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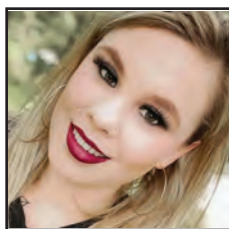
January 15, 2026

Volume 23 • Issue 1

Charges filed in death of Tatianna Ehnes-Giles, 26, of Castle Rock Township

Courtesy of KYMN Radio News

The Dakota County Attorney's Office charged Demarco Marquie Jones, 29, of Castle Rock Township, with Murder in the 2nd Degree of his girlfriend, Tatianna Ehnes-Giles, also of Castle Rock Township.



Tatianna Ehnes-Giles

(continued on page 6)

Students Recognized in VFW Essay Contest

Submitted by John Hobert

Cannon Falls and Randolph Middle and High School students are being recognized for taking part in Cannon Falls VFW Post 4452's "Patriots Pen" and "Voice of Democracy" essay contests this past fall.

Thirty-two Cannon Falls Middle School students were recognized for their participation in the 2025 Cannon Falls VFW Post 4452 "Patriots Pen" program on Tuesday, Dec. 16. Levi Marthaler from Randolph Schools placed first and will receive \$250. Danica Casalenda from Randolph placed second and received \$150 and Brooklyn Ekstrom from the Cannon Falls Middle School took third and received \$100.

(continued on page 6)



Submitted photo

Announcements

REMEMBER TO RETURN YOUR VOLUNTARY SUBSCRIPTION

Keep The Messenger coming!
Thank you for your support!

• **St. John's Red Cross Blood Drive:** Monday, January 19, 2026 from 12-6pm at St. John's Catholic School, in the Community room. For an appointment call Ann at 651-470-9069 or go to www.redcrossblood.org. There is a great need for blood, please consider donating to help save lives.

• **January Food Shelf Hours:** January 13th: 4:30 - 6:00 PM; January 20th: 4:30 - 6:00 PM; January 27th: 4:30 - 6:00 PM. Located at St. Mark's Church in Randolph. All are welcome.

(continued on page 2)

Randolph National Honor Society



Submitted photo

Randolph National Honor Society's newly inducted members. Pictured, from left to right, in the back are Max Kuhn, Nathan Sheridan, Lucas Pahl, Gavin Sumption and Jacob Snyder; in the front are Amelia Stehr, Claire Berndt and Danielle Nelson.

Donations Needed

During the month of January, Randolph Schools will once again be hosting a donation drive to support the Cannon Falls American Legion and VFW Military Box Event.

Now through January 23rd, you may send donations to school with your child.

(continued on page 7)

Need to Declutter? Let Us Help!

The Randolph Music Department will be hosting the 3rd Annual Community Garage Sale fundraiser on Saturday, May 16, 2026.



(continued on page 7)

Valentine's Day Specials

- Lobster Mac and Cheese
- 12 oz. Prime Rib with Shrimp
- Shrimp Alfredo
- Steak (8 oz)
- Steak & Shrimp
- Chicken Alfredo
- Ribs
- 3 Piece Fish Dinner

Call to make your reservation!

(651) 437-5618 Specials start at 4 pm
23910 Hogan Avenue, New Trier, MN

Upcoming Events... Bingo & Meat Raffles - Jan. 17, & Feb. 7 & 21
Euchre Tournament - Jan. 31 & Feb. 28

For More Information: [The Trophy House](https://www.facebook.com/thetrophyhouse) [Trophy House - New Trier](https://www.instagram.com/trophyhouse-newtrier) www.trophyhousenewtrier.com



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If You Are Sad...



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

If you are sad . . .
*A shadow overbears.
You were good, but then crushed.
It gets dark so easy sometimes.
People around you don't always under-
stand.
Sometimes the tears flow, and other mo-
ments they are locked inside.
The soul sinks.
At times it's even hard to breathe.*

If you feel any of the above, oh, how I want to reach through this article and give you a hug, as well as grab a cup of joe with you. You are not alone. You're not.

I can't tell you how many days, weeks, months, and even years it has been dark. And I mean midnight dark. I recently read a book called A Gift of Hope: Finding Faith Behind Barbed Wire, by John Hornbeck, which is a wonderful, compelling, and true story about his father-in law, who was a prisoner of war in Germany during WWII. There is a chapter in it titled "A Different Flavor of Fear." Well, I think there are "different flavors of depression" too.

I used to hate that word—depression. I despised the word because my mother suffered with it horribly, and I did not want to associate myself with that kind of pain. However, I have come to realize that sometimes I just get hit with that storm cloud of emptiness that is so all-consuming. It can feel like a never-ending downward spiral.

We've just wrapped up the holidays, and if you, too, struggle with being sad, Christmas and New Year's can seem to magnify the sorrow. It does not help that it is as black as a raven when we arise, and before most of us get home from work, that darkness has returned, which can mirror how we feel on the inside.

The title of this article could have grabbed your attention for many different reasons. You could have lost a loved one and are missing them all so much. Perhaps you fell back into addiction, and the shame and guilt are more than knocking at your door. Possibly your spouse, significant other, children, or

someone else said something very hurtful to you. Perchance trauma is resurfacing for some reason or another. Potentially you are feeling all so lonesome. Or, you are just down. Different flavors, but they all deserve love, attention, care, and mending.

In my life, when the depression has rolled in, I instantly send a prayer up. Sometimes this is in my mind, or I journal to some degree or fashion. Other times the pain is so strong that it is hard to pray, let alone write. In those cases I will weep and just say the name Jesus.

