue County Health and Human Services has the capacity to become increasingly effective at improving the health of the community.

The transformation of public health practice championed by PHAB includes strengthening "foundational" services--basic services needed to support health in all communities. These services include things like tracking health data and sharing clear information with the public. When more local health departments across the state have these tools, it will help everyone in Minnesota be healthy regardless of where they live. By seeking accreditation, local public health departments like Goodhue County Health and Human Services are not only investing in foundational services but also following national best practices to guide the work they do.

"We are pleased to see Goodhue County Health and Human Services, along with many others, successfully maintaining their five-year PHAB accreditation," said PHAB President and CEO Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, MD, MPH, FACEP. "This demonstrates that accreditation is not just a one-time achievement but an ongoing commitment to excellence. By maintaining accreditation, these health departments reaffirm their dedication to continuous improvement and community health."

The 2025 Goodhue County Community Health Needs Assessment will be released soon, highlighting key health issues in Goodhue County, including mental health, chronic conditions, drug and alcohol use, and housing. Notably, more than 1 in 4 adults in Goodhue County reported delaying mental health care in the past year, demonstrating the importance of an accredited health department with the partnerships and capacity needed to respond to rising mental health needs and other emerging health challenges.

About Goodhue County Health and Human Services.

The Goodhue County Health and Human Services, works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Goodhue County. Learn more about Goodhue County Health and Human Services at www.goodhuecountymn.gov. For more information, please contact Jessica Seide at 426 West Avenue, Red Wing, Minnesota 55066] or via phone at 651-385-3200.

About the Public Health Accreditation Board

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) was created to serve as the national public health accrediting body and is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Vital Records/Health Statistics accreditation is funded, in part, by the National Center for Health Statistics. The development of national public health department accreditation has involved, and is supported by, public health leaders and practitioners from the national, state, local, Tribal, and territorial levels. For more information, contact PHAB Communications at communications@phaboard.org. Learn more about PHAB and accreditation at www.phaboard.org.

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Migraines and Immunity



By Shauna Burshem, D.C.

Why do women get more migraine headaches than men? LOL, the answer is NOT that men are the cause of the headaches. Migraines are far more than just headaches; they're a full-body storm that disrupts your

senses, drains your energy, and derails your day. For women, who experience migraines three to four times more often than men, these episodes are particularly life-altering, affecting work, relationships, and daily routines. The pain, often piercing or throbbing, is just one part of the story. Migraines also hijack your thinking, mood, and ability to function, with even ordinary stimuli like light or sound becoming unbearable. Researchers are uncovering that migraines are deeply tied to how the brain handles energy and hormones, offering new insights into prevention and healing.

Hormonal fluctuations are a key reason why women are disproportionately affected by migraines. Estrogen, in particular, plays a dual role: high levels heighten sensitivity to pain, while sudden drops—such as those before menstruation or after childbirth—trigger the electrical instability that sparks migraines. Natural progesterone, on the other hand, helps counteract estrogen's pro-inflammatory effects, calming nerve excitability and reducing migraine frequency. These hormonal shifts explain why migraines often cluster around life stages like puberty, pregnancy, and perimenopause. Stability in hormone levels, as seen in later menopause,

often brings relief, highlighting the importance of hormonal balance in managing migraines.

Beyond hormones, mitochondrial dysfunction is a major driver of migraines. Mitochondria, the energy powerhouses of cells, are inherited from mothers, which explains why migraines often run in maternal family lines. People with migraines tend to have less efficient mitochondria, leaving their brains in a constant state of energy deficit. Stress, poor sleep, and hormonal swings further deplete this energy supply, triggering migraines. Addressing this requires a holistic approach: reducing linoleic acid from seed oils, restoring nutrients like magnesium and B vitamins, and supporting melatonin through morning sunlight and minimizing blue light exposure at night can strengthen the brain's energy resilience and lower inflammation.

Women's unique brain structure and stress patterns also contribute to their higher migraine burden. Female brains are more responsive to sensory and emotional stimuli, making stress, light, and noise more likely to trigger migraines. Workplace factors like irregular sleep schedules, bright lights, and poor air quality further compound the risk. Women also experience longer, more dis-

abling attacks compared to men, with migraines ranking as the fourth leading cause of disability for women globally. However, women are more proactive in adopting preventive measures which offer hope for better management and relief.

