

Lakes Area Review

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2026

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VOL. 139, NO. 10

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AROUND THE LAKES

Spring forward

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour Saturday night when you go to bed as Daylight Savings Time starts this Sunday, March 8 at 2 a.m. Daylight Savings Time runs to November 1 of this year, at which time we fall back one hour.

Tuesday's Table

NEW LONDON—Tuesday's Table, a free community meal co-sponsored by The Link, will be held at Evangelical Covenant Church on March 10, starting at 6 p.m. Everyone welcome. The church is located at 208 Main Street.

SAIL class

NLS AREA – S.A.I.L. (Stay Active and Independent for Life) exercise classes open to seniors 65+ in the New London-Spicer community. The free class focuses on strength, balance and fitness. Classes each Monday and Thursday, starting at 9:30 a.m. Glen Oaks Village Apartments in New London, and Each Tuesday and Thursday starting at 10:15 a.m. at the Dethlef Community Center in Spicer. Everyone welcome.

Food drive

WILLMAR—Hope For Our City grocery distribution, each Wednesday starting at 5:30 p.m. Hope For Our City is located at 1020 Hwy. 71 NE, across from the Flags of Honor memorial. Suggested donation \$1. Everyone welcome.

Blood Drive

SPICER – The American Red Cross hosts a blood drive at the Spicer American Legion on Tuesday, March 17, starting at noon. To register, call 1-800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org/Spicer to schedule an appointment. The American Legion is located at 155 Lake Avenue South, across from Zorbaz.

Craft for a Cause

WILLMAR – The Willmar Public Library hosts a Craft for a Cause event to benefit the Hawk Creek Animal Shelter on March 11 starting at 2 p.m. in the library's multipurpose room. Participants will help make fleece blankets for the kennels at the animal shelter. The library intends to provide the fleece, but awelcomes any donations of fleece for the event. If someone owns some fleece and wants to join the crafting session, they are welcome to attend and help make blankets for the shelter. The library is located at 410 5th Street SW.

INSERTS

Teal's
Inserts may cover all or some of the total Review circulation as requested by the business placing the insert.

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Photo submitted

SMSU presented KayAnna Gehrke with their highly competitive scholars award during a visit to the NL-S high school, posting a video of the surprise visit online to their Facebook page.

A FULL RIDE TO HER FUTURE

NL-S senior KayAnna Gehrke learns she's won a full-ride scholarship to Southwest Minnesota State University

By Shannon Urban
Staff Writer

KayAnna Gehrke had no idea. On a morning that felt like any other at New London-Spicer High School, senior KayAnna Gehrke had no clue what she was about to walk into. Everything was just as it should be on any other day. Her teachers seemed normal. There were no knowing glances, no whispered conversations that stopped when she entered a room.

Nothing to suggest that her life was about to change.

Gehrke walked down to the high school's front office and there waited none other than Charlotte Wahle, Director of Admissions at Southwest Minnesota State University, who surprised her with the news that she'd been selected as a recipient of a full ride to SMSU through their highly competitive Southwest Scholars Day competition.

After congratulating her, Wahle began reading feedback from the interview committee that helped make the final decision.

"Kayana is great. Wonderful interview with great questions. Will lean into making the most of her time here and be a leader. Confident, articulate, resilient. She will be a great fit for SMSU."

Wahle paused before the final comment:

"Highly recommend her." The words were underlined three times on the page.

"So we are here today to say, KayAnna, we are so excited to award you a full ride to Southwest Minnesota State University," Wahle announced.

The New London senior's face lit up with shock and joy—a moment captured on video and shared across SMSU's social media channels Feb. 18.

"I'm very, very grateful for this," Gehrke said, still processing the news. "I was not expecting it at all."

The full-ride scholarship—covering tuition, fees, room and board for four years—came through SMSU's Southwest Scholars Day competition, where more than 100 students competed for the university's most prestigious awards. Those eligible for the full ride had to advance through multiple rounds, including a rigorous second interview.

And Gehrke made it through.

The scholarship announcement represents months of work: the application, the first competition day with over 100 students, advancing to the second round, and finally the interview that would determine her fate.

A full ride

Continued on page 13

KMS grad caught in gunfire at Austin, TX bar dies of wounds

By Ted Almen
Publisher

Word spread Tuesday morning that a former KMS student, Jorge Munoz-Pederson, 30, who graduated here in 2013, was the third victim of what is being called a terrorist attack in downtown Austin, Texas early Sunday morning.

Munoz-Pederson, like all of the others who were shot, happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. A 53-year-old gunman, Ndiaga Diagne a naturalized U.S. citizen from Pflugerville, Texas but born in Senegal, was shot and killed by Austin police, but not until Diagne had unloaded with a pistol and then a rifle into the crowd at a popular Austin night spot. Besides Munoz-Pederson, two other bystanders were killed with more than a dozen others wounded in the attack.

The following details of the deadly incident are taken from a news report by KVUE TV, an ABC affiliate in Austin:



Photo submitted

Jorge Munoz-Pederson died of a gunshot wound.

Caught in gunfire

Continued on page 4

Commissioner Berg calls it quits after two terms

By Ralph Dickerson
Editor

Kandiyohi County District 1 Commissioner Corky Berg announced during the Tuesday, March 3 county board meeting that he does not intend to seek a third term as a county commissioner. In making the announcement, Berg said this decision honors his commitment when first elected to serve only two terms on the board.

"I am making this announcement early to allow interested residents of District 1 ample time to explore the opportunity to run for this permission," Berg said in a letter announcing his decision. "Candidate filing opens on May 19."

At the end of the meeting current board Chair Steve Gardner said the rest of the board members considered it an honor to serve with Berg. In his letter, Berg called it an "honor and a privilege to serve in this role and to work on the prolific number of issues facing our community."

Berg said though he announced his intention to not seek reelection, it does not mean he intends to take it easy. Berg said he remains fully committed to performing his role as a county commissioner and to "continue to serve the



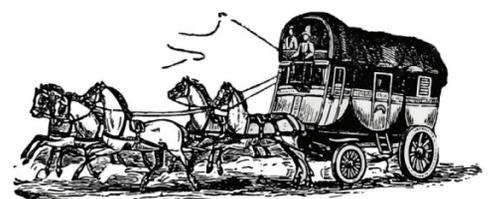
Corky Berg

residents of Kandiyohi County, the region, and the state of Minnesota to the best of my ability through the conclusion of this term on December 31."

Berg first won election to the office in 2018. District 1 encompasses the western and northern sections of the city of Willmar.

"Although I have ten months remaining in my term, I want to sincerely thank our citizens, current and past county board members, administrators, and the truly outstanding county staff for their dedication and professionalism," wrote Berg. "Kandiyohi County truly is a wonderful place to live."

Do you want to comment on this story? Email ralph@nllakesareareview.com.



PIONEER SETTLERS OF KANDIYOHI COUNTY

At first, relations between settlers and Dakota peaceful

By Ralph Dickerson
Editor

The following article is a continuation of a historical series discussing the pioneer families of Kandiyohi County. This article focuses on the early relationship between the pioneer families and the native Dakota. The following information comes from the 1905 book *The Illustrated History of Kandiyohi County, Minnesota*.

In the early 1850s, the United States government signed a treaty with the Dakota which promised them steady income in exchange for their hunting grounds in Minnesota. The government created a reservation system for the Dakota, which confined them to small strips, while the Dakota gave up millions of acres to the US government. Though the government promised to provide payment and provisions to the Dakota for this land, the government did not consistently follow through with the terms of the treaties.

This situation caused the Dakota to often leave their reservations to go hunting for

food to survive. Many of them traveled to the area then known as Monongalia County, today known as northern Kandiyohi County.

At this time, the land abounded in a variety of game such as deer, elk, bear and fish. The Dakota liked the lakes of now northern Kandiyohi County due to the abundance of Buffalo fish, a staple of their diet.

At first the white settlers remained wary of the Dakota when they approached their homes, but soon grew to trust them. These roving bands of Dakota simply came looking for food, and often wished to trade with the settlers for food and other supplies. Sometimes they traded furs for items such as flour or other food stuffs.

Sometimes conflicts caused by cultural misunderstanding took place. To the Dakota, not only did members of their tribes hold things in common, but shared their supplies with all the other members of the

Pioneer Settlers

Continued on page 6

BEST WISHES TO THE NL-S VOCAL STUDENTS AT THEIR CONTEST ON MONDAY!

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Chasing the WE Fest Dream

For local singers, Saturday karaoke contests at Spicer American Legion is the first step toward the WE Fest stage

By Shannon Urban
Staff Writer

Every August, tens of thousands of country music fans descend on the fields just outside Detroit Lakes for one of the nation's largest outdoor country music festivals. They come for the camping, the camaraderie and the chart-topping headliners who've graced that stage—names like Luke Bryan, Morgan Wallen, Miranda Lambert and Blake Shelton.

But tucked into the festival's packed schedule is a moment when the spotlight swings away from Nashville's finest and lands on someone from right here—an everyday singer from small-town Minnesota who earned their place on that stage not through record deals or talent agents, but through a journey that began at a local bar, a legion hall or a community event just like the one happening this Saturday in Spicer.

The WE Fest Karaoke Contest has become a tradition across the state, with preliminary rounds hosted at venues throughout Minnesota and beyond. Winners advance through regional competitions until one singer earns the ultimate prize: a chance to perform the national anthem at WE Fest itself.

This weekend, that journey begins at the Spicer American Legion.

More than a karaoke night

For many who enter, the contest represents something beyond a Saturday night out.

The competition is sure to draw a mix

of seasoned performers and first-timers, longtime country fans and those simply looking to test themselves on stage.

The format mirrors what contestants might face on a larger stage: pick your song, face the crowd, deliver your best. Judges evaluate not just vocal ability but stage presence, song choice and that intangible quality that separates someone singing karaoke from someone giving a performance.

Three judges will be chosen from the spectating crowd each night, with 5 judges being chosen on finals night. Each night new judges will be selected. The judges will be scoring using a points system in categories such as stage performance, audience connection, and vocal technique and quality. 100 total points are possible.

The road from Spicer to the WE Fest Stage

The path from the Spicer American Legion to WE Fest begins right here at home, with five competition rounds that run from Friday March 6th through March 27th, with finals taking place on April 10th. The competition begins each night at 8:00 PM. And if you're the lucky winner on April 10th finals night, you'll walk away with a pair of WE Fest tickets!

Winners at the local level then advance to The Showdown Semi Finals at the Shooting Star Casino on the Mustang Lounge Stage in Mahanomen, MN on July 12th.

From there, finalists compete for the

grand prize on August 7th at WE Fest in the Neon Saloon: a performance of the national anthem on the WE Fest stage later that day—in front of thousands of country music fans! The winner also receives two grandstand tickets for WE Fest 2027.

But don't worry, if you missed your chance at the local level, there will be a last chance round up for a final opportunity to qualify at the Neon Saloon at WE Fest on August 6th.

Why the Legion?

The Spicer American Legion has long served as a gathering place for the community—hosting events, fundraisers and nights that bring neighbors together. Adding the WE Fest Karaoke Contest to its calendar fits that mission.

The venue offers contestants something a larger stage can't: a hometown crowd. Friends, family and regulars fill the room, offering the kind of support that can steady nerves and fuel a standout performance.

Taking the stage

The competition is open to anyone over the age of 18. Registration occurs the night of, so it's recommended that participants arrive early!

Whether a singer advances to the next round or simply enjoys a night holding the microphone and hanging with friends, the experience offers something valuable: a moment in the spotlight, a chance to share their voice, and maybe—just maybe—the first step toward the WE Fest stage..

Let's talk about mental health

When people think about health, they often picture blood pressure numbers, lab results or physical exams. But your mental and emotional wellbeing are just as important as your physical health.

That is why talking openly with your primary care clinician about your mental health matters.

Primary care is built on long-term relationships. Over time, your clinician gets to know your medical history, your family, your stressors and your goals. That bigger picture allows for care that is personal and responsive. Mental health is an important part of that story.

Whole Person Care

Primary care takes a patient centered approach that considers biological, psychological and social aspects of health. Your emotional health does not exist separately from your physical health. They influence each other every day.