After I have settled, I then sit with the Lord for a while and process my emotions. I express to Him all the various things going on in my mind and soul. Next, I crack open the good Word of God (the Bible). I will either pick up where I left off the day prior, read the Psalms, or honestly, just randomly open it and start reading.

The other night, around 10:30 p.m., I crawled into bed with brushed teeth, and I was feeling pretty good. I was careful to not do too much screen time on my phone and zoned into reading a little of the Bible before closing my eyes.

As I laid in bed, I started to toss and turn, and the all-familiar heaviness returned. Sometimes the sadness is manifested from disturbing memories overlaying in my mind, and other times the depression just appears. That is what happened last night; out of nowhere, the darkness just sprang up.

I could tell it was spiritual warfare, so I said, "Blood of Jesus. Blood of Jesus" (see Exodus 12:13). I partnered His blood with a couple of prayers that looked something like, "Lord, I am sad again. Ugh. You love me. You love me. I am safe. I am safe." I eventually fell asleep. I awoke, and the sadness was still lingering.

I made my way downstairs to let my sweet beagle, Caleb, out to go potty. Sleepy-eyed, I walked back up the stairs and made breakfast for both Caleb and me. She had dog food, and I had over-creamed coffee. I grabbed my journal and started to share my heart with the

Lord. I then seized my Bible and read some of the New Testament. As I read the chapters and verses in front of me, the internal sun started to rise again. Revelation brewed that sent the depression out the window. I continued to talk to Him as I read the Scriptures. As I finished off the last page of my reading for that morning, I was back to "bubbly joy Ashley."

This happens almost EVERY TIME—the depression leaves after being in the Word. It can be all so heavy, but after spending time with Jesus I am renewed, rejuvenated, and restored. The days that it is extra heavy and I feel the enemy is attacking me, I will read Psalm 91 out loud until the darkness has fled.

I pray, in the name of Jesus, as you read this, that the sadness is already starting to lift. I will gently nudge you to go share your heart to Jesus. Just talk to Him like a friend. No fancy words are needed. Then I will encourage you to get in the Word. You do not have to read a lot in the Bible; sometimes I only read and meditate on a few verses. It does not matter, the Lord is not legalistic, but what does matter is that we let the Word of God wash us. Wash the conscience, the mind, the heart, and yes, that sadness that wants to creep in more than we would like to admit.

You will get through this. You will. The sun is going to come out for you. This season will teach you empathy, love, and care for others. This wave of sadness will draw you close to Jesus, and it will produce even a stronger bond with Him. So much spiritual muscle is getting produced in you.

If you think about it, this is a gift. Not one that you would expect or even at first desire, but as you start to unwrap the wounds of your soul and let Jesus and His words minister to you, you will indeed see the present. The present of His presence, unconditional love, and strength.

Late Merry Christmas and truly Happy New Year—you are loved. Blessings, Ashley

Some verses to lean into when you are sad: Psalm 6:6–9; Psalm 27:13–14; Psalm 34; Isaiah 54:10–17; and Isaiah 55.

Announcements

- January 16 - End of Semester
- January 19 - NO SCHOOL
- January 20 - True Blue Celebration:

Join us for a night of basketball, pizza, prizes, and community! You will receive a ticket upon entry to redeem for pizza and water.

Schedule of Events:

- 4:30 C Squad Boys vs. Kenyon-Wanamingo | South Gym
JV Girls vs. Kenyon-Wanamingo in North Gym
- 5:00 Free Pizza and Water | Commons
Door Prize submissions begin
- 5:45 Boys JV vs. Kenyon-Wanamingo in South Gym
Girls Varsity vs. Kenyon-Wanamingo | North Gym
- 6:45 Prize Drawing | District Office | Do not need to be present to win
- 7:15 Boys Varsity vs. Kenyon-Wanamingo | North Gym



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Pastor Dennis Ingolfssland
29020 Dawson Avenue in the heart of Randolph
(adjacent to Randolph Public School grounds).
Sunday School 9:00a.m.
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Questions? Call church office 507-663-1437

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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.

The Church Directory is Sponsored by:



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300 West Main Street
Cannon Falls



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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. 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



Randolph Community Food Shelf

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

28595 Randolph Blvd.

Randolph, MN 55065

(507) 263-9182

stmarksrandolph@gmail.com

www.stmarksrandolph.com

Facebook: Randolph MN Area Food Shelf

Monthly Food Shelf Hours:

1st Tuesday 8:00 - 9:30 am

2nd, 3rd, 4th Tuesdays 4:30-6 pm

Randolph Community Food Shelf is for anyone in need within the Randolph School District. (Randolph, Stanton, Hampton & New Trier area)

We are here to help!

Please pull around to the southwest corner door for easy loading of your items



Night Tubing with laser lights and music to 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 provides 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

OBITUARY

Durene “Tootsie” Mies

Durene "Tootsie" Mies, age 83, of Randolph, Minnesota, passed away peacefully on Christmas Day, December 25th, 2025.



She was born on March 6th, 1942, on the family farm in Welch, Minnesota, and resided most of her life in Randolph. Tootsie was a fun, spunky, breath of fresh air. She was kind, down to earth and went out of her way to help people.

She was a hard worker. She started working at 14 years old at a White Castle Car Hop. She tried many jobs including factory work and real estate, but the job that stole her heart was driving bus. She was a dedicated school bus driver at Randolph Public Schools for over 55 years, driving multiple generations of children safely to school, extra curricular activities and sporting events. Tootsie was known for her ability to skillfully navigate the bus through inclement road conditions.

