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September 17, 2026

Volume 23 • Issue 9

2026 Randolph-Hampton Fire District Chicken BBQ a Success



Congratulations to all of this year's raffle winners! We hope you enjoy your prizes!

Thank you to everyone who came out and supported the BBQ—whether you bought a meal (2075 meals served), played Bingo, purchased raffle tickets, volunteered, or simply stopped by to spend the day with us. We couldn't do it without you!

From all of us at the Randolph-Hampton Fire District—THANK YOU for another great Chicken BBQ!

Courtesy of Randolph-Hampton Fire District

Announcements

• **Randolph Community Food Shelf**, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 289595 Randolph Blvd, Randolph, MN. 507-263-9182. Randolph MN Area Food Shelf. Monthly Food Shelf Hours: 1st Tuesday 8-9:30am. 2nd, 3rd, 4th Tuesdays 4:30-6:30pm. Randolph Community Food Shelf is for anyone in need within the Randolph School District (Randolph, Stanton, Hampton, New Trier areas). We are here to help! Please pull around to the Southwest corner door for easy loading of your items.

*Do you have an announcement?
Email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com*

Randolph School to Hold Community Meetings on The Proposed Local Operating Referendum

The Randolph School District plans to hold three public information meetings open to the community about the referendum this fall. The meetings are scheduled for September 22, October 13th and October 22nd. All meetings will be held in the school commons.

Randolph Schools are asking the community to approve a \$450.00 per pupil increase in student funding through the operational levy, which would total about \$390,000.00 each year in additional revenue for a term of ten years.

(continued on page 4)

Randolph Community Education to offer Early Childhood Family Education "ECFE"

Join our ECFE staff for some great one-on-one project time with your child, while meeting other parents to discuss the joys and challenges of parenting.

ECFE is offered to families with children age 2 - PreK.

Cost: \$180

Payment options are \$160 if paid in full now, or \$90 now and \$90 in January 2027.

Class times are Monday evenings from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

(continued on page 4)

Congratulations to Randolph FFA on being named the Supreme Livestock Chapter at the Minnesota State Fair!



Courtesy of Randolph Public Schools

RANDOLPH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Proposed Local Operating Referendum

Public Information Meetings
Learn more and ask questions

Community Meetings

September 22	7:00 PM
October 13	9:00 AM
October 22	7:00 PM

School Commons

RANDOLPH HIGH SCHOOL

TACKLE CANCER AND HOMECOMING

ROCKETS VS TROJANS
RUSHFORD PETERSON

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OF THE MONTH
The Royal Peach
\$6.25

23910 Hogan Avenue, New Trier
651-437-5618
Mon. Closed; Tues.-Thurs. 3-8PM; Fri. & Sat. 11AM-8PM;
Sun. 8:30AM-8PM

How Do I Start Reading the Bible?



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

Beep. Buzz. Beep. Buzz. Jack's phone alarm goes off, and the vibrating of it makes the phone push right off the nightstand. The phone plonks down on a stack of dirty laundry. The early 5:30 a.m. rise did not bother him like every other morning, because this morning it was his birthday. Even though Jack is in his mid-twenties, he still gets excited for this special day.

Jack rolls out of bed, grabs some leftover pizza from the fridge for breakfast, does a quick shave, walks the dog, drops off the rent check, and heads to work. A couple times throughout his workday he becomes almost like a child as he thinks, "I wonder what Mom got me for my birthday?! I can't wait to have her chicken alfredo and that German chocolate cake that oozes over with frosting!"

Jack sits down to have lunch with his coworkers, and his sister from Alabama texts, "Happy birthday, brother! Jesus loves you!" Jack smirks as he thinks, "Jesus, whatever." He texts back, "Thanks, Susie, I love you!" Another text rolls in from Mom. "Hi sweetie, Happy Birthday! So happy that God gave me

YOU for my son!" He rolls his eyes, yet with kind fingertips Jack replies, "Thanks, Mom. Can't wait to see you!"

Jack's shift ends, and with an eager hop he gets into his car and makes his way to his mom's. As Nirvana plays over his dusty speakers, Jack starts to think about his father, who passed from suicide when Jack was just ten years old. "I wonder what it would have been like if he was still here . . ." Jack's heart sinks as he takes the last few drags from his cigarette. The smell of those Marlboros always reminds him of his dad. He pulls into his childhood driveway, and his mom is practically jumping off the deck with joy. Jack's excitement returns as quick as a heartbeat.

Jack smiles, turns down Cobain, and quickly pops a mint. He knows his mom dislikes his music and is not very fond of him still smoking. This does not bother Jack, though. He knows his mom has his best interests at heart.

Dinner comes and passes; it is scrumptious as always. Then comes the birthday gift. Jack's inner child is definitely front and center as he grabs the bright blue gift bag that has way too many ribbons of dark blue and bright white.

He breaks through the packaging and unwraps the gift.

Jack knows instantly what this is. He pulls deep down into the core of his being to grab his happy voice and looks up, saying, "Wow, Mom, a Bible," with the fakest smile on his face. Jack thinks in the back of his mind, "What the heck am I going to do with this?" He doesn't let the annoying gift bother him, though. He and his mom then have some of that warm cake with vanilla ice cream as they watch the golden sun set.

As Jack got home and stepped into his apartment, he greeted his sweet dog and put that blue bag (with the Bible in it) on a high shelf in his hallway closet. He never took it down. Five years went by, and his sweet mother passed. He came home from the funeral to the same apartment, with every possible feeling floating in his inner being.

He took off his suit coat and pulled open the closet. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the bright blue bag from five birthdays ago. He took a step back not only with his feet but his mind too. He stood up on his tiptoes, reached far back with his hands, and pulled forward that gift bag.