Ongoing stress can affect sleep, heart health and immune function. Depression can make it harder to manage chronic conditions. Anxiety may show up as headaches, stomach concerns or muscle tension. When we talk about



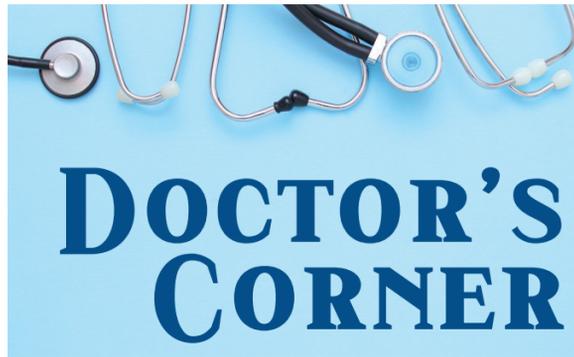
By Meagan Hoflock, CNP

both, we can respond in ways that fit your needs, whether that involves practical strategies, follow-up or additional resources.

Mental Health Changes Over Time

How you feel and what affects your mental health can shift as you move through different stages of life.

- Childhood: Attention concerns, school stress or behavior changes
- Adolescence: Social pressures, identity development and mood shifts
- Adulthood: Work stress, parenting, caregiving and financial strain
- Older adulthood: Grief, isolation, medical changes or



memory concerns

Because primary care clinicians often care for patients throughout their life, we can notice patterns, recognize changes and provide steady support through life transitions.

It's Okay to Bring It Up

You do not need to be in crisis to start the conversation. Many people talk about persistent sadness, anxiety, trouble sleeping or feeling overwhelmed. Others mention irritability, changes in appetite or energy, major life events or concerns about alcohol or substance use.

These are common experiences. Primary care clinicians address these concerns every day and are trained to approach sensitive topics with respect and awareness of each

person's background and life circumstances.

Why It Matters

When you talk about your mental health as part of your ongoing care, you are helping your clinician better understand what life looks like for you. Those conversations help connect the dots between how you're feeling emotionally and what may be happening physically. They also open the door to practical guidance, encouragement and, when needed, additional support.

Talking about mental health is not always easy. But it is a powerful step toward caring for your wellbeing. Your primary care clinician is there not just to check numbers or refill prescriptions, but to support you as a whole person through every stage of life.

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FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

RESIDENT OF THE MONTH



We are honoring Gloria as our Resident of the month, even though she moved away to be closer to family. Gloria loved helping people and being a listening ear whenever she could. She loved singing when Glen Oaks had a music activity - in fact, she really enjoyed ALL the activities within

the facility. Gloria made friends wherever she was and especially at GlenOaks. She stated she will miss each and every one when she moves! Her heart was touched by this place and the love it has towards everyone.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to Gwen Stone for being chosen as Employee of the Month. Gwen has been at GlenOaks for a year and a half as a TMA & CNA. She values getting to know our resident's preferences to provide them with the best care possible. Person-centered care and supporting activities of daily living is essential for providing quality care that our residences deserve.



Gwen is positive, kind and likes to have fun! GlenOaks provides a variety of engaging daily activities for residents to socialize and be involved in the community. Gwen has said she is very grateful to learn and grow with the Glenoaks team.



Respite Care Available



Caring for a loved one is a full-time job. You deserve a break without the worry. Whether its a weekend, a week or longer, our team is ready to step in so you can step away. Contact 320-354-2231 for more information.

INDEPENDENT LIVING Apartments



We have openings in our Independent Living apartments. Contact us at 320-354-2231 to check out the 1 or 2 bedroom units available.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Any volunteers wanting to help with activities should contact our Activities Director Janeen at 320-262-9011.



JOIN US!
for our **st patrick's day party**
Tuesday, March 17
for a medallion hunt, BINGO, sloppy joes, prizes, and more!
Music by the Pick'n Circle.

For more information about Glen Oaks Senior Living Campus in New London or any of our activities, please contact us at www.glenOaksslc.org or call 320-354-2231

New London-Spicer FFA chapter celebrates National FFA Week February 21-28, 2026

By Madeline Prentice

The New London-Spicer FFA Chapter celebrated National FFA Week with activities that brought together students, staff, and community members. National FFA Week, recognized by the National FFA Organization, highlights the importance of agricultural education and leadership.

On February 25, the chapter hosted its annual FFA Alumni and School Staff Pancake Breakfast. Members arrived early to cook and serve breakfast in the ag room, welcoming a strong turnout and showing appreciation for the continued support of alumni and staff.

On February 27, the chap-

ter held its annual petting zoo for middle and high school students, with first graders also bussed to attend. All animals at the petting zoo belonged to chapter members, showcasing the hard work students put into caring for their livestock. Chapter officers also taught the first graders about dairy products and guided them in

making homemade ice cream. Throughout the week, staff and students participated in an FFA trivia quiz, adding excitement while promoting awareness of FFA. Through service, education, and hands-on learning, the New London-Spicer FFA Chapter made National FFA Week memorable for the entire school community.



Member Tyna Larson and her horse at the petting zoo.



Staff and alumni at the annual breakfast.



Member Taya Hanson preparing pancakes at the annual breakfast.



Members Maddie Lungren and Kelsie Swart with their goats at the petting zoo.

Photos submitted

NLS FFA at Region 5 competition

By Madeline Prentice

Members of the New London-Spicer FFA Chapter competed at the Minnesota Region 5 March CDEs on March 3, 2026, with teams traveling to multiple locations for competition.

The Ag Mechanics team competed at Ridgewater College, where they placed third overall, earning a spot at the Minnesota FFA State Convention next month. Holton Hanson led the team with a fifth-place individual finish. Other team members were Matthew Gehrke, Russell Wieland, and Matt Jamma.

The Floriculture team competed at Willmar High School and placed seventh overall. Heidi Taunton finished eighth individually. Other members of the team included Audrey Moline, Lanna Schaefer, Paige Nygaard, and Brielle Lungren.

Both teams represented New London-Spicer well and will continue preparing for upcoming events this spring.



The Ag Mechanics Team left to right: Matthew Gehrke, Russell Wieland, Carl Wieland, Matt Jamma, Holton Hanson.



The Floriculture Team left to right: Heidi Taunton, Lanna Schaefer, Paige Nygaard, Brielle Lungren, and Audrey Moline.

Chapter degrees earned

On March 2, six members of the New London-Spicer FFA Chapter were awarded their Chapter FFA Degrees, celebrating an important achievement for both the students and the chapter. The Chapter FFA Degree is the highest honor a chapter can bestow upon its members. It recognizes students who have demonstrated dedication to agricultural education through active participation in chapter activities, leadership involvement, and progress in their Supervised Agricultural Experiences. Earning this degree reflects the time, effort, and commitment these members have invested in FFA. The New London-Spicer FFA Chapter is proud of their accomplishments and looks forward to their continued involvement and leadership. Pictured from left: Claire Louwagie, Lanna Schaefer, Kelly Knisley, Maddie Lungren and Brody Wileman; Not Pictured: Ella Knutson



Irish and Scottish fiddling and song

Press release

Sunburg Community Music is hosting "Irish & Scottish Fiddling and Song" on Saturday, March 14, 4 pm at East Norway Lake Lutheran Church. The event is free and open to the public. All ages are welcome to attend. (Note: This event was originally scheduled for March 21. The date was changed due to conflicts.)

Fiddlers, accompanied by bass, guitar and ukes will play Irish & Scottish music. Audience will be invited to sing-a-long. (Lyrics provided.)

Guest artists, Dempsey Schroeder (fiddle) and Maggie Harp (guitar and

piano) will perform special selections.

Sunburg Community Music invites people of all ages to participate, regardless of experience or skill. Instruction on fiddle, guitar, upright bass, mandolin, ukulele and Irish whistle is provided free of charge. Instruments are available on loan at no cost.

This event is made possible in part with a grant from the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council made possible by the voters of Minnesota, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

STUDENT NEWS

St. Cloud Technical and Community College announces President and dean's list

Four area students made either the President or dean's list at St. Cloud Technical during the fall 2025 semester. To earn recognition on the President's list, a student needs to earn a 4.0 GPA, while recognition to the dean's list requires a GPA of between a 3.5 and 3.99.

Area residents named to the President's list include New London resident Hailey Luberts, Spicer resident Abbie Kaelke and Belgrade resident Ava Lieser. New London resident Erin Knisley earned recognition on the dean's list.

THIS WEEK IN LAKES HISTORY

Compiled by Ralph Dickerson

The Early Years

New London Review, March 5, 1885

THE TOWN WE LIVE IN
Is pleasantly situated among the hills and valleys of the "middle Crow river," on the south-west quarter, Section ten, Town one hundred and twenty one, Range 34; the town-site is owned by Adams, Sperry and Larson; we have one excellent hardware store, three large well-stocked general merchandise stores; three No. 1 blacksmith, one wagon and carriage-maker, one harness-maker, one shoemaker, two feed-mills, one grist-

mill with three run of stone and one set of rolls, and one carding-mill.

We are just on the edge of the most beautiful, as well as most productive prairies in the state. The population is a mixture of Scandinavian, Irish and American, with occasionally a German. An honest, self-reliant class of citizens, with whom it is a pleasure to deal. An inexhaustible water power, good schools, good citizens, and a perfect paradise for sportsmen...

100 Years Ago

New London Times, March 4, 1926

MOEN & GANDRUD STORE AT SUNBURG DESTROYED BY FIRE LAST THURSDAY
The Moen & Gandrud store at Sunburg was totally destroyed by fire early Thursday morning of last week, entailing a loss of about \$40,000.

The store building as a large frame structure erected in

1911 at a cost of about \$5,000. The stock of goods, one of the largest in this section of the country, was valued at about \$35,000.

The postoffice was also located in the building and all supplies, records, and mail in the office were destroyed.

The origin of the fire is unknown. It was discovered about 3 o'clock a.m....

75 Years Ago

New London Times, March 1, 1951

Bob's Broadcast

It's going on two weeks now since we've seen the sun, except for a brief period at noon one day last week and Tuesday afternoon this week. Temperatures were high enough to permit thawing. Nearly 50 percent of the ground is bare. Water was standing on the lakes and ponds until it turned cooler Monday night. The calendar says spring is still another few

weeks away, so don't throw away your shovel just yet.

...
Is a sandwich spread what one gets from eating between meals?

...
The Minnesota Dep't of Conservation warns that ice is unsafe at this time, because of heavy snows last fall, ice was not thick enough, and also the weight of the snow has caused cracks in the ice.

50 Years Ago

New London-Spicer Times, March 4, 1976

FFA crop team wins District

The New London-Spicer FFA won their first District Judging Contest in four years last week. The FFA Crops Judging Team placed first out of a field of ten teams. The contest was held at the Willmar Area Vo-Tech. school on Thursday, February 26.

The team score was 2581, as compared to second place Belgrade and third place Melrose with scores of 2448 and 2377.

The team members were Mary Albrecht, Nancy Lindquist

and Andy Moller. Mary placed second with a score of 913, Andy placed third with a 888 and Nancy, seventh with a 780. There were 40 individuals in the contest.

The contest consisted of three parts: identification, grading and analysis work. Each member had to learn a total of 140 crops and weed seeds and plants. In addition to crop grading and analysis work.

These members have been working towards this goal for two years...

25 Years Ago

Kandiyohi County Times, March 5, 2001

Telephone turns 125 years old

Today, a person can reach almost anyone, anywhere, anytime, thanks to advancements in the communications industry.

A variety of communications advances-from e-mail to the Internet to cellular telephone to pagers-has made it possible.

This Saturday, March 10 marks the 125th anniversary of when it all started, the day Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone.

Beth Gjerde, general manager of sales and service for TDS TELECOM's New London office, offers some history on the telephone and its transformation over the years.

"Many of us have experienced the evolution of the telephone from a simple means

of contacting another person to a massive communications tool," Gjerde said. "In 25 years, when the telephone turns 150, who know what other changes we'll be talking about."

Following are some little-known facts about the telephone and its development.

