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FEBRUARY 12, 2026

Volume 19 • Issue 3

The Farm That Came to Town



By Cheri Roshon

As many of you know, I am an advocate for healthy living. Not only as a massage therapist for the past 35 years, but also as a past health food store owner in 2 different states. A large part of my philosophy is "you are what you eat."

In an attempt to grow more food consistently for the people of our world, many farming practices have now shown to be contradictory to the health of our soil. The use of products to control maladies such as pests, weeds and other deterrents to the harvest have shown that they carry their own pitfalls.

(continued on page 7)

A Chiropractor Who Comes to You

By Jocelyn Aldrich

What if you could receive a quality chiropractic adjustment without having to sit in the waiting room or even leave home? Well, that is exactly what Dr. Jeremy Ackerson, D.C., offers to his clients.

(continued on page 4)

Where To Take Your Sweetheart for Valentine's Day

Some of the restaurants in our area have special offerings for Valentine's Day this month. We have featured a few here for you to see what your options can be.



(continued on page 6)



Announcements

- Wanamingo Fire Department Chili Cook Off March 7. (see ad on page 9)
- Wanamingo Vintage Snowmobile Ride & Show March 7.

(see ad on page 11)

(continued on page 3)



KW Presents The Little Mermaid in a Fin-Tastic Musical Production

The Kenyon-Wanamingo Theater Department is calling all audiences under the sea with their next production of Disney's The Little Mermaid. Join us in making a splash March 5, 6, and 7th at 7pm and March 8th at 2pm. This popular musical, with its catchy songs and cast of colorful characters, is sure to thrill audiences of all ages.

(continued on page 5)



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Does God Really Love Me?



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

A few years back, I was watching a typical ooey-goey Hallmark film. These are not necessarily my go-to movies anymore, but back then, they were a nice way for me to decompress. It was late evening; Jon (my husband) was already in bed. There was your typical happy scene in the movie of a mother and daughter having a nice time together, where your average person, as they watch, would be smiling with feelings of rainbows and sprinkles inside them. I can't quite remember what they were doing. Perhaps they were grabbing coffee together or were in the kitchen talking, but I started to cry. My eyes grew heavy, and I began, for just a little while, to long for things I never had. There's no such thing as the perfect, white-picket-fence family that Hallmark might portray, but boy did I desire it.

Then a few years later, I was listening to Steffany Gretzinger (a worship singer) talk about her father, who is now in heaven, and

the amazing man of God he was. As she shared some various ways he parented, tears began to well up and fall down my face. My insides grew a little weighty, and sadness filled my heart. At first I softly said to myself, "I missed out."

Fast-forward a little bit more. Now, especially after long days of ministry, when I am drained from pouring out, oh, how I can still long to be taken care of, like a little child being embraced by their mom or dad. To have

someone cook me a meal and simply take care of me—ah, would that be ever so nice. When those days come, I begin to have a silent cry in my heart, and I can still grieve what I lacked as a child, teenager, and even as a young adult.

When these situations happen, yes, my heart starts to pitter-patter with sorrow. However, then love rushes in, my chest grows wide, and I start to breathe hope, in and out. I know I have a Father in heaven who will parent me

with His love and fill in the gaps. The absence of my parents at times, has only richened my relationship with the Father. I thought I missed out, but I only truly gained.

You see, if you are ever so willing, something special happens when you come to Jesus in pain or loneliness. The various holes and crevices of your childhood as well as adulthood can be filled with the heavenly Father's love.

(continued on page 3)

AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY

The Newness of Eternal Life

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. — John 3:16

The newness we celebrate at the start of each year pales in comparison to the ultimate newness we receive through Christ. Eternal life isn't just about a future promise; it's about a present reality that transforms how we live today. When we embrace the newness of eternal life, we accept that we are part of something far greater than ourselves—an unshakable kingdom that will never fade.

I remember when I first understood this truth fully. It wasn't until a hard season in my life that I truly grasped what it meant to have eternal life through Jesus. I realized that no matter what happened in the world or in my circumstances, the gift of eternal life could not be taken away. This profound shift in perspective gave me the peace that surpasses understanding. I knew I had a hope beyond what this world could offer.

Eternal life changes everything. It shifts our values, our priorities, and even the way we see hardship. Each day becomes a step closer to the fulfillment of God's promises. So when the trials of life come, we can face them with the confidence that we are secure in the love of God, which never ends.

As we conclude this devotional journey, let's remember that the newness we experience now is just a foretaste of the life we have in Christ that will never fade but last forever!

Lord, thank you for the gift of eternal life. Help us to embrace your love and the hope you have given us, trusting in your promises. Amen.

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February 15th: Vang-9 am; Dennison -10:30 am

Ash Wednesday February 18th: Dennison-7 pm

February 22nd: Vang-9 am; Dennison -10:30 am

February 25th: Dennison Soup Super-6:00 pm;

Worship-7:00 pm

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10:00a.m. Coffee Time

10:30a.m. Worship Service

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Pastor Steven G. Roberts

www.gospeloflifefchurch.org

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507-259-2644

Wanamingo - Wednesday 7:00p.m.

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E-mail your church announcements, schedule, etc.
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SHOP
LOCAL

Marilyn J. Swenson

Marilyn J. Swenson, age 65, of Wanamingo, MN, passed away January 23, 2026.



Marilyn was born on September 26, 1960, in Owatonna, MN, the daughter of Kenneth and Doris (Ellefson) Brandvold. She graduated from Medford High School. Marilyn enjoyed baking and crocheting and spending time with her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She was married to Tom Swenson; he preceded her in death.

She is survived by her daughter, Nicole Gonzalez (Matt) of Faribault, MN; grandchildren, Wynonna Garcia, Michael McMonigal (Sydney), and Hunter Dralle; great grandchildren, Emma, Elijah, and Ezra McMonigal; siblings, Karen Peglow of Owatonna, Kathy Quinell of Morristown, MN, Pat Jensen (Ron) of Owatonna, Lori Cordorva (Jesse) of Oklahoma City, OK, Dean Brandvold of Medford, Kenny Brandvold of Owatonna, and Shari Brandvold of Mazeppa; and many nieces,

nephews and other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Tom Swenson; parents, Kenneth and Doris Brandvold; sisters, Carol Brandvold and Diane Baseman; and brothers, Dale Brandvold and Keith Brandvold.

A memorial gathering will be held at a later date.

Raymond Hegseth

Raymond Hegseth, 96, of Wanamingo, died Saturday, January 31, 2026 at Goodhue Senior Living in Goodhue.



He was born October 26, 1929 in Wanamingo to John and Nora (Engbert-



son) Hegseth. He attended rural schools and graduated from Wanamingo High School in 1947. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and served from 1950 to 1954 when he was honorably discharged.

He married Colleen Myran at Lands Lutheran Church in Zumbrota on September 20, 1952 and for a short time they made their home in Texas while Ray was in the military. They then returned to Wanamingo where they raised 6 children.

Ray worked for Farmers Co-Op, which became Cenex and then later Ag Partners for 44 years. Most of that time he was a truck driver. He also drove the bus for Quamingo Roller Rink. He would drive around to the local communities and pick people up and take them to the roller rink. He also drove the bus to the Minnesota State Fair, Twin's Games and even to New York and South Dakota. He also delivered the Sunday Paper, often with the help of his children.

Ray dedicated 38 years to the Wanamingo fire department, serving for a number of those years as the fire chief. He was a life-long member of Wanamingo Lutheran Church where he rang the church bell for 50 years. He also took care of the church lawn and church cemetery for as long as he was physically able.

While soft spoken, Ray was always willing to help. He was a dedicated blood donor for many years. He was meticulous with his yard

work and his record keeping. Ray could probably tell you who won a dice game 20 years ago. He enjoyed fishing and playing cards, and in his 60's, he decided to take up golf.

Ray was the happiest when he had a hot cup of coffee in his hands.

He is survived by his five children, Stuart Hegseth of Wanamingo, Mary Hegseth of Zumbrota, Jane (Jerry) Wahlin of Cold Spring, Minn., Dean Hegseth of Zumbrota, and Dan (Lisa) Hegseth of Ramsey, Minn.; 14 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren; as well as other family and many friends.

He is preceded in death by his wife of 72 years, Colleen; and a daughter, Karen Fredrickson; four siblings, Adele Johnson, Joel Hegseth, Alton Hegseth, and Dorothy Meyer.

A memorial service will be 1 p.m., Saturday, February 21, 2026 at Wanamingo Lutheran Church with visitation from 11-1p.m. at the church. Burial with military honors will be at the church cemetery. Memorials are preferred to the Wanamingo Lutheran Cemetery fund. Online condolences maybe left for the family at www.mahnfamilysfuneralhome.com

Does God Really Love Me?

(continued from page 2)

Regardless of whether you have present parents or not, if they are stable or wobbly, kind or rude, when you run to the Father (and Jesus), He fills the gaps, He fills the pits, and He even fills the areas where the good parent falls short.

The Lord absolutely, one hundred percent loves you. I mean radical, bottomless, overflowing, and abundant love. Regardless of what you have done or are doing. That's right, He loves you. Now, He may not like some of the actions we have done or are doing, but His love for us is present, more present than we could ever imagine.

We probably all have heard the famous verse, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." It then goes on to say, "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16-17).

Pay attention to the onset of the last verse I just shared: "God did not send His Son into the world to condemn." Let that sink deep down in your inner being. Listen, my friends, we do not have a God who does tummy twisties and points the finger in our face. He is not a God with hands on His hips. Jesus, the Lord and Savior, He squats low and meets us where we are at, all with the heart posture of love.

His love is unlike anything you have ever tasted, and Scripture even says that His love passes knowledge (Ephesians 3:19). I could present a few more verses that directly declare about this love, but I want to share His unconditional love with you, through the Bible, in more of an abstract way.

God (Jesus) must represent the Scriptures. If He has called us to "do" or "speak" something that is in the Word of God, how much more will He? God is the author of the Scriptures; therefore, He has to represent the following truths.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). If we are called to carry the fruit of the Spirit, how much more does God (Jesus)? God is Love. God is Joy. God is Peace. God is Patience (longsuffering). God is Kindness. God is Goodness. God is Faithfulness. God is Gentleness. God is Self-Control.

"A friend loves at all times" (Proverbs 17:17a). How much more will Jesus love at all times?

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness" (Galatians 6:1a). God is the most spiritual being. How much more will He restore you with gentleness?

You are loved by our heavenly Father (and Jesus) more than you could even imagine. When I need a reminder of the Lord's love for me, I will read over various verses that talk on His love over a cup of joe. The Word of God is truly alive and active, and as you absorb its truths, it will radically change you. Let the Lord parent you with His love; He really is a good Father.

Here are some verses on God's love if you want to check them out. You could even pour a cup of coffee or tea for yourself and invite Jesus along as you read them, kind of like a coffee or tea date with the Lord! Blessings, Ashley

Zephaniah 3:17; Romans 8:35-39; Ephesians 3:14-19; John 17:23; Psalm 89:2

Announcements

• **Hiawathaland Transit:** Service hours are 7:30am-4:30pm Monday through Friday. Call dispatch at 866-623-7505 Monday through Friday 6am-9pm and Saturday 7:00am-5:00pm. Visit threeiverscap.org for more information.