Tears welled in his eyes as he grabbed the leather-bound Bible. His mother had inscribed his name in the lower left corner; Jack never noticed that until this day. Jack made his way to his small dining room table and opened the Good Book.

A letter was inside the Bible, another thing Jack had not seen. He opened the cream envelope and read the note inside:

Sweet Jack,

My lovely boy who I love more than anything in the whole world (aside from Susan), you are the most talented young man full of compassion, love, kindness, and joy. I know there have been a few hiccups along the way in your life, but nothing is too big for God. Nothing.

Jesus loves you, Jack. He loves you more than you will ever know. He is not mad at you. I am obviously not mad at you. Dad was not mad at you either. And with what happened with your dad, that was not on Jesus, my sweet son. That was Dad's free will. No shame, no guilt.

The words in the Book that is in the midst of you right now, Jack, are life-giving. If you take time to know Jesus and His Word (the Bible), it will radically transform you. Jesus changes everything.

I know you so well that I realize it might be years before you actually read this letter and potentially the Bible. If you do choose to pick up this beautiful Book, here's a little guidance in how to start reading it.

Where do you start reading the Bible? Read the book of John and read some of the Psalms simultaneously. Perhaps one chapter of John and one Psalm a day.

What happens if something you read does not make sense? A lot of things will not make sense right away. This is okay! Take your

questions and turn that into studying the Bible. Get your hands on a good commentary; that will help.

What if you skip a whole bunch of days reading the Bible? No worries! Just pick up where you left off. Jesus is not legalistic.

Can you talk to Jesus? YES! Tell Jesus everything on your heart, including the things you read about in the Bible. Tell Him all the things that excite, confuse, and even make you upset. Do not hold anything back from Him.

Will Jesus speak to you back? YES! When Jesus speaks, He will speak with the Bible or the principles of the Word. The more you are in the Bible, the more confident you will be of His voice. Also, Jesus will speak with the tone of the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). He will never speak with condemnation, guilt, or shame.

What if you do not feel Jesus? You may not always feel the Lord, but that does not mean He is not there. Trust the Bible and what it says, not your feelings.

What kinds of things does the Bible say? The Bible says so many things! Here are a few of my favorites:

You are loved: Ephesians 3:14-19
When you make a big oopsie (aka sin): 1 John 1:9

When you are sad: Psalm 34
When you are angry: Genesis 4:6-7
Needing guidance: Isaiah 55
Needing reassurance: Joshua 1:9
You can have salvation through Jesus: Romans 10:9-10

With love, Mom.
Jack, with continued watery eyes, kissed his mother's note. He started reading John 1 and Psalm 1 that very night and has never stopped reading the Bible. If you are not sure where to start in the Bible, just like Jack, do what his mom says. These words from Jack's mom can be for you too. My sweet friends, Jesus loves you more than you will ever know.

Blessings, Ashley



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RANDOLPH BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dennis Ingolfssland
29020 Dawson Avenue in the heart of Randolph
(adjacent to Randolph Public School grounds).
Sunday School 9:00a.m.
(children, teen, and adult classes)
Sunday Worship 10:00a.m.
Adult Bible Study Every Wednesday at 6:00p.m.
Questions? Call church office 507-663-1437

CHRIST UMC

Rev. Thomas Countryman
29470 Gaylord Ave., Cannon Falls
507-757-8043
www.christunitedmethodist.org
Sunday Worship 8:30a.m.
Sunday School 8:30a.m.

STANTON UMC

Reverend Thomas Countryman
1020 Hwy. 19 Blvd., Stanton • 507-321-3598
www.stantonunitedmethodist.org
Sunday Worship at 10:15a.m.
Email your church announcements, schedule, etc.
to the
Randolph-Hampton-Castle Rock Messenger at:
hometownmessenger@gmail.com

AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY

The Heart Command

*I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."
— Romans 7:7*

Most people agree that the commandments we have been discussing lately—about promoting justice, honesty, respect for others and their property, and more—offer clear, practical boundaries for living together in society. Guidelines like these are found in all kinds of societies around the world.

We might even think, like many of God's people in ancient Israel did, that keeping these commands is possible. But the law doesn't satisfy God's requirements for our hearts. The apostle Paul painfully realized this when he wrestled with the darkness in his own heart. Though he thought he had been able to keep these commandments through his actions, he was cut to the heart when he read, "You shall not covet." God commands that we show love not only through our actions but also with our hearts. By this standard, we are all guilty of failing to love others.

Thankfully, our heart problem can be solved. "While we were still sinners," Paul writes in Romans 5:8, "Christ died for us." Jesus is the only one who could ever satisfy the demands of God's law for perfect obedience and love. And since we are forgiven through Jesus' sacrifice for our sake, the Holy Spirit gives us new hearts directed toward loving God and our neighbors.

Our new life in Christ moves us beyond mere outward obedience. By trusting Jesus, our restless hearts find true satisfaction in him alone, so that we can truly love others.

Jesus, thank you for rescuing us. By your Spirit, fill our hearts so that we can love others as you have loved us. Amen.

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Pastor Lue Moua
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Sunday Worship 10:00a.m. & on Facebook
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& 1st Wednesday at 11:00a.m.
WELCA 1st Wednesday at 10:00a.m.
Questions? Call 507-263-9182

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5:00 p.m. Saturday Mass
7:30a.m. Monday Mass
Questions? Call Mon.-Friday 651-437-9030

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7:30a.m. Friday Mass
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9:00 a.m. Worship Service, Coffee After
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
Questions? Call 507-645-0042

Robert "Bob" Allen Davis



Robert "Bob" Allen Davis, of Surprise, AZ (formerly of Cannon Falls, MN), passed away after a short battle with cancer at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis with his family by his side.

