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JANUARY 7, 2026

Volume 20 • Issue 1

Brady Rouhoff Announces Candidacy for Minnesota House District 20B

Brady Rouhoff, a resident of Zumbrota, officially announced his candidacy for the Minnesota House of Representatives in District 20B on December 11th, seeking the Republican nomination.



(continued on page 15)

What to do for fun in the snow

Steeplechase, the ski, snow board and tubing resort outside Mazeppa is open for winter sports enjoyment. The 172 acre mountain

also boasts a 7,000 square foot chalet which doubles as a wedding event center. They are in their fifth year of business for tubing and the third year for skiing and snow boarding. They now offer 24 runs, four chairlifts, a tubing hill and rental shop for skis and snow boards.

The ski and snow board hill has a 200 foot vertical drop with slopes for all experience levels. Snow making equipment ensures there is always a good base of snow on the hill.

(continued on page 4)



Courtesy of Steeplechase

Serving Our Hometowns Thanks To Your Support!

We want to Thank You for your continued support of the Mazeppa-Zumbro Falls Messenger.

(continued on page 7)



Announcements

- The Mazeppa Area Historical sends out a Huge Thank You to all who braved the cold & attended our 15 annual "Soup & Chili Luncheon with Santa"! Also, for your continued support in preserving our rich history for the present & future! LOOKING FORWARD TO ANOTHER GREAT YEAR!

- Celebrate Recovery meetings every Sunday night at 5pm at South Troy Church, 56817 Highway 63 Zumbro Falls.

- The Zumbro Valley Food Shelf is located at South Troy Wesleyan Church, 56817 Hwy 63, Zumbro Falls, MN. The hours are Tuesdays 11:00am-5:00pm and Thursdays 11:00am-6:00pm. Donations and volunteers are greatly appreciated. For more information contact Pastor Colleen Hoeft at 507-259-1442 or choeft52@gmail.com.

(continued on page 2)



Mazeppa Area Historical Society Hosts 15th Annual Soup and Chili Luncheon

By Helen Reiland

The Mazeppa Area Historical Society hosted its 15th annual soup and chili luncheon on Saturday, December 13. Santa even made it to the Mazeppa Community Center in the severe cold weather, as did 82-year-old Ann Louise Haas who traveled from Bemidji just to attend.

Pictured to the left, from left to right are Betty Baer, Dora Hellerud, Helen Reiland, Kenna Bishop, Santa Claus (Kevin Ewert of Rochester), Faye Gabrielson, Bill Marx, Candy Marx, Tom Stahman, Bob Perrotti, Callie Markson, LuAnn Lewer and Santa's elf, 16-year-old Olivia Markson. All are MAHS members except for Olivia Markson, Kenna Bishop, and Santa Claus



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Zumbro Falls Area



At Once



By Pastor Colleen Hoeft

Change is hard. 30% of Americans make New Year's Resolutions, 70% don't. Nearly half (49%) of those, the 30% that make resolutions, ages 18 to 29 say they made at least one resolution this year, by far the largest share of any age group. About a third (31%) of those ages 30 to 49 say they made a resolution, while only about a fifth (21%) of adults 50 and older have done so. As we get older I guess we have either met all of our goals or believe that change is too hard or that making resolutions is easier said than done! Oh, the optimism of youth!

It's good to come into the New Year realizing that we need to change something. It doesn't have to be big, only real. Change is good, but not everything always needs to change all the time! What isn't broken probably doesn't need fixed! But on the other hand, we should always be looking for ways to change those things that are broken or are getting tired or need an update. Not everything from the 70's or 90's needs to continue to live in your house or closet!

God likes change! In fact, God loves change, look around you; the seasons change, the weather changes, every snowflake is different from the other, and people change. We begin as infants and change almost daily all the way through to death. There is change going on all over the world around us that

God has created. God loves change, yet He never changes.

"I am the Lord, and I do not change." Malachi 3:6. "He never changes or casts a shifting shadow." James 1:17. And, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Hebrews 13:8.

So how do we know the changes that we should make? Oswald Chambers writes, "Not often but every once in a while, God brings us to a major turning point—a great crossroads in our life. From that point we either go toward a more and more slow, lazy and useless Christian life, or we become more and more on fire, giving our utmost for His highest—our best for His glory."