• **All are welcome to breakfast, fellowship, bible study, and prayer time every Saturday morning at Hauge Lutheran Church in Kenyon.** Breakfast and fellowship start at 8:00 am. Followed by a verse by verse bible study. Finishing with prayer time at 10:00 am. All are welcome (men, women, and children) each Saturday morning!! Any questions, please contact Loren Bauer: 507-450-6623.

• **Three Rivers Community Action is currently accepting new Meals On Wheels clients in the communities of Zumbrota, Mazeppa, Goodhue, Pine Island, Kenyon 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. For more information on how to sign up for meals or to be a volunteer driver, please contact Dana Bergner at 507-421-6067 or dbergner@threeiverscap.org

• **Wanamingo Veterans Honor Guard invite you to become a member.** Join us and help us make the Wanamingo Veterans Honor Guard an even bigger success. WVHG meets the third Tuesday of each month at the Wanamingo Community Center. The VFW will meet from 7-7:30p.m. The Honor Guard will meet from 7:30-8:30p.m. For more information contact Eric Dierks 507-321-1967, Gary Floan at 507-732-7740, or Larry Van De Walker at 507-421-4674.

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A Chiropractor Who Comes to You

(continued from page 1)

Dr. Ackerson is a mobile chiropractor with Resolute Chiropractic, serving the Kenyon-Wanamingo and Zumbrota communities. He has been practicing chiropractic care for 12 years, and he specializes in prenatal care. He believes "that [prenatal chiropractic care] can affect change for an entire family by just caring for the mother. If the mother can feel better, meaning less pain or discomfort, then she is able to thrive in the family environment." Helping families thrive through chiropractic care is what Dr. Ackerson loves about his occupation.

Ackerson's chiropractic journey began shortly after the 9/11 attacks, when he decided to join the army three weeks after the tragic event. From 2005-2007, he served as a U.S. Army combat medic in Iraq. The physical demand of army work meant that he was carrying 50-60 pounds of gear, not to mention the extra 30 pounds of medical supplies. Naturally, Ackerson and everyone he knew in the

army suffered from daily back pain. Ackerson says, "I was lucky enough to have access to a chiropractor in the desert. But because of the regulations and restrictions, it was very challenging to be allowed to see the chiropractor." When Ackerson returned from Iraq, he continued to seek out care from a local chiropractor. Within 3 weeks, he no longer suffered from back pain. Ackerson recognizes that it was after receiving care that "this was a turning point in my life." He was fascinated that chiropractic care could be used as a natural way to relieve pain. This led him to seek further education, and in 2013, Dr. Ackerson graduated from chiropractic school at Northwestern Health Sciences University.

Dr. Ackerson says his mobile model began "when a farmer told me he was going to need [chiropractic] help soon, but he wasn't able to leave the fields during harvest. He joked about it and said, 'It's too bad you couldn't adjust me in the field!'" Dr. Ackerson says, "I thought about it for 2 seconds and said, 'I could do that.' It was wonderful to see the look in his eyes. That was the first time I really thought about making a change. That was about 4 years ago, and I started slowly and have been mobile full-time for about one year." Dr. Ackerson greatly enjoys the freedom that the mobile model gives him to truly build relationships with individuals and families. For Dr. Ackerson, chiropractic care is more than just seeing another client on the list; it means being able to come alongside families and individuals.



Chiropractic field work

Dr. Ackerson lives with his wife and four children in the Cannon Falls/Northfield area. To book your appointment with Dr. Ackerson you can email resolutechiro@gmail.com or call/text 507- 403-0069.



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The Mystery of Barbara Fritchie with Tamara Louise Thayer

By Rice County Historical Society

Join the Rice County Historical Society on February 19th at 6pm for the talk "The Mystery of Barbara Fritchie" with Tamara Louise Thayer. This talk takes place at the RCHS Museum (1814 NW 2nd Ave, Faribault).

Barbara Fritchie was an elderly woman during the Civil War who waved her union flag towards Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. Her story was made iconic in the 1863 poem "Barbara Fritchie" by John Greenleaf Whittier. Explore ideas of patriotism, genealogy, and family stories in this talk.

Thayer will be dressed as Barbara and speak

in first person, drinking a cup of tea, and speaking as though the crowd came to celebrate her 96th birthday. YOU can join in the tea party too - tea provided.

Thayer is a 1980 Faribault high school graduate and lived in Faribault for 40 years. Her first book, "A Country Doctor Goes to War"

won ten awards. She regularly returns to Faribault to interpret at the High School theater or the Paradise Center for the Arts theater. She is a current Delta Kappa Gamma member in Faribault.

Talks are free for members, \$5 for non-members. Call 507-332-2121 to pre-register.

KW Presents The Little Mermaid in a Fin-Tastic Musical Production

(continued from page 1)

Tickets for The Little Mermaid can be purchased online and at the doors.

Pictured on the front, front row: Tate Lewis-Douville, Haddie Breyer, Arianna Wagner, Gunner Carlstrom, Lindsey Short, Lucas Hargarten, Joenah Breyer, Ariel Ordalen. Back row: Bailey Evenson, Harley Liss, Holly Carlstrom, Lacey Mae Kazenbach, Piper Rueger, Ben Dierks, Nick Keller, Sylvia Hedeon, Olivar Breyer, Logan Jarvis, Shaun Hargarten, Charlie Werner, Adalee Geisinger. Not pictured: Elsie Braaten, Lila Huschle, June Sundin, Piper Benbrooks, Maddie Quam, Lily Durst, Rebecca Elzen, Mariah Brainard, Arwyn Sweet, Carlee Geisinger, Marilyn Cortez, Trey Watkins, Mary Caravola, Cora Roller, Elsie Braaten, Shaun Hargarten, Adalee Geisinger, Lindsey Short, Gunner Carlstrom, Ben Dierks, Lila Huschle, Holly Carlstrom, June Sundin, Harley Liss, Piper Benbrooks, Arianna Wagner, Piper Rueger, Maddie Quam, Lily Durst, Nick Keller, Olivar Breyer, Rebecca Elzen, Lacey Mae Kazenbach, Mariah Brainard, Joenah Breyer, Charlie Werner, Brooklyn Clemens, Arwyn Sweet, Alex Elzen, Carlee Geisinger, Lucas Hargarten, Olivar Breyer, Lacey Mae Kazenbach, Sylvia Hedeon, Logan Jarvis, Ariel Ordalen, Haddie Breyer, Bailey Evenson, Marilyn Cortez, Tate Lewis-Douville, Mary Caravola, Cora Roller, Trey Watkins

KENYON-WANAMINGO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS of the WEEK



NOBLE KNIGHTS OF THE WEEK FOR FEBRUARY 2, 2026

Front Row: Maddox Kispert, KG, Ms. Emma Kmoch; Lian Munoz Castillo, KG, Mrs. Tanya Short; Bernard Strong-Holman, Gr. 1, Mrs. Katie Benbrooks; Oakley Fleming, Gr. 1, Mr. Tony Donkers; Jeaslyn Fontes Arvayo, Gr. 2, Mrs. Deb Hinrichs. Back Row: Waylon Benson, Gr. 2, Mrs. Megan Jordan; Miguel Mireles, Gr. 3, Ms. Val Ashland; Vera Krenik, Gr. 4, Mrs. Chloe Gohman; Brookelynn Cato, Gr. 4, Ms. Rhonda Thesing

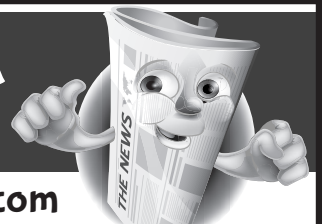


NOBLE KNIGHTS OF THE WEEK FOR FEBRUARY 6, 2026

Front Row: Waylon Beissel, KG, Ms. Emma Kmoch; Peyton Ryan, KG, Mrs. Tanya Short; Arianna Harthan, Gr. 1, Mrs. Katie Benbrooks; Emma Quam, Gr. 1, Mr. Tony Donkers; Kaylynn Westlund, Gr. 2, Mrs. Deb Hinrichs. Back Row: Daniel Coult, Gr. 2, Mrs. Megan Jordan; Jaydis Barron, Gr. 3, Ms. Val Ashland; Camilla Ortega, Gr. 3, Mrs. Sandy Bohaty; Luka Noney, Gr. 4, Mrs. Chloe Gohman; Roman Johnson, Gr. 4, Ms. Rhonda Thesing

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Where To Take Your Sweetheart for Valentine's Day

(continued from page 1)

Cahill's Bistro

Visit Cahills Bistro on Main Street in Kenyon. Choose the sparkling 2-top tables by the window; their crystal goblets and shining silverware and fresh flowers make a beautiful setting for your romantic date. Or be seated in the comfortable booths or intimate tables by the stunning bar. The back room has seating for larger groups. Don't miss the selfie station. They've installed a small archway with heart decor.

The restaurant celebrates the culinary traditions of Latin America, offering a diverse menu that showcases the bold spices and fresh ingredients that define this beloved cuisine.

From savory empanadas to zesty ceviche, each dish is crafted with care, ensuring an authentic dining experience. Their team is dedicated to providing high-quality meals while highlighting both the regional diversity of Latin dishes alongside more well-known gems.

The ambiance at Cahill Bistro Kenyon reflects the warmth and energy of a small town, making it an ideal setting for both casual meals and special occasions. Whether you are an experienced aficionado of Latin cuisine or new to these flavors, the menu is designed to please every palate.

Cahill's has a special dinner for \$100 per couple on Saturday February 14th .

It is a three-course dinner.

Choice of Lobster Bisque or Ensalada Andina

Surf & Turf 5oz Filet Mignon topped with garlic butter, 5oz lobster tail served with sautéed vegetables, mashed potato, and creamy cognac sauce.

Desert is a tres leches cake, a homemade cake soaked with a blend of three milks, topped with whipped cream, caramel, chocolate, and crisp coconut.

Call today for reservations. 507-623-1001.

Fireside Lounge & Supper Club

Tucked away in the small town of Dennison, Minnesota, just minutes from Northfield, Cannon Falls, Kenyon or Faribault, the Fireside Lounge is a beloved local gem known for its warm atmosphere, hearty food, and friendly service. This cozy establishment blends the charm of a neighborhood bar with the comfort of a rustic supper club, offering a welcoming spot for locals and visitors alike. Whether you're stopping in for a classic burger, enjoying a Friday night fish fry, or simply unwinding with a cold drink, the Fireside Lounge captures the spirit of small-town hospitality at its finest.



Try one of Michelle's famous homemade desserts at The Fireside!

The Fireside has Valentine's Day weekend

menu for you. Friday evening is the fish fry. Saturday evening is the Prime Rib. There are extra seafood items on the menu for this special weekend including lobster and scallops.

Reservations are recommended as well. 507-645-9992.