Bob was born on February 8, 1949 to Owen and Alyce Davis in Prescott, AZ. Bob grew up in many locations between Arizona and Min-

nesota. After graduating from Wayzata High School in 1967, he enlisted into the United States Marine Corps. He spent 1 year in Vietnam from 1969-1970 before returning home and joining the reserves while going into college, later being honorably discharged in 1973. Bob graduated from St. Cloud State University with a degree in Hospitality Management. After working for Mariotte Hotels and New Holland, he found himself in a career most in the community have known him for, helping veterans. Bob started his career with Dakota County as an Assistant County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) and then became the County Veterans Service Officer for Goodhue County until his retirement in 2014. In addition to being the CVSO for Goodhue County, he wore other hats to include Legislative Liaison, Risk Management and assisting in leading other departments as well.

Bob was very active in many veterans' organizations to include the Cannon Falls VFW Post 4452, American Legion Post 142, United States Marine Corps League, Toys for Tots, and the MN Association of County Veterans Services Officer. In each of these organizations, he held varying positions and roles at local and national levels. Bob was a key component and chaired the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Program for the state of Minnesota, which became a model to other states for troops coming back from OIF/OEF. Regardless of the recognition over his years of being a part of these organizations, his satisfaction came from helping any veteran that needed assistance. He fought for veterans, so they didn't have to struggle as many of his fellow Vietnam Veterans endured.

Bob met his wife of 49 years, Mary "Joyce" (Murphy) Davis while working for New Holland. They married in Northfield on May 7, 1977. Together, they raised daughter Robin Ring and son Jeffery Davis in Cannon Falls. Joyce accompanied Bob on his many work trips including reintegration of Minnesota troops as the returned from deployment overseas. After retiring in 2014, Bob and Joyce moved south full time to Surprise, Arizona and made annual trips to Minnesota during the summer to visit their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. They were able to do some traveling after retirement and enjoyed their time together.

Bob is survived by his wife Joyce Davis, daughter Robin (Henry) Ring of Farmington, and son Jeff (Krystle) Davis of Randolph. Also was survived by 9 grandchildren; Annie (Brian) Baggett, Kiersten Ring, Zach (Nicole) Beckner, Faith Ring, Emily Davis, Addison Davis, Amelia Davis, Mackenzie Davis and Mallorie Davis. In addition, great-grandchildren Kady Baggett, Lucas Baggett, Evelyn Beckner and Emma Beckner. Extended family includes siblings Owen (Linda) Davis and Betty (Dave) Lock. In-laws include mother-in-law Beverly Murphy, brothers-in-law Mick Murphy, Mark (Michelle) Murphy, Marty Murphy, and sister-in-law Paula Murphy (whom passed at the time of this notification). In addition, he was survived by many loving nieces and nephews. Bob was a very loving husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, and relative.

Bob was preceded in death by parents Owen and Alyce Davis and father-in-law Clarence Murphy.

Bob didn't want a funeral service, but instead wanted people to come together, swap stories, and enjoy each other's company. Bob's family is hosting a celebration of life on September 26, 2026 at the upper level of the Cannon Falls VFW from 11:00-2:00. An honor guard and flag presentation will also be held outside the Cannon Falls VFW at 11:00. He'll be interred at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery at a later date.

Everyone's Invited to our

TURKEY DINNER

Sunday, November 1st
at Dennison Lutheran Church
Serving 11:00am-1:00pm

Menu:
Turkey Roast,
Dressing,
Mashed Potatoes,
Corn, and Pies

Take Out Available
Call Ahead or Text
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507-645-6042

Adults \$15.00 • Children \$5.00
Children Under 5 Years Free

Proceeds will support the Kanyon Area Food Shelf and Dennison Church Outreach.

Randolph Community Food Shelf

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
28595 Randolph Blvd.
Randolph, MN 55065
(507) 263-9182
randolphcommunityfoodshelf@gmail.com
www.stmarkrandolph.com
Facebook: Randolph MN Area Food Shelf

Monthly Food Shelf Hours:
1st Tuesday 8:00 - 9:30 am
2nd, 3rd, 4th Tuesdays 4:30-6:30 pm

Randolph Community Food Shelf is for
anyone in need within the Randolph School District
(Randolph, Stanton, Hampton, New Trier areas).
We are here to help!

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

Harvest Thyme Craft Show

Saturdays: October 3, 10, 17, 24
Sundays: October 4, 11, 18, 25

Hours: 10:00a.m. to 5:00p.m.

Place:
Lori & Darwin Amy
2290 County 49 Blvd. Dennison, MN 55018
Phone: 507-649-1009
Email: cabincrew@frontiernet.net

Look Us Up on Facebook Under Potpourri Mill

The Annual Lutefisk and Norwegian Meatball Supper

Vang Lutheran Church

2060 County 49 Blvd
Dennison MN 55018
Saturday, October 3rd 2026

Menu:
Lutefisk with melted butter, Norwegian Meatballs with Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Corn, Fruit Soup, Lefse and Norwegian baking's

Join us for our annual supper, buffet style

In church seating starts at 11:00am through last seating at 1:00pm and 4:00pm with last seating at 5:00pm.
No reservations are needed.
Groups of 8 or more please call church at 507-789-5186 to reserve a table.

Home or business delivery is by reservation only, from 11:30am-2:15pm and 4:30pm through 5:30pm.
Call 507-789-5186 and leave message.
We will confirm your reservation within 2-3 days.

Ticket price \$26.00 payments by check or cash
call or email for reservations
#507-789-5186 vanglutefisk@gmail.com

Sharon Kappedahl

Sharon Kappedahl, of Randolph, MN passed away Tuesday, September 1, 2026 at Valentine's Assisted living in Red Wing, MN.

