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NOVEMBER 19, 2026 Volume 11 • Issue 44

20 Years of Hometown Christmas Magic: Christmas in West Concord Returns December 5!



WEST CONCORD, MN – There is something special about Christmas in a small town. The twinkling lights, the smell of fresh homemade doughnuts, the warmth of neighbors gathering together, and the traditions that bring families back year after year.

(continued on page 14)

Announcements

• **Coffee and Treats Thursdays** are at the West Concord Historical Society building and will continue throughout the winter months. Each day will begin at 9 a.m. The Flame Room setting provides an opportunity for people who may become isolated in the winter to visit with other community members. Participants often come with small family heirlooms and antiques to share with visitors along with "remember when" stories involving West Concord.

• **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

Meet Claremont Mayor Elect Hudson

Timothy Hudson was elected as the new mayor of Claremont in the November 3rd general election. Here he introduces himself and outlines his goals for the city.

I grew up just eight miles down the road in Dodge Center. I had a childhood that most would consider a little piece of Americana. I played and went to school with friends I still have today, 43 years later; a rare blessing and one of the reasons I've remained grounded.

My parents are another. My mother still lives in the same home they bought in 1978. My father passed away from cancer on October 1st, just one month and one day before their 52nd wedding anniversary.

I am a proud full-time single father to a son, Greyson, and daughter, Isabelle. After leaving an abusive marriage, I've worked to give them a safe, stable home, with my mother providing invaluable help with childcare.

(continued on page 6)



Tim, Greyson, and Isabelle Hudson

Local Welding Shop Offers Services



Hotlen Fabrication and Welding can handle your repair and fabrication projects. Logan Hotlen of West Concord can provide welding on mild steel, stainless steel and aluminum.

(continued on page 6)

New Pastor at Faith Lutheran



Pastor Rich McLeer

There is a new pastor at the Faith Lutheran Church in Dodge Center. Pastor Rich McLeer took the position in mid-July and is settling into his duties. He lives in Northfield with his wife Karen. Karen works in administration at St. Catherines College in St. Paul. They have a son who works in Minneapolis and a daughter finishing gras school in St. Cloud.

Rich was born in New York and attended NYU and finished grad school at Carbondale, Illinois. He met his wife, a northeast Iowa native in the early 1990's. Rich taught High School English for four years in Wisconsin and was starting med school when his mother passed away. This caused him to rethink his career and he began a seeker period looking for meaning in his life. He had been a Catholic, a Buddhist and unchurched and although he had read the Bible as literature, he had not studied it until this time. As he was searching, he determined that it was not what you feel, but what is real.

(continued on page 5)

Christmas Events are just Around the Corner

Thursday, December 3rd will be Christmas in Wanamingo. There will be treats at local businesses and bring a non-perishable food item or cash donation to each participating business and get your card stamped. Completed cards will be drawn for cash prizes. 1st prize is $100.00. Stop by the Wanamingo Community Center to see the Santa carving collection. Santa will be at the Olmsted Medical Center at 217 Main Street.



(continued on page 14)

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I will continue to work my hardest to represent you in the Minnesota State House.

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This Love Breaks the Rules

By Pastor Colleen Hoeft

I went to a church conference once to hear one of our Wesleyan Pastors from Celebrate Church in Sioux Falls SD and one thing he said from one of his messages was that Celebrate Church was willing to do anything short of sin to reach the lost! That has always stuck with me. It impressed me at the time because I was just starting out and had read a bunch of leadership books and 'how to be a pastor books' and now this guy is basically lifting all the 'traditional rules and thoughts to a place that I hadn't considered yet- to do 'anything' short of sin to reach people that needed to know Jesus.

Sadly, when many people think of 'the church' they don't automatically think of how loving the people are. They miss how generous and kind and caring the church has been and still is.

Jesus said it plainly: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35

According to Jesus, love isn't optional. Love is evidence that we are His disciples. Love is proof that we are His followers. Love is the proof that we know Jesus. When we read the Gospels—One thing becomes unmistakably clear. Jesus was drawn to people that the religious leaders avoided. God is pleased when his church looks like his Son. Because Jesus didn't just say He loved people; He showed it.

In Mark chapter 4 Jesus is back in Capernaum. Some time has passed since the last time he was here. As he settled in for a time of rest and to minister in a familiar town, word traveled fast. People wanted to hear Him speak and people were hoping to experience or witness the miracles that Jesus was known for. The house where he was at filled up quickly. (a problem most pastors would love to have!)

And within that context, a crowded, crowded home, (standing room only) people listening and watching and waiting- Jesus reaching out to his old stomping grounds and that's when LOVE shows up—This the true account of a miracle of healing and the miracle of salvation.

Jesus is home and the house packed. There is no space anywhere! Everyone keeps crowding in shoulder to shoulder and everyone wants something from Him. It's crazy- and could make someone feel pretty claustrophobic! Look at verse 3. "Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them."

Because these four friends loved their friend; they didn't just watch from the sidelines. The love they had for their friend is the kind of love that carries the burden. They got involved and put some sweat equity into the miracle. A loving church carries burdens. They carried their friend to the house where Jesus was and discovered there was no way to get him through the door to Jesus. What to do? There decision seems creative and heroic to us, but in those days- they were could be making some enemies- disrupting the rabbi's teaching, tearing apart someone's roof and possible livelihood as well as making some people pretty disgruntled having dirt, grass and roof material falling on their heads. But they kept going. They went to the roof- despite all the possible problems because they loved their friend very much!

The love that these 4 people had for the friend wasn't just a love that pointed people to Jesus it, this love CARRIED THEM to Jesus! This love made a statement- not only to the guy on the mat, but to all that attended that house that day. And this kind of love continues to speak to us as we read and recognize the sacrifice, the faithfulness and the love of these friends. It's been said: People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Love proves you care when you pick up the burden. When you go the extra mile, when you give without asking for anything in return. Love proves you care when listening and being available, despite your busy schedule. Sometimes love is seen doing the big things and other times love is revealed in the small things. Love is always personal. When people experience the love of God. Lives are changed.

Love breaks the rules. Love chooses to serve people and to save people. Love goes past the unseen boundaries to do what can't be done.

The crazy thing during this whole event was that Jesus didn't stop them. Jesus didn't rebuke them. Jesus didn't say, make sure you pay the homeowner and clean this mess up. Jesus didn't tell them to wait outside- he saw their faith and loved them! Jesus understood breaking the rules for love too. Jesus had eaten with sinners and the Pharisees hated that. He forgave prostitutes- scandalous! He touched the lepers and loved the tax collectors. All taboos in His culture of the time! In Mark's story, Mark writes that Jesus saw something. Not just the roof caving in. Jesus didn't notice their manners Jesus didn't focus on their theology. … Jesus saw their faith. How do you see faith? Jesus saw their faith through their actions, expressed through love.

When we love like Jesus—People experience God. When people experience God—Lives are changed.

So, let me ask you—Who do you know? Who is God asking you to carry? Who needs the love of Jesus through your life? Go out this week and love like Jesus!

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Area Church Directory

Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith

Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. — Hebrews 12:1-2

Our reading today invites us to reflect on the life of faith as a race marked out for us.

And who has gone before us to mark it out? Jesus, the pioneer (or trailblazer) of faith.

He did it all, providing this great gift for us. He paved the way when we were so lost in our sin that we were like dead people walking in darkness (Isaiah 9:2; Ephesians 2:1-5). He made us alive to faith. He justified us, he sanctified us, and he sustains us through every trial. Jesus lights the way for us, and he will bring us safely through to where he is. As the apostle Paul describes it in Philippians 1:6, "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion."

Some Bible translations describe Jesus' role here as the "author and finisher" of faith, and that reminds me of some treasured gifts that grace our family's home. My mother-inlaw and late sister-in-law gifted us with beautiful, handmade quilts. They "authored" these treasures, designing them on graph paper, choosing colors, cutting pieces of fabric, and quilting them together. They also "finished" these artworks beautifully, down to the last binding stitch. I benefit from these gifts of grace, resting under someone else's finished work.

In our life of faith, we depend on Jesus' accomplished work. From start to finish, we can fix our eyes on him, following his lead and relying on his guidance and finished work every step of the way.

Pioneer and Perfecter of faith, where would we be without you? Lead and guide us, Lord, and may we rest in you. Amen.

Dodge Center

Faith Lutheran Church
308 2nd St. NW, Dodge Center
507-374-2174
Traditional Worship 9a.m.; Fellowship 10a.m.

Grace Lutheran Church
404 Central Avenue N, Dodge Center
Rev. Elliott Malm • 507-633-2253
https://gracedc.church
Worship 9a.m.; Sunday School 10:30a.m.

Praise Fellowship Church
602 Central Avenue S, Dodge Center
507-374-6400
Kidz Church 9:15a.m.; Sunday Worship 9:30a.m.

Dodge Center Methodist Church
201 1st St. NE, Dodge Center
507-374-6885
Sunday Morning Worship at 8:30a.m.,
Fellowship Time Following

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

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

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

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

Bible Lutheran Church
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Sunday School 9:15a.m.; Worship 10:30a.m.
(weekly sermons available on You Tube and on website)

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Claremont

1st Presbyterian Church
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Pastor Doug Walters
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St. John Lutheran Church
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Pastor Alan Broadwell
Sunday Service at 10:30a.m.

West Concord

Faith Community Church
305 State Street N, West Concord
507-527-2244
Interim Pastor, Steve Anderson
Sunday 9:30a.m. Worship; 10:45a.m. Sunday School
www.fccwc.org
Facebook: WC Faith Community Church

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Trinity Lutheran, ELCA
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trinitychurchwc.net
Sunday worship video is posted on Facebook:
Trinitylutheranchurchwestconcordmn
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Sunday School 10:30a.m.
Tuesday Men's Bible Study, 7:00a.m.
at church and via Zoom
Call church for more information on ministries and events.

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Roger Henry Chicos

Roger Henry Chicos, 88, of Dodge Center, MN passed away on Monday, November 9, 2026, at Fairview Care Center in Dodge Center, MN.



Roger was born on February 11, 1938, in Owatonna, MN to Peter and Myrtle (Behne) Chicos. He graduated from Dodge Center High School in 1955. He was united in marriage to Mary Lou Dunagan on September 14, 1957, at St. Margaret's Catholic Church in Mantorville, MN.

Roger farmed south of Dodge Center, MN for over 50 years. He enjoyed getting together with friends and family, attending county fairs, the MN State Fair, and local festivals. He was a member of the Dodge Center School Board, Dodge County Commissioners, Knights of Columbus, and Dodge Center Lions Club. He was a lifelong member of St John's Baptiste de la Salle Catholic Church in Dodge Center.

Roger is survived by his children, David Chicos of Dodge Center, MN, Sally Chicos of St. Louis Park, MN, Dennis (Irene) Chicos of Eagan, MN, and Dale (Lisa) Chicos of Dodge Center, MN; 7 grandchildren, Mike, Theresa, Ashley, Alex, Jake, Meghan, and Myranda; 5 great-grandchildren; son-in-law, Gary Kuusisto of Hibbing, MN; siblings, Kathleen Christie, Eleanor Engesser, and Lois Hancock.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Mary Lou; daughter, Sue; and brother, Norman.

A funeral mass will be held at 11:00 a.m. Friday, November 20, 2026, at St. John Baptiste de la Salle Parish, 20 2nd St NE in Dodge Center, MN with Father John Lasuba officiating. Visitation will be held from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Thursday, November 19, 2026, at Czaplewski Family Funeral Homes, 25 South Street SW in Dodge Center, MN and one hour prior to his mass at the church. Interment will be in St. Margaret's Cemetery in Mantorville, MN.

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 his memory.

Robert "Butch" James Bzoskie

Robert "Butch" James Bzoskie, 87, passed away on Friday, November 13, 2026, at Benedictine Living Community in Owatonna, MN.



Butch was born on August 12, 1939, in a barn in Claremont, Minnesota, to Melvin and Eleanor Bzoskie. He graduated from Kasson-Mantorville High School and immediately enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he was stationed in Japan. Upon returning home, he began what would become a 30-year career with IBM in Rochester, Minnesota, retiring in November 1991.

On August 28, 1965, Butch married Mary Bzoskie at St. Ansgar Catholic Church in St. Ansgar, Iowa. Together, they made their home in Kasson, where they raised their children and built a life centered around family and community.

Retirement was not quite Butch's style. Always a worker bee, he transitioned into the lawn care business, eventually working side by side with his son until retiring again in 2012. Butch loved being outdoors and found purpose in keeping busy and lending a hand wherever he could.

Butch had a lifelong love for sports and the outdoors, especially fishing, hunting, camping, and baseball. One of his favorite places was his sister's Back Farm, where generations of family memories were made. His passion for baseball was shared with his father, brother, children, and grandchildren, and he found great enjoyment calling balls and strikes as an umpire at slow-pitch softball games throughout southern Minnesota. A devoted Minnesota Twins and Vikings fan, Butch especially loved cheering on his children and grandchildren at their sporting events.