What kind of faith life do you want to have in 2026? Will you go toward a slower and lazier and useless Christian life, or do you want to become more and more on fire giving your utmost for His highest? We don't want to change those things that are good and are there to help us grow in our faith. Are you willing to change those things that are holding you back? Don't you want to know if there are things hindering your growth and life as a believer? Change is hard, but with God change is possible!

Let's start with the disciples and how their lives changed and what that looked like in the first days of following Jesus in Mark 1. These were just ordinary people. They were fishermen, doing what they always did. Fishing. They were casting in their nets—nothing unusual on this day. A normal day on the sea of Galilee.

Jesus gave fishermen the invitation he called them, "Come follow me." Jesus gave the invite and they responded, 'at once!'

When you are called to follow you need to believe that: Where Jesus is calling you is

better than where you are. For you to choose to change, you have to believe where you are going is better than where you are. Why would anyone change if nothing is going to be different? If everything is going to be the same—why change? When you choose to follow Jesus, He has a plan that is exactly right for you. He knows what's best for you. He has an adventure all lined up—It's Time to CHANGE! And the best time to start is—

• Start now. Remember where Jesus is calling you is better than where you are!

Today is the day! Simon and Andrew—at once, immediately. Start your workout today. Get a budget today. Begin working on that relationship—today Don't just think about it—set up the appointment, call the counselor, today. Reading through the Bible in a year? —start today. ... do what you need to do now!

• Let Go. Change requires you to let go. Simon and Andrew left nets. They left family. They left their business. They dropped everything. When you choose to follow Jesus you will need to leave behind those things that will drag you back to where you are.

• Get going. At once they left their nets and followed him. Mark 1:18 NIV

The left their nets and followed Him! They did it. They changed what they were doing. Change requires action. Just talking about it won't get it done. Only praying about it won't get it done. You need to do your part in what you are being called to change. "Pray as if everything depended on God. Work as if everything depended on you." Saint Augustine.

Change is a one-time decision with a daily commitment. Start now. Let go. Get going. Change is hard, but with God, change is possible.

sible.

Jesus' call is: Follow Me. He's asking you to drop everything. The disciples left their entire lives behind at the Lake. They chose to follow Jesus. Simon, Andrew, James and John reoriented their entire lives around Jesus. They did that because He's that good. Living in His kingdom is better than where you are currently living. Doing life His way is better than your way.

Following Jesus is a one-time decision with a daily commitment. Don't wimp out with excuses Jesus is the power that will transform you into the person that He created for you to be.

Change is hard. But With God, change is possible. Let's go At Once into this New Year following Jesus!

South Troy Church wants to invite children age 4 years old-5th grade to join us.

First Wednesday VBS
The first Wednesday of each month from 6-7:30pm.

This is a monthly Vacation Bible School format filled with God's word, some crafts, fun and a meal.

January-April the Armor of God:

- January 7: Belt of Truth
- February 4: Breastplate of Righteousness
- March 4: Gospel of Peace
- April 1: Shield of Faith
- May 6: Helmet of Salvation and Sword of the Spirit



Announcements

• **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



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Pastor Dan Reich
507-753-2576 • 35933 Cty. Rd. 17, Lake City, MN
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507-843-3885
Sunday Mass 10:00 a.m.

ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH

Hall 507-753-2424, West Albany
Sunday Mass 8:00 a.m.
Wednesday Mass 7:00 p.m.

ST. JOHNS (BEAR VALLEY) LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Dan Reich • 507-753-2576
Sunday Worship 8:30 a.m.

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH (POTSDAM)

Pastor Dean Zemple
7134 Highway 246 NE, Elgin, MN
Sunday worship at 9:15 a.m.
(Bible class at 8:15 during the school year)

LANDS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor: David Krinke, Email: pastordavid@landslutheran.org
Pastor: Nikki Rockne, Email: pastornikki@landslutheran.org
P O Box 225/16640 Hwy 60 Blvd, Zumbrota, MN (507) 732-5482
Web Site: www.landslutheran.org
Facebook: Lands Lutheran Church
Sunday services 8:30 am Contemporary Worship
10:30 am Traditional Worship

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.

Email your church announcements, schedule, etc. to the
Mazeppa-Zumbro Falls Messenger at: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Dave Neil
180 2nd Ave NE, Mazeppa • 843-4962
Sunday Service 10:30 a.m.

ZUMBRO COMMUNITY CHURCH

Dave Mohler
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Sunday Service 10:30 a.m.; Sunday Evening 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday Evening 7:00 p.m.