Sharon Beverly Kappedahl, 82, was born in Kenyon, MN on November 1, 1943. She graduated from Kenyon High School and married

the love of her life, Orvin Kappedahl, in 1961. Together, they raised their four children in rural Randolph and operated a family business, "Orv's Refrigeration," until retirement. The couple wintered several years in Texas where they enjoyed playing music and making friends.

Sharon is survived by son Clay (Mina) Kappedahl of Lakeville, grandchildren Sam and Noelle; daughter Lynn (Kerry) Quam of Eden Prairie, grandchildren Austin, Layne, and Jenae; daughter, Jodi Kappedahl of Yakutat, AK; and daughter Missy (Jed) Post of rural Goodhue, with grandchildren, Cayden, Levi, Rylan, Asher, Leona, and Walton. Nieces and nephews: Charleen (Pete) Volkert, Rhonda Liberty, and Brett Neseth.

Sharon was proud of her children and grandchildren, delighting in their visits and phone calls and residing with daughter Missy and her family when living independently was not possible. Sharon was a resident of Valentines Assisted Living in Redwing in her last days.

During her life, Sharon loved people and made friends wherever she went. She enjoyed playing guitar, making floral arrangements, baking and decorating cakes and a variety of Christmas cookies to share with others.

In her last days, Sharon said the most important thing about life is "knowing Jesus." She was an active member at St. Marks Lutheran Church in Randolph and attended Grace Lutheran Church in Goodhue. She is preceded in death by husband Orv, her parents, Benjamin and Gladys Neseth; and siblings, Bernard (sister-in-law, Julie) and Gary Neseth.

Visitation was held on September 11th, 12:00-1:30pm at St. Marks Lutheran Church 28595 Randolph Blvd, Randolph, MN. A graveside memorial service followed at 2:00pm, at Little Cannon Cemetery in rural Nerstrand. After the service, everyone returned to St. Marks for fellowship and reception.



Merrilee Ashton "Mere" Weber

Merrilee Ashton "Mere" Weber, age 66, of Cannon Falls, died Tuesday afternoon surrounded by loved ones, September 8, 2026, at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester.



Mere was born December 24, 1959, in Minneapolis to Myron H. "Mike" and Joyce M. "Mitzi" (Brunette) Ashton. She grew up on Lake Byllesby, where her love for the lake and the surrounding community began. Byllesby

was always more than a place to Mere. It was home, and it remained a special part of her life and heart.

She graduated from Randolph High School in 1978. On April 23, 1983, Mere married her soulmate, Douglas J. Weber, at St. Pius V Catholic Church in Cannon Falls. Together, they made their home north of Cannon Falls in the house they built. Doug was Mere's person; her best friend, partner, and the love of her life. Losing him left a space that could never be filled, and she missed him deeply.

Mere began working as a waitress at the CannonBall Restaurant, where her love for people and customer service took root. She later worked for Honeywell and eventually Subway Restaurants. It was Mere who suggested putting a Subway in Cannon Falls, and before long, she and Doug were investing their time and energy into owning and operating several Subway restaurants throughout the area until her retirement in 2021.

She was strong-willed, spoke her mind, and could find humor in just about any situation, no matter how tough life got. She loved to socialize, spend time with her siblings and friends, go to Bingo, and rarely ventured far without a Diet Coke in hand.

Above all, Mere loved her family, especially her children and grandchildren. No matter how she was feeling, their visits could brighten her day. She loved singing "You Are My Sunshine" to her grandkids, and they truly were her sunshines. She always made

sure she had their favorite snack in abundance for them. Family traditions meant the world to her, especially the annual trip to the Wisconsin Dells. After years of returning, her kids can practically recite the entire Wisconsin Dells Duck Tour by heart.

Mere battled many different health issues throughout the years and was, at times, a bit of a medical mystery. Still, she faced it all with her trademark stubbornness, humor, strength, and deep faith. Through that faith, she won the right to enter heaven.

She is reunited with her beloved husband and soulmate, Doug; her parents, Mike and Mitzi Ashton; father-in-law, John "Jack" Weber; brother-in-law, Bob Meyers; and other family members and friends who went before her. There is comfort in knowing that after missing Doug for so long, they are finally back together forever.

She is loved and will be forever missed by her children, Sianna (Erich) Siewert, Nicholas (Jill) Weber, and Samuel (Kaci)

Weber; grandchildren, Chelsea, Carston, Cassidy, Madison, and Beau; siblings, Bob (Faye) Wellman, Joyce Meyers, Teresa (Charlie) Niebur, Susan (Stephen) Kulikowski, Michael Ashton, and Kelly (Tim) Brewer; mother-in-law, Marlys Weber; in-laws, Gretchen (Steve) Rauchwarter, Scott (Rosann) Weber, Sandy Strandberg, Tim (Rene) Weber, and Tom Weber; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, extended family members, and friends.

There will never be another Mere, she left her footprint anywhere she went and will be deeply missed.

A visitation was held Monday, September 14, from 4 to 7 p.m. at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Miesville. Mass of Christian Burial was Tuesday, September 15, at 10:30 a.m., with visitation one hour prior with the eulogy at 10:15 a.m. at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Father Andrew Brinkman celebrated.

Interment followed at the church cemetery.

Randolph Community Education to offer Early Childhood Family Education "ECFE"

(continued from page 1)

Deadline to register is September 21, 2026.

Classes will begin September 28, 2026

We reserve the right to turn away families if we exceed our numbers.

We will not run a session without a minimum of 8 families.

If you would like to send your registration via email, please send it to otted@district195.org.

