



Rock County STAR HERALD

Rock County's oldest business, printing since 1873

Thursday, March 31, 2022

Rock Motor Sports, city, Golla swap 75 property

City buys lot from Aanenson who buys Farm Store property; city also buys Golla property to the east

By Lori Sorenson

The city of Luverne will buy the Rock Motor Sports property, and Rock Motor Sports will buy the former Farm Store property in a series of land purchases along Highway 75.

In a closed session at their Tuesday, March 22, meeting, City Council members agreed to pay Bill Aanenson \$200,000 for the property.

It's a 34,000-square-foot lot (about one quarter of an acre) that had been appraised at \$118,000.

Aanenson had approached the city about selling his property in order to facilitate purchasing the new space for his business.

"As a business we have outgrown our available space, and I was considering options to enlarge my current location and space," he said.

"I had considered two options by either adding on to the existing shop or build a separate building to accommodate future growth. When the Farm Store announced that it was closing its operation, it presented an opportunity to expand the business to the former Farm Store location."

The council agreed to buy the Aanenson lot if the city could buy Gary Golla's property behind Rock Motor Sports. This would square off city-owned property (former Sharkee's lot) all the way to Hatting Street.

"It was like a three-legged stool," said Mayor Pat Baustian. "We would buy property from Billy and Billy would buy the Farm Store property."

Highway 75 properties/see 14A



Lori Sorenson photos/0331 farm week at library

Library hosts Farm Week activities

Farm Week at the Rock County Library last week featured a weeklong lineup of farm-focused activities, including reading with a farmer Tuesday morning. Beaver Creek farmer Peter Bakken, on behalf of Minnesota Farm Bureau, read books about farming to preschoolers and talked about the John Deere tractor that C&B, Luverne, parked in the library lot. Among other Farm Week activities last week, the library hosted the original animated "Charlotte's Web" movie, a scavenger hunt and a red tractor visit from Titan Machinery.



Above, children's librarian Bronwyn Wenzel hands out Casey and Friends coloring and activity books to preschoolers following story time March 22. At left, Karis De Jong poses with Hayes and Adaline with a John Deere tractor outside the library. A red Case IH tractor visited the library later in the week.

County approves tax abatement for New Vision mill in Magnolia

By Mavis Fodness

New Vision Co-Op will expand its grain storage and handling capabilities with an additional grain bin and building structure at its Magnolia feed mill facility this year.

Cost of the expansion is estimated at \$2.35 million.

Rock County Commissioners approved a 10-year property tax abatement resolution at their March 22 meeting in a vote of 4-1.

Total amount of the step-down abatement is \$74,095 and only includes the county's portion of the property tax.

Commissioner Stan Williamson cast the dissenting vote.

He looked back at the previous abatement where he cast the deciding vote to approve a 10-year tax abatement for the fertilizer building and grain bin expansion at the Hills location in 2016. Estimated value was \$1.2 million.

"There was a vote of 3-2. Commissioners (Ken) Hoime and (Ron) Boyenga voted against it. Three of us voted for it," Williamson said. "Today — and I think I told you before on other abatements, that 10 years is too long. I can't do 10 years. I agree, I think my vote was wrong that day when we went 10 years."

The 2016 abatement was for \$5,222 annually for 10 years. Martin County approved a five-year agreement.

The abatement for the Magnolia expansion is a step-down agreement in which the percentage starts at 100 percent then steps down after five years.

For years one through five, the abatement would be 100 percent of the new construction or \$10,585 per year. Year six would decrease to 80 percent (\$8,486), year seven to 60 percent (\$6,351), year eight to 40 percent (\$4,234) and year nine at 20 percent (\$2,117).

No one from the public or New Vision Co-Op attended the abatement hearing.

New Vision abatement/see 5A

Elementary playground to get two new basketball courts

By Mavis Fodness

Luverne School Board members approved two new elementary basketball courts at their monthly meeting Thursday night, March 24.

The cost is \$62,050 for the concrete work, line painting, five basketball hoops, pickleball net and tetherball equipment.

Payment will be with funds available to the district through federal ESSER pandemic funds (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief).

One basketball court will be located on the north side of the elementary school and one on the south side.

Currently, basketball hoops are located on the southeast side of the building, using a portion of the existing parking lot as the court.

"The new courts will get the kids off the parking lot and away from the cars," said district business manager Tyler Reisch.

The courts will not be regulation-sized but will allow snow removal access by maintenance staff and not interfere with the cross country course located behind the school.

In other business, school board members:

- approved replacing the elementary school's boiler system at a cost of \$262,250, as bid by Bisbee Plumbing and Heating of Marshall. It will be paid for through the district's long-term facility maintenance fund.

- accepted the retirements of Wendy Nath, middle-high

School Board/see page 5A

Committee organizes for Luverne Public Schools Alumni Hall of Fame

By Mavis Fodness

A committee is currently organizing to select the first honored alumni to the Luverne Public School's Alumni Hall of Fame.

School Board member Tim Jarchow and Superintendent Craig Oftedahl will serve on the nine-member committee.

Oftedahl said the seven other members represent various decades of graduation years. Their familiarity with nominees will assist in the selection process.

Teacher Jason Berghorst and retired teachers Gregg Gropel, Elmer Menage and Jeanne Bowron will serve on the committee along with Luverne graduates Curt Laudon and Emily Crabtree.

Their job is to select who will be inducted into the LPS Alumni Hall of Fame on an annual basis. The first induction will be during Homecoming Week 2023.

The committee will also make financial decisions on costs such as engraving of the names on the black granite wall of the Alumni Garden being built this spring near the school's east entrance.

Terms of the committee members are for five

years.

Nominations to the 2023 Hall of Fame open Feb. 1, 2023.

Nomination forms will be available on the district's website, www.isd2184.net, or from the district office.

Purpose of the LPS Alumni Hall of Fame is to recognize former students and alumni who have distinguished themselves on a local, regional, state, national or international level.

Individuals selected will have shown excellence in their profession; exceptional service, volunteerism and/or contributions to society; excellence in their personal endeavors; and/or contributions to education.

Individuals must exhibit qualities of character and action to be outstanding role models for current students supporting District 2184's vision: Learn, live, lead.

Nominees must have attended Luverne Public Schools for a minimum of eight years or graduated from Luverne High School and must be out of school for at least 10 years.

Posthumous nominations are accepted.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Meetings

Generations will meet at 12:30 p.m. Monday, April 4, at the new building.

Parkinson's Support Group will meet at 2 p.m. Monday, April 4, at Poplar Creek Care Center. Masks are required.

Blue Mound Quilters will meet at 6 p.m. Monday, April 4, at the Rock County Library for a tour of the library and computer lab. The quilters' meeting and show-and-tell will follow.

Friendship Club (formerly TOPS) meets Mondays at 9 a.m. at the Luverne Pizza Ranch. New members welcome. Contact Karen at 507-935-2004 for more information.

Springwater Township Board will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 5, in the township hall.

Pleasantview Cemetery Board will meet at 7 p.m. Monday, April 11, at the Brent Taubert residence, 690 81st St., Beaver Creek. Potluck dinner will follow.

Beaver Creek Township Board will meet at 7:30 p.m. Monday, April 11, in the township hall.

H-BC presents 'Crazy Quilt Club'

The Hills-Beaver Creek High School Drama Department will present "The Crazy Quilt Club" at 7 p.m. Friday, April 1, and 2 p.m. Sunday, April 3, at the high school in Hills.

'Those Crazy Ladies'

The Green Earth Players will present "Those Crazy Ladies in the House on the Corner" April 1-3 and 7-10 at the Palace Theatre in Luverne. Sunday performances are at 2 p.m. and the others begin at 7:30 p.m. Contact the Palace Box Office, 507-283-4399, or online at palacetheatre.us for tickets. Cost is \$7 for students and \$14 for adults.

Music programs April 8

Luverne Elementary School first- and third-graders will perform their music programs Friday afternoon, April 8, in the Performing Arts Center.

The first-grade "Pajama Party!" is at 1:45 p.m. and the third-grade "Bada Bing, It's Spring!" is at 2:30 p.m. Arts Center.

Free tax prep at library

AARP volunteers offer free tax preparation for low-income individuals and seniors at the Rock County Library on Mondays through April 15. Call 507-449-5040 for appointments. Bring documents, including last year's tax return, and a form of identification to document social security number.

Mobile dental clinics scheduled

Mobile dental clinics will be in Luverne Wednesday, April 6, and Thursday, April 7, at the Rock County Health and Human Services community room. These clinics provide dental care for adults and children ages infant through 100. Call 612-746-1530 to schedule an appointment. All insurance accepted. The clinics are organized by the #Luv1LuvAll initiative, Rock County Oral Health Task Force.

County Library Happenings

For details about library happenings, call 507-449-5040 or email rockcountystaff@gmail.com

Story Time with Bronwyn is at 10:30 a.m. Fridays through April 29.

Trivia Night is at 7 p.m. the first Thursday of every month at Take 16 in Luverne. Team registration begins at 6 p.m.

Reminiscence Kits are available featuring various topics such as gardening, pets, baking, sewing, farming and hunting. The kits are designed to use with a loved one experiencing memory loss, encouraging the loved one to open up about activities they once loved in the past.

Sanford Health scholarships

Students in select Sanford Health Network locations are invited to apply for a health network scholarship. The \$2,000 scholarships are for students pursuing a post-secondary degree in a health care-related field. Each Sanford network facility will sponsor one student with a scholarship. Email educationalassistance@sanfordhealth.org for info.

A.C.E. respite care available

A.C.E. of SW Minnesota (A.C.E.) offers respite care services in Rock County for those needing a break from caring for a loved one. Volunteers provide non-professional supportive services to caregivers to give them time for themselves, relieve their stress and help them remain healthy. Respite care volunteers are also needed. Contact Linda Wenzel at 507-283-5064 or ace.rock@co.rock.mn.us.



Lori Sorenson photo/0331 novo aesthetics ribbon cutting

Pictured at Friday morning's ribbon-cutting for Novo Aesthetics are (front, from left) Chamber Board members Tony Schomacker and Annie Opitz, Novo business partners Brant and Stephanie Van Dyke, Novo owners Stephen and Rachael Dekker and their son, Trent (with scissors), friend Kate Bleyenbug, Chamber Board member Shelley Nibbelink, (back) friend Bob Junak, Chamber Board member Becky Walgrave, Rachael's parents Stu and Deb Burgers, Chamber Board member Cris Oeltjenbruns and Luverne Economic Development Authority Director Holly Sammons.

Novo Aesthetics Spa opens downtown

By Lori Sorenson

Novo Aesthetics Spa recently opened on the second floor of the former Cragoe building in downtown Luverne, and the Chamber Board hosted a ribbon-cutting Friday morning to celebrate the new business.

Rachael Dekker is a doctoral trained certified nurse practitioner and nurse anesthetist who has been in the medical field for over 20 years, including six years in plastic and re-

constructive surgery and over six years as a nurse anesthetist.

The medical spa offers anti-wrinkle injections, dermal fillers, chemical peels, micro-needling and more, and retails medical grade skin care products.

Dekker's philosophy is that "aesthetics should improve your already beautiful features," and she works with clients to achieve a "natural look without appearing 'fake' or 'treated.'"

Appointments can be booked at

novo-spa.com. The phone number is 507-215-8110 and email is rachael@novo-spa.com.

She grew up in Sioux Falls and moved to Luverne in 2020 with her husband, Stephen, and their son, Trent.

The Dekkers and their partners, Brant and Stephanie Van Dyke (V & D Properties LLC), purchased the Cragoe Realty building with plans to make interior updates for additional commercial tenants.

Four Cardinals earn All-Conference speech honors

By Mavis Fodness

Four Luverne speech team members earned all-conference honors March 17 at the Big South Conference meet in Marshall.

Seniors Luke Thorson and Chance Tunnessen took the conference championships in humorous interpretation and extemporaneous speaking respectively.

Joining Thorson and Tunnessen in the all-conference designation were senior Burke Johnson in discussion and junior Parker Carbonneau in extemporaneous speaking. Both speakers placed second in their respective categories.

The four were among the 16 Cardinals who competed in the preliminary rounds. Nine speakers advanced to the final rounds:

- Freshman Brianna Kinsinger, fourth in creative expression.
- Senior Mia Wenzel, fifth in serious poetry.
- Sophomore Alex Perkins, seventh in serious poetry.
- Eighth-grader Zander Carbonneau, fourth in extemporaneous speaking.
- Senior Rylee Anderson, sixth in great speeches.

The team placed second in the small school division out of nine competing schools. The competition had 140 student participants.

R-T-R tournament
The Cardinal speech



Nine Luverne students placed at the Big South Conference speech tournament March 17 in Marshall. They are (front, from left) Rylee Anderson, Mia Wenzel, Brianna Kinsinger, Alex Perkins, (second row) Zander Carbonneau, Burke Johnson, Luke Thorson, (back) Parker Carbonneau and Chance Tunnessen. Thorson, Tunnessen, Johnson and Parker Carbonneau earned all-conference speech honors by placing first or second in their respective categories.

team traveled to the Russell-Tyler-Ruthhton High School in Tyler Saturday for the school's inaugural varsity meet in R-T-R's new school.

Almost 200 students competed in the three rounds that culminated in a final round for each of the 13 categories.

Luverne brought home the second-place team trophy.

Individual varsity re-

sults included:

- Creative expression: Brianna Kinsinger, third.
- Extemporaneous speaking: Chance Tunnessen, first; Parker Carbonneau, second; Zander Carbonneau, third.
- Great speeches: Rylee Anderson, third; Nora Louwagie, fifth.
- Humorous interpretation: Luke Thorson, first.
- Poetry: Mia Wenzel, second.

In the junior varsity competition at the R-T-R tournament, eighth-graders Makayla Oechsle and Maddy Schepel placed fourth and fifth respectively in discussion, and eighth-grader Lizzy Mulder placed first in informative speaking.

Montevideo invitational

Luverne finished the regular speech season Saturday in Montevideo.

Nine Cardinals received medals or ribbons at the meeting including:

- Creative expression, Brianna Kinsinger, fourth.
- Extemporaneous speaking, Chance Tunnessen, first.
- Great speeches, Rylee Anderson, fourth.
- Humorous: Luke Thorson, first.
- Informative speaking: Jessika Tunnessen, third; Lizzy Mulder, fifth; Xavier McKenzie, blue ribbon.
- Original oratory, Rose-lynn Hartshorn, third.
- Poetry, Mia Wenzel, second.

Subsection competition is Tuesday (after press deadline) in Adrian followed by the Section 3A championships on April 9 in Marshall. The state speech tournament is April 22-23 in Apple Valley.

Luverne is the defending subsection and Section 3A champions. A record six students from Luverne competed virtually in last year's state tournament.

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Historic Preservation Review Board considers Manfred House

The State Historic Preservation Review Board will consider the nomination of the Manfred House at the Blue Mounds State Park to the National Registrar of Historic Places during a virtual meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday, April 12.