SOUTH TROY WESLEYAN CHURCH

Pastor Colleen Hoeft
56187 Hwy. 63, Zumbro Falls
www.southtroywesleyan.org • 507-259-1442
Sunday 10:30a.m.
Sunday 5:00p.m. Celebrate Recovery - 5pm- meal, 5:45 large group and 6:30 small groups.
Wednesday Kids and Teen worship at 6pm - meal at 6, followed by worship and small groups.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Dean Zemple
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Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m.
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20 - 3rd St. SW, Oronoco, MN
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10:00a.m. Worship

Leroy "Roy" Ernest Goranson

Leroy "Roy" Ernest Goranson, passed away on December 4, 2025 at the age of 75 at his home in Mazeppa, MN, surrounded by family. He was born on September 7, 1950 to Burton and Garnet (Stull) Goranson.

Roy graduated from High School in Mazeppa in 1969. After graduation, he joined the Army and trained as a paratrooper with the 101st Airborne Division, before serving in Vietnam in 1970-1971. He returned to Mazeppa where he spent the next 40+ years working as a brick and block layer. From private homes in Mazeppa to the beautiful stonework of the Gonda building, Roy's handiwork is visible throughout SE Minnesota. On October 4, 1980, Roy married Nancy (Bartholome) from Bellechester and celebrated 45 years of marriage and family.

Each year Roy looked forward to golfing with friends, fishing up north, snowmobiling in Michigan, and riding his motorcycle on trips throughout Minnesota and beyond. His greatest claim to fame was tagging a 22-point whitetail deer in 1990, ranked as Minnesota's 2nd largest non-typical deer that year. In 2007

Roy helped to establish the Mazeppa Honor Guard. Thereafter he was instrumental in designing and building the Mazeppa Veterans Memorial, as well as establishing the annual Field of Flags during Mazeppa Daze.

Roy is survived by his wife, Nancy, his son, Brandon (Kerstin) Goranson, and his daughter, Haley (Alan) Jacob; grandchildren, Ava, Kashon, Phoebe, Brooks, Ellie; siblings, Shirley Webster, Patti Goranson, Raymond (Cheryl) Goranson, Yolie (Russ) Donley, Linda Goranson, Debbie (Ken Dubriel) Carrier, Sheila (Dennis) Albers, Zola (Rod) Harvey, and Dale (Mary) Goranson; sister-in-law, Nan Goranson, and numerous nieces and nephews. Roy is preceded in death by his parents, Burton and Garnet; siblings, Burt, Lee (Margaret), and Zeld; and brothers-in-law, Fritz and Scott.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be sent to the Mazeppa Honor Guard.

Internment took place at the Minnesota State Veteran's Cemetery in Preston, MN on Wednesday, December 10 at 1:00pm. All were welcome.

A celebration of life was held at WD's 2 in Mazeppa on Saturday, December 13, 2025 from 2-6pm. Service and salutes at 2pm, followed by a meal. Toasts to Roy in the American Legion at 6pm.

Arrangements by the Mahn Family Funeral Home, Larson Chapel in Zumbrota.

Carley Ray Howard

Carley Ray Howard, 17 years old, of Pine Island, Minnesota, passed away Sunday, November 30, 2025.

Carley was born on March 13, 2008 in Rochester, Minnesota, to Zach Howard and Nicole (Breitbach) Loftus. She was a senior at Zumbrota-Mazeppa High School. Carley enjoyed learning about raising animals and showing goats and alpacas at county fairs through her involvement with Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4H Club. She was a farm girl at heart, driving her beloved 1994 Ford F150, enjoyed milking cows and doing welding projects. Carley also loved contemplating the natural wonders of the northern lights and sunsets, as well as, the antics of the local squirrels.

Carley is survived by her parents, Zach Howard and Nicole (Joe) Loftus; bonus mom, Laura Severude; brothers and sisters, Peyton Loftus, Genevieve Loftus, Aria Howard, and Hailey Howard; grandparents, Mark (Brenda) Breitbach, Tony (Peggy) Howard, Doug Severude, and Joe (Wendy) Loftus; and many other aunts, uncles, and cousins who loved her dearly.

She was preceded in death by her grandma, April Severude; great-grandparents; Herb and Josephine Breitbach, Ray and Francis Worms, Robert and Gladys Ullevig, and Harry and Muriel Howard.

A memorial service for Carley was at 6 p.m. Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Zumbrota, Minnesota. Pastor Eric Westlake and Father Shawn Heremza officiated. Visitation preceded the service, from 3-6 p.m. Arrangements were entrusted to Mahn Family Funeral Home, Larson Chapel in Zumbrota. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed

to the FFA, Zumbrota-Mazeppa Chapter.