-On March 7, 1876, the first telephone patent (U.S. No. 174,465) was allowed and issued to Alexander Graham Bell, just hours before his competitor, Elisha Gray, filed notice to patent a telephone himself.

-The first prototype of the sound-proof phone booth was built in 1877. Tom Watson, Bell's assistant, wadded bed blankets around a box. He created the booth to prevent his landlady from listening in on conversations...

10 Years Ago

Lakes Area Review, Feb. 27, 2016

One mile of upgrades on Lake Ave. N estimated at 5.273 million

The city of Spicer is gearing up for a major reconstruction project on Lake Avenue North through downtown to start this spring. A public hearing has been scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 8 at city hall to discuss estimated property assessments for the planned improvements.

The Spicer city council authorized the feasibility report and scheduled the public hearing on the Lake Avenue North project during its Feb. 19 meeting.

While Tuesday's hearing

will include preliminary assessments for the entire project from Agnes Street north to Skyline Drive and the city limits, at this time it appears only the southern-most section from Agnes Street to Medayto Street will be under construction in 2016.

The council ordered the design and improvements for Lake Avenue North from Agnes to Medayto during its Feb. 19 meeting. The motion allows the bid process to proceed.

Construction on the northern-most section from Medayto Street to Skyline Drive and the city limits likely will be delayed for a year or more...

CIVIC NEWS

High water, high stakes: county proposes no-wake rules to protect lake shorelines and recreational boating

By Ralph Dickerson
Editor

Kandiyohi County Administrator Kelsey Baker briefed county board members on a proposed no-wake ordinance on county lakes during periods of high water. After hearing the proposed ordinance, the board scheduled a public hearing on the ordinance for April 7 at 9 a.m., during its regularly scheduled board meeting.

Baker briefed board members at the March 3 meeting, and the ordinance sets wake restrictions on lakes with high recreational boat traffic, not each lake in the county. Baker worked with county drainage manager Austin Hilbrands to set the individual level on each lake that triggers the no-

wake ordinance.

"The purpose of this ordinance... is to protect shorelines and infrastructure during high water seasons, which we experienced last year," said Baker. "(The purpose is) to help reduce erosion and property damage, protect docks, lifts, retaining walls, public access points, promoting safety for boaters, swimmers and property owners, and then preserving environmental quality."

The no-wake restriction ordinance applies to the following lakes: Andrew, Big Kandiyohi, Diamond Lake, Eagle, Elkhorn, Florida, Games, George, Green Lake, Long by Hawick and Long by Willmar. The no-wake restric-

tion automatically takes effect when the water levels in each lake reaches a predetermined depth, and the wake restriction zone stretches from the shoreline out 300 feet.

For example, the normal water level on Lake Andrew sits at 1,190.58 feet above sea level. The no-wake restriction automatically takes effect when water levels reach 1,192.2 feet above sea level, or just over 1.5 feet above the lake's normal water level.

The water level and wake restriction elevation differ for each lake. When in effect, the no-wake sets the speed limit for boats at 5 mph from the shore to 300 feet out. Baker said this represents the minimum speed necessary to steer

recreational watercraft.

Baker said such an ordinance increases transparency, while also setting objective rules for when the ordinance takes effect. The ordinance also balances the competing interests on its lakes by setting clear guidelines for everyone to follow.

"The ordinance balances recreational boating, shoreline protection, property rights, environmental stewardship and public safety," said Baker. "It ensures that when our lakes are at normal water levels, boating continues as normal. Restrictions are tied strictly to the elevated water conditions."

To develop the water level on each lake that triggers the no-wake restrictions, Hilbrands merged two different water level data sets. He combined county lake elevation data with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources 1929 datum. He then examined each lake to determine its control level (minimum elevation), ordinary high-water mark and the no-wake restriction level.

When setting the no-wake water level, he set it to cover 25% to 50% of the water levels above the ordinary high-water level mark. Some lakes in the county rarely exceed the ordinary high-water level mark, so he set the no-wake restriction at an elevation barely above the ordinary high-water mark.

"I looked at each lake individually, trying to be objective as possible," said Hilbrands.

County backs ARIS grant to divert people in crisis from jail to treatment

By Ralph Dickerson
Editor

The Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners approved a request from Community Corrections Director Dr. TamiJo Lieberg to apply for a \$150,000 per year, two-year grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety to continue its Alternative Response Intervention System program. The board gave its approval at the March 3 county board meeting.

Originally, Community Corrections funded its ARIS program through the state opioid grant intervention project. Lieberg said this year the county did not receive funding from this grant program, so it switched gears to apply for money from a different funding source, with the intention to reapply for opioid grant dollars within the next two months. In the meantime, Lieberg said Community

Corrections intends to apply to the other funding program next week.

Lieberg said ARIS seeks to prevent or drastically reduce the number of 911 calls related to mental health crises, opioid abuse, or chemical dependency issues, and to also reduce the number of people suffering from these crises from going to jail. Lieberg said someone suffering such a crisis needs professional help, not time in a jail cell.

Lieberg said the ARIS program seeks "to divert them, or get them out (of jail) sooner. Or keep them from coming back in." She said the ARIS program seeks to reduce "the amount of dollars that we're spending with people in a different way that is actually more harmful to them than what we're spending helping them."

Lieberg said the ARIS

program works with people in the community that regularly suffer mental health or drug dependency crisis issues. It seeks to provide them the appropriate care options from cognitive behavioral health groups to pro-social activities to help address underlying issues.

Commissioner Dale Anderson asked about the sustainability of the program when the grant funding ends. Lieberg said some of the grant programs provide an option for ongoing financial support, others do not. Overall, Lieberg said she hopes ARIS helps reduce total outlay of funds spent on housing these persons in jail, with the implication that a possibility exists of funding the program through cost savings in the future.

Do you want to comment on this story? Email ralph@nslakesareareview.com.



Photo submitted

Jorge Munoz-Pederson was a rising MMA fighter.

Caught in gunfire

Continued from page 1

The FBI said it is investigating a possible terrorism motive in a mass shooting early Sunday outside a bar in Austin, Texas, that left two people dead (later changed to three after life support for Munoz-Pederson had been removed on Monday) and more than a dozen others injured.

The suspected gunman was killed in a confrontation with police officers, who were already staged in the city's entertainment district when the shooting broke out, Austin Police Chief Lisa Davis said at a news conference on Sunday.

Alex Doran, the acting special agent in charge of the FBI's San Antonio field office, said a motive for the shooting remains under investigation, but terrorism is a possible motive.

"There were indicators on the subject and in his vehicle that indicate potential nexus to terrorism," Doran said Sunday. "Again, it's still too early to make a determination on that."

Davis said 911 callers began reporting a shooting on Sixth Street in downtown Austin just before 2:00 a.m. She said the 911 callers stated that someone was shooting around Buford's Bar.

"We know that a large SUV drove several times around the block in that area," Davis said. "At one point, [the suspect] put his flashers on, rolled down his window and began using a pistol, shooting out of his car windows, striking patrons of the bar that were on the patio and that were in front of the bar."

Davis said the suspect then parked his vehicle, got out and opened fire on people gathered on the sidewalk.

She said the Austin police department had a contingent of officers assigned to patrol the area in the busy Sixth Street entertainment district. She said the officers were (less than a minute) away from where the suspect was shooting, and rushed toward the gunfire.

Davis said the suspect was walking in the direction of the

police when officers confronted him and killed him.

"There is no question in my mind that the quick response of the police officers and of our EMS personnel and those professionals made a difference and saved lives," Austin Mayor Kirk Watson said at the news conference.

The FBI's Joint terrorism Task Force is joining the investigation into the shooting, sources familiar with the matter told ABC News.

Three people, including a suspect, were pronounced dead at the scene, Luckritz said, adding that another 14 were transported to local hospitals for treatment for injuries.

--ABC News' Luke Barr, Jack Date and Pierre Thomas contributed to this report.

Who was Jorge-Munoz-Pederson? According to people who knew him as a KMS student, he was a transfer into the local district as a senior, coming from Minniewaska Area High School. A short bio printed in the 2023 graduation issue of the Banner stated that he was active in school, being involved in wrestling, cross-country and band. He was the son of Nancy Pederson.

"Jorge's plans for the future are to attend Minnesota State University in Moorhead, working to become a physical therapist," read Munoz-Pederson's senior profile, continuing, "The most important lesson Jorge learned at KMS was, 'Don't get caught with your phone.' and 'To Jorge, the best thing about KMS is how helpful and nice the teachers are.'"

Munoz-Pederson is being described in an on-line fundraiser to help pay for funeral expenses as "an inspiration in mixed martial arts."

"His impact at the gym was that of a welcoming, warm and tough presence that changed many lives for the better," the fundraiser said.

"Jorge had a bright future that was cut short in the March 1st Austin, Texas shooting at Buford's Bar. He will not soon be forgotten."

RECORDS

Motor vehicle pursuit and manhunt

WILLMAR – On 03/03/2026 at 3:51 PM, Willmar police were dispatched to a local hardware store on South 1st St. for a report of a shoplifter. The caller advised the suspect was leaving in a gray Mazda passenger car and provided a description of the suspect and the plate number of the suspect vehicle.

A short time later, Willmar police located the suspect vehicle in the area of CR 5/Hwy 40. Police attempted to stop the vehicle, but the driver accelerated at a high rate of speed and fled westbound on Hwy 40.

The driver, later identified as Ricardo Gomez, 49 of Willmar, stopped in the area of Hwy 40/75th St. SW and bailed out on foot. The passenger, later identified as Jessica Bauman, 43 of Clara City, then climbed into the driver's seat and fled the traffic stop at a high rate of speed.

One officer remained in the area of Hwy 40/75th St. SW and began to set up a perimeter. The other officer once again pursued the suspect vehicle which was driven by Bauman. Bauman led the pursuit to Pennock, where

she struck a vehicle at Hwy 12/Atlantic Ave. NE. She eventually came to a stop in the area of Horseshoe Dr./Atlantic Ave. She was arrested without further incident.

As more officers arrived in the area of Hwy 40/75th St. SW, a clear perimeter was established. Willmar Police Officers and Kandiyohi County Deputies began a search of the area. Drones and Kandiyohi County K-9 Loki were used to search for and locate Gomez. He was located and arrested a short time later without incident.

There were no injuries reported. There was moderate damage to the vehicle Bauman was driving and the vehicle she struck in Pennock. The Willmar police department was assisted by the Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Office. Both Gomez and Bauman were arrested and transported to the Kandiyohi County jail for the following charges.

Ricardo Gomez: Fleeing in a Motor Vehicle, Driving After Cancellation/Inimical to Public Safety and Fleeing on Foot

Jessica Bauman: Fleeing in a motor vehicle, Failure to Stop after a Traffic Collision, Theft and Receiving Stolen Property.

Klobuchar statement on the death of Sergeant First Class Nicole M. Amor of White Bear Lake

From the office of Minnesota US Senator Amy Klobuchar

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar released the following statement on the death of Sergeant First Class Nicole M. Amor, 39, of White Bear Lake, Minnesota, who died on March 1, 2026, in Port Shuaiba, Kuwait.

Sergeant First Class Amor was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), United States Army Reserve, Des Moines, Iowa. Sergeant First Class Amor's husband and children reside in White Bear Lake.

"John and I join with people across our state and our country in mourning Sgt. First Class Nicole Amor of White Bear Lake. Our hearts are with her family, loved ones, and all those in our armed forces. Sgt. Amor made the ultimate sacrifice serving our nation, and we are forever indebted to her."

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Advocacy in Washington DC

Press release

The National Association of Counties (NACo) holds a legislative conference in Washington DC each year. County representatives from across the country establish national legislative priorities that affect counties—and properties owners—across the nation.

In addition, attendees make visits to Capitol Hill to speak individually with congressional delegates on the importance of legislative priorities for counties. Many of the priorities are the same across the landscape. HHS, Public Health, Transportation, Public Lands, etc.

It also gives local leaders a chance to lobby for projects in

their communities that have an impact on constituents. County Commissioner Roger Imdieke and County Engineer Mel Odens were among approximately seventy-five Minnesota advocates at the recent conference.