The meeting link and instructions will be available on the State Review Board Meeting page, mn.gov/admin/shpo/registration/nrhp/review-board/meetings.

The Manfred House is among several nominated properties for consideration, and the meeting will consider several nominations during the April 12 meeting.

The local Save the Manfred House group hired a historian to nominate the structure for consideration. Visit savethemanfredhouse.org

All owners of nominated properties have been notified in accordance with program regulations.

Inclusion in the National Registrar constitutes official recognition of the historical importance of these premises.

In Minnesota, National Registrar properties that are publicly owned or are owned by non-profit entities qualify for Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants, also known as Legacy Grants, which can provide funding for their rehabilitation and maintenance.

Written comments should be directed to Secretary, State Historic Preservation Review Board, SHPO, 50 Sherburne Ave., Suite 203, St. Paul, MN 55155.

Sanford, Minnesota West host camp for high school students to learn surg tech, med assisting



Lori Sorenson photos/0331 sanford minnwest camp

Sanford Health partnered with Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Luverne Friday to host a free camp for high school sophomores, juniors and seniors.

The event gave students an idea of what it would be like to work in the healthcare field, specifically as medical assistants and surgical technologists, and also an idea of what college life might look like.

Students spent part of the camp at Sanford Luverne and the other part at the Minnesota West Luverne Center.

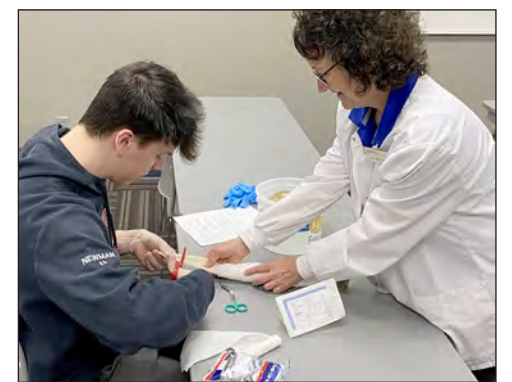
The goal was to get students interested in the healthcare industry to support a labor market that is currently short on those workers.

By reaching out to high school students, both Sanford and Minnesota West are trying to reach students younger to gain their interest earlier.

Minnesota West instructor Amy McCuen (right) works with students on ultrasound equipment. They are (clockwise from left) Cassandra Latchman, Lorena Silva, Eric Morales and Juanita Diaz.

At left, Lillyana Newman applies wet casting tape to her practice "arm."

Below center, the same group learns about surgical instruments in the Minnesota West operating room



Above, Minnesota West instructor Lisa Smith helps Easton Newman through the first part of casting.

At far left, Megan Dykstra (left) and Aisha Zeidi team up to cast an arm.

Luverne Rotary selects Brockberg essay

By Mavis Fodness

Three Luverne Middle School students were recognized as winners in the annual Rotary Club Four-Way Test essay contest for 2022.

Kloe Brockberg, the daughter of Mike and Kim Brockberg, Luverne, was selected as this year's essay winner. Brockberg earned \$75 for her winning effort.

Her essay titled "Social Media" is entered in the district essay contest. Brockberg's winning essay is printed below.

Chosen as second place and earning \$50 was Lauren Peters, and third place was Tiba Kadhim (\$25).

Luverne Middle School sixth-grade teacher Deb Hoogendoorn organized the essay contest with the students, and nine sixth-graders entered the annual contest.

The contest introduces students to the Rotary's Four-Way Test, which asked four questions to gauge whether thoughts, words or actions are appropriate. The questions are: Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? And will it be beneficial to all concerned?



The three sixth-graders whose Four-Way Test essays were recently selected as the prize-winning essays by the Luverne Rotary Club include (from left) Lauren Peters, Kloe Brockberg and Tiba Kadhim.

Following is Brockberg's winning essay:

Social Media
By Kloe Brockberg

Is social media true? Most things aren't true, because it is so easy to say something on social media and many people

can believe this so easily and then you have false words out in the open, and someone can take that the wrong way and be very offended. Social media is dangerous mentally, and might ruin your day so be careful what apps you use and what source you can get your information from. Not everything on social media/the internet is true.

I think this is fair and that everyone should get the right information. Because no one likes false information because what if you are doing an essay on snow leopards and you got the wrong information and then you got a bad grade. So people need the right information to complete an assignment that you really need to be correct because it is part of your final grade. So do you go out and give false information because that could hurt someone and ruin their whole day.

Will social media build goodwill and better friendship?

It depends how you use social

Rotary essay/see page 5A

GRAVEL BIDS: MAGNOLIA TOWNSHIP

Magnolia Township will be accepting gravel bids for gravel to be applied on township roads by July 1, 2022. Bids must be received by April 12, 2022.

Send to: Magnolia Township
1581 121st St.
Luverne, MN 56156

Magnolia Township Board

Thank You from the family of Sherri Waddington

Thank you to all who have donated to help Sherri Waddington as she recovers from strokes and a major neurological procedure. Her journey to recovery is still long. Thank you for your continued prayers and support!

*Donations can be made at either Luverne Minnwest Bank branch.

GREEN EARTH PLAYERS PROUDLY PRESENTS

Those Crazy Ladies IN THE HOUSE ON THE CORNER

By Pat Cook | Directed by Sue Sandbulte

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Beers, brats, basketball and miracle of birth make for a good night in neighborhood

It's college basketball playoff season and also calving season in our neighborhood.



ON SECOND THOUGHT

By Lori Sorenson, editor

And thanks to modern technology, we took in riveting versions of both last week over beers and brats at the neighbors.

One of the supper guests was casually monitoring his cell phone for live-feed video of a heifer in labor.

A nearby television screen carried riveting Arkansas upset of No. 1 Gonzaga in NCAA playoffs. Table conversation at times was about the heifer and at times about the game.

For those who don't have farming backgrounds, "heifers" are female livestock who have not yet borne calves. As first-time mamas, they have no idea what's going on and sometimes need help from a nearby human.

This one had begun labor just before supper, and if she didn't deliver by 8 p.m., the calf may need to be pulled.

As she labored over her calf, sometimes pacing in circles and sometimes lying in her bed of hay, her pen mates occasionally wandered over to check on her.

"They know how this goes by now," the human said about delivery No. 11 so far this spring.

"But you should see them when the first calf shows up."

He described a hysterical cow who doesn't know what just happened to her, while the heifers circle around her and then freak out when the calf shows up. "Like it's some kind of alien."

We laughed at the prospect of conversation among the first-time mothers and

their shared experience. The human females in the room, of course, empathized with the laboring heifer.

We learned that this year Heifer No. 3 (her tag ID) had been particularly curious in the delivery room, and we learned that another cow has been affectionately named a "doula" for her ability to calm the herd during a stressful delivery.

As I polished off my tater tots and ketchup, I wondered if our laboring heifer would need human assistance.

Suddenly the Arkansas-Gonzaga contest became a four-point game with only minutes left until the buzzer. After several fouls, free throws, time-outs and coaching theatrics, another upset hit the NCAA brackets.

When the celebrating Arkansas players left the court, I turned my gaze back to the calf cam and discovered the heifer had become a cow.

We marveled at the newborn calf somehow knowing how to get up on its wobbly legs to find Mom's udders for nourishment.

"Truly miraculous," we remarked. More so even than the Gonzaga upset.

It was a good night in the neighborhood.

Congratulations to the Razorbacks (who later bowed out of the playoffs) and to all the heifers becoming cows this spring.

Congratulations also to No. 3, who successfully delivered her own little alien over the weekend.

Home, lawn, garden edition features best of spring in Rock County

Each spring, the Rock County Star Herald publishes a Home, Lawn and Garden special section which features businesses and issues unique to these topics.

This year's special section (tucked inside this week's Star Herald) prompted us to once again marvel at the ingenuity of local residents and businesses and the entrepreneurial spirit of newcomers to the local business scene.

We at the Star Herald continue to be amazed about what our residents are doing to brighten up their homes, improve their lawns or experiment in their gardens.

We try to feature a subject in each of the three categories and, again, we were not disappointed this year.

Inside this edition there is something for everyone, whether it's inspiration to complete those long-overdue home improvement projects, take a second look at the

STAR HERALD EDITORIAL

lawns or start that garden with the help of local experts. We've got it covered.

Our 2022 Home, Lawn and Garden edition includes features on:

- The start of a new business, Luverne Lawn Care, a venture that continues the Farm Store legacy of lawn care services, seed and chemical sales and rental items — among many other services.

- Rooftop solar panels that generate electricity for a private Luverne home.

- The Luverne Building Center's approach to a roller-coaster construction market.

- The creativity of Banking Barns in Hills where wood becomes works

of art.

- Expert tips from George Bonnema for selecting, planting and caring for the latest varieties of hydrangeas.

- Profiles of several local Master Gardeners who reflect on their roles in sharing expert advice for vegetables, flowers, trees, fruit, landscape design and more.

- Advice from Real Estate Retrievers on how to make decisions about selling (or not selling) your home in today's volatile housing market.

Spring weather is coming; get a head start on your own home, yard and garden ideas by reading this week's paper.



Flash floods can come rapidly, unexpectedly; drivers be prepared

Question: With spring being here and the melting snow, can you talk about what a person should do when coming across water on roads?

Answer: Flooding can occur when streams and rivers flow over their banks, when dams or levees break, when there is run-off from deep snow, or any time there is heavy rainfall. Floodwaters can be found on roads, bridges and low areas. Flash floods can come rapidly and unexpectedly. They can occur within a few minutes or hours of excessive rainfall.

- Do not drive through flooded areas. If you see a flooded roadway ahead, turn around and find another route to get to your destination.

- Be cautious, especially at night, when the visibility is limited.



ASK A TROOPER

By Sgt. Troy Christianson, Minnesota State Patrol

- Remember, 6 inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars, causing loss of control or possible stalling.

- Two feet of moving water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles and pickup trucks.

- Even if the water appears shallow enough to cross, do not attempt to cross a flooded road. Water can hide dips, or worse, floodwaters

can damage roadways by washing away the underlying road surface.

- If there is no other route, proceed to higher ground and wait for the waters to subside.

Question: I have a question about pickups with their wide tires sticking outside of the fender wells. Is that illegal? I always thought there were supposed to be fenders? I know they throw a lot of rocks around. I don't think that's right.

Answer: Minnesota law states that all passenger vehicles shall have fenders, or other devices, that are designed to prevent, as far as practicable, water, dirt or other material being thrown up and to the rear by the wheels of the vehicle. For the tires sticking outside of the fenders, the vehicle would need to be equipped with fender flares. The fender flares would need to match the width of the tires sticking out.

If you have any questions concerning traffic-related laws or issues in Minnesota, send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson - Minnesota State Patrol at Statue 169.791 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901-5848. (Or reach him at, Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us)

Readers take issue with 'thumbs down' editorial item

To the Editor:

In regard to last week's thumbs down regarding rising fuel costs, first, we think you can get a point across without name-calling. It is not necessary or helpful. Our country is divided enough. Let's make efforts to come together.

It's very common for people to blame a president for many things, fuel costs included, no matter who is in office. Justified or not, that is nothing new. Bringing this subject up as you have did the very thing you accused the "small-minded" people of doing, politicizing the issue. Let's be the change we want to see in the world.

Mike and Wanda Jarchow, Luverne

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Office manager: Deb Lusty Lori Sorenson, editor
Office assistant: Jennifer Nelson Mavis Fodness, reporter
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editor@star-herald.com

Rock County
STAR HERALD
Rock County's newspaper since 1873

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The *Star Herald* encourages letters to the editor expressing the opinions of readers and intends to print all letters. Letters not meeting the guidelines will not be printed. The *Star Herald* will verify the authenticity of all letters. Letters must have the name of the writer, a signature and address.

Unsigned letters will not be considered. The *Star Herald* will edit for grammar, spelling and clarity. Any letters containing offensive language, libelous or slanderous material, or misleading or false information will be rewritten before being published. The *Star Herald* will not publish letters written with the sole intent to advertise or serve as a thank-you. Letters with more than 300 words may be edited. The deadline for letters is Monday 10 a.m. They may be delivered or mailed to the editor, *Rock County Star Herald*, P.O. Box 837, 117 W. Main St., Luverne, Minn. 56156.

ON THE RECORD

Dispatch report

March 18
•Complainant reported stolen checks used at location.

•Complainant on County Road 4, Luverne, reported pickup losing debris at location.

•Complainant on S. Kniss Avenue reported a returned check.

•Motorist was assisted on Kniss Avenue and Warren Street.

March 19
•Report that property was found.

•Complainant on N. Oakley Street requested residence checks at location.

•Complainant on E. Second Street, Hills, reported suspicious activity.

•Complainant on E. Brown Street reported possible vandalism.

March 20
•An outage was reported.

•Complainant on S. Kniss Avenue reported children walking in traffic at location.

•Complainant on 111th Street reported fire at location.

•Complainant in Beaver Creek reported theft of farm machinery.

•Complainant on N. Kniss Avenue reported theft of package.

•Subject with Rock County warrant turned self in.

•Complainant on Sioux Valley Drive reported suspicious vehicle.

•Complainant east-bound on Interstate 90, Beaver Creek, reported a stolen vehicle.

March 21

•Complainant east-bound on Interstate 90, mile marker 7, Beaver Creek, reported people walking on the interstate.

•Complainant reported catalytic converter stolen from their vehicle.

•Complainant on 20th Avenue, Valley Springs South Dakota, reported a person sleeping in vehicle in parking lot.

•Complainant on N. Oakley reported loud music.

•Complainant on E. Warren Street requested to speak to a deputy.

March 22

•Road closed at location on 51st Street, Hills.

•Complainant west-bound on Interstate 90,

mile marker 7, Beaver Creek, reported erratic driving, speeding and cutting off other vehicles.

•Complainant on N. Kniss Avenue and on E. Edgehill Street found a birthday present found in roadway.

•Possible water main break reported at location on Hatting and Kniss.

•Complainant in Hardwick reported concerns.

•Complainant east-bound on Interstate 90, mile marker 3, Beaver Creek, reported debris in roadway.

•Complainant on E. Main Street reported an unauthorized vehicle parking behind location.

March 23

•Complainant on Donaldson Street requested extra patrol.

•Complainant on N. Lindale requested residence checks at location.

•Complainant on E. Luverne Street, Magnolia, reported threats at location.

•Complainant on Service Drive reported a threat.

•Complainant on N. Spring Street reported possible stolen property.

March 24

•Complainant on 71st Street reported a road closure.

•Complainant on 81st Street, Luverne, requested info for a stolen vehicle.

•A warrant was issued in Airway Heights, Washington.

•Complainant in the 24-hour parking lot reported a loud noise.

•Complainant on E. Lincoln Street reported loud music.

March 25

•Complainant on N. Kniss Avenue reported a driving complaint.

•Report of a civil issue.