Butch appreciated the simple pleasures of everyday life, especially his mornings at Erdman's, affectionately known as the "Coffee Klutch," and his Tuesdays at the Saloon with his classmates. These friendships and gatherings were an important part of his life and reflected his strong ties to the community.

Butch is survived by his children, Jim Bzoskie and Deb (Tim) O'Connor of Kasson, Minnesota; his grandchildren, Mikayla (Nick Swanson) O'Connor, Chase (Hannah) O'Connor, Keagan O'Connor, Hunter Bzoskie, and Addy Bzoskie; his great-granddaughter, Scottie O'Connor; his siblings, Don (Diane) Bzoskie, Rich (Amy) Fait, Jeanne Kreidermacher, and Mary Jo (Chuck) Speiker; and his sisters-in-law, Elaine Warner and Marlene Lippitt.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Bzoskie; his parents Melvin and Eleanor Bzoskie; as well as Frank Kreidermacher, Gerald and Sue Hohn, Denny Lippitt, and nephew Mark Lippitt.

His memory will live on through the stories shared, the traditions carried forward, and the countless moments spent together by those who knew and loved him.

A memorial service will be held at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, November 21, 2026, at Czaplewski Family Funeral Homes, 801 7th St SE in Kasson, MN with Pastor Pete Wyttenbach officiating. Visitation will be held from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Friday, November 20, 2026, at Czaplewski Family Funeral Homes in Kasson and one hour prior to his service on Saturday. Inurnment will be in Maple Grove Cemetery with Military Honors provided by the Kasson American Legion Post 333.

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Holidays

During the holiday seasons as we get older, and if we have lost one of our loved ones, can become a season we don't enjoy as much anymore. I know I went through a period after my wife passed away that was pretty tough for me.

I am glad to say that time does heal all wounds. This is a time in our lives when we really need to reach out to our children and our close friends. If you are living alone, this also is a time to ask God for some help so we can enjoy the holidays.

Folks, we need to take some positive action. Don't sit home all alone. Otherwise we might soon start feeling sorry for ourselves. This is when some very negative thoughts could start to come into our minds.

So use that telephone to call a friend.

Thanksgiving is coming soon. Lets hope we will have an enjoyable day, and share in some fellowship with friends and family.

At Christmas time, let's remember the true meaning of why we celebrate that day. The birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

For Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11

On Christmas Eve, I am so grateful my four children and some of my grandchildren always come. Seeing them brings so much happiness to me.

The next exciting thing in my life will be my birthday. I will be turning 83 in March. As in years past,, I will again be having a party at the Annadine. Several family members and dear friends will be there. This, I am really looking forward to.

So folks, we do have things to be so very happy about. Keep those positive thoughts coming. Keep your prayers coming. And be grateful for every day God gives you.

Remember to Hug those kids today.

Your Friend,
Larry Blood

Richard D. Boss



Richard D. Boss, 89, of Owatonna, died peacefully at his home with his loving family by his side on Thursday, November 12, 2026.

He was born December 24, 1936, in Cloquet, the son of Dennis and May (Meisner) Boss. Richard attended school in Cloquet. Stationed in Hawaii, Richard served in the U.S. Army from 1955-1957.

Richard was united in marriage to Verna Krey on August 5, 1972, in Owatonna. He owned Claremont Meats for 25 years and retired in 2001. Richard was a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church and later Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Richard and Verna wintered in Weslaco, TX for 24 years. He was an avid sports fan, with his favorite being the Minnesota Vikings. He enjoyed any kind of music, fishing, playing cards and shuffleboard in Texas. He was a very friendly man and could carry a conversation with anyone. He always had a smile on his face.

Richard is survived by his wife of 54 years, Verna; children, Lisa (Jeremy) Paukert, Jeanine Boss, Michael Boss, Russell Boss, Christine (Curt) Williams, and Diane Zezulka; seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren; also nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by two brothers and two sisters.

Memorial Service was held 2:00 PM, Wednesday, November 18, 2026, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Owatonna. Rev. Harold Storm officiated. Visitation was one hour prior to the service at the church.

New Pastor at Faith Lutheran

(continued from page 1)

He enrolled in seminary while living in Cobb, Wisconsin and finished in five years, completing his internship in a church 40 miles from his home. He served nine years at Middle Point, Wisconsin and then two and a half years ministering at three churches in the Boscobel and LaCross area. All of these congregations were within driving distance from his home they had lived in since he started his teaching career. Next came the call to College Station, Texas in 2023, where they served for 2 ½ years. It was a big church but that area in Texas was not a great fit for them.

They returned to the Midwest and interviewed with four churches in Minnesota. Dodge Center was their first choice and they were happy to be offered the position here. His wife had taken a job in St. Paul and so Northfield was a good place to settle.

Rich will be taking the time to understand the local community and congregation and to figure out what to keep doing and how to address changes if they are needed. He likes the service of the food pantry and believes that the food ministry is a great outreach. Rich states that it will be a patient and prayerful process and that ideas must come from the people in the church. Rich says, "it has been really fun getting to know the town and I am looking forward to what the future holds for Dodge Center." He would love to stay for the next 12 to 15 years and work with the church in Dodge Center.



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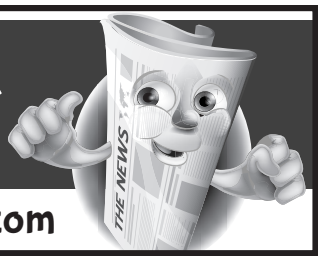


We'd like to send our warmest wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving and all the best this holiday season.

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Meet Claremont Mayor Elect Hudson

(continued from page 1)

Claremont checked all the boxes in allowing my kids to have a childhood like mine. But affordability, convenience, and lack of local employment have plagued many families here, including mine.

I've done a little bit of everything professionally. I began my on-air career in radio while I was still a senior in high school, before graduating from Triton in 1998. During my 14 years in broadcasting at stations serving female audiences, I worked nearly every daypart—from the Early Morning Show to the Top 9 at 9 on KROC-FM. I also spent a year at Z93 in La Crosse and served as Music Director when KNXR flipped formats to 97.5 Pulse FM in 2015.

From entry-level positions to department management, I've also worked in banking, retail, and auto and camper detail. Those experiences have taught me how to be well-rounded, well-spoken, and well-prepared for one of my proudest chapters: serving as mayor of Claremont.

There are several reasons why I ran for mayor, because Claremont faces several problems. The controversy surrounding the 2024 mayoral election, along with repeated appointments to city leadership, reinforced my belief that residents needed a stronger voice in the direction of their government.

In my 22 years living in Rochester, I never paid more in property taxes than I do now, yet I've never felt I received less for my tax dollar. Residents deserve a budget that reflects what they can afford and a clear explanation of what their money is accomplishing.

Add aging infrastructure, the loss of local commerce, concerns about transparency, and questions about accountability within city government, and you begin to understand why I ran. I want residents to have confidence that their concerns will be heard and their tax dollars will be treated with respect.

Beyond bringing greater discipline to the budget, some of Claremont's most immediate challenges have been years in the making.

Since losing our Service Center gas station in 2020, and our grocery store many years before, we've had little choice but to take ourselves and our hard-earned dollars to neighboring communities for basic necessities. From a gallon of milk to a gallon of gas, we've become dependent on the convenience of other towns.

That loss affects more than our daily routines. It means fewer opportunities to keep spending close to home, support local jobs, and broaden our commercial tax base. A goal of my first term is to begin reversing that trend through responsible budgeting and practical, mutually beneficial relationships with small businesses.

Before going door to door during my campaign, I had the mistaken impression that this was a town divided. After speaking with residents, many of whose families have been here for generations, I came to understand that Claremont's strong sense of community is one of the biggest reasons it has endured. Businesses and residents have come and gone, but the people who have stayed have made Claremont resilient.

Having lived here for five years, I know I still have much to learn from those who have seen what has worked and what hasn't. Through "Mayor Mondays," I want to give residents an opportunity to speak with me directly every Monday evening about what we want, what we need, and how we can get there together.

That is how I hope to put the words of my campaign into practice: "We're Not Too Small to Grow."

I want to make one thing abundantly clear to established companies, small businesses, and entrepreneurs: CLAREMONT IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS.

For too long, the expectation that nothing will change has left us focused on merely surviving. My long-term goal is to help Claremont thrive. This town is full of people with passion, knowledge, and determination. We've done so much with so little for so long that we've almost forgotten that prosperity is even an option.

We've become a commuting community, going elsewhere to earn and spend our money. We already know what businesses we can support because other towns continue to grow based on what we lack. If we're asking people to invest their livelihoods in Claremont, we owe them a city that works for them. That means being available when they are, solving problems at their speed, and addressing their concerns with consistency and integrity; that goes for business and citizens. When businesses succeed, Claremont citizens succeed through greater convenience, more local opportunity, and a stronger tax base for everyone.

We're not too small to grow. But growth starts when we give someone a reason to believe in Claremont—and back that invitation with action.

Local Welding Shop Offers Services

(continued from page 1)

Logan always wanted to work in the welding trade and a job change at the age of 22 gave him the opportunity. He started at McNeilus Truck and Manufacturing ten years ago and has worked at Minnesota Implement for the last two years. Logan lived in the Rochester and Zumbrota area until moving to West Concord five years ago.

He enjoys fixing and building things. At his shop he can do welding, repair or fabrication and works mostly with wire feed and TIG aluminum welding. He can handle almost any project or repair job and especially enjoys trailer repairs doing tie downs, winch plates, tool boxes and repairing jacks. Logan is looking to expand his customer base in the area and perform most any kind of repair and fabrication job.

Give him a call at 507-993-9016 and he can give you an estimate on your needs.

DO YOU HAVE A STORY IDEA?

E-mail:
hometownmessenger@gmail.com









Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes

Caterpillars, Cables and Days Gone By



By Terry Campbell

This column is written by Messenger editor and Minnesota native Terry Campbell. Here he relates his adventures and recollections including relocating to the state of Tennessee after he turned sixty years old.

As I was digging a plot of land this spring for planting, I turned up a large heavy-duty cable looped and both ends. It was about six feet long, made from ½" steel wire rope and had two clamps on each end with a metal thimble protecting the loop. It was quite rusty but I had no doubt what it was for. I remembered it even thought it had been buried for over sixty years. That is one of the advantages of still living on the farm one was born on. The mere sight of an item can rekindle a memory long thought forgotten. And this cable was a connecting link to times in the early 1960's.

It was a cable that my dad made for pulling things with his Caterpillar. I still have the heavy duty vise my dad used to secure the clamps to the cable when it was made in his shop. It probably slipped off the dozer when he was operating it. And laid in the soil until I unearthed it sixty years later.

As a kid I lived and breathed anything that took place on the farm. Equipment held a sacred place in my mind. It was the backbone of the farm. Enabled a mere man to perform tasks impossible to a human on their own. That was the D2 Caterpillar. A marvel of machinery in my mind. My young mind absorbed all the information my dad related to me about the attributes of this wonderful crawler. I can still feel what that black seat felt like and see the steering levers and hear the pony motor fire to life when he pulled the rope which had to be wound around the engine pully.

The Caterpillar D2 was built from 1938 until 1957. It was the smallest tracked tractor the company built. A 33 horsepower, four-cylinder diesel engine, with five forward speeds and one reverse gear. It had a gasoline pony motor to start it. Weighing in at 8,000 pounds with 12" wide tracks it could outpull a tractor. Many of these were sold for farming applications and my dad used it to pull a three bottom molboard plow.

He also had a blade mounted on the dozer and used it to move lots of dirt around the farm. There is still an earthen dam he built to



catch runoff from the barnyard. It has long since filled in with silt but I recall who built it every time I see the square plateau that did what the designer built it for many years ago. He widened out the cartway which gave us access down the limestone bluff at the backside of the farm.

My neighbor told me one time that he was helping his dad take down a silo by their barn on a Sunday morning. A common way of removing a concrete stave silo is to break out the staves at the bottom of the silo on the side you want it to fall. When enough staves are gone it should fall in that direction. In their case it fell in the wrong way and blocked the entrance of the barn so the dairy cows couldn't get back in. He was only fifteen years old but he had worked for my dad and grandfather, and knew how to run the dozer. My dad was gone that day, and over the protestation of his father, he started the Caterpillar and brought it over to move the concrete debris away from the barn and save the day.