Hubbell House

As our forefathers expanded the nation to the west of the and into the virgin lands of the Great Plains, Frank Mantor and John Hubbell, traveling from Winona to St. Peter, hopped off a stagecoach and staked the original claim to what is now the village of Mantorville.

In 1854, the town was incorporated. During this same year, four years before Minnesota became a state, John Hubbell constructed the first Hubbell House. The original Hotel, a 16 x 24 foot log structure, was the only building in town having a double roof, thereby allowing room in the chamber for guests.

Two years later, in 1856, the present three-story structure was built and it immediately became an important stopping place along the trail from the Mississippi to St. Peter.

Although times have changed, Early-American hospitality is still available in Mantorville. In 1946, Paul Pappas purchased the Hubbell House and at that time established the policy of providing you with excellent foods and served them in an atmosphere that has changed but little since 1854. The Hubbell House has been a favorite with those seeking fine dining in southeast Minnesota for generations.

The Hubbell House has three outstanding entrees featured for Valentine's Day as well as many other wonderful choices on the menu.

Filet Oscar is a delicious blend of land and sea! A 7 ounce filet mignon topped with crab-cake, asparagus and bearnaise sauce.

Crab Stuffed Shrimp is shrimp with a decadent blend of crabmeat and creamy cheese, lightly breaded and deep fried to perfection.

Chicken Marsala is a tender chicken breast sauteed with mushrooms in a rich, savory Marsala wine sauce.

All entrees are served with a choice of potato, au gratin, baked, french fries, western or green beans. A choice of salad, soup, herring or coleslaw and Garlic Toast.

The Hubbell House will be serving from 11:30am to 8:30pm on Valentine's Day February 14th and reservations are highly recommended.

Sakers Sports Bar & Grill

Sakers in Kasson offers great dining for one and an event center to accommodate up to 400. Tony Saker has spent many years perfecting a variety of culinary masterpieces and is known in the area for quality.

Sakers Sports Bar & Grill offers a menu that includes a quick daily lunch or a relaxing evening of fine dining.

For Valentine's Day they have a terrific special. This is a 12 ounce ribeye steak, cooked to your wishes, along with a 5 ounce Lobster tail and a choice of potato and a salad for only \$39.99. Make plans to spend Valentine's Day Saturday close to home and with a delicious meal. Sakers is well known for their signature cheesecake desserts as well.

Sakers is open Tuesday thru Thursday from noon to close and Friday and Saturday from 11am to close. Give them a call at 507-634-7400.

Sweetheart Comedian Night: February 14 at 7:00 pm

By Mantorville Theatre Company

Enjoy a fun night out with your sweetheart! There will be four hilarious comedians: Lori Finlay, Cheryl Anderson, Zach Sharf, and Raymond Joseph. The comedian acts will be PG-13. Look below for more info about the comedians!

A silent auction will be held before and during the show - we have a range of exciting donations valued from \$50 to \$800. Silent auction items include a personal chef dinner, Mississippi cruise package, tickets to local theatres, gift baskets, and more! Please note cash/check are preferred (credit cards can be used). Visit our website for a full list of silent auction items: www.mantorvilletheatrecompany.com.

The Sweetheart Comedian Night is a fundraising event for the Mantorville Theatre Company. We are in need of about \$2,000 for the all-student summer show and each of our three family-friendly summer melodramas to be able to break even for the summer season. If we are fortunate enough to exceed these needs, we have a list of lighting equipment that we would purchase to enhance the presentation of our shows. This fundraiser will help keep our summer ticket prices down and reasonable for families.

Order your tickets online at www.mantorvilletheatrecompany.com or call 507-635-5420 and leave a message. General admission seating - \$20 per ticket. The show will start at 7:00 pm. Doors will open at 6:00 pm when the silent auction bidding starts.

Thank you for your continued support of MTC - we hope to see you there!

A sweetheart of an evening!

At Mantorville Theatre

Meet the comedians!



Lori Finlay is currently producing shows across Rochester, the Twin Cities, and Wisconsin. You never know what she'll say next—and neither does she! One thing's certain: a night with Lori is always a good forking time.



Cheryl Anderson has performed at some of the top comedy clubs in the country, appeared on NBC, Fox, and Nickelodeon. She has also appeared in numerous National and International comedy festivals.



Zach Sharf entered the comedy community in 2024. Zach is known for his silly and lovable personality, and overall hilarious delivery. One thing about Zach, if you have seen him once, you will never forget him.



Raymond Joseph believes that laughter is the best way to overcome life's challenges. He is a producer and co-host of Broken Clock Brewery's Comedy Showcase, and is quickly becoming a staple in the Minnesota comedy scene.



See more info here!



The Farm That Came to Town

(continued from page 1)

This in turn affects the quality and nutrition available in our food. But that's another story. Today I want to focus on a positive approach to our health.

I was in Zumbrota last week picking up my freshly baked artisan bread, when I saw a "new" storefront. It has been there for about a year, but I had never noticed it. I had heard of The Greensted, and it was on my list of places to check out, but I hadn't gotten there yet. I popped in to see what was waiting for me inside, and met one of the owners, Jayne Bredlau. I as usual asked a lot of questions, and was pleased to find a kindred spirit in the nutritional world. Located at 224 S. Main Street, Zumbrota, it is a bright and airy store, well stocked with healthy options for your palate.

Jayne, one of the owners, shares a bit about the enterprise:

The Greensted Fresh-n-Local - Greensted

means "green place" and Fresh-n-Local is the mission. Dean and Jayne Bredlau started business in 2018 growing and selling Microgreens. Business grew to producing over 200 pounds weekly sold wholesale to many grocery stores. We needed more growing space so moved to a custom-built facility on E. 9th Street in 2021. We added garden produce and opened the retail "farm store"

Starting in 2023, the economic times have been challenging for everyone. We had to make hard choices for our business. In October of 2024 we paused growing microgreens (after 8 years straight) and garden produce to step into a new opportunity. We moved the grocery store to Main Street in downtown Zumbrota. We flung wide the doors to our community on Nov. 1 that year. In a new location, we upgraded the name, but have the same earnest vision for bringing the best in local and regional food, home goods and personal care products to our local communities.

The Mission is sourcing all things as close to home as possible. The fresh foods come from local farms (eggs, milk, produce and meats). The best butter and cheeses (both cow and goat) come from Nordic Creamery, Westby, Wisc. Real maple syrup and honey are, of course, sourced from local farms. Regional (Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin) small businesses provide clean ingredient pantry items like coffee, tea, cereal, crackers, pick-



les, infused olive oils and balsamic vinegars, salsa, chips and organic grains and flours and much more. Yes, we have a variety of gluten free things too!

One of the most popular items are tallow based soaps, lip balms, hair care products and laundry detergent from Dandelion Naturals located in Hayfield. Michelle, the founder, handmakes all her products – there are hundreds – with a base of rendered tallow, clean oils and lightly scented with essential oils. Your skin, hair, lips and laundry will thank you. No waxes, stabilizers, dyes or preservatives in the home makes a serious impact, especially for children whose little bodies are not able to detox those substances.

I read an interesting article recently – Where does one start the process of detoxing the home? What's most impactful? The answer as voiced by many moms: Begin with switching everything that touches your family's skin. Laundry, care products, clothing and especially all plastics. Cookware was the second most vital change. Buying organic carrots or farm raised eggs is great; cooking them in toxin coated cookware or storing in plastic containers reduces the benefits.

Pro tip: Watch for used mason jars sold on FB Marketplace, garage sales or thrift shops. Make sure the tops are not chipped. Store nearly everything in them! It extends shelf life and keeps the food fresher. Cute lids can be purchased and makes them fun. Use them for drinking glasses too. Amp your game by getting a jar sealer to store dry goods (not appropriate for regular canning). Buy oats, beans, flours, dried herbs, etc. in bulk, seal 'em up in the jars and you're set for cooking and baking for months.

Start slow and make small changes in your home. It is worth the effort.

Bottom line, The Greensted GROCERY is a GROCERY store. We are not a specialty or gift store, although we offer some gift items. We provide everyday food items to promote wellness and build community support. A dollar spent at home, stays at home. Healthy eating isn't expensive, it's priceless. Our na-

tion is seeing epidemic levels of chronic illness. You are what you eat. We are not broken; the body speaks when it's struggling. Listen – don't rush to medicate.

Food is health care. Take care of your health.

My favorite item in the store was the low heat pasteurization of their milk. I have had a milk allergy all my life, so I had avoided consuming it until I found a farmer that allowed me to buy his milk right out of the cooling tank. This was acceptable to my body, so I did a deep dive into why I could tolerate the raw milk when store bought milk caused me a lot of problems while growing up. Jayne answered my questions in detail, which was much appreciated.

I was able to drink raw milk with no issues for several years until my "go to" farmer was told he couldn't sell it to his customers any more. The laws had changed and he wasn't willing to take the risk, which is understandable. So, no more raw milk for me. Again, that's another story!

I found out from Jayne that she carries milk that uses low heat instead of a high heat ultra pasteurization process. The benefit here is the naturally occurring enzymes that are present in the milk and are so important to our health remain intact. This means the enzymes our bodies require are not damaged, and can fully enter our digestive tract where they can now do their job.

The Greensted began as a way to get back to the roots of healthy living. Dean and Jayne Bredlau are on the healthy living journey right alongside their customers.

Stop in, take a look, ask questions about products and the companies behind them (Jayne loves these conversations!). Do your own research, begin to build your vision for your home and family on healthy, clean, delicious living. Let's do this together!

The Greensted is open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10am to 5pm, Saturdays from 10am to 4pm and closed Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Phone number is 507-359-2680.

Coming soon: Nygaard Repair Expansion

By Jocelyn Aldrich

Thirty-eight years of quality service and counting. That's the reputation that Nygaard Auto Repair offers. Nygaard Auto Repair has been serving the Kenyon community for almost four decades, and they work on just about every type of engine. The Nygaard team strives to make any vehicle, new or old, run well again.

Wade Nygaard, the current owner, said one of his favorite parts of being in the automotive business is helping vehicles reach their "former glory" once again.

With thirty-eight years in business, the Nygaard team has seen a lot of change in Kenyon. Wade says he was a one-year-old when his father, Tom Nygaard, decided to open the shop. Nygaard Repair has literally been a family business from the start. Wade says he started helping his dad at the shop around age eleven. Learning the ins and outs of automotive repair just made sense in Wade's mechanical mind.

Although Wade understood the mechanics of auto repair, he decided to pursue training in culinary arts. He attended Le Cordon Bleu and used his training to open Pizza Time in Kenyon. However, when other restaurants began forming in town, it created difficult competition. Wade then decided to return to the automotive business.

Wade enrolled in the automotive technology program at DCTC. He worked diligently and became top of his class, earning him a spot to compete in the USA skills competition. Wade's dedication to quality work can be seen in the way he handles everyday projects in the shop.