•Complainant on 141st Street, Beaver Creek, reported drug was paraphernalia found at location.

In addition, officers responded to 2 motor vehicle accidents, 1 vehicle in ditch, 2 escorts, 16 ambulance runs, 4 paper services, 7 animal complaints, 2 fingerprint requests, 11 burn permits, 1 vehicle impound, 2 driver's license checks, 1 gas drive-off, 3 alarms, 6 drug court tests, 4 purchase and carry permits, 2 stalled vehicles, 20 traffic stops, 6 abandoned 911 calls, 1 test and 4 welfare checks.



Hills-Beaver Creek Elementary students check out the new Gaga (a Hebrew word meaning "touch touch") pit with physical education teacher Darin DeBoer (far right). The pit was constructed by the H-BC High School Patriot Millworks students as a class project and was installed on a rubber safety mat March 16. (Submitted photo)

Patriot Millworks build gaga pit

By Mavis Fodness

Hills-Beaver Creek Elementary students are enjoying a popular outdoor game, thanks to the Patriot Millworks high school woodworking class.

Last year's Millworks students hinged together eight wood panels for a 25-foot elementary school gaga pit.

The finished pit was finally put into place March 16, to the excitement of the K-5 students.

"The students knew we were getting it earlier this year because we started playing it (Gaga) in gym class," said physical education teacher Darin DeBoer.

"This way they know all the rules and we're ready to play it outside on the playground."

Gaga (a Hebrew word meaning 'touch touch') is played in the pit with a ball as a variant on the popular game of dodgeball.

The game combines dodging, striking, running and jumping with the objective of being the last person standing. Players hit the ball at each other with their hands and are eliminated if the ball strikes them on or below the knee.

The district purchased the pit's



metal corner pieces this fall to anchor the pit to the playground's surface

This year's Millworks students made improvements to the wooden walled gaga pit, including a redesign.

"The Patriot Millworks class for period six rebuilt the panels by attaching the new corners," said instructor Chris Louwagie.

"Safety measures that were taken include countersinking the bolts so they don't stick out past the wood planks, and we also sanded any of the planks where there were splinters or chipped boards."

Junior Brock Harnack suggested a redesign to students having to step into the pit.

"He thought we could make it handicap-accessible," Louwagie said. "This is why there is a door in the middle of the one panel."

A rubber safety mat arrived shortly after the first of the year, with the maintenance staff fully assembling the complete Gaga pit during the warmer weather.

"It gives students another option to do things on the playground," DeBoer said. "We have had to limit the number of students in the pit because everyone wants to play it."

Rotary winning essay, Four Way Test/continued from 3A

media. If you use social media to talk to your friends or parents or grandparents, you might get to know your friends and family that you don't see often better. Social media is a good way to be able to talk to your friends over the summer.

But if you use it to look at people's posts and comment mean things that could ruin someone's day. You shouldn't use social media to hurt others because how would you like it if someone said

something bad about your post, you should always use the golden rule to treat others how you want to be treated.

Is social media beneficial to all concerned?

Social media can be beneficial to you if you use it to talk to friends then it can be beneficial. Then you would be able to ask them about a question that you were stuck on for homework then they can help you figure it out. Social media is not beneficial when

you use it to just look at people's posts and watch videos that aren't beneficial. In summary, social media is helpful if you need to get a hold of someone and it is not when you just look at people's posts and watch videos. But be careful what you look up. There are bad things on the internet. So social media may not be the important/beneficial thing ever, instead of staring at the screen, go outside, go build a snowman, go ride snowmobile, go have a snowball fight.

New Vision abatement/from 1A

The additional grain bin, located on the east side of the existing facility, will expand the Magnolia Township facility by 1.5 million bushels and allow the facility to load two semitrailer trucks at once.

The 90- by 200-foot building structure will be located next to the existing truck storage facility.

The expansion will add another truck driver and mechanic to the location.

New Vision built the new \$16 million feed mill in 2011. Commissioners granted a five-year, \$18,900 annual abate-

ment in 2011 that has since expired.

Co-op officials at that time indicated they would need 13 full-time employees at the new facility. They have hired double the amount.

County Administrator Kyle Oldre said none of the neighbors to the feed mill have voiced any opposition to the current expansion plans.

According to the 2021 property tax statement, New Vision pays \$137,289 in taxes at the Magnolia facility. The county's portion is \$34,285.

School Board/from 1A

school paraprofessional effective May 26; Diana Ouverson, middle-high school administrative assistant, effective June 30; Cindy Arends, community education administrative assistant, effective June 9 in a phased retirement option to assist in the office transition; and Al Brinkman, English Language Learning teacher, effective June 2.

•hired Jacqueline Johnson as speech-language pathologist beginning with the 2022-23 school year for a salary of \$71,228; Derek Elbers as assistant B-squad baseball coach, Bailey Cowell as assistant C-squad coach and Jon Schomacker as middle school baseball coach.

•approved Tyler Reisch as volunteer baseball coach and Ben Nath as volunteer golf coach.

•accepted the resignations of Caroline Thorson as assistant speech coach and Lora Wynia, custodian. Both resignations are effective May 27.

PALACE

PALACE THEATRE

UPCOMING EVENTS

Green Earth Players present:
"Those Crazy Ladies in the House on the Corner"

April 1-3 and April 7-10
Tickets on sale Now!

Tickets: \$7 for students, \$14 for adults

No Bank Nite Movie in April due to Green Earth Players Performance

104 E. Main St. • Luverne, MN 56156 • 507.283.4339
WWW.PALACETHEATRE.US

REQUEST FOR BIDS

Class 5 crushed gravel, pit run and crushed rock to be spread on
Clinton Township roads.

Submit bids on or before
Monday, April 4 at 8 pm

to Clinton Township
1161 21st Street, Steen, MN 56173

Rock County

2022 Board of Appeal & Equalization Schedule

Monday, April 11, 2022	
BEAVER CREEK TOWNSHIP	9:00 to 9:30 A.M.
Beaver Creek Township Hall	
VIENNA TOWNSHIP	10:00 to 10:30 A.M.
Kenneth Community Center - Kenneth	
BATTLE PLAIN TOWNSHIP	3:00 to 3:30 P.M.
Justin Prins Residence - 1941 231 st St, Edgerton	
Tuesday, April 12, 2022	
CLINTON TOWNSHIP	9:00 to 9:30 A.M.
Township Hall - Steen	
SPRINGWATER TOWNSHIP	2:00 to 2:30 P.M.
Springwater Township Hall	
MAGNOLIA TOWNSHIP	4:00 to 4:30 P.M.
SW Health & Human Services Bldg - Luverne	
DENVER TOWNSHIP	7:00 to 7:30 P.M.
Hardwick City Hall	
Wednesday, April 13, 2022	
LUVERNE TOWNSHIP	11 to 11:30 A.M.
Pizza Ranch, 110 E. Main St., Luverne	
Thursday, April 13, 2022	
OPEN BOOK MEETING AT COURTHOUSE	9:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.
Kanaranzi, Martin, Mound, Rose Dell Township, Jasper, Kenneth, Steen City	
Tuesday, June 21, 2022	
ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF APPEAL & EQUALIZATION	7:00 to 7:30 P.M.
Rock County Courthouse, Luverne	

CELEBRATIONS

Bridal Shower

There will be a bridal shower for **Paige Tweet**, bride-to-be of **Tucker Oeltjenbruns**, at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 2, at Take 16 Brewery in Luverne.

MENU

Monday, April 4: Sloppy Joes on a bun, potato salad, fruit, dessert.

Tuesday, April 5: Roast beef, mashed potatoes with gravy, California Normandy, bread, dessert.

Wednesday, April 6: Ham with raisin sauce, au gratin potatoes, peas, bread, dessert.

Half-Price Day sponsored by Christian Reformed Church.

Thursday, April 7: Sausage egg bake, broccoli, cinnamon apples, coffee cake.

Friday, April 8: Baked ziti, mixed vegetables, peaches, dessert.

LSS Dining offers well-balanced and affordable meals in a community atmosphere.

Call **Lynette Hoiland** at 283-9846 to arrange to pick up a dinner or for home-delivered meals.

Gift certificates are available at the meal site or online at www.lssmn.org/nutrition.

Three seniors awarded SVE scholarships

Three H-BC seniors were selected to receive Sioux Valley Energy scholarships this year.

They are Ethan Kruger, \$500; Samantha Moser, \$250; and Tara Paulsen, \$1,000 L&O Power Co-op Scholarship.

"Applications were judged on the basis of grades, work experience, school activities, volunteer community service and an essay question," said CEO/General Manager Tim McCarthy.

SVE awarded 32 scholarships this year.



The Hills-Beaver Creek Elementary School student councils hosted a roller-skating party Friday night in the elementary school gym where district students and families enjoyed skating, food, games, drawings for prizes and more. **At left:** Ruthie Opheim gets a little help in the slow lane from Paul Opheim. **Below:** Jessamy Dwire teeters and then falls. **Below right:** Fifth-grade teacher and party DJ Dylan Gehrke takes a lap around the floor, encouraging skaters to follow his lead.



1902: Summer teacher training begins in area

The following appeared in *The Rock County Herald* on July 18, 1902.

Summer Training School For Teachers of Rock County and Vicinity—Four Weeks' Term Begun Monday.

The Rock County Summer Training school for teachers opened Monday in the high school room with Prof. E. M. Phillips, of Albert Lea as conductor, and Estella Scofield, of Ortonville, F. E. George, of Pipestone, and Ella Probst, of Minneapolis, assistants. The work was begun in the usual manner with registration on Monday. Sixty-seven teachers were registered as follows:

Luverne—Luverne Kreps, May Brewer, Jennie D. Wright, Francis McDermott, Deila Blodgett, Margaret Williams, Clarinda B. L. Stoughton, Viola Hvid, Nellie Ramsey, Vena L. Brockway, Maud M. Brockway, Luella Stoughton, Alma Haga, Merble Herrick, Anna Armstrong, Rosalie Teeter, Alma Heinz, Mrs. Myrtle Calhoun, Hanna M. Brady, Bertha Scott, Nora V. Adams, Harriet L. Henton, Blanche E. Abbey, Beatrice Angell, R. May Walters, Tillie Dietrich, Margaret Scheehan, Nellie E.



BITS BY BETTY

By **Betty Mann**, president Rock County Historical Society

Schellhamer.

Adrian—Christine Nash, Isabel Egeland.

Hardwick—Emelia Heiden, Louise Mannigel, Emma Hauger.

Magnolia—Evelyn Bareley, Mabel L. Ehlers, Theresa Barclay, Allie B. Adams, Ida H. Miller, Ettie M. Ehlers, Essie S. Pickett.

Ransom—Bessie Sorem, Clara Guernsey.

Hills—Christine Severson.

Sioux Falls—Edith C. Cox.

Kanaranzi—Ethel G. Rowland, Zula M. Bowen.

Bits, continued on 14A

REMEMBER WHEN

10 years ago (2012)

•Barely a week into her retirement, Luverne's Sandra Hensley said she already likes her new schedule.

But that doesn't mean she won't miss her work as court administrator for Rock and Nobles counties.

"It was always challenging," she said Tuesday during a break from spring cleaning at her home. "It was constantly changing; you never get bored."

When she started in the Rock County Courthouse 33 years ago, Hensley was one of three generalists in the Court Administrator's office.

25 years ago (1997)

•Students from Luverne High School tackled the tough issues of parenting and early fatherhood at the "Dads Make A Difference" Conference recently held in St. Cloud. Students from all across Minnesota attended the conference training sessions that taught high school students how to teach middle school students about the tough responsibilities of parenting and the importance of making life-altering decisions.

The conference focused on the growing problem of adolescent pregnancies by training young people about parenting responsibilities. Nearly a fourth of all children born in the United States live in female-headed households, and 40 percent of these children have not seen their fathers in at least one year. The curriculum stresses not only the importance of raising children with the involvement of both parents, it teaches students the obligations of parenting at any age.

50 years ago (1972)

•The Sedlacek brothers may help Texas Lutheran College win another Big State Conference baseball championship.

And they may do it without cracking the line-up as an every-day starter. Tom is a utility infielder while Mike is a relief pitcher.

Coach Ray Katt, a man who spent 17 years in the big time as a player and coach, says the attitude of the Luverne duo is an asset to the team.

"Tom and Mike are the kind of players you need. They're

good players and probably will be starters next season. They are playing some now, but their attitude means a lot to us, too. They're for the team."

75 years ago (1947)

•Crews in charge of the production of the senior class play, "It's All In Your Head," to be presented by the class of 1947 on April 18 and 19, were announced this week.

The stage crew includes Gordon Backer, stage manager; the carpenter crew, consisting of Marilyn LeMarie, chairman, Dale Hartz, Wayne Remme, Roger Jensen, James Van Hove and James Fritz; the painting crew, Dick Petersen, chairman, Sara Ann McRobert, Claris Anderson, and special painting by Audre Schlapkohl; sound effects, Otto Jensen, chairman, Carol Thorson, Robert Soutar and Siena Dik; lighting, Arthur Tofteland and Mabe Moreaux; properties, Lowell Binford, chairman, Boyd Barrett, Shirley Busse, David Hoh, Joycelyn Heronimous, Velma Ralfs, Melvin Smook and Nellie Timmer.

Heading the business staff as advertising and business manager is Walter Tofteland. Marilyn Brooks is chairman of the advertising committee and is assisted by Gertrude Bosch and Beverly Perkins. The program committee consists of Betty Goettsch, chairman, Doris Gullickson, Arlene Gradert, Kathleen Rolph, Corinne Ruddy and Marjorie Van Voorst. Ruth Gonerman heads the ticket committee and is assisted by Joyce Reemts, Martha Wiggins and Edith Winter; Jack Butler is house manager; Lois Huisman and Betty Thomas, prompters; Ruth Winter, head usher, assisted by Ruth E. Winter, Imogene Lemke, Beatrice Bosch, and Eva Lou Lafrentz.

100 years ago (1922)

•Almine Skovgaard, of Hills, a junior in the school of agriculture, University of Minnesota, won fifth place in the music memory contest at University Farm last week, with about 700 students competing, and was awarded a \$10 prize.

The school is a part of the department of agriculture of the University of Minnesota, and has graduated more than 2,700 young men and women, 95 per cent of whom have returned to the farms to win success as farmers or farm homemakers.

OBITUARIES

Gerald Bruggeman

Gerald "Jerry" P. Bruggeman, 86, of Valley Springs, South Dakota, died Thursday, March 24, 2022, at his home.

Visitation will be held on Sunday, March 27, 2022, from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. at George Boom Funeral Home, Brandon, South Dakota. Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Monday, March 28, 2022, at 10:30 a.m. at Risen Savior Catholic Church, Brandon, South Dakota.

Gerald "Jerry" Paul Bruggeman, son of August and Catherine (Snyder) Bruggeman, was born on April 29, 1935, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He grew up on his family's farm near Larchwood, Iowa. In 1953, Gerald graduated from St. Mary's High School in Larchwood.