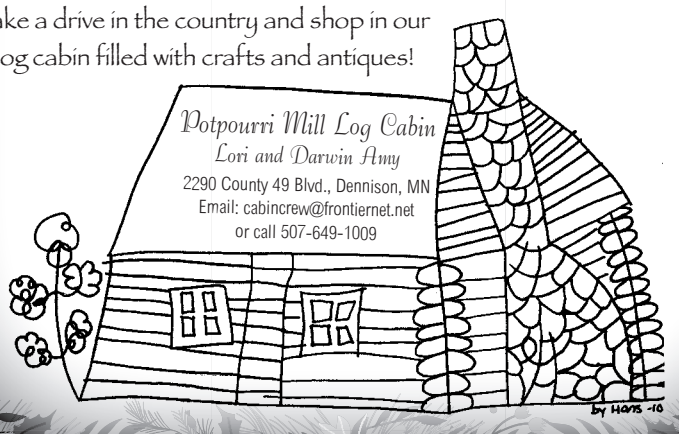


Holly Thyme Craft Show

Saturdays: November 28, December 5, 12
Sundays: November 29, December 6, 13
Hours: 10:00a.m. to 5:00p.m.

Call 507-649-1009 to set up other dates and times to shop in our cabin.

Take a drive in the country and shop in our log cabin filled with crafts and antiques!



A Minnesotan:

Deer Season



By RosaLin Alcoser



Growing up in rural Minnesota fall always brought around many a man's favorite time of the year. Hunting season.

November usually brought around my lest favorite time of the year as a child. Firearm season. Which was my least favorite because my mother would keep us inside for nearly an entire month because of it. As an adult who's handled a firearm I get it, as a child I understood the why of it all but I didn't like it.

Now I have never actually hunted. However, as a teenager and young adult I did participate in part of hunting season. Mainly because grandpa used me as a spare deer and turkey scout at times or on occasion took me to follow a blood trail during bow season. Outside of that and the rare occurrence of helping of cleaning a deer I've never hunted.

Although I did get an eight point buck back in the Fall of 2019 when it ran in front of my Subaru.

I was driving home in rural Minnesota late at night when I had just turned onto the road from the main county highway when I saw the car in the other lane flash their headlights at me. Which made me wonder if my high beams were on, they were not. What they were trying to warn me about was that they had seen the doe run across the road and a buck was likely behind it.

Thankfully I was going under 40 miles per hour — so I came out of this fine— because all of a sudden a 300 lbs monster of a buck was smashing in the front end of my car. It was the end of both the buck and of my Subaru.

That deer was made into jerked afterwards and I was told he was not delicious.

So while I have never and probably will never actually hunt I have gotten a deer. And quite an impressive one at that.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

TO YOU AND YOURS



At this special time of year, we want to thank the many friends and neighbors who make our success possible.
As the holiday season heralds the arrival of another new year, we look forward to continuing our tradition of helping customers achieve financial success.

We will be closed Thursday, November 26 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

MBT Bank

www.mbtbank.bank

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Austin | Blooming Prairie | Dodge Center | Hayfield | Mantorville | Rochester

Get Your Tickets for "Little Women"

By Mantorville Theatre





Our December show is "Little Women" adapted by Marisha Chamberlain, directed by Kami Sim. The show runs December 4-20: Shows will start at 7 pm on Dec. 4, 5, 11, 12, & 18. Shows will start at 2 pm on Dec. 6, 13, 19, & 20. Shows are held at the Mantorville Opera House: 5 5th St. West, Mantorville, MN.

About the show

Under the guidance of their beloved mother, the four young March sisters – tempestuous Jo, motherly Meg, shy Beth and spoiled baby Amy – struggle to keep their family going while Father is away in the Civil War. In this beautifully dramatized version of the classic novel, even as turmoil, illness, and sibling rivalry cast their shadows, each girl strives to find her true self. Expanded to a full-length adaptation, Chamberlain's work brims with heart and passion.



Genre: Drama

This Little Women show is not the musical version.

Meet the cast

The March sisters:
Jo - Catherine Williamson
Meg - Anna Houston
Beth - Lydia Tate
Amy - Ellie Brasher

The older members of the family:

Hannah - Becca Messick
Marmee - Lindsay Herr
Aunt March - Cheryl Frarck
Father - Travis Dockter

The neighbors:

Mr. Laurence - Carl Benson
Laurie - James Lee
Mr. Brooke - Drew Adams

Get your tickets

Adult tickets are $22, Senior/MTC member/Student tickets are $20. All seats are reserved. Visit our website to purchase your tickets:

https://www.mantorvilletheatrecompany.com/tickets.html

Please reach out if you have any questions. The box office can be reached via email (MantorvilleTheatre@gmail.com) or phone (507-635-5420 - please leave a message). We can reserve tickets and you can pay for them at the door (with cash). The doors will open 30 minutes prior to show time.

We can't wait to see you there!

Dodge County Salvation Army Launches Christmas 2026 Red Kettle Campaign



Salvation Army kettle at Heritage Bank

Dodge County Salvation Army has launched their Christmas 2026 Red Kettle campaign. There are kettles on the counters of twenty-five businesses throughout the county. 25 businesses in the county. Support these local businesses and give generously as these contributions help those who are in need.

Bell ringing starts Nov. 20 at Kasson Hy-Vee, Hardware Hank, and sunshine foods in Dodge Center.

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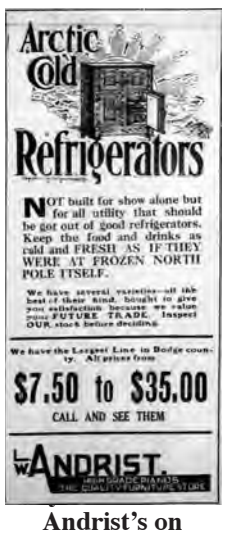
NO COMMISSION ON ITEMS SELLING OVER $1000 PER ITEM

Museum Musings



Chillin'

By Colleen Sathrum Hayne



Andrist's on Main Street, West Concord



1931 Electric refrigerators arrived in West Concord

When I was a child I loved visiting my grandparents at their home on Olive Street in West Concord. I often rewind and play back those memories just because they make me smile.

The other day it occurred to me that my grandma always asked me to get food from her "icebox". I never heard her say the word "refrigerator". I thought about it for a while and realized that for the majority of her life an icebox was exactly what grandma had. That would be her name forever for anything that kept food cold.

In West Concord, from the time the town was founded in 1885, until the 1930's, ice boxes were what kept food fresh and safe in most households. The early West Concord newspapers are filled with tips for keeping home iceboxes sanitary, A 1905 Enterprise advised keeping the icebox "sweet and clean" by burning in it a small disinfecting candle. Be sure to leave the doors open to air it." To keep ants away it was recommended to "tie a string saturated with turpentine around each leg of the icebox."

The Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Bulletins were frequently published in the Enterprise those days. Infant deaths were all too common and one of the reasons given in the 1910 Ag Bulletin was that milk was left to stand for hours in a warm room.

To remedy the unsafe situation the Bulletin recommended making a small milk refrigerator following the steps they provided:

"Obtain a wooden box from the grocer at least a foot deep. Buy a tin pail with a cover, deep enough to hold a quart bottle of milk. Buy a slightly bigger pail without a cover. Put the pails one inside the other into the center of the box and pack sawdust or excelsior (curly wood shavings) beneath and around. Nail 50 layers of newspaper to the under surface of the box cover. Each morning fresh milk should be put in the pail and 5 cents worth of ice should be cracked and put around the milk bottle and the cover put back on. Finally, put the lid on the box. Every morning pour the melted ice off."



Ice harvesting in Minnesota



Even music heralded the Ice Man

In 1924 the Ag Bulletin admonished icebox users to make sure the iceboxes were well insulated with only clean ice, clean food, clean containers, and were wiped clean each day. Consumers were urged to use a thermometer to make sure the ice box was at 50 degrees or less. That seems a little warm to me for refrigeration by today's standards. Remembering to empty the pan of melted water under the icebox was a regular duty. If forgotten, you'd soon be reminded by water running across the floor.

How did households get their ice when they needed it? Residents put a card in the window of their homes telling the iceman how many pounds of ice they needed and he brought it to them on his delivery route. Typical cost for ice ran somewhere between 25 to 40 cents per 100 lbs. of ice but a small chunk of ice for daily use could be had for a nickel.

The iceman was so much a part of daily life that popular songs were even written about him. Two popular songs hinted at the chances the iceman had to get to know the women on his route—much like mailman innuendos in later years. In 1899 the song, "How'd You Like to Be the Iceman?" was popular and in 1907 "All She Gets From the Iceman is Ice" was a hit.

Little anecdotes about the iceman were found throughout the early West Concord newspapers. Here's one:

"Are you getting ready for winter?

Yes, we've had our last scrap with the ice man and have begun to quarrel with the coal man."

And this: "Worry won't make the iceman give you a bit bigger chunk."

Where did all this ice come from? Ice harvesting was a serious job every winter in January and February. Ice was cut on lakes, rivers, creeks, and ponds and stored in ice houses, usually with thick wooden walls, and insulated with sawdust, hay, and straw.

Ice kept this way would last for nearly a year. Farms had their own icehouses, as well as root cellars, to keep food and milk cool.

It wasn't until 1927 that electric refrigerators were first advertised for sale in West Concord newspapers. General Motors advertised the Frigidaire and Northern States Power Company advertised the Kelvinator. By 1930 Frank Griffin was selling electric refrigerators and by 1935 Ferguson and Son were stocking them, too. Those vintage refrigerators became famous for their longevity. They often lasted for decades.

We knew times had really changed when the Enterprise wrote, "Our idea of a real vacation is an electric refrigerator, a couple of electric fans, the latest mystery, and a comfortable seat on a shady front porch."

The icebox was relegated to history and life became simpler in yet another way.

As the Enterprise wrote in 1931, "Look back 30 years. How many of you boasted of an electric refrigerator, an auto, a radio or a paved street by your house?" The Enterprise also asked, "How many of you would give those things up?" I'm sure we know the answer to that question.

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

A Thanksgiving Story

This time of year we remember the brave souls who came to this country in search of freedom in a new land. Many of us have Norwegian heritage and this is the story of the first wave of our ancestors to come to America.

July 4, 1825, Stavanger, Norway. The tiny sloop you see in this painting is Restauration. It is only 54 feet long, smaller than a modern city bus. On its deck are 52 Norwegians - 46 adults, men and women, and 8 children, the youngest just two years old. They are leaving everything they have ever known. Their houses, their farms, their families. They are carrying only wooden chests, Bibles, and hope. This is the most important ship in Norwegian-American history, and this is 100 percent real, documented in both the Norwegian National Archives in Oslo and the US National Archives in Washington D.C., with passenger manifests still preserved.

Why did they leave? In 1825, Norway was not an independent country. It was in a forced union with Sweden, poor, overpopulated, with almost no religious freedom. The leader of this group, Lars Larsen Geilane, was a Quaker, and Quakers were persecuted in Norway. The state Lutheran Church said you must be Lutheran or you will be jailed. They could not worship freely. They also heard letters from America that said there is free land, free religion, and no king.

They sold everything they owned and bought this small sloop, Restauration, which was originally built to carry only 10 people and some lumber along the Norwegian coast. It was never meant to cross the Atlantic Ocean. But they overloaded it with 52 people, barrels of water, salted fish, flatbread, and 20 Bibles. They had no navigation instruments except a simple compass and a map.

The voyage took 14 long, terrifying weeks across the Atlantic, through autumn storms that broke the mast. They had almost no privacy, everyone slept on deck. In the middle of the ocean, one baby girl was born, named Restauration and called Sara. And one man, a 60-year-old farmer named Lars Olson, died and was buried at sea. They prayed every day in Norwegian.

On October 9, 1825, after 14 weeks, they landed in New York City. They had no money, spoke no English, and looked starved. New Yorkers were shocked. The New York newspapers wrote, how did 52 people survive on a ship built for 10? The US government



seized the ship because it was illegally overcrowded under US law.

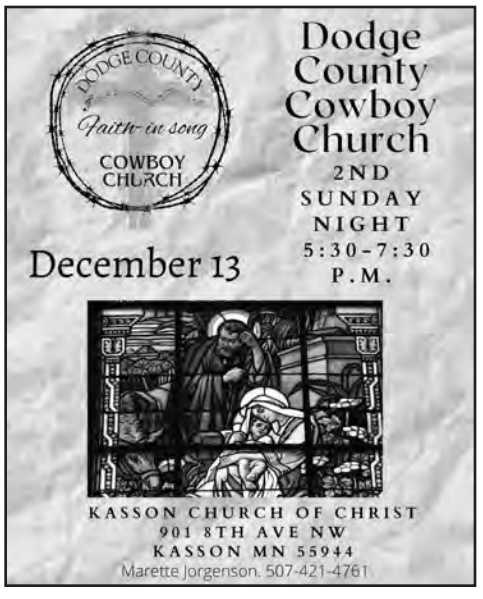
But then something amazing happened. The case went to President John Quincy Adams himself. Adams, who believed in religious freedom, pardoned them, returned their ship, and allowed them to stay. He said they are pilgrims seeking liberty.