This is Wade's fifth year running Nygaard Auto Repair, and he looks forward to what the future will hold for the business. He is working on expanding the business by adding two more bays to the building east of the current shop. Wade notes that ever since the Milo Peterson Ford Garage closed, business has been increasing. The expansion will help Nygaard to continue offering quality auto care to the Kenyon community. Wade currently employs two mechanics and is eager to expand the business. Wade is grateful for the continued support of the Kenyon community.

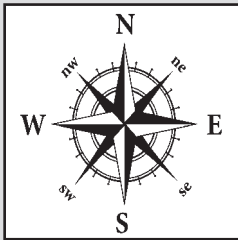
Nygaard Auto Repair is located in downtown Kenyon. For your automotive needs, call 507-789-5548.



Wade Nygaard with employees Snitzer and Louis

Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

Vacation Funland or Fraud



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.

Timeshares, we all have heard of them. Most have heard bad things about them. I owned one forty years ago when I had young kids. I paid \$6,800 for one week in Florida. We used it twenty-years and it worked out to \$120 per night. Couldn't get hotel for that price. Gave it to my ex-wife so I no longer owned it.

So, this year we rented the same vacation villa for \$99 per night when we visited Disney World. We love the condo, the pools, the location, the restaurants and amenities on site. A great deal for \$99 per night. Then they offered

us \$200 to attend their sales presentation. Only 90 minutes of our time. That is where it went off the rails. First of all, my wife and I knew there wasn't a snowball's chance on a Florida beach we were buying. The sales guy wasn't aware of that. He hadn't been told that some tourists weren't gullible.

They fed us breakfast, they gave us the tour, we saw the kids arcade, water park, paddle boats on the lake, bar and restaurants. They said no pressure, if it wasn't for us to not even consider buying. They wouldn't even tell us the price, just said that it would pay for itself. We would save so much money, our vacation would be almost free. It was a legacy to hand down for generations. Then a closer stepped in and was going to clinch the sale. She said to forget that "pinky" promise we made before we came that we would not buy.

All of this fanfare and we were shown the price. \$39,900 for one week per year. Why, this was an investment better than any we had ever seen. We should pull our money out of whatever we were vested in and place it with them. And maintenance and taxes were only an additional \$1,500 per year.

I am a farmer and I have hauled a lot of manure and have never seen this much shoveled out in such a short time. I replied that my investments made over 14% last year and that \$40,000 would generate \$5,600. Add in the \$1,500 maintenance fee each year and I was throwing away \$7,100. I could rent the condo for \$700 a week and have \$6,400 to spend on vacation a week without risking a cent of my principal. Poor sales kid was speechless. They called in the boss.

This guy was certain he had us with a



\$10,000 price reduction. We didn't even flinch. Then because, I had once been an owner he said he would sell us this unit for the incredible price of \$15,000. We still didn't blink an eye. He lowered his voice and said that for this hour only and never again offered, we could steal it for the measly sum of \$8,900. Three strikes and this guy's pitch was over.

By this time, we were three hours into the presentation and my wife had a spa appointment, she had booked the day before, in half an hour. So, we stood up to leave. A short woman with long black hair stormed onto the scene. She was the clincher, all business, she was going to save the day, she was their last

hope, she would make the sale. When she realized we were leaving she became rather insolent, demanding extra time to speak to us. I said we have a prior engagement and we were going. She looked right at me with fire in her dark eyes and scolded me for scheduling something the day of the presentation. I replied that her 90-minute presentation ended an hour and a half ago and walked away. Still part of me wished we could have stayed to have seen just how low they were willing to go.

We will go back again, we love the facilities. For \$99 a night it is a great deal. And after all, they will pay you \$200 to sit thru the ordeal.

A Minnesotan: Cats



By RosaLin Alcoser

Growing up in rural Minnesota cats were mainly an outdoor animal that spounded into existence in barns. Yes, there were plenty of people who had house cats, but the ones I saw were mainly outside cats.

Working cats who knew how to survive out in the world. And who may or may not scratch you if you got too close depending on the cat. Not indoor cats of leisure like all city cats appear to be.

My family did not have any cats; inside or outside. Mainly due to the fact that half of the family unit was allergic to them. We were a combination inside outside dog

family; the combination really depended on the dog. Since our first dog basically refused to come inside until she was quite old and my parents current dog panics if she accidentally gets left outside alone.

My husband, however, is from a cat family and he has two inside cats; because we live in the cities and outside cats are not a thing here. Which means that I now have two cats for the first time in my entire life. And I don't mean that they are a cat family like my family is a dog family. Where we have a dog and we love it because it's part of the family. I mean they are a cat obsessed family who takes their cats to the cabin with them and has cat images everywhere. It doesn't even have to be their cats or past cats, it just has to be a cat, and can be on literally anything.

I do like cats and I absolutely love our specific two cats; and with the cold weather we've been having, I am very glad that they don't need to be taken outside. There have been things that I have had to learn though to live with in order to live with indoor nonworking cats. Such as they will stand on us in our sleep and if they choose to sleep on your lap you're just sitting in that chair until they get off on their own.



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Wanamingo Sportsmen's Club Banquet

February 12, 2026

- KENYON-WANAMINGO MESSENGER -

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photos by Wanamingo Sportsmen's Club



(additional pictures on pages 10 & 11)



KENYON VFW POST 141

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Wanamingo Sportsmen's Club Banquet

February 12, 2026

- KENYON-WANAMINGO MESSENGER -

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PROUD TO SUPPORT NATIONAL FFA WEEK

The Kenyon-Wanamingo FFA Chapter is off to a great start this year so far. In September the Dairy Cattle Evaluation Team earned second place at their region contest qualifying them for their state competition in April, this team consists of Hanna Gudknecht, Matthew Scheffler, Ben Scheffler, and Cora Foss. A few of the team members placed in the top 10 Ben Scheffler placed 2nd, Cora Foss placed 5th, and Hanna Gudknecht placed 8th.

The annual Fruit Sale Fundraiser was a success with the chapter selling just short of \$15,000 worth of fruit to the community.

Coming up the chapter is having their pancake breakfast to thank the school staff and alumni/supporters for National FFA Week. In March the FFA Alumni are planning a pancake feed in Wanamingo open to the public.

Students will be attending the Minnesota State FFA Convention at the end of April to compete and learn more about FFA while supporting their fellow members.

The agriculture department's greenhouse at the high school will be back open and selling a variety of tomatoes, peppers, flowers, and more starting the first week in May for the FFA Plant Sale mark your calendars!

Finally to wrap up the year the Kenyon-Wanamingo FFA Chapter is celebrating their local FFA week May 11th- 15th with activities for the students all week long, end of the year banquet, and the tractor drive on May 15th.

National FFA WEEK

FEBRUARY 21-28, 2026



Back row: Mason Allen, Mason Kylo, Caleb Thorsen, Braiden Johnson, Cody Ostertag, Josh Estrem, Matthew Scheffler, Lukas Gullickson, Daniel Sandberg. Front row: Roman Gura, Madison Quam, Cora Foss, Morgan Laue, Talia Johnson, Eva Jacobson, Hadley Wieme, Anna Ostertag, Carter Sivahop, Ben Scheffler, Jaxson Hedeon, and Chase Cordes

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Farm Girl Chatter

The Ones That Have Taught Me Life Lessons and True Love

By McKell Lemmerman

This article is dedicated to the animals that shape a farmer's life and give meaning to the work done before sunrise and after dark. While family and friends are essential, the deeper connection often lives in the pasture and the barn. It can be found in frost-lined fences at dawn, in the creak of a barn door opening, and in the quiet sound of hooves shifting. For many farmers, animals are the reason the day begins early and ends late. They are constant companions—silent speaking with no words back to you, but always present.

Many farmers, like me, grew up around animals, yet it is often with age and experience that their true value becomes clear. Farming teaches responsibility early, but devotion is learned over years of repetition. They depend on us whether the winter wind strikes through a coat, or the summer dust clings to our sweaty skin. They wait for us, they trust us, and they require our consistency. In your daily routine, you learn patience, and the quiet discipline that defines rural life.

Horses are often dismissed as “hay burners,” but their worth has never been measured by profit at my farm. Horses offer something deeper; they bring peace. Stepping into the

saddle, feeling the leather between your legs, you escape your reality. There is saying that there is no better view between the ears of the horse, the land stretches wide and open, offering perspective that few other places can. They are the ones who are spirited with attitudes, but when they know you have a hard time, they understand what you are going through. Galloping through the fields, they are the ones who give you the imagination of flying like a bird, arms out, soaring through the sky with the air bouncing off your body. They are the animals that can carry you for miles without hesitation, go through unwanted territory like they are a boy scout wondering about the woods. While horses still serve practical roles, such as helping me gather cattle, their greatest contribution is the calm they bring to an otherwise demanding life.

Then there are the dogs—the always present helpers and loyal shadows. Farm dogs are the hired hands who never ask for wages, just a treat or a good scratch. Farm dogs are up when you are up and go to bed when you go to bed. They follow their owners across every stage from sun baked pastures to snow kissed ground. They are always ready and always watching. A good farm dog understands your routine, the long hard days that are worked. No matter how busy the day becomes, the dog remains.

And finally, the heart of the farm is the cattle. For many farmers, appreciation for livestock grows with time. Calving season brings long nights and early mornings, but also moments that remind farmers why they chose this life. Kneeling in straw as a calf takes its first breath, watching a cow instinctively turn to her newborn. The cow gives a gentle moo of appreciation, thanking the farmer much like a new mother thanking the doctor who helped bring her baby into the world. Farmers



help the cows raise these calves through storms and sunshine, knowing each one represents hours of care, effort, and hope—whether it becomes replacement stock or is eventually sold, they all have a purpose. The cows eventually know your routine and patiently wait at the gate for every meal that is served. They learn your voice and your body language. They know the sounds that follow every action you do. So, when you give a call to the herd that is dispersed in open green fields, they shout back, saying I am here. They know you and because of that they come running, jumping, kicking with joy of excitement to see the person they trust most.

Farmers love their animals not because the

work is easy, but because there is a bond built. Loving animals means sore muscles, sleepless nights, and heartbreak when one is lost. But it also means purpose. These animals shape daily routines and give meaning to the labor that often goes unseen.

In the end, farming is not just about land or livestock. It is about a bond formed through routine, trust, and responsibility—a bond that demands everything and gives back just enough to make it worth it. That is why farmers love their animals: because in caring for them, they find not only their livelihood, but their identity.

Silent appreciation never goes unnoticed from the eyes of your four-legged animals.

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Fertility



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist

While you may remember a discussion of “the birds and the bees,” with a parent or in a classroom setting, nothing of that content provides a helpful foundation for how to create a family. A couple can establish a household and have a stable place for raising children, but there are many more factors that go into creating an environment for conceiving a child. The perfect environment seems to be harder to achieve these days as the fertility rate in the USA continues to decline. The Center for Disease Control has documented a continuing decline of fertility since the “baby boom” of the 1950s, and the British Medical Journal published a report in 2025 that the fertility rate in the US had reached an all-time low. Current fertility rates are not able to sustain a stable population. In order to create a perfect environment for conceiving children, a couple must begin with an evaluation of their nutrition.