She had a deep love for her family. She especially enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren; she loved camping, sleep overs, taking them on trips, dining out, shopping, and visiting water parks. She loved going to dinners and shows at the casino. She also took great pride in her flower gardens and enjoyed hunting for a good bargain.

Tootsie was preceded in death by her parents, Douglas and Irene Anderson; her sister, Verone Mortenson; her brother, Gary Anderson; and her children's fathers: David Haro and William Mies.

She is survived by her brother Larry Anderson; children, Todd (Mary) Haro & Troy (Lori) Haro, Will (Jody) Mies, and Autumn (Derrick) Lehrke; grandchildren, Heather (Eric) Otto, Josh Haro, Lacy, Cole (Katlyn) & Emily Haro, Kylie & Nora Mies, Silas & Priscilla Lehrke; seven great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews, and extended family members.

Her daughter Nicole Anderson remains missing.

Visitation was held at St. Mark's Lutheran Church: 28595 Randolph Blvd, Randolph, MN 55065 on Saturday, January 3, 2026, from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., followed by a funeral service at 2:00 p.m. Lunch and burial followed the service.

Tootsie will be remembered for her devotion to her family, her dedication to her community, and the lasting impact she made on the lives of many.

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.

Messenger

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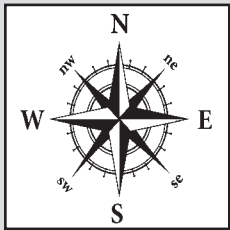
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Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

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 too 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 deceptive 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.



Students Recognized in VFW Essay Contest

(continued from page 1)

Other participating students received \$25.00 for their participation in this year's program. Cannon Falls students participating included

Presley Winchell, Magdalene Johnson, Simon Brechtel, Addyson Paolodichuk, Juen Nobach, Chelsea Webber, Emma Homan, Ellison Lindahl, Daisy Nobach, Norah LaFollette, Victoria Johnson, Sawyer Reberg, Aribella Johnson, Brennan Miller, Vienna Malchow, Collin Merchlewitz, Charlie Venosdel, Grady Harnson, Lydia TeBeest, Peyton Muraski, Brooklyn Ekstrom, Cooper Jack Neuman, Kyle Hernke, Lillian Olvnd, Nora Mies, Shlayah Silva, Zoey Stift, Matthew Holz, Paige Thompson, Isia Harnson, Lola Winchell and Leo Nygaard.

John Hobert and Bob Durdahl made the award presentations on behalf of Cannon Falls VFW Post 4452. Renae Otto and Anne Davisson were thanked for their leadership in promoting the "Patriots" Pen program.

Twelve high school students were recog-



Some of the high school students honored

submitted

Charges filed in death of Tatianna Ehnes-Giles, 26, of Castle Rock Township

(continued from page 1)

On the afternoon of December 24th, Dakota County Sheriff's Office deputies responded to the 3700 block of 250th Street West in Castle Rock Township on a report that a woman had been shot inside the residence.

Upon arrival, deputies found Ehnes-Giles in an upstairs bedroom deceased from a gunshot wound to her head. Deputies found Jones semi-conscious on top of the second-floor stairway outside the victim's bedroom. According to the criminal complaint, Jones had blood on his hands and the back of his head from an apparent gunshot wound. Jones told deputies that the gun was "in the room". A handgun and two spent shell casings were recovered from the scene.

Five other family members of Ms. Ehnes-Giles who also reside in the home were present at the time of the shooting including the two young children of Ms. Ehnes-Giles and Jones. No others were injured. Jones was transported to a hospital where he remains in custody.

In a statement announcing the charges,

Dakota County Sheriff Joe Leko said, noting that Ehnes-Giles died not only on Christmas Eve, but also on her 26th birthday, thanked first responders and the 911 Dispatch staff for their help and professionalism.

"Our highly trained deputies and investigators were tasked with processing a very challenging scene," he said, "and did so with professionalism and care."

Bail was set for Jones at \$2 million with conditions by Judge Dannia Edwards. He will be transferred to the Dakota County Jail after he is medically cleared. His next court hearing was scheduled for Jan. 5, 2026, at 9 a.m. in Hastings.

nized for their participation in the Cannon Falls VFW Post 4452 "Voice of Democracy" program for 2025. Zane Beck from Cannon Falls High School was recognized for placing first and received \$250, Helaena Hensley from Randolph Schools placed second and received \$150 and Alex Shattuck from Cannon Falls High School placed third and received \$100.

Other participating students received \$25 for their participation. They were James

Huseth, Alexa Shattuck, Falon Hepola, Graham Bray, Zane Beck, Hillari Palodichuk, Monette Otterness, Kennedy Harmsen, Axel Rapp, Jonathyn Bank, Katherin Stay and Chase Curtis.

John Hobert and Bob Durdahl made the presentations on behalf of Cannon Falls VFW Post 4452. Heather Loeschke, civics teacher at Cannon Falls High School, was recognized for her leadership in promoting the "Voice of Democracy" program annually.

Building Community with Books

Adults looking to unwind with a good book and socialize with others can register for the Dakota County Library's annual Winter Reads program.



More than 50 events are scheduled from Jan. 12 to Feb. 28. These include community-building activities such as trivia nights, book bingo, speed dating with books and author talks. Winter Reads also features three community reading events, where all participants read the same book.

Winter Reads encourages adults to take a break to relax and read. It also highlights the library as a space for social engagement, not just individual use.