Chiropractic care supports the immune system by improving nerve function, reducing stress hormones (like cortisol), and enhancing circulation, all thanks to its focus on spinal alignment which optimizes communication between the nervous and immune systems, potentially leading to fewer illnesses and faster recovery, though more extensive research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms. Adjustments help clear spinal misalignments (subluxations) that can interfere with nerve signals, allowing immune cells and nutrients to flow better, boosting the body's defenses. How it works: Nervous System Connection: Your spine houses the central nervous system, which directly talks to your immune system; spinal issues can disrupt this communication, weakening your immune response. Increased Immune Cell Activity: Studies suggest chiropractic adjustments can boost the activity of immune cells, like lymphocytes and natural killer cells, helping fight pathogens. Reduced Stress: Chiropractic care can lower cortisol (stress hormone) levels, which typically suppress immunity, allowing your body to respond better to threats. Better Circulation & Lymph Flow: By restoring spinal alignment, adjustments improve blood flow and lymphatic drainage, delivering immune cells and removing toxins more effectively. Potential Benefits: Fewer infections and quicker recovery from respiratory issues. Reduced inflammation, a key factor in many chronic conditions. Overall enhanced ability to fight off viruses and bacteria. Key Research: Studies show increased immunoglobulin production and better outcomes for respiratory infections in patients receiving chiropractic care. Historical data from the 1918 flu pandemic suggested much lower death rates for chiropractic patients compared to conventional care, highlighting strong innate healing. In essence, by keeping the spine aligned, chiropractic care aims to optimize the body's communication network, creating an environment where the immune system can work at its best.

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

The Savvy Senior Chair Yoga: Safe, Simple, and Beneficial for Older Adults



By Jim Miller

Dear Savvy Senior,

I've been hearing a lot about chair yoga lately. My New Year's resolution is to improve my health and get moving again, but I have trouble getting down on the floor. What can you tell me about this type of yoga?

-Arthritic Abby

Dear Abby,

If you're looking for a safe way to get active again but find traditional exercise routines difficult, chair yoga may be the perfect fit.

Chair yoga is a gentle form of yoga that's done either sitting on a chair or using the chair for support while standing. It adapts traditional yoga poses so they're accessible to people who may have limited mobility, balance issues, or difficulty getting down on the floor.

This practice helps improve flexibility,

strength, and balance, boosts circulation and mobility, and promotes relaxation while reducing stress. This makes it an effective and safe way to stay active and support overall well-being at any age.

A typical chair yoga session begins with simple seated postures, such as gentle twists, stretches for the arms and legs, or movements that open the hips and shoulders. These exercises loosen stiff joints, improve posture, and increase flexibility in areas of the body that often become tight with age.

It can also include standing poses like modified lunges or gentle balance work, with the chair always nearby for stability. Breathing exercises are often incorporated throughout the practice, encouraging participants to slow down, deepen their breath, and cultivate a sense of calm. Sessions usually end with a short period of guided relaxation or meditation, leaving participants refreshed and grounded.

How to Get Started

To get started, you just need a sturdy chair without wheels and preferably without arms, and some comfortable clothes. The goal with chair yoga is to stretch, not cause pain. So go only as far as feels comfortable and don't push beyond your limits.

If possible, consider joining a local chair yoga class. Many local senior centers, YMCAs, and community recreation centers offer chair yoga as part of their wellness or fitness programs. Some yoga studios and gyms may offer gentle yoga or chair yoga too. And if you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan, you may be able to access classes for free through SilverSneakers.com.

If attending an in-person class isn't an option, you can also practice chair yoga at home. There are chair yoga apps and many videos you can access on YouTube to guide you through a routine.

Chair Exercise Options

As an alternative to chair yoga, there are chair exercises you can add to your routine that can help improve strength and balance,



reduce joint pain and prevent falls.

To execute some of these exercises, you'll need some resistance equipment like light dumbbells, water bottles, soup cans or resistance bands.

Sit-to-stand: For this exercise, sit at the edge of the chair, feet hip-width apart. Stand up without using your hands, then slowly sit back down. Use hands lightly on the chair or use a walker or cane if needed for support.

Seated marches: Sit tall and alternate lifting one knee at a time toward your chest.

Seated bicep curls: With elbows tucked in, curl weights towards shoulders, then lower with control.

Seated overhead press: Press weights overhead from shoulder height, then slowly lower.