Jerry entered the United States Army on February 14, 1956. He was stationed in Alaska, where he served as a meteorologist. After his honorable discharge on January 24, 1958, he started his career at the Sioux Falls Stockyards, where he worked for several years selling cattle. Jerry eventually became a cattle buyer for several different firms for many years until his retirement.

Jerry was united in marriage to Sharon McCarty on October 21, 1961, in Alford, Iowa. They settled on an acreage east of Valley Springs, South Dakota, where they raised their four children. Jerry always had a nice herd of Black Angus cows and calves on the acreage.

Jerry enjoyed hunting with his sons, trips to the



lake over the Fourth of July week with his family and neighbor friends. He loved his trips to Mexico with Sharon and his daughter's family. Jerry loved the outdoors and working with his cows on the farm. He enjoyed his stockyard group gatherings and his "Bruggeman Breakfast" time with his siblings and family. Any time he had with his grandchildren was cherished.

Grateful to have shared his life are his wife, Sharon; four children, Jim (Cheryl) Bruggeman of Dell Rapids, South Dakota, Dave (Daletta) Bruggeman of LeMars, Iowa, Mary (Brian) Maiers of Shakopee, Minnesota, Amy (Bo) Keller of Minneapolis, Minnesota; blessed with nine grandchildren, Andy (Tiana) Thompson, Beth Bruggeman, Kendra Jorgensen, Kody (Hailey) Bruggeman, Jake (Alyssa) and Emma Maiers, Isabelle, Bo and Ben Keller; two great-grandchildren, DeJay Thompson and Henry Bruggeman; sisters Pat Wright and Cleone Kellar; brother Don (Rosemary) Bruggeman; sister-in-law, Orph Bruggeman; numerous nieces and nephews; and many special friends and neighbors.

Jerry was preceded in death by his parents, brothers Norbert and Len, sister Maureen McCarthy, sister-in-law Theresa Bruggeman, brothers-in-law Russel Wright and Jim Kellar.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be given to Avera Foundation, Avera Hospice, Prince of Peace and The Banquet.

(0331 V)

James Vink

James A. Vink, age 83, of Luverne, Minnesota, died on Monday, March 21, 2022, at the Sanford Luverne Hospice Cottage.

Visitation will be Sunday, March 27, 2022, from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the American Reformed Church in Luverne. A funeral service will be Monday, March 28, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. at the church. Interment will follow at the Memory Gardens in Luverne. Arrangements have been entrusted to Hartquist Funeral Home - Luverne Chapel. To read Jim's life history and sign an online registry please visit www.hartquistfuneral.com.

James Albert Vink was born November 12, 1938, to Delmar and Lucretia (DeBoer) Vink in Castlewood, South Dakota. He attended grade school at Rock County District 1 and graduated from Luverne High School in 1957. In January of 1958, Jim enlisted in the United States Army and served our country until his honorable discharge in January of 1960. He began driving truck for Luverne Creamery, then later hauled wholesale groceries for M. and J.R. Hakes, which was later named Schrivner, Inc.

On Sept. 8, 1961, Jim was united in marriage to Janice Miersma at Valley Springs Reformed Church. The couple settled in Luverne and raised their four children, Joel, Timothy, Audra and Paul. Jim hauled for Schrivner for 38 years until the company's closing. He then drove the Rock County Heartland Bus for two years.

After his retirement, Jim volunteered with the Foster Grandparent Program at the Luverne Elementary School for ten years and



was recognized as the 2008 Friend of Education. He also volunteered with the Big Buddies of Rock County and was named 2005 Big Buddy of the Year.

On Monday, March 21, 2022, Jim died peacefully at the Sanford Luverne Hospice Cottage at the age of 83 years, four months, and nine days.

Jim made public profession of his Christian faith in 1960 and was a charter member of the American Reformed Church in Luverne, where he served as deacon, elder, Sunday School teacher, and Men's Bible Study leader. In April of 1996 he began a weekly Bible Study group at Southwestern Youth Services in Magnolia, Minnesota, and participated with the group over the next 17 years. Jim enjoyed fishing, reading, and listening to classic country music.

He will be remembered by his wife of 60 years, Janice; his four children, Joel and his wife, Teresa Vink of Poway, California, Timothy and his wife, Dana Vink of Zeeland, Michigan, Audra and her husband, Joel Diederichs of Muscatine, Iowa, and Paul and his wife, Laura Vink of Indianapolis, Indiana; nine grandchildren, Nicole Vink, Chad Vink, Karis (Jon) De Jong, Alaina (Dave) Ekdorn, Caley Vink, Devon Diederichs, Trevor Diederichs, Madison Vink, and Dalton Vink; four great-grandchildren; one sister, Joanne (Jack) Campbell of Moline, Michigan; one brother, Arnold (Gloria) Vink of Luverne, Minnesota; and a sister-in-law, Dianne Vink of Iola, Kansas.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Delmar and Lucretia, and two brothers, Gary Vink in 2006 and Dale in 2016.

(0331 V)

Patricia Aning

Patricia Kay Aning, 62, Detroit Lakes, formerly of Luverne, died Friday, March 18, 2022.

A funeral service was Friday March 25, at the First Presbyterian Church in Luverne with burial in the Luverne Memorial Gardens Cemetery.

Patricia Aning was born Jan. 9, 1960, to Sievert and Gertrude (Vogt) Aning in Luverne. She graduated from Luverne High School in 1978. She graduated from Northwest Technical College in 1998 with a business management degree.

Patricia lived in Luverne after she graduated, where she worked at Tri State Insurance for many years. She moved to Detroit Lakes in the early 1990s and continued to work for Tri State Insurance from her home. She helped run a family-owned business until she retired. After she retired, she worked with horse rescue and bought and sold antiques.

Joyce Mulder

Joyce Mulder, age 86, of Luverne, Minnesota, died on Thursday, March 17, 2022, at Sanford Hospice Cottage in Luverne.

Visitation will be held Sunday, March 27, from 4:00-7:00 p.m. at Hartquist Funeral Home - Luverne Chapel. Funeral service will be held Monday, March 28, at 10:30 a.m. at the United Methodist Church in Luverne with burial to follow at Maplewood Cemetery. To sign an online registry and view a life history, please visit www.hartquistfuneral.com.

Joyce Mulder was born July 24, 1935 in Adrian, Minnesota, to Ben and Tina (Tjepkes) Rust. She attended elementary school at Magnolia public school and transferred in eighth grade to Adrian Public School. She graduated from Adrian High School in 1952 at the age of seventeen. After graduation, Joyce moved to Oklahoma where she met and married her first husband, Lee Jepson. The couple was married in 1959 and moved to Connecticut where they were blessed with their daughter, Cindy. In 1968, after Lee's untimely death, Joyce and Cindy moved back home to be closer to family.

On a Sunday morning after a church service at the United Methodist Church in Luverne, Joyce Rust Jepson and her daughter met a widower farmer/auctioneer by the name of Duane Mulder and his nine-year-old daughter. They immediately recognized each other as grade schoolmates. After a short conversation, Duane suggested that they should go to Sioux Falls for a noon meal. After the noon meal they decided to go to the zoo with their two girls. It did not take long for a relationship to develop. Both knew they wanted a family for their girls and themselves. They were married on October 17, 1975, and never looked back, concentrating on raising their girls and running the farm and auction business. They were an inseparable couple, generally if you saw one, you would see the other. Over the years, Joyce was always beside her auctioneer husband clerking auctions be it 95 degrees or subzero temperatures. Over the 40

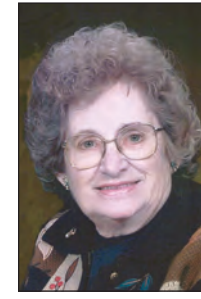


years she clerked thousands of auctions and settled them out as well. She took the required real estate education, and became a real estate salesperson in Duane's real estate firm. She sold numerous homes and acreages to many satisfied customers. Joyce was never a person to complain or say a bad word about anyone. She kept a strong faith, taught Sunday school, and was active in the church activities. Duane and Joyce were Sunday School Counselors for a number of years. Throughout the years they never hired a baby sitter. Evenings and weekends were family time with their girls. They might go to town in the evening for a root beer float, go fishing after chores, play a game of pinochle, or go camping and fishing with their girls on weekends. Joyce loved the holidays and planned far in advance for Christmas. She hosted the Auction Company Christmas party for years. Joyce was a past president of the Minnesota State Auctioneers Auxiliary and past president of the Luverne Eagles Club Auxiliary. During the last several years, Duane kept her at home and was her caregiver as a lung disease ravaged her body. While at the Sanford Hospice Cottage in Luverne, Joyce went to be with her Lord on March 17, 2022, surrounded by her loving family.

Joyce is survived by her husband, Duane; daughters, Cindy (Dale) Reverts, and Lori (Jim) Von Holtum; grandchildren, Micheal (Christine) Reverts, Amanda (Adam) Breheny, Matthew (Stephanie) Reverts, J.J. (Jacob) (Amy) Von Holtum, and Adam Von Holtum; great grandchildren, Tanner Reverts, Olivia Reverts, Dominic Breheny, Bailey Breheny, Hannah Breheny, Rhyann Von Holtum, Dax Von Holtum, and Tate Von Holtum; brother Melvin (Dorothy) Rust; as well as many nieces, nephews, and close friends.

Joyce was preceded in death by her first husband, Lee Jepson; parents Ben and Tina Rust; sister Dolores Dreesen; and brother Marvin Rust.

(0331 F)



Florence Fick

Florence Eleanor Fick, age 94, of Beaver Creek, Minnesota, died on Thursday, March 24, 2022, at Sanford Hospice Cottage in Luverne.

Visitation will be held Sunday, March 27, from 4 to 7 p.m. at St. John Lutheran Church.

Funeral service will be held Monday, March 28, at 10:30 a.m. at St. John Lutheran Church in Luverne with burial to follow at Maplewood Cemetery. To sign an online registry and view a life history, please visit www.hartquistfuneral.com.

Florence Fick was born on May 23, 1927, in her home to John Heinrich and Christine Margaretha (Funck) Reylets. She was raised on the farm and attended school at Beaver Creek Public School from elementary through graduation.

She was a lifelong member of St. John Lutheran Church, baptized on June 12, 1927, confirmed July 4, 1942, and married August 28, 1946, to Arthur Johaan Fick. After marriage, the couple moved to a small farm near Magnolia. In 1959 they moved to a farm by Beaver Creek, where Florence thrived as a lifelong caregiver and nurturer. Faith and family were her highest priorities in life. She and Arthur were blessed with three children and Florence worked hard to care for them.

Arthur preceded Florence in death, passing in the spring of 1980. Later that year, Florence took in her ailing mother and continued to provide care until 1992 when her mother passed. Florence then retired from their farm and relocated to Beaver Creek.

She remained living in her home independently until spring of 2022 when she was admitted to Hospice care and transferred to the Hospice Cottage in Luverne. On March 24, 2022, while surrounded by family and loved ones, Florence went to be with her Lord and Savior at the age of 94 years, 10 months, and 1 day.

Florence was proud to be a lifelong member of the

St. John Lutheran Church. She was a very active woman with several hobbies and gifts she loved sharing with her community. She enjoyed baking and entered several items in the Rock County Fair. She was named grand champion for her

Sunshine Cake. Gardening was another important hobby of hers. She grew new plants every year and enjoyed delivering bouquets to her friends for special occasions, birthdays, or "just because." She also enjoyed quilting and made quilts for everyone in the family. A hobby that started out as a way to bless her sister, but became her own, was collecting milk glass. Florence had strong Christian values and faith that helped make her into the mother, wife, grandmother, and woman that she was. She would say, "The world changes, but the Bible never does." She would also say, "I'd give up chocolate but I'm no quitter."

Florence is survived by her children, Marilyn (John) Doppenberg of Yankton, South Dakota, Allen (Christine) Fick of Beaver Creek, and Marlin (Amie) Fick of Beaver Creek; sister Lorna (Reylets) Hill of Jasper, Minnesota; grandchildren Amy Doppenberg, Adam (special friend Dani Stewart) Doppenberg, Travis (Jenna) Doppenberg, Gregory (Natalie) Fick, Derek Fick, and Tyler Fick; and great-grandchildren Owen Doppenberg, Charlie Doppenberg, Bax Doppenberg, and Conner Fick.

Florence was preceded in death by her parents, JH and Christine Reylets; her husband, Arthur Fick; an infant great-granddaughter; brother Elden Reylets; infant sister Anna Dora Reylets; brother-in-law Tom Hill Sr.; seven brother and sister-in-laws, Henry (Anna) Fick, Louis (Frieda) Fick, Albert (Anna) Fick, William (Metta) Fick, Fritz (Malinda) Fick, Paul (Meta) Fick, and Herbert (Darlene) Fick; and several nieces and nephews.

(0331 V)

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April 4 - April 25

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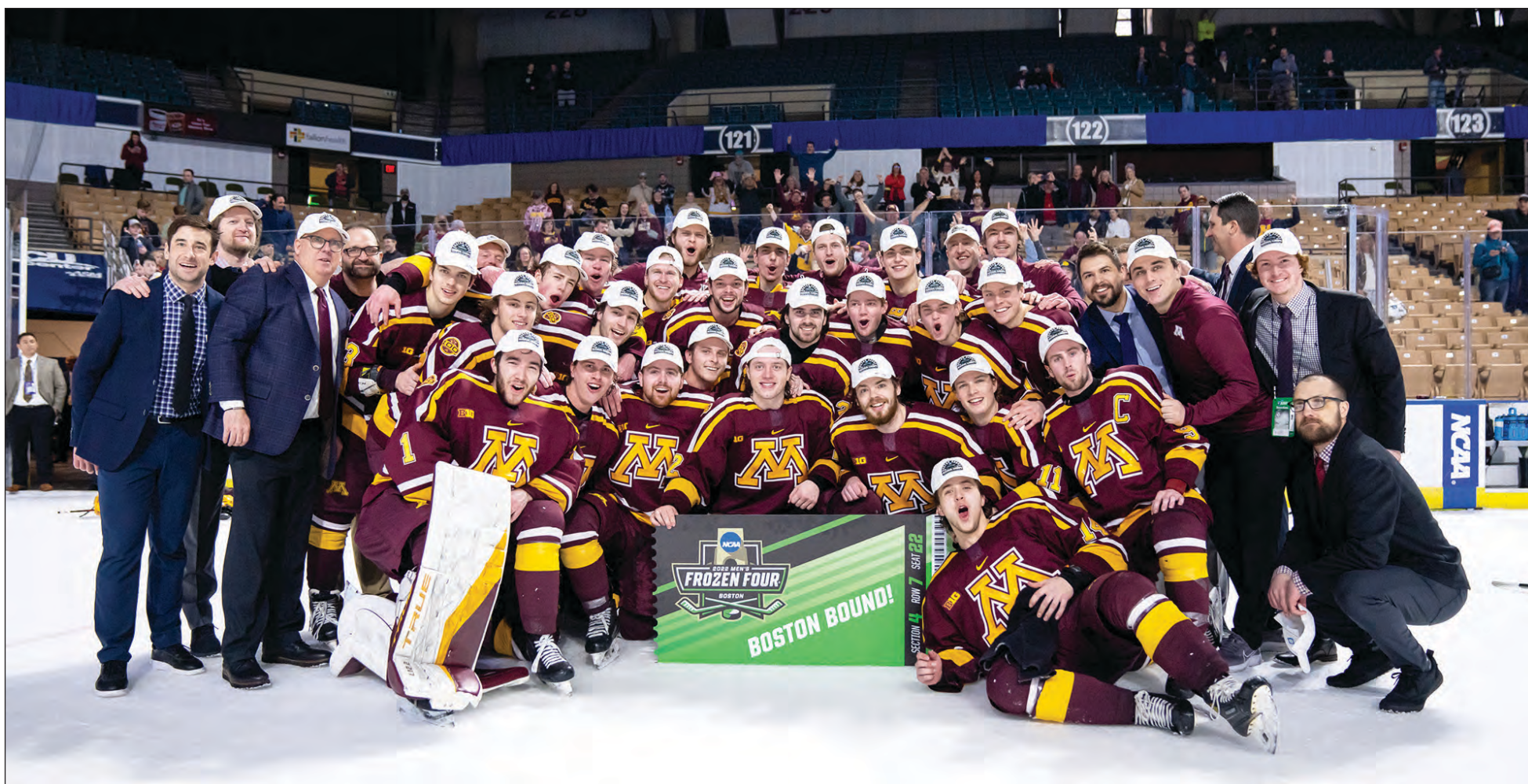


Photo courtesy of University of Minnesota Athletics

Luverne High School graduate Jaxon Nelson (second row, third from left, kneeling) celebrates the University of Minnesota Gophers' win over Western Michigan University Sunday afternoon in Worcester, Massachusetts. The Gophers and Nelson are headed to the NCAA Frozen Four April 7 against Minnesota State-Mankato.