Visit any Dakota County Library location to sign up, get reading suggestions and find out about upcoming events. Join the more than 1,000 customers who participate in Winter Reads each year.

Learn more by visiting www.dakota-county.us/library, search Winter Reads.

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Phone: 507-263-4276
Email: info@freebergins.com

Ins Brokers of Cannon Falls

106 4th Street North
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Phone: 507-263-5100
Email: vdungan@insurancebrokersmn.com

Northfield Agency

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Phone: 507-645-8861
Email: nfldins@hotmail.com

Haggerty Agency

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Hastings, MN
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Jazz Band and Chamber Choir Performs at the Minneapolis Veterans Home



In December, the Jazz Band and Chamber Choir performed at the Minneapolis Veterans Home. Music, memories, and gratitude all in one day. *Courtesy of Randolph Schools*

Need to Declutter? Let Us Help!

(continued from page 1)

For \$25 you can reserve a 10x10 space to sell your clothing, toys, books, shoes, tools, craft items, antiques, etc.

Anything that you want to get rid of! You keep all the money from your sale and the music department benefits from the rental of the space! Go to https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe3un7cmhfZsb_fJfT7IIKKNksHOjt7QgE-Woc6_VbnIVA_vw/viewform to register. Deadline to register is April 1, 2026.

The music department will also be accepting donations of new or gently used items to sell at the event. Donations can be dropped off at the school the week of May 11. Any do-

nations that aren't sold at the sale will be donated to the Epilepsy Foundation or brought to a donation center.

Money raised from the sale will be used to help defray costs of the band and choir trip in March 2027. For more information about the sale contact band director, Jackie Sczepanski, sczepanskij@district195.org, 507-263-2151.

NEED A NEW MATTRESS?

Wait and shop the Music Department's mattress sale on October 3, 2026, at Randolph High School! The past two sales we have sold over 110 mattresses and raised \$21,000. This sale is a fundraiser to help our music students raise money for their trip to New Orleans in March 2027.

Donations Needed

(continued from page 1)

Items will be given to the Legion/VFW to be used in care packages sent to US service men and women deployed and stationed at military installations in the US and throughout the world.

We will also have donation boxes available on January 20th during our True Blue Celebration for your convenience.

The most coveted items to receive in care packages include:

- 1) Beef Jerky
- 2) Unscented Baby or Dude Wipes
- 3) Unscented Tampons (women appreciate them and they are useful for plugging wounds during training and/or combat)
- 4) Single Serve Ramen and Mac & Cheese Cups
- 5) Card Games (such as variations of Uno) or small travel games

Other highly desired items include: Cliff Bars (or other protein bars that are not chocolate covered), Pringles (the can protects the chips), nuts (flavored almonds, cashews, and pistachios are always appreciated), trail mix (especially varieties containing M&Ms), hunting/fishing/gun magazines, crossword/sudoku magazines, peanut butter crackers, Chex Mix, gum and candy (not chocolate- nothing that melts), socks with reinforced toes (regulation green), and toiletry items. *Please note* NO soap or lotion- nothing scented!

We will also be accepting monetary donations (cash or checks made out to The American Legion Post 142) to help defray the costs of shipping the care packages. Each package costs approximately \$11-\$18 (depending on destination) to ship.

Additionally, if you have an active duty family member or friend deployed or stationed at a US military installation (within the United States or around the world), and would like him or her to receive a care package, please send Mrs. Carlin an email with name and address no later than January 15th! Please contact Heather Carlin at carlinh@district195.org with questions. Thank you for your support with this project.

New School Resource Officer

Randolph Schools would like to welcome our new school resource officer Deputy Brooke Stoeklen. Brooke is a Deputy with the Dakota County Sherriff's office.

Courtesy of Randolph Schools



COMMUNITY



DATE: May 16, 2026
9:00 am - 2:00 pm

LOCATION: Randolph High School
Randolph, MN

WANT TO DONATE YOUR STUFF??

DONATE YOUR GENTLY USED, CLEAN, WASHED ITEMS TO THE
HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Donations will be accepted at Randolph High School

- Monday, May 11th, 3:00-7:00pm
- Tuesday, May 12th, 3:00-7:00pm
- Wednesday, May 13th, 8:00am-7:00pm
- Thursday, May 14th, 3:00-7:00pm

**No large furniture items accepted - if you can't bring it in by yourself, we can't take it.

Any donations that aren't sold at the sale will be picked up by the Epilepsy Foundation or brought to a donation center.



WE ARE UNABLE TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING
Mattresses, Sofas & Large Upholstered Chairs, Entertainment Centers, Baby Furniture, Car Seats, Strollers, Exercise Equipment, Monitors, Printers, Large Appliances, TV's, Microwaves, Metal Office Furniture, Gas Powered Items, Large Seasonal Items (i.e. Christmas Trees), Food Items, Toiletries, Bathroom Fixtures, Tires and Undergarments.

Contact Jackie Sczepanski for more info, sczepanskij@district195.org
The sale is a fundraiser for the Randolph Music Departments trip in March 2027

Congratulations to Liv Tennesen for joining the 1,000 points club!