Seated leg extensions: Extend one leg straight out and hold for 2-3 seconds, then lower and repeat.

Heel raises: Lift heels off the floor, pause, and lower back down.

For noticeable benefits, these exercises should be performed at least three days a week, doing three sets of 8 to 12 repetitions.

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SHAUNA BURSHEM, D.C.

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Ask
A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



Question: *I'm pregnant and I've seen seat belt attachments that clip under the seat and say they make belts safer for pregnant people. Are these safe to use?*

Answer: I contacted the expert who is the Community Programs and Occupant Protection Manager for the Minnesota Safety Council and here is what I was advised.

Seat belt adjusters, also called seat belt po-

sitioners, are devices that try to move the lap belt so it doesn't rest across a pregnant person's belly. Manufacturers claim this reduces pressure and keeps the baby safe in a crash. These devices are not safe and should not be used.

What Crash Tests Showed:

- Experts tested these devices using crash test dummies designed to represent pregnant drivers.
- Plastic hooks broke completely in crashes.
- Metal hooks or extra straps pressed on the dummy's belly or groin.
- All adjusters allowed the dummy to move too far forward, increasing the risk of injury.
- Hard plastic or metal parts in the adjusters can cause extra harm in a crash.

Why They Don't Work:

- The main danger to a baby in a crash is from internal forces on the uterus, called placental abruption. Seat belt adjusters do not prevent these forces.
- Using an adjuster can actually make these forces worse by letting the pregnant driver move too far forward.

How to Wear a Seat Belt Safely During

Pregnancy:

- Use the normal three-point seat belt (lap + shoulder belt).
- Lap belt: Low on the hips, under the belly.
- Shoulder belt: Across the chest and off the neck.
- Worn this way, the seat belt protects both mother and baby.

Other Safety Notes:

- Manufacturers of seat belt adjusters do not have to meet safety standards.
- Materials and designs vary, and many are not crash-tested.
- Claims of "certified" or "crash tested" are not verified by independent sources.
- Bottom line: Do not use seat belt adjusters. Wearing the seat belt correctly is the safest

way for pregnant drivers and their babies.

Trusted Resources:

- Buckle Up MN: Seat Belt Use for Pregnant People
 - NHTSA: Pregnancy Seat Belt Use
 - Hudson Center for Prenatal Vehicle Safety
- 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)

May You Find Peace This Holiday Season

This has been a difficult, heavy year for many Minnesotans. For many in America. And it goes beyond the price of gas or the unpredictable weather.

Here in Minnesota, we had the political assassination of Melissa Hortman, and the devastating Annunciation School shooting. Which led to the threats of Governor Walz calling a special session, not to pass any meaningful gun legislation, but as Walz insinuated, to get Republicans for record of their votes.

I ran for this office to help solve problems, and there is no issue I would rather fix than to bring safety and security to our children, schools, neighborhoods, and cities. This is a deeply complex issue. If only we had this magic ability with the vote of the legislature and the swipe of a pen to make everyone totally "safe," I venture to guess we'd be all scrambling over each other to pass that law.

If gun legislation was the magic answer, would you agree that Chicago – which has some of the strictest gun laws in America - then must be one of our safest cities? If banning guns worked, then why did we just see a mass shooting in Australia after prohibiting semi-automatic firearms in 1996? If gun-free zones were effective, how did a violent criminal bring a gun on a 146-acre campus of Brown University and kill two students?

After the Annunciation shooting, I was alarmed and frankly disgusted to see how quickly the anti-gun activists hijacked and politicized the narrative. Children were still in surgery rooms nearby, when politicians stood up at a news conference and publicly claimed that gun legislation was what we needed to ensure Minnesotans' "safety."

Fear is an incredible thing. It drives people to action. People who are under duress and extreme fear are easier to manipulate and control. Knowing this as psychological fact, you then realize it's not an accident when political rhetoric increases after tragedies. In this case, demands for gun legislation with the promises in return of your "safety", never mind the shootings referenced above prove gun control doesn't work.

The Annunciation Church shooting was an unconscionable tragedy. You know what else was a tragedy? A Lake City man allegedly shooting the owner of the local Subway restaurant over an apparent disagreement. So too was the former Stewartville wrestler who authorities believe shot a student on the Stewartville wrestling team and then killed himself.

These two incidents happened within a day of each other this month in southeastern Minnesota. Clearly, these individuals were all troubled, the same as any other individual who thinks violence is the answer to their problems.