Randolph School to Hold Community Meetings on The Proposed Local Operating Referendum

(continued from page 1)

An operational levy is for the daily operations of the school district, which includes payroll, utilities, supplies, technology, etc. It is not for building construction. State funding has not kept up with inflation and costs associated with the unfunded mandates by the state. Randolph has been able to hold requests for additional funding since covid. One driver of needed funding is the trend of students choosing alternate learning paths like online and homeschooling, resulting in smaller incoming class sizes in the area. These trends will continue to affect enrollment statewide. Residents will learn more at these Public Information Meetings and can address any concerns at that time. As part of the operational levy, agricultural land and buildings are not taxed. Only residential properties along with commercial and industrial properties. On farms, only the house, garage, and one acre are taxed. For a home valued at \$350,000, the estimated tax increase would be about \$21.00 per month. A full table of the various home values and potential increases will be available at the presentation. The referendum coincides with this year's general election. Randolph Schools remain one of the lowest among area schools for per pupil levy funding.

DO YOU HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE MESSENGER?

Email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

ROCKET FOOTBALL 2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION
FRI 9/4	CANNON FALLS	HOME
FRI 9/11	GOODHUE	HOME
FRI 9/18	NESTON WASHINGTON	AWAY
FRI 9/25	ROBERTSON PETERSON	HOME
FRI 10/2	DOVER-EVOTA	HOME
FRI 10/9	CALEDONIA	HOME
WED 10/14	CENTRAL	HOME
TUES 10/20	LAKE CITY	HOME

ALL GAME TIMES 7:00 PM

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Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes Observations in a Hospital Cafeteria



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.

A year ago, I had an hour to pass waiting for someone at St. Mary's Hospital. I was looking for something to do while they had a test and took the occasion to walk to the patient and visitor cafeteria for lunch. As I sat there with my sandwich and a drink I observed others in

the room. It was a rather sobering hour of reflection. A hospital does not catch you at the best in your day.

A family with three teenage kids was sitting by the wall. They were all focused on talking and eating and sort of ignoring the one child, a boy in his late teens. He just sat there lost in thought not touching his food. The rest seem oblivious to his plight. I sensed that his mind was in a much darker place than his family was aware of. A young person should be filled with plans and dreams of the future and not staring down the dark tunnel of hopelessness.

A woman in her early thirties was sitting all alone at a small round table. She looked haggard and worried and seemed to be shouldering her sadness all by herself. There was a look of trepidation and fear etched in her face. The whole food thing was more of a distraction than a necessity, one was supposed to do it whether you were hungry or not. At noon you found food and then tried to tell your body to consume it because it was needed. Even if your body didn't want it or was ready to reject it.

A couple that looked to be in their sixties were sitting right behind me. While moving a chair to get more comfortable, the man bumped into me and said he was sorry. Then we struck up a conversation. He had been a working man all his life and a diagnosis had brought him to Rochester. They had exhausted all the remedies that the medical community had to offer, and he was resigned to the fate he was facing. His concern was more of how his wife would fare in the future without him. He didn't show any bitterness



or remorse for the health problem that he was facing, but just a practical factual assessment of the situation. What was interesting was that he wanted to talk to me about Jesus. He didn't believe that his life was particularly worth holding on to, but that there was something better awaiting him. He wanted to be sure his wife was cared for after he was gone and also share the comfort that he felt about where he was going.

The fourth couple sat at a small table to the left of me and I deduced that they were an old farm couple. He wore a seed corn hat and she was in a farm wife's house dress. They were finishing the meal and she was concerned that the extra packets of condiments were not wasted but taken home for a future use. A practical woman, being sure that nothing

was wasted even though her body was wasting away from something she had no control of. He was uncomfortable in the surroundings, unsure of what he was going to do without her company in the future and completely helpless in the current situation.

I felt a sense of somberness looking around because I had lived through these age groups in my life. I had stopped at this cafeteria to pass an hour of time during my busy day and now I was witnessing four lives possibly watching what little time they had left slip through the hour glass of life. It is good to look at others through a different lens and feel empathy for what they may be going through. And take the time and effort to be kind because you never know what their life may actually be like.

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A Minnesotan:

Pumpkin Spice Monsters



By RosaLin Alcoser

The longer I live in the Cities I have become more and more aware of what my husband likes to call the pumpkin spice monsters. A pumpkin spice monster is one who goes crazy for pumpkin spice as soon as it is out and consumes as much as is humanly possible before it goes out for the season or the store runs out.

I have probably noticed this due to the fact that I am now around more coffee shop and large box stores than I was in my younger days. Due to the amount of specialty seasonal items coming in pumpkin

spice that should not come in pumpkin spice that have been made in recent years. I am happy to report that so far I have not seen any pumpkin spice soap, cat products, or trash bags this year. It could still happen, but it hasn't yet.

I do enjoy pumpkin spice in my coffee or in a baked good. I just rather have it in the fall and not before Labor Day when they come out. However, with that being said I do typically get one when it first comes out to guarantee that I get one from the coffee shop. Since the pumpkin spice monsters exist and it might not still be there when I'm ready to enjoy it in mid September. Once that happens I make a small batch of pumpkin spice syrup at home for coffee and call it a day.

This year I got one from Caribou on the first day it was out. In the middle of August. I walked in at 8 AM on a Thursday and the store was crazy busy with people ordering pumpkin spice coffee drinks in such profuse. To the point that one of the people working behind the counter looked me dead in the eye and said "people gotta have their pumpkin! Pumpkin! Pumpkin! Pumpkin!" with the franticness of someone over run by a title wave of people.

Now all there is for me to do at least, is wait until mid to late September to see if there is any left or if the pumpkin spice monsters have consumed it all before October this year. In which case I will buy a can of pumpkin and make it myself.

