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The Messenger

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SEPTEMBER 17, 2026

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Kasson Alliance for Restoration benefit this weekend



The Wine, Beer, Whiskey and Chocolate tasting benefit will be held this Saturday, September 19th in the beer garden building at the Dodge County Fairgrounds from 5 to 8pm. Tickets are \$35 in advance and \$45 day of the event. You may purchase them at Mantorville Square or call 507-259-1775 or 651-380-1246. There will be light appetizers available and live music will be provided by Neon Arrival.

There will also be a raffle for a balloon ride for two with Stillwater Balloons. The tickets are \$20 each and may be purchased at the event or prior by calling Janet at 507-251-1657 or Jerry at 507-951-0126.

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Two Vie For Dodge County Attorney Position

Crysta Parkin, candidate for Dodge County Attorney



Crysta Parkin

Here Crysta introduces herself here in her own words.

My parents moved to Mantorville when I was 3 years old (1980) after my dad accepted a teaching position at Kasson-Mantorville High School. I grew up in Mantorville and graduated from Kasson-Mantorville High School in 1995.

My parents – Doug and Linda Wunderlich – were both teachers. My dad taught science and math. He also served on the Mantorville Fire Department for almost 30 years. My mom was a substitute teacher and very involved with music – teaching piano lessons as well as leading music programs at St. John's Lutheran Church in Kasson. I have one brother who resides in Yakima, Washington. My husband grew up in Byron and is an electrician at A&A Electric in Kasson. Most of his extended family resides in Dodge County.

I graduated from Valparaiso University in December 1998 with an individualized major in public relations and political science.

(continued on page 10)

Kailee Thompson, candidate for Dodge County Attorney



Kailee Thompson

Here Kailee introduces herself here in her own words.

I am originally from Forest Lake, Minnesota. I attended Hill-Murray School in Maplewood, Minnesota for Middle and High School, which meant bouncing around the Twin Cities' suburbs to be closer to school, but my family ultimately landed back in Forest Lake.

I have the best mom and dad who met working at the old Ford assembly plant in St. Paul before it shut down. I am the youngest of six siblings - one full brother, Brandon; two half-sisters and two half-brothers. I also have five nieces and nephews. I grew up with a hockey family, spending most days at the hockey rink, whether it was watching my siblings or playing. My parents decided to become snowbirds a few years back and moved to South Carolina and Brandon followed them shortly after. I have been with my significant other, Cody, for 4.5 years. We met on the ice at a hockey tournament in Rochester. Cody has a 16-year-old son that attends Kasson-Mantorville High School.

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Announcements

- GriefShare support group for anyone experiencing loss of a loved one, friend, or other significant person in their lives, meets Thursdays, 6:30 - 8:30 pm at Anchor Of Hope Church, 203 E. Main St., Dodge Center, MN. Contact Dale E. Rood, pastor emeritus, at 507-633-2772, or go to the GriefShare website.

- The United Methodist Church of Dodge Center at 20 First Street NE offers a dine in and carry out meal from 5:00-6:00pm the third Wednesday of each month.

Do you have an announcement?

Email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

St. John's Lutheran Church Celebrates Their Sesquicentennial

Submitted by Sharon Melquist



Members of St. John's Lutheran Church in Kasson have been celebrating its heritage all year in recognition

of its 150th Anniversary. To honor this milestone, "Past Pastors" have been invited to preach during their Legacy Sundays (3rd Sunday of each month), a special Anniversary Service was held in April to commemorate the Incorporation in 1876, and now this coming Sunday, September 20, there will be a special Celebration Service where Bishop Regina Hassanally will preach.

(continued on page 3)



Larry's Fridge & Fundraiser

Looking for donations to restock Larry's Fridge at the First Presbyterian Church in Claremont. Boxes are set up at local Claremont businesses and a front porch deck box at 211 Elm Street, where you may drop off donations for the food pantry.

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DODGE CENTER

FIRE DEPARTMENT

50TH ANNIVERSARY

PANCAKE BREAKFAST!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4TH, 2026

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

COME OUT AND SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT!

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT DODGE CENTER FIRE DEPARTMENT

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We Service Dodge County

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.

(continued on page 3)

Dodge County Cowboy Church
2ND SUNDAY NIGHT
5:30 - 7:30 P.M.
October 11

Celebrate the Anniversary of Cowboy Church and hear from Charles Schaal, founder of Cowboy Church in our area.

KASSON CHURCH OF CHRIST
901 8TH AVE NW
KASSON MN 55944
Marette Jorgenson, 507-421-4761

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

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

Take Out Available
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507-645-6042

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

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ATV/UTV quote today**

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Agent

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Bus: 507-282-1500
shawn@sfrrochester.com
www.sfrrochester.com

DODGE CENTER

Faith Lutheran Church
308 2nd St. NW, Dodge Center
507-374-2174

Traditional Worship 9 a.m.; Fellowship 10 a.m.

Grace Lutheran Church
404 Central Avenue N, Dodge Center
Rev. Elliott Malm • 507-633-2253
<https://gracelcchurc.org>

Worship 9 a.m.; Sunday School 10:30 a.m.

Praise Fellowship Church
602 Central Avenue S, Dodge Center
507-374-6400

Kids Church 9:15 a.m.; Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.

Dodge Center Methodist Church
201 1st St. NE, Dodge Center
507-374-6885

Sunday Morning Worship at 8:30 a.m.,
Fellowship Time Following

St. John Baptist De La Salle
20 2nd St. NE, Dodge Center • 507-374-6830
Mass Saturday 5 p.m.

Living Water Assembly Church
104 1st St. NW, Dodge Center
Roy Andrews • 507-374-6561
Sunday 10 a.m.

Dodge Center SDA Church
410 3rd Ave. SW
Dodge Center • 507-374-6895
Sabbath School 9:15 a.m.; Saturday Worship 11 a.m.

**Anchor of Hope Church,
a 7th Day Baptist Congregation**
203 E. Main St., Dodge Center • 507-374-6755
Saturday 10 a.m. Worship; 11:45 a.m. Sabbath School

Bible Lutheran Church
(American Assoc. of Lutheran Churches)
11 1st Ave. N.E., Dodge Center
www.biblelc.org • 612-803-1212
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.; Worship 10:30 a.m.
(weekly sermons available on YouTube and on website)

First Congregational Church
12 Second Street NW
Dodge Center, MN 55927 • 507-633-6873
www.congregationalchurchdc.com
Mark Martig, Pastor

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.

CLAREMONT

1st Presbyterian Church
200 East Street, Claremont • 528-2320
Pastor Doug Walters
Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m.

St. John Lutheran Church
4532 SE 84th Avenue, Claremont • 528-2404
Pastor Alan Broadwell
Sunday Service at 10:30 a.m.

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160 26th St NE, Owatonna
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WEST CONCORD

Faith Community Church
305 State Street N, West Concord
507-527-2244

Interim Pastor, Steve Anderson
Sunday 9:30 a.m. Worship; 10:45 a.m. Sunday School
www.fccwc.org

Facebook: WC Faith Community Church

Hegre Lutheran, ELCA
51939 Highway 56 Blvd., Kenyon • 507-527-2353
Sunday: 9:15 a.m. Sunday School; 10:30 a.m. Worship

Trinity Lutheran, ELCA
301 Highland St., West Concord • 507-527-2778
trinitychurchwc.net
Sunday worship video is posted on Facebook:
Trinitylutheranchurchwestconcordmn
Sundays 9:30 a.m. Worship in building and live streamed on Facebook.
Sunday School 10:30 a.m.
Tuesday Men's Bible Study, 7:00 a.m.
at church and via Zoom
Call church for more information on ministries and events.

Church of Christ
55087 200th Ave., West Concord • 507-527-2723
Pastor Peter Moen
9:00 a.m. Sunday School; 10:00 a.m. Worship
concordchurchmn.com

Zwingli United Church of Christ
"The Berne Church"
23148 Co. Hwy. 24, West Concord • 507-356-4340
Pastor Beth Anthony
Sunday 10:00 a.m. Worship; Find us on Facebook

Email your church announcements,
schedule, etc. to the The Messenger at:
hometownmessenger@gmail.com



MAIL

32 West Main Street • P.O. Box 33
Dodge Center, MN 55927

PHONE/TEXT 507-649-3327

FAX 507-645-9878

**For advertising information
call Terry at 507-951-7417
or email:**

hometownmessenger@gmail.com

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St. John's Lutheran Church Celebrates Their Sesquicentennial

(continued from page 1)

This service will be filled with music, including an organ solo, handbells, brass quartet, flute, violin, cello, as well as the Senior Choir premiering the commissioned piece "Your Steadfast Love" by Matthew Culloton.

This piece honors the past and inspires the future.

In addition to the special service, a brunch will be served and many fun activities will be held on the church lawn to kick off the youth programming. Various history items are on display and also commemorative items and history books are for sale. A festive gala featuring dinner and live music will be held for the congregation the evening before the special service.

St. John's began its history when six families living in Kasson requested to start their own church at the annual meeting of West St. Olaf congregation of Hayfield, MN, in February, 1876. They wanted to worship in the area where they were living. The request was approved and St. John's was incorporated on April 3rd, 1876. The records show that Pastor J.A. Thorsen was the Pastor for the new congregation for three years in addition to the parishes of East St. Olaf, West St. Olaf, Hayfield Evanger and another in Rochester. At the

beginning, members met over stores, only men were in leadership positions, and the services were in Norwegian.

By 1903, there were 23 families belonging to the congregation and it was this year that St. John's purchased the church belonging to the Danish Baptists for \$1,000.

This building was located at the corner of 2nd Avenue and 5th Street NW in Kasson.

Later in 1916, the congregation voted to build a new church. The old church was sold to Andrew Beaver and moved off the lot. The second church was dedicated on August 26th, 1917.

When St. John's first formed, sharing a Pastor was common. It wasn't until 1921 when Pastor Mikkell Lono served for five years. When Pastor Thorvald E. Moen arrived on May 1st, 1928, he provided stability for many years as he served until 1956. Another long-term Pastor, Pastor Curtis H. Johnson, was installed on August 17th, 1961, and served 36 years. Several years after his arrival, the third church was built in 1963-1964 on donated land where St. John's currently stands.

The last service in the old church was in April 1964, and afterwards the congregation held a procession to the current location. The membership grew and in 1992, renovation of the current church included a new kitchen, remodeling the office areas and library, increasing the narthex area, and adding to the Sunday School wing with additional restrooms.

The current pastors include Senior Pastor John Weisenburger, who began in 2022, part-time Associate Pastor Kristen Schlauderaff, and Intern Pastor Kirby Chilson.

Preparation for the 150th Anniversary began in the Fall of 2024. There have been many sub-groups involved in planning all as-



pects of the anniversary activities.

In addition to our Anniversary Service, St. John's members are gearing up for their annual Lutefisk Dinner which will be October 22nd. This dinner has been served since the early 1930's.

How Do I Start Reading the Bible?

(continued from page 2)

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



Sidewalk Pastor

In Gods Time

Psalms 27:14

"Wait on the lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait. I say, on the lord."

Our entire life is based around God's timing. He knows when our prayers should be answered. God is there to help guide our lives. I know we go through times when we think well, will God ever answer our prayers. God knows when the time is right, when we can understand and handle his answer to our prayers. This is why we never give up on God answering our prayers. Patience and courage are essential while trusting God's timing. When we turn our lives over to God and totally trust in Him, our lives become so much better. Be patient and trust in God.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

"He has made everything beautiful in his time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end."

When I take a good, hard look around, how beautiful our lives really are. To see the sunrise and sunset in the blue sky above us is truly a gift from God above. Everything we go through is a blessing in disguise. Sometimes life leads our human flesh to a place where we want to be saved. So that we may take ourselves to Jesus fully and that we may put more love in our hearts and our heads.

Mathew 5:8

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

Truth in our lives leads our minds to have a conscious contact with God, so that we may seek him and remember the journey we had to take on the way to give our lives fully over to him, so we can speak to him in this lifetime and in the next.

Remember to love and hug those kids today and don't stop praying.
Sidewalk pastor and friend,

Larry Blood
and Sarah Broskoff



Sandra "Sandi" Lyona (Kreager) Klindworth



Sandra "Sandi" Lyona (Kreager) Klindworth, aged 76 of Dodge Center, Mn peacefully passed away September 8, 2026, at her home.