Those 52 people, called the Sloopers, did not stay in New York. They walked 350 miles to upstate New York, to Kendall, near Lake Ontario, and started the first permanent Norwegian settlement in America. They wrote letters back to Norway. The letters said, America has free land, free church, you can own 100 acres. Those letters were copied by hand and passed around villages in Norway. Those letters started a chain migration. From 1825 to 1925, exactly 100 years, over 800,000 Norwegians followed them, almost one-third of Norway's entire population at that time. It was one of the largest mass migrations in European history.

That is why October 9th, the day they landed, is now officially Leif Erikson Day in America, to honor both Leif Erikson, the first Norwegian to find America in 1000 AD, and this ship Restauration, which brought the first Norwegians to stay. Today, a perfect full-size replica of Restauration sails in the fjords of Norway as a floating museum, and the original Restauration House and cemetery is a historic museum in Kendall, New York, maintained by Norwegian-Americans.

This small 54-foot ship is the reason why today, 200 years later, 4.5 million Americans proudly say they are Norwegian-American. It all started with 52 brave, poor, religious people on a boat smaller than a bus who chose freedom over comfort.







West Concord Library hosts final Legacy programs for the season





The West Concord Library hosted their final Legacy programs for the 2026 season. Chad Lewis came and spoke on Paranormal Minnesota on November 5 and Heidi Bacon visited on November 10 and taught a lesson in lefse making with samples. She also read "My Grandma Makes Lefse", a children's book written by her sister and illustrated by Heidi.

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



City of West Concord – Water, Sewer & Storm Sewer Utility Updates

Tired of Waiting for Your Utility Bill? Sign Up for Email Billing!

With the ongoing issues and delays with USPS mail delivery, why not make life a little easier and sign up for email utility billing! When your monthly bill is ready, you'll receive an email with your current utility bill. No more waiting for the mail or wondering if your bill got lost along the way!

You can also pay your utility bill online! Simply visit www.westconcordmn.com and click the online payment link at the bottom of our homepage. It's quick, convenient, and can be done from the comfort of your home. Interested in switching to email billing or online payments? Contact City Hall (507-527-2668), and we'll help get you signed up!

Important Notice: Past-Due Utility Bills

All utility accounts with balances 60 days or more past due must be paid in full by December 10, 2026, to avoid having the outstanding balance assessed to property taxes.

Some residents may have received a past-due notice even though they typically pay online or have already made a payment. Please understand that the City is required to send notices to all accounts identified as past due. If you've already paid your balance, thank you! If you have questions regarding your account, please contact City Hall.

A Few Friendly Reminders!

Utility bills are always due on the 21st of each month, unless the 21st falls on a weekend. Please plan accordingly to avoid late fees.

Paying with cash? We kindly ask that you bring the correct change when paying your utility bill at City Hall. We do not keep cash on hand to break larger bills.

Thank you for helping us keep utility billing running smoothly.
We appreciate your cooperation!

SNOW REMOVAL IN WEST CONCORD

IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR SNOW!

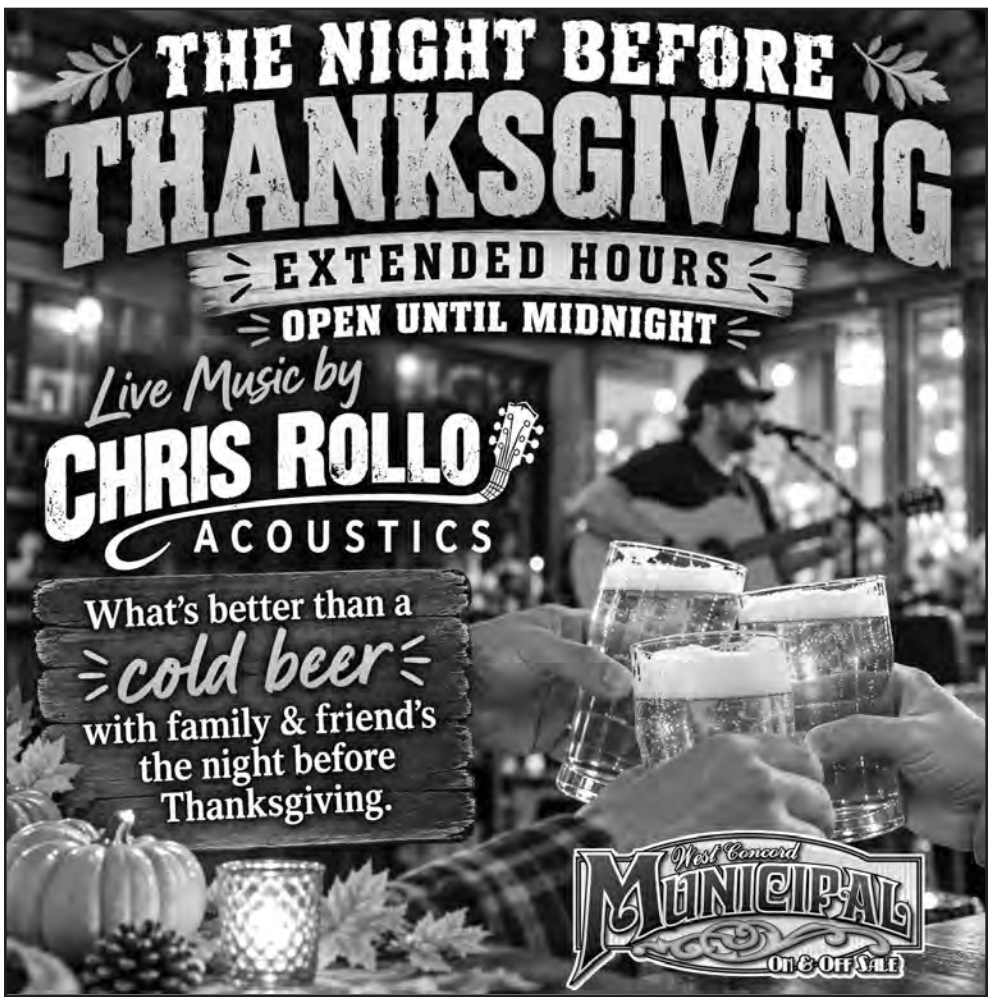
Snow Emergencies: No vehicle or trailer shall be parked on any city street or alley during a declared snow emergency. A snow emergency is defined as any time the quantity of snow warrants the deployment of snowplows. During snow emergencies, no parking shall be allowed on the road or alley for 48 hours after the start of a snowfall. Warnings and/or citations will be issued to vehicle owners parked in the path of snowplow on the first pass. Any vehicle violating this article may be towed without notice to the property owner, at the owner's expense.



Piling of Snow: Persons shall not push or deposit snow or ice into a street or alley from private property or public boulevards. Do not pile snow at street corners or at the ends of public drives so it interferes with the view of the traveling public. Property owners will be charged removal costs if such piles must be removed by City staff or other agent of City.

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









Christmas Events are just Around the Corner

(continued from page 1)

Stop between 5 and 7pm for a visit.

Saturday, December 5 from 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. downtown Kasson turns into a winter wonderland for the day!

Families can snap photos with Santa, pose with our giant Yeti, and hop the trolley for stops all around town. Kids can get their hands busy with holiday crafts and games, warm up with a cup of hot chocolate, decorate an ornament or enter our coloring contest, and keep an eye out for giveaway baskets along the way. It's a full day of holiday cheer, and every participating business helps make the magic happen.

Christmas in West Concord will be held on Saturday December 5th. The Bell Tower Center will have coffee, cocoa and hot cider starting at 9am. Check out the silent auction, festival of wreaths and the Christmas Program at 5pm. There will be a free community supper from 5:30 to 7pm. The American Legion will have fresh homemade doughnuts starting at 7am and there is a Christmas Marketplace at the Historical Society from 9am to 2:30pm with lunch served from 11am to 1pm.

On Saturday December 5th in Goodhue you can experience the Christkindlmarket German Christmas Market, featuring German food and beverages, children's activities, artisans, crafter and vendors, horse drawn rides and meet Santa and the Grinch from 11am to 3pm.

Thursday, December 10, from 5 to 7 p.m Kenyon businesses will be open for evening shopping and will hold prize drawings. Shoppers can also sign up at local businesses for the Kenyon Commercial Club's ham drawing. Santa will stroll through downtown and stop at State Farm for photos. The library will host its annual Candy Land event.

On Saturday, December 12 the Kenyon VFW will host a Sip and Shop featuring local vendors. The Kenyon Area Historical Society will hold its annual Bake Sale & Cookie Walk at the Gunderson House.

On Saturday, December 12th, Triton's Community Education joins with Dodge County's Salvation Army to bring sweets and treats to all the good boys and girls of all ages. There will be 3 hours of family fun to join in on, starting at 10 am and going until 1 pm.

You can park and enter through the Main



Elementary Door. Here you will find horse drawn sleigh rides waiting to whisk you away, maybe even through some snow? There will be free pictures with Santa, and you can decorate cookies with the girl scouts. There will be crafts to make to bring home and hot cocoa to sip on while you do so.

And gift giving just got easier, too! Local vendors and crafters will have unique products on display for those hard to buy presents for, because these gifts are handmade and one of a kind! The winter wonderland will put you in a festive spirit for your holiday shopping pleasure as you peruse the colorful displays of gifts and sweets. As you can tell, the elves among us have outdone themselves again, so be sure to avoid the Christmas Last Minute Shopping Blues and find that special hand-crafted gift for everyone on your list.

20 Years of Hometown Christmas Magic: Christmas in West Concord Returns December 5!

(continued from page 1)

On Saturday, December 5, 2026, West Concord will celebrate the 20th Annual Christmas in West Concord, marking two decades of holiday memories, community spirit, and hometown Christmas magic.

This milestone celebration promises to be one of the best yet, with beloved traditions, exciting new activities, delicious food, holiday shopping, and entertainment for all ages. Whether you've called West Concord home for generations or are visiting for the first time, everyone is invited to experience what makes this community such a wonderful place to live and visit.

Holiday Favorites and New Treasures at the Bell Tower Center

The historic Bell Tower Center will once again be at the heart of the celebration, bringing several of the day's most anticipated attractions together under one roof.

The always-popular Silent Auction, sponsored by the Cardinal Club, will feature baskets and other wonderful items just waiting for the highest bidder. The beautiful Festival of Wreaths returns featuring festive wreaths created to celebrate the season. Visitors can vote for their favorite wreath and place a bid to take one home to decorate their own house! Joining these holiday favorites is the NEW Santa's Gift & Snack Shoppe, along with limited-edition Christmas ornaments commemorating the celebration.

While visiting, be sure to register for a chance to win a 2006 Silver Proof Coin, generously sponsored by the West Concord Area Foundation. Complimentary coffee, cocoa, and hot apple cider will also be served in the morning, sponsored by the Dodge County Salvation Army.

Christmas Traditions: Music and a Community Dinner

One of the most cherished traditions of Christmas in West Concord is the annual Christmas Program at the Bell Tower Center, beginning at 5:00 p.m. This heartwarming gathering brings neighbors and families together to celebrate the true spirit of the season through music, fellowship, and holiday traditions.

Following the program, everyone is invited to enjoy the FREE Community Christmas Supper from approximately 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., sponsored by the West Concord EDA. It's a wonderful opportunity to gather with friends, reconnect with neighbors, and celebrate the season together.

New for 2026: Even More Holiday Fun!

The 20th anniversary brings several exciting additions to the celebration!

West Concord Chiropractic & Wellness invites visitors to enjoy A Merry Little Adjust-MINT.

(continued on page 15)



Holly J. Burow
CPA, LLC
Certified Public Accountant
holly@hollyjcpa.com
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Office: 507-527-2898 Cell: 507-838-2970 Fax: 507-527-2445



20 Years of Hometown Christmas Magic: Christmas in West Concord Returns December 5!

(continued from page 14)

At the West Concord Historical Society, the Dodge County Salvation Army will host a Red Kettle Campaign giving visitors an opportunity to help others this holiday season. While there, explore the Christmas Marketplace and enjoy lunch.

The West Concord Municipal Liquor Store is introducing a Wine Tasting with cheese and chocolate pairings beginning at 2:00 pm. Guests can also enjoy a Bloody Mary Special earlier in the day and live music with Andy Tackett beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Old-Fashioned Favorites for the Whole Family

Some traditions are simply too good to change! For many, Christmas in West Concord wouldn't be complete without a stop at the American Legion for their famous hot, fresh homemade doughnuts, served from 7:00 to 11:00 a.m. It's the perfect way to start a day of holiday fun!

At Heritage Bank, children can visit Santa Claus, participate in a coloring contest, and enjoy Literacy Grant and Sharing Tree activities. City Hall and the West Concord Library will welcome families for children's crafts and Cookies with the Cops, along with a Snowplow Safety presentation by Public Works.

Wescon Lanes will serve breakfast from 8:00 to 10:30 a.m., followed by FREE bowling and lunch specials until to 2:00 p.m. Casey's General Store will offer free coffee, while Dollar General will have candy for kids and door prize registration.