Michael Henry Koop

Michael Henry Koop, 35, of Zumbro Falls, MN passed away on Wednesday, December 17, 2025. He was born to Michael and Marie (Bartel) Koop in Rochester, MN on May 5, 1990. Michael grew up in Pine Island, MN and graduated from Pine Island High School. Michael started

working for Central Livestock since he was 16, and has continued working there for the past 19 years. Eventually, he decided to open his own business, Koop Livestock, working towards his dream of being his own boss. During his free time, he enjoyed bowling on a league team and watching sports. Michael was also known for supporting local causes with his financial support, and could always be found near the sales barn. More than anything, Michael loved his son, Milton, and looked forward to any time they got to spend together. He always loved going to Milton's baseball games and playing video games with each other.

Michael is survived by his son, Milton Koop; parents, Michael (Marie) Koop; siblings, Brian Bartel, Jennifer Knude, Ashley (Aaron) Koop-Kruger, Mitchell (McKensi) Koop; grandparents, Milton (Marcia) Bartel, and Pat Jackson; 8 nieces and nephews; and many other friends and family members.

He is preceded in death by his grandfather Richard Koop; and his uncle Mark Bartel.

A memorial service for Michael was held on Tuesday, December 30th at 11 a.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Pine Island. A visitation was held one hour prior at the church. There was also be a visitation on Monday, December 29, from 4-7 p.m. at the Mahn Family Funeral Home - Larson Chapel in Zumbrota.

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Questions?
 Contact Pastor Colleen Hoeft at celebraterecoveryouthtroy@gmail.com or 507.259.1442
 Visit southtroywesleyan.org for more information

Outdoor Nativity at South Troy Church



What to do for fun in the snow

(continued from page 1)

There are two double chair lifts and two triple chair lifts to keep runs moving. The rental shop stocks over 450 skis for all ages as well as snow boards. The chalet has a café inside for snacks while you warm up or rest. The ski and snowboard slopes are open Saturday from 10am to 9pm and Sunday from 10am to 7pm. Lift tickets are \$55.00 per day and rental skis and boots, including helmet is \$40.00.

There are 3 tubing lanes that are 700 feet long. A tow will pull you and your tube back to the top of the hill between runs. Every evening at sundown you can enjoy Extreme Night Tubing with laser lights and music to



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set the mood. The tubing lanes are open Friday 5 to 9pm, Saturday 10am to 9pm and Sunday 10am to 7pm. One hour of tubing is \$18.00, two hours is \$25.00 and four hours is \$40.00. Tubes are provided. Season passes start at \$300.00 for individuals and there are family passes available. The season pass allows unlimited days and pro-

vides discounts at 47 other resorts, including three in Minnesota, eight in Wisconsin and two in Iowa. Steeplechase is located at 59468 423rd Avenue, Mazeppa, MN and their phone number is 507-261-8033. Check out their website at steeplechaseevents.com

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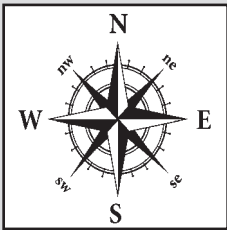
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Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

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 law-



suit from 10 states related to deceptive marketing 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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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.



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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.

Layer after layer, till springtime shows.

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Lake City Area Arts Presents: “Celebrating World Cultures - NORWAY” Featuring the Stoughton High School Norwegian Dancers

Lake City Area Arts is proud to present the next event in its Celebrating World Cultures series: Celebrating World Cultures – Norway, featuring a special performance by the Stoughton High School Norwegian Dancers from Stoughton, Wisconsin. The celebration will take place Friday, January 17th at the Wild Wings Plaza Event Center in Lake City, Minnesota.

The evening will begin at 6:00 PM with a Scandinavian inspired menu available for purchase, giving guests the opportunity to enjoy authentic flavors prior to the show. Dinner purchase is optional and does not include performance admission.

At 7:00 PM, the Stoughton High School Norwegian Dancers will take the stage to present an energetic, heritage-rich performance. These talented students have performed worldwide, sharing the spirit of Norwegian folk dance with audiences around the globe. Known for their vibrant traditional costumes, skilled footwork, and storytelling choreography, they offer an unforgettable performance rooted in Norwegian culture and community tradition. Tickets for the performance are \$10, and high school students and children are admitted free. Performance tickets may be obtained online through the Lake City Area Arts website (www.lcaamn.org) or in person at Fresh Market in Lake City.