Their ask for Kandiyohi County, is a request for an earmark from Congresswoman, Michelle Fischbach, to rehabilitate two water towers. If successful it will be a direct savings on water bills for ratepayers.

From left: Kandiyohi County Engineer Mel Odens, Congresswoman Michelle Fischbach and Kandiyohi County Commissioner Roger Imdieke

— Photo submitted



Here's your wake-up call: Daylight saving time may impact your heart health

As much of the nation prepares to "spring forward," the American Heart Association cites scientific research that indicates the spring time change may negatively impact your heart and brain health

MINNEAPOLIS, Mn — March 3, 2026 — Losing an extra hour of sleep may not be the worst thing that could happen when you "spring forward" at the start of daylight saving time. According to the American Heart Association, the world's leading nonprofit organization focused on heart and brain health for all, scientific researchers have noticed a marked increase in heart attacks and strokes in the days following this time change each year.

This year, daylight saving time begins on Sunday, March 8. Daylight saving time is the practice of setting the clocks an hour ahead of standard time to achieve longer evening daylight in the summer months. While gaining extra daylight may be a nice change, the transition could come with some health challenges.

According to a study of hospital admissions across the state of Michigan, there was a 24% increase in heart attacks on the Monday following the switch to daylight saving time. In a study from Finland, researchers found that the overall rate of ischemic stroke was 8% percent higher during the first two days after a daylight saving time transition. Other research has found that, in general, more serious heart attacks occur on Mondays than on any other day of the week, making the day after the time change even more worrisome.

"We don't really know exactly why there is an increase in heart attacks and strokes during the change to daylight saving time. It's likely connected with the disruption to the body's internal clock, or its circadian rhythm," said Dr. Haitham Hussein, MD, Neurologist at M Health Fairview. "It's important to be aware of this increased risk, especially if

you already have heart disease or other risk factors. Recognize the signs of a heart attack or stroke and call 9-1-1 if you or someone you're with experience any of those symptoms."

The American Heart Association offers a few tips to get ahead of the time change:

- Do start now to get outside and get as much natural light as possible each day. This can help adjust your body rhythm for the change to come.

- Do begin winding down a little earlier in the evenings ahead. While you can never make up lost sleep, going into the time change well-rested can help.

- Don't compensate with extra caffeine. It may feel like an extra coffee or two can help you through the mid-day slump, but too much caffeine is not heart-healthy.

"We know that the amount and the quality of sleep a person gets at any time of the year is essential to good health. That's why the American Heart Association has added sleep to our Life's Essential 8™, which is our equation of 4 health factors and 4 health behaviors that are needed for good cardiovascular health," Dr. Hussein said. "In addition to increasing the risk for cardiovascular conditions like heart attack and stroke, lack of sleep may also put people at risk of things like depression, cognitive decline and obesity."

The Association's Life's Essential 8 recommended ideal level of sleep is:

- 7-9 hours daily for adults;
- 8-10 hours daily for ages 13-18 years;
- 9-12 hours daily for ages 6-12 years; and
- 10-16 hours daily for ages 5 and younger.

"More than 1 in 3 adults do not get the recommended amount of sleep for heart

health. It's important to maintain a healthy sleeping pattern all year long, and there are some specific steps you can take to set yourself up for a good night's rest," Dr. Hussein said.

- Don't hit snooze: Sleeping past your alarm can make you groggy in the morning. Try putting your alarm clock across the room so you must physically get out of bed to turn it off.

- Prioritize exposure to natural light: Maximize exposure to natural light during the day to regulate your body's internal clock and prepare for a restful night. Try going for a walk when you wake up in the mornings to promote physical activity while getting natural sunlight.

- Eat a healthy, balanced diet: Enjoy a heart-healthy diet with plenty of fiber-rich vegetables, fruits, legumes and whole grains and balance your calories throughout the day. When you get more calories late at night, sleep may be less peaceful.

- Watch what you drink: Drinking sugary, caffeinated or alcoholic beverages may lead to more disruptions during the night.

- Limit afternoon naps: Avoid taking long naps during the day because they can disrupt your sleep patterns and make it harder to achieve restful sleep at night. Instead, focus on maintaining consistent sleep patterns to support good overall sleep quality.

- Limit technology use in the evening: The blue light of most electronic devices can interfere with your circadian rhythm and melatonin production. Create a productive sleep environment by keeping electronic devices out of the bedroom. Aim to disconnect from screens at least one hour before

bedtime to reduce exposure to blue light and promote better sleep quality.

- Create a relaxing bedtime routine: Engage in calming activities before bed, such as reading a book, journaling, taking a warm bath, or practicing relaxation exercises like deep breathing or meditation. Relaxing activities can help ease into a restful night's sleep.

"Making small changes in your daily habits can make a big difference in your sleep quality and overall health. Instead of turning on the TV to help you fall asleep, try reading a book or journaling about your day. Putting your phone in another room can also prevent the temptation to scroll in bed," Dr. Hussein said. "Implementing these small habits now can help you prepare for the upcoming daylight saving time change and ensure your sleep patterns are strong and more likely to remain consistent all year long."

Learn more about the importance of sleep for heart health at heart.org.

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About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. Dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities, the organization has been a leading source of health information for more than one hundred years. Supported by more than 35 million volunteers globally, we fund groundbreaking research, advocate for the public's health, and provide critical resources to save and improve lives affected by cardiovascular disease and stroke. By driving breakthroughs and implementing proven solutions in science, policy, and care, we work tirelessly to advance health and transform lives every day. Connect with us on heart.org, Facebook, X or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.

Free online access to Lakes Area Review ends April 1

By **Ralph Dickerson**
Editor

Starting April 1, the Lakes Area Review's online edition transitions to a paid subscription format. The paper made the online edition free for three months to introduce it to the community, and while staff worked to perfect the finished product.

The subscription rate costs \$45 per year for anyone wanting the online edition, no matter where he or she lives; the paper costs the same per year online for residents of New London and Spicer, as it does for residents in Raymond or other parts of Kandiyohi County, the rest of Minnesota and out-of-state. Staff added some flexibility to the subscription offerings.

For example, if a family goes to Arizona, Florida or some other warm destination for a few months during winter, the LAR offers a monthly subscription at \$7 per month. This option allows a family to take a two, three or four month subscription to the online edition.

Sometimes, people want to

view a single copy of a paper due to a specific item or story in the paper, such as a story on a grandchild, an obituary or a story on a family member. The LAR offers a one week subscription option that costs \$2.

Since the introduction of the online edition, staff made several improvements/additions to the paper in an effort to include the same content in the online paper as offered in the physical paper. The online edition also offers options not available in the printed paper, such as photo galleries.

Due to space limitations, the sports pages often carry only one or two photos of sporting events covered in the paper. With the online edition, the LAR offers photo galleries of game action.

The LAR eventually intends to offer these photos for sale via a link on the website. The link, when established and live, details the cost for each photo.

So, if you enjoy the online edition, do not forget to subscribe!

BOARD & COUNCIL MEETINGS

March 9, 2026

- Kandiyohi County Planning Commission meeting, 7 p.m. Health and Human Services building second floor meeting room, 2200 23rd St. NE, Willmar.
- Kandiyohi County Board of Adjustments meeting, 6 p.m. Health and Human Services building second floor meeting room, 2200 23rd St. NE, Willmar.
- New London-Spicer Board of Education meeting, 4:30 p.m. District Conference Room.
- League of Women Voters meeting, 6 p.m. at Willmar Public Library Multipurpose Room.

March 10, 2026

- Sunburg City Council meeting, Sunburg Fire Department, 211 Isola Street, 7 p.m.
- Burbank Township meeting, 7 p.m. in the meeting hall at 5201 28th Ave NE, Belgrade.
- Arctander Township meeting at East Norway Lake Church, 16720 68th Street NW, New London

March 12, 2026

- Roseville Township meeting, 7 p.m. 15768 232nd Ave NE, Hawick.

March 16, 2026

- Kandiyohi City Council meeting, Kandiyohi City Hall/Civic Center, 432 Atlantic Ave. 7 p.m.
- Prairie Pothole Association meeting, Zorbaz in Spicer, 7 p.m..

March 17, 2026

- Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners meeting, 9 a.m. Health and Human Services building second floor meeting room, 2200 23rd St. NE, Willmar.
- Spicer City Council meeting, 5:30 p.m. Dethlefs Community Center, 217 Hillcrest Ave. Spicer.
- Irving Township meeting, 7 p.m. 15282 195th Ave NE, Hawick..

March 18, 2026

- New London City Council meeting, 5:30 p.m. 10 Ash Street SE, New London.

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Conservation and hunting traditions highlighted in Minneapolis

By **Amy Gronli**

Many of the necessities associated with upland bird hunting filled the Minneapolis Convention Center February 20 - 22: shotguns, hunting vests, leather boots, and dogs, dogs, dogs. But along with these must-haves for a successful hunt, speakers and exhibitors advocated for conservation, community, and continuing the hunting tradition.

Put on by Pheasants Forever (PF) and Quail Forever (QF), the national Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic drew organization personnel, vendors, and hunting enthusiasts across the country to share a love of wild lands and wildlife.

"Grasslands are the most threatened ecosystem in the world," Tom Carpenter, editor of the Pheasants Forever Journal said when I asked why people should value upland bird hunting. Carpenter described how grasslands not only protect pheasants and quail but also songbirds, bumblebees, and other pollinators.

Promoting public access to land also brings much-needed dollars to local communities when hunters visit rural towns. According to information provided by Jared Wiklund, PF

and QF's Director of Communications, the two organizations have impacted over 31.5 million acres in the U.S. through more than 589,000 habitat projects.

These projects focus on improving areas where game birds nest and hatch their young, restoring upland prairies and wetlands, and increasing natural sources of food and shelter. In 2025 alone, over 2.04 million acres of land were enhanced through habitat assistance after the wildlife biologists for PF and QF made 43,656 landowner contacts.

In that same year, over 2,000 volunteers in PF and QF improved 87,704 acres through nearly 2,500 habitat projects. At a booth dedicated to showcasing the impact of PF in our state, Becca Kludt, Minnesota Restoration Manager, and Mary Jo Hill, Minnesota Public Lands Specialist, shared how their organization is acquiring and improving land.

Kludt described how current projects have included converting land back into native prairie, working with Ducks Unlimited to restore wetland areas, and improving pollinator plots. After selecting Kandiyohi on an interactive screen displaying Minne-



Photo by Amy Gronli

Decorations at the Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic reminded attendees of the habitat conservation currently taking place throughout the country.

sota's counties, I read that PF had acquired 1,850 acres and enhanced or restored 2,105 acres in our county.

Specific projects highlighted on the screen included the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center's prairie restoration and Johnson Tract wetland restoration. Anyone

interested in learning more projects and habitat help can visit minnesotapf.net/contact.

Sabin Adams, PF's Minnesota State Coordinator, presented on the "State of the State" to share population

Conservation

Continued on page 7

OPINION

Ted Here..... by Ted Almen

According to AI -- short for Artificial Intelligence -- "Ready, Fire, Aim" is a phrase often used in a sarcastic manner to describe a "mind-set" for diving headlong into something without first really thinking it through. AI credits the term to author Michael Masterson who described a business strategy of "... rapid execution over extensive planning to achieve fast results and learn through mistakes."

Could it also be used to characterize "Operation Epic Fury?"

The U.S. and Israeli bombing campaign and assassination of Iran's top dog on Saturday has achieved some results. For one, the death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei will not cause many to mourn in this country and around the world as he was known for his iron grip on the Iranian people and dismissive or hateful attitude toward other nations. Various celebrations broke out in Iran at news of his death, although it is not clear how widely that sentiment is spread. "Death to the United States and to Israel" chants were known to break out at Khamenei public events... don't expect that to change just because this man is dead.

In fact, don't be surprised if they are now louder and more frequent.

When a coalition of nations, including the U.S., went into Libya in 2011 to take out Muammar Gaddafi and his regime, it seemed as though the victors were like the dog which caught the car: Now what do we do? With the death of the brutal Gaddafi, chaos erupted in that northern African nation as there did not appear to be a solid plan on how to or who would take over leadership. In fact there were extremists vying for power in the vacuum which was created, and Libya has since that time been in an unstable state. Barack Obama has called the lack of an after-plan the worst mistake of his presidency.