If we are serious about reducing violence, shouldn't every possible factor be on the table for discussion? Remember, we are basically two generations removed from kids driving to school with a loaded shotgun in the back of their pickup so they could go hunting after class – and no one batted an eye. What's changed? We've always had guns. Are we brave enough to consider what else is contributing to our society's violence epidemic?

Drastic increases in mental illness, depression and violence are happening in our society. Which of the following could be factors in these increases: children being over medicated for ADHD and anxiety, violent video games, lack of parenting, screen-time usage, decreased attention spans, alcohol, drugs, social media, or lower church attendance?

Are we serious about truly solving problems? If so, then let's have some very honest and tough discussions. Rushing to blame a gun for someone's actions is short-sighted and disingenuous at best. Falling for this heated political rhetoric, and allowing emotions to be overcome by fear, leads us to ignore every other contributing factor to the problem. Lulling us into believing "if only we legislate," has proven to be a false safety.

2025 is nearly in our rearview mirror, and the Christmas season is upon us. It is the season of giving, and a season of happiness. Most of us know the reason for the season. Might the society shift we are seeking to lessen violence, be not in legislation, but simply found in a meek and humble baby born, named Jesus?

Peace to you and your families this holiday season. Merry Christmas.



Rep. Pam Altendorf
(R)

To the Editor:

Mental Health: A Primary Concern for Goodhue County

Over the past few years, Goodhue County has quietly been facing a crisis that too often goes unspoken. While we take pride in being a close-knit, resilient community, recent data from the Goodhue County Community Health Needs Assessment reveals a troubling reality: the number of people in our county reporting poor mental health days has risen sharply, and our suicide rate has nearly doubled. These are not just statistics, they are neighbors, classmates, coworkers, and friends.

The COVID-19 pandemic didn't create this crisis, but it deepened it. Isolation, financial uncertainty, and the loss of daily routines left lasting marks on our collective well-being. For many, the pandemic years turned what used to be manageable stress into overwhelming anxiety or depression. The stigma that still surrounds mental health made it harder for people to reach out for help, and even when they did, access to care wasn't always there. As Whitney Isaacson and Sarah Knieff note in their recent article in the Republican Eagle, "So many of our top issues are interrelated and the data shows how the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of these issues," said Maggie Cichosz, community engagement specialist at Goodhue County Health and Human Services. The survey taken in 2021 saw a spike in opioid overdose deaths, while the 2022 student survey showed more students seriously considering suicide.

Rural communities like ours face unique challenges. We may have fewer mental health professionals per capita, longer travel times for appointments, and limited emergency services compared to larger cities. Many residents struggle to find affordable care, and waiting lists can stretch for weeks or months. For someone in crisis, that wait can be the difference between life and death.

But there is hope and it starts with conversation and connection. We need to keep normalizing the idea that mental health is health. Just as we wouldn't ignore a broken bone, we can't afford to ignore emotional pain. Schools, churches, and local organizations can play a vital role by promoting awareness and connecting people to resources like crisis hotlines and counseling services. Employers can make a difference too, by supporting mental health days and encouraging open dialogue in the workplace.

As a community, we can strengthen our safety net by supporting local mental health initiatives, advocating for funding, and ensuring that every resident – young or old, urban or rural – has access to compassionate care.

Goodhue County has always prided itself on being a place where people look out for one another. Let's prove that again now. Let's talk openly about mental health, listen without judgment, and remind each other that no one must face their struggles alone.

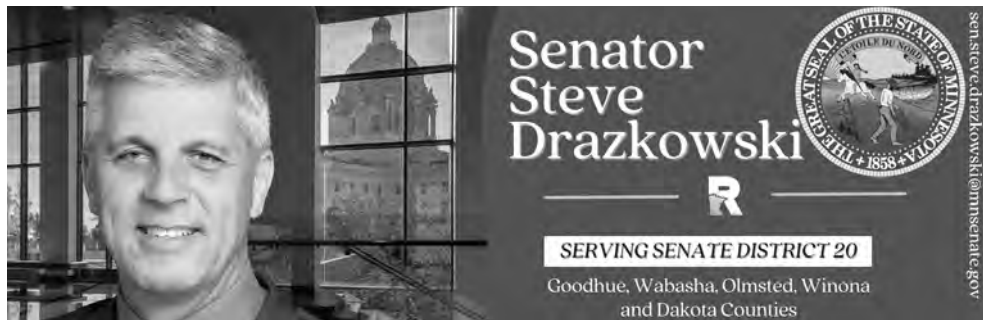
If you or someone you know is in crisis, please reach out. Call or text 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, available 24/7. Help is here. Hope is real. And healing is possible, especially when we face it together.