Serving Our Hometowns

(continued from page 1)

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

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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Historical Happenings

Compiled by
Helen Reiland

THE MAZEPPA JOURNAL, Editor and Publisher: Barbara and Reider Tommeraas
FRIDAY, AUGUST 3, 1956

Two Businesses Change Hands This Week

ARENDT'S RESTAURANT SOLD TO THE CLIFFORD LIFFRIGS

Mr. and Mrs. Ervin Arendt have sold their restaurant to Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Liffrig, who took possession last Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. Arendt, who operated the restaurant for the past 14 months, plan to move to Rochester in the near future, where he is employed.

Best wishes for success are offered both the Liffrigs and the Arendts.

HELGERSON'S STORE SOLD TO MR. AND MRS. R.J. TOMMERAAS

It will take a lot of doing to all the shoes of Cy Helgerson, popular Mazeppa "storekeeper" for more than 50 years.

Mr. Helgerson this week announced the sale of his general store to Mr. and Mrs. Reider Tommeraas

Cy Helgerson came to Mazeppa in 1900, after growing up on a farm near Millville. He spent about three years in Canada and one at York's store in Hammond. His career in a general store in Mazeppa began when he started working Herman Phillips, at \$35. a month. About 46 years ago, he went into partnership with the late George Squire. Since the latter's death in 1943, he has been sole owner.

Cy has seen a great evolution to merchandise carried. He well remembers when a thriving business was carried on in coonskin and buffalo furs for both men and women who had to brave horse and buggy rides in the severe winters; horse hide coats and robes. However the store still carries a general line of merchandise suited to the needs of the community.

Needless to say, he knows the store business frontwards and backwards, and has been a successful merchant through all the ups and downs of the past century.

Cy has been as fine a citizen as storekeeper, through his varied interests. He came to Mazeppa originally because of his interest in music, which the town was noted for. He was a fine trumpet player and was with the municipal band for 35 years, as both player and director. He also used to play in a dance orchestra and on the town baseball team.

He has a genuine liking for people and will miss the store as much as it will miss him. It is the wish of The Journal and the community that he and Mrs. Helgerson may enjoy many happy years of retirement.

Area Farms Bracing For 1956 Plowville

It is quiet and peaceful right now on the farms of Donald Darcy, Peter Perrotti, Florian Reding, Clarence Arendt and Neil Arendt.

These farm families are comparing it to a quiet before the storm however.

That's because thousands of visitors from a wide area will converge on their farms for the Plowville '56 activities Friday and Saturday, September 14 and 15.

The Peter Perrotti farm has been designated as the headquarters area while various soil conservation demonstrations and plowing matches will be held on the Darcy, Arendt and Reding farms.

Continued next month.

Historical Happenings are taken directly from the archives of the original papers as printed. Any discrepancies need to be taken up the Editor and Publisher of the said papers, who are deceased.

Thank You to Hanisch Bakery for Donating Donuts



A big THANK YOU to Hanisch Bakery for donating donuts to the winning Holiday Scavenger Hunt classroom contest at the Elementary School. Mrs. L. Quam's class was able to enjoy their sweet prize. *Courtesy of Z-M Schools*

KTTC Interviews FFA Members



In December, KTTC stopped by to interview some of our FFA members about Winter Leadership Summit held in St. Cloud. *Courtesy of Z-M Schools*

Congratulations to Ms. Ringstad's Advisory for winning our Toys for Tots fundraising Drive!



Courtesy of Z-M Schools

First Grade Community Service Project



In December, first grade completed their bedtime endeavor! All items were donated locally to support our community. Thank you first grade families for your support in completing this community service project! *Courtesy of Z-M Schools*



Thank you to all those who participated in the ZM Dance Team Alumni Tournament



ZM Elementary Students Celebrated Computer Science Week by Practicing their Typing and Coding Skills in IGNITE



Courtesy of Z-M Schools

Courtesy of Z-M Schools

Women in Faith of Mazeppa UMC Donates Toys



Pictured left to right: Ariel Nelson, Tracey Nelson, Jody Durow, Kelly Barker, Dora Hellerud, Jane Hanson, Joyce Greer

Submitted by Ann Neil

The Women in Faith of Mazeppa UMC donated toys through the Dollar General collection effort. Christmas Eve service at 4 PM December 24.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL and a "THANK YOU"

To the following for donating time, materials and support in completing our new building!:

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Valley Electric
Thompson Doors

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Also, Thanks to all members, donors and grant-makers for their generous donations.