Courtesy of Randolph Schools

State Winter Leadership Summit



Randolph FFA members attended State FFA Winter Leadership Summit in St Cloud. Jonathan Tate competed in Creed Speaking, and the girls attended CLIMB leadership workshop. *Courtesy of Randolph FFA*

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Region Officer Visit



Region Officer Erika visited the AFNR Night Class, working on some team building, leadership and public speaking skills. *Courtesy of Randolph FFA*



January Upcoming Events

January 19, 6-7 pm	FFA Monthly Meeting, Ag Room
January 19, 7-9 pm	FFA Outreach Class, Ag Room
January 19	State Degrees, Proficiency, Region Officer Applications Due to Wagner
January 20	Region Floriculture, Small Animal, Fish & Wildlife, Nursery & Landscape CDEs, PEM
January 28	FFA Officer Meeting, Ag Room
January 28	Region Advisor Application Review Night, Chatfield
January 30	Region Winter Leadership Day, Riverland Community College, Austin (BIG Contest, SAE Interviews, State Degree Interviews, Region Officer Interviews)
January TBD	FFA American Degree Interviews
February 1	James Tracy Scholarship & National FFA Chapter Apps Due
February 11 - 7 am	FFA Officer Meeting, Ag Room
February 12 - 7 pm	FFA Alumni Board Meeting, Ag Room
February 13	Region Food Science, Dairy Foods, & Poultry CDEs, Riverland Community College, Austin
Friday, February 13	FFA @ The World's Toughest Rodeo (Members and Family Invited)
February 25, 7 am	FFA Officer Meeting, Ag Room
February 21-28	National FFA Week
February 18	FFA Tour, TBD

Region Greenhand Camp

11 Steps to Archery Success

1. Stance

2. Nock Arrow

3. Draw Hand Set

4. Bow Hand Set

5. Pre-Draw

6. Draw

7. Set-U

8. Follow Through

9. Release

10. Recovery

11. Score

1. Always follow commands

2. Never dry fire

3. All archery equipment must be used properly

4. Eye protection must be worn at all times

5. Identify your target before shooting

6. NOT cross the range

7. See scorekeeper for score

8. See scorekeeper for order of shooting



8 FFA Greenhands and 2 Regional Officers attended Greenhand Leadership Camp
Courtesy of Randolph FFA

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

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

FINALLY FRIDAY All You Can Eat Fish Dinner

SATURDAY
Hand Battered Jumbo Shrimp or Slow Roasted Prime Rib

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

Mark Your Calendars for Flake Out Fest February 7th!

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Sunday 9:00am-8:00pm (Bar Open Later)
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8:00PM
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**Saturday, January 17
8:00PM
LIVE MUSIC!
Gary West**

**Sunday, January 19
3:00-6:00PM
LIVE MUSIC!
Justin Burk with
Mike & Pella Poot**

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Bring partner if possible, not required. \$20 team entry. Questions contact Jen at 507-649-0602.

11:00AM Medallion Hunt - \$150 Cash Prize (Meet at City Hall for Rules and Map)

11:30AM Complimentary Hot Chocolate Bar at City Hall

12:00 PM HOT DISH COOKOFF

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

12:00 PM Bring Entry to City Hall • 12:30 PM-2:00 PM Tasting/Voting

2:30 PM Hot Dish Winner Announced (1st & 2nd Place Payout)

Hosted by Dennison Lions Club

2:45 PM Red Neck Pool "Round One" at Cattlemen's Saloon

4:00 PM Designer Purse & Gift Card Bingo at City Hall

\$30/packet, 10 games, designer purses and \$150 gift card packages

6:30 PM 12th Annual Denni Dazzle Parade \$200.00 Prize for Best Float!

Hosted by the Dennison Lions. Call or text Diane at 612-532-0268

6:45 PM Red Neck Pool "Round Two" at Cattlemen's Saloon

7:00 PM LIVE MUSIC Bryan Anderson at Cattlemen's Saloon

9:30 PM Raffle Winners Announced at Sapphire Cocktail Lounge & Event Center

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Flake Out Festival Raffle Saturday, February 7

Buy a Raffle Ticket from any Lions Member, Fireside Lounge, Dennison Depot Gas Station, Cattlemen's Saloon or Heritage Bank in Dennison for \$5.00 for your chance to win!

Grand Prize \$500.00 Cash! 2nd Prize \$250 Cash • 3rd Prize \$100 Cash

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Minnesota Farm Bureau Announces New LeadAg Institute Program Participants

EAGAN, Minn - Minnesota Farm Bureau is proud to announce the six inaugural participants of its new leadership development program, the LeadAg Institute. The LeadAg Institute equips Farm Bureau leaders with the tools they need to effectively advocate for agriculture, engage with members, and provide exceptional leadership at the community, county, state and national levels.

The inaugural class includes Farm Bureau members from across the state: Brianne Arneson (Madison), **Jessie Bester (Hampton)**, Jay Sohre (Good Thunder), Ellie Trout (Cohasset), Traci Walkowski (Hutchinson), and Josh Yates (Mora).

Participants will engage in five learning sessions focused on leadership development and personal growth, understanding Farm Bureau's impact and their own leadership potential, policy work on agricultural issues, and advancing agricultural literacy.

Brianne Arneson, Madison, MN (Lac Qui Parle County Farm Bureau): "I believe rural Minnesota has a lot of value and knowl-

edge to bring to state and national leadership, and I joined this program to gain the tools and knowledge to help local community members feel encouraged to bring their stories forward and be leaders for agriculture."

Arneson grew up on a small cow/calf operation in Kansas, where she started her own registered Hereford herd at the age of 12. After graduating from Oklahoma State University, she started working for Cargill, eventually taking a role in Madison. Currently, she works at United Prairie Bank. She enjoys helping in the community and staying active in the agriculture community, also serving as secretary on the Midwest Cattlemen's Board.