The same criticism may be applied to the toppling of the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein in 2003, another murderous dictator whose demise was hailed as a win for humanity but with a flawed game plan following the victory parade.

So now, since the beginning of 2026, the U.S. has been leading or supporting the removal of two nations' leaders, both of whom were hated by many if not most throughout the world. In the first case it was the U.S. going it alone in removing Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro for his alleged drug trafficking, although later the case was made it was for that country's oil reserves. The U.S. is supposedly going to run Venezuela for awhile. Now we have Iran on our

hands. Those are two fires that could each build into conflagrations. Meanwhile we have our own problems to deal with right here at home. So much for 'America First.'

Another question is if there are any restraints on an Administration conducting military strikes solely on its own accord. By this president's thinking, no, he can do whatever he wants. But is that a good and safe strategy for our nation? Countries who are attacked generally try to strike back, as can currently be seen in the Middle East where Iran is retaliating. If history has taught anything, it's that those people are persistent. I wouldn't look for relations between the U.S. and Iran, and any other nations sympathetic to Iran for that matter, to calm anytime soon, or ever. And that's not just because of the killing of Khamenei. There are also the 'oops' to consider... such as the reported bombing of a girls elementary school by mistake resulting in the deaths of more than 100 children. The Pentagon had not confirmed this tragedy as of Monday, but is "taking it seriously" and "looking into it." One would hope so.

The payment for this 'win' in Iran could be another quagmire of death and destruction lasting months or even years. For one thing, Israel showed the world in Gaza that it doesn't just step on its enemies. It stomps and stomps and stomps and stomps... and now the U.S. is attached at their hip.

Rationalization for the assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is based on his repressive control of Iran plus sponsorship or admiration of terrorist activities. It was also said that the threat of Iran getting a nuclear weapon was imminent, although that was disputed by others, and Khamenei himself (if you can believe him) has been quoted as saying weapons of mass destruction went against the ideals of Islamic belief. The point is he was thought of as a very bad person who needed to be taken out. So how does that square with the likes of Russia's Vladimir Putin, North Korea's Kim Jong Un, China's Xi Jinping, Saudi Arabia's Mohammed bin Salman or any of the four dozen or so other authoritarian leaders currently in power?

Are we policing the rest of the world? Being part of a unified movement (as an Allied member in WWII, for example) is one thing, and easily justified. That isn't as simple in a rogue action which threatens to lead us down a prolonged and dangerous path. Hopefully this Administration hasn't done that by attacking Iran, and real intelligence will put the words Ready, Fire and Aim in their proper perspective.

AN OBJECTIVE STATE of MIND

How to fix our broken immigration system

By Ralph Dickerson
Editor

What does this country do to curb the flow of undocumented immigrants across the US' borders? The first step includes acknowledging the primary reason why people flock to the US in the first place. The vast majority of people that cross our borders illegally do so not because they fear political repression, they do so for economic opportunity.

The vast majority of the undocumented simply come here seeking work; as long as the bottom rung of jobs in the US pay more than the wages in undocumented immigrants' home countries this process will continue. Low skill jobs in the US pay well above wages in Mexico. For example, the median daily salary in Mexico, meaning half of the jobs pay above this amount, and half below, totals just over \$7 per day, or just over \$42 per week, based on a six-day work week! This information comes from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

By contrast, the federal minimum hourly wage in the United States totals \$7.25 per hour. An undocumented immigrant makes more in one hour at the federal minimum wage than he or she does in one day in Mexico. A 40-hour work week at \$7.25 per hour totals \$290 per week, a rate nearly seven

times higher per week than in Mexico!

The undocumented come here for economic opportunity. Any reform of the US' immigration system needs to take this fact into account.

The undocumented come here to fill those low-paying, by our standards, jobs because too many Americans refuse to work these jobs. They often entail hard work in tough conditions, and too many Americans simply do not want to face those work conditions.

For example, where I came from in Kentucky a tobacco grower worked with a government program to bring in migrant workers to cut and house his tobacco. Several locals complained about him bringing in the migrants, and said it took away jobs from the county's youth. The farmer said he needed to use migrant workers because county youth wanted extremely high wages, equal to the starting wages at several of the heavy industry factories in the county.

The wages the youth wanted cost the famer more than his tobacco crop realized at sale. So he turned to migrant workers.

The same process affects the owners of these low-paying jobs. American workers refuse to work these jobs without being paid a rate that bankrupts the employer. Too many Americans want easy work and premium pay.

The United States needs to work with countries such as

Mexico and other Latin and South American countries to develop a guest worker program. The countries need to create a job bureau that connects migrant workers with jobs in the United States.

US employers that need workers place their job listing with this bureau, and the bureau connects the job seeker with the employer. The system needs to update several times per day, preferably every 15 minutes, to prevent the bureau from sending more than one person to the employer.

The employer pays for the migrants cost of transportation visa costs and other associated fees to come to the United States. The visa also sets a term of how long the employment status lasts. For example, if an employer says it needs a worker for six months, the work visa lasts six months.

When the job gets close to ending, the migrant again contacts the bureau for another job, and the process starts over again.

The work eligibility lasts for a total of five years. After that time the migrant either goes back to his or her home country, or applies for citizenship to the US. The program prohibits a migrant from pursuing dual citizenship. If a migrant wants the benefits the US offers, the migrant needs to become a US citizen.

Is this system perfect? No, but it is better than the broken system now in place.

THREE BUNS and a HURRICANE®

BY ALISON NELSON



As our oldest boy's senior year heads into its' final months, we are experiencing even more 'lasts' than a person thinks about heading into it . . . a last spring concert, a last knowledge bowl meet, even a last day off for Presidents' Day registered with me. It's hard not to dwell on the little things when the big thing is coming.

Last week we watched the Saints boys basketball team play their final game of the season. Even though Axel does not play basketball, it still hit me that his classmates' time for that activity has ended. They've been a part of our experience, too. Of course, it doesn't help to sit behind all of their moms and watch the tears flow when they left the court for a final time. And be next to moms whose kids graduated last year and are reliving the moment.

Axel loves band. It's been his favorite activity since he began playing the drums before 5th grade, and even though he's not going to be a world famous percussionist, that activity has kept him excited about going to school, made him lots of friends in many grades above and below him, and provided countless memories from pep bands, concerts, marching parades, and cross country trips. It's been a huge blessing.

So when we start to have the final moments of that part of his life, we're a little sadder yet. The final spring concert

happened earlier this week, and we smiled the whole time we watched him and his brothers play for a packed house. Well, truth be told, we watched him and one brother because they both stand up in the percussion section in the back. I assume the trumpeter and baritone player were doing what they were supposed to be doing, but they're just in the sea of heads.

I am always surprised, however (and I shouldn't be, because it's just normal now), at how many people need to get up and leave or walk around during a one-hour concert. Can we not go to the bathroom or get a drink or take a phone call or stretch our legs before or after the show? Good grief! Certainly there are emergencies, but I doubt the number of people who are leaving their seats during the performance are having emergencies. Hold it til it's over, please.

I read a piece a few years ago about a woman who was enjoying her time as a stay-at-home mom when her kids were teenagers. She worked when they were young and her kids went to daycare, and while at first she felt bad about not being there every day to watch them grow, she realized that it really just required someone to keep them alive and make sure they were safe. A loving provider could do that.

When she really felt like she

needed to be there was when they were teens. That's when they're forgetting the homework that's due today, or needing their jersey washed at the last minute. It's when they are having more problems with friends or crushes, and when they really need the support. I am sure finding that to be true.

While I've never strived to be a stay-at-home mom, and really think I am someone who needs to work for her own sanity and sense of self, I do wish I could from time to time. When I forget to take someone to his dentist appointment because our schedule is so overwhelming, or I don't have time to make a good supper for like a week, or someone comes into my room when I'm sitting in bed at night and clearly wants to talk - that's when I wish I could only focus on them. Not forever, just for these years when they, in a way, seem to need me more than when they were little.

Since stay-at-home momming seems unlikely, I will continue to juggle all the appointments and jersey-washing - not perfectly by any means - carry a little extra stress-related weight, and savor the moments when they come to find me because they need to talk. It's all winding down a little fast.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trump does not understand tariffs

To the editor:

In his State of the Union address, I got the impression that President Trump does not understand how a tariff works. He seemed to be saying that the foreign country pays the tariff that is deposited into the US treasury.

The reality is that the importing US company pays the tariff (tax) on imported goods. The importing company is bringing the product into the US so it can sell it to the American consumer or company.

That importing company must decide what it will do to cover the added cost of the tariff. The importing company has two choices; it can absorb the added cost thus reducing its profits or it can pass the cost onto the consumer.

From the information I have heard, 90% of the tariff is passed on to the consumer and 10% of the cost is absorbed by the importer. Let me give you an example of how this works.

We have a grand daughter who is having a birthday soon. We have decided to give her a toy.

Many toys that Americans buy come from other countries. Let's say that President Trump has decided to put a 50% tariff on all goods imported from the country where the toy we want to purchase is made.

Let us say the toy would normally cost the importer \$10. With the 50% tariff, the toy will now cost the importer \$15.

The importer must pay the manufacturer in the

exporting country \$10 for the toy. They must also pay the US government the \$5 tariff (tax) calculated by taking the 50% tariff times the original \$10 cost of the imported toy.

Put yourself in the importer's shoes. He needs to make a profit to stay in business so he will pass the increased cost caused by the tariff on to the consumer.

I will end up paying \$15 for the toy. As part of the \$15, I will also be paying for the \$5 tariff imposed by President Trump.

It is a hidden tax that has been imposed on me. What was even more alarming to me was when the President said he would like to use the tariff as a means of supporting the government and maybe eliminating the income tax.

The consumer of the goods imported is most likely going to be a middle income American. The poor do not purchase many imported goods.

The wealthy can afford to pay Americans to produce the goods they feel they need. Those of us in the middle, the ones who purchase toys for our grandchildren, would pay the most to support our government.

We would be better off using a national sales tax if we want to eliminate the income tax. This would mean every American would be supporting the costs for all that the Federal Government provides for its citizens no matter where the product is produced.

Signed,
Ronald Van Nurden
New London Township

Pioneer settlers continued from page 1

group. If one member of the group managed to kill a deer, it did not belong just to him, but to the entire village and they all partook of it.

This cultural practice sometimes caused trouble when the Dakota encountered white settlers. The Dakota did not consider it stealing to take a cow, pig or other items from a white settler. They simply viewed it as community property shared by everyone. Usually though, the Dakota traded for items with white settlers.

Early settler Louis Larson shared a story that happened in the vicinity of Lake Henderson. A party of Dakota camped near Lake Henderson, and after a skirmish with their ancestral enemy the Chippewa, in which both sides suffered casualties, the Dakota went on a foraging expedition.

The Dakota came to the homestead of Peter Thompson, and took some of his pigs.

A few of the settlers of the area formed a group, traveled to the Dakota's camp and accused them of stealing the pigs.

The Dakota denied the accusation. One of the white settlers, Erik Peterson, searched through the camp and discovered one of the Dakota cooking a pig in a large kettle.

A small skirmish broke out between Peterson and the Dakota man, which threatened to turn into a full on fight between the white settlers and the Dakota. The Dakota greatly outnumbered the white settlers, and Rev. Andrew Jackson managed to convince the white settlers to not push the issue, since the Dakota outnumbered the white settlers 10 to 1, and let the Dakota keep the pigs.

At that time, Chief Little Crow traveled with the band of Dakota. According to reports, he drew a rough map on the ground with a stick.

He drew an area that included the Minnesota River, the Mississippi and Big Stone Lake. He said this land belonged to the Dakota, which meant all forms of game, including settlers' pigs belonged to the Dakota. He said the white settlers needed to move to the other side of Fort Snelling.

This incident foreshadowed the future war between the United States and the Dakota a short time later.