Luverne graduate helps Golden Gophers hockey team to the Frozen Four

By Star Herald staff

Luverne High School graduate Jaxon Nelson is headed to the Frozen Four college hockey playoffs with the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers team next week.

Nelson, a junior forward, tallied a pair of assists in Minnesota's NCAA opener — including the overtime session that bounced defending national champion Massachusetts Friday.

"It was the best feeling I've had playing sports," Nelson told the Star Herald Monday.

"Getting the opportunity for a chance to win it all with the best group of guys is something special."

The Gophers faced a Massachusetts team that was 22-12-2 this season and won 94 games over the past four years. Nelson said beating UMass 4-3 was a morale booster for the team.

"After playing UMass and realizing how hard it was to beat them and they were the defending national champions, we knew we were going to win," he said.

His mom, Jennifer Nelson, Magnolia, was at the suspenseful overtime game.

"He told me after the game he knew they were going to win," she said. "I told him that would have been helpful to know while I was holding my breath in the stands. I was just dying."

Minnesota later shut out Western Michigan 3-0 Sunday night in the regional final to punch its ticket to the NCAA Frozen Four for the 22nd time and first since 2014.



At 6-4 and 225 pounds, Nelson is considered a strong player who factors into Minnesota's power plays and penalty kills in addition to being a regular offensive contributor, according to Gopher sports information.

Nelson was on the ice for Minnesota's third goal against Michigan when Blake McLaughlin scored a shorthanded tally in a 6-on-4 situation with the WMU net empty.

Coach Bob Motzko characterizes Nelson as playing a "200-foot game,"

meaning he plays both ends of the ice arena effectively both offensively and defensively.

"He's grown and matured so much as a player since we first saw him on the ice with the (Luverne) Cardinals," he said. "We know he can go out and play against the top lines for other teams, and we count on him in just about every game situation."

Nelson said Motzko kept calm during the game, but celebrated with the players after the win.

"He just told us to keep playing and we did just that, but afterward he was ecstatic," Nelson said. "He was proud of us all and the way we played and battled all weekend. It was a great birthday present for him."

Nelson missed 13 games earlier in the season with an injured ankle, and the team encountered other challenges, losing a goalie and operating without some teammates who competed in the Olympics.

The overall impact on the team, however, was minimal, Nelson said.

"I think in the end, it all made us a better team. I think we are better because of it," he said.

Nelson, continued on 14A

How will you, as supporters of wildlife and the environment, help make the planet better?

Writing an outdoors column can help make our readers more informed about wildlife and resource issues. My column today is about Earth Day, and my research for this script has resulted in my gaining a large amount of new information to share with you.

Earth Day was started in 1970 primarily as a student campus activity. The date of April 22 was chosen because it fell between spring break and college final exams. The first Earth Day included a teach-in and more than 5,000 students attended.

Overall, the first Earth Day inspired more than 20 million people — over 10 percent of the United States population at the time — to participate.

Smog and polluted air was the driver initially behind this effort. It was a rare instance where both Republicans and Democrats rallied around one common cause. It created an emerging environmental consciousness around the byproduct of human consumption, pollution. The result of this grassroots effort was the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Congress in short order passed the Clean Air Act, followed closely by the Clean Water Act.

Fast forward to 1990 and Earth Day had grown to 200 million people in 141 countries. The engagement of the masses ultimately led to the push to recycle that still exists today. Current Earth Day at-



THE OUTDOORS

By Scott Rall
Outdoors columnist

tracts more than 1 billion people from 193 countries to push for a planet we can all survive on.

I have been an Earth Day participant almost every day of my life for the past 50 years. My life's motto has always been to try to leave the planet just a little better off than when I found it. This has been done during my adult life as a member and volunteer for Pheasants Forever. The efforts of this habitat organization do just as much for clean water, pollinators, pollution reduction, erosion reduction and environmental education as any other on the planet.

Across America on this Earth Day the 730 chapters of Pheasants Forever are calling all of their members to skip a regular meeting and grab their volunteers and head out to get their hands dirty. They are calling on every member of the organization to attend a project and actually do some manual labor.

My chapter is doing our Earth Day event one week earlier than the actual date of Earth Day and is scheduling to bring all interested parties out onto some of the public lands in Nobles County, Minnesota. We have people from the Minneapolis metro area coming to help. We normally do one big day of public lands improvements annually.

This includes many things, but old fence removal, eradication of invasive trees, trash pickup and sign replacements are all on this list of things to do. We have had north of 40 volunteers attend this annual activity on a regular basis. It is amazing what you will find dumped on these important public lands.

What are you going to do to help make the planet a little better for all of the creatures and humans that inhabit it? Will you be one of those participants? I challenge you to reach out to your local PF chapter or any other habitat organization and see

what they have planned for that day. It is a call to action. There is no real way to describe the satisfaction you get from a day in the tall grass.

If you are limited in a physical activity way, then go to a county or regional park and do some cleanup. Visit a Wildlife Management Area in your county and just spruce up those spots by doing a little trash collection. If you have equipment, offer to donate your time and use of that equipment to our collective cause.

If you are interested in helping with our project, it is scheduled for April 16 at 9 a.m. We will gather at my house located at 1027 Lexington Ave., Worthington, Minnesota, and head out as a group. You can help for an hour or all day. Each participant is welcome, no matter what your schedule might be. Please reach out to me at scottarall@gmail.com or by calling 507-360-6027 for more information and what you need to bring.

This is your chance to be part of an event that benefits every person and creature on the planet. I look forward to seeing you working together for the collective good of all.

Scott Rall, Worthington, is a habitat conservationist, avid hunting and fishing enthusiast and is president of Nobles County Pheasants Forever. He can be reached at scottarall@gmail.com. or on Twitter @ habitat champion.

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For Sale: Landscaping rock 1.5 and 3/4-inch rock. Also do stump grinding. Call Wayne Biever Construction at 507-227-4521 or 507-283-4614. Also have yard dirt. 715 SW Park Street, Luverne, MN. (3.12-3.31)

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Need outside work done? Call Frank Mongold at 507-283-9364 for lawn mowing, thatching, garden tilling, lawn seeding for new or to repair lawns. Been in business for over 40 years. (3.26-5.5)

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The family of Ray VanWyhe would like to thank our family and friends for their sincere acts of kindness. Whether it was sharing your cooking/baking talents with us, sharing of your time with those much needed home visits, or inspirational messages that were sent in cards, or the beautiful flower arrangements, we are eternally grateful and feel blessed. We want to thank Pastor Dorie for the beautiful memorial service in honor of Ray's life. And to Matt at Hartquist Funeral Home for his empathy and professional ability to help us through this difficult time. Thank you to the ladies of the church for serving the lunch. They say it "takes a village" and we have been shown our village is one of compassion and strength.

God Bless,

Carol, Judy, Rick, Randy, Pam, Melissa, Tony and families

(3.26-3.31)

EMPLOYMENT

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EMPLOYMENT

HELP WANTED: The City of Hills is accepting job applications for part-time seasonal maintenance help at \$15 per hour. Must be 16 or older to apply. To request an application contact the Hills City Office, P.O. Box 172, 301 S. Main Ave., Hills, MN 56138 or call 507-962-3290. Applications accepted until position is filled. (3.12-4.7)

K-12 Music Instructor - The Ellsworth Public School District is seeking a full-time music instructor for the 2022-2023 school year. The successful candidate will teach elementary general music, 5-12 band, and 7-12 choir. A full job description and how to apply can be found at: <https://www.ellsworth.mntm.org/district/district-vacancies.cfm>. (3.31-4.16)

High School FACS, Business, Foreign Language, or STEM Instructor - The Ellsworth Public School District is seeking a full-time high school elective instructor for the 2022-2023 school year. We are open to Family & Consumer Science or Business, Foreign Language, or STEM. A full job description and how to apply can be found at: <https://www.ellsworth.mntm.org/district/district-vacancies.cfm> (3.31-4.16)

At-Risk Coordinator - The Ellsworth Public School District is seeking an At-Risk Coordinator. The At-Risk Coordinator will work with students, families, and other agencies to prevent truancy, drop outs, at-risk behaviors, criminal activities, and tardiness. A full job description and how to apply can be found at: <https://www.ellsworth.mntm.org/district/district-vacancies.cfm> (3.31-4.16)

Ag Instructor - Ellsworth Public School District is seeking a full-time Ag instructor for the 2022-2023 school year. We have a growing FFA program. There are also opportunities for extracurricular activities. A full job description and how to apply can be found at: <https://www.ellsworth.mntm.org/district/district-vacancies.cfm> (3.31-4.16)

Local Delivery Driver - Doll Distributing - Worthington Full-time, 1st shift, Tuesday-Friday We pay for CDL training! Competitive wages and full benefits including medical, dental, vision, life and disability insurance, PTO and 401(k) match. Come work for the BEST beverage distributor! Apply at www.dolldistributing.com/careers or call Sheila at 515-299-2218 EOE (3.31-4.2)

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EMPLOYMENT

HELP WANTED Age 55+ workers needed for part-time light custodial work at the Adrian & Beaver Creek rest areas on I-90 Contact Green View 651-639-1913

COMMUNITY EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Luverne Public Schools is seeking applications for **Community Education Administrative Assistant**

- Applicant must have customer service and technology skills.
- Skills in Microsoft Access and Adobe InDesign in addition to prior office management experience is preferred.

Position open until filled.
District application form available at https://www.isd2184.net/about_ips/open_employment.
Submit letter of application, resume, and application form to Craig Oftedahl, Superintendent of Schools, 709 North Kniss Avenue, Luverne MN 56156 or c.oftedahl@isd2184.net.

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Apply in person or call to set up an interview.
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Submit letter of application and application form to Craig Oftedahl, Superintendent of Schools, 709 North Kniss Avenue, Luverne MN 56156 or c.oftedahl@isd2184.net.
EOE

EMPLOYMENT

CARING HANDS DENTAL CLINIC
of Pipestone is under construction and is searching for **LICENSED DENTAL ASSISTANTS.**
The new Clinic is located at 301 - 11th Street NE and we hope to have staff in place in May. Caring Hands serves all people of all ages with high quality, award winning dental care and education.
All fulltime positions enjoy very competitive wages, based on experience and benefits including paid BLS, CE, Licenses, dues, scrubs, vacation, health insurance subsidy, PTO, family dental care and matching IRA. LDA positions offer a nice sign-on bonus too! No selling services just provide great care. Caring Hands strives to provide a comfortable family friendly work atmosphere for its staff. If you like people, are professional and want to enjoy a 4 day work week please apply in confidence to: Al Olsen, CEO at al@caringhandsdc.org.

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Luverne Public Schools is seeking applications for **Middle/High School Administrative Assistant**

- Applicant must be familiar with technology and be willing to train in student information systems.
- Applicant must have customer service and communication skills
- Prior office management experience preferred.

Position open until filled.
District application form available at https://www.isd2184.net/about_ips/open_employment.
Submit letter of application, resume, and application form to Craig Oftedahl, Superintendent of Schools, 709 North Kniss, Luverne, MN 56156 or c.oftedahl@isd2184.net.
EOE

ROCK COUNTY SUMMER EMPLOYMENT

Rock County is accepting applications for summer help positions at the Highway Department until April 15, 2022. The positions are full-time temporary/seasonal and will work with a variety of projects in providing assistance with the following activities: general maintenance duties at the Highway Department and Transfer Station; may also provide assistance with the engineering department of the Highway Department. Applicants must be 18 years of age, possess a valid driver's license and have the ability to stand for long periods of time, along with bending, stooping and the operation light equipment; minimum pay is \$12.88 per hour.

Applications are available online at www.co.rock.mn.us/job_opportunities/; for additional questions, please contact the Rock County Administrator's office at the Rock County Courthouse in Luverne, Minnesota at 507-283-5065 or by email to susan.skattum@co.rock.mn.us. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Applications will be accepted until all positions are filled.

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For questions on these positions contact:
Kristee Hart, Director of Nursing 507-283-3129
Tyler Eekhoff, Dietary Dept. Manager 507-283-3123

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Bits by Betty/continued from 6A

Jasper—Mabel La Martine.

Sherman—S. D.—Dora E. Davis.

Ellsworth—Daisy Walker, Erie Rolfe, Bertha Buechel, Fred A. Buechel.

Edgerton—Vileta B. Nichols, Anna E. Carberry, Blanche Rogers.

Worthington—Mattie Bryan, Edna Goodrich, Alma Anderson, Janet K. Billington, Juanita Harden, Maud Ayer, Ella Cloud, Ella M. Wood.

Beaver Creek—Charlotte Snow, Maud Chesley, Francis Chesley.

Rushmore—Lulu L. Putnam.

The term will occupy four weeks and the general plan of the work is outlined in the following:

Elementary Algebra.

The amount of work covered in this subject will be determined when the class is formed.

Plane Geometry.

The needs of the class will govern the outline in this subject.