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FINALLY FRIDAY All You Can Eat Fish Dinner

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SUNDAY
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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 midsection 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.*

Talking winter skin health with University of Minnesota

The winter months bring fun activities for those willing to brave the outdoors, but time outside in the dry and cold air can be harsh on our skin. David Pearson, MD, FAAD, with the University of Minnesota Medical School and M Health Fairview talks about how to keep your skin healthy during the winter.

Q: What unique challenges does our skin face in the winter?

Dr. Pearson: Our skin is our interface with the environment. As temperatures and humidity levels drop, one of the first places we experience this is on our skin — particularly in places like Minnesota, where it gets very cold and dry. Unsurprisingly, a number of studies show that skin and fingernail moisture content is much lower during the winter months. When our skin dries out, its barrier function is compromised and we become more susceptible to external allergens, irritants and even infections. The effects of cold can range from being a nuisance to quite dangerous. Frostbite can occur when the skin temperature gets to 28 F — this only takes about 30 minutes when the thermometer reads 0 F. Our skin isn't physiologically equipped for unprotected, prolonged exposure to these temperatures, so be sure to wear warm coats, hats and gloves when you're going outside.

Q: What common skin issues do you see during the winter?

Dr. Pearson: We see lots of dry skin, even incidentally, in people who come in for other skin concerns. Winter is often a more difficult time for people with eczema — especially on their hands. Winter itch is a common rash resulting from excessive dryness that resembles a dried-up riverbed, with red, itchy, cracked skin. This is most common on the legs and usually spares body folds and the face, and we treat it with moisturizers and sometimes prescription topical anti-inflammatory medications. We also see many irritant reactions, such as frequent tissue use during respiratory virus season or rashes from licking your lips. I specialize in autoimmune connective tissue diseases and see a lot of Raynaud's and pernio (chilblains). Raynaud's is the rapid onset of white or blue discoloration of the fingers and/or toes from cold exposure due to constriction of blood vessels. Perno is the delayed onset of tender pink bumps on the fingers and toes one to two days after cold exposure.

Q: What are your go-to recommendations for those suffering from dry winter skin?

Dr. Pearson: Moisturize, moisturize, moisturize! It's pretty intuitive, but it bears repeating. The environment treats our skin differently in the winter, and we may have to change our behaviors to acclimate. I recommend a thick moisturizing cream that you have to scoop out of a jar or squeeze out of a tube over those with a pump handle, which tend to be used for thinner products, but these recommendations vary based on a person's skin type (e.g. oily versus dry). I don't like a lot of additives, perfumes or scents — keep it simple. Ceramides are a good ingredient to look for and may help restore the skin barrier, and hyaluronic acid helps to retain water. I also recommend a gentle soap that doesn't have perfumes or scents, as these can irritate the skin. Some data suggests humidifiers can be helpful in certain circumstances, but probably less so than moisturizers.

Q: Should people still wear sunscreen/SPF in the winter?

Dr. Pearson: In short, yes. Getting into a routine with sunscreen improves the consistency of use, so I often recommend working in a combined moisturizer/SPF product every day. The long answer is a little more nuanced. In Minnesota, our UV index — how much ultraviolet light reaches us — is pretty low in the winter. People's skin is usually covered up in the winter, but there's actually a fair amount of reflection of UV light from the snow. Prolonged exposure through outdoor activities (or long drives) can add up. If you're lucky enough to travel south or upwards in elevation, I would definitely recommend applying sunscreen like you would during the summer months.

Q: What are you doing to advance research in the dermatology field?

Dr. Pearson: As the director of the Autoimmune Connective Tissue Diseases Specialty Clinic, my interests are focused on lupus, dermatomyositis, scleroderma, morphea and vasculitis, among others. Our group is involved in several industry-sponsored clinical trials aimed at developing new and better therapies for these diseases, which currently have limited treatments and can be devastating to people who suffer from them. I'm particularly interested in the environmental triggers of these skin diseases and how to improve quality of life for people who suffer from them. Like many autoimmune diseases, the conditions I study are characterized by periods of both increased and decreased activity, and we still have a lot to learn about why and when flares will happen.