Growing up, her family was involved with Kansas Farm Bureau, and she was active in collegiate Farm Bureau and the Young Farmers & Ranchers Program while at Oklahoma State. She now serves as secretary for the Lac Qui Parle County Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

Jessie Bester, Hampton, MN (Dakota County Farm Bureau): "As an agriculture educator I want to be able to show my students the importance of getting involved in all avenues of agriculture. They don't need to want to be a farmer to be a part of, or advocate for, agriculture."

Bester grew up on a dairy farm where she showed dairy cattle and was active in both FFA and 4-H. She is now an agriculture educator and has been sharing her passion for agriculture and FFA in the classroom for 13 years.

Outside of the classroom, Bester became active in Farm Bureau to connect more resources to her classroom. This led to her in-

volvement on the Dakota County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, state Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee including serving as chair, and participating in several advocacy programs including visits to the state Capitol and Washington, D.C.

Jay Sohre, Good Thunder, MN (Blue Earth County Farm Bureau): "I wanted to participate in the LeadAg Institute to grow as a young farmer and become a better leader. I am grateful for the opportunity and will use the skills I learn back at my local and county level to help advocate for agriculture."

Sohre grew up on a farm in Good Thunder where he was active in FFA and 4-H. Currently, he farms corn and soybeans with his wife and his parents, while also working off the farm at Wells in the drafting and engineering department. Sohre is active on the Blue Earth County Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

Ellie Trout, Cohasset, MN (Arrowhead Regional Farm Bureau): "I applied for the program to gain hands-on experience with policy work on agricultural issues. I am so excited for this program and other opportunities to use the skills I will learn."

Trout is a fourth-generation farmer on her family farm in Northern Minnesota where they raise beef and sheep. She currently attends the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, studying broad area agriculture with an emphasis on informal education.

Prior to leaving for college, Trout served on the Arrowhead Regional Farm Bureau Board of Directors, giving her a platform to put her passion for agriculture to work. She plans to

serve on the county board again after graduating from college.

Traci Walkowski, Hutchinson, MN (McLeod County Farm Bureau): "I wanted to participate in the LeadAg Institute to grow as a leader and better understand how agriculture policy and advocacy connect to the work I do every day. Agriculture touches education, food systems, and communities in powerful ways, and I want to be part of shaping conversations that support farmers, families, and the future of agriculture in Minnesota."

Walkowski is an agricultural educator in McLeod County where she teaches cross-curricular courses that connect agriculture, literacy, science and community engagement. She also owns and operates Farmacy, LLC, a farm-to-table business focused on local food, agriculture literacy and community connection. She is passionate about strengthening relationships between consumers and agriculturists and helping people understand where their food comes from and why agriculture matters.

Josh Yates, Mora, MN (Kanabec-Isanti County Farm Bureau): "Participating in the LeadAg Institute will give the opportunity to grow myself as a leader and build valuable connections within the agriculture industry."

Yates grew up on a small livestock farm in Mora. He has a club lamb farm operation that he uses to lease animals to younger 4-H participants who are interested in showing sheep or learning more about the industry. He currently works at a local feed mill and a steel custom fabrication shop in Mora.

MDA Seeks Public Comment on Groundwater Protection Rule

Commenters can weigh in on whether the rule is sufficient or if additional restrictions are required

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is requesting written public comments to help determine whether the state's Groundwater Protection Rule is adequate to protect Minnesota's air, water, land, and other natural resources from nitrate pollution.

On Sept. 5, 2025, the Ramsey County Second Judicial District Court ordered the MDA to make findings on whether the rule provides sufficient protection, or if additional restrictions are needed.

The Groundwater Protection Rule, adopted in 2019, is designed to minimize nitrate contamination in vulnerable groundwater areas and protect drinking water sources. The rule restricts nitrogen fertilizer application in the fall and on frozen soils. It also establishes a framework for reducing contamination in areas where public water supplies already are experiencing elevated nitrate levels.

The MDA is seeking information on the following:

Whether the Groundwater Protection Rule adequately protects against nitrate contamination from regulated practices; or

Whether further restrictions should be applied to sensitive regions, including Southeast

Minnesota's karst geology and the Central Sands region.

Commenters are asked to provide substantive information and supporting evidence. Comments that state only support for or opposition to the rule will not assist the MDA in its decision-making.

Comments must be received by Thursday, March 12. Submit comments by letter to the address below or email to gpr.mda@state.mn.us (Subject: Groundwater Protection Rule).

Larry Gunderson Supervisor, Fertilizer Management Unit
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
625 Robert St. North, St. Paul, MN 55155
Phone: 651-201-6168
Email: larry.gunderson@state.mn.us

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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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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 uncov-

ering 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 in-

flammation.

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 disabling 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 im-

mune 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.*

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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. Pernio 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.



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.*

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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 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

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)

Randolph City Council Regular Meeting Minutes - November 12, 2025

Call to order:

The regular Randolph City Council meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Mayor Marie Jacob

Roll Call:

Present were Mayor Marie Jacob
Council Members Tony Price, Randy Ferguson and Keith Sande
Treasurer Sandy Nicolai and Clerk Mary Haro.
Also, in attendance was Bolton & Menk engineer, Matt Blazer and legal counsel, Greta Bjerkness.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion to approve the agenda with the deletion of Jessica Willems under new business, was made by Price and seconded by Ferguson.
All voting in favor, none opposed, motion passed 5:0.

Public Comments:

None

Prior Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the October 8, 2025 planning commission meeting minutes was made by Ferguson, seconded by Price.
All voting in favor, none opposed, motion passed 5:0.