Farm Girl Chatter

Behind the ears, Keeping Cattle in the Landscape

By McKell Lemmerman



There's something about learning life from behind the ears of a horse that you can't learn anywhere else. There's no steering wheel, gas pedal, or button you can push to make a horse do exactly what you want. You have to learn to communicate. You have to learn how to feel. You have to learn

when to ask and when to simply let the horse do its job. And then there's cattle. Working cattle from horseback is an art. It isn't simply sitting in a saddle and steering. You have to understand the horse underneath you and the cattle in front of you. You learn how a cow moves, where they want to go, and how your horse needs to position itself to move them there. A shift of your weight. A turn of the reins. A change in your horse's feet. Sometimes, it's nothing more than putting yourself in the right place at the right time. Your body controls the horse, and your horse helps control the cattle. That is where the magic is. Ranch rodeos, sorting, penning, cutting, and roping have carried pieces of that old Western way of life into today. The equipment may have changed, and the work may look different, but the partnership between horse, rider, and cattle remains. There is grit in it. There is patience in it. And there is a whole lot of humility.



A good horse will teach you that you don't know as much as you think you do. A good cow will humble you even faster. But that's why I keep coming back. Because horses aren't just about riding. They're about learning a language without words. They're about trusting something with a mind of its own. They're about getting dusty, getting frustrated, making mistakes, climbing back on, and trying again. They're about carrying forward a piece of the West that could easily be forgotten.

So, as the combines get ready for another harvest and the fields begin to turn, I find myself appreciating both sides of agriculture—the modern machinery that keeps our farms moving forward and the horses that remind us where we came from. Maybe that's why, when someone asks me "Why horses?" I don't have just one answer. Because no matter how much the world changes, there will always be something worth learning in the saddle.



By Beth Brekke
Scott Kroll of Randolph and Trent Jacobson of Cannon Falls hosted a car show in the parking lot by the Randolph School ball fields on August 15th. The show was held from 11 AM - 3 PM preceding the annual chicken BBQ. A new event for 2026, the show was well attended. Winners of the peoples' choice awards were Todd Rolf and Don Norstad.

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Both Charlie and Leah have careers off the farm: Charlie in master data with Post Con-

sumer Brands and Leah as an occupational therapist. Their daughters, Katie and Ellen, also contribute to the operation.

Community involvement is important to the Radman family. Charlie serves as the Minnesota Farm Service Agency State Committee chair, on the University of Minnesota Rosemount Research and Outreach Center Advisory Committee, as the Dakota County Farm Bureau vice president, and volunteers with 4-H and Randolph/Northfield FFA Alumni.

Leah serves on the Randolph public school board, is a 4-H club leader and volunteers with the Randolph/Northfield FFA Alumni.

Their daughter Katie serves as the University of Minnesota Beta of Clovia vice president. She also participates in the University of Minnesota Block and Bridle Club and



General Livestock Team, as well as the Agricultural Education, Communications and Marketing Club.

Ellen serves as her 4-H Club president, Dakota County 4-H Federation president, and is a Randolph FFA member.



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HAMPTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING JULY 14, 2026

The Hampton City Council met on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at Hampton City Hall for the Regularly Scheduled Meeting. Present were Mayor John Knetter and Council Members Jerry Huddleston, Erica O'Connor, and Nick Russell. Councilman David Luhring was absent. Also present were Chris Meyer, Treasurer, Brad Fisher of Bolton & Menk, Attorney Anna Yunker, and Marlin Reinardy.

Regular Meeting Called to Order – Mayor Knetter called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Disclosure of Interest – None

Approval of June 9, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes – Motion by Russell, seconded by O'Connor, to approve the June 9, 2026 regular meeting minutes. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 4-0.

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

Public Comments: Marlin Reinardy asked for clarification on 47 and the scope of the upcoming road project, specifically whether sidewalk sections would be removed. Mayor John Knetter explained that the project includes improvements to pedestrian ramps within the project area and noted he had met with Dakota County staff and utility locators earlier that day. City Engineer Brad Fisher added that all pedestrian ramps will be upgraded to meet ADA standards and that several uneven sidewalk panels will be replaced to eliminate tripping hazards, while the primary scope of the project remains a mill and overlay. Reinardy expressed concern about the numerous water curb stops along the street and whether they had been identified to prevent damage during construction. Fisher confirmed that all curb stops are included in the project plans and will be adjusted as needed, and Mayor Knetter stated they are also expected to be adjusted during construction. Reinardy recommended that the curb stops be physically flagged or painted because they could be difficult for equipment operators to see. Following discussion, Mayor Knetter directed staff to contact Dakota County to ensure the curb stops are

clearly identified, which is expected to start the following day.

Petitions, Requests, and Communications: Mayor John Knetter recommended rescheduling the August City Council meeting from August 11 to August 18 due to his planned absence and because the City Hall building would be occupied for the primary election on August 11. Council Member Russell moved to approve the date change. During the discussion, Treasurer Chris Meyer recommended beginning the budget review at 6:30 p.m., and the Council agreed to incorporate that start time into the rescheduled meeting. Council Member O'Connor seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Ordinances and Resolutions – None

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees:

Engineer Report – City Engineer Brad Fisher of Bolton & Menk provided updates on several ongoing projects. He reported that the water tower improvement project is substantially complete, noting that the old tower has been removed, its footings demolished, and the site restored. The historic "H," the red top, and portions of the tower legs were successfully salvaged for potential future use at the city park. Remaining work consists of minor punch list items, including SCADA system updates and staff training, which must be completed before final project closeout. During the discussion, Mayor John Knetter suggested that the former tower site could eventually be converted to a gravel parking area rather than maintained as turf, but the Council agreed to consider the improvement at a later date to avoid additional project costs. Fisher also updated the Council on MnDOT's Highway 50 reconstruction proj-

ect, explaining that the current closure between Highways 52 and 61 is expected to continue through late August, after which work will shift east with additional closures near Hinton Avenue, Holt Avenue, and Hogan Avenue. Local access will be maintained throughout construction, and Fisher encouraged the Council to monitor the MnDOT project website for updates. Finally, Fisher reported that the City's GIS web application transition is progressing well following staff training, with only minor enhancements remaining before the system is ready to go live.