Letter to the Editor Policy—Lakes Area Review welcomes readers to express their views by submitting Letters to the Editor. All letters need to be signed and dated with the name of your town included. A phone number must also be included for verification purposes. Letters will not be published without verification of authenticity by the author. All letters are limited to 500 words or less. Only one submission per 15 days will be accepted. Letters written by multiple parties must include all person's names and phone numbers for verification. Letters may be mailed to: P.O. Box 838, New London, MN, 56273 or emailed to: editorial@nlsakesareareview.com

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Rathionalizing

By Ashley Rath



The illusion of control in a very big room

Last week we traveled to San Antonio after Tyler won a corn yield contest that earned us a trip to the Commodity Classic, one of the largest agriculture trade shows in the country. The scale of it is hard to describe. Acres of booths. Towering equipment displays. Companies promising higher yields, better systems, smarter technology. Everywhere you looked, there was a solution for sale.

But the longer I stood in that enormous building, the clearer one thing became: for all our innovation, we still operate inside limits.

The show floor was built on progress. Optimize this. Streamline that. Remove risk. Increase efficiency. It was impressive—and inspiring. But in the quieter conversations with people from all over the country and Canada, a different truth surfaced.

No matter where they were from, everyone was managing variables they couldn't control. Weather. Markets. Soil conditions. Timing. One farmer battles drought. Another fights humidity. Someone else deals with extreme heat or a shortened growing season. Same crop. Completely different realities.

And that's when it clicked: this isn't just about farming.

We all live inside variables.

You can have the best planner, the best strategy, the best education, the best intentions. You can optimize your morning routine and track your habits and listen to every podcast on performance. But life still introduces factors you didn't account for—health scares, financial stress, relationship strain, unexpect-

ed setbacks.

We love the idea that if we just find the right system, we can eliminate uncertainty. That's what those massive trade show booths represent in a way: control.

But standing in that building made something else obvious. The people who last—whether in agriculture, business, parenting, or leadership—aren't the ones who eliminate variables. They're the ones who learn to operate steadily within them.

That's a different skill set.

It requires humility to admit you're not in full control. It requires adaptability when conditions shift. It requires perspective to stop comparing your circumstances to someone else's completely different set of variables.

In a room that large, comparison loses its power. You realize quickly that you can't measure your situation against someone whose context is entirely different. And maybe that's the broader lesson.

We don't all get the same weather.

We don't all get the same starting point, the same challenges, or the same resources. But we all get a set of conditions. The real work is learning to respond wisely inside them instead of wishing for someone else's.

San Antonio was beautiful. The show was impressive. But the takeaway wasn't about scale or spectacle.

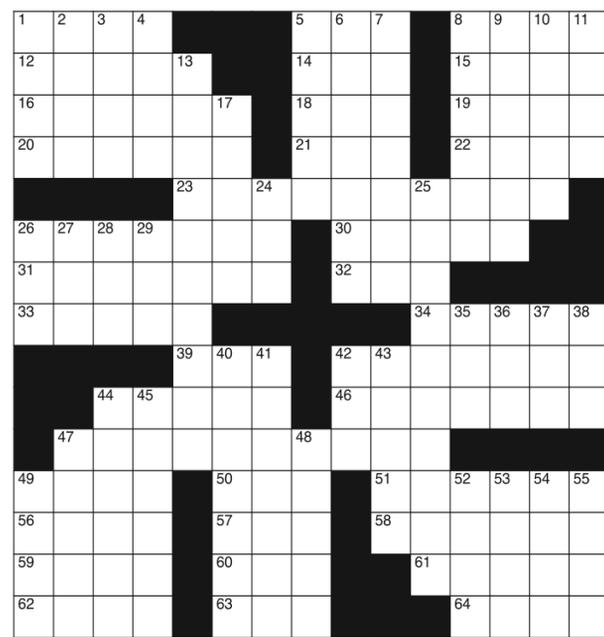
It was this: progress is powerful, but perspective is essential. Control is limited. Response is not.

CLUES ACROSS

1. Unit of dry measure
5. One who defies authority
8. Social media giant
12. Render holy
14. "Much ___ about nothing"
15. Computer manufacturer
16. Creed
18. Immoral act
19. Mountain pass
20. Winged nut
21. Don't know when yet
22. Elected officials
23. Corrupt tendencies
26. Popular adult beverage
30. Made a mistake
31. Morally correct
32. Type of whale
33. Portable conical tent
34. Native people of the Congo
39. More (Spanish)
42. Classroom implements
44. Cognizant of
46. One who tells
47. Free from bondage
49. Thick piece of something
50. Containing two adjacent nitrogen atoms
51. Removed from the record
56. Legendary singer Turner
57. Broke up the earth
58. Hunting expedition
59. Contributes
60. Unit of work or energy
61. Wreckage on the sea bed
62. Affirmative! (slang)
63. Witness
64. Scrape (Archaic)

CLUES DOWN

1. "___ and flows"
2. Humble request for help
3. A position of leadership
4. Continent
5. Adherent of a particular religion
6. Things that can be eaten



7. Self-governing Netherlands territory
8. Long-tailed crow
9. Repeated
10. Bluish greens
11. Humanities
13. Someone who serves in the armed forces
17. Labor (Spanish)
24. Zero
25. Shared by involving three parties
26. Queens ballplayer
27. Consumed
28. Rest here please
29. Men's fashion accessory
35. American time
36. Sound unit
37. They ___
38. Soviet Socialist Republic

40. Places to play video games
41. A sudden attack of illness
42. When you hope to arrive
43. Charges
44. Actress Seyfried
45. A tributary of the Ohio River
47. Omit when speaking
48. Armored fish
49. Remain
52. From a distance
53. Adventure story
54. Geological times
55. Eat dinner

Conservation Continued from page 5

numbers for grassland birds. On a large screen behind him, Adams projected a line graph showing estimated pheasant harvests from the 1950s to 2024.

"What's amazing to me," Adams said, "is that in 1958 we, in Minnesota, harvested 1.6 million pheasants, which is astounding when you consider [that] we harvested in 2024 roughly 235,000 pheasants. We took a tremendous decrease in the late 1960s. The pheasant population crashed, but has since somewhat stabilized."

With a laser pointer, Adams traced the peaks and valleys of the line.

"Notice these years from the 1960s: up and down and up and down. If you put together enough data about farm policy, about conservation programs, about commodity prices, and you graphed all of that out, you would get pretty much that same graph. The pheasant population in Minnesota and pretty much the entire Midwest is tied to agriculture production and conservation programs that we put in place."

Adams also touched on population numbers of sharp-tailed grouse, prairie chickens, and the Hungarian Partridge (which is apparently thriving in the Fargo-Moorhead urban environment).

"I think a lot of people have a perception that wildlife just simply exist," Adams said. "In some instances, that is true, but when we talk about all the birds that I mentioned, and you see a stand of grassland habitat—no matter the size—there is, I would bet, a 98% chance that taxpayer dollars, conservation groups, donations, etc. put that grass out there. It didn't just happen. It is there because we showed that we valued it."

Adams mentioned how public lands are enhanced as wildlife management areas or waterfowl production areas, and how privately held lands are improved through government initiatives such as the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and Reinvest in Minnesota. While PF held a major presence to tell their story of acquiring land and working with people to keep some of their land wild for wildlife's sake, other organizations were on hand to share how they are promoting conservation.

Finding the booth for Monarch Joint Venture at the event was a surprise at first, but after speaking with organization employees Alexa Koch and Avery Pearson, I understood how fitting it was for them to be present.

"Grassland birds and pollinators share the same habitat," Koch explained. "We're advocating for better habitats for monarchs. When you have a prairie full of diverse plants, that also creates really good pollinator habitat. A lot of insects, including pollinators, can be really important food sources for a lot of the native birds. Promoting the native plants and that community to support native insects supports the birds, and it all goes in a big circle."

Koch shared that visitors to their booth had told stories about converting parts of their yard to native plants or asked about the best types of flowers to plant for pollinators.

"People get really excited about monarchs because they're such a charismatic species," Koch said.

While some Minnesota residents might feel duty-bound to protect the environment for birds, and butterflies, momentum for action would quickly fizzle out without a network of supporters. At a seminar called, "Pass It On: Why Hunting Needs You," Ashley Chance, Hunting Heritage Program Manager for PF, pointed out that a decline in hunter numbers negatively affects conservation efforts.

"Almost all of the conservation that happens on state-owned public lands is funded through hunting license sales. So, this is a funding issue, and as we move forward, it's also a social issue. To keep hunting, we need public support

for hunting, or at least we need to minimize public disapproval of hunting."

Chance noted that plenty of hunting interest groups focus on introducing people to hunting, but less focus is put on retaining new hunters and reactivating people who have stepped away from the activity. Hunting skills take time to develop, and, in many cases, older family members introduce children to hunting and teach them more and more over time.

When children grow up and leave home, they might lose access to equipment, land, and, perhaps most critically, friends and family who taught and encouraged them. If hunting as a child was a positive experience, many hunters will be motivated to return to the activity they learned growing up. Often, Chance said, the motivation comes not from a dream of bagging prize birds but from the love of hunting's community element.

"Social support is what we need to minimize churn and keep people coming back," Chance said. "Churn" in this context means a high rate of recruitment partnered with a high level of fall-out. New female hunters have the highest rate of churn where hunter demographics are concerned. "If there's a woman that you know that you think might be interested, please don't hesitate to ask her to come along or ask her if she would like to learn something from you," Chance asked of the hunters in the audience.

A panel of three female hunters followed Chance's seminar to share how they were introduced to hunting and overcame obstacles to keep enjoying the pastime: Laura Schara (daughter of "Minnesota Bound" founder, Ron Schara, and a TV personality in her own right), Kate Ahnstrom (a certified shooting instructor), and Courtney Bastian (founder of HerUpland, a women-led organization that promotes hunting and conservation). After Bastian shared about driving a long way to go hunting and not having her husband to help with the process, Ahnstrom said, "She was four hours from home with no hubby. So, hobbies, boyfriends, significant others, remember that it's okay to let us feel a bit on our own. We come out a lot stronger, and we do have to figure it out."

Ahnstrom said that a roadblock for her was not having women in her hunting community, so she was happy to discover the HerUpland community.

"It meant a lot to me to find other women, to have this support, and to get deeper into hunting."

Ahnstrom mentioned PF's Women on the Wing chapters: groups that share the same goals as PF but also focus on providing support to potential, new and established femalehunters. I left the Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic with a renewed appreciation for all hunters who care for the land and want it to provide habitat for not just game birds but many species of wildlife.

Conservation efforts to reclaim and restore land were front and center. Community was on display as attendees asked questions and shared stories with vendors, speakers, and social media personalities.

Continuity came in the form of scores of children tagging along with their parents and enjoying hands-on activities in the Youth Village, but it also came in the form of sincere, soft-spoken Jenny Ayechit: the Karen Community Outreach Coordinator for MN DNR. Ayechit helps Karen residents of Minnesota understand how they can still enjoy their traditional pursuits of hunting and fishing when they follow the state's rules and regulations.

Through the work of PF and QF and other groups to protect land, promote community, and propagate a love for the outdoors, the Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic will continue to celebrate noteworthy causes for years to come.

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	2	5				7		
4	1						2	8
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					7			

Level: Advanced

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

NUTRITION WORD SEARCH

X P N G S I S Y L B D S C D E I E N N D A B A I S M S M R T N E M H C I R N E X C S S E E S T S A E C P B I G I E Y R A A E C E T T I N L T Y N E Y R Y B G A T M F I R T O Y L E Y E Y H O T T U R S S V I B R H A R L O I V I N A F E X E C F T P N I O O R P O B R A D O V I R N I L T N R O O L T D V R A T R P M T E E T M Y F A X A A V V F T T U A G A B Y O D L E G D P C A V C M H I C E N B S I B I C E L L S I E I A H F O S E M O P F M B A T C X G L X R D I M C B L L I R D M O L N F S Y S A O C S L I V R D E P C V R I D E X V R H A I G S A P N A G M X I P P T C O D L T I C T X P B R V C H I L M I O H B A I B X E D N I C I M E C Y L G D M I S O G N C R L T A U E L I F D T F S O A N X I U V I T A M I N S I C X U D A B E S D I C A Y T T A F R T L T E A B S T N E I R T U N O R C A M I X B Y I Y	WORDS AMINO ACIDS ANTIOXIDANTS BASAL BIOAVAILABILITY CALORIES CARBOHYDRATES CELLS DIETARY ELECTROLYTES ENERGY ENRICHMENT FATTY ACIDS FIBER FORTIFICATION GLYCEMIC INDEX IRON LIPIDS MACRONUTRIENTS METABOLISM MICRONUTRIENTS PROBIOTICS PROTEIN SATIETY VITAMINS
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Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

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OBITUARIES

Francis Michael "Mike" Whetston, 83

Francis Michael "Mike" Whetston, lovingly known as "Papa," passed away on February 25, 2026, at the VA Medical Center in St. Cloud, Minnesota, at the age of 83. His interment occurred at 11:30 am, Saturday, March 7th at Lake Lillian Community Cemetery with a celebration of life from 12-2:00 pm at the Horseshoe Bar in Lake Lillian. Arrangements are with Harvey Anderson Funeral Home in Willmar.