Alana Schmit, Winona State University
Op-Ed Assignment

Resources

Isaacson, Whitney, and Sarah Knieff. "Mental Health Tops Goodhue County Health Concerns." Cannon Falls Beacon, 25 Jan. 2023, www.cannonfallsbeacon.com/news/government/mental-health-tops-goodhue-county-health-concerns/article_69352628-9c23-11ed-955f-e770dd51898b.html. Accessed 04 Nov. 2025.

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



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We've just ended a tumultuous year in Minnesota. In 2025, we saw a new Trump administration take over in Washington, making needed course corrections in many different areas, including those that directly impact our state. Last summer, we experienced the horrifying murder of former Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband, the shootings at Annunciation School, and, on the national stage, the murder of conservative activist Charlie Kirk. In the last few weeks, we've seen public sector fraud in Minnesota take center stage, something Republicans like me have tried to call attention to for years. As we start the new year, let's hope that 2026 brings clarity and focus to our leadership so that we can effectively turn the page and build a brighter future.

The fraud reckoning

The truth about fraud in Minnesota public programs has finally reached social media and national news. Viral videos by an independent investigator revealed that Minnesota has squandered state and U.S. tax dollars on nonexistent children's food and care, paying for services never rendered on a scale unprecedented anywhere.

What could have prevented this? And what could the legislature have done?

Many people tried to prevent daycare benefit fraud and other abuses of the system. For decades, the Office of the Legislative Auditor has produced report after report detailing the failings of the administrative state around public welfare programs. After these reports came out, some legislators have been spurred to act by passing bills intended to "fix" the problems.

Why didn't they succeed? Because these efforts were stymied by other legislators who supported Governor Walz's view that the legislature had no business trying to manage his administration, even when it had repeatedly failed to address fraud. They were complicit in keeping the fraud in place and shirking one of the legislature's primary functions: oversight of the executive branch.

So, when you read about fraud and the failure to stop it, remember that there were people who tried to sound the alarm, but there were also those who did everything they could to keep the money flowing to the fraudsters. If you don't believe me, take a look at this debate on childcare fraud legislation from the Minnesota House in 2019. In it, House Democrats had a weak bill to address the fraud by allowing the fraudsters time to come up with the "corrections" they needed to keep getting funded. House Republicans, including me, disputed that this bill would do anything to prevent the fraud from continuing and offered amendments to implement basic anti-fraud reviews and audits of the program. These were all rejected. We were called racists and haters for our efforts.

Audits can prevent ongoing fraud, but they only catch it after it starts. To prevent it, we need to adjust Minnesota's system of checks and balances. The legislature must regain some of its authority over the executive branch in overseeing its programs. Additionally, we should reduce the number and complexity of programs to make them less vulnerable to exploitation by criminals.

I was part of the group that worked on a bill last year that would create an Office of the Inspector General. It was blocked in the

House by Governor Walz and his Democrat supporters. The OIG would be an independent office, like the OLA, but with investigative and law enforcement power. It would not have to wait for the legislature to act, and it would not be caught up in partisan debate.

Many people have asked, Why do we need a new agency? Why can't we give those powers to the Legislative Auditor? I don't like the idea of creating more government. But we cannot create an unconstitutional usurpation of power by the legislature that could be challenged in court. Many states have created Inspector General Offices and similar institutions and have found them to be valuable tools in combating fraud.

An OIG is not the only tool at our disposal. We must strengthen our whistleblower laws to protect honest people who come forward with information. They have been our best allies in stopping fraud. Currently, their only protection under the law is the right to sue for wrongful termination or to prove retaliation. That isn't much of an incentive to come forward. We can create a better pathway for investigation without exposing them to risk.

There will be much more news about this in the coming days. The guilty must be caught and punished, which is a job for law enforcement and the courts. The Trump administration is doing what it can to get the resources to the U.S. Attorney who will be prosecuting most of these cases because federal tax dollars were abused. At the legislature, our focus will be on what we can do to ensure this can't happen again. And it must start with overhauling our oversight role.