Sandi was born August 16, 1950, to Clarence and June (Johnson) Kreager, in Dodge Center, Mn. Life as you may expect with three brothers

was adventurous to say the least. Her childhood playmates were not only those rambunctious brothers, neighborhood kids, and plenty of quality time spent with cousins. She had fond memories of her days with Cindy, Rocky, Betty, Sharon and the list of her cousins on both sides of the family. As the only girl, she may have received a little extra love from her Grandma's. Stories were shared of Grandma Johnson coloring with her on the pantry floor and the walks in Grandma Liz's flower gardens.

She graduated from Dodge Center High School in 1968. After graduation Sandi moved to Rochester and worked as a candy striper at St Mary's Hospital.

She was married to Richard Klindworth at Lincoln Lutheran Church in Lake City, Mn, February 14, 1970. They later divorced in January 1978. From their union arrived the loves of her life, Stacia "Staci" (Mike) Smith, Shylene "Shellee" (Terry) Rath, Richard "Rich" Klindworth Jr, Sharice "Shari" (Nelson)

Lecea, Reginald "Reg" Klindworth and Shannon (Tracy) DuChene. They moved to West Concord, Mn in 1976.

Sandi knew no greater joy than raising her children. As a single mom for the majority of their childhood, she needed to provide for her children. Sandi enrolled at RCTC and earned her LPN nursing license. Sandi worked as an LPN at the State Hospital in Faribault, MN, an in-home nursing position in Austin, MN and finished her career at Fairview Nursing Home in Dodge Center, MN. She found great joy in bringing comfort to and caring for others. Through the care she gave, she gave humility, dignity and respect.

Days were long, the house was loud and chaotic yet she endured. She had Grandma and Pa for back-up and they came every Sunday. Steady with reminders, "Don't let Pa find your bike laying in the yard and did you put all the toys back in the sandbox?" Sunday supper around that cramped kitchen table. Elbow to elbow with everything she cherished the most in the world. As if her six weren't enough, they had friends. And they were always welcome. Sleepovers, games of hide-n-seek, tents on the clothesline, football player haircuts on Thursday in the kitchen. "What's one more" was her motto. She was steadfast in teaching her children self-reliance, working for what they want and above all be true to and love one another because at the end of the day they had each other. The early years were meager, but her kids never knew. Nighttime ritual of prayers before lights out. She kept them warm, bellies full, a nice warm bed and safe (she only heard of the harrowing tales of the teenage years long

after her beloved children had reached adulthood and were certain they wouldn't be grounded).

As the children grew, married and gave her grandbabies, what she most valued was their visits. She always said, "They don't do anything alone, but it's hard to get them all together". Sandi enjoyed word find books (like Pa), diamond art, electronic games and she can work a 1000-piece puzzle like nobody's business. Sandi resided at Heritage Estates in Dodge Center where she made several friends. Who knew that 25 years after moving out of West Concord she would be neighbors with ladies from the old neighborhood, just in a new home. Coffee over a puzzle became her new pass time. As her health gave her new challenges to face, the residents at Heritage would always ask about mom, and stop down for celebrations when the family came.

One thing always made her smile, visits from the kids and grands. Phone calls, pictures and a visit would make her day. Her life has touched so many, her love had no boundary. We are better for having her in our lives.

Sandi is survived by her children and their spouses, 23 grandchildren and 15 (and counting) great-grandchildren; brother, LeRoy "Buck" (Connie) Kreager; sister-in-law, Pam Kreager; numerous nieces and nephews and her special friend, Richard Burkhardt.

She was preceded in death by her parents and grandparents; brother, Fred Kreager and brother, Richard "Dick" Kreager.

A funeral service for Sandi was held at

11:00 a.m. Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at Faith Lutheran Church, 308 2nd St NW in Dodge Center, MN. Her son, Pastor Reggie Klindworth officiated, a luncheon followed her service. Visitation was held one hour prior to her service at the church. Interment was in Riverside cemetery in Dodge Center, MN.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her name to the American Heart Association.

To share a special memory or condolence please visit www.czaplewskifuneralhomes.com, Czaplewski Family Funeral Homes, 25 South Street SW Dodge Center, MN 55927 (507) 374-2155. Blessed be her memory.

Do you need help with your toenails?



Registered nurse and certified foot care nurse will trim your nails in your home.

Joyful Feet Footcare

Phone: 507-475-1434 (okay to text)

Email: joyfulfeet@yahoo.com

Hegre's Annual Fall Swedish Meatball Supper

~ Take out and curbside pickup orders only ~

Wednesday, September 23rd 2026 serving 4pm -7:00pm

Menu includes: Swedish Meatballs, Ham, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Cole Slaw, Corn, Cranberries, Dinner Roll & Apple Dessert

Cost: \$18 per meal (all meals are adult sizes). Cash or checks only.

Call or text orders are recommended by Friday, September 18th to guarantee meals.

Please include name, number of meals and time of pick up.

Drive up meals available the day of the supper until food is gone.

Picnic tables outside for anyone to use.

Please stay in line until reaching the cashier on the east side of the church.

Call or text orders to Beth at 507-330-4996. Quilt Raffle available!



Hegre Church 51939 Hwy. 56 Blvd, Kenyon, MN

hegrechurch@yahoo.com

Hegre Church Congregation thanks you all in advance for your continues support!

Faith In Action

Fall Soup and Pie Dinner

October 12, 2026 from 4:30-7:00 p.m.

Grace Methodist Church - 801 5th Ave. NW, Kasson

Menu:

Choice of Soup (Chicken Wild Rice, Vegetable Beef or Chicken Noodle), Bread and Crackers, Assorted Pies



Faith In Action is a non-profit, interfaith organization that provides volunteer services that assist senior citizens in maintaining their independence in the home environment of their choice.

Sponsored by Thrivent Financial and Knights of Columbus #14460

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

Obituaries

September 17, 2026

- DODGE CENTER, CLAREMONT, WEST CONCORD, KASSON, MANTORVILLE, HAYFIELD MESSENGER -

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Karen Murn Knudson

Karen Murn Knudson, 85 years old, passed away on Saturday, September 12, 2026, at Saint Marys Hospital in Rochester, MN.

Karen was born on August 11, 1941, in Kasson, MN to Harvey John Knudson and Genevieve Murn (Howe) Knudson.

Karen graduated from Dodge Center High School in 1961. She

worked for Federated Insurance of Owatonna for 35 plus years. She also volunteered for SEMCAC Meals on Wheels, drove patients to appointments, and drove van for Triton Public Schools. Karen was a member of the Congregational Church in Dodge Center, MN, as well as the Fairview Women's Auxiliary in Dodge Center, MN.

Karen enjoyed attending the Dodge Center Relay for Life as a cancer survivor, bowling on the Fritz's Mobile bowling team for years, going to the casino, and playing 500 and poker. She also loved watching the Minnesota Vikings, Minnesota Twins, and Minnesota Timberwolves on her big screen TV. If her teams were not playing that day, she was okay to watch another sports team or a rerun of the Vikings, Twins, or Timberwolves. Karen also enjoyed participating in Superbowl boards. Other than sports, Karen loved watching game shows, especially Let's Make a Deal. She loved her chocolates, particularly from the Chocolate Shoppe in Mantorville, MN. She also loved her Cheetos. Karen would tell you that Fieldcrest has the best coffee around. She also enjoyed camping with the Chicos Family.

She is survived by nieces and nephews: Janice Klinger, Barbara (Tom) MacVey, Konnie Kerrigan, Julie (Dean) Suilmann, John (Donica) Knudson, Cheryl (Mark) Gillard, Betty Butler, Mike (Denise) Butler, Eileen (Bill) Huneke, Bob (Bonnie) Butler, Patty Hortop, Pam Thomas, Vince (Steph) Chicos, Diane (Mike) Hortop, Matt Chicos, and Jeff Chicos.

Karen is also survived by several great nieces and nephews, great-great nieces and

nephews, and great-great-great nieces and nephews.

Karen is preceded in death by her parents; siblings, Robert Knudson, Bonita Butler, and Joanne Chicos; brother-in-law, James Butler; nephews, Roger (Butch) Knudson and Larry Butler; nieces, Christine Knudson, Geraldine Knudson, and Mary Espenson; great nephews, Brent Huneke and Jacob Knudson; and great nieces, Megan Hortop, and Baby Girl Gillard.

A celebration of life for Karen will be held on Wednesday, September 16, 2026, from 4 to 7 p.m. at Czaplowski Funeral Homes in Dodge Center, MN (25 S St SW Dodge Center, MN) with a prayer service beginning at 6:30 p.m. A graveside service will be held on Thursday, September 17, 2026, at 10 a.m. at Riverside Cemetery in Dodge Center, MN.

Memorials are suggested to Riverside Cemetery in Dodge Center, MN.

Blessed be her memory.

Joyce Ann Stivers

Joyce Ann Stivers, 91, of Kasson, MN passed away on Thursday, September 10, 2026, at Mayo Clinic St. Mary's Campus in Rochester, MN.

Joyce was born on July 30, 1935, in Frankford Township, Mower County, MN, the



third child of John and Eleanor (Monette) Renken.

Joyce graduated Dodge Center High School in 1953. She married James Stivers in June of 1956. She worked at Neisner Brothers in the Miracle Mile Shopping Center for 16 years and for a natural gas company for 22 years. She retired in 1995.

Joyce loved her pets, working in her garden, reading, and bird watching.

She was preceded in death by her husband; her parents; a sister, Jeanette; and two brothers, Joseph and John.

Joyce is survived by her sister-in-law's, Kathy Peterson of Kasson, MN and Peggy Stebbins of Rochester, MN; nieces and nephews.

Per Joyce's wishes, there will be no services held. Memorials are preferred to Paws and Claws, 3224 19th St NW, Rochester, MN 55901.

To share a special memory or condolence please visit

www.czaplewskifuneralhomes.com, Czaplowski Family Funeral Homes, 801 7th St SE Kasson, MN 55944 (507)634-6510. Blessed be her memory.

Pancake Breakfast to benefit the Dodge Center Ambulance Service
Hosted by Eden Progressive Gophers 4-H Club



Hot Pancakes, Eggs, Sausage, Fruit Milk, Juice & Coffee

*Same price
Same great 4-Hers*

Date: Sunday, September 20, 2026
Where: West Concord American Legion
Time: 7:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Suggested Price: \$8 for 5 yrs old - Adults
4 years old & under free

EXTENSION  Dodge County 4-H



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Pumpkin Giveaway

Claremont First Presbyterian Church is giving away pumpkins, campfire bags and goodie bags while supplies last along with having Trunk or Treat on



October 10th
at
10-11am

Trunk or Treating will be held behind the church.

If you are interested in participating in the Trunk or Treat you can set up behind the church at 9:30.



Even sponsored by Presbyterian Women and Claremont Chamber of Commerce

Location: 121 East St N Claremont, MN

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33rd Annual Turkey Dinner

With all the fixings
Sunday, September 20, 2026
11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
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Adults \$15.00 • Children 6-12 \$6.00
Children 5 & Under Free

All Dine-In and Take-out meal tickets sold at the door.



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West Concord Fire Department

Annual Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, October 11th from 7:00 am to 1:00 pm
at the West Concord Fire Department

Serving: Pancakes, Scrambled Eggs & Sausage

Cost: \$10.00 suggested donation for adults;
\$6.00 for kids ages 6-12
(children 5 & under free)

A fundraiser for the West Concord Fire Department Relief Association



William A. Haefemeyer

William A. Haefemeyer, age 85 of Faribault, MN passed away on Friday, September 4, 2026 at Milestone Senior Living following an extended illness.

William Alvin, the son of Alvin and Lillian (Pautz) Haefemeyer was born on May 21, 1941 in Faribault, MN. He attended Dodge Center High School and graduated with the class of 1959. Following high school, Bill served in the United States Navy and was honorably discharged in 1962. On June 22, 1968 he was united in marriage to Marian Sexton in Waseca, MN. Bill worked at EF Johnson Company in Waseca for 25 years, starting in the drafting department, where he met his future wife, and then worked as an acoustical engineer. He was doing some of the early research for cellular communication. Bill also worked for over 40 years as a gunsmith at Ahlman's Gun shop in Morristown, MN. Later he started his own business, Your

Grandfather's Gun Shop at his home. When he wasn't working, he enjoyed time with his family, golfing, working on cars and tinkering with anything to see if he could fix it and get it to work. He was a member of the NRA and a former member of the Faribault Rifle and Pistol Club.