Water / Sewer Report – Mayor Knetter reported that both backup generator lift station generators were serviced and found to be in excellent condition, with no issues identified. A detailed service report was provided. He noted that Brad had already covered updates regarding the new water tower. Knetter also reported that the flow meters in the pump house will need to be calibrated or rebuilt within the next few months to meet state requirements. Aside from these items, there were no additional updates.

Park Report – Councilman Russell reported that the contractor for the water tower project is tentatively scheduled to meet on Friday to review the project after being unable to attend earlier in the week. The contractor has received photos of the project and will provide a cost estimate following the review, with additional information expected within the next month. Russell also noted that weed control will need to begin soon as the parks are becoming overgrown, and staff will contact Ottomatic to perform the work.

(continued on page 12)

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HAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

(continued from page 11)

Regarding the ball field scoreboard, Reinardy reported that the existing scoreboard is currently operational after repairs, but Russell advised the Council that replacement will likely be needed in the future, with a preliminary estimate of approximately \$10,000. Russell noted that funding is anticipated to be available in next year's park budget, which includes \$25,000 annually, and the project will be discussed further during the upcoming budget meeting.

Street Report – In Councilman Luhning's absence, Knetter reported that a pothole at the corner of Main Street will need to be patched and confirmed that the patch of grass near Highway 52 is the City's responsibility. Council members also discussed concerns about overgrown weeds along the road edges and on a vacant parcel across from the former bank, noting that several complaints had been received. The Clerk was directed to send a letter to the property owner requesting that the parcel be mowed. The City will also determine whether Ottomatic is available to mow the area near Highway 52 or arrange for the work to be completed using a tractor and side mower if needed.

Social Media/Website – Councilman Huddleston reported that there were no social media or website updates.

Unfinished Business – None

New Business – The Council conducted its required annual review of the City's Data Practices Policy, as required by state law by August 1. Knetter explained that the current Data Practices Policy remains in effect, while a separate email retention policy under consideration would establish a 14-day retention period for transitory emails that are not considered official records. Attorney Anna Yunker clarified the distinction between a data practices policy, which governs how the public requests and accesses government data, and a data retention policy, which establishes how long records are kept. She also noted that the model policy provided by the Minnesota Department of Administration is optional and that state statute defines classifications of public, private, and confidential data. Council members discussed the Clerk's responsibility for determining which communications qualify as official records subject to retention requirements. Councilmember Huddleston suggested returning to the discussion later in the meeting to allow Attorney Yunker additional time to review the current policy. The Council agreed to table the discussion and revisit the matter later in the meeting.

The Council reviewed a quote to update the City's Code of Ordinances books. Knetter explained that the proposed update would replace the existing binders with newly printed volumes, even though only a small portion of the ordinances have changed. He noted that the current system of updating individual pages in the binders remains effective and questioned the need to incur the expense of replacing the entire set. Council members discussed the availability of electronic copies of the Code, including on the City's website, and agreed that maintaining the ordinances electronically is more practical and allows updates to be made easily. Following discussion, the Council reached a consensus not to proceed with purchasing new printed ordinance books.

The Council reviewed a list of overdue water utility accounts. Knetter explained that the Clerk is given broad discretion to work with customers and establish payment plans

before delinquent accounts are brought to the Council, with the goal of avoiding water shutoffs whenever possible. The Clerk clarified that delinquency notices had been sent to customers but that shutoff notices had not yet been issued. Following discussion, the Council directed the Clerk to send shutoff notices to delinquent customers while continuing to work with them to establish payment plans whenever possible to prevent service disconnections.

The Council considered a request from St. Mathias for approval of a one-time gambling license and liquor license for the annual Fun Fest. Russell moved to approve both licenses, and O'Connor seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Council returned to discussion regarding the City's Data Practices Policy. Attorney Yunker advised that a closed session was needed pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.05 for attorney-client privileged discussion. The Council approved a motion to enter into closed session, with the motion passing unanimously. Following the closed session, the Council reconvened in open session. Huddleston moved to approve the City's existing policies and procedures under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, and O'Connor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Deputy provided an update on recent scam attempts occurring throughout the county, including individuals impersonating construction workers, utility workers, or law enforcement officers and requesting payment through gift cards. The Deputy reminded residents that legitimate agencies will not request payment in gift card form or call individuals to resolve warrants in this manner. The Deputy also provided an update on the Highway 50 construction project, noting that the roadway remains restricted to local residents and businesses with direct access, and that other traffic must follow posted detours. The Sheriff's Office has increased enforcement efforts, including issuing citations for unauthorized traffic through the closed area, which is a misdemeanor offense. The Deputy reported that traffic violations have decreased since enforcement began and encouraged residents to follow detour signs and avoid the construction area for safety reasons. The project is anticipated to continue through approximately September or October.

Adjournment - Motion by O'Conner, seconded by Russell, to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Kelly Roan

HAMPTON CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING AND REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING

AUGUST 18, 2026

The Hampton City Council met on Tuesday, August 18, 2026, at Hampton City Hall for a Special Hearing and the Regularly Scheduled Meeting. Present were Mayor John Knetter and Council Members Jerry Huddleston, David Luhning, and Nick Russell. Councilwoman Erica O'Connor arrived at 6:55pm. Also present were Chris Meyer, Treasurer, Drew Bailey of Bolton & Menk, Attorney Anna Yunker, and various Residents.