Dr. David Pearson is an associate professor of dermatology at the University of Minnesota Medical School, a dermatologist with M Health Fairview and the director of the Autoimmune Connective Tissue Diseases Specialty Clinic. His research interests include environmental triggers of autoimmune connective tissue diseases, effects on quality of life and development of novel therapies for these conditions.



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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.

Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



Question: Is it illegal for a vehicle pulling a trailer to have a ladder or ramp hanging from the side of the trailer?

Answer: You are able to have ladders or ramps secured to the side of an enclosed trailer as long as you do not exceed the width of 8 feet 6 inches. This is the maximum dimension that may be operated on Minnesota roadways without a special permit. The maximum height is 13 feet 6 inches. If you exceed the height or width, then you would have to apply for an oversize permit.

A few trailer safety tips:

- Make sure the pulling unit of the trailer has the towing capacity to pull the trailer safely.
- Check the trailer tires for proper tire pressure and the conditions of the tires. If the trailer has not been used recently, check the tread and for any cracking on the side walls.
- Make sure you have the proper ball size required for the trailer.
- Be sure the safety chains are connected and all the lights are working properly.
- Adjust your mirrors so you can see behind the trailer when towing it.
- Adjust your trailer brakes according to the load. For example, if you're towing a heavy boat you would need to increase the brake pressure compared to pulling an empty boat trailer.

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 Protec-

tion Manager for the Minnesota Safety Council and here is what I was advised.

Seat belt adjusters, also called seat belt positioners, 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

Question: I've seen the traffic safety infor-

mation you share on your X account when it comes to dealing with winter weather and slippery roads. Can you write about winter driving safety here for all of us? I'd like for you to share some basic winter driving tips. Thank you and be safe.

Answer: While summer months are the deadliest on Minnesota roads for fatal crashes, wintertime leads to the most crashes and poses its own safety risks and hazards. Stay safe while on the road in the winter:

- Avoid unnecessary travel if conditions are too poor.
- Buckle up and make sure child restraints are secured tightly. We recommend you use bulky clothes and blankets on top of the child restraint harness, not beneath, to ensure harness restraints fit properly.
- Drive at speeds that are safe for the road conditions and provide for plenty of travel time.
- Leave plenty of space to stop between vehicles.
- Use extra precautions when driving around snowplows by keeping at least 10 car-lengths behind plows.
- If you start to skid, remain calm, ease foot off the gas and turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the front of the vehicle to go.
- If vehicle has an anti-lock braking system (ABS), apply a steady firm pressure to the brake pedal. Never pump ABS brakes.
- Clear snow and ice from vehicle windows, hood, headlights, brake lights and directional signals.
- You must turn on your headlights when it is snowing or sleeting.
- Do not use cruise control on snow, icy or wet roads.



- Equip vehicles with a scraper/brush, small shovel, jumper cables, tow chain, and a bag of sand or cat litter for tire traction. Blankets, heavy boots, warm clothing and flashlights are also important, as are storing high-energy foods such as chocolate or energy bars.
- Be sure cell phones are charged for long trips, and inform your family or friends of your travel plan and schedule.

- If you get stranded, stay in the vehicle.
 - Parents of teen drivers should make sure they experience snow and ice driving in a safe environment, such as an empty parking lot.
 - For weather-related road condition information, call 511 or visit www.511mn.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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Zumbro Falls City Council Minutes - November 12, 2025

The Zumbro Falls City Council met at City Hall at 6PM. Absent from the meeting was council member Eric Winters and Fire Chief Scott Kennedy.

The meeting was called to order by the Mayor. The clerk read to council the minutes from the October meeting which were accepted as read by a motion from Anderson, seconded Benson, all in favor, carried.

Treasurer's report followed with acceptance by a motion from Benson, seconded Anderson, all in favor, carried.

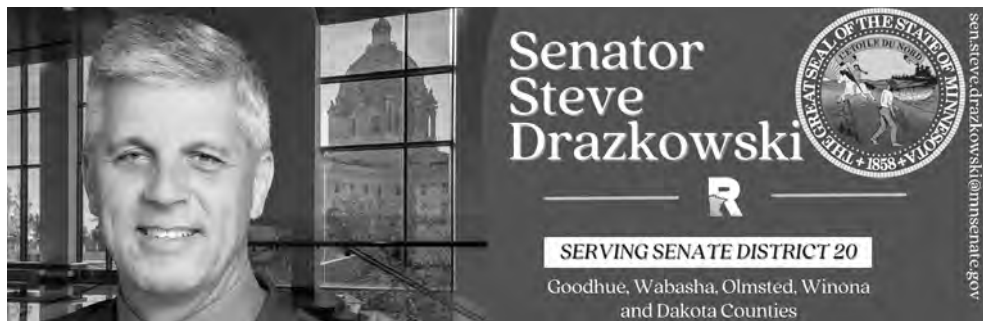
A motion was made by Benson, seconded Anderson, all in favor, carried to accept donations to the Fire Department totaling \$400 (\$200 from Emery Bremer and \$200 from Sandra Stopyro).