New laws in 2026

As is usual, Minnesota has a significant number of laws taking effect January 1, 2026. This year, there are new laws that affect workers, outdoor recreation, and protections for vulnerable adults.

Paid family and medical leave

A new state-run Paid Family and Medical Leave program starts, allowing most Minnesota workers to take up to 12 weeks of medical leave and 12 weeks of family leave per benefit year, with a combined cap of 20 weeks of paid benefits. Benefits are funded by a 0.88% payroll tax shared between employers and employees, and the program operates similarly to unemployment insurance with job protection for covered leave. (See my last newsletter for a write-up on this vast and probably unsustainable expansion of government into the employer-employee benefits area.)

Meal and rest break changes

Employers must provide a paid rest break of at least 15 minutes for every four consecutive hours worked, and this time must be counted as hours worked.

Employers must also provide at least a 30-minute meal break for every 6 consecutive hours worked, tightening the previous "sufficient time to eat" standard.

Outdoor and natural resources changes

The "shotgun zone" for taking deer during the regular firearms deer hunting season in southern Minnesota is repealed. Hunters statewide may use any legal firearm for deer unless a county enacts its own restriction, after a public hearing and passage of a county

ordinance. County sheriffs would enforce such an ordinance, not the State Department of Natural Resources, as was the case with the "shotgun zone."

Watercraft fee increases

The annual invasive-species watercraft surcharge increases from \$10.60 to a tiered range of \$14 to \$62, depending on boat size, type, and use. Specific water-use permit fees are also increasing. I fought these increases and will continue to try to roll back the rising cost of enjoying our outdoors.

Protections for vulnerable adults

People can now petition a district court for an order for protection against financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult, with a hearing required within 14 days. Courts may grant relief such as prohibiting contact and freezing assets or credit lines if the vulnerable adult is in imminent danger of exploitation or irreparable financial harm.

Elections

Absentee ballot applications will require both a Minnesota driver's license/state ID number and the last four digits of a Social Security Number unless the applicant certifies they lack these.

Third-party (groups or political party) Mailings with absentee ballot applications or sample ballots must include disclaimers clarifying they are not official government communications.

Other changes include the inclusion of phonetic name spellings for candidates on candidate filing documents, faster public information list processing, restrictions on campaign contributions for inaugural/transition expenses, and immediate reporting of self-contributions exceeding limits.

Specialty crop grants available from the Department of Agriculture

The Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) program funds projects that will increase the competitiveness of Minnesota-grown specialty crops in domestic and foreign markets.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines specialty crops as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, floriculture, and processed products that have 50% or more specialty crop content by weight, exclusive of added water. A list of eligible specialty crops is available on the grant page.

Each project must demonstrate external support from specialty crop stakeholders and produce measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry or public beneficiaries. Projects proposed by individual producers, for-profit businesses, or commercial entities are eligible if they demonstrate a significant benefit to the broader specialty crop industry.

MDA will award roughly \$1.25 million through a competitive review process, contingent on federal funding. The minimum award is \$25,000, and the maximum award is \$125,000. There is no matching funds requirement for this grant.

Applications are due by 4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Wednesday, February 11, 2026.

For more information, including the link to apply, here: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/business-dev-loans-grants/specialty-crop-block-grant>

Snow and Mailbox

Postal Service Asks Customers to Clear Walkways and Areas Around Mailboxes of Snow and Ice

Courtesy of City of Goodhue

MINNESOTA — Winter weather advisories, winter storm warnings, and icy condition warnings have been issued across portions of Minnesota.

Postal officials are asking for the public's cooperation in keeping mailboxes, steps, and sidewalks clear of snow and ice, so letter carriers are able to provide the safest, most efficient delivery service possible.

The Postal Service is asking customers to help keep their letter carrier safe through the following actions:

Clear enough snow from curbside boxes to allow mail trucks to approach the box, deliver the mail and to drive away from the box without danger of the need for backing.

Walkways should be cleared of snow and ice and allow enough traction to avoid slips, trips or falls.

Steps should also be kept clear of ice and snow and in good repair so as not to cause injury to the letter carriers or others who visit the customer's home.

Overhangs should be clear and free of snow and ice to avoid injury.

Residents who receive delivery to roadside mailboxes also must keep the approach to, and exit from, the mailbox clear of snow or any other obstacles, like trash cans and other vehicles. The carrier needs to get in, and then out, without leaving the vehicle or backing up.