U.S. History.

Period from 1765-1800. Establishment of Independent Government.

Period from 1800-1865. Industrial Development.

Any Eighth Grade Text.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR
I. Brief review—The parts of speech and their uses.

II. Verbs, verb phrases, participles, infinitives and gerunds.

III. Analysis of different pas-

sages.

Note. III Will be carried on with each day's work in I and II. Each member of the class will be asked to get "Exercises in Syntax" published by Hyde and Manuel.

CIVICS

The Government of Minnesota.

I. History (studied with maps).

1. As a territory.
2. As a state.

II. The State constitution.

1. History of Written Constitution.

2. The contents of the Union Constitution.

3. Laws amended or revised.

III. Departments of Government.

1. Legislative.
2. Executive.
3. Judicial.

IV. Taxation.

V. Educational System.

SPECIAL SUBJECT

The School System.

PHYSIOLOGY

A brief review using any good text, taking the work by subjects. (Designed to help teachers prepare for the August examinations),

One or two subjects taken thoroughly as Digestion and Assimilation of Foods, with some simple experiments.

This will continue in next week's article of Bits by Betty. Mann welcomes correspondence sent to manmade@iw.net.



Highway 75 properties change hands/continued from 1A

Golla was a willing seller to both the Aanensons and to the city, which is paying \$60,000 for the one-acre lot to the east.

"The council saw this as a positive development for Highway 75. We all knew that Billy Aanenson and Rock Motor Sports were pinched for space and he was looking to grow," Baustian said.

"I guess that's where our whole partnership with him came into play. His property that we acquired paired up well with our other

Highway 75 property that we'll have highway 75 frontage for."

Rock Motor Sports will enlarge its retail display area featuring the Exmark, Ariens, Honda and Echo lines of equipment, and use more inside storage for new equipment and customer machines.

The business has one full-time employee but may hire another as it grows into the new space.

Meanwhile, Real Estate Retrievers will move into the former True Value building next to the Farm

Store frontage property.

"They have also outgrown their current locations with the addition of several new agents," Aanenson said.

"We both look forward to the opportunities that this move will make and appreciate the support the community has given us in the past."

The city will close on the Aanenson property May 18. It will be cleaned up over the summer and held for future development.

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Niki B., RN

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Nelson in Frozen Four/continued from 8A

"It taught us how to deal with adversity, and some players had to step up in those situations. ... It grew the whole team."

Since returning after his injury, Nelson hasn't missed a beat, with points in four of the last six games leading up to last weekend's playoffs.

However, he credits the whole team for the season's successes to date.

"It took a lot of hard work and dedication to playing the right way," Nelson said. "Everyone bought into their role and everyone is playing the right way right now."

When asked if he thinks the Gophers will win the championship, Nelson was optimistic.

"I think we can, yes. If we play the way we played this past weekend, it's going to be hard to beat us," Nelson said.

"It's going to be a revenge game

against Mankato and it's going to be a war. Last year they ended our season, and I think now we know what it is going to take to play for it all."

Minnesota has now earned its 22nd NCAA Frozen Four berth and will look to win its sixth national championship (1974, 1976, 1979, 2002, 2003).

The Gophers open the Frozen Four on Thursday, April 7, in Boston against Minnesota State Mankato, who reached finals by beating Notre Dame in a 1-0 nail biter Saturday.

Jaxon graduated from Luverne High School in 2018 and is the son of Jennifer Nelson, Magnolia, and Chad Nelson, Magnolia.

He is pursuing a degree in supply chain management and operations at the U of M's Carlson School of Management, Minneapolis.

Mel & Minnie

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HOME, LAWN & Garden

March 31, 2022

A production of the Rock County Star Herald and featured advertisers.

Spring 2022 ISSUE

Supply-demand, supply chain issues challenge local builders

The Luverne Building Center, local contractors and homeowners work together to overcome historic market conditions affecting local building projects.

... Page 3B

Banking Barns repurposes old wood with creativity, skill

Justin Kerkhove-Brandt of Banking Barns in Hills continues to make statements in custom-made furniture, with construction turning toward milling their own wood.

... Page 5B

Hydrangea varieties improve with color, hardiness

Luverne horticulturalist George Bonnema's quest for the perfect hydrangea ends with 'Incrediball' and 'Bloomstruck' varieties that live up to their hype.

... Page 7B

Master Gardeners offer resources for local green thumbs

Rock County Master Gardeners have long been resources for gardening advice, but today we have several local 'experts' to lean on for everything from vegetables and landscaping to trees and fruit.

... Page 9B

"This is a business that we put our heart and soul into. And we want them to be successful. Nate (Golla) does too. I'm at a stage in my life where I can help them ... until they kick me out."

— Greg Uithoven, mentor for Luverne Lawn Care, LLC and retired Luverne Farm Store lawn services manager



Greg Uithoven (center) is mentoring the Luverne Lawn Care owners (left) Mira Uithoven and Ross Steensma who will be married this summer, and (at right) Nick and Brittany Weidert (Ross' sister). (Lori Sorenson photo)

Luverne Lawn Care LLC picks up where former Luverne Farm Store left off

By Lori Sorenson

Hundreds of local property owners and their grass are in the hands of new lawn care professionals this spring.

Luverne Lawn Care purchased the mowing and chemicals business from the Luverne Farm Store in February when the longtime local business closed its doors.

The new owners are Mira Uithoven and Ross Steensma (who will be married this summer) and Nick and Brittany Weidert (Ross' sister).

"I have always wanted to be my own boss and I have always taken pride in the way my yard looks," Nick said. "When this opportunity arose for owning my own business and taking care of yards, it seemed like the perfect business venture."



LUVERNE LAWN CARE

L U V E R N E , M N

"We want to assure our client base that we will provide them with the same quality service that they have received in the past from Luverne Farm Store."

*— Mira Uithoven
Luverne Lawn Care*

Ross said he's following a lifelong interest.

"As a high schooler I owned a lawn mowing business and lawn care has always interested me," he said. "When the opportunity came along to purchase this business, it was something I decided to pursue."

They're operating out of the former

Mel's Alignment building, which they bought from Rick Reed, and opened for business March 1.

In addition to offering lawn care services, the business is a Millborn Seed dealer with residential turf seed, agricultural pasture seed, waterway

Luverne Lawn Care LLC/see page 6B

Catching rays, capturing electricity

Luverne's first home solar panels generate power

By Mavis Fodness

The solar panels on the roofs of Pat and Katie Baustian's home and garage are not only saving the couple money each month on electricity, the panels are also reducing carbon emissions that warm the planet.

"As consumers and human beings on this earth, it is our job to use earth's resources as best we can and save them for generations to come," Pat Baustian said.

Over the years, the Baustians have done away with the incandescent lighting in their home to the more energy-efficient LED. They also upgraded appliances to reduce their home energy use and installed low-flow toilets as well.

Solar panels for the home interested **Baustian solar panels**/see page 8B



Pat Baustian



Ten solar panels placed on the south side of Pat and Katie Baustian's garage provide electricity to the couple's two-story home, decreasing the need to buy electricity.

Another 18 solar panels are located on the south and west sides of the roof of their home on Estey Street.

To sell or not to sell ...

How do you know when it's the right time to put your house on the market? Here are a few questions to consider as you make your decision

**By Jen Rolfs and Deb Aanenson
Real Estate Retrievers**

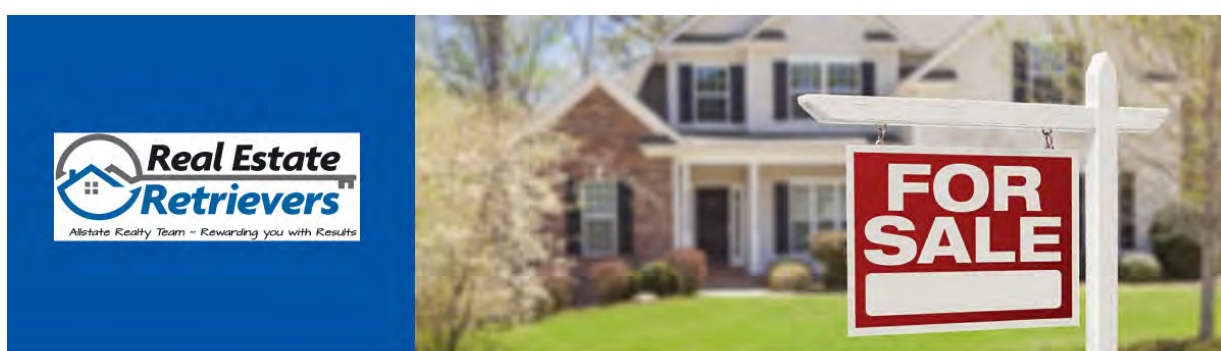
The housing market has stayed competitive for months, and if you're like many homeowners, you've probably thought about selling. But is it the right time?



Deb Aanenson



Jen Rolfs



Selling your home is a big decision, and pinpointing the perfect time to make your move can be challenging.

That's why we are here to help, and realtor.com® offers its fourth annual "Best Time to Sell Report," which suggests listing a home during the week of April 10-16.

Doing so allows them to take advantage of the spring buying season's anticipated strong demand, high asking prices, quick home sales, and lowered competition from other sellers.

Preparation is key this year since the market dynamic could change quickly due to factors like rising mortgage rates, inflation and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

Here are a few questions for you to consider if you want to explore what it would look like to put your home on the market soon.

Has your lifestyle changed? Most homeowners outgrow a property at some point, or they find their needs have changed in some way. A property may be too small, or you may want to downsize.

With historically low interest rates, maybe now is the time for you to build that perfect retirement or forever home.

Do you have another property or a plan for where you'll go next? Be sure to keep the logistics and busy market conditions in mind if you're

"Preparation is key this year since the market dynamic could change quickly."

buying and selling at the same time.

Let us help relieve the stress of coordinating multiple transactions and keeping everything on track.

Have you discussed the details with everyone involved? Selling your house isn't something you should do on the spur of the moment.

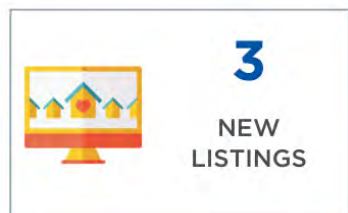
This sale will mean big changes, both financially and in your day-to-day life, so be sure everyone in your household is on the same page.

Have you established your goals? When you're ready, let's discuss your needs and wants to create a plan that makes sense for you.

Once clear goals are established, we can work together to find what you're looking for.

Still not sure if it's the right time to sell? Get in touch with us to discuss your options today.

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What's happening in Rock County?

Meanwhile, those who are curious about current market conditions may be interested in the local market report for February through the WestCentral Multiple Listing Service.

It indicates that for Rock County:

- Current listings are down 61.5 percent year to date.
- Pending sales are up 50 percent
- Closed sales increased at an amazing 150 percent.

• Current days on market have increased slightly to 80 days from list to sale.

• The monthly supply of inventory continues to remain at historic low levels.

• The median sales price for Rock County properties is also up 19.1 percent to \$190,500.

As a benefit this indicates that there is greater equity for homeowners while current interest rates remain low.

With interest rates increasing, the buying power for new buyers entering the market may decrease.

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“I won’t even have a hole in the ground and I’ll have the windows ordered. Window companies are, as far as lead times, anywhere from 10 to 26 weeks out, depending on which company and what series of window. Some are 52 weeks out. You have to have choices made a lot sooner and you have to plan a lot farther ahead than you used to. You can’t rely on things being two to three weeks anymore.”

— Nick Mead, Luverne Building Center, reflecting on supply-chain issues in building industry

Builders, homeowners complete construction projects amid historic market challenges

Luverne Building Center and customers complete construction projects with planning and patience

By Lori Sorenson

Global markets and supply chain issues have affected everything from cars and machinery to food and beauty products.

And it’s affecting people’s buying decisions and in many cases life planning.

Nick Mead at Luverne Building Center said the home building market is among the industries heavy hit by price volatility and product availability.

“We’ll bid a project, and in three to five days it’s out of date already,” he said.

“We’re up front with people, and we just let them know the prices on there are good pending availability and price increases.”

Sometimes prices change “effective immediately,” and Mead said the constant changes require extra communication with suppliers and customers.

“The biggest change for us is the extra work it takes to facilitate a project. And I think that’s the case for any industry; it takes a lot more time to get the things it takes to run your business,” he said.

“You’ve got certain things priced at the time of shipment. If you order it, you won’t know what your cost is to get it. It just depends on what the market bears at that time.”

He said prices of construction materials last summer were more than double the highest they’ve ever been.

“Lumber and plywood were probably four to six times what it’s been retail,” Mead said. “Traditionally an 8-foot 2-by-4 might cost you \$3. Last year at its high, you were seeing anywhere from \$11 to \$13 on the same 8-foot 2-by-4.”

He said a 4-by-8 sheet of plywood

Luverne Building Center/see page 4



Lori Sorenson photo/0331 HYG luverne lumber group

Luverne Building Center owner Nick Mead (far left) credits employees for the success and sustainability of the business through volatile market swings. Building Center staff pictured in the lumber warehouse are (from left) Mike Mead, Anitra Overgaard, Terry Hamann, Dan Hanenburg and Darrin Popkes.

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Luverne Building Center: projects today require planning and patience/continued from page 3B

went from \$20 to \$100 for a half-inch sheet.

“I think the biggest thing on the lumber side is just shipping — getting the trucks or rail cars into place,” Mead said, adding that labor shortages and rising fuel prices are also contributing to the challenges.

“It cost them more to get the trees out of the forest, it cost more to get the trucks to get the trees out of the forest, and those guys cutting those trees and the guys working at the mill are all requiring better benefits and better pay. ... A lot of hands touch that tree before it ever gets to our building projects.”

Mead’s business supplies local contractors with materials and offers computer-aided drawing services for building projects.

“The biggest thing we’re having trouble with is windows, and that’s related to labor and materials. Garage doors are the same,” Mead said.

“I won’t even have a hole in the ground and I’ll have the windows ordered. Window companies are, as far as lead times, anywhere from 10 to 26 weeks out, depending on which company and what series of window.”

He’s heard of some companies 52 weeks out.

“You have to have choices made a lot sooner and you have to plan a lot farther ahead than you used to,” he said. “You can’t rely on things being two to three weeks anymore.”

What does this all mean for some-



Jordan and Jennifer Siebenahler moved into their new home on Rowe Drive east of Luverne in the spring of 2021. When they approached Nick Mead at the Luverne Building Center in 2020 about building a new home, Mead advised them to wait. “That was when prices were going up, and I said, ‘You know Jordan, going into the winter, maybe you want to wait ’til spring and let things cool down a bit,’” Mead said. “But he called me a few days later and he said, ‘Nope. We’re going to do it.’ ... And he outsmarted me, because he would have paid way more in the spring. He ended up in a lot better position than he would have had he waited.”

one considering building a new home?