He is survived by his wife, Marian T. Haefemeyer of Faribault, MN; by his sons, Matthew W. Haefemeyer (Maria Yolanda Haefemeyer) of Warsaw, MN, Steven R. Haefemeyer of Warsaw, MN and Andrew A. Haefemeyer of Warsaw, MN; by four grandchildren, Jacob (Lyndsey) Haefemeyer, Joshua (Anna) Haefemeyer, Kaitlyn (Austin) Olson and Riley (Lyndsey) Haefemeyer; by three great grandchildren, Ella Haefemeyer, Greyson Olson and Walker Olson; by his sister, Carol Foxen of Warsaw, MN and other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Alvin and Lillian Haefemeyer and his daughter-in-law, Jennifer Haefemeyer.

A Celebration of Life visitation was held on Saturday, September 12, 2026 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Parker Kohl Funeral Home & Crematory in Faribault. Interment will be held at Fort Snelling National Cemetery on Wednesday, October 21, 2026.

Arrangements are being completed by the Parker Kohl Funeral Home & Crematory of Faribault.

James "Jim" Lowell Stucky

James "Jim" Lowell Stucky, 84, of Kasson, MN passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on Thursday, September 10, 2026, at his home.

Jim was born on October 19, 1941, in Old Concord, MN to Ross and Elsie (Chapman) Stucky. He graduated from Pine Island High School. He worked as a cowboy in Montana and on his family's dairy farm. He then worked and retired from Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. Following his retirement he worked as a truck driver for construction companies. He also rode and drove horses and mules. On January 12, 1984, he married the love of his life, Beverly Timgren. They shared their home together in Kasson, MN.

Jim enjoyed hunting and fishing. He looked forward to heading out on many different road trips and spending time at his camper in Waterville, MN.

Jim is survived by his children, Dale Stucky of Kenyon, MN and Delores "Dee Dee" (Gene) Hart of Byron, MN; stepchildren, Paul (Dan) Beckman of Rochester, MN and Scott Beckman of Chatfield, MN; sister, Marilyn Chilson of Oronoco, MN; 13 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Ross and Elsie Stucky; wife, Beverly Stucky; sisters, Jane Rucker and Phyllis (Cowden) Feisler; brother, Dan Stucky; stepson, Brad Beckman; and many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

A memorial service will be held at 11:00 a.m. Thursday, September 17, 2026, at First Presbyterian Church, 101 6th Ave NW in Kasson, MN, with Pastor Loren Olson officiating. Visitation will be held from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Wednesday, September 16, 2026, at Czaplewski Family Funeral Homes, 801 7th St SE in Kasson, MN and one hour prior to his service at the church. Burial will be in Berne cemetery in Berne, MN.

Memorials are suggested to the First Presbyterian Church.

To share a special memory or condolence please visit www.czaplewskifuneralhomes.com, Czaplewski Family Funeral Homes, 801 7th St SE Kasson, MN 55944 (507)634-6510. Blessed be his memory.

Kasson Alliance for Restoration benefit

(continued from page 1)

The drawing for the hot air balloon ride will be drawn on Sunday September 20th.

Be sure to attend and help raise funds for the Old Kasson School building.

Superintendent Update

By Beth Giese, MA, Ed.S, Superintendent, Kasson-Mantorville Schools

As we approach the November 3 election, I want to make sure our Kasson Mantorville community has opportunities to learn more about the school district's proposed operating levy, understand why the district is seeking additional funding, and have questions answered.

Kasson Mantorville Schools will host two Community Information Meetings in the High School Forum Room: Monday, September 21 at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, September 22 at noon

You have likely seen us out and about sharing information and answering questions at sporting events, school activities, and other gatherings. These upcoming meetings provide another opportunity to learn more and have a conversation with district leadership. Both meetings are open to the public and will provide an overview of the operating levy that will appear on the November 3 ballot.

On November 3, voters in the Kasson Mantorville School District will be asked to consider a \$500 per pupil operating levy. If approved, the levy would provide approximately \$1 million in additional annual funding to support the district's day to day operations.

During the information sessions, we will talk about the financial factors that have led to the levy request. Like school districts across Minnesota, Kasson Mantorville continues to face increasing costs while state funding has not kept pace with inflation. We are also managing the financial impact of new state and federal requirements that do not always come with sufficient funding.

At the same time, we recognize our responsibility to carefully manage the resources our community provides.

The proposed levy is intended to help us continue providing the learning opportunities and student supports our community values, including Career and Technical Education, STEM and project based learning, student support services, music and fine arts, and co-curricular opportunities.

Our goal with these meetings is simple: to make sure our community has the information needed to understand the question on the ballot. We will share the facts, explain what the levy would mean for our schools and answer questions from community members.

I encourage parents, staff, residents, business owners, and other community members to attend one of these sessions. Whether you have followed the district's financial conversations closely or are just beginning to learn about the levy, we want you to have clear and accurate information before November 3.

Thank you for staying informed and engaged with Kasson Mantorville Schools. We look forward to seeing you on September 21 or September 22 and continuing this important conversation with our community.



KASSON ALLIANCE FOR RESTORATION

FUNDRAISER EVENT

WINE, BEER, WHISKEY & CHOCOLATE

Tasting and Silent Auction

Benefiting the 1918 Kasson Historic School

SEPTEMBER 19th 5:00-8:00 pm

light appetizers - music by Neon Arrival

Beer Garden Bldg.

Dodge County Fairgrounds

\$35 in advance \$45 at door

Tickets can be purchased at Mantorville Square or call 507-259-1775 or 651-380-1246

Museum Musings

THE HOTEL SITUATION

By Colleen Sathrum Hayne

When I grew up in West Concord in the fifties and sixties, the brick Concord Hotel was a landmark on the southeast corner of Main and Front streets. It is no longer there, but its story is part of the fabric of our town.

When the Hall Hotel on Main Street was destroyed by fire in August of 1912, the Enterprise proclaimed, "A town is worthless without a hotel." The Collins House, known also as the Hotel Concord, had burned 7 years earlier. The editor of the newspaper called the situation an emergency and asked if the town could rise to the occasion and erect a brick hotel. The newspaper quoted a traveling man who arrived by train in town and said, "Better get on the train again, this bum town has no hotel. 'I'm bound for Mantorville.'"

The call to action was eventually answered and a hotel stock company was formed and incorporated. August 26, 1915 was the organizational meeting and 35 stockholders attended. Both West Concord citizens and its surrounding farmers were urged to purchase stock at \$50 a share. With \$9000 raised, approximately 2/3 of the anticipated cost, bids were let for a new hotel. Kramer and Stevens of St. Charles were chosen as the contractors to build a two story brick hotel with a basement and a 12 foot veranda, with 54 feet of frontage and 92 feet back, and hot and cold water. A spacious lobby, a ladies parlor, a restaurant, and 26 sleeping rooms would complete the gracious lodging.

The grand opening of the Hotel West Concord in February of 1916 was quite the event. 170 guests were served in the dining room that evening, paying \$2.00 a plate each. The Andrist Ladies Orchestra of Mantorville provided music and tours were given throughout the evening. After everyone had eaten at the hotel, guests strolled across Main Street to City Hall where speeches were given touting the benefits the hotel would bring to West Concord. There was more musical entertainment and a dance to end the evening's memorable occasion to be sure.

The final cost of the hotel with lots, drainage, and fixtures was \$14,298.99, approximately \$429,000 in today's dollars. The Enterprise remarked opening week, "We believe that West Concord has the best hotel along the line of the Great Western Railway from St. Paul to Oelwein, and that when better railroad service is assured, it will be one of the best paying hotels in southern Minnesota." In that quote lies the problem that would plague the hotel for years, two-thirds of the Great Western passenger trains passed through West Concord without stopping.

In the early years of the hotel it was leased, not owned by its managers, and lessees seemed to change often. In 1919 the hotel closed with only 24 hours notice when Leonard Ellingson traded his hotel lease for Montana lands and thought the gentleman with whom he traded would keep the hotel open. A week later, after legal proceedings, the hotel was open again.

In 1934, Floyd Campbell, who had managed the hotel since 1923, vacated the hotel and located his cafe in a different location on Main Street. No renter for the hotel was found until Mr. and Mrs. H.O. Nordvald leased it, updated it and held a grand opening on March 23, 1935. Free coffee was offered on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday 150 special dinners were served. Our Flame Room at the museum pays homage to the Nordvald's lovely dining room.

The next manager, Elmer Lampson, bought the hotel in June of 1942. The days of leasing it were over. The town was relieved because the Hotel once again had been shut down for some time. In the 40's the hotel featured a variety store, a Watkins dealer conducting business out of Apartment 4, and the opening of Frank Pirkl's electrical appliance store in the west side of the hotel for a short time before moving to another location on Main Street.

In 1948 Dewey Scott, my school bus driver, purchased the hotel and gave it the name, The New Concord Hotel. By this time many sleeping rooms had been converted into apartments. In the spring of 1964 the Scotts sold the hotel to Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Peterson of Dodge Center. The Petersons had the hotel rewired for safety and advertised warm, comfortable rooms and apartments with three rooms and a bath. The Petersons owned the hotel for 12 years and sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Cardinal Bacon of Bloomington, MN in 1975. While Mr. Bacon stayed in Bloomington to attend to his work there, Mrs. Bacon managed the Concord Hotel. Unfortunately she passed away in 1980 at the young age of 50, a hotel auction taking place shortly after her death on September 4, 1980. The last mention I could find of apartments being rented at the hotel was in 1984 and 1985 when 1 and 2 bedroom apartments were advertised by the Elite Management Company.

At City Council meetings in the 1990's real concerns were expressed about the safety of the now empty building. Talks about demolishing it or rehabbing it were ongoing. In 1996 the State Fire Marshall deemed the building unsafe and in 1997 the city attorney was authorized to proceed with condemnation as the hotel was not closed or safeguarded properly. In the meantime security lights were installed in the alley behind the old hotel to discourage trespassing and vandalism. I have struggled to find the date the Concord Hotel was demolished. If you happen to know, will you let me know? Our story needs an ending.

In the meantime I'd like to memorialize our old hotel by remembering some of the many events that happened there, as well as the needs it filled. It's quite a comprehensive list. Baseball, city band, county newspaper, rural mail carrier and dairy association meetings were often held there. Visiting allergists, optometrists, and hearing aid specialists regularly met patients at the hotel. Photographers visited often, giving local families easy access to professional photographs of their children. Junior-Senior Banquets, Study Club Banquets, anniversary parties, midnight suppers after town dances, Lodge dinners, birthday parties and even funerals all happened at the Concord. You could leave orders for piano tuning or freight hauling at the hotel. You could also mail letters in the evening there and the hotel would take them down to the evening train so they'd be in St. Paul by the next morning. You could visit an attorney or a tax accountant at the hotel or even have lady's hair marcelling done there. Best of all, the hotel provided a home for a multitude of people. Many of West Concord's elderly spent their last years living at the hotel. Often former residents stayed at the hotel when they came back to town to visit old friends and family. Doc Olson rented apartment 4 so that he'd have a place to live when he was discharged from service in WW II. The David Scarrs rented an apartment while their house was being built in town, as did others.

We miss you and your heyday, Concord Hotel!

(additional picture at www.westconcordmn.net, www.claremontmn.net, www.dodgecentermn.com)



Hotel West Concord, on the left, in its early days, circa 1916



Hotel Concord, updated in the mid-thirties



The Flame Room, opened in 1935, and the site of many festivities

Fall Harvest Safety

It's a busy time of year with more farm equipment in the field and on the road.

Motorists:

- Slow down and use caution when approaching farm equipment.
- Don't assume the equipment operator can see you.
- Watch for debris dropped by farm equipment.
- Wait for a safe place to pass.
- Drive with headlights on.

Farm equipment operators:

- Use lights and flashers to make equipment more visible.
- Use slow-moving vehicle emblems on equipment traveling less than 30 mph.
- Avoid encouraging or signaling motorists to pass. Pull over when safe and let traffic pass.
- Consider using a follow vehicle when moving equipment, especially at night.
- Pick up any debris left on the highway by the equipment.

BE PATIENT, BE KIND AND SHARE THE ROAD.