Mike Whetston

Mike met the love of his life, Sandra Kay "Sandy" Whetston, in Redwood Falls, Minnesota. The two were married on July 15, 1961, in Morton, Minnesota. While stationed in Germany, they welcomed their child on August 31, 1968, and returned stateside just two weeks later.

In 1970, they moved to Lake Lillian, Minnesota, where Mike would spend the majority of his life. A mechanic his entire life, Mike could fix just about anything and often did. He owned and operated the service station in Lake Lillian for many years, where he enjoyed not only the work but the conversations and familiar faces that came through the doors. After closing the shop, he worked at Plowman's in Hutchinson until retirement, where he thoroughly enjoyed the annual Christmas meat and cheese platters—arguably one of his favorite job perks.

Mike lived independently in Lake Lillian until 2024 and was deeply woven into the fabric of the community. Quietly generous, he was the kind of neighbor who helped first and explained never. One winter, a new neighbor discovered a full cord of wood mysteriously delivered in the middle of the season—Mike had dropped it off and driven away before they even knew who had done it. He regularly snowblowed neighbors' driveways before they could get to them and took personal responsibility for keeping Lake Lillian's sidewalks clear of snow, a job he took very seriously whether anyone assigned it to him or not. For a short while, he even served as acting Mayor of Lake Lillian, much to his own surprise.

Affectionately known as "Papa," Mike loved woodworking and especially his many scroll saws. He was famous for owning multiples of nearly every tool imaginable—because, in his opinion, one was simply not enough. He loved tinkering, building, and bringing projects to life, often with the help of his lifelong friends Donnavon Garberich, Greg Schroeder, and Henry Wittman.

He also treasured time spent with his grandchildren and made a point to create lasting memories with them through family trips to Duluth, the Science Museum, Disney World, Indianapolis, Nashville, and beyond. One of his favorite adventures came when he won a trip to the Super Bowl through VISA, a story he loved to share. In true Mike fashion, he stayed in touch with the bartender from that trip and remained pen pals for the next 25 years.

Each year, Mike could also be spotted driving his Chrysler LeBaron convertible in the Lake Lillian parade, proudly participating and just as reliably forgetting to buy candy to throw to the kids. Despite this annual oversight, he remained a beloved and familiar sight.

Mike was preceded in death by his wife, Sandra "Sandy" Whetston (2006); his parents, William Walter and Mary Laura Whetston; and his siblings Charlotte Christenson, Margaret Latham, Gertrude Holzerland, Bernard Whetston, James Whetston, and Vince Whetston.

He is survived by his son, Timothy Whetston and wife Janet of New London, Minnesota; his grandchildren, Aiden Whetston and Quinn Whetston of New London; many nieces and nephews; and his lifelong friends Donnavon Garberich, Greg Schroeder, and Henry Wittman, who helped him bring countless ideas and projects to life.

Mike will be remembered for his quiet kindness, steady presence, mechanical mind, dry humor, and the many thoughtful things he did without ever needing recognition. Whether it was fixing something, clearing snow, helping a neighbor anonymously, or planning another trip with his grandkids, he showed his love through action. He lived simply, worked hard, helped often, and, true to form, likely left this world the same way he lived in it—without much fuss, but with a lasting impact on everyone around him.

Barbara Severson presentation

Beginning on the day set aside to commemorate the life of St. Patrick, "Green" Lake Free Lutheran and the Monongalia Preservation Society are co-sponsoring a two-part presentation by Barbara Severson of Willmar as she will be speaking on the life of

Norway's greatest man: HANS NIELSEN HAUGE "A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS"
 Tuesday, March 17th & Tuesday, March 24th. 10:00 AM. Green Lake Free Lutheran Church, 8008 County Road 8, Spicer.

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How would you define the Christian faith? What does it mean to really follow Jesus and to walk with God? I suspect there are many answers that people might give if we polled the community.
 My answer, that I believe is the clear witness of Scripture, is that the Christian faith, at its core, is not a list of things you can and cannot do, but rather it is a relationship.
 Galatians 5:1 is a beautiful summary of this core truth. For freedom Christ has set us free.
 This is the foundation upon which the entire Christian faith is built. The premise of the Christian worldview is that God created the world and that it was very good, but because sin and rebellion entered into the world, we find ourselves naturally at enmity with God. Sin is a sad reality in this world. You don't have to look very far to see brokenness, hurt, pain, or injustice.
 We find ourselves incapable of not sinning. We know what we should do, and yet we don't do it. We know we shouldn't do things, and yet we do them. We can't seem to break free from the chains that bind us to our past mistakes. This is the human condition.
 But God himself took on human flesh and lived among us. His purpose in coming was to live the life we couldn't live, to live a life totally free from sin. But Jesus didn't just come to set us an example of how we should try to live.
 Jesus' public ministry ended in a horrific display of brutality and punishment on the cross. He was humiliated and executed in a public spectacle, and the cosmic implications of what Jesus did on the cross change everything about life. Because Jesus didn't just suffer unjustly. He suffered in your place.

PASTOR'S CORNER
 By Carl Fiskness
 Green Lake Free Lutheran

Substitutionary atonement is the fancy theology word, but what Jesus suffered on the cross, he suffered in your place.
 He suffered in my place. I deserve punishment for my sin, because my sin is, at its core, rebellion from God. It's trying to set myself up as the god of my own life. I should have been the one up on the cross, because I was guilty when Jesus was not. But somehow, in a way which is above my comprehension, Jesus took my place on the cross. He knew I didn't deserve it, but he loves me anyways.
 My price has been paid. Your price has been paid. Because of Jesus' work on the cross, we're given the free gift of grace. A helpful acronym from my Sunday School days is that grace stands for God's Riches At Christ's Expense. Jesus took your punishment for you, and in doing so has set you free from the sin that used to chain you down.
 You're set free to have a restored relationship with God, and the chains that held you to your past mistakes are erased.
 Who the Son sets free is free indeed!

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SPORTS



File photos by Ralph Dickerson

Top left, Korbin Tanner, pictured in section action against Morris Area, provided the inside punch against Minnewaska as she scored 16 points and pulled down 10 boards. Ayla Caskey, center, also pictured in action against MACA, scored 13 points, four points and added seven steals against the Lakers. Taylor Munsch, right, also pictured against MACA played an all-around game with seven points, 10 boards, three steals, three assists and a block.

NLS gets past Waska 59-45 and into section finals

GIRLS BASKETBALL

By Bruce Strand
Sports Reporter

With a strong start and a strong finish, New London-Spicer fended off a furious Minnewaska Area rally to beat the Lakers 59-45 in the Section 3AA North finals Feb. 25 at UM-Morris.

The Wildcats (28-1) and Fairmont (28-2), top seeds in

the North and South, battled for the section crown Thursday evening in Marshall. The winner advances to the Class 2A state tournament starting Wednesday, March 11.

NLS appeared headed for a lopsided win, building a 34-15 halftime lead, but the Wildcats started the second half shooting 1-for-12 and suffering several turnovers while the Lakers caught fire, especially on three-pointers.

Minnewaska got as close as 39-37 and 43-40 after hitting 3-point shots before NLS slowly recovered.

“They had completely taken the momentum, and had everything going their way,” NLS coach Mike Dreier assessed, “but thankfully we were able to answer the call and get control back.”

A three-pointer by Paycen Rutgers and a three-point play by Ayla Caskey made it 49-41. Caskey, who shot poorly most of the game, slashed through the lane and missed a layup but snagged the rebound, make a put-back and got fouled. The Cats made eight of nine free shots as they inched farther ahead.

Waska made seven three-pointers in the second half and was 8-for-25 in the game while NLS had its worst game of the season outside the arc, 2-for-17. But the Wildcats had a crushing advantage on rebounds, 45-25, and made 21 of 30 free shots.

Korbin Tanner notched 16 points and 10 rebounds, Caskey 13 points and seven steals, and Taylor Munsch seven points and 10 rebounds. Rutgers had seven points, and Katelyn Delzer and Roxanne Klein six each.

For Minnewaska, Lauryn

Ankeny and Berlyn Green led with 11 points each, with Kendall Danielson and Eliana Marthaler each scoring six with two 3-pointers. Green made three triples.

Waska 15 30 — 45
NLS 34 25 — 59

Minnewaska Area Statistics — 16-52 FG (8-25 3FG), 5-11 FT, 25 rebounds, 23 turnovers, 21 fouls **Scoring:** Lauryn Ankeny 11, Berlynn Green 11, Kendall Danielson 6, Eliana Marthaler 6, Allie Mrnak 4, Nori Song 3, Olivia Danielson 2, Londyn Dahl 2 ... **3-point-**

ers: Green 3, K. Danielson 2, Marthaler 2, Song 1.

New London-Spicer Statistics — 18-51 FG (2-17 3FG), 21-30 FT, 45 rebounds, 20 turnovers, 14 fouls **Scoring:** Korbin Tanner 16 (10r, 1s, 1b), Ayla Caskey 13 (4r, 4a, 7s), Taylor Munsch 7 (10r, 3s, 3a, 1b), Paycen Rutgers 7 (2r, 2a, 3s), Katelyn Delzer 6 (9r, 2a 1s), Roxanne Klein 6 (4r, 1a, 2s), Kyla Vick 3, Ezri Boelter 1 (5r, 1a), Sydney Thorstad 0 (1r) ... **3-pointers:** Vick 1, Rutgers 1.

*Box score key: r, rebounds; a, assists; s, steals; b, blocks.

NLS' TURN-AROUND SEASON ENDS

NLS boys beat Paynesville, lose to unbeaten Tigers

BOYS BASKETBALL

By Bruce Strand
Sports Reporter

A season of significant improvement by New London-Spicer boys basketball has ended with a 13-15 record and one playoff win.

The Wildcats edged Paynesville 60-55 at home Friday but undefeated and top-ranked Morris Area/Chokio-Alberta ended their season 69-37 Tuesday in Willmar.

NLS had nowhere to go but up after last year's 1-26 season, and up they went, by a dozen wins, with a young squad that could break out next year.

“Not the way we wanted to go out, but overall we met some of our goals, and were just so close on others,” said coach Jeff Paffrath, asked to reflect on the season. “The kids bought in all year. We learned a lot, and still need to learn a lot more. They gave it their all, all season, and as a coach, that’s all you can ask for.”

Griffin Thompson, NLS senior, commented to the West Central Tribune: “We had a lot of close games last year, and we knew that the team had it in us. It felt really good to come back from that catastrophic season.”

Most of the players who saw action will return, while the JV team was 22-4 and the C squad 20-4.

“We have a lot of talent, and we really work hard on learn-



Photo by Ralph Dickerson

The NLS student section got on their feet and cheered, stomped and willed the Wildcats to victory in the section game against Paynesville. The game featured several lead changes.

ing how to play basketball,” Paffrath said. “Being able to react in situations without thinking whether on defense or offense is key to our future.”

NLS 60, Paynesville 55

It was a “great atmosphere,” said the coach, for a final home game, with NLS and Paynesville fans packing the gymnasium.

“Our guys haven’t been in a game like that for a while, so we came out very tight and played like that a lot of the game,” Paffrath said. “We just kept battling, whether down or up ... We were lucky to be ahead in the end, that’s about what it came down to.”