“I don’t know what to tell people. I don’t even want to try to tell them, ‘If you wait, the prices might come down.’

I don’t want to play that game,” he said.

“I would say, from where we are now, we can only go down. We’re higher now than we’ve ever been or ever should be, but how did we get to this point in the first place.”

Pulling the trigger

When Jordan and Jennifer Siebenahler approached Mead in 2020 about building a new home, Mead said he advised them to wait.

“That was when prices were going

up, and I said, ‘You know Jordan, going into the winter, maybe you want to wait ’til spring and let things cool down a bit,’” Mead said.

“But he called me a few days later and he said, ‘Nope. We’re going to do it.’ ... And he outsmarted me, because he would have paid way more in the spring. He ended up in a lot better position than he would have had he waited.”

Luverne Building Center/see 6B

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“A lot of the time I get free rein on a project and I’m always thinking as I make it if it’s something that they will want when I’m done.” — Justin Kerkhove-Brandt, Banking Barns

Banking on barnwood ... and old unique trees

Kerkhove-Brandt is creative mind behind Banking Barns in Hills

Photos and text by Mavis Fodness

When Banking Barns opened its doors in 2015, the Hills business dismantled barns and repurposed the decades-old wood into various home features meant to make a visual statement.

“Ever since we started, the goal of our business is, ‘Whatever we put into a house, it’s the first thing you look at, making a kind of a statement,’” said Justin Kerkhove-Brandt, who manages the business for owner Kris Gagnon.

Fast-forward three years and Banking Barns continues to make statements in custom-made furniture, with construction turning toward milling their own wood.

In 2021 Banking Barns made 25 coffee and dining room tables.

Each tabletop and base were designed by Kerkhove-Brandt with construction assisted by Banking Barns employee Tony Thoof and a local metal fabricator.

The result has been one-of-a-kind works of art with a wide range of costs.

“The average table leaving my shop is \$6,000 to \$10,000,” Kerkhove-Brandt said.

One table, made from rare Claro walnut wood from California with a black epoxy inlay and the custom bench, was priced at \$20,000.

“It is really hard to duplicate something like that, even if you had more wood,” he said.

Kerkhove-Brandt’s woodworking expertise began 13 years ago as a 14-year-old student at Hills-Beaver Creek High School.

The basic skills he learned in school were further expanded when he worked for a local woodworker before attending college to be a graphic designer.

“I didn’t really take a liking to woodworking until I was through with college,” Kerkhove-Brandt admitted.

“I received a degree in graphic design and ended up not liking it as much as I thought I would.”


His graphic arts skills are not going to waste, however.

“It did give me an idea what to do with





Justin Kerkhove-Brandt is the manager of Banking Barns in Hills and is the creative mastermind behind the tables and mantels displayed in the business showroom on Main Street.

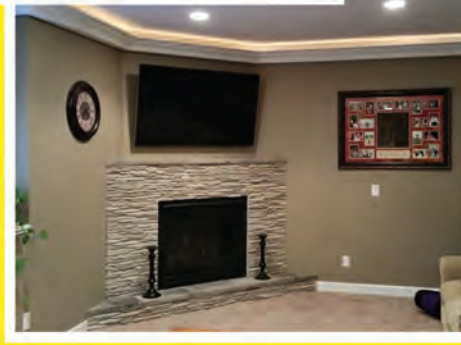

Banking Barns/continued on page 12B




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Luverne Lawn Care LLC continues tradition of service and excellence/continued from page 1B

seed, and CRP mixes.

Its storefront on West Harrison Street next to the Eagles Club offers lawn and garden fertilizer for sale, plus a variety of lawn care retail products and a wide selection of rental equipment for indoor and outdoor use.

So far, the new business has taken on more than 600 lawn contracts, including the Veterans Home, housing developments and other large commercial clients.

Mira said they're ready, but they're bracing for unique market circumstances.

"Our challenges this year are the cost of goods going up and finding employees," she said.

"We want to ensure our client base that we will provide them with the same quality service that they have received in the past from Luverne Farm Store."

Young entrepreneurs have legendary backing

The two couples are young, but they have the professional backing of the Luverne Farm Store, which mailed letters to all its current customers encouraging them to remain with the new owners.

In January when Nate and Gary Golla formally announced their decision to sell the Farm Store, they said they're pleased the business will be carried on by young, local entrepreneurs.

"We're very excited we have some young people who are going to take it over," Nate Golla said. "They have similar thoughts on providing high quality service, using high quality products and really working on their customer service."

The Gollas said in the process of selling the family business, they considered its impact on the community.

"We needed to do what was right for our customers and for the area," Nate said.

"It was important to us that business continued with companies that shared our common focus and goals.



The Luverne Lawn Care office is located in the former Mel's Alignment building at 306 W. Harrison Street in Luverne, and the office phone number is 507-449-6124. The company can also be reached through Facebook and at info@luvernelawncares.com

And we think we found those people for lawn care and for the feed mill."

Luverne Lawn Care will also benefit from the 40-year career experience of Mira's grandpa, Greg Uithoven, who started the lawn care service at the Luverne Farm Store with Gary Golla.

"We started out relatively small. I think we had 80 yards to start with. We'd take a Saturday in the spring, typically around the 10th of April, and we'd take our whole crew (there would be no farm customers that day) and do them all in a day."

At the peak of the Farm Store's lawn care business, there were 1,000 contracts.

"They'll vary anywhere from 2,000 square feet to 400,000 square feet to 10 acres," he said.

"And mowing is just part of it. The treatments are the biggest part of the business."

Gearing up for spring

So far, nearly 70 percent of those Farm Store customers signed contracts with the new company, which is busy gearing up for spring work.

"We just need a few more workers," Ross said.

They need a lead for lawn mowing and they need a tech for fertilizing and spraying, with some of the work being full-time seasonal, part-time seasonal during the spring and summer months.

"We basically need college students," Brittany said.

Ready or not, grass treatments start in a few weeks, and the Luverne Lawn Care owners said they're excited to get started.

"I look forward to working with the community and serving their yards, along with getting into the farming community and providing them with cover crops and grass seed," Nick said.

Ross said he's eager to prove the new business is up to the challenge.

"I look forward to working with customers on day-to-day operations and showing our results with quality lawn care practices," he said.

Greg said he's just happy to be part of the new venture that's keeping his old business alive.

"I'm retired. I'm 65 in June, so I want to be able to have freedoms," he said.

"But I felt like these guys – this is a business that we put our heart

and soul into. And we want them to be successful. Nate does too. I'm at a stage in my life where I can help them ... until they kick me out."

He said he looks forward to continuing customer relationships while also helping his granddaughter and the new business.

"When I stepped away ... this was really important to me, to not sit all day. I don't go to coffee shops," Greg said. "So this will give me some years of camaraderie."

Luverne Lawn Care provides residential and commercial lawn care services in Rock County and surrounding communities, including Ellsworth, Wilmont, Leota, Lismore, Edgerton, Pipestone, St. Kilian, Garretson, Brandon, Sioux Falls and Harrisburg.

The list of services specifically includes:

- Residential and commercial lawn care.
- Weed control.
- Herbicides, pesticides and insecticides.
- Spraying and fertilizing.
- Lawn rolling.
- Sidewalk and driveway Edging.
- Grass seed and CRP seed.
- Various rental equipment.
- Gutter cleaning.
- Snow removal.

The office is located at 306 W. Harrison Street in Luverne, and the office phone number is 507-449-6124. The company can also be reached through Facebook and at info@luvernelawncares.com

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New hydrangea varieties offer more color, longer blooms and sturdier stems

Bonnema offers insight on three classifications of hydrangea shrubs:

- *macrophylla (mop head)*
- *arborescens (smooth leaf)*
- *and paniculata (panicle)*

By George Bonnema
Luverne horticulturalist

I have been a horticulture enthusiast all of my adult life, both ornamental horticulture and floriculture.



Whenever a new variety is introduced, I will probably be in line to give that plant a go and see if it lives up to the hype our media gives anything and everything new.

I am not saying that there is a problem with the tried and true, but neither do I want to miss out on the opportunity of adding a great new introduction to my landscape.

So, for this informative "lecture" I will address the countless number of new hydrangea varieties that have been introduced in recent years.

There are three classifications of hydrangea shrubs: macrophylla (mop head), arborescens (smooth leaf), and paniculata (panicle).

Mop head hydrangeas

The mop head hydrangeas in past years had not been hardy varieties for our Zone 4 climate. Their flowers are really magnificent, and colors range from white to shades of pink, lavender and blue.

Varieties of this hydrangea produce blue flowers if grown in acidic soil or pink flowers in alkaline soil — we have alkaline soil in our area. These are also the flowers florists use for cut flower arrangements.



(At left) the Endless Summer "Bloomstruck" Hydrangea is one of the most popular hydrangea varieties available, and it's no wonder why.

This plant blooms from early summer through Thanksgiving in most growing regions.

They thrive in full sun to partial shade, making them especially versatile.

They don't require excessive pruning to thrive, and they're able to bloom from early summer through the late fall.



"Incrediball" hydrangeas are beloved for their stout stems and massive blooms.

When Endless Summer was introduced as the first mop head hardy in Zone 4, I was really excited.

The "endless" part of that name referred to the fact that the first early blooms of the season would happen on the previous year's growth followed by flowers on the current growth later in the summer, indicating the plant would have stunning color for the entire summer.

The media hype got people like me inspired. So, I planted 14 of them (yes, I said I was inspired).

Well, I had them in the ground for nine years, and of those nine

years, I only had one season where the canes survived the winter well enough to produce flowers.

Added to the insult was the fact that seldom did the current year's growth ever produce flowers.

Scratch Endless Summer off my list. It probably does better in Zone 5 than in Zone 4.

Endless Summer was followed by Summer Crush, another introduction supposedly more reliable than Endless Summer, but it hasn't proven to be.

Bonnema hydrangeas/see page 14

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Baustian solar panels catch rays capture renewable energy from rooftops/continued from page 1B

the energy-use-conscious Baustian, who was investigating ways to replace his home's electricity needs using green energy.

"I looked at solar panels six years ago, but the wattage was just not there," he said.

A retired Air Force IT support specialist, Baustian's former job with the South Dakota Air National Guard involved implementing the latest in military technology. He's seen firsthand how fast improvements can happen.

Improvement in solar panel technology is no exception.

He first had to convince his wife, Katie, that solar panels attached to the roof of their house would be beneficial.

She said her reservations included the aesthetic look on the roof, the upfront costs and whether they would receive their investment back.

"I really finally gave in because Pat had done a lot of research over a few years and seemed confident in his thought," Katie said.

Pat began researching solar panel systems two years ago when technology improved wattage levels. After interviewing three companies, he selected All Energy Solar out of St. Paul to install solar panels on his home.

He said he was "very impressed" with All Energy Solar's in-house engineers and the professional way the owners conducted their business.

They examined the Baustians' home electricity usage and designed a solar panel system to meet the average usage for the family of six at 1,300 kilowatts per hour.

"The system on the house was built during the Covid year when all the kids were home," he said.

The Baustians were empty-nesters in November when the 28 solar panels were installed on the roofs of their home and garage on Estey Street.

All connections from the panels to the electrical grid were made outside of the home with no underground cables necessary to connect with the city's electricity service.

After just months of operation, the Baustian household is already seeing positive results from the \$50,000 investment.



Solar panels on the roof of Pat and Katie Baustian's home and garage on Estey Street in Luverne are on the south and west sides of the rooftops to best capture the sunshine.

One meter records production from the solar panels while another meter records the home's electricity usage. When production exceeds usage, the usage meter runs backward, lessening the Baustian family's electricity bill for the month.

"So far this month we've generated 893 kilowatts per hour and are on track to generate 1,300 kWh for March," he said. "What we are not using that day goes out to the neighbors to use."

Two meters track the production and usage in the Baustian home. The usage meter will run backward, reducing or eliminating the family's monthly electric bill.

Katie admits she doesn't love the look of the panels on the roof of the house and garage but the final product is not as bad as she first envisioned.

She is happy with the power their panels are producing.

"Our city bill has gone down about \$150 a month," she said.

"With only the two of us at home we aren't using as much power. This summer will be a good trial as our air conditioning runs all summer."



Pat estimates they will recoup their investment in eight to 10 years.

"After that the energy is free for the next 15 to 17 years," he said.

The solar panels are expected to function for 30 to 35 years. The panels and installation come with a 25-year warranty.

Pat doesn't expect problems with the panels or their efficiency over time.

"I am 58 years old now so when I am 83-84 years old, these panels will still be putting out 92 percent of the energy," he said.

If the Baustians sell their home, the warranty transfers to the next owner.

Baustian's next green energy investment would be an electric vehicle.

"Direct usage of solar panels doesn't fit everybody's home," he said. "With electric vehicles we can further decarbonize our atmosphere."



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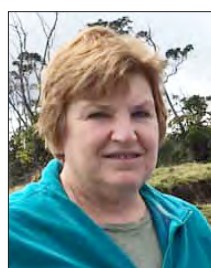


Meet the Masters

The Master Gardener Volunteer Program teaches research-based horticulture principles and practices so that everyone can grow plants successfully. Rock County is fortunate to have several local Master Gardeners to turn to for advice on vegetables, trees, flowers, landscape design and more. The Rock County Star Herald reached out to local Master Gardeners about their skills and interests and about reflections on their contributions as local gardening resources.

Lynette Jauert is celebrating 25 years as a Master Gardener this year.

She serves as a mentor for Master Gardener interns, coordinates the community garden in Luverne and serves as the spokesperson for the local group.



Lynette Jauert

"I became a Master Gardener because I wanted to learn more about flower gardening and realized that I have most likely killed more plants than most people have purchased in their lives," she said.

"Trust me, 25 years later, I am still killing plants, but as a Master Gardener I have resources that allow me to better figure out why they died and how to hopefully prevent it in the future."

Jauert said the Master Gardener program is beneficial in countless ways.

"I have expanded my gardening knowledge and now thoroughly enjoy growing vegetables, starting my own seeds, experimenting with raised beds, no till gardening and using cover crops in my vegetable plots at the Luverne Community Gardens," she said.

"I sincerely enjoy the challenge of raising large onions, potatoes, a variety of peppers and sharing my produce with family and friends."

Master Gardeners are helpful resources, but Jauert said gardeners don't need to be experts to consider joining the program.

"We are a group of people who just love to garden and learn while volunteering to help the community with their gardening."

Master Gardeners offer research-based information and encourage people to become interested in gardening with events like the Annual Plant Sale, the Garden Tour, Community Education classes, answering individual questions and more.

"I also really enjoy exhibiting at the Rock County Fair in the Open Class division," Jauert said.

"Stay tuned to the Star Herald for new and exciting information on changes being made to entry times for Open Class."

Cindy Arends became a Master Gardener about eight years ago, specializing in vegetables and flowers. She serves as secretary for the Rock County Master Gardeners and coordinates classes and organizes events.