A motion to approve the October 8, 2025 regular council meeting minutes was made by Price, seconded by Sande.

All voting in favor, none opposed, motion passed 5:0.

Treasurer's Report and Payment of Bills:

It was noted that we did not have enough checks to pay the bills this month. Clerk Haro ordered some checks and will ask the company to put a rush on them. Once we get them Sandy can prepare the rest of the checks.

Motion to approve the payment of bills was made by Price, seconded by Jacob.

All voting in favor, none opposed, motion passed 5:0.

Old Business

Water Rates

Greta prepared a breakdown of a few other cities and what they charge for their water rates. Matt noted that they usually assume 70 gallons per person per day so a 4 person household would be approximately 8,400 gallons a month. Sandy will look into what an average water bill is. We want to get this in place so we can impose the new rates in 2026. We would need to have the fee schedule ordinance amended and published in a newspaper before January which can be done. Greta will get the ordinance amendment prepared so we can move forward with this. Clerk Haro will contact Ehlers and see if they have anything regarding the water billing that we discussed in the past.

Resolution Denying North Pro Rail's Zoning Amendment

Mayor Jacob made a motion to approve Resolution 25-13 Denying an application to Amend Chapter 152 of the City Code to and Transloading as Permitted Use, seconded by Price.

All voting in favor, none opposed, motion passed 5:0.

New Business

Deputy

A Deputy noted that is deer hunting season and if you hit a deer and are not injured there is no need to call the department but if you want a deer tag then you can call them as they can issue a tag. They are almost fully staffed. With the holidays coming the fraudulent calls are going to be ramping up again. The department does not ask for money, gift cards, bitcoins over the phone. When in doubt call them to verify the call. It was noted that there is speeding going through town before school starts.

Met Council

Met Council Representative Merritt Clapp Smith introduced herself to the council along with her co-worker Abby. She is our sector representative for this community from the local planning assistance team. She is our point person for comp plan update and environment reviews. We can reach out to at any time.

She discussed the 2050 comprehensive plan update. They have a new plan (Small Communities Planning Program) that we are eligible for and it's free. (continued on page 17)

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Hampton City Council Meeting
November 19, 2025

The Hampton City Council met on Tuesday, November 19, 2025, at Hampton City Hall for the Regularly Scheduled Meeting. Present were Mayor John Knetter and Council Members Jerry Huddleston, David Luhring and Nick Russell. Absent was Anthony Verch. Also present were Brad Fisher and Madison Richard of Bolton & Menk, Merritt Clapp-Smith, Tabitha Lyon, and Mariah Calverley.

Regular Meeting Called to Order – Mayor Knetter called the regular meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Disclosure of Interest – None

Approval of October 14, 2025 Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes – Motion by Luhring, seconded by Russell, to approve the October 14, 2025 work session regular meeting minutes. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 4-0.

Approval of Disbursements - Motion by Russell, seconded by Luhring, to approve the disbursements. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 4-0.

Public Comments: Mayor Knetter recognized resident Mariah Calverley, who addressed a longstanding pothole at the end of her driveway on Water Street. Mrs. Calverley noted previous inquiries with City Hall and expressed concern about safety for teenage drivers. Mayor Knetter assured her that the

city will fill the pothole, explaining that an expected contractor was unavailable, but a cold patch will be applied before the first snowfall. Mrs. Calverley thanked the Council, and Mayor Knetter apologized for the delay.

Petitions, Requests, and Communications: Mayor Knetter informed the Council that he will be out of town for the next two regularly scheduled meetings and requested rescheduling the December meeting to the 16th and the January meeting to the 20th. No objections were raised.

Madison Richard of Bolton & Menk presented the first draft of the city’s cannabis ordinance, noting that it incorporates standard definitions and prior council discussions. Key points included: allowing indoor and outdoor cultivation in the agricultural district with conditional use permits; prohibiting cannabis-related activities under home occupation permits; permitting cannabis and lower-potency hemp retail in the arterial commercial district; and allowing manufacturing, wholesale, micro, and mezzo operations with retail endorsements in the industrial district. She reviewed performance standards for temporary events, buffers, and building requirements, including that outdoor cultivation structures resemble typical agricultural buildings. Richard recommended using conditional use permits over

interim use permits due to limited guidance in the city code. Proposed business hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., reflecting state constraints and conservative regulation. The Council discussed alignment with state alcohol rules, weekend operations, and cautious regulation given the city’s size. Richard noted upcoming revisions, including clarifying medical retailer exemptions and drafting a resolution to defer certain oversight to Dakota County. She confirmed the ordinance will proceed to a public hearing at the January Planning Commission meeting.

Engineer Report – Brad Fisher introduced engineer Drew Bailey, who will attend meetings to gain experience and assist with future projects at no additional cost. Fisher then provided a detailed update on the new water tower: painting and coating are complete, electrical work is nearly finished, and the only remaining delay is the aviation safety light, expected in early December. Afterward, punch list items will be addressed and the tower disinfected and filled, likely in late November or early December, keeping the project on track for year-end. Pay Application 7 was included in the disbursements.

The Council then discussed the future of the old water tower. Fisher confirmed the contractor will honor the original alternate price to lower and salvage the tank, and the city must provide placement direction if temporarily staged on parkland. Councilmember Huddleston noted interest from Steve Bauer of the Little Log House in taking ownership. Discussion included measurements, structural considerations, salvage methods, preserving a community landmark, and liability concerns. The Council expressed support for transferring ownership to Bauer, pending confirmation of details to ensure the city is no longer responsible. Fisher will coordinate follow-up, with a final decision anticipated in December.