Zach Lageson sank 19 points, shooting 7-for-11, including 2-for-2 on threes. Gavin Vick sparkled all-around with 13 points (shooting 5-for-8), nine rebounds, five steals and three blocks. Griffin Thompson and Loudon Johnson each notched eight points and five rebounds.

Paynesville (15-12) had four double digit scorers led by Carter Flanders with 13.

Pay 26 29 — 55
NLS 28 32 — 60

Paynesville Statistics— 22-45 FG (7-25 3FG), 4-10 FT, 24 rebounds, 20 turnovers, 12 fouls **Scoring leaders:** Carter Flanders 13, Matthew Hemingson 11, Reed Johnson

11, Sam Brunner 10.

New London-Spicer Statistics — 24-54 FG (6-17 3FG), 6-9 FT, 33 rebounds, 19 turnovers, 15 fouls **Scoring:** Grant Henjum 4 (4r, 1a, 1s, 1b), Loudon Johnson 8 (5r, 1a, 1s, 1b), Zach Lageson 19 (2r, 1a, 2s), Ethan Nelson 2 (7r, 3a, 2s), Kaden Shimek 6 (2a, 1s, Griffin Thompson 8 (5r, 1s, 1b), Gavin Vick 13 (9r, 2a, 5s, 3b), Boden Spers 0 (1r) ... **3-pointers:** Johnson 2, Lageson 2, Shimek 2.

MACA 66, NLS 39

NLS guard Zach Lageson swished a 3-point shot a few seconds after the opening tipoff. It was all Tigers after that as they rolled to their 27th straight win.

The Cats didn’t score again for nearly seven minutes and fell behind 14-3. They were within 35-21 at halftime but the Tigers ruled the second half 34-16.

Top scorers for the Tigers were Alex Asmus with 18 points and Jack Kehoe with 15. Excellent ball-handling was one of the Tiger traits as they had just seven turnovers and NLS made just one steal.

Grant Henjum had nine points and Zach Lageson eight for NLS. The Cats were off the mark shooting with just 12 field goals.

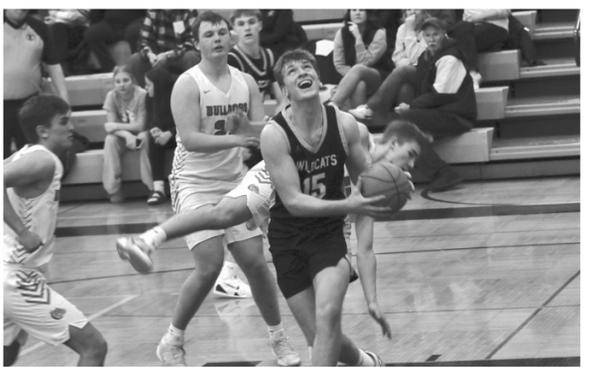
NLS 21 16 — 37
MACA 35 34 — 69

New London-Spicer Statis-

tics — 12-37 FG (2-10 3FG), 11-16 FT, 23 rebounds, 18 turnovers, 14 fouls ... **Scoring:** Grant Henjum 9 (1r), Loudon Johnson 2 (1r, 1a), Zach Lageson 8 (1r, 3a), Teagan Lindahl 2, Ethan Nelson 5 (6r), Boden Spears, Griffin Thompson 3 (7r), Gavin Vick 2 (1r), Brecken Westby 2 (2r), Kaden Shimek 0 (2r, 1s), Jack Van Nurden 0 (1r) ... **3-pointers:** Lageson 1, Spears 1.

Morris Area/Chokio-Alberta Statistics — 27-53 FG (9-20 3FG), 6-16 FT, 26 rebounds, 7 turnovers, 12 fouls ... **Scoring leaders:** Alex Asmus 18, Jack Kehoe 16, Riley Asmus 13, Tyson Grove 8.

*Box score key: r, rebounds; a, assists; s, steals; b, blocks.



Photos by Ralph Dickerson

The section game between NLS and Paynesville featured runs by both teams, lead changes and tough defense. Left, Ethan Nelson forces a jump ball. Middle, Gavin Vick drives to the basket. At right, Loudon Johnson reacts to making a heady defensive play against Paynesville.



LAR file photo

The Zylstra's run drills with campers in 2023. The camp has been held for ages Kindergarten all the way up to seniors, split into age groups.

Zylstra summer football camp canceled this year

FOOTBALL

By Shannon Urban
Staff Writer

The popular Zylstra summer football camp that has drawn young athletes from across the region in recent years will not take place this summer, the NL-S community education department announced.

Brandon Zylstra, one of the camp's organizers, said a combination of scheduling issues and lower-than-expected registration numbers led to the decision to pause the event for 2026.

"Simply put, we were having some scheduling conflicts this year and our registration was down significantly thus far compared to past years," Zylstra said in a statement. "We thought it was best to take this summer off and maybe try again in the future."

The camp, which Zylstra launched with his brother Shane, was a way for them to give back to the community that has supported their football careers over the years. "We have learned so many valuable lessons from this game and wanted to be able to share, prepare, and inspire the youth about sports and life,"

Shane Zylstra said in a 2024 interview for the Lakes Area Review.

The camp started out with a strong following by offering young athletes the chance to sharpen their skills under the guidance of experienced coaches and high-level players. The event regularly attracted strong participation and was praised for creating an energetic, supportive environment focused on fundamentals, mentorship and love of the game.

At the time, the camp provided local youth with access to instruction that might otherwise have required travel to larger cities. It also emphasized character development and leadership alongside on-field drills and competitions.

This year, however, early registration numbers fell short of previous summers, prompting organizers to reassess whether they could deliver the same experience participants had come to expect.

"We apologize to those who did sign up and for anyone that was planning too!" Zylstra said.

The Zylstras indicated the cancellation is a pause rather than a permanent end. Brandon Zylstra said they may revisit the camp in the future, depending on schedules and interest levels.



LAR file photo

Brandon and Shane Zylstra said that the goal has always been to get the youth exposed to all the drills and knowledge that the game has taught them of the years.

Hanson goes 1-2 in state wrestling

WRESTLING

By Bruce Strand
Sports Reporter

Holton Hanson, New London-Spicer's lone entrant in the state wrestling meet, picked up one win while losing twice on Feb. 27-28 at Grand Casino Are-

na.

The senior 152-pounder lost to Tate Olson of Delano 4-1, then pinned Tyler Hall of Becker in 20 seconds, then lost to Noah Cameron of Little Falls 13-3.

Hanson, who qualified for state by placing second in the Section 3AA tournament, finished the season 30-8. He had a final total of 151 wins.

A full ride Continued from page 1

Surrounding her were friends, family, and teachers who have seen all of the hard work that went into this achievement, and wanted to be present to applaud her in the moment she learned that it had all paid off.

"Tell us what you're most looking forward to at SMSU in the fall," Wahle asked.

Gehrke's answer revealed something deeper than typical college excitement.

"Just being there, I think," she began. "I'm really excited to be with my sister again because she's on campus. And just being able to grow more—because being in a small town, sometimes it's hard to be able to expand. And I think it's going to be a really good way to step out and just find myself more."

It's a sentiment familiar to many small-town students: the love of home coupled with the hunger to discover who you might become beyond its borders. For Gehrke, attend-

ing SMSU in Marshall means she won't have to choose between growth and connection.

Gehrke said she plans to major in elementary education—a choice that reflects both her passion and her roots.

"I'm going to go teach, hopefully somewhere around this area," she explained. "And after that, I'll hopefully get my master's so I can be with other teachers and mentor them."

The plan reveals a student who's already thinking beyond her own classroom to how she can elevate the profession itself. Wanting to teach teachers, to lead from within the field. It's exactly the kind of vision that would catch SMSU's attention—and exactly what the School of Education looks for in its future graduates.

"We can tell that you are going to be a leader on our campus," Wahle told her.

For SMSU, the President's Regional Scholars program

represents a strategic investment in students who will shape southwest Minnesota's future. These aren't just bright students—they're future educators, leaders and builders who understand the region's challenges and possibilities.

For Gehrke's family, the scholarship means more than prestige. It means possibility.

The financial burden of college weighs heavily on many families across rural US, where economic fluctuations and limited higher-paying jobs make saving for tuition challenging. A four-year full ride doesn't just pay for school—it changes what a family can imagine for their child's future.

As news of Gehrke's achievement spread through New London-Spicer School District, the celebration reflected a community's pride in one of its own. In small towns, victories like these are shared. When one student succeeds, it reminds everyone what's pos-

sible.

"Thank you," Gehrke said, still beaming. "I'm so excited."

Come fall, KayAnna Gehrke will join the Mustang family. She'll begin the journey from student to educator to mentor. And the full ride scholarship opened the door.

What she does once she walks through it will be her story to write.

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WINTER SPORTS 2026



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GIRLS BASKETBALL



Row 1: Katelyn Delzer, Evaline Swenson, Sydney Thorstad, Paycen Rutgers, Sydney Peltier, Kyla Vick, Roxanne Klein. Row 2: Brooke Barney, Ezri Boelter, Addison Peltier, Harper Olness, Korbin Tanner, Taylor Munsch, Ayla Caskey. Row 3: Student manager Ari Gould, Asst Coach Margaret Essler, Asst Coach Gable Adams, Head Coach Mike Dreier, Asst Coach Joey Dreier, Asst Coach Lynnette Buening, Student manager Ayla Roediger, Student manager Brooke Bajari.

DANCELINE JAZZ



Row 1: Brooklyn Behne, Caylee Leindecker, Delilah Larsen, Grace Toutges. Row 2: Jaclyn Renstrom, Brooke Glauvitz, Taylor Rutgers, Dasha Hand, Ava Baker. Row 3: Ella Schammel, Zoe O'Brien, Sophia Schammel, Olivia Paffrath.

DANCELINE KICK



Row 1: Taylor Rutgers, Brooklyn Behne, Caylee Leindecker, Delilah Larsen, Grace Toutges, Bristol Egge, Elin Anderson. Row 2: Asst. Jessica Williams, Jaclyn Renstrom, Ava Baker, Brooke Glauvitz, Dasha Hand, Madeline Leindecker, Emma Shea, Student Manager Morgan Thein. Row 3: Head Coach Jenny Ziemer, Ella Schammel, Zoe O'Brien, Sophia Schammel, Olivia Paffrath, Etta Lee, Brenna Swanson, Claire Lesteberg, Asst. Coach Alexa Vallejo.

BOYS HOCKEY



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GYMNASTICS



Row 1: Finley Hebrink, Josephine Nelson, Mariah Fifield, Delany Barber, Averie Turner, Rylie Harrier, Kloe Yeo, Taytum Schmitz, Hannah Schrotberger, Evangeline Dalton. Row 2: Olivia Fifield, Amelia Morales, Zoe Peterson, Lydia Sing, Reese Baeth, Delaney Baeth, Kennedy Goracke, Svea Haugen, Savannah Appleby, Violet Sing.

GIRLS HOCKEY



Madyson Woelfel, Adeline Olson, Adeline Greeley, Sophia Olson.

WRESTLING



Row 1: Student Manager Dee Dee Riza, Elden Halvorson, Kellon Hanson, Bryce Mead, Jack Tuschen, Carter Olson, Jett Hoffman, Josh Lucas, Gage Pederson, Student Manager Paytin Zuroff. Row 2: Student manager Emma Freidell, Gable Westby, Connor Hauptli, David Korsmo, Jeremiah Nelson, Ben Hannig, Caiden Rheauem, Nick Stevee, Caleb Walz. Row 3: Andrew Sandau, Lucas Engels, Matthew Gehrke, Holton Hanson, Van Pulsifer, Grant McCain, Jesus Riza. Row 4: Asst Coach Corbin Schwartz, Head Coach Shawn Hatlestad, Gaige Knisley, Rylan Plumley-Champagne, Caleb Nelson, Luke Hannig, Garret Leenstra, Alexander Meis, Asst Coach Nick McKenzie, Asst Coach Darin Hatlestad, Asst Coach Ty Bisek, Asst Coach Troy Johnson.

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