"I enjoy learning and being of assistance in helping others find



Cindy Arends

answers to their questions," she said. "Gathering with others for the May Plant Sale is fun and is always a learning experience, as will be this year's June Garden Tour to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum."

For Arends, becoming a Master Gardener came at the right time in her life.

"When I became an empty-nester I decided it was time to challenge myself to see if I could do online classes and become a Master Gardener," Arends said.

"I always had a lot of questions about plants and what was happening with my flowers and vegetables, so I thought the classes would be helpful."

Erin Hamann is a Master Gardener intern focused on vegetable gardening, no-till gardening, perennial edibles (fruit trees, bushes, vines) and



Erin Hamann

native plants.

"I decided to become a Master Gardener because I have been gardening for most of my life and wanted to use my love of plants, the environment and growing food to give back and support our community," Hamann said.

"I'm enjoying connecting with the public and meeting other locals who have their own interest or specialties in gardening."

She works part time for Project Food Forest and Prairie Ally Outdoor Center, the demonstration public food forest in Luverne.

"I helped teach a seed starting class this spring and it was so rewarding to help people learn new skills," Hamann said.

I think being a Master Gardener will help advance the work we are doing through workshops and public outreach and give me ample opportunity to apply what I learned through the program."

Meet your Rock County Master Gardeners/see page 11B



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The Direct Home Loan program offers financing to qualified very low- and low-income applicants that are unable to qualify for traditional financing.

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Applicants must meet income and credit guidelines and demonstrate repayment ability.

The program is available in rural communities of generally 35,000 people or less.

The maximum loan amount is \$20,000 at a one-percent interest rate, repayable for a 20-year term and can be used to improve or modernize homes and do essential repairs.

Grants of up to \$7,500 are available to homeowners 62 and older and must be used to remove health or safety hazards, such as fixing a leaking roof, installing indoor plumbing, or replacing a furnace.

Time is limited to receive funds for the current fiscal year.

In southwest Minnesota the

Maximum loan amount is \$20,000 at a one-percent interest, repayable for a 20-year term and can be used to improve or modernize homes and do essential repairs

USDA Rural Development Housing Specialists are located in Marshall and Worthington.

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USDA Rural Development loans and grants provide assistance that supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community services such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas.

For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov/mn.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Luverne Building Center: projects today require planning and patience/continued from page 4B

The Siebenahlers are now moved into their new home on Rowe Drive in the housing development east of Luverne. They have three children under 4 years old, and Jennifer is operating a day care center in the lower level of the house.

"We got pretty lucky," Jordan Siebenahler said last week. "The prices were starting to go up, so we downsized our plans by about 700 square feet."

By the time they were done, the price of their new home increased \$13,000 despite downsizing. "I said, well shoot, we should have just gone with the bigger house," he said. "We were going to wait, but when the prices started going up again, we decided to pull the trigger."

The Siebenahlers credited Mead and the Luverne Building Center for helping them stay ahead of supply chain issues.

"Nick was really good to work with. He helped out tremendously helping us get things here on time and helping stay ahead of the price jumps," Siebenahler said.

"He knew shingles were going up, so he helped us get them ordered, and he knew garage doors would be delayed, so he got those ordered so they'd be ready for us."

While their building costs were high, the Siebenahlers were able to finance their project with a 2.875-percent mortgage rate.

"We have no regrets," Siebenahler said.

Supply, demand and interest rates

Mead said low interest rates are a big reason construction is still booming amid the supply-chain and pricing challenges.

"I think where people probably justify it now is that interest rates are low," he said.

"Our projects may cost more, but if I'm financing it for 15 years, it saves X-dollars in interest, so that eats up some of that difference. So that cushions some of that blow of paying more."

The feds raised interest rates a quarter of a percentage point on March 16.

"That I think will start affecting things. If you raise the interest rates and people start backing off on projects, obviously demand will come down and prices are going to come with it."

It goes hand-in-hand. It's never just one thing, but that's a huge part of it — supply and demand."

Until supply and demand level off, Mead said he expects to remain busy with construction projects. "If you look at the real estate listings, there's not much available," he said.

"We still seem to be as busy as we've always been. We've got a lot of nice projects going on ... I think where you see the most change is in the non-necessity things. ... Like maybe I want a better-looking front door, but I don't necessarily need a better-looking front door."

"If it's a 'want' versus a need,' we're seeing people push the brakes a little bit. But if it's something you gotta have, it's no different than buying a gallon of milk. You're not going to wait for it."

Advice to builders

Mead said people have asked for his advice ahead of a building project, and he recommends patience.

"I would say, 'If you're thinking about doing something, be patient.' Anymore we're so Amazon-have-it-now, and it's not a reality," he said.

"Knowing you have something in mind that you want to do — keep in mind it will take planning. It takes a lot more planning and lot more due diligence to make sure you've got everything that you need and that you want in a timely manner."

He said when he and his dad, Mike Mead, bought the business from Sam Berghorst over five years ago, they would have never imagined these sorts of challenges.

"I hope we can look back on this in 20 years and say, 'Remember 21 and 22 how bad those years were?'" Mead said.

"Hopefully this doesn't turn into the norm. It's going to take some time to get back to normal, whatever the new normal will be."

He said he's grateful for the Luverne Building Center's understanding customers and for dedicated employees — six full-time and one part-time.

"We're very, very fortunate because we've got some awesome employees and we do our best to treat them well and they do a great job for us," Mead said. "We wouldn't be able to do what we do without them."




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Meet the Masters — Rock County Master Gardeners reflect on program/continued from page 9B

We are your neighbors

The University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteer program started in 1977 with its first class of 25 people.

Since then it has grown to include more than 2,300 active master gardeners who share U of M horticultural expertise in almost every county of the state of Minnesota.

The mission of the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program is to use research-based horticultural knowledge and practices to deliver educational outreach and project-based efforts that inspire change and promote healthy people, healthy communities and a healthy planet.



What guides our work

We are connected to the University of Minnesota, and use evidence-based research and best practices to inform our community engagement efforts, educational outreach, and horticultural expertise. We strive to make scientific knowledge understandable and accessible to all and inspire and encourage lifelong learning through continued scientific exploration and discovery.

We are connected to people, and committed to learning, becoming leaders in our communities, and contributing to improving lives. We collaborate and work across geographical and organizational boundaries to create viable and vibrant results.

We are connected to our communities, and their needs drive the work of our program. We are empowered to create change in our communities through educational engagement in alignment with our program priorities.

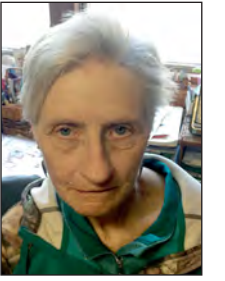
We are connected to our earth, and strive for stewardship and sustainability through horticultural best practices and a conscientious approach to volunteer work in alignment with our program priorities. We aim to improve not only the lives of the people within our communities, but also the land which sustains us.

Through all, we strive to be accessible and welcoming to all, regardless of what separates us.

Laurie Bohlke has been a Master Gardener for four years and specializes in vegetable gardening.

She said she became a Master Gardener to learn more about vegetable gardening and to keep learning about growing fruit trees.

"I enjoy being a Master Gardener because it's fun to get together and share information with each other no matter what type of gardening we are doing."



Cathy Honken is a Master Gardener intern focused on perennials and landscape design.



She and her husband, Luverne native Ron Honken, moved back to the community 1 1/2 years ago to be closer to family.

"I've completed the Master Gardener program twice before in Indiana and in Tennessee, and since we moved back to Minnesota I thought I should go through it one more time," Honken said.

"I've always been interested in gardening and I have a degree in landscape design. I have enjoyed working with the various PTAs at my son's schools and helped with Earth Day programs and chairing their grounds committees. I also designed an outdoor classroom and obtained a grant to complete the project."

Join the Masters
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Banking Barns in Hills makes new creations from old barnwood and felled trees/continued from 5B

wood on the art side," he said.

Banking Barns used felled trees, bringing the entire trunk back to Hills, where the trunks would later be milled into wood slabs for live-edge tables, countertops or lumber for other one-of-kind home features.

The former Around the Clock fitness building on Main Street in Hills was remodeled into a Banking Barns showroom and a workshop, where Kerkhove-Brandt creates a finished product or helps do-it-yourselfers with their own projects.

Equipment at Banking Barns has the capability to cut large tree trunks, plane the slabs level and sand the slabs smooth.

They've banked enough barn wood and trees that Kerkhove-Brandt, 27, won't be able to use all the stock in his lifetime.

The large inventory allows Kerkhove-Brandt to focus on creating furniture pieces for sale or assist customers in completing projects.

Staircases, sliding barn doors, back splashes, countertops, a hunting blind, and an overhead light fixture for a pool table have been projects completed by Kerkhove-Brandt recently.

Epoxied projects is where Kerkhove-Brandt's artisanship shines.

"I've developed an eye of where to ep-



Several tables designed and made by Justin Kerkhove-Brandt of Banking Barns in Hills were featured at the Sioux Falls Home Show including this epoxied tabletop. The average cost of one of his completed tables is \$6,000 to \$10,000.

Left, Banking Barns employee Tony Thooff sands the epoxy drips from the bottom of a current Banking Barns project.

oxy on tables," he said. "It's become kind of a passion."

He's able to select a piece of wood, plane it to bring out the best finish, and create an epoxied top for the finished product.

Posts to the Banking Barns social media site show Kerkhove-Brandt taking a project from a plain rectangular frame to a finished project. He's seen chiseling, sawing and sanding wood slabs, then positioning the slabs within the frame. He mixes colored and/or clear epoxy and pours the mixture into the frame.

In some projects, he's added shell casings, mechanics tools and even car parts between the wood slabs. A clear epoxy over the materials preserves the objects inside the tabletop.

Due to the amount of epoxy products used at Bank-

Banking Barns/continued on next page

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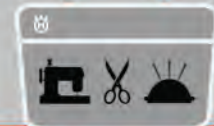
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Banking Barns/
continued from page 12B

“What’s so cool is the response you get from people — it makes it all worth it.”

— *Justin Kerkhove-Brandt, Banking Barns in Hills*

Banking Barns, the business is a distributor of Maus products that includes both the table top and deep pour products for DIYers.

Banking Barns will also mill, grind and flatten wood slabs for DIYers.

“We have all the machines to do all the work a sawmill does, and we end up selling wood work, milling it down for individuals or running custom cutting jobs,” Kerkhove-Brandt said.

At the recent Sioux Falls Home Show, a more natural-looking spray finish was shown to customers on a finished tabletop.

A spray booth at Banking Barns allows for a faster drying time versus poured epoxy finishes. The matte finish look and Kerkhove-Brandt’s attention to detail was noticed by customers.

“Every day after the (March) show, I have had an order,” he said. “Not large ones — fireplace mantels are the most common — I am surprised with the economy that we are in that there is so much building going on,” he said.

Conference tables and desks have been popular requests recently with custom-made metal bases.

Kerkhove-Brandt works with a local metal fabricator to bring the customer’s vision of a decorative metal base to life.

Customers’ responses to Kerkhove-Brandt’s innovations have been positive, a good feeling for the woodworker.

“Trying to meet your customers’ expectations is the hardest part of the job,” he said. “A lot of the time I get free rein on a project and I’m always thinking as I make it if it’s something that they will want when I’m done.”

A positive reaction is what Kerkhove-Brandt strives to achieve with each project.

“What’s so cool is the response you get from people — it makes it all worth it.”



In the photograph at the top of the page, a project in the making at Banking Barns combines rare Claro walnut with black epoxy for a one-of-kind tabletop.

(Center photo) The finished Claro walnut table with matching bench is complete with fabricated metal legs. Retail cost of the one-of-a-kind set is \$20,000.

(Photo at left) Justin Kerkhove-Brandt with Banking Barns in Hills sprays on an alternative tabletop finish. The conversion varnish finish protects the wood from watermarks in a durable finish with a fast drying time.

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Bonnema shares thoughts on hydrangeas - ‘Incrediball’ and ‘Bloomstruck’/continued from page 7B

A couple of years ago, I tried another new mop head variety named Bloomstruck, and that one made my happy list.

It’s a compact size and produces blended lavender/purple/white flower heads that are beautiful and give a long season of color.

Smooth leaf hydrangeas

The smooth leaf hydrangeas have been around forever. They have white flowers that age to emerald green and remain on the end of the stem for the entire summer.

We recommend cutting them down to ground level in early spring, and they come back fresh and beautiful every year.

The one drawback is that they are not well mannered; they like to travel. You plant it here and it shows up over there, too.

Anna Belle is the original variety with Incrediball being the new and improved variety, with stronger stems and fuller, larger flower heads, but still white flowers.

A couple of years ago, Invincible Spirit was introduced followed by Invincible Mini Mauvette. Both varieties produced pink flowers, but Mauvette has shorter and stronger stems.

The flowers were good, but the color lasted for about two – maximum three – weeks, which isn’t long enough for me.



“I am not saying that there is a problem with the tried and true, but neither do I want to miss out on the opportunity of adding a great new introduction to my landscape.”

— George Bonnema, Luverne Horticulturalist, reflecting on new varieties of hydrangeas

Incrediball hydrangeas (below, left) are known for their sturdy stems and large blooms, including some that come in a “silvery-pink” color. They bloom every year, even in chilly USDA Zone 3, being native to North America. Above, their striking flowers remain attractive through the seasons and they’re popular in landscapes or as cut flowers.



Panicle hydrangeas

The Zone 4 panicle hydrangeas were limited to Peegee, which was a good variety and often pruned to a tree form. Its flaw was the flowers were so heavy that the stems were not strong enough to support them.

Then Lime Light was introduced, and this was a true winner. Strong stems with magnificent lime green, cone-shaped flower heads that faded to pink and finally rose at the end of the season. Furthermore, the flowers were persistent through the fall and winter, giving the plant winter interest for the landscape.

Lime Light was a large shrub, but breeders have worked to develop more compact versions: Little Lime, Bobo, Strawberry

Sundae, Baby Lace, Lavalamp Flare, and the list goes on.

These varieties have proven themselves to be worthy in my book. Limelight is also sold in tree form and as such is excellent because of its size and the quality and endurance of the flowers.

General hydrangea care

All hydrangea varieties have some degree of shade tolerance with the smooth leaf varieties being the most tolerant.

They prefer uniformly moist soil and, because of the size of the flower and leaf, if grown in full sun, they will often wilt, which can affect the lasting quality of the flowers.

Pruning the smooth leaf varieties means cutting to ground

level every spring. If you want to work with the mop heads, you do no spring pruning until you see the new growth buds developing, then cut back to above that live bud, which is usually low.

The tall panicle varieties take some discipline to keep them in bounds. Depending on the variety, you determine how far to cut them back by looking at how much they grew last year.

Remember that you need to give them room to grow, so if it is the size you want it to be before you prune it, look at how much new growth there was last year and prune accordingly.

Disciplined pruning is a good thing when done correctly.



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