Special Hearing Called to Order – Mayor Knetter called the Special Hearing to order at 6:30 p.m.

Chris Meyer reviewed the proposed amended 2026 budget and the 2027 budget,

noting that the meeting packet included a worksheet identifying all proposed changes. For the amended 2026 budget, Meyer reported reductions of \$100,000 in bond principal and \$72,642 in bond interest to reflect debt payments that were made in December 2025 rather than January 2026. For the 2027 budget, Meyer presented a proposed overall tax levy increase of approximately 3.19%, with the general tax levy increasing by \$7,863, or 2.02%.

Other revenue adjustments included a \$2,500 reduction in rental fees because the applicable fee occurs only in even-numbered years, a \$1,073 reduction in state grants and aids, and a \$12,000 reduction in projected bulk sewer charges based on recent trends. On the expenditure side, Meyer reviewed adjustments including reductions in general fund dues and subscriptions, legal fees, building personnel costs, and sewer cleaning and engineering expenses; increases in planning and zoning, fire district expenses, mowing, and water tower electrical costs; and the elimination of personnel costs associated with building cleaning because the work is now contracted.

The Council discussed sewer line cleaning and videotaping, noting that newer piping does not require the same frequency of maintenance, and confirmed that no phosphorus management project is currently planned for 2027. Meyer also noted that the City could consider water and sewer rate adjustments in January, as rates have not been increased since 2023, although both funds are currently in good financial condition. The Council discussed recovering water usage costs associated with outside use of City hydrants, potential State Department of Health grants for water system improvements and fluoride

equipment, and training budgets for the general, water, and sewer funds.

The Council also discussed insurance coverage for the new water tower, with the replacement project construction costs expected to be just under \$2 million. The Council indicated that the new tower should be insured for approximately \$2 million, with the former tower already removed from the policy.

Meyer advised that the proposed budget could still be adjusted before the September meeting, when the Council is expected to formally adopt the budget. He noted that reductions could continue to be made through December, but increases could not be made after the September adoption. Council members expressed support for the proposed levy and budget and had no additional questions.

Adjournment - Motion by Russell, seconded by Knetter, to adjourn the special hearing. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Regular Meeting Called to Order – Mayor Knetter called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Disclosure of Interest – None

Approval of July 14, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes – Motion by Luhning, seconded by Huddleston, to approve the July 14, 2026 regular meeting minutes. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of Disbursements - Motion by Russell, seconded by Luhning, to approve the disbursements. All voted in favor. None opposed. Motion passed 5-0.

Public Comments: Mike Thurmes raised concerns regarding potholes and other holes in the roads, noting that he had previously

(continued on page 13)

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A promotional graphic for Consumer Cellular. On the left, a large, 3D-style "\$25" is displayed, with a speech bubble containing the text "SWITCH & GET" pointing to it. To the right, a dark speech bubble contains the text "Off First Month of New Service!" and "USE PROMO CODE: GZ590". Below this, the "Consumer Cellular" logo is shown inside a white speech bubble. At the bottom, a black banner contains the text "CALL CONSUMER CELLULAR 888-804-0913" in white. A small copyright notice is at the very bottom: "© 2023 Consumer Cellular Inc. For promo details please call 888-804-0913".

THEME: SOLAR SYSTEM

1. Ancient Peruvian
5. Hit the slopes
8. Bro or sis
11. Thomas the Engine's warning
12. *Sun, e.g.
13. Twist and distort
15. Carpenter's groove
16. *Jupiter's inner "ring"
17. MC Hammer's "2 ____ 2 Quit"
18. "It makes up the majority of Jupiter's mass"
20. Narrative poem
21. "When ____ Cry" by Prince
22. Louisville Slugger
23. Chase
26. Puffy cloud
30. Nurses' org.
31. Frozen drink
34. Ricci of fashion
35. Same as climate
37. Buddy Holly's "Peggy ____"
38. Knight's breastplate
39. Flying toy
40. a.k.a. pennant
42. Possesses
43. Appetizer
45. Like certain pine
47. Large edible mushroom
48. ____-Arts, or fine arts
50. Disparaging remark
52. *The largest moon in the Solar System
55. *Jupiter's Great Red Spot
56. Up it in poker
57. Exclamation of disgust
59. Famous diarist Samuel ____
60. Like decorated cake
61. Reply from a tunnel
62. Tarzan's adoptive dad
63. Neither here ____ there
64. Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. acr.

1. It would
2. Master of ark
3. Buffalo Bill's last name
4. In conflict (2 words)
5. Coach-and-four
6. Type of leaf cabbage, pl.
7. *Reason for Mars' redness
8. Kind of palm
9. Author Murdoch
10. Sandwich with acronym name
12. Snow mover
13. Flash of light
14. *Farthest planet from sun in our Solar System
19. Make awake
22. Opposite of vend
23. Gets ready for a trip
24. Dark
25. Indian restaurant yogurt staple
26. ____ Zhen in "Fist of Fury"
27. *The Solar System spans roughly 1.6 ____-years
28. Uniate church member
29. Impudent
32. ____-friendly
33. *Center of the Solar System
36. *The smallest planet
38. Per ____, or yearly
40. Vigor
41. Approved
44. 4 years for a U.S. President, pl.
46. Daisies
48. Bench in Mexico
49. Larger key on the right
50. Pas in ballet
51. Between trot and gallop
52. Effect of pain?
53. Mussolini, with II
54. Not counterfeit
55. Relaxation location
58. Ornamental pond dweller

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

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

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