My personal journey into nutrition began with this question of fertility as my wife and I learned how challenging conception can be. I am very thankful we were directed to a doctor who clearly outlined for us how important nutrition is for establishing a foundation of health that can support the creation of new life. This discovery has changed my life and the life of my family, which now includes two healthy young adult children. As the statistics from the CDC declare, there is an increasing number of couples across the country who need to know this information too.

Healthy conception is a team effort depend-

ent on the health of the man and the woman. Sperm and egg quality reflect the quality of food that has been consumed in the past six months. In fact, the study of epigenetics points to the impact a grandparent’s diet will have on the grandchild. The children of the “baby boom” were the result of family food practices that involved gardens and farm fresh foods. Very little processed food existed in the 1950s compared to what is on the store shelves today. But as processed foods, preservatives, fast foods, and sugar have increased in the nation’s food supply, the fertility rate has decreased due to decreased sperm and egg quality.

As my wife and I discovered, there are opportunities to select quality food sources and nutrition supplements that will heal the body and restore fertility. A few of those choices include:

Add healthy fats – Do not purchase any product with “low fat” on the label. Healthy cells egg and sperm cells require quality fats to function well. Whole milk yogurt, whole fat cheese, wild caught fish, eggs, Olive oil, and coconut oil are good examples of healthy fat sources. These whole food sources should be a part of each day to help promote the stable production of hormones that will direct the conception process.

Add protein to each meal – Protein provides the building blocks to make new tissue and new cells. Protein should come from whole food sources like poultry, fish, meat, beans, nuts, and cheese. Avoid protein powders as there can be additives and these products are

more expensive forms of protein.

Add fresh vegetables each day – Fresh vegetables will provide the vitamins, minerals, and additional nutrients that will help the sperm and egg to function properly. Dark leafy greens like kale, collard greens, chard, and broccoli are rich in folate and minerals. Make an effort to add a rainbow of colors to your plate with carrots, red onion, cabbage, bell peppers, and black olives. Each color represents a different set of nutrients delivered to fertility system.

Within these primary food categories are important nutrients that sustain healthy fertility and a stable environment for a growing baby. Key nutrients for fertility include: Omega-3 fatty acids, folate, zinc, selenium, iodine, Vitamin D, iron, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Vitamin B12, and choline. Both the male and female need to give attention to consuming these nutrients to improve fertility and give the next child the best chance of a healthy start. Your grandchildren in the future are affected by your diet now.

I enjoy helping couples develop a healthy food plan for their households that result in greater health and stronger families. 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

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Yes! Cold Weather Does Make You Ache More!



By Shauna Burslem, D.C.

Here it is. The answer to the most asked question during winter months pertaining to aches and pains: Cold weather exacerbates arthritis symptoms by affecting joint fluid, circulation, and muscle flexibility. As temperatures drop, the synovial fluid in joints thickens, making movements feel stiff and painful. Reduced blood flow and tightened muscles further amplify discomfort, while shorter days and less sunlight contribute to inactivity and vitamin D deficiency, weakening bones and increasing inflammation. These combined factors make winter particularly challenging for those with arthritis, as the body struggles to adapt to the seasonal changes.

Barometric pressure drops during cold weather also play a significant role in worsening arthritis pain. When the pressure decreases, tendons and muscles expand, creating additional strain on already inflamed joints. This internal pressure makes joints feel tighter and more sensitive, often causing discomfort even before a storm arrives. Additionally, poor circulation in cold temperatures slows the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to joints, delaying recovery and heightening



stiffness, especially in weight-bearing areas like the knees and hips.

Lifestyle changes during winter, such as reduced physical activity and dietary shifts, further contribute to joint pain. Inactivity weakens muscles, reducing their ability to support joints and increasing friction and stiffness. Immune system overactivity in colder months can also intensify inflammation, particularly in autoimmune conditions like rheumatoid arthritis. However, proactive measures like regular movement, heat therapy, and maintaining a nutrient-rich diet can help counteract these effects and improve joint health.

Nutrition and supplementation are crucial for managing arthritis symptoms in winter. Optimizing vitamin D and K2 levels strengthens bones and reduces inflammation, while consuming anti-inflammatory foods supports overall joint health. Warm bone broth, rich in collagen and cartilage-repairing compounds, nourishes joints and improves circulation. Avoiding inflammatory seed oils and replacing them with healthier fats like grass-fed butter or ghee can also reduce oxidative stress and support cellular health, further alleviating joint discomfort.

Daily movement, heat therapy, and sunlight exposure are essential strategies for staying active and pain-free during winter. Gentle exercises like yoga, stretching, or indoor walking keep joints lubricated and improve circulation. Heat therapies, such as warm baths or saunas, relax stiff tissues and restore flexibility. By combining these practices with proper nutrition and self-care, individuals with arthritis can reduce winter flare-ups, maintain mobility, and confidently navigate the colder months.

Improve Mental Health; Reduce Social Media time: A recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association AMA Network Open revealed that reducing social media use to approximately 30 minutes per day can significantly improve mental health. The research found that participants experienced a 16% reduction in anxiety, a 25% decrease in depression, and a 15% drop in insomnia symptoms. However, loneliness scores remained largely unchanged, highlighting the dual role of social media as both a source of connection and stress. These findings align with earlier studies, such as those from the University of Bath, which demonstrated that even a one-week break from platforms like TikTok, In-

stagram, and Facebook can enhance well-being, though such short resets are not substitutes for therapy or medical care.

The study, which tracked 373 young adults aged 18 to 24, used a digital phenotyping app to measure real-time social media usage and its effects on mental health. Participants were monitored over three weeks, including a one-week "detox" period where nearly 80% voluntarily reduced their social media use from 1.9 hours to just 30 minutes daily. During this detox, participants reported significant improvements in mental health, particularly those with severe symptoms at the start. Depression scores dropped by nearly 50% for those with moderate-to-severe depression, while anxiety and insomnia symptoms also saw notable reductions. Researchers attributed these benefits to reduced opportunities for negative social comparisons and addictive behaviors rather than simply cutting overall screen time.

Interestingly, the study found that behavior changes during the detox were subtle, with participants spending slightly more time at home and maintaining similar overall phone usage. This suggests that the type of content consumed on social media, rather than the total time spent, plays a more critical role in mental health outcomes. Experts emphasized that interventions targeting problematic engagement, such as late-night scrolling or unhealthy comparisons, may be more effective than focusing solely on reducing screen time. While the study's short-term nature limits its ability to predict long-term outcomes, it highlights the potential of brief digital detoxes as a practical mental health strategy



for young adults.

Mental health professionals have praised the study for its robust methodology and impactful results. Psychologist Mitch Prinstein of the American Psychological Association noted that the improvements observed in just one week rival those typically achieved after 8 to 12 weeks of therapy. However, experts caution that such detoxes should be approached thoughtfully, especially for individuals who rely on online communities for support. Planning and consulting with a trusted health professional can help integrate these experiments into broader mental health care. Ultimately, the study underscores the importance of mindful social media use and its potential to positively influence mood, sleep, and overall well-being.

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

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The Savvy Senior How to Turn Down the Volume on Tinnitus



By Jim Miller

Dear Savvy Senior,

What treatments are recommended to help with tinnitus? I started noticing a subtle ringing in my ears about 10 years ago, but it's gotten much more bothersome since I turned 60.

Ringin' Ronnie

Dear Ronnie,

Tinnitus is actually one of the most common health conditions in the country. According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders around 10 percent of the U.S. adult population – over 25 million Americans – experience some form of tinnitus.

For most people tinnitus is merely annoying, but roughly 5 million people struggle with chronic tinnitus and 2 million find it debilitating.

While there's no cure, there are a range of different strategies you can employ to reduce the symptoms to make it less bothersome. Here's what you should know.

What is Tinnitus?

Tinnitus (pronounced TIN-a-tus or tin-NIGHT-us) is the sensation of hearing a ringing, buzzing, roaring, hissing or whistling sound in one or both ears when no external sound is present.

The sounds, which can vary in pitch and loudness, are usually worse when background noise is low, so you may be more aware of it at night when you're trying to fall asleep in a quiet room.

Tinnitus itself is not a disease, but rather a

symptom of some other underlying health condition. The best way to find out what's causing your tinnitus is to see an audiologist, or an otolaryngologist – a doctor who specializes in ear, nose and throat diseases (commonly called an ENT). The various things that can cause tinnitus are:

Hearing loss, which is the most common cause.

Middle ear obstructions usually caused by a build-up of earwax deep in the ear canal.

Side effects of many different prescription and over-the-counter medicines like aspirin, ibuprofen, certain blood pressure medicines and diuretics, some antidepressants, cancer medicines and antibiotics.

Various medical conditions such as high blood pressure, vascular disease, diabetes, allergies, thyroid problems, ear or sinus infections, Meniere's disease, Lyme disease, fibromyalgia, otosclerosis, temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorder, a tumor, an injury to the head or neck, traumatic brain injury, depression, stress and more.

Treatment Strategies

There are many ways to treat tinnitus depending on the cause. For example, if your tinnitus is caused by a wax build-up in your ears or a medical condition like high blood pressure or a thyroid problem, treating the problem may reduce or eliminate the noise.

Or, if you're taking a medication that's causing the problem, switching to a different drug or lowering the dosage may provide some relief. If you have hearing loss, getting

a hearing aid can help mask your tinnitus by improving your ability to hear actual sounds.

Another strategy that can help suppress or mask the sound so it's less bothersome is "sound therapy." This can be as simple as a fan or white noise machine, or you can use sound therapy apps like ReSound Tinnitus Relief, myNoise or NatureSpace.

Cognitive behavioral therapy and psychological counseling can also be helpful, as can tinnitus retraining therapy (TNT). This combines counseling and sound therapy to train your brain to ignore the sound in your ears. The new MindEar app offers TNT.

There are even new innovations like the FDA approved device Lenire that uses electrical stimulation of the tongue to alleviate symptoms.

There are also certain medications that may help. While there's no FDA approved drugs specifically designed to treat tinnitus, some anti-anxiety drugs and antidepressants have been effective in relieving symptoms.

Your audiologist or ENT can help you figure out the best treatment options.

Other things you can do to help quiet the noise is to avoid things that can aggravate the problem like fatty foods, salt, artificial sweeteners, sugar, alcohol, tonic water, tobacco and caffeine. Also be sure to drink plenty of water as dehydration can worsen symptoms. And protect yourself from loud noises by wearing earplugs.

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SMIF

Honoring the Past, Building the Future



By Benya Kraus
President & CEO Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

Our state is going through a lot right now. Crisis after crisis has put Minnesota in the national spotlight. What feels even more fraught is the way these crises seem to be tearing apart much of the social fabric that has knitted us together as Minnesotans for decades: a state that has led the nation in civic engagement, a people whose warmth binds us together through the sub-zero months, a team spirit that never gives up on the Vikings, no matter how many times we enter a Super Bowl play-

off without them.