Metropolitan Council Update – Merritt Clapp-Smith briefed the Council on the upcoming 2050 Comprehensive Plan update. Hampton’s last update (the 2040 Plan) was submitted in 2018, and all metro communities are required to submit the next 10-year update by the end of 2028. The city recently received its System Statement with maps, data, and forecasts. Clapp-Smith introduced the Met Council’s new Small Communities Planning Program, identifying Hampton as one of 29 eligible communities based on size and limited financial resources. Under this program, the Met Council will complete the bulk of technical, mapping, engineering, and data work at no cost, partnering with city officials to ensure the plan reflects community priorities. Engineering consultants will handle water, wastewater, and surface-water components, and city consultants like Bolton & Menk may participate as reviewers or contributors. Councilmembers highlighted Bolton & Menk’s familiarity with Hampton’s infrastructure, groundwater, and development history, particularly near the Hwy 47/52 interchange. Clapp-Smith stated a formal agreement will be prepared in 2026, with planning work beginning in summer 2026. Additional program information will be shared with staff.

NorthfieldWiFi Request – Tabitha Lyon

requested leasing space on the new water tower for internet equipment. Mayor Knetter explained that no agreements can be considered until construction is fully complete. Fisher noted the contractor retains control until the old tower is demolished, with contract closure expected around June 30, 2026. Lyon was advised to return to the Council in June or July and to coordinate with the city clerk for agenda placement.

Ordinances and Resolutions: None
Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees:

Water / Sewer Report – Mayor Knetter reported that wastewater discharging is complete. A head on the water system’s sterilization equipment failed and has been replaced. Chlorine capacity is sufficient, and disinfection is expected to take 3–5 days, likely starting the week of December 1.

Park Report – Councilman Russell provided no updates.

Street Report – Councilman Luhring reported that fall street sweeping is complete and praised the work. The city will purchase material to patch potholes and address protruding iron to ensure it will not interfere with the upcoming plowing season. Material will be delivered to the community when procured.

Unfinished Business – Gambling Ordinance – The Council discussed updating the ordinance to allow a local business to conduct non-profit gambling after the fire department’s withdrawal. The attorney recommended minor wording changes. Knetter expressed support, and a motion was made and seconded to update the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously. Final approval and adoption, along with the resolution number, will occur at the next meeting.

Parking Lot Signage – Knetter proposed signage for the city-owned parking lot near The Roundup to address long-term, dilapidated, unlicensed, or inoperable vehicles that obstruct snowplowing. The Council defined “vehicle” to include cars, trucks, boats, and campers, and established criteria for inoperable vehicles (e.g., multiple flat tires). Two signs will be installed at both entrances, and ample warning will be provided. Ordinance updates will reflect this policy.

Park Security Cameras – The Council discussed installing security cameras at the park due to ongoing vandalism. Russell identified several vendors offering cellular cameras with cloud storage. The Council emphasized creating a formal policy for data retention, public access, and signage to notify the public. A 30-day automatic data retention period was agreed upon, and cameras will be installed at secure, accessible locations. Knetter noted the importance of power sources, including solar, while considering battery performance in winter. Additional proposals and optimal camera locations will be reviewed at the December meeting.

New Business – None.

Adjournment - Motion by Russell, seconded by Luhring, to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Roan

Randolph City Council *(continued from page 16)*

They will assist with the comprehensive plan updates. Their team would take the lead on all the technical work, such as the data, research, maps and writing it. We would be in charge of our vision, and our priorities. It is our choice if we want to do this program. We will have to sign an agreement and what is everyone responsibility. We would have to host a community meeting. They will send out more information in the next few months. We asked if they assist with writing grants. She will check on this. She asked if we have any questions regarding the system statement that was sent to us which is basic information like roads, sewer system, etc. Our forecast of growth for 2020 through 2050 is estimated that we would grow by 38 households.

Northern Salt Land Use

O.J. from Northern Salt discussed that the track is going in and they should be receiving their first train load of product in December. They do not currently have any construction plans for the 20 acres to the south. They would like to utilize the 20 acre piece and generate some revenue before they have a solid plan for the property. They want to know how we feel about another project such as the windmill parts that would have a start and end date. They will come to us with a plan to consider such as either a CUP or IUP projects. He wants to know if he can continue to have conversations with potential clients. We indicated to him that we are open to conversations.

Parking on Dawson Avenue

Marie noted that the parking on Dawson by Felton’s is tight especially for buses. We could put up “No Parking” signs between 7:30 – 3:30 when school is in session. Let’s start with a sign for when school is in session and see how it goes. Matt will have a sign ordered and installed.

Sewer Project

Matt indicated that Dickman is supposed to get the final lift tomorrow. The sod installation will continue. Danel and Davisson is done but some seeding also needs to be completed. They will be putting the stripes on 83. Mailboxes and sign should be going up in two weeks – everything will be completed by Thanksgiving. If we note anything that should be dealt with make a note of it and send it to Matt. The pond will be worked on next Spring.

Council Member Reports

Cannon River Tree Service is coming to take down trees by the water tower. They will also grind the stumps. He also noted that there are two dead ash trees behind the garage so he will take those down as well. In the spring we will take a drive around and see if there are any other trees that need to come down on city properties.

Marie has been working on the website and she will start posting all of the past minutes and hopefully get caught up soon.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Price, seconded by Sande, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

All voting in favor, none opposed, motion passed 5:0.



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