Mayor Heitmann informed the council that continued grease build-up in the city's waste water system required the lift station to be pumped. The mayor also mentioned that the street light on Appledale is scheduled to be fixed by Xcel Energy in the coming weeks.

The council reviewed outstanding water and sewer payments and approved submitting a special assessment for those unpaid amounts to the county to be recovered via property taxes. A motion to approve these assessments to be known as Resolution 25-04 was made by Anderson, seconded Heitmann, all in favor, carried.

The meeting then adjourned around 6:45 pm with all bills presented to be paid by a motion from Anderson, seconded Benson, all in favor, carried. The next council meeting will be held December 10th.

Submitted by,
Blake Hanson, Clerk



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, <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/business-dev-loans-grants/specialty-crop-block-grant>

Brady Rouhoff Announces Candidacy for Minnesota House District 20B

(continued from page 1)

Rouhoff says the focus of his campaign is to protect rural Minnesota from urban sprawl, protect small businesses from burdensome legislation, and to be a strong advocate for public safety and responsible government.

Rouhoff holds a Master of Business Administration and a Master's in Nursing Leadership, a combination he says provides both the data-driven decision-making and leadership experience needed to serve effectively in the legislature. "My MBA equips me with a strong understanding of business, budgeting, and economic policy, while my nursing leadership background has taught me how to lead teams, make strategic decisions, and solve complex problems under pressure," Rouhoff said in a statement.

Growing up in District 20B on a farm in rural Zumbro Falls, Rouhoff says his upbringing has shaped his views on land use and economic development. "Our farmland is not just real estate," Rouhoff said. "It's our heritage, our livelihood, and the backbone of our communities." Additionally, Rouhoff grew up in a small business family. "My parents owned several small businesses in District 20B, and I understand first-hand how challenging small businesses can be, but how important they are for our local communities."

Now living in Zumbrota, Rouhoff says his campaign is motivated by a desire to preserve the quality of life in District 20B for future generations. "I have serious concerns about the future we are leaving for our children. I want my daughter to grow up in the same small towns, open fields, and strong communities that shaped me. Protecting our rural way of life, supporting local families and businesses, and preserving local opportunities so everyone can build their future in District 20B is why I'm running."

Snow, ice, and its removal. A popular topic at City Hall. Mazeppa City staff does a great job of keeping streets clear. We still get complaints, but most residents are very supportive of the snow removal team. We do want to address the complaints that we have received.

Q1) Why does the City come by later and put another snowplow ridge at the end of my driveway? A1) First priority of snow removal is to get the streets passable for people to be able to get around the community and to be able to commute for work. Some areas are completed early, such as the downtown business area and the area around the School. Other areas require their second pass, to make sure the traffic areas are widened out and corners are pushed up. Any time we are widening out the lanes or pushing drifts, there is a chance that a driveway will get another plow ridge.

Q2) Why are County and State Highways seem cleaner than the City streets? A2) Roads in the open are designed for wind to help blow snow off the road. Wind currents from passing vehicles also help blow snow from roadways. The less stuck snow, the faster the sun can heat the pavement, begin the melting process, and make chemicals work more effectively. In the City, buildings disrupt wind, slower speeds allow the snow to be packed making it more difficult to remove, and once it has been packed it takes longer for applied chemicals and sand to work because the snow cover is reflective, so sunrays are not as effective in heating pavement to make chemical applications more effective. Also, with less traffic, road treatment chemicals are not spread as much by tires and traffic. Also, those maintenance crews use more expensive pre-treatment equipment and chemicals. Less traveled areas of larger City's look very much the same, or worse than our road surfaces.

The City appreciates that most property owners/tenants with sidewalks in front of them have been keeping them cleaned and maintained. The City thanks everyone working together to get through the long Minnesota winter.

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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

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 org.

With purchase of a new Safe Step Walk-In Tub. Not applicable with any previous walk-in tub purchase. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase. CSLB 1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445

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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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