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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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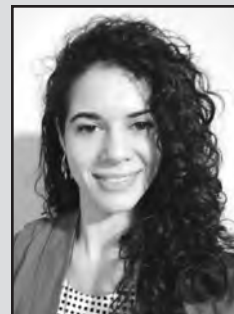
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A Minnesotan: Pumpkin Spice Monsters



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 spe-

cialty 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.

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Two Vie For Dodge County Attorney Position

Crysta Parkin, candidate for Dodge County Attorney

(continued from page 1)

I then obtained a masters degree in public policy (specifically policy affecting children and families) from the University of Minnesota Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs in May 2001. During my masters degree program, I worked at the Hennepin County Attorney's Office as a planning analyst with their Delinquents Under 10 / Early Intervention Program. This sparked my interest in the law, and I had the opportunity to take some classes at the University of Minnesota's Law School but ultimately chose not to attend law school at the time.

After working at Olmsted County Community Services for approximately 3 years, I started law school at Hamline University School of Law. During law school I participated in Hamline's Child Advocacy Clinic and then was selected to be the Clinic's student director for my final year of law school, supervising the clinic students as well as carrying a caseload. In May 2007, I graduated from Hamline University School of Law. I passed the Minnesota Bar Exam and was sworn in to the Minnesota Bar in October 2007.

As stated previously, I worked at the Hennepin County Attorney's Office as a planning analyst with their Delinquents Under 10 / Early Intervention Program from March 2000 – May 2001 during my masters degree program.

I then worked as a program evaluator for Olmsted County from 2001 – 2004. I produced annual reports to present to the Social Services Advisory Board and Olmsted County Board in collaboration with program managers. I worked with programs serving children and adolescents including youth in foster care, juvenile probation, the former

Many Rivers programs (juvenile detention center and juvenile sex offender program), and adolescent behavioral health.

During law school, I worked in the Ramsey County Elections Department during the fall months of 2005 and 2006 as an election worker. In addition to working as the Child Advocacy Clinic Student Director, I was a research assistant for two professors and worked as a law clerk for a small law office in Fridley.

In August 2007, following the Bar Exam, I began working as a family law attorney at Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS) in Rochester. At SMRLS, I represented clients in family law matters across southeastern Minnesota, but worked primarily in Dodge, Rice, and Olmsted counties. I partnered with local advocacy organizations to represent survivors of domestic abuse and sexual assault in a wide variety of court proceedings. In April 2010, I was promoted to Lead Family Law attorney for the Southeast Region and supervised a team of attorneys and paralegals in addition to carrying a caseload. During my time at SMRLS I had the opportunity to assist in authoring 2 amicus briefs to the Minnesota Supreme Court, authored several Minnesota Court of Appeals briefs, and argued multiple times before panels of the Minnesota Court of Appeals achieving successful results for our clients.

I am currently an Assistant Dodge County Attorney. I have been at the Dodge County Attorney's Office for almost 11 years (November 2015 – present).

I handle all civil litigation for the county including CHIPS, paternity, child support, guardianship and conservatorship, civil commitment, and civil forfeiture matters. I review, edit and sign pleadings and draft proposed orders. I consult with and advise county staff on legal matters. I participate as a member of the Family Dependency Treatment / Adult Drug Court team during weekly staffing and court sessions. I provide legal advice to Minnesota Prairie County Alliance during daily MDT (multi-disciplinary team) child protection report screening, child & family services court consults, CornerHouse interviews, and adult MDT screening. I manage the Dodge County Attendance Review Board (ARB) process for truant students, including facilitating ARB meetings, following

up with school personnel, and communicating with students and their families who appear before the ARB.

I have helped with criminal coverage throughout my 10+ years at Dodge County when we were between criminal attorneys. During 2 smaller gaps of time in 2019 (approximately 3 months) and 2023 (approximately 2 months), I handled both my civil caseload and the criminal caseload. I have additionally provided coverage when other attorneys have been out of the office due to illness, vacations, trainings, etc. I have consulted with law enforcement on cases, drafted and signed complaints, handled bail and sentencing hearings as well as a court trial, negotiated plea agreements, and reviewed Riverside requests (applications for judicial determination of probable cause to detain individuals) on the weekends.

I established the Dodge County Attendance Review Board (ARB). This year is the 11th year it has been in place and over the first 10 years we have had 224 referrals to the ARB and reduced the number of truancy petitions filed in Dodge County.

I have been active in the Minnesota County Attorney's Association and presented multiple trainings on child support, child protection, and ethics.

I was appointed to the Minnesota Guardian ad Litem Board in January 2017 and served until December 2025. I was chair of the Board from 2018 until December 2024.

I am a current member of the 3rd Judicial District Committee for Equity and Justice.

Experience – I have almost 2 decades of legal experience, and over a decade of experience in the Dodge County Attorney's Office. In that time, I have touched almost every type of work our office does and have extensive experience advocating for victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault.

Connections – I have worked not only in Dodge County, but in our neighboring counties. I have worked with local advocacy organizations, our local schools, human services, law enforcement, and other county attorney offices. I participate in our local bar association, am an active member of the Minnesota County Attorneys Association and serve on the 3rd Judicial District Committee for Equity and Justice.

Leadership – I led the creation of our Atten-

dance Review Board and have facilitated it with our local schools for over 10 years. I was appointed to the state Guardian ad Litem Board and served as chair for 8 years. During the time I chaired the state GAL Board we successfully advocated for increased pay and staffing levels for the program.

2027 will be the first year the office has had a full-time elected county attorney. The needs of the office under our new structure must be assessed – will a full-time elected plus two full-time assistants and two paralegals be sufficient for our needs, or is any additional staffing needed? Will caseload responsibilities need to be shifted amongst staff?

Beyond that, I will ensure that our staff is able to attend training so that we can serve the citizens of Dodge County and work effectively with other departments and community partners. I intend to participate and will encourage other staff to participate in the Minnesota County Attorneys Association so that our county's voice is heard when new legislation affecting our duties and community is being considered.

I have lived in or around Dodge County for most of my life. My family lives here. I graduated from school here.

I have almost 20 years of experience as a lawyer in southeastern Minnesota including almost 11 years in the Dodge County Attorney's Office. I have experience as a supervisor and served on a statewide board responsible for overseeing a program budget.

I come into contact with people experiencing significant challenges in their life – primarily mental illness or substance use disorders. I am inspired by the individuals who take advantage of services we offer, make changes in their lives, and overcome those challenges. This is particularly true of people who participate in our treatment court. I am so proud of seeing parents who have completed our family treatment court in the community, working, raising their kids, going back to school, buying homes, etc.

Cases aren't just numbers. Every case is a family or individual whose lives we impact. The majority of people we serve are Dodge County residents and will continue to reside in Dodge County. The more lives we can positively impact through our work, the better off our community will be.



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Two Vie For Dodge County Attorney Position

Kailee Thompson, candidate for Dodge County Attorney

(continued from page 1)

The three of us love to rock climb and travel together. The boys ski/snowboard and fish any chance they get. And last, but certainly not least, I have the fluffiest pup, Teddy and a Bengal cat, Fred.

After high school, I attended Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee for two years. During Spring semester 2016, I studied for six months in Sydney, Australia. Upon my return home, I transferred to the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities for my junior and senior year of undergrad, where I graduated in Spring of 2018 with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology. I started law school Fall of 2018 at Mitchell Hamline School of Law in St. Paul (formerly William Mitchell Law School). I graduated with my J.D. in January 2021 and took the Bar Exam in February of 2021. During my time At Mitchell Hamline, I served as president of the Criminal Law Society beginning Fall 2019 until Covid-19 hit in

2020. I was also a fellow for World Without Genocide where I gave presentations on the International Criminal Court. During the summer of 2019, I studied with Creighton School of Law in Nuremberg, Germany, where I studied International Criminal Law and the impact of the Nuremberg Trials on international courts.

I started working when I was 16 years old at Donald's Uniforms in St. Paul. I held a variety of positions throughout college, but my first legal job was as a legal intern at Johnson Brother's Liquor Company. I worked as a legal intern there for several years during my summers home and while attending the U of M. During my first year of law school, I accepted a position as a student attorney with the Dakota County Attorney's Office in their child support division and accepted a second job as a law clerk for private criminal defense attorney, Rich Ohlenberg. I then left the Dakota County Attorney's Office and joined the First Judicial District Public Defender's Office. I remained with Attorney Ohlenberg and the public defender's office until completing the Bar Exam. Shortly after taking the Bar Exam, I accepted position as a law clerk for the Honorable Robert Friday in St. Louis County – Virginia, Minnesota and I moved to Duluth, MN. I drafted orders, assisted the judge with trials, researched complex legal issues, and was part of the first case in Minnesota to use reverse DNA testing to identify a suspect in a cold case murder. While clerking, I officially became licensed to practice

law and was ready to start my career in a different role in the courtroom - as an attorney. I accepted a position as an Associate Attorney at Kans Law Firm, a criminal defense firm. While there, many of my cases were DWIs. I had roughly 200 cases that I handled myself.

I am currently an Assistant Dodge County Attorney at the Dodge County Attorney's Office handling the criminal case load. I have held this position for 3.5 years.

I prosecute all levels of criminal cases including petty misdemeanors (traffic), juveniles, misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors, and felonies. This includes charging cases referred by law enforcement agencies, appearing in court, responding to legal challenges, and going to trial. I communicate with victims of crimes and work with victim services, gather restitution requests, present evidence, negotiate appropriate plea deals, handle competency hearings, and draft motions when necessary. On the weekends, I am on call to sign necessary documents when someone is arrested to comply with the law and the defendant's constitutional rights. Additionally, I lead the Dodge County Task Force meeting, which brings together agency partners quarterly, including law enforcement, social services, probation, the courts/court administration, commissioners, school officials, drug court, and more. The goal is to update each other on news within each agency or address concerns that may have come up. It also is an opportunity to learn what needs exist in the community and how we can address those needs. I serve on the Dodge County Safety Committee as the County Attorney's Office representative. Every day is a different day that brings on new challenges.

In my 3.5 years, I have increased the number of trials within Dodge County. I do not simply give plea deals I do not believe in simply to avoid trial. I also helped reframe victim services, which created an individual advocate for criminal sexual conduct and similar cases and more closely aligns with Minnesota's statutes. I also lead the Dodge County Task Force. Task force is where I first introduced "Big Ideas," a mobile learning lab that uses VR technology to teach trade skills. In fall 2025, students from the four high schools in the county got to participate, as well as probationers/drug court participants.

Employers within the county also took part, setting up booths to answer questions about the company, career, and job openings.

While I am also proud of the trials I have won, I do not mention specific cases out of respect for the victims.

Criminal cases are the majority of cases in Dodge County. Being knowledgeable in how to handle these matters, whether a petty traffic ticket or a major felony, at all stages of the case, is essential. I also have strong relationships with agency partners, which has created a level of trust. I am not afraid of hard work and finding a solution when a problem presents itself. Beyond just what the work entails, I am very personable. I like meeting people and learning about others. Overall, I work hard, I am tough, but I am also a person you can chat with when we run into each other on the street.

I want to continue to search for and bring more resources to the community that foster success for residents of Dodge. By relying on resources in surrounding, larger counties, we are creating an additional barrier for juveniles, families, and the general public. In the same regard, I want to create more transparency between the criminal justice system and the community. While there are many changes I would like to make in the criminal justice system, some of the decisions I make are rooted in law and require changes at a legislative level, which is possible with public support.

It is not the number of years you serve, but what you do in the years you have. I believe during my time in Dodge, I have made a positive impact beyond just the courtroom. While I may not be from the area, I have engrained myself in the community and built relationships that are important to the work. If I can do all what I have already mentioned in just 3.5 years as the criminal prosecutor, imagine what I can do in the future as County Attorney. I find solutions, lead when required, and learn where necessary.

I am not running for County Attorney because it is a step up on my career ladder. I am running because I love this community. I have found a home here and take pride in the work I do every single day. Dodge County is so unique in ways that people do not realize. My job is not an assembly line, doing the same thing every single day or treating each case the same. Most people who come through the court system that live in this community will also return to the community, whether immediately, or after treatment, or after a jail/prison stay. So, I must take the steps necessary to ensure that when the person reenters the community, parameters are in place for them to be a successful and contributing member for the safety of others around them. This is why it is important to have resources available that address the unique problems of Dodge, rather than getting grouped in with larger surrounding counties. I also get to be a voice for victims. Victims are meeting me at probably one of the worst times in his/her life, having experienced something they wished they had not. That is something I do not take lightly. I take pride in the little details of the job that make a big difference.