And don't forget the spirit of giving! The West Concord Fire Department will host a Toys for Tots collection at Centennial Park, helping make Christmas brighter for children in need.

Celebrating 20 Years of Community and Christmas Spirit

This special anniversary celebrates everything that makes small-town life extraordinary. It's a chance to slow down during the busy holiday season, enjoy the simple pleasures of Christmas, and appreciate the people and places that make West Concord feel like home.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 5, 2026, and help us celebrate 20 years of Christmas in West Concord! Bring your family, invite your friends, and spend the day experiencing a little hometown Christmas magic.

Come celebrate the holiday season with us and discover why West Concord is such a great place to live and visit!

All activities are subject to change or cancellation. Follow the City of West Concord Facebook page for the latest updates.

Christmas Picture Day at KFS of Kasson









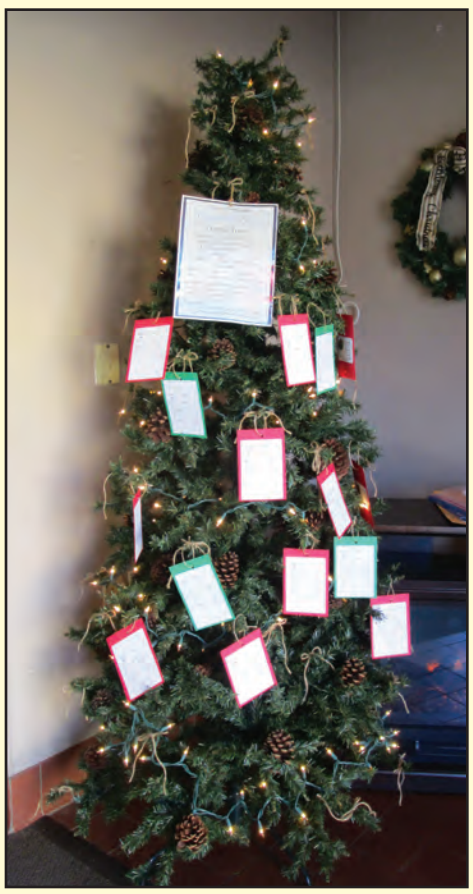








K-M Care and Share Giving Trees



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Hardware Hank

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Active PT to Open Physical Therapy Clinic in Dodge Center December 8

New location will offer Tuesday and Thursday appointments with Kasson resident Garrett Nogosek, DPT



Garrett Nogosek, DPT

DODGE CENTER, Minn. — November 4, 2026 — Active PT will open a new physical therapy clinic at 215 W Highway St. (formerly Subway) in Dodge Center on Tuesday, December 8, bringing personalized care for pain, injuries, and rehabilitation closer to home for area residents.

The clinic will see patients on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Appointments are available to schedule now by calling (507) 451-8254. Active PT also offers free pain and injury screenings for people who are unsure where to start.

Care will be provided by Garrett Nogosek, DPT, Cert. DN, who lives in Kasson with his family. Nogosek earned his Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the Mayo Clinic School of Health Sciences in Rochester in 2025 and holds certification in dry needling. His clinical interests include lower-extremity and sports-related injuries, rehabilitation after surgery, and treating back, neck, knee, and jaw pain.

Before the clinic opens, Garrett will offer free pain or injury screenings at the new Dodge Center location on November 24, December 1, and December 3, from 5:15 to 7 p.m. The events allow community members to meet Garrett, have their pain or problem assessed, and learn about the best next steps for care. No appointment is necessary for these screening events. Minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

"I'm excited for the opportunity to serve Dodge Center and the surrounding communities.

(continued on page 19)







Why Our Forefathers Were Much Healthier



By Shauna Burshem, D.C.

For most of human history, people didn't have to think much about staying healthy. Good health was simply a byproduct of how they lived. Our ancestors ate nutrient-dense whole foods, moved their bodies all day long, and lived in step with the natural world around them. There were no calorie counters, step trackers, or shelves of supplements, because their surroundings gave their bodies what they needed. Today, many of us struggle with low energy, sluggish metabolism, and chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and obesity, even with more health information at our fingertips than ever before.

Looking back at how past generations lived can give us a practical roadmap for feeling better now.

Traditional diets looked very different from what fills most grocery carts today. Families valued the whole animal, not just lean cuts like chicken breasts or tenderloins. Organ meats were common in cookbooks from the 1700s through the early 1900s, and bones were simmered into broths rich in collagen and amino acids that support the gut, joints, and skin. Saturated fats from butter and animal sources were welcomed rather than feared, and some researchers now question the mid-century push to replace them with seed oils. Carbohydrates were part of the picture too, but they came from root vegetables, seasonal fruits, and whole grains that were soaked or fermented for easier digestion. Vegetables were usually roasted, steamed, or stewed, and meals followed a simple rhythm of three nourishing plates a day, all made from scratch. Industrialization changed that, bringing refined sugars, seed oils, and packaged convenience foods that are high in calories but low in real nutrition.

Movement was also built into everyday life. Farming, construction, and manufacturing demanded hours of physical effort, and that steady activity helped keep metabolism humming. Research shows that Americans' resting metabolic rate has dropped about 6% since 1820, and the energy demands of the average job have fallen by roughly 25% since 1870. Desk jobs and labor-saving devices have shifted us toward long hours of sitting, which takes a toll on metabolic health, posture, and mobility. We've also lost much of our time outdoors, which once helped people make plenty of vitamin D and gave the immune system a boost. Studies link time in green spaces to lower inflammation and stronger immune activity.

Our ancestors also lived without the steady stream of synthetic chemicals we face today. Their food wasn't sprayed with modern pesticides, their water didn't carry microplastics or pharmaceutical residues, and their homes weren't filled with plastics and chemical-laden products. Today, compounds like BPA, phthalates, and PFAS are nearly impossible to avoid, and they have been linked to metabolic, reproductive, and developmental concerns. Some researchers also raise questions about certain food additives, noting that excess iron from fortified processed foods may contribute to iron overload and that high fluoride exposure has been studied for possible effects on the thyroid and nervous system. Cutting back on unnecessary toxins where you can is a simple, meaningful step toward lightening your body's load.

Finally, sleep once followed the sun. Morning daylight helped people wake up naturally, and as evening fell, warm firelight and candlelight let melatonin rise so the body could rest and repair. Full-spectrum sunlight, including near-infrared light, also supported healthy mitochondria, the tiny energy producers inside your cells. Now, blue light from screens and bright indoor lighting keeps us wired late into the night, throwing off our internal clocks and hormone balance. Some research suggests that constant exposure to electromagnetic fields from phones and Wi-Fi may also interfere with deep sleep. The goal isn't to live in the past. It's to borrow these time-tested habits, like getting morning sunlight, eating real food, moving more, and winding down when it gets dark, so you and your family can rebuild the energy and resilience that used to be normal.

Microplastics showing up in birds lungs! Microplastics are tiny bits of plastic smaller than 5 millimeters, and they really are everywhere. They're in the water we drink, the food we eat and the air we breathe. Because they're so small, they can slip past the body's natural defenses and settle into our tissues, including our lungs. A 2025 study made this crystal clear. Researchers examined the lungs of 56 birds from 51 different species and found plastic particles in every single sample, averaging about 221 particles per species. Birds are often an early warning sign for problems in our environment, so these findings strongly suggest that we're breathing in the same contamination. In fact, earlier research has already found microplastics in human lung tissue, including particles from common plastics like polypropylene and PET, the material used in many drink bottles.

What concerns me most is what happens once these particles get inside us. Microplastics and the chemicals they carry have been linked to hormone disruption, which can affect metabolism, fertility, mood and thyroid function. Your immune system also treats these particles as invaders, which can lead to chronic inflammation. They've been tied to oxidative stress, which damages cells and drains energy, and to gut damage that weakens digestion and immune balance. Even more troubling, the smallest particles, called nanoplastics, have been shown to cross the placenta and the blood-brain barrier. That means they can reach a developing baby and the brain itself. If you're pregnant, trying to conceive or raising little ones, this is worth paying close attention to. The good news is that a few simple changes at home can make a real difference over time. Start by switching to reusable cloth or canvas bags instead of plastic ones. Store your food in glass or stainless steel containers, especially anything you plan to heat. Cut back on single-use plastics like straws, plastic cutlery and disposable water bottles. When it's time to replace things around the house, choose natural materials like wood, bamboo, cotton, wool or ceramic. Finally, improve your indoor air by opening windows, dusting and vacuuming often, and running an air purifier with a HEPA filter. You don't have to do it all at once. Every small step helps lower your plastic load and supports a healthier body for you and your family.

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

Active PT to Open Physical Therapy Clinic in Dodge Center December 8 *(continued from page 18)*

My goal is to get to know each patient, understand what matters most to them, and help them get back to doing the things they love," said Nogosek.

Active PT emphasizes listening to each patient's story, hands-on care, and treatment plans built around individual goals. The Dodge Center location will serve residents of Dodge Center and nearby communities.

To schedule a physical therapy appointment, call (507) 451-8254 or visit https://activeptandsports.com/.

About ActivePT

Founded in 2008, ActivePT is a southern Minnesota outpatient physical therapy practice committed to understanding each patient's story and providing personalized care guided by patient goals, clinician experience, and research. Your goals — Our passion.







Stretching Your Grocery Budget



By Noel Aldrich, PhD, CNS
Licensed Nutritionist

As we move into the winter months here in Minnesota, we prepare for colder days and winter storms by stocking our shelves and cupboards. But food costs are rising and budgets are getting tighter, so we need to give priority to the foods that are essential for sustaining health. Higher gasoline prices also affect the budget and may mean fewer trips to the grocery store. Many rural food pantries across southern Minnesota have reduced access or closed entirely as their resources have been restricted.

Beginning in November, colds and flu increase steadily across the country. This yearly cycle has become so routine that many people expect to get sick and treat it as unavoidable. But each of us also has a remarkable immune system, the built-in defense process that keeps us alive by constantly guarding against germs and invaders. We should understand how it works and how to support it.

White blood cells are the "troops" on the front line of your immune system. Just as the military has different branches, there are many types of white blood cells, and each has a specific job. And like our service members, these cells need food to keep doing their jobs well. When key nutrients run short, the cells can't perform at their best. To keep your front line"troops" in top condition this winter, make sure they are getting what they need.

Three nutrients to prioritize

Vitamin C helps white blood cells eliminate bacteria and germs, and it is one of the least expensive vitamins on the market. Good food sources include bell peppers, broccoli, kiwi, whole oranges, and strawberries. I recommend whole oranges over orange juice because of the juice's high sugar content.

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin essential for balanced cell activity. It can enter the nucleus of a cell and help turn important processes on and off. Food sources include cod liver oil, goose liver, salmon, sardines, and whole eggs. I prefer these whole foods to fortified products. Vitamin D is especially important for Minnesotans during the winter months with limited sunshine. You can find more resources at www.grassrootshealth.net.

Zinc is an essential mineral for a strong immune system, and it is also needed to build the proteins that fight bacteria. The best food sources are beef, lamb, lentils, pepitas (pumpkin seeds), and cashews. If you don't eat these foods regularly, a 15 mg zinc tablet per day is another option.

Go easy on the sweets

Sugar is known as an energy source, but it doesn't help immune cells get more work done. A 1973 study observed that white blood cells exposed to glucose slowed down and stayed sluggish for up to five hours. As you move into the holiday season, pay attention to how often you are having treats and how your body responds. A glass of water will do more for your immune system than another candy.

You only get one body in this lifetime. Make sure you take good care of it and do not wear it out sooner than necessary.

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 free Strategy Call 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



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Fun Indoor Games to Play with Your Dog

Being stuck at home, for any reason, can be a bummer for both you and your dog. But even though you're confined inside, you can still engage in meaningful activities with your dog that can stimulate them mentally and physically. So, the next time you find yourself homebound, don't let it spoil your fun. Try out these games and activities to keep your dog on their toes.

Hidden Treasure.

Dogs have a remarkable sense of smell. Did you know that they have approximately 45 times more scent receptors than humans? What better way to exercise that sense of smell than by making a game that uses it? All you need to do is collect a few small boxes or containers and arrange them upside down. Place a prize, such as a favorite treat, underneath one of them and encourage your dog to start sniffing around. When your dog accurately identifies which container the treat is under, make sure to congratulate them and, of course, reward them with the hidden treasure.

You can also use a snuffle mat to engage your dog's sense of smell and curiosity. There are multiple pockets to hide treats in and different puzzles with adjustable difficulty. Help mentally stimulate your dog and work on their nose work skills!

Hide and Seek.

You likely loved this game when you were a kid, so why not enjoy it with your dog? For this game to be successful, your dog will have to understand basic commands, such as sit, stay, and come. Lead them to a room and ask them to stay, then leave and hide in a different location. When you've found the perfect hiding place, call their name to encourage them to come find you. Once they've figured out where you are, it's time to celebrate their big accomplishment.