In times of crisis, we can choose to fan the fire, to respond with such force that one crisis begets another, to sow suspicion and blame in our neighbor. Or we can choose cooperation. To respond with measured reason, to hold multiple truths at the same time and believe that the solution is better when we work at it together.

And as Minnesotans, we've seen and chosen both paths in our history.

This year, we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation — which is also 40 years since the farm crisis of the 1980s. I remember my uncle Paul driving me around our farm in the four wheeler near Waseca when I was a teenager, pointing out which plots of land used to be owned by which family. As the farm crisis unfolded, many of those families were forced to sell off land that generations of their ancestors stewarded. Some of those families were lost to suicide. All this was unfolding within the backdrop of the Cold War, where children had learned to practice hiding under desks for fear of nuclear attacks.

The farm crisis of the '80s had the potential to pit neighbor against neighbor, the urban metro benefitting from the gains of globalization while rural communities were shut out of financial markets. Yet, amidst the devastation — a group of Minnesotans came together across urban and rural communities to form the Minnesota Initiative Foundations. With the leadership and financial investment of the Minneapolis-based McKnight Foundation, an endowment fund was set up in each of the six

regions of Greater Minnesota as a way to keep as much wealth retained in our rural communities as possible. Residents of each region governed the fund that would impact where they lived, and in those 40 years since, generations of local donors and volunteers chose to invest in a fund where the returns would be distributed to future generations of entrepreneurs, child care providers and community leaders with big ideas to grow their small towns.

Forty years ago in a time of crisis, Minnesota chose cooperation and focused on meeting local need. They made immediate sacrifices in service of future generations they would never meet.

I find myself reflecting on this history now as we prepare to celebrate SMIF's 40th anniversary on April 23, and as my husband and I prepare to welcome our first child in the coming month. The theme of SMIF's anniversary event is "Honoring the Past, Building the Future" — which feels a lot like the weight of impending parenthood as well. As we think through names for our future child, we keep turning to the legacy of our grandparents as inspiration. Do we hope for our child to be strong in faith like Granny Jean and resilient like Khun Yai Somjit? Or perhaps humble like Grandpa Powell and selflessly headstrong like Grandpa Jim? We know the next generation will leave their own distinctive mark on the world in ways we will never be able to predict or control. Yet, how they handle crisis, the responsibility they will hold for their neighbor and community, is not forged in isolation. By looking to our past, to

the lives of service that our ancestors led, we can choose to extend their legacy into the futures we build today.

As our state continues to navigate the intensity of today's crises, I hope you will join us in finding new pathways forward beyond today's cultural standstill. We may just find that looking at the past and honoring what it's taught us is the best way we can build a new future together, and for our children.

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

About Benya Kraus

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

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Ask A Trooper

By Sgt. Troy Christianson,
Minnesota State Patrol



Question: *I know you were talking about winter safety tips in your last article. Can you go over the items a person should have in their vehicle when traveling in the winter?*

Answer: When assembling a winter travel survival kit, it's best to include a variety of items that prepare you for cold, isolation, and unexpected delays. Even if you keep the kit in your vehicle year-round, review it regularly to make sure everything is in good condition and still in its proper place. A winter travel survival kit should focus on warmth, traction, communication, and basic supplies.

Winter Travel Survival Kit Essentials

Warmth

- Extra blankets or a sleeping bag
- Warm hats, gloves, socks, and scarves
- Hand and foot warmers
- Emergency thermal (space) blanket

Traction & Vehicle Safety

- Ice scraper and snow brush
- Small shovel
- Sand, cat litter, or traction mats
- Tire chains (if appropriate for your area)
- Jumper cables

Communication & Visibility

- Fully charged power bank and charging cables
- Flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries
- Reflective vest or roadside flares
- Whistle for signaling
- Paper and pencil(s) to leave note/message

Basic Supplies

- Non-perishable food and snacks
- Bottled water (rotate to prevent freezing or expiration)
- First aid kit
- Multi-tool or basic tool kit
- Matches or lighter (stored safely)
- Paper towels, tissues, and wet wipes

Additional Helpful Items

- Map of the area (in case GPS fails)
- Emergency contact information
- Duct tape and zip ties
- Tow strap

Keeping these essentials on hand can make a critical difference if you're stranded or delayed during winter travel. Regular checks ensure your kit is always ready when you need it most.

Question: *My husband always used to say "never use your cruise control during the winter months". Is that still true with advances on tires and technology?*

Answer: He is correct, cruise control

should never be used on wet or icy roadways. If your wheels lose traction, the cruise control will continue to accelerate, causing the vehicle to skid. By the time you realize you are skidding, it could be too late.

With dry road conditions, cruise control helps you safely monitor your speed, stay within the speed limit and improve driving comfort on long, fairly straight stretches of road. It should be used only when you are able to drive at a steady speed with safe road conditions.

On icy, snow-covered or wet roads.

When deciding if you should set your cruise control:

- Ask yourself if it's safe to travel the speed limit. If not, it isn't safe to set your cruise.
- Is there limited visibility? If it's foggy, snowing, or raining and your range of visibility is significantly reduced, play it safe. Don't set your cruise.
- Is traffic moving smoothly? If it's stop-and-go, or there's heavy traffic around you, it's not safe to use cruise.

Remember that using your cruise control can be an advantage when driving long distances, but YOU are your vehicle's best safety feature.

Question: *I listened to your radio show the other day and you were talking about fatal crashes were lower last year, what was the break down on the numbers?*

Answer: In 2025, Minnesota saw a significant improvement in road safety, recording 370 traffic-related deaths. This marks the lowest fatality count since 2019 and reflects a 22% decrease from 2024 and 8% percent less than in 2023.

While the overall trend is positive, specific categories show where our roads are getting safer and where challenges remain:

Speed-related fatalities (98) were 29 percent less than in 2024 (138), 43 percent less than in 2021 (171) and the lowest since 2019. Unbelted deaths (70) were 31 percent less than in 2024 (101) and the lowest in the past seven years. Distraction-related deaths (21) were 30 percent less than in 2024 (30), 34 percent less than in 2020 (32) and the lowest in the past seven years. Bicycle fatalities (14) were twice as high as in 2024 (7). The next highest count since 2019 was in 2020 (10). Motorcycle deaths (57) were 25 percent less than in 2024 (76) and the lowest since 2019.

The Minnesota State Patrol remains committed to a dual-pronged approach for 2026. While public education on the dangers of speeding, impairment, and distraction is vital, it must be supported by extra enforcement.

Let's work together to make 2026 the safest year yet. Buckle up, put the phone away, and drive for the conditions.

Question: *I travel a lot and I see a number of people making some poor choices when it comes to passing semis and large vehicles.*



There is no way these big rigs can stop in time when people do these unsafe maneuvers. Can you write about this?

Answer: A commercial vehicle is a motor vehicle or a combination of motor vehicles that weighs more than 26,000 pounds and is used to transport passengers or property. Buses, including school buses of all sizes, and smaller vehicles with hazardous materials placards are also considered commercial vehicles.

Before passing a commercial vehicle, make sure you have safe clearance to the side, behind and ahead of your vehicle.

- Passing on a level highway: It takes three to five seconds longer to pass a commercial vehicle than a car. Allow enough time to pass and return to the right lane before coming within 100 feet of oncoming traffic.

- Do not pass: If you plan to exit or turn off the road soon, stay behind the commercial vehicle until you reach the exit.

- Passing while going uphill: Commercial vehicles often lose speed on an upgrade, making them easier to pass than a car.

- Passing while going downhill: Commercial vehicles increase speed on a downgrade. Allow more distance to pass.

- Complete your pass quickly: Do not remain alongside the commercial vehicle. Move back into your lane only when you can see the front of the commercial vehicle in your rearview mirror. Maintain your speed after passing.

- When a commercial vehicle passes you: Keep to the far side of your lane and slightly reduce your speed. Do not speed up while the commercial vehicle is passing.

- Meeting a commercial vehicle from the opposite direction: Stay as far to the right as possible to avoid a sideswipe crash and reduce wind turbulence between the vehicles. Turbulence will push the vehicles away from each other, not toward each other.

- Judging speed and distance: Because of their large size, commercial vehicles often appear to be traveling slower than they actually are. Many car-commercial vehicle collisions occur at intersections because the driver of the car misjudges the speed and distance of the commercial vehicle.

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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KENYON CITY COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 13, 2026

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a City Council Meeting was duly held in the City Council chambers at 7:00 p.m. on the 13th day of January 2026. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kirchmann.

The following members were present: Mayor Don Kirchmann, Council Members Kim Helgeson, Lee Sjolander, Mary Bailey, and Elana Brunner

Also, present: City Administrator Scott Lehner, Administrative Assistant Holli Gudknecht, Engineer Derek Olinger, City Attorney Scott Riggs, Brittni Schmitz, Officer Armani Tucker, Josh Johnson, Operations Superintendent Randy Eggert, John Lee, Bob Hawley, Jed Johnson, Todd Greseth, Doug Henke

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZEN COMMENT

Bob Hawley, Executive Director of Goodhue County Habitat for Humanity, updated the council on the home being built in Kenyon. The Kenyon-Wanamingo school's construction class is assisting on the construction. This house is still looking for a family to occupy the home. Applications are open now for a low-income family.

Todd Greseth, Goodhue County Commissioner, stated that the County levy will increase 6.5% for 2026. There will be an even larger increase coming in 2027 because of State mandates. The May County Commissioner meeting will be held at Kenyon City Hall. If you have any questions for the commission, please contact Todd.

ADOPT AGENDA

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Bailey to approve the agenda. Motion carried 5-0-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Helgeson second by Brunner to approve the amended Consent Agenda, which includes:

Kennedy & Graven 2026 Rates for Legal Services

CMPAS Alternate – Remove Jim Malloy, Add John Lee

Resolution 2026-01: Establishing License Fees and Compensation

Annual licenses

Resolution 2026-02: A Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of 2025 Donations

Payment of check numbers, 77731 through 77837; 7100E through 7170E

Council Special Meeting Minutes of December 9, 2025

Council Meeting Minutes of December 9, 2025

Motion carried 5-0-0.

PRESENTATIONS/

PUBLIC HEARINGS/

RECOGNITIONS/PROLAMATIONS

ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Step Increase/COLA

Administrator Lehner stated that the council previously approved a 3% COLA increase in the 2026 budget. Historically, a step increase has also been provided; however, the 2026 budget did not include a step increase. Lehner reported that adding a step increase would cost approximately \$41,000. He recommended implementing a COLA at the beginning of each year and a step increase on the employee's anniversary date beginning in 2027. Councilmember Sjolander expressed

interest in providing some type of increase for part-time employees as well.

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Kirchmann to pay a step increase for 2026 retroactive to the first payroll of 2026. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Benefits-MN Family Leave

Administrator Lehner reported that all required paperwork for Minnesota Family Leave benefits has been submitted and payroll deductions have begun.

Performance Evaluations

Administrator Lehner reported that he had received all performance reviews done by the supervisors. He has completed the department head reviews but was waiting to distribute the reviews pending the decision on step increases.