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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 communi-

cate. 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.



Larry's Fridge & Fundraiser

(continued from page 1)

Items such as non-perishable food, canned goods, boxed meals and pantry staples. Fresh produce from your garden is welcome also. Other items such as toiletries, household needs, soap, shampoo, toilet paper and cleaning supplies. With cold weather coming there is also a need for coats, hats, boots, mittens or gloves, in new or gently used condition and all sizes.

A fundraiser community soup supper is being planned for October 5th from 4 to 7pm at the Claremont American Legion. A choice of soup, homemade dinner rolls with butter and a delicious dessert bar.

LARRY'S FRIDGE FUNDRAISER

Neighbors Helping Neighbors!

This autumn, there are three ways you can support your neighbors; by donating to our town-wide collection, joining us for a community dinner, or helping by volunteering!

DONATIONS

Boxes will be set up at local businesses

Non-perishable food, canned goods, boxed meals, and pantry staples. Home garden surplus: Fresh produce from your extra harvest. Also needed,

Toiletries & household needs: Soap, shampoo, toilet paper, and cleaning supplies. Winter gear: Such as coats, hats, boots, mittens/gloves in new/gently used condition. All sizes are needed for children, babies, and adults.

FUNDRAISER

Community Soup Supper

When: October 5th, 4 PM TO 7 PM

Where: The American Legion

What: A free-will donation supper featuring your choice of two comforting soups, homemade dinner rolls with butter, and a delicious dessert bar.

***The donation store will have items available for people to take during this event. Items can be donated at 211 Elm St. (front porch deck box) or donation boxes at local businesses.

Contact:
Jamie Sultze
507-213-1331
j.sultze1@gmail.com

Contact:
Cindy Johnson
507-363-1866
cindy.johnson27@outlook.com

FOOD SHELF MANAGER

Semcac is currently accepting applications for a Food Shelf Manager, 24 hours per week, at the Kasson Contact Center.

Must be able to multi-task, complete paperwork, lift and stock items, do food rescue and provide support to clients.

A positive attitude, networking with community organizations and groups, working with volunteers, and computer skills required.

Applications and more information available at www.semcac.org, or by contacting Robyn Steffens at robyn.steffens@semcac.org or 507-864-8272.

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Big Iron Classic

September 17, 2026

- DODGE CENTER, CLAREMONT, WEST CONCORD, KASSON, MANTORVILLE, HAYFIELD MESSENGER -

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Fall & Winter Exercise Classes

Begins Sept. 2

Monday, Wednesday & Friday
8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.
Historical Society Gym
\$1 suggested donation per class

No- to low-impact exercise
Chair exercises, stretching, flexibility, toning & balance
Bring a water bottle, swim-size towel, and light hand weights if you'd like
No class on Sept. 7, 21, 23, and 25

Questions: Karen Johnson – 319-239-4639
Exercise at your own level, effort, and ability.

City of West Concord MINNESOTA
West Concord Public Library
Books - People - A Stronger Community

More than books. A brighter tomorrow.

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Library Assistant

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Evenings & Saturdays

Help patrons, support programs & events, and assist with daily library operations.

No previous experience required

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Libraries build stronger communities.

5th ANNUAL Oktoberfest 2026

Saturday, September 19th
3:00 - 7:30 pm
Under the Tent at the West Concord Muni
124 Main Street, West Concord, Minnesota

- Visit and snap a picture with our "Bavarian" Llamas! Watch them complete an obstacle course. Llama photos Available 4 - 7pm.
- Check your strength at the Strongman Challenge Sponsored by Kratos Athletic Center. Challenges held throughout the event.
- Join in on the Beer Run at 5pm and win prizes!
- Coloring Pages for the kids Sponsored by Ready Set Learn of Dodge County!
- Come in your German costume - contest judging at 6pm! Prizes for 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place, both Men & Women
- Drink Specials & More

Purchase a Limited Edition Mug for \$20 and Draft Beer Refills are \$5 during event

Featuring Live Music by:

The Dan Stursa Band

The West Concord American Legion will be serving Brats, Kraut, German Potato Salad or Chips and non-alcohol drink for \$12 (4-7pm)

WEST CONCORD PUBLIC LIBRARY PRESENTS

GHOST TOWNS OF SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA

FREE AND OPEN TO ALL AGES

with MN Project Get Outdoors

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2026 at 6:00 PM

WEST CONCORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

180 MAIN STREET
WEST CONCORD, MN 55985

507-527-2668

Find more library events in the SELCO region at legacy.selco.info/calendar



Water & Sewer Utility Billing Reminder

The City of West Concord is encouraging residents to sign up to receive their monthly water and sewer utility bills by email. With ongoing postal delivery issues and increasing postage costs, email billing provides a faster and more reliable way to receive your bill each month.



Residents are also encouraged to make payments online at
<https://westconcordmn.payacp.com/home>.

As a reminder, utility bills are due by the 21st of each month. Payments received after the due date are subject to late fees. To sign up for email billing or if you have questions about your account, contact Beth at City Hall at 507-527-2668 or email accounting@westconcordmn.com.

City of West Concord Upcoming Events

- Thursday, September 17th** – City Council Meeting at 7:00 pm
- Saturday, September 19th** – OktoberFest at the Muni, 3:00–7:30 pm
- Monday, October 5th** – EDA Meeting at 6:15 pm
- October 8th** – Community Health Event at 6:00 pm
- October 10th** – TwigFest at the Muni at 6:00 pm
- October 15th** – City Council Meeting at 7:00 pm
- October 24th** – WCAF Gala at 4:00 pm

Watch for more details on each event.

For up-to-date information from the City of West Concord visit
www.westconcordmn.com



COMMUNITY HEALTH CONVERSATION

Understanding Substance Abuse & Mental Health

Free community education event with time for Q&A.

- October 8**
- 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM**
- Bell Tower Center**
401 Main St, West Concord, MN
- Free and open to the public**
- Q&A included**

FEATURED SPEAKER



Kate Hendrickson, LGSW, LADC

Kate Hendrickson is a Licensed Graduate Social Worker and Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor at Spero in Owatonna. She holds degrees from Gustavus Adolphus College and Winona State University and has spent the past 6 years supporting individuals as a mental health therapist and substance use disorder counselor. Kate specializes in helping individuals facing mental health and substance use challenges, including co-occurring disorders and justice-system involvement.

Community Health Education

This event was made possible by a grant from Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation.

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

West Concord AREA FOUNDATION

an affiliate fund of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

1ST ANNUAL Gala

COMMUNITY. CONNECTION. IMPACT.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2026
BELL TOWER CENTER
 401 Main Street, West Concord, MN

Join us as we celebrate our community, recognize local non-profits, and invest in a stronger West Concord—together.

NO COST TO ATTEND!
Family Friendly

DOORS OPEN
AT 4:00 PM
Family Friendly
No Cost to Attend!

CASH BAR
Enjoy a drink and connect with friends and neighbors.

PIE BAKE-OFF CONTEST / FUNDRAISER
Taste, vote, and support a great cause!

5:00 PM
Introduction to the WCAF

GRANT AWARDS CEREMONY
Honoring local non-profits making a difference.

ENTERTAINMENT & GAMES
Fun for all ages—especially the kids!

Together, we grow. Strengthening West Concord today and for generations to come.

WCAFoundation@smifoundation.org | smifoundation.org/westconcordareafoundation/

West Concord Area Foundation

an affiliate fund of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

Pie Bake-Off Contest Fundraiser

Part of the West Concord Area Foundation 1st Annual Gala

BRING TWO (2) OF THE SAME PIES TO ENTER

FREE TO ENTER

JUDGED ON APPEARANCE, TASTE, & CREATIVITY

Judges Choice

People's Choice:
Vote for your favorite pie with a cash donation to the foundation.

Awards will be 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place ribbons and certificates for bragging rights!

PIES DROPPED OFF AT THE BELL TOWER CENTER (401 Main Street)
BY 4:00 PM, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2026

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Mantorville Marigold Days

September 17, 2026

- DODGE CENTER, CLAREMONT, WEST CONCORD, KASSON, MANTORVILLE, HAYFIELD MESSENGER -

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Quilt show at the Opera House



Shoppers strolling through the flea market



Marigold Day royalty on the Mantorville float

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• Appetizers provided • Cash bar available • \$25 per person •

Dress the Part! (optional) Come dressed in your favorite 1950's or 1960's attire for a chance to win our Best Costume Award!

Saturday, September 26
4:00-7:00 p.m.

West Concord Historical Society
800 West First Street
West Concord, MN 55985

To make reservations, please send \$25.00 per person to: West Concord Historical Society, Box 58, West Concord, MN 55985 by no later than Friday, September 11 or stop by the WCHS office to make a reservation. Reservations are non-refundable.

Name(s) _____
Phone # _____
☐ I can't attend, but I would like to donate: \$ _____

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 507-527-2628

Mantorville Marigold Days



Local favorite food truck Taco Express



The K-M Lions serving their cheeseburgers



On Saturday Backup Sound System entertained at noon



On Sunday Striker was on stage with rock classics



Dodge County Sheriff Scott Rose spoke at the Field of Flags ceremony



The Rochester Caledonian bagpipe band performed a tribute to firefighters at the parade

Mantorville Marigold Days

September 17, 2026

- DODGE CENTER, CLAREMONT, WEST CONCORD, KASSON, MANTORVILLE, HAYFIELD MESSENGER -

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A restored 1973 Allis Chalmers 160 diesel in the parade



A six hitch team pulling a wagon in the parade



Miriam, Moses and a crocodile on the Nile



Looks like a customized early 1980's El Camino



1969 Pontiac Judge in original form



Miss Mantorville girls handing out trophies at the car show Sunday

Share Your Good News!

Submit your engagement, wedding or birth announcement.

Email: hometownmessenger@gmail.com

A black and white photograph of a sign that says "JUST MARRIED". The sign is white with black lettering and is hanging from a string.

Instant Music Classes for Hopelessly Busy People

Would you like to learn to play an instrument like the piano, guitar, or ukulele, but you just cannot seem to find the time? Are you intimidated by the idea of taking private lessons, but you still want to learn to play? If this sounds like you, then check out the classes being offered by Craig Coffman at Triton Community Education.

Coffman teaches what he calls "Instant Music Classes." These are crash courses for absolute beginners on the piano, guitar, or ukulele. Each class is a One-time seminar designed for an absolute beginner and will get you started playing your instrument right away at a simple level. Getting started is half the battle, and that is what these courses are designed to do so you can get you started.

Each class is partly hands-on instruction and partly lecture/demonstration. Students take the class online using zoom and then continue their learning on their own using Coffman's online book and online recorded follow-up lessons. The classes are designed primarily for busy adults, but students as young as thirteen are welcome to attend.

Coffman has taught his Instant Music Classes for over 33 years at colleges and community education programs all over the

USA. Over 33,000 students have attended and are glad they did. He promises that students who attend an Instant Music class will leave the class being able to play simple songs right away at a simple level on their chosen instrument.

Students LOVE taking the class online as they get to sit at home using their own instrument as they take the class. And because of the use of the mute setting, no one gets put on the spot. YOU DON'T HAVE TO PLAY IN FRONT OF OTHER STUDENTS!

The class includes a recording of the class

along with an online book and online follow up lessons. An optional monthly question and answer session is also available at no added charge.

To register for a class (which is very affordable) contact Triton Community Education at 507-418-7550 If there is no answer, please email chordsarekey@gmail.com.

THERE'S A REASON WHY THEY CALL IT "PLAYING THE PIANO, GUITAR OR UKULELE".

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE FUN!

Dodge Center Foundation Seeks Grant Applications

The DODGE CENTER FOUNDATION is a non-profit organization established to serve the greater Dodge Center community by providing leadership and funding to qualified projects that enhance the quality of life for area residents. The Dodge Center Foundation promotes philanthropy and raises funds to meet these goals.

Local organizations interested in seeking funding from the Dodge Center Foundation should fill out a Grant Application and submit it to the Dodge Center Foundation's Secretary, Diane Page, at dpageno2@gmail.com. Or mail the completed application to the Foundation at P.O. Box 276, Dodge Center, MN 55927. The deadline is September 21, 2026. Grant Application forms may be picked up at Dodge Center City Hall, 35 East Main St., Dodge Center, MN 55927.