Speaking of basic commands, an obedience training session is a perfect way to stay occupied. Whether you're working on enhancing your dog's skills for competitions or simply making sure your dog can listen and respond to you in a positive way, an obedience-retrieving dumbbell is a great tool to use for a practice session.

Now, this is a fun exercise. While your dog is on a leash, rile them up as much as possible — you can run around cheering, jumping up and down — anything to get your dog as excited as possible. Then, mid-romp, you'll instruct them to sit. This may take some practice, depending on how hyperactive your dog is, but after a few tries, your dog should be able to go from a state of excitement to sitting patiently on command.

Obstacle Course.

This one's easy because you can take advantage of common household objects and design the course to be as simple or difficult as you want. You could use broken-down boxes for your dog to crawl through, place chairs down for them to navigate through, and even stack books for them to jump over.

You can make an easy DIY dog jump made from household items, or you can also use a set of cones and poles to create your own training and obstacle course.

One way to make sure that your dog is positively occupied inside is by engaging them with a dog training platform and agility system. Many options are adjustable and can be sized to your dog's specifications. Some are even waterproof and washable, so you can use them outside.

Known in the sport of agility as weave poles, this is a training game you can play with your dog. You can set up "poles" using household objects, like chairs, or even friends or family members. Instruct your dog to heel alongside you as you weave between them. You can change your pace from fast to slow, which will encourage your dog to concentrate on following you as you change direction. This is an awesome way to work on coordination, while also getting a cardio workout for both of you.

There's no shortage of meaningful activities you can do with your dog, even when you're cooped up inside. Be sure to make the most of it and spend some quality time bonding with your dog and developing their mental and physical skills.

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Farm Girl Chatter

Fall Harvest: The Season of Thankfulness

By McKell Lemmerman



The month of gratitude, the beauty of the changing seasons, and the reminder to appreciate the little things in life.

The time when slowing down doesn't mean just sitting back and relaxing but recognizing the equipment on the roads. To take your time when you get "stuck" behind them and can't hurry around. Remember that is someone's loved one driving that machinery.

There is something special about being in a combine when it works its way through a field at sunset. The corn stands tall before it, and behind it lies a clean path of harvested rows. Dust hangs in the air, catching the last golden rays of sunlight. The tractor pulling the grain cart follows close behind, ready to catch every bushel before the combine tank fills. It is like a coordinated dance with perfect timing, trust, and with every person knowing their part.



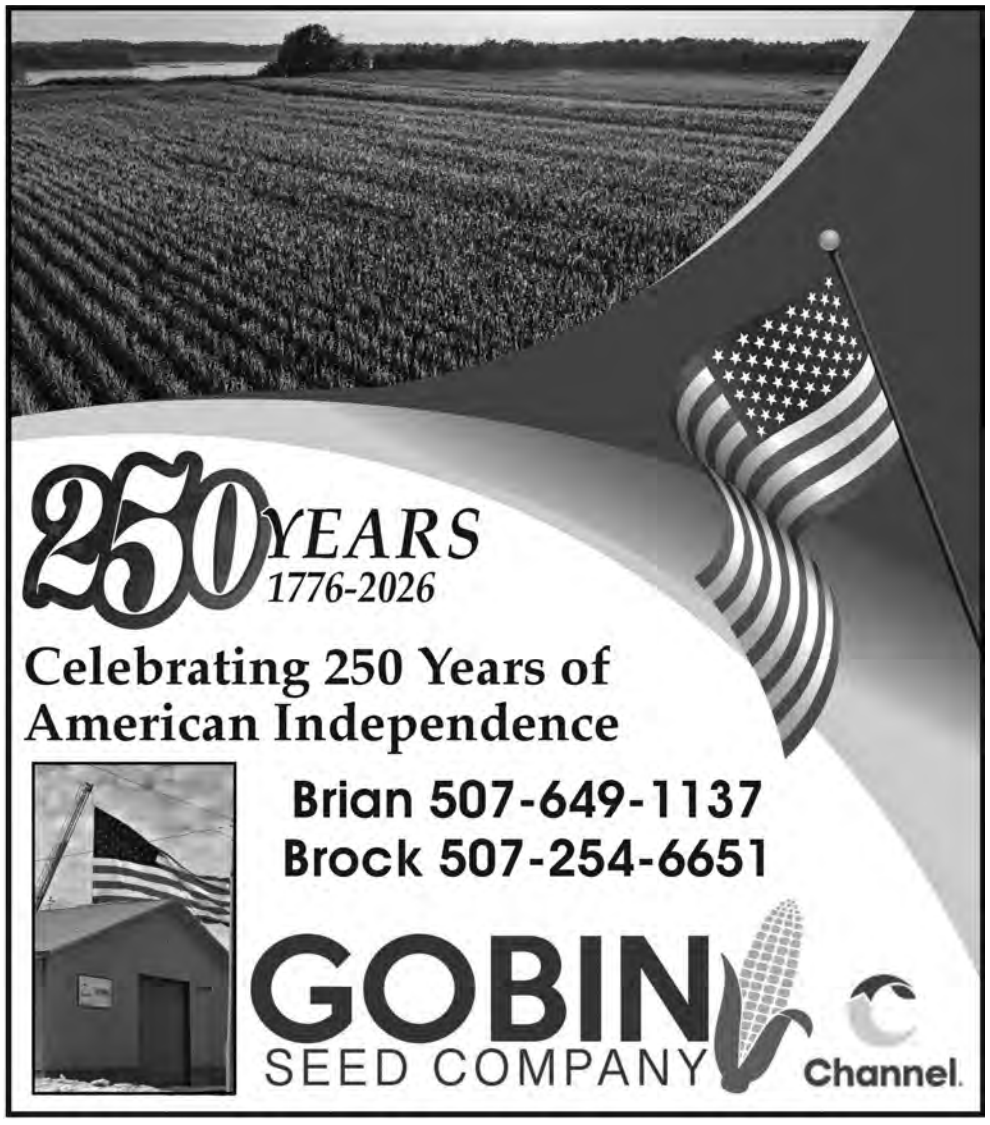
Harvest does not always follow a convenient schedule. Sometimes supper is brought to the field, sometimes sleep gets pushed back, and sometimes the only time to rest is when the machinery needs fixing or Mother Nature starts the sprinkler system.

I find myself looking toward the fields. The bright lights of tractors and combines shine across the dark countryside like a football stadium in the middle of nowhere.

Maybe this is what thankfulness looks like in the farming world. It is not always sitting quietly with a list of things to be grateful for. It is standing along a gravel road, watching the lights move through a field long after dark. It is bringing a meal or a nice cold beverage to someone who has been working since sunrise. It is appreciating a good crop, a dependable machine, a helping hand, or another beautiful sunset at the end of a long day.

It is simply remembering the people behind it all.

Thank you, farmers!



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Gardeners, Relax and Take Time to Read



By Lorrie Rugg
Master Gardener

As our growing season is winding down and the garden chores keep getting checked off my list to get done I begin to think about another thing I really enjoy and that is reading. What do I love to read - a really good gardening book. So I did some research on what books are out there and should maybe be on my Christmas wishlist?

The best gardening books for our region are those that help us understand our climate, choose hardy plants, work with our soil and create gardens that can withstand whatever Minnesota weather throws at us. We have all experienced a late spring frost just when the apple trees or magnolias are just ready to bloom, or a summer when the rain just stops and we get very friendly with our garden hoses and an early frost that catches us off guard.

I hope that by doing a little reading this winter we all will be more prepared for next year's growing season.

Here are a few selections that sound like they would be worth reading.

The Northern Gardener: From apples to Zinnias by Mary Lahr Schier.

This book has over 150 years of Minnesota Gardening wisdom inside the cover. It includes practical advice, gardening traditions, hardy plants and stories about Minnesota horticulture.

Growing Perennials in Cold Climates - Mike Heger, John Whitman and Debbie Lonnee. This is a great reference for anyone who loves perennial gardening. It helps you choose the right plant for the right place.

Month-by-Month Gardening in Minnesota - Melinda Myers. This is a great book for knowing what to do and when to do it. We all struggle with timing because our weather can vary so much from year to year. What worked last year might not work this year.

Growing Shrubs and Small Trees in Cold Climates - Debie Lonnee, Nancy Rose, Don Selinger and John Whitman. This is a wonderful resource for choosing trees and shrubs that can withstand our Minnesota winters. It has a nice selection of varieties with attractive flowers, berries and year round interest..

I hope these books offer more than just instructions - they offer inspiration to try new things and the knowledge to make it be successful. It helps us to understand the relationship between our gardens and our Minnesota weather. It can save you years of trial and error.

I read the best advice for Minnesota gardeners is : Work with our climate rather than against it. We can make plans and have everything figured out, but

Mother Nature always has the final say. Every garden year is different and our climate is changing, so we need to change some of the ways we do things. One thing I love about gardening is - there is always something new to learn. It is an ongoing process.

I hope you find some of these books under your tree this Holiday season.,

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Who Owns Main Street?



By Benya Kraus
President & CEO Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

Recently, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) partnered with Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) and Rural Voice to facilitate two important discussions in southern Minnesota. A question framed much of our recent Rural Voice event in Albert Lea: Who owns Main Street?

At first glance, the answer seems obvious. Main Street is owned by the people who own the buildings, the businesses and the property that line our downtowns. But as we listened to business owners, community leaders and residents from across southern Minnesota, it became clear that ownership is about far more than a deed or a storefront. Main Street is shaped and sustained by the people who invest themselves in a community every single day.

Consider the owner of a small boutique, the operator of a screen-printing company or the family running a local restaurant. Their work may be selling clothing, producing custom apparel or serving meals. But that is rarely the full extent of what they contribute. They are the people organizing downtown events. They sponsor youth sports teams. They donate gift cards for school fundraisers. They remember their customers' names, ask about a parent's health and become a mentor for a teenager's first job.

When we choose to support local businesses, we are purchasing far more than a product. We are investing in relationships. We are investing in a downtown that feels alive. We are investing in people who are helping build the civic and social fabric of our communities.

The challenge is that many of these community-building businesses are also among the most undercapitalized. During our conversations, we heard from owners operating on razor-thin margins. Many shared stories of working extraordinarily long days because they were hesitant to take on debt that could require putting their homes or personal assets at risk. Others knew they could grow if they purchased additional equipment or hired another employee, but lacked the resources and support necessary to take that next step.

This is where community banks play a critical role. Across southern Minnesota, local lenders continue to serve communities and businesses that might otherwise be overlooked by national banks. Yet even community banks are constrained with what support they can offer. Some businesses need additional flexibility to reflect the seasonality of their sales, or some added coaching to offload their tasks to another employee and think differently about their pricing strategy. Other businesses may be asset-light, so struggle to collateralize their loan. Or the owners may have had health bills go unpaid in the past, and so struggle with their credit score.

That is where Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation can help.

Our role is not to replace traditional lenders but to complement them. We serve as a gap funder, a coach, and a flexible, creative financing partner. We understand that many small businesses are trying to grow in an economy that often concentrates resources toward the largest companies while leaving small, locally owned enterprises with fewer options for the capital they need to succeed.



And it's not just businesses that struggle to get access to funding.

Despite making up 20% of the U.S. population, rural communities get only 3% of philanthropic funding. That's why we focus so much of our grantmaking on small, rural towns. Recently, SMIF awarded a new round of Small Town Grants to local projects working to strengthen quality of life and social connections.

In Mabel, the public library will launch a game night and Silver Screen Movies for Seniors, a free monthly movie and discussion program designed to reduce isolation and increase social engagement among older residents. The effort brings together the library, senior dining programs, assisted living providers, churches and civic organizations to create meaningful opportunities for community connection.

In Montgomery, 507 Food Share is partnering with Tri-City United Schools to establish a Weekend Backpack Nutrition Program for students. The initiative will provide food directly to children who need it, reducing barriers to access while preserving privacy and dignity for families.

And in Medford, the United Way of Steele County is leading a community planning effort focused on the future of the Medford Community Pool. More than a recreational facility, the pool serves as a gathering place and source of community pride. This project will engage residents in shaping a long-term vision for preserving an important community asset while strengthening local leadership and civic participation along the way.

So, who owns Main Street?

The answer is all of us.

And when we recognize, support and invest in the people who build community, we are helping ensure that our towns remain vibrant places not just for today, but for generations to come.

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

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

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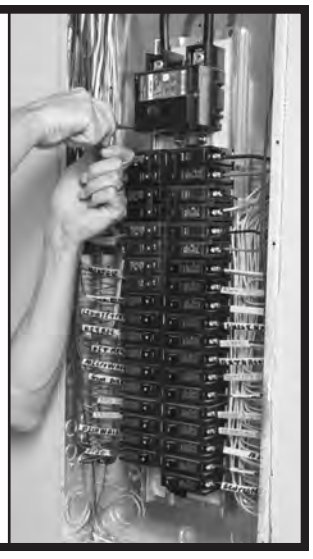
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Dear Savvy Senior,

I'm a 68-year-old woman and over the past few years my hair has become noticeably thinner, especially on top. Is this just part of aging, or could it be a sign of a health problem? And are there treatments that really help women with hair loss?