Computer/Office/Conference Room

Administrator Lehner reported that Mike from On-Site Computers reviewed the city's computer needs and layout. Planned upgrades include a new computer and monitors for the finance office, an upgraded conference room system, and a new printer for the Deputy Clerk.

Reposting of Administrative Assistant Position

Administrator Lehner reported that the administrative assistant position is being reposted after the selected candidate declined the offer. The new application deadline is the end of January.

Brittni Schmitz addressed the council regarding her part-time position in the city office, stating she will not continue employment due to ineligibility for COLA and step increases, and the impact of the new Minnesota Family Leave payroll deduction. Administrator Lehner stated that a work session would be scheduled to review this issue.

Year-end Wrap-Up Update

Administrator Lehner reported that staff have been busy completing year-end tasks and transferring files.

Transitioning KMU into the City Banking System

Administrator Lehner reported that the transition of KMU auto-pay accounts to the city banking system is ongoing and will take additional time to complete.

ENGINEERING

2025 Street and Utility Improvements

Engineer Olinger stated that change order #1 was tabled at last month's meeting, but it is now ready for review. This is a contract amendment to address two items on the project. Item one is extending the completion dates for 2025 work to reflect the additional time needed to complete the 2nd street watermain work and other work completed during the 2025 construction season.

Fitzgerald Excavating and Trucking Change Order No. 1

Motion by Bailey seconded by Brunner to approve Change Order No.1 for Fitzgerald Excavating and Trucking. Motion carried 5-0-0.

LEGAL

Rebound Project-TIF

Attorney Riggs stated that Rebound Real Estate is applying for a state grant and that additional documentation from the city would improve the application rating.

Resolution 2026-03: Approving the Application

Motion by Bailey seconded by Helgeson to

adopt Resolution 2026-03. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Resolution 2026-04: Expressing the City of Kenyon's Willingness to Work with Rebound Real Estate on Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for the Sunset Homes Redevelopment

Attorney Riggs recommended tabling the resolution.

Resolution 2026-05: Approving the Application and Committing the Local Match and Authorizing Contract Signature

Motion by Bailey seconded by Brunner to adopt Resolution 2026-05. Motion carried 5-0-0.

OLD BUSINESS NEW BUSINESS

2026 Appointments and Designations

Library Board – 3-Year Term

Renee Caron

Bryana Lothert

Planning Commission – 2-Year Term

Vacant

Vacant

Vacant

Public Utility Commission

Don Kirchmann

Historic Preservation Commission

a. Vacant

Park & Recreation

Bailey Ament

Vacant

Appointments

Acting Mayor – Mary Bailey

Legal Newspaper – Kenyon Leader

Depository – Security State Bank, 4M, Northland Securities

City Attorney – Scott Riggs, Kennedy & Graven Chartered

Prosecuting Attorney – David Jacobsen, Jacobsen Law Firm

City Engineer – Derek Olinger, Bolton & Menk

City Auditor – BerganKDV

Financial Consultant – George Eilertson - Northland Securities

Investments – As Allowed Per Minnesota Statutes

Deputy Clerk – Holli Gudknecht

Weed Inspector – Donald Kirchmann

Personnel Committee – Don Kirchmann, Kim Helgeson, Scott Lehner

Kenyon Fire Relief Association – Don Kirchmann and Scott Lehner

Motion by Sjolander seconded by Brunner to approve the 2026 committee appointments and designations. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Part-Time Police Recommendation

Police Chief Sjolander recommended hiring some part-time police officers, noting interest from trained officers currently working in the profession.

Motion by Bailey seconded by Brunner to approve the hire of part-time police officers. Motion carried 5-0-0.

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings

KMU Meeting: Tuesday, January 20th @ 3:00 p.m.

EDA Meeting: Tuesday, January 27th @ 8 a.m.

City Council Meeting: Tuesday, February 10th @ 7 p.m.

COUNCIL AND STAFF GENERAL COMMENTS

Council Member Sjolander thanked Public Works and KMU for working in the recent

storms and Officer Tucker for the way he handled a situation last week.

Council Member Bailey thanked KMU for their fast response to a recent power outage.

Mayor Kirchmann thanked everyone for what they are doing in the city.

Council Member Brunner thanked everyone for taking care of the city with everything that is going on in the world today.

Motion by Bailey seconded by Helgeson to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Motion carried 5-0-0.

Holli Gudknecht, Deputy Clerk

Donald Kirchmann, Mayor

City of Wanamingo Regular EDA Meeting Monday January 12, 2026 6:00 P.M.

Wanamingo City Council Chambers 401 Main Street Wanamingo MN

PRESENT: Brian Gudknecht, Rebecca Haugen, Ryan Holmes, and Josh Schaefer

ABSENT: Annette Fritz, Jim Kittelson, and Amy McDonald

ALSO PRESENT: Michael Boulton and Laurie Musselman

Brian Gudknecht called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance followed.

EDA Director Boulton stated that he would administer the oath of office to Annette Fritz and Amy McDonald Haugen for their new four-year terms in the coming week.

ADOPT AGENDA: Schaefer motioned, seconded by Haugen to adopt. Approved 4-0-0.

CONSENT AGENDA: Haugen motioned, seconded by Schaefer to approve. Approved 4-0-0.

PRESENTERS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution 26-01 - Election of 2026 EDA Board Officers of President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Schaefer moved to approve, seconded by Haugen. Boulton stated that Gudknecht would remain President, Holmes would remain Vice-President, Fritz would take over a Treasurer, and Boulton would remain Secretary. Passed 4-0-0.

Resolution 26-02 = Approving re-appointment of Annette Fritz and Amy McDonald to the EDA Board: Holmes to approve, seconded by Haugen. Boulton explained that the four-year terms of Fritz and McDonald have expired at the end of 2025. Holmes recommended each of their re-appointments to the EDA Board. Passed 4-0-0.

Resolution 26-03 = Setting EDA Meeting Schedule for 2026: Schaefer moved to approve, seconded by Holmes. Boulton stated that the meeting dates are being held and that meetings would only occur if an agenda packet was delivered by the Friday before the Monday meeting. Boulton stated that the EDA By-Laws require the EDA to hold quarterly meetings, at minimum. Passed 4-0-0.

Administrator Boulton presented the 2025 Wanamingo Outstanding Indebtedness Report. The Wanamingo EDA paid \$29,000 in bond principal in 2025 and owes \$241,000 at the beginning of 2026.

(continued on page 23)

WANAMINGO EDA MEETING

(continued from page 22)

The City paid \$487,000 in bond principal in 2025 and owes \$4,097,000 at the beginning of 2026. Boulton stated that the current debt service is manageable with the interest rates associated with the existing bonds. Boulton stated that the City has roughly \$130,000 of debt service capacity available for 2026/2027 (utilizing for Riverside Park parking lot and Torkelson Park pickleball court projects) with additional capacity available in 2026 (\$90,000), 2027 (\$93,000), and 2028 (\$53,000). The next debt service capacity available would be \$108,000 in 2032. The plan would be to issue new debt in the coming years to pay for infrastructure and equipment needs. Boulton stated that the City paid \$516,000 in principle and roughly \$118,384.50 in interest in 2025. The report will be submitted to Goodhue County next week, according to the MN State Statutes.

Boulton shared an email request from Nate Roth of Benike Construction on behalf of Mead Johnson at the Medical Center. Mead Johnson has requested to add a door to the egress path in the Mead Johnson suite at the Medical Center. The purpose of the door would be to create some sound separation between the conference room and the office. There are currently disruptions to office staff when Mead Johnson is having training. There is already exit signage in place and we would install a door with push bar in the direction of travel. There would be no locks on the door. Boulton stated that the request came by email January 12th. Schaefer stated that there needs to be lit. This means that there needs to be a window in the door. Schaefer also stated that the door should be ADA compliant. Gudknecht asked if Mead Johnson would be paying for the door and installation. Boulton said yes, Mead Johnson would be paying for the door and installation. Haugen moved to approve Mead Johnson's request for the door installation with stipulation that the door is lit, the door is ADA compliant, and paid for by Mead Johnson, seconded by Schaefer. Passed 4-0-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

There being no further business, Holmes made a motion seconded by Schaefer to adjourn the EDA meeting at 6:10PM. Approved 4-0-0.

Brian Gudknecht, President
Michael Boulton, Director

**CITY OF WANAMINGO
City Council Regular Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026 7:00 P.M.
Wanamingo City Council Chambers – 401
Main Street
Wanamingo, MN**

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Holmes.
PRESENT: Council: Ryan Holmes, Stuart
Ohr, Eric Dierks, Jeremiah Flotterud, and Rebecca Haugen

City Administrator: Michael Boulton
Deputy Clerk: Laurie Musselman
ABSENT: Council: None

ALSO PRESENT: Brad Kennedy, Beth Haas – Zumbrota News-Record, Andrew Deziel – Kenyon Leader, and Goodhue County Commissioner Todd Greseth.

ADOPT AGENDA: Ohr motioned to adopt

the agenda, seconded by Haugen. Passed 5-0-0.

CONSENT AGENDA: Dierks motioned, seconded by Flotterud. Passed 5-0-0.

PRESENTERS:

A) Brad Kennedy reported on:
1) Started trimming trees that overhang the road ways around town. These trees interfere with snow removal and street sweeping. The trimming will take place with staff availability and weather.

2) Cut concrete on the East side of City shop so that it does not heave into new tin siding. Concrete slab on East side of shop will need to be replaced. It has been discussed as a project for 2026 but has not been formalized.

3) Plowed snow and salt/sanded streets after snow events. We have utilized more salt and sand in the last month than in the past two years.

4) Ford Tractor has a leak in the steering column and is in the middle of being worked on at the shop.

5) Working on building up ice in the ice rink as weather allows.

6) Holiday banners were taken down on Main Street. Will not be installing the City of Wanamingo banners due to the plastic material used to make them that does not bend or stretch well in cold weather. Staff will wait for warmer weather to put the new logo banners back up.

B) Todd Greseth, Goodhue County Commissioner, report on:

1) The County is seeing a number State mandates that are increasing the strain on the budget, including Minnesota Paid Leave.

2) The County Health and Human Service Department has a lot of leg work involved with the SNAP program.

3) Goodhue County works on a 2-year budget. The 2026 levy was set with a 6.5% increase. The projected preliminary 2027 levy has additional increases between 17%-20% increase. Staffing makes up one half of the County Budget. In 2025 there were three County positions that were not filled when employees left. There will be further review of the budget, including staff and capital requests before the 2027 levy is set by the County Board next December. The 2027 Goodhue County budget planning is already underway at the end of the month.