The Dodge Center Foundation only funds projects that meet requirements of community development, such as maintaining or creating community assets in areas such as recreation, arts, education or personal health. The Board of Trustees of the Dodge County Foundation would like to encourage all organizations interested to submit an application for consideration.



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Phone: 507-732-7614
Email: kalassagency@kalassagency.com

Sviggum Agency

133 Main Street
Wanamingo
Phone: 507-824-5105
Email: agent@svigguminsurance.com

Insurance Brokers of Byron

505 Frontage Rd NE
Byron MN 55920
Phone: 507-775-7280
Email: a.sanders@insurancebrokersmn.com

North Risk Partners Rochester

2048 Superior Drive, Suite 100
Rochester, MN
Phone: 507-288-7600
Email: jesse.stenke@northriskpartners.com

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Harold's CLUB

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Dodge Center
507-374-9425



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SATURDAY
SEPT
26
2026

CELEBRATE WITH A FALL FESTIVAL
FUNDRAISER FOR A NEW AMBULANCE AND ALS EQUIPMENT

EVENT SCHEDULE

- 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM
CAR SHOW
• Registration 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM
• Awards 12:30 PM
@ Main Street
- 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
DODGE CENTER ALS INTERCEPT CAR
@ the Car Show
- 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
VENDORS
@ the Ambulance Station
- 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM
KIDS GAMES & ACTIVITIES
@ the Ambulance Station
- 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM
BENEATH THE BADGE BOOK SIGNING
Dave & Christi Dyke
@ the Ambulance Station
- 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM
MEAL
FREE WILL DONATION
PULLED PORK / HOT DOGS
@ the Fire Hall
- ALL DAY
MEET THE CREW
@ the Ambulance Station



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Eat
Sauerkraut
for
Good Health!



By Shauna Burshem, D.C.

The Wonders of Sauerkraut: When it comes to supporting your body from the inside out, sauerkraut is one of those humble foods that quietly does a lot of good. Its biggest gift lives in raw, unpasteurized versions, which are loaded with live probiotics. These friendly bacteria help balance your gut flora, and that matters more than most people realize. The fermentation process also breaks down fibers and natural sugars, so your body can absorb nutrients far more easily. Add in the active enzymes that support your gastrointestinal function, and you have a food that genuinely helps digestion run smoothly. On top of that, sauerkraut delivers a solid dose of vitamin C, vita-

min K1, and iron, giving your body real nutritional value with every bite. Since a healthy gut microbiome strengthens your natural barrier against harmful pathogens, this simple fermented cabbage becomes a quiet ally for your immune defenses too. And here is the part I love: it offers plenty of dietary fiber with very few calories, so you get all these benefits without the guilt.

The good news does not stop at digestion and immunity. Sauerkraut contains vitamin K2, which plays a fascinating role in directing calcium into your bones rather than letting it settle into soft arterial tissues, supporting both bone strength and heart wellness. It also delivers antioxidants that help combat cellular damage and reduce inflammation, something anyone focused on holistic health can appreciate. If you want to enjoy the full range of these advantages, reach for the refrigerated, unpasteurized options, since those preserve the live probiotic cultures that pasteurized versions lose. Just keep one thing in mind: fermented cabbage can be high in sodium, so enjoy it thoughtfully as part of your overall wellness routine. A little goes a long way toward feeling your best!

Chiropractic care for neck and back pain: If you have been living with neck or back pain, you already know how much it can steal from your day. Chiropractic care offers a natural path to relief by focusing on the root of the problem rather than just masking it. When the bones of your spine become stuck or shift out of their proper position, they can irritate nearby nerves and create real discomfort. Through gentle, precise adjustments, a chiropractor helps guide those joints back

into alignment. Many patients feel a noticeable difference after just a few visits, and the beauty of it is that your body does much of the healing on its own once the pressure is eased.

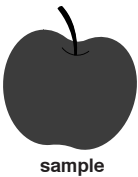
Pain relief is wonderful, but the real gift is getting your life back in motion. When your spine is aligned and your joints move the way they should, everyday activities become easier, whether that is picking up your kids, hitting the gym, or simply turning your head to check your blind spot while driving. Over time, consistent care helps restore mobility and supports long-term function, so you are not just feeling better today but building a stronger foundation for the years ahead. Think of it like tuning an instrument: small, regular adjustments keep everything working in harmony, helping you stay active and com-

fortable.

What draws so many people to chiropractic care is that it is a safe, drug-free approach that treats you as a whole person, not just a set of symptoms. Instead of reaching for medication that only covers up the pain, chiropractic focuses on helping your body heal naturally and function at its best. Your care can include posture guidance, stretches, and wellness habits that prevent problems from creeping back in. Suitable for all ages and gentle enough for the whole family, this holistic approach is about more than easing neck and back pain today. It is about supporting your overall wellness and keeping you feeling your best for the long run.

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

FIND and DINE



Find the apple hidden somewhere in The Messenger this week and enter for a chance to win a gift card to a local restaurant.

E-mail the page the flag is on, along with your address to: messengerdrawing@gmail.com

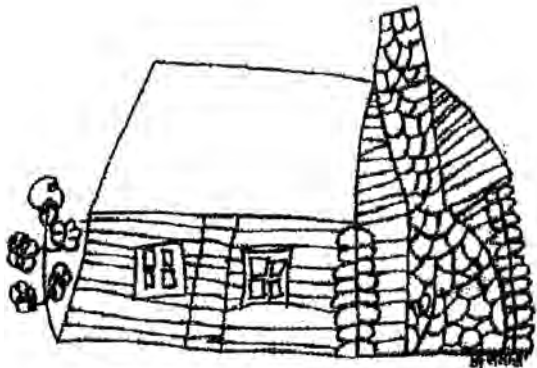


The winner for this week is JUDY QUIMBY of West Concord, MN!

Harvest Thyme
Craft Show

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

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An Inconvenient Study



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist

Science is a powerful tool. A tool can be used for good, or it can be used improperly, which can result in significant harm. True science is the observation of causes and reactions in a controlled setting, or in a setting carefully described to understand probable cause. We have grown up in the age of science. We are familiar with the idea of looking for clues as we watch our favorite detective shows and murder mysteries on TV. However, many of us do not take the time to look for clues ourselves, but we trust others to tell us what the evidence is. There is no shame in asking

questions. When evidence is presented, questions should be asked, just like questions are asked in TV shows. When it comes to science and your body, you need to be the one to ask the questions.

Questions have been asked for many years regarding the effectiveness of vaccinations. To evaluate the evidence, the United States government established the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS) (<https://vaers.hhs.gov/>) in 1990 as a database for reporting adverse events directly related to a vaccination. Since 1990, more than 2.5 million adverse events have been reported. This number of adverse events certainly justify asking questions, but how to answer those questions is more challenging.

The gold standard, or “ideal” situation, for scientific study is to have a control group and a test group. In asking the question, “Is this vaccine safe to give to a child?” – how do you have a control group and a test group? Would a parent volunteer their child to be the test subject of an untested substance? Typically, the answer is “no.” So, how do we evaluate the safety of a vaccine? Since vaccines have been around for more than 50 years, there are records that can help bring clarity to this question. Those documents are now becoming part of public record.

A new documentary titled “An Inconvenient Study,” (available on YouTube) presents the recent history of an important research project designed to evaluate the safety of childhood vaccinations. The study completed by the Henry Ford Health Systems of

Michigan reviewed the health history of 18,000 children. Sixteen thousand were vaccinated and two thousand were unvaccinated. The results showed a 250% increased risk of chronic health problems among vaccinated children compared to unvaccinated children.

The complete study was published on the US Senate website by Senator Ron Johnson because the original researchers were not willing to publish the results. This documentary provides access to the resources for each of us to be able to ask more questions.

In a follow-up podcast (<https://www.westonaprice.org/podcast/>) #555, Del Bigtree noted there are additional studies that have been done that show increased risk related to vaccinations. A 2017 science article authored by Mawson evaluated vaccinated vs. unvaccinated children in Mississippi and found increased rates of chronic illness among the vaccinated. Another study authored by Lyons-Weiler in 2020 looked at children in Oregon and those who were vaccinated had more doctor visits and illness compared to those unvaccinated. Another 2020 study authored by Hooker and Miller observed increased risk for asthma, ear infections, or developmental delay with increased number of vaccinations received. Science is providing an answer to the question, “Is this vaccine safe to give to a child?” The answer raises even more questions and a lot of intense emotions.

Another important question to ask is, “What additional ways can I help my child have a strong immune system and be as healthy as possible?” Nutrition is designed to support a healthy body. The immune system cannot do its job without the right vitamins and minerals. A vaccination never provides vitamins and minerals to help the immune system get stronger. When you feed the body what it needs to grow strong and respond quickly, then you will have less illness and chronic disease. While this article focused on the impact of vaccinations on children, the same question must be asked about vaccinations at any age. There is no shame in asking questions.

As a nutrition specialist, I can help you learn how to strengthen your immune system using the whole foods and vitamins your body needs. Finding the resources for true health can be located right in your local grocery store. Contact me to discuss your health goals for the coming year. A No Charge Consultation is available for you to ask your questions and begin to get some answers. Nutrition is designed for healing. Contact me at nutritionproportion@gmail.com, or check out my website at www.nutritionproportion.net.

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



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Chili's: 10% off (55+)
Denny's: 10% off, 20% off for AARP members (55 +)
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Subway: 10% off (60+)
Taco Bell: 5% off; free beverages for seniors (65+)
Wendy's: 10% off (55 +)
White Castle: 10% off (62+)

RETAIL & APPAREL:

Belk's: 15% off first Tuesday of every month (55 +)
Big Lots: 30% off
Dress Barn: 20% off (55+)
Goodwill: 10% off one day a week (date varies by location)
Hallmark: 10% off one day a week (date varies by location)
Kmart: 40% off (Wednesdays only) (50+)
Kohl's: 15% off (60+)
Michael's: 10% off everyday (55+)
Rite Aid: 10% off on Tuesdays & 10% off prescriptions
Salvation Army Thrift Stores: up to 50% off (55+)

GROCERY:

Food Lion: 60% off every Monday (60+)
Great Valu Food Store: 5% off every Tuesday (60+)
Hy-Vee: 5% off one day a week (date varies by location)
Kroger: 10% off (date varies by location)
Publix: 15% off every Wednesday (55 +)

TRAVEL:

Amtrak: 15% off (62+)
Bus: Greyhound: 15% off (62+)

Car Rental:

Alamo Car Rental: up to 25% off for AARP members
Avis: up to 25% off for AARP members
Budget Rental Cars: 40% off; up to 50% off for AARP members (50+)
Dollar Rent-A-Car: 10% off (50+) Enterprise Rent-A-Car: 5% off for AARP members
Hertz: up to 25% off for AARP members
National Rent-A-Car: up to 30% off for AARP members

Overnight Accommodations:

Holiday Inn: 20-40% off depending on location (62+)
Best Western: 40% off (55+)
Comfort Inn: 20%-30% off (60+)
Comfort Suites: 20%-30% off (60+)
Econo Lodge: 40% off (60+)
Hampton Inns & Suites: 40% off when booked 72 hours in advance
Hyatt Hotels: 25%-50% off (62+)
Marriott Hotels: 25% off (62+)
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ACTIVITIES & ENTERTAINMENT:

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Supercuts: \$8 off haircuts (60+)

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The Infrastructure Behind Rural Neighborhoods



**By Benya Kraus
President & CEO Southern
Minnesota Initiative
Foundation**

One of the greatest advantages of living in a rural community is the opportunity to truly know your neighbors.

Not in a vague or nostalgic sense, but in a tangible, human way. These are the people you see at the park, the ballfield, the library, the lake, the school concert and the community celebration. They're the people who show up when there's a need, volunteer for local causes and invest their time in making their hometown stronger.

Those relationships are one of southern Minnesota's greatest assets. But they don't happen by accident. They require two kinds of infrastructure: physical infrastructure and relational infrastructure.

Physical infrastructure is easy to see. It's the playground, community center, beach, childcare facility or local coffee shop. Relational infrastructure is less visible, but just as important. It's the trust, connections, sense of belonging and civic engagement that grow when people have places to gather and opportunities to connect. At Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), we've long recognized that strong communities need both.