City of Goodhue 2026 Budget Summary						
General Fund		Income		Expenses		
10% Gambling Proceeds *	30000			Salaries		
Taxes	515,450			Council		6,000.00
Bond Assessment	204,750			Clerk/Admin		89,948.01
LGA	355,855			Public Works		115,542.68
Small City Assist	22,107			Fire Protection		40,000.00
Building Permits	20,000			Police Protection		174,762
Dog Licenses	500			Ambulance Fees		23,000.00
Golf Cart Permits	100			Engineer Fees		7,000.00
Court Fees	1,500			Legal Fees		30,000.00
Alcohol Permits	4,700			Office Supplies		8,000.00
Tobacco Permits	150			Electricity		28,000.00
Interest on Checking Acct	8,500			Telephone/Cell Phone		2,500.00
City Hall Office Rental	6,000			Gas		3,000.00
Park Facility Rental	600			Garbage		186,000.00
Crop Land Rent	4,990			EDA - Faade Budget		6,000.00
Fire Training Aid	0			Abatement Agreement		14,000.00
Garbage	191,748			Technology Support/Operating Supplies		9,000.00
Billboard Rental	2,000			PW - Street and Shop		100,000.00
	1,368,950			Parks		9,000.00
* varies				Snow Removal		15,000.00
				Professional Dues/Fees		2,700.00
				Publishing Fees/Website		1,500.00
				Election Fees		3,800.00
				LMCIT Insurance -Property		37,000.00
				LMCIT Insurance - Worker's Comp		6,000.00
				Building Permits		16,000.00
	Principle	Interest		Debt Payments		248,712.50
Bond				Capital Improvement Fund		25,000.00
2022 Street	65000	19,163		Transfer to Savings		10,000.00
2021A/2022/Pool/ Water Tower *	\$207,200	10,250		TIF 1.5 Agreement		99,000.00
	\$272,200	29,413				1,316,465.20
Total		301,613		Income minus Expenses =		52,484.80
* \$52,000 paid from Water fund						

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THEME: ON THE FARM
ACROSS

1. Laura Ingalls' notebook
6. Boozer
9. Biblical pronoun
13. Sacred text, to some
14. "Fat chance!"
15. Afrikaners' ancestors
16. Cake spread
17. Chowd down
18. Clear the blackboard
19. *Barn chore
21. *John Deere, e.g.
23. Nirvana's "Come as You ____"
24. Spasm of pain
25. Broadband access overseer, acr.
28. Mark for omission
30. Recessed space
35. "____ and the Real Girl," movie
37. "Shoot!"
39. E in baseball box score
40. Oil org.
41. Intelligent
43. A mixture or medley
44. Children's respiratory disease
46. Foggy view?
47. Politicians, for short
48. In a sympathetic manner
50. Ski hill ride
52. Maiden name indicator
53. Bald eagle's nest
55. Repeated Latin dance step
57. *a.k.a. harvester
61. *Opposite of pasture
65. *Common varieties are yellow, red and white
66. Tall tale
68. Smooth, in manner
69. Audience's approval
70. "____ at ease"
71. Stomach sore
72. Caribou or moose
73. Soldier's bed
74. Harsh

DOWN

1. *Separate cream from milk
2. Locus, pl.
3. Seed coat
4. Form of Japanese poetry
5. Encircle
6. Deep pile carpet
7. *Cereal grass
8. Sorority letter
9. Cleopatra's necklace
10. Thermostat option
11. Guesstimate phrase (2 words)
12. Olympic cast-out, e.g.
15. Charles Darwin's vessel
20. Must-haves
22. Ribonucleic acid, acr.
24. Fine
25. *Group of chickens
26. Birthplace of Caprese
27. Oedipus' successor
29. *Baby sheep
31. *____ rotation
32. Acrylic fiber
33. Bridal veil fabric
34. With a jagged margin
36. Gulf War missile
38. *Pasture-raised chicken's morsel
42. Vanish without this?
45. Lamentation
49. Japanese capital
51. Rh in Rh disease
54. Indiana Jones' find, e.g.
56. Not a minor
57. For boys and girls
58. Popular fairy-tale beginning
59. Stephen King's "The Green ____"
60. *Male pig
61. Abe Lincoln's hat material
62. Tatted cloth
63. Done
64. Seaside bird
67. UN labor grp.

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