–Thinning Thelma

Dear Thelma,

Hair thinning is a common concern for women as they age, especially after menopause, but it's not something you should automatically dismiss as getting older. While some hair loss is a normal part of aging, it can also be linked to underlying health conditions, medications, nutritional deficiencies, stress, or other treatable issues. The good news is that in many cases, the cause can be identified and sometimes successfully treated.

Aging changes

One of the most common causes of thinning hair in older women is female pattern hair loss, also called androgenetic alopecia. It usually appears as gradual thinning on the top of the scalp or a widening part, rather than bald patches. After menopause, declining estrogen levels can affect the hair growth cycle, causing strands to become finer, grow more slowly, and shed more easily over time.

Possible causes

But hormones and aging aren't the only explanations. Hair loss can also follow a major illness, surgery, COVID infection, or a period of significant stress. In these cases, shedding often begins a few months later and may improve on its own.

Other possible causes include thyroid disorders, iron deficiency, poor nutrition, autoimmune conditions, and scalp disorders. Medications can also play a role. Drugs such as blood thinners, antidepressants, beta blockers, cholesterol medications, thyroid treatments, arthritis drugs, and some hormone therapies have all been linked to hair loss in some people. If you suspect a medication may be involved, don't stop it on your own – ask your doctor about alternatives.

Get checked

Because there are so many possible causes, the first step is getting a proper evaluation. See your doctor or a dermatologist if you notice sudden shedding, rapid thinning, bald patches, or scalp itching or pain. They may review your medications, examine your scalp, and order simple blood tests to check for problems such as thyroid imbalance or iron deficiency.

What helps

Treatment depends on the cause. If an underlying condition such as thyroid disease, iron deficiency, medication side effects, or poor nutrition is identified, treating it may help restore hair growth.

For older women with age-related female pattern hair loss, the treatment with the best evidence is topical minoxidil (Rogaine), available over the counter. It can help slow thinning and stimulate some regrowth, but results take several months and continued use is needed to maintain any benefit. Some women who don't respond may be candidates for low-dose oral minoxidil, which is an off-label treatment and requires medical supervision because of possible side effects.

Be cautious with hair-growth supplements. Unless you have a true deficiency, products such as biotin usually provide little benefit and can interfere with certain lab tests, including thyroid and some heart tests.

Gentle hair care and cosmetic options can also help. Avoid harsh chemical treatments, tight hairstyles that pull on the hair, and excessive heat from blow dryers or styling tools. A fuller haircut, thickening styling products, hair-building fibers that reduce the appearance of thinning spots, or lightweight hairpieces and wigs can also improve appearance and confidence.

Hair thinning in older women is common, but it isn't always just a normal part of aging. Because it can sometimes signal an underlying medical issue, it's worth getting checked – especially if it comes on suddenly or worsens quickly. While not every type of hair loss can be reversed, treatment and practical strategies can often slow it down and help you feel better about how your hair looks.

To the Editor:
The Doorway Between the Conference and the Book Fair

By Douglas Vandergraph
https://douglasvandergraph.com

Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are not necessarily those of The Messenger.

On Thursday evening, a parent may come through the school doors with a question that has been waiting all week. The Kasson-Mantorville elementary calendar lists parent-teacher conferences for November 19, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. The same date is a family shopping evening for the school's fall book fair. Those two invitations share a building, but they remind us of two different kinds of opportunity: the chance to be heard, and the chance to take a story home.

Neither opportunity should depend on a family's ability to move quickly, spend freely, or know exactly what to ask.

There is a familiar temptation at a parent-teacher conference. A short appointment begins, several important subjects compete for attention, and everyone tries to be efficient. Some caregivers arrive knowing the language of academic goals and school systems. Others may have questions they cannot quite organize into a sentence. They might be exhausted from work, anxious about what they will hear, or worried that asking for clarification will sound like a criticism. Those possibilities are not evidence of any particular problem in Kasson-Mantorville. They are reasons for any community to make listening a deliberate practice.

A teacher's preparation matters, but so does a parent's courage in showing up. A caregiver who says, "I don't understand how to help with this," has not failed a test. That sentence can be the beginning of a partnership. The most useful answer may be a small one: show me an example, tell me the next step, or point me toward a person I can ask later. The purpose of a conference is not to leave everyone with a stack of perfect answers. It is to make the next conversation possible.

The book fair offers another picture of belonging. A child may leave with a new book, and that can be a wonderful gift. Another child may simply look at the covers, read a few pages, or imagine a story without bringing anything home. That child's curiosity is just as real. A community that values reading can celebrate the purchase and also protect the pleasure of reading for those who cannot buy. Teachers, libraries, neighbors, and relatives each have ways to keep stories circulating beyond a shopping night.

In Mark 10, people tried to keep children away from Jesus. He did not treat the interruption as an inconvenience. He welcomed them and made their place among the crowd unmistakable. That passage is not a shortcut to an education policy. It is a challenge to the attitude we bring to every doorway: Who feels expected here, and who has to work harder to enter?

A practical welcome can be ordinary. It can sound like a teacher asking whether the explanation made sense, without embarrassment if it did not. It can be a parent admitting that a schedule is difficult and asking whether another way to stay connected is available. It can be an older student sharing a favorite library book with a younger one, or a neighbor offering a ride when it is wanted and appropriate. These are examples of kindness, not claims about services currently offered.

Communities also have a responsibility to respect the limits of teachers and families. No educator can be available every hour, and no parent can attend every event. Listening well includes clear expectations, realistic follow-up, and a willingness to admit when another resource is needed. Compassion without boundaries burns people out; boundaries without compassion leave people alone.

When the conference tables are folded and the book fair shelves are packed away, the real question remains: Did someone leave knowing that their voice matters? Did a child discover that stories belong to them even when their hands are empty? Did an adult find one next step instead of one more reason to feel behind?

In a small town, the answer is built across many days. The doors open for a scheduled evening. Our responsibility is to keep the welcome alive after the lights go out.

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November is National Alzheimer's Awareness Month

Funded in part by the SEMN Area Agency on Aging.
ELDER NETWORK
www.elder-network.org

Elder Network is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit serving our communities since 1988. We have been serving Dodge County since 2022, and are working to provide the community with supportive services and information for older adults and caregivers. November is National Alzheimer's Awareness Month and we want to take the time to remember those living with Alzheimer's Dementia and their family members who comprise 102,000 people in Minnesota living with Alzheimer's dementia. According to Mayo Clinic, Alzheimer's disease can "cause brain cells to die over time and the brain to shrink," which can lead to memory loss and cognitive decline. We want to promote the importance of cognitive health and taking steps to protect your memory and overall health.

Please contact Pa Cha Vang, Dodge County Program Manager for caregiver support, educational opportunities, and referrals to our programs. Contact Pa Cha at 507-285-5272 or pachav@elder-network.org.

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF DODGE
DISTRICT COURT
PROBATE DIVISION
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT
Court File No.
20-PR-26-662
In Re the Estate of:
KAY F. MEYER, a/k/a
KAY FRANCIS MEYER, a/k/a
KAY MEYER,
Decedent
(Deceased person)
NOTICE AND ORDER OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR FORMAL PROBATE OF WILL AND APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

It is Ordered and Notice is given that on December 21 2026 at 9:00 a.m. a remote hearing will be held via Zoom from the Dodge County Courthouse, 22 6 th St. E, Mantorville, MN 55955, for the for the formal probate of an instrument purporting to be the Will of Decedent, dated December 12, 2008, and for the appointment of Brian D. Meyer, whose address is: 7810 North 131 East Ave., Owasso, OK 74055, AND Susan K. Rahrmann, 404 Meadowlark Ct. NW, Byron, MN 55920 as Co-Personal Representatives of the Estate of the Decedent in an UNSUPERVISED administration.

Any objections to the Petition must be filed with the Court prior to or raised at the hearing. If proper and if no objections are filed or raised, the personal representatives will be appointed with full power to administer the Estate, including the power to collect all assets, pay all legal debts, claims, taxes and expenses, to sell real and personal property, and do all necessary acts for the Estate. PLEASE SEE NOTICE OF REMOTE HEARING AND INSTRUCTIONS.

Notice is also given that (subject to Minn. Stat. 524.3-801) all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the personal representative or to the Court Administrator within four months after the date of this Notice or the claims will be barred.

Judge /s/Debra Groehler
Date 10-2-2026
Brooke Delano
Court Administrator
Attorney for Personal Representative
Daniel L. Ziebell
ZIEBELL LAW OFFICE, P.A.
13 W Main St., PO Box 248
Kasson, MN 55944-0248
Attorney ID# 280380
Phone: (507) 634-7887
ziebelllaw@kmtel.com

State of Minnesota
Dodge County
District Court
Third District
Court File Number:
20-PR-26-725
Case Type: Informal Probate
Notice of Informal Probate of Will and Appointment of Personal Representative and Notice to Creditors
Estate of Carolyn May McDonald AKA Carolyn McDonald, Deceased
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND CREDITORS:

Notice is hereby given that an application for informal probate of the above-named Decedent's Last Will dated May 24, 2006, has been filed with the Probate Registrar, and the Third Amended Application has been granted.

Notice is also given that the Probate Registrar has informally appointed the following:

Name: Paul Michael McDonald
Address: 2515 Parkhill LN SW
Rochester MN 55902

as Personal Representative of the Estate of the Decedent.

Any heir, devisee or other interested person may be entitled to appointment as Personal Representative, or may object to the appointment of the Personal Representative. Unless objections are filed pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 524.3-607, and the court otherwise orders, the Personal Representative has full power to administer the Estate, including, after 30 days from the date of issuance of letters, the power to sell, encumber, lease or distribute real estate.

Any objections to the probate of the Will, or to the appointment of the personal representative, must be filed with this court, and will be heard by the court after the filing of an appropriate petition and proper notice of hearing.

Notice is also given that, subject to Minn. Stat. § 524.3-801, all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the Personal Representative or to the Court Administrator within four (4) months after the date of this Notice, or the claims will be barred.

Self-Represented Litigant:
Paul Michael McDonald
2515 Parkhill LN SW
Rochester MN 55902
/s/ Tammy L. Merchlewitz
Probate Registrar, Tammy L. Merchlewitz Dated: Nov. 6, 2026
Brooke Delano - Court Administrator

LEGAL NOTICE

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONER'S MEETING
OCTOBER 27, 2026
STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
COUNTY OF DODGE
MANTORVILLE, MN

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

The following actions were approved:

* Agenda as discussed to switch item 7.2 to an action item.
* The following Consent Agenda items: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3.
* Public Health to accept FY 2027 TZD Safe Roads Grant in the amount of $20,435.52.
* Signatures to resolution #2026-38 – Parts of Main Street & Center Avenue, Hayfield Grant Application.
* Cooperative Construction Agreement between Dodge County and City of West Concord for reconstruction of CSAH 36, SAP 020-636-006.
* The following personnel actions: A.1, A.2, B.1.
* Payment of the following bills:

01 Revenue Fund	$ 69,042.24
13 Road and Bridge Fund	$ 124,543.49
16 Environmental Quality Fund	$ 14,730.43
52 The Midway	$ 560.00
Total	$ 208,876.16

* Stussy Construction to continue mining for 6 months, provided company complies with timelines established by Environmental Services Department & inclusion of specific dates for each item on list of guidelines and site visits.
* Stipulation that Stussy Construction must make a reasonable effort to initiate reclamation process & reclamation activities must continue throughout the 6-month period.
* Moving forward with awarding asbestos removal bid for property located at 10.010.0300 to Hummingbird Environmental Services at a cost of $6,200.
* Adjourning the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

This is a summary only. A complete set is available in the Administration Office at the Government Services Building in Mantorville, MN.

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ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
DODGE CENTER, MINNESOTA

ELECTRONIC PROPOSALS will be received through QuestCDN vBid (On-Line Bidding ONLY) by the City Council of the City of Dodge Center until **2:00 PM on the 10th day of December, 2026**, at which time the proposals will be reviewed for the following public improvements;

WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS
WIDSETH PROJECT NO. 2024-11871

The City is bidding the project using the Best Value procurement method defined in Minn. Stat. § 16C.02, subd. 4(a). A panel of committee members will rank each bidder in four (4) separate categories. There will be a maximum total of 100 points possible for each bidder and the relative weight of the selection criteria are as follows: 1) Price submitted by contractor in the proposal – max. 60 points 2) Contractor's performance on previous three similar projects – max. 15 points 3) Risk assessment and plans of mitigation – max. 15 points 4) Interview – max. 10 points (interviews will be scheduled with each bidder submitting a complete proposal and will be held the week December 14-18, 2026). The bidder with the highest average combined score following the evaluation process will be considered by the City Council of the City of Dodge Center after 6:00 PM on the 28th day of December, 2026 for possible contract award.