That's what makes both the Taylor Rural Improvements and Taylor Rural Childcare Grants unique. Funding for capital projects is often one of the hardest resources for rural communities to secure. Roofs need replacing. Buildings need renovating. Public spaces need updating. These projects are essential, but they're often difficult to fund through traditional sources. Thanks to Glen Taylor's visionary investment in southern Minnesota, SMIF has been able to help communities build and improve the physical spaces that allow social connections to flourish. In fact, this year's Taylor Rural Improvements Grant is focused exclusively on community gathering spaces. Three years after Glen Taylor established this charitable legacy, we're already seeing the results.

In Goodview, Taylor funding helped improve the city's beach area. On paper, it's a capital improvement project. In reality, it's an investment in countless moments of connection: grandparents watching grandchildren



Kids playing at an improved beach area in Goodview thanks to a Taylor Rural Improvements Grant.

photo courtesy of the Klinger family

play, neighbors gathering on summer evenings and families creating memories together.

In the Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop area, funding supported a community resource bus that helps residents access services and connect with supports across communities. You can find the bus driving directly to where families gather, standing out on the roads thanks to a painted mural of their rural landscape designed by the student art club. The project meets practical needs, but it also strengthens relationships and ensures people remain connected to the community around them.

These projects remind us that the most important outcome of physical infrastructure is often what happens within it. A gathering space is ultimately about gathering. A community facility is about community.

The same idea applies to childcare.

This fall, SMIF is accepting applications for both the Taylor Rural Improvements and Childcare Grants and our Early Care and Education Grants. While these programs support different kinds of investments, they share a common goal: strengthening the foundations of thriving communities.

Childcare facilities are physical infrastructure. The children and families they serve are relational infrastructure. When we invest in high-quality early care and education, we're helping young children develop the social and emotional skills that shape how they learn, build relationships and contribute to their communities. We're investing in future volunteers, caregivers, business owners, teachers and neighbors. In many ways, early childhood is where relational infrastructure begins.

The future of rural Minnesota will always depend on strong infrastructure. But some of our most important investments aren't measured in concrete, lumber or square footage. They're measured in relationships. When we invest in the places where people gather and in the children who will inherit our communities, we're strengthening both the physical and relational infrastructure that makes rural Minnesota special. And in doing so, we're preserving one of our region's greatest strengths: the ability to truly know our neighbors.

To learn more about these grants and to apply, visit smifoundation.org/grants/for-grant-seekers/. All three applications opened on September 8 and are due by October 6.

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

LEGAL NOTICE	01 Revenue Fund
	\$ 121,903.95
APPROVED MINUTES OF THE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONER’S MEETING	13 Road and Bridge Fund
AUGUST 25, 2026	\$ 107,301.32
STATE OF MINNESOTA COUNTY	16 Environmental Quality Fund
ADMINISTRATION OFFICE	\$ 30,091.59
COUNTY OF DODGE MANTORVILLE, MN	41 Ditch Fund
	\$ 2,450.00
	Total \$ 261,746.86
The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The following actions were approved:	* Signatures to resolution #2026-29 – WGA 4 Kids 50/50 Raffle Gambling Permit – Big Iron Truck Show.
* Agenda as presented.	* Out of state training for 3 Sheriff’s Office employees to attend 2026 ProPhoenix National User’s Conference 9-28-26 to 10-1-26 in Wisconsin as requested at a cost of approximately \$3,946.
* The following Consent Agenda items: 1.1, 1.2.	* Adjourning the meeting at 5:54 p.m.
* Signatures to resolution #2026-28 – Al-Corn Clean Fuel Resolution of Support for DEED Application.	This is a summary only. A complete set is available in the Administration Office at the Government Services Building in Mantorville, MN.
* The following personnel actions: A.1, A.2, A.3, B.1, C.1, D.1, E.1, E.2, F.1, F.2.	
* Payment of the following bills:	

CITY OF CLAREMONT CITY COUNCIL MEETING	Administrator Sorg asked for one addition to the agenda: the opening of a savings account to be placed under the Finance Committee reports. Motion to approve the agenda as amended made by Council Member K. Sultze and seconded by Council Member Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.
TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2026 7:00 P.M.	Public Input
Mayor Jared Sultze called the Regular City Council Meeting of the City of Claremont to order on Tuesday, August 4, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.	Nelson Pearson, candidate for Minnesota State Senate, introduced himself to the Council. He noted his prior service in the Minnesota State House representing Olmsted County and described his current district, which includes Dodge County and portions of Olmsted County. He encouraged residents and officials to reach out with any concerns where state government intersects with local government, and provided his contact information.
Present: Mayor Jared Sultze, Council Member Ethan Johnson, Council Member Donna Gregory, and Council Member Krystal Sultze. Absent: Council Member Debbie Ellis.	Bret Nordstrom, W. Front
Others present: City Administrator Elizabeth Sorg, City Attorney Mark Rahrlick, City Engineer Derek Olinger, Jamie Sultze, Nicholas Sultze, Lisa Martinez, Ed Krenke, Tracy Boyum, Elise Ness, Bret Nordstrom, and Tim Hudson.	
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.	
Approval of Agenda	

Street, expressed frustration regarding the proposed replacement of the city's snowplow truck. He argued that an employee's inability to operate the equipment is a personnel matter, not a justification for selling and replacing the truck. He also expressed a broader concern about the Council's willingness to accept public input and make changes accordingly.	businesses itself.
Tim Hudson, N. East Street, addressed several topics. He noted his presence at the recent budget workshop as the only member of the public and raised concerns about the proposed 6% tax levy, characterizing it as part of a pattern of annual tax increases without corresponding spending reductions. He echoed Mr. Nordstrom's concerns about the snowplow truck. He argued that city government should focus on creating incentives for private business rather than operating	Tracy Boyum, 4th Place, expressed concern about the accessibility of city records and the general openness of city government. She described feeling that requests for public information had been met with resistance and referenced a concern that she had been characterized as harassing a city employee for seeking information she believed she was legally entitled to as a taxpayer. She also lamented the lack of amenities in Claremont and suggested the city conduct a community survey to identify what residents want.
	A broader discussion followed between residents and council members about the perceived disconnect between the Council and the public. Mayor Jared Sultze acknowledged the issue and noted ongoing efforts, including exploratory conversations
	(continued on page 25)

Does Your Dog Have UTI Symptoms or Something Worse?

You and your dog might not agree about how many treats a day they should get. But you can certainly agree that urinary tract infections (UTI) are a pain. Urinary tract infections are uncomfortable at best, and downright dangerous at worst.

In most cases, these infections resolve with treatment and do not cause any lasting damage. In other cases, a dog’s supposed UTI symptoms could be indicative of more serious conditions, such as poisoning or cancer. Staying informed and educated about symptoms is important for any dog owner.

As with humans, a UTI in dogs refers to an infection of the urinary tract. The most common causes of UTIs in dogs are bacterial. In fact, bacterial urinary tract infections are the most commonly occurring infectious disease in dogs, period. Bacterial UTIs affect 14 percent of all dogs throughout their lifetimes. That means the odds are comparatively high that your dog could experience a UTI at some point in their life.

Most dogs get UTIs when normal skin and gastrointestinal (GI) tract flora get past the urinary tract’s defenses. These bacteria then colonize the urinary tract, leading to an infection. E. coli is the most common bacterial cause of UTIs, but several bacteria and even some fungi can cause infections.

Some factors could increase your dog’s risk of getting a UTI. Female dogs are more likely to get UTIs than males, but male dogs may still get them.

Some common UTI symptoms include:

- Bloody and/or cloudy urine
- Straining or whimpering during urination
- Accidents in the house
- Needing to be let outside more frequently
- Licking around the urinary opening
- Fever

Sometimes, however, dogs don’t show any symptoms of a UTI at all. In these instances, your veterinarian might discover the infection while testing for other things. For symptomatic dogs, these signs could point toward a possible UTI. However, there are some more serious conditions that your veterinarian will want to rule out first.

Urinary tract infections are serious enough on their own. If left untreated, they can lead to dysfunction of the lower urinary tract, kidney or bladder stones, inflammation of the prostate gland, infertility, blood poisoning, and even kidney infection and kidney failure. Likewise, some symptoms could be a sign of something far more serious than even a UTI.

One of the most alarming symptoms of a UTI is blood. If you think there is blood in your dog’s urine, contact your veterinarian immediately. While this could be a sign of a UTI, it also could be a sign of the following conditions:

- Poisoning
- Kidney disease
- Trauma
- Cancer
- Stones in the urinary tract

Certain types of rodent poison can lead to platelet breakdown, which can be fatal. The faster your dog is seen by a doctor, the better their prognosis. You can also check your dog for other symptoms of anemia, such as pale gums or dark, bloody stools.

Bloody urine could also be a sign of trauma. Car accidents, dog fights, or slight injuries don’t always leave obvious signs, but there could be internal damage to your dog’s organs.

Stones in the kidney, bladder, or elsewhere in the urinary tract are painful for your dog. They may also lead to scarring and even obstruction of your dog’s urethra, which is a veterinary emergency.

Difficulty urinating, or an inability to urinate, is a medical emergency. It can lead to a rupture in your dog’s bladder, and if left untreated can be fatal, so make sure you call your veterinarian immediately if you notice this symptom.

Your veterinarian is the person best equipped to deal with this dangerous situation. As with bloody urine, trauma and obstructions can be fatal if not treated, and scar tissue in the urinary tract could be the result of chronic urinary tract infections or other diseases.

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M-F 8am to 5pm; Sat. 8am to Noon

CLAREMONT CITY COUNCIL

(continued from page 24)

with a potential gas station developer and work on attracting a food and convenience type of business to town. Council Member Johnson reflected on feeling welcoming but sensing a gap he could not fully explain. Council Member Gregory mentioned that a presenter from the League of Minnesota Cities conference, a specialist in community dialogue and conflict facilitation, had expressed willingness to come to Claremont and work with the Council and community, which was received positively.

Approve the Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda, consisting of the Minutes of the July 7, 2026 Regular City Council Meeting and Resolution No. 26-16, was made by Council Member K. Sultze and seconded by Council Member Gregory. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports Finance Committee

Administrator Sorg pre-

sented a proposal to open a municipal savings account to generate interest on funds currently sitting idle in the city's checking account. She explained that when the levy is received there is money that could be earning interest until needed along with TIF funds sitting in the checking account. Moving \$300,000 into a savings account would earn better interest while remaining accessible for operational needs. Motion to open a savings account was made by Mayor Jared Sultze and seconded by Council Member K. Sultze. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve the financial reports was made by Council Member K. Sultze and seconded by Council Member Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.

Approve Payment of Bills

Motion to approve the payment of bills, including the added bills distributed at the meeting, was made by Council Member Johnson and seconded by Council Member K. Sultze. Motion carried unanimously.

Parks Committee

Council Member Johnson noted that the playground at

the park is low on mulch in the playground area and asked whether it could be replenished. The Council discussed timing and agreed to place the mulch replenishment on a future agenda, with a preference for addressing it in the spring. Discussion also touched on the status of the park pavilion, which has been delayed due to a personal matter involving the contractor.

City Attorney Mark Rahrack raised an item regarding the availability of trail grants, noting that the City of Medford recently received a grant for a pedestrian trail. He suggested exploring whether a similar grant might be available for Claremont and gave the Administrator a person to contact for information.

A discussion followed regarding Harmer Park and the issue of visitors to the park using a private driveway adjacent to the park to access the ball field. Mayor Jared Sultze proposed exploring the installation of a fence—potentially a chain link fence—to separate the driveway from the park. The Council agreed to obtain cost estimates for various fencing

options and bring the matter back the following month. Access for individuals with mobility limitations was also raised as a consideration, with some discussion of a gravel path to the bleacher area. Gregory wondered whether local volunteers could install the fence.

Personnel Committee

No report.

Planning and Zoning Committee

No report.

Public Health & Safety Committee (Health, Fire, Police, Weeds)

No report.

EDA

No report.

City Administrator

Administrator Sorg provided the following updates:

The city's domain name has been changed to cityofclaremontmn.gov to meet state naming requirements that distinguish municipalities from townships and other entities.

A local tree service was identified via security camera footage as having improperly dumped large tree stumps at the city's brush dump. The company was contacted and agreed to remove the oversized material.

Administrator Sorg and Maintenance Supervisor Casey Dahl met with Al-Corn's Project Engineer to discuss their ongoing modernization project and the possibility of connecting to the city's water and sewer system. The city requested information on anticipated water usage to assess capacity, and the matter remains in early exploratory stages.