4) Goodhue County Data Center Committee – The proposed Pine Island Data Center has shown positives for the County including increase tax base and jobs added, both construction and when in operation. Flotterud asked how many jobs there are projected once in operation. Greseth said 35-40 jobs once the first building is in operation with up to 300 once the entire development is built out. Greseth stated that the County could be asked to take over 195th Avenue due to traffic volumes. Greseth stated that this could be turned into a County State Aid Highway (CSAH) with additional State funding. Greseth stated that this could be both a challenge for additional cost and opportunity with additional growth opportunities with adjacent land that has access to 195th Avenue. Flotterud asked what the expected property tax share would be for the County on the Pine Island Data Center. Greseth stated that that they are in negotiations for tax abatement but that at least \$250,000/year in property taxes

is on the table. Greseth stated that he is hoping for the yearly County share of property taxes to be closer to \$500,000 with the first data center building. Flotterud stated that there is vocal resistance. Greseth stated that there are citizens on both sides of wanting and not wanting the proposed data center. Greseth stated that there are concerns with not wanting exhaust from the diesel backup generators, increased traffic through roundabout, water usage, and electricity usage. The concerns have each been addressed. Greseth stated that City staff have visited numerous Data Center sites across the Midwest. Greseth stated that data centers are about the best commercial/industrial neighbor with little to no noise, smell, or audible sound concerns.

Flotterud asked about the impact of the Minnesota Paid Leave on the County. Greseth stated that the County would have to contribute 0.44% of employee wage tax in 2026. Greseth stated that along with the direct financial impact the County would have to keep the employee job open for up to 12 weeks if the employee took the leave. This is difficult in key positions to complete the work and keep the job open while an employee is on extended leave. Greseth has concerns that there will be overlaps with multiple County staff on leave at the same time, weakening the ability for the County to provide timely service to the public.

NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION:

26-001 = Approving 2026 Appointments & Legals: Haugen moved to approve, Seconded by Dierks. Passed 5-0-0.

26-002 = Setting 2026 City Council Meeting Schedule: Dierks moved to approve, Seconded by Ohr. Passed 5-0-0.

26-003 = Authorizing Temporary Liquor License for the Fire Relief Association snowmobile run: Ohr moved to approve, Seconded by Haugen. Passed 5-0-0.

26-004 = Approving 2026 Updated Wanamingo Emergency Management Plan: Flotterud moved to approve, Seconded by Haugen. Boulton stated that he and Gregg Erickson, the Wanamingo Civil Defense Director, had reviewed and made the necessary changes. The changes were mainly contacts and contact information. Passed 5-0-0.

26-005 = Authorizing a Temporary Gambling Permit for the Wanamingo Fire Relief Association: Dierks moved to approve, Seconded by Flotterud. Passed 5-0-0.

26-006 = Approving Financial Authorization: Haugen moved to approve, seconded by Flotterud. Passed 5-0-0.

Ordinance #215 – Amending Section 111.5(B) of the Wanamingo Code of Ordinances Regulating the Sale of Intoxicating Liquor and Wine – 1st Reading - Boulton stated in December 2025 Barney Nesseth requested that the Council consider removing the Responsible Beverage Server Training requirement within Wanamingo Code of Ordinance 111.5(B). Nesseth had concerns with cost of the formal training and requirements for additional reporting for new employees throughout the year. Nesseth stated that there was funding provided the first few years for the training from a grant through SHIP. The grant funding is no longer available, placing the cost on the bar owner. Nes-

seth stated that formal online training was costing him several hundred dollars yearly. Nesseth said that training the employees was in the best interest of the Bar owner and that the City had no skin in the game if bar employees were in violation of server requirements. Nesseth said that training could be completed in a less formal and costly manner. Boulton stated that the ordinance had been put in place after lobbying from County SHIP program in 2007. The Council had asked for legal advice from the City Attorney, David Jacobsen, on whether the requirement is needed to stay in place. Jacobsen provided a written legal opinion that the Responsible Beverage Service Training is not required by Minnesota law. Many cities make this mandatory by ordinance under their authority to further restrict licensing under Minn. Stat. 340A.509. Some cities offer a discount on liquor license fees if the licensee provides proof that all employees have undergone training. Also, it appears that many licensees are required or offered discounts by their insurance carriers for dram shop liability purposes. It also seems like there are also plenty of online resources that might be a bit cheaper with some advertising costs under \$10/employee. In sum, the City has the power to amend the ordinance requiring the training of employees. Simply because the City can, doesn't mean it should. The council should weigh the pros and cons of making a legislative decision and the potential consequences of relaxing restrictions on licensees. Boulton stated that this is a first reading of the proposed ordinance. Boulton asked if the Council wished to proceed with a second reading and if any changes are needed to the proposed Ordinance #215 before February 9th Council meeting. Flotterud stated that he wished to proceed with the second reading with no changes to the proposed Ordinance #215.

OLD BUSINESS:

Public Hearing - Mayor Holmes opened Ordinance #214 - 2026 Fee Schedule Hearing at 7:21PM. Administrator Boulton went over the proposed changes from 2025 Fee Schedule for the proposed 2026 fee schedule including increasing Deputy Clerk labor from \$45/hour to \$47/hour, increasing Public Works Labor from \$45/hour to \$47/hour, increasing City Administrator Labor from \$60/hour to \$62/hour, increasing dump truck from \$65/hour to \$85/hour, removing grader from the list, removing skid loader from list, adding compact wheel loader at \$90/hour, increasing the sewer hook-up from \$750 to \$800, increasing water meter cost from \$370 to \$380, increasing the MN Water User Fee from \$0.82/month to \$1.30/month, increasing the sewer debt service/base fee from \$32.00/month to \$34.00/month, increasing the monthly garbage fee from \$19.11/month to \$20.06/month, and increasing the monthly recycling fee from \$7.35/month to \$7.64/month. The increase to the water meter fee helps to cover increases to the actual costs of the water meters and readers. Boulton stated that the proposed monthly sewer base rate/debt service fee increase of \$2.00/month to each hook-up would bring in roughly \$14,000 in new revenue in 2026. The monthly garbage and recycling increase reflects the yearly new contract with Highland Sanitation.

(continued on page 24)

WANAMINGO CITY COUNCIL MEETING

(continued from page 23)

Throughout the year, including the budgeting process, the Council has discussed and has recommended the above changes. The City Auditors recommend that the Council review sewer/water rates and make small adjustments regularly to capture revenue as opposed to large jumps. The wastewater treatment plant will need upgrades soon which could cost millions of dollars. No Additional Public Comments Offered. Mayor Holmes closed the public hearing at 7:26PM.

Ordinance #214 - 2026 Fee Schedule - 2nd Reading - Haugen moved to approve, seconded by Dierks. Passed 5-0-0.

Administrator Boulton presented the 2025 Wanamingo Outstanding Indebtedness Report. The Wanamingo EDA paid \$29,000 in principle in 2025 and owes \$241,000 at the beginning of 2026. The City paid \$487,000 in bond principal in 2025 and owes \$4,097,000 at the beginning of 2026. Boulton stated that the current debt service is manageable with the interest rates associated with the existing bonds. Boulton stated that the City has roughly \$130,000 of debt service capacity available for 2026/2027 (utilizing for Riverside Park parking lot and Torkelson Park pickleball court projects) with additional capacity available in 2026 (\$90,000), 2027 (\$93,000), and 2028 (\$53,000). The next debt service capacity available would be \$108,000 in 2032. The plan would be to issue new debt in the coming years to pay for infrastructure and equipment needs. Boulton stated that the City paid \$516,000 in principle and roughly

\$118,384.50 in interest in 2025. The report will be submitted to Goodhue County next week, according to the MN State Statutes.

Boulton stated that the annual City Council/Staff Appreciation Dinner would be held on Saturday January 31st. social hour starting at 6:00PM and dinner at 6:30PM. Boulton stated that formal invites would be sent out later in the week.

Flotterud stated that Core824 Daycare has received their state license to open. Flotterud stated that Staff hiring is key to the number of children that can be enrolled. Flotterud stated that there is a waiting list of over 100. Flotterud stated that the daycare opening is huge for Wanamingo and the surrounding area. Holmes echoed the positive news of the Daycare opening for the community.

Flotterud shared policing concerns of a drone flying over homes in the Mingo View Drive neighborhood. Flotterud was hoping that a Goodhue County Deputy would be present to discuss the concern at the meeting. Flotterud stated that neighbors had called the Goodhue County Sheriff's office to report the drone. Flotterud asked if residents could do anything about drones invading privacy over homes. Boulton stated that drones are regulated by the FAA and that concerns with flying over homes should be reported to the Goodhue County Sheriff. Cities are not authorized to regulate drones as this is regulated solely by the FAA. Boulton stated that residents should not take hostile measures on any drones and should call the Goodhue County Sheriff's Office to report FAA violations such as flying over structure.

*Fire Department/Township/City Annual

Meeting is on 2/2/2026 at 6:30pm

*Next City Council meeting on 2/9/2026 at 7:00pm.

Adjourn: At 7:34PM a motion to adjourn was made by Ohr and seconded by Flotterud.

Passed 5-0-0.

Signed: Ryan Holmes, Mayor

Attest:

Michael Boulton, City Administrator



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1. Biology lab supply
5. Aldous Huxley's drug of choice
8. *Certain Courtney
12. Tear violently
13. Color of a bruise
14. Al Roker's show
15. Pupil control
16. Any minute, to Shakespeare
17. Sheep-like
18. *H. P. of science fiction fame
20. Hibernation stations
21. Boat station
22. Tennis shot
23. Packed in container
26. User-friendly interface, acr.
30. Genetic info carrier, acr.
31. *Love unquestioningly
34. Equal to 1.3 ounces in Asia
35. Not a minor
37. Poem addressed to certain subject
38. Hundred, in Italian
39. Nothing
40. Relating to clone
42. Division, abbr.
43. Sloughed off skin
45. Fluffy dessert
47. All good things come to this?
48. Between Oeds and Novs
50. _____ Verdes National Park
52. *B-52s' "little old place" (2 words)
56. Singing femme fatale
57. Deed hearing
58. Reverberated sound
59. Blue-Green scum, pl.
60. Misery cause
61. Actress Perlman
62. Scheme
63. Right coast time
64. Made by tailor

1. Seed cover
2. Biking helmet manufacturer
3. Tel ____, Israel
4. #64 Across, redone
5. Like 1969 landing
6. Laugh with contempt
7. Fender-bender damage
8. *a.k.a. hickey (2 words)
9. Norse deity
10. "Off The Wall" shoe
11. Needle hole
13. Macy's Thanksgiving offering
14. Commotions
19. Silica variety
22. NaOH
23. Solder together
24. Dewey Decimal Classification, a.k.a. Relative

25. Pleasant Island
26. Small songbird
27. Harry's and Hermione's magic tools
28. Bigfoot's cousins
29. *Hand cover, with love
32. *Lemming relative, or anagram of love
33. Tokyo, formerly
36. *Couch for two
38. Lumps in liquid
40. Knave
41. Unit of electric current flow
44. Absurd
46. Theater guides
48. Nutritious beans
49. Black tie one
50. Grain grinder
51. "Cogito, ____ sum"
52. Stud site
53. Occasional heart condition
54. Prepare to swallow
55. Riddle without solution
56. Tree juice

SUDOKU ANSWERS

4	8	2	5	6	9	7	3	1
6	3	5	7	8	1	2	4	9
7	1	9	4	3	2	5	8	6
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1	6	4	8	7	5	3	9	2

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