The work generally includes the following: **Wastewater Treatment Facility Improvements, consisting of preliminary treatment expansion, oxidation ditch improvements, new bioreactor, final clarifier improvements, UV disinfection, sludge storage tank expansion and improvements, administration building improvements and site improvements.**

No proposal will be considered unless it is electronically submitted through QuestCDN vBid prior to **2:00 PM on the 10th day of December, 2026**. No paper bids will be accepted. A Cash Deposit, Certified Check, or Bidder's Bond, payable to the City of Dodge Center, in the amount of not less than 5% of the amount of the bid must accompany each proposal as a guarantee that the bidder, upon award of the Contract will enter into a Contract with the City of Dodge Center and furnish a Performance and Payment Bond along with a Certificate of Insurance if awarded the contract. Both the Performance and Payment Bonds must be written for the full amount of the Contract and will be required with the Contract. The deposit will be subject to forfeiture as provided by law. The deposits from each bidder will be retained by the City of Dodge Center until the evaluation process is completed and it has arranged financing for the project, but no longer than sixty (60) days.

The City of Dodge Center reserves the right to waive any informalities, to reject any or all proposals and to award the Contract to the contractor offering the best value applying the weighted selection criteria previously listed in the advertisement.

A mandatory prebid conference will be held at 10:00 AM on the 18th day of November, 2026 at the Wastewater Treatment Facility: 62888 190th Avenue, Dodge Center, MN 55927

Complete digital project bidding documents will be available on November 11, 2026 at www.questcdn.com. You may download the digital plan documents for **$55.00** by inputting Quest project #10437063 on the website's Project Search page. Please contact QuestCDN.com at (952) 233-1632 or info@questcdn.com for assistance in free membership registration, downloading and working with this digital project information.

The City of Dodge Center will be using MN Public Facilities Authority funds for this project. Bidders are encouraged to utilize Disadvantaged Business Enterprises for this project. The project will also have American Iron and Steel requirements.
Bids shall be electronically submitted using QuestCDN vBid (On-Line Bidding ONLY).

Dated this 11th day of November, 2026.

Lee Mattson
City Administrator, City of Dodge Center

TRITON ISD NO. 2125 – SUMMARY SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2026 – 6:00 P.M. TRITON HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER – DODGE CENTER, MN & ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

This published information is a summary of the full minutes of October 19, 2026, Triton School Board meeting. A copy of the full minutes is available for viewing in the Triton District Office, 813 West Highway Street, Dodge Center, or online at www.triton.k12.mn.us.

Present: Wendy Kenworthy, Rebecca Knutson, J. Jensen, Dale Jensen, Brian Ginder, Scott Curran, Luke Lutterman, Shane Van Beek, Tanisha Fox, Tricia Johnson, Jaxon Marine, Kristy Faber, Mya Matejcek, Tina Kozisek, and others.

The School Board approved the following items:

• Agenda and consent agenda including the September 21, 2026 regular meeting minutes as presented; budget update; claims and bills; treasurer's report; open enrollment/nonresident agreements for students #101926A, #101926B, #101926C, and #101926D; maternity leave/FMLA for #101926A effective January 16, 2027, through May 28, 2027; MOU between Triton Public Schools and Triton Education Minnesota;
• 2025-2026 audit report;
• Resolution Accepting Donations;
• Proposed Certified Staff Seniority List for 2026-2027;
• Proposed Classified Staff Seniority List for 2026-2027;
• Food service contract with Taher;
• 2026-2027 snow removal quote for Hodgman Drainage;
• Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (CACR) Plan for 2026-2027

Meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

_____

TRITON ISD NO. 2125 – SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES SCHOOL BOARD STUDY SESSION WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2026 TRITON HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER – DODGE CENTER, MN

-Meeting Proceedings-

Chair Wendy Kenworthy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Those members present: Wendy Kenworthy, Rebecca Knutson, Jim Jensen, Dale Jensen, Lloyd Henslin, Jr., and Scott Curran; absent: Brian Ginder. Also present: Superintendent Luke Lutterman.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Items discussed:
Preferred Communications between Superintendent & Board of Education
Technology Planning – 1:1 Devices Timelines
Budget Timelines, FY 27, 28
Schedule Exploration Grades 6-12 Timelines
Calendar 2027-2028 Process & Timelines
Timeline for Superintendent Evaluation

Chair Kenworthy adjourned the meeting 7:16 p.m.

_____
School District Clerk

_____

ASSUMED NAME: State Line Build Co.
PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: 74427 170th Ave, Hayfield MN 55940
APPLICANT(S): Dustin Dornink
Address: 1089 Hwy 105 Saint Ansgar, IA 50472.
If you submit an attachment, it will be incorporated into this document.
If the attachment conflicts with the information specifically set forth in this document, this document supersedes the data referenced in the attachment. By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.
SIGNED BY: Dustin Dornink
MAILING ADDRESS: 1089 Hwy 105, Saint Ansgar IA 50472
EMAIL FOR OFFICIAL NOTICES: dustin.dornink@gmail.com

Dodge County Planning Commission
Public Hearing Notice

The Dodge County Planning Commission will meet on Wednesday, December 2, 2026 at 1:00 PM.
To participate in the Public Hearings, citizens can come in person or join via Microsoft Teams. Please visit the Dodge County Environmental Services Public Hearings page for the meeting link: https://www.co.dodge.mn.us/departments/environmental_services/public_hearings.php
Item 1: Dwelling on less than 53 acres
For additional information on request and commenting procedures or if you have trouble getting on the Teams Meeting, please contact the Environmental Services Department at 507-635-6272.

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NOTICE OF HEARING
CITY OF CLAREMONT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Notice is hereby given that the City Council of Claremont, Minnesota will meet in City Hall at 7:00 p.m. on December 1, 2026, to consider assessing the property located at:

219 and 411 N East Street
235 Julia Street

in Claremont, Minnesota for special charges pursuant to Minnesota Statute Section 429.101 due to water parts and a fire call provided to the property by the city. The amount of the special charge is:

Amount	Property Address	Parcel Number
$224.01, water ball curb stop	219 & 411 N East St	21.028.1000
$416.15, fire call	235 Julia Street	21.600.2007

Adoption of the proposed assessment may be taken at the hearing. Such persons as desire to be heard with reference to the proposed assessment will be heard at this hearing. Written or oral objections thereto by any property owner will be considered at the hearing. An administrative charge of $100 will be added upon certification of assessment.

No appeal may be taken as to the amount of any assessment adopted unless a written objection signed by the affected property owner is filed with the city clerk prior to the assessment hearing or presented to the presiding officer at the hearing. The owner may appeal an assessment to district court pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 429.081 by serving notice of the appeal upon the mayor or clerk of the city within 30 days after the adoption of the assessment and filing such notice with the district court within ten days after service upon the mayor or clerk.

Homestead property owners who are 65 years of age or older or retired by virtue of a permanent and total disability for whom it would be a hardship to make payments may apply for a deferral of the special assessment by contacting the city clerk.

The property owner has the right to prepay the entire assessment by submitting payment to the city clerk. Partial payment of the assessment has not been authorized.

Elizabeth Sorg
City Administrator

FIND and DINE


sample

Find the turkey 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 turkey is on, along with your address to:
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RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
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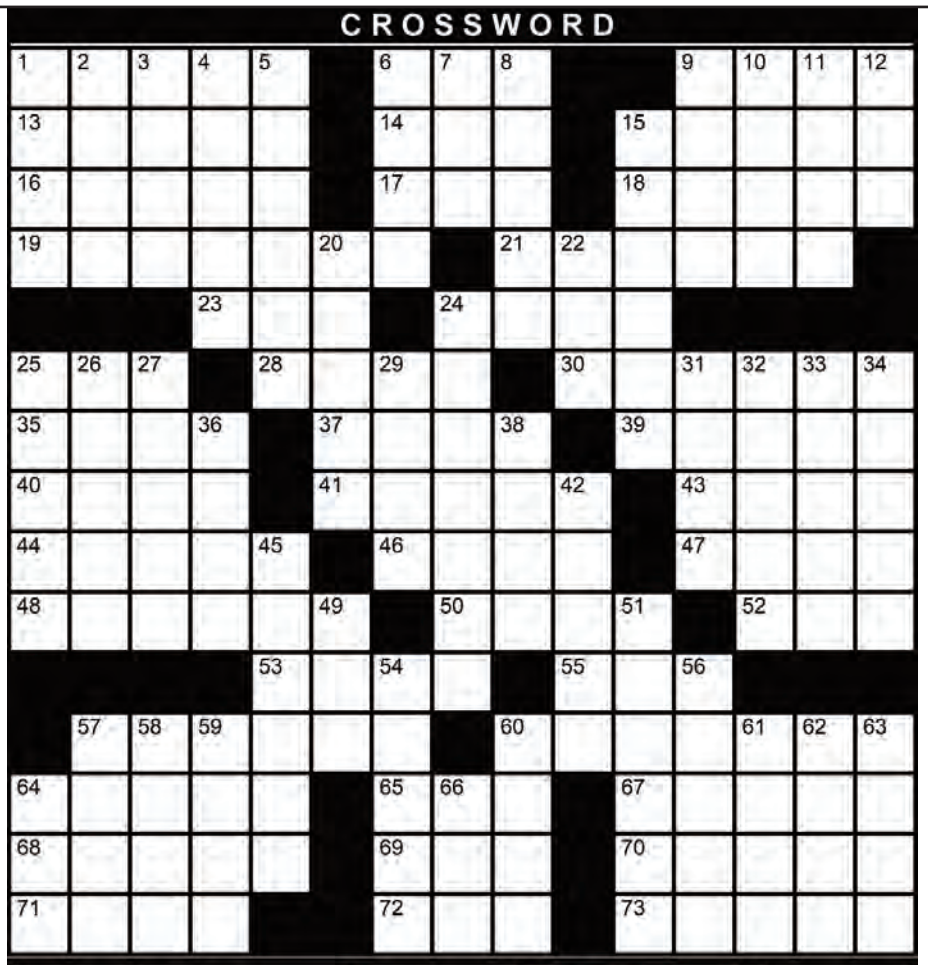
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THEME: HOLIDAY MOVIES

ACROSS
1. "As the World Turns" and such
6. Hundredweight, acr.
9. Notable achievement
13. Keep a threat ____ ____, or away
14. Across, in verse
15. Jiggly dessert
16. Opposite of bow
17. Sch. grp.
18. Kidman's ex
19. *HomeExchange story, with The
21. *Rudolph's father
23. *Kevin to Buzz in "Home Alone"
24. "Dickens!"
25. Quantity, acr.
28. *"Candy ____ Lane" starring Eddie Murphy
30. Opposite of anaerobe
35. Russian mountain range
37. Coxae, sing.
39. Tori, sing.
40. Goals
41. Famous Mac & Cheese manufacturer
43. One of auto pioneers
44. Letter-shaped girder
46. Home to Taj Mahal
47. A la _____, with ice cream
48. Relating to teeth
50. "My bad"
52. Eucharist vessel
53. Multicolored horse
55. NHL court
57. *Bailey of Bedford Falls
60. *Mount ____, Grinch's home
64. Supercharger
65. Ewe's mate
67. Alice Halsey on "Little House on the Prairie"
68. Ammo in a quiver, sing.
69. Knot-tying vow (2 words)
70. Sensory threshold, in psychology
71. Artist's inspiration
72. Bajillion years
73. Guns N' Roses lead guitarist

DOWN
1. "Away to the window I flew like a flash, ... and threw up the ____"
2. "Beetle Bailey" pooch
3. Cain's brother
4. *The McCallisters' travel destination
5. Trustee
6. Printer button
7. *Harry and Marv, a.k.a. the ____ Bandits
8. Pro move
9. Shade-loving plant
10. Hamburg river
11. Winglike
12. Freight weight
15. Official work trip
20. Taken where?
22. South American tuber
24. Six-sided polygon
25. *Cousin Eddie actor
26. Human social group
27. Mandarin's headquarters
29. *Luther Krank's wife
31. Living space
32. Lowest deck
33. *Will Ferrell's famous holiday role
34. English county
36. Future J.D.'s hurdle
38. Like Bob Ross' do
42. Short-trunked ungulate
45. Bone filler
49. Yule treat
51. Type of racing boat, pl.
54. Nest for an eagle
56. Not your grandmother's mail?
57. Spiritual leader
58. Makes a mistake
59. Double reed woodwind
60. Slangy "Follow me!"
61. Cat on a shoe
62. Wraths
63. Hyperbolic tangent
64. _____ o' shanter
66. Fuss, to Shakespeare

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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



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

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