A meeting is scheduled for next week with Council Member Gregory, Council Member K. Sultze, Administrator Sorg, and a chamber

representative to discuss the possibility of attracting a gas station to Claremont. No commitments have been made and this too is in the early exploratory stage.

The Public Health and Safety Committee will meet on the 18th to review the rental inspection procedures and develop recommendations for the Council.

City Attorney Mark Rahrack

No report.

Old Business Snowplow

Mayor Jared Sultze reiterated his position that the city should not purchase a new truck unless the existing one is sold and the replacement is funded by the proceeds of that sale. He noted that he had spoken with a city resident who indicated the current highway truck is manageable. Council Member Johnson reported that he had spoken with the same resident, who indicated he would be willing to work with current maintenance staff Casey Dahl and Richard Klindworth to practice maneuvering the large truck. Council Member Johnson also noted he had contacted a Bobcat dealership in Rochester about winter snow equipment rentals, which are billed by the hour, and was awaiting a quote for comparison purposes. The Council acknowledged that the primary challenge with the truck involves the side blade's interaction with tighter city streets during turning, and discussed the fact that the city can ask the township to use its grader for winging snow off the road. The consensus of the Council was to pursue training with former staff before considering any equipment changes. No motion

was made.

New Business

Rules of Decorum for City Council Meetings

Administrator Sorg presented a draft Rules of Decorum document based on League of Minnesota Cities guidelines. The document outlines expected conduct at city council meetings for both the public and council members. Council members discussed the document and noted it largely reflects existing practice, but puts expectations in writing for public clarity. Motion by Johnson to adopt the Rules of Decorum for City Council Meetings, seconded by Council Member K. Sultze. Motion carried unanimously.

LMC Insurance Renewal Liability Coverage Waiver

Administrator Sorg explained that as part of the city's annual insurance renewal, the city must elect whether to waive or not waive the monetary limits on municipal tort liability. She explained that not waiving the limits caps potential lawsuits at \$2,000,000, while waiving them would expose the city to liability in excess of that amount. She noted that the city has historically chosen not to waive the monetary limits and recommended continuing that practice. Motion by Council Member Johnson that the City does not waive the monetary limits on municipal tort liability, seconded by Council Member K. Sultze. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 26-17: Resolution Approving the Proposed 2027 Tax Levy and Proposed Budget

(continued on page 26)



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CLAREMONT CITY COUNCIL

(continued from page 25)

Council Member K. Sultze explained the procedural context: state law requires the city to submit a proposed levy by September 30, and the amount submitted acts as a ceiling—the final levy adopted in December may be equal to or lower than the proposed amount, but cannot exceed it. She expressed a preference for proposing 6% rather than 7%, noting the Council's intent to bring the final levy in below the 6%. At a 6% increase the total proposed 2027 tax levy would be \$597,493. Motion by Council Member Johnson to approve Resolution No. 26-17, setting a proposed 2027 tax levy with an increase of 6% (\$597,493) and approving the 2027 proposed budget, seconded by Council Member K. Sultze. Motion carried unanimously. A public hearing on the final budget will be scheduled for December 1st at the regular 7:00 p.m. city council meeting.

Council Member Ellis' LMC Learning Experience

Council Member Ellis was not present. This item was tabled.

Council Member Gregory's LMC Learning Experience

Council Member Gregory provided a summary of her attendance at the League of Minnesota Cities annual conference. Key sessions she attended included: Tim Shriver and the Dignity Index: An opening session focused on the concept of dignity in civic interactions. Council Member Gregory emphasized that the framework applies in both directions—council to citizens and citizens to council—and described it as a "full circle" model for respectful dialogue. Elections Presentation by Steve Simons: A session emphasizing the seriousness of election administration, with a strong message that complaints or concerns from any citizen will be prioritized for response. Successfully Managing a Disruptive Meeting:

Council Member Gregory attended this session twice and noted the presenter—the same dialogue specialist referenced earlier in the meeting—is willing to visit Claremont. Fraud Schemes: A session on identifying and preventing fraud. Green Step Cities: A session on low- and no-cost actions cities can take to support sustainability goals. Council Member Gregory also highlighted an additional conference session in which attendees from similarly sized cities (under 2,500 population) were grouped together to share experiences and best practices, which she found particularly valuable.

City Engineer Derek Olinger WWTF Mapping

City Engineer Olinger discussed the wastewater treatment facility mapping issue that had resulted in unexpectedly high costs during a recent water line repair project. Council Member Johnson summarized the situation: a contractor was hired for what was estimated as approxi-

mately a \$6,500 repair to a water line near the water treatment plant. When workers excavated at the location indicated on the existing maps, the pipe was not there. After several days of excavation and investigation, the line was eventually located in a substantially different location than what the plans showed, resulting in a final bill of over \$20,000. City Engineer Derek explained that discrepancies between design plans and actual field conditions are not uncommon in infrastructure projects. He noted that contractors are required to provide marked-up as-built plans at project completion showing any deviations from the original design, but that the quality and completeness of those submittals vary significantly. In this case, it appears the water service pipe was installed in a different location without that deviation being communicated or documented, and the engineering firm was therefore not aware of the change. Olinger acknowledged that the amount of time and cost associated with locating the pipe—multiple days rather than the typical matter of hours—was, in his words, "a pretty big red flag." He stated he could not

explain why the search took as long as it did without more information about what occurred on-site, and was careful not to attribute fault to the contractor without reviewing that record. City Attorney Rahrlick noted that the as-built plans are a contractual deliverable, and raised the question of the city's right to rely on them. He observed that the plans themselves include a disclaimer noting that information was "prepared in part by information provided by others." The Council discussed the practical limits of the city's recourse, given that the project dates to approximately 2004 and the bill has already been paid. Council members and members of the public in attendance expressed frustration at the cost borne by taxpayers and the difficulty of holding anyone accountable after such a long period of time. Olinger confirmed he would update the maps to reflect the actual location of the water line as now known. He also offered, going forward, to be engaged earlier in similar projects so that he could advise on scope and cost management in real time. The Council acknowledged the lesson learned and agreed that greater oversight of contractors and tighter

communication with the city engineer during future projects would be prudent. No formal motion was made.

Final Word

Tim Hudson followed up on the earlier public discussion about business development, asking whether the city maintains any record of businesses or individuals that have attempted to establish something in Claremont. He suggested that understanding why proposals are not advancing would be a useful first step.

Mayor Jared Sultze responded by describing efforts to recruit a gas station, including outreach to CHS and Casey's General Stores, and acknowledged the structural barriers: the cost of extending water and sewer infrastructure under the railroad tracks, the county road access requirements, and the fundamental challenge that prospective businesses cite insufficient population as a barrier to entry. He described the situation as a "vicious cycle" in which population growth is needed to attract amenities, and amenities are needed to attract population. He noted that a co-op model has been explored based on successful examples from

(continued on page 27)

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NOTICE OF HEARING ON CITY OF WEST CONCORD 2027 STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Notice is hereby given that the City Council of West Concord will meet in the council chambers at the Bell Tower Center, 401 Main Street of West Concord at 6:00p.m. on October 15, 2026 to consider making the proposed 2027 Street and Sidewalk Improvements on Main Street (CSAH 36) from Third Street to Front Street, on Front Street (CSAH 36) from Main Street to Concord Street (CSAH 24), on Third Street from Eugene Street to South Street, on First Street from Eugene Street to Southview Street, on Southview Street from First Street to State Street (TH 56), on all of Sterling Court east of First Street, and on all of Todd Court east of First Street, pursuant to Minn. Stat. §§ 429.011 to 429.111. The estimated cost of the improvement is \$716,868. A reasonable estimate of the impact of the assessment will be available at the hearing. Such persons as desire to be heard with reference to the proposed improvement will be heard at this meeting.



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CLAREMONT CITY COUNCIL

(continued from page 26)

other communities, and expressed hope that community members with ideas would bring them forward.

Tracy Boyum shared that she had contacted Casey's General Stores directly and they asked for a map identifying a site for the company's consideration. Administrator Sorg received the same email

and sent them the information they requested and they still said no.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Council Member K. Sultze to adjourn at 8:47 p.m., seconded by Council Member Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.

Elizabeth Sorg,
City Administrator
Jared Sultze, Mayor

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NOTICE of HEARING on PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT 6:00 PM, Monday, September 28, 2026 Dodge Center City Hall

To Whom It May Concern:

Notice is hereby given that the Dodge Center City Council will meet in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 35 East Main Street at 6:00 P.M. on Monday, September 28, 2026, to consider the reconstruction of the following streets: First Avenue NE between E Main Street and E Highway Street, pursuant to Minn. Stat. §§ 429.011 to 429.111. The estimated cost of the improvement is \$2,485,292.30. A reasonable estimate of the impact of the assessment will be available at the hearing. Such persons as desire to be heard with reference to the proposed improvement will be heard at this meeting.

You may address the City Council in writing with any questions you may have in the event you are unable to attend this hearing. You may also contact the City Administrator at 507-374-2575.

Thank you,

Lee Mattson
City Administrator

ORDER SETTING FORTH INITIAL DESCRIPTIONS AND SETTING HEARING DATE:

WHEREAS, the town board of Concord Township, Dodge County, Minnesota was presented a petition at its meeting on the 10th day of September, 2026 requesting the alteration of a road and a vacation of an alley;

WHEREAS, the petition contained a description of the road and alley, the names of the owners over which the road passes, the point of beginning, general course, and termination of the proposed road;

WHEREAS, Minn. Stat. § 164.07, subd. 2 requires the town board to make an order describing as nearly as practicable the road to be altered, and or vacated, describing the several tracts of land through which the road passes, and fixing a time and place when and where the town board will meet and act upon the petition;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. The road proposed to be altered is described as: Platted width of 554th St. is 100'. Alter the platted width to the standard township 66' from 201st Avenue east to the hamlet of Concord east border.

2. The alley proposed to be vacated is described as: All of the alley located in Block 19 between Commerce Street and Park Street, Original Plat, Concord, Dodge County, Minnesota.

3. Vacate: The street proposed to be vacated is described as: All of Water Street in the Hamlet of Concord, Dodge County, MN. All in T108N, R17W, Dodge County, Minnesota. More specific descriptions may be developed if the petition is granted.

The tracts of land through which the road/alley passes and may affect its owners are:

Luke Luhman, 55224 County 24
Brian Albers, 20128 554 Street
Concord Township, 20131 Concord Township Park
Aaron Ludlow, 20178 554 Street
Jane Lake, 20222 554 Street
Concord Cemetery, 20258 554 Street
Jonathan Adams, 55326 202 Avenue
Rod Streich, 20171 202 Avenue
Joel DeFlieger, 20390 555 Street

The Concord Town Board will conduct a hearing at 6:30 p.m. on the 8th day of October, 2026, at Concord Town Hall to examine the road, receive public comment, consider the proposed action, and act on the petition.

DODGE CENTER SUMMARY COUNCIL MINUTES Monday, August 24, 2026

This published information is a summary of the full minutes of August 24, 2026, Dodge Center City Council regular meeting. A copy of the full minutes is available for viewing at City Hall, 35 East Main Street or online at www.ci.dodgecenter.mn.us.

Present: Mayor Bill Ketchum, Cathy Skogen, Gary Trelstad, Paul Blaisdell, Braedon Dostal, Marianne Sobek, Stephanie Gonzalez, Meredith Brose, Deputy Breuer, Deputy Anderson, John Fox, Vanessa Hines, Al Denny, Melinda Hedberg

City Council approved the following items:

- Minutes of the August 10, 2026 City Council Meeting, Minutes of the July 2026 HRA Meeting, Minutes of the July 2026 EDA Meeting, Minutes of the July 2026 Park Board Meeting, and Payment of bills Tabled the nuisance code violation decision regarding the 602 10th Ave NW property,
 - Approve hiring Dylan Ptacek to the Fire Department,
 - Approve Resolution 2026-013: A Resolution Ordering A Report on Improvement for the 2027 Improvement Project,
 - Approve Resolution 2026-014: A Resolution Receiving Report and Calling for Hearing on Improvement for the 2027 Improvement Project for 1st Avenue NE from Main Street E to Highway Street E, setting the public hearing for September 28th City Council Meeting,
 - Authorize submission of the Park Board Playground Answers to Leathers and Associates,
 - Authorize hiring Wanda Fjerstad as a part-time Administrative Assistant,
 - Appoint Dan Jensen as a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

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